

to do (Q 5:105).

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Shinqūī. *Aḍwāʾ*?

Ṭabarī. *Tafsīr*.

Tirmidhī. *Sunan*.

Zajjāj. *Maʿānī*.

Zamakhsharī. *Kashshāf*.

See also: ABILITY; ACQUISITION; APOSTACY; ĀZAR; BELIEF; BUYING AND SELLING; CHILDREN OF ISRAʿĪL; DISBELIEF; FIRʿAWN; GUIDANCE AND MISGUIDANCE; HYPOCRISY AND HYPOCRITES; IDLE TALK; INFALLIBILITY OF PROPHETS; PEOPLE OF THE BOOK; REWARD AND PUNISHMENT; SĀMIRĪ; SATAN; WILL, WANT, AND VOLITION.

FATIMAH AHMADSHAH

Astronomy

See STARS AND PLANETS; MOON; SUN; THE QURʿĀN AND THE NATURAL WORLD; THE QURʿĀN AND SCIENCE

Asylum

See OATHS

Atheism

See POLYTHEISM AND POLYTHEISTS

Atmosphere

See QURʿĀN AND THE NATURAL WORLD

ATOM

DHARRA

“Atom” is often used as a problematic translation of the Qurʿānic word *dharra* (root *dh-r-r*), which is mentioned six times in the Qurʿān (Q 4:40; 10:61; 34:3; 34:22; 99:7-8) in the sense of an infinitesimal quantity. Its meaning is graphically explained by Ibn ʿAbbās (3BH-68/619-688), may Allah be well-pleased with him and his father both, as “the weight of the head of a red ant” (Ṭabarī, *sub* Q 4:40). It is also said to be like “the floating dust-motes seen when sunlight shines through a window” (Ibn Manzūr; al-Khāzin, *Lubāb al-taʾwīl*, *sub* Q 4:40); and “the dust which remains clinging to the hand after the rest has been blown off” (Zamakhsharī, *sub* Q 4:40). In all six instances of its occurrence, the Qurʿān uses the singular form of the noun *dharra* in the phrase *mithqāl dharra*—“the weight of an atom” or “a mote”.

When Arab philosophers first translated the Greek “ἄτομος”—*átomos* (from *a-*, “un-” + *τέμνω* -*temno*, “to cut”), meaning indivisible—they used the term *al-jawhar al-fard*, meaning “singular essence” (al-Tahānawī, *Kashshāf*, *sub* *juzʿ*), closely echoing the meaning of the Greek term. Classical *Kalām* and philosophy recapitulated this terminology in idealized form as the imaginary indivisible atom (*al-juzʿ al-ladhī lā yatajazzaʿ*).

Toward the beginning of the twentieth century,

however, modern Arabic started to use *dharra* for the atom of modern science and this was subsequently adopted by several translators to render the Qurʾānic *dharra* into English (cf. Asad, *Message*; Daryabadi, Dawood, Hilali/Khan, Irving, Jones, Khalidi, Sarwar, Shakir, Sher Ali, Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Quran*). This semantic link has been used by certain modernists to claim that it was the Qurʾān that first introduced the concept of the atom as the term is understood in modern science. This argument was used to “prove” that the Qurʾān is a revealed Book, because the Prophet—upon him blessings and peace—could not have known about the existence of atoms (see last section for more details). “Atom” is used in this article in its non-technical sense, denoting an infinitesimal quantity.

Dharra as a Qurʾānic Term

I. In the Context of Divine Justice

Al-Khāzin (678-741/1279-1340) explains that Allah Most High uses the term *dharra* in Q 4:40 (*Verily Allah does not wrong [anyone] by as much as an atom's weight (mithqāl dharra), and if there is a good deed, He will multiply it and will grant from Himself a great reward*) “as a parable (*q.v.*) to describe the smallest possible thing which people can recognize in order to explain that He shall not wrong anyone in any way—small or great—and He multiplies the good, such that a good deed is as if it were ten [good deeds]. It is said that this will be at the time of reckoning: if someone were left with only an atom's weight of good, Allah will multiply it as much as seven hundred times, leading to a great reward.” Hence Qatāda (*ca.*60-117/680-735) said: “It is dearer to me than the whole world and all there is in it that my good deeds be more than my evil deeds by as much as one atom's weight” (al-Khāzin, *Lubāb al-taʾwīl*, *sub* Q 4:40).

Ibn Masʿūd (d. 32/*ca.*652), Allah be well-pleased with him, said, “People's accounts will be settled on the Day of Resurrection (*q.v.*). If someone has even one more good deed than evil deeds, such a person will enter Paradise; and if even one evil deed is more than the good deeds [in a person's record], that person will go to Hell.” Then he recited Q 23:102-103: *And they whose weight is heavy in the balance, it is they who will have attained a happy state. And they whose weight is light in the balance, it is they who will have squandered their own selves to abide forever in Hell*, and said, “indeed the balance tilts this way or that with the addition or subtraction of

an atom's weight” (Ibn Kathīr, *sub* Q 7:46).

II. As a Symbol of Divine Knowledge

The Qurʾān also uses *dharra* in two almost identical passages to describe the inexhaustible, all-embracing, and unlimited knowledge of Allah: *Not even an atom's weight (mithqāl dharra) on earth or in heaven escapes your Sustainer's knowledge; and neither is there anything smaller or larger than that but is recorded in a clear Book* (Q 10:61); and *And the disbelievers say: “The Hour will never come unto us.” Say: “Nay, by my Sustainer, but it is surely coming unto you; [He is] the Knower of the Unseen. Not an atom's weight (mithqāl dharra) [of whatever there is] in the heavens or on earth escapes His knowledge; nor is there anything smaller than that, or greater, but is recorded in a clear Book”* (Q 34:3). These and numerous other verses affirm that Allah has knowledge of all things, large or small, manifest or hidden (*q.v.*); indeed, the Qurʾān asserts that *Not a leaf falls but He knows it; nor is there a grain in the earth's deep darkness, or anything living or dead, but is recorded in a clear Book* (Q 6:59).

In contradistinction to the literal Qurʾānic description of Divine Knowledge (Q 2:32; 2:231; 2:282; 3:5; 3:29; 3:92; 4:32; 4:86), certain Muslim philosophers of the Islamic Neoplatonist tradition, spearheaded by Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (*ca.*258-339/*ca.*872-951) and epitomized by Ibn Sīnā (*ca.*370-429/*ca.*980-1037) and his school of thought, argued that God's knowledge is atemporal, absolute, and universal. According to them He does not know particulars, especially of those things and events that are subject to change through generation and corruption. Since God is not changeable, His knowledge is also unchangeable, whereas knowledge of a particular temporal event requires a temporal relation between the knower and the event known and, hence, by necessity, entails change in the knower. Thus, they argued, God has knowledge of things only of universals and not of particulars (cf. Ibn Sīnā, *Dānish Nāma-i alāʾī*, ch. 30-32, p. 61-66).

Al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) devoted chapter thirteen of his *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* to refuting this position, which in his opinion was nothing less than “a principle which undermined the very foundation of religious law altogether—because it means that if Zayd, for instance, obeys or transgresses against Him, Allah would not know of the change in his state, since He does not know Zayd as he is, for he

is an individual and his actions are accidents which come into existence after they have been nonexistent; and if He does not know the individual, He does not know his states and acts; in fact, He does not know Zayd's unbelief or his Islam [actually], but He only knows man's unbelief or Islam universally and absolutely, not as specified in individual persons!" (al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, p. 128).

Defending Ibn Sīnā's position, Ibn Rushd (d. 594/1198) called al-Ghazālī's conception of Ibn Sīnā's formulation a confusion of Divine and human kinds of knowledge, and an unjustified patterning of Divine knowledge on the model of human knowledge. "For [only] man perceives the individual through his senses and universals through his intellect...and no doubt [his] perception changes when the things perceived undergo change...[but] truly competent philosophers do not classify His knowledge of existents, may He be glorified, into universal or individual [categories]. For such classification of knowledge is only for a passive intellect (*ʿaql munfaʿil*) and [is an] effect (*maʿlūl*)—whereas the First Intellect (*al-ʿaql al-awwal*) is pure act and a cause (*fiʿl-mahd wa-ʿilla*). His knowledge cannot be compared to human knowledge" (Ibn Rushd, *Tahāfut al-tahāfut*, p. 455-456).

III. In the Context of Divine Sovereignty

In affirmation of absolute Divine sovereignty, Q 34:22 employs *dharra* as a term to refer to the absolute dependence of all creatures on Him: *Say: "Call upon those whom you imagine beside Allah [to have powers]; they have not an atom's weight (mithqāl dharra) of ability and power either in the heavens or on earth; for them there is no share in [the heaven and earth], and He does not have any helper from among them."* This central Qurʾānic theme is mentioned in numerous other verses and explained through a parable in Q 22:73: *O humankind, a parable is set forth; pay heed, then, to it: Behold, those whom you invoke beside Allah cannot create [as much as] a fly, even if they were to join together to that end; and if a fly takes away anything from them, they cannot [even] recover it from it. So weak indeed are the seekers and the sought!*

IV. In the Context of Final Accountability

In the two complementary verses of Sūrat al-Zalzala (Q 99:7-8), *dharra* is employed in a graphic description of the Day of Reckoning: *And so, he who shall have done an atom's weight (mithqāl*

dharra) of good shall see it; and he who shall have done an atom's weight (mithqāl dharra) of evil shall see it. A weak-chained report states that when this sura was revealed, Abū Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, was sitting and eating with the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace. When the Prophet recited to him the verses just revealed, he was so awe-struck by the momentous scale of the reckoning that he could not put the next morsel in his mouth, and asked: "O Messenger of Allah, will I be recompensed for every good and evil deed, even if it be equal to the weight of an atom (*mithqāl dharra*)?" "See, O Abū Bakr," the Prophet replied, "whatever hardships you have suffered in this world, they are the recompense for whatever evil deeds—be they equal to an atom's weight (*mithqāl dharra*)—may have been committed by you; and your good deeds—be they equal to an atom's weight (*mithqāl dharra*)—are being gathered by Allah to recompense you on the Day of Resurrection" (Ṭabarī, *sub* Q 99:7-8).

Both the Qurʾān and the Hadith use *dharra* to denote an infinitesimal thing, quantity, or measure which may, nevertheless, outweigh great quantities; for example, the weight of one's testimony of faith (*shahāda*) will prove heavier than bundled scrolls of sin (Tirmidhī, *Īmān*, mā jāʾ fī man yamūt wa-luwa yashhad an lā ilāha illā Allāh). Ibn Qutayba (213-276/828-889) points out that in addition to *dharra*, the Qurʾān uses several other terms for infinitesimal quantities: *fatīla* (Q 4:49, 4:77; 17:71); *naqīra* (Q 4:53; 4:124); *qitmīr* (Q 35:13); *habāʿan manthūrā* (Q 25:23); and *habāʿan munbaththā* (Q 56:6) (*Taʾwīl mushkil al-Qurʾān*, p. 137-138).

Dharra in the Hadith Texts

The use of *dharra* in hadith texts is the same as the Qurʾānic usage. Allah Most High says in a Divine hadith (*al-ḥadīth al-qudsī*): "Who could be more evil than one who claims to create even as I create? Let them, then, create an atom (*dharra*) or a grain of wheat or barley" (Bukhārī, Tawhīd, qawli-Llāhī taʿāla wal-I.āhu khalāqakum wa-mā taʿmalūn). A long hadith on intercession (*q.v.*) states that Muslims who have already entered Paradise will be asked by Allah to go and bring out from the Hellfire those Muslims who have even a dinar's worth of virtue (*khayr*) in their hearts. They will do so. Then Allah will tell them to go a second time and rescue those who have as little virtue in their hearts as the weight of half a dinar.

They will do so, but there will still remain a multitude in Hell who would have virtue even less than that, and thus Allah Most High will say: “Go and bring out even those in whose hearts you find good the weight of a *dharra*.” So, the people of Paradise will bring out a multitude and say: “O our Lord, now there is nothing of *khayr* left in [Hell]” (Muslim, *Īmān*, *itḥbāt ru’yat al-mu’minīn fī-l-ākhirati rabbahum*). Abū Sa’īd al-Khudrī, the narrator of this hadith, may Allah be pleased with him, ends the hadith by saying: “If you do not believe my narration, then recite: *Verily Allah does not wrong [anyone] by as much as an atom’s weight (mithqāl dharra), and if there is a good deed, He will multiply it and will grant from Himself a great reward (Q 4:40).*”

A similar usage of *dharra* is found in the hadith of the Great Intercession narrated by Anas b. Mālik and al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (Bukhārī, *Tawḥīd*, *kalām al-Rabb ‘azza wa jall yawm al-qiyāma ma’ al-anbiyā’ wa-ghayrihim*) and again as the Prophet said: “Whosoever has professed ‘there is no deity except Allah’ will leave the Fire even though he has in his heart virtue [only] equal to the weight of a grain of barley; then the one who has professed ‘there is no deity except Allah’ even though there is in his heart virtue equal [only] to the [smaller yet] weight of a grain of wheat; then the one who has professed ‘there is no deity except Allah’ even though there is in his heart virtue equal to the weight of an atom (*mithqāl dharra*)” (Muslim, *Īmān*, *adnā ahl al-janna manzilatan fihā*; Tirmidhī, *Ṣifāt jahannam*, *mā jā’ anna lil-nār nafsayn wa-mā dhukir man yakhrūj min al-nār min ahl al-tawḥīd*; Ibn Mājah, *Zuhd*, *dhikr al-shafā’a*).

Similar examples of the use of *dharra* can be found in numerous other hadith texts. For example, the Prophet, peace be upon him, is reported to have said: “The one who has even an atom’s weight (*mithqāl dharra*) of pride in his heart will not enter Paradise” (Muslim, *Īmān*, *taḥrīm al-kibr wa-bayānuh*).

Modern Usage

The use of “atom” for *dharra* in modern English, including various translations of the Qur’ān, has led to confusion and misinterpretation. Scores of websites and modernist texts equate the Qur’ānic *dharra* with the atom of current physical sciences as an argument for the Divine origin of the Qur’ān. A typical argument proceeds by noting that modern scientific theories and facts such as those regarding the atom could not have been known to the Prophet; their ostensible presence in the Qur’ān therefore establishes as definitive its claim of revelation (Yahya, *The Miracle in the Atom*). Such attempts overlook critical

distinctions between the atom of modern science, which denotes a microscopic particle invisible to the human eye consisting of a solid central nucleus made up of protons and neutrons surrounded by a cloud of negatively charged electrons, and the *dharra* of the Qur’ān, which is an infinitesimal weight, quantity, or measure, both indivisible as well as visible to the naked human eye.

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- See also:** ACCOUNTABILITY; BEAUTIFUL NAMES OF ALLAH; JUDGMENT; INTERCESSION; KNOWLEDGE; QUR’ĀN AND THE NATURAL WORLD; QUR’ĀN AND SCIENCE.

MUZAFFAR IQBAL

Atonement

See EXPIATION

northeast of Beirut.

The Qurʾān mentions *Baʿl* as a deity in the Makkan Sūrat al-Ṣāffāt (Q 37:125) in a pericope situated in the flow of verses succinctly narrating what happened to the ancient multitudes to whom Allah, Most High, had sent Messengers but who had afterwards gone astray (*q.v.*). Beginning with the prelude, *And, indeed, most of the people of old went astray before them, although verily We had sent warners unto them* (37:71-72), the stories of five Prophets are narrated in rapid succession. These include Nūḥ (*q.v.*), Ibrāhīm (*q.v.*), Ishāq (*q.v.*), Mūsā (*q.v.*), and Hārūn (*q.v.*)—may peace be upon all of them. Then comes the mention of Ilyās, upon him peace, and his people, worshippers of *Baʿl*: *Indeed, Ilyās too was among the Messengers. When he said to his people: “Will you not be conscious of Allah? Do you call upon Baʿl and forsake the Best of Creators? Allah is your Lord and the Lord of your ancestors of yore.” But they denounced him as a liar, so they will surely be arraigned, except Allah’s chosen servants* (Q 37:123-128). According to Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209), *Baʿl* was a golden idol twenty cubits high, with four faces and 400 attendants (*sadana*); Satan (*q.v.*) entered into its mouth and preached a religion of misguidance (*bi-sharīʿat al-ḍalāla*) (Rāzī, *sub* Q 37:125).

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Yāqūt. *Buldān*.

Zabīdī. *Tāj*.

See also: FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD; IDOLS AND IDOLATRY; ILYĀS, UPON HIM PEACE; MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE; SATAN; SYRO-PALESTINE.

MUZAFFAR IQBAL

Balance

See HARMONY AND BALANCE

Banū Isrāʾīl

See CHILDREN OF ISRĀʾĪL

Baqara

See ANIMALS

Barrier

See BARZAKH; HIJAB

BARZAKH

This article comprises the following sections: i. Definition, Usage, Etymology; ii. The Estuarine *Barzakh*; iii. Figurative *Barzakhs*; iv. The Pre-Resurrection Afterlife; v. The Bliss or Punishment of the Grave; vi. The Life of Martyrs and Prophets in *Barzakh*; vii. The Hearing of the Dead; viii. Bibliography.

Definition, Usage, Etymology

The Arabic noun *barzakh* is a quadriliteral *faʿʿal* form used three times in the Qurʾān to denote a barrier (*ḥājiz*, *maḥbas*), twice in the sense of the space where seas and rivers meet—*And it is He Who has let loose the two seas: this, sweet and thirst-quenching; that, saltish and bitter; and has placed between the two a barrier (barzakh) and a great partition complete (ḥijran mahjūran)* (Q 25:53, cf. Q 55:20), including the senses of dry land (*yabas*) and natural boundary (*tukhūm*)—and once in the sense of the other-worldly barrier between the living and the dead: *and behind them (i.e., the dead) is a barrier until the day when they are raised* (Q 23:100): “Everything that is between two things is a *barzakh*, and what lies between this world and the next is a *barzakh*” (Abū ʿUbayda, *Majāz*, *sub* Q 25:53; Ibn Qutayba, *Gharīb*, *sub* Q 23:100; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *sub* Q 25:53).

The Qurʾān also uses the term *ḥājiz* in the first sense of estuary above: *Or, Who has made the earth a fixed abode, and placed rivers in the folds thereof, and placed firm hills therein, and has set a barrier (ḥājizan) between the two seas? Is there any deity beside Allah? Nay, but most of them know not!* (Q 27:61). In the second sense *barzakh* has also been defined metonymically as “the grave” (al-Sijistānī, *Gharīb*; Abū Ḥayyān, *Tuhfa*, both *sub* *b-r-z-kh*) and translated as “life of/in the grave,” “isthmus-life,” and “interlife.” Accordingly, it is said that the *barzakh* is “an invisible barrier” (*ḥājiz khafīy*) (al-Farrāʾ, *Maʿānī*, *sub* Q 23:100; cf. Azharī, *Tahdhīb* and Ibn Manẓūr). *Barzakh* therefore is a major theme

connected to death (*q.v.*) and Resurrection (*q.v.*), reward and punishment (*q.v.*), and the states and types of humanity connected therewith, which the Prophet—upon him blessings and peace—described at length in hadiths. It has been glossed as the forty-year pause between the first two trumpet-blasts that initiate the Resurrection (Ibn ‘Aṭīyya, *sub* Q 20:98-102; Rāzī, *sub* Q 17:52; and Qurṭubī, *sub* Q 23:100).

The word *barzakh* is not found in the Prophetic Sunna, but ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib and Ibn Mas‘ūd—Allah be well-pleased with them—reportedly used it: the former to refer to an “interval passage” of the Qur’ān he skipped (*aswā barzakhan*), reciting what came before and after it in the prayer; the latter in the plural, in the expression “these are the intervals of faith” (*tilka barāzikh al-īmān*), to refer to the believers’ struggles against satanic whisperings (*q.v.*)—that is, “what lies between the beginning and the end of *īmān*” (see BELIEF) (Abū ‘Ubayd, *Gharīb* and Ibn al-Athīr, *Nihāya*; cf. al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, *al-Nushka*, Aṣḥ 221). These and other meanings were summed up by al-Fayrūzābādī (729-817/1329-1415) in his trove of exegetical insights:

Insight into *barzakh*: It is the barrier between two things. It sometimes [means] the power of Allah itself, and sometimes something existing through the power of Allah (*tāratan qudrat Allāh wa-tāratan bi-qudrat Allāh*). *Barzakh* lasts from the time of death to Resurrection. Whoever dies enters it. The *barāzikh* of faith are what lies between its beginning and its end. *Barzakh* after Resurrection is the barrier between a human being and the attainment of the highest homes in the hereafter. That is the allusion to the steep ascent (*al-‘aqaba*) in the verse *Yet he has not conquered the steep ascent* (Q 90:11). That steep ascent presents impediments to states unreachable by those other than the righteous.

Baṣā’ir 2:238

Barzakh is listed under the quadriliteral entry *b-r-z-kh* in major lexicons (Jawharī, *Ṣiḥāḥ*; Ibn Durayd, *Jamhara*; Fayrūzābādī; Ibn Manẓūr; Zabīdī) but it has been suggested that it originated from the root *b-r-z*, meaning “to emerge prominently,” to which a euphonic consonantal *kh* suffix was added. “*Barzakh* is a barrier between two things, as if there were a prominent emersion (*barāz*) between the two, that is, a vast stretch of land; then any barrier became [known as] a *barzakh*” (Ibn Fāris, 1:333, Bāb min al-rubā‘ī ākhar). The lexicographers deem it an Arabic word, and it is not mentioned in the manuals on Arabicized words

such as al-Jawāliqī’s (465-540/*ca.*1073-*ca.*1145) monumental *al-Mu‘arrab*, al-Suyūṭī’s (849-911/1445-*ca.*1505) *al-Mutawakkilī*, or al-Khafājī’s (d. 1069/*ca.*1659) *Shifā’ al-‘alīl*—which relegates any claimed etymological connection with the Persian noun *farsakh* (a unit of distance) to the realm of speculation.

The Estuarine *Barzakh*

Barzakh has received a variety of interpretations in its usage in the marine sense; these were summed up by Ibn ‘Aṭīyya (d. *ca.*542/1147) in his commentary on the verse *And it is He who has let loose the two seas...* (Q 25:53):

People have given discrepant explanations of this verse. Ibn ‘Abbās (3BH-68/619-688) said, “He means the sea of clouds and the sea that is on the earth, and the wording of the verse was arranged accordingly.” Mujaḥid (d. 104/722) said: “The freshwater sea is the water of the rivers that pour into the salt sea. Its pouring into it is its being *let loose*. The barrier and the partition are a wall of which Allah [alone] knows, invisible to human beings.” Al-Zajjāj (d. 311/923) said the same. According to another group, the meaning of *let loose* is “He made one perdure inside the other”, while according to Ibn ‘Abbās it means “He left one on top of the other.” There are other such views that are more or less connected to part of the wording of the verse. My own view of the verse is that its purport is to warn us of the power of Allah and how consummately He creates things, in that He has let forth sweet waters in abundance in the earth in the form of rivers, springs, and wells, putting bitter waters next to them and vice-versa. Thus you can see the sea with sweet waters embracing it on both its shores, and you can see sweet water inside islands and the like with bitter salt waters embracing them... and by *the two seas* He means all [bodies of] sweet water and all [those of] salt water.

Muḥarrar, *sub* Q 25:53

Thus, as the space where seas and rivers meet, *barzakh* in Q 25:53 and 55:20 and *ḥājiz* in Q 27:61 denote estuaries, the sea inlets where the saline tide meets the freshwater current without the two intermingling (see RIVERS AND SPRINGS).

It has also been suggested that, in keeping with the Qur’ān’s use of the unqualified term *two seas* (*bahrayn*) in Sūrat al-Raḥmān (Q 55:20), *barzakh* also refers to the invisible divides between large bodies of salt

water such as the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean, or the fourteen seas of the East Indian Archipelago, each neighboring body of water keeping its own characteristics of temperature, salinity, and density, without imposing it on the other (Ṭayyāra, *Mawsūʿa*, p. 212-215; cf. International Hydrographic Organization, *Limits of Oceans and Seas*).

