

Semantics of Quranic pistemological Terms

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Abstract

There are various terms used in the Quran concerning knowledge and its grades. A comprehensive look at the Quranic worldview on man as well as the role and responsibility of mental faculty in having belief and faith in perceivable truths can clarify Quranic aim and purpose in its different applications of that term. A superficial look at those verses in which such key terms as ignorance, doubt, conjecture, and certainty are used may cause big mistakes in interpretation of Divine Speech in the realm of man's mental responsibilities. For in some Quranic verses doubt is considered among signs of infidelity on the one hand and in some other verses even such a personality as the Prophet is allowed to doubt what has been sent down to him on the other. Also in some Quranic verses *khashi'un* (the humble) are described as having conjecture

about encountering their Lord, while in some other verses it is said that it is infidels who base their beliefs on conjecture.

The essential question is that how can a harmonized interpretation of apparently different applications of those fundamental terms in the realm of knowledge be presented on the basis of Quranic worldview?

Analyzing four significant terms in this connection, i.e., ignorance, conjecture, doubt, and certainty, this essay deals with their relation as well.

Key Words: ignorance, conjecture, doubt, certainty, *mirya*, *rayb*.

Introduction

Doubtless, man is not of the same degree in knowing all things and intellectual concepts. He asserts a statement sometimes confidently and sometimes doubtfully. The very confidence and doubt are of grades too. It is well known that man can be in four grades considering rate of confidence in a thought. The first state is that of certainty in which man knows and is sure about something hundred percent. The second is the state of doubt in which man stands between two contradictory thoughts trusting each side fifty percent. The third is the state of

conjecture in which he stands in the middle of doubt and certainty. And the fourth is the state of illusion which lies in a rank between doubt and absolute ignorance. Therefore, the process of man's knowledge extends from the point of ignorance to that of certainty.

In the holy Quran terms *jahl* (ignorance), *shakk* (doubt), *dhann* (conjecture), and *yaqin* (certainty) are applied to faith and infidelity as well as believers and infidels. A good number of people who have undergone this-worldly chastisement are introduced as those who were ignorant. This question is posed here whether the ignorant person deserves chastisement or he should be given knowledge.

Also in some Quranic verses *khashi'un* (the humble) are described as having conjecture about encountering their Lord (2,45-6), while in some other verses it is said that it is infidels who base their beliefs on conjecture (6,116 & 148; 10,36 & 66; 53,23 & 28). The question is that how those two considerations concerning conjecture can be justified.

Certainty and doubt are among very significant subjects in the realm of religious sciences. According to the Holy Quran, people of faith, god-fearing, and guidance are those of certainty too; they are certain of Divine Signs and the Hereafter (Q.,2,4).

Also in some Quranic verses infidels are characterized as having no certainty in Divine Signs and being sunk into the doubt (44,9; 22,55).

Similarly, jurists emphasize that fundamental teachings of Islam should not be followed through blind imitation; rather, religionists must be certain of them. On the other hand, those who doubt God's existence and truthfulness of the holy prophet are treated as infidels in some juristic views (Resalah Toziholmasael,35). Considering such Quranic and juristic teachings in religious literature and common practices, having certainty in religious propositions is treated as being at the boundary of faith and having doubt in them is considered as being at the boundary of infidelity, while according to some other Quranic verse doubt is essentially considered as a usual, permissible affair even for such a personality as the holy prophet who is asked to put an end to his probable doubt through asking and inquiring(10,94). Similarly, the purpose of God's presentation of kingdom of heavens and earth to such a prophet as Abraham has been his elevation to the degree of certainty (6,75). Variety of precepts of certainty and doubt in the Quran denote the difference in the nature of concepts of doubt and certainty in Quranic application. Surveying the

whole Quranic verses in the realm of certainty and doubt, we should reply to these two significant questions: Which certainty is a requisite for religious belief? and, Which doubt would indicate infidelity? In other words, when we say that the believer must be of certainty in the fundamental teachings of religion, what have we precisely meant by that proposition? Also, when we say that doubt in the beliefs brings man from the realm of faith to that of infidelity, is by doubt meant a mere doubt in one of the fundamental teachings?

In order to reply to such questions, we investigate literal meanings and Quranic applications of the four terms of *Jahl* (ignorance), *dhann* (conjecture), *shakk* (doubt), and *yaqin* (certainty) first and then survey the relation of those terms with one another.

