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TOWARD THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE QUR'ANIC CONCEPT OF SIN:

A PRELIMINARY STUDY IN SEMANTICS

A THESIS

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INTRODUCTION

The present study is by no means to be taken as a complete survey of the Qur'anic concept of sin. Rather it is a semantic monograph on ten major general words for sin in order to try and determine the dominant conceptual framework underlying their use. It is hoped that this approach, like the similar one of Charles C. Torrey in his doctoral dissertation at Strasburg,¹ may shed some additional light on the religion of the Qur'an. Other terms will be analyzed to the extent that they contribute to an understanding of the primary words under consideration or to the major thesis of the paper. But, because the central investigation is limited to these ten general words, such important specific words as كُفْرُهُ and شُرَكَاءُ² will not receive exhaustive or independent study but will only be mentioned as they contribute to the primary purpose of the work. In like manner, though such interesting problems as the relation of knowledge and guilt will arise, the limited semantic scope of this

¹The Commercial-Theological Terms in the Koran (Leyden, 1892).

²Their independent study is also made unnecessary by their extensive treatment in Toshihiko Izutsu, The Structure of the Ethical Terms in the Koran (Tokyo, Keio Institute of Philological Studies, 1959), pp. 113-167; and the former word is given a more interpretive study in Kenneth Cragg, "The Meaning of Kufir," The Muslim World, XLIX (1959), 315-322.

study prohibits their being given a comprehensive treatment.

The method of investigation for each word will be to try and discover first of all the etymology of the word to see if this sheds any light upon its Qur'anic usage. Then its meaning will be sought in the contemporary Arab sources to see what meanings were available to the writer of the Qur'an. But ultimately it is only as we study the writings of each author that we are able to define words as he uses them; therefore the major portion of each study will be in the Qur'anic text itself.

An illustration of the inadequacy of using standard Arabic dictionaries alone for determining Qur'anic usages is provided by 17:82 where المؤمنون (the believers) is contrasted with الظالمون (the wrongdoers) rather than الكافرون (the disbelievers) as might be expected on the basis of the literal meaning of the words.¹ Likewise Arabic dictionaries may be inadequate because they are based on the later meanings of words after they had been given a more precise definition in the fiqh books.²

Another danger in using sources later than the Qur'an is that translators may read meanings back into words on

¹For ease of reference for the English as well as the Arabic reader and because it corresponds rather closely to the official Egyptian text, the writer has used the versification found in Maulana Muhammad 'Ali, The Holy Qur'an: Arabic Text, Translation and Commentary (4th ed., Lahore, Ahmadiyyah Anjuman Isha'at Islam, 1951).

²As will be seen, الظالمون came to have a more precise definition in the post-Qur'anic period of legal development than forms from the same stem had in the Qur'an.

the basis of later theological development. By way of example, the present investigation illustrates how M. M. 'Ali describes ذنب as not meaning sin when it is used of the Prophet.¹ However, by references to ancient Arab commentaries, the following analysis demonstrates that earlier the word was believed to mean sin even when used of Muhammad.

The need for the present study also arises from the fact that no scientific lexicon of Qur'anic words is in existence. Some words have been studied adequately by such men as Charles C. Torrey in his previously-mentioned work and Arthur Jefferey in The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'an.² However, no work applies the findings of Comparative Semitics to a sufficient number of the Qur'anic words; but this is necessary, particularly in the light of the scarcity of authentic Arabic writing prior to the Qur'an.

John Penrice's A Dictionary and Glossary of the Koran,³ though convenient, is inadequate. By way of illustration, he adds the meaning sinful to فاطية, though this meaning is not found in its Qur'anic occurrences (unless فاطية is regarded as the feminine of فاطية in 96:16); while he does not give an adjectival meaning to ضالة, though it has one in 6:78 and 23:106. And he gives a meaning for صلب with ب, though this combination does not appear in the Qur'an.

¹page 968n.

²(Baroda, 1938).

³(London, 1873).

Individual words for sin are discussed in encyclopedias. However, these only discuss a few words and put much emphasis on the later development of the words rather than concentrating on their Qur'anic meaning. Furthermore, they are not altogether accurate. For example, Wensinck asserts that one of the root meanings of خطى is stumbling, and he bases his assertion on the Hebrew of Proverbs 19:2.² But neither the Hebrew nor the Arabic supports this view.

Besides the studies of individual words, there are studies which treat a number of the Qur'anic words for sin together. Two of these may be dismissed as too brief. H. U. Weitbrecht Stanton devotes less than one page to the topic in The Teaching of the Qur'an.³ And J. Windrow Sweetman devotes only nine pages to the subject in Islam and Christian Theology.⁴ Furthermore, as will be seen, the present writer takes issue with the view of Stanton that the word ذنب refers chiefly to ceremonial offences.

Of a more extended nature is the pamphlet of W. R. W. Gardner, The Qur'anic Doctrine of Sin.⁵ But even it is

¹E.g., Joseph Schacht, "Khata'," Encyclopedia of Islam (Old ed.); and Arent Jan Wensinck, "Khāṭi'a," ibid.

²Ibid., p. 925.

³(London, 1919), p. 56.

⁴(London, Lutterworth Press, 1945-), Part I, vol. 2, pp. 194-203.

⁵(The Islam Series, Madras, 1914).

too brief -- for example, there is approximately a page on اعتدَى¹ and none of any other forms of the root عدو. Furthermore, Gardner makes little use of Comparative Semitics and thus does not get beneath the idea of misfortune to that of unseemliness in سوء.² Of more important consequence in this writer's opinion is the fact that Gardner tends to go beyond the text in making nicer distinctions than the text warrants as, for example, with انتم in 5:2.³ One of the conclusions of the present study is that the Qur'an uses general words so flexibly that it is precarious to define them very precisely.

Izutsu has made an even more extended analysis of some of the words for sin in The Structure of the Ethical Terms in the Koran. It was published after virtually all the material for the present thesis was collected, and it confirms many of the methods and conclusions of this investigation. However, he derives little benefit from the findings of Comparative Semitics; and, because the scope of his study is broader than the present one, he has been forced to make a comparable reduction in intensity. Thus he devotes less than a page to the various forms of غوى.⁴

¹pages 12-13.

²Page 2. On the basis of his virtual disregard of the etymology of ذنب (p. 4), however, it might be inferred that Gardner did not wish to penetrate beneath the surface concept of misfortune in سوء.

³Page. 7.

⁴pages 201-202.

Neither does he give all the forms of each radical group -- for example, though he refers to **عَدْوَانٌ**, **عَادُونَ**, **عَدُوٌّ**, and **مُعْتَدِيٌّ**,¹ he does not mention **عَدَا**, **عَدَاوَةٌ**, **عَادَى**, **نَعَدَى**. Then there are other places where he gives words a different flavor than the present writer does. By way of illustration, in 5:62 (vs. 67 in Izutsu), he translates **عَدْوَانٌ** as disobedience;² while the present writer would prefer hostility or injustice.

Despite these criticisms of the above works, they represent for the most part careful study and are very helpful as a result. However, new tools for research are being made increasingly available to researchers. These tools include first of all the wealth of material made available in recent years by the study of ancient Semitic languages. Secondly, the Arabic poetry from pre-Islamic times down through the Umayyad period had not been catalogued until the Concordance of ancient Arabic poetry was recently started at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.³ With the tools from these two areas one is able, for example, to see the semantic relationship between **سَوْءَةٌ** and the other forms of **سَوْءٌ**.

¹pages 111, 138-139, 145, 151, 161-164, 247.

²page 247.

³Relevant material from the Concordance (as far as it was completed by January 20, 1959) was provided through the courtesy of Na'im Shahr bani and M. M. Plessner, members of the School of Oriental Studies at the Hebrew University, and Albert M. Franklin, American Consul General, Jerusalem.

The English ethical terms will be used in the following manner in this study. The word "sin" will be used as a general word for any non-conformity to or transgression of the revealed will of God -- be it cultic or ethical, intentional or unintentional. However a distinction will be made between the word "sin" and other ethical terms such as "evil," "wrong," "fault," "transgression," and even "guilt." "Sin" will be used exclusively in relation to the monotheistic faiths -- specifically Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and the monotheism of Arabia with its affinities to these. In this context "sin" will be determined by the theological norm of the revealed will of a personal God. On the other hand, the other ethical terms may be determined by any norm of conduct or good. When this norm is the revealed will of the personal God of the monotheistic faiths, these words will involve sin, as defined here, but will not in other contexts.

Since all these words express negative concepts, their meaning can only be understood in terms of what they negate. The norm which they negate is in turn determined by the world view in which it is found. Hence, the reader must be aware of the world view and norm of conduct which determines each use of each word -- be that norm social mores or cultic taboo in polytheism or the revealed will of the personal God in monotheism. Below the relevant world views and norms of conduct will be developed.¹ There it will be argued that

¹The Qur'anic and Biblical views are developed in the section entitled Conceptual Framework and Conclusions, and the other relevant views are in the Appendix.

the Qur'anic norm of the revealed will of God is best understood in the Mosaic sense of a divinely revealed covenant. Because the covenant is the basis of law, sin becomes transgression of the law of God. But because the covenant is revealed by God, infractions of the law take on the character of disobedience or rebellion in relation to a personal God. The Qur'an may refer to this revealed will in less theological phrases such as "the way of God" (2:195) but the underlying conceptual framework will be seen to be the same. The content of this revealed will of God can be found in other studies,¹ and will be spelled out in more detail in the text of this study.

¹E.g., Robert Roberts, The Social Laws of the Qoran (London, 1925).

CHAPTER I

نظري

BACKGROUND¹

Here, as in the subsequent words studied, an attempt will be made to determine the idea underlying the root and to what extent, if any, this idea affects the Qur'anic meanings of the words derived from this root. Likewise an attempt will be made to determine the extent to which the underlying idea is the common property of other languages. The pattern of the development of this root is so similar in the various Semitic languages consulted that there

¹Except for hieroglyphics, which are omitted, the original Semitic script and its lexical definition, when foreign, are enclosed in brackets. Though slight differences may be noted between the various systems of transliteration, it seemed wise to follow some of the more standard systems in each language. For Akkadian, Assyrian, and Ugaritic, the transliteration found in the manuals or lexicons referred to is used. For Ethiopic, Hebrew, South Arabian and Syriac, the following tables of transliteration equivalents are used:

Ethiopic: August Dillmann and Carl Bezold, Ethiopic Grammar, trans. James A. Crichton (London, 1907), table I.

Hebrew: William R. Harper, Elements of Hebrew (12th ed., New York, 1890), pp. 13, 19.

Epigraphic South Arabic: Dillmann and Bezold, op. cit., table I.

Syriac: Theodor Nöldeke, Compendious Syriac Grammar, trans. James A. Crichton (London, 1904), pp. 2, 8.

is little need to analyze the precise relationship of the various languages to each other or to the Qur'anic materials in this case. The original meaning of the Semitic root must have been to miss, and the other meanings are all ultimately derived from it.

In the eastern branch of the Semitic family of languages, or what is known as Assyro-Babylonian or Akkadian, the development of meaning is clear. The Akkadian verb ḥaṭû means to sin or to trespass (pécher), and the noun ḥiṭu in turn means sin, trespass, or transgression (péché).¹ This verbal form ḥaṭû in the Assyrian starts with the meaning to miss, make a mistake, fail, or neglect and then acquires the meaning noted above, to commit an offence, trespass, or sin.²

The south or south-western branch of the Semitic family reveals a similar pattern of development. The Ethiopic ḥaṭ'a (ህ ጥ ጸ) has the basic meaning of to fail to find (non reperire) and acquires a host of other meanings in its various forms. Only some of the more pertinent ones will be indicated here; the nominal form ḥaṭ'i' (ህ ጥ ጸ) includes the meaning of a want or need (inopia), a failing (defectus) and in rare cases a mistake, transgression, or sin (peccatum). The ethical, moral, or religious flavor

¹René Labat, Manuel d'Epigraphie Akkadienne (Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1948), p. 303.

²Ignace J. Gelb, et al., eds., The Assyrian Dictionary (Chicago, Oriental Institute, 1956), VI, 156-158.

completely overshadows the physical in the form ḥaṭīʾat (ḥ ṭ ḥ ṭ) meaning fault, error, mistake, transgression, or sin [peccatum (delictum, crimen)].¹

In South Arabian ḥṭʾt (ḫ ṭ ṭ ḫ) means it had missed or erred (sie hatte gefehlt) in an inscription recorded by M. A. Levy.² Yet the root ḥṭʾ (ḫ ṭ ḫ) goes beyond the physical to the moral. As a verb it means to make a mistake, transgress, or sin (peccare) and as a noun fault, error, mistake, transgression, or sin (peccatum, culpa).³

Again similar meanings are found in the north-western branch of the Semitic family. In Ugaritic ḥṭʾ is to sin.⁴ Biblical Hebrew reveals a highly developed use of the root.⁵ As a verb ḥṭʾ (ḫ ṭ ḫ) means to miss (a goal or way),

¹August Dillmann, Chrestomathia Aethiopica et Glossario Explanata (Leipzig, 1866), pp. 222, 223.

²"Neun himjarische Inschriften," Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, XXIV (1870), Plate I and pp. 195, 197.

³Karolus Conti Rossini, Chrestomathia Arabica Meridionalis Epigraphica: Edita et Glossario Instructa (Rome, 1931), p. 155. For further examples see: Nikolaus Rhodokanakis, Studien zur Lexikographie und Grammatik des Altsudarabischen (Vienna, 1915), p. 66, and Katabanische Texte zur Bodenwirtschaft (2nd ed., Vienna, 1922), pp. 5, 28.

⁴Cyrus H. Gordon, Ugaritic Manual (Rome, Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1955), p. 266. For illustrations of its use in transliterated texts see p. 129.

⁵The following discussion on Hebrew is based on Francis Brown, et al., eds., A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament (Oxford, 1907, 1955), pp. 306-310.

go wrong, sin. In the Qal form it can be used in the literal sense of missing the mark -- e.g., "one hastening with his feet misseth (the way or goal)" (Proverbs 19:2).¹ When the goal or path missed is that of right duty, it means sin (Exodus 20:20). And it develops still further to emphasize the guilt incurred (Genesis 43:9). The same pattern is found in the Hiphil form where it can mean to miss the mark literally: ". . . everyone could sling a stone at a hair, and not miss" (Judges 20:16). And it can also mean to induce or cause to sin (Exodus 23:33) or to bring into guilt, condemnation, or punishment (Isaiah 29:21).

The masculine noun ḥēṭ' (חֵטֵא) can mean sin (Isaiah 31:7), guilt of sin (Deuteronomy 15:9), or punishment for sin (Leviticus 20:20). And the adjective and masculine noun ḥattā' (חַטָּא) means sinful (Numbers 32:14) and sinners (Numbers 17:3). Sin is the governing meaning of the feminine nouns ḥattā'āh (חַטָּאָה), ḥ'tā'āh (חַטָּאָה) and ḥattā't (חַטָּאת), and the last word also includes the aspects of guilt (Genesis 18:20) and punishment (Zechariah 14:19). Though the root idea of missing the mark becomes overshadowed by the theological and religious usage, it is frequently apparent that a legal or ethical norm is missed

¹It is suggested that the conclusion of Arent Jan Wensinck, that the root meaning here is stumbling, is unnecessary; for the concept of missing (the way or goal), demanded by other passages, illustrated here, is adequate to explain this occurrence also (see loc. cit.).

(as in Deuteronomy 19:15-21 and I Samuel 19:5 respectively).

Though Jessie Payne Smith¹ gives to miss as the root idea behind the Syriac h^etā' (ܗܬܐ), neither she nor Robert Payne Smith² nor Carl Brockelmann³ gives any Syriac examples of this literal meaning in their Syriac lexicons. However, the ethical meanings parallel those already given in cognate languages so that its derivation by some means from the Semitic root may be safely assumed. The simplest form h^etā' (ܗܬܐ) as a verb is to commit a fault or crime or to sin (peccare) and as a noun is a fault, crime, or sin (peccatum). As h^attāyūtā' (ܗܬܐܝܘܬܐ) it acquires the concept of crookedness, irregularity, or deformity which in the realms of practice and morals becomes wickedness or per- versity -- i.e., moral irregularity (pravitas). The idea of sin is basic to all the other forms; hence they will not be mentioned here except for h^etīyā' (ܗܬܝܐ), which appears to have a special relationship to Arabic. Like the simple noun above it means a sin, crime, offence, or fault (peccatum).⁴

Alphonse Mingana claims that almost all the religious terms found in the Qur'an are derived from the Syriac and includes in this category ܗܬܐ from h^etā' (ܗܬܐ) he

¹A Compendious Syriac Dictionary: Founded upon the Thesaurus Syriacus of R. Payne Smith (Oxford, 1903), pp. 137, 138.

²Thesaurus Syriacus (2 vols., Oxford, 1879), I, pp. 1246, 1247.

³Lexicon Syriacum (Gottingen, 1928), p. 227.

⁴Ibid.

sinned and its derivative فَطِيئَة from ḥṭyt' (ḥṭyt').¹
 But in order to save space and because he considers the relationship self-evident, he does not give a direct proof of the borrowing of these two words from the Syriac.² However his study has indirect force, for he indicates quite conclusively the importance of Syriac sources on the vocabulary of the Qur'an by such arguments as the Syriac form of proper names and theological expressions.³

On the other hand Friedrich Schwally spells out in detail his reasons for calling فَطِيئَة a Syriac loan word. After indicating that ḥṭyt' (ḥṭyt') is a فَعْلَة form, he argues as follows:

Im Arabischen entspricht فَطِيئَة dieses hat kein فَطِيئ neben sich, sondern nur فَطَا und فَطِي. Das beweist an sich natürlich gar nichts. Nimmt man aber den Umstand hinzu, das فَطِيئَة eine Form فَعْلَة ist, während dem syrischen Äquivalente nur scheinbar dasselbe Paradigma, tatsächlich vielmehr ein aus فَعْلَة nach syrischen Lautgesetzen entwickeltes فَعْلَة zu Grunde liegt, so wird man der Annahme zuneigen müssen, dass فَطِيئَة ein syrisches Lehnwort ist. Dasselbe gilt für äthiop ጥ ጣ ኃ ኅ.⁴

If understood with the precaution that his wording suggests, the argument is forceful. But words of this form can be

¹"Syriac Influence on the Style of the Qur'an," The Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, II (1927), 11-12.

²Ibid., p. 6.

³Ibid., pp. 7-12.

⁴"Lexikalische Studien," Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, LII (1898), p. 132.

explained in other ways also.¹ For example, the present writer has found no **فَعِيل** form for **نَقِيصَة** nor an equivalent form in Syriac; so some other explanation is suggested.²

Another difficulty with the theory that **خَطِيئَة** is a Syriac loan word is the fact that more primitive meanings are found in Arabic, as will be noted below, than in any of the Syriac sources noted above, though this does not negate the possibility that such meanings exist nor that the form **خَطِيئَة** came from Syriac. On the contrary, Schwally's argument is significant.

The above analysis of cognate languages has shown a common pattern in words related to **خَطَأ** : the root idea to miss developing into sin with the root concept more or less apparent or lost depending on the form and use. In some cases words took on specific but related meanings. Even where examples were not sufficient to trace the complete development within a language or from one to another, the patterns of each were similar enough so that the general development could safely be implied.

The Syriac has been suggested as the final loaner of the form and content of **خَطِيئَة** , both because of its form

¹Perhaps it is better, therefore, not to go quite as far as Arthur Jeffery, who refers to the above argument regarding its form as "proof conclusive that the borrowing of this form is direct from the Syriac **ܕܚܦܝܢܐ** " (p. 124).

²This statement is based on a study of Edward William Lane, ed., An Arabic-English Lexicon (3 vols., London, 1862); Brockelmann; and J. P. Smith. Other forms unknown to the writer may be extant.

and because of the important Syriac influence on the Qur'anic vocabulary which has been shown by Mingana. In the event that this is not the case, however, the Semitic materials again are so common that there need be no doubt as to the development of meaning of these words.

As we move to the Arabic materials, we note that خَطَأٌ means to cast out froth or scum,¹ a fact which, if taken alone, might lead us to think that the root idea behind these words was abomination as in the case of فحش. However the overwhelming evidence from Comparative Semitics, as we have seen, indicates that to miss is the root idea. Hence the meaning to cast out froth or scum is tropical -- perhaps deriving its significance from the separation which such a process involves. This conclusion concerning the root idea is corroborated by many Arabic examples. With roughly the same sense as noted above in the South Arabian and the Hiph'īl form of Hebrew, اخطأ is used of marksmanship -- for example, اخطأ الرامي الغرض (The archer, or thrower, missed the mark; or failed to hit it); and اخطأه السهم (The arrow missed it, or him; or passed beyond it, or him). Then, as implied above in a Hebrew Qal form, the word can be used of a way -- for example, اخطأ الطريق (He missed the way; or he deviated from the way).

Other examples are more figurative but the underlying

¹This and the Arabic illustrations in the following discussion are from Lane, p.761A, B.

concept of missing is still basic to the sense, as

اَنْطَأَ نَوْؤُهُ (His star, or asterism, missed), which is said of one who sought an object but did not succeed in obtaining it; or اَنْطَأَهُ الْكُفُّ (The right, or due, was, or became out of his reach; or far from him).

QUR'ANIC USAGE

In the Qur'an we find 21 occurrences of the words in various forms which are related to both unintentional acts (e.g., اَنْطَأَ in 4:92) and to intentional ones (e.g., مَا طَبَّخَ in 12:91). اَنْطَأَ (by mistake) occurs once (4:92) in reference to a believer killing another believer; and it is contrasted with اَنْتَعَدَ (intentionally) so the meaning is definite. اَنْطَأَ (to be in error or make a mistake)¹ occurs twice and refers to unintentional acts in both cases in keeping with the secular, more literal use of this form described above. In 33:5 we read: ". . . there is no blame (لَيْسَ ... جُنَاحٌ) on you in that wherein you make a mistake (اَنْطَأْتُمْ), but that which your hearts purpose (اَنْتَعَدْتُمْ)." The contrast with اَنْتَعَدْتُمْ and the lack of culpability indicated by لَيْسَ ... جُنَاحٌ make the unintentional nature of its use here conclusive. Its other occurrence, 2:286, is a petition: "Our Lord, punish us (تَوَّابِنَا) not if we forget (نَسِينَا) or make a mistake

¹Lane includes the meaning to miss the mark and Jeffery and Penrice add to sin; but though their flavor is inherent in the word, they are extra-Qur'anic meanings.

(أَخْطَاْنَا)." Its use with نَسِيْنَا coupled with the implication that there are grounds for mercy in both cases indicates that make a mistake is a satisfactory translation. When we compare this interpretation with that of at-Tabari, one of the greatest of the ancient commentators, we find that he too stressed the unintentional aspect. He says that this verse teaches the way we should pray for forgiveness when we have sinned (اِخْطَاْنَا), by doing something forbidden us, without intending (غَيْرَ قَصْدٍ) to oppose God and from ignorance (جَهَالَةٍ) on our part and error (خَطَاً).¹

خَاْطِئٌ (part. act.: One who sins or a sinner)² occurs five times and is used as a general word for any who sin (e.g., 69:37). Those who commit ذَنْبٍ (a general word for sin) are خَاْطِئِينَ in 12:29, 97. From the logic of the passage the ذَنْبٍ -- hence indirectly the خَاْطِئِينَ -- in the former verse almost undoubtedly refers to the attempt of a woman to seduce (رَاوَدَتْ) Joseph and then blame him, though it could apply to Joseph instead from the sentence structure. Joseph's brothers use the plural form خَاْطِئِينَ of themselves for their wrong against him; thus intention is indicated (12:91). It is used of Pharaoh, Haman, and

¹ ابو جعفر محمد بن جرير الطبري، تفسير الطبري

(القاهرة، دار المعارف، ١٩٥٤م -)، ج ٣، ص ٩٥.

² Sinful is also given by Penrice, but this adjectival use is not found in the Qur'an unless خَاْطِئَةٌ is regarded as the feminine of خَاْطِئٌ in 96:16.

their hosts for their wrongdoing at the time of Moses (28:8).

فَطْأٌ (sin or error) occurs only once in 17:31:

" . . . kill not your children for fear of being brought to want; we will provide for them and for you. Surely the killing of them is a great sin (فَطْأٌ كَبِيرٌ)." Because the most ancient Qur'anic texts did not include short vowels, one might question whether the original meaning here was sin (فَطْأٌ) or mistake (فَطْأٌ). If infanticide were practiced out of ignorance of the fact that God would take care of them, mistake (with a fathah) might be understood. However, three of the most noted ancient authorities agree with the present rendering of sin (with a kasrah). Aṭ-Ṭabarī gives the position of Ibn-'Abās, with apparent approval, that the reference is to sin (اِثْمًا وَفَطِيئَةً) not a mistake (فَطْأٌ) because the people already knew that infanticide was wrong.¹ Al-Baīḍawī uses both فَطْأٌ كَبِيرٌ and ذَنْبًا كَبِيرًا (a great sin) in reference to infanticide here and then gives a reason: it cuts the reproduction of mankind.² The agreement of these ancient authorities suggests the rendering فَطْأٌ in the absence of further evidence.

