2020

Dignity: An Islamic Perspective

Zeki Saritoprak

Follow this and additional works at: https://collected.jcu.edu/fac_bib_2020

Part of the Islamic Studies Commons
DIGNITY

An Islamic Perspective

Zeki Saritoprak

INTRODUCTION

Islamic conceptions of dignity are rooted in a theocentric vision and anthropological claim that all humans possess the *imago Dei* and a dignifying status as children of Adam. In fleshing out these conceptions, I draw primarily on sages from the Qur'an and classical, medieval, and modern commentaries. I undertake a comprehensive theological and linguistic analysis of the Qur'an terms *al-ins, al-nas,* and *al-insan,* used to describe humanity. As the art of Most-Beloved and Most-Merciful and the vice-regent (*khulafa'*, pl. *khulafāʾ*) God on earth, humanity possesses inherent physical and spiritual dignity that enjoins legal commands and moral duties. I also explore, however, the way which certain passages of the Qur'an depict human beings as weak and vulnerable to deception and desire. I argue that, at its essence, dignity in the Islamic tradition reflects an awareness of human frailty and human reliance on God.

In explicating Islamic perspectives on dignity canvassed in the Qur'an, I engage Muslim scholars and mystics from differing historical contexts, including al-Tabari (d. 923), Abu Mansur al-Maturidi (d. 944), Abd al-Karim al-Khaliq (d. 1306), Ibn Khizar (d. 1373), Muhammad Hamdi Yazir (d. 1942), and Dinuzzaman Said Nursi (d. 1960). Through their commentaries on the sayings of the Prophet, we can gain insights into the ways in which Islamic thought disabuses notions of superiority, emphasizes effort and duty over lineage, affirms that the path of justice involves respect for others and supplication before God.
In Islam, all creation is important because everything was created by God. Within the realm of creation, though, human beings have a special place and are the most important creatures in the universe. If the universe is a tree, human beings are the fruit. This is arguably an axiom of the Islamic tradition, and the importance of human dignity is outlined in the major sources of Islam, in particular the Qur'an. Before exploring what the theological sources say about human dignity, some etymological information is useful. The term that is used for the dignity of human beings is a derivative of the root k-r-m, *karama*. As a noun, the word that is defining human dignity is *al-karama*. In contemporary literature, because of the Islamic source's use of this term, human dignity has been terminologically spoken of as *karamat al-insan*, literally "the dignity of human beings." Basically, *al-karama* is the term that all related references use to refer to the dignity of human beings. A second word from the same k-r-m root is used to call someone or something noble, has connotations of honoring someone, and is used to indicate the dignity of human beings. The Qur'an uses this second, transitive form when it speaks of the dignity of human beings: "Surely We have dignified [karamat] the Children of Adam and carried them in land and sea, and We have given them good things as sustenance. And We have made them superior to many other creatures that We created" (17:70). This dignity is generally understood as the superiority of human beings over other creatures. That God has dignified human beings means God has made human beings superior in comparison to other creatures. The opposite of the term *al-karama* is *al-thana*, which connotes humiliation. The technical word *al-karama* should also not be confused with the Sufi understanding of the term, which describes extraordinary events performed by mystics.

As an adjective, the k-r-m root becomes *al-karim*, which means "honorable" or "the one who is dignified and honored." To indicate the honorable position of someone, the Prophet would often use the word *al-karim*. For instance, when describing the prophet Joseph, after whom chapter 12 of the Qur'an is named, the Prophet of Islam said: "He is *al-karim*, the son of *al-karim*, the son of *al-karim*, the son of *al-karim*. Joseph [is] the son of Jacob the son of Isaac the son of Abraham." This indicates that Joseph and his ancestors were all honorable and dignified by God because they have the honor of prophethood, knowledge, beauty, chastity, and character. Also *al-Karim* is one of the 99 Names of God. God is the Most-Honorable and the Most-Generous. In other words, God gives bounties extensively to human beings so His honor and generosity are unlimited. Human beings are also called *al-karim*, but their *karama* is by definition limited. Therefore the term that is used to define human dignity has several connotations, and, in fact, all of them are taken into account when we speak of the dignity of human beings. These connotations are honor, dignity, majesty, exaltedness, chastity, generosity, and kindness. These are all considered the qualities that contribute to the dignity of human beings. Furthermore, human beings are honorable just because they are human beings. With this regard, all human beings share the same honor regardless of their skin color, religious affiliation, and other characteristics. This is because the Qur'an speaks of the dignifying of the children of Adam and is part of what separates human beings from other creatures.

There are several specific reasons why human beings are dignified in Islam. One is that God made human beings with His own hands (see Q 38:75). This means that God gives paramount importance to human beings, and, as such, they are the most special art of God. Similarly, there are verses which state that God put into human beings a part of His spirit (Q 32:7-9) and that human beings are dignified because they have been made in the most beautiful way; that is, they were made in the image of the Divine name al-Rahman, the Most-Merciful (Q 64:3). It can be argued that among Muslim theologians there is a consensus on the dignity of human beings to the extent that, even during times of war, it is not permissible to mutilate the body of an enemy. This is a legal command that requires Muslims to dignify human beings qua human beings, enemy or friend.

With this in mind, we should now turn to what the classical Islamic sources, especially commentaries of the Qur'an, have to say on the subject. They are scholars of their time, but some elements of what they have to say are useful to us today, others not. Thus, my approach is not simply to repeat them, but instead to build upon them and use them to frame my own interpretation. The obvious need for modern interpretation and analysis aside, it is refreshing to see how even early commentators were very progressive, and the modern world can benefit from their understandings. It is important to note that many Western philosophers and humanists have developed a specialized literature on human dignity. For example, August Comte and those who followed him approached humanity in a very independent way that disconnects humanity's relationship with the Divine. This approach has led some people to erect a statue to humanity, as literally happened in 1983 in Brazil. The Islamic approach to humanity is considerably different. Humanity is the art of God, but it should not be considered an object of worship. Therefore, since Islam is a theocentric
tradition, any idea that suggests worshipping human beings and making human beings the standard for moral rule and worship will be at odds with the core teachings of the religion on the nature of humanity and be rejected by Muslims. In other words, humanity is to be loved and to be honored because it is the art of the Most-Beloved and the Most-Beautiful. Human beings are expected, as the thinkers of the Book of the Universe, to contemplate how they were created as a Divine art (Q. 41:53). And further, the Qur’an commands human beings to contemplate within themselves (Q. 30:8). More importantly, human beings are expected to serve each other, and this service again has a Divine connection because serving one another leads to the pleasing of God. The Prophet of Islam said: “The best of human beings are those who are the most beneficial to human beings.” With this in mind, let me turn to the understanding of humanity in the Qur’an and Hadith.

