

**AN EXTRACTION FROM AL-MALFUZ
AL-SHARIF OF IMAM AHMAD RIDA
AL-QADIRI** رحمته الله

**A DISCUSSION ON THE PROPHETIC KNOWLEDGE
PERTAINING TO THE UNSEEN (AL-GHAYB)**

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

COMPILER: A person whose leaning was towards *Wahābīsm*, asked a question pertaining to the Knowledge of the Unseen (علم غيب) of Sayyidunā Rasūlullāh ﷺ. The noble Imām thus replied:

ANSWER: Do you ask about the general *‘Ilme-Ghayb* or the knowledge of *Mā’yakūn* (happenings in the future)? I will answer you according to your question.

QUESTION: I accept that Sayyidunā Rasūlullāh ﷺ is the most high and excellent creation and I also believe that he is *Roshan-Zamīr*¹, but I do not accept that he is aware of the intentions in the hearts of people.

ANSWER: *Roshan-Zamīr* itself means to know the conditions of the heart. *Allāh* ﷻ states in the Holy *Qur’ān*:

﴿ مَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيَذَرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَىٰ مَا أَنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ حَتَّىٰ يَمِيزَ الْخَبِيثَ مِنَ الطَّيِّبِ ۚ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُطْلِعَكُمْ عَلَىٰ الْغَيْبِ وَلَٰكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَجْتَبِيٰ مِنْ رُسُلِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ ۖ فَفَاتَمُنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ ۚ وَإِنْ تُؤْمِنُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَلَكُمْ أَجْرٌ ۙ ﴾

﴿ عَظِيمٌ ﴾

*Allah will not leave the Believers in the state in which you are now, until He separates what is evil from what is good. Nor will Allāh ﷻ disclose to you the secrets of the Unseen, but He ﷻ chooses of His Messengers (for the purpose) whom He ﷻ pleases. So believe in Allāh ﷻ and His Messengers: and if you believe and do right, you will have a reward without measure.*²

Another *Ayah* state:

﴿ عَلِيمُ الْغَيْبِ فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلَىٰ غَيْبِهِ أَحَدًا ۚ إِلَّا مَنِ ارْتَضَىٰ مِنْ رَسُولٍ فَإِنَّهُ يَسْلُكُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ رَصَدًا ﴾

﴿ عَظِيمٌ ﴾

*He (Alone) knows the Unseen, nor does He make anyone acquainted with His Mysteries, except a Messenger whom He has chosen: and then He makes a band of watchers march before him and behind him.*³

¹ One who possesses Spiritual Insight is called *Roshan Zamīr*. Such Spiritual Insight is also called *Kashf* in Arabic.

² *Al-Qur’ān al-Karīm*, Sura Alā-‘Imran, verse 179

³ *Al-Qur’ān al-Karīm*, Sura Al-Jinn, verse 26/27

Allāh ﷻ not only exposes it, but also gives it to **His** ﷻ chosen Prophets. It is the consensus of the ‘*Ulamā* of *Ahle Sunnah* that whatever excellence was granted to other Prophets of **Allāh** ﷻ was all given in a higher scale to *Sayyid al-‘Alamīn* ﷻ. Whatever excellence any Prophet possessed was actually granted to him by Sayyidunā Muḥammad ﷻ. This he granted by the Divine Grace of **Allāh** ﷻ. *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Muslim* both narrate:

﴿إِنَّمَا أَنَا قَاسِمٌ، وَاللَّهُ يُعْطِي﴾

*And verily, I am the distributor and Allāh ﷻ the Provider.*⁴

Concerning Sayyidunā Ibra’hīm ﷺ, **Allāh** ﷻ states:

﴿وَكَذَلِكَ نُرَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ مَلَكُوتَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلِيَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُوقِنِينَ﴾

*So also did We show Abraham the power and the laws of the heavens and the earth, that he might (with understanding) have certitude.*⁵

The word “*Nara*” in Arabic refers to continuation. This means that the Kingdom of the Unseen was not shown only once, but is being shown continuously. If this is the case of Sayyidunā Ibra’hīm ﷺ then surely the condition and status of Sayyidunā Muḥammad ﷻ is much greater. His observance is more comprehensive and clearer than all the noble Prophets ﷺ. Only the ignorant will reject this reality.

اعاذنا الله تعالى من هذه العقيدة الباطلة !

May Allāh ﷻ protect us from such corrupt beliefs!