فَطِيئَةٌ (sin or error) and the plural فَطَايَا³

ج ١٥ ص ٥٤١

² أبو سعيد عبد الله بن عمر البصراوي، انوار التنزيل واسرار التأويل (2 vols., Leipzig, 1846-48), ed. H. O. Fleischer, ص ٣١٧

³ The final ي is changed to an ا because preceded by another ي [Silvestre de Sacy, Grammaire Arabe (3rd ed., 2 vols., Tunis, 1904-05), I, 111, 370].

occur ten times. They are general words -- for example, the plural form is indirectly contrasted with a derivative of the general word for good in 2:58: "We will forgive you your wrongs (**فَطَايَاكُمْ**) and increase the reward of those who do good (**الْمُحْسِنِينَ**)" (cf. 7:161). Likewise the singular form is used with another general word and the two contrasted with the general alternatives belief and good works in 2:81, 82: "Whoever earns evil (**كَسَبَ سَيِّئَةً**) and his sin (**فَطَيْئَتُهُ**) surrounds him, those are the companions of the fire . . . and those who believe (**آمَنُوا**) and do good deeds (**عَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ**), those are the companions of the Garden"

As suggested by these verses (2:81, 82), unbelief is associated with this noun. Disbelievers (**كَافِرُونَ**) commit **فَطَيْئَاتٍ** (71:25, 26). However believers, and even Abraham, have **فَطَايَا** or **فَطَيْئَةٌ** also, though the text nowhere states that these were committed in a state of belief (20:73; 26:82; 29:12). Rather belief is offered as a grounds for the possibility of forgiveness (26:51).

Also, as suggested by the above verses (2:81, 82), wrongdoers (**ظَالِمُونَ**) commit **فَطَيْئَاتٍ** (71:24, 25). Some specific sins which occur in the context of **فَطَيْئَةٌ** and its plural are: forging the Book for personal ends (2:79, 81); disobeying Noah and following another, plotting (against the right way), saying not to forsake the current gods, and leading others astray (71:21-25).

Likewise, as implied by the above verses (2:81, 82), culpability may be ascribed to **خَطِيئَةٌ**, for divine punishment is the result (71:25). In 29:12, 13 the inference is that **خطايا** must be borne as burdens (**أَنْقَالٌ**). The culpability found in this noun form is in direct contrast to **أَخْطَأَ** noted in 33:5 above where there is no blame (**مِنَاحٌ**).

In 4:12 the singular form is used with another general word, **يَا نِثْمٌ** : "Whoever commits a sin (**خَطِيئَةٌ**) or a crime (**يَا نِثْمًا**), then accuses an innocent one of it, he indeed takes upon himself calumny (**بُرْهَانًا**) and manifest crime (**يَا نِثْمًا مُبِينًا**)." The aspect of culpability is very strong in **يَا نِثْمٌ** and, unlike **خَطِيئَةٌ**, none of its forms mean mistake.¹ However this verse is not too helpful in differentiating between the two words, except that it uses **يَا نِثْمٌ** for the compounded wrong and therefore would seem to imply that it is the stronger word, though the use of the intensifying **مُبِينًا** lessens the force of such reasoning.

خَا طِئَةٌ is considered a noun absolute (habitual sinfulness), though it may also be regarded as the feminine of **خَا طِئٌ**. The **ة** is sometimes added to the end of a word for intensity.² This form occurs twice. In 96:16 it is used in the adjectival sense of sinful and, together with **كَاذِبَةٌ** (lying), modifies a forelock which God will seize. In 69:9, 10 it is used of Pharaoh and those before him and

¹See analysis of word below.

²De Sacy, I, 322n; II, 279n.

the overthrown cities (probably those of Lot; cf. 11:82),
that brought sinfulness (بِأَلْحَاظِطَةِ) and disobeyed
(عَصُوا) the messenger of their Lord.¹

¹The post-Qur'anic use of forms from the خَطِئَ root not only confirm the Qur'anic interpretations above but show the more precise definition of words in the post-Qur'anic period of legal development. The general use of خَطَاءٌ for any errors is brought out by the Semitic parallelism of Abū 'l-'Atāhiya (130/748-211/824) who counterbalances it with the general word

ذُنُوبٌ in the following poem

فَاغْفِرْ ذُنُوبِي وَأَسْتُرْ خَطَايِي
إِنَّهَا جَمَّةٌ إِنَّكَ السَّاتِرُ

7 إسماعيل بن القاسم بن سويد بن كيسان ابو العتاهية، ديوان أبي
العتاهية (بيروت، 1886) ص 120.

Forgive my sins because they are too much,
And cover my errors because Thou art the Coverer.

Likewise the idea of mistake seen above in خَطَأٌ (4:92) and أَخْطَأُ (2:286; 33:5) is found in the fiqh books in their precise definition of الخطأ. Al-Jurjānī says that it refers to that which a person does unintentionally. علي بن محمد الجرجاني، التعريفات، (Leipzig, 1845) ed. Gustavus Flügel. Likewise al-Khudarī contrasts الخطأ with intentional wrong, which is a crime (جناية). And he gives two examples, that of a fasting man who accidentally lets some water down his throat (where it is forbidden), while rinsing his mouth and that of a hunter who accidentally hits a man while aiming at a bird. He adds, however, that in الخطأ there is the جناية of not being firm and in this respect the doer is to blame, but the punishment is not in proportion to the crime (الجريمة) itself. Rather it is in proportion to the lack of care which caused the deed to happen. محمد الحضري.

اصول الفقه (الطبعة الثانية، مصر، 1933م/ 1352هـ)، ص 131.

Both writers refer to two technical types of الخطأ :
"the rights of God" (حقوق الله) and "the rights of men"
(حقوق العبد), which refer to divine and social responsibilities respectively. In the former the sinner (الخطيئ) does not really sin (بأثم); the lawgiver has made the act excusable so that the one who does wrong unintentionally (الخطيئ) is not blamed (يؤاخذ) or punished

CHAPTER II

ضلع

BACKGROUND

The use of Comparative Semitics is not nearly as helpful for the understanding of this root as was the case with خطى. In only the most conjectural way may one trace through the biliteral stem to ضلع (to decline or deviate), which is also used figuratively of deviating from what is right or true.¹ The latter's nominal form ضلع (a curved thing of the side or a rib)² has a number of cognate words in other Semitic languages: the Hebrew çelā' (צל) means rib and side;³ the Akkadian šîlu rib and side (côte);⁴ and the Syriac 'elā'ā' (هل) rib and side (costa) or flank and side (latus).⁵ However there is no need to belabor this questionable derivation in order to find the root sense of curving or deviating,

¹Lane, p. 1799C.

²Ibid., p. 1800A.

³Brown, et al., p. 854.

⁴Labat, p. 317.

⁵Brockelmann, p. 22.

for the Qur'an will be seen to make the root meaning of deviating clear by, for example, the contrast of ضل with اهدأى .

QUR'ANIC USAGE

The various forms from this stem occur 192 times in the Qur'an and may refer to intentional acts (e.g., لِيُضِلُّوا, in 14:30) or unintentional ones (e.g., تَضَلُّ in 2:282).

ضَلَّ (to err or go astray from) occurs 52 times, and its basic meaning can be seen from the words with which it is used. It is used of erring or straying from the way (السَّبِيلِ) (4:44), the right way (سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ) (5:12), the way of God (سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ) (4:167), and His way (سَبِيلِهِ) (16:125). Then it is defined by a similar clause in 17:48: "And they have gone astray (ضَلُّوا) and they cannot [find] a way (لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ سَبِيلًا)." In various grammatical structures it is contrasted with هُدًى (guidance) (20:123), اهدأى (to be directed aright) (10:108), and مُهْتَدُونَ (those who are guided aright) (6:56). Further, it is used with بَعِيدٍ, a word of position, in the construction ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا (he erred a distant erring) (4:116). Finally, it is used in a parallel construction with غَوَى (to deviate) in 53:2, thereby indicating a similar meaning.

Shades of meaning and derived meanings are brought out by the use of prepositions or the case of the related noun.

ضَلَّ means to wander away or go astray from with the

accusative or عن (4:44 and 16:125 respectively); to leave in the lurch -- hence, to fail, also with عن (6:24); to err against with على (10:108); and to be hidden or lost with في (32:10).¹

Penrice gives another derived meaning to go from the thoughts or be forgotten and gives 17:67 as an illustration, thereby agreeing with Sale's translation.² However, a more probable translation of the verse is: ". . . when distress afflicts you in the sea, away go (ضَلَّ) those whom you call on except He, but when He brings you safe to land, you turn away (أَعْرَضْتُمْ); and man is ever ungrateful." This interpretation (indicating forsaking on the part of those called upon rather than forgetting on the part of the callers) is more probable because it is more in keeping with the regular use of the word, is simpler, and explains all parts of the verse. If forgotten were meant, it would seem that a verb like نسى would be used with the second (rather than the third) person form, as with أَعْرَضْتُمْ in the latter part of the verse. Also, it is more logical that all should forsake them except One rather than that they should forget all but One, particularly in light of the subsequent clause, ". . . and when He brings you safe to

¹Penrice also adds the meaning to err with ب, but ضَلَّ is not used with ب in the Qur'an.

²George Sale, The Koran; with Explanatory Notes and Preliminary Discourse (London, Orlando Hodgson, n.d.), p. 216.

land." The final clause (" . . . and man is ever ungrateful") would then explain the two previous clauses together.

This verb is used of disbelief (كفر) (2:108; 5:12) and wrongdoing (ظلم) (7:148, 149). In the latter case the wrongdoers were the people of Moses who set up a calf. Other specific acts to which ضل is related are: killing (قتل) children, forbidding (حرّم) what God has provided -- devising a lie (افتراء) against God (6:141); coining epithets against the Prophet (17:48); showing friendship to the enemy in secret (60:1); and following lusts (اهواء) (6:56). The implication is that erring can be from a lack of understanding (4:177) and forgetfulness (2:282). Finally, the one who errs does so to his own detriment (39:41).

ضال (part. act.; one who errs or goes astray; erring) occurs 14 times, being used as a noun (e.g., 26:86) and an adjective (e.g., 6:78; 23:106).¹ That its underlying concept is the same as the definitely defined ضال above is plain for it is also contrasted with forms of

هدى : with هداكم (He guided you) in 2:198 and يهديني (He guides me) in 6:78 (cf. 20:123 et al.).

Also, like ضال above (2:108; 5:12), it is used of disbelief in 3:89: ". . . those who disbelieve (كفروا) after their believing, then increase in disbelief (ازدادوا كفرا)".

¹Penrice does not give an adjectival meaning.

their repentance is not accepted and these are those who go astray (الضَّالُّونَ)." It might be noted that those who disbelieve after their believing are likewise called

الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ (unjust or wrongdoing people) (vs. 85), though in this case they may be forgiven if they repent and amend (vs. 88). However, a case cannot be made that ضَالُّونَ is stronger than ظَالِمُونَ just because ازدادوا كُفْرًا is added to it and because repentance is accepted with the latter but not the former in the passage under discussion. On the contrary their use here as elsewhere is too general and inclusive; and, as already noted, ظالمون is associated with the basic verb ضَلَّ (7:148, 149). Another, more specific word with which it becomes associated is مُكَذِّبُونَ (rejectors or deniers) (56:51, 92).

ضَلَّ and ضَلَالَةٌ (error or mistake) occur 48 times and have the same basic meaning as the verb ضَلَّ as can be seen by their joint use in the cognate accusative ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا (lit., he strayed a straying) (4:116, 136). Also like ضَلَّ, they are contrasted with forms of هدى : with الهدى (guidance) in 2:175 and with هدى (he guided) in 7:30 (cf. 20:123 et al. above). Their use for error in the moral and ideological realms is confirmed by the comparison of ضلال with طغى (to transgress) in 50:27 and its contrast with الحق (the truth) in 10:32.

This form is used in reference to some of the same sins as the simple verb. In the cognate accusative it is used

of unbelief (كُفْر) (4:136, 167; cf. 2:108 and 5:12 above). And it is used of شَرِك (association [of others with God]) both directly (4:116) and indirectly: making one equal with the Lord of the worlds (26:98); invoking besides God that which neither harms nor benefits one (22:12); taking besides Him gods ("الِهَةٌ") (36:23); taking idols (اَصْنَامًا) for gods (6:75); and worshipping (عَابِدِينَ) images (تَمَاتِيل) (21:52, 53) (cf. 7:148, 149 above). Also it is used of disobeying (يَعِص) God and His Messenger (33:36) and not accepting the Inviter to God (46:32) (cf. 17:48 above). Finally it refers to the time of ignorance (3:163; cf. 4:177 above).

Likewise ضَلَال refers: to a wife who seeks to seduce (تَرَاوِدُ) her slave (12:30); to those who are [spiritually] blind (الْعَمَى) (30:53) or whose hearts are hardened (الْقَاسِيَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ) against the remembrance of God (39:22); to those who dispute (جُمَارُونَ) concerning the Hour (42:18); and to those who love this world's life more than the Hereafter, turn away (يَصُدُّونَ) from God's path and would have it crooked (يَبْغُونَهَا عِوَجًا) (14:3).

As to its form, ضَلَال is sometimes followed by بعيداً (far or distant) both as a cognate accusative (4:116, 136) and alone (14:3; 22:12; 42:18). Other times it is followed by مُبِين (manifest), as a cognate accusative once (33:36), and otherwise alone (6:75; 12:30; 21:52). Also ضَلَال is preceded by اشْتَرَى and thereby becomes to buy error

(2:175; 4:44).

أَضَلَّ (2nd. declension comparative form; to be more astray) occurs nine times and has the same underlying concept as the simple verb, as is evident not only by their common root but also by its use, for it too is used of being astray from the way (سَبِيلًا) (17:72; cf. 4:44 above) or the right way (سَوَاءَ الشَّبِيلِ) (5:60; cf. 5:12 above). And it is described by بَغَيْرِ هُدًى (without guidance) (28:50; cf. 20:123 above where ضَلَّ is contrasted with هُدًى).

Furthermore the sins with which it is associated are some already covered by other forms. It is used of dissenting widely (تِنْفَاقٍ بَعِيدٍ) in a sentence describing unbelief (كُفْرٍ) (41:52; cf. 2:108 under ضَلَّ ; 3:89 under ضَالٌّ , and 4:136 under ضَلَالٍ). And it is related to ظَمٍ (wrongdoing) in 28:50 (cf. 7:148-149 under ضَلَّ). The specific sin here is following lust (كَهْوً) (cf. 6:56 under ضَلَّ). And it is used of شِرْكَ (association [of others with God]) when it refers to those who invoke besides God such as answer Him not until the day of Resurrection (46:5; cf. 7:148, 149 under ضَلَّ and 4:116; 22:12, et al. under ضَلَالٍ). It characterizes those who are blind (عَمًى) (17:72; cf. 30:53 under ضَلَالٍ). This idea is amplified in 7:179 where it is used of those who understand not, see not, and hear not -- hence are more astray than cattle and are the heedless

ones (الغفلون).

تَضَلِيلٌ (a second measure masdar; error) occurs only in 105:2, where it refers to the end to which God brought the plans of the instigators of the Elephant War. Dictionaries translate the word by error,¹ an interpretation confirmed by the other forms derived from the same root. Some translators have tried, however, to give a more precise rendering of this hapax legomenon based on the context. Abdullah Yusuf Ali,² Arthur J. Arberry,³ and George Sale stay close to the original meaning, the first two giving the translation go astray and the third error. Richard Bell indicates that the literal translation is misguidance but puts awry in his text,⁴ while M. M. 'Ali and Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthall⁵ give confusion and to naught respectively. However, these suggested meanings all rest on the basic idea of error.

أَضَلَّ (to cause to err, seduce, lead astray from)

¹Lane, p. 1797A and Penrice.

²The Holy Qur-an: Text, Translation and Commentary (3rd ed., 2 vols., New York, Hafner Publ. Co., 1938).

³The Koran Interpreted (2 vols., London, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1955).

⁴The Qur'an: Translated, with a Critical Re-arrangement of the Surahs (2 vols., Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark, 1937).

⁵The Meaning of the Glorious Koran (New York, New American Library of World Literature, 1953).

occurs 65 times and appears with the double accusative or the accusative and عَنْ. Its meaning is quite plain. First, we find it defined through synonymous clauses in 20:79: "Pharaoh led astray (أَضَلَّ) his people, and he guided not aright (مَا هَدَى)." Secondly, it is used with other forms of the root (which have been defined) with the same essential meaning. Thus in 6:117-118 يُضِلُّ (the first measure) is contrasted with بِاطِرْتَدِينِ (the guided ones) so that its meaning is sure, and يُضِلُّونَ (the fourth measure) is used of the same phenomenon (cf. 5:77). Likewise the fourth measure is shown to have the same underlying meaning as ضَلَّ (which has been defined) in أَنْ يُضِلُّهُمْ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا (to cause them to err a great erring (4:60; cf. ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا in 33:36)).

Thirdly, the meaning of the causative form is shown by its use with سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ (6:117) and سَبِيلِ (42:46) and سَبِيلِهِ (14:30) (cf. the comparable occurrences with ضَلَّ in 4:167 and 16:125 and أَضَلَّ in 17:72 and 5:60 above). Fourthly, the meaning of the fourth measure is shown by the words with which it is contrasted -- for example, various verbal constructions of هَدَى (2:26; 4:88; 6:126; 7:178; 20:79; cf. similar contrasts in the other forms -- e.g., 6:56, 78; 7:30; 28:50).

A number of specific sins are associated with أَضَلَّ; and, in keeping with the close relationship between the forms of this root, some are the same as those noted above

under other forms. Lust (الهوى) can lead astray (38:26), and people lead astray by their lusts (باهوا آثمهم) (6:120; cf. 5:77; 30:29; see also 6:56 under ضلّ and 28:50 under أضلّ). Some even take lust (لهوى) for their god (45:23) and are led astray. Men set up equals (جعلوا . . .) with God to lead astray from His path (14:30; cf. 7:148, 149 under ضلّ , 4:116 under ضلاله , and 46:5 under أضلّ).

Pride too causes one to lead astray, as the 'Ubād of Aṣ-Ṣaghānī and the Qāmūs indicate when they give as a translation of ثاني عطفه (lit. twisting or bending his side or neck) in 22:9 magnifying himself, or behaving proudly, or turning away from al-Islam.¹ Frivolous discourse (لهو الحديث) can also lead astray (31:6). And he who even becomes a friend of one, who disputes about God without knowledge and follows every rebellious devil, will be led astray (22:3, 4; cf. 60:1 under ضلّ). Some forge a lie (افتراي . . . كذباً) against God to lead astray (6:145; cf. 6:141 under ضلّ and 56:51, 92 under ضالّ).

Those who are led astray are الظالمون (the wrongdoers or unjust ones) (14:27; 30:29; cf. 7:148-149 under

¹Lane, p. 2080C. Note that at this and subsequent points in this study the writer had moved to California, where many Arabic texts are not readily accessible. Hence most Arabic sources quoted in Lane's Lexicon could not be checked in the originals.

(أَضَلَّ , 28:50 under ضَالٌّ , 3:85 under ضَلَّ ,
 (those who disbelieve) الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا (9:37; 40:74; cf.
 2:108 under ضَلَّ , 3:89 under ضَالٌّ , 4:136 under
 الضَّالِّينَ , and 41:52 under أَضْلَى , and الْمُنَافِقُونَ
 (the hypocrites) (4:88).

Three agents are described as leading astray -- man, Satan, and God. First, men lead astray (22:8; 31:6), and these men include most of those in the earth (6:117). They are السَّاطِرُونَ (sinners) (26:99), الظَّالِمُونَ (wrongdoers) (71:24; cf. 6:145), and الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا (those who disbelieve) (47:1, 8). Even a party of the People of the Book desire to lead astray, but they only lead themselves astray (3:68).

Along with these more immediate and secondary agents of error is the underlying operation of the spiritual world. Thus Satan desires to lead astray (4:60), and God is described as the subject of أَضَلَّ when men (e.g., 14:27) and their works (47:8) are the object.¹ This is a hard concept to reconcile with the justice of God (in some portions of the Bible as well as the Qur'an). Thus M. M. 'Ali regularly translates أَضَلَّ leaves in error when it applies to God, and A. Y. Ali uses leaves astray (e.g., 20:29). However Bell and Pickthall do not show as much hesitancy to apply the common translation of the word to God and render it sent astray in this passage (vs. 28 in

¹For a related discussion of God as a cause of sin see the analyses of ظَلَمَ , مُعْتَدِرٌ , and أَعْوَى .

Bell).

The present writer feels that the regular translation led astray is the correct one when applied to God as well as elsewhere. The reasons for this conclusion are first that we have no linguistic basis for making this shift, only a preconceived idea of what justice should be when applied to God. Secondly, يَهْدِي (he leads aright) and يُضِلُّ are both used of God in parallel but contrasting clauses (2:26; 4:88; 6:126), implying that the latter is the opposite of the former. Thirdly, though this argument is not conclusive in itself, the Qur'an spells out what it means by the latter. Thus in 6:126 we read: ". . . whomsoever God intends to guide (يَهْدِيهِ) He expands his breast for Islam and whomsoever He intends to يُضِلُّهُ he makes his breast straight, narrow." The sovereign action of God associated with أَصْلَهُ is brought out even more strikingly in 45:23 where it is followed by "He seals his hearing and his heart and puts a covering on his sight." One might argue for M. M. 'Ali and A. Y. Ali's translations that man is left in error by pointing out the Qur'anic tendency to imply an antecedent action or decision on the part of man here and elsewhere (e.g., 14:27). But nevertheless the Qur'an in 6:126 and 45:23 clearly teaches an increase in error in which God is at least in collaboration. Finally, the high Qur'anic view of the sovereignty of God is too commonly recognized to need defense; and the present

argument conforms to this view.¹

In a broader study concerning the justice of God in the Qur'an Daud Rahbar devotes a section to God's tadlīl and concludes by saying: "None of the contexts of God's tadlīl can safely be quoted to illustrate that in the Qur'an's view God is the author of evil dispositions, or that He arbitrarily leads men astray. His leading astray is retributive."² Because the scope of the present study is linguistic rather than theological or ethical, an extended discussion of Rahbar's conclusion would be out of place. For the purposes of this paper it is sufficient to note that even if God's tadlīl were only retributive, it does not contradict the previous argument that **أضلّ** means leads astray even when applied to God.

مُضِلٌّ (active participle; one who seduces) occurs three times. Like all the other forms except the hapax legomenon it is contrasted with a form of the root **هدى** (**يَهْدِي** in 39:37); so it clearly conveys the same basic idea of error. It is used of an enemy (**عَدُوٌّ**) Satan

¹It might be noted that the argument presented is in keeping with the interpretation of a man of such central significance in Muslim theology as al-Asharī who, after quoting a verse ascribing **أضلّ** to God, says, "God has the capacity to reform the disbelievers and favor them, so that they become believers; nevertheless He wills that they be disbelievers."

ابو الحسن عليّ الأشتعري، الإبانة (ميدرا باد الدكن، مطبعة جمعية دائرة المعارف العثمانية؛ في كتاب الرسائل السبعة في العنقا ص 7).

²God of Justice (Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1960), p. 90.

(28:15) and by implication is equated with him (إبليس)
and his offspring, enemies (عَدُوِّهِ), and the unjust
(الظالمون) (18:50, 51).

CHAPTER III

عوى

BACKGROUND

The root is related to the Ethiopic 'ayaya (ዐሳሳ), which means err. And it is related to the Hebrew 'wh (אָוַח), from which develops the masculine noun 'āwōn (אָוֹן) (iniquity, guilt -- e.g., Job 15:5 and Gen. 44:16 respectively) and the verb 'āwā (אָוַח) (to commit iniquity, do wrong -- e.g., Est. 1:16; Dan. 9:5). This verb is a cognate of the Aramaic 'wy (ܐܘܝܢ) (commit sin) and 'awāyā (ܐܘܘܝܢܐ) (sin).¹

Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner translate the Hebrew root act pervertedly and list the Judaeo-Aramaic cognate 'awā (ܐܘܘܝܢܐ) (deviate). The Hebrew comes to mean to do wrong in the Qal, to sin (peccare) in the Niph'al, and to pervert [the right] in the Hiph'il.² In a primarily secular sense the Hebrew 'āwā (אָוַח) means twist or bend, both literally and metaphorically.³ But these latter

¹Brown, et al., pp. 730B, 731.

