

(*khamr*) is, and then (also) the (more precise) explanation of the fact that this verse shows the (existence of the) prohibition against wine.

(1) On the first point, namely the (more precise) explanation of what wine is (the following is offered): Ash-Shāfi'ī said that every intoxicating drink (*muskir*) is wine. Abū Hanīfa said that wine is equivalent to a strong grape juice which develops foam (as a result of fermentation).

(1A) The evidence on which ash-Shāfi'ī supports his opinion consists of various aspects (*wujūh*, sing. *wajh*):

(1AA) The first aspect is presented in what Abū Dāwūd relates in his (work on Tradition called) *Sunan*, from ash-Sha'bī, from Ibn 'Umar, who said (that 'Umar said the following): On one particular day, the prohibition against wine came down (from God, stating that wine is prohibited) whenever made out of five kinds of things: grapes, dates, wheat, barley, and millet (*dhura*). (At that time) one understood as wine that which clouds (*khamara*) the mind. From this one can draw three kinds of conclusions:

(a) The first is as follows: 'Umar reported that on a specific day wine was prohibited, whenever made out of wheat, barley (and millet) as well as grapes and dates. This shows that all of these were designated as wine.

(b) The second is as follows: 'Umar said that on a specific day wine was prohibited, whenever it was made out of these five things. This is as good as an explicit declaration that the prohibition of wine includes the prohibition of these five kinds.

(c) The third is as follows: 'Umar spoke also of every type of drink that 'clouds' the mind. Doubtlessly 'Umar knew the correct linguistic usage. Consequently, his Tradition indicates that 'wine' is a designation for all (drinks) that 'cloud' the mind. And so forth.

(1AB) The second (portion of) evidence (on which ash-Shāfi'ī bases his opinion) is this: Abū Dāwūd relates from an-Nu'mān ibn Bashīr the following statement: The Messenger of God said: 'Wine is made out of grapes, dates, honey, wheat, and barley.' From this one can draw two kinds of conclusions:

(a) The first is as follows: This is an explicit explanation that these things fall under the designation 'wine' and thus are also included in the verse that establishes the prohibition against wine.

(b) The second is as follows: It is not the intention of the Law-

giver (*shāri'*) to give instruction concerning the (various) expressions (for wine and similar drinks). Thus, in the present case he cannot have wished other than to explain that the decision which applies to wine (made from grape juice) also applies to these (other kinds of wine). If the known decision, which is meant specifically for wine (made from grape juice), pertains to the wickedness of drinking, it must therefore be applied in like manner for these (other) types of drinks.

Al-Khaṭṭābī said that (the reason) the Messenger of God used (the word) 'wine' specifically for these five things (was) not because wine is produced only from these five (raw materials). Rather, these are specially mentioned because they were well known at that time. Therefore, the decision concerning these five (raw materials) applies to all that are like them, such as millet, sult (-barley), and tree sap. . . .

(1AC) The third (portion of) evidence (on which ash-Shāfi'ī bases his opinion) is as follows: Abū Dāwūd relates also from Nāfi' who relates from Ibn 'Umar: The Messenger of God said that every intoxicating drink (*muskir*) is wine and that every type of intoxicating drink is forbidden. Al-Khaṭṭābī said the following: If the Messenger of God states that every type of intoxicating drink is to be considered wine, then this leads to two possible interpretations (*wajhān*):

(a) First: (The word) 'wine' designates all drinks that cause intoxication. This is based on the following: After the verse had proclaimed the prohibition against wine, the people did not know the (exact) meaning which God meant to express with the (word) 'wine', that is, whether the Lawgiver (*shāri'*) was using this expression according to the usual meaning in the Arabic language, or was producing a legal designation through a creation (of a new definition of the word 'wine'), as is also the case with (the terms) 'prayer' (*ṣalāt*), 'fast' (*ṣaum*), and others.

(b) Second: The meaning of the statement (of the Messenger of God) consists in the following: that every intoxicating drink is to be treated like wine regarding the sinfulness (of its use). That is, when the Messenger of God says that this (that is, every intoxicating drink) is wine, then the literal meaning of this expression would signify that these are actually (different kinds of) wine. It is now evident that this (narrow interpretation) is not meant, so one must take it as a figurative expression (*majāz*) for whatever is

equivalent, and this remains as the authoritative decision.

(1AD) The fourth (portion of) evidence (on which ash-Shāfi'ī bases his opinion) is this: Abū Dāwūd related the following from 'Ā'isha: The Messenger of God was asked about (the drink) *bita'*, and he answered: 'Every drink that intoxicates is prohibited.' Al-Khaṭṭābī said: *Bitā'* is a drink that one makes out of honey. This statement (of the Messenger of God) refutes every interpretation that is put forward by those who declare the (wine) *nabīdh* (a type which includes *bita'*) to be permitted. This (statement also) refutes the assertion of those who say that a small amount of an intoxicating drink is allowed. The Messenger of God was asked only about a single kind, the (wine) *nabīdh*, but answered with a prohibition against the (entire) class (of intoxicating drinks). This includes not only a large amount of it but also a small amount. If separate classifications according to kind and amount were intended here, then the Messenger of God would have mentioned this and not neglected it.

(1AE) The fifth (portion of) evidence (on which ash-Shāfi'ī bases his opinion) is this: Abū Dāwūd related the following from Jābir ibn 'Abd Allāh: The Messenger of God said that whatever intoxicates in large amounts is also prohibited in small amounts.

(1AF) The sixth (portion of) evidence (on which ash-Shāfi'ī bases his opinion) is this: Abū Dāwūd related further from al-Qāsim who related from 'Ā'isha (who said): I heard how the Messenger of God said: 'Every intoxicant is forbidden. Whatever intoxicates in the amount of a *farq* is also forbidden in the (smaller) amount of a handful.' Al-Khaṭṭābī said that a *farq*¹⁸ is a measure that comprises sixteen *ratl*. Here then it is most clearly evident that sinfulness extends to all parts of (intoxicating) drinks.

(1AG) The seventh (portion of) evidence (on which ash-Shāfi'ī bases his opinion) is this: Abū Dāwūd related also from Shahr ibn Ḥaushab who related from Umm Salama that the Messenger of God prohibited every intoxicating and weakening (drink). Al-Khaṭṭābī said that by 'weakening' is to be understood every drink that brings about weakness and stiffness in the joints. It doubtlessly includes all kinds of drinks. All these reports indicate that every intoxicating drink (*muskir*) is wine, and is thus prohibited.

(1B) The second kind of argument which indicates (in addition to the material cited above) that every intoxicating drink (*muskir*) is wine (*khamr*) is seen when one considers the etymology. The

lexicographers maintain that the basic meaning of the consonantal group *kh-m-r* is 'to cover'. The head veil (of women) is called *khimār* because it covers the head of the woman, while *khamar* may be a shrub, or a ground depression or hill, which conceals somebody. . . . The etymology shows that by 'wine' is to be understood that which 'veils' (*satara*) the mind, just as one designates wine as an intoxicating drink (*muskir*) because it 'closes' (*sakara*) the mind. . . .

(1C) The third kind of argument which indicates that by 'wine' is to be understood (simply) whatever (drink) intoxicates is based on the fact that the (Islamic) community agree in the following: There are three verses which refer to wine, in two of which it is mentioned explicitly (as *khamr*). The first is the verse presently under discussion (Sūra 2:219/216), and the second is the verse in (the sūra called) 'The Table' (5:90f./92f.). The third verse refers to intoxication and contains God's words: 'Draw not near to prayer when you are intoxicated' (Sūra 4:43/46). This shows that by 'wine' is meant (simply) whatever (drink) intoxicates.

(1D) The fourth kind of argument is as follows: The occasion for the prohibition of wine was when 'Umar and Mu'ādh said: 'Messenger of God, wine seizes the mind and steals the wealth. Give us an explanation concerning it!' Thus, they asked for a judgment from God and his Messenger because wine seizes the mind. Hence it follows necessarily that all that is like wine in this sense is either wine or is equivalent to it in view of the present decision.

(1E) The fifth kind of argument is as follows: God has confirmed his prohibition of wine through his words: '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' (Sūra 5:91/93). Doubtless, such kinds of acts are motivated by intoxication. This cause is certain. Accordingly, the present verse (Sūra 2:219/216) presents more precise evidence of the fact that the sinfulness of (the use of) wine lies in the fact that it intoxicates. Whether it is now unconditionally necessary that every intoxicating (drink) is wine, or whether this is not so, in all cases the present decision has validity for every intoxicating drink. Whoever thinks correctly and is free from stubbornness knows that these aspects (*wujūh*) (of evidence) are given clearly and distinctly along with the (clear) statement of this problem.

(1F) The evidence of Abū Ḥanīfa is (likewise) of various aspects:

(1FA) The first aspect is as follows: When God said: 'And (We give you) the fruits of the palms and the vines, from which you obtain an intoxicant as well as wholesome food' (Sūra 16:67/69), then he granted a favour to us in that we (may) make an intoxicating drink and wholesome food. (Therefore) that through which we have an intoxicating drink and wholesome food must be permitted, since a benefaction (which God grants) cannot be other than permitted.

(1FB) The second (portion of) evidence (on which Abū Ḥanīfa bases his opinion) is that Ibn 'Abbās related the following: In the year of the farewell pilgrimage, the Messenger of God came to the drinking place (of the pilgrims in Mecca, that is, the well Zamzam), leaned against it, and said: 'Give me a drink!' Then al-'Abbās asked: 'Should I not give you a drink from what we pressed (from the grapes) (*nabadha*) in our houses?' Then when the Messenger of God replied: '(Give me a drink of) what you usually give the people to drink!', al-'Abbās brought a cup of (the wine) *nabīdh*. The Messenger of God smelled it, made a gloomy face, and handed back the cup, whereupon al-'Abbās said: 'Messenger of God, do you want to destroy the drink of the inhabitants of Mecca?' Then the Messenger of God said: 'Give me the cup!', and it was handed to him. He ordered water out of (the well) Zamzam, poured it into it, drank it, and said: 'If these drinks climb to your head, break their benefit with water!' From this one draws the following conclusion: The Messenger of God made a gloomy face solely because the (wine) *nabīdh* was strong. Mixing it with water was done clearly for the purpose of diluting it. That a drink climbs to the head means that it is strong.

(1FC) The third (portion of) evidence (on which Abū Ḥanīfa bases his opinion) is that one accepts the Traditions of the Companions of the Prophet (which are not specifically mentioned here).

(Concerning 1FA) To the first aspect (of the evidence of Abū Ḥanīfa) is to be answered: When God says: 'And (We give you) the fruits of the palms and the vines, from which you obtain an intoxicant as well as wholesome food', there is uncertainty in the acknowledgment (of the kind of drink and food). Why do you now say that this intoxicating drink and wholesome food are identical with (the wine) *nabīdh*? After all, the Qur'ānic exegetes agree that this verse (Sūra 16:67/69) came down before the (other)

three verses mentioned which indicate the prohibition of wine. Thus, these three verses must either abrogate or elucidate the (first) verse.

(Concerning 1FB) The (wine) *nabīdh* with which the Tradition (from Ibn 'Abbās) is concerned could be water into which one had tossed (*nabadha*) dates in order to remove its brackishness. Then the taste of the water could have changed by becoming a little tart. Now the Messenger of God was extremely gifted with his sensitive taste, and so his noble nature could not stand that taste; so he made a gloomy face. Furthermore, he wanted to decrease the tartness and smell by pouring in that amount of water. To sum up, every reasonable person knows that it is impossible to refute the arguments which we have mentioned with such a (small) amount of weak evidence.

(Concerning 1FC) Thus (in conclusion), the Traditions of the Companions of the Prophet contradict and refute one another. One must therefore disregard them and hold to that which is evident through the Book of God and the *summa* of his Messenger. Thus concludes the discussion concerning the true nature of wine.

(2) Concerning the second point, namely the (more precise) explanation of what the present verse (Sūra 2:219/216) indicates concerning the prohibition against wine (the following may be cited). The explanation concerning this has various aspects:

(2AA) The first aspect is as follows: The verse shows that wine in itself contains sin (*ithm*). And sin is forbidden according to God's words: 'Say: My Lord has forbidden all indecencies, open and hidden, and sin (*ithm*), and unjust insolence (*baghy*)' (Sūra 7:33/31). Taking both verses together, they prove the prohibition of wine.

(2AB) The second aspect is this: With (the word) *ithm* one sometimes means punishment and sometimes transgression (*dhanb*) that deserves punishment. Whichever of the two (meanings) may be intended here, one can correctly interpret it only as referring to something that is forbidden.

(2AC) The third aspect is as follows: God said: 'But the sin in them is greater than their usefulness.' (With this) he expressed clearly the predominance of the sin and the punishment, and this makes the prohibition (under discussion) necessary.

One can now say (to us): This verse does not indicate that the drinking of wine (in itself) is a sin, but (only) that therein lies a sin. Let us suppose that that sin is forbidden. Why then do you maintain

that the drinking of wine is necessarily forbidden because that sin occurs in it? To this I answer: (This is so) because the question (at the beginning of the verse) is directed towards wine in general (and not to its nature, sanction, or sinfulness). When God now reveals that therein lies a sin, what is meant is that that sin is inseparably linked with it, in all its implications (which one could develop here). The drinking of wine thus leads necessarily to this complex of prohibitions; and whatever necessarily leads to something prohibited is (itself) prohibited. Consequently, the drinking of wine must be prohibited.