The word *كذلك* is used for comparison or similarity. Any student of the Arabic language knows that comparison (تشبيه) requires two objects, i.e. the object likened to (متشبه به) and that to which anything is likened, (مشبه به). The *Qur’ān* mentions the object likened to (مشبه به), is Nabī Ibra’hīm ﷺ and that to which anything is likened (مشبه به) is Sayyidunā Muḥammad ﷻ. After understanding this, the meaning of the *Ayah* will thus read, “O My beloved Rasūl ﷺ, as We

⁴ *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Vol.1, pg.39, narrated by Sayyidunā Amīr Mu’āwiyā ﷺ. *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī Ḥadīth* no.71, the complete *Ḥadīth* reads:

(71) – حَدَّثَنَا سَعِيدُ بْنُ عُفَيْرٍ قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا ابْنُ وَهْبٍ عَنْ يُونُسَ عَنْ ابْنِ شِهَابٍ قَالَ: قَالَ حَمِيدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ سَمِعْتُ مُعَاوِيَةَ خَطِيبًا يَقُولُ:

سَمِعْتُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: ﴿مَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ بِهِ خَيْرًا يُفَقِّهُهُ فِي الدِّينِ. وَإِنَّمَا أَنَا قَاسِمٌ، وَاللَّهُ يُعْطِي. وَلَنْ تَزَالَ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةُ قَائِمَةً عَلَى

أَمْرِ اللَّهِ لَا يَضُرُّهُمْ مَنْ خَالَفَهُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ.﴾

⁵ *Al-Qur’ān al-Karīm*, Sura Al-An‘ām, verse:75

show you the kingdoms of the skies and the earth, similarly by your blessings (Wasīlā) We are also showing it to your noble forefather Nabī Ibra'hīm ﷺ.”

The Holy *Qur'ān* states in another *Ayah*:

﴿ وَمَا هُوَ عَلَى الْغَيْبِ بِضَنِينٍ ﴿١٤﴾ ﴾

My beloved Rasūl ﷺ is not a miser on revealing Ghayb.⁶

He also exposes it to those whom he finds worthy. Obviously, a miser is he who has wealth and does not spend it. One who does not have wealth to spend cannot be called a miser. In the above *Ayah*, the Beloved *Nabī's* ﷺ possession of 'Ilme-Ghayb refutes the quality of a miser. Therefore, it is said, “*He is not a miser of Ghayb. He possesses 'Ilme-Ghayb and gives it to others.*” If he did not have 'Ilme-Ghayb to relate then what are the rejections all about? It is clear that the *Nabī* ﷺ is equipped with 'Ilme-Ghayb and informs his special servants about it.

Almighty *Allāh* ﷻ states:

﴿ وَيَوْمَ نَبْعَثُ فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ ۗ وَجِئْنَا بِكَ شَهِيدًا عَلَىٰ هَٰؤُلَاءِ ۗ وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ ۖ الْكِتَابَ تَبْيِينًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً وَبُشْرَىٰ لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٨٩﴾ ﴾

One day We shall raise from all Peoples a witness against them, from amongst themselves: and We shall bring thee as a witness against these (thy people): and We have revealed this Book (Qur'ān) on you with clear and detailed information of everything, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad Tidings to Muslims.⁷

The word *تبينا* (exposure) was used and not *بيان* (report). This explains to us that the knowledge of things was so explicit that nothing was hidden. Imām Tirmidī ﷺ (d.271/892) and others narrated this *Hadith* from ten *As'hab*. The *Sahāba* state, “*One morning we went to Masjid al-Nabawī for Salat al-Fajr. We all waited for the Beloved Nabī ﷺ to come. But he was delayed till almost sunrise,*

﴿ حَتَّىٰ كِدْنَا نَتْرَأَىٰ عَيْنَ الشَّمْسِ ﴾

PT⁶ TPAI-*Qur'ān al-Karīm*, Sura At-Takwīr, verse 24

⁷ *Al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*, Sura An-Naḥl, Verse 89

*It was almost sunrise.*⁸

The Nabī ﷺ came and led the *Salāh* after which he addressed us and said, ‘Do you know why I was delayed?’ We answered: *الله ورسوله اعلم: Allāh ﷻ and His Rasūl ﷺ knows best.*” He said,

﴿رَأَيْتُ رَبِّي فِي أَحْسَنِ صُورَةٍ﴾

I saw my Lord in a most beautiful sight (تجلى).⁹

This means he was engrossed in some Divinely Ordained meditation in the presence of his Sublime Lord ﷻ, who was directly casting His ﷻ Divine Light on him. The *Habīb* then said, ‘*Allāh ﷻ said to me,*