²Lexicon in Veretis Testamenti Libros (Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1953), p. 686B; Supplementum (1958), p. 176A.

³Brown, et al., p. 730B.

meanings appear to be more closely related to عَوَى (to twist, etc.)¹ than غَوَى. Nevertheless we obtain a clear pattern from the root. From the idea of bending away or erring comes the ethical meaning to sin.

QUR'ANIC USAGE

The various forms of غَوَى occur 22 times in the Qur'an.

غَوَى (to wander, go astray, deviate from the right way, err) occurs three times. Its meaning is quite clear, for in 53:2 it is used in synonymous parallelism with ضَلَّ, which has already been defined as to err or go astray from. In 20:121 it refers to the fall of Adam and Eve as follows: "Adam disobeyed (عَصَى) and he erred (غَوَى)."

The Tāj al-'Arūs lists the interpretation of al-Azhari and ar-Rāghib that the latter word here means and his life became evil to him, or he was disappointed, or he acted ignorantly.² These readings find acceptance in the modern translation of M. M. 'Ali. The last rendering appears to be an interpretation not found in the text, and the former two reflect the former part of the verse which reads: "So they both ate of it; then their evil (سَوَاءُ تَطْرُقَ) became manifest to them, and they began to cover themselves with the leaves of the garden." The latter two readings also

¹Iane, p. 2185 under عو.

²Ibid., p. 2304C.

follow renderings of عَوَى given by the Miṣbāḥ of al-Fayyūmī and the Ṣiḥāḥ,¹ but these renderings may also be derived from the words used in this verse.

In contrast to the above, the present writer holds to the rendering erred because it is the simplest and by far the most common rendering of the word, yet agrees with the context. Secondly, it is the most natural counterpart to عَطَى in the parallelism at the end of the verse, which shows that disobedience and erring are related in the Qur'an. Thirdly, the other renderings can all be explained as attempts to interpret the verse. Finally, like its synonym ضَلَّ, it is contrasted with هَدَى (he guided) in the following verse; and it is in the same context as هَدَى, هَدَى, and يَضِلُّ in the verse after that.

عَتَى (error, destruction) occurs four times. The meaning is obvious for it is contrasted with الرَّشَدُ (the way of rectitude) (2:256; 7:146). Its use with رشد does not shed much new light on the meaning of the word, however, for the forms of رشد are essentially synonymous with those of هدى, which is contrasted with the first measure of the verb above (20:121-122). To illustrate, the Asās of az-Zamakhsharī uses forms of these roots synonymously as in the statement: هُوَ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْمَرَاتِدِ (He directs to the right places to which roads tend).²

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 1089c.

Furthermore, both **رشد** and **هدى** have what in Western terms we might call a 'secular' connotation, and also in certain forms, they may have a 'religious' one. The 'secular' connotation is seen in **رُشِدًا** (the only form used with **عَيْشًا**), which means rectitude, maturity of intellect and rectitude of actions and good management of affairs.¹ The 'secular' flavor of **هدى** is seen in: **هَدَاهُ** (he directed him, or guided him [to the way], or directed him aright) and **اهْتَدَى** (he continued to be rightly directed or to follow the right direction) and **هَدَى** (a way, course method or manner of acting, or conduct).² The more 'religious' significance of words derived from the two roots is seen in **رُشْدًا** and some of its other forms which develop the idea of orthodoxy³ and **المُرْتَدِيَّة**,⁴ which means the directed [by God to the truth].

Penrice adds the meaning destruction, which may derive its meaning from that which characterizes the end of error, or the way of error or from a fusion (as in the Hebrew **לילה**) or confusion of **عوى** and **عوى**. And the Exposition of the Hamāsah (Hamāsae Carmina)⁵ by at-Tabrizī also gives **عَيْشًا** the significance of a state of perdition, which probably

¹Ibid., p. 1089A, B.

²Ibid., p. 3042B, C.

³Ibid., p. 1089A.

⁴Ibid., p. 3042B, C.

⁵Page 643 copied in ibid., p. 2305B.

derives its meaning from the fact that it represents a deviation from the way of Paradise or rectitude. These readings fit the context of 19:59 and possibly -- though not probably -- 7:202.

The specific types of sinners with which غَيِّبٌ is associated are: those who are unjustly proud (يَتَكَبَّرُونَ), do not believe (لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ), falsely reject (كَذَّبُوا) the divine messages and are heedless of them (كَانُوا عَنْهَا غَافِلِينَ) (7:146); neglect prayers (أَضَاعُوا الصَّلَاةَ), and follow lusts (اتَّبَعُوا الشَّهَوَاتِ) (19:59).

غَوِيٌّ (one who is in the wrong) occurs only in 28:18, where Moses uses it to refer to a man who had cried the day before for help from oppression, but now wanted help to oppress another.

غَاوٍ (active participle; plural one who goes astray) occurs six times and only in the plural. The meaning is plain, for it is used in the same context as ضَلَالٌ and أَضَلُّ . But a new flavor is introduced, for it is contrasted with الْمُتَّقِينَ (the dutiful, godfearing) (26:90-99). It is used of Satan (7:175), those who follow him (15:42) and the devils (26:224), those who worship others besides God (26:91-93), those who follow their own lust (كُهَى) (7:175-176), and those who lead others astray (أَغْوَى) (37:32). And hell is their end (15:42; 26:91, 94).

أَغْوَى (to lead astray) occurs eight times. Its meaning is clear, for it is used with غَوَى (which has already been defined) in the same sense except that it is causative (28:63; 37:32). And it is contrasted with the word أَنْصَحَ (to give good counsel) (11:34) and used in agreement with the clause, "I shall certainly make [evil] fair-seeming to them" (15:39).

As with أَضَلَّ, the agents responsible for leading astray are three-fold: First, they are those who themselves erred (28:63) or were erring ones (غَاوُونَ) (37:32). We then move from the secondary cause to a primary cause and find that Iblis leads astray (15:39).

Finally, Iblis charges God with leading him astray (7:16; 15:39); and Noah implies that God may lead men astray, although the implication is made uncertain because it is in the protasis of a conditional sentence (11:34). As with أَضَلَّ above, some appear hesitant to call God responsible for leading others astray. Thus M. M. 'Ali translates the word in the first two verses above judged or adjudged erring. And in 7:16 A. Y. Ali uses thrown . . . out (only using misled in a footnote where he says that Iblis is lying), and in 15:39 he uses put . . . in the wrong (adding thrown . . . out of the way in a footnote). In 11:34 M. M. 'Ali uses destroy, but A. Y. Ali returns to lead . . . astray (perhaps because the conditional nature of the sentence does not require the conclusion that God does lead

astray). Although the Tāj-al-ʿArūs gives caused . . . to err as a rendering of 7:16, it indicates that in 11:34 some give the rendering punish . . . for erring or decree . . . erring.¹

One might argue for these or similar translations by showing that 15:26-39 describes God's curse upon Iblis because of his disobedience; hence the context suggests that أَغْوَى be translated judged . . . erring. The changes deemed necessary here would then naturally apply to the parallel passage (7:16) and could also suggest a change in the other passage where أَغْوَى is used of God (11:34) -- particularly when divine retribution is spoken of in the verses immediately preceding.

Nevertheless, the present writer will argue that led astray is the preferred reading throughout. This is, first, because there is no linguistic basis for changing from the regular meaning -- unless in 11:34, for example, we have a phenomenon such as the fusion (as in the Hebrew אָגַו) or confusion of غوى and عوى. Secondly, the other interpretations can be explained as attempts to avoid calling God a cause of error. Thirdly, as we have noted, أَغْوَى is contrasted with أَنْصَحَ (to give good counsel) in parallel clauses of 11:34, thus implying that the former is related to guidance rather than to destruction. Fourthly, the

¹Lane, p. 2305A.

interpretation of this paper is in keeping with the recognized Qur'anic emphasis on the sovereignty of God. Finally, it has been demonstrated by a more conclusive chain of arguments that the preferred rendering of أَضَلَّ when it refers to God is led astray; hence it is logical that its synonym أَغْوَى should mean the same thing in similar contexts.

Though this writer considers the above arguments sufficient to retain the normal translation of أَغْوَى when it applies to God, it should be noted that these three verses alone are insufficient to develop a doctrine of a divine cause for evil; for the first two are in the mouth of Satan and might be a lie, and the third is in a conditional clause so is not conclusive. Also we should notice, when we seek to determine levels of causation, that Iblis makes the fact that God led him astray the basis for his leading others astray (15:39; 38:82). However the text makes God's act subsequent to, or at least contemporaneous with, the error of Iblis in such a way that Iblis is culpable (cf. 15:26-39).

CHAPTER IV

طغى

BACKGROUND

The root idea is that of water rising so high that it exceeds the bounds and overflows. Thus in 69:11, in what is undoubtedly a reference to Noah's ark, it has a purely secular connotation, referring to the water which rose high, and the idea of going beyond a limit is shown in 53:17 where it is used of one's eye in synonymous parallelism with زاع (to turn aside).

The fact that the secular pictographic element is retained even in developed forms of this word is illustrated by the use of طاعية in 69:5 to describe some enormous phenomenon that destroyed Thamud. However there is some disagreement concerning the precise rendering in this context. Translators render it a Screamer (Arberry), a terrible noise (Sale), a terrible storm of thunder and lightning (A. Y. Ali), the lightning (Pickthall), the Outburst (Bell), and a severe punishment (M. M. 'Ali). Penrice lists only a severe storm. The Siḥāḥ and the Qāmūs give a thunderbolt

as a meaning; but in this specific context the Ṣiḥāh and the Tāj al-ʿArūs list cry of punishment, thereby combining the ideas of noise and punishment expressed by various translators above.¹ The actual event described involved an earthquake (cf. 7:78; 27:52) and a cry or shout (cf. 54:31) and a thunderbolt (cf. 51:44). As this is not an ethical use of the word, there is no need to decide which rendering is most accurate. We only need to note that even in a developed form the root idea of being excessive or passing beyond the limit is not lost.

QUR'ANIC USAGE

Various forms from this stem occur 39 times in the Qur'an. The only occurrence of one of these forms, طاغية, has already been discussed and will not be considered further for, though it has ethical and religious meanings,² they are not used in the Qur'an. Another form, طاغوت, occurs eight times but will also not be considered here because it does not help us understand the essence of sin in the Qur'an. Instead it is used of the devil or a seducer or false deities such as idols, all of which are only applicable to a more comprehensive study.

¹Ibid., p. 1857A.

²A. De Biberstein Kazimirski, Dictionnaire Arabe-Français (2 vols., Paris, Editions G. P. Maisonneuve, 1960); and Lane, p. 1857A.

طَغَى (to transgress, exceed all bounds, wander from its orbit, overflow) occurs 12 times. The meaning is quite clear as we have already seen from the examples of this form which were used to illustrate the root meaning. From the metaphorical idea of rising (cf. 69:11) and going beyond the bounds (cf. 53:17 where it is defined by زَاغٌ), it develops a flavor of inordinacy and self-sufficient pride. Thus in 96:6-7 we read: ". . . man is surely inordinate (or acts presumptuously -- لَيَطُغُ), because he looks upon himself as self-sufficient (or sees that he has become rich -- اسْتَغْنَى)." The idea of inordinacy can be seen in the character of Pharaoh, of whom it is used a number of times (20:24, 43; 79:17; 89:11).

Those who طَغَى are associated with those who prefer the life of this world in contrast to those who fear (خَافَ) the Lord and restrain their souls from lust (الرَهْوَى) (79:37-41). Likewise طَغَى is contrasted with زَكَّى (to purify) and فَشَى (to fear), and indicates a state of separation from the Lord (79:15-19).

طُغْيَانٌ (transgression, exceeding wickedness, obstinacy) occurs nine times. The idea of deviating or going beyond bounds is clearly shown by its use in the same context as عَنِ الصِّرَاطِ لَنَا كِبُونَ (deviating from the way) and يَعْصُونَ (blindly wandering astray) (23:74-76). In fact it forms the idiomatic union طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْصُونَ with the latter word of blind straying (2:15; 6:110; 7:186;

10:11; 23:75). The continuous nature of this state is emphasized by means of its introduction by the word **لَبَّسُوا** (they persist) (23:75). This continuous nature of the word and the element of independent pride already found in the simple verb (96:6-7) lead us to suggest obstinacy as one of the best English renderings of **طُغْيَانٌ**, even though Penrice does not list it.

We then find the word used in combination with **كُفِرَ** (5:64, 68; 18:80), thereby witnessing the close relationship between transgression and unbelief. This conclusion is confirmed by verses which charge those who disbelieve with

طُغْيَانٌ (6:111; 23:74), and those who increase in **طُغْيَانًا وَكُفْرًا** are put under the one category of **الْكَافِرِينَ** (disbelievers) (5:68). So serious is it to involve one in **طُغْيَانًا وَكُفْرًا** that even killing one who threatens to lead others into this state appears justified (cf. 18:74-80).

As **طَغَى** is contrasted with **خَافَ** (79:37-41) and **تَخَوَّفًا** (79:15-19), so **طُغْيَانًا** is contrasted with **تَخَوَّفًا** (to cause fear) (17:59-60). It is used of those who are pleased with this earthly life and are heedless (**غَافِلُونَ**) of the divine revelations (10:7, 11), do not submit (**اسْتَكْبَرُوا**) to their Lord nor humble themselves (**يَتَضَرَّعُونَ**) (23:75-76), and are hypocritical by mocking (**مُسْتَهْزِئُونَ**) (2:13-15).

طَاغٍ (for **طَاغِيٌّ** ; active participle, one who is

excessively impious or obstinate, a transgressor) occurs six times and only in the plural. As the previous forms are contrasted with خَافَ, خَشِيَ, and تَخَوَّيَ, so the same idea of awe or dread is carried on by الظَّالِمِينَ, which is contrasted with الْمُتَّقِينَ (the godfearing) (38:49-51, 55-57). Others are to turn away from them (51:53).

أَطْفَى [relative form for أَطْفَأَ (second declension); most extravagant in wickedness or inordinate] occurs only in 53:52. Here it is used together with أَظْلَمَ (most unjust or sinful) of the people of Noah.

طَغَوَى (excess of obstinacy or impiety) is another hapax legomenon, occurring only in 91:11. The element of inordinacy is brought out, for it describes the underlying attitude of the Thamūd when they rejected (كَذَّبَتْ) the truth.

أَطْفَى (to cause to transgress, to make one a transgressor) occurs only in 50:27. The root idea of going beyond a limit, which is basic to these cognate words (cf. 53:17 above), finds expression here for أَطْفَى is used synonymously with فِي ضَلَالٍ بَعِيدٍ (in wide error).

CHAPTER V

عدو

BACKGROUND

On the basis of Comparative Semitics the root idea is to pass by. The Ethiopic 'adawa (ሰላጸ) means pass by, the Hebrew 'ādā (אָדָּא) pass on or advance, the Biblical-Aramaic "'dā' (אָדָּא) and "'dā (אָדָּא) pass on or away, and the Aramaic 'dy (אָדָּא) go along or go by, and the Syriac 'ēdā' (اَدَا) pass by or go on or come. Likewise the Arabic عدا can mean pass by.¹ From this secular meaning it develops the ethical one of passing beyond a limit set by one such as God -- hence to transgress.

QUR'ANIC USAGE

The various forms from this stem occur 106 times in the Qur'an.

عدا (to transgress with في , to pass by or away from with accusative and عَن) is used three times. With عَن

¹Brown, et al., pp. 723B, 1105A; Koehler and Baumgartner, p. 682.

it has a secular meaning in 18:28: "Let not thine eyes pass from them (ولا تَعُدُّ عَنْهُمْ)." Penrice indicates that the meaning to pass by is not found in the Qur'an and gives to turn aside for this form instead. But the root and the context clarify the underlying idea -- the passing of the eyes by, hence away from them. In the other two cases it is used with في in the ethical sense of violating or transgressing the Sabbath (4:154; 7:163). In these cases the Sabbath is one of the divine limits which should not be passed by or transgressed. The meaning of transgression is confirmed by the synonymous use of يَفْسِقُونَ (they transgressed [divine commandments]) in the latter verse.

عَدُوٌّ (malice, wickedness) occurs twice. In 10:90 it is used together with بَغِيًّا (injustice, wrong) to describe the way Pharaoh and his hosts followed the Children of Israel (cf. 6:146 where عَادٍ and بَاغٍ are also used together). Its use in 6:109 suggests the underlying concept of exceeding the limit more clearly, for it is used of reviling (يَسْتَبُوا) God. The verse also brings out that one can commit عَدْوًا without knowledge (بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ).

عَادٍ (for عَادٍ, active participle, a runner, transgressor, exceeding the limit) occurs seven times. العاديات, the feminine plural form, is found only once (100:1), where it means the runners.¹ This translation, which is supported

¹Lane, pp. 1980C-1981A. Penrice does not list this meaning.

by the context, would appear to be a primitive meaning derived from the root concept of passing by.

The rest of the occurrences have the more fully developed ethical connotation of transgression or exceeding the limit. They suggest that there is what we might call a "scale" from what is right to what is wrong, and on this "scale" there is a limit established by God. To go beyond this limit is sin. Thus we have the "scale" of sexual passions which may be exercised with mates and those whom their right hands possess; but those who seek to go beyond this are عادون (23:5-7; 70:30-31), among whom are those who practice sodomy (26:165-166).

Likewise there is the "scale" of foods, and the limit of God extends even into the area of forbidden (حُرْمٌ) foods if one is driven by necessity, not lusting or desiring (باغٍ). In this extended area God is forgiving (6:146; 16:115), and no sin (إِثْمٌ) is upon one (2:173).

عداوة (enmity) occurs six times. Its meaning is clear for it is contrasted with مودة (friendship) (5:182) and وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ (a warm friend) (41:34) and is coupled with البغضاء (hatred) (5:14, 91). It is used of the Jews and idolaters; also pride (cf. يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ in 5:82), wine (الخمر), and games of chance (الطبير) (5:91) appear to contribute to it.

عدوان (hostility, injustice) occurs ten times. In

5:2 it seems to have a general sense, for it and the general word الإِثْمُ (sin, guilt) are contrasted with the general words الْبِرُّ (righteousness) and التَّقْوَى (piety). In 2:193 it suggests hostility or aggression, without any reference to the absolute rightness or wrongness of the act; for it is used of rightful retaliation. However, the context requires the meaning of injustice in 28:28: ". . . whichever of the two terms I fulfill there will be no injustice to me."

On the basis of the root concept and these meanings, this writer concludes that the idea of transgressing an agreement or relationship by, for example, a hostile act is the more primitive meaning. It later develops the idea of injustice as this breach becomes related to the moral law. The less specific use in 5:2 is merely an example of the somewhat free use of terms which is often made in the Qur'an and which will be illustrated in the Concluding Synthesis.

Not only is the word used of retaliation, but it is also used with ظُلْمٌ (also injustice, or wrongdoing) to describe the type of killing which is one of the great things (كَبِيرٌ) forbidden (نَهَا) (4:29-31). Likewise it is combined with الإِثْمُ (sin) and مَعْصِيَاتٍ (disobedience) to describe the secret counsels which are forbidden (58:8-9). With الإِثْمُ and أَكَلِهِمُ الشُّنْتِ (their devouring the illegal gain) it is characterized as evil (بِئْسَ) (5:62).¹

¹The translation disobedience which Izutsu (p. 247)

عَدُوٌّ (an enemy) occurs 50 times. The meaning is confirmed by 43:67, where it is contrasted with الأَفْدَاءُ (friends) and 18:50, where it is contrasted with أَوْلِيَاءُ (patrons). Those described as having enemies are: man (12:5), the prophets (6:113; 25:31), and God, His angels, His messengers, Gabriel, and Michael (2:98).

The enemies mentioned are: Satan (most frequently -- e.g., 12:5) or Iblis and his offspring (18:50), the devils (شَيْطَانٍ) from among men and jinn (6:113), some from the guilty (الْمُجْرِمِينَ) (25:31), those to whom a portion of the Book was given (4:44-45), and the disbelievers (الْكَافِرِينَ) (4:101). Conversely it is also used of God to describe his relationship to the disbelievers (2:98), which points out that there is nothing inherently evil in the word. Some of the devils inspire others with gilded speech deceitfully (غُرُورًا) (6:113), and those to whom a portion of the Book was given buy error (الضَّلَالَةَ) and desire that others err (تَضَلُّوا) from the way (4:44-45). Thus the enemies should not be taken for friends (cf. 60:1).

عَادَى (to be at enmity with) is only found in 60:7. However, the meaning is clear; for, like عَدَاوَةٌ above (5:82), it is contrasted with مَوَدَّةٌ (friendship).

تَعَدَّى (to transgress, exceed the limit) occurs gives عُدْوَانٍ in this verse does not seem warranted.

three times. The meaning is plain for all are used with هُدُود (limits). After a statement of the laws of inheritance, 4:14 reads: ". . . whoever disobeys (يَعْصِي) God and goes beyond His limits (يَتَعَدَّى هُدُودَهُ), He will make him enter fire." The other two refer to God's limits on divorce, which show the same flexibility as those on forbidden foods (cf. 2:173; 6:146 above). Thus 2:229 sets up the limits and then states that it is not lawful (لَا يَحِلُّ) for the man to take part of the dowry. However, if they fear they cannot keep within the limits, the women may relinquish part of the dowry to be free without blame (جَنَاحٌ). But those who exceed the limits are the wrongdoers (الظَّالِمُونَ) (2:229), and wrong (ظَلَمَ) themselves (cf. 65:1). Here we see that as law develops, the root idea takes on a legal flavor.

إِعْتَدَى [to be wicked, to transgress (with accusative or فِي or with عَلَى of persons)] is used 15 times. It has the same essential meaning of exceeding the limits as the previous words from this root, for it too is used with

هُدُودِ اللَّهِ (2:229). And it is used with عُدُونِ 2:193-194) and تَعَدَّى (2:229) in the same sense.

Like عُدُونِ it cannot convey absolute wrongness in 2:193-194, for it is used of rightful retaliation. However,

إِعْتَدَى is wrong if it is in a form other than divinely-regulated retaliation, for we read in verse 190: ". . . fight in the way of God against those who fight against you,

but do not exceed the limit (لا تَعْتَدُوا)." Here *إِعْتَدَى* would seem to imply aggression or over-vindictiveness. It is evident from 2:193-194 that the word can be applied to transgression against both men and God.

Besides its use with the law of retaliation, it is also used of the laws of inheritance (4:13-14), the Sabbath (2:65), and divorce -- of retaining women by violence (*ضِرَارًا*) (2:231). Likewise it is used of making unlawful (*حُرْمًا*) what God has made lawful (*أَحْلًا*) (5:87). Hatred (*شَنَّانًا*) can be a cause of it (5:2), and it is associated with disobedience (*عَصَى*) (e.g., 3:111). Those who disbelieve (*كَفَرُوا*) do it (5:78) -- hence are unjust or wrongdoers (*الظَّالِمُونَ*) (5:107).

مُعْتَدِي (active participle; wicked, a transgressor) is found nine times. It is the participial form of the eighth measure and thus has the same essential meaning -- a conclusion confirmed by 2:190 where both words are used in the same context. It is used specifically of those who do not respect ties of relationship or covenants with believers (9:10), do not believe (*مَا كَانُوا لِيُؤْمِنُوا*) (10:74), and reject (*كُذِّبَ*) the day of Judgment (83:12). In the last case one is characterized as a *مُعْتَدِي* *أَثِيمًا* (a transgressor, a sinful one), thereby showing the close relationship of these terms in the Qur'an (cf. also 68:12). As we noted under *أَضَلَّ* and *أَغْوَى*, so here, God's will is involved with sinful man's. Thus we read that He seals the

hearts of the مُعْتَدُونَ (10:74).

CHAPTER VI

سوء

BACKGROUND

When we look for the etymology of سوء , we find what on the surface look like different concepts. The Hebrew has a somewhat similar word in שָׁוְ (שׁוּוּ), which in its nominal form שָׁוְ (שׁוּוּ) means emptiness or vanity or worthlessness (e.g., Ps. 60:13; Is. 59:4; Ps. 26:4). However the Ethiopic saye' (ሳይኛ) meaning baseness is more helpful,¹ being more in keeping with some of the meanings Lane gives to ساء : it was, or became, abominable, foul, unseemly, unsightly or ugly.² On the other hand Gardner³ says the idea underlying the word appears to be that of misfortune or calamity, an element which we shall see does develop in the word.

