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

A PRELIMINARY STUDY IN SEMANTICS

A THESIS

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INTRODUCTION

The present study is by no means to be taken as a complete survey of the Qur'anic concept of sin. Rather it is a semantic monograph on ten major general words for sin in order to try and determine the dominant conceptual framework underlying their use. It is hoped that this approach, like the similar one of Charles C. Torrey in his doctoral dissertation at Strasburg,¹ may shed some additional light on the religion of the Qur'an. Other terms will be analyzed to the extent that they contribute to an understanding of the primary words under consideration or to the major thesis of the paper. But, because the central investigation is limited to these ten general words, such important specific words as ٍشرك and ٍكفر ² will not receive exhaustive or independent study but will only be mentioned as they contribute to the primary purpose of the work. In like manner, though such interesting problems as the relation of knowledge and guilt will arise, the limited semantic scope of this

¹The Commercial-Theological Terms in the Koran (Leiden, 1882).

²Their independent study is also made unnecessary by their extensive treatment in Toshihiko Lutsu, The Structure of the Ethical Terms in the Koran (Tokyo, Seoul Institute of Philological Studies, 1959), pp. 113-167; and the former word is given a more interpretive study in Kenneth Cragg, "The Meaning of Kufir," The Muslim World, XLII (1950), 315-322.
study prohibits their being given a comprehensive treatment.

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

An illustration of the inadequacy of using standard Arabic dictionaries alone for determining Qur’anic usages is provided by 17:92 where الْمُنْبِرُونُ (the believers) is contrasted with الْكَافِرُونِ (the wrongdoers) rather than الْكَاذِبُونَ (the disbelievers) as might be expected on the basis of the literal meaning of the words. Likewise Arabic dictionaries may be inadequate because they are based on the later meanings of words after they had been given a more precise definition in the fiqih books.

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

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1 For ease of reference for the English as well as the Arabic reader and because it corresponds rather closely to the official Egyptian text, the writer has used the versification found in Maulana Muhammad 'Ali, The Holy Qur’an: Arabic Text, Translation and Commentary (4th ed., Lahore, Ahmadiyyah Anjuman Isha‘at Islam, 1961).

2 As will be seen, لَكَنَّا came to have a more precise definition in the post-Qur’anic period of legal development than forms from the same stem had in the Qur’an.
the basis of later theological development. By way of example, the present investigation illustrates how M. M. 'Ali describes ذنب as not meaning sin when it is used of the Prophet. However, by references to ancient Arab commentaries, the following analysis demonstrates that earlier the word was believed to mean sin even when used of Muhammad.

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

John Penrice's *A Dictionary and Glossary of the Koran,* though convenient, is inadequate. By way of illustration, he adds the meaning sinful to مبتكر, though this meaning is not found in its Qur'anic occurrences (unless is regarded as the feminine of مبتكر in 30:16); while he does not give an adjectival meaning to مبتكر, though it has one in 6:78 and 23:106. And he gives a meaning for جر with ب, though this combination does not appear in the Qur'an.

1 *Page 968a.*
2 *(Zaroda, 1938).*
3 *(London, 1873).*
Individual words for sin are discussed in encyclopedias. However, these only discuss a few words and put much emphasis on the later development of the words rather than concentrating on their Qur'anic meaning. Furthermore, they are not altogether accurate. For example, Wensinck asserts that one of the root meanings of قف is stumbling, and he bases his assertion on the Hebrew of Proverbs 19:2. But neither the Hebrew nor the Arabic supports this view.

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

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

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1 E.g., Joseph Schacht, "Khata", Encyclopedia of Islam (Old ed.); and Aref Jan Wensinck, "Khatra", Ibid.
2 Ibid., p. 925.
5 (The Islam Series, Madras, 1914).
too brief — for example, there is approximately a page on عدو and none of any other forms of the root عدو. Furthermore, Gardner makes little use of Comparative Semitics and thus does not get beneath the idea of misfortune to that of unspeakliness in سوء. Of more important consequence in this writer's opinion is the fact that Gardner tends to go beyond the text in making nicer distinctions than the text warrants as, for example, with ندم in 5:2. One of the conclusions of the present study is that the Qur'an uses general words so flexibly that it is precarious to define them very precisely.

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

1 Pages 12-13.
2 Page 2. On the basis of his virtual disregard of the etymology of زنگ (p. 4), however, it might be inferred that Gardner did not wish to penetrate beneath the surface concept of misfortune in سوء.
3 Page 7.
4 Pages 201-202.
Neither does he give all the forms of each radical group — for example, though he refers to "عدوان", "عدون", "عد", and "عدوان", he does not mention "عدوان". Then there are other places where he gives words a different flavor than the present writer does. By way of illustration, in 5:62 (vs. 67 in Mawdu'), he translates "عدوان" as disobedience, while the present writer would prefer hostility or injustice.

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

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1 Pages 111, 133-139, 145, 151, 161-164, 247.
2 Page 247.
3 Relevant material from the Concordance (as far as it was completed by January 20, 1939) was provided through the courtesy of Na'im Shahbani and M. M. Plessner, members of the School of Oriental Studies at the Hebrew University, and Albert M. Franklin, American Consul General, Jerusalem.
The English ethical terms will be used in the following manner in this study. The word "sin" will be used as a general word for any non-conformity to or transgression of the revealed will of God — be it cultic or ethical, intentional or unintentional. However a distinction will be made between the word "sin" and other ethical terms such as "evil," "wrong," "fault," "transgression," and even "guilt." "Sin" will be used exclusively in relation to the monotheistic faiths — specifically Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and the monotheism of Arabia with its affinities to these. In this context "sin" will be determined by the theological norm of the revealed will of a personal God. On the other hand, the other ethical terms may be determined by any norm of conduct or good. When this norm is the revealed will of the personal God of the monotheistic faiths, these words will involve sin, as defined here, but will not in other contexts.

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

¹The Qur'anic and Biblical views are developed in the section entitled Conceptual Framework and Conclusions, and the other relevant views are in the Appendix.
the Qur'anic norm of the revealed will of God is best understood in the Mosaic sense of a divinely revealed covenant. Because the covenant is the basis of law, sin becomes transgression of the law of God. But because the covenant is revealed by God, infractions of the law take on the character of disobedience or rebellion in relation to a personal God. The Qur'an may refer to this revealed will in less theological phrases such as "the way of God" (2:193) but the underlying conceptual framework will be seen to be the same. The content of this revealed will of God can be found in other studies,¹ and will be spelled out in more detail in the text of this study.

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND

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

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


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

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

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

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

²Ignace J. Gelb et al., eds., The Assyrian Dictionary (Chicago, Oriental Institute, 1956), VI, 156-158.
completely overshadows the physical in the form ḫet' (ח"ט) meaning fault, error, mistake, transgression, or sin (peccatum, delictum, crimien).1

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

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

1August Dillmann, Chrestomathia Aethiopica et Glossario Explanata (Leipzig, 1865), pp. 222, 223.
go wrong, sin. In the Qal form it can be used in the literal sense of missing the mark -- e.g., "one hastening with his feet misheth (the way or goal)" (Proverbs 19:2). When the goal or path missed is that of right duty, it means sin (Exodus 20:20). And it develops still further to emphasize the guilt incurred (Genesis 43:9). The same pattern is found in the Hiphil form where it can mean to miss the mark literally: ",... everyone could sling a stone at a hair, and not miss" (Judges 20:16). And it can also mean to induce or cause to sin (Exodus 23:33) or to bring into guilt, condemnation, or punishment (Isaiah 29:21).

The masculine noun הָטָּפָה (יִתְּפָּה) can mean sin (Isaiah 31:7), guilt of sin (Deuteronomy 15:9), or punishment for sin (Leviticus 20:20). And the adjective and masculine noun הָטָּפָה (יִתְּפָּה) means sinful (Numbers 32:14) and sinners (Numbers 17:3). Sin is the governing meaning of the feminine nouns הָטָּפָהְתָּה (יִתְּפָּתָה) and הָטָּפָהְתָּה (יִתְּפָּתָה) and הָטָּפָהְתָּה (יִתְּפָּתָה), and the last word also includes the aspects of guilt (Genesis 18:20) and punishment (Zechariah 14:19). Though the root idea of missing the mark becomes overshadowed by the theological and religious usage, it is frequently apparent that a legal or ethical norm is missed

²It is suggested that the conclusion of Arend Jan Wensing, that the root meaning here is stumbling, is unnecessary; for the concept of missing (the way or goal), demanded by other passages, illustrated here, is adequate to explain this occurrence also (see loc. cit.).
Though Jessie Payne Smith¹ gives to miss as the root idea behind the Syriac ḫṭṭā (ViewChild), neither she nor Robert Payne Smith ² nor Carl Brockelmann³ gives any Syriac examples of this literal meaning in their Syriac lexicons. However, the ethical meanings parallel those already given in cognate languages so that its derivation by some means from the Semitic root may be safely assumed. The simplest form ḫṭṭā (ViewChild) as a verb is to commit a fault or crime or to sin (peccare) and as a noun is a fault, crime, or sin (peccatum). As ḫṭṭāluṯ (ViewChild) it acquires the concept of crookedness, irregularity, or deformity which in the realms of practice and morals becomes wickedness or perversity -- i.e., moral irregularity (prativitas). The idea of sin is basic to all the other forms; hence they will not be mentioned here except for ḫṭṭāluṯ (ViewChild), which appears to have a special relationship to Arabic. Like the simple noun above it means a sin, crime, offence, or fault (peccatum).⁴

Alphonse Mingana claims that almost all the religious terms found in the Qur’an are derived from the Syriac and includes in this category ḫṭṭā from ḫṭṭā (ViewChild) he

⁴ Ibid.
sinned and its derivative ُفِكَّةَ from ُقَيِّبَ ( ُقَيْبِسُ ).¹

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

On the other hand Friedrich Schmally spells out in detail his reasons for calling ُقَيِّبَ a Syriac loan word. After indicating that ُقَيِّبَ ( ُقَيْبِسُ ) is a ُفِكَّةَ form, he argues as follows:

Im Arabischen entspricht ُفِكَّةَ dieses hat kein ُقَيِّبَ neben sich, sondern nur ُقَيَّبَ und ُقَيَّبَ. Das beweist an sich natürlich gar nichts. Nimmt man aber den Umstand hinzu, dass ُقَيِّبَ eine Form ist, während dem syrischen Äquivalent nur scheinbar dasselbe Paradigma, thatsächlich viel mehr ein aus ُفِكَّةَ nach syrischen Lautgesetzen entwickeltes ُفِكَّةَ zu Grunde liegt, so wird man der Annahme zuneigen müssen, dass ُقَيِّبَ ein syrisches Lohnwort ist. Dasselbe gilt für Äthiop. ُقَيْبَ. ⁴

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

² Ibid., p. 6.
³ Ibid., pp. 7-12.
explained in other ways also. For example, the present writer has found no نقيصة فعال form for مطبخة nor an equivalent form in Syriac; so some other explanation is suggested.2

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

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

The Syriac has been suggested as the final loaner of the form and content of مطبخة, both because of its form 1

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

2 This statement is based on a study of Edward Williams Lane, ed., An Arabic-English Lexicon (2 vols., London, 1862); Brockelmann; and J. P. Smith. Other forms unknown to the writer may be extant.
and because of the important Syriac influence on the Qur'anic
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concept of missing is still basic to the sense, as ﴿ ﴾ (His star, or asterism, missed), which is said of one who sought an object but did not succeed in obtaining it; or ﴿ ﴾ (The right, or due, was, or became out of his reach; or far from him).

QUR'ANIC USAGE

In the Qur'an we find 21 occurrences of the words in various forms which are related to both unintentional acts (e.g., ﴿ in 4:92) and to intentional ones (e.g., ﴿ in 12:91). ﴿ (by mistake) occurs once (4:92) in reference to a believer killing another believer; and it is contrasted with ﴿ (intentionally) so the meaning is definite. ﴿ (to be in error or make a mistake) occurs twice and refers to unintentional acts in both cases in keeping with the secular, more literal use of this form described above. In 33:5 we read: "... there is no blame ( ... ﴿ ) on you in that wherein you make a mistake ( ... ﴿ ), but that which your hearts pur-pose ( ... ﴿ )." The contrast with ﴿ and the lack of culpability indicated by ﴿ ... ﴿ ... ﴿ make the unintentional nature of its use here conclusive. Its other occurrence, 2:286, is a petition: "Our Lord, punish us ( ﴿ ﴾ ) no: if we forget ( ﴿ ﴾ ) or make a mistake ﴿ ﴾ includes the meaning to miss the mark and Jeffery and Penrice add to sin; but though their flavor is inherent in the word, they are extra-Qur'anic meanings.
Its use with نسبا coupled with the implication that there are grounds for mercy in both cases indicates that make a mistake is a satisfactory translation. When we compare this interpretation with that of at-Tabari, one of the greatest of the ancient commentators, we find that he too stressed the unintentional aspect. He says that this verse teaches the way we should pray for forgiveness when we have sinned (خطأ), by doing something forbidden us, without intending (قد) to oppose God and from ignorance (جهله) on our part and error (خطأ).²

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

ابو جعفر محمد بن جبريل الطارقي، تفسير الامامية (الファーية، دار المعرفة، 1968 م - ج 2، ص 15).

²Sinful is also given by Penrice, but this adjectival use is not found in the Qur'an unless خاطئة is regarded as the feminine of خطأ in 96:15.
their hosts for their wrongdoing at the time of Moses (28:6).

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

"... kill not your children for fear of being brought to
want; we will provide for them and for you. Surely the
killing of them is a great sin (ṣināṭa ḥāzārā)." Because
the most ancient Qur'anic texts did not include short vowels,
one might question whether the original meaning here was
ṣin (ṣināṭa) or mistake (ḥāzāra). If infanticide were
practiced out of ignorance of the fact that God would take
care of them, mistake (with a fatwān) might be understood.
However, three of the most noted ancient authorities agree
with the present rendering of ṣin (with a kaṣrah). Al-Ṭabarî
gives the position of Ibn-‘Abîs, with apparent approval,
that the reference is to ṣin (ṣināṭa) not a mis-
take (ḥāzāra) because the people already knew that
infanticide was wrong.\(^1\) Al-Baiḍāwī uses both
ṣināṭa ḥāzāra and ḥāzāra ḥāzāra (a great sin) in reference to infanticide
here and then gives a reason: it cuts the reproduction of
mankind.\(^2\) The agreement of these ancient authorities sug-
gests the rendering ṣināṭa ḥāzāra in the absence of further evidence.