Figurative Barzakh

In addition to the geo-physical understanding of the *barzakh* phenomenon, al-Rāzī (543-606/1148-1209) saw the water *barzakh* as a symbol for the dam between a human being's higher and lower selves that leads—if unbroken—to the extraction of pearls and coral:

The believer, also, [has] two seas in his heart: the sea of faith and wisdom, and the sea of tyranny and lust. He (Allah), with the success that He [alone] grants, has placed between the two of them a barrier so that one will not ruin the other. One of the wise commented on His saying *He let loose the two seas that meet with a barrier between them they do not break* (Q 55:19-20): “When the barrier is not broken, *From them emerge pearl and coral* (Q 55:22). Thus, when there is no transgression in the heart, religion and faith emerge with gratitude.”

sub Q 27:61

Ibn ʿAshūr (d. 1339/1973) gave another allegorization (*tafsīr ishāri*) of the water *barzakh*:

an allegory (*tamthīl*) of the state of the call to Islam in Makka at the time (i.e., when Sūrat al-Furqān (Q 25) was revealed), with the intermingling of the believers with the pagans, (...) faith being represented by the *sweet and thirst-quenching* and paganism by the *saltish and bitter* (Q 25:53). Just as Allah Most High has set a barrier between the two seas, preserving the sweet from being tainted by the bitter, similarly, He has put a block between the Muslims and the pagans so that the latter cannot spread their unbelief among the Muslims. There is in this a boost for the Muslims, telling them that Allah shall bar the harm of the pagans from coming their way just as He said *They will not harm you save a trifling hurt* (Q 3:111); there is also an oblique reference (*taʿrīḍ kinnāʿi*) to the fact that Allah helps this Religion lest paganism taint it.

sub Q 25:53

The Pre-Resurrection Afterlife

In the sense of the barrier between the dead and the

living, *barzakh* is an intermediary state or “interlife” between this world and the next which each individual enters at the time of death and does not exit until the Day of Resurrection, as explicitly stated in the verse *until the day when they are raised* (cf. al-Farrāʿ, *Maʿānī*, sub Q 23:100). The adverb *then*, according to al-Nūrsī (1293-1379/1876-1960), in the verse of Sūrat al-Baqara that states *then He brings you back to life* (Q 2:28), “alludes to the mediation of the world of *barzakh*, the dimension of wonders” (*Ishārāt*). It is that mediation which is alluded to in the words *and all that is in between* in the verse *Unto Him belongs all that is before us and all that is behind us and all that is in between* (Q 19:64)—that is, the past ages before us, what happens both here and hereafter after we are gone, and the *barzakh* in between (Qurṭubī, sub Q 19:64). Its modalities, like all the articles of eschatology, the unseen, and the afterlife, can only be known through revelation (see MANIFEST AND HIDDEN). The Prophet, blessings and peace upon him, described it as “the first of the homes of the Hereafter” (Tirmidhī, Zuhd, bāb, hadith classed *ḥasan gharīb*; Ibn Mājah, Zuhd, dhikr al-qabr), although strictly speaking such a dimension is, in the words of al-Shaʿbī (19-103/640-721), “neither of this world nor of the next” (Naḥḥās, *Iʿrāb*, sub Q 23:100). Moreover, the *terminus ad quem* expressed in the verse “does not mean that they will return on the Day of Resurrection; it is only meant to convey utter hopelessness on the confirmed basis that there is no return on the Day of Resurrection other than to the next life” (Rāzī, sub Q 23:100).

Ibn ʿAbd al-Salām (577-660/ca.1181-1262) in his description of the states of the afterlife gives the following summation of the condition of *barzakh*:

There shall be no just nor wicked man, and no believer nor unbeliever who shall not behold, in the *barzakh*, their future station (*manzil*) every morning and every evening, whether they are to be a dweller in Hellfire or a dweller in Paradise. Moreover, the bliss specific to the *barzakh* is based on nobility of works and their abundance; and its specific punishment is based on transgressions and their abundance. There are four stations: the first is in the wombs of mothers; the second, in the lower world; the third, in the *barzakh* until mortal remains are reassembled and the dead are resurrected; and the fourth in the abode (*q.v.*) of permanency, without end. Nay, the dwellers of Paradise shall be in bliss for all eternity without death, and the dwellers of Hellfire shall be in punishment for all eternity without death.

Bayān aḥwāl al-nās, p. 36-37

Death, furthermore, has been termed “the Minor Resurrection” or *qiyāma ṣuḡhrā* (cf. Ṭabarī, *sub* Q 75:1; Naysābūrī, *Gharāʾib*, *sub* Q 81:14; Ghazālī, *Ihyāʾ*, al-Ṣabr wal-shukr, bayān ḥaqīqat al-ṣabr wa-maʿnāh). This appellation was implied more than once by the Prophet himself in the way he replied whenever asked about the time of the Day of Resurrection: he would look at the youngest person present and say “If he lives, he will not reach a hoary age before your Hour comes (*qāmat sāʿatukum*)” (Muslim, Fitan, qurb al-sāʿa; Bukhārī, Riḳāq, sakarāt al-mawt). Thus, death is a personal pre-Judgment Day because it spells bliss or punishment in anticipation of their everlasting permanency in the hereafter. This momentous reality is implied in several verses that presuppose two stages of requital, one immediate in *barzakh* and one deferred until Paradise or Hell:

- *Allah confirms those who believe with a firm saying in the life of the world and in the Hereafter* (Q 14:27). The Prophet said: “This verse was revealed concerning punishment in the grave” (Bukhārī, Janāʾiz, mā jāʾ fi ʿadhāb al-qabr; Muslim, Janna wa-ṣifat naʿimihā, ʿarḍ maqʿad al-mayyit);
- *If you could but see, when the wrongdoers are in the overwhelming pangs of death, while the angels extend their hands [striking them], saying: Discharge your souls! Today you are awarded the punishment of humiliation* (Q 6:93);
- *The Fire: they are exposed to it morning and evening, and the Day the Hour rises [it will be said], “Make the People of Firʿawn enter the severest punishment”* (Q 40:46). Al-Bukhārī cited the above two verses in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* under the chapter-title “What has been conveyed regarding punishment in the grave” (Janāʾiz, mā jāʾ fi ʿadhāb al-qabr);
- *We will punish them twice, then they will be returned to a great punishment* (Q 9:101), the first punishment being in the grave and the second in Hell-fire according to the commentaries (*Tafsīrs* of Ṭabarī, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Baghawī, Ibn ʿAṭiyya, Rāzī, Qurṭubī, and others);
- *And verily We make them taste the lower punishment before the greater* (Q 32:21);
- *And verily, for those who do wrong there is a punishment beyond that* (Q 52:47), which along with the previous verse some of the Successors (*Tābiʿīn*) understood to refer to punishment in the grave (Ṭabarī, Rāzī, Qurṭubī, and others, *sub* Q 32:21 and 52:47; al-Ājurrī, *al-Sharīʿa* 3:1283-1284 §854-855).

The Bliss or Punishment of the Grave

Barzakh is a higher level of existence beyond the confines and finitudes of material existence including the grave (*q.v.*) dug in the ground wherein we deposit the earthly remains of the deceased. Regardless of the means of death, and whether or not the physical body is buried or lost, all enter this state, whereupon starts another kind of life in which the virtuous are admitted to *ʿilliyīn* (Q 83:18-28) while the wicked are assigned to *sijjīn* (Q 83:7-17, among other verses).

Far from marking the end of human life, death and the grave therefore inaugurate another stage of life wherein one experiences either bliss or punishment as a preamble to eternal life, after a potentially harrowing interrogation by two angels (*q.v.*) named Munkar and Nakīr. The Prophet—upon him blessings and peace—abundantly sought refuge from the punishment of the grave in or before the end of every prayer. Al-Bukhārī narrated it from five Companions—Allah be well-pleased with them: ʿĀʾisha, Ibnat Khālīd b. Saʿīd b. al-ʿĀṣ, and Abū Hurayra (Janāʾiz, mā jāʾ fi ʿadhāb al-qabr); and Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ and Anas (Jihād, mā yutaʿawwadh min al-jubn). Muslim added five more in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*: Ibn ʿAbbās (Masājīd, mā yustaʿadh minh); ʿAwf b. Mālik (Janāʾiz, al-duʿāʾ lil-mayyit); Zayd b. Arqam and Ibn Masʿūd (Dhikr wal-duʿāʾ, al-taʿawwadh); and Zayd b. Thābit (Janna wa-ṣifat naʿimihā, ʿarḍ maqʿad al-mayyit). Al-Tirmidhī added yet five more in his *Sunan*: Abū Bakra (Daʿawāt, mā jāʾ fi ʿaql al-tasbīḥ bil-yad; hadith classed *ḥasan gharīb*); ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (Daʿawāt, minh; hadith classed *gharīb*); and Abū Ayyūb, Jābir b. ʿAbd Allāh, and Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī (Janāʾiz, mā jāʾ fi ʿadhāb al-qabr). The Prophet—upon him blessings and peace—also said:

The believer in his grave is in a lush garden and his grave is expanded to seventy arm-spans for him with a light shining upon him like the full moon. *But he who turns away from remembrance of Me, his will be a distressful life, and We shall bring him blind to the assembly on the Day of Resurrection* (Q 20:124). Do you know that about which this verse was revealed? [It is] the punishment of the unbeliever in his grave.

Abū Yaʿlā, *Musnad* 11:521 §6644; a fair chain of narrators according to Haythamī, *Majmaʿ* 3:55; cf. Ṭabarī, *sub* Q 20:124; al-Ājurrī, *al-Sharīʿa* 3:1273 §840, al-taṣḍīq wal-īmān bi-ʿadhāb al-qabr; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Ṣaḥīḥ* 7:392-393 §3122; al-Bayhaqī,

Ithbāt, p. 62 §68; discussed by Ibn al-Qayyim, *Miftāḥ dār al-saʿāda* 1:206

The grave is either a grove among the groves of Paradise or a pit among the pits of Hell.

Tirmidhī, *Ṣifāt al-qiyāma wal-raqāʿiq*, minh, hadith classed *gharīb*; al-Bayhaqī, *Ithbāt*, p. 55 §50

The latter statement was incorporated verbatim into al-Ṭahāwī's (229-321/ca.843-933) *Exposition of the Credal Doctrine of the People of the Sunna and the Congregation According to the School of the Jurists of the Community*—*Abū Ḥanīfa al-Nuʿmān b. Thābit al-Kūfī, Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb b. Ibrāhīm al-Anṣārī, and Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī*, more famously known as the *Aqīda Ṭahāwīyya*.

In a famous long hadith (sound-chained according to al-Bayhaqī, *Shuʿab* 1:610-612 §390, and Abū ʿAwāna as quoted by Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Jawāb*, p. 40) narrated from al-Barāʾ b. ʿĀzīb, the Prophet—upon him blessings and peace—also mentioned that one's works become embodied in either an attractive or a repulsive being that will also share the dead person's space in the grave after the latter's interrogation, and address the dead person with the words: "I am your good deeds" or "I am your bad deeds" (Alḥmad 30:499-505 §18534, *Musnad al-Kūfiyyīn*). This encounter is described by Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 638/1241) as "an experience of supra-formal realities or meanings, for, in the isthmus after death, 'Meanings become embodied and manifested in shapes and sizes, so they take on forms' (*Futūḥāt* 2:195.30)" (Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds*, p. 100).

The Prophet—upon him blessings and peace—notably emphasized (i) the regular reading of *Sūrat al-Mulk* (Q 67) as a guarantee of future safety in one's grave (Tirmidhī, *Faḍāʾil al-Qurʾān*, *mā jāʾ fi faḍl Sūrat al-Mulk*, hadith classed *ḥasan gharīb*); (ii) that the most frequent cause for the torment of the grave for Muslims was dereliction in cleansing oneself of urine (Ibn Mājāh, *Ṭahāra*, *al-tashdīd fi-l-bawl*, through a sound chain; al-Bayhaqī, *Ithbāt*, p. 87 §120-121); and (iii) that the gravedweller is shown his post-Resurrection position—either in Paradise or in Hell (Bukhārī, *Janāʾiz*, *al-mayyit yuʿraḍ ʿalayh maqʿaduh*; Muslim, *Janna wa-ṣifāt naʿimihā*, ʿarḍ maqʿad al-mayyit min al-janna aw al-nār ʿalayh), which makes him cognizant of both this world and the next. Hundreds of similar narrations illustrating the reality of the bliss and punishment of the grave were gathered in specialized monographs such as the following:

- Ibn Abī al-Dunyā's (208-281/823-894) two lost,

partially reconstituted compilations entitled *al-Mawt* and *al-Qubūr*;

- Ibn Mandah's (310-395/922-1005) lost *al-Rūḥ wal-nafs*;
- al-Bayhaqī's (384-458/994-1066) compilation of 240 narrations from the Prophet and the early generations entitled *Ithbāt ʿadhāb al-qabr*;
- ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq al-Ishbīlī's (510-582/1116-1186) *al-ʿĀqiba fī dhikr al-mawt wal-ākhirā*;
- al-Qurṭubī's (d. 671/1273) three-volume *al-Tadhkirā fī aḥwāl al-mawtā wa-umūr al-ākhirā*;
- Ibn al-Qayyim's (691-751/1292-1350) landmark *Kitāb al-Rūḥ* in which he wrote:

Know that the doctrine of the Predecessors of the Community and its Imams is that the deceased, upon death, is in bliss or punishment, and that that befalls his spirit and his body, and that the spirit persists after the departure from the body in bliss or punishment, and that it is joined to the body at times, and bliss or punishment befalls it together with the spirit. Then, on the day of the Major Resurrection (*al-qiyāmat al-kubrā*) the spirits are returned to the bodies and rise from their graves to the Lord of the worlds. And the resurrection of the bodies is agreed upon among Muslims, Jews, and Christians. (...) And one ought to know that punishment in the grave is punishment in the *barzakh*.

al-Rūḥ, p. 155, 168, Masʿala 6

- Ibn Rajab's (736-795/ca.1335-1393) *Aḥwāl al-qubūr wa-aḥwāl ahlihā ilā al-nushūr*;
- al-Suyūṭī's *al-Fawz al-ʿazīm fī liqāʾ al-Karīm* and his *Sharḥ al-ṣudūr bi-sharḥ ḥāl al-mawtā wal-qubūr*; also known as *Kitāb al-Barzakh*;
- Ibn Ṭūlūn's (880-953/1476-1546) *al-Taḥrīr al-murassakh fī aḥwāl al-Barzakh*;
- *Aḥādīth ḥayāt al-Barzakh fī-l-kutub al-tisʿa*, by the modern Muḥammad b. Ḥaydar b. Ḥasan, recapitulates all of the above.

The Hadith master Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar al-Kattānī (1274-1341/ca.1858-1923) cited the names of 32 Companions—to which ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Ghunnārī (1338-1418/1920-1997) added one more—who related Prophetic hadiths concerning torment or bliss in the grave (*Naẓm al-mutanāthir* and *Ithāf dhawī al-faḍāʾil*, *al-Marḍā wal-janāʾiz wa-aḥwāl al-mawtā*, ʿadhāb al-qabr wa-naʿimuh), making this specific issue "mass-transmitted in meaning" (*mutawātir maʿnawī*) by the

criteria al-Suyūṭī defined in Type 30 of *Tadrīb al-rāwī*. Accordingly, consensus formed over its reality as related by al-Ash‘arī (260-324/874-936?) in *al-Risālat ilā ahl al-Thaḡhr* (ijmā‘ 39), al-Ṭalamankī (339-429/951-1038) in *al-Wuṣūl ilā ma‘rifat al-uṣūl* as cited in Ibn al-Qaṭṭān’s (562-628/1167-1231) *Iqnā‘* (1:52 §103), Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr (368-463/979-1071) in *al-Istidhkārah* (7:115 §9878, Ṣalāt al-kusūf, al-‘amal fī ṣalāt al-kusūf), and al-Nawawī (631-676/1234-1277) in *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Janna wa-ṣifat na‘imihā, ‘arḍ maq‘ad al-mayyit min al-janna aw al-nār ‘alayh) who added that it is breached only by “the Khawārij, most of the Mu‘tazila, and some of the Murji‘a.” This appears to be a famous misattribution to the Mu‘tazila, as noted by Muḡhulṭāy (689-762/1290-1361) in his commentary on Ibn Mājah’s *Sunan*, where he cites the chief Mu‘tazili Qāḍī ‘Abd al-Jabbār al-Hamdānī’s (d. 415/1025) characterization of the classical position of the Mu‘tazilis as being entirely in accordance with that of the Sunnis (*I‘lām* 1:159); and even before him, Ibn Ḥazm (384-456/994-1064) had said that that consensus was breached by the Khawārij but not the Mu‘tazila except for Ḍirār b. ‘Amr al-Ghaṭafānī (*al-Fiṣal* 4:66-67)—a dissent that, at any rate, has made a pseudo-scholarly comeback in our times (cf. al-Natsha, *Qirā‘at fī fikr Ḥizb al-taḥrīr*, p. 92-99), although the denial of the reality of the punishment of the grave has been said to entail unbelief (*kufrah*) (*Fatāwā Hindiyya*, Siyar, ix: aḥkām al-murtaddīn, maṭlab fī mūjibāt al-kufr anwā‘: minhā mā yata‘allaq bi-yawm al-qiyāma).

The Life of Martyrs and Prophets in *Barzakh*

The Qur’ān discourages calling the martyrs (*shuhadā’*) (*q.v.*) dead, in deference to the magnificence of their reward and the fact that their state is unfathomably superior to that of those described as dead: *Count not those who are slain in the way of Allah as dead. Nay, they are alive, with their Lord, and provided for* (Q 3:169). This is also true of Prophets and Messengers (*q.v.*). Al-Bayhaqī says:

After the Prophets die—upon them blessings and peace—their souls are returned back to them and so they are *alive, with their Lord* (Q 3:169) like the martyrs. Our Prophet saw, on the Night of the Ascension (see NIGHT JOURNEY AND ASCENSION), a number of them. We have compiled a monograph establishing the facts of their life in the grave.

al-I‘tiqād, p. 305

Al-Munāwī (952-1021/1545-1612) says in reference to the life of Prophets in their graves:

This is because they are like martyrs—rather,

their lives are higher than that of martyrs, and the latter are *alive, with their Lord, and provided for* (Q 3:169). The purpose of specifying their being with Allah is to allude to the fact that their life is not visible to us. It is more like the life of the angels. It is likewise with Prophets. That is why the latter are not inherited from, nor can anyone marry their wives after them.

Fayḍ al-qadīr 3:184

Furthermore, Ibn Mas‘ūd pointed out that the Prophet—upon him blessings and peace—had died as a martyr (Aḥmad, *Musnad* ‘Abd Allāh b. Mas‘ūd, 6:115 §3617; ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf* 5:269 §9571), as a consequence of being poisoned at Khaybar, as the Prophet himself disclosed (Bukhārī, *Maghāzī, maraḍ al-Nabī*).

The monograph al-Bayhaqī mentioned authoring, *Ḥayāt al-anbiyā’ ba‘da wafātihim*, has received several editions as well as an enlightening recapitulation and commentary in al-Zurqānī’s (1055-1122/1645-1710) *Sharḥ al-Mawāhib al-lāduniyya* (5:382-394). Al-Suyūṭī wrote a similar brief treatise entitled *Inbā’ al-adhkiyā’ bi-ḥayāt al-anbiyā’*, which he included in his *Ḥawā lil-Fatāwā* (2:147-169). Among the Prophetic proof-texts they adduced are the following:

- “I passed, on my Night Journey, by Mūsā at the red dune as he was standing in prayer in his grave” (Muslim, *Faḍā’il, faḍā’il Mūsā; Nasā’i, Qiyām al-layl, dhikr ṣalāt Nabī Allāh Mūsā*);
- “The Prophets are alive in their graves, praying” (Abū Ya‘lā, *Musnad* 6:147 §3425 with a sound chain of trustworthy narrators according to Ibn Ḥajar in *Fath al-bārī, Aḥādīth al-anbiyā’, qawl Allāh wa-dhkur fī-l-Kitābi Maryam*, and Haythamī, *Majma’* 8:211; cf. al-Bayhaqī, *Ḥayāt*, p. 15);
- “My life is an immense good for you: you bring up new matters and new matters are brought up for you. My death, also, is an immense good for you: your actions will be shown to me; if I see goodness I shall praise Allah and if I see evil I shall ask forgiveness of Him for you” (Bazzār, *Musnad* 5:308-309 §1925 with a sound chain of trustworthy narrators according to al-‘Irāqī, *Ṭarḥ al-tathrīb* 3:297; Haythamī, *Majma’* 9:24 §91; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Khaṣā’iṣ al-kubrā* 2:281; and al-Zurqānī, *Sharḥ al-Muwaṭṭā’* 1:97);
- “None greets me but [he should know] that Allah has returned my soul to me so that I may greet him back” (Abū Dāwūd, *Manāsik, ziyārat al-qubūr*; Aḥmad, *Bāqī musnad al-mukthirīn*,

bāqī al-musnad al-sābiq, 16:477 §10815; both with a sound chain according to al-Nawawī in *Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn*, al-Ṣalāt ‘alā al-Nabī, and *al-Adhkār*, al-Ṣalāt ‘alā Rasūl Allāh; Ibn al-Qayyim, *Jalā’ al-afḥām*, p. 48 §23; Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-bārī*, Aḥādīth al-anbiyā’, qawl Allāh *wa-dhkur fī-l-Kitābi Maryam*; and others). Al-Bayhaqī said: “What is meant—and Allah knows best—is, ‘but that Allah has once and for all returned my soul to me so that I may greet him back’” (*Shu’ab al-īmān* 6:52 §3864);

- “Truly, among your best days is Friday. On it Ādam was created, and on it his soul was taken back, and on it will the final trumpet-blast take place, and on it will the great Thunderstrike (*al-ṣa’qa*) take place. Therefore invoke blessings upon me abundantly on that day, for your invocation is shown to me.” They said: “Messenger of Allah, how will our invocation be shown to you after you have turned to dust?” He said: “In truth, Allah Most High has forbidden the earth to consume the bodies of Prophets!” (Nasā’ī, Jumu’a, ikthār al-ṣalāt ‘alā al-Nabī; Abū Dāwūd, Ṣalāt, faḍl yawm al-Jumu’a; Ibn Mājah, Iqāmat al-ṣalāt, fī faḍl al-Jumu’a; Dārimī, *Sunan*, Ṣalāt, faḍl yawm al-Jumu’a; Aḥmad 26:84-86 §16162 all with sound chains, cf. analyses by Ibn al-Qayyim, *Jalā’*, p. 66-74 §59; Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-bārī*, Aḥādīth al-anbiyā’, qawl Allāh *wa-dhkur fī-l-Kitābi Maryam*; Ibn ‘Allān, *Futūḥāt* 3:309-313);
- “I saw myself in the assembly of the Prophets. There was Mūsā standing in prayer, a tall man with curly hair who resembles the tribesmen of Shanū’a. There was ‘Īsā b. Maryam standing in prayer; closest to him in resemblance is ‘Urwa b. Mas’ūd al-Thaqafī. There was Ibrāhīm standing in prayer. The closest of people in resemblance to him is your Companion”—meaning himself. “Then it was time for prayer, so I led them in prayer” (Muslim, Īmān, dhikr al-Masīḥ Ibn Maryam).

The latter two are among several narrations of the Night Journey and Ascension showing that the *barzakh* bodies of Prophets are not confined to their graves. Similarly, it is related that Salmān al-Fārisī and Mālik b. Anas said of the souls of the believers, “they are in an earthly *barzakh* and roam wherever they please” (Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *al-Mawt*, p. 53 §86; Ibn al-Mubārak, *al-Zuhd*, p. 143-144 §429; Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt* 4:86-87; cf. Ibn Qayyim, *al-Rūḥ*, p. 244, Mas’ala 15 and Ibn Rajab, *Ahwāl*

al-qubūr, p. 150-151). Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr said: “The souls are on the thresholds of their graves. This is the soundest position—and Allah knows best—because the hadiths to that effect are better and more firmly transmitted than others, and the meaning to me is that they *might* be found at the thresholds of their grave; not that they never move or part the thresholds of their graves, but as Mālik said” (*al-Istidhkār* 8:354-355 §11849-11850, Janā’iz, jāmi‘ al-janā’iz). This scenario is mentioned among eight other positions by al-Shawkānī (1173-1250/1759-1834) in his brief treatise entitled *Baḥṭh fī mustaqarr arwāḥ al-amwāt*. The dissertation *Aḥādīth ḥayāt al-Barzakh* by the modern Muḥammad b. Ḥaydar b. Ḥasan ends with ten main conclusions, among them that “the soul [of the believer] remains connected with the bodily remains in the grave while its heavenly body (*jirm jism*) is in heaven (*al-samā’*) after parting with the body, like a sunbeam falling on the ground although originally connected to the sun” (, p. 397).