When we look for a connection between the root idea of

¹Brown, et al., p. 996; Koehler and Baumgartner, p. 951.

²Page 1457A.

³Page 2.

being base or unseemly or unsightly and the idea of harming anyone or anything, it seems logical that a transition could take place in the idea of treating one basely -- hence harming him. Such a development might be similar to that of آفة above, which as a noun can mean a bad, or evil, thing and as a verb to treat badly (Ps. 89:23)¹ -- hence to harm. Or the transition could take place through the development of the positive element of that which causes baseness or unseemliness -- hence harms.

In order to test this theory one may turn to the ancient Arabic poetry where a similar development of meaning is found. The primitive meaning of unsightliness, which may be related to baseness, is seen in the saying: يزيد القُرْطُ سُوءَ قَدَائِلِهَا ("The earrings increase the unsightliness of the back of her head.")² The secular meaning becomes even more general when a form is used of enduring a bad night (بيتة سُوء) which was like perishing (ها لكا).³ The same sense is seen in the report that certain news gave birth to a bad day (يوم سُوء) for Abdul Qais.⁴ Related to these usages is the passive element of misfortune which may be observed in the description

¹Koehler and Baumgartner, p. 951.

² ابو الفضل محمد بن مكرم بن منظور، لسان العرب، (القاهرة، ١٣٠٠-١٣٠٧ هـ) ج ٢، ص ٤٥٢، ط ٥.

³ Ibid. ج ٢، ص ٣٢١، ط ١٧.

⁴ Ibid. ج ١، ص ٨٢، ط ١٦.

"the poor mother of evil (السوء)," which is used of an old woman who was forced to commit adultery (زنى).¹

Likewise the more active element of harmfulness, or that which causes misfortune, develops. This is brought out by the use of سوء for the harmfulness of poison.²

And it is seen in the following clause: فان تصرمني

أو تسبخ جنابتي ("If you cut me off or do harm to my side").³ Even as forms from this stem develop a more general meaning, they still can convey the flavor of

harm. Thus, when someone's brother wronged a jester, the exclamation is made: "O . . . for the evil evil (للسؤأة

السؤاء)."⁴ A similar sense is seen when مُسيئاً is used almost synonymously with ظالماً in the following poem:

وكان الفؤاد بها معجباً فقد أصبح اليوم عن ذلك سالى
5 صا لا مسيئاً ولا ظالماً ولكن سدا سئوؤة في بهال

And the heart was admiring her;
And indeed today he began to forget that,
It awoke not doing evil or wrong,
But forgetting itself in beauty.

In the illustrations above moral undertones have gradually been added to the secular meanings as the element of harm became prominent. Now the moral sense becomes predominant as a form is applied to the condition or state

¹ Ibid. ج ٤، ص ٤٨٣، ط ٧.

² Ibid. ج ٦، ص ١٧٩، ط ١.

³ Ibid. ج ٥، ص ١٩٤، ط ١٨.

⁴ Ibid. ج ١١، ص ١٠، ط ١٤.

⁵ ابو الفرج الاصبهاني، كتاب الاغاني (القاهرة ١٢٢٨)، ج ٦، ص ١٥١، ط ١٦.

of a man in the following: **لَكَانَ جَمِيلٌ أَسْوَأَ النَّاسِ بِنْتَةً**
 (Jamil was the most evil of men in respect to condition.)¹

The emergence of the sense of general moral evil is confirmed by the use of forms of **سَوْءٌ** as antonyms of **إِحْسَانًا** and **الصَّالِحَاتِ**. In one case an old woman sees her evil (**سَيِّئًا**) as good (**إِحْسَانًا**).² And in the other reference the good deeds (**الصَّالِحَاتِ**) of a man are contrasted with what he does of evil (**أَسَاءَ ، يَسِيئُ**).³

QUR'ANIC USAGE

The various forms of **سَوْءٌ** occur 167 times in the Qur'an and generally correspond with the meanings given above except for the most primitive meaning of ugliness. Perhaps the nearest English equivalent is evil, for it likewise can have both physical and moral connotations.

سَاءَ [to be evil, wretched or grievous; to grieve, afflict (with accusative)] and the passive **سِيئٌ** or **سِيئَةٌ** (for **سَوَّءَ**) [to be made sad; to be vexed for (with **بِ**)] are found 30 times. Its meaning to be evil, wretched, or grievous is illustrated by the clause **سَاءَ سَبِيلًا** (It is evil as to its way) (4:22); while its meaning to grieve or afflict is found in **لِيَسُوَّءُوا وَجْوهَكُمْ** (to vex, or afflict,

¹ ابن منظور، ج 7، ص 116، ط 10.

² ابو زيد الأنصاري، كتاب النوادر في اللغة (بيروت، 1961م)، ص 105، ط 11.

³ ابن منظور، ج 1، ص 43، ط 10.

your faces) (17:7). Its passive use appears in 11:77 and 29:33, where it describes the grief Lot had for the divine messengers when they came to him. Sometimes a secular meaning prevails as in 5:101: ". . . do not ask about things which if made known to you would grieve, or afflict, you (تَسُوُّكُمْ)." At other times the moral significance is dominant as above in سَاءَ سَبِيلًا, which refers to the sin of marrying a woman who was married to one's father.

That the word is used in a general sense for evil is brought out by its contrast with حَسُنْتَ and virtually synonymous use with يَشْرَبُ in 18:29 and 31, where Hell and Heaven are contrasted thus:

Evil (يَشْرَبُ) is the drink! And ill (سَاءَتْ) is the resting-place!

Excellent (زَعَمَ) is the recompense! And goodly (حَسُنْتَ) is the resting-place!

Its antonym حَسُنْتَ is a general verb meaning to be good. And its synonym يَشْرَبُ is one of the "verbs of praise and blame" (أفعالُ الطَّحِجِ وَالذَّمِّ) meaning to be bad.¹ The context brings out a physical rather than a spiritual quality to سَاءَ, for verse 29 describes the سَاءَاتٍ مَّرْتَفَعًا as a place of fire where men are given water like molten brass which scalds their faces.

The word is used both of the wrongness of men and their actions and of the severity of their punishment. In the

¹W. Wright, A Grammar of the Arabic Language (3rd ed., Cambridge, Cambridge U.P., 1955), I, 97.

former sense it describes a companion (4:38), an example (7:177), the way of sinners (4:22), what they do (9:9), and what they judge (6:137). In the latter sense it describes the sinners' burden (20:101) and their final resort (4:97) and abode and resting-place (25:66). This last verse brings out the element of punishment in **سَاءَ**, for it is used almost synonymously with **عَرَامٌ** (affliction) in verse 65. The verb refers to both Satan (4:38) and Hell (**جَهَنَّمَ**) (4:115). Finally it refers to the sins of those who: reject (**كَذَّبُوا**) the divine signs (7:177), sell the signs of God for a small price and thus hinder from His way (9:9), commit fornication (**الزَّانِي**) (17:32), marry a woman that one's father married (4:22), and set apart a portion of tith and cattle for God and a portion for associate-gods (**لِشْرَكَاءَ**) (6:137).

سَوَاءٌ (infinitive noun of **سَاءَ** ; evil) may be applied to a man or to an action and occurs nine times in the Qur'an. Thus **رَجُلٌ سَوَاءٌ** (a man of evil nature or doings) would mean a man who does what is evil, displeasing, grievous, or vexatious.¹ The idea of baseness, noted in the discussion of the root meaning, is brought out by the contrast of **السَّوَاءُ** with the divine **الْأَعْلَى** (the highest) (16:60).

The word can be used without moral connotations, for it refers to an evil rain upon a city (undoubtedly Sodom)

¹Lane, p. 1457C.

(25:40) and an evil turn [of fortune] (9:98; 48:6). The Qāmūs and the Tāj al-ʿArūs recognize the non-moral nature of السُّوء in these last two verses and thus give it the following interpretations: defeat and evil, trial or affliction or torment, and perdition and destruction or corruption.¹

It is used of those who rejected (كَذَّبُوا) the divine messages (21:77), believed not (لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ) in the Hereafter (16:60), and wrought abomination (الْخَبَائِثَ) (21:74). And the context of 19:28 suggests that it refers to unchastity, for it is used with بَغِيًّا (harlot) and after what appears to be an implication of adultery. Finally, it refers to the evil thought (ظَنَّ السُّوءَ) of some of the men who did not take part in the Hdaybiyyah expedition because they thought the believers would not return, and that appeared fine to them (48:12; cf. 48:6).

سُوءٌ (evil) occurs 51 times in the Qur'an. It is considered the substantive from سَاءَ by the Ṣiḥāḥ, Muḥkam, and Qāmūs. But it is classified as an infinitive noun of سَيِّئٌ by the Kashshāf of az-Zamakhsharī, of سَاءَ by the Exposition of the Qur'an of al-Bayḍāwī, and of سَاءَ by the Tāj al-ʿArūs.² Penrice merely lists it as an abstract noun. It means evilness, badness, abominableness,

¹Ibid., p. 1458A, B.

²Ibid., p. 1458A.

or unseenliness; and displeasingness, grievousness, or vexatiousness; and immoral, unrighteous, sinful, or wicked conduct.¹

Penrice lists سَوَاءٌ and سُوِّءٌ together as both meaning evil. Likewise Izutsu finds difficulty distinguishing between the meanings of the two, though he differentiates between ظَنَّ السُّوِّءَ and ظَنَّ السُّوِّءَ in 48:12 on the basis of grammatical syntax. In the former, he says, سَوِّءٌ acts like an epithet of the analytic type and is literally thought of evilness, meaning an evil thought. However, in the latter, he continues, سُوِّءٌ acts as the object of ظَنَّ, which itself assumes a more verbal nature than in the former case. The translation thus becomes the thinking of evilness.²

On the other hand, the Qāmūs and the Tāj al-ʿArūs differentiate between the meanings of the two words in 25:42. They say السُّوِّءُ means harm, injury, hurt, mischief, or damage and evilness of state or condition; while السُّوِّءُ means corruption or destruction or perdition.³

However it is the view of this writer that for a number of reasons it is not fruitful to draw such fine distinctions. First, as will be demonstrated in the concluding section,

¹Ibid.

²Pages 238-239.

³Lane, p. 1458B.

the Qur'an does not as a rule choose words this precisely. Secondly, in ancient writing without vowel points it would be difficult to determine which word was intended. Thirdly, ancient scholars do not even agree among themselves as to which word is being used in some cases. Thus az-Zajjaj says that **السُّوءِ** may be read **السُّوءِ** in 48:6.¹

When we return to the ancient Arabic poetry to shed light on this form, we have difficulty distinguishing between **سُوءٌ** and **سَوَاءٌ** because of the lack of vowel pointing. However, the four illustrations of **سوء** we listed all brought out secular meanings.

Likewise the Qur'an sometimes uses **سُوءٌ** in a secular sense. In 20:22 it refers to a physical malady such as leprosy and in 16:58 to the bad news of the birth of a daughter. The context suggests misery as its meaning in 16:27. Harm or affliction is the obvious meaning in 3:173: "They returned [from Uhud] with favor (**بِنِعْمَةٍ**) from God and grace (**فَضْلٍ**); no evil (**سُوءٌ**) touched them." In 4:148 we read: "God loves not the public utterance of harmful (**السُّوءِ**) speech except by one who has been wronged (**ظَلَمَ**)." This verse points out that even when the word has a slight moral flavor it is not necessarily conveying intrinsic or absolute sin, for here it can refer to rightful retaliation.

¹ Ibid.

The words with which it is contrasted further clarify the meaning. First, it is used in opposition to رَحْمَةً (mercy) with the sense of harm (33:17). Then it is contrasted with فَخْرًا (good) in 7:188 and 3:29. In the former the flavor of harm is brought out, for the words are used of benefits and ills. Likewise the latter brings out harmfulness but also shows an ethical element, for it speaks of the day "when every soul will find present what it has done of good (خَيْرٍ) and what it has done of evil (سُوءٍ)."

In a similar, and obviously ethical, way it is contrasted with الصَّالِحَاتِ (good works) in 4:123-124 and أَصْلَاحًا (to act aright) in 6:54 and 16:119. In a context similar to that of the poem above about an old woman who saw her evil (سَيِّئًا) as though it were good (إِفْسَانًا),¹ it is contrasted with حَسَنًا in 35:8: ". . . the evil (سُوءٌ) of his work has been so adorned that he thinks it good (حَسَنًا)."

The same contrast is seen in 27:11: ". . . he who does wrong (ظَلَمَ) and then does good (حَسَنًا) instead after his evil (سُوءٌ) [fears not]. . . ." However we must guard against formulating too nice a definition from such contrasts; for in 18:86 حَسَنًا is also contrasted with تُعَذِّبُ (punish), a word with a related but slightly different meaning than سُوءٌ. Nevertheless we are safe

¹ الانصاري، ص 115، ط 11.

in drawing a general definition from 27:11, particularly as this verse also uses ظَلَمَ (do wrong) in a synonymous way. Also it is used in a way similar to يَظْلِمُونَ in 4:110 [cf. 7:165 where it is associated with ظَلَمُوا and يَفْسُقُونَ (they transgressed)].

Other words with which سُوءٌ is compared bring out its more secular side. Thus it is used almost synonymously with ضَرًّا (harm) in 7:188, with عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ (grievous chastisement) in 16:94, and بَشْسٌ (evil) in 13:18 (cf. 4:115 where it was used with سَاءَاتٍ). Az-Zajjāj explains سُوءَ الْحِسَابِ (the evilness of the reckoning) here in 13:18 as meaning a reckoning in which no good work will be accepted and no evil work passed over because the former will have been made of no avail by infidelity. Others interpret the phrase as meaning a reckoning that is pursued to the utmost extent and in which no evil work will be passed over.¹ But, however we interpret the phrase, the meaning of سُوءٌ here is clear. It is evil in the sense of that which causes harm or misery.

As سُوءٌ was used of those who did not believe (16:60; 21:77) so سُوءٌ is used of disbelievers (الكافرين) (9:37) and those who do not respond (لَمْ يَسْتَجِيبُوا) to their Lord (13:18). The evidence of disbelief in the former is the changing of a sacred month which thus makes lawful what God

¹Lane, p. 1485A.

has forbidden (**مَنْعًا**). Another specific sin described by **سُوءًا** is the deed, which the Qur'an ascribes to Pharaoh, of having Haman build a tower to reach the God of Moses, who Pharaoh thought was a liar (40:36-37).

Like **السُّوء** in the poem of the woman who committed adultery (**زَنَى**)¹ and like **سُوءًا** in 19:28, **سُوءًا** may refer to sexual license. Thus, when the wife of the Egyptian sought to seduce (**رَاوَدَتْ**) Joseph, the act is called

السُّوء (evil) and **الفَحْشَاءُ** (indecency) (12:23-25).

In verse 24 az-Zajjaj interprets the words as unfaithfulness to his master and adultery.² However, it is not warranted to ascribe the meaning unfaithfulness to his master to

السُّوء, for in the following verse the word is used of adultery alone.

Finally, the word is used by Joseph in the sequel of the story: "I call not myself free from guilt (**أَبْرَأْتُ**); surely the soul incites to evil (**السُّوء**), except those on whom my Lord has mercy (12:53)." Obviously the meaning here is moral, and the context suggests that **السُّوء** refers to licentiousness. The last part of 12:53 resurrects the problem of the involvement of God in human evil, for it suggests that God is able to alleviate evil.

Part of the solution is found in 13:11 which states,

¹ ابن منظور، ج 4، ص 483، ط 1.

² Lane, p. 1458A.

"God changes not the condition of a people until they change their own condition." But God remains sovereign, for it continues, ". . . when God intends evil (**سُوْءٌ**) to a people, there is no averting it." However, **سُوْءٌ** here refers more to punishment than to morality; so it is not very helpful. Much more light is shed by 35:8 which states: ". . . the evil (**سُوْءٌ**) of his work has been so adorned that he thinks it good (**حَسَنًا**). God leadeth astray (**يُضِلُّ**) whom He will and guideth (**يَهْدِي**) whom He will." Not only does **سُوْءٌ** have a moral sense here, but the final statement explains the first by showing that God is involved in some way.

Another problem which the word raises for us is the relation between knowledge and culpability. A number of verses indicate that **سُوْءٌ** can be committed in ignorance (**بِجَهَالَةٍ**) (4:17; 6:54; 16:119), and to be forgiven one must turn and act aright (**أَمْرًا**). As the element of harm is so prominent in this word, one can readily see how one can be guilty of **سُوْءٌ** without conscious disobedience or rebellion.

سَيِّئٌ (bad, wicked, or evil) is used both as a substantive and an adjective and occurs four times in the Qur'an. Lane also adds the following meanings: abominable, foul, unseemly, unsightly, or ugly;¹ but the Qur'anic words,

¹Page 1458B.

though flavored by these meanings, are used in a more ethical sense. In the poem about the old woman, the contracted form of the word (سَيِّئَةٌ) is contrasted with إِحْسَانٌ (good), thus bringing out its general use for evil or bad.¹ This use carries into the Qur'an where it is contrasted with صَالِحٌ (9:102) -- a word which Penrice defines as good, sound, free from blemish, perfect, upright, righteous.

In 17:31-38 the sins of which it is used are: killing children for fear of poverty (which is a great wrong, or mistake -- خِطَاءٌ كَبِيرًا); killing the soul which God has forbidden (هُرْمٌ), except for a just cause, or exceeding (سُرْفٌ) the limit in slaying; embezzling orphan's property; being dishonest in business; following that of which one has no knowledge; and going about in an insolent manner (مَرَحًا).

سَيِّئَةٌ (evil, a sin, evil action) is found 58 times in the Qur'an. Lane includes the element of intentional disobedience among his definitions.² In this connection we might note that in 4:17-18 سَوْءٌ is used for evil committed in ignorance (بِجَهَالَةٍ) but soon repented of (so also in 6:54 and 16:19), while سَيِّئَاتٌ is used of evil deeds committed until death. In view of the close etymological relation between these words it would be perilous to draw much significance from the verses other than to note the frequency with which سَوْءٌ is used with

¹ سَيِّئَةٌ is a contraction of سَيِّئَةٌ, Lane, p. 1458C.

² page 1459A.

بِجَهَالَةٍ, and the way the plural form of سَيِّئَاتِهِ lends itself to describe repeated action.

The latter is closely related to the simple verb سَاءَ as is seen by their use together in 29:4. And we notice the same development in the meaning of the substantive seen earlier in the verb. Thus سَيِّئًا can mean a disagreeable or harmful state of affairs or a wrong state or action. We notice the former meaning in 11:10 where the word is used as a synonym of مَرَدَاءٌ (distress).

Gradually we get a transition from physical evil to the moral evil which causes it. A step in this direction is seen in the words كَسَبَ سَيِّئَةً (he earned evil) (2:81; 10:27).¹ The moral element dominates in the similar saying عَمِلُوا الشَّيْئَاتِ (they worked evil) (7:153). In this verse the working of evil is associated with a state of unbelief. Likewise the full moral meaning is obvious in 2:271: "If you manifest almsgiving, it is well. And if you hide it and give to the poor, it is good for you; and it will atone for your evil deeds (سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ)."

To develop a more precise understanding of the word it would be helpful for us to see other ones with which it is contrasted or associated. First, like سُوْءٌ it is contrasted with رَحْمَةٌ (mercy) in 30:36, thus bringing out the element of harm or affliction. Its most common antonym,

¹For the significance of كَسَبَ see Torrey, pp. 27-29.

however, is حسن. In 7:95 we read: "We changed the evil (السَّيِّئَةَ) for good (الْحَسَنَةَ), till they became affluent and said: Distress (الضَّرَّاءُ) and happiness (السَّرَّاءُ) did indeed touch our fathers." Here we not only see the general nature of السَّيِّئَةَ by its contrast with الْحَسَنَةَ, but it is defined by being equated with الضَّرَّاءُ (cf. 11:10 above).

Another instructive example is 7:131: ". . . when good (الْحَسَنَةَ) befell them, they said: This is due to us; and, when evil (بِئْسَاءُ) afflicted them, they drew bad omens (يُظَاهِرُوا) from Moses. Is not their bad omen (ظَاهِرُهُمْ) God?" Here again the context proves that the word means distress or harm; for, not only is it contrasted with الْحَسَنَةَ, but it is connected with يُظَاهِرُوا [to augur evil, draw an evil augury from (with ب)] and (a flying thing, an omen -- especially an evil one).

Though other secular examples of سَيِّئَة and حَسَنَة might be given (e.g., 3:119; 4:78; 7:168), we shall turn to an example where the words share in both moral and secular connotations: ". . . whoever intercedes in a good (حَسَنَةً) cause has a share of it, and whoever intercedes in an evil (سَيِّئَةً) cause has a portion of it" (4:85; cf. 10:27). Likewise other examples of these words are clearly moral -- for instance, 11:114: ". . . keep up prayer. . . Surely good deeds (الْحَسَنَاتِ) take away evil deeds (السَّيِّئَاتِ)" (cf. 25:70).

In 40:40 صَالِحًا, a different word for ethical good, is made the antonym of سَيِّئَةً. But in 45:21 السَّيِّئَاتِ is contrasted with آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ (believe and do good works), which suggests that the Qur'anic use of سَيِّئَاتِ has an additional element of unbelief -- a factor already noted in سُوْءًا (16:60; 21:77) and سُوْءًا (9:37). A new word is added in 2:81-82 where فَطِيئَةً (sin) as well as سَيِّئَةً are contrasted with آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ. Lane makes فَطِيئَةً a synonym of سَيِّئَةً.¹ This is correct whenever the latter is used as just a general word for evil in the sense of sin; but as we have seen سَيِّئَةً often conveys a sense of harm quite foreign to فَطِيئَةً.

Another word associated with سَيِّئَةً is ذُنُوبٌ in 3:192: "O Lord, grant us protection from our sins (ذُنُوبِنَا) and remove our evils (سَيِّئَاتِنَا)." One might draw the conclusion that ذُنُوبٌ here referred to great sins and سَيِّئَاتِ to little sins on the basis of 4:31: "If you shun the great things (كَبِيرًا) which you are forbidden (تَنْهَوْنَ), we shall do away with your evil deeds (سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ)."

However this is a dangerous conclusion. First, it is not likely that ذُنُوبٌ would be used to express only great sins when it was used of Muhammad himself (40:57; 27:21; 48:2). Secondly, though a definite distinction is

¹page 1459A.

made between **كِبَائِر** and **سَيِّئَات** in 4:31, various forms of the root **سوء**, which are closely related in meaning, are used for great sins. These include the sins of those who falsely reject (**كَذَّبُوا**) the divine signs (7:177), setting aside portions of produce for associate-gods (**لِشْرَكَائِهِ**) (6:137), and believe not (**لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ**) in the Hereafter (16:60). Nevertheless, the various forms of **سوء** with their flavor of harm sometimes tend to be lower on the scale of culpability than some of those which express ideas such as rebellion to the divine will (cf. 4:148).

سَوَاءٌ (shame, secret parts) occurs seven times in the Qur'an. In 7:20 and 20:121 it refers to the secret parts or shame of Adam and Eve. As the word does not make a significant contribution to our understanding of the Qur'anic concept of sin, we need not pursue it further other than to note that it is closer to the suggested root meaning of **سوء** than any of the other forms in the Qur'an. Were we just to look at the Qur'an or such secondary sources as Gardner and Izutsu, with their emphasis on the element of harm and evil, we might not understand how the meaning of **سَوَاءٌ** was related to that of the other forms of **سوء**. However, Comparative Semitics and the ancient poem on the unsightly woman¹ suggest that a primitive meaning of the root is unsightliness, and the other meanings develop from this.

¹ ابن منظور، ج 1، ص 182، ط 17.

أَفْسَأَ (relative form, worse, worst) occurs twice in the Qur'an. The meaning is certain, for it is contrasted with أَفْسَنَ (the relative adjective meaning best) (39:35). The ancient Arabic poetry showed its use for the most evil of men in respect to condition.¹ In its second Qur'anic usage it refers to the worst of the actions of those who disbelieve (كَفَرُوا) (41:27).

أَفْسَاءَ (to do evil) is found five times in the Qur'an. The meaning is obvious. As it was contrasted with الصالحات (good things) in the Arabic poem,² so it is contrasted with عَمِلَ صَالِحًا (does good) in 41:46 and 45:15. Likewise it is contrasted with أَفْسَنَ (the causative form of another word for good) (17:7; 53:31). In 30:10 أَفْسَاءَ is particularly used of the sin of those who rejected (يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ) the signs of God and mocked (كَذَّبُوا) at them.