\(^{3}\)

\(^{1}\) Abu Ẓubayr, al-tawārîkh, 1:440, ed. H. O. Fleischer

\(^{2}\) The final ى is changed to an ی because preceded by
another ی.
occur ten times. They are general words -- for example, the plural form is indirectly contrasted with a derivative of the general word for good in 2:58: "We will forgive you your wrongs (مُطَاوَاتُكُمْ) and increase the reward of those who do good (المُهَيْسِينُ)" (cf. 7:151). Likewise the singular form is used with another general word and the two contrasted with the general alternatives belief and good works in 2:81, 82: "Whoever earns evil (كَسَبَ سَيِّئَةً) and his sin (مُطِيَّة) surrounds him, those are the companions of the fire... and those who believe (أَمْنُوا) and do good deeds (غَيْلَا الصَّالِحَاتِ), those are the companions of the Garden...."

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

Also, as suggested by the above verses (2:81, 82), wrongdoers (ظَلَّلُونَ) commit مُطَيَّات (71:24, 25). Some specific sins which occur in the context of مطَيَّة and its plural are: forging the Book for personal ends (2:79, 81); disobeying Noah and following another, plotting (against the right way), saying not to forsake the current gods, and leading others astray (71:21-25).
Likewise, as implied by the above verses (2:81, 82), culpability may be ascribed to خطيّة, for divine punishment is the result (71:25). In 29:12, 13 the inference is that خطأ must be borne as burdens (أنيال). The culpability found in this noun form is in direct contrast to خطأ noted in 33:5 above where there is no blame (حماح).

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

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

1See analysis of word below.
2De Sacy, I, 322n; II, 279n.
the overthrown cities (probably those of Lot; cf. 11:82),
that brought sinfulness (بَلَاء...، باللّه اذكُرُو (عُضَوا
the messenger of their Lord. 1

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

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

Likewise the idea of mistake seen above in
and
(2:286; 33:15) is found in the eight books in
their precise definition of
Al-Qur'ān says that
it refers to that which a person does unintentionally.
Likewise al-Kūfāt contrasts with
intentional wrong, which is a crime (صَحِيح
). And he gives
two examples, that of a fasting man who accidentally lets some water
down his throat (where it is forbidden), while rinsing
his mouth and that of a hunter who accidentally hits a man
while aiming at a bird. He adds, however, that in
there is the
نَفَطَتُ of not being firm and in this respect
the doer is to blame, but the punishment is not in proportion
to the crime (صَحِيح
itself. Rather it is in proportion
to the lack of care which caused the deed to happen.

Both writers refer to two technical types of
"the rights of God" (حقوق الله) and "the rights of men"
(HQodi al-Mulūk), which refer to divine and social responsi-
bigibilities respectively. In the former the sinner (الدُّخِلْ)
does not really sin (تمّت
); the lawgiver has made the act
excusable so that the one who does wrong unintentionally
(الدُّخِلْ) is not blamed (تمّت
) or punished.
for the crime (الجريمة) itself. In the latter, the one who has destroyed (إفك) is responsible for his wrong and has to make social compensation. (النذر، ص. 20).

Three technical meanings come to be ascribed to "الإثم" (sin or crime); the opposite of "الوفر" (resolution); and the opposite of "الجهنم" (right). (الجواب، ص. 6). Its contrast with "الشيء" (by mistake) with "الكفر" (intentionally) noted above in 4:30, 33. It is unnecessary to describe further the post-Qur'anic development of the various forms of خطاً because the above examples illustrate that, although there was restriction and more exact definition of meanings, they are related to those noted in the Qur'an by a clearly discernible chain of development.
CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND

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

\(^1\)Lane, p. 1799A.
\(^2\)Ibid., p. 1800A.
\(^3\)Brown, et al., p. 854.
\(^4\)Labat, p. 317.
\(^5\)Brockelsmann, p. 22.
for the Qur'an will be seen to make the root meaning of
deviating clear by, for example, the contrast of مُتَحِلِّيَّةا
with اهتداءان.

**QUR'ANIC USAGE**

The various forms from this stem occur 192 times in the
Qur'an and may refer to intentional acts (e.g., مُتَحِلِّيَّةا
in 14:30) or unintentional ones (e.g., تَخْلَص، in 2:222).

tَخْلَص (to err or go astray from) occurs 52 times,
and its basic meaning can be seen from the words with which
it is used. It is used of erring or straying from the way
(النَّطْرَاٰث بالله) (4:44), the right way (سَبِيلُ الله
) (5:12), the way of God (سَبِيلُ اللَّهِ) (4:167), and His way
(سبيله) (16:125). Thus it is defined by a similar clause
in 17:48: "And they have gone astray (مُتَخَلَصْتَ) and they
cannot (لَمْ يَسْتَطِعُوا تَخْلَصُوا)." In various
grammatical structures it is contrasted with
(بَيْنِي) (20:123), اهتداء (to be directed aright) (10:128),
and مَهْذَبُونَ (those who are guided aright) (6:56).

Further, it is used with مَعَ, a word of position, in
the construction عَلَى مَعَ (be off a distant
erroneous) (4:116). Finally, it is used in a parallel con-
struction with غَيُّبَةٗ (to deviate) in 53:2, thereby indicat-
ing a similar meaning.

Shades of meaning and derived meanings are brought out
by the use of prepositions or the case of the related noun.
ذَلَّلٕ means to wander away or go astray from with the

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

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

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

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

This verb is used of disbelief (كفر) (2:108; 5:12) and wrongdoing (ظلم) (7:148, 149). In the latter case, the wrongdoers were the people of Moses who set up a calf. Other specific acts to which ضلال is related are: killing (قتل) children, forbidding (منع) what God has provided -- devising a lie (الفحير) against God (6:141); coining epithets against the Prophet (17:48); showing friendship to the enemy in secret (60:1); and following lusts (إهاء) (6:56). The implication is that erring can be from a lack of understanding (4:177) and forgetfulness (2:82). Finally, the one who errs does so to his own detriment (39:41).

ضللب (part. act.; one who errs or goes astray; erring) occurs 14 times, being used as a noun (e.g., 26:86) and an adjective (e.g., 6:78; 23:106). That its underlying concept is the same as the definitely defined ضللب above is plain for it is also contrasted with forms of خذركم (He guided you) in 2:198 and خذرك (He guides me) in 6:78 (cf. 20:123 et al.). Also, like ضللب above (2:108; 5:12), it is used of disbelief in 3:89: "... those who disbelieve (كفروا) after their believing, then increase in disbelief (ازدادوا كفرًا),

1Ferrie does not give an adjectival meaning.
their repentance is not accepted and these are those who go astray (الملاليون)." It might be noted that those who disbelieve after their believing are likewise called 

الظلماء (unjust or wrongdoing people) (vs. 85),

though in this case they may be forgiven if they repent and amend (vs. 88). However, a case cannot be made that is stronger than 

عذرنا كثر (we have added to it) and because repentance is accepted with the latter but not the former in the passage under discussion.

On the contrary their use here as elsewhere is too general and inclusive; and, as already noted, 

ظلمون is associated with the basic verb ضل (7:148, 149). Another, more specific word with which it becomes associated is 

مكرونون (rejectors or deniers) (56:51, 92).

ومن (error or mistake) occur 48 times and have the same basic meaning as the verb 

ضل (lit., he strayed a straying) (4:116, 136).

Also like 

امد (guidance) in 2:175 and with 

الإله (he guided) in 7:30 (cf. 20:123 et al. above). Their use for error in the moral and ideological realms is confirmed by the comparison of 

مكرون (to transgress) in 50:27 and its contrast with 

الحق (the truth) in 10:32.

This form is used in reference to some of the same sins as the simple verb. In the cognate accusative it is used
of unbelief (كفر) (4:136, 167; cf. 2:108 and 5:12 above). And it is used of (association [of others with God]) both directly (4:116) and indirectly: making one equal with the Lord of the worlds (26:98); invoking besides God that which neither harms nor benefits one (22:12); taking besides His gods (الله) (36:23); taking idols (عابدة) for gods (6:75); and worshipping (عبيد) images (صانع) (21:52, 53) (cf. 7:148, 149 above). Also it is used of disobeying (يعبد) God and His Messenger (33:36) and not accepting the Inviter to God (46:32) (cf. 17:48 above). Finally it refers to the time of ignorance (3:163; cf. 4:177 above).

Likewise ضلال refers: to a wife who seeks to seduce (تغور) her slave (12:30); to those who are [spiritually] blind (الغُرُور) (30:53) or whose hearts are hardened (المسمك قدوتْ) against the remembrance of God (39:22); to those who dispute (مُكَانَة) concerning the Hour (42:18); and to those who love this world’s life more than the Hereafter, turn away (يُطَرِّقُون) from God’s path and would have it crooked (يَبِغُونَ) (14:3).

As to its form, ضلال is sometimes followed by (far or distant) both as a cognate accusative (4:116, 135) and alone (14:3; 22:12; 42:18). Other times it is followed by (manifest), as a cognate accusative once (33:36), and otherwise alone (6:75; 12:30; 21:52). Also ضلال is preceded by (and thereby becomes) to buy error
(2:175; 4:44).

(2nd. declension comparative form; to be more astray) occurs nine times and has the same underlying concept as the simple verb, as is evident not only by their common root but also by its use, for it too is used of being astray from the way (سبيلك) (17:72; cf. 4:44 above) or the right way (سَوَآءَ الْشَّيْبِر) (5:60; cf. 5:12 above).

And it is described by (without guidance) (28:50; cf. 20:123 above where is contrasted with )

Furthermore the sins with which it is associated are some already covered by other forms. It is used of dissenting widely (شَيْخَافِيْ بِعَبْدِي) in a sentence describing unbelief (كَفَر) (41:52; cf. 2:108 under ضل; 3:89 under منازل; and 4:136 under صلل). And it is related to (wrongdoing) in 28:50 (cf. 7:148-149 under ضل). The specific sin here is following lust (كَفَرَ) (cf. 6:56 under ضل). And it is used of (association [of others with God]) when it refers to those who invoke besides God such as answer him not until the day of Resurrection (46:15; cf. 7:148, 149 under ضل and 4:116; 22:12, et al. under ضلال). It characterizes those who are blind (عِلْي) (17:72; cf. 30:53 under ضلال). This idea is amplified in 7:179 where it is used of those who understand not, see not, and hear not -- hence are more astray than cattle and are the heedless
ones (الخَليْلِ). This term (a second measure ma’dar; error) occurs only in 105:2, where it refers to the end to which God brought the plans of the instigators of the Elephant War. Dictionaries translate the word by error, an interpretation confirmed by the other forms derived from the same root. Some translators have tried, however, to give a more precise rendering of this hapax legomenon based on the context. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Arthur J. Arberry, and George Sale stay close to the original meaning, the first two giving the translation go astray and the third error. Richard Bell indicates that the literal translation is misguidance but puts away in his text, while M. M. 'Ali and Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthall give confusion and to naught respectively. However, these suggested meanings all rest on the basic idea of error.

\[\text{ضَلِّلُ (to cause to err, seduce, lead astray from)}\]

1 Lane, p. 1797A and Penrice.
occurs 65 times and appears with the double accusative or the accusative and \textit{عنى}. Its meaning is quite plain. First, we find it defined through synonymous clauses in 20:79: "Pharaoh led astray (أظلم) his people, and he guided not right (ما هدى)." Secondly, it is used with other forms of the root (which have been defined) with the same essential meaning. Thus in 6:117-118 (the first measure) is contrasted with (the guided ones) so that its meaning is sure, and (the fourth measure) is used of the same phenomenon (cf. 5:77). Likewise the fourth measure is shown to have the same underlying meaning as (which has been defined) in (to cause them to err a great erring) (4:60; cf. صلل صلل بعبدا in 33:36).

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

A number of specific sins are associated with \textit{عنى}; and, in keeping with the close relationship between the forms of this root, some are the same as those noted above
under other forms. Lust (الْخَيْرُ) can lead astray (38:26), and people lead astray by their lusts (لا يَهْدُو قُلُوبَهُمْ). Some even take lust (كَيْفَ َينْسِى مَلَكُ) for their god (45:23) and are led astray. Men set up equals (الْمُؤْتَى) with God to lead astray from His path (14:30; cf. 7:148, 149 under مُتَّقَرِبُونَ, 4:116 under مَهْمُولُونَ, and 46:5 under مَهْمُولُونَ).

Pride too causes one to lead astray, as the 'Ubayd of As-Saghānī and the Qāmīs indicate when they give as a translation of (ٍتَمَّ دَعَاهُ) (lit. twisting or bending his side or neck) in 22:9 magnifying himself, or behaving proudly, or turning away from al-Islam. Frivolous discourse (الْمُطْرَقُ) can also lead astray (31:6). And he who even becomes a friend of one, who disputes about God without knowledge and follows every rebellious devil, will be led astray (22:3, 4; cf. 60:1 under مَخْلُوقُ). Some forge a lie (كَفِي إِذْنِهَا) against God to lead astray (6:145; cf. 6:141 under مُتَّقَرِبُونَ and 56:51, 92 under مَهْمُولُونَ).

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

1Lane, p. 20300. Note that at this and subsequent points in this study the writer had moved to California, where many Arabic texts are not readily accessible. Hence most Arabic sources quoted in Lane's Lexicon could not be checked in the originals.
Three agents are described as leading astray -- man, Satan, and God. First, men lead astray (22:8; 31:6), and these men include most of those in the earth (6:117). They are the hypocrites (4:88).