The Hearing of the Dead

The hearing of the dead has been a matter of dispute because of ‘Āisha’s—Allah be well-pleased with her—interpretation against it based on the two verses she cited as evidence, *Lo! you cannot make the dead hear* (Q 27:80) and *you cannot make those who are in the graves hear* (Q 35:22) (Bukhārī, Maghāzī, qatl Abī Jahl; Muslim, Janā’iz, al-mayyit yu’adhdhab bi-bukā’ ahlīh ‘alayh). However, this interpretation on her part has not been sustained, and exegetes have not considered these two verses to refer literally to the deceased but rather to “the unbelievers whose unbelief has caused the death of their hearts” in the words of al-Qurṭubī (*sub* Q 35:22; cf. *Tafsīrs* of Ibn al-Jawzī, Rāzī, Ibn Kathīr, *sub* Q 35:22; Baghawī, Naysābūrī, Rāzī, and especially Shinqīṭī, *sub* Q 27:80), just as they are exclusively meant by “the dead” in the verse *Only those can accept who hear. As for the dead, Allah will raise them up; then unto Him they will be returned* (Q 6:36) by consensus of the exegetes (Shinqīṭī, *Aḍwā’*, *sub* Q 27:80).

The great exegete Abū Ja’far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (224-310/839-ca.922) in his *Tahdhīb al-āthār* prefaces his compilation of the reports on the description of the afterlife events that follow one’s burial thus:

A large number of the Predecessors among the scholars of the Community have said that the dead hear the speech of the living, whence the Prophet’s address to those buried in the well [at Badr] (see BADR). They also said that his words to

the Companions, “You certainly do not hear any better than they do,” are the most resplendent exposition of the truth of what we have said: namely, that the dead hear the speech of the living.

Tahdhīb al-āthār 2:491

Al-Ṭabarī narrates fourteen Prophetic hadiths to that effect, then introduces a chapter entitled “Mention of Those of the Predecessors who Asserted the Soundness of Those Reports and Said ‘Truly the Dead hear the Speech of the Living, and Speak, and are Cognizant,’” after which he narrates eleven reports from Abū Hurayra, Ibn Mas‘ūd, Jābir, and some of the Successors (*Tābi‘īn*) to that effect. He concludes:

It is therefore obligatory to firmly assert that Allah makes anyone of His creation hear, after their death, whatever He wishes of the speech of living human beings as well as other creatures in any way He wishes, and He makes whomever among them He wishes understand whatever He wishes, and He grants bliss to whomever of them He likes with whatever He likes, and He punishes the unbeliever in his grave and whoever of them deserves punishment in any way He wishes, just as the narrations and reports from the Messenger of Allah state.

Tahdhīb al-āthār 2:518-519

Among the subsequent authorities who positively asserted the reality of the hearing of the dead in their works or legal responses are

- Ibn ‘Abd al-Salām in his *Fatāwā Mauṣūliyya* (, p. 100-101);
- al-Nawawī in the chapter already cited of his *Sharḥ Muslim* (Janna wa-ṣifat na‘īmihā, ‘arḍ maq‘ad al-mayyit min al-janna aw al-nār ‘alayh);
- Ibn al-Qayyim in the opening chapter of his *Kitāb al-Rūḥ*;
- Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī (773-852/1371-1449) in his *al-Jawāb al-kāfī ‘an al-su‘āl al-khāfī*, in which he replies to twenty-nine questions pertaining to the state of the dead in the graves;
- al-Sakhāwī (831-902/1428-1497) in his magisterial treatise on the address to those recently buried (*talqīn*) entitled *al-Idāh wal-tabayīn bi-mas‘alat al-talqīn*;
- al-Suyūṭī in the opening fatwa of the first part of the responses on Resurrection in his *Hāwī lil-Fatāwā* (2:169-175: Mabḥath al-Ma‘ād, alḥwāl al-Barzakh, hal ya‘lam al-amwāt bi-ziyārat al-aḥyā‘ wa-hal yasma‘ al-mayyit kalām al-nās);

- the Ḥanafī jurist Muḥammad ‘Abid al-Sindī al-Anṣārī (ca.1190-1257/1777-1842) in his treatise *Ḥawā al-tawassul wal-istighātha* (, p. 170-181) takes issue with the majority position of his school, according to which the dead can only hear immediately after their burial and before they are questioned by the angels. Indeed, the Prophet—upon him blessings and peace—waited three full days before addressing the dead Makkans in the well of Badr (Bukhārī, Maḡhāzī, qatl Abū Jahl; Muslim, Janna wa-ṣifat na‘īmihā, ‘arḍ maq‘ad al-mayyit). He also mentioned that (i) ‘Ā’isha’s hadith was not based on direct witnessing of the events at Badr but upon reports through intermediaries; (ii) the possibility that she changed her understanding later, since she later addressed her brother ‘Abd al-Raḥmān at his grave a month after he had been buried (Tirmidhī, Janā‘iz, mā jā’ fi-l-ziyārat lil-qubūr lil-nisā’; Bayhaqī, *Sunan* 4:49).

Al-Nu‘mān b. Maḥmūd al-Ālūsī (1252-1317/1836-1899) authored a book arguing that the dead do not hear entitled *al-Āyāt al-bayyināt fi ‘adam samā‘ al-amwāt ‘ind al-Ḥanafīyya al-sādāt* (recirculated in the 1980s with notes by Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Albānī); and Muḥammad Bashīr al-Sahsawānī (1250-1326/1834-1908)—of the Ahl-e-Hadith movement and author of *al-Qawā al-muḥaqqaq al-muḥkam fi ziyārat qabr al-Ḥabīb al-Akrām*—went so far as to boast that he made a point to perform pilgrimage and not visit the grave of the Prophet in Madina. These and similar tracts prompted noteworthy refutations, among them *Tadhkirat al-rāshid bi-radd Tabṣirat al-nāqīd* by Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Ḥayy al-Laknawī (d. 1304/1887), *Ḥayāt al-mawāt fi bayān samā‘ al-amwāt* (1305H) by Aḥmad Riḍā Khān al-Baraylawī (1272-1340/1856-1921) in Urdu—in which he quoted hundreds of reports from the Prophet and the early generations as well as the fatwas of Shāh Walī Allāh al-Dihlawī (1114-1176/1702-1762) and his erudite family—and the unpublished *Tawdīḥ al-bayyināt fi samā‘ al-amwāt* (1306/1888, mistitled *Tarjih al-bayyināt* in the Azhar manuscript library catalogue) by the Mufti of Baṣra, ‘Abd al-Waḥhāb b. ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-Ḥijāzī al-Baḡhdādī—Allah Most High have mercy on them all.

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See also: ANGELS; BADR; BELIEF; DEATH; GRAVE; MANIFEST AND HIDDEN; MARTYRS; NIGHT JOURNEY AND ASCENSION; PROPHETS AND MESSENGERS; RESURRECTION; REWARD AND PUNISHMENT; RIVERS AND SPRINGS; WATER.

GIBRIL FOUAD HADDAD

BASMALA

This article comprises the following sections: i. Definition and Usage; ii. Linguistic Construction and Meaning of *bi-sm Allāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm*; iii. History of Revelation and Use of the *Basmala*; iv. The *Basmala* in Q 27:30; v. The *Basmala* in Q 11:41; vi. Issues related to the *Basmala* (*Masʿala fī-l-basmala*); vii. The *Basmala* in Hadiths; viii. Legal Rulings (*al-aḥkām al-fiqhiyya*); ix. Merits of the *Basmala*; x. Scholarly Literature; xi. Writing the *Basmala*; xii. Bibliography.

Definition and Usage

The theonymic invocation *bi-sm Allāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm* (“In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Ever-Merciful”) appears in its complete form in Q 27:30, in the letter of Prophet Sulaymān (*q.v.*), upon him peace, to the Queen of Sabaʾ (Sheba) (see SABAʾ; ANONYMOUS MENTIONS); in shorter form—without the two Names of Mercy (al-Raḥmān and al-Raḥīm; see BEAUTIFUL NAMES OF ALLAH and discussion below)—in Q 11:41, in the invocation of Prophet Nūḥ (*q.v.*), upon him peace, when commencing his voyage in the Ark (*q.v.*); and at the head of every sura (*q.v.*) except the ninth, al-Tawba (“Repentance”) (see below for the various reasons adduced for this absence, as well as the extensive scholarly discussion on the mode in which the *basmala* occurs at the head of every sura). Altogether, the *basmala* is found 114 times in the Qurʾān in its complete form and once in the aforementioned

shorter form. The *basmala* is also known as the *tasmiya* (“invoking the name [of Allah]”) (Ṭabarī, *sub Q basmala*), based on the view that a name (*ism*) is distinct from its referent (*musammā*) (see more on this below) (see THE NAME, THE NAMING, THE NAMED).

The term *basmala* is a verbal noun (*maṣḍar*) of the quadrilateral root *b-s-m-l* (patterned on the form *faʿlala*). Grammarians explain that one usage of this form is the construction (through a process called *naḥt*) of abbreviations from compound phrases by drawing letters from each constituent word (Ibn ʿAqīl, *Sharḥ* 4:262; Azharī, *Tahdhīb* 13:108; also Ibn ʿAshūr, *sub Q basmala*). Al-Azharī (d. 369/980) quotes al-Farrāʾ (d. 207/822) as saying that he had not heard any verbal nouns based on this morphological pattern other than *basmala=bi-sm Allāh* (“in the name of Allah”); *sabḥala=subḥān Allāh* (“glorified be Allah”); *ḥaylala=lā ilāha illā-Llāh* (“[there is] no god but Allah”); and *ḥawlaqa* (variant *ḥawqala*)=*lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā bi-Llāh* (“[there is] no ability and no power but with Allah”). Al-Azharī himself, however, cites other such abbreviations, as mentioned by Abū al-ʿAbbās: *ḥamdala=al-ḥamd li-Llāh* (“all praise is to Allah”); *jaʿfala=juʿiltu fidāka* (“may I be a ransom for you”); and *ḥayʿala=ḥayya ʿalā al-ṣalāt* (“come to prayer”) (*Tahdhīb* 3:240). Ibn ʿAshūr (1296-1393/1879-1972) notes that the word *basmala* originally signified the act of saying or writing the phrase *bi-sm Allāh* (“In the name of Allah”), but popular usage extended its conventional meaning to denote saying or writing the entire phrase *bi-sm Allāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm*—even though the abbreviated form does not contain the letters *ḥāʾ* and *rāʾ* from the last two words of the entire phrase (*sub Q basmala*; al-Ṣabbān, *al-Risālat al-kubrā*, p. 156).

Linguistic Construction and Meaning of *bi-sm Allāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm*

Bi-smi

Bi-smi is formed by adding the preposition *bi-* to the elliptic form of *ism* (contracted by omitting the *ḥamzat al-waṣl*). The preposition *bi-* is variously regarded as indicating companionship (*muṣāḥaba*) or supplication (*istiʿāna*, seeking aid). In the former sense, it would mean, “I seek the company of...” and in the latter, “I seek the help of...” Al-Ālūsī (1217-1270/1802-1854) preferred the latter reading when speaking of the Divine name as it expresses humility and servitude in contrast to the claim of company (*Rūḥ*, *sub basmala*). It indicates one’s poverty and need (*iftiqār*) while seeking Divine help to accomplish the act one

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See also: ABILITY; ACQUISITION; AL-ANṢĀR; ABROGATION; ALLIANCE AND TREATY; ANGELS; ANONYMOUS MENTIONS; BARZAKH; BOOTY; CHILDREN; CLIENTS; CONQUEST; CONSULTATION; CRITERION; DISBELIEF AND DOUBT; DISBELIEVERS; HĪJRA; INHERITANCE AND PATRIMONY; MĀDYAN; MARTYRDOM AND MARTYRS; MUḤĀJIRŪN; POLYTHEISM AND POLYTHEISTS; THAMŪD; TRIALS AND STRIFE; WAR; WEALTH.

GIBRIL FOUAD HADDAD

Baḥīra

See CONSECRATION OF ANIMALS

Bakka

See MAKKA

BA'L

Ba'l is used in the Qur'ān once (Q 37:125) to denote a pagan deity, known as Baal in English, and six times as a common noun, in all instances meaning "husband" (see FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD; MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE).

Ba'l is derived from the root *b-ʿ-l*. Of this root, two forms occur seven times in the Qur'ān: *Ba'l* three times (Q 4:128; 11:72; 37:125) and the plural *bu'ūlatun* four times (2:228; 24:31 thrice). The root has two different basic meanings, the first denoting a husband; a lord, master, owner or a possessor of a thing; a head, chief-tain, ruler, or a person of authority; someone overbearing. Its second meaning denotes a tract of land elevated above other land; any tract of land upon which flows neither torrential nor even running water, and which does not receive rain except once a year; a male date-palm, especially one whose roots reach groundwater and hence does not need to be irrigated (Farāhīdī; Ibn Fāris; Fayrūzābādī; Zabīdī). The word appears in many hadiths, especially those referring to cultivated yet unirrigated land (Mālik, Zakāt, zakat al-ḥubūb wal-zaytūn; Abū Dāwūd, Zakāt, ṣadaqa al-zar'a).

According to al-Rāghib al-Aṣfahānī (d. 502/ca.1108), the meanings of *Ba'l* include husband, as in Q 11:72 (and this my husband is old), the plural being *bu'ūla*, as in Q 2:228, and more generally anyone who towers over others or puts himself above others. He adds: "the Arabs thus named their idol (by whom they sought nearness to Allah) *Ba'l*, because of their belief in its superiority; hence the saying of the Most High *Do you invoke Ba'l and forsake the Best of the Creators?* (Q 37:125)" (*Mufradāt*).

Ba'l in Q 37:125 is variously understood by commentators to be (i) the name of a specific idol worshiped by the people of Prophet Ilyās (q.v.), upon him peace; (ii) a woman whom they worshipped; and (iii) a common name used to denote a deity or lord (*rabb*) (Ṭabarī, *sub* Q 37:125), with the predominant view being the first (Qurṭubī, *sub* Q 37:125). Al-Kalbī (d. 204/819) did not list *Ba'l* in his *Kitāb al-Aṣnām* ("Book of Idols"); it was listed by Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (d. 626/1229) in his *Mu'jam al-buldān* as an idol which "was worshipped by the people of Ba'labakk in an ancient town in *al-Shām* (see SYRO-PALESTINE), where great old castles and ruins are to be found" (Yāqūt, *Buldān*, *sub* *Ba'l* and *Ba'labakk*). *Ba'labakk*, or Baalbek, is a town in Lebanon, some 85 km

northeast of Beirut.

The Qurʾān mentions *Baʿl* as a deity in the Makkan Sūrat al-Ṣāffāt (Q 37:125) in a pericope situated in the flow of verses succinctly narrating what happened to the ancient multitudes to whom Allah, Most High, had sent Messengers but who had afterwards gone astray (*q.v.*). Beginning with the prelude, *And, indeed, most of the people of old went astray before them, although verily We had sent warners unto them* (37:71-72), the stories of five Prophets are narrated in rapid succession. These include Nūḥ (*q.v.*), Ibrāhīm (*q.v.*), Ishāq (*q.v.*), Mūsā (*q.v.*), and Hārūn (*q.v.*)—may peace be upon all of them. Then comes the mention of Ilyās, upon him peace, and his people, worshippers of *Baʿl*: *Indeed, Ilyās too was among the Messengers. When he said to his people: “Will you not be conscious of Allah? Do you call upon Baʿl and forsake the Best of Creators? Allah is your Lord and the Lord of your ancestors of yore.” But they denounced him as a liar, so they will surely be arraigned, except Allah’s chosen servants* (Q 37:123-128). According to Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209), *Baʿl* was a golden idol twenty cubits high, with four faces and 400 attendants (*sadana*); Satan (*q.v.*) entered into its mouth and preached a religion of misguidance (*bi-sharīʿat al-ḍalāla*) (Rāzī, *sub* Q 37:125).

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See also: FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD; IDOLS AND IDOLATRY; ILYĀS, UPON HIM PEACE; MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE; SATAN; SYRO-PALESTINE.

MUZAFFAR IQBAL

Balance

See HARMONY AND BALANCE

Banū Isrāʾīl

See CHILDREN OF ISRĀʾĪL

Baqara

See ANIMALS

Barrier

See BARZAKH; HIJAB

BARZAKH

This article comprises the following sections: i. Definition, Usage, Etymology; ii. The Estuarine *Barzakh*. iii. Figurative *Barzakhs*; iv. The Pre-Resurrection Afterlife; v. The Bliss or Punishment of the Grave; vi. The Life of Martyrs and Prophets in *Barzakh*; vii. The Hearing of the Dead; viii. Bibliography.

Definition, Usage, Etymology

The Arabic noun *barzakh* is a quadriliteral *faʿʿal* form used three times in the Qurʾān to denote a barrier (*ḥājiz*, *maḥbas*), twice in the sense of the space where seas and rivers meet—*And it is He Who has let loose the two seas: this, sweet and thirst-quenching; that, saltish and bitter; and has placed between the two a barrier (barzakh) and a great partition complete (ḥijran mahjūran)* (Q 25:53, cf. Q 55:20), including the senses of dry land (*yabas*) and natural boundary (*tukhūm*)—and once in the sense of the other-worldly barrier between the living and the dead: *and behind them (i.e., the dead) is a barrier until the day when they are raised* (Q 23:100): “Everything that is between two things is a *barzakh*, and what lies between this world and the next is a *barzakh*” (Abū ʿUbayda, *Majāz*, *sub* Q 25:53; Ibn Qutayba, *Gharīb*, *sub* Q 23:100; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *sub* Q 25:53).

The Qurʾān also uses the term *ḥājiz* in the first sense of estuary above: *Or, Who has made the earth a fixed abode, and placed rivers in the folds thereof, and placed firm hills therein, and has set a barrier (ḥājizan) between the two seas? Is there any deity beside Allah? Nay, but most of them know not!* (Q 27:61). In the second sense *barzakh* has also been defined metonymically as “the grave” (al-Sijistānī, *Gharīb*; Abū Ḥayyān, *Tuhfa*, both *sub b-r-z-kh*) and translated as “life of/in the grave,” “isthmus-life,” and “interlife.” Accordingly, it is said that the *barzakh* is “an invisible barrier” (*ḥājiz khafīy*) (al-Farrāʾ, *Maʿānī*, *sub* Q 23:100; cf. Azharī, *Tahdhīb* and Ibn Manzūr). *Barzakh* therefore is a major theme

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE; MADYAN; MŪSĀ, UPON HIM PEACE; NŪH, UPON HIM PEACE; PARADISE; SABBATH; SATAN(S); THAMŪD; ZAQQŪM.

CSABA OKVATH AND MUZAFFAR IQBAL

CUSHIONS

ARĀ'IK, MUTTAKA', NAMĀRIQ, RAFRAF, 'ABQARĪ, SURUR, ZARĀBĪ

Cushions in this article refers to various kinds of casings of silk and brocade stuffed with soft material and spread on the couches of Paradise (*q.v.*) for the relaxation and comfort of its dwellers. Seven Qur'anic terms, all inclusively or exclusively thus glossed, are mentioned in the Qur'an sixteen times. They highlight, as the commentaries cited in this article describe, the Paradisiacal state of refinement and luxury associated, in the world and with the life of royalty.

Arā'ik

The noun *arā'ik*, singular *arika*, from the stem ²-r-k, defined as “a decorated cushioned bed (*sarīr munajjad*) in a tent” (Jawharī), “a nuptial canopy (*hajala*) over a couch/bed” (Ibn Durayd, *Ṣāhib, Muḥit*, 6:322; Ibn Fāris, *Qatāda and Mujaḥid in Ṭabarī, sub Q 76:13*) “of pearl and ruby” (Mujaḥid, *sub Q 36:56*), is mentioned five times, three as the object of *reclining upon* (*muttaki'ūn/in*) (Q 18:31, 36:56, 76:13) and twice as *upon canopies, gazing* in a single sura (Q 83:23, 83:35). “Abū 'Awsaja said, *arā'ik* are cushions” (Māturīdī, *sub Q 18:31, 36:57*); this is the lexicographer and litterateur Abū 'Awsaja Tawba b. Qutayba al-Hujaymī al-Samarqandī, the student of the major linguist 'Abd al-Malik b. Qurayb al-Aṣma'ī (123-216/741-831) (Sam'ānī, *Ansāb*, 1:257 §168, *sub al-Ushṭābdīzkī*). “*Arika* cannot be other than a bed (*sarīr*) in a tent with its upholstery (*shawār*) and padding (*najd*)” (Ibn al-Anbārī, 1:454 §397). The word is said to come from Ethiopic (Ibn al-Jawzī, *Funūn*, p. 351) and is sometimes included among the Arabized vocables of the Qur'an (Suyūṭī, *Muḥadhdhab*, p. 38, *sub arā'ik*).

A foundational hadith spoken by the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, at the time of the conquest of Khaybar (7/628), states:

Soon will a man say, leaning on his *arika* with his stomach full, as he hears my hadith: “Between us and you there is the Book of Allah. Whatever licit matter we find [stipulated] in it we hold licit; whatever unlawful matter we find

[stipulated] in it, we hold unlawful.” Behold! Truly, whatever the Messenger of Allah declares prohibited is just like what Allah declares prohibited (Dārimī, 'Alāmāt al-mubuwwa, al-Sunna qāḍiya 'alā Kitāb Allāh; Abū Dāwūd, Sunna, *luṣūm al-Sunna*); I swear by Allah that I have commanded, exhorted, and forbidden you many matters in the amount of the Qur'an or more (Abū Dāwūd, al-Kharāj wal-fay' wal-imāra, ta'shīr Ahl al-dhimma idhā ikhtalafū bil-jjārat).

“He was referring to the Kharijites and Rafidites who clung to the externals of the Qur'an and disregarded the Sunna in which is kept the exposition of the Book, reaping confusion and error.... By 'leaning on his *arika*' he meant lovers of apathy and easy living who keep to their homes and do not pursue learning morning and night to acquire it where it can be acquired” (Khaṭṭābī, *Mā'ālim*, 4:298, *Sharḥ al-Sunna, al-nahy 'an al-jidāl fil-Qur'an*).

Muttaka'

The singular noun *muttaka'*, from the stem *w-k-* which denotes pressuring or leaning on something such as a walking staff or a cushion (Farāhīdī, *Zamakhsharī*), is defined as “a place to sit and eat with pillows and cushions (*al-namāriq wal-wasā'id*)” (Ṭabarī, *Tha'labī, Māwardī, Wāḥidī*), and is mentioned once, in the verse *And when she heard of their scheming she sent for them and prepared for them a banquet on couches* (Q 12:31), glossed in full in the entry CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH. In addition to the three already mentioned verses (Q 18:31, 36:56, 76:13), *w-k-* cognates are used in six more verses as the verb *yattaki'ūn* (Q 43:34) and the present participle *muttaki'īn* (Q 38:51, 52:20, 52:54, 55:76, 56:16) in the sense of “reclining” on beds and couches (*surur, furush*).

Some read the word as *mutkan*, *mutk* meaning the citron (*utrujj*) in Ethiopic (Ibn 'Abbās in Ṭabarī and Ibn Abī Ḥātim; Mujaḥid, *sub Q 12:31*; Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn 'Umar, Ibn Jubayr, Mujaḥid, Qatāda, Ḍaḥḥāk, Kalbī, Naṣr from 'Aṣim, Ibn Hurmuz, Abū Rawq, Abū Rajā' al-'Uṭarīdī, Ibn Yazdād from Abū Ja'far, Jaḥdarī, Abān b. Taghlib, and A'mash according to one narration, while Ibn Mas'ūd, Mu'adh and al-'A'raj read it *matkan*: Khaṭṭābī, 4:241, *sub Q 12:31*); “and everything that is sliced with a knife is called *mutk*” (Muqātil; Ḍaḥḥāk and 'Ikrima in Ṭabarī). Unlike *muttakā'* which is originally Arabic, *mutk* is therefore counted as Arabized (*mu'arrab*) (Suyūṭī, *Muḥadhdhab*, p. 85, *sub muttaka'*). This irregular reading (*qirā'a shādhḥa*, see CANONICAL READINGS), however, was strenuously rejected:

“The *muttaka*’ is the *numruq* one leans upon [see next section]. Some people claimed it is the citron, and this is the biggest falsehood on earth; but there might be citron offered as part of the *muttaka*’ food” (Abū ‘Ubayda, endorsed by Ṭabarī, *sub* Q 12:31).

Namāriq

The noun *namāriq*, singular *numruqa/nimriqa*, a *fuʿlula* derivation from the stem *n-m-r* with an added final *qāf* (the *namira* being a sewn covering) (Fārābī, 2:49, *sub fuʿlul*; Ibn Fāris), glossed as cushions (Jawharī, *Zajjāj*, *sub* Q 88:15), or as striped tapered cushions, wider at the back, for riders to sit on (Azharī), occurs once, in the verse *and cushions in rows* (Q 88:15) in the sense of “huge cushions lined up on top of carpets in the dialect of Quraysh specifically” (Muqātil), “cushions and armrests (*al-wasāʿid wal-marāfiq*)” (Ibn ‘Abbās in Ṭabarī and Ibn Abī Ḥātim) “in the fashion of the dais of kings” (Ṭabarsī, *Majmaʿ*). “Thus are cushions spread out in this world, so they were made desirable in the hereafter as well” (Māturīdī). The gloss of *namāriq* as cushions is therefore an exclusive and unanimous one (Wāḥidī).