1. *Jahl* (Ignorance)

1.1. The Literal Meaning of *Jahl*

Most of lexicographers have presented a negative meaning for *Jahl*. They have said that *Jahl* is the opposite of knowledge (al-Jawahari & al-Fayyumi, under *Jahl*). Ibn Faris holds that the stem *Jahl* is of two principles; one meaning lack of knowledge, and the other meaning shaking and moving. For instance, when

it is said استجهلت الريح الغصن it means that the wind shook and moved the tree branch (Ibn Fris, under *Jahl*). Al Mustafawi opposes the idea that *jahl* has two semantic principles. He holds that the second meaning refers to the first, in the sense that *jahl* necessitates shaking and motion in the same way that *'ilm* (knowledge) and *yaqin* (certainty) necessitate confidence and peace (al-Mustafawi,2,132). Considering the applications of *Jahl* in the Quran and hadith, some contemporaries maintain that *jahl* was not essentially used as the opposite of *'ilm* (knowledge), but of *'aql* (intellect). Expounding that perspective, al-Muzaffar holds that the application of *jahl* as the opposite of *'ilm* (knowledge) prevailed from the time when Greek philosophical texts were translated into Arabic (al-Muzaffar,1,126).

Considering different scopes of applying the term *jahl*, al-Raghib al-Isfahani believes in variety of meanings in relation to each of those scopes. He asserts, "*Jahl* is of three kinds: First, the mind's lack of knowledge. This is the principal meaning of *Jahl*. Second, to believe in something in contradiction to its reality. and Third, to do something in opposition to its correct way (al-Raghib,102).

1.2. Quranic Applications of *Jahl*

Precise observation of Quranic applications of *Jahl* indicates that al-Raghib's perspective on the meanings of this term is correct.

In some cases, Quran uses *jahl* as the opposite of '*ilm* (knowledge), as in describing the gentle-looking poor it says, "*Jahil* supposes them rich because of their abstinence (from begging)" (2,273). In this verse, *Jahil* (the ignorant) is applied to one who has no knowledge and information of poverty of those poor people.

Although Quran has used the term *jahl* in the sense of lack of knowledge, in most cases it has applied it in a meaning other than that. For example, in the story of Moses we read, "And when Moses said to his people, 'God commands you to sacrifice a cow.' They said, 'Do you take us in mockery?' He said, 'I take refuge with God, lest I should be one of the ignorant' "(2,67). This verse treats mocking as *jahl* and the one who mocks as *jahil*. Therefore, as al-Raghib said, *Jahl* is sometimes used for an action which should be abandoned. One who commits indecent actions is *jahil*, even though he is aware of their indecency. God treats people of Lot as *jahil*, while according to the Quran itself they were aware of the indecency of their act. In this connection, the holy Quran asserts, "And

Lot, when he said to his people, What, do you commit indecency with your eyes open? What, do you approach men lustfully instead of woman? No, you are a people that are ignorant” (27, 54-5). As observed in the two subsequent verses, people of Lot are described as having at once two opposite qualities of insight and ignorance. Hence, here the term *jahl* does not mean that they were absolutely unaware that such an act is among indecent ones. Therefore, if God punished *jahils* for their *jahl*, it would not mean that God punished those whose crime was merely not knowing something.

2. Dhann (Conjecture)

2.1. The Literal Meaning of Dhann

The Lexicographers’ perspectives on the meaning of *dhann* can be summarized in the following three ones:

First Perspective: Dhann in Two Opposite Meanings

The well-known perspective is that *dhann* is among those terms which have two opposite meanings being used in the meanings of both “doubt” and “certainty” (al-Farahidi, 2,1118; Ibn Faris,3,462-3; al-Azhari,14,362; Ibn Mandhur,13,272; al-

Fayyumi,386). To distinguish them from one another in Quranic applications, it is narrated from al-Dahhak that when it is used for the believer it means certainty and when it is used for the infidel it means doubt. Mujahid has said that *dhann* in relation to hereafter is certainty and in relation to this world is doubt” (al-Rastegar, 48, 516). It is narrated from Imam Ali in *al-Tawhid* and *al-Ihtijaj* that “*Dhann* is of two kinds: *dhann* of doubt, and *dhann* of certainty. That *dhann* which is in the affairs of the Resurrection is *dhann* of certainty, and that one which is in the affairs of this world is *dhann* of doubt” (al-Saduq,267; al-Tabrisi, *al-Ihtijaj*, 1,363).

Some who support this view have added that *dhann* would never be used in a certainty produced by sensible observation; rather, it is applied only to a certainty attained by contemplation (Ibn Mandhur, *ibid*). Muqatil b. Sulayman has added a third meaning saying that *dhann* is of three meanings: certainty, doubt, and accusation (Nweya,117). *Dhanna* meaning accusation and *dhanin* meaning the accused are also used (al-Farahidi, *ibid.*; Ibn Durayd,1,111).