Along with these more immediate and secondary agents of error is the underlying operation of the spiritual world. Thus Satan desires to lead astray (4:60), and God is described as the subject of ًلا يَعَدُّ (6:142) (71:24; cf. 6:145), and their works (47:18) are the object. This is a hard concept to reconcile with the justice of God (in some portions of the Bible as well as the Qur'an). Thus M. M. 'Ali regularly translates ًلا يَعَدُّ leaves in error when it applies to God, and A. V. All uses leaves astray (e.g., 20:29). However Bell and Pickthall do not show as much hesitancy to apply the common translation of the word to God and render it sent astray in this passage (vs. 28 in

For a related discussion of God as a cause of sin see the analyses of ٍعَلَمُ , ًعَدَّلُ , أَعُوُّ and ٍعَلَمُ.
The present writer feels that the regular translation *led astray* is the correct one when applied to God as well as elsewhere. The reasons for this conclusion are first that we have no linguistic basis for making this shift, only a preconceived idea of what justice should be when applied to God. Secondly, *he leads aright* and *he makes his breast straight, narrow* are both used of God in parallel but contrasting clauses (2:26; 4:88; 6:126), implying that the latter is the opposite of the former. Thirdly, though this argument is not conclusive in itself, the Qur'an spells out what it means by the latter. Thus in 6:126 we read: "... whomsoever God intends to guide ( *he makes his breast for Islam and whomsoever He intends to* ) he expands his breast for Islam and whomsoever He intends to... he makes his breast straight, narrow." The sovereign action of God associated with *is brought out even more strikingly in 45:23 where it is followed by "He seals his hearing and his heart and puts a covering on his sight." One might argue for M. M. 'Ali and A. Y. Ali's translations that man is left in error by pointing out the Qur'anic tendency to imply an antecedent action or decision on the part of man here and elsewhere (e.g., 14:27). But nevertheless the Qur'an in 6:126 and 45:23 clearly teaches an increase in error in which God is at least in collaboration. Finally, the high Qur'anic view of the sovereignty of God is too commonly recognized to need defense; and the present
argument conforms to this view.¹

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

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

¹It might be noted that the argument presented is
in keeping with the interpretation of a man of such cen-
tral significance in Muslim theology as al-Ashtaf who,
after quoting a verse ascribing بَرَاءَتْ to God, says,
"God has the capacity to reform the disbelievers and
favor them, so that they become believers; nevertheless
He wills that they be disbelievers."²

(20:15) and by implication is equated with him (إِبْلِيسَ) and his offspring, enemies (عَدُوِّهُمْ), and the unjust (الظَّالِمُونَ) (18:50, 51).
CHAPTER III

Background

The root is related to the Ethiopic ʿayava (ʾayāʿ), which means err. And it is related to the Hebrew ʿawān (ʾawān) (iniquity, guilt -- e.g., Job 15:5 and Gen. 44:16 respectively) and the verb ʿāwāʾ (ʾāwāʾ) (to commit iniquity, do wrong -- e.g., Est. 1:16; Dan. 9:5). This verb is a cognate of the Aramaic ʿawy (ʾawy) (commit sin) and ʿwāyāl (ʾwāyāl) (sin).\(^1\)

Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner translate the Hebrew root as pervertedly and list the Judaeo-Aramaic cognate ʿwāl (ʾwāl) (deviate). The Hebrew comes to mean to do wrong in the Qal, to sin (psecare) in the Niphʿal, and to pervert (the right) in the Hiphʿal.\(^2\) In a primarily secular sense the Hebrew ʿawān (ʾawān) means twist or bend, both literally and metaphorically.\(^3\) But these latter

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\(^1\)Brown, et al., pp. 730B, 731.


\(^3\)Brown, et al., p. 730B.
meanings appear to be more closely related to عَوَى (to twist, etc.) than عَوَى. Nevertheless we obtain a clear pattern from the root. From the idea of bending away or erring comes the ethical meaning to sin.

QUR'ANIC USAGE

The various forms of عَوَى occur 22 times in the Qur'an. عَوَى (to wander, go astray, deviate from the right way, err) occurs three times. Its meaning is quite clear, for in 53:2 it is used in synonymous parallelism with صُرُّ، which has already been defined as to err or go astray from. In 20:121 it refers to the fall of Adam and Eve as follows: "Adam disobeyed غُرُى and he erred غُرُى."

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

1Lane, p. 2185 under غَرَى.
2Ibid., p. 2304C.
follow renderings of عُقَيْرَة given by the مُشَابَهَة of al-Fayyūmī and the شَبَاه،¹ but these renderings may also be derived from the words used in this verse.

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

عَتَبَ (error, destruction) occurs four times. The meaning is obvious for it is contrasted with الرَّشَد (the way of rectitude) (2:256; 7:146). Its use with does not shed much new light on the meaning of the word, however, for the forms of رَشَد are essentially synonymous with those of غَدِي, which is contrasted with the first measure of the verb above (20:121-122). To illustrate, the Azza of az-Zamakhshari uses forms of these roots synonymously as in the statement: كَيْتَرَى بَعْدَه bien éteint (He directs to the right places to which roads tend).²

¹Ibid.
²Ibid., p. 10890.
Furthermore, both هدى (Hidayah) and رشد (Isharat) have what in Western terms we might call a 'secular' connotation, and also in certain forms, they may have a 'religious' one. The 'secular' connotation is seen in رشد (the only form used with رشد), which means rectitude, maturity of intellect and rectitude of actions and good management of affairs. The 'secular' flavor of هدى (Hidayah) is seen in: هدى (he directed him, or guided him [to the way], or directed him aright) and راهد (be continued to be rightly directed or to follow the right direction) and راهد (a way, course method or manner of acting, or conduct). The more 'religious' significance of words derived from the two roots is seen in رشد and some of its other forms which develop the idea of orthodoxy and عدل, which means the directed [by God to the truth].

Pentrice adds the meaning destruction, which may derive its meaning from that which characterizes the end of error, or the way of error or from a fusion (as in the Hebrew لال) or confusion of عدل and عدل. And the Exposition of the Hanbah (Manasaq Garina) by at-Tabrizi also gives the significance of a state of perdition, which probably

1Ibid., p. 1089A, B.
2Ibid., p. 3042B, C.
3Ibid., p. 1089A.
4Ibid., p. 3042B, C.
5Page 643 copied in Ibid., p. 2305B.
derives its meaning from the fact that it represents a deviation from the way of Paradise or rectitude. These readings fit the context of 19:59 and possibly -- though not probably -- 7:202.

The specific types of sinners with which is associated are: those who are unjustly proud (بَلَغُّونَ), do not believe (يَكْفُرُونَ), falsely reject (كِذِبَّوا) the divine messages and are heedless of them (كَانُوا غَفِيلِينَ) (7:146); neglect prayers (أَضَلُّوا الْحَجَّةَ), and follow lusts (أَتَعِبُوا السَّبْطَةِ) (19:59).

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

(active participle; plural one who goes astray) occurs six times and only in the plural. The meaning is plain, for it is used in the same context as (26:90-99). It is used of Satan (7:175), those who follow him (15:42) and the devils (26:224), those who worship others besides God (26:91-93), those who follow their own lust (7:175-176), and those who lead others astray (37:32). And hell is their end (15:42; 26:91, 94).
اًعَرُى (to lead astray) occurs eight times. Its meaning is clear, for it is used with "عَرِى (which has already been defined) in the same sense except that it is causative (28:63; 37:32). And it is contrasted with the word "أَفْسَحَ (to give good counsel) (11:34) and used in agreement with the clause, "I shall certainly make [evil] fair-seeming to them" (15:39).

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

Finally, Iblis charges God with leading him astray (7:16; 15:39); and Noah implies that God may lead men astray, although the implication is made uncertain because it is in the protasis of a conditional sentence (11:34). As with "أَوْلِي" above, some appear hesitant to call God responsible for leading others astray. Thus K. M. 'Ali translates the word in the first two verses above judged or adjudged erring. And in 7:16 A. Y. Ali uses thrown ... out (only using misled in a footnote where he says that Iblis is lying), and in 15:39 he uses put ... in the wrong (adding thrown ... out of the way in a footnote). In 11:34 K. M. 'Ali uses destroy, but A. Y. Ali returns to lead ...

astray (perhaps because the conditional nature of the sentence does not require the conclusion that God does lead
astray). Although the Tāj-al- Ārūs gives caused... to err as a rendering of 7:16, it indicates that in 11:34 some give the rendering punish... for erring or decree... erring. ¹

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

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

¹Lane, p. 2305A.
interpretation of this paper is in keeping with the recognized Qur'anic emphasis on the sovereignty of God. Finally, it has been demonstrated by a more conclusive chain of arguments that the preferred rendering of ٍ when it refers to God is led astray; hence it is logical that its synonym ٍ should mean the same thing in similar contexts.

Though this writer considers the above arguments sufficient to retain the normal translation of ٍ when it applies to God, it should be noted that these three verses alone are insufficient to develop a doctrine of a divine cause for evil; for the first two are in the mouth of Satan and might be a lie, and the third is in a conditional clause so is not conclusive. Also we should notice, when we seek to determine levels of causation, that Iblis makes the fact that God led him astray the basis for his leading others astray (15:39; 38:32). However the text makes God's act subsequent to, or at least contemporaneous with, the error of Iblis in such a way that Iblis is culpable (cf. 15:26-39).
CHAPTER IV

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BACKGROUND

The root idea is that of water rising so high that it exceeds the bounds and overflows. Thus in 69:11, in what is undoubtedly a reference to Noah's ark, it has a purely secular connotation, referring to the water which rose high, and the idea of going beyond a limit is shown in 53:17 where it is used of one's eye in synonymous parallelism with ٣٧٣٧ (to turn aside).

The fact that the secular pictographic element is retained even in developed forms of this word is illustrated by the use of ٣٧٣٧ in 69:5 to describe some enormous phenomenon that destroyed Thamud. However there is some disagreement concerning the precise rendering in this context. Translators render it a Screamor (Arberry), a terrible noise (Sale), a terrible storm of thunder and lightning (A. Y. Ali), the lightning (Fischbach), the Outburst (Bell), and a severe punishment (W. M. 'Ali). Fenrice lists only a severe storm. The جِغَّ ين and the أَمْمُسُ give a thunderbolt.
as a meaning; but in this specific context the Ṣabāh and the Ṭāl al-ʿArūn list cry of punishment, thereby combining the ideas of noise and punishment expressed by various translators above. The actual event described involved an earthquake (cf. 7:78; 27:52) and a cry or shout (cf. 54:31) and a thunderbolt (cf. 51:44). As this is not an ethical use of the word, there is no need to decide which rendering is most accurate. We only need to note that even in a developed form the root idea of being excessive or passing beyond the limit is not lost.

QUR'ANIC USAGE

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

1Ibid., p. 1857A.
to transgress, exceed all bounds, wander from its orbit, overflow) occurs 12 times. The meaning is quite clear as we have already seen from the examples of this form which were used to illustrate the root meaning. From the metaphorical idea of rising (cf. 69:11) and going beyond the bounds (cf. 53:17 where it is defined by زاغ ), it develops a flavor of inordinacy and self-sufficient pride. Thus in 96:6-7 we read: "... man is surely inordinate (or acts presumptuously -- لُبِطَ ), because he looks upon himself as self-sufficient (or sees that he has become rich -- استغني )," The idea of inordinacy can be seen in the character of Pharaoh, of whom it is used a number of times (20:24, 43; 79:17; 89:11).

Those who طغى are associated with those who fear ( ﻦﺎﻃِ ) the Lord and restrain their souls from lust ( ﺎﻟﻢ ) (79:37-41). Likewise طغى is contrasted with ﻢَسَى (to purify) and ﺮَكِّزَ (to fear), and indicates a state of separation from the Lord (79:15-19).

طغاي (transgression, exceeding wickedness, obstinacy) occurs nine times. The idea of deviating or going beyond bounds is clearly shown by its use in the same context as ﻋَبَارَةَ ﺍﻟْإِنْدِرُوُّ (deviating from the way) and ﺔَحْيَأَرَةً (blindly wandering astray) (23:74-76). In fact it forms the idiomatic union طغاي يرتمن ﺔَحْيَأرُون (with the latter word of blind straying (2:15; 6:110; 7:186;
10:11; 23:75). The continuous nature of this state is emphasised by means of its introduction by the word ُلَا يُؤْمَنُ (they persist) (23:75). This continuous nature of the word and the element of independent pride already found in the simple verb (95:6-7) lead us to suggest obstinacy as one of the best English renderings of ُظَفَاهُ, even though Penrice does not list it.

We then find the word used in combination with َكَفْرُ (5:64, 68; 18:80), thereby witnessing the close relationship between transgression and unbelief. This conclusion is confirmed by verses which charge those who disbelieve with ُظَفَاهُ (6:1; 11:1; 23:74), and those who increase in ُكَافِرُ (disbelievers) (5:68). So serious is it to involve one in ُظَفَاهُ that even killing one who threatens to lead others into this state appears justified (cf. 18:74-80).

As ُطَيْعُ (79:37-41) and ُنَفَسُ (79:15-19), so ُطَفَاهُ is contrasted with ُخَوَانَ (to cause fear) (17:59-60). It is used of those who are pleased with this earthly life and are heedless (ُغُيُوشُ) of the divine revelations (10:7, 11), do not submit (ُعِسَكَرُونَ) to their Lord nor humble themselves (ُعَسِّرُونَ) (23:75-76), and are hypocritical by mocking (ُعَبْسُونَ) (2:13-15).

طَيْعُ (for ُطَيْعُ; active participle, one who is
excessively impious or obstinate, a transgressor) occurs six times and only in the plural. As the previous forms are contrasted with خُوَيْنَا, فَكُلُّهُمَا, and the same idea of awe or dread is carried on by الفَقَانِ, which is contrasted with (the godfearing) (38:51, 55-57). Others are to turn away from them (51:53).

(relative for أَطْفَأُ (second declension); most extravagant in wickedness or inordinate) occurs only in 53:52. Here it is used together with أَطْفَأَمْ (most unjust or sinful) of the people of Noah.

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

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

عذو

BACKGROUND

On the basis of Comparative Semitics the root idea is to pass by. The Ethiopic ፫ፋ ( Qa Qa ) means pass by, the Hebrew ʿašā ( נָעַשׁ ) pass on or advance, the Biblical-Aramaic ‘ašā ( נָעַשׁ ) and ‘adā ( נָעַדּ ) pass on or away, and the Aramaic ḍēz ( 'דְּז ) go along or go by, and the Syriac ḍēz ( 'דְּז ) pass by or go on or come. Likewise the Arabic عذو can mean pass by. From this secular meaning it develops the ethical one of passing beyond a limit set by one such as God -- hence to transgress.

QUR'ANIC USAGE

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

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

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

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it has a secular meaning in 10:26: "Let not thine eyes pass from them (ولاَ لَنَ تَغْرَبُنَّ ... عَنْهُمْ)." Penrice indicates that the meaning to pass by is not found in the Qur'an and gives to turn aside for this form instead. But the root and the context clarify the underlying idea -- the passing of the eyes by, hence away from them. In the other two cases it is used with فِي in the ethical sense of violating or transgressing the Sabbath (4:154; 7:163). In these cases the Sabbath is one of the divine limits which should not be passed by or transgressed. The meaning of transgression is confirmed by the synonymous use of يُعْبِسُونَ (they transgressed [divine commandments]) in the latter verse.