There are also people who maintain that this verse does not indicate the sinfulness of wine and who argue for this in various ways:

(2BA) The first way is as follows: God established (in the present verse) that wine and games of chance can be useful for man; however, no usefulness lies in something which is forbidden.

(2BB) The second way is as follows: If this verse indicated the prohibition of wine, why then were the Muslims (at the time of Muḥammad) not satisfied with it, before the verse in (the sūra called) 'The Table' (5:90f./92f.) and the verse concerning the prohibition (of drunkenness) at prayer (Sūra 4:43/46) came down?

(2BC) The third way is as follows: God has indicated that a great sin lies in wine and games of chance. This requires that the great sin (which lies therein) occurs as long as these two exist. Now if this great sin were the basis for the (general) sinfulness of (the use of) wine, then God would have to have spoken of the existence of such sinfulness (also earlier) in the other revelations (which were issued before the Qur'ān).

(Concerning 2BA) To the first (of these arguments) is to be answered: That a temporary usefulness appears in the present world with something that is prohibited does not alter the fact that it is prohibited. Since this is so, then the fact that usefulness (sometimes) occurs with wine and games of chance also does not alter the fact that both are sinful. From the legality (of something that is prohibited) in particular (namely, without the usefulness connected with it) follows necessarily the legality in general.

(Concerning 2BB) To the second (of these arguments) is to be answered: We have a Tradition of Ibn 'Abbās according to which the present verse came down for the purpose of prohibiting wine, while the objection cited by me (above) is not related by Ibn 'Abbās

and his followers (and therefore does not have such good support through ancient authorities). Naturally it is possible that (after the revelation of this verse) the more important Companions of the Prophet desired that a statement would come down which would contain a more emphatic prohibition (against wine) than this verse (contains), just as Abraham asked to be able to see the quickening of the dead in order to gain greater peace and resignation.¹⁹

(Concerning 2BC) To the third (of these arguments) is to be answered: When God says: 'In them lies a great sin', he thereby proclaims something concerning the present condition and not concerning the past. According to our view, God knew that drinking wine would bring ruin to the people in that time; and he also knew that it was not injurious for the people before this (religious) community (of Muslims). Herewith this chapter may be concluded.

9. *The emancipation of slaves*

Zamakhsharī on Sūra 24:33

And let those who find not the means to marry be abstinent until God enriches them through His bounty. Those your right hands own (as slaves) who seek emancipation, contract with them accordingly, if you know some good in them; and give to them some of the wealth of God that He has given you. And constrain not your slavegirls (fatayāt) to prostitution, if they desire to live in chastity, that you may seek the chance goods ('arad) of the present life. Whoever constrains them, surely God, after their being constrained, is All-forgiving, All-compassionate.

... *Contract with them accordingly:* ... This means that the man is to say to his slave (*mamlūk*): 'I issue to you a letter of emancipation for the price of a thousand dirhams', and that the slave will then be free when he pays the amount.²⁰ The meaning is: I write down in your behalf that you will be free from me when you pay the money; and I write down in my behalf that you will pay it. Or, I write down for you the payment of the money and for me the emancipation. According to Abū Ḥanīfa, this is to be effected either immediately or later, as well as by instalments or not by instalments. Since God has not in any way mentioned division into instalments, this (interpretation) is reached through 'conclusion from analogy'

(*qiyās*) based on other agreements. According to ash-Shāfi'ī (on the other hand) this (agreement) is effected only at a later time and only by instalments. According to his view, the payment is not to be made in a single instalment, since the slave possesses nothing²¹ and consequently an agreement to be completed at once would prevent the realization of the desired goal, since the slave could not make a full payment all at once.

The agreement may be concluded with him for a small or large (amount of) money, and for a specific period of service or for a specific, temporary, designated task, as for example the digging of a well at a designated place, whereby also the length and width (of the well) must be specified. . . . If the master contracts a letter of emancipation with the slave in the amount of his value (without this being specified more precisely), this is not permissible. If (however) the slave pays this price, he is free. If the master contracts with him a letter of emancipation for the value of a young slave (*waṣīf*) (who has just become capable of work), this is permissible, because the amount which is left undetermined is small and the average value is low. It is not proper for the master to disregard the emancipation agreement. If the slave (in such a case) pays, he is free. The patronage (*wilā'*) concerning the (freed) slave falls to (the lot of) the master (*maulā*),²² who grants to him the profit that he originally had (been able to keep) for himself.

According to the view of the majority of scholars, the command under discussion here is to be understood as a recommendation (and not an obligation). According to al-Ḥasan (al-Baṣrī), it is not a final decision. If the master wishes, he may contract the letter of emancipation, and if he wishes, he may not do so. According to 'Umar (on the other hand) this belongs among the strict commands of God. Ibn Sīrīn is of the same view, and it is also interpreted likewise by the legal school of Dāwūd.

(*If you know some good in them*): an ability to pay that for which they are set free. Some say (also that it means): credit and earnings. It is related by Salmān that he had a slave who asked for a letter of emancipation from him. Then Salmān said: 'Do you have the means?' When the slave answered in the negative, Salmān said: 'Then do you want to command me to consume the dirty hand-washing water of the people?'

And give to them: According to the view of Abū Ḥanīfa and his followers, God has commanded the Muslims, in the sense of a

strict obligation, to help those who possess letters of emancipation and to hand over to them their share of what God has allotted to the Muslims out of the public treasury (*bait al-māl*²³). Thus God says: 'The freewill offerings (*ṣadaqāt*) are for the poor and needy, for those who work to collect them, for those whose hearts are brought together, for the ransoming of slaves, (for paying the debts of) debtors, in God's way, and for the traveller. Thus God ordains!' (Sūra 9:60; cf. 2:177/172). If I am asked whether it is permissible for a rich master to accept contributions²⁴ that are given to him on behalf of his slave, then I answer in the affirmative. A charitable contribution that does not amount to the full price (of a slave), and does not prove to be sufficient for the payment of the remainder, proves to be a blessing for the master, since he accepts the money not because it is a charitable contribution, but in regard to the emancipation agreement, just like someone who has received a charitable contribution which was given to a poor person, whether acquired by purchase, received by inheritance, or as a present (but not as charity). To this refer the words of the Prophet in the Tradition concerning the (emancipation of the slave girl) Barīra: 'It is a charity for her and a present for us.'

According to ash-Shāfi'ī, the present words of God signify an obligation for the masters to decrease the amount for the emancipation of slaves. If they do not do this, they should be forced (to do so). According to 'Alī, one should remit one-fourth to the slave. According to Ibn 'Abbās, one should give a small present to the slave with his letter of emancipation. From 'Umar (is related) that he contracted a letter of emancipation with his slave named Abū Umayya, who was the first slave in Islam to receive a letter of emancipation. When the letter came to 'Umar with the first instalment, 'Umar gave it back to him and said: 'Take it as help for your emancipation agreement!' To this the slave replied: 'Why did you not defer that until the final instalment?' 'Umar answered: 'I fear that I may not come to that (point).'

According to the view of Abū Ḥanīfa, this is to be understood as a recommendation. He said: (In the letter of emancipation) what is involved is a mutual agreement for the exchange of the value of property, and one is just as likely to be able to force a reduction as when bargaining. Others say that the meaning of (the words) *and give to them* is: and advance (money) to them. (Still) others say (that the meaning is): give money to them when they

have paid (the price for emancipation) and are free. All this is commendable.

It is related that Ḥuwaiṭib ibn 'Abd al-'Uzzā had a slave named aṣ-Ṣabīḥ, who asked his master for a letter of emancipation. He refused, however, whereupon the present verse came down. (Further is related:) The maidservants of the pre-Islamic Arabs (*ahl al-jāhiliyya*) were forced to be prostitutes for their masters. 'Abd Allāh ibn Ubayy, the chief of 'hypocrisy' (*nifāq*), had six maidservants . . . whom he forced into prostitution, and upon whom he imposed all kinds of fees. When two of them complained to the Messenger of God, the present verse came down. . . .

(*God is*) *All-forgiving, All-compassionate*: concerning the men or concerning the female slaves or concerning both, if they turn in repentance and act justly. . . .

10. Holy war

Baiḍāwī on Sūra 2:216f./212–214

Prescribed for you is fighting (against the unbelievers), although it be hateful to you. Yet it is possible that you will hate a thing which is better for you; and it is possible that you will love a thing which is worse for you. God knows, and you know not. They will question thee concerning the holy month and fighting in it. Say: 'Fighting in it is a heinous thing, but to bar from God's way—and disbelief in Him—and the holy mosque, and to expel its people²⁵ from it, that is more heinous in God's sight. And persecution is more heinous than slaying.'

Prescribed for you is fighting (against the unbelievers), although it be hateful to you: although it is repugnant and unbearable to you by nature. . . .

Yet it is possible that you will hate a thing which is better for you: What is meant is all that was imposed upon the believers by force, since this is contrary to their nature, even though their integrity depends on it and it is the basis for their well-being.

And it is possible that you will love a thing which is worse for you: What is meant is all that came to be forbidden to the believers, since this is what the soul loved and enjoyed, even though it is led to perdition by it. (The expression) 'it is possible that' ('asā) is

used because the soul (*nafs*), when it exerts itself, turns the affair (*amr*) into its opposite.

God knows what is good for you, and you know not: Herein is an indication that the statements (of God) have in mind the predominant well-being (of man), even though man is not aware of this himself.

They will question thee concerning the holy month: It is related that, in the (month of) Jumādā l-Ākhira, which was two months before (the battle of) Badr,²⁶ the Prophet sent out his paternal cousin 'Abd Allāh ibn Jaḥsh with an expeditionary force, in order to be on the look-out for a caravan of (the tribe of) Quraish in which were 'Amr ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥaḍramī and three (other) men. They killed 'Amr, took two of his men captive, and drove away the caravan, which contained the goods of trade from aṭ-Ṭā'if. This happened at the beginning of (the month of) Rajab, while 'Abd Allāh and his people believed it was (still) the (month of) Jumādā l-Ākhira. Regarding this, the (people of the tribe of) (Quraish said: 'Muḥammad has (unlawfully) regarded the month in which raids and warlike acts are forbidden, so that the fearful can be safe and men can move freely everywhere for the sake of their livelihood, as permissible (for such forbidden acts).' This fell hard upon the members of the expeditionary force, and they said: 'We will not submit until compensation comes down for us.' At this, Muḥammad gave back the caravan along with the captives. According to Ibn 'Abbās (however, it is related) that the Messenger of God accepted the booty when this verse came down. This is supposed to have been the first booty in Islam. Those who questioned (Muḥammad about the holy month) were the unbelievers, who thereby sought to ascribe to him calumny and profanation (of a holy month). Others say (however) that they were the members of the expeditionary force (who asked Muḥammad about the holy month). . . .

Say: Fighting in it is a heinous thing: that is, a heinous sin. For the most part, in opposition to 'Aṭā', it is held that this statement is abrogated by the following words of God: 'If they do not leave you alone and offer you peace and stop hostilities, then take them wherever you find them and slay them' (Sūra 4:91/93). In this case the more specific (that is, the prohibition against fighting during the month of Rajab) would be abrogated by the general (that is, the general command to kill the unbelievers). However, there is a contradiction in this. It lies nearest (the truth) to reject (the interpre-

tation) that the present verse declares an absolute prohibition against fighting in the holy month. Although (the word) 'fighting' is indefinite here, it is fixed in scope; and thus, (the fighting here is) not (to be understood as fighting) in general. . . .

IX

DOGMATICS

1. Faith

Zamakhsharī on Sūra 2:256/257

There is no compulsion in religion. What is right has become clear from what is wrong. So whoever disbelieves in idols (aṭ-ṭāghūt) and believes in God has laid hold of the most firm handle, unbreaking. God is All-hearing, All-knowing.

There is no compulsion (ikrāh) in religion: that is, God does not allow belief through compulsion (*ijbār*) and coercion (*qasr*), but through strengthening (*tamkīn*) and free choice (*ikhtiyār*). Accordingly, he has said: 'If thy Lord had willed, whoever is in the earth would have believed, all of them, all together. Wouldst thou then constrain the people until they are believers?' (Sūra 10:99). That is, if he had willed, he would have compelled them to believe; however, he did not do this, but placed faith on the basis of free choice.¹

What is right has become clear from what is wrong: Faith is distinguished from unbelief through clear indications.

So whoever disbelieves in idols (aṭ-ṭāghūt): whoever freely decides to believe not in Satan or the deities² but in God.

Has laid hold of the most firm handle: (This expression) refers to a strong rope that is twisted tightly. (It is the strap) with which one makes certain before a journey that (the load) will not break open. Here knowledge (of faith) which is obtained through insight and deduction is likened to something truly concrete, so that the one who hears this perceives it thus, as if he viewed it directly. Thus his conviction and his certainty concerning it are made firm.

Some say that what is involved here is a proclamation in the sense of a prohibition, namely: 'Exercise no compulsion in your religion!' On the other hand, some people say that this (verse)

is abrogated through God's words: 'O Prophet, struggle with the unbelievers and hypocrites (*munāfiqūn*), and be harsh with them. Their refuge is Jahannam, an evil home-coming!' (Sūra 9:73/74; 66:9). Others say that (the prohibition against compulsion) refers especially to the People of the Book, since they have been immuned themselves (from compulsion) through the payment of tribute (*jizya*).³ It is related that one of the 'Helpers' (*anṣār*) of the Banū Sālim ibn 'Auf had two sons who had accepted Christianity before the Messenger of God was sent. Both came to Medina and their father was grieved for them and said: 'By God, I will not let you go until you have converted to Islam!' The two refused, however, and then they (all three) came before the Messenger of God with their controversy. The 'Helper' said: 'Messenger of God, should a part of me go into hell-fire while I am watching it?' At this, this present verse came down and the father left the two alone.