﴿يا محمد، فيم يختصم الملائة الأعلی؟ فقلت لا ادري﴾

*Oh Muḥammad! What are these Angels arguing about? I replied, ‘I would know if You inform me’*¹⁰

﴿فرأيتُه فوضعَ كَفَّهُ بينَ كَتفِيَّ حتى وجدتُ برْدَ أناملِهِ بينَ ثَدْيِيَّ ، فتجلى لي كلُّ شيءٍ

وَعَرَفْتُ﴾

⁸ Cited in *Sunan Tirmidī*, Vol 9, p.118, *Hadith* no. 3357, narrated on the authority of Sayyidunā Ma‘ād ibn Jabal ﷺ. This is very lengthy *Hadith* which also incorporates the following questions and it reads as follows:

(3357) – حدثنا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ بَشَّارٍ حَدَّثَنَا مُعَاذُ بْنُ هَانِيٍّ حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو هَانِيٍّ السَّكْرِيُّ حَدَّثَنَا جَهْضَمُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَنِ يَحْيَى بْنِ أَبِي كَثِيرٍ عَنِ زَيْدِ بْنِ سَلَامٍ عَنِ أَبِي سَلَامٍ عَنِ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ عَائِشِ بْنِ الْحَضْرَمِيِّ أَنَّهُ حَدَّثَهُ عَنْ مَالِكِ بْنِ يَخَامَرَ السَّكْسَكِيِّ عَنْ مُعَاذِ بْنِ جَبَلٍ، رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ «اِحْتَبَسَ عَنَّا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ذَاتَ غَدَاةٍ مِنْ صَلَاةِ الصُّبْحِ حَتَّى كِدْنَا نَنْتَرِئُ عَيْنَ الشَّمْسِ فَخَرَجَ سَرِيعًا فَنُوبَ بِالصَّلَاةِ فَصَلَّى رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَتَجَوَّزَ فِي صَلَاتِهِ، فَلَمَّا سَلَّمَ دَعَا بِصَوْتِهِ فَقَالَ لَنَا: عَلَيَّ مَصَافِكُمْ كَمَا أَنْتُمْ ثُمَّ انْقَلَبَ إِلَيْنَا ثُمَّ قَالَ: أَمَا إِنِّي سَأَحْدِثُكُمْ مَا حَبَسَنِي عَنْكُمْ الْغَدَاةَ أَنِّي فُئِمْتُ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَنُوضَّاتُ فَصَلَّيْتُ مَا فُدِّرَ لِي فَتَعَسْتُ فِي صَلَاتِي حَتَّى اسْتَنْقَلْتُ إِذَا أَنَا بَرَّبِّي تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى فِي أَحْسَنِ صُورَةٍ فَقَالَ يَا مُحَمَّدُ، قُلْتُ لِرَبِّي رَبِّ، قَالَ فِيمَ يَخْتَصِمُ الْمَلَأُ الْأَعْلَى؟ قُلْتُ: لَا أَدْرِي رَبِّ قَالَهَا ثَلَاثًا، قَالَ فَرَأَيْتُهُ وَضَعَ كَفَّهُ بَيْنَ كَتِفِيَّ. قَدْ وَجَدْتُ بَرْدَ أَنْمَالِهِ بَيْنَ ثَدْيِيَّ فَتَجَلَّى لِي كُلُّ شَيْءٍ وَعَرَفْتُ فَقَالَ يَا مُحَمَّدُ، قُلْتُ لِرَبِّي رَبِّ، قَالَ فِيمَ يَخْتَصِمُ الْمَلَأُ الْأَعْلَى؟ قُلْتُ فِي الْكُفَّارَاتِ، قَالَ مَا هُنَّ؟ قُلْتُ مَسْنِي الْأَفْدَامِ إِلَى الْجَمَاعَاتِ، وَالْجُلُوسِ فِي الْمَسَاجِدِ بَعْدَ الصَّلَوَاتِ، وَإِسْبَاغِ الْوُضُوءِ فِي الْمَكْرُوهَاتِ، قَالَ ثُمَّ فِيمَ؟ قُلْتُ: إِطْعَامِ الطَّعَامِ، وَلَيْسَ الْكَلَامِ، وَالصَّلَاةَ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّاسُ نِيَامٌ. قَالَ سَلِّ، قُلْتُ اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ فِعْلَ الْخَيْرَاتِ، وَتَرْكَ الْمُنْكَرَاتِ، وَحُبَّ الْمَسَاكِينِ، وَأَنْ تُغْفِرَ لِي وَتُرْحَمَنِي، وَإِذَا أَرَدْتَ فِتْنَةً فِي قَوْمٍ فَتَوَفَّنِي غَيْرَ مَقْنُونٍ، وَأَسْأَلُكَ حُبَّكَ وَحُبَّ مَنْ يُحِبُّكَ وَحُبَّ عَمَلٍ يُقَرِّبُ إِلَى حُبِّكَ. قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِنَّهَا حَقٌّ فَادْرُسُوهَا ثُمَّ تَعَلَّمُوهَا».