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

عَادُ (for عَدُوُّ, active participle, a runner, transgressor, exceeding the limit) occurs seven times. !�َا هَا دَيْنَ لُغَلُفَ ١ , the feminine plural form, is found only once (100:1), where it means the runners. This translation, which is supported

١Lare, pp. 1960C-1981B. Penrice does not list this meaning.
by the context, would appear to be a primitive meaning derived from the root concept of passing by.

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

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

عداوة (enmity) occurs six times. Its meaning is clear for it is contrasted with دوام (friendship) (5:182) and ولي (a warm friend) (41:34) and is coupled with الحُبُس (hatred) (5:14, 91). It is used of the Jews and idolaters; also pride (cf. يُسْتَكِروُون in 5:82), wine (أَبْيَض), and games of chance (الكَبَس) (5:91) appear to contribute to it.

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

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

Not only is the word used of retaliation, but it is also used with مس (also injustice, or wrongdoing) to describe the type of killing which is one of the great things كذب (forbidden) (لذان) (4:29-31). Likewise it is combined with مسمى (sin) and مسمى (disobedience) to describe the secret counsels which are forbidden (58:8-9). With منك (their devouring the illegal gain) it is characterized as evil (ليه) (5:62).\(^1\)

\(^1\)The translation disobedience which Ikutsu (p. 247)
The word **عدوّ** (an enemy) occurs 50 times. The meaning is confirmed by 43:67, where it is contrasted with **أولياء** (friends) and 18:50, where it is contrasted with **أولين** (patrons). Those described as having enemies are: man (12:5), the prophets (6:113; 25:31), and God, His angels, His messengers, Gabriel, and Michael (2:98).

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

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

**(تعدّى)** (to transgress, exceed the limit) occurs gives **عدوان** in this verse does not seem warranted.
three times. The meaning is plain for all are used with \( \text{لَعْدَة} \) (limits). After a statement of the laws of inheritance, 4:14 reads: ". . . whoever disobeys (ُيُعَصِّبُ) God and goes beyond His limits (ٍيَكُونُ لَعْدَةً), He will make him enter fire." The other two refer to God's limits on divorce, which show the same flexibility as those on forbidden foods (cf. 2:173; 6:146 above). Thus 2:229 sets up the limits and then states that it is not lawful (لا لَعْدَة) for the man to take part of the dowry. However, if they fear they cannot keep within the limits, the women may relinquish part of the dowry to be free without blame (جَناح). But those who exceed the limits are the wrongdoers (الْعُدُودُون) (2:229), and wrong (ظُلْمٌ) themselves (cf. 65:1). Here we see that as law develops, the root idea takes on a legal flavor.

\( \text{اعْتَدَى} \) [to be wicked, to transgress (with accusative or with \( عَدُودُ الله \) in or with \( عَدُودُ الله \) of persons)] is used 15 times. It has the same essential meaning of exceeding the limits as the previous words from this root, for it too is used with \( عَدُودُ الله \) (2:229). And it is used with 2:193-194 and \( عَدَّرُتْ \\(2:229\) in the same sense.

Like \( عَدَّرُتْ \) it cannot convey absolute wrongness in 2:193-194, for it is used of rightful retaliation. However, \( عَدَّرُتْ \\(الّذِي) is wrong if it is in a form other than divinely-regulated retaliation, for we read in verse 190: ". . . fight in the way of God against those who fight against you,
but do not exceed the limit (لا تَعْكَوْوا)." Here it would seem to imply aggression or over-vindictiveness. It is evident from 2:193-194 that the word can be applied to transgression against both men and God.

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

تَعْكَوْنَ (active participle; wicked, a transgressor) is found nine times. It is the participial form of the eighth measure and thus has the same essential meaning -- a conclusion confirmed by 2:150 where both words are used in the same context. It is used specifically of those who do not respect ties of relationship or covenants with believers (9:10), do not believe (بَإِنَّا كَانْتُوا بِهِمْ يَدُونَا ) (10:74), and reject (كُبْرَ ) the day of Judgment (83:12). In the last case one is characterized as a تَعْمِّرُ أَنْبِيَء (a transgressor, a sinful one), thereby showing the close relationship of these terms in the Qur'an (cf. also 68:12). As we noted under أَحْلَ and أَعْوَى , so here, God's will is involved with sinful man's. Thus we read that He seals the
hearts of the مَعَتَّدُونَ (10:74).
CHAPTER VI

سوء

BACKGROUND

When we look for the etymology of سوء, we find what on the surface look like different concepts. The Hebrew has a somewhat similar word in שונ (נ שונ), which in its nominal form שון (ך שון) means Septiness or vanity or worthlessness (e.g., Ps. 60:13; Is. 59:4; Ps. 26:4).

However the Ethiopic says (ך נף) meaning baseness is more helpful,\(^1\) being more in keeping with some of the meanings Lane gives to פסא: it was, or became, abominable, foul, unseemly, unsightly or ugly.\(^2\) On the other hand Gardner\(^3\) says the idea underlying the word appears to be that of misfortune or calamity, an element which we shall see does develop in the word.

When we look for a connection between the root idea of

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\(^1\)Brown, et al., p. 996; Koehler and Baumgartner, p. 951.

\(^2\)Page 1457a.

\(^3\)Page 2.
being base or unseemly or unsightly and the idea of harming anyone or anything, it seems logical that a transition could take place in the idea of treating one basely -- hence harming him. Such a development might be similar to that of لذلا above, which as a noun can mean a bad, or evil, thing and as a verb to treat badly (Ps. 89:23) — hence to harm. Or the transition could take place through the development of the positive element of that which causes baseness or unseemliness -- hence harms.

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

1 Koehler and Baumgartner, p. 951.
2 Abu al-fæl, Mird (مّيرد من مّيرد من منظور، في صدر الغريب،
(الفارسي، ١٣١٣-٧٣٣ هـ) ج. ٣٠ ص. ص ٤٥٣ ط. ٥.
3 Ibid., ج. ٣٠ ص. ص ٣٤٢ ط. ١٧.
4 Ibid., ج. ٣٠ ص. ص ١٨٨ ط. ١٠.
the poor mother of evil (السوء), which is used of an old woman who was forced to commit adultery (زنى).  

Likewise the more active element of harmfulness, or that which causes misfortune, develops. This is brought out by the use of سوء for the harmfulness of poison.  
And it is seen in the following clause: نان تسرمتي أو تسحق جناكي ("If you cut me off or do harm to my side .... "). Even as forms from this stem develop a more general meaning, they still can convey the flavor of harm. Thus, when someone's brother wronged a jester, the exclamation is made: "O ... for the evil evil (السوءة).  
A similar sense is seen when سوء is used almost synonymously with طالب in the following poem:  
وكان النواذ بها سمي، فقد أصبى اليوم عن ذلك سال
وكان شاذ سلوة في هال  
And the heart was admiring her;  
And indeed today he began to forget that,  
It awoke not doing evil or wrong,  
But forgetting itself in beauty.  

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

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1. Ibid.  
2. Ibid.  
3. Ibid.  
4. Ibid.  
5. أبو الفرج البصيري، كتب البصري (الفاطمية)، ج. 1، ص 176.
of a man in the following: (Jamil was the most evil of men in respect to condition."). The emergence of the sense of general moral evil is confirmed by the use of forms of سوء as antonyms of وسمان and السألات. In one case an old woman sees her evil 小 as good 小 (simmah). And in the other reference the good deeds 小 of a man are contrasted with what he does of evil 小. 

**QUR'ANIC USAGE**

The various forms of سوء occur 137 times in the Qur'an and generally correspond with the meanings given above except for the most primitive meaning of ugliness. Perhaps the nearest English equivalent is evil, for it likewise can have both physical and moral connotations.

سناء (سناء to be evil, wretched or grievous; to grieve, afflict (with accusative) and the passive بسناء (سناء to be made sad; to be vexed for (with هذًا are found 30 times. Its meaning to be evil, wretched, or grievous is illustrated by the clause لسناء سامسرا (سناء سامسرا (It is evil as to its way) (4:22); while its meaning to grieve or afflict is found in لسناء وفروكم (سناء وفروكم (to vex, or afflict.

1. ابن منظور: ج. 3, 418, 51.
2. أبو زيد الأنصاري، كتاب النواص في اللغة (بيروت: 1402 هـ/1982 م)
3. ابن منظور: ج. 1, 422, 415.
your faces) (17:7). Its passive use appears in 11:77 and 29:33, where it describes the grief Lot had for the divine messengers when they came to him. Sometimes a secular meaning prevails as in 5:101: ". . . do not ask about things which if made known to you would grieve, or afflict, you (كُمْتَ كَمَّكَ)." At other times the moral significance is dominant as above in سَيَبَارَ، which refers to the sin of marrying a woman who was married to one's father.

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

Evil (شيء ) is the drink! And ill ( جَوْمَ ) is the resting-place!

Excellent ( زَمَعْ ) is the recompense! And goodly ( كَبْسَتْ ) is the resting-place!

Its antonym مَكَشَتْ is a general verb meaning to be good.

And its synonym مَكَشَتْ is one of the "verbs of praise and blame" ( أَمَالَ الْمُكَشَّتْ وَالْأَذَّرَ ) meaning to be bad. The context brings out a physical rather than a spiritual quality to سَيِبَة, for verse 29 describes the سَيِبَة as a place of fire where men are given water like molten brass which scalds their faces.

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

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former sense it describes a companion (4:38), an example (7:177), the way of sinners (4:38), what they do (9:9), and what they judge (6:137). In the latter sense it describes the sinners' burden (20:101) and their final resort (4:97) and abode and resting-place (25:66). This last verse brings out the element of punishment in شَعْرُم (affliction) in verse 65. The verb refers to both Satan (4:38) and Hell (ضَهْرُم (4:115). Finally it refers to the sins of those who: reject (کُبْنُ بَوا) the divine signs (7:177), sell the signs of God for a small price and thus hinder from His way (9:9), commit fornication (ئِلْلَهِ ٍ) (17:32), marry a woman that one's father married (4:22), and set apart a portion of tilth and cattle for God and a portion for associate-gods (٢َٰ٢َلِتْسَرُّ). (infinitive noun of سَعَى; evil) may be applied to a man or to an action and occurs nine times in the Qur'an. Thus سَيْطَرُ (a man of evil nature or doings) would mean a man who does what is evil, displeasing, grievous, or vexatious.\(^1\) The idea of baseness, noted in the discussion of the root meaning, is brought out by the contrast of اسْمَعُرُ (the highest) (16:60).

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

\(^1\)Lane, p. 1457c.
(25:40) and an evil turn [of fortune] (9:98; 48:6). The Qámís and the Táj al-Árús recognize the non-moral nature of the: in these last two verses and thus give it the following interpretations: defeat and evil, trial or affliction or torment, and perdition and destruction or corruption.¹

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

سُوءُ (evil) occurs 51 times in the Qur'an. It is considered the substantive from سَاءُ by the Síyáh, Mupkám, and Qámís. But it is classified as an infinitive noun of سَاءُ by the Kashshāf of az-Zamakhsharí, of سَاءُ by the Exposition of the Qur'an of al-Baydáwí, and of سَاءُ by the Táj al-Árús.² Penrice merely lists it as an abstract noun. It means evilness, badness, abominability.

¹Ibid., p. 1458A, B.
²Ibid., p. 1458A.
or unseeliness; and displeasingness, grievousness, or vex-
ationsness; and immoral, unrighteous, sinful, or wicked
conduct.  

Renice lists سوء and شوأ together as both
meaning evil. Likewise Ikutsu finds difficulty distinguis-
hing between the meanings of the two, though he differentiates
between شوأ in 48:12 on the basis
of grammatical syntax. In the former, he says،سوء acts
like an epithet of the analytic type and is literally
thought of evilness, meaning an evil thought. However, in
the latter, he continues،سوء acts as the object of
شأ، which itself assumes a more verbal nature than in
the former case. The translation thus becomes the thinking
of evilness.  

On the other hand, the قاموس and the تاج العرف
differentiate between the meanings of the two words in 25:42.
They say،شوء means harm, injury, hurt, mischief, or
damage and evilness of state or condition; while،شوأ
means corruption or destruction or perdition.  

However it is the view of this writer that for a number
of reasons it is not fruitful to draw such fine distinctions.
First, as will be demonstrated in the concluding section,
the Qur'an does not as a rule choose words this precisely. Secondly, in ancient writing without vowel points it would be difficult to determine which word was intended. Thirdly, ancient scholars do not even agree among themselves as to which word is being used in some cases. Thus az-Zajjaj says that the word المُنَرَّةَ may be read either المُنَرَّةَ or المُنَرَّةَ in 48:6.1

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

Likewise the Qur'an sometimes uses سوء in a secular sense. In 20:22 it refers to a physical malady such as leprosy and in 16:58 to the bad news of the birth of a daughter. The context suggests misery as its meaning in 16:27: Here or affliction is the obvious meaning in 3:173:

"They returned [from Uhud] with favor ( فَضَلَّ ) from God and grace ( فَضَلَّ ) ; no evil ( سوء ) touched them."

In 4:146 we read: "God loves not the public utterance of harmful ( ظَلَامٍ ) speech except by one who has been wronged ( ظَلَامٍ )." This verse points out that even when the word has a slight moral flavor it is not necessarily conveying intrinsic or absolute sin, for here it can refer to rightful retaliation.

1 Ibid.
The words with which it is contrasted further clarify the meaning. First, it is used in opposition to مَلَأ (mercy) with the sense of harm (33:17). Then it is contrasted with مِّنْ (good) in 7:188 and 3:89. In the former the flavor of harm is brought out, for the words are used of benefits and ills. Likewise the latter brings out harmfulness but also shows an ethical element, for it speaks of the day "when every soul will find present what it has done of good (صَدَقَة) and what it has done of evil (عَبْرَة)."

In a similar, and obviously ethical, way it is contrasted with صُلْبِيَات (good works) in 4:123-124 and أَصَابُ (to act right) in 6:54 and 16:119. In a context similar to that of the poem above about an old woman who saw her evil (سَيِّئَة) as though it were good (مُّسِبِن), it is contrasted with مَسْنِاُ in 35:8: "... the evil (عَبْرَة) of his work has been so adorned that he thinks it good (صَدَقَة)."