In the Qur’an, the nature of humanity is spiritual. In fact, every human being can become so high in dignity and honor that he or she can reach a certain level of perfection. Because spirituality is so essential in human life, I will first briefly examine how mystics have understood human dignity, then I’ll examine more closely what the Qur’an and the sayings of the Prophet, the two major sources of Islam, say about humanity. Because thoroughly examining the mystical dimension of human dignity is beyond the scope of this chapter, two examples—one from the classical and one from the modern period—should suffice. One of the most well-known and significant works on human dignity is by Abd al-Karim al-Jili (d. 1306). Al-Jili’s famous book is generally known simply as Al-Ishār al-Kamīl (The Perfect Human). The same title is also given as an honorific to the Prophet of Islam, and al-Jili describes the Prophet of Islam as a model for human dignity and a perfect human being. In the entirety of the creation of human beings, if one makes a pyramid of perfection, the pinnacle contains the prophets of God. Among the prophets of God, the five elite prophets—Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad—are the most perfect examples for humanity. In fact, the Qur’an speaks of the Prophet of Islam as “a beautiful example” (33:21). Also, Abraham and “those with him” are presented as models for human beings (60:4–6). One section of Al-Ishār al-Kamīl directly speaks of the perfect human being. Here, al Jili describes the Prophet of Islam. This section is the foundation of the book, and the entire book is an explanation of the dimensions of this perfect human being. As the culmination of perfection, al-Jili describes the journey of human beings toward the eternal life.

In the Islamic pyramid of creation, technically speaking, angels are higher than human beings, but because human beings have free will and can improve themselves, they may become higher than angels. However, if they use their capabilities in the wrong direction, these dignified and precious human beings will become lower than animals. If human beings make the effort to improve themselves, they will join the group of human beings on whom God has bestowed His favors and bounties (Q. 1:7). As al-Jili describes, they will reach their eternal abode and become eternal. Thus it is interesting also to see that some Muslim theologians use the name Dar al-Kamāma for Paradise. Literally, this means “the Abode of Dignity” or, descriptively, “the Abode where the Divine bounties are plentiful.” Furthermore, the significance of being honored by God is that human beings can supplicate to God as they wish. They can ask God for what they want and when they want it. Because of this honorable position, even if they make mistakes, their repentance is acceptable. This is true even if they break their promise and repent again. Al-Qushayri (d. 1074), the prominent mystic and commentator of the Qur’an, cites a hadith qudsi: “I gave you before you asked Me. I forgave you before you asked for forgiveness.”

A modern example of literature on human dignity is found in the work of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (d. 1960), a prominent scholar-mystic from Turkey. This is Nursi’s commentary of the Qur’anic verse: “Surely We have created human beings in the best form. Then We returned them to the lowest of the low, except those who believe and do good deeds” (95:4–6). This work has been translated into various languages, with one of the translations in Arabic being al-Insan wa al-Inman, or Human Beings and Faith. In his magnum opus, called the Treatises of Lights, Nursi elaborates on the importance of human beings extensively, but in this treatise, he specifically focuses on humanity and faith and how human beings can have spiritual elevation through faith and connection with the Divine.

THE QUR’AN AND HUMANITY

In Islam, the most important source of theological and religious knowledge is the Qur’an, the Holy Book of Islam. Therefore to understand human dignity in Islam, one should start by understanding what the Qur’an says about human beings. The three most important words in the Qur’an for human beings or people are ‘al-ins, al-nas, and al-inman. All of these terms derive from the same
root, a-n-s, which means "sociable, nice, or friendly," and, importantly, these three words also connote a level of civilization. The first word to mention is al-nas, which is usually translated as "human beings" or "humankind." The most commonly used variant in the Qur’an is al-nas, which means "the people" or "humanity." However, the third term, al-insan, is perhaps the most well-known word for human beings found in the Qur’an. This term is used as a shorthand for banu Adam, which means "the children of Adam." The children of Adam are honored by God and are the most eminent creatures in the realm of creation. The Qur’an also uses the word babaar, which literally has something to do with skin and corporeality, but is used to mean "human" as opposed to deity. In the Qur’an, God instructs the Prophet of Islam to say, "I am only a bashar" (18:110). That is to say, I am not a deity; I am a human being.

Since the most well-known term for human beings is al-insan, it is appropriate to examine some relevant verses in order to see how it is used in the Qur’an. It should be noted, however, that the concept of al-insan in the Qur’an is not monolithic. It is a large idea that in itself would require a major study to examine fully. Human beings are remarkably dignified in the Qur’an, but there are verses that speak of the negative characteristics of humanity. One verse says, "God wants to lighten your burden, and human beings in [al-insan] are created weak" (6:28). Another verse describes al-insan as the ones who deny God's bounties and are excessive wrongdoers (14:34). Another verse notes their psychological weakness: "Human beings pray for evil as they pray for good, and human beings are ever hasty" (17:11). The Qur’an further says: "And human beings are more than anything prone to dispute" (18:54). Another Qur’anic verse speaks of humanity’s relationship with the Divine: "Surely We have created human beings, and We know what their souls whisper to them, and We are closer to them than their jugular veins" (50:16). Yet another verse challenges human beings because of their irresponsible actions: "Do human beings assume they will be left without aim?" (75:36).

In connection with al-insan, one must also make mention of Satan. According to the Qur’an, Satan is the enemy of human beings and always wants to benefit from human weaknesses. He is an extraordinary enemy who can ruin the future for human beings if they are not strong enough to resist. Also, the Qur’an speaks of another enemy of human beings that is within themselves. This is al-naﬁ al-mumna, or "the evil-commanding soul." The evil-commanding soul is described by many Muslim mystics as the outpost of Satan in human beings. This is not to say that human beings are evil, but to underline the fact that if human beings do not work hard to achieve perfection, they can easily become victims of these negative forces. The Qur’an gives the story of Adam and how he and his wife were deceived by Satan; therefore one can see a constant warning in the Qur’an to human beings about the possibility of being deceived. In almost all Quranic verses where Satan is mentioned, he is described as the enemy of human beings and must be taken seriously.