Rafraf

The singular noun *rafraf*, from the stem *r-f-f*, used in the two senses of sucking (*maṣṣ*) and movement (*ḥaraka*) including flashing (*barīq*) as in the onomatopoeic *rafrafa* or fluttering of a bird’s wings (Ibn Fāris, *Zamakhsharī*), is the most polysemic term of this list and refers to “the side of a small tent, a piece of fabric sewn to the bottom of a coarse tent, the groves of Paradise, couches and carpets, seats and cushions” (Azharī, *cf.* Māwardī, *sub* Q 55:76); “fine silk garments” (Ibn Sīda, 4:74, *al-busuṭ wal-namāriq wal-furush*); “the sides of a shield and what dangles from them” (Fārābī, 3:101, *sub faʿlal*), “green fabrics used to make bed sheets (*maḥābis*)” (Jawharī, Ṭabarī, *sub* Q 55:76), “strewn tree-leaves” (Rāghib), “armrests” (*marāfiq*, Ṭabarī, Thaʿlabī), “cushions” (*Zajjāj*, Ibn Abī Zammīn, *Zamakhsharī*, etc.). It is mentioned once in Q 55:76, *reclining on a green rafraf*, which the Shāfiʿī Kurdish exegete, hadith scholar, legal theorist, prosodist and poet Mullā Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Ismāʿil b. ‘Uthmān al-Shahrazūrī al-Gūrānī (813-893/1410-1488, fourth Ottoman Shaykh al-Islam and teacher to the Sultan Muḥammad al-Fātil) glossed as “cushions of green silk, because it is a color that brings happiness; also called thus are wide carpets (*busuṭ*), tent hems, and every green garment” (Gūrānī, *Ghāya*).

The word *rafraf* is associated with the gloss of one of the events that took place during the Prophet’s Night

Journey and Ascension (*q.v.*), upon him blessings and peace, whereupon *He saw some of the greatest signs of his Lord* [or: *He saw, of the signs of his Lord, the greatest, cf.* Nawawī, *Sharḥ*, Īmān, maʿnā qawl Allāh ‘azza wa-jall *wa-laqaḍ raʿāhu nazlatan ukhrā*] (Q 53:18): “He saw a green *rafraf* that had filled the firmament” (Ibn Masʿūd in Bukhārī, Q 53:18). This hadith was interpreted as (i) the sight of Jibrīl, upon him peace, in his celestial form (Ibn ‘Aṭiyya), “wearing a green tunic/ two green tunics” (Tirmidhī, wa-min Sūrat al-Najm, rated *ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ*; Abū Yaʿlā, *Musnad*, 8:434-435 §5018); (ii) or Jibrīl sitting on top of a carpet (*bisāṭ*) or couch (*firāsh*) (Bayhaqī, *Asmāʿ*, 2:351 §925, *cf.* Ibn Sīda, 4:73, *al-busuṭ wal-namāriq wal-furush*); (iii) “possibly also Jibrīl spreading all his wings the way a garment is spread” (Khaṭṭābī, *Aʿlām*, 2:1491), “which is patently far-fetched” (Ibn Ḥajar 6:316, *Badʿ al-khalq*, *dhikr al-malāʾika*).

ʿAbqarī

Q 55:76 also mentions the quadrilateral-stem (‘*b-q-r*) collective noun ‘*abqarī*, glossed as carpets (Ibn Sīda, 4:73, *al-busuṭ wal-namāriq wal-furush*), specifically thick ones (*al-ṭanāfis al-thikhān*, Ṭabarī, *sub* Q 55:76) with pictorial motifs (“‘Umar, may Allah be well-pleased with him, would prostrate on a ‘*abqarī*,” Abū ‘Ubayd, 1:62; Bayhaqī, 2:612 §4283), also glossed as synonymous with *zarābī* (Mujāhid, Muqātil, ‘Abd al-Razzāq, etc.) (see below), thus denoting cushions as well.

‘*Abqar* is also a place name for (i) a town in Yemen famous for their pictorial embroidery (*washy*) of textiles (Abū ‘Ubayd, 1:61, 2:110 and Ibn Sīda), whence “‘*abqarī* in other than Qurʾān is clothes obtained from ‘*Abqar*” (Māturīdī); and (ii) a desert spot famed for its jinns (Farāhidī, Ibn Durayd).

The term became generic for anything or anyone with superlative attributes (Ibn Fāris, *Mujmal*, 3:676; Thaʿlab, *Majālis*, 2:302 §366). The Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, recounted a dream in which he saw ‘Umar pull water from a well better than anyone: “I never saw any clan’s ‘*abqarī* do more accomplished work” (Bukhārī, *Manāqib*, *manāqib* ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb; Muslim, *Faḍāʾil*, *faḍāʾil* ‘Umar raḍiya Allāhu ‘anh).

Surur

The plural noun *surur*, singular *sarīr*, from the stem *s-r-r* which denotes hiding (whence *sirr*, secret), purity and stability (Ibn Fāris), is defined as beds (Ibn Sīda), dominion and bliss (*al-mulk wal-niʿma*) (Jawharī),

“that upon which one sits due to *surūr*, joy that is kept private (*mā yanḥatim min al-fārah*), as behooves the denizens of bliss” (Rāghib), and also—in a unique gloss—simply as “cushions” (*wasāʾid*) (Māwardī, *sub* Q 42:20) (see BLESSINGS, BOUNTIES AND FAVORS OF ALLAH; HAPPINESS AND SADNESS). It is mentioned in six verses all describing the couches of Paradise (15:47, 37:44, 42:20, 43:34, 56:15, 88:13).

Zarābī

The plural noun *zarābī*, singular *zarbiyya* (Ibn Sīda), glossed as “cushions” only by the lexicographers (Ibn Durayd; Ibn Fāris; Fayyūmī) and as synonymous with *namāriq* (Jawharī) or with *ʿaqbarī* (Ibn Sīda, 4:74, *al-busūʿ wal-namāriq wal-furush*), comes from the stem *z-r-b* which points to the sense of shelter (Ibn Fāris). The fifth Qurʾānic hapax with *muttakaʿ*, *namāriq*, *rafraf* and *ʿaqbarī*, it occurs in one verse, *and cushions scattered* (mabthūtha) (Q 88:16), in the sense of “many and sundry” (*kathīra mutafarriqa*, *Maqāyīs*, *sub b-th-th*), as part of a longer description of Paradise. The exegetes gloss it as “wide carpets” (*tanāfīs*, *busut*) (Muqātil, *sub* Q 55:76, 88:15; Zajjāj, *sub* Q 55:76; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *sub* Q 88:16), “fringed, velvety carpets” (*tanāfīs mukhmala*); it is counted among the “rare words of the Qurʾān” (*q.v.*) (Abū Ḥayyān, *Tuhfa*, p. 77).

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See also: BLESSINGS, BOUNTIES AND FAVORS OF ALLAH;
CANONICAL AND NON-CANONICAL READINGS;
CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH; HAPPINESS AND SADNESS;
NIGHT JOURNEY AND ASCENSION; PARADISE; RARE
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- See also:** BEGUELEMENT; DEATH; JĀHILIYYA; LIFE OF THIS WORLD; PERSEVERANCE, PATIENCE, AND FORTITUDE; POVERTY; REMEMBRANCE AND REMINDER OF ALLAH; REPENTANCE; RIGHTEOUSNESS AND VIRTUE; TRUST IN ALLAH

GIBRIL FOUAD HADDAD

ABŪ BAKR

ALLAH BE WELL-PLEASSED WITH HIM

This article comprises the following sections: i. His Ancestry and Appellation; ii. His Life before Islam; iii. His Conversion and Life in Makka after Islam; iv. Attempted Hijra to Abyssinia; v. Hijra to Madina; vi. His Life in Madina; vii. His Role in the Events Surrounding the Demise of the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace; viii. His Caliphate; ix. The Compilation of the Qur’an; x. His Death; xi. His

Character and Personality; xii. His Eminence and Virtues; xiii. Verses of the Qurʾān Related to Him; xiv. Hadiths in his Praise; xv. Bibliography.

ʿAbd Allāh b. Abū Quḥāfa (ca.50^{BH}-13/573-634), known as Abū Bakr, the first male adult to accept Islam, the father-in-law of the Prophet—upon him blessings and peace—and his successor (*khalīfat al-Rasūl*), the first of the four rightly guided caliphs (*al-khulafāʾ al-rāshidūn*) (see CALIPH), and, by consensus of exegetes, referent of the phrase *second of the two (thānī ithmayn)* in Q 9:40.

His Ancestry and Appellation

His father, Abū Quḥāfa ʿUthmān b. ʿĀmir b. ʿAmr b. Kaʿb b. Saʿd b. Taym b. Murra b. Kaʿb b. Luʿayy (d. 14/635), and mother, Umm al-Khayr Salmā bint Ṣakhr b. ʿAmr b. Kaʿb (d. before her husband, 13 or 14/634 or 635), were both fifth-generation descendants of Taym b. Murra through whom they were related to the Prophet (al-Kalābādhi, *al-Hidāya wal-irshād* 1:381; Ibn Saʿd; Nawawī, *Tahdhīb* 2:181). Abū Bakr is the only Companion whose genealogical tree includes four successive generations of Companions, including his parents, children, and some of his grandchildren: his mother, one of the early converts, accepted Islam at the hand of the Prophet himself in Makka at the house of al-Arqam b. Abī al-Arqam (d. ca.53/673) (Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *al-Istīʿāb* 4:1934 §4141; Ibn al-Athīr, *Uṣd al-ghāba* 7:314 §7436; Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Iṣāba* 8:386 §12010); his father entered Islam on the day of the conquest of Makka (see CONQUEST) (*al-Istīʿāb* 3:1036 §1773; *Uṣd al-ghāba* 3:575 §3582; *al-Iṣāba* 4:374 §5458); his son ʿAbd al-Raḥmān and grandson Abū ʿAtīq Muḥammad; his daughter Asmāʾ and her son ʿAbd Allāh; and his daughter ʿĀʾisha, a wife of the Prophet, upon him peace and blessings (Nawawī, *Tahdhīb* 2:181; al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr* 1:11; al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh*, p. 88). Of his other two children, Muḥammad (10-38/631-658) and Umm Kulthūm (born 13/634), the former was born a few months before the death of the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, and the latter, a Successor and narrator of Hadith, was born shortly after his own death.

According to Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr (d. 463/1071), he was called ʿAbd al-Kaʿba (“Slave of the Kaʿba”) in the pre-Islamic era (see JĀHILIYYA) until the Prophet renamed him ʿAbd Allāh (“Slave of Allah”). He was also called ʿAtīq, meaning either “the Handsome”, because of the comeliness of his face (*li-ʿatāqat wajhih*) or “the Freedman,” either because of a brother who died before him

(as he escaped the death that had befallen his brother) or, according to his daughter ʿĀʾisha, because the Prophet gave him this name on account of his being “liberated by Allah from Hell-Fire” (*ʿatīq Allāh min al-Nār*) (Tirmidhī, Manāqib, bāb; Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *al-Istīʿāb* 3:963 §1633; Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Iṣāba* 4:146 §4835; al-Nawawī, *Tahdhīb* 2:181; al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh*, p. 26).

There are no explanations offered in the sources as to how he came to be known as Abū Bakr (“Bakr” being a young camel). He was, however, also known by two other epithets: “al-Awwā” (meaning “one given to sorrow due to intense compassion”), indicating his tenderness of heart and compassion for others; and “Ṣāḥib Rasūl Allāh” (“Companion of the Messenger of Allah”), indicating his unique privilege of continuous companionship with the Prophet (Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt* 3:127 §46; Ibn al-Athīr, *Uṣd al-ghāba* 3:310 §3066; and more on this below). He was a close friend and neighbor of the Prophet in Makka before the prophetic mission began, and entered Islam as soon as he was invited. The Prophet said, “Everyone I called to Islam hesitated, deliberated, and delayed [acceptance], except for Abū Bakr b. Abī Quḥāfa; when I invited him, he neither hesitated nor delayed” (Ibn Hishām, *dhikr man aslama min al-ṣaḥāba bi-dāʿwat Abī Bakr* 1:166; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya* 3:37; al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh*, p. 31-32).

His most famous title, however, is “al-Ṣiddīq” (“the one who wholeheartedly confirms the truth”), by which he became known on the morning after the Prophet’s Night Journey and Ascension (see NIGHT JOURNEY AND ASCENSION). The disbelievers came and asked him: “What do you say of your companion, as he claims to have travelled by night to the Sacred House (*bayt al-maqdis*) [in Jerusalem (*q.v.*)]?” He replied: “Did he really say that?” They said: “Yes.” Abū Bakr said: “Then verily he spoke the truth. Indeed, I confirm him (*la-uṣaddiqah*) and believe that he speaks the truth about something more wondrous (*abʿad*) than this: messages from Heaven, coming to him morning and evening” (Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt* 3:127 §46; Ḥākim, 3:65 §4407; al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh*, p. 28). The Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, himself refers to him by the sobriquet al-Ṣiddīq in the hadith about Ḥirāʾ, when the mountain started to quake while the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, and Abū Bakr and ʿUthmān, Allah be well-pleased with them both, were standing on it. The Prophet said, “Be still, O Ḥirāʾ, for upon you are none less than a Prophet, a confirmer (*ṣiddīq*), and a martyr” (Bukhārī, *Fī faḍāʾil aṣḥāb al-Nabī*, manāqib ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān; Muslim, *Fī faḍāʾil al-ṣaḥāba*, min faḍāʾil Ṭalḥa wal-Zubayr raḍiya Allāh ʿanhumā).

Abū Bakr's wives included Qutayla bint 'Abd al-'Uzzā, the mother of his children Asmā' and 'Abd Allāh, to whom he was married at the time he accepted Islam; Umm Rūmān Zaynab bint 'Āmir, the mother of his children 'Ā'isha and 'Abd al-Raḥmān; Ḥabība bint Khārīja, whom he married in Madīna (see below); who was the mother of his daughter Umm Kulthūm (born after his death); and Asmā' bint 'Umays, widow of the Companion Ja'far b. Abī Ṭālib, the mother of his son Muḥammad (born while she was on the Farewell Pilgrimage (*q.v.*)) (Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt* 3:126).

His Life before Islam

Abū Bakr was known as a noble and wise man well before his conversion, famous for his knowledge of genealogy (*ansāb*) and loved and respected by his tribe (see QURAYSH) as well as others who came to know him in the course of his travels as a cloth-merchant—travels that, according to his own account, made him one of the richest men of the Quraysh (Ibn Hishām, *Islām Abī Bakr al-Ṣiddīq*, raḍīya Allāh 'anh wa sha'nah; Nawawī, *Tahdhīb* 2:183; al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh*, p. 29). His uprightness, compassion for the downtrodden, and high moral character were acknowledged even by the disbelievers, as testified by Ibn al-Dughunna who offered him protection when he left Makka for Abyssinia (see below). He had forsworn alcohol even in the pre-Islamic era (al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh*, p. 29), was literate, and—belonging to the clan of Taym b. Murra—had inherited the prestigious office of al-Ashnāq (settling affairs related to bloodwit (*qisās*) (*q.v.*) and blood money (*diyā*) (*q.v.*)) (Ibn al-Athīr, *Uṣd al-ghāba* 3:310 §3066).

His Conversion and Life in Makka after Islam

Ibn al-Athīr (555–630/1160–1233) writes that, during his travels sometime before the beginning of the Prophetic mission, Abū Bakr met an elderly learned man of the Azd tribe, who informed him that he bore the attributes of one who would help the Prophet whose mission was to commence at the Sacred House (see KA'BA). Abū Bakr was thus prepared to accept Islam as soon as he heard of it (*Uṣd al-ghāba* 3:310 §3066). By scholarly consensus, he was the first person to accept Islam outside the household of the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace. However, there is a difference of opinion about whether he was the second person ever to enter Islam. According to one of the earliest reports on the subject, based on a panegyric (*qasīda*) composed by Ḥassān b. Thābit (*ca.* 60_{BH}–63/563–683) and approved by the Prophet, Abū Bakr was the first

to accept Islam after Khadija, the wife of the Prophet, Allah be well-pleased with her (see FAMILY OF THE PROPHET) (Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *al-Istī'āb* 3:964 §1633; Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt* 3:128 §46). Some reports reserve the privilege of being the second person to enter Islam for 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, the cousin of the Prophet, Allah be well-pleased with him. The Prophet had brought the ten year old 'Alī into his own household because of 'Alī's father's financial duress. Ibn Hishām relates that the first to accept Islam were Khadija, then 'Alī, then the Prophet's freedman and adopted son Zayd b. Ḥāritha, and then Abū Bakr, Allah be well-pleased with them all (*Sīra*, dhikr anna 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib raḍīya Allāh 'anh awwala dhakar aslama 1:163). These varying reports are reconciled by scholars who state that the first person to enter Islam was Khadija, the first child 'Alī, the first youth Zayd, and the first male adult Abū Bakr (Ibn Hishām, dhikr man aslama min al-ṣaḥāba bi-da'wat Abī Bakr, 1:166; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya* 3:37; al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh*, p. 31–32).

Abū Bakr did not conceal his conversion but actively invited others to also enter Islam. Among the notables of Quraysh who accepted Islam through his calling were 'Uthmān b. 'Affān, al-Zubayr b. al-'Awwām, 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Awf, Sa'd b. Abī Waqqās, and Ṭalḥa b. 'Ubayd Allāh—Allah be well-pleased with them all (Ibn Ishāq, *Sīra*, p. 121; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Sīra* 1:68; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya* 3:37; al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh*, p. 31–32). He freely spent of his wealth in the cause of Islam, including buying and setting free Muslim slaves from pagan slaveowners who were torturing them. The seven slaves set free by him include Bilāl b. Rabāḥ, 'Āmir b. Fuḥayra (or Fahīra), Umm 'Ubays (or 'Abīs), Zinnīra (or Zanīra), al-Nahdiyya and her daughter, and a woman from the clan of Banū Mu'ammal who was a slave of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb before his conversion (Ibn Hishām, dhikr 'udwān al-mushrikīn 'alā-l-mustaḍ'afīn mimman aslama bil-adhā wal-fitna, 1:201–202; and see below the Section entitled “Verses of the Qur'ān Related to Him”). The Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, refers to Abū Bakr's generosity in a hadith reported by al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870): “The one who has favored me most of all, both with his company and wealth, is Abū Bakr. Were I to take a close intimate (*khalīl*) other than my Lord, I would have taken Abū Bakr; but [what ties us] is the bond of brotherhood and friendship...” (Bukhārī, *Aṣḥāb al-Nabī ṣallā Allāh 'alayh wa sallam*, qawl al-Nabī ṣallā Allāh 'alayh wa sallam saddū al-abwāb illā bāb Abī Bakr). On another occasion, he told the Companions: “Allah appointed me [as a Prophet] to you [people]

but you denied me, while Abū Bakr testified [to my Prophethood] and assisted me with his self and wealth..." (Bukhārī, *Aṣḥāb al-Nabī ṣallā Allāh ‘alayh wa sallam, qawl al-Nabī ṣallā Allāh ‘alayh wa sallam law kuntu muttakhidhan khalīlan*) (see below for more on these hadiths and others).

Attempted Hijra to Abyssinia

Despite his high social standing, Abū Bakr did not remain immune to the fearful persecution of Muslims in Makka. When the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, advised his Companions to migrate to Abyssinia (see *Hijra*), Abū Bakr decided to leave. He had reached Birk al-Ghimād, two days' distance from Makka, when he met Ibn al-Dughunna, who was then an influential leader of the confederation of tribes Banū al-Ḥārith, Banū Khuzayma, and Banū al-Muṣṭaliq (collectively called al-Aḥābīsh for their pact) (Ibn Hishām, *dukhūl Abī Bakr fī jiwār Ibn Dughunna thumma radduh ‘alayh*, 2:16). Ibn al-Dughunna asked him: "Where are you going?" He replied: "My people have injured and expelled me." He said: "By Allah, a man like you cannot be exiled. You help the poor and the needy, care for [your] blood relations, honor guests, and help the afflicted! Return: you are under my protection." When they arrived in Makka, Ibn al-Dughunna proclaimed to the Quraysh that he had taken the son of Abū Quḥāfa under his protection, speaking of him in words reminiscent of those used by Khadija about the Prophet when he returned home anxious after receiving the first revelation: "[Abū Bakr] cares for the needy and the downtrodden; he is an upholder of the forgotten virtues; fulfiller of the rights of blood relations; a generous host; and succor of those who face hardships in the path of truth" (Bukhārī, *Kafāla, jiwār Abī Bakr fī ‘ahd al-Nabī ṣallā Allāh ‘alayh wa sallam wa ‘aqdih; for the words of Khadija, see Bukhārī, Bad‘ al-waḥy, kayf kāna bad‘a-l-waḥy ilā Rasūl Allāh ṣallā Allāh ‘alayh wa sallam*).

The Quraysh withheld their cruelty for a time, but when they again saw Abū Bakr worshipping and preaching openly, they asked Ibn al-Dughunna to tell Abū Bakr to worship at least in the seclusion of his home. "When he recites what has come to Muḥammad, he weeps like no other, and this softens the hearts of the meek among us, and of women and slaves, and we fear lest they desert the religion of their forefathers." Ibn al-Dughunna asked Abū Bakr to either relieve him of his sworn protection or curtail his worship to within the confines of his home, whereupon Abū Bakr

said: "I do not need your protection; Allah and His Messenger are enough for me" (Bukhārī, *Manāqib al-Anṣār, bāb hijrat al-Nabī wa aṣḥābih ilā-l-Madīna; Ibn Ishāq, al-Sīra, qiṣṣat al-Nabī li-mā ‘araḍa nafsalh ‘alā al-‘Arab*, 1:235).

Hijra to Madina

The Hijra of the Prophet to Yathrib (*q.v.*), later renamed Madina—marking the advent of the Hijri calendar (see *CALENDAR*)—holds special significance in relation to Abū Bakr, Allah be well-pleased with him. The Muslim emigration formally began in the thirteenth year of prophethood, when the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, told the believers: "Allah has made for you brethren and houses in which you will be safe" (Ibn Hishām, *Nuzūl al-amr li-Rasūl Allāh fī-l-qitāb*, 1:278). Referring to a dream he had, he said: "I have been shown the place of your emigration: I saw a well-watered land, rich in date palms, between two tracts of black stones" (Bukhārī, *Kafāla, jiwār Abī Bakr fī ‘ahd al-Nabī ṣallā Allāh ‘alayh wa-sallam wa ‘aqdih*).

Thereafter, Makkan Muslims started to emigrate in small groups. The Prophet stayed behind, waiting for the Divine command to leave Makka. When Abū Bakr sought permission to leave, the Prophet told him, "Wait awhile, because I hope that I will also be allowed to migrate." Abū Bakr started to improve the feed of two camels he had, hoping to migrate with the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace (Bukhārī, *Kafāla, jiwār Abī Bakr fī ‘ahd al-Nabī ṣallā Allāh ‘alayh wa-sallam wa ‘aqdih; Ibn Ishāq, al-Sīra, Hijrat al-Rasūl* 1:285, 288).

The Divine command came on a day when the Quraysh met at their usual gathering place (Dār al-Nadwa) and decided to kill the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace. That day, Jibrīl, upon him peace, came to the Prophet and told him not to sleep in his bed that night, meaning that it was to be his last day in Makka. The Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, then went to Abū Bakr's house during midday—a time when the Arabs of Makka normally sought refuge in their homes from the intense heat. As soon as Abū Bakr saw him at the door he knew something important had occurred. "Allah has granted me permission to leave the city and to emigrate," the Prophet said. "Together with me?" asked Abū Bakr. "Together with you," replied the Prophet. ‘Ā’isha, who was present on the occasion, would say afterward: "I knew not before that day that one could weep for joy until I saw Abū Bakr weep at those words" (Ibn Hishām, *Hijrat*

al-Rasūl, 1:288). By then, no Muslim was left in Makka except Abū Bakr and his family, ‘Alī, and those who had been detained and were being tortured by the pagans.