The same contrast is seen in 27:11: "... he who does wrong (ظَلَام) and then does good (فُضُّ) instead after his evil (عَبْرَة) [fears not]...." However we must guard against formulating too nice a definition from such contrasts; for in 18:36 مُّسِبب is also contrasted with تَعَيْب (punish), a word with a related but slightly different meaning than عَبْرَة. Nevertheless we are safe...
in drawing a general definition from 27:11, particularly as this verse also uses (do wrong) in a synonymous way. Also it is used in a way similar to (they transgressed) in 4:110 [cf. 7:165 where it is associated with and (they transgressed)].

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

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

1Lane, p. 1485A.
has forbidden (ْمَكَتَم). Another specific sin described by سَوْمَقُ، is the deed, which the Qur'an ascribes to Pharaoh, of having Haman build a tower to reach the God of Moses, who Pharaoh thought was a liar (40:36-37).

Like النَّجْمُ, in the poem of the woman who committed adultery (أَظْلَلَتْ) in 19:28, سَوْمَقُ may refer to sexual license. Thus, when the wife of the Egyptian sought to seduce (بَدْعَتْ) Joseph, the act is called النَّجْمُ (evil) and الأَفْتَنَةُ (indecency) (12:23-25).

In verse 24 az-Zajjaj interprets the words as unfaithfulness to his master and adultery. However, it is not warranted to ascribe the meaning unfaithfulness to his master to سَوْمَقُ, for in the following verse the word is used of adultery alone.

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

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

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1 Lane, p. 1458A.

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"God changes not the condition of a people until they change their own condition." But God remains sovereign, for it continues, ". . . when God intends evil ( زَوْج١ ) to a people, there is no averting it." However, زَوْج here refers more to punishment than to morality; so it is not very helpful. Much more light is shed by 35:8 which states: "... the evil ( شَوْج ) of his work has been so adorned that he thinks it good ( مُنَعَّنَت ). God leadeth astray ( مُدْجَل ) whom He will and guideth ( مُهْدِئ ) whom He will." Not only does شَوْج have a moral sense here, but the final statement explains the first by showing that God is involved in some way.

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

شَوْج (bad, wicked, or evil) is used both as a substantive and an adjective and occurs four times in the Qur'an. Lane also adds the following meanings: abominable, foul, unseemly, unsightly, or ugly, but the Qur'anic words,
though flavored by these meanings, are used in a more ethical sense. In the poem about the old woman, the contracted form of the word (ما سنة) is contracted with (ما مانات) (good), thus bringing out its general use for evil or bad.1 This use carries into the Qur'an where it is contrasted with (صواب) (9:102) -- a word which Pentecost defines as good, sound, free from blemish, perfect, upright, righteous.

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

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

1 سكني is a contraction of سعني , Lane, p. 1458c.
2 Page 1459a.
and the way the plural form lends itself to describe repeated action.

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

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

To develop a more precise understanding of the word it would be helpful for us to see other ones with which it is contrasted or associated. First, like شَوَعْت it is contrasted with رَحْمٍ (mercy) in 30:38, thus bringing out the element of harm or affliction. Its most common antonym, 3

1For the significance of کسب see Torrey, pp. 27-29.
however, is . In 7:95 we read: "We changed the evil (السيئة) for good (الصحبة), till they became affluent and said: Distress (الضَّرَّ) and happiness (الصَّرَف) did indeed touch our fathers." Here we not only see the general nature of لائنة, but it is defined by being equated with لائنة (cf. 11:10 above).

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

Though other secular examples of سَيِّئة and مسِئة might be given (e.g., 3:119; 4:78; 7:168), we shall turn to an example where the words share in both moral and secular connotations: "... whoever intercedes in a good (السَّيِّئَة) cause has a share of it, and whoever intercedes in an evil (السيئة) cause has a portion of it" (4:85; cf. 10:27). Likewise other examples of these words are clearly moral -- for instance, 11:114: "... keep up prayer. ... Surely good deeds (الكَبَّارَ) take away evil deeds (السيئة)" (cf. 25:70).
In 40:40 صاحية a different word for ethical good, is made the antonym of 
ال火车 (believe and do good works), which suggests that the Qur'anic use of 
سبيل (sin) as well as 
سنينة are contrasted with 
أثنا عقوم (the evil) Lane makes a synonym of 
سنينة 1 This is correct whenever the latter is used as just a general word for evil in the sense of sin, but as we have seen often conveys a sense of harm quite foreign to 
سنينة.

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

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

1Page 1459A.
made between ﷲ and ﷶ in 4:31, various forms of the root ﷶ، which are closely related in meaning, are used for great sins. These include the sins of those who falsely reject ( ﷶ ﷲ) the divine signs (7:177), setting aside portions of produce for associate-gods ( ﷶ ﷲ) (6:137), and believe not ( ﷶ ﷲ) in the Hereafter (16:80). Nevertheless, the various forms of ﷶ with their flavor of harm sometimes tend to be lower on the scale of culpability than some of those which express ideas such as rebellion to the divine will (cf. 4:148).

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

١٤١٠، ص٢٨٨، ط١٦
(relative form, worse, worst) occurs twice in the Qur'an. The meaning is certain, for it is contrasted with أَمْسِكَنَ (the relative adjective meaning best) (39:35). The ancient Arabic poetry showed its use for the most evil of men in respect to condition.¹ In its second Qur'anic usage it refers to the worst of the actions of those who disbelieve (كَذَّرَوا) (41:27).

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

**مَسَّكْنِي (an evil deed)** occurs only in 40:58, which reads: "... the blind (لاَّ عَيْنِي) and the seeing (المَبْصِرُ) are not alike nor those who believe and do good (أُمِّنُوا وَعَمِّنَوا الخَبِيرُ) and the evil deed (المَسَّكْنِيَّ). The double contrast is set up with the balance of a mathematical ratio, making the meaning certain. And the addition

¹ 1144. ج: 10 ص 434، ط: 101
² 1144. ج: 20 ص 346، ط: 101
of امتنوا to "مسيح" suggests that an element of unbelief is associated with the Qur'anic use of "مسيح" as we have noticed with other words from the same root (سيبت in 16:60 and 12:77; سمعت in 9:37; سمحت in 45:21).
CHAPTER VII

ลำ

BACKGROUND

Sweetman says that the root gives no clue concerning the meaning of the word.\(^1\) However Comparative Semitics make it possible to suggest the development of thought. The root means tail or end according to the Hebrew zanāb (זָנָב), the Akkadian zabbatu and zimbatu, the Assyrian zibbatu, the Aramaic danbār (דנָבָר) and danbār (דָּנָבָר), and the Ethiopic zanāb (חַנָּב).\(^2\)

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


\(^2\) Koehler and Baumgartner, p. 260B; Brown, et al., p. 275A.

\(^3\) Quoted in K. K. 'Ali, pp. 131, 132, but the original text not available to the writer.
of being overtaken by a fault or rather that which overtakes man, in somewhat the same way as the idiom is used, 'If anyone be overtaken in a fault,' \(^1\) This view, that to be overtaken is the primitive idea, may receive some support from the simple verb ذنب which is not found in the Qur'an but means to follow closely.

However, the use of הָצִינָה (ḥatsinah) (the Piel form of the Hebrew verb) suggests a third approach. It means to cut off or snit the tail or rear. Thus in Joshua 10:10 and Deuteronomy 23:18 it is used of attacking or sniting in the rear. \(^2\) Though this usage lends some support to Sweetman's suggestion, it seems to favor the view that the underlying idea is the guilt which arises from harming someone as in a rear attack.

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

**QUR'ANIC USAGE**

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


\(^2\) Koehler and Baumgartner, p. 280B; Brown, *et al.*, p. 275B.

\(^3\) العربية: ص ١١١٠, ط ٨.
sin, the two uses of دُنْبَهُ in 51:59 not being relevant to our discussion.

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

We have previously noted the use of دُنْبَهُ in 3:193. At that time the writer explained that it was dangerous to differentiate between the two as large sins and small sins respectively, even though the latter is contrasted with كَبِيرٌ in 4:31. However the problem is not so great with other general words for it is made synonymous with نَسُوق or نَسِق (transgression) by its use with فِسقون (transgressors) in 5:49. And it is equated with مُطَلَّقَةً (sin) by its use with
(sinnrs) in 12:29 and 97. The latter identification, as has been noted, finds support in the parallelism of Abū'l-
ʿAtāniya:

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

Likewise it is used to refer to the sin of those who commit indecency (فَاحِيَّةُ ) or wrong (ْظَمَّانُوا ) them-selves (3:134). In keeping with the former it is used of the sin of the woman who tried to seduce (ْرَأَوُنَ ) Joseph and then blamed him (12:23-29). In the following verse (ْبَرَاءُ ) is used of the same act, hence indirectly associated with (ْذَنُوبُ ). Also associated with (ْذَنُوبُ ) are the sins of those who have low desires (ْأَهْوَآءُ ) seduce you (ْفِضْلُوا ) from part of what God has revealed, and turn away (ْكُفُوْنَا ) (5:49).

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

1 Arabic text on page 22.
of the crime (ذنب) that the people of Pharaoh charged against Moses for the man he had killed (26:14).

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

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

The words ... do not negative the claim made repeatedly that the Prophet was sinless. ... the Holy Prophet is described ... as being one who purified others from sin, in 2:129, 151; 3:63; 9:103; and 62:3. How can a sinful man purify others from sin? ... Again, the Holy Prophet is repeatedly

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2 Page 968n.
spoken of in the Holy Qur'an as walking in the way of perfect righteousness and entire submission to Allah. Then he goes on to add some lesser arguments.

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

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

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

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1 Page 901n.
3 sites 245, صرب‌.
4 Ibid.
5 Nicholson, p. 145.
6 sites 253, صرب‌.
We find a similar clause in 47:19 which reads: "... seek pardon for thy ذنب; and for the believers, male and female." Al-Mahallī and al-Suyūṭī (1445-1505 A.D.)¹ record the tradition that the Prophet said, "I ask forgiveness from God a hundred times a day."² But some commentators believe that he was commanded to ask forgiveness, not because he wanted it, but in order to be an example to the Muslims; hence he made the above statement.³ It should be noted, however, that these commentators are later than At-Tabarī and al-Baṣāwī.

Al-Baṣāwī amplifies the same passage as follows:

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

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

The word 'dhaphi-ka ... has been misunderstood as meaning thy sin. In the first place dhaph means any shortcoming, not necessarily a sin .... Secondly, the Prophet never committed a sin and his 1stighfar

¹Nicholson, pp. 454-455.
²مجلة الدراسات الإسلامية، و.FILE:2018年188页 (بيماري: 84年) ص 176.
³Mase, p. 378n.
⁴البيماري، ص578، 84年. 
meant the asking of Divine protection against the
commission of sins. . . . Dhanbi-ka . . . here means
not the sin committed by thee but the sin committed
against thee or the shortcomings attributed to thee.

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

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

¹Loc. cit.
²Page 379n.
³Nicholson, p. 145.
⁴Ibn al-Asim, جمع من عمر الزكزاكي, اكشاف عن قضاط، الفنون الشرعية (مجلد المملكة، جزء 4، 1875)، p. 370.
⁵Ibid.
the affairs of Zainab and Mary, for in these he professed to have the sanction of Divinity.¹ It is not necessary for us to solve this disagreement but just to note that these writers both ascribe sin to the Prophet.

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

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

¹Vol. IV, p. 60n.
²البيضاوي،س٥٨،١٠٣٠٣-٢.٢٠٩.
light on the possible meanings of ذنب.

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

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

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

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

1Page 220n.
Al-Baidawi records a humorous story which is more in keeping with the latter account. It seems a certain حبدة had stolen a coat of mail from تبت and put it in a sack of flour, which left a stream of flour all the way to the house of زيد, a Jew. حبدة was investigated, but he swore he had not taken the coat and did not know anything about it; so they left and followed the line of flour to the Jew's house, where they found the coat. The Jew said that حبدة had given it to him and produced witnesses from among his people. Therefore the Muslim tribe of نفر went to the Prophet to induce him to take their side; so the Jew would not be declared innocent and حبدة destroyed. The Prophet was on the point of doing this, but followed the guidance of God. Thus he was to ask forgiveness for what he was on the point of doing.

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

1 الطبري، ج 18، ص 396.
2 البغدادي، ص 396.
3 Page 396n.
However, al-Badawi, who was closer to the original usage of the saying, does not explain it in this way. He even uses the word مَعْتِزَة to describe a permission which Muhammad had granted, and he amplifies the verse so it reads: "For what reason did you permit them to rest when they asked you for permission, giving false excuses? You have not stopped or waited to know who they were that had not lied and who they were that were liars." Then he concludes by reporting: "It was said that the Prophet had done two things that he had not been ordered to do — his taking the ransom and his giving the permission to the liars. Hence God has blamed him for them."

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

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

1 البسقاوي، ص177
2 Pages 7 and 8.
3 Pages 901n. and 964n.
Demand for a sinless Prophet is inconsistent with Muhammad's view of himself and the Qur'anic view of revelation. In the former Muhammad claims that he is only a messenger (72:21-23). And in the latter, the Qur'an states that it is the verbatim Word of God (cf. 2:97; 26:192-194; 43:40; 85:21-22). Why then must the Prophet be sinless as he is not part of the revelation but only a channel?