مُتَّبِعٌ (an evildoer) occurs only in 40:58, which reads: ". . . the blind (الْأَعْمَى) and the seeing (الْبَصِيرُ) are not alike nor those who believe and do good (آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ) and the evildoer (الْمُتَّبِعُ). The double contrast is set up with the balance of a mathematical ratio, making the meaning certain. And the addition

¹ Ibid. ج ٦، ص ١٩٤، ط ١٠.

² Ibid. ج ١١، ص ٤٣٧، ط ١٥.

of **اٰمَنُوْا** to **الضَّالِّاتِ** suggests that an element of unbelief is associated with the Qur'anic use of **مُسِيْرًا**, as we have noticed with other words from the same root (**سَوَاءً** in 16:60 and 12:77; **سُوْءًا** in 9:37; **سَيِّئَاتٍ** in 45:21).

CHAPTER VII

ذنب

BACKGROUND

Sweetman says that the root gives no clue concerning the meaning of the word.¹ However Comparative Semitics make it possible to suggest the development of thought. The root means tail or end according to the Hebrew zānāb (זָנַב), the Akkadian zabbatu and zimbatu, the Assyrian zibbatu, the Aramaic danbā' (ܕܢܒܐ) and dunbā' (ܕܘܢܒܐ), and the Ethiopic zanab (ንጎን).²

Al-Isfahānī traces the development of the word from the idea of taking the tail of a thing to every act of which the consequence is disagreeable or unwholesome.³ In this case abomination or unseemliness would be the underlying idea. Sweetman suggests another tack: "It may have the significance

¹Part I, vol. II, p. 195.

²Koehler and Baumgartner, p. 260B; Brown, et al., p. 275A.

³Quoted in M. M. 'Ali, pp. 131, 132, but the original text not available to the writer.

of being overtaken by a fault or rather that which overtakes man, in somewhat the same way as the idiom is used, 'If anyone be overtaken in a fault,'¹ This view, that to be overtaken is the primitive idea, may receive some support from the simple verb ذنب , which is not found in the Qur'an but means to follow closely.

However, the use of zinnēb (ذنَّب) (the Piel form of the Hebrew verb) suggests a third approach. It means to cut off or smite the tail or rear. Thus in Joshua 10:19 and Deuteronomy 25:18 it is used of attacking or smiting in the rear.² Though this usage lends some support to Sweetman's suggestion, it seems to favor the view that the underlying idea is the guilt which arises from harming someone as in a rear attack.

But, whatever the correct etymology may be, the ancient Arabic poetry indicates that the root idea had been replaced by a new general concept prior to the first period of Islam, for it uses ذنب as a general word for sin.³

QUR'ANIC USAGE

The root idea is lost in the Qur'an where ذنب is a general word for sin. It occurs 37 times in the sense of

¹part I, vol. II, p. 195.

²Koehler and Baumgartner, p. 260B; Brown, et al., p. 275B.

³ الانصاري، ص ١٠، ط ٨.

sin, the two uses of ذَنْبٌ in 51:59 not being relevant to our discussion.

ذَنْبٌ (plural ذُنُوبٌ ; a crime, fault, sin) is the only form other than ذَنْبٌ . Lane also gives the meanings: a misdemeanor, a misdeed, an unlawful deed, an offence, a transgression, or an act of disobedience.¹ Stanton says that the word "refers chiefly to ceremonial offences";² but, as we shall see, this statement is not correct. For example, it is used of those who disbelieve the signs of God (8:52) and falsely reject His messages (3:10). That it is a general word and that it conveys a sense of moral guilt are patent (cf. 39:53). The regular sense of guilt makes it a more ethically advanced term than some occurrences of سوء , which often do not convey guilt.

We have previously noted the use of ذَنْبٌ with سَيِّئَاتٍ in 3:193. At that time the writer explained that it was dangerous to differentiate between the two as large sins and small sins respectively, even though the latter is contrasted with كَبِيرٌ in 4:31. However the problem is not so great with other general words for it is made synonymous with فُسُوقٌ or فُسُوقٌ (transgression) by its use with فُصِّقُونَ (transgressors) in 5:49. And it is equated with مَطِيئَةٌ (sin) by its use with مُطَّئِنٌ

¹Page 979.

²Page 56.

(sinners) in 12:29 and 97. The latter identification, as has been noted, finds support in the parallelism of Abū'l-
'Atāhiya:

Forgive my sins (ذُنُوبِي) because they are too much,
And cover my errors (خَطَايَايَ) because Thou art the
Coverer.¹

Likewise it is used to refer to the sin of those who commit indecency (فَاِمْشَتْة) or wrong (ظَلَمُوا) themselves (3:134). In keeping with the former it is used of the sin of the woman who tried to seduce (رَاوَدَ) Joseph and then blamed him (12:23-29). In the following verse

مَثَلٍ مُّبِينٍ (manifest error) is used of the same act, hence indirectly associated with ذَنْبٌ . Also associated with ذَنْبٌ are the sins of those who have low desires (اَهْوَاءٌ), seduce you (يَفْتِنُوكَ) from part of what God has revealed, and turn away (تَوَلَّوْا) (5:49).

It is used to describe the sins of those who disbelieved (كَفَرُوا) after they had received clear arguments (40:21-22) and denied (كَذَّبُوا) the divine messages (3:10; 8:54) and messenger (9:13-14). Related to the above is a passage where it is used of the sin of Korah, Pharaoh, and Haman, who behaved haughtily (اسْتَكْبَرُوا) (29:39-40). On the other hand it is used of men who are not totally evil, for it refers to the sins of those who mixed a good deed (صَالِحًا) with another that was evil (سَيِّئًا) (9:102). And it is used

¹ ابو العاصية ، ص ١٢٠ .
Arabic text on page 22.

of the crime (ذَنْبٌ) that the people of Pharaoh charged against Moses for the man he had killed (26:14).

Finally, it is used of the Prophet himself, thus raising the problem of whether or not he sinned -- a problem about which there is considerable difference of opinion. This divergence is particularly found among more recent commentators. Thus E. M. Wherry does not hesitate to speak of "the sins of the Prophet" in 48:1-2.¹ M. M. 'Ali, on the other hand, says of the same reference, "the Prophet never committed a sin."² There are three references where ذَنْبٌ is used of the Prophet: 40:55; 47:19; 48:1-2. These will be considered first and then two more (4:105; 9:43) will be discussed which, although they do not use ذَنْبٌ, yet seem to ascribe a sin or fault to the Prophet. Then all the verses will be evaluated together.

In 40:55 we read: ". . . ask pardon for thy ذَنْبٌ, and give glory with praise of the Lord in the morning and in the evening." M. M. 'Ali (a contemporary exegete) agrees that this clause refers to the Prophet but says:

The words . . . do not negative the claim made repeatedly that the Prophet was sinless. . . . the Holy Prophet is described . . . as being one who purified others from sin, in 2:129, 151; 3:163; 9:103; and 62:3. How can a sinful man purify others from sin? . . . Again, the Holy Prophet is repeatedly

¹A Comprehensive Commentary on the Qur'an (London, 1882-85), IV, 59.

²Page 968n.

spoken of in the Holy Qur'an as walking in the way of perfect righteousness and entire submission to Allah.¹

Then he goes on to add some lesser arguments.

When we return to the most ancient commentators, however, we do not see them explaining away the clause. In fact they do not even pause to give it extra consideration but treat it as a very understandable statement. At-Tabarī (d. 922 A.D.)² paraphrases God's statement to Muhammad as follows: "Ask God forgiveness for your ذنب , and ask him for forgiveness."³ It is interesting that at-Tabarī goes to greater length explaining the latter part of the verse than the former, for he continues, "and pray thankfully in the evening (from sunset until night) and in the morning (from dawn until sunrise)."⁴

Al-Baidāwī (d. 1286 A.D.)⁵ likewise uses the singular in his commentary -- hence refers the clause to Muhammad. He writes:

Ask protection for your ذنب and follow the orders of your religion. If you have made any mistakes, take care of them from the start and very quickly. Keep on asking for forgiveness. He [God] will be beside you.⁶

¹Page 90ln.

²Reynold A. Nicholson, A Literary History of the Arabs (New York, 1907), p. 145.

³الطبري، ج ١٤، ص ٤٥.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Nicholson, p. 145.

⁶البيضاوي، ج ٤، ص ٥٥٦.

We find a similar clause in 47:19 which reads: ". . . seek pardon for thy ذنب; and for the believers, male and female." Al-Mahallī and al-Suyūṭī (1445-1505 A.D.)¹ record the tradition that the Prophet said, "I ask forgiveness from God a hundred times a day."² But some commentators believe that he was commanded to ask forgiveness, not because he wanted it, but in order to be an example to the Muslims; hence he made the above statement.³ It should be noted, however, that these commentators are later than Aṭ-Ṭabarī and al-Baiḍāwī.

Al-Baiḍāwī amplifies the same passage as follows:

You must know there is not but one God, and you must keep asking for God's forgiveness and protection. And, when you understand the happiness of believers and the misery of unbelievers, this is done by . . . improving your situation and deeds. And keep on asking protection from God for your ذنب and those of the believers.⁴

The final passage in which ذنب is used of the Prophet is 48:1-2: "Surely we have given thee a manifest victory, that God may forgive thee thy former and thy latter ذنب." Once again M. M. 'Alī defends his thesis by writing:

The word dhanbi-ka . . . has been misunderstood as meaning thy sin. In the first place dhanb means any shortcoming, not necessarily a sin. . . . Secondly, the Prophet never committed a sin and his istighfar

¹Nicholson, pp. 454-455.

²مداد الدين المكي وجمال الدين السيوطي، تفسير الجلالين (مصر، 1884م)، ص 179.

³Sale, p. 378n.

⁴البيضاوي، ص 17، 18.

meant the asking of Divine protection against the commission of sins. . . . Dhanbi-ka . . . here means not the sin committed by thee but the sin committed against thee or the shortcomings attributed to thee

For the converse view we have ancient and more modern exegetes. Of the latter, Wherry says that the victory at Khaibar was "the earnest of the pardon of the sins of the Prophet."¹ Sale interprets "that God may forgive thee" as meaning: "That God may give thee an opportunity of deserving forgiveness by eradicating of idolatry and exalting his true religion, and the delivering of the weak from the hands of the ungodly. . . ." ²

Zamakhshari (d. 1143 A.D.)³ spells out the دنب in more detail saying, "It means all that you have done and the fights that were in the Jahiliyyah and what has taken place later."⁴ He even goes so far as to indicate that it had been said that the "former" دنب refers to Maria [with whom he is reported to have lain] and the "latter" دنب to Zeid's wife [whom he married].⁵ But Wherry counters: "It is hardly possible that the allusion here should be to

¹ Loc. cit.

² Page 379n.

³ Nicholson, p. 145.

⁴ ابو القاسم محمود بن عمر الزمخشري، كشاف عن حقائق التنزيل والقرآن (صحة وليم ناسو ليس، كلكته، ١٨٥٦-٥٦)، ج ٢، ص ١٣٧٢.

⁵ Ibid.

the affairs of Zainab and Mary, for in these he professed to have the sanction of Divinity."¹ It is not necessary for us to solve this disagreement but just to note that these writers both ascribe sin to the Prophet.

Al-Baīdāwī has a very instructive interpretation of the ذنب in the passage. First, he indicates that verse one refers to the opening of the way to Mecca through such raids as those of Khaybar and Hudaibiyah. Then he replaces ذنب in verse two by علة, which in this context would refer to a mental illness. The verse thus reads, "May God forgive your illness." The reason given is that it is caused by worthy efforts (to make religion higher, remove الشرك, and complete the souls that are lacking), but these efforts have become bad because force was used.²

If al-Baīdāwī's use of علة is correct, ذنب might better be translated as fault rather than sin in this context; and its meaning would be similar to that of 9:102 where it is used to describe the mixing of a good deed (عَمَلًا صَالِحًا) with another that is evil (سَيِّئًا). Obviously, however, ذنب and علة are not exact equivalents; but a fuller treatment of ذنب will be reserved until two other verses are considered which seem to attribute a fault or sin to Muhammad -- hence throw indirect

¹Vol. IV, p. 60n.

البيضاوي، ص ٤٨، ١٦-٢.

light on the possible meanings of ذنب .

The first of these is 4:105 which reads: "Ask forgiveness (استغفر) of God." The word استغفر is the same word used above; hence we conclude that the verse has essentially the same meaning though the details may be different. M. M. 'Ali says that the injunction is meant "for every Muslim who is called upon to act as a judge."¹ However, the context is in the singular, and the previous verse reads: ". . . We have revealed the book to thee . . . that thou mayest judge between people by means of what God has taught thee." These imply that the Prophet is being addressed.

At-Tabarī even supplies the word ذنب and mentions the Prophet by name. He writes, "O Muhammad, ask Him to forgive you your ذنب in your not breaking relations with the traitor who has betrayed some money belonging to another." In his comment on the next clause he again supplies ذنب and names the Prophet. Thus it reads:

God still forgives the ذنب of His worshipers; and He does this by not punishing them if they have asked for His forgiveness. . . . Do this also, Muhammad; God will forgive you what has been shown you concerning your attitude about the traitor.

He also records this slightly different tradition: "It was said that the Prophet . . . had not really done this [taken the side of the traitor], but he had intended to do that, and God had ordered him to ask forgiveness for what he had intended

¹Page 220n.

to do."¹

Al-Baidawi records a humorous story which is more in keeping with the latter account. It seems a certain **طعمة** from the tribe of **ظفر** had stolen a coat of mail from

قتادة and put it in a sack of flour, which left a stream of flour all the way to the house of **زيد**, a Jew. **طعمة** was investigated, but he swore he had not taken the coat and did not know anything about it; so they left and followed the line of flour to the Jew's house, where they found the coat. The Jew said that **طعمة** had given it to him and produced witnesses from among his people. Therefore the Muslim tribe of **ظفر** went to the Prophet to induce him to take their side; so the Jew would not be declared innocent and **طعمة** destroyed. The Prophet was on the point of doing this, but followed the guidance of God. Thus he was to ask forgiveness for what he was on the point of doing.²

The final verse to be considered is 9:43: "God forgive thee (**عَفَا اللَّهُ عَنْكَ**)! Why didst thou permit them until it was clear to thee who spoke truly, and thou didst know who were the ones who were lying?" M. M. 'Ali asserts: "'Afā-llāhu 'an-ka . . . does not convey the significance of pardon of sins; it is rather the equivalent of Allah bless thee! or may Allah set thy affairs aright!"³

¹ الطبري، ج ٥، ص ١٦٩.

² البيضاوي، ص ٢٢٩.

³Page 396n.

However, al-Baīḍāwī, who was closer to the original usage of the saying, does not explain them in this way. He even uses the word **فطية** to describe a permission which Muhammad had granted, and he amplifies the verse so it reads: "For what reason did you permit them to rest when they asked you for permission, giving false excuses? You have not stopped or waited to know who they were that had not lied and who they were that were liars." Then he concludes by reporting: "It was said that the Prophet had done two things that he had not been ordered to do -- his taking the ransom and his giving the permission to the liars. Hence God has blamed him for them."¹

On the basis of all these verses this writer is of the opinion that when **ذنب** is applied to the Prophet it can mean sin, as defined above.² First, **ذنب** is applied to the Prophet as even M. M. 'Ali assumes,³ and as the separate reference to the believers in 47:19 proves. Elsewhere it has always indicated sin. Why then should it mean anything different here, unless one can find statements to the contrary?

M. M. 'Ali lists no direct negations, only Qur'anic statements which he believes are inconsistent with a sinful Prophet. On the other hand, this writer feels that the

¹ البيضاوي، ص ٤٣٦.

² pages 7 and 8.

³ pages 90ln. and 964n.

demand for a sinless Prophet is inconsistent with Muhammad's view of himself and the Qur'anic view of revelation. In the former Muhammad claims that he is only a messenger (72:21-23). And in the latter, the Qur'an states that it is the verbatim Word of God (cf. 2:97; 26:192-194; 43:40; 85:21-22). Why then must the Prophet be sinless as he is not part of the revelation but only a channel?

Secondly, both the use of **اسْتَغْفِر** in 40:55 and 47:19 and the use of **لِيَغْفِرَ** in 48:2 suggest that **ذَنْب** refers to a sin that must be forgiven or covered. Thirdly, M. M. 'Ali's contention, that **ذَنْبِكَ** in 48:2 means the sin committed against thee or the shortcomings attributed to thee, is artificial and certainly not the plain or simplest meaning of **ذَنْبِكَ**.

Fourthly, we have seen that early commentators attributed faults or sins to Muhammad. It was only later that the doctrine of a sinless Prophet arose -- perhaps through the influence of Christians with their claim to a sinless Christ. We conclude, therefore, that we can retain the normal meaning of **ذَنْب** (as fault, sin, or crime) even when it refers to Muhammad. We must bear in mind, however, that the present study has shown **ذَنْب** to be such a general word that it can refer to small faults as well as great sins, and intention need not always be implied.

CHAPTER VIII

أَنْتَم

BACKGROUND

Etymologically أَنْتَم seems to be related to the Hebrew 'āšam (אָשַׁם), though the thā and the shīn do not make a normal correspondence. Friedrich Heinrich Wilhelm Gesenius considered the first meaning of this word to fail in duty or to become guilty. He supports his argument by reference to the Ethiopic ḥeṣham (ሐሰም) meaning fault and 'ahshama (ሉሐሰም) meaning to do amiss. He says that the primary idea is to be sought in that of negligence, especially in going or in gait. Thus أَنْتَم is used of a slow-paced camel who is faltering and weary.¹ This sense is likewise found in a use of أَنْتَم in the Muḥkam, where it refers to a slow she-camel. And aṣ-Ṣaghanī uses مَوَّانْتَم of that which is slack or slow in pace or going.²

However, the Ethiopic to which Gesenius refers seems

¹ Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures, tr. Samuel Prideaux Trigelles (New York, 1895), p. 86A.

² Lane, p. 22A, C.

to have another underlying idea. The word hāshama (ሐሠዕ) can mean foul, filthy, abominable, detestable, ugly, or unsightly (foedus, turpis); and thence convey the idea of to be displeasing (displicere) or to be physically, intellectually, or morally bad (malus esse). Likewise the form hesham (ኧሠዎ) can convey a sense of unsightliness and foulness or deformity (turpitude, deformitas). Or it can convey the idea of a hurting, injury or calamity (laesio, malum). Finally, along with the idea of foulness and deformity (foeditas) or harm (malefactum), it develops the idea of disgrace, dishonesty, infamy, or shame (dedecus).¹

Not only is the meaning of the Ethiopic somewhat different, but it is difficult to account for the hā in Ethiopic when there is an alif in Arabic and Hebrew. Nevertheless, even the revised and enlarged edition of Gesenius's lexicon by Brown, Driver, and Briggs, mentions the same Ethiopic root as having a possible relation to □ሠላ and أَنَم. But they omit Gesenius's statement that negligence is the primary idea of □ሠላ. Rather they just develop the idea of offence and guilt.²

This writer concludes that □ሠላ and أَنَم are probably related etymologically because their meanings are similar, and only the thā and shīn correspondence is not a normal one. How-

¹Dillmann, Chrestomathia Aethiopica, p. 168.

²pages 79B-80A.

ever, because the Ethiopic also has the ha, there is little likelihood that it is related. Hence the most that may validly be said for the Arabic root is that it has developed the meaning of offence or guilt. This might have evolved from the idea of failure to perform duty, seen in the Arabic references to slow camels; but one may not project further back on the basis of the Ethiopic to suggest that displeasure or physical badness is more primitive. However, such projection is unnecessary, for by the time of the Qur'an the idea of guilt or sin has become the overwhelming one of this root. Thus أَنْتَمَ means to sin, commit a sin or crime, or do what is unlawful; and أَنْتَمَ means to pronounce guilty.¹

QUR'ANIC USAGE

The various forms of أَنْتَمَ occur 48 times in the Qur'an but without any remnant of their primitive root meaning. However, they carry on the very fully developed concept of guilt.

إِنْتَمَ (a sin, guilt, iniquity) is found 35 times. Some consider it an infinitive noun and others a simple substantive. To the above meanings Lane also adds a fault, an offence, or an act of disobedience.² Its general nature is implied by the fact that it and العُدْوَانِ (malice) are

¹Lane, pp. 21C-22A, and Penrice.

²pages 21C-22A.

contrasted with the general words البر (righteousness) and التقوى (piety) (5:2).¹

Likewise light is shed on the word by those with which it is associated. In 5:62 إِثْمٌ is called بِئْسَ (evil). It is associated with اِغْتَدَى (to exceed the limit), and those who are thus described are wrongdoers (الظالمين) and transgressing people (القوم الفاسقين) (5:107; cf. 4:110-112; 5:3, 28). And in 4:112 it is related to بُهْتَانًا (calumny). All these words, with which it is used in a somewhat synonymous way, are general terms for sin.

Though the above words show its general nature, إِثْمٌ is a word which particularly stresses culpability or guilt. In 4:112 we read: ". . . whoever commits a فَطِيئَةٌ or an إِثْمًا, then accuses an innocent one of it, he indeed takes upon himself the burden of a بُهْتَانًا and a manifest إِثْمًا." Of this additional crime إِثْمٌ and بُهْتَانٌ are used, thus evidencing the culpability inherent in them. Furthermore, in 49:12 we read that الظَّنُّ (suspicion) sometimes (بَعْضٌ) is إِثْمٌ. This quality which makes it إِثْمٌ would seem to be guilt.

Many passages illustrate the guilt found in the word. Thus, if someone does a permitted thing, there is no إِثْمٌ

¹It seems that Gardner is going beyond the text when he makes this verse support his opinion that the word expressed "the action done to another in revenge or in requital for supposed injury or evil done by that person, but of which he is innocent" (p. 9).

on him (2:203). Even if one does a forbidden thing there is no إِثْمٌ on him if he does it through necessity, without lusting (بِأَعْيُنِهِ) or exceeding the limit (عَادٍ) (2:173). And in 5:107 we read: "If it be discovered that they [the witnesses] are guilty of (lit. deserving of -- يَسْتَوْفُوا) إِثْمًا , two others shall stand up. . . ." Here the use of استوف points out the culpability. Finally, in places such as 2:203 above we find it used in the same way as جُنَاحٌ (blame) and in similar contexts (e.g., 2:158). The obvious conclusion is that it means the same thing.

Lane says that, though إِثْمٌ and ذَنْبٌ are synonyms, the former is intentional; while the latter is both intentional and unintentional.¹ We have seen in 5:3 and 2:173 that intention is involved in إِثْمٌ . Further we have seen, by its use with الظَّنُّ (suspicion) in 49:12, that even the attitude without the outward act may constitute إِثْمٌ . In this same vein is 6:121 which enjoins: ". . . avoid the open sins (or the outside of sin -- ظَاهِرُ الْإِثْمِ) and the secret ones (or the inside thereof -- بَاطِنُهُ)." Al-Baidawi gives two possible interpretations for this. The first is that it refers to what is announced and what is secret -- for example, open or secret prostitution. The second interpretation is that it refers to sins of action or sins of the heart.² The latter interpretation seems like the more

¹Page 22A.

²البيضاوي، ص 7، آ 11

probable injunction; and, if so, it combines with the other verses to suggest the inwardness of sin.

Besides referring to inward intention, it can refer to harm (as did the Ethiopic word above). This harm can be merely false charges against a person.¹ Such is the case in 24:11 where it refers to the charges against 'Ayisha. Or it can refer to the sin of those who undeservedly affront believers (33:58). Or it can be used of overt acts such as killing (5:28) or combining to expel people from their homes (2:85). Likewise the idea of harm is suggested by its contrast with مَنَافِع (advantage) in 2:219: "In both [wine and gambling] is إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ and مَنَافِع for men, and their إِثْمٌ is greater than their نَفْعٌ."

In its use for harm it is associated with the Qur'anic social legislation. Thus it is used of the guilt of those who change a will (2:181), of a sinful course on the part of a testator (2:182), and of false testimony (5:107). Likewise it can refer to social legislation outside of court such as the swallowing up of other men's property (2:188). In a statement of what we might term the "Moral Law," إِثْمٌ is forbidden (حُرْمَةٌ) (7:33).

On the other hand, إِثْمٌ is also used to describe violation of taboo in its more "ceremonial" manifestations.

¹ However we cannot use 4:20 to support this, as Gardner does (p. 9); for بُهْتَانٌ (slander) and إِثْمٌ are only words used of the same action and are not necessarily equivalent as a result.