The two of them set out that night, leaving from the back window of Abū Bakr’s house and followed by his *maḥlā* (client), the shepherd ‘Āmir b. Fuhayra, who drove his sheep after them to cover their tracks. While the polytheists sent out parties of young men to apprehend or murder them for a reward of one hundred camels, they took refuge in a cave (*q.v.*) on Mount Thawr, not far from the Ka‘ba. They remained in that cave (*ghār Thawr*), an enclosure formed by boulders providentially placed near a cliff at the summit, for three days. Abū Bakr had instructed his son ‘Abd Allāh to mingle with the Quraysh during the day and relate the news at the cave in the evening, his daughter Asmā’ to join her brother and bring them provisions, and ‘Āmir to graze his flock near the cave for the sheep’s milk and the cover the hoof-prints would provide. On the third day, the Prophet and Abū Bakr were nearly discovered by a Quraysh search party. When he saw the party approaching, Abū Bakr exclaimed to the Prophet, “If any of them were to look at his feet, he would discover us!” The Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, replied: “What do you think of the two, O Abū Bakr, when Allāh is their third?” (Bukhārī, Manāqib, manāqib al-muhājirīn wa faḍlihim; Muslim, Faḍā’il šaḥāba, min faḍā’il Abī Bakr al-Šiddīq).

By exegetical consensus, Q 9:40 directly refers to this event: *If you help not [the Prophet], Allah surely helped him when the disbelievers drove him out; [with] the second of the two, when the two were in the cave, and he said to his companion: “Grieve not, for verily, Allah is with us.” And thereupon Allah sent down His tranquility (sakīna) upon him and strengthened him with hosts you did not see, and abased the word of the disbelievers; but the Word of Allah is supremely exalted; for Allah is Almighty, Infinitely Wise (cf. Tafṣīrs of Ṭabarī, Samarqandī, Sam‘ānī, Māwardī, Zamakhsharī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyya). All exegetes agree that Abū Bakr is the referent of the phrases the second of the two (thānī ithnayn) and Grieve not! (lā taḥzan), and they consider the phrase then Allah sent down His tranquility upon him (fa-anzala Llāhu sakīnatahu ‘alayhi) to either refer to the Prophet, to Abū Bakr, or to both of them (see below, all references sub Q 9:40).*

Al-Māwardī (364-450/974-1058) explains that the phrase *Grieve not!* could have been revealed with or without Abū Bakr actually experiencing any grief. If he did

express grief, the verse is interpreted to mean that the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, uttered these words by way of consolation (*tasliya*). “[This] grief (*huzn*), however, was not fear (*khauf*) [for his own safety against their imminent capture] but sadness of the heart (*ta‘lam al-qalb*), due to his premonition that Islam would weaken after the Prophet” (*Nukat*). Other exegetes likewise understand the verse to allude to Abū Bakr’s worry for the Prophet and for the fate of Islam after him, citing the words of Abū Bakr: “If I am killed, it will be only the murder of a single person; but if you are killed, it will be the murder of this whole Umma (see COMMUNITY)” (cf. *Tafṣīrs* of Samarqandī, Ibn Abī Zamanīn, Tha‘labī, Wāḥidī, Sam‘ānī). Al-Qushayrī adds: “Such grief cannot be alleviated except by the company (*ma‘iyya*) of Allāh—indicated by [the Prophetic words], *grieve not, for verily Allah is with us*—and such grief cannot be but due to [awareness of] the rights of Allāh (*li-ḥaqq al-Ḥaqq*) [and not for one’s own sake]” (*Tafṣīr*). Al-Wāḥidī (d. 468/1075) says that *Verily, Allah is with us* means “verily Allāh has prevented them from us and He has helped us” (*Wajīz*).

Debate over the referent of the phrase *then Allah sent down His sakīna upon him* centers on the term *sakīna* and the pronoun *hā* in the verse (upon him, *‘alayhi*). Those who understand *sakīna* to mean “calmness of heart” argue that the Prophet was in no need of such succor, being exempt from the weaknesses of heart to which other humans are subject (see INFALLIBILITY OF PROPHETS)—and therefore that the verse must mean that Allāh sent down His *sakīna* upon Abū Bakr. Supporting this opinion, Ibn Abī Ḥātim (d. 327/939) relates from Ibn ‘Abbās (3BH-68/619-688) that the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, said that Abū Bakr never lost the *sakīna* sent down upon him (*Tafṣīr*). Ibn ‘Aṭīyya (480-546/1087-1151) avers that the Prophet is the referent of the verse, for “*sakīna* here means that which Allāh sends down upon His Prophets: that is, [His] protection of them and those exclusive matters (*al-khaṣā’is*) that befit none but them, as in the saying of the Most High [regarding the Ark of the covenant (*q.v.*), that] *in it is sakīna from your Lord* (Q 2:248)” (*Muḥarrar*). Ibn al-Jawzī (510-597/ca.1116-1201) summarizes the exegetical reflections on the term *sakīna*, noting that it has variously been taken to mean Mercy (*al-raḥma*) (by Ibn ‘Abbās), dignity (*waqār*) (Qatāda), and tranquility and assurance (*al-sukūn wal-ṭuma’nīna*) (Ibn Qutayba, and supported by Ibn al-Jawzī himself). The pronoun ending (*‘alayhi*, upon him) was taken by early authorities (‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, Ibn ‘Abbās, and Ḥabīb b.

Abī Thābit) to refer to Abū Bakr, for the Prophet could not need tranquility; to the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace (Muqātil); and to both of them—*‘alayhi* being taken as a contraction of *‘alayhimā* (“them both”)—and the mention of one being sufficient; Ibn al-Jawzī cites the example of Q 9:42 in support of this view (Ibn al-Anbārī) (Ibn al-Jawzī, *Zād*).

The unique honor granted Abū Bakr in spending three days alone with the Prophet in the cave under threat to their lives became a topos of intimacy and friendship that continues to reverberate in the tropology of Islamic thought and civilization. In the poetic imagination and popular folk literature, Abū Bakr is described as *ṣāhib al-ghār* (*yār-i ghār* in Persian, Turkish, and Urdu: “the Companion of the Cave”).

When ‘Abd Allāh and Asmā’ arrived on the fourth night, they left the cave and descended the slope. ‘Āmir had brought with him ‘Abd Allāh b. Arqaṭ (or Urayqit), the Bedouin (not yet Muslim) to whom Abū Bakr had entrusted the two camels prepared for the journey (Ibn Hishām, 1:290). Asmā’ had brought provisions for the journey but had forgotten to bring rope to secure them. She took off her fabric sash and tore it into two lengths, using one to tie the provisions to her father’s saddle and keeping the other for herself, thus earning the title “She of Two Sashes” (*dhāt al-niṭāqayn*) (Ibn Hishām, Hijrat al-Rasūl, 1:290; Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt* 1:177).

When they were ready to depart, Abū Bakr offered the better of the two camels to the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, who said: “I will not ride a camel that is not my own.” “But she is yours, O Messenger of Allah, may my father and mother be your ransom.” “No,” said the Prophet, “but what price did you pay for her?” The Prophet accepted the camel for the price Abū Bakr paid, and the camel, named Qaṣwā’, remained his favorite mount throughout his life; he later rode her for the Farewell Pilgrimage (*q.v.*) (see ANIMALS).

The riders travelled through the night. Their desert guide took them away from Makka through the southern route along the shore of the Red Sea before doubling back after they crossed the desert road below ‘Uṣfān. On Monday, 12 Rabī’ I 1/24 September 622, they arrived in Qubā’, the nearest settled locality to Yathrib (Ibn Hishām, Hijrat al-Rasūl, 1:293-294; Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt* 3:173-174). According to his daughter Asmā’, Abū Bakr had five or six thousand dirhams with him when they arrived (Ibn Hishām, Hijrat al-Rasūl, 1:291).

His Life in Madina

Abū Bakr, Allah be well-pleased with him, stayed in Qubā’ for three days in which he was constantly with the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace. He took part there in laying the foundation of the first mosque to be built in Islam. As soon as they arrived in Yathrib, now renamed Madinat al-Nabī (“the City of the Prophet”), the Prophet bought land from two orphans and asked Abū Bakr to pay for it; this was to become the site of the Prophet’s Mosque (*Masjid al-Nabī*) (Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-bārī* 7:246; Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt* 1:239).

In Madina, Abū Bakr lodged with Khārīja b. Zayd until the arrival of his family from Makka (he later married Khārīja’s daughter Ḥabība). Shortly after their arrival in Madina, the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, established fraternal bonds between forty-five or fifty Muhājirūn (“Emigrants”: the Muslims formerly of Makka) (*q.v.*) and an equal number of Anṣār (“Helpers”: the Muslims of Madina) (*q.v.*) (Bukhārī, *Ikhā’ al-Nabī bayn al-Muhājirīn wal-Anṣār*; Ibn Hishām, *al-Mu‘akhāt bayn al-Muhājirīn wal-Anṣār*); Abū Bakr was made ‘brother’ of Khārīja, Allah be well-pleased with them both.

Abū Bakr was fifty-three years old when he migrated to Madina. He had already become father-in-law to the Prophet in Makka, when he contracted the marriage of his daughter ‘Ā’isha and the Prophet after the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, twice dreamt her to be his wife (Bukhārī, *Nikāh, al-nazar ilā-l-mar’a qabl al-tawwāj*; Muslim, *Faḍā’il al-ṣaḥāba, fī faḍl ‘Ā’isha*). He remained close to the Prophet until he died, upon him blessings and peace—a period of nearly ten years, in which Abū Bakr participated in all major battles, expeditions, and events of the nascent Muslim polity. During the Battle of Badr (*q.v.*) (2/624), he guarded the palm shelter (*‘arīsh*) from where the Prophet commanded; at Uḥud (*q.v.*) the next year, he was one of the few Companions who remained beside the Prophet when the tide of the battle turned against the Muslims. Ibn al-Athīr quotes scholars specializing in knowledge of the Prophetic battles (*ahl al-siyar*) as affirming that Abū Bakr was at every battlefield where the Prophet was present (*Usd al-ghāba* 3:212).

When ‘Ā’isha, Allah be well-pleased with her, was falsely accused in the Event of Ifk (see FALSEHOOD), the allegations being spread also by Abū Bakr’s beneficiary and impoverished kinsman Miṣṭaḥ b. Uthātha b. ‘Abbād b. al-Muṭṭalib, Abū Bakr declared: “By Allah, from now on I will not spend anything on him.” ‘Ā’isha was later to recount, “It was regarding

this that Allah—Exalted and Glorious—revealed *And let not those of you who are blessed with favor and ease ever become remiss in helping their near of kin, and the needy, and those who have emigrated in the cause of Allah; rather, let them forgive and forbear. Do you not wish that Allah should forgive you? Allah is Ever Forgiving, Most Merciful* (Q 24:22)...whereupon Abū Bakr said: ‘By Allah, I wish that Allah pardon me! I shall never stop this stipend (*nafaqa*) [to him].’ So he continued to give him the stipend he had withdrawn” (Bukhārī, Maghāzī, ḥadīth; Muslim, Tawba, fī ḥadīth al-ifk wa-qubūl tawbat al-qādhif).

Abū Bakr was appointed the Hajj leader for the year 9/631 by the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, and was instructed to announce to the multitude of pilgrims that no polytheist would thenceforth be permitted to perform Hajj and no naked person permitted to circumambulate the Ka‘ba, as had been common in the idolatrous rite (Bukhārī, Maghāzī, ḥajj Abī Bakr bil-nās fī sana tis’). The next year, Abū Bakr accompanied the Prophet on the Farewell Pilgrimage.

His Role in the Events Surrounding the Demise of the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace

During the last days of his life, the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, ordered that an expedition be sent against the Syro-Palestinian territories of Balqā’ and al-Dārūm under the command of the young Usāma b. Zayd. These Arab tribes had sided with the Byzantines in the Battle of Mu‘ta (8/629), during which the prominent Companions Ja‘far b. Abī Ṭālib and Usāma’s own father Zayd b. Ḥāritha were martyred (Bukhārī, Maghāzī, ba‘th al-Nabī ṣallā Allāh ‘alayh wa sallam Usāma; Ibn Hishām, Dhikr jumlat al-sarāyā wal-bu‘ūth, 2:403). As preparations for this expedition were under way, in late Ṣafar or early Rabī‘ I 11/May or June 632, the Prophet led prayer at the mosque and then ascended the pulpit, invoked blessings on the martyrs of Uḥud, and addressed the Companions: “There is a slave among the Slaves of Allah to whom Allah has offered a choice between this world and that which is with Him—and the slave has chosen that which is with Allah.” Upon hearing this, Abū Bakr wept, for he understood the Prophet to indicate his death was imminent. The Prophet saw that he had understood, and, telling him not to weep, said further: “O people, the most beneficent of men unto me in his companionship and in that which his hand bestowed is Abū Bakr; and were I to choose from all mankind an intimate friend (*khalīl*),

it would be Abū Bakr; but companionship and the brotherhood of faith is ours until Allah unite us in His Presence. Behold these doors [that open onto the Mosque]—let them be walled up, save only the door of Abū Bakr” (Bukhārī, Manāqib, suddū-l-abwāb illā bāb Abī Bakr; Ibn Hishām, Tamriḍ Rasūl Allāh fī bayt ‘Ā’isha, khuṭba lil-Nabī wa tafḍīlulh Abā Bakr, 2:409). Over the next few days the Prophet’s illness intensified, and, with the permission of his other wives, he moved to the house of ‘Ā’isha, where he was to reside until his death (Ibn Hishām, Ibtidā’ shakwā Rasūl Allāh 2:404; Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt* 2:232; ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf* 5:429; Ibn al-Āthīr, *Kāmil* 2:318).

By scholarly consensus, during the last days of his illness, the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, appointed Abū Bakr to lead prayer in his stead (Bukhārī, Adhān, man asm‘a al-nās takbīr al-imām; Ibn Hishām, Tamriḍ Rasūl Allāh fī bayt ‘Ā’isha, 2:411; Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt* 2:217-225; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* 3:197; al-Balādhurī, *al-Ansāb* 1:554; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, al-Sīra, p. 552). Among the relevant narrations is that of ‘Ā’isha, Allah be well-pleased with her: “When the Messenger of Allah, Allah bless him and grant him peace, became gravely ill, Bilāl came to him to announce the prayer. He said: ‘Tell Abū Bakr to lead the people in the prayer.’ I said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, Abū Bakr is a soft-hearted man (*raḡul asīf*); were he to stand in your place, he would not be able to make the people hear him. Will you enjoin ‘Umar [instead]?’ He repeated: ‘Tell Abū Bakr to lead the people in the prayer.’ Then I said to Ḥafṣa: ‘Tell him, Abū Bakr is a soft-hearted man; if he stands in his place, he will not be able to make the people hear him. Would you order ‘Umar to lead the prayer [instead]?’ Ḥafṣa likewise encouraged him to do so. The Prophet said: ‘Verily you are as the companions of Yūsuf (*q.v.*) (*ṣawāḥib Yūsuf*). Tell Abū Bakr to lead the people in the prayer.’ Abū Bakr then stood up for the prayer. In the meantime the Messenger of Allah felt better and emerged with the help of two people [holding him] on either side, his legs dragging on the ground till he entered the Mosque. When Abū Bakr heard him coming [while leading prayer], he tried to retreat, but the Messenger of Allah beckoned him to carry on. The Prophet sat on his left side; Abū Bakr prayed while standing; the Messenger of Allah led the prayer while sitting; Abū Bakr was following the Prophet, and the people were following Abū Bakr [in the prayer]” (Bukhārī, Adhān, al-raḡul ya’tamm bil-imām wa ya’tamm al-nās bil-ma’mūm; cf. *Fathḥ al-bārī* of Ibn Rajab as well as *Fathḥ al-bārī* of Ibn Ḥajar

for explanation of the simile of the “companions of Yūsuf” as meaning people with ulterior motives—in this case, ‘Ā’isha and Ḥafṣa trying to avoid people seeing Abū Bakr standing in place of the Prophet).

The Prophet felt better on Monday morning, the day he was to meet his Lord. While he was lying with his head upon ‘Ā’isha’s chest, she heard him murmur: “To the supreme communion in Paradise, *with those upon whom Allah has showered His favor, the Prophets, the truthful, the martyrs, and the righteous, most excellent for communion are they* (Q 4:69), O Allah, to the supreme communion.” These were his last words (Bukhārī, Maghāzī, maraḍ al-Nabī ṣallā Allāh ‘alayh wa sallam wa wafātuh; Ibn Hishām, sha’n ‘Alī wal-‘Abbās qabl wafātih, 2:413; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* 3:199; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, al-Sira, p. 561).

That morning, Abū Bakr had taken leave from the Prophet to visit his wife Ḥabība in the village of Sunḥ, where she still lived with her parents. When the news reached him, he rushed back on horseback, and, without pausing to speak to anyone in the Mosque, entered the chamber of his daughter. He drew back the cloak with which they had covered the face of the Prophet. He gazed at the face and then kissed him, saying: “May my father and my mother be ransomed for you, you have tasted the death that Allah decreed for you. No death after that shall ever befall you” (Ibn Hishām, 2:413-414). Then, drawing the cloak over his face, he returned to the Mosque, where ‘Umar was still addressing the assembled throng. “Hear me speak,” he said to ‘Umar, but was paid no attention. Abū Bakr began speaking anyway, and people started to gather around him. After praising Allah, he said: “O people, whoever used to worship Muḥammad, verily Muḥammad is dead; and whoever used to worship Allah, verily, Allah is Ever-Living.”

Then he recited Q 3:144, which had been revealed after the Battle of Uḥud (3/625): *Muḥammad is but a Messenger, and Messengers have passed away before him. If he dies or is slain, will you then turn upon your heels? Whoever turns back upon his heels will thereby do no harm unto Allah; and Allah will reward the thankful.* The recitation struck the hearts of many. ‘Umar was to later say: “When I heard Abū Bakr recite that verse, I was so astounded that I fell to the ground. My legs would no longer carry me, and I realized that the Messenger of Allah had died” (Ibn Hishām, 2:414). Abū Bakr later intervened in the Companions’ argument over where to bury the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, by recalling that the Prophet had said: “No Prophet dies but is buried wherever he died.” And so his grave was

dug in ‘Ā’isha’s chamber (Ibn Hishām, 2:418).

His Caliphate

(12 Rabī‘ I 11—21 Jumādā II 13/7 June 632—
22 August 634)

While the body of the Prophet yet lay in ‘Ā’isha’s chamber (*hujra*) and most of the leading members of the community were still in the Mosque, the Anṣār held a meeting at Saqīfa Banī Sā‘ida (a veranda built of palm trunks where they commonly assembled) to debate the future of the Islamic polity. One of the Anṣār brought word of this gathering to Abū Bakr and ‘Umar, may Allah be well-pleased with them both. They immediately went to the gathering of the Anṣār. In a sermon several years later, after returning to Madina from his last pilgrimage (23/644), ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb recounted at length what occurred that day.

Let no one foment mischief by saying that the allegiance pledged to Abū Bakr was an impromptu (*falta*) affair only later ratified (*fa-tammāt*). It was impromptu, to be sure, but through it Allah protected people from an evil. There is none among you to whom people will surrender obedience like they did to Abū Bakr. (...) [Once we arrived at the Saqīfa] we sat down. We listened to their orator pronouncing the *shahāda*; he praised Allah as was fitting, and then said: “To proceed: We are Allah’s Helpers (*Anṣār*) and a fighting force of Islam, and you, O Emigrants (*yā ma’shara l-Muhājirīn*), are of us, for a group of your people have settled amongst us—but now we see that they want to sever their ties to us and wrest authority from us.”

When their speaker had finished, I wanted to respond, for I had prepared a speech in my mind which greatly pleased me, and I wanted to produce it before Abū Bakr. I was trying to soften its asperity, but Abū Bakr said: “Be gentle (*‘alā rislik*), O ‘Umar!” I did not want to disobey him, so he spoke; he was a man with more dignity and knowledge than I and, by Allah, he did not omit a single word which I had thought, prepared, and liked, but he delivered it extemporaneously in the same manner [as mine] or better. He said [to the Anṣār]: “You well deserve all the good that you mentioned, but the Arabs will not recognize anyone’s authority except that of the Quraysh, who are the best among Arabs in lineage and estate (*dār*). I am pleased for you with either of these two men; pledge to

whomever of them you wish.” And he took my hand and that of Abū ‘Ubayda b. Jarrāḥ—who was sitting between us—and nothing he said had displeased me more than that. By Allah, I would have rather come forward and have my head struck off, if that were no sin, than rule over people among whom was Abū Bakr. One of the Anṣār said: “I am that comforting support of the Anṣār whose opinion soothes them and whose presence brings joy to them; a fruit-laden palm, which these people prop up. Let us have one ruler and you another, O Quraysh!” A commotion ensued, voices were raised, and I feared discord. I said: “Hold forth your hand, O Abū Bakr.” He did so, and [by clasping it] I pledged allegiance to him. Then the Muḥājirūn [assembled there] pledged and then the Anṣār [assembled there] pledged their allegiance.

Ibn Hishām, *amr Saqifa Banī Sā’ida* 2:415-416; *cf.* other versions of this account in Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*

The next day, Abū Bakr, Allah be well-pleased with him, sat at the pulpit in the Prophet’s Mosque and ‘Umar addressed the assembly, reprising his speech of the previous day in which he had denied the death of the Prophet. Calling Abū Bakr “the best of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah, *the second of the two when they were both in the cave* (Q 9:40),” he bade them pledge their allegiance to Abū Bakr, which the congregation did (see ALLIANCE AND TREATY). Abū Bakr then addressed them. After praising and thanking Allah Most High, he inaugurated the ethos of his caliphate:

O people, I have been given authority over you, and I am not the best of you. If I do good, aid me [in it]; and if I do wrong, set me right. Sincere regard for truth is loyalty and disregard for truth is treachery. The weak amongst you shall be strong with me until I have secured his rights, if Allah wills; and the strong amongst you shall be weak with me until I have wrested from him the rights of others, if Allah wills. If a people refrain from fighting in the path of Allah, Allah will smite them with disgrace. Wickedness never spreads among a people but Allah brings calamity upon them all. Obey me so long as I obey Allah and His Messenger, but if I disobey Allah and His Messenger, you owe me no obedience. Arise for your prayer, may Allah have mercy upon you.

Ibn Hishām, *Khuṭba Abī Bakr*
ba’d al-bay’a, 2:417

Among the few Companions who delayed their pledge was ‘Alī, Allah be well-pleased with him. Some six months later, after the death of his wife Fāṭima, may Allah be well-pleased with her, he went to Abū Bakr and said, “We know well your eminence and what Allah has bestowed upon you, and we are not jealous of any benefit that He has caused to come unto you—but you confronted us with an accomplished fact (i.e., Abū Bakr being the next leader of the Muslim polity), leaving us no choice [in the matter], and we felt that we had some claim therein due to our nearness of kinship unto the Messenger of Allah.” Abū Bakr’s eyes filled with tears, and he said: “By Him in whose hand is my soul, I had rather that all should be well between me and the kin of the Messenger of Allah than between me and my own kindred.” At noon that day in the Maṣjid, Abū Bakr publicly exonerated ‘Alī for not yet having recognized him as caliph, whereupon ‘Alī affirmed the right of Abū Bakr and pledged his allegiance to him (narrated by ‘Ā’isha in Bukhārī, Maghāzī, *ghazwat Khaybar*).

One of the first undertakings of Abū Bakr as Caliph was to send off Usāma’s expedition, which was still encamped outside Madina. Although some senior Companions, nearly all of whom were part of the troops under the young Usāma’s command, advised postponing the campaign because of the restiveness of other Arab tribes after the Prophet’s death, Abū Bakr refused to rescind the Prophet’s plan: “By Him in whose hand is the soul of Abū Bakr, even if I risk being torn apart by predators still will I dispatch Usāma’s army in accordance with the wish of the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace.” He himself went to the encampment at al-Jurf to send off the army (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* 3:225-226; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, *Siyar al-Khulafā’ al-Rāshidīn*, Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq; al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh*, p. 60; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil* 2:335-336).

While the bulk of the Muslim fighting force was away in Syro-Palestine, certain tribes of the Arabian Peninsula withheld payment of the *zakat* to the central treasury. Abū Bakr decided to wage war against them as well until they again paid the *zakat*, but some of the Companions wondered about the legitimacy of his decision. ‘Umar asked: “How can you fight against these people, when the Messenger of Allah said, ‘I have been commanded to fight with people [only] until they say “None is worthy of worship but Allah.” Whoever says this secures from me his life and possessions but for his trespassing the law—and his accounts

will be with Allah’?” Abū Bakr replied: “By Allah, I will fight those who differentiate between *ṣalāt* and *zakāt*, for *zakāt* is obligatory upon wealth. By Allah, if they refuse to pay me (i.e., under his caliphate) even a goatkid which they would pay at the time of the Messenger of Allah, I will fight them for withholding it.” ‘Umar later said: “By Allah, it was none but Allah who opened Abū Bakr’s heart to it, and I came to realize that his decision was right” (Bukhārī, *Zakāt*, wujūb al-zakāt; Muslim, *Īmān*, al-amr bi-qitāl al-nās ḥattā yaqūlū lā ilāha illā Allāh Muḥammad Rasūl Allāh). Differentiating between *ṣalāt* and *zakāt* was in this way understood as a form of apostasy (*q.v.*), in that it introduced an untenable division into religious obligations.