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

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

BACKGROUND

Etymologically יָבַע seems to be related to the Hebrew יָבָע (יָבָע), though the thāl and the shīn do not make a normal correspondence. Friedrich Heinrich Wilhelm Gesenius considered the first meaning of this word to fall in duty or to become guilty. He supports his argument by reference to the Ethiopic ḫeqāma (ẖeqāma) meaning fault and ḫeqämä (ẖeqämä) meaning to do amiss. He says that the primary idea is to be sought in that of negligence, especially in going or in gait. Thus יָבַע is used of a slow-paced camel who is faltering and weary.¹ This sense is likewise found in a use of יָבַע in the Ḫeqāmē, where it refers to a slow she-camel. And az-Śaghaṭ uses יָבַע of that which is slack or slow in pace or going.²

However, the Ethiopic to which Gesenius refers seems

²Lane, p. 224, C.
to have another underlying idea. The word ḥagama (חָ֥נָה) can mean foul, filthy, abominable, detestable, ugly, or unsightly (foedus, turpis); and thence convey the idea of to be displeasing (displacere) or to be physically, intellectually, or morally bad (malus esse). Likewise the form ḥagam (חָ֥נָמ) can convey a sense of unsightliness and foulness or deformity (turpitude, deformitas). Or it can convey the idea of hurting, injury or calamity (haesio, malum). Finally, along with the idea of foulness and deformity (foeditas) or harm (malefactum), it develops the idea of disgrace, dishonesty, infamy, or shame (dedecus).¹

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

This writer concludes that צו נ and צו נ are probably related etymologically because their meanings are similar, and only the thā and shin correspondence is not a normal one. How-

¹Dillmann, Christomathia Aethiopica, p. 168.
²Pages 799-80A.
ever, because the Ethiopic also has the ḫ, there is little likelihood that it is related. Hence the most that may validly be said for the Arabic root is that it has developed the meaning of offence or guilt. This might have evolved from the idea of failure to perform duty, seen in the Arabic references to slow camels; but one may not project further back on the basis of the Ethiopic to suggest that displeasure or physical badness is more primitive. However, such projection is unnecessary, for by the time of the Qur'an the idea of guilt or sin has become the overwhelming one of this root. Thus ʿaṣʿ means to sin, commit a sin or crime, or do what is unlawful; and ʿaṣʿ means to pronounce guilty. ¹

**QUR'ANIC USAGE**

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

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

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¹Lane, pp. 21C-22A, and Penrice.

²Pages 21C-22A.
contrasted with the general words "righteousness" and "piety" (5:2). 1

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

Though the above words show its general nature, 2 is a word which particularly stresses culpability or guilt. In 4:112 we read: "... whoever commits a "naught" or an "impunity," then accuses an innocent one of it, he indeed takes upon himself the burden of a "wrong" and a manifest "wrong."" Of this additional crime "impunity" and "wrong" are used, thus evidencing the culpability inherent in them.

Furthermore, in 49:12 we read that "suspicion" sometimes ("accusation") is. This quality which makes it would seem to be guilt.

Many passages illustrate the guilt found in the word. Thus, if someone does a permitted thing, there is no 3

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1 It seems that Gardner is going beyond the text when he makes this verse support his opinion that the word expressed "the action done to another in revenge or in re- quital for supposed injury or evil done by that person, but of which he is innocent" (p. 9).
on him (2:203). Even if one does a forbidden thing there is no blame on him if he does it through necessity, without lusting (بِأَغْشَى) or exceeding the limit (عَالِمُ) (2:173). And in 5:107 we read: "If it be discovered that they [the witnesses] are guilty of (lit. deserving of -- سَكَّةٌ) two others shall stand up..." Here the use of سَكَّةٌ points out the culpability. Finally, in places such as 2:203 above we find it used in the same way as بَشَاء (blame) and in similar contexts (e.g., 2:158). The obvious conclusion is that it means the same thing.

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

¹Page 22A.
²البيضاوي, س. "الآثار"
probable injunction; and, if so, it combines with the other verses to suggest the inwardness of sin.

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

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

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

¹ However we cannot use 4:20 to support this, as Gardner does (p. 9); for فَتْي (plunder) and فَتْي are only words used of the same action and are not necessarily equivalent as a result.
Thus we see its use for willful eating of forbidden food (2:173; 5:3). In fact Stanton claims that it is used largely of ceremonial offences.¹ But the verses above plus the ones we shall now consider show this to be an overstatement. It is used of the greatest of moral sins. Thus ُدميا (manifest sin) is used of the act of those who forge the lie (ِّبَيَّنَةٌ وَاهْتَزَأَنَّ وَالْكُفَّارِ) against God (4:50). And the word is used of the actions of those who disbelieve and buy disbelief (3:176-177). Finally, it is used of the unforgivable sin ُشرك, which is called ُأَنَامم (a great sin) (4:48).

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

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

¹Page 56.
active participle; one who sins, an evildoer) appears only three times. Twice it describes those who conceal testimony (2:283; 5:106); and in 76:24 such a person is combined with the (disbelieving or ungrateful one), and neither are to be obeyed.

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

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

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

\[1\] Lane, p. 22A.
CHAPTER IX

BACKGROUND

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

In the North-West Semitic branch we see the Hebrew הָרָם (ḥāram) which in the Hiphīl form means ban, devote, exterminate. With the first two meanings it particularly had a religious connotation but later came to be used of things hostile to the theocracy. Thus, it is used of not permitting (Hoph'al form) a sorceress to live (Exodus 22:13 (19 in Hebrew)). In the Syriac ṣāḥrēm (ṣāḥrēm) the sense of sacred prohibition remains strong for the word means anathematize or excommunicate. Likewise the religious sense is strong in the Paleo-Hebrew הָרָם (ḥāram) which means...
consecrated (consecré). The South or South-West Semitic branch also has a strong sense of the sacred. We see this as well as the development of a legal strain in the Ethiopic šerām (ח צ'א) which means prohibit from common use, consecrate to God, and esteem unlawful.¹

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

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

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¹Brown, et al., p. 355B.
²Levy, p. 199.
³Brown, et al., p. 355B.
⁴Ibid., p. 356.
⁵Ibid., p. 5530.
is related to above, and it begins to show a polarity between what Westerners would call a legal and a sacred emphasis, though the Semite of the time would not see this as a divergence. It means the state of being forbidden, prohibited, or unlawful and the state of being sacred or inviolable, sacredness, or inviolability; and it means the state of being revered, respected, or honored.  

QUR'ANIC USAGE

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

The sacred element alone is found in (a holy place, asylum), which appears in 28:57 and 29:67, and (the Sacred ordinances of God), which appears in 2:194 and 22:30. As these only cast indirect light on the problem of sin, we will not treat them further here. Likewise need not be developed in this section on sin; for, though it retains the sense of forbidden or deprived, it is not in the religious sphere of taboo. It

1 Ibid., p. 555a.
rather refers to one who, together with the beggar, is a worthy recipient of alms (70:25). He is one suffering privation (cf. 51:19; 56:67; 68:27), perhaps through shame or a sense of decorum.

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

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

[to make sacred, forbid, make or declare

¹Penrice does not include this meaning, but see 9:37.
unlawful (with accusative of things and of persons]) occurs 39 times. Again the meaning is clear for in 4:19-24 it is contrasted with (was permitted) and is used synonymously with (is not lawful). Another helpful verse in this connection is 7:157:

He enjoins on them ( ) the right ( )
And forbids them ( ) the evil ( )
And permits ( ) to them the good things ( )
And prohibits ( ) for them impure things ( ).

The parallel couplets make it quite plain that is an antonym of and a synonym of , a conclusion supported by 4:160-161 where the three words again appear. Likewise the word is defined by the context of 24:3, where a divine prohibition is made and then referred to by . As we noted under , the system of taboo still clings to certain usages; thus game of the land is forbidden ( ) as long as one is on pilgrimage (lit., in a state of sanctity -- ). Yet from taboo three qualities of prohibition develop within this word. First, some have a strong element of inviolability because of holiness or sacredness. We see this in 9:37: "...they allow it [the Sacred Month] one year and forbid it ( ) another year, that they may agree on the number which God has made sacred ( ) and thus permit what God has forbidden ( )." The context almost forces the meaning sacred or hallowed upon the second occurrence of in this verse and allows it in the other two occurrences.
The second quality of prohibition is inviolability because of pollution. In this category would come the flesh of swine (كُرَّمُ الطَّيِّبَةِ) which is ( تَفْسِير) in 2:173 and ( حَرَامُ الْحَيَاةِ) in 6:146. The third quality is void of any concept of holiness or pollution, but just the idea of prohibition remains. Of this category is 5:72: "Surely whoever associates [others] ( يَشَارِكُهُ) with God, God has forbidden ( حَرَامُ مُحْرَّمٍ) to him the Garden."

We have seen in general that God forbids ( حَرَامُ حَرَامٍ) impure things ( حَرَامُ الْبَيْعَةِ) (7:157). We shall now see what they are specifically, starting with the more ceremonial and working up to the increasingly moral sins. They are: game ( صيد) of the land while one is on pilgrimage (5:96); what dies of itself ( المُضْرَرَانِ), blood ( دُمُّ الْكُرَّةِ), the flesh of swine (كُرَّمُ الطَّيِّبَةِ), that over which any other than God has been invoked ( يُدْعَى أَيُّهَا الْمُكَفَّرُونَ) (2:173); the strangled ( المَنْتَزِهِ), that beaten to death ( البَطْنَةُ), that killed by a fall ( البَطْنَةُ), that killed by going with the horn ( النُّجُومُ), that which the wild beasts have eaten ( أَكَلَ الْبَشَّارَ) -- except what you slaughter ( دُقُومُ مُكَبَّرٍ), that which is sacrificed on stones set up [for idols] ( دُقُومُ عَبْدُ النُّحْبِ), and that which one seeks to divide by arrows ( دُقُومُ الْحَتَّالَ). Also ( فَخَوَّرُ) is applied to usury ( إِلَّا الْفَخْوَرَ) (2:275) and the marriage of close relatives (4:23) and (for believers) the marriage of an adulterer ( الْمُثَلَّةُ), an adulteress.
I will recite what your Lord has forbidden to you: Associate naught ( ﷺ) with Him, 
slay not ( ﷺ) your children for poverty . . . , and draw not nigh unto heinous crimes ( ﷺ), 
on open or secret, and slay not ( ﷺ) the soul which God has forbidden (or made sacred) -- ﷺ . . .

Added to this list is sin ( ﷺ), unjust rebellion ( ﷺ), and saying about God what one does not know (7:33).

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

On the other hand, it is wrong to make lawful what God has forbidden (9:37), for things so prohibited are transgression ( ﷺ) (5:3) and sin ( ﷺ) (7:13) and likewise involve one who does them in sin ( ﷺ) (cf. 2:173) and blame ( ﷺ) (cf. 4:23). And those who do not forbid them are with those who do not believe ( ﷺ).
in God nor the Last Day and are to be fought by the believers (9:29).

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

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

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

Prior to this word Penrice lists (prohibition), but this form is not found in the Qur'an.
inviolability, without any sense of holiness or pollution, and is found in 5:26, where the Promised Land is forbidden to the Children of Israel.
CHAPTER X

BACKGROUND

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

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

¹Kochler and Baumgartner, p. 804.
²Brown, et al., p. 853A.
³Nicholson, pp. 121, 123.
And the heart was admiring her;  
And indeed today he began to forget that,  
It awoke not doing evil or wrong!  
But forgetting itself in beauty.

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

نصيب نصيبه من رأي ولادة كل ظلوم غشوم  
نباطنها من حر في لنف وظاهرها من جان الغنم

The Destiny of Nasibih from her Lord,  
Is to be governed only by a tyrannical oppressor.  
The internal part of her because of these is in Hell;  
And its external part is in Paradise.

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

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

1. أصححني، ج. 16، صف. 19-21، س. 328.
2. ابن عطاء الله، تاج الغرورين (مسنن 1483)، ج. 1، ص. 101، ط. 3.
3. كيلد، ج. 1، ص. 487، ط. 3.
perception. We see this in 5:16 which reads, "God . . .
brings them out of darkness (الظُّمُّ) into light
(الَيْيَضُّ) . . . and guides them into a straight path."

However, al-Asma'I, al-Azhari in the Tahqîq, the Sibîh, x
al-Fayyumi in the Mîṣbîh, and others suggest another under-
lying idea. They say أَلْعَلَّا means the putting of a
thing in a place not its own, putting it in a wrong place
or misplacing it; and this is by exceeding or falling short
or by deviating from the proper time and place and the trans-
gressing of the proper time and place. The Tafsîr al-'Arûs
adds the meaning the transgressing of the proper limit.

This interpretation is illustrated in the Tafsîr al-'Arûs by
the sentence: ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ -- which
is interpreted as meaning, He who asks (or desires) the wolf
to keep guard surely does wrong (or puts a thing in a wrong
place). ¹

Likewise Ibn as-Sikkit interprets إِنَّ الْبُوْمَ الْيَوْمَ وَالْبُوْمَ الْيَوْمَ ﷺ (Verily separation is to-day, and the
day has wronged [us]). ²

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

¹Lane, p. 1920A.
²Ibid., p. 1921A.
equally well without the introduction of the spatial element. Secondly, with the strong Semitic evidence for darkness as the root meaning of these cognate words, it is difficult to see how the spatial element became so prominent in its ethical development -- unless it was transposed from the more common Qur'anic concept of sin as separation from the Way of God.

Furthermore, the likelihood that the spatial element was introduced would seem to be lessened by the fact that we have already noted a transitional step between the physical and moral meaning of forms from this stem in 5:16.

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

Thus we are faced with the dilemma of having some forms which are obviously related to the root idea of darkness and this occurrence which suggests an underlying meaning to be wanting or to be less than a standard. However, we find a
possible solution to our dilemma in the Hebrew root גל ( ngọt), which is actually composed of two roots. The one we have already noted in such forms as the Akkadian שיאמ. It means grow black and appears in the Arabic in such forms as ﯽ kab (grew dark) and ﯽ kab (darkness).

The primitive meaning of the other root is to cut off. It appears in the Hebrew גלע (_notes_0051), which means image and comes from the idea of something cut out or chiseled. This root is found with similar meanings in the Assyrian גלע, the Sabean גל (_notes_0051), the Aramaic גלע (_notes_0051) and the Syriac גלע (_notes_0051).

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

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

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1 Koehler and Baumgartner, p. 804a.
the same three radicals as the first. Secondly, the root idea of to cut off explains the origin of the meaning to be wanting found for جل in 18:33. Thirdly, this underlying idea can explain why certain Arabic lexicographers above interpreted forms from this stem as meaning to be, or put a thing, in the wrong place. For from the idea of to cut off, thence to be wanting, can be found the idea of being short of a standard, thence in the wrong place. Fourthly, the derived meaning of being short of a standard explains the meaning injustice, which we have noted in the ancient poetry and which comes to dominate the ethical use of the forms from this stem in the Qur'an. For injustice is being short of the standard of justice, as revealed in the divine will.

QUR'ANIC USAGE

When we come to the Qur'an, we notice that the primitive meaning of the first root remains in the جل form. At times this has a physical flavor which approaches the idea of calamities. We see this in 6:63, which reads: "Who is it that delivers you from the darkness ( جل ) of the land and sea?" Again we see this meaning in 21:87 which says: "... he [Jonah] called out in the darkness ( جل ), There is no God but Thou...!" As we have noticed, at other times the Qur'an uses the primitive meaning of the first root in the metaphorical sense of spiritual lack of perception. Thus we read in 2:256: "God
is the friend of those who believe; He brings them out of darkness (الظلامات) into light (النور). And those who disbelieve, their friends are the false deities (الشامخات), who take them out of light (النور) into darkness (الظلامات)." These verses explain the following Qur'anic forms: the noun ُظَلَمْ (in 10:27 and 36:36), which means darkness or one who is in darkness; and ُظَلَمَ (in 2:20), which means to be dark.