Thus we see its use for willful eating of forbidden food (2:173; 5:3). In fact Stanton claims that it is used largely of ceremonial offences.¹ But the verses above plus the ones we shall now consider show this to be an overstatement. It is used of the greatest of moral sins. Thus **إِثْمًا مُبِينًا** (manifest sin) is used of the act of those who forge the lie (**يَفْتَرُونَ . . . الكَذِبَ**) against God (4:50). And the word is used of the actions of those who disbelieve and buy disbelief (3:176-177). Finally, it is used of the unforgivable sin **شُرَكَ**, which is called **إِثْمًا عَظِيمًا** (a great sin) (4:48).

In this latter category, of its use for great sins, is 53:32 where it is used in **كِبْرًا إِثْمًا** and contrasted with **الْأَثْمَ**. The latter word means literally that which is near. It then comes to be applied to what is near being a sin -- hence small faults. Thus we see the breadth of the Qur'anic use of **إِثْمًا**. On the one hand it can refer to sins such as suspicion (**الظَّنُّ**) in 49:12; and, on the other, it can refer to the great sins we have just considered. The unifying element it bears in all is that of guilt.

أَنْتَامَ (punishment for wickedness) shows a still further development in meaning. It is only found in 25:68 where it refers to the requital of sin which those who commit fornication (**يَزْنُونَ**) will meet.

¹Page 56.

آثِمٌ (active participle; one who sins, an evildoer) appears only three times. Twice it describes those who conceal testimony (2:283; 5:106); and in 76:24 such a person is combined with the كَفُورٌ (disbelieving or ungrateful one), and neither are to be obeyed.

أَثِيمٌ (a wicked person) occurs seven times. The meaning is clear, for it is contrasted with الْمُتَّقِينَ (those who keep their duty) in 44:44 and 51. The latter word is also contrasted with الظَّالِمِينَ (wrongdoers) in 45:19. We may then conclude that, as ظَالِمٌ and أَثِيمٌ are antonyms of the same word, they are synonyms of each other. This suggests not only that the Qur'an makes a free use of words but that it assumes an essential relation between the nature of the individual (his sinfulness) and his actions (his wrongdoing).

The word is combined with another synonym مُعْتَدٍ (transgressor) and used of those who reject (يَكْفُرُونَ) the day of Judgment (83:11-12). Likewise it is combined with كَفَّارٌ (unbelieving or ungrateful) and associated with usury (الرِّبَا) (2:276). Finally it is combined with أَقَالٌ (lying) and used of those who persist in haughtiness (مُسْتَكْبِرٌ) and make a jest (هَزْوًا) of the divine messages (45:7-9), and upon whom the devils (الشَّيَاطِينُ) descend (26:222).

تَأْتِيمٌ (second declension; inciting to sin) occurs

twice. Penrice lists the meaning as accusation of crime. However the Qāmūs makes it a synonym of إِثْمٌ.¹ Kazimirski refers to it as that which incites one to sin. This definition seems most probable for it is in keeping with the common significance of the second form verbal noun. Both occurrences of the form are linked with لُغْوٌ (foolishness, vain talk). Thus we read concerning Paradise: "They hear therein neither لُغْوًا nor تَأْتِيًا" (56:25); and, "They pass therein a cup wherein is neither لُغْوٌ nor تَأْتِيَةٌ" (52:23).

¹Lane, p. 22A.

CHAPTER IX

حرم

BACKGROUND

The root grew from the primitive Semitic system of taboo with its idea of the numenous and inviolable. Under this system there was as yet no differentiation between what was inviolable because it was sacred and what was prohibited because it was abominable or wrong. But these two concepts gradually began to develop as we can see from the various Semitic languages.

In the North-West Semitic branch we see the Hebrew ḥāram (חָרַם) which in the Hiph'ʿil form means ban, de-
vote, exterminate. With the first two meanings it particu-
larly had a religious connotation but later came to be used
of things hostile to the theocracy. Thus, it is used of
not permitting (Hoph'al form) a sorceress to live [Exodus
22:18 (19 in Hebrew)]. In the Syriac ḥārem (ܚܪܡ)
the sense of sacred prohibition remains strong for the word
means anathematize or excommunicate. Likewise the religious
sense is strong in the Palmyrene ḥrm (ܚܪܡ) which means

consecrated (consacré). The South or South-West Semitic branch also has a strong sense of the sacred. We see this as well as the development of a legal strain in the Ethiopic harama (ሐረመ:) which means prohibit from common use, consecrate to God, and esteem unlawful.¹

Some South Arabian inscriptions contain the word mhrm,² which indicates that the concept of the holy was associated with places, for the word means sanctuary.³ In the Hebrew hermōn (הַרְמוֹן), meaning sacred, the concept is associated with a particular mountain. Also it can refer to things as in the Hebrew noun hērem (חֵרֵם) which may mean devoted thing. Furthermore the concept is attributed to people as in the proper noun hārim (חָרִים).⁴ We may then conclude that the root of حرم is an integral part of the ancient system of taboo, that it was early tied up with a sense of the numenous and the sacred, and that it later began to add a legal element.

Parallel development is seen in the Arabic. The first measure حَرْمٌ, which is related to חֵרֵם above, means it was, or became, forbidden, prohibited, or unlawful.⁵ Likewise

¹Brown, et al., p. 355B.

²Levy, p. 199.

³Brown, et al., p. 355B.

⁴Ibid., p. 356.

⁵Lane, p. 553C.

حُرْمَةٌ is related to חַרְמִין above, and it begins to show a polarity between what Westerners would call a legal and a sacred emphasis, though the Semite of the time would not see this as a divergence. It means the state of being forbidden, prohibited, or unlawful and the state of being sacred or inviolable, sacredness, or inviolability; and it means the state of being revered, respected, or honored.¹

QUR'ANIC USAGE

By the time of the Qur'an there is a clear polarity between what is forbidden because sacred and what is forbidden because abominable or wrong. The clarity of this polarity, however, varies in different words and different contexts. Some retain a unified concept as under the pagan system of taboo; while others develop in one or the other direction.

The sacred element alone is found in حَرَمٌ (a holy place, asylum), which appears in 28:57 and 29:67, and

الْحُرْمَاتُ (the Sacred Ordinances of God), which appears in 2:194 and 22:30. As these only cast indirect light on the problem of sin, we will not treat them further here. Likewise كُرْهُمٌ need not be developed in this section on sin; for, though it retains the sense of forbidden or deprived, it is not in the religious sphere of taboo. It

¹Ibid., p. 555A.

rather refers to one who, together with the beggar, is a worthy recipient of alms (70:25). He is one suffering privation (cf. 51:19; 56:67; 68:27), perhaps through shame or a sense of decorum.

In the Qur'an there are 75 occurrences of the remaining forms. But before investigating these the obvious observation should be made that, though the underlying idea of حَرَم is of pagan origin, it now comes to be associated with the divine will of God as revealed through the Prophet. Hence there is a change from what was considered permitted (حَلَال) and what was considered forbidden (حَرَام) by both the pagans (6:139; 16:116) and the Jews (6:146-147).

حَرَام (plural حَرَامَات ; prohibited, unlawful, sacred, sanctified) is found 31 times. The meaning is clear because it is contrasted with حَلَال (permitted, lawful) in 10:59 and 16:116. The element of taboo is evident when it is used of the state of sanctity of one on pilgrimage; for such a one is not allowed to kill game -- a ceremonial restriction not applicable at other times (5:96). Frequently the meaning of this word is restricted to the inviolableness of what is holy rather than what is polluted. Thus in the sense of sacred it modifies a house (5:2), a monument (2:198), a mosque (2:144), and a month (2:217). To violate this sacredness is a great [offence] (كَبِير) (2:117).

حَرَّمَ [to make sacred,¹ forbid, make or declare

¹Penrice does not include this meaning, but see 9:37.

unlawful (with accusative of things and على of persons)] occurs 39 times. Again the meaning is clear for in 4:19-24 it is contrasted with أُهِلَّ (was permitted) and is used synonymously with لَا يَحِلُّ (is not lawful). Another helpful verse in this connection is 7:157:

He enjoins on them (يَأْمُرُهُمْ) the right (بِاطْعَرُوفٍ)
And forbids them (يَنْهَاهُمْ) the evil (الْمُنْكَرِ)

And permits (يُحِلُّ) to them the good things (الطَّيِّبَاتِ)
And prohibits (يُحَرِّمُ) for them impure things (الْمُنْتَهَاتِ) .

The parallel couplets make it quite plain that حَرَامٌ is an antonym of أَحَلَّ and a synonym of نَهَى, a conclusion supported by 4:160-161 where the three words again appear. Likewise the word is defined by the context of 24:3, where a divine prohibition is made and then referred to by حَرَامٌ.

As we noted under حَرَامٌ, the system of taboo still clings to certain usages; thus game of the land is forbidden (حَرَامٌ) as long as one is on pilgrimage (lit., in a state of sanctity -- حُرْمًا). Yet from taboo three qualities of prohibition develop within this word. First, some have a strong element of inviolability because of holiness or sacredness. We see this in 9:37: ". . . they allow it [the Sacred Month] one year and forbid it (يُحَرِّمُونَهَا) [another] year, that they may agree on the number which God has made sacred (حَرَامٌ) and thus permit what God has forbidden (حَرَامٌ)." The context almost forces the meaning sacred or hallowed upon the second occurrence of حَرَامٌ in this verse and allows it in the other two occurrences.

The second quality of prohibition is inviolability because of pollution. In this category would come the flesh of swine (لَحْمُ الْخِنْزِيرِ) which is حَرَامٌ in 2:173 and رِجْسٌ (unclean) in 6:146. The third quality is void of any concept of holiness or pollution, but just the idea of prohibition remains. Of this category is 5:72: "Surely whoever associates [others] (يَتَشْرِكُ) with God, God has forbidden (حَرَّمَ) to him the Garden."

We have seen in general that God forbids (حَرَّمَ) impure things (الْحَبَائِثُ) (7:157). We shall now see what they are specifically, starting with the more ceremonial and working up to the increasingly moral sins. They are: game (صَيْدٌ) of the land while one is on pilgrimage (5:96); what dies of itself (الْمَيْتَةُ), blood (الدَّمُ), the flesh of swine (لَحْمُ الْخِنْزِيرِ), that over which any other than God has been invoked (أَهْلًا) (2:173); the strangled (الْمَوْفُودَةُ), that beaten to death (الْمَخْزُوقَةُ), that killed by a fall (الْمَتْرَدِيَةُ), that killed by goring with the horn (التَّطِيئَةُ), that which the wild beasts have eaten (أَكَلَ السَّبْعُ) -- except what you slaughter (دَكَّيْتُمْ), that which is sacrificed on stones set up [for idols] (ذَبَحَ عَلَى النَّصَبِ), and that which one seeks to divide by arrows (اسْتَقْسَمَ بِالْأَزْلَامِ) (5:3).

Also حَرَّمَ is applied to usury (الرِّبَا) (2:275) and the marriage of close relatives (4:23) and (for believers) the marriage of an adulterer (الزَّانِي), an adulteress

(زَنِيَّةٌ), an idolater (مُشْرِكٌ), or an idolatress
 (مُشْرِكَةٌ) (24:3). We see a still higher ethical level in
 6:152:

I will recite what your Lord has forbidden (حُرِّمَ)
 to you: Associate naught (أَتَى تَشْرِكُوا) with Him . . .
 slay not (لَا تَقْتُلُوا) your children for poverty
 . . . and draw not nigh unto heinous crimes (الفَوَاحِشِ),
 open or secret, and slay not (لَا تَقْتُلُوا) the soul
 which God has forbidden (or made sacred -- حُرِّمَ)

Added to this list are sin (الْإِثْمِ); unjust rebellion
 (الْبَغْيِ يَغْيِرِ الْكُفْرِ), and saying about God what one does
 not know (7:33).

Other prohibitions were made as a form of punishment.
 Thus for their injustice (بَطْلَمٌ) (4:160) and their
 iniquity (يَبْغِيهِمْ) (6:147) they were forbidden good
 things which had been made lawful for them. However Muslims
 are told not to forbid the good things which God has made
 lawful (5:87). Those who did this, forging a lie (افْتِرَاءٌ),
 went astray (ضَلُّوا) and lost (خَسِرُوا) (6:141). How-
 ever, according to 66:1, even the Prophet forbade what God
 made lawful -- though in this context it refers to personal
 denial.

On the other hand, it is wrong to make lawful what God
 has forbidden (9:37), for things so prohibited are trans-
 gression (فِسْقٌ) (5:3) and sin (الْإِثْمُ) (7:33) and
 likewise involve one who does them in sin (الْإِثْمُ) (cf.
 2:173) and blame (جُنَاحٌ) (cf. 4:23). And those who do
 not forbid them are with those who do not believe (لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ)

in God nor the Last Day and are to be fought by the believers (9:29).

Concerning the prohibitions, however, we might note that they may be violated for a just cause (17:33) or when one is driven by necessity, not desiring (باغ) nor exceeding the limit (عادي) (2:173; cf. 6:120). Also, although there are many ceremonial laws of a rather external nature, we have seen that the Qur'an stresses that true, inner piety is more important.

محرّم (passive participle; that which is forbidden or unlawful; or declared sacred) appears five times.¹ The underlying meaning of this word is obviously the same as محرّم with which it is used synonymously in 6:139-140. In these same verses it is used in the same sense as محرّم (prohibited) and contrasted with خالصة (reserved for). Likewise the word is defined by the context of 2:84-85 where, after God says that the Israelites should not expel their people from their cities, the act is called محرّم.

We also note three qualities of inviolability. First is that of holiness; for it is used in بيتك المحرم, meaning Thy Holy House (14:37). The second, that of pollution, is found in 6:146, where the flesh of swine is محرّم because it is رجس (unclean). The third just expresses

¹ Prior to this word Penrice lists تحرّم (prohibition), but this form is not found in the Qur'an.

inviolability, without any sense of holiness or pollution,
and is found in 5:26, where the Promised Land is forbidden

محرمة to the Children of Israel.

CHAPTER X

ظلم

BACKGROUND

A root meaning of ظلم is to be dark. This is seen in certain forms of the Arabic where أَظْلَمَ means grew dark and ظُلْمَةٌ means darkness. A similar sense is found in the Akkadian ṣalāmu which means grow black.¹ Through the biliteral stem ظل a number of words with similar meanings are found in other Semitic languages,² but biconsonantalism is too uncertain to be made the basis for an etymological argument.

Whatever the correct etymology might be, the moral use of the forms from this stem is seen to be well developed in the Arabic poetry by the first century of Islam. Al-A'shā, who lived in the last half of the century before Islam,³ uses ظالم in the following poem:

¹Koehler and Baumgartner, p. 804.

²Brown, et al., p. 853A.

³Nicholson, pp. 121, 123.

وكان الفؤاد بها معجباً فقد أصبح اليوم عن ذلك سالى
 مما لا مُسيئاً ولا ظالماً ولكن سداً سَلوةً في جمال

And the heart was admiring her;
 And indeed today he began to forget that,
 It awoke not doing evil or wrong¹
 But forgetting itself in beauty.

Its use with مُسيئاً suggests that it is likewise a general word for wrong. Another form is used with a flavor of injustice in the phrase "the deaths of the wronged (مظلوم)."² Still another form is seen in the following poem:

نصيب نصيبين من ربها ولاية كل ظلوم غشوم
 فباطنها منهم في لظن وظاهرها من جنات النعيم

The destiny of Nasibin from her Lord,
 Is to be governed only by a tyrannical oppressor.
 The internal part of her because of them is in Hell;
 And its external part is in Paradise.³

Here use of ظلوم with غشوم gives it the additional flavor of tyranny.

The problems which now present themselves are, first, how the word group developed its moral character and, secondly, whether this development gives any clue toward a more precise definition of the Qur'anic usage. The Qur'an shows us a transition between the physical idea of darkness and the moral one of sin in the idea of spiritual lack of

¹ الا صبرها في، ج ٦، ص ١٥١ ط ١٦ - ص ٥٢ ط ١٦

² ابن عطاء الله، تاج العروس (مصر ١٩٢٨)، ج ١، ص ٢٦١، ط ١.

³ Ibid.، ج ١، ص ٤٨٧ ط ٢١.

perception. We see this in 5:16 which reads, "God . . . brings them out of darkness (الظلمات) into light (النور) . . . and guides them into a straight path."

However, al-Asma'i, al-Azharī in the Tahdhīb, the Ṣihāh, al-Fayyūmī in the Misbāh, and others suggest another underlying idea. They say الظلم signifies the putting of a thing in a place not its own, putting it in a wrong place or misplacing it; and this is by exceeding or falling short or by deviating from the proper time and place and the transgressing of the proper time and place. The Tāj al-ʿArūs adds the meaning the transgressing of the proper limit.

This interpretation is illustrated in the Tāj al-ʿArūs by the sentence: مَنْ اسْتَرْعَى الْذئْبَ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ -- which is interpreted as meaning, He who asks (or desires) the wolf to keep guard surely does wrong (or puts a thing in a wrong place).¹

Likewise Ibn as-Sikkīt interprets الْيَوْمُ ظَلَمَ as meaning the day has put the affair in a wrong place in وَأَنَّ الْفِرَاقَ (Verily separation is to-day, and the day has wronged [us]).²

Reasons could be found for dismissing these interpretations. First, there is not unanimous agreement about the meaning of the above illustrations, and they may be translated

¹Iane, p. 1920A.

²Ibid., p. 1921A.

equally well without the introduction of the spatial element. Secondly, with the strong Semitic evidence for darkness as the root meaning of these cognate words, it is difficult to see how the spatial element became so prominent in its ethical development -- unless it was transposed from the more common Qur'anic concept of sin as separation from the Way of God. Furthermore, the likelihood that the spatial element was introduced would seem to be lessened by the fact that we have already noted a transitional step between the physical and moral meaning of forms from this stem in 5:16.

However, we cannot dismiss this spatial theory quite so easily. First, we must adequately explain its origin when the transition from physical to spiritual darkness would seem so easy to people who used the forms ^{ظلمة} for darkness and ^{أظلم} for grow dark. Secondly, if we discard the spatial theory, we do not have an adequate explanation for the form ^{ظلم} found in 18:33. Here we read, "Both these gardens yielded their fruits, and ^{لَمْ تَظْلِمِ} ^{مِنْهُنَّ شَيْئًا}." Though Bell (vs. 31) translates the words did wrong in no part thereof, the context suggests a translation such as they did not fail (or were not wanting) in any of it.

Thus we are faced with the dilemma of having some forms which are obviously related to the root idea of darkness and this occurrence which suggests an underlying meaning to be wanting or to be less than a standard. However, we find a

possible solution to our dilemma in the Hebrew root glm (גלם), which is actually composed of two roots. The one we have already noted in such forms as the Akkadian ṣalāmu. It means grow black and appears in the Arabic in such forms as أَظْلَمَ (grew dark) and ظِلْمَةٌ (darkness).¹

The primitive meaning of the other root is to cut off. It appears in the Hebrew gelem (גֵּלֵם), which means image and comes from the idea of something cut out or chiseled. This root is found with similar meanings in the Assyrian ṣalmu, the Sabean glm (גלם), the Aramaic ṣalmā (ܣܠܡܐ) and the Syriac ṣalmā (ܣܠܡܐ).

The latter root makes its way into Arabic as صَلَّمَ (cut off).² The lexicon of Brown, Driver, and Briggs does not list ظلم as a possible cognate word of גלם, nor does it identify the former root of גלם. Though Koehler and Baumgartner's work identifies the two roots, it does not associate ظلم with the latter one. Nevertheless, the present writer suggests that certain forms of ظلم may be related to the second root, just as other forms of ظلم are obviously related to the first.

There are a number of reasons for this conclusion. First, morphologically the second root could have developed into ظلم as well as into صلم, for this root contains

¹Koehler and Baumgartner, p. 804B.

²Ibid.; Brown, et al., p. 853B.

the same three radicals as the first. Secondly, the root idea of to cut off explains the origin of the meaning to be wanting found for ظَمَّ in 18:33. Thirdly, this underlying idea can explain why certain Arabic lexicographers above interpreted forms from this stem as meaning to be, or put a thing, in the wrong place. For from the idea of to cut off, thence to be wanting, can be found the idea of being short of a standard, thence in the wrong place. Fourthly, the derived meaning of being short of a standard explains the meaning injustice, which we have noted in the ancient poetry and which comes to dominate the ethical use of the forms from this stem in the Qur'an. For injustice is being short of the standard of justice, as revealed in the divine will.

QUR'ANIC USAGE

When we come to the Qur'an, we notice that the primitive meaning of the first root remains in the ظَلَمَةٌ form. At times this has a physical flavor which approaches the idea of calamities. We see this in 6:63, which reads: "Who is it that delivers you from the darkness (ظُلُمَاتٍ) of the land and sea?" Again we see this meaning in 21:87 which says: ". . . he [Jonah] called out in the darkness (الظُّلُمَاتِ), There is no God but Thou . . . !" As we have noticed, at other times the Qur'an uses the primitive meaning of the first root in the metaphorical sense of spiritual lack of perception. Thus we read in 2:256: "God

is the friend of those who believe; He brings them out of darkness (الظلمات) into light (النور). And those who disbelieve, their friends are the false deities (الطاغوت), who take them out of light (النور) into darkness (الظلمات)." These verses explain the following Qur'anic forms: the noun ظلمة above; the active participle مظلم (in 10:27 and 36:36), which means darkness or one who is in darkness; and أظلم with على (in 2:20), which means to be dark.

However, it is the other forms that are more helpful for our study of sin. The writer has already suggested that they are related to the second root of ظلم. In these forms we find a strong flavor of injustice -- for example, 21:47 states, "We will place the balances [with] justice on the day of resurrection, and no one will be wronged (or treated unjustly -- نُظْمَ)." When we look at the words with which the various forms are contrasted, we also see the stress on injustice. Thus the passive participle مظلوم is contrasted with بِالْحَقِّ (with justice) (17:33).

Other antonyms bring out a more general use of the forms -- particularly the verb ظلم and the active participle ظالم. For example, 27:11 speaks of one "who does wrong (ظلم), then does good (حَسَنًا) instead after evil (سَوْءًا)." The contrasting of both ظلم and سَوْءًا with حَسَنًا suggests that they are roughly equivalent. The form ظالم is used antithetically with اتَّقُوا (19:72) and الْمُتَّقِينَ (45:19) -- verbal and participial

forms describing those who guard themselves or are dutiful and pious.

Other verses suggest that an element of unbelief may also be associated with this word, for it is contrasted with those who believe and do good works (أٰمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّٰلِحٰتِ) (3:56). Furthermore, it is contrasted with المؤمنين (the believers) alone in 17:82. These two verses suggest two conclusions. First, ظالمون is used rather flexibly. Secondly, the Qur'an makes such a close association between unbelief and wrongdoing that the two may be used almost interchangeably. This close association is demonstrated both positively and negatively. On the one hand, أٰمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّٰلِحٰتِ is a common Qur'anic saying (e.g., 3:56 above). On the other hand there are numerous verses which use

كٰفِرُونَ and ظٰلِمُونَ interchangeably of the same people (e.g., 29:47, 49; 5:44-45). Other verses equate the two -- for example, 2:254: ". . . the disbelievers (الْكٰفِرُونَ), they are the wrongdoers (الظٰلِمُونَ)."

A man can commit ظلم in his relationship with God, man, and himself. First, regarding man's relationship to God, we read: "Surely, ascribing partners (الشِّرْكِ) [to God] is a grievous wrong (لُظْمٌ عَظِيمٌ)" (31:13). Thus شِرْكٌ is ظلم. Stated otherwise, the ظالمون are those who: serve (يَعْبُدُونَ) besides God that which He has not authorized (22:71), call (دَعَا) besides God what can neither benefit nor harm one (10:106), or say they

are also gods (21:29). Likewise we read in 6:21: ". . . who is more unjust (أَظْلَمُ) than he who forges (افترى) a lie (كَذِبًا) against God or falsely rejects (كَذَّبَ) His signs. Surely the wrongdoers (الظالمون) will not be successful." Secondly, regarding man's relationship to other men we read: "Surely he has wronged thee (ظلمك) in demanding thy ewe [to add] to his own; and surely many partners wrong (يبغى) one another. . . ." (38:24).

We may conclude from these verses that ظلم in relation to God and man is withholding or being wanting in what justly belongs to them. Thus, though its meaning is somewhat more general here, ظلم retains the flavor of the secular use we noted in 18:33 where it is used of gardens which did not withhold or were not wanting in anything. However, whether one does ظلم in his relationship with God or man, ultimately he does it against himself. Hence we read in 7:177: "Evil (ساء) as an example are the people who reject (كذبوا) Our signs and wrong themselves (انفسهم كانوا يظلمون)." And concerning social regulations about divorce we read: ". . . whoever goes beyond the limits (يتعد حدود) of God, he indeed wrongs himself (ظلم نفسه)" (65:1; cf. 2:231).