Second Perspective: Common Dhann, Psychic conversation

Some lexicographers and Quranic commentators have not accepted the previous view on *dhann*. Al-Tabrisi narrates from al-Mubarrad that Arabs never used *dhann* for something observable. The former attributes to some researchers that “*dhann* is a passing thought which goes into the soul and overcomes the heart. In fact, it is the psychic conversation about something.” (*Majma’ al-Bayan*, 1, 128). Such a psychic conversation is in conformity with both doubt and knowledge (*Ibid.*, 2, 459). Therefore, doubt and certainty are neither principal, real meanings of *dhann* nor its opposite meanings. However, the opposition between certainty and *dhann* made by the Quran implies that *dhann* cannot coincide with certainty even in instantiation. In al-Firuzabadi’s opinion “*Dhann* is a hesitation [of the soul] in its uncertain belief in both contradictory sides when one side is preferable to it.” (4, 348).

Muhammad b. Ali al-Tirmidhi, known as al-Hakim al-Tirmidhi (alive in 285 A.H.), also holds that “*Dhann* is applied to something which appears to the heart considered by the heart suspiciously and uncertainly. Nevertheless, should a favorable presupposition overcome the heart, *dhann* would be

changed into knowledge; otherwise, it is merely an assumption accompanied by suspiciousness.” (Nweya,115)¹

Third Perspective: The Mind's Product through a Sign

Al-Raghib al-Isfahani has presented a more precise theory. In his opinion, *dhann* is used for what is achieved through a sign (al-Raghib,317), and strength and weakness of conjectural cognitions depend upon the rate of confidence-making of the sign through which knowledge or conjectural judgment is achieved. He sees conjectural cognition as oscillating between “knowledge” and “illusion”. Should conjectural knowledge be raised from strong signs, it would attain the rate of knowledge too; but if the origin of conjectural cognition is merely poor sign or signs, that cognition will never pass the limits of illusion (*Ibid.*). The two following Quranic verses confirm al-Raghib’s perspective:

(a) “It is He who expelled from their habitations the unbelievers among the People of the Book at the first mustering. You did not think that they would go forth and they

1. Paul Nweya narrates that from al-Tahsil li Nadha’ir al-Quran written by al-Tirmidhi as a commentary on al-Ashbah wa’l Nadha’ir of Muqatil b. Sulayman. According to Nweya, of that book there is only one copy available in the library of municipality of Alexandria, numbered 3585. (Nweya,98).

made *dhann* (i.e., thought) that their fortresses would defend them against God; then God came upon them from whence they had not reckoned and He cast terror into their hearts as they destroyed their houses with their own hands, and the hands of the believers; therefore take heed, you who have eyes!” (Q.,59,2). According to this verse, Jews of Banu Nadir concluded from one sign that the Muslim army cannot defeat them. Their sign was their fortifications. They thought that their fortifications would prevent their defeat. Then, what they knew was their fortifications and not invincibility. Therefore, passing judgment on invincibility was a conjectural judgment.

(b) “The likeness of this present life is as water that We send down out of heaven, and the plants of the earth mingle with it whereof men and cattle eat, till, when the earth has taken on its glitter and has decked itself fair, and its inhabitants make *dhann* (i.e., think) they have power over it, Our Command comes upon it by night or day, and We make it stubble, as though yesterday it did not flourish. Even so We distinguish the signs for a people who reflect.” (Q.,10,24). The verse indicates that when trees become green and blossom, through this sign, their owners think that they would become wealthy and rich; that is, using this sign, they calculate how

much fruit, grain and supply they will have for themselves and their animals. Therefore, by vegetables becoming green they are certain of only this affair that their trees and vegetables are at the best state at that moment having the possibility of bearing fruits, but they cannot have knowledge of fruitfulness of their vegetables and trees in the future. Since through a sign such as green vegetables they passed judgment that they will have wealth, the holy Quran calls it *dhann*.

2.2. Classification of Quranic Applications of *Dhann*

The stem *dhann* and its derivations are used 64 times in the Quran. Those applications can be generally divided into two categories:

2.2.1. *Dhann* as an Incorrect Thought

In some Quranic verses, *dhann* is used in opposition to knowledge and certainty and called as an incorrect thought whose holder should be blamed, such as: “They say, ‘There is nothing but our present life; we die, and we live, and nothing but Time destroys us.’ Of that they have no knowledge, they merely make *dhann* (i.e., conjecture)” (Q.,45,24). “And for their saying, ‘We slew the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, the

Messenger of God.’ Yet they did not slay him, neither crucified him, only a likeness of that was shown to them. Those who are at variance concerning him surely are in doubt regarding him. They have no knowledge of him except the following of *dhann*, and they slew him not of a certainty” (Q.,4,157). “They have not any knowledge thereof. They follow only *dhann*, and *dhann* avails naught against truth” (Q.,53,28). “And when it was said, ‘God's Promise is true, and the Hour, there is no doubt of it,’ you said, ‘We do not know what the Hour may be; we have only a *dhann*, and are by no means certain” (Q.,45,32).