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

Other antonyms bring out a more general use of the forms -- particularly the verb ُظَلَم and the active participle ُظَلَم. For example, 27:11 speaks of one "who does wrong (ُظَلَم), then does good (ُعَمِّسَ) instead after evil (ُعَمِّسَ)." The contrasting of both ُظَلَم and ُعَمِّس suggests that they are roughly equivalent. The form ُظَلَمْ is used antithetically with ُظَلَمْ (19:72) and ُظَلَمْ (45:19) -- verbal and participial
forms describing those who guard themselves or are dutiful and pious.

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

On the other hand, there are numerous verses which use and interchangeably of the same people (e.g., 29:47, 49; 5:44-45). Other verses equate the two -- for example, 2:254: "... the disbelievers (they are the wrongdoers (".

A man can commit in his relationship with God, man, and himself. First, regarding man's relationship to God, we read: "Surely, ascribing partners (to God) is a grievous wrong (31:13). Thus is of. Stated otherwise, the are those who serve (besides God that which He has not authorized (22:71), call (besides God what can neither benefit nor harm one (10:105), or say they
are also gods (21:29). Likewise we read in 6:21: "... who is more unjust \(\text{ظلم} \) than he who forges a lie \(\text{كذب} \) again? God or falsely rejects His signs. Surely the wrongdoers \(\text{الظلمون} \) will not be successful." Secondly, regarding man's relationship to other men we read: "Surely he has wronged thee \(\text{ظلمك} \) in demanding thy ewe [to add] to his own; and surely many partners wrong \(\text{يتعاك} \) one another...." (38:24).

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

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

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1 Pages 152-161.
by Muhammad Kasim Husain. The latter study includes notes by Kenneth Cragg, who attaches a discussion of Zālim in the introduction to his English transliteration of the same author's book Fā'irīyat. Because these studies are already in existence, it would be superfluous for this writer to record his analysis of the forms from this stem further. Therefore we only need to consider how some of the occurrences of Zālim affect issues raised in the previous word studies.

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


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

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

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

This flexible use of words is illustrated by 27:11, which contains the words: "... he who does wrong (ظلم) then does good (حسى) instead of evil (سيّرة) ...." In this verse ظلم and سيّرة are both contrasted with حسى -- hence should be equivalent to each other. In a general sense they are, but the preceding study has shown that they emphasize different aspects of sin. Similarly الداري (the devout or God-fearing) is contrasted with البدون (the deviators) (26:90-91), السري (the sinful or guilty) (44:44,51), and الظالمون (the wrongdoers or unjust) (45:19). Of still more significance is the contrast between الظالمون (the wrongdoers) and الراويون (the believers) (17:82). The interrelation of concepts, also referred to in the fourth argument above, is illustrated by الاعتدى (to exceed the limit). This word is associated with the diverse concepts behind taboo or unlawfulness (ظلم) (5:87), injustice or wrongdoing (ظلم) (5:107), guilt or sin (ظلم) (5:107), and sodomy (26:165-166) -- which is described as filthiness or abomination (amiliar) (7:80).

Despite revealing a certain flexibility in the use of words, these contrasts also suggest that the Qur'an does not make a clear differentiation between the nature of sinners and their actions or between faith and works.
In like manner ُذَنَم (evil) (3:62) and بِكْرَة (calumny) (4:112).

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

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

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

²For reasons noted in the Appendix, the Biblical views of the world and sin are developed here, along with the somewhat similar Qur'anic concepts, rather than there with the other pre-Islamic views.
the Bible there is one sovereign God who will not share his glory with any other. A king does not take part in a periodic recreation of the world. Demons, and also jinn in the Qur’an, still find a small place; but the sovereign God is in complete control. Man, rather than being integrated with the cosmic order as in ancient religions, is fallen—though in a somewhat different way in the Qur’an than in the Bible.

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

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

obedience to a list of stipulations set down by the superior.1 This structure is clearly seen in the most formative covenant of the Old Testament — that made through Moses (Exodus 20).

Here, on the basis of God's care for Israel (vs. 2), she is called upon to obey the stipulations of the Decalogue. Other covenants are mentioned such as those with Noah (Genesis 9), Abraham (Genesis 15:18), and David (Psalm 89:20-23, 34); but in these God swears to keep certain promises. On the contrary, the Mosaic covenant only imposes stipulations on man.

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

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

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

The idea of a fall, of man estranged from God, gives a new depth to the Biblical and Qur'anic views of sin. Men were not judged now by such human values as brave and generous action as in the "tribal humanism" of Arabia. Rather they were judged by their relation to a holy God. Unlike the Egyptian
gods, who were little more than enlarged men and subject to shortcomings, the God described by the Bible and the Qur'an is transcendent. Thus the great confession of the Old Testament is "The Lord our God is one Lord" (Deuteronomy 7:4), and the first two commandments of the Mosaic covenant show the violation of this to be sin. In like manner the Qur'an states, "God bears witness that there is no god but He" (3:17), and the unforgivable sin is ُشَرَك (4:48). The higher God is elevated, the deeper sin is lowered.

However, the idea of the covenant, as it has been discussed above, brings out the most important understanding of sin. In 2:83-84 and 3:80 the covenant is mentioned and its contents elaborated. Then the following words, describing man's relationship to the covenant, are used: تُوَّلِّي (he turns back), مُخِيَّرِين (transgressors), مُغْرَض不同于 (were averse), ُعْدُوُّون (exceeding the limits), ُعْمَّن (sin), ُكَفَّرُون (you disbelieve). The implications of this covenantal understanding of sin will now be developed. First, as has been noted, the covenant in the Qur'an, as in the Bible, asserts that it is revealed (3:60-63; 5:47). Thus the concept of sin as disbelief ُكَفَر becomes prominent (e.g., 3:85). In contrast to ancient Mesopotamian religion where this revelational element of law is not found, the Qur'an, like the Bible, develops a new aspect of sin. In 7:27 there is a suggestion that the pagan Arabs believed their practices
divinely commanded, for they are portrayed as saying: "We found our fathers doing this and God (or the god) has so commanded us." However, this verse might rather show an attempt on the part of the pagans to give their traditions the status of revealed commands in opposition to the claim of revelation by Muhammad. In any event, the vagueness of religious ideas in pre-Islamic Arabia, particularly in the northern and central parts, was a contrast to the clear idea of revelation in the Qur'anic utterances. Thus sin as unbelief took on a new clarity.

A second implication of the covenantal idea was that there was a personal element behind the moral law. God had given the covenantal commands in the Bible (Exodus 20:1-2) and the Qur'an (5:7). Thus sin was not aberration from cosmic harmony as in ancient Egyptian religion but was the breaking of a relationship and disobedience or rebellion against God (e.g., 7:77; 10:15; 50:24; Isaiah 59:2, 13; Nehemiah 9:26). The Qur'an does not have a highly personal confession like Psalm 51:4: "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned." Nor does it develop the personal element to the extent found in Hosea (where sin against God is compared to marital unfaithfulness) or in the story of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32). But, through the covenant, the personal element still forms the basis of the law. Behind this opposition to God is proud self-assertion on the part of man
(e.g., 23:21; 38:74-75; 96:6-7; Psalm 10:2-6; I Timothy 3:6). Man becomes anthropocentric, as in the "tribal humanism" of pre-Islamic Arabia, rather than theocentric. And this is sin.

The third and most prominent implication of the covenant is that it forms the basis of law, and sin then is transgression or disobedience of that law (e.g., 2:223; 23:5; 68:6; Joshua 7:11; 1 Samuel 15:24; Nehemiah 9:26; I Timothy 1:9). This development of divinely revealed law in the Qur'an is in sharp contrast to the paganism of Arabia where men's actions were based on common practice, not law. However, before one can understand the nature of sin in relation to the law, it is necessary to understand the nature of law in the Qur'an. Like law in the Bible, it is not based on the Ideal or an abstract idea of law as in ancient Greece. Rather, as has been noted above, it is based on a relationship with God. His revealed will as expressed in commands is the norm of action. Though the preserved tablet (الَّذِيْنِيْنَ كُلُّهُ) in 85:22 (cf. 43:4) might be interpreted as referring to a static conception of revelation, and hence law, the progressive nature of the revealed commands to meet new situations gives a more dynamic conception of law in the Qur'an. One should also note that though the Qur'an develops law rather than theology, it does not make a clear differentiation between faith and works as the Protestant Reformers did. The Qur'an constantly relates
the two (e.g., 18:38). In the covenant the two are joined. Its nature as divine revelation calls forth faith, and its content of commands calls forth obedient works. Thus in

the Qur'an "the disbelievers (الكفرون) are the wrongdoers (الظالمون)" (2:254).

The emphasis that has been placed on the personal element behind the law is not to deny that the increased legal influence would lead the Muslims to think of sin only in terms of the breaking of a catalogue of laws. This process was repeatedly found among the Israelites and was fought by the prophets. The ideal of the community in the Qur'an, as in the Old Testament, was a theocracy. Hence laws came to cover every area of life. But, because all were believed divinely instituted, there was not a clear distinction between ethical and cultic transgressions. Both were a breach of God's law. Though the concept of taboo found in paganism is significant enough to warrant a separate discussion below, it might be noted at this point that some of the old taboos (though partly re-interpreted) became integrated with the all-inclusive legal structure (e.g., 2:222, Leviticus 5:2–3). However, instead of the divine wrath which broke forth automatically when something taboo was violated in South Arabian religion, guilt in the Qur'an came to be determined more by intention than specific act (e.g., 2:173; 6:120; 17:33).
Nevertheless the Qur'an never spiritualizes the law to the extent of some of the Biblical writers -- particularly in the New Testament. Thus Christ considered the Pharisees as sinful because of their pride even though they strictly observed the external ordinances of the Jewish Law (Matthew 12:34; Luke 18:11-14). The New Testament writers did not consider the law unimportant (Matthew 5:17; John 14:15; Romans 7:7, 20). They rather considered it insufficient by itself (Matthew 5:20; Romans 3:20). It points out the sin, but man cannot meet its standards, for he has an innate bias toward sin which can only be corrected by a divine transformation of the life (cf. Genesis 8:21; Romans 1:16-32; 3:20; 17:14-25; 12:2). Thus when one seeks to determine the nature of sin by analyzing its relation to the law, he is led to a contrast between the Qur'anic view and the view which is increasingly developed in the Bible. Sin for both is transgression of the divine law. But in the Bible sin is increasingly interpreted more spiritually and less legally as the nature of the heart is given priority over the observance of law. Likewise the nature of sin is seen as irremediable (without a divine transformation of the inner life) as the Biblical doctrine is developed that law cannot control man's innate bias toward sin. The Qur'an has elements of both doctrines, intent is more important than act (cf. 2:173), and 12:53.

1"The soul is an inciter (ةُجِّرُ) to evil."
might be interpreted as teaching that man has a bias toward sin. But the Qur'an does not develop these doctrines in the way the Bible does. Thus law keeps its prominence with the resultant implications for the nature of sin.

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

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

The use of شرع, however, does raise the problem of the extent to which pagan ideas of taboo entered the Qur’an. As has been noted, the concept of شرع in polytheism was more concerned with the violation of what was unclean or sacred than with a high moral or spiritual standard of conduct. On the contrary the Qur’an is concerned with raising the standard of conduct with its many laws. It even speaks against certain pagan taboos concerning food (6:144-146). Nevertheless, as in the Bible (Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 11:1-12:8; 18:19; 20:18), certain elements with their roots in the old taboo system are carried on in the Qur’an. It likewise has its forbidden foods (2:172; 5:3; 6:146; 16:115) and restrictions such as not approaching women during menstruation (2:222). The Qur’an here tends to parallel the Mosaic framework of thought, even where its restrictions are different (e.g., 6:146-147), for
it has the same type of restrictions. Despite the fact that the simplified restrictions of the Qur'an are similar to those suggested by some of the early church leaders (Acts 15: 28-29), their emphasis in the Qur'an remains more important (cf. Matthew 15:1-20; Mark 7:2-8, 15; Acts 10:9-18).

One should note, however, that these survivals from the old taboo system are almost always transformed. Instead of the emphasis being on some resident spiritual power, it is now on the divine law of God. In like manner though the Ka'bah was retained as a sacred place, it was by divine command (2:125), and most other pagan places were not retained. Likewise the belief in jinn was retained; but, as noted by Ignaz Goldziher, they were no longer a major element of the Weltanschauung. The study of مهـ has revealed a similar evolution in its use. It has been traced back into the old taboo system. In the Qur'an it is still used of that which was considered unclean (2:173; 5:3), though, as noted, these unclean items were now determined by the divinely revealed law. But the use of مهـ is not confined to survivals from the taboo system, it is used of any prohibitions including شرط (8:152; 7:32-33).

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

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

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

¹Hence the concept of sin was not further deepened by a belief that sin could only be atoned for by death.
significance to the familiar words. Instead of wrongdoing in the social realm being associated with unwritten mores, it was now associated with divinely revealed law. Where the old social mores were still operative, their frame of reference was increasingly the divinely-guided community based on faith rather than the old clan based on blood. Instead of cultic wrongdoing being the violation of something mysteriously taboo or sacred with automatic punishment, it now was associated with a personal God. The conception of this God and the morality required by His law were both elevated with the resultant deepening of the sense of sin expressed by the familiar words. Yet there was another new element which affected the words. It was the sense of urgency created by a belief in impending judgment and doom. The backdrop for this awareness may have been the social crises facing Arabia at the time, but Muhammad saw in these what the Old Testament prophets had seen in their time — the judgment of God. And he called men to a new awareness of sin that they might repent and submit to the revealed will of God.