The Qur’an presents human beings as the vice-regents of God on earth. The following two verses are probably the most quoted Quranic verses on the dignity and importance of human beings. The first verse is related to the importance of human beings and their superiority over other creatures. The verse says, “Surely We have honored the Children of Adam and carried them in land and sea, and We have given them good things as sustenance. And We have made them far superior to many other creatures that We created” (17:70). Scholars of Islam and Qur’anic commentators have given many explanations of this verse that reflect the value of human beings. Some commentators refer to the human capacity of reasoning. Others refer to the capacity of speech or to the beauty of the human face. One of the earliest commentators of the Qur’an, Abdullah bin Abbas, who was also one of the companions of the Prophet, comments on the above verse by saying, “Eating with their hands, while other creatures eat with their mouths, made human beings superior over other creatures.” In fact, another Qur’anic verse speaks of the fingers of human beings as a Divine gift. Indicating that God could have made human hands and feet like the hooves of camels and donkeys, the Qur’an says: “Yes, indeed we are able to make whole his [their] very finger tips” (75:4). The commentator al-Tabari (d. 923) would say being supervisors over other creatures is what makes human beings superior. Scholars generally take the Qur’anic language to be inclusive, that is, to include both believers and unbelievers as honored because both are the creation of God and have received the bounties of God. This honor is related to the ability to reason and distinguish between what is right and wrong and consequently to make choices, that is, to have free will.

From a theological perspective, all human dignity is derived from God, the Creator. God through His gifts to human beings has endowed them with a noble place in the cosmos. That place is as khulafa, or God’s representative on earth. In Islamic theology, creation can be considered a pyramid. Human beings, on the whole, are somewhat near the top of that pyramid. Generally speaking for contemporary Islamic theology, human beings, because of their quality and encompassing knowledge, are considered above rocks, microbes, plants, animals.
and even angels, though some have accepted archangels as being higher than human beings. Theologically speaking, human beings are supervisors over all creatures. Human superiority is a theological truth laid out in several Qur'anic verses that speak of the bowing down of angels before Adam and Adam's knowledge of "the names." These verses are the foundation of this belief in the superiority of human beings over other creatures. However, there are also verses that speak of human beings' accountability and their responsibility to God, to fellow human beings, and to the environment. In other words, human beings are superior over other creatures, but are not permitted to do whatever they please. Human beings' actions among themselves and toward other creatures have to be in accordance with Divine command. They can do anything that is allowed, but must avoid anything prohibited.

The most notable verses that discuss humans' superiority use the word khalifa. Khalifa is the Arabic word for "successor," which was also used for the successors of the Prophet. Among the places where khalifa is used, the most important for a discussion of human dignity is in 2:30–37. This long section is part of the conversation God had with the angels related to Adam, the first human being and the first prophet. The Qur'an says:

And remember when your Lord said to the angels: "Surely I am placing a khalifa on the earth." They said: "Will You place on it one who will cause corruption and will shed blood, while we are exalting You with Your praise and sanctifying You?" He said: "Surely I know what you do not know." And He taught Adam the names of all [things that have a name], then presented them [i.e., the things He had taught Adam the names of] to the angels, saying: "Tell Me the names of these things, if you are truthful." They said: "Exalted are You! We have no knowledge except that which You have taught us. Surely You, only You, are the Most-Knowledgeable, the Most-Wise." He said: "O Adam! Inform them of their names," and when He [Adam] informed them of the names of things, He [God] said: "Did I not tell you that I know the secret of the heavens and the earth? And I know what you display and what you hide." And remember when We said to the angels, "Prostrate to Adam," they all prostrated except Iblis. He arrogantly avoided [doing so] and became one of the disbelievers. And We said, "O Adam, you and your wife stay in the Garden and you both eat freely as you desire, and do not go near this tree or you both will be among the wrongdoers." But Satan caused them both to slip up and took them both away from what they had been in [of the bounties], And We said, "Go down all of you. Some of you are enemies to others of you. And for you on earth there is a place of dwelling and enjoyment for a time." And then Adam received from his Lord some words [of revelation] and He [God] accepted his [Adam's] repentance. Surely He alone is the One who accepts repentance and the Most-Merciful. (2:30–37)

Theologians' commentaries on these verses generally state that God wanted to show the importance of consultation because God did not need the angels' opinion. God tells the angels that He will create on earth a khalifa. Yet, the angels appealed to their superiority as innocent, peaceful creatures who spend their existence praising God, whereas this khalifa would shed blood and cause destruction on the earth. The angels' concern is that human beings will love bloodshed on earth, but the Divine response is clear. It indicates that even if some of them will commit evil actions, the good will outweigh the bad. Even if those who do good are low in number, they will be higher in value. God tells the angels several times in these verses that He knows things the angels do not, and, in order to show the superiority of these khalifas, God teaches all names to the first of them, whom we know to be Adam. "This shows that these khalifas are knowledgeable and therefore honorable and the angels are asked to recognize them. God then tests Adam and the angels, asking them for the names. Adam's knowledge is superior because he is capable of learning and developing and possesses free will, but angels are static and do not possess these abilities.

HUMANITY'S VICE-REGENCY

We have established that human beings are God's khalifas on earth. But, what does it mean to be a khalifa? Commenting on verse 2:30, al-Tabari says, "Khalifa is when you say: Someone succeeded someone on this matter. When he [or she] takes the place after that person, the person becomes his [or her] khalifa... That is why for the Sultan, the title Khalifa is given because he succeeds the previous ruler and takes his place." Muslim theologians and commentators of the Qur'an have elaborated on this concept. Surely it is an honorable position given to human beings by God to the extent that angels were asked to show their respect for this new creature by bowing before him. Some recent theologians, such as Said Nursi, go further by saying that the Qur'an equates the earth with the heavens in many verses because of the honorable position of the earth as
the home of these khulafa'. Being on earth, humanity adds to the value of the earth in comparison to the heavens. It should be remembered that according to Muslim theologians, the highest of these khulafa' are the messengers of God, particularly the five elite prophets, and therefore their having lived on earth, makes the earth equal in comparison to the much larger heavens. A recent Turkish commentator, Muhammad Hamdi Yazir (d. 1942), interprets these verses as if God is saying to the angels about human beings the following: “I will give these successors certain authority from my own power and free will. They will be able to exercise their authority over creatures as my representative. In my name they will apply some of my rules and carry them out. They are not the originator of these rules and will not carry them out for themselves. On the contrary, they will be representing Me and they will be My apprentices and be commanded to use their free will to apply My will, My commands, and My laws. And they will practice this generation after generation.”