2. Faith and reason

Zamakhsharī on Sūra 17:15/16

Whoever is guided is only guided to his own gain, and whoever goes astray, it is only to his own loss. No soul laden bears the load of another. We never chastise until We send forth a messenger.

That is, each person bears a burden, but he bears only his own burden and not that of another.

We never chastise: There is among us no principle according to which wisdom requires that we punish people, until after we have sent a messenger (*rasūl*) to them so that we have forced upon them the evidence (for faith) (*hujja*). One may now say that the evidence already compelled them before the messengers were sent, since they had the proofs of reason (*aql*) through which God grants knowledge; however, the people neglected spiritual contemplation (*nazar*), although they were capable of it. Therefore, they must be punished because they neglected contemplation of that which was given to them (through reason) and thus disbelieved. Yet (they must be punished) not because they disregarded the revealed laws (*ash-sharā'ī*), to which there is no access without God's help (*taufīq*) and which a man can thus obey properly only if he has first obtained faith. To this I answer: The sending of the mes-

sengers is among those things which stimulate contemplation and warn him who is slumbering in negligence. Thus, one is not able to say: 'We were neglectful. O that you had sent to us a messenger who would have stimulated contemplation on the rational proofs!'

Baiḍāwī on the same passage

... *We never chastise until We send forth a messenger* who has explained the evidence and rendered accessible the revealed laws, so that we have forced upon them the substance of the evidence. Herein lies an indication that there is no obligation (to believe) before 'the revelation' (of Islam) (*ash-shar'*).⁴

Zamakhsharī on Sūra 67:10

They also say: 'If we had only heard or had understood, we would not have been among the inhabitants of the blaze.'

If we had only heard the warning, like people who strive for the truth, or, if we had only understood it like people who engage in meditative contemplation. Some say: (Here) God has linked hearing with reason because that for which there is a (divine) command (to men) rests on the evidence of hearing and reason. Among the (heretical) innovations (*bida'*) in the interpretation (of this verse) is (the view) that what is meant (here) is: If only we had followed the teaching (*madhhab*) of the 'people of the Tradition' (*ahl al-ḥadīth*) or the teaching of those who interpret (the Qur'ān) according to their own opinion (*ra'y*).⁵ (The proponents of such innovations introduce them) as if this verse (first) came down after the appearance of these two points of view (*madhhabain*), as if God had (previously) sent down threats against the adherents of other points of view and those who inquire freely (*mujtahidūn*), and as if the adherents of these (two points of view) felt themselves to be unconditionally among the saved ones, according to the principle that the number of the Companions of the Prophet to whom paradise is promised amounts to ten and that no eleventh has been added.⁷ (They do this further) as if most of those who pass over the bridge (*aṣ-ṣirāt*) (which leads over hell and into paradise)⁸ had never heard anything of the names of these two groups.

Ibn al-Munayyir regarding this

If az-Zamakhsharī means that the statements of religious law are drawn from reason as well as from hearing, (namely) as a method for (distinguishing between) what is considered to be good and what is considered to be evil, then he does not stand far from the inhabitants of hell-fire. If (however) he means that reason leads to the true principles (*'aqā'id ṣaḥīḥa*) and that hearing is appropriate for the statements of religious law, then he agrees with the 'people of the *sunna*'.⁹

3. Free will and predestination

Zamakhsharī on Sūra 18:29/28

Say: 'The truth is from your Lord; so whoever wills may believe, and whoever wills may disbelieve.' Surely We have prepared for the evildoers a fire, whose pavilion encompasses them. If they call for succour, they will be succoured with water like molten copper that will scald their faces—how evil a potion, and how evil a resting-place!

Say: The truth is from your Lord: (The word) 'truth' is the subject of something omitted. What is meant is: The truth has come and the excuses (*'ilal*) (on your behalf) have been taken away. There remains for you nothing more than to choose freely whether you want to follow the way of deliverance or the way of destruction. Expressions of command (*amr*) and of 'the granting of a choice' (*at-takhyīr*) are used here, since the man now has the ability to choose freely which of the two (possibilities) he wishes. He is like one to whom it is commanded as an option to choose freely which leader he wishes to follow. ...

Baiḍāwī on the same passage

... *So whoever wills may believe, and whoever wills may disbelieve:* (God means:) I do not worry about the belief of him who believes, nor about the unbelief of him who does not believe. Yet this in no way means necessarily that the servant is solely responsible for his act himself. Even though this happens through his wish, still his wish is not limited to his wish (but is subject to the wish of God)¹⁰....

Zamakhsharī on Sūra 6:148f./149f.

Those who associate (others with God) will say: 'Had God willed, neither we nor our fathers would have associated (anything with Him), nor would we have forbidden anything.' So also did the people before them count (the message) false, until they tasted Our might. Say: 'Have you any (revealed) knowledge? Bring it forth for us then. You follow only opinion, and you are only conjecturing.'

Say: 'To God belongs the convincing argument. Had He willed, He would have guided you all.'

Those who associate (others with God) will say: Here is announced what they will say (later). And when they have (then) said this, God says: 'Those who associate (others with God) will say: "Had God willed, neither we nor our fathers would have served anything apart from Him"' (Sūra 16:35/37). They suppose in their unbelief and disobedience that their idolatry and that of their fathers, as well as the fact that they have forbidden what God has allowed, have occurred through the wish and the will of God, and that without his wish nothing of this kind would occur. This is in exact agreement with the preaching of the Mujbira.¹¹

So also did the people before them count (the message) false, that is: They have declared (the entire truth) to be a lie.¹² God has imprinted (upon the mind) something from reason and sent down something in his books that proves him to be free and exempt from willing and desiring disgraceful things.¹³ The messengers have declared this. If someone now (however) ascribes the existence of the disgrace of unbelief and disobedience to the wish and will of God, then he declares (the truth) without restrictions to be a lie, since he accuses God, his books, and his messengers to be false and has disavowed the evidence of reason and hearing.

Until they tasted Our might: until (at last) we have sent down upon them the punishment for their false accusation.

Say: Have you any (revealed) knowledge of an unquestionable (*ma'lūm*) fact with which one can argue convincingly for what you assert?

Bring it forth for us then: This is meant ironically and serves as a proof of the fact that words of that kind cannot possibly have in themselves any basis of evidence.

You follow only opinion, when you maintain this.

And you are only conjecturing: You surmise that the facts of the matter are according to your assertion or lying accusation. . . .

Say: To God belongs the convincing argument. This means: If the facts are as you assert, namely that the condition in which you find yourselves is in accordance with the wish of God, then, according to your own teaching, God has the convincing argument against you (on his side).

Had He willed, He would have guided you all: you and your opponents in the religion. If you link your religion with the wish of God, you must also link the religion of your opponents with the wish of God. Therefore, assist them and do not be an enemy to them and do not oppose them, since the wish (of God) builds a common bond between you and their situation!

Baiḍāwī on the same passage

Had God willed, neither we nor our fathers would have associated (anything with Him), nor would we have forbidden anything: If according to his pleasure he had desired the opposite of our situation, as indeed he says: 'Had He willed, He would have guided you all', then neither we nor our fathers would have done what we did. They meant by this that they act in a manner which is thoroughly just and agreeable with God (because God has wished it so), and that they did not will it but it was God who has willed these disgraces for them, thus producing a plea for committing these acts, so that they blame God and thus furnish evidence for the (view of the) Mu'tazila. (This interpretation) is supported by God's words: *So also did the people before them count (the message) false:* that is, just as they accuse you (Muḥammad) of lying when you proclaim that God has prohibited polytheism and has not forbidden what they have forbidden, so (also) those who lived before them accused the messengers of lying. . . .

Zamakhsharī on Sūra 2:6f./5f.

As for the unbelievers, alike is it to them whether thou hast warned them or hast not warned them, for they do not believe. God has set a seal on their hearts and on their hearing; and on their eyes is a covering. And there awaits them a mighty chastisement.

After first (in the previous verses) mentioning his friends and sincere servants, together with the characteristics which make them worthy of his goodwill, and (after) demonstrating that the Book (of God) signifies right guidance and benevolence for them, God now continues by mentioning their opponents who are unbelievers of arrogant obstinacy, for whom right guidance remains of no use and benevolence (*lutf*) remains without effect. For these it is the same whether the Book exists or not and whether the Messenger warns or remains silent. . . .

If (the phrase) *as for the unbelievers* is specific (rather than referring to an unspecified group of unbelievers), then this may be because these unbelievers are known. It would then refer to certain individuals like Abū Lahab, Abū Jahl, al-Walīd ibn al-Mughīra, and other unbelievers like them. The specification, however, could also extend to the (entire) group (of unbelievers) and thereby include every person who persists firmly in his unbelief and will not be dissuaded from it later, as is the case with those mentioned and others. That the specification (in fact) extends to (all) those who persist in their unbelief supports the statement reported here that the unbelievers are people for whom it is the same whether they are warned or not. . . .

The (term) 'set a seal' (*khatama*) and the (term) 'keep secret' (*katama*) are cognate expressions, since when a man reassures himself of something by putting a seal on it, then he keeps it secret and conceals it so that no-one else can obtain entrance to it or learn anything about it. . . .

If one asks what the sealing of the heart and the hearing as well as the covering of the eyes mean, then I answer: In reality, there is here neither a sealing nor a covering. Rather there is a trope (*majāz*) whereby both kinds of the trope are taken into consideration, namely, metaphor (*isti'āra*) and simile (*tamthīl*).¹⁴ A metaphor is present under the following conditions: The heart and the hearing of the unbelievers are represented as things through which one has assurance as if through sealing; that is, because the truth does not penetrate into the heart and does not reach into its interior, since the unbelievers turn away from the truth and regard themselves as too great to receive and believe it, and because the hearing of the unbelievers rejects the truth when they hear it, they do not listen attentively, and they are unwilling to listen to it. And the eyes of the unbelievers are presented as something over

which a covering and a curtain are placed, and concerning which perception is made impossible, because the eyes of the unbelievers do not perceive the signs of God which have been presented and the indications (of God's power) which have been manifested, as do the eyes of those who ponder over and reflect upon them.

A simile is presented when the heart, hearing, and eyes are likened to things that are separated from what they should perceive because of a partition, that is, because the unbelievers do not use them for the religious purposes for which they were created and entrusted to men. . . .

One may now say: Why is the (act of) sealing ascribed to God? When it is ascribed to him, this suggests that the unbelievers are prevented from receiving the truth and finding access to the path which leads to it. This would be shameful; but God is exalted high above doing anything shameful,¹⁵ since he knows the disgraceful character of what is shameful and knows that he does not require it. He has (himself) declared that one must keep his nature free (from the attribution of such a characteristic), in that he has said: 'I wrong not My servants' (Sūra 50:29/28), 'We never wronged them, but they themselves did the wrong' (Sūra 43:76), 'God does not command indecency' (Sūra 7:28/27),¹⁶ and similar statements which are declared in the revelation.

To this I answer: The intention here is to characterize the heart as something which is as if it had been sealed.¹⁷ When the (act of) sealing is ascribed to God, it is thereby indicated that this characteristic (of unbelief), when excessively steadfast and persistent, is something innate (in the unbeliever) and not (merely) a passing characteristic. One also says: 'So and so is created with a talent for such and such and is endowed with it', when one means that he is very persistent in it. How can anyone suggest this (that is, that God himself may have sealed the hearts of the unbelievers), when the present verse came down in order to reproach the unbelievers with the loathsomeness of their character and the offensiveness of their conduct, and the explicit threat of a mighty punishment is added!

Perhaps in its present form, thus (in the form) *God has set a seal on their hearts*, the statement is used figuratively. Thus one says: 'The mountain torrent has flowed away with someone', when this person has perished, and: 'The condor bird has flown away with someone', when this person has been absent for a long time. (In

reality) the mountain torrent and the condor bird have no part in the destruction and the long absence of the ones in question. On the contrary, what is involved here is a simile in which it is stated that the situation of the one who perished is like that of one with whom the mountain torrent has flowed away, and the situation of the one who has been absent for a long time is like that of one with whom the condor bird has flown away. Likewise, it is here set forth that the condition of the heart of the unbelievers in its aversion to the truth is like the condition of a heart that God has sealed, similar to the heart of the barbarians which in its lack of good sense corresponds directly to the heart of wild animals. Or (it is here set forth that the condition of the heart of the unbelievers is) like the condition of a heart over which God's seal is placed, so that it pays no attention to anything and does not understand anything. (Actually) God has not contributed towards the aversion of the heart to the truth and the disinclination to receive the truth, for he is exalted high above such things.

Perhaps the ascribing (of the act of sealing the heart) is itself also transferred to God (in a metaphorical way) from something other than God. Then the sealing (of the heart) would be attributed to the name of God according to a kind of trope, while in reality it is due to someone other than him. This is to be explained in the following manner: The action has various points of reference. It touches the subject, the (outer) object, the inner object, the time, the location, and that which causes the action. Actually, the action is to be ascribed to the subject; yet, it is (also) ascribed, sometimes in the figurative usage of the metaphor, to the (other) things just mentioned. This can happen because these things are like the subject in so far as they (also) have a relation to the action. This is just like when a man who is like a lion in his daring is metaphorically called a lion. Thus one says (metaphorically) of the object (of an act) 'a satisfied life' (instead of 'a life with which one is satisfied') . . . and of one who is responsible for bringing about an act: 'The amir has built the city' (instead of 'The amir has caused the city to be built'). . . . (In the present case) it is now in reality Satan or the unbeliever (himself) who has sealed (the heart). However, since it is God who has granted to him the ability and the possibility (to do it), the sealing (of the heart) is ascribed to him in the same sense as an act which he has caused.