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The major results achieved by the word studies have been incorporated into the preceding discussion of the context of these words in the Qur'anic view of the world and sin. Here
an attempt will be made merely to list some of the results achieved and to mention the extent of their originality. First, there are the results which are only incidental to the main thrust of the study but arose because they bore upon the interpretation of certain words in specific contexts. Of such a nature were the discussions on the involvement of God in human sin which arose in connection with the analyses of ُنَا، ُأَقْتَرَ، ُنِعَتْنَ، ُنَأَوَيْنَ، ُأَضْلَلْ. The conclusion reached was that words for leading astray or causing to err have the same meaning when God is the agent, for God is involved in leading men astray and sealing hearts. However they are generally portrayed as retributive acts, and it is claimed that God does not wrong (( نَأَوَيْنَ) men.¹ Furthermore this interpretation, that God leads astray, was shown to be in keeping with that of as significant a theologian as al-Ashari. Bahar was cited as stressing the retributive nature of ُأَضْلَلْ when used with God as the agent, but no previous study had treated and synthesized the results from the other relevant words. And such modern Qur'anic translators as E. N. 'Ali and A. Y. Ali still translate ُأَضْلَلْ as leaves in error or leaves astray when God is the agent. Another conclusion of only incidental significance to the main thrust of the study was that ُدُنْبَ still meant sin when used of an

¹Pages 36-37, 44-46, 58-59, 71-72, 121.
action of Muhammad despite the contrary view of such modern
Muslims as M. M. 'Ali that Muhammad was sinless. The conclu-
sion of the writer was also shown to be in agreement with
the interpretations of early commentators.

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

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1 Pages 84-92.
2 Pages 2, 118.
3 E.g., see طغي , p. 49.
4 Page 121; cf. 5:94; 6:115.
lack of understanding and forgetfulness. Certain ones of these theological observations have been made before, but their implications have not previously been integrated with both philological study and the world view together.

Other results of the study, which are also secondary in nature, pertain to the development and use of the words in the Qur'an. The first concerns the evolution of the meanings of words from those that are physical to those that are moral. It is natural that such a progression would be found in the forms of عذرو because evil is thought of both in physical and moral terms. However evidence of similar development has been noted in other words, not only in their pre-Qur'anic development, but also in the Qur'an itself. For example, forms of عذرو and عذرو, طغي have been noted with secular and religious connotations. The evolution of thought is quite clear in forms of عذرو. The form ١ عذرو with the

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١Pages 27, 53, 72.
٣The analysis of طغي has shown how the Qur'an not only developed the meanings of words but in turn formed the background for their more precise definition in the post-Qur'anic period (see p. 22a).
٤Pages 64-66, 78, 74-75.
accusative and عين means to pass by or away from. The root idea develops an ethical character in عدوان which is used of the transgression of an agreement or relationship by, for example, a hostile act. As the breach becomes related to the moral law, it develops the idea of injustice. As the Qur'anic law developed in Medina, words not only took on an ethical character but also a legal one. Thus نَكَر was used of exceeding the limits of what was lawful ( نَبِيْل ) concerning divorce. Likewise فَتْم develops from the idea of taboo until it becomes a general word for prohibition and is contrasted with أَكْل and used for anything that the law prohibited including شَرَك.

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

1 Pages 52-53.
2 Page 55.
3 Page 57.
4 Pages 106-108.
5 Pages 68, 120-121.
word for sin in one case but implied that it had the more specific sense of injustice in another. ¹ Finally the use of the various forms of ² shows that the Qur'anic vocabulary does not distinguish clearly between the state of sinfulness or guilt and the action of wrongdoing. ² Certainly Arabic lexicographers have been aware of the development and use of many of the words studied. However the synthesis of these ideas, particularly as they were influenced by the developing Qur'anic law, is original.

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

¹Pages 34-55.
²Page 95-100.
³E.g., pp. 67-68, 81, 96, 98, 99.
all the necessary words. Yet such a study was seen to be necessary for most of the words were observed in other languages, and the present study has suggested some relation between the previous monotheistic faiths and the Arabian monotheism which provided Muhammad with the vocabulary for the Qur'an. However, because Arabic is a cognate language to Syriac, Judeo-Aramaic, and Hebrew and as a result has parallel forms, Arab philologists have tended not to recognize the probable influence of the latter upon the vocabulary of Arabian monotheism. Furthermore, the most developed word studies, those of Gardner and Imatsu, did not trace the development of meaning in the pre-Islamic Arabic poetry when necessary. Yet without such study, one sometimes has difficulty determining either the existing meanings available to the writer or the relationship between the meanings of different forms from the same root. Thus the first ten chapters were attempts to give definitions of the designated words in historical focus.

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

1E.g., p. 77.
possessed would have to be found in the world view. Secondly, the words were chosen for study because of their general nature with the result that they were observed to be used rather flexibly and with an interrelation of concepts. Again the world view was necessary for unity and significance. Thirdly, and most important, most of the words were observed to be held in common with other languages and religions. Hence whatever uniqueness they possessed was to be found in the world view. There is some originality in the discovery of the factors themselves which led to this conclusion. It was possibly the failure of recognizing the flexible use of words which led Gardner and the writers of the Qāmūs and the Ṣaj al-'Arūs to make more precise definitions of words than valid. There is also originality in the conclusion and its ultimate development, for Qur'anic scholars have not previously analysed the words for sin in the context of their world view.

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

1Pages 5, 67-68.
exclusive elevation of God resulted in a deepening of the sense of sin in the old words. The covenant was seen as central in the world view. Its revelational character led to a new clarity and authority concerning what constituted sin. The fact that God had issued it gave a sense of rebellion against God to any disobedience of the law. And finally its laws determined what constituted sin. It was law rather than social mores or some vague concept of taboo which now governed the understanding of sin. And the general words for sin which were studied gained their new significance from this understanding. They now expressed non-conformity to or transgression of the revealed will of God as expressed in His covenantal law. As noted above, other men have observed the place of the covenant in the Qur'an. But it has been a contribution of this study to attempt to spell out the implications of this insight as they relate to the Qur'anic vocabulary for sin. But there has been still another observation of this study which philologists usually miss but which profoundly affects the significance of the words used. It is the depth and urgency of the message. In contrast to the Arabians before him, Muhammad saw the transcendence of God and the imminence of doom; and as a result his words conveyed the deep tragedy of sin.
APPENDIX

PRE-ISLAMIC VIEWS OF THE WORLD AND WRONG

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

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

¹S.g., Richard Bell, The Origin of Islam in its Christian Environment (Edinburgh, 1925); Charles C. Torrey, The Jewish Foundation of Islam (New York, 1933); and Andras.
many of the foreign and indigenous elements found in the
Qur'an.\footnote{Cf. Hamilton A. R. Gibb, "Pre-Islamic Monotheism in
Arabia," Harvard Theological Review, LV (1962), 269-280; W.
Montgomery Watt, Muhammad at Mecca (Oxford, Clarendon Press,
1953), pp. 24-29, 135-164; Nicholson, pp. 139-140; Alfred
Guillaume, trans. and ed., The Life of Muhammad (Translation
of Ibn Hisham's recension of Ibn Ishaq's Strat Wasil Allah;
and ed., Translations of Ancient Arabian Poetry (New York,
1930), pp. 90, 92, 112, 113.} Fourthly, a discussion of "sources" is not
necessary for the purposes of this paper. All that is
necessary is that the previous conceptions of sin in the
context of their world views be outlined so that the Qur'anic
conception might be given historical and theological focus --
thereby showing contrasts and similarities and their develop-
ments.

First we shall look briefly at the ancient NearEastern
religions.\footnote{The following outline of pre-Islamic views of the world
and wrong will rest heavily on secondary sources because it
is not an original contribution of this thesis but is merely
added to lead historical and theological focus to the study.} Even though these religious predate Islam by
many centuries -- in that they form the background of the
Old Testament -- they warrant some consideration because some
of the words studied have been traced back to this period and
because they show polytheistic world views lying behind and
in some way related to the polytheism of Arabia. These views
of the world and sin are seen to be in sharp contrast to the
views of the Bible and the Qur'an — even though elements of
the ancient views will be seen to crop up on occasion among
followers of the later monotheistic faiths. Henri Frankfort
states: "The ancients . . . experienced human life as part
of a widely spreading network of connections which reached . . .
into the hidden depths of nature and the powers that rule
nature."¹ Because whatever was significant was embedded in
the life of the cosmos, he points out that the king's function
was to maintain the harmony of that integration. He notes
further that, though this doctrine is valid for the entire
ancient Near East and for many other regions, there are con-
trasts between the two centers of ancient civilization --
Egypt and Mesopotamia.

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

¹Kingship and the Gods: A Study of Ancient Near Eastern
Religion in the Integration of Society and Nature (Chicago,
³Henri Frankfort, Ancient Egyptian Religion (New York,
Columbia U. P., 1948), pp. 73-74.
The good was not that which in the modern sense was ethically right or the evil that which was morally wrong. Rather the cosmic forces and natural processes were personified in human form and were thus subject to human shortcomings and instability, and "the good was what they willed and loved and the evil that which was contrary to their desires and the right ordering of things, and consequently displeasing to them."\(^1\)

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

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3 Ibid., p. 163.
in Psalm 51). The guilt was recognized by its consequences, for the gods struck automatically when a divine decree was transgressed. However the individual might not know exactly what his offense had been. It is true that the Mesopotamians had a law in the Code of Hammurabi, but this should not be considered a revealed law in the sense that the Law of Moses or the Qur'anic laws claim to be. As noted by George Ernest Wright, the text makes clear that the king was only commissioned by the god to prepare the code; he did not receive it from the god in its present form.

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

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

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

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

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


3Ibid., p. 673.
wrongdoer as "the enemy (or hated) of God" (عدو الله).

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

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

The temple was called ḫmr because it was sacred and hence inviolable by the profane or impure. Thus, in the world view of the Southern Arabians there was a clear distinction between the profane and the sacred and between the pure and the impure.

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

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

¹Gonzague Rychmans, Les Religions Arabes Présomianiques
(2nd. ed., Louvain, Bureau du Musée, 1951), pp. 5, 27-30; and
"La Confession Publique des Pêcheurs en Arabie Méridionale

²W. Robertson Smith, The Religion of the Semites (Re-
print of Lectures on the Religion of the Semites, 1889) (New
those who were tardy in paying what they had promised to the
temple. Furthermore, as noted in the religion of the ancient
Mesopotamians, this wrath of the god breaks forth automati-
cally, roused by the transgression itself and not by the
moral disposition of the one to whom it was imputed. In
this context an individual could become culpable by commit-
ting involuntary or unconscious wrongs or by sharing in group
responsibility even though he did not commit the wrong himself.1

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

1Krockman, Les Religions, pp. 35, 37-38, and "La Con-
sorceresses, who tried to intervene in the laws of nature, and divination was used to interpret omens. However there was also a developed cult with priests who performed ritual functions and rendered the oracles of the god, while the faithful rendered homage to the divinity by apporting to him offerings and sacrifices.¹

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

¹Ryckmans, Les Religions, pp. 7, 9-12.
²Ibid., pp. 8, 12-13; Smith, pp. 142-143; 445-446.
what Watt calls "tribal humanism" was more effective by the
time of Muhammad than the archaic religion. 1 According to
this perspective, meaning in life was to be found in belong-
ing to a tribe which could boast of bravery and generosity
and in having some share in these. Thus the realization of
human excellence and the concomitant survival of the tribe
were the chief ends of life.

Besides the archaic religion and "tribal humanism," mono-
theism was also found in pre-Islamic Arabia. Historical
records point this out by their description of the 
*pantri*. 2
But the internal evidence of the Qur'an also implies the fact,
for words and references with monotheistic content are used
without explanation and presuppose sufficient apperception
on the part of the hearers. The content of this monotheism
was vague, 3 and a great deal more study is necessary to deter-
nine its constituent elements. However an analysis of passages
such as 55:33-54 suggest that it included material from the
Old and New Testaments, from poets such as Zuhair, and from
native Arabian tradition. 4

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

1Pages 24-25.
2Guillaume tr., Ibn Ishaq's *Siyas*, pp. 98-104.
3Cf. Watt, pp. 158-161.
4Cf. Gibb, pp. 272-278.
concept of wrong, but so also does the fact that there is some uncertainty as to the texts, the authors, and the dates of much of the fragmentary material from the period.\(^1\) However, the fact that this monotheism was so strongly infused with Biblical thought somewhat lessens the need for a separate analysis. It will only be noted here that among the monotheists there was a belief that God created and sustained the earth (cf. 29:61-63). Further, He had revealed Himself and His will in the Tablets of Moses (cf. 53:36-36). In a phrase reminiscent of Psalm 1:6, IAbîd describes right conduct as the way of the righteous.\(^2\) And an-Nâ‘ibîgha says that God requires his justice and his fidelity (أَنَّ نَآَبِيَّ ۚ إِنَّهُ يَتَابِعُ ۙ وَهُوَ يُحْفِظُ).\(^3\) In this context, sin would obviously include turning from God's revelation (as it did in the time of Muhammad — cf. 29:61; 53:33) or committing injustice or not being faithful to God. Zuhârî implies that this sin need not be an overt action but may be hidden in the soul when he says:

\[
فَلَوْنِ ۖ كَذَّبْتُمْ ۙ أَنْتُمْ مَا كُنْتُمْ مُّضْطَرِّيَّينَۢ إِلَّا نَفْسَكُمْ وَمَا يُحْفَظُۢ إِلَّا نَفْسُكُمْ.
\]

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

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\(^1\) Cf. Andrae, p. 39.

\(^2\) Lyall, p. 90.

\(^3\) (London, 1870) ed. W. Ahlward.\(^4\) Cf. \(\text{Ibíd.}\)
Before one turns his attention from pre-Islamic Arabia, however, we should note that, despite the presence of many Biblical borrowings or parallels, there is a melancholy or pessimistic fatalism which runs through the poetry. Thus Ḳaṭṭ writes:

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

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

are so many parallels between the views of the Qur'an and Bible -- particularly those of the Old Testament -- that separate discussions would involve unnecessary duplication. This conclusion, that the perspectives of the Bible and Qur'an have much in common, is borne out not only by the internal evidence of the views presented but also by the express claim of Muhammad. Thus in 5:48 we read that the Book revealed to Muhammad is a confirmation and guardian of the previous revelation of the Torah and Gospel, though the verse also recognizes some differences between them.

In contrast Muhammad expressly repudiates polytheism (e.g., 4:68). During Muhammad’s early ministry Islam assimilated not only elements of the belief of the Jews but also some of their practices such as fasting and the qibla. Later, after they had rejected Muhammad’s message, he changed the month for fasting and the direction of the qibla but he retained the practices. Thus, even deliberate alterations such as these did not affect the Jewish framework of thought and practice.
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