It is evident, therefore, that these verses indicate the importance of human beings as the khulafa’ of God on earth. This dimension of human beings is frequently emphasized. For example, al-Qushayri, in commenting on these verses, says that it is God who has created all of Paradise and what is in it, and the Throne with what it encompasses of design and beauty. But He never consulted with angels saying He is creating Paradise or the Throne or angels. Instead, to show the honor and privilege given to human beings in the personality of Adam, God speaks to the angels and tells them He will create a khulifa’ on earth.

In general, commentators on the Qur’an speak of khulifa’ as the representative of God on earth, but there are commentators who understand the word in a different way. Since the word khulifa’ itself has the connotation of succession and representation, a minority of commentators understand the word to describe the succession of one generation of human beings to the next. Most prominently, Ibn Kathir (d. 1373) takes this approach. Despite not being well known in the Islamic tradition, this way of approaching khulifa’ is interesting for a study of the idea of human dignity. For Ibn Kathir, the word khulifa’ means “a nation succeeds one to another, century after century and generation after generation.” He then proceeds to list a long lineage of these successors, which includes the great figures. This idea is not at odds with the majority opinion and, in my view, enhances it by showing how humanity is part of a living chain that stretches from Adam to us today.

The prophets of God are the highest human beings in the realm of humanity, and therefore they deserve this title of khulifa’ more than other human beings. Theologically speaking, the prophets were exceptional human beings and are often called perfect human beings. Further, they directly represented God on earth and spoke on behalf of God. In the Qur’an, we have the stories of many of these great human beings. As an example, let us examine the story of David. The Qur’an speaks very positively of David as someone who received God’s bounties to the extent that even mountains were commanded to be co-worshipers of God with him (34:10). He is known as the one who constantly returned to God, al-awwnab (38:17), and David is directly addressed by God as khulifa’. “David! Surely We have made you khulifa’ on the earth; therefore judge with truth [and justice] between people, and do not follow [your] desire such that it will deviate you from the way of God. Surely those who deviate from the way of God have an awful punishment, for they have forgotten the Day of Reckoning” (38:26). This verse clearly states the importance of David as the representative of God on earth, but it also indicates two important qualities that should be followed by all the offspring of Adam. The Qur’an, by addressing David, indirectly addresses all khulafa’, asking them to have two essential qualities.

The first of these is to act justly and to serve justice. Justice is the foundation of human society. In fact, one of the names of God is the Most-Just. If human beings do not follow the way of justice, they cannot be representatives of God on earth. Justice is emphasized because human beings have great capacity for justice and injustice toward their fellow human beings, other creatures, the environment, and so on, and the evil-commanding soul can easily lead them to transgressions. Following the path of justice is a challenge, but human dignity requires it. Justice is so significant that chapter 55 of the Qur’an, on four occasions, emphatically asks human beings to establish justice: “And He raised the heaven and He established the balance so that you not transgress the balance. And establish the measurement with justice and do not come up short of the balance” (55:7–9). The second quality is self-awareness of human weaknesses. Human weaknesses can deviate humanity from the path of justice to the path of desires. Therefore, God addresses David, and through David addresses all human beings, saying that they should not follow the path of desire. This will deviate them from the path of justice. Human beings are not to follow desires that can cause them to do injustice and to transgress on the rights of others. It can be argued that these qualities of justice and self-awareness are, at least in part, what distinguish the human community from animal communities.
A basic understanding of human beings’ positive and negative characteristics is fairly self-evident, but in the Islamic tradition part of what makes one’s angelic qualities manifest and leads to a fuller recognition of human dignity is not simply doing good deeds and refraining from evil ones. It is also in understanding the frailty and impotence of human capacities and human beings’ reliance on God for all human advances. Nursi continues:

This means that human beings’ domination and human advances and the attainments of civilization, which are to be observed, have been made subject to them not through their attracting them or conquering them or through combat, but due to weakness. They have been assisted because of their impotence. They have been borrowed on them due to their indigence. They have been inspired with them due to their ignorance. They have been given them due to their need. And the reason for their domination is not strength and the power of knowledge, but the compassion and clemency of the Sustainer and Divine mercy and wisdom. They [Divine mercy and wisdom] have subjugated things to them [human beings]. Yet, what dress human beings, who are defeated by vermin like eyeless scorpions and legless snakes, in silk from a tiny worm and feeds them honey from a poisonous insect is not their own power, but the subjugation of the Sustainer and the bestowal of the Most-Merciful, which are the fruits of their weakness.  

Perhaps paradoxically then, is human beings’ own weakness before God that is the source of human achievement. As the famous Muslim mystic Uwais al-Qarani in his supplication says, “You are the Great and I am the weak. You are the Giver and I am the beggar. . . . You are the Healer and I am the sick.” Human beings are dignified not because they are great and powerful creatures. Human dignity comes from their supplication to and relationship with the Divine and the status of human beings as the addressees of God. Human beings are imputed this dignity at birth, and that dignity qua being human cannot be taken away. For instance, a thief still has a certain level of dignity because he or she is still a human being. That person’s humanity might be extensively affected by his or her actions, which can cause it to fall down a few rungs in the ladder of humanity, but still that person’s position can be reclaimed through repentance. It is like a candle that can burn brightly but also be covered or even put out and still be relit. Whether the candle is out or burning brightly, for the candle to burn to its fullness, there

| One of the most quoted verses of the Qur’an dealing with the dignity of human beings says, “Surely We have created human beings in the most beautiful form” (95:4). The verse indicates human physical and spiritual dignity. It also indicates that such a creature of the Divine deserves to be the vicegerent of God on earth. Human beings, as God’s most sophisticated creatures, are given this position. According to the Islamic theology, human beings are pure by nature. Yet, despite the natural goodness of human beings, they are capable of committing evil. Indeed, as can be seen from verses 2:30–37, above, even Adam committed sin. However, unlike in the Christian tradition, there is no concept of “original sin”; there is no transmission of the sin of Adam and Eve to their offspring. It is strongly emphasized in Islam that no one is to bear another’s burdens (6:164, 17:15, 35:18, 39:7, and 53:38). That is to say, children are not responsible for the crimes of their parents. Everyone is responsible only for his or her own actions. Furthermore, in Islam, all children until the age of puberty are considered innocent and pure, and it is only when a human being reaches puberty that he or she becomes responsible and accountable.  