There is (yet) a fourth possible meaning (*wajh*): Since the un-

believers belong firmly and finally among those who do not believe and for whom the signs and warnings do not suffice, and for whom neither the proofs of (divine) benevolence (*alḥāf*) already received nor those that are at hand, should they be granted to them, are of any use, and when there is positive knowledge that they will not come to believe through obedience and free choice (*ikhṭiyār*), then there remains no other path to faith than that God compel and coerce them. And if now no other path to faith remains than that God compel and coerce them, but he (nevertheless) does not compel and coerce them, so that the goal which lies in the endeavour (towards faith) may not slip away, then the renunciation is referred to as force and coercion through the sealing (of the heart). By this means it is to be made known that they are those whose determination in favour of disbelief and whose persistence therein approach the limit from which one can be spared only through force and coercion. Here the extreme degree is reached, as is exhibited by their stubborn lingering in falsehood and in their serious condition in error and unrighteousness.

(Finally) the following remains as a fifth possible meaning: What is involved (here) is an ironic response of something that the unbelievers (themselves) had said. That is, they said: 'Our hearts are veiled from what thou callest us to, and in our ears is heaviness, and between us and thee there is a veil' (Sūra 41 :5/4). A similar ironic response appears in God's words: 'The unbelievers among the "people of the Book" and the idolaters would never desist (from their unbelief) until the clear sign (*bayyina*) should come to them' (Sūra 98 :1). . . .

Zamakhsharī on Sūra 37:95f./93f.

*Abraham*¹⁸ said: 'Do you serve what you hew, when God created you and what you make?'

When God created you and what (mā) you make: that is, when he created you and the idols which you have made. Thus, God says: '(Recall the time) when Abraham said to his father and his people: "What (good) are these idols to which you are cleaving?" . . . They said: "Hast thou come to us with the truth, or art thou one of those who play?" He said: "Nay, but your Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, who originated

them"' (Sūra 21 :56/57). What is meant is: 'who originated the idols'.

One may now ask: How can one and the same thing be created by God and made by them, (namely) in such a manner that his creation and their act extend to it together? To this I answer: This is just like when one says: The carpenter makes the door and the chair, and the goldsmith makes the bracelet and the necklace. What is meant by this is the production of the shape and form of these things, but not their substances. Now the idols also consist partly of substances and partly of shapes, and the creator of their substances is God, while the producers of their shapes are those who give them shape, since they carve them (into shape) and remove some parts of them until the shape that they want is attained.

One may ask (further): Why do you deny that the (word) *mā* (with the verb that follows in this verse) functions as a verbal noun (*an takūna mā maṣdariyya*) (in the sense of 'that you make', or 'your making') and not a relative pronoun (in the sense of 'what'), and that the sense of the verse is: 'God has created you and your act', as is maintained by the Mujbira?¹⁹ To this I answer: What first of all proves the weakness of this question is the evidence of reason and the Book that the meaning of the present verse obviously does not permit (the interpretation suggested by) this question and clearly stands in opposition to it. God argues against the idolaters, beginning with the assumption that both the one who worships (the idols) and what is worshipped are God's creation. (But) how can the (one) creation worship the (other) creation, when the one who worships is the (same) one who made the form and shape of what is worshipped? If this were not (the intended meaning), then the worshipper could not in any way have formed and shaped what is worshipped (but God would have to have done it). Were one therefore to say that the meaning is: 'God has created you and your act', then God could not have argued against the idolaters. Consequently, this interpretation does not fit (the text).

(In addition there is still) something else: God's words *what you make* are an interpretation of his words *what you hew*. Moreover, the (term) 'what' in 'what you hew' is certainly relative, and anyone who treats the parallel 'what' otherwise can only be one who acts arbitrarily and clings fanatically to his doctrine, without concerning

himself with the (laws of) rhetoric and without understanding the structure (*naẓm*) of the Qur'ān.

One could object (to me as follows): I take the *mā* as relative (but interpret it) in such a way that I am not forced to the same conclusion as you; that is (I take it to mean): 'and what you make as your act'. To this I answer: No, the problem involved in the two necessary conclusions would be resolved for one who is as strict as you, only by dissociating from submission to the truth. When you take the *mā* as relative, but only in order to mean 'the act', you do not argue against polytheism, just as is the case when you take it as functioning like a verbal noun (*maṣḍariyya*). Moreover, you sever thereby the connection which exists between *what you make* and *what you hew*, since a contradiction then exists between what is meant in the two cases. (That is) you then interpret 'what you hew' to mean material objects which represent the deities, and you interpret 'what you make' to mean the abstract properties which constitute the acts. This, however, would break up the construction and arrangement of the (statements of the) Qur'ān, just as if you took the *mā* as functioning like a verbal noun.

Baiḍāwī on the same passage

He said: Do you serve what you hew: what you hew as idols.

When God created you and what you make (mā ta'malūna): that is, that which you make (mā ta'malūnahū). The substance of the idols was produced through God's creation, while the shape of the idols, although coming about through the act of the idolaters so that the idols are presented as their works, is (actually) produced through the fact that God destined the idolaters to do it and created the motives and dispositions on which their act depends. Or (it means): your act, (that is) in the sense of 'your accomplished (work)'. Thus it corresponds to what you hew. Or (it means: your act) in the sense of the origination (of the action). That is, when their act is produced through God's creation, then this accomplished (work) which is done, which depends on their act is especially suited to this (act). In this sense, our companions (of mind), under the assumption that God created the acts, hold fast to this. And it is for them to favour this (manner of explanation) above the two mentioned above, because an expression of opinion or a more figurative usage is present in both of these.²⁰

Jalāl ad-Dīn as-Suyūṭī (Tafsīr al-Jalālain) on Sūra 8:24

O believers, respond to God and the Messenger when He calls you unto that which will give you life; and know that God stands between a man and his heart, and that to Him you shall be mustered.

O believers, respond to God and the Messenger: through obedience. When He calls you unto that which will give you life: (unto something) of the religion, for it is the source of eternal life.

And know that God stands between a man and his heart: so that it can be believing or unbelieving only according to God's will.

And that to Him you shall be mustered: so that he gives you the reward for your deeds.

X

MYSTICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL
QUR'ĀNIC EXEGESIS

1. *The outer and inner meanings*

Ghazzālī on interpretation according to individual opinion¹

... The Prophet said: 'Whoever interprets the Qur'ān according to his own opinion (*bi-ra'yihī*) is to receive his place in the hell-fire.' The people who are acquainted with only the outer aspect of exegesis (*tafsīr*) have for this reason discredited the mystics in so far as they have been involved with exegesis, because they explain (*ta'wīl*) the wording of the Qur'ān other than according to the Tradition of Ibn 'Abbās and the other interpreters. They have thus advocated the view that what is involved here is unbelief. If the advocates of (the traditional) exegesis are correct, then the understanding of the Qur'ān consists in nothing else than that one knows its interpretation outwardly. But if they are not right, then what is the meaning of the Prophet's words: 'Whoever interprets the Qur'ān according to his own opinion is to receive his place in the hell-fire'?

One should note: When someone maintains that the Qur'ān has no other meaning than that expressed by the outer aspect of exegesis, then by doing so he manifests his own limitation (*ḥadd*). With this confession about himself he hits upon what is absolutely correct (for his own situation); however, he errs in his opinion that the entire creation is to be regarded as being on his level, that is, restricted to his limitation and situation. Rather, the commentaries and Traditions show that the meanings contained in the Qur'ān exhibit a wide scope for experts in the field. Thus, 'Alī said (that a specific meaning can be grasped) only when God grants to one (*'abdan*) understanding for the Qur'ān. (But) if nothing else is present than the interpretation which has been handed down,

then this is not understanding. (Further) the Prophet said that the Qur'ān had a literal meaning (*zāhir*), an inner meaning (*bāṭin*), a terminal point (of understanding) (*ḥadd*), and a starting point (for understanding) (*muṭṭala'*)... According to the opinion of some scholars, every verse can be understood in sixty thousand ways, and what then still remains unexhausted (in its meaning) is more numerous (*akthar*). Others have maintained that the Qur'ān contains seventy-seven thousand and two hundred (kinds of) knowledge, since every word constitutes one (kind of) knowledge. This then increases fourfold since every word has a literal meaning, an inner meaning, a terminal point (of understanding), and a starting point (for understanding). ...

Ibn Mas'ūd said: Whoever wishes to obtain knowledge about his ancestors and descendants should meditate upon the Qur'ān. This knowledge does not appear, however, if one restricts the interpretation of the Qur'ān to the outer meaning. All in all, every kind of knowledge is included in the realm of actions and attributes of God, and the description of the nature of the actions and attributes of God is contained in the Qur'ān. These kinds of knowledge are unending; yet, in the Qur'ān is found (only) an indication of their general aspects. Thereby, the (various) degrees (*maqāmāt*) of the deeper penetration into the particulars of knowledge are traced back to the (actual) understanding of the Qur'ān. The mere outer aspect of interpretation yields no hint of this knowledge. Rather, the fact is that the Qur'ān contains indications and hints, which certain select people with (correct) understanding can grasp, concerning all that remains obscure of the theoretical way of thinking and that about which the creatures (*al-khalā'iq*) disagree regarding the theoretical sciences and rational ideas.² How is the interpretation and explanation of the outer meaning of the Qur'ān to be sufficient for this? ...

Regarding the words of the Prophet 'Whoever interprets the Qur'ān according to his own opinion', and the prohibition concerning this, ... one can conclude as follows: Either, restriction to the Tradition (*ḥadīth*) and what can be learned (from other sources), and (thus) the renunciation of inference and independent understanding, is meant; or, something else is meant. For the following reasons (*wujūh*), it has been decided that it is wrong to conclude that what is meant is that concerning the Qur'ān one is allowed only the outer meaning, which he has heard:

(1) One would then be restricted to what was stated (in the time of the Prophet) and can be traced back to him (through statements of suitable authorities). But this seldom occurs with (interpretations of) the Qur'ān. . . .

(2) The Companions of the Prophet and the exegetes are in disagreement concerning the interpretation of certain verses and advance differing statements about them which cannot be brought into harmony with one another. That all of these statements have been heard from the mouth of the Messenger of God is absurd. One was obliged to learn of one of these statements of the Messenger of God in order to refute the rest, and then it became clear that, concerning the meaning (of the passage of the Qur'ān in question), every exegete expressed what appeared to him to be evident through his inference. This went so far that seven different kinds of interpretations, which cannot be brought into harmony with one another, have been advanced concerning the (mysterious) letters at the beginning of (some of) the sūras. . . .

(3) The Messenger of God prayed for Ibn 'Abbās: 'God instruct him in the religion and teach him the interpretation!' But if one had heard the interpretation in the same way (that he heard the recitation of the Qur'ān) and could preserve it in his memory just as it was revealed, then what could this statement (of Muḥammad) mean, since it was intended especially for Ibn 'Abbās? . . .

(4) God has said: ' . . . those of them whose task it is to investigate would have come to know the matter' (Sūra 4:83/85). Thus he has granted a disclosure to people with knowledge, and it is certain that the disclosure surpasses what is heard (of the doctrines which have been handed down). All of the reports which we have mentioned concerning the understanding of the Qur'ān stand in opposition to this notion (*khayāl*) (of a restriction of interpretation to what is heard from earlier sources), and consequently it is senseless to make hearing (*samā'*) a condition for the interpretation (*ta'wīl*). (Rather) it is permitted to everyone to draw conclusions from the Qur'ān according to the measure of his understanding and according to the scope of his reason.

The prohibition (against interpreting the Qur'ān according to individual opinion) involves the following two reasons for its having been sent down: The first is that someone may have an opinion (*ra'y*) about something, and through his nature as well as his inclination he may shelter a bias for it and then interpret the

Qur'ān in accordance with his opinion and bias, in order thereby to obtain arguments to prove his view to be correct. Moreover, the meaning (which he links with his view) could not at all appear to him from the Qur'ān if he did not have (preconceived) opinion and bias. This sometimes happens consciously, as perchance in the case of those who use individual verses of the Qur'ān as arguments for the correctness of a (heretical) innovation (*bid'a*) and thus know that this is not in accordance with what is meant by the verse. They want rather to deceive their opponents. Sometimes (however) it (also) happens unconsciously. For instance, when a verse allows various meanings, a man inclines in his understanding to that which corresponds with his own opinion. Then, he settles the issue according to his opinion and inclination and thus interprets according to 'individual opinion'. That is: It is 'individual opinion' which drives one to such an interpretation. If one did not have this opinion, then that possibility of interpretation (to which one is inclined) would not have gained predominance. . . .