Two other forms of apostasy prevalent in those early days of the Caliphate were open rebellion against Madina and following upstart claimants to prophecy, two of whom (Musaylima al-Kadhdhāb in Yamāma and al-Aswad al-‘Ansī in Ṣan‘ā’) had already appeared during the last days of the Prophet. There now appeared two more: Ṭulayḥa (Ṭalḥa) al-Asadī, among the tribes of Asad and Ghaṭafān, and a woman, Sajālḥ, among Banū Taghlib, who would later wed Musaylima. In Jumāda II, after the Syro-Palestinian campaign had ended, a large army was sent to fight a series of “wars against apostasy” (*ḥurūb al-ridda*) under the command of Khālīd b. al-Walīd (d. 21/642). Abū Bakr enjoined Khālīd to fight against anyone who did not affirm the five articles of creed (see BELIEF) (al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh*, p. 61). These campaigns were successfully carried out over the next few months, during which time al-Aswad al-‘Ansī died, Ṭulayḥa al-Asadī repented and later died a martyr in the Battle of Nahāwand (21/642), and Musaylima the Arch-Liar (*al-kadhdhāb*) was killed in the fierce Battle of al-Yamāma, in which about seventy Companions were martyred. After Musaylima’s death Sajālḥ repented and accepted Islam (Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya* 7:259). In addition, Abū Bakr authorized smaller expeditions to fight against other apostates including those of Baḥrayn, the tribes in ‘Ammān, and the people of al-Najīr (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* 3:225-226; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, *Siyar al-Khulafā’ al-Rāshidīn*, Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq; al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh*, p. 62; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil* 2:335-336).

The Compilation of the Qur’ān

One of the most important undertakings of Abū Bakr, Allah be well-pleased with him, was the compilation of the written text of the Qur’ān (see COMPILATION OF THE QUR’ĀN). Zayd b. Thābit (d. 45/665), the Companion delegated the task, recounted later:

Abū Bakr sent for me when [many] Muslims were slain in the Battle of Yamāma. ‘Umar [b. al-Khaṭṭāb] was with him [when I arrived]. Abū Bakr, Allah be pleased with him, said, “‘Umar came to me and said, ‘Casualties among Qur’ān reciters were heavy during the Battle of Yamāma—and I am afraid that heavier casualties might take place among the reciters in other battles, whereby much of the Qur’ān would be lost. I am of the opinion that you should order the collection of the Qur’ān [in codex form].’ I asked ‘Umar, ‘How dare I do something the Messenger of Allah, upon him blessings and peace, did not do?’ ‘Umar replied, ‘This, by Allah, is a good thing (*khayr*) [to do].’ And ‘Umar kept urging me until Allah opened my heart to it and I came to view the matter as he did.” Zayd related that Abū Bakr said [to him]: “You are a wise young man and we trust you. You used to transcribe the revelation for the Messenger of Allah, upon him blessings and peace. So go and find [all the fragments of] the Qur’ān and put them together.”

By Allah, had they required me to move a mountain, it could not have been weightier for me than their order to collect the Qur’ān. So I asked, “How dare I do something that the Messenger of Allah, upon him blessings and peace, did not do?” Abū Bakr persisted in his demand until Allah opened my heart to it, as He had done for Abū Bakr and ‘Umar. Thereupon I traced the Qur’ān, collecting it from [where it had been inscribed on] palm branches, flat stones, and the chests of people [who had memorized it], until I found the last two verses of Sūrat al-Tawba—*There has come to you a messenger, [one] of yourselves, to whom aught that you are overburdened is grievous, full of concern for you...* up to the end of the sura (Q 9:128-129)—in the possession of Abū Khuzayma al-Anṣārī, having found them with no one else. The scrolls (*ṣuḥuf*) thus gathered remained with Abū Bakr until his death, then with ‘Umar until the end of his life, and then with Ḥafṣa, ‘Umar’s daughter.

Bukhārī, *Faḍā’il al-Qur’ān*, jam‘ al-Qur’ān

Abū Bakr instructed ‘Umar and Zayd, may Allah be well-pleased with them all, “Sit at the entrance of the [Prophet’s] Maṣjid and if anyone brings to you two a verse from the Book of Allah along with two witnesses, record it” (Abū Dāwūd, *jam‘ Abī Bakr al-Ṣiddīq raḍīya Allāh ‘anh al-Qur’ān fi-l-maṣāḥif ba’d Rasūl*

Allāh ṣallā Allāh ‘alayh wa sallam). Commentaries explain “two witnesses” as meaning “memory [backed by] writ; or two witnesses to testify that the verse was written verbatim in the presence of the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace; or two witnesses testifying that it was one of the forms (*al-wujūh*) in which the Qur’ān was revealed. Their intention was to accept only what had been written in the presence of the Prophet, not [what had been penned] merely from memory” (Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-bārī*, qawluh bāb jam‘ al-Qur’ān; also see al-Qārī, *Mirqāt al-mafātīh*, faḍā’il al-Qur’ān; al-Mubārakfūrī, *Tuḥfat al-aḥwadhī*, bāb wa min Sūrat al-Tawba).

His Death

After his return from leading the Hajj in 12/634 (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* 3:386), Abū Bakr consulted a number of senior Companions, including ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Awf, ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān, and Sa’d b. Abī Waqqās, about appointing ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (r. 13-23/634-644) as his successor. He then called ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān to him and dictated his will (*wasīyya*) (see WILLS, BEQUESTS, DIRECTIVES, AND DIVINE STIPULATIONS):

In the name of Allah, Most Merciful, Most Gracious. This is the last will (*‘ahd*) of Abū Bakr b. Abū Quḥāfā, [written] shortly before his departure from the world and entrance into the [world of the] Hereafter. This is the time when even a disbeliever accepts faith, even a habitual sinner (*al-fājir*) [repents and] will have certainty (or: protects himself) (*yūqin*), and even a habitual liar speaks the truth. I am leaving behind me ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb as my successor for you; listen to him and obey his commands. I have left no stone unturned to serve Allah, His Messenger, His religion; and I have served you to the best of my abilities. I know—and this is my expectation about him—that ‘Umar will command with justice; and if he changes, then to each is what he earns. But I have desired to do good for you. I have no knowledge of the Unseen. *And those who do wrong will come to know by what overturning they will be overturned* (Q 26:227). May the peace, blessings, and mercy of Allah be upon you.

al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh*, p. 66

Abū Bakr also told his daughter ‘Ā’isha, Allah be well-pleased with her, “By Allah, my dear daughter, after I die, there is no one I would prefer to be free of worldly needs than you. There is no one it would pain me more to see destitute after I die than you. I gave

you some palm-trees which produce twenty *awsāq* (see WEIGHTS AND MEASURES). If you had cut them and taken possession of them, they (their wealth) would have been yours, but today they are the property of [my] heirs, who are your two brothers and two sisters; so divide them according to the Book of Allah.” ‘Ā’isha said, “Father, by Allah, even if these had been more, I would have given them. But there is only [my one sister] Asmā’. Who is my other sister?” Abū Bakr said, “The one in the womb of [Ḥabība] bint Khārīja. I think it will be a girl” (Mālik, *Aqḍiyya*, mā lā yajūz min al-naḥl).

‘Ā’isha, Allah be well-pleased with her, narrates: “At the time of his death, Abū Bakr asked: ‘What day is it?’ They said: ‘Monday.’ He said: ‘If I die tonight, do not leave my burial until tomorrow, for I would love to reach the Messenger of Allah as soon as possible.’” He was to be buried beside the Prophet (Aḥmad, *Musnad Abī Bakr al-Ṣiddīq* 1:218 §45).

As the time of his death approached, ‘Ā’isha lamented: “Wealth is of no avail to a man on the day when the death-rattle is in his throat, and his chest is constricted by it.” Abū Bakr uncovered his face and said: “Not so! Say rather: *Lo, the agony of death has indeed come with Truth; that is what you were wont to look away from* (Q 50:19).” He then instructed ‘Ā’isha to bury him in the two pieces of cloth he was already wearing, after washing them, saying “The living need new clothes more than the dead” (Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt* 2:18; al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh*, p. 67). It is said that his last words were the supplication of Prophet Yūsuf, upon him peace: [*Lord,*] *let me die in submission to You (musliman) and join me with the righteous* (Q 12:101).

He died that night (Monday, 21 Jumādā II 13/22 August 634), at the age of 63, and was buried, in accordance with his wish, before the break of dawn. ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb led the funeral prayer. His grave was dug so that his head was placed level with the shoulder of the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace (Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil* 2:262; al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh*, p. 67).

His Character and Personality

In various sources, Abū Bakr is described as tall and thin, with a reddish-fair complexion, a high forehead which often perspired, deep-set eyes, high cheekbones, and a gaunt face. When white hair appeared in his beard, he started to dye it with henna and *kutum* (a wild grass yielding black dye) (Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt* 3:188; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* 3:424; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil* 2:263; al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh*, p. 30). He was tender-hearted, generous, and kind, with impeccable etiquette (Ibn

Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt* 3:179; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* 2:317).

When the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, asked for donations to equip the “Army that Endured Great Hardship” (*jaysh al-‘usra*) for the battle of Tabūk (9/630), Abū Bakr, Allah be well-pleased with him, came bearing all of his wealth. When the Prophet asked, “What did you leave behind for your family?” He replied, as is well-known, “I left for them Allah and His Messenger” (Tirmidhī, *Manāqib*, bāb; Abū Dāwūd, *Zakāt*, *fi rukḥṣa fi dhālik*).

Although rich, he lived an austere life. After his emigration to Madina, he lived with his wife Ḥabība at al-Sunḥ, a small village near Madina, in a simple structure made of dried palm leaves and sticks. He continued to live there for six months after becoming Caliph and either walked or rode his horse to Madina each morning, returning home after the night prayer. He continued to help his neighbors with milking and grazing as he had before becoming Caliph, and continued to trade various goods for his livelihood, often carrying the goods himself to the market.

‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb insisted that he take a stipend from the public treasury to support himself because his life as Caliph was devoted to serving the Muslim community. ‘Umar contacted Abū ‘Ubayda, the guardian of the treasury (*bayt al-māl*, an institution Abū Bakr formally established), and they fixed him a sum approximating the share of one Muhājir: equivalent to half a sheep for one’s daily meals and summer and winter clothing. It is also said that he was granted an additional annual stipend of 2,500, 3,000, or 6,000 dirhams (Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt* 3:184-185; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* 3:432; al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh*, p. 30). Shortly before Abū Bakr’s death, he instructed his daughter ‘Ā’isha to return the goat, the camel, and the slave given him by the treasury along with a piece of his land to compensate for the allowance that he had received from the treasury. When ‘Umar received these back, he said, “O Abū Bakr, may Allah shower His Mercy upon you, you have laid a heavy burden upon me [by setting the standard of abstinence (*q.v.*) very high for subsequent caliphs!]” (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* 3:432-433; al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh*, p. 30).

His Eminence and Virtues

Al-Nawawī (631-676/1234-1277) writes that scholars have noted the eminence of Abū Bakr’s knowledge on the basis of his declaration that he would fight anyone who differentiated between *ṣalāt* and *zakāt*. Al-Nawawī adds that the other Companions would come to Abū Bakr about issues they could not resolve, and, upon

debating and pondering his answer, would confirm it. “It has been reported to us that Ibn ‘Umar was asked who [among the Companions] gave *fatwās* to the people during the time of the Prophet. He replied, ‘Abū Bakr and ‘Umar, and I know of none other than them’” (*Tahdhīb* 2:190).

Jubayr b. Muṭ‘im (d. 57/676 or 677), an expert in genealogy, said that Abū Bakr was the most learned in such lore. The dream interpreter Ibn Sīrīn (33-110/653-728) said that after the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, Abū Bakr was the most learned in interpreting dreams and that he would do so during the time of the Prophet, one Companion even being referred to him by the Prophet (see DREAMS AND THEIR INTERPRETATION). According to Ibn Kathīr, he was one of the best orators (al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh*, p. 37). Al-Suyūṭī cites as proof of his penetrating insight events of Ḥudaybiya (6/628) in which ‘Umar asked the Prophet certain questions and received identical responses from Abū Bakr (al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh*, p. 38). According to al-Nawawī, he was one of the Companions who memorized the entire Qur’ān (*Tahdhīb* 2:191), but narrated only 142 hadiths of the Prophet. “The reason for this scarcity, despite the seniority of his companionship, is that his death pre-dated the dissemination of hadiths and the efforts by the Followers (*tābi‘īn*) to hear, gather, and preserve them” (*Tahdhīb* 2:182). Al-Suyūṭī lists 104 of these hadiths in his *Tārīkh* (, p. 70-78).

Abū Bakr once entered a garden where he saw a small sparrow under a tree. He drew a long breath and said, “What good fortune you have, O bird! You eat from the tree, rest under it, and are free from accountability. I wish Abū Bakr were like you!” (Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf* 7:91 §34432; al-Bayhaqī, *Shu‘ab* 1:485 §787).

Ibn ‘Asākir (d. 570/1175) cites Abū Sa‘īd al-Aṣma‘ī (121-216/740-831) as saying that if anyone praised Abū Bakr, he would respond: “O Allah, You have the best knowledge of me and I know myself more than they [know me]. O Allah, make me better than their conjectures, forgive me what they do not know, and do not take me to task for what they say” (al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh*, p. 86).

Despite his knowledge, insight, and great scholarship, he would hesitate to say anything about the Qur’ān. One of his proverbial statements was uttered in response to a question about the phrase *wa fākihātan wa abba* (Q 80:31): “Which sky would shade me and which earth would contain me, were I to say

anything about the Book of Allah without [certain] knowledge?” (Baghawī).

Verses of the Qur’ān Related to Him

As already mentioned in the Section “His Hijra to Madīna”, the exegetes consider Q 9:40 indicative of the high station of Abū Bakr; Allah be well-pleased with him. Al-Qushayrī (376-465/ca.986-ca.1073) says, “The verse is a proof of the Companionship of al-Ṣiddīq, may Allah be well-pleased with him, for Allah Most High has named him [the Prophet’s] Companion. He has counted him as the second: he is the second in faith (*īmān*), second in the cave, second in the grave (*fī-l-qabr dajī‘a*) (meaning thereby that his grave is next to the Prophet’s), and he will be his companion in Paradise” (*Tafsīr*). Al-Wāḥidī and al-Rāzī (543-606/1148-1209) both say that the Divine description of Abū Bakr as the Companion of the Messenger in Q 9:40 is indicative of his eminence and excellence. They cite the saying of al-Ḥusayn b. Fuḍīl al-Bajalī: “Anyone who denies the Companionship of ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān, or any other Companion is a liar and an innovator; but anyone who denies the Companionship of Abū Bakr is a disbeliever (*kāfir*), because such a person rejects a proof-text (*naṣṣ*) of the Qur’ān” (*Wajīz and Tafsīr*).

Al-Qāḍī Abū Bakr Ibn al-‘Arabī (468-543/1075-1148) writes that Q 9:40 lists merits specific to Abū Bakr alone, including that Allah Most High granted a place in His Book to what was said to Abū Bakr, the Qur’ānic description of whose companionship with the Prophet will be recited until the Day of Resurrection. The Prophet’s question to Abū Bakr in the cave (“What think you of the two, O Abū Bakr, when Allah is their third?”) underscores the great honor accorded him, in that no other human has been described this way. Because of these merits, Ibn al-‘Arabī continues, Abū Bakr was preeminent over all others (*Aḥkām, maṣ’alat qawlihi ta’ālā illā taṣṣurūhu* (Q 9:40) 2:512-514). Hadīth commentators further explicate the Prophetic saying, “Allah is the third of them”; Abū al-Ḥasan Ibn Baṭṭāl (d. 449/1057), Ibn Rajab (736-795/ca.1335-1393), and Ibn Ḥajar (d. 852/1449) all point out that it here means that He is their Companion, Protector, and Helper, sufficient for them—but that it does not reflect on His knowledge of them, for in that sense Allah is always with every two. In His Words, *Never can there be a secret counsel between three persons without Him being the fourth of them, nor between five without Him being the sixth of them* (Q 58:7) (cf. Ibn Baṭṭāl, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 9:96; Ibn Rajab, *Fath al-bārī*

3:116; Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-bārī* 7:259). Furthermore, Ibn Rajab writes, “the general presence of Allah (*ma‘iyyat ‘amma*) involves His knowledge, power, omnipotence, and recompense, whereas the specific accompaniment (*ma‘iyyat khāṣṣa*) here alluded to involves a goodly expectation (*ḥusn al-zann*) of His pleasure and protection; for this is proximity [of a different kind], not the proximity common to [all] creatures” (Ibn Rajab, *Fath al-bārī* 3:116). Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1327) notes that certain scholars hold that this accompaniment was granted only to Abū Bakr (*Minḥāj al-sunna* 8:382).

Al-Suyūṭī (849-911/1445-ca.1505) devotes a special section in his *Tārīkh al-Khulāfa’* (“History of the Caliphs”) to “Verses Sent Down in Praise, Confirmation, or Attestation of the Virtues of Abū Bakr”:

Abū Bakr bought Bilāl to set him free from his slavery to Umayya b. Khalaf and Ubayy b. Khalaf for a mantle (*burda*) and ten *awāq* [of grain] (see WEIGHTS AND MEASURES). Allah then revealed Q 92:1-4: *By the Night when it is veiled, and the day resplendent, and Him Who created male and female; indeed, your strivings are divergent* (referring to the different purposes that motivated Abū Bakr on the one hand and Umayya and Ubayy on the other);

‘Āmir b. ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr said: “Abū Bakr used to [buy and] set free the elderly and weak women and slaves of Makka, if they embraced Islam. His father (Abū Qulḥāfa) said to him: ‘My dear son, I see that you buy and set free weak women; it would be better if you emancipate strong young men so that they remained with you and defended you against your enemies.’ Abū Bakr responded: ‘Father, I only desire what is with Allah.’ [Ibn al-Zubayr] said, ‘One of my family told me that the verse *As for him who gives and fears [Allah]...* (Q 92:5) was revealed about [this incident]”;

‘Urwa said: “Abū Bakr set free seven [slaves] who were being tortured because of their belief in Allah, and the last five verses of Sūrat al-Layl were revealed about it” (Q 92:17-21: *Far removed shall remain he who is truly conscious [of Allah], who spends his possessions [on others] so that he may grow in purity, not in payment for favors received, but only from longing for the Countenance of his Lord Most High—and such, indeed, shall be well-pleased*).

Tārīkh, p. 41-42

Other verses listed by al-Suyūṭī include Q 3:159

and Q 66:4, both of which are said to refer to Abū Bakr and ‘Umar; and Q 15:47, concerning Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, and ‘Alī, may Allah be well-pleased with them all. He also lists, citing earlier sources, Q 33:43, Q 46:15-16, and Q 55:46 as verses which confirm attributes of Abū Bakr (*Tārīkh*, p. 41-42). The relationships offered by exegetes between Abū Bakr and these verses, however, are not exclusive for, as Shāh Walī Allāh al-Dihlawī (1114-1176/1702-1763) points out (*al-Fawz*, p. 95), Companions would commonly remark that a certain verse pertained to such and such person or event—meaning that they are to be understood in the light of the verse, or that they embody qualities described in the verse, without limiting its general scope (see OCCASIONS OF REVELATION).

Hadiths in his Praise

Several hadiths enumerate Abū Bakr’s merits and virtues. One is narrated by Abū Hurayra, Allah be well-pleased with him, who said: “I heard the Messenger of Allah, upon him blessings and peace, say: ‘Whoever spends a pair (*zawjayn*) (of horses, camels, or anything else, as per scholarly commentaries) in the Path of Allah, [such a person] will be called to from all the gates of Paradise: “O slave of Allah, this is virtuous.” He who is among those who prays will be called from the Gate of Prayer. He who is among the people of jihad will be called from the Gate of Jihad. He who is among those who give charity will be called from the Gate of Charity. He who is among those who fast will be called from the Gate of Fasting, called al-Rayyān.’ Abū Bakr said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, may my father and mother be your ransom, the one who is invited from all the gates will be the most fortunate. Is there any who will be invited from all the gates, O Messenger of Allah?’ [The Prophet] said: ‘Yes, and I hope you will be among those, O Abū Bakr!’” (Bukhārī, Ṣawm, al-Rayyān lil-ṣā’imīn; Muslim, Zakāt, man jama‘a al-ṣadaqāt wa a‘māl al-birr).

According to other reports, the Prophet included Abū Bakr among those Companions who confirmed and testified to what he said. “A man was driving an ox loaded with goods. The ox looked toward him and said: ‘I was not created for this, but [to work] the land.’” People exclaimed in surprise and awe: “Hallowed be Allah! Does an ox speak?” The Messenger of Allah said: “I believe it, and so do Abū Bakr and ‘Umar.” In another hadith, the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, said: “A shepherd was tending his flock. A wolf came and carried away one goat. The shepherd pursued [the wolf] and rescued [the goat] from

it. The wolf looked toward him and said: “Who will save it on the day when there will be no shepherd except me?” Thereupon people exclaimed in surprise (at the notion of a talking wolf): “Hallowed be Allah!” The Messenger of Allah said: “I believe in it, and so do Abū Bakr and ‘Umar” (Bukhārī, Aṣḥāb al-Nabī, qawl al-Nabī ṣallā Allāh ‘alayh wa sallam, law kuntu muttakhidhan khalīlan; Muslim, Faḍā’il al-ṣaḥāba, min faḍā’il Abī Bakr al-Ṣiddīq).

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See also: ABSTINENCE; AL-ANṢĀR; CALIPH; CAVE; COMPANIONS OF THE PROPHET; COMPILATION OF THE QURʿĀN; CLIENTS; CONSULTATION; FALSEHOOD;

FAMILY OF THE PROPHET; HIJRA; MADINA; MAKKA; AL-MUHĀJIRŪN; OCCASIONS OF REVELATION; QURAYSH; YATHRIB.

MUZAFFAR IQBAL

ABŪ LAHAB

Literally “the father of flame,” Abū Lahab was the epithet given to ʿAbd al-ʿUzzā b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib (d. 2/624), a paternal uncle of the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, because of his glowing countenance or the redness of his face (Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-bārī*, sub Q 111:1; Zamakhsharī and Rāzī, sub Q 111:1). His name is mentioned once in the Qurʿān in the opening verse of Sūrat al-Masad (also known as Sūrat Tabbat yadā and Sūrat al-Lahab): *Broken be the hands of Abū Lahab and may he perish*. Some commentators are of the opinion that the patronymic *abī* used in Q 111:1 (*Abī Lahab*) indicates that he is “one destined for Hellfire,” in the same manner in which one who kindles the fire of wars is called “father” or “brother of wars”, *abā* or *akhā al-ḥarb* (Rāghib, sub *l-h-b*) or one who is extremely evil is called *abū al-sharr* (“father of evil”) and one extremely good is called *abū al-khayr* (“father of good”) (Zamakhsharī). Abū Lahab is the only one of the Makkan opponents of the Prophet mentioned in the Qurʿān by name.

Historical Background

When the Prophet was commanded to warn his near relatives (Q 26:214), he ascended Mount Ṣafā and called out: “Be warned [O people!],” in the manner of those who seek to gather people to announce a great event or to warn them about danger from an enemy (Ṭabarī, sub Q 111:1). When the people gathered around him, the Prophet addressed them, calling each tribe and family by name (“O children of ʿAbd Manāf, O children of ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib,” and so on): “If I were to inform you that mounted troops will imminently attack from behind this mountain, would you believe me?” They said: “Indeed, we have never encountered falsehood from you.” The Prophet then said: “I warn you of the great impending punishment,” meaning thereby the fate of those who deny his Prophethood.

At this, Abū Lahab got up and said: “May you perish! Is this why you have gathered us?” (Bukhārī, Tafsīr, Sūra

BEAUTY

HUSN, JAMĀL, NADRA, BAHJA, ZAHRA, ZĪNA, HĪLYA,
KARĪM, YUḤBARŪN

This article comprises the following sections: i. Definitions and Usage; ii. The Beauty of Allah Most High; iii. The Beauty of the Sublime Qurʾān; iv. The Beauty of the Prophet Muḥammad, upon him blessings and peace; v. The Beauty of the Prophet Yūsuf, upon him peace; vi. The Beauty of Paradise and Its Dwellers; vii. Bibliography.