⁹ Ibid and also cited in *Sunan Dāramī*, Vol 2, p. 126, narrated on the authority of Sayyidunā ‘Abd al-Raḥmān bin ‘Ā’ish ﷺ.

¹⁰ Ibid and also cited in *Musnad Imām Aḥmad* ﷺ narrated on the authority of Sayyidunā ‘Abd al-Raḥmān bin ‘Ā’ish ﷺ and other *Sahāba*.

Then I saw Almighty Allāh ﷻ place His Divine Hands of Qudrah between both my shoulders and I felt coolness in my heart. Thereafter, everything (in the universe) became clearly exposed to me and I recognised them.¹¹

This *Hadith Sharīf* is explicit and no one can refute it by saying that “everything” here refers to all that pertains to the Laws of *Sharī‘āh*. In fact, one *Hadith* states:

﴿ مَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ ﴾

I recognised everything in the skies and earth.¹²

Another narration reports:

﴿ فَعَلِمْتُ مَا بَيْنَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ ﴾

I perceived everything between the east and the west.¹³

All three *Aḥadith* are correct and sound (صحيح). The words of Sayyidunā Rasūlullāh ﷺ are that,

1. Everything became exposed to me.
2. I recognised everything in the skies and earth.
3. I perceived everything between the east and west.
4. The *Nabī* ﷺ says that everything became exposed to him and he recognised them all. He said this because,
 - ❖ Sometimes a thing is known but not in your presence, e.g. an apple which is in the market or tree and not in your presence. Although it is absent from the physical eye, but you can visualise them.
 - ❖ Sometimes things are in your presence but you do not recognise them, e.g. sitting in the presence of many people and you see them but do not recognise them all. In both these points the knowledge is limited or incomplete.

The Prophet of *Allāh* ﷺ has removed all doubts from our hearts and minds and informed us that his knowledge is comprehensive and unique which is beyond human perception. Therefore, he said, “*Everything in the universe was presented to me and I recognise them all. Nothing in the universe is excluded from my knowledge or sight*”.

¹¹ As cited in *Sunan Tirmidī*, Vol 1, p. 947, and Imām Aḥmad ﷺ narrated on the authority of Sayyidunā Mu‘āz ibn Jabal ﷺ

PT¹² TP ibid

PT¹³ TP ibid

﴿ الحمد لله رب العالمين ﴾

Dear *Muslim* brothers, baseless interpretation of *Qur'ānic Ayahs* is not accepted in *Islām*. Almighty *Allāh* ﷻ states clearly, “*We have revealed this Book to you with clear details of everything*”, and the Beloved *Nabī* ﷺ confirms this, “*Everything became clearly exposed to me and I recognised them.*” This recognition encompasses everything hidden in the Sacred Pen (قلم) and recorded in the Protected Sacred Tablet (لوح محفوظ). This in turn encompasses everything of the past and future, from the First to the Last Day. Every concealed or exposed thing is included therein.

Hence, Imām Tabrānī ؒ (d.360/970), Imām Nā‘īm bin Ḥammād ؒ (d.256/868), *Ustāz* of Imām al-Bukhārī ؒ (d.256/868) and others, all narrated from Sayyidunā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar ؒ (d.73/692) that the *Nabī* of *Allāh* ﷻ said:

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ قَدْ رَفَعَ لِي الدُّنْيَا فَإِنَّا أَنْظَرُ إِلَيْهَا وَإِلَىٰ مَا هُوَ كَائِنٌ فِيهَا إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ﴾

كَأَنَّمَا

أَنْظَرُ إِلَىٰ كَفِّي هَذِهِ ﴿﴾

Verily Allāh ﷻ raised the world in front of me. So I saw it along with everything to happen in it till Qiyāmah as if I was looking at this palm of mine.¹⁴

By the blessings of Sayyidunā Muḥammad ﷺ, *Allāh* ﷻ has entrusted this unique quality to his beloved *Nabī*'s ﷺ chosen servants. A *Walī* of *Allāh* ﷻ states, “*One is not a perfect man if one does not see the entire world like one sees one’s own palm.*” He has spoken the truth and revealed his true status.