The second reason is that someone may come to an interpretation of the Qur'ān prematurely on the basis of the outer meaning of the Arabic language, without receiving the assistance of hearing (*samā'*) and the Tradition for what is involved with passages of the Qur'ān which are difficult to understand, for the obscure and ambiguous (*mubdal*) expressions which are found in the Qur'ān, and for abbreviations, omissions, implications (*iḍmār*), anticipations, and allusions which are contained in it. Whoever has not mastered the outer aspect of exegesis, but solely on the basis of his understanding of the Arabic language proceeds hastily to the conclusion of the meaning (of the Qur'ān), commits many errors and aligns himself thereby to the group of those who interpret (the Qur'ān) according to individual opinion. The Tradition and hearing (*samā'*) are indispensable for the outer aspect of exegesis, first of all in order to make certain thereby against the opportunities for error, but then also in order to extend the endeavour to understand and to reach conclusions. The obscure passages which cannot be understood without hearing are in fact numerous. . . .

Ibn Rushd (Averroes) on the harmony between revelation and knowledge³

. . . If speculation based on the arguments of reason is to lead

someone to knowledge about something, then this matter must involve either something that is not mentioned in the revelation or something about which it does contain information. If it involves something that is not mentioned (in the revelation) then there is no contradiction (between the speculative knowledge and the revelation), and it is then the same case as when specific decisions are not mentioned in the revelation, and the lawyers must make decisions on the basis of 'deduction by analogy' (*qiyās*). If, on the other hand, the revelation speaks explicitly of the matter (concerned), then the outward expression must either be in agreement with that to which the reasoning leads or not. If agreement is present, there is no need for discussion; however, if no agreement is present, then allegorical exegesis (*ta'wīl*) is required. Allegorical exegesis thereby has the purpose of converting the meaning (*dalāla*) of an expression from the literal meaning (*dalāla ḥaqīqiyya*) to a figurative meaning (*dalāla majāziyya*), without thereby damaging the standard linguistic usage of the Arabs with regard to the formation of metaphors.

... The reason why there is an inner and an outer meaning in the revelation is to be sought in the fact that the natural talents of people are different and that their abilities in regard to the affirmative function (*taṣdīq*) (of reason) deviate from one another. And the reason why passages appear in the revelation whose outer meanings show disagreement lies in the fact that those (people) who have a thorough knowledge should be stimulated towards allegorical exegesis which creates harmony between the divergent meanings. There is allusion to this in God's words: 'It is He who sent down upon thee the Book, wherein are clear verses that are the *umm al-kitāb*,⁴ and others that are ambiguous. As for those in whose hearts is swerving (from the right way), they follow the ambiguous part, desiring dissension, and desiring its interpretation. But none knows its interpretation except God and those firmly rooted in knowledge' (Sūra 3:7/5).⁵

One may now say: There are statements in the revelation which Muslims agree should be taken according to their outer meaning, and statements (which Muslims agree must be taken according to their inner meaning) which must be interpreted allegorically, and (finally) statements concerning which they disagree. How (then) is it possible that the (scientific) reasoning leads to an allegorical exegesis of something concerning which the Muslims are in agreement in accepting the outer meaning, and that it comes to an

outer meaning of something concerning which they are in agreement in accepting the allegorical interpretation? To this I answer: If the agreement had to result on the basis of one sure method, then no agreement could have been produced. If, on the other hand, it resulted on the basis of conjecture, then it could appear. ...

Kāshānī 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 (in order to rule the world), causing the night to cover the day, which it pursues urgently. And (he created) the sun, and the moon, and the stars to be subservient, by His amr.⁶ Are not the creation and the amr His alone? Blessed be God, the Lord of all being.

Surely your Lord is God, who created the heavens and the earth in six days: that is, who has concealed himself in the (pure) spirit of heaven and the matter of the earth for six thousand years, for God says: 'Surely a day with thy Lord is as a thousand years of your counting' (Sūra 22:47/46). What is meant by this is (the time span) from the creation of Adam to the time of Muḥammad. Creating signifies that God (*al-ḥaqq*) conceals himself in the outer things of creation. And this time span extends from the beginning of the period of the concealment (of God) until the beginning of the manifestation, which falls in the time of the sealing of prophecy (through Muḥammad) and the appearance of lordship (*wilāya*). Thus the Prophet has said: Time is turned back (to the situation) in which it was on the day when God created the heavens and the earth. The beginning of the concealment (of God) in the creation is in fact the end of the manifestation. Since the concealment now ends in favour of the manifestation, then time thus turns back to the beginning of creation, as it has elapsed. The manifestation is perfected through the appearance of the Mahdī⁷ after the completion of seven (cosmic) days. Thus one says that this world has a duration of seven thousand years.

Then sat Himself upon the Throne: that is, upon the throne of the heart of Muḥammad, since he revealed himself completely with all his attributes through Muḥammad. ...

Causing the night of the body and the darkness of nature to cover the day of the light of the spirit, which it pursues urgently, because

(as body) the night is gifted and suited for absorbing the day (as spirit) by adjusting (the body fluids).⁸ *And the sun* of the spirit, *and the moon* of the heart, *and the stars* of the senses (are created) by *His amr*. This *amr* is something (*sha'n*) that is mentioned in God's words: 'Every day He is engaged in something' (Sūra 55:29).

Are not the placing-into-being through *His* power (alone) and the decree through (his) wisdom (alone)? Or: Are not the causing-to-originate and the creating-anew His (alone)?

If one takes the heaven and the earth according to the outer meaning (of the text), then the six days are the six dimensions⁹ (of the material world). That is, one can give expression to events by (speaking of) days. Thus God says: 'And remind them of the days of God' (Sūra 14:5), when what is meant is: (And remind them) of the creation of the world of matter in the six dimensions! Then he firmly took possession of the Throne¹⁰ so that he interwove into it, by imprinting into it, the forms of the things which grew out of it. The Throne has an outer and an inner meaning. According to the outer meaning, it is the ninth sphere of the heavens, in which all forms of things which come into existence are written down. Their being or non-being depends upon whether they are recorded in it or are erased from it. . . . According to the inner meaning, the Throne is the source of reason (*'aql awwal*), in which the forms of things are written in as universals. . . . This is the place of eternal determination. . . .

2. Allegorical interpretation

Kāshānī on Sūra 20:12

(A voice cried out: 'Moses,) I am thy Lord! Take off thy sandals. Thou art in the holy valley, Ṭuwā.'¹¹

Take off thy sandals: namely, your soul and your body, or your two (temporal) forms of existence, since when one is free from soul and body, one is free from both (temporal) forms of existence. That is: As soon as one is free, through the spirit (*rūḥ*) and the inner mystery (*sirr*), from the properties and characteristics of the soul and the body, so that one is united with the holy spirit, then one is free from the soul and the body (also) through the heart (*qalb*) and the breast (*ṣadr*), since the general connection (with

them) is severed, their actions are released, and one has escaped their properties and activities. God calls the soul and the body sandals and not garments. If one were not free from intimate contact with both, one could not become united with the sacred sphere. The condition (however, on which it depends) is that of becoming united. God gives to Moses the command that he is to devote himself exclusively to him, in the sense of his words: 'And remember the name of thy Lord, and devote thyself completely to Him' (Sūra 73:8). It is therefore almost as if the connection of Moses with the sandals (of the soul and the body) still exists. This connection permits his feet, that is, the lower self, just as the breast designates the place of the heart, to sink into the ground. Consequently, they stand back away from the spiritual and inner turning-point to the holy, and for this reason God commands Moses to free himself from them in order to enter the realm of the spirit. Appropriately, God gives a reason for the necessity of removing the sandals, in his words: *Thou art in the holy valley, Ṭuwā*, that is, in the world of the spirit, which is free from the actions of linking (through the soul and the body) the characteristics of transient things and the material bonds. This world is called Ṭuwā because the stages of the kingdom of God (*malakūt*) are concealed (*ṭawā*) in it, while the heavenly and earthly bodies stand under it. . . .

Kāshānī on Sūra 20:17/18–22/23

'What is that, Moses, thou hast in thy right hand?'

'Why, it is my staff,' said Moses. 'I lean upon it, and with it I beat down leaves to feed my sheep; other uses also I find in it.' God¹² said: 'Cast it down, Moses!'

And he cast it down, and behold it was a serpent sliding.

God said: 'Take it and fear not. We will restore it to its first state.

Now clasp thy hand to thy side; it shall come forth white, without evil. This is a second sign.'

What is that, Moses, thou hast in thy right hand: This is a reference to the soul of Moses, that is, to that which lies in the hand of his reason. That is, reason is a right hand with which man grasps the gift of God and with which he bridles his soul.

Why, it is my staff, said Moses, I lean upon it: that is, the soul,

on which I lean in the world of intuition and the acquisition of perfection, of turning to God, and of the assimilation to his characteristics. That is: These things are possible only through the soul.

And with it I beat down leaves to feed my sheep: that is, with (the soul) I beat down the leaves of profitable knowledge and of practical wisdom from the trees of the spirit, since the power of thinking moves with the soul above the sheep, that is, man's animal powers.

Other uses also I find in it: namely, the acquisition of the (mystical) stages as well as the pursuit of the (ecstatic) conditions, gifts, and (divine) manifestations. . . .

God said: Cast it down, Moses: that is, set your soul free from the bridling through reason!

And he cast it down: that is, he set (his soul) free, and its concern was entirely transformed after it acquired a share in bringing to light the manifestations of the attributes of divine force (*qahr*).

And behold it was a serpent sliding (along the ground): that is, a serpent which moved about as a result of fierce anger. The soul of Moses was filled with intense anger and vehement rage. Then as soon as he reached the stage in which the (divine) attributes manifest themselves, as a result of the necessity of his predisposition, his share in the manifestation of (divine) power turned out to be abundant. . . . With the fading away of the (divine) attributes, his anger changed into divine (*ilāhī*) anger and divine (*rabbānī*) power. Thus the soul became a serpent which swallows everything it finds.

God said: Take it (up from the ground): that is, bridle it through your reason (so that it becomes again) like it was before.

And fear not concerning it (and let not) your soul overpower and defeat you, so that you fall into the sinful condition of vacillation. Your anger is now faded away and moves according to my command. It was not veiled at the level of the soul, through the light of the heart, so that it might (be allowed to) step forward, after which it was concealed.

We will restore it to its first state: that is, dead and faded away and turned back again to the level of vegetative power, which has no perception and no desire. Because Moses killed the soul in his upbringing with Shu'aib¹³ and thus treated it like the vegetative powers, it is designated as a staff. Thus it is said that Shu'aib gave it to him.

Now clasp thy hand to thy side (janāh): that is, clasp your reason to the side (*jānīb*) of your spirit, which is your right wing (*janāh*), so that you are enlightened through the light of divine (*ḥaqqānī*) right-guidance! In the way that reason is suited to the aim of ordering earthly life and is connected to its side, which constitutes the left wing, reason will be dulled and mixed with the power of imagination (*wahm*) (of lower standing). It is then cloudy and obstinate and will neither enlighten nor can it receive the divine (*rabbānī*) gift and the divine (*ilāhī*) truths. Therefore God has commanded Moses to clasp it to the side of the spirit, whereby it becomes pure and receives the holy light.

It shall come forth white: enlightened through the light of divine (*ḥaqqānī*) right-guidance and the rays of holy light.

Without evil: (without) an injury, a blemish, or a sickness (being present), as is brought about through the mingling (of reason) with the powers of imagination and fantasy (*khayāl*).

3. Parallel interpretation

Kāshānī on Sūra 8:41/42

And you must know that, whatever booty you take, the fifth part of it is God's and the Messenger's, and the near kinsman's and the orphan's, and for the needy and the traveller, if you believe in God and what We sent down upon Our servant (Muḥammad) on the day of salvation (furqān), the day the hosts encountered. And God is powerful over everything.

(The passage beginning) *And you must know that, whatever booty you take, the fifth part of it is God's* (together with the following verses) down to God's words: 'And God is terrible in retribution' (Sūra 8:48/50) allows no allegorical interpretation (*ta'wīl*), because herein an actual occurrence is treated. If one, however, wished to establish parallels (*taṭbīq*)¹⁴ between these words and the individual parts of (human) being, then one could say: 'And you spiritual forces must know that whatever booty you take (in the form) of profitable knowledge and of the laws on which Islam is built, the fifth part of it belongs to God, according to the words of the Prophet: "Islam is based on five things."¹⁵ What is involved with this fifth part is the acknowledgment that there is no god but God and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of God, for the general unity of being (*tauḥīd*) is at stake here.

And the near kinsman's, which are the inner mystery (*sirr*) (of man) as well as the outstanding theoretical and practical powers of imagination, in addition to the power of thinking and the lower powers of the soul.

And for ... the traveller: This is to be understood as the soul which goes on a journey, wandering in a foreign land, passing through the stations of the journey and turning away from its original resting place. (In this case what is involved is the confession of faith) in that what is thereby concerned is the unity of being which is dismembered in the world of prophecy. The remaining four-fifths are distributed to the limbs, the trunk parts, and the natural powers. ...

XI

SHĪ'ITE QUR'ĀNIC EXEGESIS

1. *The genuine revealed text*

Kāshī on Sūra 3:123/119

And God most surely helped you at Badr, when you were utterly abject (adhilla).¹ So fear God! Perhaps you will be thankful.

And God most surely helped you at Badr: Here is mentioned something which taught them to trust in God. Badr is an oasis between Mecca and Medina which belonged to a man named Badr and then was named after him.

When you were utterly abject (adhilla): Al-Qummī and al-'Ayyāshī say according to (the Imām) aṣ-Ṣādiq: They were not abject, for the Messenger of God was among them. (Actually, the following) came down: 'When you were weak (*du'afā*)'. Al-'Ayyāshī reports according to aṣ-Ṣādiq that Abū Baṣīr recited the verse (in this way) in aṣ-Ṣādiq's presence. Regarding this, the latter said that God did not send down the verse in this form; (and that actually the following) was sent down: 'when you were few (*qalīl*)'. In a Tradition it is said that God never humbled (*adhalla*) his Messenger, and thus what was sent down was: 'when you were few'. In several reliable reports it is said that they numbered three hundred and thirteen.