Definitions and Usage

“Beauty” in this article refers to the splendor and exquisiteness of both (a) the creation (*q.v.*) of the world (*q.v.*) as a reflection of the Divine (see ALLAH) attributes of Power (*q.v.*), Generosity (*q.v.*), Perfection and Wisdom (*q.v.*), and (b) the Hereafter (*q.v.*) and Paradise (*q.v.*) Allah Most High has prepared for the Believers (*q.v.*). Beauty has seven main vocables with interrelated significations: *husn*, *jamāl*, *naḍra*, *bahja*, *zahra*, *zīna*, and *hīlya*, respectively derived from the roots *ḥ-s-n*, *j-m-l*, *n-d-r*, *b-h-j*, *z-h-r*, *z-y-n*, and *ḥ-l-y*. Two less explicit vocables also convey strong connotations of beauty even if they do not denote it in literal terms, *karīm* and *yuhbarūn*, respectively derived from the roots *k-r-m* and *ḥ-b-r*. The rest of this entry explains these nine vocables as well as the themes of the beauty of Allah, of the Qurʾān, of Prophet Muḥammad and Prophet Yūsuf, upon them blessings and peace, and of Paradise and its dwellers.

Husn. As *husn*, beauty is defined as “the contrary of ugliness” (Ibn Durayd, *Jamhara*, p. 535; Fārābī, 2:277; Ibn Fāris, 2:57; Ibn Sīda, *Muḥkam*, 3:143; Saraquṣī, 1:366) and as the quality of every delightful and desirable matter from any one of three perspectives: intellectual, affective, or sensory (Rāghib); thus it is closely related to the ethico-spiritual meanings of excellence (*q.v.*). Cognates of *ḥ-s-n* occur 193 times, 24 of them as the intransitive verbal forms *ḥasuna*, “to be beautiful and excellent” (Q 4:69, 18:31, 25:76), and *aḥsana*, “to act beautifully and excellently” (Q 2:195; 3:172; 4:128; 5:93; 6:154; 10:26; 16:30; 17:7 x2; 18:30; 28:77; 39:10); and, in the transitive, *aḥsana*, “treat beautifully and excellently” (Q 12:100; 28:77) and “make beautiful and excellent” (Q 12:23; 18:104; 32:7; 40:64; 64:3; 65:11), most notably in the verses that repeatedly emphasize that Allah Most High creates human beings as exemplars of beauty, and *He fashioned you, making your images beautiful and excellent* (fa-aḥsana ṣūwarakum) (Q 40:64; 64:3). In the latter sense of fashioning, *sawwā*

(to proportion) and *ʿadala* (to balance) also signify “to make beautiful” in the verses *He Who created you, proportioned you and balanced you; in any image He wishes, He composes you* (Q 82:7-8). Similarly, the description of the angel appearing to Maryam bint ʿImrān, upon her peace (*q.v.*), as *basharan sawwīyan* (Q 19:16), is sometimes glossed as “a beautiful human being” (*ḥasan al-ṣūra/al-shakl*: Zamakhsharī; Qummī; Biqāʿī).

The nominal (*husn*, *iḥsān*, *muḥsin*, *aḥsan*, *ḥasana/āt*) and adjectival (*hasan*, *ḥasana*, *ḥusnā*) forms reflect the same semantic register with meanings that are related to

- Divine acts such as acceptance (see SUPPLICATION AND ANSWER) (Q 3:37) and preservation (*q.v.*; Q 3:37), promises (*q.v.*; Q 20:86; 28:61), and the granting of victory (see SUCCOR) (Q 8:17);
- the Hereafter, such as rewards (see REWARD AND PUNISHMENT) (Q 48:13) and Paradise as in the term *husn* combined with the *maʿāb* (return) (Q 3:14, 29; 38:25, 49) and *thawāb* (reward) (Q 3:148, 195); eternal provision (Q 22:58); and
- this world, such as good deeds (*q.v.*; Q 4:40; 6:160; 7:168; 11:114, etc.) including speech (*q.v.*; Q 2:83; 41:33), intercession (*q.v.*; Q 4:85) and repentance (*q.v.*; Q 7:95; 27:11); good things (see GOOD AND EVIL) (Q 2:220; 3:120; 4:78; 7:131,156, etc.); sustenance (*q.v.*; Q 16:67, 75); almsgiving (*q.v.*), zakāt (*q.v.*) and *a beautiful and excellent loan to Allah* (Q 2:245; 5:12; 57:11, 18; 64:17; 73:20); and deuded claims (Q 18:104; 35:8).

Used as an adjective, *al-ḥusnā* qualifies the Beautiful Names of Allah (*q.v.*; Q 7:180; 17:110; 20:8; 59:24) and as a feminine noun it denotes (i) one of the names of Paradise in nine verses, among them: *to both parties Allah has promised al-ḥusnā* (Q 4:95); *for those who act beautifully and excellently is al-ḥusnā and more* (Q 10:26); *and He requites those who act beautifully and excellently with al-ḥusnā* (Q 53:31) (Ṭabarī); (ii) martyrdom (*q.v.*, *shahāda*) and booty as *the two good things* (al-ḥusnayayn) (Q 9:52) (Ibn Qutayba); (iii) the claim of a good deed (Q 9:107) (Ṭabarī).

The noun *al-iḥsān* is also used as a reference to Paradise as a Divine reward in the verse *Is the requital of iḥsān but Iḥsān?* (Q 55:60) which uses the rhetorical figure of “alliterative semblance” (*tajāmus muzāwaja*), whereby the reiteration of a term or its cognate implies consequentiality and additional meanings (Fayrūzābādī, 1:70, Muqaddimāt, iʿjāz al-Qurʾān; 2:380, Fī wujūh al-kalimāt al-muftataḥa bil-jīm, baṣīra fīl-jazāʿ), as in *for those who acted beautifully and*

excellently (aḥṣanū) is al-ḥusnā, and more (Q 10:26). The noun *aḥṣan* is used 34 times, of which five are superlatives in reference to Allah Most High (*q.v.*) as the most beautiful and excellent of creators (Q 23:14; 37:125), the Qurʾān as the most beautiful and excellent account (Q 12:3) and the most beautiful and excellent discourse (Q 39:23), and human beings as created in the most beautiful and excellent stature (Q 95:4), glossed as “the best-balanced physique (*aḍal khalq*)” (Ibn ʿAbbās in Mujaḥhid) and “the best image” (Ṭabarī). The rest are comparatives of superiority including rhetorical questions to which the answer is “none,” and who is more beautiful and excellent than Allah in coloring? (Q 2:138), and who is more beautiful and excellent than Allah in judging for a people who have certainty? (Q 5:50).

The agential noun *muḥsin*, literally “one who acts beautifully and excellently,” occurs 39 times in reference to Believers whom Allah declares loving (Q 2:195; 3:134, 148; 5:13, 93), “who perform all the obligations of Allah and shun all the prohibitions of Allah” (Ḥasan al-Baṣrī in Samʿānī, *sub* Q 77:44), including Prophets (Q 37:80, 105, 110, 121, 131), and who are especially rewarded in Paradise (Māturīdī, *sub* Q 77:44).

Jamāl. As *jamāl*, beauty means “abundant *ḥusn*” (Rāghib) with the added senses of (i) human volition with regard to actions and character (ʿAskarī, see below); (ii) large physique (*ʿizam al-khalq*: Ibn Fāris), “whence the camel was named *jamal*” (ʿAskarī, see below); (iii) wealth and tribe (*ʿashīra*), “as in the Qurʾān, and you have in them beauty (*jamāl*) when you take them up and when you run them out (Q 16:6), meaning horses and camels” when they are brought back into the stables at night and driven out to pasture in the morning (ʿAskarī, pp. 262-263, §23; Farrāʾ; Abū ʿUbayda), “whence the Arabs named the camel *jamal*” (Samīn, *Umda*, 1:341, *sub j-m*); and (iv) completeness in beauty (*jamula al-shayʾ jamālan: tamma ḥusnuh*, Saraquṣṭī, 2:270). Just like *ḥasan* (see above),

jamāl was originally coined for the external form that is perceptible by eyesight; then it was transferred to the inward form perceived by insights as in “a beautiful life” (*sīra ḥasana jamīla*) and “a beautiful character” (*khuluq jamīl*). When the inward form gathers up all of its attributes of completion that are fit for it, it gives the possessor of insight that beholds it more pleasure, beauty, joy and emotion than that experienced by the onlooker at a beautiful form with external eyesight (Ghazālī, *Maqṣad*, al-Jalil).

The sense of beauty is meant in eight out of the eleven cognates of *j-m-l* in the Qurʾān: once as a noun referring to horses and camels in the above-cited verse, and seven times as an adjective qualifying excellent behavior in adversity, enmity, and separation from spouses. These occurrences include:

- the superlative patience (*ṣabr*) invoked by the Prophet Yaʿqūb, upon him peace (Q 12:18, 83)
- and enjoined on the Prophet Muḥammad, upon him blessings and peace (Q 70:5);
- the forbearance (*ṣafḥ*) enjoined on the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace (Q 15:85);
- the amicable release of wives from marriage (*ṣarāḥ*, Q 33:28, 49)
- and the gracious forsaking (*ḥajr*) of enemies enjoined on the Prophet (Q 73:10).

Jamāl is the *ḥusn* of a thing among the excellent attributes of its kind, and the beauty of patience is the most excellent of its aspects, which is that nothing should accompany it that would detract from the characteristics of its essence... and his saying to the distressed widow, ‘Patience is but at the first shock’ (*innamā al-ṣabru ʿinda al-ṣadmat al-ūlā*) [Bukhārī, Janāʿiz, *ziyārat al-qubūr*] means complete patience (Ibn ʿĀshūr, *sub* Q 12:18).

Nadra. *Nadra* and *naḍāra* denote “effulgence” or the sending forth of intense light, from the root *n-d-r* that points to the beauty of the human face and foliage (*naḍāra: ḥasuna*: Farāhidī, 7:26; *al-naḍāra: al-jamāl*: Ibn Durayd, p. 752), with an added sense of flash and moisture (*barīq wa-nadā*: Azharī, 12:8). The noun *naḍra* occurs twice in reference to the appearance of the dwellers of Paradise: *Allah deflected from them the calamity of that Day and He lavished on them naḍra and gladness* (Q 76:11); *You recognize in their faces the naḍra of bliss* (Q 83:24), “meaning its luster (*rawnaquh*)” (Rāghib). The adjective *nāḍira* occurs in an identical sense in the verses that serve as the proof for the doctrine of the vision of Allah (*ruʾya*, see FACE OF ALLAH) by the Believers in the Hereafter as mentioned in the Sura of Resurrection (al-Qiyāma): *Faces on that Day are effulgent, beholding their Lord* (Q 75:22-23). Effulgence in faces is glossed as brightness and clarity (*al-bayāḍ wal-safā*) (Ṭabarī; Ibn Ḥajar, 13:419, Tawḥīd, qawl Allāh taʿālā *wujūhun yawmaʿidhin nāḍira*) as well as beauty: “*Nāḍira* means beautiful, and they are entitled to be effulgent as they look at the Creator!” (al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī in Ṭabarī); “Allah made them effulgent so that they could look at Him” (Muḥammad b. Kaʿb al-Qurazī in Ājurri, *Sharīʿa*, 2:989 §582; Suyūṭī).

“al-Quraḏī affirmed the faces’ beauty before the vision as a *preparation* for them for the vision of their Creator, while al-Ḥasan viewed their beauty as a *consequence* of their vision; and both meanings are beautiful” (Abū Shāma, *Ḍaw’ al-sārī*, p. 31).

Those thus described in the Hadith include the 70,000 Friends of Allah (*q.v.*) who, the Prophet said, upon him blessings and peace, “shall enter Paradise in the image of / their faces like the full moon, without account, each of them bringing in 70,000 more” (Aḥmad, 1:203 §22, 14:326-327 §8707, 36:479-480 §22156; Tirmidhī, *Ṣifāt al-Qiyāma wal-raqa’iq wal-wara’*, bāb 11, rated *ḥasan*), and whom he further described as “those whose faces will be light, who will be on daises (*manābir*) of light and in whose position Prophets and Martyrs shall yearn to be” (Abū Dāwūd, *Ijāra, fil-rahm*; Tirmidhī, *Zuhd, mā jā’ fil-ḥubb bil-Lāh*, rated *ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ*; Aḥmad, 36:399-400 §22080, 37:540-542 §22906), “and their faces shall be completely covered in light until Allah finishes with the sins of creatures” (Ṭabarānī, *Kabīr*, 8:112 §7527, rated good-chained: Haythamī, 10:492 §18001).

Such beauty begins in this world for those *whose marks are on their faces from the traces of prostration* (Q 48:29, see BOWING AND PROSTRATION) and, more particularly, for the scholars of Hadith as stated in the mass-transmitted report by nearly thirty Companions, “May Allah make radiant (*naḏara/naḏḏara Allāh*) the one who hears from us a hadith, preserves it, and conveys it as heard” (Abū Dāwūd, ‘*Ilm, faḥl nashr al-‘ilm*’; Tirmidhī, ‘*Ilm, mā jā’ fil-ḥathth ‘alā tablīgh al-samā’*’; Dārimī, *Muḡaddima, al-iqtidā’ bil-‘ulamā’*; Kattānī, *Nazm*, ‘*Ilm, §4*). Other evidence for the vision of Allah Most High includes (i) the counter-proofverse that asserts unbelievers will not be able to see Allah, *nay, verily they are veiled from their Lord on that Day* (Q 83:15) and (ii) the expression *and more (wa-ziyāda)* in the verse *for those who act beautifully and excellently is al-ḥusnā and more* (‘Abd al-Razzāq, Ṭabarī, Zajjāj, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *sub Q 10:26*), whereby the created servants of Allah will be allowed to behold the uncreated beauty of the Divine countenance on top of the created beauty (*al-ḥusnā*) of Paradise (*cf.* Baghawī, *sub Q 6:103*). A slightly different interpretation glosses *al-ḥusna* itself as the effulgence of the Believers’ faces (Rāzī, *sub Q 10:26*).

Bahja. The noun *bahja* and its adjectival form *bahīj* are closely related to *naḏra, nāḏira* and are defined as “the beauty (*ḥusn*) of the color of a thing and its shine (*naḏāra*)” (Farāhīdī, 3:349; *cf.* Ibn Fāris, , 5:439; Fārābī, 2:272, all *sub b-h-j*), together with a feeling

of joy (*surūr*) (Ibn Durayd, p. 272; Ibn Fāris) caused by the sighting of such beauty (*bahja: sarra wa-a’jaba: Saraqustī, 2:90; al-bahīj: al-ḥasan al-ladhī yusirru nāzīrah: Samīn, sub Q 22:5*), all the more since “*bahja* originally means gladness” (‘Askarī, see next paragraph). The root *b-h-j* is used in connection with plants and vegetation as the context of its three occurrences: *and with it [i.e. water] We made delightful* (dhāta *bahja*) *gardens grow* (Q 27:60); *it [i.e. the earth] quivers and develops and grows every delightful type in pairs* (min kulli *zawjīn bahīj*) (Q 22:5); *and We caused to grow in it every delightful type in pairs* (Q 50:7). The register of beauty is confirmed by the fact that two very similar verses mention *karīm* (see below) in the place of *bahīj*: *how many a beautiful type in pairs* (min kulli *zawjīn karīm*) *We cause to grow in it!* (Q 26:7), *and We caused to grow in it every beautiful type in pairs* (Q 31:10). These verses serve to illustrate the Divine attribute of Power (*qudra*) as a proclamation of the reality of the Day of Resurrection (*q.v.*) (Māturīdī, *sub Q 22:5*), as confirmed by the challenge to create anything comparable in the verse that follows one occurrence (Q 31:11) and the mention of Resurrection in the verses that follow the other two (Q 22:6-7, 50:8-11).

The lexicographer of the Qur’ān Abū Hilāl al-Ḥasan b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Sahl al-‘Askarī (d. 395/1005) addressed the differences between the above four vocables in his book on semantic nuances entitled *al-Furūq al-lughawīyya* (Lexicological Differences) thus:

Ḥusn is used for actions and character, such as in one’s management of affairs (*al-tadbīr*), as well as for appearance of form and sound of voice, while *bahja* is a gladness (*surūr*) that makes the heart exult (*yaḡrah*), as *bahja* originally means gladness. The difference between *ḥusn* and *jamāl* is that the latter is what distinguishes and raises a human being in actions, character, abundant wealth, and physique. Originally, *jamāl* is for acts, manners and external states; then it became used as a term for forms (*al-ṣuwar*) (pp. 261-262, §23).

Zahra. The root *z-h-r* points to beauty and has but a single cognate in the Qur’ān, the noun *zahra*, which denotes that sense (*ḥusn, bahja, zīna, naḏāra*) in the verse *And do not stretch your eyes to what We let them enjoy of spouses as the bloom (zahra) of the life of this world, so that We test them in that* (Q 20:131), although its literal sense is the flower (*nawr*) of a plant (Farāhīdī; Ibn Durayd; Fārābī, *Dīwān*, 1:139; Ibn Fāris; Yahyā b. Sallām, *Tha’labī, Sam’ānī, Wāḥidī, Wasīl*). The verse

is a warning that material longings (*amānī al-nafs*) sever one from remembrance of Allah (*q.v.*) (Tustarī). Another interpretation is that it refers not to beautiful wives but to orchards and fertile lands (Māturīdī). Both senses are among the pleasurable and desirable items that constitute temptation in various verses that refer to wealth (Q 8:28; 64:15), wives (Q 64:14) as well as relatives, tribe, wealth, trade and dwellings (Q 9:24), *women... and tillage* (Q 3:14), in sum, *what We created on earth as its ornament* (Q 18:7), which consists in “all things on earth” (Mujāhid). The Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, summed it all up as “the world and women” in his hadith, “Verily the world is verdant and pretty (*ḥukwa*), and Allah indeed makes you successors [of previous generations] in it, then He watches how you act; therefore beware of the world and beware of women” (Muslim, Riqāq, akthar ahl al-janna fuqarā’ wa-akthar ahl al-nār al-nisā’ wa-bayān al-fitna bil-nisā’; Aḥmad, 17:260-261 §11169; Ṭabarī). Among the meanings of the second warning are the extremes to which men’s lust for women push them to commit murder and other enormities (Qārī, *Mirqāt*, Nikāḥ, preamble) as well as marital tests (Nawawī, Riqāq, akthar ahl al-janna fuqarā’ etc.).

Zina. *Zīna* is the noun derived from the root *z-y-n*, yielding the infinitive nouns *zayn* and *zīna*, defined as “the contrary of blemish (*shayn*)” (Farāhīdī, 7:387; Fārābī, *Diwān*, 3:411), “beauty” (*ḥusn, bahja*) (Azharī, 13:255) and “beautification” (*ḥusn al-shay’ wa-taḥsinuh*: Ibn Fāris, 3:41), usually translated as “embellishment, adornment.” “One’s real *zīna* is what is never a blemish for one from any aspect, whether in this world or the Hereafter” (Rāghib). There are 46 occurrences of the root, of which 27 are verbal in the sense of “make beautiful” and “make to seem beautiful” as in

- i. the Divine adorning of the cosmos with heavenly bodies (see STARS AND PLANETS) (Q 15:16; 37:6; 41:12; 50:6; 67:5);
- ii. the Divine custom of testing humankind (see TRIALS AND STRIFE; WAY OF ALLAH) in the verse *Fair-seeming to men is made the love of pleasurable things: women, children, heaped-up mounds of gold and silver, horses with marks, cattle and tilth* (Q 3:14) and verses precluding inter-marriage with polytheists, as attractive and beautiful as they may be (Q 2:221, *cf.* Māwardī, *sub* Q 60:10);
- iii. the Divine reinforcement of the Believers’ predisposition to belief (Q 6:108; 49:7) (see INNATE NATURE);

- iv. the Divine beguilement (*q.v.*) of the disbelievers (*q.v.*; Q 2:212; 6:108, 122; 9:37; 10:12; 13:33; 27:4; 35:8; 40:37; 41:25; 47:14; 48:12);
- v. the Satanic sworn seduction of the latter (see DECEIT AND DELUSION; OATHS; SATAN) (15:39); and
- vi. nature’s spring (Q 10:24).

The remaining 19 nominal occurrences of the root all feature the noun *zīna* in the following meanings and contexts.

- i. The Divinely-revealed origin of human clothing (see GARMENTS) is introduced by the verse *O children of Ādam, We have sent down upon you raiment to cover your nakedness and outer garments* (Q 7:26) in explicit contrast with the Satanic legacy of indecent disrobement mentioned in the next verse: *O children of Ādam, never let Satan seduce you as he brought out your parents from Paradise by divesting them of their clothes to show them their pudenda* (Q 7:27), followed by the mention of indecent man-made traditions (Q 7:28) and culminating with the abrogative verses, *O children of Ādam, put on your adornments at every place of worship; Say: “Who dares prohibit the adornment of Allah which He brought out for His slaves?”; Say: “My Lord only prohibits indecencies, both outward and inward”* (Q 7:31-33, see ABRIGATION; COMMANDING GOOD AND FORBIDDING WRONG). Polytheists would circumambulate the Ka’ba (*q.v.*) naked and proscribe any clothing at that time (Mujāhid, Farrā’, Ṭabarī, *sub* Q 7:31). The Islamic *adornments* enjoined in Q 7:31 consist in the humble unsewn garments during the consecrated state of pilgrimage (see HAJJ) and, outside it, in at least two pieces of garment such as “a loinwrap (*izār*) and mantle (*ridā’*); or a loinwrap and camise (*qamiṣ*, an ankle-length shirt); or a loinwrap and kebaya (*qabā’*); or trousers (*sarāwīl*) and a cloak (*ridā’*); or trousers and a camise; or trousers and a kebaya; or briefs (*tubbān*) and a camise” (‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb in Bukhārī, Ṣalāt, al-ṣalāt fil-qamiṣ wal-sarāwīl wal-tubbān wal-qabā’).
- ii. The Divine embellishment of the cosmos (Q 37:6) and human life (Q 11:15; 28:60; 33:28; 57:20) including equids (see ANIMALS) (Q 16:8) is a sign of Divine power, wisdom and munificence as well as a test for all (Q 18:7, 18:28, 18:46) and a beguilement for unbelievers, such as the beautiful garb and huge wealth of both

- Qārīn (*q.v.*) who was subsequently swallowed up by the earth (Q 28:76-81) and Fir‘awn (*q.v.*) (Muqātil, Ṭabarī, Tha‘labī, *sub* Q 10:88) and his people, whose annual festival the Qur‘ān calls “the Day of Beauty” (*yawm al-zīna*: Q 20:59), a term that may also signify their weekly market-day (Jawharī, *Ṣiḥāḥ*, 5:2132; Ṭabarī).
- iii. The figure of the calf which the Israelites fashioned out of their gold and silver (*q.v.*) ornaments is described as made *from the zīna of that nation* (Q 20:87) and out of their jewelry (*ḥulīy*: Q 7:148; see below) in reference to the Egyptians to whom it had first belonged (Ṭabarī, Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr; see CALF; CHILDREN OF ISRĀ‘ĪL).
- iv. The *zīna* of Muslim women is mentioned four times in two verses that concern vestimentary rulings enjoining them to refrain from the attractive displays that typified pre-Islamic fashion (Q 24:31, 60) in other than private or family settings (see “Female adornments children are allowed to see” in CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH), and denotes hennaed palms, rings, kohl (Baghawī, *sub* Q 24:31), and “the adornments worn beneath [clothes], such as necklaces, anklets, armlets and bracelets, whereas what shows is the clothes and the face” (Zajjāj, *sub* Q 24:31).

Hilya. Another type of typically but not exclusively female adornment denoting beauty is the golden jewelry known as *ḥulīy* (singular *ḥaly*) and *hilya*, from the root *h-l-y* which has nine occurrences and is defined as “what is worn of gold, silver and precious stones” (Ibn Durayd). Both of the above nouns occur in the Qur‘ān in reference to (i) metallurgy, the process of *what they heat up in the fire* to extract metal ore from its gangue *for adornment* (*ḥilyatan*) or *enjoyment, which produces foam and froth* in the process (see GOLD AND SILVER) (Q 13:17); (ii) the precious metals collected and melted for the making of the Golden Calf (*q.v.*; Q 7:148, see above); (iii) the *adornments* (*ḥilya*) *you extract from it (the sea) to wear them* (Q 16:14, 35:12), glossed as “pearls and corals” (Ṭabarī); and (iv) the type of garb that typifies female upbringing in the verse that shows the fallacy of the polytheists’ attribution of daughters to Allah through the retelling of their own logic: *is one brought up amid pretty ornaments (al-ḥilya), unnoticed in disputes, [fit to be a child for Allah]?* (Q 43:18; cf. Muḥāhid). The remaining four instances are all verbal occurrences that refer to the Believers in Paradise (see last section below) being adorned (*ḥullū*,

yuhallawn) with its silver, gold and pearl armlets and green brocade and silk tunics (Q 18:31; 22:23; 35:33; 76:21), “how beautiful the wrist whereon both metals mix! It may also be that gold is for those brought near (*muqarrabīn*) and silver for the virtuous (*abrār*)” (Burusawī, *Rūḥ*, *sub* Q 76:21).