It is for this reason that in the realm of creation, human beings are the ones whose level of quality is nonstatic. Individual human beings can be lower than animals or higher than angels. Perhaps the best examples of this in the Qur’an are Pharaoh and Moses, and many other examples can be given from human history. Theologically, this is related to the dualistic nature of human beings. In describing human arrogance Nursi gives the following description of human beings:

O human beings! There are two aspects in you. One is of creativity, existence, goodness, positivity, and action. The other is destruction, nothingness, evil, negativity, and passivity. In regard to the first aspect, you are lower than a bee and a sparrow and weaker than a spider and a fly. In regard to your second aspect, you exceed the mountains, the earth, and the heavens. You have taken upon your shoulder the burden that they were afraid to take so you assume a circle larger than they do. The reason for this is that when you do good deeds and when you do something creatively, you do it according to your capacity and to the extent of your hands and according to your own power so you can do positive, creative things accordingly. But when you do bad things and are destructive, then your evilness transmits and your destruction spreads.  

Perhaps paradoxically then, it is human beings’ own weakness before God that is the source of human achievement. As the famous Muslim mystic Uwais al-Qarani in his supplication says, “You are the Great and I am the weak. You are the Giver and I am the beggar. . . . You are the Healer and I am the sick.” Human beings are dignified not because they are great and powerful creatures. Human dignity comes from their supplication to and relationship with the Divine and the status of human beings as the addressees of God. Human beings are imputed this dignity at birth, and that dignity qua being human cannot be taken away. For instance, a thief still has a certain level of dignity because he or she is still a human being. That person’s humanity might be extensively affected by his or her actions, which can cause it to fall down a few rungs in the ladder of humanity, but still that person’s position can be reclaimed through repentance. It is like a candle that can burn brightly but also be covered or even put out and still be relit. Whether the candle is out or burning brightly, for the candle to burn to its fullness, there
must be constant positive actions and intentions. This takes us to the concept of contemplation in the creation of human beings through which the relationship with the Divine is strengthened.

CONTEMPLATIVE HUMANITY

The Qur'an emphatically states that the main purpose of the creation of human beings is to worship God. It says, "I have not created human beings and jinn [invisible creatures parallel to human beings] except that they worship Me" (51:56). The concept of worship has a large connotation. Praying five times a day is an act of worship, but so is clearing the path for others so that they can easily walk and are not harmed. In fact, the Prophet emphasized that to be beneficial to others is a form of worship. Similarly, many solitary spiritual acts are also acts of worship. Indeed, within the tradition of Islamic spirituality there is a well-developed literature on such personal acts of worship. For present purposes, I will concentrate on one, contemplation, for its direct connection to human dignity.22

There are many Qur'anic verses that invite human beings to contemplate the signs of God in nature. For instance, the Qur'an says, "And on the earth are signs [e.g., mountains, seas, trees, fruit, etc.] for those who are sure in faith. And in yourselves [there are signs], will you not see [them]?" (51:20–21); "We will show them Our signs in the horizons and in themselves until it becomes clear that it [the Qur'an] is true. Is it not enough that your Lord is the Witness over everything?" (41:53). Other verses invite human beings to contemplate their own existence: "It is God the One who created the earth for you as a sheltered place and the sky as a ceiling and formed you and beautified your images and provided you with good sustenance. That is God your Lord. And Exalted is God, the Lord of the worlds" (40:64). There is also an emphasis on the importance of the creation of human beings. A Qur'anic verse says, "Then We made the drop [of semen] into a clot [of blood]. And then We made the clot into a lump [of flesh]. And then from the lump We made bones and We clothed the bones with flesh. Then We made it another creature. Exalted is God. He is the Most-Beautiful of creators" (23:14). In his commentary on this verse, al-Razi (d. 925) says, "If you want, just contemplate only one organ among the organs of the human being, and that is the eye. He [God] created the black pupil of the eye, and then circled it with the whiteness of the eye. He then covered it with the blackness of the eyelash. God then framed that blackness of the eyelash with the whiteness of the eyelid, then created the blackness of the eyebrow. He then created above that the whiteness of the forehead. God then created the blackness of hair. Let this just be as an example of the Divine creation in human bodies."23 From here, al-Razi goes further and compares this world to a city: "This world is similar to an urbanized village, or a well-prepared guest house. All of its benefits are directed to human beings. The human in this world is similar to a president who is served, or to a ruler who is obeyed, all other animals compared to him are like slaves. All this shows that human beings, in the sight of God, through His dignifying of them, have a very special place."24 Indicating the importance of human status in the universe, Umar, the second caliph, while defending the rights and dignity of a Coptic Egyptian, admonished his governor in Egypt by saying, "How can you enslave people while they are born from their mothers as free?"25 This indicates the free nature of every human being and shows that slavery is anathema to the dignity of humanity as strongly advocated by the Islamic tradition.

God has given human beings a special status in the realm of creation and subjugated all other creatures to them, and one of humanity's duties is therefore to be thankful, but not all human beings are grateful for this Divine gift. In fact, the Qur'an says, "It is God who has made the night for you to rest in it and the day for you to see. Surely God has bestowed bounties upon human beings, but most human beings are not thankful" (40:61).26 People are either grateful or ungrateful (76:3). Those who develop their angelic qualities and are aware of the Divine bounties are seen as grateful, while those who develop their satanic qualities are seen as ungrateful. Similar to other traditions, this dualism in the Qur'an takes the form of right being good and left being bad. This is most notable in 56:27–44. The Qur'an here speaks of the beauties of paradise, which "the people of the right [hand]" (56:27) will receive, and the torments of hell for "the people of the left [hand]" (56:41). Further, chapter 56 goes on to note that it is these people who "persisted in the great sin" (56:46). But it should be emphasized that it is only those who fail to correct their behavior who are doomed.27 Nevertheless, whether individual human beings are good or bad, humanity as a whole is still the reflection of the Qur'anic verse: "Surely We have honored the Children of Adam" (17:70). Thus, since the Qur'anic language on the dignity of human beings is comprehensive, regardless of one's faith or beliefs, all human beings are considered dignified by God simply on account of their being human beings.
In Islam, there are two distinct ways in which an individual praises God. One is the conscious praising of God, and the other is unconscious. The former is the praise of the believers, and the latter is the praise of the body's organs, tissues, and such. In other words, the human body itself, including all of the living cells of the body, regardless of the consciousness of the individual human being, praises God continuously. It does so through what has called its "tongues of exposition." Therefore, a person who does not believe in God may not consciously praise God, but the cells of the body of such a person still praise God. Perhaps for this reason, on the Day of Judgment the limbs or organs of a human being may testify against that person (see Q.36:65). This is why human beings, just because they are human beings, deserve respect and dignity. Jabir bin Abdillah narrates that on one occasion he was with the Prophet and a funeral procession passed by them. The Prophet stood up for it, and his companions stood up with him. And they said, "O Messenger of God, the deceased person is Jewish." The Prophet responded, "When you see a funeral procession, stand up for it." By this he indicated his respect for the dignity of every human being, regardless of that person's religion and ethnicity. Hence, in Islam there should be no animosity toward others, even to someone with whom you may have a disagreement.