So fear God constantly! Perhaps you will be thankful for the blessings which he has granted to you.

Kāshī on Sūra 26:227/228

... And those who have done wrong will (one day) know what kind of turning upside down they will experience.

Al-Qummī says: God has mentioned their enemies and those who

have done wrong against them. He has said (in Sūra 26:227/228): 'Those who have done wrong against the law of the family of Muḥammad will (one day) know what kind of turning upside down they will experience.' This is the way the verse actually came down. . . .

Kāshī on Sūra 5:67/71

O Messenger, deliver that which has been sent down to thee from thy Lord; for if thou dost not, thou wilt not have delivered His message. God will protect thee from men. God guides not the people of the unbelievers.

O Messenger, deliver that which has been sent down to thee (as revelation) from thy Lord: that is, (what has been sent down to you) with regard to 'Alī. According to the tradition of the authorities on doctrine, the verse (actually) came down in this (extended) form.

For if thou dost not, thou wilt not have delivered His message: If you discontinue the delivery of what has been sent down to you concerning the guardianship (wilāya) of 'Alī (over the believers), and you keep this secret, then it is as if you delivered none of the message of your Lord concerning that which requires reconciliation. Some also read: 'his message concerning the confession of the unity of God (tauḥīd)'.

God will protect thee from men: He will guard you against their inflicting evil upon you.

God guides not the people of the unbelievers: In the Jawāmi' (of aṭ-Ṭabarsī) it is said according to Ibn 'Abbās and Jābir ibn 'Abd Allāh that God commanded his Prophet to place 'Alī before men and to inform them of his guardianship (over them). The Prophet, however, was afraid that they would say: '(He is) the protector of his paternal cousin', and that a group of his Companions might find this distressing. The present verse came down regarding this. On the next day, the Prophet then took 'Alī gently by the hand and said: 'Whose protector (maulā) I am, their protector (also) is 'Alī.' Then he recited (this verse). . . .

2. *The 'Alids and their opponents*

Kāshī on Sūra 2:269/272

He gives wisdom (al-ḥikma) to whomever He will, and whoever

is given wisdom has been given much good. Yet none remembers except those who have understanding.

. . . (What is meant are) people with reason who are free from prejudice through the power of imagination (*wahm*) and eager desire.² In the *Kāfi* (of aṭ-Ṭabarsī) and with al-'Ayyāshī it is said according to (the Imām) aṣ-Ṣādiq concerning this verse: (What is involved here is) obedience to God and knowledge about the Imām. According to aṣ-Ṣādiq (this verse involves) knowledge about the Imām and the avoidance of grave sins, for which God has imposed (the punishment of) the hell-fire. Al-'Ayyāshī has reported according to aṣ-Ṣādiq: Wisdom is knowledge and cognizance of the religion. Whoever of you has knowledge (of it) is wise. The death of no believer is dearer to Iblīs than that of one who possesses (this) knowledge. . . .

Kāshī on Sūra 1:6f./5-7

Guide us in the straight path, the path of those whom Thou hast blessed, not of those against whom Thou art wrathful, nor of those who go astray.

Guide us in the straight path: . . . In the Ma'āni (of Ibn Bābūya al-Qummī) it is said according to (the Imām) aṣ-Ṣādiq: This is the path of knowledge of God, and there are two paths—one in this world and one in the hereafter. The path in this world is the Imām, who demands obedience. Whoever acknowledges him in this world and follows his guidance passes over that path which in the hereafter consists of the bridge over the hell-fire.³ Whoever does not acknowledge him in this world, his foot will slip from the path in the hereafter, so that he falls into hell-fire. From aṣ-Ṣādiq (is further related): The path is the Prince of the Believers ('Alī). . . .

*The path of those whom Thou hast blessed, not of those against whom Thou art wrathful, nor of those who go astray: . . .⁴ In the Ma'āni (is related) from the Prophet: Those for whom you have shown mercy are the party (*shī'a*) of 'Alī, that is, you have shown mercy for them through the guardianship (wilāya) of 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, and they neither suffer the wrath (of God) nor do they go astray. According to aṣ-Ṣādiq, Muḥammad and his descendants are meant. Al-Qummī has related according to aṣ-Ṣādiq: Those who suffer the wrath (of God) are the enemies (of 'Alī), and those*

who go astray are the doubters who do not acknowledge the Imām. . . .

Kāshī on Sūra 7:44f./42f.

The inhabitants of paradise will call to the inhabitants of the fire: 'We have found what our Lord promised us true. Have you found what your Lord promised you true?' 'Yes', they will say. And then a herald shall proclaim among them: 'God's curse is on the evildoers who bar from God's way, desiring to make it crooked, disbelieving in the world to come.'

The inhabitants of paradise will call . . . : They say this with joyfulness concerning their (own) situation and with gloating pleasure and sighs concerning the (situation of the) inhabitants of the hell-fire. God does not say: 'what your Lord promised you' in the same way that he says: 'what our Lord promised us', because what is promised which causes pain to the inhabitants of hell-fire is not promised so specifically as the resurrection, the balancing of accounts, and the grace of paradise (which are promised) to the inhabitants of paradise. . . .

And then a herald shall proclaim among them: God's curse is on the evildoers: . . . In the *Kāfī* (of aṭ-Ṭabarsī), and by al-Qummī according to (the Imām Mūsā) al-Kāzīm, and by al-'Ayyāshī according to (the Imām) ar-Riḍā, it is stated: The herald is the Ruler of the Believers ('Alī). Al-Qummī (adds to this): He will announce (this) in a manner which will cause the creatures to listen attentively. In the *Majma'* (of aṭ-Ṭabarsī) and in the *Ma'ānī* (of Ibn Bābūya al-Qummī) it is reported from the Ruler of the Believers: I am that herald. . . .

Kāshī on Sūra 39:60/61

And upon the day of resurrection thou shalt see those who lied against God, their faces blackened. Is there not in Jahannam a lodging for those who are proud?

Referring to this verse, al-Qummī reports from (the Imām) aṣ-Ṣādiq: (What is meant is) one who claims to be Imām but (in reality) is not. Someone asked: Even if he is a Fāṭimid descen-

dant⁵ of 'Alī? To this aṣ-Ṣādiq answered: (This applies even) when such is the case. . . .

Kāshī on Sūra 14:24/29–26/31

Hast thou not seen how God has coined a simile? A good word is like a good tree; its roots are firm, and its branches are in heaven.

It gives its produce every season by the leave of its Lord. Thus God coins similes for men. Perhaps they will remember.

And a corrupt word is like a corrupt tree—uprooted from the earth, having no firm hold.

. . . *Like a good tree* which bears good fruit, perhaps the palm. In the *Majma'* (of aṭ-Ṭabarsī) it is said from the Prophet: This good tree is the palm. . . .

Thus God coins similes for men. Perhaps they will remember: In the coining of similes lie an admonition and a graphic description of important matters which need to be understood, (and God coins these similes) in order to bring these matters closer to understanding. Al-'Ayyāshī has reported from (the Imām) aṣ-Ṣādiq: This is a simile that God has coined regarding the family of the Prophet and their enemies. In the *Kāfī* (of aṭ-Ṭabarsī) it is said from aṣ-Ṣādiq: When someone asked aṣ-Ṣādiq about the tree in this verse, he answered: The Messenger of God is its root, the Prince of the Believers ('Alī) is its trunk, the imāms among the descendants of both are its branches, the knowledge of the imāms constitutes its fruit, and the believers of their party (*shī'a*) are its leaves. He said (further): When a believer is born, a leaf is formed on it, and when a believer dies, one falls off. In the *Ikmāl* (of Ibn Bābūya al-Qummī) it is said: Al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusain are its fruits and the nine (later imāms) from the descendants of al-Ḥusain are its branches. In the *Ma'ānī* (of Ibn Bābūya al-Qummī) is (stated): The branch of the tree is (Muḥammad's daughter) Fāṭima, its fruits are their children, and its leaves are their party. . . .

Like a corrupt tree: which bears no good fruit, perhaps the colocynth. . . . In the *Majma'* (of aṭ-Ṭabarsī) it is said from (the Imām) al-Bāqir that this is a simile referring to the Umayyads. . . .

Kāshī on Sūra 24:35⁶

God is the light of the heavens and the earth. His light is to be

likened to a niche wherein is a lamp—the lamp in a glass, the glass as it were a glittering star—kindled (with oil) from a blessed tree, an olive that is neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil wellnigh would shine, even if no fire touched it. Light upon light; God guides to His light whom He will. And God coins similes for men, and God has knowledge of everything.

... In the *Tauhid* (of Ibn Bābūya al-Qummī) it is said from (the Imām) aṣ-Ṣādiq: What is involved here is a simile that God has coined for us. (Regarding God's words) *God is the light of the heavens and the earth*, aṣ-Ṣādiq says: God is thus. *His light*: Aṣ-Ṣādiq says (this is) Muḥammad. *Is to be likened to a niche*: Aṣ-Ṣādiq says (what is meant is) Muḥammad's breast. *Wherein is a lamp*, aṣ-Ṣādiq says: wherein is the light of knowledge, that is, of prophecy. *The lamp in a glass*, aṣ-Ṣādiq says: The knowledge of the Messenger of God issued from the latter into the heart of 'Alī. ... (The words) *the glass as it were a glittering star, kindled from a blessed tree, an olive that is neither of the east nor of the west*, according to aṣ-Ṣādiq, are coined in reference to the Ruler of the Believers, 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, who was neither a Jew nor a Christian. (Regarding God's words:) *Whose oil wellnigh would shine, even if no fire touched it*, aṣ-Ṣādiq says: The knowledge would wellnigh issue forth from the mouth of the knowing one of the family of Muḥammad (that is, 'Alī), even if Muḥammad had not spoken it. *Light upon light*, aṣ-Ṣādiq says (means): Imām to imām.

Regarding the meaning of the simile, there are further accounts. Thus, it is said in the *Kāfī* (of aṭ-Ṭabarsī) from (the Imām) al-Bāqir in a Tradition, (God's words *God is the light of the heavens and the earth*) mean: I am the (rightly guiding) director of the heavens and the earth. The knowledge that I have given, namely, my light through which the guidance results, *is to be likened to a niche wherein is a lamp*: The niche is the heart of Muḥammad, and the lamp is his light, wherein lies knowledge. God's words: *The lamp in a glass* mean: I want to lay hold of you and what is with you, thus setting forth the executor (*waṣī*)⁷ (of your mission) (that is, 'Alī), like the lamp stands in the glass. *As it were a glittering star*: Then will I give to men news of the excellence of the executor. *Kindled (with oil) from a blessed tree*: The root of the blessed tree is Abraham. This is mentioned in God's words: 'The mercy of God and His blessings be upon you, O people of the House! Surely he (that is, Abraham)

is worthy of praise and glory' (Sūra 11:73/76),⁸ as well as: 'God chose Adam and Noah and the House of Abraham and the House of 'Imrān⁹ above all beings (*al-'ālamūn*), the descendants of (the patriarchs all being of the same race and thus interrelated with) one another. God hears and knows' (Sūra 3:33f./30). *That is neither of the east nor of the west* means: You are neither Jews, so that you would perform the prayer facing towards the west, nor Christians, so that you would face towards the east.¹⁰ Rather, you follow the creed of Abraham, of whom God has said: 'No, in truth Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but a Hanīf who was surrendered to God (*hanīfan musliman*).'¹¹ Certainly he was never one of the idolaters' (Sūra 3:67/60). God's words *whose oil wellnigh would shine* mean: Your children who will be begotten of you are like oil which is pressed from olives. They wellnigh speak already in prophecy, even though an angel has not yet come down to them.

Al-Qummī has related from aṣ-Ṣādiq who related from his father (al-Bāqir) the following concerning this verse. *God is the light of the heavens and the earth*: Al-Bāqir says that God begins with his own light. *His light*, that is, his guidance in the hearts of the believers, *is to be likened to a niche wherein is a lamp*: The niche is the inside of the body of the believer, the light glass (*qindīl*) is his heart, and the lamp is the light that God has placed therein. *Kindled (with oil) from a blessed tree*, al-Bāqir says: The tree is the believer. *An olive (tree) that is neither of the east nor of the west*, al-Bāqir says: (What is meant is an olive tree that stands) on the ridge of a mountain. 'Neither of the east' means that the tree has no sunrise side, and 'nor of the west' means that it has no sunset side. When the sun rises, it rises over the tree, and when it sets, it sets over it. *Whose oil wellnigh would shine*: (The tree is a believer) in which the light that God has placed in his heart wellnigh shines even though he had not spoken. *Light upon light*: command upon command and precept upon precept (*sunna*). *God guides to His light whom He will*, al-Bāqir says: God guides whom he will to himself according to his command and precept. *And God coins similes for men*, al-Bāqir says: This is a simile that God has coined for the believer. The believer walks in five kinds of light: His entrance (into the world) is a light, his exit is a light, his knowledge is a light, his word (*kalām*) is a light, and his entrance into paradise on the day of resurrection is a light. ...

3. *Ismā'īlite Qur'ānic interpretation*

Diyā' ad-Dīn on Sūra 13:31

And still the unbelievers are smitten by a shattering (qāri'a¹²) for what they wrought, or it alights near their dwelling, until God's promise is fulfilled. And God will not fail the tryst.