The Cardinal Pole of noble Saints (The *Qutb*) ‘*Arife-Billāh* Shaykh Bahā al-Dīn Naqshaband ؒ ؒ (d.791/1389) states, “*I say that one is not a perfect man if one does not see the entire world as if one sees the nail of one’s thumb.*”

¹⁴ cited in *Majma‘h al-Zawā‘id*, *Hadith* no.76041, narrated on the authority of Sayyidunā ‘Umar al-Farūq ؒ. This complete cited is as follows:

(76041)- وعن عمر قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: ﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ قَدْ رَفَعَ لِي الدُّنْيَا فَإِنَّا أَنْظَرُ إِلَيْهَا وَإِلَىٰ مَا هُوَ كَائِنٌ فِيهَا إِلَىٰ

يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ كَأَنَّمَا أَنْظَرُ إِلَىٰ كَفِّي هَذِهِ جَلِيَانُ جَلَاهُ اللَّهُ لِنَبِيِّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَمَا جَلَاهُ لِلنَّبِيِّينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ.﴾ رواه الطبراني، ورجاله وثقوا على

ضعف كثير في سعيد بن سنان الرَّهَآوي.

The illustrious son and descendant of the Glorious Prophet ﷺ and the true representative and inheritor of Prophetic Bounties, the great *Ghawth* Shaykh Sayyid ‘Abd al-Qādir Jilānī ؒ (d.561/1164) states:

نَظَرْتُ إِلَى بِلَادِ اللَّهِ جَمْعًا كَخَرْدَلَةٍ عَلَى حُكْمِ اتِّصَالِ
*I see all the cities of Allāh ﷻ as I see a mustard seed in the centre of my palm.*¹⁵

This vision is not limited to a specific moment, but the word اتصالی refers to “continuity” which means that he sees it continuously. The Grand *Ghawth* ؒ also states:

﴿ إِنَّ بُؤْبُؤَهُ عَيْنِي فِي اللُّوحِ المَحْفُوظِ ﴾

*The pupil of my eye is set on the Luḥe-Mahfūz*¹⁶.

What is the *Luḥe-Mahfūz*? *Allāh* ﷻ explains:

﴿ وَكُلُّ صَغِيرٍ وَكَبِيرٍ مُسْتَطَرٌ ﴾

*Every matter, small and great, is on record (in the Qurān).*¹⁷

Another *Ayah* declares:

﴿ وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا طَيْرٍ يَطِيرُ بِجَنَاحَيْهِ إِلَّا أُمَّمٌ أَمْثَالُكُمْ ۗ مَا فَزَّطْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ثُمَّ

إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يُحْشَرُونَ ﴾

*There is not an animal (that lives) on the earth, nor a being that flies on its wings, but (forms part of) communities like you. Nothing have We omitted from the Book, and they (all) shall be gathered to their Lord in the end.*¹⁸

The Holy *Qur’ān* further elaborates:

¹⁵ *Qasīdah Ghawthiyyah* by Sayyidunā Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir Jilānī ؒ.

¹⁶ Refer *Bahjat al-Asrār* by Imām ‘Arife-Billāh Imām Abu al-Ḥasan Nūr al-Din Shatnūfī Shafā’ī ؒ (d.713/1314)

¹⁷ *Al-Qur’ān al-Karīm*, Sura Al-Qamar, Verse 54:53

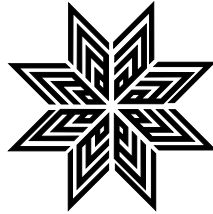
¹⁸ *Al-Qur’ān al-Karīm*, Sura Al-An’am, Verse:38

﴿ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ ۚ وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنْ وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٍ فِي ظُلْمَتِ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا رَطْبٍ وَلَا

يَابِسٍ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٥٩﴾

He knows whatever there is on the earth and in the sea. Not a leaf does fall but with His knowledge: there is not a grain in the darkness (or depths) of the earth, nor anything fresh or dry (green or withered), but is (inscribed) in a Record clear (i.e. the Holy Qurān).¹⁹

If this is the state of *Luḥe-Mahfūz*, which holds the records of every event from the First to the Last Day, then one who possess this comprehensive knowledge will surely have the knowledge of the entire universe.



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¹⁹*Al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*, Sura Al-An'ām, Verse:59