Because of the importance of ظلم in the Qur'an a number of studies have been made of its use. These include a semantic study by Izutsu¹ and a more interpretive study

¹Pages 152-161.

by Muhammad Kamil Husain.¹ The latter study includes notes by Kenneth Cragg, who attaches a discussion of ظُلم النفس . Cragg has also commented on the meaning and significance of ظُلم in the introduction to his English translation of the same author's book قَرِيبة ظالِمَة .² Because these studies are already in existence, it would be superfluous for this writer to record his analysis of the forms from this stem further. Therefore we only need to consider how some of the occurrences of ظلم affect issues raised in the previous word studies.

First, as illustrated by 65:1 above, the concept of ظلم fits into a larger Qur'anic view of sin as separation from the Way of God. There are limits of God (مَدْوَدَ اللّٰهِ) and to exceed the limits (يَتَعَدَّى مَدْوَدَ) is to do ظلم and become a ظالِم (cf. 2:229). Secondly, and related to the first topic, some words describe actions that are not inherently wrong but derive their negative or positive ethical quality from their relationship to the Way of God. To illustrate, certain of the Children of Israel were called ظالِمِينَ when they turned back (تَوَلَّوْا) after fighting (القتال) was enjoined on them (2:246). Yet, on the other hand, Cain is told that, if he kills (قتل) Abel,

¹"The Meaning of Zulm in the Qur'an," The Muslim World, XLIX (1959), 196-212.

²M. Kamel Hussein [sic], City of Wrong, trans. Kenneth Cragg (Amsterdam, Djambatan, 1959), pp. ix-xxv, esp. pp. xv-xvi.

he likewise will be one of the ظالمين (5:28-29). Thus to fight or kill in some situations is right (cf. 4:76, 89) but in other situations is wrong (cf. 4:76, 93).

Thirdly, we again see that certain types of retaliation are permitted, for the fact that one has been wronged (ظلم) is considered sufficient grounds for hurtful (بالشَّوْء) speech (cf. 4:148). Fourthly, knowledge leads to culpability, for 2:145 says: "If thou shouldst follow their desires after the knowledge that has come to thee, thou wouldst indeed be of the ظالمين ." Finally, we receive further light on the problem of how a sovereign God is related to the sin of mankind. We read God not only does not guide (لا يَهْدِي) the ظالمين (6:145) but even leads them astray (يَضِلُّ) (4:27). Yet, as the Sovereign God, He remains just. The Qur'an may ascribe أَضَلَّ to Him but never ظَلَّمَ . Furthermore it expressly teaches that He does not wrong (ظَلَّمَ) people (3:116, 160) and that, if one who wrongs himself (يَظْلِمُ نَفْسَهُ) asks forgiveness, he will find God forgiving, merciful (4:110).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND CONCLUSIONS

As stated in the Introduction the present study is not an attempt to present the total Qur'anic understanding of sin. Nevertheless even the general words studied cannot be understood in their real significance unless some consideration is given to the context of sin in the Qur'anic Weltanschauung or world view. A number of factors lead to this conclusion. First, sin is a negative concept - hence can best be understood in terms of what is negated. Secondly, the background study of these words has shown that most of them are held in common with other religions and languages; so their special meaning in the Qur'an can only be discovered by understanding its world view. Thirdly, the background study of the words has also shown their great age and the resultant fact that some of them have lost their root significance. Although this conclusion is not surprising because of the fact that the words were chosen for their general nature, it nevertheless further emphasizes the need to understand their conceptual context in order to grasp their current usage. Fourthly, (although the Qur'an uses sufficient precision in the choice of words to warrant the arguments presented in this study)

the general nature of the words studied leads to a somewhat flexible usage and to an interrelation of concepts as will be shown. Hence an understanding of the Qur'anic world view is necessary for one to understand their significance.

This flexible use of words is illustrated by 27:11, which contains the words: ". . . he who does wrong (ظَلَمَ) then does good (مُسِنًا) instead of evil (سُوءٌ)" In this verse ظَلَمَ and سُوءٌ are both contrasted with مُسِنًا -- hence should be equivalent to each other. In

a general sense they are, but the preceding study has shown that they emphasize different aspects of sin. Similarly

الْمُتَّقِينَ (the dutiful or God-fearing) is contrasted with الْغَافِلِينَ (the deviators) (26:90-91), الْإِثْمِ (the sinful or guilty) (44:44,51), and الظَّالِمِينَ (the wrongdoers or unjust) (45:19). Of still more significance is the contrast between الظَّالِمُونَ (the wrongdoers) and الْمُؤْمِنُونَ (the be-
lievers) (17:82).¹ The interrelation of concepts, also

referred to in the fourth argument above, is illustrated by اعْتَدَى (to exceed the limit). This word is associated with the diverse concepts behind taboo or unlawfulness (حُرْمٌ) (5:87), injustice or wrongdoing (ظَلَمٌ) (5:107), guilt or sin (إِثْمٌ) (5:107), and sodomy (26:165-166) -- which is described as filthiness or abomination (فَاْمِشَّةٌ) (7:80).

¹Despite revealing a certain flexibility in the use of words, these contrasts also suggest that the Qur'an does not make a clear differentiation between the nature of sinners and their actions or between faith and works.

In like manner اثم is related to لَيْسَ (evil) (5:62) and بُهْتَانًا (calumny) (4:112).

The arguments, which have been presented to show the need for understanding sin in the context of a total world view, are not intended to imply that Muhammad had consciously reasoned out or analyzed his world view. He was a prophet not a systematic theologian, as the flexibility of his words and the interrelation of his concepts clearly show. However his use of the words studied presupposes that he had at least a rough world view (perhaps partly unconsciously). But, as has been shown, it is necessary to grasp at least the salient features of this to understand the meaning and significance of the words studied.¹

When one turns to the Qur'anic world view as with the Biblical,² he is struck by the essential contrast with the ancient Near Eastern religions - though elements from the latter may be seen from time to time. A cosmological order is observed in the ancient religions where man, under a king, sought to become integrated into the eternal cosmic cycle. Furthermore, in Arabian polytheism, as in the ancient Canaanite religions, man had to come to terms with all the spiritual powers behind the universe. Conversely, in the Qur'an and in

¹The discussion of the pre-Islamic views of the world and wrong, found in the Appendix, fits logically here. It is an attempt to provide historical and theological focus for the following Qur'anic analysis. Any references or allusions in the Qur'anic analysis to non-Biblical pre-Islamic views are documented in the Appendix.

²For reasons noted in the Appendix, the Biblical views of the world and sin are developed here, along with the somewhat similar Qur'anic concepts, rather than there with the other pre-Islamic views.

the Bible there is one sovereign God who will not share his glory with any other. A king does not take part in a periodic recreation of the world. Demons, and also jinn in the Qur'an, still find a small place; but the sovereign God is in complete control. Man, rather than being integrated with the cosmic order as in ancient religions, is fallen - though in a somewhat different way in the Qur'an than in the Bible.¹

In this context of alienation from God, man is related to God through a covenant, not a king as in the Ancient Near East.² This covenant is not an agreement between two parties on equal terms. Rather, it has the form of the Hittite suzerainty treaties where, on the basis of the benevolent deeds and care of the Hittite ruler, the vassal pledges

¹In contrast to the Biblical account, Adam in the Qur'an merely "forgot" (نسي) God's command, and there was no intention (عزماً) to disobey (20:115). This difference might be accounted for by the fact that Muhammad considered Adam a prophet and felt as a result that he would not intentionally disobey. A concomitant of the fall in the Bible is the fact that man possesses an innate bias toward sin and thus needs an inward transformation of his nature (e.g., Genesis 8:21; Romans 1:18-32; 7:5-25; 12:2). In the Qur'an, 12:53 might be interpreted as expressing this viewpoint; but the Qur'an as a whole does not develop this doctrine.

²The relationship between the Biblical and Qur'anic covenants has been noted by Arthur Jeffery, The Qur'an as Scripture (New York, Russell F. Moore, 1952), pp. 39-41, and by Robert Neelly Bellah, "Islamic Institutions," Lectures: History of Religions 131 (Harvard U., Fall, 1961). The latter emphasizes the primary importance of the Mosaic covenant in the Qur'anic world view.

obedience to a list of stipulations set down by the superior.¹ This structure is clearly seen in the most formative covenant of the Old Testament - that made through Moses (Exodus 20). Here, on the basis of God's care for Israel (vs. 2), she is called upon to obey the stipulations of the Decalogue. Other covenants are mentioned such as those with Noah (Genesis 9), Abraham (Genesis 15:18), and David (Psalm 89:20-28, 34); but in these God swears to keep certain promises. On the contrary, the Mosaic covenant only imposes stipulations on man.

In the Qur'an a covenant (*ميثاق*) is made at the time of Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus (33:7); but, unlike the comparable Biblical accounts, the Qur'anic references do not make a clear differentiation of form in the various occurrences. Rather the Mosaic type appears to be found throughout. Not only is Moses mentioned more than any other previous messenger; but, more important, the descriptions of the covenant bear out this conclusion. Where the contents are given, they include a list of stipulations. In 2:83 specific reference is made to the "covenant with the Children of Israel," and two commandments similar to those of the Decalogue are given: "You shall serve none but God, and do good to parents." Like Exodus 20, the Qur'an associates the covenant with God's favor (*نعمة*) and man's obedience (*أطاع*) (5:7). Though perhaps forgotten

¹George E. Mendenhall, Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East [Reprinted from The Biblical Archaeologist, XVII (1954), pp. 26-46, 49-76] / (Pittsburgh, The Biblical Colloquium, 1955), pp. 32-34.

at times by adherents, the covenant in both the Bible (cf. Exodus 20:1-2) and the Qur'an (cf. 5:7) is based on a personal relationship, not an impersonal law. Unlike the Code of Hamurabi where the king was commissioned by the god to prepare a code, the covenant in the Bible and the Qur'an is described as revealed, and a recipient such as Moses was merely a messenger (رَسُول) (3:80-83; 5:70).

The essential nature of sin in this world view of man estranged from God but related through a covenant - will soon be evident. But one should first note that the Qur'an, like the Bible, does not have one comprehensive idea of sin. In fact Muhammad, like Christ in the Synoptic Gospels, is not quoted in the Qur'an as discussing sin in the abstract. The emphasis is on sinners and specific sins. As has been observed in the preceding word studies, the more general words express various concepts. The cultic is seen as well as the ethical and the revelational as well as the ethnic. Nevertheless, the world view, as it has been discussed, allows one to distinguish the basic orientation of the Qur'an.

The idea of a fall, or man estranged from God, gives a new depth to the Biblical and Qur'anic views of sin. Men were not judged now by such human values as brave and generous action as in the "tribal humanism" of Arabia. Rather they were judged by their relation to a holy God. Unlike the Egyptian

gods, who were little more than enlarged men and subject to shortcomings, the God described by the Bible and the Qur'an is transcendent. Thus the great confession of the Old Testament is "The Lord our God is one Lord" (Deuteronomy 7:4), and the first two commandments of the Mosaic covenant show the violation of this to be sin. In like manner the Qur'an states, "God bears witness that there is no god but He" (3:17), and the unforgivable sin is شُرْك (4:48). The higher God is elevated, the deeper sin is lowered.

However, the idea of the covenant, as it has been discussed above, brings out the most important understanding of sin. In 2:83-84 and 3:80 the covenant is mentioned and its contents elaborated. Then the following words, describing man's relationship to the covenant, are used: تَوَلَّى (he turns back), مُعْرِضُونَ (were averse), فَاسِقُونَ (transgressors), عَدَوَان (exceeding the limits), إِنَّمَا (sin), تَكْفُرُونَ (you disbelieve). The implications of this covenantal understanding of sin will now be developed. First, as has been noted, the covenant in the Qur'an, as in the Bible, asserts that it is revealed (3:80-83; 5:47). Thus the concept of sin as disbelief (كفر) becomes prominent (e.g., 3:85). In contrast to ancient Mesopotamian religion where this revelational element of law is not found, the Qur'an, like the Bible, develops a new aspect of sin. In 7:27 there is a suggestion that the pagan Arabs believed their practices

divinely commanded, for they are portrayed as saying: "We found our fathers doing this and God (or the god) has so commanded us." However, this verse might rather show an attempt on the part of the pagans to give their traditions the status of revealed commands in opposition to the claim of revelation by Muhammad. In any event, the vagueness of religious ideas in pre-Islamic Arabia, particularly in the northern and central parts, was a contrast to the clear idea of revelation in the Qur'anic utterances. Thus sin as unbelief took on a new clarity.

A second implication of the covenantal idea was that there was a personal element behind the moral law. God had given the covenantal commands in the Bible (Exodus 20:1-2) and the Qur'an (5:7). Thus sin was not aberration from cosmic harmony as in ancient Egyptian religion but was the breaking of a relationship and disobedience or rebellion against God (e.g., 7:77; 10:15; 50:24; Isaiah 59:2, 13; Nehemiah 9:26). The Qur'an does not have a highly personal confession like Psalm 51:4: "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned." Nor does it develop the personal element to the extent found in Hosea (where sin against God is compared to marital unfaithfulness) or in the story of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32). But, through the covenant, the personal element still forms the basis of the law. Behind this opposition to God is proud self-assertion on the part of man

(e.g., 25:21; 38:74-75; 96:6-7; Psalm 10:2-6; 1 Timothy 3:6). Man becomes anthropocentric, as in the "tribal humanism" of pre-Islamic Arabia, rather than theocentric. And this is sin.

The third and most prominent implication of the covenant is that it forms the basis of law, and sin then is transgression or disobedience of that law (e.g., 2:229; 23:5; 66:6; Joshua 7:11; 1 Samuel 15:24; Nehemiah 9:26; 1 Timothy 1:9). This development of divinely revealed law in the Qur'an is in sharp contrast to the paganism of Arabia where men's actions were based on common practice, not law. However, before one can understand the nature of sin in relation to the law, it is necessary to understand the nature of law in the Qur'an. Like law in the Bible, it is not based on the Ideal or an abstract idea of law as in ancient Greece. Rather, as has been noted above, it is based on a relationship with God. His revealed will as expressed in commands is the norm of action. Though the preserved tablet (لَوْحٌ مَّقْطُوفٍ) in 85:22 (cf. 43:4) might be interpreted as referring to a static conception of revelation, and hence law, the progressive nature of the revealed commands to meet new situations gives a more dynamic conception of law in the Qur'an. One should also note that though the Qur'an develops law rather than theology, it does not make a clear differentiation between faith and works as the Protestant Reformers did. The Qur'an constantly relates

the two (e.g., 18:88). In the covenant the two are joined. Its nature as divine revelation calls forth faith, and its content of commands calls forth obedient works. Thus in the Qur'an "the disbelievers (الكُفْرُونَ) are the wrongdoers (الظَّالِمُونَ)" (2:254).

The emphasis that has been placed on the personal element behind the law is not to deny that the increased legal influence would lead the Muslims to think of sin only in terms of the breaking of a catalogue of laws. This process was repeatedly found among the Israelites and was fought by the prophets. The ideal of the community in the Qur'an, as in the Old Testament, was a theocracy. Hence laws came to cover every area of life. But, because all were believed divinely instituted, there was not a clear distinction between ethical and cultic transgressions. Both were a breach of God's law. Though the concept of taboo found in paganism is significant enough to warrant a separate discussion below, it might be noted at this point that some of the old taboos (though partly re-interpreted) became integrated with the all-inclusive legal structure (e.g., 2:222, Leviticus 5:2-3). However, instead of the divine wrath which broke forth automatically when something taboo was violated in South Arabian religion, guilt in the Qur'an came to be determined more by intention than specific act (e.g., 2:173; 6:120; 17:33).

Nevertheless the Qur'an never spiritualizes the law to the extent of some of the Biblical writers -- particularly in the New Testament. Thus Christ considered the Pharisees as sinful because of their pride even though they strictly observed the external ordinances of the Jewish Law (Matthew 12:34; Luke 18:11-14). The New Testament writers did not consider the law unimportant (Matthew 5:17; John 14:15; Romans 7:7, 20). They rather considered it insufficient by itself (Matthew 5:20; Romans 3:20). It points out the sin, but man cannot meet its standards, for he has an innate bias toward sin which can only be corrected by a divine transformation of the life (cf. Genesis 8:21; Romans 1:18-32; 3:20; 17:14-25; 12:2). Thus when one seeks to determine the nature of sin by analyzing its relation to the law, he is led to a contrast between the Qur'anic view and the view which is increasingly developed in the Bible. Sin for both is transgression of the divine law. But in the Bible sin is increasingly interpreted more spiritually and less legally as the nature of the heart is given priority over the observance of law. Likewise the nature of sin is seen as irremediable (without a divine transformation of the inner life) as the Biblical doctrine is developed that law cannot control man's innate bias toward sin. The Qur'an has elements of both doctrines, Intent is more important than act (cf. 2:173), and 12:53¹

¹"The soul is an inciter (*نَفْسًا زَئِيمَةً*) to evil."

might be interpreted as teaching that man has a bias toward sin. But the Qur'an does not develop these doctrines in the way the Bible does. Thus law keeps its prominence with the resultant implications for the nature of sin.

The significance of the analysis above for the preceding word studies should now be evident. When the words were shown to have lost enough of their root meaning to be just general words for sin, they express the understanding of sin outlined here. That is, they express that which is contrary to the revealed will of God, which is seen most clearly in the covenant with its various implications. In most cases the idea of a violated law is prominent, but the personal element lies behind this. Some aspect of non-conformity was seen to underlie the first five root ideas considered: to miss the mark in خطئ , to deviate in ضل and غوى , to pass beyond the limit in طغى , and to pass by in عدو . Wherever this root idea was still seen to be prominent, it referred to some aspect of non-conformity to or transgression of the revealed will of God with its covenantal implications. Verses which have been discussed have shown that this revealed will is seen in different forms. It is either seen in general terms such as the "Way of God" or the "Way of Rectitude," or it is thought of specifically as the signs or message of God, the message of Muhammad, or the life of the Muslim community. Thus, whenever any of the ideas of non-conformity or transgression

were seen to be prominent, they referred either to this revealed will in general or to one of these elements of it. Even the latter five groups of words, where the root idea of non-conformity was not prominent, find their unity in the covenantal view of the world. Thus the more general words like ذنب and انثم refer to sin as outlined above. Even the more specific هرم, despite its roots in the pagan system of taboo, becomes integrated with the structure of covenantal law, for it is used of whatever is prohibited -- even شرك (7:32-33).

The use of هرم, however, does raise the problem of the extent to which pagan ideas of taboo entered the Qur'an. As has been noted, the concept of hrm in polytheism was more concerned with the violation of what was unclean or sacred than with a high moral or spiritual standard of conduct. On the contrary the Qur'an is concerned with raising the standard of conduct with its many laws. It even speaks against certain pagan taboos concerning food (6:144-146). Nevertheless, as in the Bible (Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 11:1-12:8; 18:19; 20:18), certain elements with their roots in the old taboo system are carried on in the Qur'an. It likewise has its forbidden foods (2:172; 5:3; 6:146; 16:115) and restrictions such as not approaching women during menstruation (2:222). The Qur'an here tends to parallel the Mosaic framework of thought, even where its restrictions are different (e.g., 6:146-147), for

it has the same type of restrictions. Despite the fact that the simplified restrictions of the Qur'an are similar to those suggested by some of the early church leaders (Acts 15:28-29), their emphasis in the Qur'an remains more important (cf. Matthew 15:1-20; Mark 5:2-8, 15; Acts 10:9-18).

One should note, however, that these survivals from the old taboo system are almost always transformed. Instead of the emphasis being on some resident spiritual power, it is now on the divine law of God. In like manner though the Ka'bah was retained as a sacred place, it was by divine command (2:125), and most other pagan places were not retained. Likewise the belief in jinn was retained; but, as noted by Ignaz Goldziher, they were no longer a major element of the Weltanschauung.¹ The study of حرم has revealed a similar evolution in its use. It has been traced back into the old taboo system. In the Qur'an it is still used of that which was considered unclean (2:173; 5:3), though, as noted, these unclean items were now determined by the divinely revealed law. But the use of حرم is not confined to survivals from the taboo system, it is used of any prohibitions including شرك (6:152; 7:32-33).

So far the main thrust of the argument has centered on sin as volitional -- or sin thought of in terms of man willfully

¹Abhandlungen zur Arabischen Philologie (Leiden, 1896), p. 107.

violating covenantal law. Some words, however, treat sin as an objective quantity. A factor involved is that these words do not make a clear distinction between sin and guilt. Thus 5:29 uses انتم (the word with the strongest sense of guilt of those studied) as follows: "I desire that you return laden with my sin (i.e., your sin against me) and your sin (تَبَوَّءَ) (بِإِثْمِي وَإِثْمِكُمْ)." The same conception of sin and guilt as an objective quantity is seen in Isaiah 53:12 ("He bore the sin"). Likewise a similar view is expressed in 3:194: ". . . conceal our evils (كَفَرُوا عَنَّا سَيِّئَاتِنَا)" (cf. Psalm 32:1). Sin or guilt as thus conceived harms the individual. In 2:219 انتم is used of wine and gambling and is contrasted with مَنَافِع (benefit), thus implying the element of harm. Similarly 3:134 speaks of those who wrong themselves (ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ). Despite these other aspects of sin, the volitional aspect remains the dominant one of the Qur'an. Even the forms of سوء where harm or the material effects of wrong are most evident (e.g., 4:85) include such volitional elements as the rejection of the divine revelation (cf. 30:10).

The argument so far has shown that the Qur'an did not add new words for sin to the Arabian scene. What it did add to paganism was a covenantal world view similar to that of the Mosaic period (except for such elements as the need of a sacrifice for the atonement of sins).¹ This world view gave a new

¹Hence the concept of sin was not further deepened by a belief that sin could only be atoned for by death.

significance to the familiar words. Instead of wrongdoing in the social realm being associated with unwritten mores, it was now associated with divinely revealed law. Where the old social mores were still operative, their frame of reference was increasingly the divinely-guided community based on faith rather than the old clan based on blood. Instead of cultic wrongdoing being the violation of something mysteriously taboo or sacred with automatic punishment, it now was associated with a personal God. The conception of this God and the morality required by His law were both elevated with the resultant deepening of the sense of sin expressed by the familiar words. Yet there was another new element which affected the words. It was the sense of urgency created by a belief in impending judgment and doom. The backdrop for this awareness may have been the social crises facing Arabia at the time, but Muhammad saw in these what the Old Testament prophets had seen in their time -- the judgment of God. And he called men to a new awareness of sin that they might repent and submit to the revealed will of God.

* * * *

The major results achieved by the word studies have been incorporated into the preceding discussion of the context of these words in the Qur'anic view of the world and sin. Here

an attempt will be made merely to list some of the results achieved and to mention the extent of their originality. First, there are the results which are only incidental to the main thrust of the study but arose because they bore upon the interpretation of certain words in specific contexts. Of such a nature were the discussions on the involvement of God in human sin which arose in connection with the analyses of ظالم , سوء , معتد , أغوى , أضل . The conclusion reached was that words for leading astray or causing to err have the same meaning when God is the agent, for God is involved in leading men astray and sealing hearts. However they are generally portrayed as retributive acts, and it is claimed that God does not wrong (ظلم) men.¹ Furthermore this interpretation, that God leads astray, was shown to be in keeping with that of as significant a theologian as al-Ashari. Rahbar was cited as stressing the retributive nature of أضل when used with God as the agent, but no previous study had treated and synthesized the results from the other relevant words. And such modern Qur'anic translators as M. M. 'Ali and A. Y. Ali still translate أضل as leaves in error or leaves astray when God is the agent. Another conclusion of only incidental significance to the main thrust of the study was that ذنب still meant sin when used of an

¹Pages 36-37, 44-46, 58-59, 71-72, 121.

action of Muhammad despite the contrary view of such modern Muslims as M. M. 'Ali that Muhammad was sinless.¹ The conclusion of the writer was also shown to be in agreement with the interpretations of early commentators.

There are also some results which, while only incidental to the main thrust of the study, have some implications for the understanding of Qur'anic theology. These include the observed inseparability of faith and works,² a fusion more characteristic of James and Roman Catholic theology than Paul and Protestant theology. As a result disbelief (كفر) and wrongdoing (ظلم) have been seen as inseparable. Another observation is that proud self-sufficiency on man's part is seen to underly transgression.³ This element of pride is important in the Qur'an as in the Old Testament though not central. Still another observation is that, unlike the religions of ancient Mesopotamia and Arabia where divine retribution was automatic following violations, the Qur'an makes a relation between guilt and knowledge or intention.⁴ However one can commit wickedness (عَدْوَتِه) and evil (سُوءِه) without knowledge and can stray (ضَلَّ) as a result of

¹pages 84-92.