“Beauty” also has two auxiliary vocables in the Qur‘ān which, although they do not literally denote it, nevertheless overwhelmingly imply it:

Karīm, literally “honorable,” “generous” (Farāhīdī, 5:368; Ibn Durayd, p. 798; Ibn Fāris, 5:172, all *sub k-r-m*), is glossed as “excellent and beautiful” (*ḥasan, jamīl*) in verses qualifying (i) entrance, i.e. into Paradise (*ma/hudkhalan karīman ay ḥasanan, wa-huwa al-janna*: Baghawī, *sub* Q 4:31; Zabīdī, *sub k-r-m*); (ii) Divine provision (*rizq*) in the sense of Paradise (*rizqan karīman: ḥasanan, ya‘nī al-janna*: Baghawī, *sub* Q 33:31); (iii) the reward (*ajr*) of Believers therein (*ajran karīman ay ḥasanan*: Māturīdī; Qushayrī, *sub* Q 33:44); (iv) the gracious communication (*qawl*) of believing sons and daughters with their disbelieving parents (*qawlan karīman: ḥasanan, jamīlan*: Tha‘labī, Baghawī, Zamakhsharī, Bayḍāwī, *sub* Q 17:23), consisting in “soft speech” (Baghawī, Biqā‘ī, Jalālayn, Ibn ‘Ajība) along with “beautiful and excellent manners, observance of the minutiae of dignity (*murūwwa*), modesty and decency” (Qummī, *Gharā‘ib*); (v) the residence (*mathwā*) appointed by the King of Egypt for Yūsuf (*akrimī mathwāh: ij‘alī manzilah karīman ḥasanan*: Zamakhsharī; Rāzī, Bayḍāwī, *sub* Q 12:21); (vi) every pair (*zawj*) in the plants (*q.v.*) of creation (Q 26:7, 31:10) (*karīm: ḥasan*: Muqātil, ‘Abd al-Razzāq, Ṭabarī, Ibn Abī Ḥātim; ‘Askarī, p. 175, §12).

Yuhbarūn, tuḥbarūn. The passive verbs plural *yuhbarūn* (Q 30:15) and *tuḥbarūn* (Q 43:70), from the stem *h-b-r*, denote rejoicing in Paradise and are usually glossed as *they/you are lavishly honored* (*yukramūn/tukramūn*: Muqātil, Ṭabarī, Zajjāj, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, etc.), *blessed with all kinds of blessings* (*yuna‘amūn*: Muḥāhid, Ṭabarī) and *made joyful* (*tusarrūn*: Abū ‘Ubayda; Ibn Qutayba). They are indeed cognates of *ḥabr* and *ḥabra*, both defined as blessing (*ni‘ma*: Farāhīdī, 3:218; Ibn Sīda, 3:236), and of *ḥubūr*, defined as gladness (*surūr*: Ibn Durayd, p. 275; Saraquṣṭī, 1:329). However, these are all metaphorical senses (Abū ‘Ubayda, *op. cit.*) as the original literal sense of the root is “the effect of beauty and grace” (*al-athar fī ḥusn wa-bahā’*: Ibn Fāris, 2:127) and *ḥabra* is “extreme beauty” (*al-mubālagha fī-mā wuṣifa bil-jamāl*: Ibn Abī Zamanīn *sub* Q 43:70). The Baghdad grammarian Abū ‘Alī Muḥammad b. al-Mustanīr al-Baṣrī, known as Quṭrub (d. 206/821),

said: “That *ḥabr* is beauty and handsome appearance is indicated by the saying of the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, ‘A man shall come out of the Fire with all his *ḥabr* and *sabr* (also *ḥibr* and *sibr*) having left him’ [Muṭarrif b. ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Shikhkhūr and Khulayd b. ‘Abd Allāh al-‘Aṣarī *Mawlā* Abū al-Dardā’ in Ṭabarī, *sub* Q 37:55-57, both in *maqṭū‘* mode as they are Successors; cf. Abū ‘Ubayd, 1:220]” (Tha‘labī, *sub* Q 5:44); “meaning, all his beauty and grace (*jamālūh wa-bahā’uh*)” (Ibn al-Jawzī, *sub* Q 5:44).

The rest of the six occurrences of the cognate all concern the scholars of the Jews, the *aḥbār* (singular *ḥabr* and *ḥibr*), thus named because of their use of ink (*ḥibr*) when writing (Ibn Fāris, *op. cit.*) (see RABBIS).

The Beauty of Allah Most High

The beauty of Allah is proclaimed in the Qur’ānic mentions of (i) His Face in the senses of His encompassment of all creation (Q 2:115), eternity (Q 28:88; 55:27), the absolute good (*khayr*) sought by those who often remember Him (Q 6:52; 18:28), and the givers of alms and *zakāt* (Q 2:272; 30:38-39; 76:9; 92:20) who pray, show fortitude, and requite evil with beautiful and excellent responses (Q 13:22); (ii) the splendor of Paradise that is their reward and defies description (Q 76:12-21; see below, “The Beauty of Paradise and Its Dwellers”); (iii) His *beautiful Names* and Attributes (Q 7:180; 17:110; 20:8; 57:1-6; 59:22-24), particular al-Ghaffār, “the Oft-Forgiving” (Q 20:82; 38:66; 39:5; 40:42; 71:10), glossed as “He Who shows what is beautiful and covers up ugliness and sins,” al-Majīd, “the All-Glorious” (Q 11:73, 85:15), glossed as “He Whose Essence is noble and Whose acts are beautiful” (Ghazālī, *Maqṣad*, al-Ghaffār and al-Majīd), and His Speech as represented by the Qur’ān (*q.v.*, see below); (iv) His acts, as in the three verses *He has treated me beautifully and excellently* (*qad aḥsana bī*) by *bringing me out of prison* (Q 12:100)—from which the Andalusian exegete Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Qurṭubī (d. 671/1273) inferred the Divine Name al-Muḥsin, “the Benefactor,” although “it is not mentioned in the Qur’ān as a name but as an act” (*Asnā* 1:512-513); *Truly those for whom is already decreed by Us beauty and excellence...* (al-ḥusnā) (Q 21:101), meaning “Paradise which Allah has foreordained for all Believers” (Mujāhid); and *His beautiful Word fulfilled for the Children of Isrā’īl for what they patiently endured* (Q 7:137); (v) His creation, including His Throne (*q.v.*), Footstool (*q.v.*), angels (*q.v.*), Paradise and its dwellers (see below), the visible universe and all it contains (see WORLD), particularly human beings

(see HUMANS), who are like its microcosms (Bayḍāwī, *sub* Q 1:2, 2:34, 51:21) and the beauty of whom defies description (cf. Qurṭubī; Ibn ‘Ādil, *sub* Q 95:4), most particularly Believers (*q.v.*), Prophets, and above all Prophet Muḥammad, upon him and them blessings and peace (*q.v.* and AḤMAD, UPON HIM BLESSINGS AND PEACE; see below).

In the *Summa* the beauty of Allah is explicitly mentioned in the hadith, “Allah is beautiful and He loves beauty” (Muslim, Īmān, taḥrīm al-kibr wa-bayāmuh):

That is, He is beautiful in His Essence, His Attributes and His acts; and every type of beauty, whether of outward form or spiritual, are traces of His beauty; and He loves beauty in the sense of its appearance in His creatures. That is the reason He caused them to appear (*aḥarāhum*) and made them manifestations of Him (*mazāhirah*) (Qārī, *Mirqāt*, Ādāb, al-ghaḍab wal-kibr).

He loves for His servants to be characterized by embellishing traits such as noble deeds and meritorious characters that show forbearance, generosity, mercy, and forgiveness (Ṣan‘ānī, *Tanwīr*, 3:294 §1714).

The Beauty of the Sublime Qur’ān

The Qur’ān is the Speech of Allah (Dārimī, Faḍā’il al-Qur’ān, al-Qur’ān kalām Allāh) and a light (Q 7:157) especially lavished on the parents of its reciters, let alone the reciters themselves: “Those who recite the Qur’ān, complete it (*akmalah*) and put what it contains into practice, will dress their parents on the Day of Resurrection with a crown whose light is more beautiful (*aḥsan*) than the light of the sun on the houses of this world; what to say of the doers themselves?” (Aḥmad, 24:402-403 §15645; Abū Dāwūd, *Witr*, *thawāb qirā’at* al-Qur’ān; rated *ḥasan*). Its beauty affects those who hear it: *Allah sent down the most beautiful and excellent discourse* (*aḥsan al-ḥadīth*), *a consimilar Book, oft-repeated verses at which the skins of those who fear their Lord tremble, then their skins soften, as do their hearts, at the remembrance of Allah* (Q 39:23).

It is *most beautiful and excellent* because it is uncreated, *a consimilar Book* in its inimitability (*ī‘jāz*) and powerful eloquence (*balāgha*), and *oft-repeated verses* in which wisdom after wisdom are enumerated which one never tires of reciting. They are two types: [the first is] praise of Him through the mention of His power and his doing what is beautiful and excellent, and

[the second type is] the attributes of Paradise and Hellfire, promises and threats. *The skins of those who fear their Lord tremble when they hear the verses of threat then their skins soften, as do their hearts, at the remembrance of Allah when they hear the verses of promise.* It is also said they tremble and soften with fear and hope; with constriction and expansion; with awe and familiarity; with manifestation and concealment (Qushayrī).

The stylistic beauty of the Qurʾān is summed up by the exegetes with the term *iʿjāz*, literally “incapacitation” and usually translated as “inimitability,” which the major central Asian exegete Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Jarīr b. Yazīd al-Ṭabarī (224-310/839-923) takes up in his magnum opus, the thirty-volume commentary entitled *Jāmiʿ al-bayān ʿan taʾwīl āy al-Qurʾān* (Integrated Elucidation of the Interpretation of the Verses of the Qurʾān) (Preamble; sub Q 2:23; 10:38; 11:13) where he states that the Torah (*q.v.*), Psalms (see ZABŪR) and Injīl (*q.v.*) are all devoid of the stunning miraculousness of the Qurʾān (*lā muʿjizata fī wāḥidīn minhā*: sub Q 1:7). Most importantly, Ṭabarī links the incapacitation of would-be imitators of the Qurʾān to the miraculous beauty of its style,

Among the noblest of those meanings in which our Book is superior to all others are its astonishing ordering (*naẓmuh al-ʿajīb*), its marvelous arrangement (*raṣfūh al-gharīb*) and its unique composition (*taʿlīfuh al-badīʿ*), which orators failed to produce the like of even with respect to the smallest sura, the structure of which the experts of high style fell short of producing even part of, and which left poets incredulous and the keenest minds bewildered at their own incapacity to produce anything remotely like it (sub Q 1:7).

The Beauty of the Prophet Muḥammad, upon him blessings and peace

The Qurʾān presents as sublime the legal paradigm of the Way (Sunna) of the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace: *There is indeed for you in the Messenger of Allah a model of beauty and excellence (iḥṣawatan ḥasana) and for all who desire Allah and the Last Day (Q 33:21).* The Prophet Ibrāhīm, upon him peace (*q.v.*), is also mentioned as such a model (Q 60:4); however, “The latter is restricted to desisting from polytheism (*q.v.*), which is the rule in every community without exception, whereas there is in our Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, a model of beauty and excellence in absolute terms (*ʿalā al-ṭīlāq*) because it is in credal

doctrines as well as in all the rulings of sacred Law (*q.v.*)” (Ibn ʿAṭīyya). More than that, there is congruence between the beauty of the Qurʾān and the beauty of the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, as expressed in the well-known reply of his wife the Mother of the Believers Umm ʿAbd Allāh ʿĀisha bint Abī Bakr al-Ṣiddīq (7BH-57/615-677): “His character (*khuluq*) was the Qurʾān” as she recited, *You command a truly magnificent character (Q 68:4) (Aḥmad, 41:148-149 §24601).* Another such congruence is the description of Allah Most High as light (Q 24:35), of the Qurʾān as a light (Q 7:157) and of the Prophet as light (Q 5:15). The latter aspect, moreover, was not only spiritual but also literal. It is one of the mass-transmitted yet under-exposed facts of the Prophetic Sunna that over forty Companions of the Prophet (*q.v.*) are authentically documented to describe him as effulgent and as a visible light both by day and in night-time (Haddad, *Muḥammadan Light*, pp. 45-76).

Another remarkable aspect in which the beauty of the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, stands out in the Qurʾān is in the mention of his physical appearance from head to foot, outward and inward, front and back, as documented by the Hadith master of Nishapur Abū Saʿd ʿAbd al-Malik b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Kharkūshī (d. 406/1015) in his book on the Prophetic attributes entitled *Sharaf al-Muṣṭafā*:

Allah Most High mentions the limbs of the Messenger of Allah, upon him blessings and peace, in the Qurʾān out of love for him and to compliment him. He mentions the Prophet’s life (*naḥs*: Q 7:205; 18:6; 35:8), his face (*wajh*: Q 2:144), his eyes (*ʿaynayn*: Q 15:88), his sight (*baṣar*: Q 53:17), his ears (*uḥun*: Q 9:61), his heart (*qalb*: Q 2:97; 26:193-194), his inner heart (*fuʿād*: Q 53:11), his speech (*nuṭq*: Q 53:3), his chest (*ṣadr*: Q 39:22; 94:1), his tongue (*lisān*: Q 19:97; 44:58; 75:16), his back (*ẓahr*: Q 94:3), his hands (*yad*: 17:29), his neck (*ʿunuq*: Q 17:29), his right hand (*yamīn*: Q 29:48; 33:50; 33:52; 69:45), his leg (*rijl*: Q 20:1-2, see below), his foot (*qadam*: Q 10:2), his frame (*taqwīm*: Q 95:4), his character (*khuluq*: Q 68:4), and his life (*ʿamr*: Q 15:72)—may Allah bless and greet him abundantly (4:186-188 §1455).

The mention of the Prophet’s leg lies in the Disjointed Letters (*al-ḥurūf al-muqattaʿa*, see OPENING LETTERS OF THE QURʾĀN) *ṭa ha* which stand for *ṭaḥā*, the imperative singular of the verb *watīʿa*, to tread, as supported by the report that the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, used to take turns between his two legs in prayer, standing on one then the other, until the verse

was revealed, *Ṭaha*—i.e. tread the earth with both feet!—*We have not revealed the Qurʾān to you to cause you difficulty* (Q 20:1-2) (Bazzār, 3:136 §926; Zamakhsharī; Suyūṭī, rated *ḥasan*-chained; *Lubāb*).

The Beauty of Prophet Yūsuf, upon him peace

The Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, referred to Prophet Yūsuf, upon him peace (*q.v.*), as having been given “half of beauty” (*shaṭr al-ḥusn*: Aḥmad, 21:441 §14050, rated *ṣaḥīḥ*-chained). Another version states, “Yūsuf and his mother were given half of beauty” (Ṭabarī, *sub* Q 12:31; Ḥākim, 2:570, rated *ṣaḥīḥ*-chained), namely Rāḥīl (Rachel) bint Lābān (Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamhara*, p. 504; Ibn ʿAshūr, *sub* Q 12:10). This aspect of his story is vividly illustrated in the passage of his eponymous Sura (Q 12) that recounts the ruler’s wife’s revenge against the gossiping townswomen of Egypt: “the ruler’s wife is enticing her servant-boy against his will; she has become possessed with love!” And when she heard of their scheming she sent for them and prepared for them a banquet on couches (see CUSHIONS). She gave each one of them a blade then said [to him], “Come out and let them see you.” When they saw him they extolled him and sliced their own hands and said, “Allah forbid! This is no mortal! Truly this is no other than some gracious angel!” (Q 12:31).

It is said that she beautified him, dressed him up in the most attractive garments that she possibly could, and suddenly brought him out for them to behold. Nothing astonished them so much as the most beautiful and handsome creature of Allah emerging before them out of nowhere. They were seized with astonishment at that marvelous spectacle while holding in their hands knives with which they were slicing their food. They were so stunned they slashed their own hands without realizing. Thus she countered their verbal scheming with this dynamic scheming of unsurpassed effectiveness among women (Ibn al-Qayyim, p. 315; on Q 12:31 see also CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH).

The Beauty of Paradise and its Dwellers

The Qurʾān abounds in highly moving and motivational descriptions of Paradise and its dwellers. Believers, their fore parents, spouses and offspring (Q 13:23; 36:56; 40:8; 43:70) will bask in its luxuries with Paradisiac bliss (*ḥubūr*, see above). These descriptions revolve around beauty and abundance, notably in the Suras of the All-Merciful (al-Raḥmān, Q 55), the Due Event (al-Wāqīʿa, Q 56), and Man (al-Insān, Q 76), including passages that mention:

- pleasurable food and drink (Q 2:25; 52:22; 56:18-21,32-33; 77:42-43; 78:32, 34; 83:25-28) which have a beauty and taste far surpassing their worldly homonyms (Ibn ʿAbbās in Ṭabarī, *sub* Q 2:25), culminating in the verse *and their Lord gives them to drink an all-purifying beverage* (Q 76:21) “because it purifies their inner selves... whereby purity takes place in preparation for the reflection of the light of Divine beauty in their hearts, which is the utmost goal of the stations of the most truthful friends of Allah” (*q.v.*, *ṣiddiqīn*: Burusawī);
- pleasant shade (Q 4:57; 13:35; 56:30; 77:41);
- free-flowing rivers and springs (*q.v.*) of water, milk, wine, and honey (Q 2:25; 3:136, 195, 198; 4:13; 47:15, etc.);
- dais, couches, cushions (*q.v.*; Q 15:47; 18:31; 36:56; 55:54; 76:13; 83:23, etc.) and garments of silk and brocade (Q 18:31; 35:33; 44:53; 76:21); and
- gold, silver and pearl jewelry (Q 18:31; 22:23; 35:33; 76:21) as well as dishware and drinkware of the same (Q 43:71; 76:15; 88:14).

The Qurʾān also mentions the *most endearing wives* (*ʿuruban*, Q 56:37) in Paradise who only have eyes for their husbands (*qāṣirāt al-ṭarf*, Q 37:49; 38:52; 55:56). They are called *ḥūr* (feminine singular *ḥawrāʾ*, see HOURIS; masculine singular *aḥwar*) (Q 44:54; 52:20; 55:72; 56:22), a term used either for “those who possess very black pupils, perfectly round irises and very white sclera” (Ibn Sīda, *Muḥkam*, *sub* *ḥ-w-r*) or “for the eye to be all black, like gazelles and feral cattle” (Fārābī, *Dīwān*, 3:415; Jawharī, 2:639, *sub* *ḥ-w-r*). They are further described as *ʿīm*, (fem. singular *ʿaynāʾ*, masc. singular *aʿyan*) (Q 37:48; 52:20; 56:22), defined as “wide-and-beautiful-eyed” (Ibn al-Anbārī, *Zāhir*, 1:27 §8, *qawluhum* “Allāhumma innā naʿūdih bik min al-ḥawr baʿd al-kawr; Fayyūmī, 2:440, *sub* *ʿ-y-n*), also a praised attribute of feral cattle (Jawharī, *sub* *ʿ-y-n*; ʿAskarī, *Talkhīs*, p. 379, *min asmaʾ baqar al-walsh*); *the like of treasured pearls* (Q 56:23), *reminiscent of ruby and coral* (Q 55:58), *youthful/rejuvenated* (Q 56:35) *virgins* (Q 55:56, 74; 56:36) *same-aged* (*atrāb*: Q 38:52; 56:37; 78:33) as one another (Mujāhid, Abū ʿUbayda, *sub* Q 38:52) or as their spouses (Māwardī) in the sense that they are not jealous of one another (Ṭabarī, *sub* Q 38:52), *with full-grown breasts* (*ḥawāʿib*, Q 78:33; cf. Ibn Durayd, 1:365, *sub* *b-ʿ-k*; Qaysī, *Idāḥ*, 1:449 §117), but they do not menstruate (*q.v.*) (*muṭaḥḥara*: Q 2:25; 3:15; 4:57; see Ṭabarī, *sub* Q 2:25), *always keeping to their high chambers* (Q 39:20; 55:72; 56:34), *like eggs carefully hidden* (Q 37:49).

The immortalized youths (*wildān mukhalladūn*, Q 56:17; 76:19; *ghilmān*, Q 52:24) who, when you see them, you think they are strewn pearls (Q 76:19) and treasured pearls (Q 52:24) are dwellers of Paradise which contains all that souls crave for their pleasure and that eyes delight in viewing (Q 43:71) and they will have whatsoever they wish in it (Q 50:35, cf. 16:31; 25:16; 39:34; 42:22)

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Zamakhsharī. *Kashshāf*.

See also: ALLAH MOST HIGH; AḤMAD, UPON HIM BLESSINGS AND PEACE; ABRIGATION; ALMSGIVING; ANGELS; ANIMALS; BEAUTIFUL NAMES OF ALLAH; BEGUELEMENT; BELIEVERS; BOWING AND PROSTRATION; CALF; CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH; CHILDREN OF ISRĀʿĪL; COMMANDING GOOD AND FORBIDDING WRONG; COMPANIONS OF THE PROPHET, UPON HIM BLESSINGS AND PEACE; CREATION; CUSHIONS; DAY OF RESURRECTION; DECEIT AND DELUSION; DEEDS; DISBELIEVERS; EXCELLENCE; FACE OF ALLAH; FIRʿAWN; FOOD AND DRINK; FOOTSTOOL; FRIENDS OF ALLAH;

GARMENTS; GENEROSITY; GOLD AND SILVER; GOOD AND EVIL; HAJJ; HEREAFTER; HOURS; HUMANS; IBRĀHĪM, UPON HIM PEACE; INJĪL; INNATE NATURE; LAW; MARTYRDOM AND MARTYRS; MARYAM, UPON HER PEACE; MENSTRUATION; MUḤAMMAD, UPON HIM BLESSINGS AND PEACE; OATHS; OPENING LETTERS OF THE QURʾĀN; PARADISE; PLANTS AND VEGETATION; POLYTHEISM; POWER; PRESERVATION; PROMISES AND THREATS; QĀRŪN; QURʾĀN; RABBIS; REMEMBRANCE OF ALLAH; REPENTANCE; REWARD AND PUNISHMENT; RIVERS AND SPRINGS; SATAN; SPEECH; STARS AND PLANETS; SUCCOR; SUPPLICATION AND ANSWER; SUSTENANCE; THRONE OF ALLAH; TORAH; TRIALS AND STRIFE; WAY OF ALLAH; WISDOM; WORLD; YŪSUF, UPON HIM PEACE; ZABŪR; ZAKĀT.

GIBRIL FOUAD HADDAD

BEDOUIN(S)

AL-AʿRĀB

This article comprises the following sections: i. Definitions and Usage; ii. The First Arabs; iii. The Prophet Yaʿqūb and the Retreat to Nomadism; iv. The Praise and Criticism of Bedouins; v. Bibliography.

Definitions and Usage

The Qurʾān refers to Bedouins or nomadic desert Arabs thirteen times, using two different terms: (i) the plural noun *aʿrāb* (Q 9:90, 97-99, 101, 120; 33:20; 48:11, 16; 49:14) (sing. *aʿrābī*, pl. of the plural *aʿrābī*); and (ii) the collective singular noun and nominal verb *badw* (Q 12:100), the active participle used as a noun *bād* (Q 22:25), and its plural *bādūn* (Q 33:20).

The former term is derived from the root ʿ-r-b, which also gives rise to the generic collective two-gendered noun *ʿarab* (sing. *ʿarabī*), which denotes clarity of expression and articulateness (*al-ibāna wal-iḥṣāh*)—as opposed to the collective *ʿajam*, which denotes “foreign, incapable of correct speech” and is translated mostly as “non-Arab”—because, writes Ibn Fāris (d. 395/1005), “their tongue is the most expressive tongue (*aʿrab al-alsina*) and their idiom the best idiom (*ajwad al-bayān*).” The adjectival substantive *ʿarabī* usually refers to the sedentary townspeople, but occurs in the Qurʾān only as an adjective in reference to language, not people, although the Qurʾān does refer to the Arab nation by the plural noun *ummiyyīn* (see ARABIC; UNLETTERED) (Ibn Fāris, *sub* ʿ-r-b; Qurṭubī and Nasafī, *sub* Q 9:97). The latter term is derived from the root b-d-w, yielding the verb *badā*,