**IMAGO DEI**

Perhaps because of the prominent place of human beings vis-à-vis the Divine names, the Prophet said, "When you fight your brother, avoid striking the face because God created the Children of Adam in His own image." On another occasion, the Prophet said: "God created human beings in the image of al-Rahman." This does not mean that there is anthropomorphism in Islam, as if to say, God is like human beings, but it is to indicate that human beings are the reflection of the Divine names or attributes. Indeed, Islamic theologians have often said that whatever comes to the mind of human beings, God is different from that. Theologians have used such sayings of the Prophet to demonstrate that human beings, among all creatures of God, are the most important mirrors of the Divine names. Because of this encompassing aspect of human beings, every human being is a universe. In other words, a universe is folded into every human being. The Qur'an equates the killing of one human being to the killing of all human beings and the saving the life of a human being to saving the lives of all human beings (5:32). Among the Divine names for which human beings are mirrors are al-Bair, the One who sees everything; al-Sami', the One who hears everything; al-Khabir, the One who is aware of everything; and al-Mutakallim, the One who speaks and has the power of all languages. Not only are humans' outer senses reflections of Divine names, but our inner senses, of which there are thousands, are also reflections of the Divine names. For example, our sense of compassion reflects the Divine name al-Rahman, the Most-Compassionate. Our sense of mercy reflects the Divine name al-Rahim, the Most-Merciful. Our sense of love mirrors the Divine name al-Wadud, the Beloved or the One who loves. Our inner ability of patience indicates the Divine name al-Sabur, the Most-Patient. Our sense of peace and tranquility indicates the Divine name al-Salam, the Peace. Thus, just as mirrors, glasses, and even bubbles show the reflection of the light of the sun, human beings reflect attributes and names of God.

Muslim theologians have spoken in detail on these human capacities and how they are reflections of the Divine names. Indeed, the vast majority if not all Muslim theologians are in agreement on this fact. Some would say that human beings have thousands of inner and outer senses, each of which reflects one or more Divine names. As an indication of the importance of human beings, a line in one of the poems attributed to Ali, the fourth caliph, says, "O human beings, do not think you are a small creature. A great world is folded in you." That is because human beings received al-Amma, or the Divine Trust. They are elevated and have become the addressees of God. In the realm of creation, it is only human beings that are carrying al-Amma according to the Holy book of Islam: "We offered al-Amma to the heavens, and to the earth, and to the mountains, but they shrank from the burden and they were afraid of it. And human beings accepted this offer. But surely some are extremely unjust and ignorant" (Q.33:72). This is an extraordinarily precious duty, but at the same time it gives a remarkable accountability. God has given human beings free will. People are free to exercise it as they wish because in Islamic teachings, this life is a test. Some members of the human family will do much wrong and will be ignorant, while others will be wholesome and knowledgeable.

**HUMAN BEINGS’ POTENTIAL**

The Qur'an encourages human beings to be aware of their potential and capacities. Yet at the same time, the Qur'an complains that human beings are like "Oh human beings, who has beloved you above your Creator? God is the Most-Merciful. Oh human beings, who has desired you above God's Mercy? He is the Most-Compassionate." For example, in the Qur'an, it is written: "And human beings accepted this offer. But surely some are extremely unjust and ignorant. God has given human beings free will. People are free to exercise it as they wish because in Islamic teachings, this life is a test. Some members of the human family will do much wrong and will be ignorant, while others will be wholesome and knowledgeable."
the One who created you and shaped you and made you symmetrical! In whatever form He desired, He composed you” (81:6–8). These verses remind human beings of their relationship to the Divine: they are created, not the Creator, and they are created in the most beautiful form. As we have seen, on the one hand, human beings have the capacity of being greater than angels to the extent that angels are proud to serve them, and, on the other, human beings have the capacity to be lower than animals. Some Islamic scholars, considering this aspect of human nature, use the “Analogy of the Seeds.” If you put some seeds into the ground and give them enough water, sunlight, and, if necessary, fertilizer, they will grow and be fruitful trees and in turn will result in thousands of new seeds. But if you neglect the seeds, neither planting them nor giving them nourishment, the seeds despite their innate capacities will rot and never bear fruit and will become forgotten. Human beings with their inner and outer capacities can be likened to these seeds. If they are given appropriate spiritual nourishment, human beings will develop and become a tree with thousands of fruits in the realm of eternity. If human beings fail to develop these capacities, they ultimately will become like the rotten seed, without fruit and spiritually barren. 

In other words, if human beings follow the way of their egoistic desires, rather than pursue spiritual development, they will lose their almost limitless capacity, and their life will be only this short, temporary, physical life. But if they follow their angelic qualities, consider the body given to them as a house of God for their spirit, and use their skills and senses for the betterment of society and to help others in ways that will further their mirroring of the Divine names, human beings will be the most important trees that will result in thousands of seeds and fruits and will enjoy the realm of eternity.

Muslim mystics considering this capacity of human beings have developed a concept to idealize such a state of humanity. This state is al-iman al-kamal, “the perfected human being,” or “the person who has reached perfection.” Through spiritual training, and a strong relationship with the Divine, human beings are encouraged to reach the state of perfection. As we briefly mentioned above, such a level of perfection is found in the messengers of God who worked for the betterment of human beings in this life and in the afterlife; in the messengers who invited their fellow human beings to righteousness. A society made up of people striving to live the life of perfection would be considered a society of bliss. Indeed, Muslim theologians have called the era of the Prophet, “The Era of Bliss.” Mystics have developed codes of behaviors to most famously described by al-Jili. The reason that al-Jili used the “Perfect Human Being” for the Prophet is because of the encompassing message of the Prophet. Spiritual development is not something to be achieved and finished. It is a constant struggle until the end of life for an individual and until the end of time for humanity in general. Because God has not put limitations on human capacities, vast fields of spiritual development are open to human beings, but there are tests that must be passed to reach them.