²pages 2, 118.

³E.g., see طغى , p. 49.

⁴page 121; cf. 5:94; 20:115.

lack of understanding and forgetfulness.¹ Certain ones of these theological observations have been made before,² but their implications have not previously been integrated with both philological study and the world view together.

Other results of the study, which are also secondary in nature, pertain to the development and use of the words in the Qur'an.³ The first concerns the evolution of the meanings of words from those that are physical to those that are moral. It is natural that such a progression would be found in the forms of **عدو** because evil is thought of both in physical and moral terms.⁴ However evidence of similar development has been noted in other words, not only in their pre-Qur'anic development, but also in the Qur'an itself. For example, forms of **طغي**, **عدو** and **هرم** have been noted with secular and religious connotations.⁵ The evolution of thought is quite clear in forms of **عدو**. The form **عدا** with the

¹pages 27, 53, 72.

²E.g., on the association of disbelief and wrongdoing see Izutsu, pp. 152-161; and on the association of faith and works see Tor Andrae, Les Origines de l'Islam et le Christianisme, trans. Jules Roche (Paris, Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1955), p. 180.

³The analysis of **طغي** has shown how the Qur'an not only developed the meanings of words but in turn formed the background for their more precise definition in the post-Qur'anic period (see p. 22n).

⁴pages 64-66, 70, 74-75.

⁵pages 47, 49, 52-53, 104-105.

accusative and عن means to pass by or away from.¹ The root idea develops an ethical character in عدوان which is used of the transgression of an agreement or relationship by, for example, a hostile act. As the breach becomes related to the moral law, it develops the idea of injustice.² As the Qur'anic law developed in Medina, words not only took on an ethical character but also a legal one. Thus تَعَدَّى was used of exceeding the limits of what was lawful (يَحِلُّ) concerning divorce.³ Likewise هَرَمَ develops from the idea of taboo until it becomes a general word for prohibition and is contrasted with أَهْلًا and used for anything that the law prohibited including شِرْكًا.⁴

Other words did not develop the sense of intrinsic wrong but derived their ethical significance from their relationship to the will of God. Hence harmful (سَوْءًا) speech and killing and fighting in some situations are wrong (ظَلَمًا) but in others are permissible, or even enjoined in the case of the latter two.⁵ Still other words were seen to be general in some situations and specific in others. Of such a nature was عدوانًا, which the context required to be a general

¹pages 52-53.

²page 55.

³page 57.

⁴pages 106-108.

⁵pages 68, 120-121.

word for sin in one case but implied that it had the more specific sense of injustice in another.¹ Finally the use of the various forms of **انم** shows that the Qur'anic vocabulary does not distinguish clearly between the state of sinfulness or guilt and the action of wrongdoing.² Certainly Arabic lexicographers have been aware of the development and use of many of the words studied. However the synthesis of these ideas, particularly as they were influenced by the developing Qur'anic law, is original.

The preceding results have all been of an incidental or secondary nature, while the following results relate to the primary intention of the study. The first of these was of course the definition of all the relevant Qur'anic words which developed out of the ten major roots chosen for study. It is not necessary to repeat the discussion in the Introduction concerning the inadequacies of the existing dictionaries and word studies. There they were shown to be too brief and in some cases inaccurate, and the inaccuracies were further noted in the text.³ Furthermore, though some studies, such as that of Jefferey, have noted the value of Comparative Semitics in determining the meanings of some words, they do not deal with

¹pages 54-55.

²page 95-100.

³E.g., pp. 67-68, 81, 96, 98, 99.

all the necessary words. Yet such a study was seen to be necessary for most of the words were observed in other languages, and the present study has suggested some relation between the previous monotheistic faiths and the Arabian monotheism which provided Muhammad with the vocabulary for the Qur'an. However, because Arabic is a cognate language to Syriac, Judeo-Aramaic, and Hebrew and as a result has parallel forms, Arab philologists have tended not to recognize the probable influence of the latter upon the vocabulary of Arabian monotheism. Furthermore, the most developed word studies, those of Gardner and Izutsu, did not trace the development of meaning in the pre-Islamic Arabic poetry when necessary. Yet without such study, one sometimes has difficulty determining either the existing meanings available to the writer or the relationship between the meanings of different forms from the same root.¹ Thus the first ten chapters were attempts to give definitions of the designated words in historical focus.

However, these studies revealed that the meaning of each word, together with its relationship to the others in the larger concept of sin, could only be determined by an analysis of the Qur'anic world view. A number of results led to this conclusion. First, the words revealed that there was no comprehensive idea of sin with the result that what unity they

¹E.g., p. 77.

possessed would have to be found in the world view. Secondly, the words were chosen for study because of their general nature with the result that they were observed to be used rather flexibly and with an interrelation of concepts. Again the world view was necessary for unity and significance. Thirdly, and most important, most of the words were observed to be held in common with other languages and religions. Hence whatever uniqueness they possessed was to be found in the world view. There is some originality in the discovery of the factors themselves which led to this conclusion. It was possibly the failure of recognizing the flexible use of words which led Gardner and the writers of the Qāmūs and the Tāj al-ʿArūs to make more precise definitions of words than valid.¹ There is also originality in the conclusion and its ultimate development, for Qur'anic scholars have not previously analysed the words for sin in the context of their world view.

The comparison of the Qur'anic view of the world and sin with those of the polytheistic religions of the area and with the Bible led to a number of results. The Qur'an was observed to possess elements of polytheism, seen, for example, in the use of حرم, but these were transformed in the new world view which corresponded roughly to that of the Mosaic period in the Bible rather than to the New Testament. Sin was observed to occasion man's estrangement from God, and the

¹pages 5, 67-68.

exclusive elevation of God resulted in a deepening of the sense of sin in the old words. The covenant was seen as central in the world view. Its revelational character led to a new clarity and authority concerning what constituted sin. The fact that God had issued it gave a sense of rebellion against God to any disobedience of the law. And finally its laws determined what constituted sin. It was law rather than social mores or some vague concept of taboo which now governed the understanding of sin. And the general words for sin which were studied gained their new significance from this understanding. They now expressed non-conformity to or transgression of the revealed will of God as expressed in His covenantal law. As noted above, other men have observed the place of the covenant in the Qur'an. But it has been a contribution of this study to attempt to spell out the implications of this insight as they relate to the Qur'anic vocabulary for sin. But there has been still another observation of this study which philologists usually miss but which profoundly affects the significance of the words used. It is the depth and urgency of the message. In contrast to the Arabians before him, Muhammad saw the transcendence of God and the imminence of doom; and as a result his words conveyed the deep tragedy of sin.

APPENDIX

PRE-ISLAMIC VIEWS OF THE WORLD AND WRONG

The necessity of looking at the pre-Islamic context is indicated by a number of factors. First, it gives the Qur'anic view historical and theological focus by showing how it differed from some conceptions and how it was similar to others. Secondly, history and reason show that socio-religious movements are never entirely new but must be based on at least some existing ideas or practices in order to be comprehensible to the recipients and to appeal to their religious feelings. Thirdly, internal evidence confirms this reasoning, for the words studied were seen to have been used in the Qur'an without explanation and thereby imply that this religious vocabulary was already well-known to the hearers. Fourthly, the preceding study showed that some words were probably loan-words. Hence it would be helpful to study the previous religious systems to see what foreign flavor, if any, has influenced the Arabic words. This problem is heightened, however, by the fact that almost all of the relevant languages are cognate to Arabic with the result that the latter has parallel roots. Finally, the Qur'anic materials demand this

approach; for, as will be illustrated later, Muhammad expressly states his position in relation to that of the Jews, Christians, and pagans as he understood them. Hence understanding both what he agrees with and what he is reacting against becomes important in reconstructing his own position.

However, this section, together with the development of the Biblical views in the main text of the thesis, should not be considered an attempt to make a "source" analysis of the Qur'an even though material relevant to such a study will be treated. In the first place, even if such an analysis were possible, it would extend far beyond the space limitations of this study. Secondly, well-known works of varying value are already in existence.¹ Thirdly, definite conclusions are difficult because of such considerations as the following: information from the period is scanty; correspondence does not always imply dependency; almost all Jewish sacred books were also used by Christians; Muhammad's understanding of such Christian doctrines as the Trinity (5:116) reveal either little contact with orthodox Christians or contact with heretical groups; elements of literary dependence are intertwined with original elements; and finally, such Qur'anic passages as 3:3 and 53:33-54 plus pre-Islamic poetry point to a previous Arabian monotheism which already contained

¹E.g., Richard Bell, The Origin of Islam in its Christian Environment (Edinburgh, 1925); Charles C. Torrey, The Jewish Foundation of Islam (New York, 1933); and Andrae.

many of the foreign and indigenous elements found in the Qur'an.¹ Fourthly, a discussion of "sources" is not necessary for the purposes of this paper. All that is necessary is that the previous conceptions of sin in the context of their world views be outlined so that the Qur'anic conception might be given historical and theological focus -- thereby showing contrasts and similarities and their developments.

First we shall look briefly at the ancient Near Eastern religions.² Even though these religions predate Islam by many centuries -- in that they form the background of the Old Testament -- they warrant some consideration because some of the words studied have been traced back to this period and because they show polytheistic world views lying behind and in some way related to the polytheism of Arabia. These views of the world and sin are seen to be in sharp contrast to the

¹Cf. Hamilton A. R. Gibb, "Pre-Islamic Monotheism in Arabia," Harvard Theological Review, LV (1962), 269-280; W. Montgomery Watt, Muhammad at Mecca (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1953), pp. 24-29, 158-164; Nicholson, pp. 139-140; Alfred Guillaume, trans. and ed., The Life of Muhammad (Translation of Ibn Hisham's recension of Ibn Ishāq's Sīrat Rasūl Allāh; London, Oxford U.P., 1955), pp. 98-103; Charles Lyall, trans. and ed., Translations of Ancient Arabian Poetry (New York, 1930), pp. 90, 92, 112, 119.

²The following outline of pre-Islamic views of the world and wrong will rest heavily on secondary sources because it is not an original contribution of this thesis but is merely added to lend historical and theological focus to the study.

views of the Bible and the Qur'an -- even though elements of the ancient views will be seen to crop up on occasion among followers of the later monotheistic faiths. Henri Frankfort states: "The ancients . . . experienced human life as part of a widely spreading network of connections which reached . . . into the hidden depths of nature and the powers that rule nature."¹ Because whatever was significant was embedded in the life of the cosmos, he points out that the king's function was to maintain the harmony of that integration. He notes further that, though this doctrine is valid for the entire ancient Near East and for many other regions, there are contrasts between the two centers of ancient civilization -- Egypt and Mesopotamia.

The Egyptians with their cosmological view of the world and society believed that the universe contained opposing forces in continual equilibrium. Thus evil was balanced by good. Ma'at was the cosmic force of harmony which, according to John A. Wilson,² comes closest to the moral connotation of our word "good." In this context the Egyptian viewed his misdeeds as aberrations, not as rebellion against a holy God.³

¹Kingship and the Gods: A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Religion as the Integration of Society and Nature (Chicago, Chicago U. P., 1948), p. 3.

²The Burden of Egypt (Chicago, Chicago U.P., 1951), p.48.

³Henri Frankfort, Ancient Egyptian Religion (New York, Columbia U. P., 1948), pp. 73-74.

The good was not that which in the modern sense was ethically right or the evil that which was morally wrong. Rather the cosmic forces and natural processes were personified in human form and were thus subject to human shortcomings and instability, and "the good was what they willed and loved and the evil that which was contrary to their desires and the right ordering of things, and consequently displeasing to them."¹

This idea of cosmic order with its rhythms was also found among the Mesopotamians, but it was not something given. It was rather something achieved by a continual integration of the many individual cosmic wills.² Man's position in the universe was comparable to that of a slave in a city-state, and his task was to submit to the hierarchy of authority.³ In this context what seems praiseworthy to one's self may be contemptible before the god, and what seems bad to the individual may be good before one's god. Thus, though the Mesopotamian believed he lived under a divine imperative, he did not believe that this was an eternal law given by an absolutely just God. As a result their psalms refer to guilt but ignore a deep sense of sin (such as shown by David

¹Edwin Oliver James, Myth and Ritual in the Ancient Near East (London, Thames and Hudson, 1958), p. 183.

²Thorkild Jacobsen, "Mesopotamia," Before Philosophy: The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man, ed. Henri Frankfort, et al. (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, Penguin Books, 1949), p. 139.

³Ibid., p. 163.

in Psalm 51). The guilt was recognized by its consequences, for the gods struck automatically when a divine decree was transgressed. However the individual might not know exactly what his offense had been.¹ It is true that the Mesopotamians had a law in the Code of Hammurabi, but this should not be considered a revealed law in the sense that the Law of Moses or the Qur'anic laws claim to be. As noted by George Ernest Wright,² the text makes clear that the king was only commissioned by the god to prepare the code; he did not receive it from the god in its present form.³

When we turn to paganism in Arabia, we face new problems, for one cannot always differentiate clearly between elements of paganism and the monotheism which was developing. As pointed out by Henri Lammens⁴ and many others, the Arabians had contact with Jews and Christians. These religions undoubtedly had some relation to the Arabian monotheism, so we cannot always tell what ideas were indigenous and what were related to other religions. Thus we find a strong religious feeling and a sense of sin in the *Dīwān* of Labīd, but

¹Frankfort, Kingship, pp. 278-279.

²The Biblical Doctrine of Man in Society (London, SCM Press, 1954), p. 30n.

³Theophile J. Meek, trans., "The Code of Hammurabi," Ancient Near Eastern Texts, ed. James B. Pritchard (Princeton, Princeton U.P., 1955), pp. 163-180.

⁴L'Arabie Occidentale avant l'Hegire (Beirut, 1928), pp. 1-99.

Christianity was established in Najran among the tribe which he was addressing.¹ Hence any attempt to distinguish the source of these views too closely would be dangerous.

Another problem grows out of the scantiness of material -- particularly for North Arabia. This dearth of material is based not only on the limited writing prior to Islam but also on the fact that the Arabians themselves do not appear to have had very clear ideas on the subject. The traditional cult was practiced, but anything approaching dogma certainly did not exist. There does not even seem to be a definite belief as to such questions as the relation of the Deity to sacred stones, trees and idols. If the heathen Arabians reflected on these subjects, they probably thought that these objects possessed a divine power which exercised a divine influence.²

The poetry, however, reveals that the pre-Islamic Arabians had a recognized moral code, but Nöldeke says that "the maintenance of morality was due much more to respect for traditional usages and public opinion than to fear of Divine wrath."³ However, the pagan Arabian did think of God as "the Restrainer" (الوازع) from evil and the

¹Lyall, pp. 90-92 (Arabic text not available to the writer).

²Cf. Theodor Nöldeke, "Arabs (Ancient)," Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, ed. James Hastings, I, 665.

³Ibid., p. 673.

wrongdoer as "the enemy (or hated) of God" (عدو الله).¹

Actually the Qur'an combines the two ideas of tradition and the divine will in the minds of the pagans: "When they commit an indecency they say, we found our fathers doing this, and God (or the god) has so commanded us" (7:27).

When one turns from these general remarks about the pre-Islamic Arabian view of religion and morality to a more specific analysis, he observes a similarity and a difference between the religions of Northern, Central, and Southern Arabia. A brief look at the latter two will be sufficient for this study; for material is more readily available concerning them, and they contain most of the significant elements of similarity and contrast with Islam. In Southern Arabia (Yemen and Hadramawt) various powers were believed to work in nature, for sorcery and magic were practiced as among all the Semites. However, the most significant feature of their religion for the present study was their developed temple worship. This was characterized by the concept of hram or inviolability, which was discussed above in the background analysis of هرم. The temple was called mhram because it was sacred and hence inviolable by the profane or impure. Thus, in the world view of the Southern Arabians there was a clear distinction between the profane and the sacred and between the pure and the impure.

¹Julius Wellhausen, Reste Arabischen Heidentums (2nd. ed., Berlin, 1927), p. 224.

Women could not circle the temple in a state of impurity -- that is, at the time of their menses. People could not have sexual relations during the pilgrimage. In order to approach the temple one had to purify himself by washing. However, the idea of inviolable divine protection was not confined to the temple areas but also included funeral steles and tombs, and those who violated them were subject to divine reprisal. Likewise the concept of h̄rm or inviolability extended beyond the temple and burial places. It was also taboo to approach a woman in illicit (h̄rm) times, which included having relations with her at the time of her menses or when she was in child-bed.¹ The reason why "unclean" things are taboo like "holy" things is because in primitive religion they were both believed to have inherent supernatural powers or associations.²

Despite the previously-mentioned contention of Nöldeke, that "maintenance of morality was due more to respect for traditional usages and public opinion than to fear of Divine wrath," the wrath of the god is a significant factor, at least in the religion of the Southern Arabians. Thus the god 'Almaqah is portrayed as striking with pestilence and famine

¹Gonzague Ryckmans, Les Religions Arabes Préislamiques (2nd. ed., Louvain, Bureaux du Muséon, 1951), pp. 5, 27-40, and "La Confession Publique des Péchés en Arabie Méridionale Préislamique," Le Muséon, LVIII (1945), pp. 1-14.

²W. Robertson Smith, The Religion of the Semites (Reprint of Lectures on the Religion of the Semites, 1889) (New York, Meridian Books, 1956), pp. 446-448.

those who were tardy in paying what they had promised to the temple. Furthermore, as noted in the religion of the ancient Mesopotamians, this wrath of the god breaks forth automatically, roused by the transgression itself and not by the moral disposition of the one to whom it was imputed. In this context an individual could become culpable by committing involuntary or unconscious wrongs or by sharing in group responsibility even though he did not commit the wrong himself.¹

When one turns to Central Arabia (Southern Hijaz and the region to the north of Yemen), he can discern the outlines of a world view even though the materials are only fragmentary. The sky was the habitat of the gods; while the land and the subterranean regions were haunted by jinn - or spirits and phantoms. In the Qur'an men and jinn belong to two species of the same genus of being and populate the land. Men are corporal and the jinn are spiritual, although terrestrial and not supresensible in a strict sense. Jinn are manifested in the form of strange beings or animals and birds of various kinds. They circulate by preference during the night and haunt solitary places and ruins. And they are responsible for the disorders which trouble the normal course of things such as impotence in men, sterility in women, fevers, and insanity. In this context there were many sorcerers and

¹Ryckmans, Les Religions, pp. 35, 37-38, and "La Confession," pp. 8-14.

sorceresses, who tried to intervene in the laws of nature, and divination was used to interpret omens. However there was also a developed cult with priests who performed ritual functions and rendered the oracles of the god, while the faithful rendered homage to the divinity by apportioning to him offerings and sacrifices.¹

Pre-Islamic Arabian poets such as Zuhair had a deep religious feeling and a sense of sin, but because of the nature of their poetry they will be considered in the section on Arabian monotheism. As with the South Arabian polytheists, what is most fruitful for the purposes of this study is an investigation of the concept of hram in Central Arabia. These Arabians believed in sacred stones and trees as well as sanctuaries and often tombs. The sacred area in Mecca was called the Haram, and pilgrims were in a state of ihram -- that is in a sacred state. As in Southern Arabia women could not take part in feasts and sacrifices during the time of their menses, and sexual relations were prohibited in the environs of the temple. The latter restriction is not directed against immorality for it applies to spouses. Rather, once again a distinction is seen between the sacred and the profane and the pure and the impure. One should note however that what men did and what they abstained from doing was based on common practice rather than law.² In fact

¹Ryckmans, Les Religions, pp. 7, 9-12.

²Ibid., pp. 8, 12-13; Smith, pp. 142-143; 445-446.

what Watt calls "tribal humanism" was more effective by the time of Muhammad than the archaic religion.¹ According to this perspective, meaning in life was to be found in belonging to a tribe which could boast of bravery and generosity and in having some share in these. Thus the realization of human excellence and the concomitant survival of the tribe were the chief ends of life.

Besides the archaic religion and "tribal humanism," monotheism was also found in pre-Islamic Arabia. Historical records point this out by their description of the hanīfs.² But the internal evidence of the Qur'an also implies the fact, for words and references with monotheistic content are used without explanation and presuppose sufficient apperception on the part of the hearers. The content of this monotheism was vague,³ and a great deal more study is necessary to determine its constituent elements. However an analysis of passages such as 53:33-54 suggest that it included material from the Old and New Testaments, from poets such as Zuhair, and from native Arabian tradition.⁴

Not only does the vagueness of the pre-Islamic monotheism militate against a clear understanding of its world view and

¹Pages 24-25.

²Guillaume tr., Ibn Ishaq's Sīrat, pp. 98-104.

³Cf. Watt, pp. 158-161.

⁴Cf. Gibb, pp. 272-278.

concept of wrong, but so also does the fact that there is some uncertainty as to the texts, the authors, and the dates of much of the fragmentary material from the period.¹ However, the fact that this monotheism was so strongly infused with Biblical thought somewhat lessens the need for a separate analysis. It will only be noted here that among the monotheists there was a belief that God created and sustained the earth (cf. 29:61-63). Further, He had revealed Himself and His will in the Tablets of Moses (cf. 53:36-56). In a phrase reminiscent of Psalm 1:6, Labid describes right conduct as the way of the righteous.² And an-Nābigha says that God requires his justice and his fidelity (**أَبَىٰ آلَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا** (**عَدْلَهُ** وَوَفَاءَهُ **ۚ**).³ In this context, sin would obviously include turning from God's revelation (as it did in the time of Muhammad -- cf. 29:61; 53:33) or committing injustice or not being faithful to God. Zuhair implies that this sin need not be an overt action but may be hidden in the soul when he says:

فَلَا تَكْتُمَنَّ آلَ اللَّهِ مَا فِي نَفُوسِكُمْ لِيَخْفَىٰ وَمَهْمَا يُكْتُمَنَّ آلَ اللَّهِ يَعْلَمَنَّ

You do not hide from God what is in your souls
To be hid; whatever one hides from God, He knows.

¹Cf. Andrae, p. 39.

²Lyall, p. 90.

³(London, 1870) ed. W. Ahlwardt, **دواوين الشعراء الجاهليين**

⁴**ص ٣٢ ط ١٩٥**, Ibid. ط ٢٦.

Before one turns his attention from pre-Islamic Arabia, however, he should note that, despite the presence of many Biblical borrowings or parallels, there is a melancholy or pessimistic fatalism which runs through the poetry. Thus

'Imrū 'l-Qaīs writes:

رَأَى عِرْفَانَ النَّارِ وَشَجِبَتْ عُرْوَتِي وَهَذَا الْمَوْتُ يَسْلُبُنِي شَبَابِي
 1 وَنَفْسِي سَوْفَ يَسْلُبُنِي وَجَرْمِي وَيُنَجِّتُنِي وَسِيكًا بِالشَّرَابِ

My veins are interrelated with the vein of the earth.
 This death robs me of my youth.
 It will rob me of my body and my soul,
 And soon will join me to the dust.

That Jewish and Christian ideas were present in Arabia at the time of Muhammad has already been noted. These ideas found expression both in the vague Arabian monotheism which has been mentioned and in Jewish and Christian communities -- though most of the latter may not have been orthodox. The writer has attempted to compare and contrast the Judeo-Christian world view and concepts of sin -- particularly as found in the Old and New Testaments -- with their Qur'anic counterparts in the one discussion in the main text, rather than giving a separate treatment to the Judeo-Christian materials here. The reason for this is first of all that good summaries of the Biblical views are readily accessible.² Secondly, there

¹ ص ١٢٠ ب ٤-٥، Ibid.

² E.g., Wright, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-62, and *The Old Testament against its Environment* (London, SCM Press, 1950); Floyd V. Filson, *The New Testament against its Environment* (London, SCM, 1950); or any of the standard texts on Biblical Theology such as Walter Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, Vol. I, tr. John A. Baker (Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1961), pp. 374-381.

are so many parallels between the views of the Qur'an and Bible -- particularly those of the Old Testament -- that separate discussions would involve unnecessary duplication. This conclusion, that the perspectives of the Bible and Qur'an have much in common, is borne out not only by the internal evidence of the views presented but also by the express claim of Muhammad. Thus in 5:48 we read that the Book revealed to Muhammad is a confirmation and guardian of the previous revelation of the Torah and Gospel, though the verse also recognizes some differences between them. In contrast Muhammad expressly repudiates polytheism (e.g., 4:48). During Muhammad's early ministry Islam assimilated not only elements of the belief of the Jews but also some of their practices such as fasting and the qibla. Later, after they had rejected Muhammad's message, he changed the month for fasting and the direction of the qibla but he retained the practices. Thus, even deliberate alterations such as these did not affect the Jewish framework of thought and practice.

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