And still the unbelievers: that is, (those who do not believe) in the rank of the veil of lights.¹³

Are smitten by a shattering for what they wrought: What is involved here is an allusion to the appearance of the (coming) public imāms.

Or it alights near their dwelling: Here is a reference to the location of the (Ismā'īlite) community on the Yemenite peninsula, especially (referring to the time) since the end of the generation of the Chosen One,¹⁴ when the enemies among the inhabitants of this place became afraid of the imāms of rightful guidance, while the community—according to God's will—has grown.

Until God's promise is fulfilled: that is, (until) in the time of the public imāms, whose time of elevation is looked forward to expectantly, (the promise) of al-'Ain¹⁵ (is fulfilled), whereby the (divine) rule (*amr*) makes its appearance and the truth gains power.

God will not fail the tryst (al-mī'ād)¹⁶: He is exalted above doing so.

Diyā' ad-Dīn on Sūra 22:17

Surely they that believe, and those who are Jewish, the Sabaeans, the Christians, the Zoroastrians, and those who associate (other gods with God)—God shall distinguish between them on the day of resurrection. Surely God is witness over everything.

Surely they that believe: What is meant are the descendants of that group of converts in each age who believe in the rank of the masters of guidance and in their veils,¹⁷ who recruit for them.

Those who are Jewish (alladhīna hādū): that is, ('those who turn away', *hādū*) from the executor.¹⁸ What is meant are the Jews of this (Islamic) community (*umma*), (that is) the descendants of the hateful ones who went before them in each early period.

The Sabaeans: These are the ones who strive (*ṣāba*) after indecision in this community. They belong to the descendants of the descen-

dants of those who remain undecided, since they found themselves in harmony neither with the guardianship of the executor, nor with that of his opponents. For these people behave just the same in this world.

The Christians: These are the extremists of his community, who are descended from the evil ones among those who went before them as extremists in the earlier periods.

The Zoroastrians: These are the 'hypocrites' (*munāfiqūn*) of this community, who are descended from the evil ones among the descendants of the hypocrites in the past.

And those who associate (other gods with God): These are those who associate (other gods with God) among this community, who are descended from the descendants of those who at one time acknowledged the rank of the executor as well as that of his opponents. Although this evil group will be hurled down the cliff of hell, certain parts of their evil fumes must be preserved in the corners, so that they become the same kind of leaven for the people of later generations, bringing ruin to these.

Then God says: *God shall distinguish between them on the day of resurrection*, that is: when he appears and steps forward openly out of the circle of the *qā'im*.¹⁹

Surely God is witness over everything means: (He is) witness over them and discloses what has proceeded from them.

XII

MODERN QUR'ĀNIC EXEGESIS

Polygamy

Muḥammad 'Abduh and Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā on Sūra 4:3

If you fear that you will not be able to act justly towards orphans (who are to be the first choice in marriage, then instead of them) marry two, three, or four of such women as seem good to you, but if you fear you will not be equitable, then (marry) only one, or what your right hands own (as slaves). Thus it will be more likely that you will not be partial.

... The Ustādh-Imām¹ (Muḥammad 'Abduh has said): Polygamy is mentioned in connection with the words (of the present verse) concerning orphans and with the prohibition against spending all their wealth, even though it be through marriage. He said: If you feel within yourself the fear that by marrying the orphaned girl (*al-yatīma*) you will spend all her wealth, then you may (choose) not (to) marry her, since here God has given to you a possibility of avoiding (your duty) concerning (marriage to) the orphan. He has given you the choice of marrying other wives, up to (the number of) four. If you fear, however, that you will not be able to treat two or more wives justly, you must restrict yourself to one. Moreover, (justifiable) fear that a proper act will not be done is present whenever there is adequate presumption and adequate doubt, indeed even when there is adequate suspicion. The law may nevertheless justify suspicion since where knowledge of this kind of thing exists there is seldom freedom from it. The marriage of two or more wives is therefore allowed as an option (only) to one who has the conviction in himself that he will deal justly, (indeed) in such a way that he has no doubt about it, or that he suspects it but shelters (only) a small doubt about it.

Muḥammad 'Abduh has said: After God said *But if you fear you will not be equitable, then (marry) only one*, he gives a reason for this in his words: *Thus, it will be more likely that you will not be partial*, that is, thus you will come more closely to the condition in which neither injustice nor oppression will occur. Consequently, God has made the condition that one keep far from injustice to be the basis for his giving of a law (concerning marriage). This confirms the fact that justice is enjoined as a condition and that duty consists in striving for it. Further, it shows that justice is something difficult to attain. God says in another verse of this sūra: 'You will not be able to treat your wives equally, regardless of how eager you are (to do so)' (Sūra 4:129/128). This refers to justice in the inclination of the heart, since otherwise the two verses taken together would have the result that there would be no permission for polygamy at all. And then also the meaning of his words in (another) part of the verse just cited, (namely) 'Yet do not follow your inclination to the extreme (thus completely severing your relations with any of them) so that you leave her as it were deserted' (Sūra 4:129/128), would not be clear. God forgives the servant when something in the inclination of his heart goes beyond his power, even *as*, towards the end of his life, the Prophet felt a stronger inclination for 'Ā'isha than for his other wives. To be sure, he did not treat her with any distinction above them, that is, not without their consent and authorization. He used to say: 'God, this is my share of what lies in my power. Do not call me to account for what does not lie in my power!' That is: (This is my share) regarding the inclination of the heart.

Muḥammad 'Abduh has said: Whoever considers the two verses correctly acknowledges that permission for polygamy in Islam applies (only) with the most severe restriction. Polygamy is like one of those necessities which is permitted to the one to whom it is allowed (only) with the stipulation that he act fairly with trustworthiness and that he be immune from injustice (*al-jaur*). In view of this restriction, when one now considers what corruption results from polygamy in modern times, then one will know for certain that a people (*umma*) cannot be trained so that their remedy lies in polygamy, since, in a family in which a single man has two wives, no beneficial situation and no order prevail. Rather, the man and his wives each mutually assist in the ruin of the family, as if each of them were the enemy of the other; and also the children then

become enemies to one another. The corruption of polygamy carries over from the individual to the family and from the family to the (entire) people.

Muḥammad 'Abduh has said: Polygamy had advantages in the early period of Islam, among the most important at that time being that it brought about the bond of blood relationship and of relationship by marriage, so that the feeling of tribal solidarity was strengthened. Also, at that time it did not lead to the same harm (*ḍarar*) that it does today, since at that time the religion was firmly rooted in the souls of women and men, and the insult (*adhan*) of taking an additional wife (*ḍarra*) did not go beyond her rival (in its effect). Today, on the other hand, the harm (*ḍarar*) of every additional wife (*ḍarra*) carries over to her child, its father, and its other relatives. The wife stirs up enmity and hatred among them; she incites her child to enmity against his brothers and sisters, and she incites her husband to suppress the rights of the children which he has from the other wives. The husband, on the other hand, follows in the folly of the wife whom he loves the most, and thus ruin creeps into the entire family. If one wished to enumerate specifically the disadvantages and mishaps that result from polygamy, then one would present something that would cause the blood of the believers to curdle. This includes theft and adultery, lies and deceit, cowardice and deception, indeed even murder, so that the child kills the father, the father kills the child, the wife kills the husband, and the husband kills the wife. All this is tangible and is demonstrated from the (records of the) courts of justice.

It may suffice here to refer to the (poor) education of the (modern) woman, who knows neither the worth (*qīma*) of the husband nor that of the child and finds herself in ignorance concerning herself and her religion, knowing of religion only legends and errors which she has snatched up from others like herself and which are not found either in the scriptures or in (the sayings of) the prophets who have been sent. If women had the benefit of a proper religious education, so that religion had the highest power over their hearts and would prevail over jealousy, then no harm would grow out of polygamy for the people today, but the harm would remain limited as a rule to the women (who are concerned). However, since the matter now stands as we see and hear it, there is no possibility of educating the people so long as polygamy is widespread among

them. Thus, it is the duty of scholars to investigate this problem, (that is) especially the Ḥanafite scholars, in whose hand the matter lies (in the Ottoman empire and its sphere of influence), and whose opinion is determinative (here). They do not deny that religion was sent down for the use and benefit of mankind and that it belongs to the principles of religion to prevent harm and injury. Now if at a (certain) time (that is, the present), corruption results from something that was not connected with it earlier, it is without doubt necessary to alter the laws and to adapt them to the actual situation, that is, according to the principle that one must prevent the deterioration beforehand in order then to bring about the well-being (of the community). Muḥammad 'Abduh has said: Hence, it is recognized that polygamy is strictly forbidden when the fear exists that one cannot act fairly.

This is what the Ustādh-Imām (Muḥammad 'Abduh) said in the first lecture in which he interpreted the present verse. In the second lecture he then said: It has been said before that permission for polygamy is restricted since a stipulation is imposed which is so difficult to realize that it represents the same as a prohibition against polygamy. Further, it has been said that to him who fears that he is unable to act equitably it is forbidden to marry more than one wife. This is not, as has been done by some students (of al-Azhar University), to be understood in the sense that a marriage settlement is null and void when it has been completed under such circumstances, since the prohibition (given here) is not so firm that it could require the negation of the marriage settlement.² The husband may indeed fear that he will act unjustly, but yet not do so. And he may act unjustly, but then repent and act equitably and thus lead a legitimate life. . . .

I (Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā) say: Add to this that polygamy is at variance with the natural fundamental rule (*asl*) in the nature of marriage, since the fundamental rule is that the man is to have a single wife and that he is her mate just as she is his. Polygamy is, however, a necessity that befalls human society (under certain circumstances, that is) especially in warlike peoples (*al-umam al-ḥarbiyya*) like the Islamic community. Polygamy is permitted to them only in the case of necessity, and then only with the stipulation that neither injustice nor oppression will occur thereby. This problem requires further discussion. So the wisdom of the plurality and number (of wives) is discussed, and there must be

discussion as to the extent to which the administrators of the law are in a position to impede the perversions of polygamy through restraint when the harm done through polygamy becomes widespread, as is seen to be the case in Egypt. For those men who marry more than one wife are numerous here, while in Syria and Turkey this is not the case; and at the same time, the customs in Egypt ordinarily are more corrupted than there. We have published a legal opinion (*fatwa*) concerning the wisdom of polygamy in the seventh volume of (the journal) *Al-manār*. It reads as follows:

The wisdom of polygamy

Question ... from Najīb Āfandī Qonawī, a student in America: Many American physicians and others ask me about the verse: *Then marry two, three, or four of such women as seem good to you, but if you fear you will not be equitable, then (marry) only one.* And they say: 'How can a Muslim join together four women (to form a family unit)?' I have answered them, so far as I understand this verse, in support of my religion, and have said: It is impossible to treat two (wives) equitably. For if one marries a new (wife), the old one must be resentful. How is one to treat them equitably? But God has commanded that one treat (them) equitably. Therefore, it is best when one has (only) one (wife). I have said this and usually those who inquire are satisfied with this answer. However, I would appreciate your interpretation and explanation of this verse, and I would like to know what you say to those who marry two or three (wives).

Answer: The general public in the West regard the problem of polygamy to be the most serious deficiency in Islam, because this general public are influenced by their customs, their religious traditions, their excessive esteem for women, and by what they have heard and learned about the conduct of many Muslims who marry several wives only for the release of their animal desires, without holding to the restrictions that have been imposed upon them concerning permission for it. (Further, the general public in the West are of this opinion because they are influenced) by what appears to them to be corruption in a family which consists of one husband and several wives, whose children confront each other with jealousy, strife, and hatred. This kind of view, however, does not suffice in order to resolve so serious a problem as this for human

society. Rather, before making a decision one must reflect about the nature of man and woman, about (the question) of whether there is a larger number of men or women, (further) about the problem of domestic life and the care of men for women or vice versa, or the independence of both marriage partners from each other, and (finally) about the history of human development, in order to know whether people in the stage of nomadic life were satisfied for each man to have (only) a single wife. After all this, one has to see whether the Qur'ān has made the problem of polygamy a religious matter worthy of striving after or a concession that is allowed in the case of necessity and under limiting restrictions.

You who are occupied with the medical sciences know best among mankind the distinction between the nature of man and that of woman as well as the most important difference between the two. According to what we all know, man has by nature a greater desire for woman than she has for him. There is (only) seldom an impotent man who (because of this impotence) by nature has no desire for women; but there are many women who by nature have no desire for men. If the woman were not to become enamoured with being loved by the man, and if she did not undertake considerable reflection regarding esteem by the man, then there would be many more women today who would forgo marriage. This passion in the woman is something other than the inclination that grows out of the natural craving for procreation in her and in the man. This passion is sheltered also by the old woman and by those who cannot hope for a wedding with the customary adornments of the virgin bride. In my opinion, the most important reason for it is a social one, consisting of the fact that many centuries have established in the nature and belief of women the desire to have the benefit of the protection and care of men, (further) in the fact that the provision of the man for the woman arises according to the measure of esteem which she has for him and the inclination which he has for her. Women felt this in primitive times (by necessity) and have continued it so that it has become a hereditary factor with them. This is so much the case that, even when a woman hates a man, it hurts her if he turns away from her and treats her contemptuously, and it hurts the woman when she sees a man—even a stricken old man or a monk who has turned away from the world—who feels no inclination for the woman, does not succumb to her charms, and does not show a reaction to her glamour. Hence it

follows that the procreative instinct is stronger in the man than in the woman, and this is a primary premise (for the solution of the problem).