I have examined the idea of human dignity vis-à-vis the Qur’anic understanding of what distinguishes human beings as magnanimous creatures of God, but we must also discuss how human beings are to interact with one another. For this, it is best to look carefully at one of the most important verses from the Qur’an on the subject. The verse says, “O human beings! Surely We have created you from male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that you may know one another. Surely the noblest of you, in the sight of God, is the best in conduct. Surely God is All-Knowing, All-Aware” (49:13).

Human beings are social creatures. The Qur’an gives paramount importance to the development of positive relationships among human beings. In fact, in the language of the Qur’an all of humanity is one family from one father and one mother. In addition to the verses we have looked at, there are many other verses that encourage good manners and positive relationships between human beings. The Qur’an describes a group of God-fearing people as those who give charity in their good and difficult times and those who swallow their anger, forgiving people. “Surely God loves those who do what is beautiful” (3:134; see also 2:195, 3:148, 5:13, and 5:93). Similarly, another verse says, “Good deeds and bad deeds are not the same. Repel [the bad] with what is most beautiful and then between you and whom there is enmity it shall become as if he were a close friend” (41:34). In other words, just as Jesus said to love one’s enemy, the Qur’an says to be kind and do good to one’s enemy. The Qur’an encourages people to follow certain moral principles. Therefore forgiveness is a wholesome quality of a human being, and responding to evil with good is also an important element of Qur’anic morality. As al-Tabari says in his commentary, “Respond with your kindness to their ignorance against you; with your forgiveness to their wrongdoing to you; with your patience to the difficulties that they impose upon you.” A similar verse says, “And the servants of God are those who walk on earth humbly and when some ignorant [people] speak against them, they just say peace” (25:63). The Qur’an makes it clear that
There are several different stories regarding the revelation, and perhaps they all are relevant. When the Prophet asked Bilal, an Ethiopian who convened to admonish even those who were listening to gossip, that this was akin to generating and promoting harmonious interpersonal relationships.

When the Prophet asked what gossiping is, and the Prophet said, "If what you say is true it is gossiping. If what you say is false, it is gossiping and calumny." Additionally, the Prophet said, "Do not spy on one another. Do not gossip. Does one of you love to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You will abhor it. Then be God-fearing. Surely God is the Acceptor of repentance and God is the Most-Merciful" (49:12). This verse puts in place a specific foundation for the betterment of society. For instance, showing the abhorrence of gossip and comparing it to eating the flesh of one's brother is a very powerful way of alleviating such a social problem. Once the Prophet of Islam was asked what gossiping is, and the Prophet said, "To mention your brother [or sister] with something he [or she] dislikes. If what you say is true it is gossiping. If what you say is false, it is gossiping and calumny." Additionally, the Prophet admonished even those who were listening to gossip that this was akin to gossiping themselves. A society that avoids these social diseases will be able to cooperate and promote harmonious interpersonal relationships.

It is worth mentioning the occasion of the revelation of 49:12 and 13. There are several different stories regarding the revelation, and perhaps they all are relevant. When the Prophet asked Bilal, an Ethiopian who converted to the Ka'ba and called for prayer. At this point some pagans in Mecca became upset. Harith bin Hishan said, "Does not Muhammad have someone other than this black crow?" Ibrar bin Sayyid, who was among the most eloquent of the pagans, said, "My father was lucky because he did not see this day [in which a black person is inviting people to prayer]." Based on these conversations, it is believed that this verse was revealed to indicate that all humans are equal and there is no superiority of one racial or ethnic group over another. Therefore, the Qur'an prohibits claiming the superiority of one ethnicity over another because the origin of all human beings is the same, and thus there is no basis for such claims of superiority. The Prophet of Islam practiced this Qur'anic principle throughout his life. His appointment of Bilal is but one example of this.

In 49:13, this aspect is emphasized clearly, and perhaps this verse is the most repeated when human relationships are being considered. This particular verse covers at least five critical points. First, the addressee is all human beings, unlike some other verses directed specifically at believers. Second, the human family is one since all humans share the same father and the same mother. Third, division into nations and tribes is a Divine plan, and all are part of the extended human family. Fourth, the reason for such diversity is to "know one another" and not to fight one another. Fifth, the second aspect of skin or ethnic background over others; white is not greater than black, and black is not greater than white. The same holds true for nations. The best of people are simply the best in conduct. The verse is considered a foundation for Islamic understandings of human relationships. If humanity reaches this level of understanding, perhaps social problems will be much easier to solve. In order to reach this level of understanding, the preceding verse is more specific and in fact prepares human minds for the next step.

Whereas 49:13 addresses all human beings, the verse just before it addresses believers. The goal is to develop good relations between believers specifically, which eventually will contribute to the general betterment of humanity: "O believers! Avoid many suspicions, some of them are sinful. Do not spy on one another. Do not gossip. Does one of you love to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You will abhor it. Then be God-fearing. Surely God is the Acceptor of repentance and God is the Most-Merciful" (49:12). This verse puts in place a specific foundation for the betterment of society. For instance, showing the abhorrence of gossip and comparing it to eating the flesh of one's brother is a very powerful way of alleviating such a social problem. Once the Prophet of Islam was asked what gossiping is, and the Prophet said, "To mention your brother [or sister] with something he [or she] dislikes. If what you say is true it is gossiping. If what you say is false, it is gossiping and calumny." Additionally, the Prophet admonished even those who were listening to gossip that this was akin to gossiping themselves. A society that avoids these social diseases will be able to cooperate and promote harmonious interpersonal relationships.

The commentators suggest that the end of the verse in question, which says that God is Knowing and Aware, alludes to this story that God knew what was in the heart of this individual: kindness and faith. Even though he appeared black, for the Messenger of God he was a great person of faith. Also, this incident was difficult for the Prophet's companions to understand, which could be another reason for the revelation of the verse.