Thus, divine wisdom exists concerning the inclination that each of the two marriage partners, the male as well as the female, feels for the other, for the inclination which leads to marriage exists in procreation, through which the species is preserved, just as the wisdom concerning the necessity for food exists in the preservation of the individual. Now a woman is capable of procreation during only half of the natural human lifetime, which amounts to a hundred years. This is because the power of the woman in general after fifty years is no longer sufficient for pregnancy, and thus menstruation and the (forming of the) eggs cease(s) in the womb. The wisdom in this is evident and the medical people can explain it better in detail.

Whenever there is no freedom for the man to marry more than a single woman, (then) half of the natural lifetime of the men among the people will be prevented from procreation, which is the purpose of marriage; (that is, this is true) if one assumes that the man marries (a woman) of the same age. Some men, however, lose more than fifty years, (which is the case) if they marry older (women) and if they reach the natural age (of a hundred years), just as some few (years) are lost if they marry younger (women). In each case (a man) loses a part of his time (for procreation). Even if he were to marry a fifteen-year-old (girl) when he was fifty years old, (still) fifteen years would be lost to him. If illness, premature old age, or death can befall men before the attainment of the natural age, they can also strike women before the change of life. A Western scholar has given attention to this distinction (in the ability for procreation). He has asserted: If we allow a single man to remain together for a single year with a hundred women, then we could receive a hundred offspring in the year. On the other hand, if we allow a hundred men to remain together with a single woman for a full year, then we would receive a single person at the most from their offspring. Probably, however, this woman would not bring into the world a single (person), because each of the men would destroy the (fertile) field of the others. Whoever has given attention to the importance of sufficient offspring within the laws of nature and for the condition of the people, to him the importance of this distinction will be clear. Herewith is given a second premise.

Then also, female births are more numerous than male ones in most regions of the earth. (Footnote appearing in the Arabic text: One may well dispute whether females are more numerous in most regions of the earth; however, it is true for England and for the survivors of a war in any state). And one sees that men, although they are fewer in number than women, are exposed to death and obstacles to marriage to a greater degree than women, including above all, military service and wars as well as the inability to bear the burdens and expenses of marriage. This is required according to the law of order in nature and the custom of the tribes and their peoples—although there are exceptions. When the man who is suited for marriage is not allowed to marry more than a single (wife), then this inevitably results in a situation in which a greater number of women are left without offspring, and they are prevented from reproducing, as is demanded of them by nature and the people. (Further, what results is a situation in which) they are required to suppress the procreative instinct in their nature, from which develop many physical and psychological illnesses, whereby these unfortunate ones become a burden and a misfortune for the people, after they (previously) had been a benefit to them. Or (what results is a situation in which) they surrender their good reputation and acquiesce to unchastity. This then leads to cases of misfortune, especially if they are poor, and no-one who has any human feelings can be satisfied with this. Such cases of misfortune are in fact so common in Western countries that people have thereby been weakened and have set their researchers to work to find a remedy for it. To some of them it has become clear that the only remedy lies in the sanction of polygamy. It is noteworthy that this view is advocated by several women authors in England, about whom we have written in an article in the fourth volume of (the journal) *Al-manār*. . . . This is noteworthy since women are the very ones who by nature shrink back from such a thing, since they reach opinions more according to sentiment and feeling than according to evidence and (concern for) the common good. What is more, to Western men, as a result of (the views of) their women, the question of polygamy has become a problem which is full of emotion, so that they do not find themselves in the position of the philosopher who in an impartial manner investigates the advantages of polygamy and the basis on which a necessity for it exists, striving (only) for the disclosure of the truth. This is a third premise.

From here on I want now to devote myself along with the reader (*bika*) to an exploration of the principle of married life and to examine this institution with him, as it is seen by reason and presented by nature. This principle states that the man must be the breadwinner for the wife and the manager of the household, because his body and his intellect are strong and he is better suited to (maintenance of) livelihood and protection (than the woman). This is the meaning of God's words: 'Men are the managers of the affairs of women because God has exalted the one above the other, and because they spend their wealth (on the women).³ Righteous women are therefore obedient (to their husbands), guarding in their absence what God desires to be guarded' (Sūra 4:34/38). (Further, the principle of married life together means) that the woman has to lead the household and bring up the children, because she is gentle and patient and because she . . . is in the middle between the man and the child regarding feeling and thinking. She is thus fully suited to occupy a position in the middle in order to prepare the boy gradually for manhood and to guide the girl into that condition of mildness, gentleness, and ability concerning her natural activity as must be done. In clarifying this problem, one could say that the family is a small state, just as families together make up the large state. Then, in this state the woman would be responsible for the guidance of internal matters and educational matters, while the man would be responsible for the management of finances, public works, war, and external matters.

Since it now corresponds to the order of nature that the woman represents the 'valuable part' of the family and remains restricted to it in her activity—according to her nature and on account of the obstruction through pregnancy, delivery, and the care of the children, she is too weak for another activity and to that extent dependent upon man—the independent life is too difficult a task for her, to say nothing of domination and authority over the man. And if it is correct that the woman must stand under the care of man and 'the men must stand over the women', as indeed is obviously the case, what should we do then when the women are more numerous than the men? Must it not correspond with order in human society that a single man be permitted to care for a number of women, especially when a corresponding requirement exists, (for instance) when what is involved are people who have survived war which has claimed the men and left behind many women without bread-

winner and helpers? Many people add (as an argument in favour of polygamy) that it is easy for the man to take many people to help with his work outdoors. On the other hand, the household is comprised solely of its members, and it is often urgently necessary that the woman have help with her many tasks, as is indicated by the laws of economics regarding the division of labour. But it is impossible that a (strange) man should (be hired to) help the woman in the family, because this would lead to corruption. Thus, it is good to have more women in the family to promote its prosperity. So say some people. Herewith is given a fourth premise.

If the reader will now turn with me to an examination of human development regarding marriage (*zawāj*) and the family, or coupling (*izdiwaj*) and reproduction, he will find that among no people is the man satisfied with a single woman, as is also the case with most animals. This is not the place to explain the natural reasons for this phenomenon. It has been shown through research that in primitive tribes the women were the common property of the men according to the mutual agreement that the woman was then the manager of the family, since as a rule the father (of the children) was not known. Now, gradually as man evolved upward he recognized the disadvantage of this common possession and mingling, and he inclined towards a restriction (*ikhtiṣāṣ*). The first restriction in the tribe then was that the women of the tribe came to the men of that tribe and not to the men of another tribe. Mankind developed upward further until they reached the point that the individual man was limited to several women, but without being restricted to a specific number. Rather, he acted according to his capabilities. Thereby the history of the family moved into a new stage, in which the father became the pillar of the genealogy and the support of the family, as some recent scholars in Germany and England have shown in books about the history of the family. From this point Westerners have reached the conviction that the end of the development is that the individual man is to be restricted to a single woman. This also is undisputed and should be the basic principle in the family.

But what do Westerners say concerning the natural and social phenomena that require that the man be concerned about the proper welfare of women and about the welfare of the people, as well as concerning his appropriate natural gift for several women? Can they report to us that the men among any people are content with

this restriction and are satisfied with monogamy until today? Is there in Europe among a hundred thousand men a single one who has not committed adultery? Certainly not, since, because of his nature and his hereditary factor, the man cannot be satisfied with a single woman, for the woman is not disposed to it every time the man wishes to cohabit with her, just as she is not disposed every time to fertility and the natural gain from this cohabitation, namely offspring. On the contrary, for the woman (the desire for) sexual intercourse with the man is limited to specific times and is impossible at other times. According to normal gifts, the natural need of the woman for sexual intercourse with the man consists (only) in the time after menstruation. During the period of menstruation as well as during pregnancy (*ḥaml*) and child-bearing (*ithqāl*) the nature of the woman declines sexual intercourse.

I believe as follows: If the woman had not accustomed herself to giving satisfaction to the man and enjoying his esteem, and if the thought and conception of carnal pleasure which appeared in its time had not been brought to maturity through effort and repetition—which essentially is the case considering the influences which upbringing and general customs exert—then women would deny themselves to men on most days on which they are pure and ready for conception, which of course is the beginning of procreation. From this statement one understands the following: When a man is content with a single woman, then this leads necessarily to the fact that according to his nature he is stimulated by her on many days in which she is not disposed to have sexual intercourse with him. The most evident of these (times) are during the days of menstruation, pregnancy, and childbirth (*nifās*), while it is less evidently the case during the days of nursing (*radā'*), and especially on the first day of menstruation and the last day before. Thus, on these days, as a result of the superior strength of habit, the man struggles against his nature. On the other hand, when a woman is content with a single man, then a hindrance exists here neither from the side of her nature nor from the benefit of procreation; indeed, it is suitable to procreation, since the woman is never disposed to sexual intercourse when the man is not, that is so long as both are of normal constitution. We are of course not speaking here of sickness, since both marriage partners are then alike, and duty and the good practice of marriage require that each marriage partner should occupy himself with the

care of the other when one is affected by some misfortune, without thereby pursuing his desire. With reference to (the statements of) some European scholars it should be mentioned that the large number of married men sometimes found among primitive tribes may be a result of the small number of girls, since at that time the men used to bury (newborn) girls alive.⁴ This is a fifth premise.

If, after all this, the reader will consider with me the history of the Arab people before Islam, then he will find that this had developed to the extent that legal marriage constituted the basic principle for the rise of the family and that the man represented the pillar of the family and the root of the genealogy. However, polygamy was neither limited according to number nor bound to any (restrictive) stipulation. Sexual intercourse of several men with a single woman was regarded as unchastity worthy of blame. In spite of its frequency (at that time) this remained almost limited to female slaves and was (only) seldom practised by free women, possibly because the man consented to the woman's cohabiting with another man of her choosing in order to receive a child. Unchastity was not considered to be shameful or dishonourable for the man who committed it. (Thus) only with free women was it seen as shameful. In view of this situation, it would have been very difficult for men to accept Islam and act according to it if polygamy had not been allowed. Had this not happened then adultery would be regarded as legal in the Islamic countries just as it is allowed in the countries of the West. Herewith is given a sixth premise.

Even when one is aware of these problems, one must not forget that the final aim in the development of social order and family happiness consists in building each family on only two marriage partners of which each grants to the other a large measure of love, faithfulness, trust, and exclusive devotion. Thus, they bear sorrow together in the rearing of children, so the children will be brought up well and will provide joy for them, as they (as parents) form a good example for them in harmony, concord, love, and faithfulness. This is a seventh premise.

When one considers all these premises correctly and knows them according to branch and root, the following conclusion or the following conclusions become clear: The basis for happiness in marriage and family life consists in the man having (only) a single wife. This is the final aim of human development in its kind and the perfection into which the people grow up and with which they

should be satisfied. Over against this, however, stands the fact that not all men can reach this stage and that conditions (often) require that a particular man care for more than a single woman. This can be to the benefit of the particular men as well as of the particular women. Thus, a man may marry a barren wife and then for the sake of posterity be obliged to (marry) another woman. Here it is then to the benefit of the (first) wife or to the benefit of both together, provided he does not separate from her and she declares herself agreed that he should marry another woman, especially in the case of a king or prince. Or, the woman may reach the change of life when the man is in the position to have more than a single wife and to care for many children and to rear them, and he perceives that he still could witness offspring with another woman. Or, he may perceive that one woman does not suffice for him to continue blameless (in marriage fidelity), since his temperament drives him to frequent sexual intercourse while it is the opposite with her, or she absolutely cannot endure it, or her menstrual period extends for a long time and lasts up to fifteen days in a month. Then the man sees himself faced with the alternative of marrying a second woman or being forced into unchastity; but the religion (Islam) prohibits the possibility and wholesomeness of unchastity, which signifies a greater evil for the wife than when one adds to her another (woman) and at the same time treats both properly, as is the stipulation in Islam for the sanction (of polygamy). For this reason unchastity is regarded as legal in countries in which polygamy is forbidden.

Polygamy is sometimes also of benefit for the people (as a whole), as perhaps when a large surplus of women exists in a society, as for example in England and in any country that has suffered a devastating war to which the men are carried off, up to many thousands, leading to a large surplus of women and forcing the women to seek employment and to be concerned for their means of livelihood. In such cases most of them have as an object of value in exchange for earnings nothing other than their sexual parts. If she surrenders these, then no observer can remain unaware of the misery that results from this surrender for the woman who is without a breadwinner, if she is forced to grieve for herself and a fatherless child, especially just after the birth and during the time of nursing, but also during the entire period of infancy. When many women writers of England have spoken of the necessity of polygamy, they have done this (only) after first gaining insight into the situation of the

girls who work in the factories and other public places and (after seeing) what shame, what need, and what misery these girls have suffered. Now since the grounds for allowing polygamy lie in the extent of the necessities for which it is permitted, and since men as a rule are inclined to it in order to satisfy their eager desire rather than to promote the (general) welfare, and (finally) since perfection (in family life), which is to be aspired to as a basic principle, knows no multiple marriage, polygamy has been approved in Islam, but not as an obligation nor as something that would be recommended as desirable in itself. It is tied to the stipulation that is declared in the noble verse (Sūra 4:3—'But if you fear you will not be equitable, then [marry] only one') and is confirmed and repeated (in the statement: 'Thus, it will be more likely that you will not be partial'). One should contemplate this verse thoughtfully. . . .