Commenting on 49:13, Abu Mansur al-Maturidi (d. 944), one of the great scholars of Islam in the Middle Ages, gives two meanings to the verse. According to the first meaning, God says, "We have created all human beings from one source and that is Adam and Eve and therefore all become brothers and sisters. There is no superiority of one brother or sister over others because of their ancestors. Their ancestors are given to them and they did not acquire them. What counts for honor is merit and good conduct." For the second
including kings, subjects, freemen and slaves, men and women, from the liquid of male and female. Since all people are from such liquid drops that are ugly and stinky, human nature finds it detestable. By mentioning this, the Qur’an draws our attention to the meaninglessness of claims of superiority through ancestors or tribes.10

Muslim commentators reject the notion that people can claim honor based on their ancestors, because this is not something over which an individual has control. One has no right to claim something that is beyond his or her control and for which he or she has not produced effort. The Qur’anic verse clearly states, “And for human beings there is nothing except the result of their own efforts” (53:39). Therefore, fearing God and having good conduct are the criteria for superiority, and not one’s lineage.11 From the Creator’s perspective, all people are at root the same.

The Prophet of Islam furthers this idea of superiority of effort and not lineage. There are several sound hadith on the subject, which when taken together straightforwardly show that the spiritual lineage of the prophets is not through their relatives, but through the scholars (ulama).12 Al-Razi narrates a story from his own time, the thirteenth century, that serves to illustrate this:

There were some people in Khorasan [a historical region in Central Asia that today is split between Iran, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan] closer to Ali, the cousin of the Prophet by blood, but they were impious. There was also a black servant who was accelerated through knowledge and effort. People would come to him for blessings. One day he went out of his home to go to the mosque. A good number of people followed him. The Sharif [the one with closer blood ties to Ali] encountered him [while the Sharif was] drunk and the people were throwing themselves in front of the Sharif to keep him away, but the Sharif managed to get close to the servant and said: “You are the one with black hands and feet, the son of infidels, but I am the son of the Messenger of God . . .”. The black servant responded, “O, honorable Sharif, I whitened my inner [self]” and you blackened your inner [self]. People see the whiteness of my heart over the blackness of my face. I took the lifestyle of your father and you took the lifestyle of my father. People are seeing me in the behaviors of your father and seeing you in the behaviors of my father. They think that I am the son of your father and you are the son of my father. They treat you as they treat my father and they treat me as they treat

Some commentators refer to Jesus’s and Muhammad’s statements when discussing the verses in question. People asked Jesus, “Who are the most honorable of people?” Jesus took two handfuls of soil and said, “Which of these are more honorable?” Then he mixed them and threw them and said, “All people are from soil. The best of them are the best in conduct.”13 Similarly, the Prophet of Islam, while pointing to his chest, said, “God doesn’t look at your body and appearance, but he looks at your heart.”14

CONCLUSION

It is fitting to end with the words from the last sermon of the Prophet.15 Here, he again emphasizes this same notion: “O human beings, surely your Lord is One and your father [Adam] is also one. There is no superiority of an Arab over a non-Arab, and there is no superiority of a non-Arab over an Arab. Also there is no superiority of black over white and white over black. The only superiority is through piety.” After his sermon, the Prophet repeatedly asked, “Did I convey the message?” And his companions said yes, “We are witnesses that you conveyed the message.” Then the Prophet said, “Let those who are present convey the message to those who are absent.”

NOTES

1. I have consulted available translations as a guide, but all translations from the Qur’an should be considered my own.
5. This is the language used by the Qur’an. It is generally taken to mean the early prophets, who are considered his offspring, including Isaac, Ishmael, Joseph, and Jacob.
9. In the past, al-in is often translated as "man" or "mankind." However, this should not be taken to mean that only male human beings are being referred to. In many instances, this being just one example, gender-neutral language in the Qur'an has been rendered this way in English, occluding the real Qur'anic meaning.

10. Formally in Arabic, al-inan is singular, but making it plural in English translation is more in keeping with my understanding of the meaning of the word in the Qur'an.


14. The commentaries on this verse are not in agreement as to what the "names" refers. Some say that it is to the names of creatures, but others argue that it refers to the Divine names. Answering this question, though, does not affect the larger point of this discussion.


17. al-Qushayrî, Lântif al-Ittânî, 1:75.


20. Ibid., 141.


22. I discuss a number of these in Sarıınk, Islamic Spirituality.


24. Ibid., 274.


26. An almost identical verse is 27:73. Other similar verses are 2:243, 10:60, 12:38, and 34:13.

27. To elaborate further on this point would lead to a discussion of sin in Islam. Suffice it to say that the concept of sin in Islam is similar, with notable differences, to that found in the Christian tradition. For example, sin can be forgiven, but it is only God who can forgive sins. For more on sin in Islam, see Sarıınk, Islamic Spirituality, 67–71, 80–81, and 104–5.

28. The subject at hand is human becomings, but the same idea holds for all beings and cause of their place as the supervisors of all creation, the bodies of all created things praise God and deserve dignity and respect. It is this idea that forms an important basis of Islamic environmentalism.

29. al-Bukhârî, Al-Sâbîh, hadîth no: 1311. A version of this hadîth is also found in Muslim bin al-Hajjâj, Al-Sâbîh, hadîth no: 960 and 961.


33. For Nursî’s version of this analogy, see Nursî, Sûdûr, 136–37.

34. In about forty places, categories of people that God loves and ones that God does not love are cited in the Qur’an. The Qur’an says God loves those who repent and clean themselves (2:222), the God-fearing ones (3:159), the just ones (5:42, 49:9, 60:8), those who are clean (9:108), and so on. God does not love the transgressors (2:190, 5:87, 7:55), those who cause corruption (2:205), the arrogant (4:36, 31:18, 57:23), wrongdoers (3:57, 3:140, 42:40), those who openly say bad words (4:148), those who are corrupt (5:64, 28:77), those who are wasteful (6:140, 7:31), those who are dishonest (8:58), and so on.


40. Ibid.

41. See al-Bukhârî, Al-Sâbîh, hadîth no: 67; and Ahmad bin Hanbîlî, Al-Muna’ad, hadîth no: 9972.

42. al-Râzi, Mafatîh al-Ghâyûb, 28:114.

43. Isma’il Haqqî, Ruh al-Bayyân, 9:91.

44. Mîsîmî, Al-Sâbîh, hadîth no: 2564.

45. For the full version of the Prophet’s last sermon, see Scholars of al-Azhâr Islamic Research Center, Al-Tafsîr al-Wãsî li al-Qur’ân al-Karîm, 3:1049.