In the first three cases, the holy Quran has used *dhann* in opposition to knowledge; and from the fourth verse, in which *dhann* is used in opposition to certainty, it becomes evident that by knowledge in those three verses is also meant certain knowledge.

Sometimes a thought comes to man’s mind merely on the basis of a desire. Therefore, desire prepares the ground for the generation of an illusion. In such a case, man relies on a thought dependent upon illusion without being proved by certain or preferable proof. On the verse 28 of sura 53, al-allama al-Tabatabaee asserts, “In this verse, *dhann* means

illusion, for in the object of *dhann* there is no sign of preference. The verse says that polytheists called angels by female names; and this belief is treated in the next verse as being based on *dhann*. Indeed, they had such an illusion and concept that angels are female, without having any certain or preferable proof for it” (al-Tabatabaee,19,42). Also al-Raghib mentions that sometimes *dhann* does not go farther than illusion (317). Expounding the application of *dhann* in polytheists’ illusions and imaginations, a Quranic commentator says, “Since female sex is mostly known as manifestation of kindness and affection and polytheists desired to be later interceded by divine angels, they believed that angels are female and hence will assist them when kindness and affection becomes necessary and will intercede with God for them” (Mudarresi,14,168). It seems that the context of those verses would confirm this view due to such phrases as “Or shall man have whatever he fancies?” and “And what the souls desire.”

It is obvious that man’s desires lead to false estimations if they are not based on knowledge and reality. Hence, the Quran considered that belief of polytheists concerning femininity of angels as false estimation. Verbs *يخرصون* (they are

conjecturing) and *تخرصون* (you are conjecturing) in the following verses are good evidence for that:

“And they have made the angels, who are themselves servants of the All merciful, females. What, did they witness their creation? Their witness shall be written down, and they shall be questioned. They say, ‘Had the All merciful so willed, we would not have served them.’ They have no knowledge of that, they are only conjecturing. Or did We bring them a Book aforetime to which they hold? Nay, but they say, ‘We found our fathers upon a community, and we are guided upon their traces’ ” (Q.,43,19-22)

“If you obeyed the most part of those on earth, they will lead you astray from the Path of God. They follow only surmise, merely conjecturing” (Q.,6,116).

“The idolaters will say, ‘Had God willed, we would not have been idolaters, neither our fathers, nor would we have forbidden (to ourselves) aught.’ Even so the people before them cried lies until they tasted Our might. Say: ‘Do you have any knowledge for you to bring forth for us? You follow only surmise, merely conjecturing’ ” (Q.,6,148).

خرص means conjecturing which is also used in the meaning of lie (al-Raghib,146). It is obvious that reliance on thoughts

based upon guess and conjecture have no value where there is certain knowledge of reality. Hence, one cannot trust human knowledge achieved through uncertain theories in opposition to divine knowledge reported by divine prophets.

Should we accept al-Raghib's view on the meaning of *dhann*, who treated it as the product of a sign, we could consider actions and conduct of polytheists' fathers as a sign for confirming their belief. In some cases, Quran mentions that polytheists' proof for truthfulness of their beliefs is that their fathers followed that way (2,170; 31,21) and in so many cases it emphasizes that polytheists act merely on the basis of *dhann*: "We conjecture only a *dhann*" (10,36). This point, therefore, also confirms that the conduct of fathers and grandfathers is treated as a sign. On the verse 36 of sura 10, al-allama al-Tabatabaee writes, "Most of the polytheists followed their fathers' beliefs, since they had good opinion of them" (al-Tabatabaee,10,60). They could present no reason to prove their perspective: "So ask them for a pronouncement. Does your Lord have daughters, and they sons? Or did We create the angels females, while they were witnesses? Is it not of their own calumny that they say God has begotten? They are truly liars. Has He chosen daughters above sons? What ails you

then, how you judge! What, and will you not remember? Or do you have a clear authority? Bring your Book, if you speak truly!” (Q.,37,149-57).

From the verses mentioned above it is understood that “opinion based on *dhann*” is used for an opinion which is dependant neither on a sense nor on a rational reasoning. Since they did not observe angels, they have no sensory, experimental knowledge of their claim. Also, since they have no clear proof for that claim, their claim does not depend upon rational reasoning.

2.2.2. *Dhann* Meaning a Good Thought

The second category is the verses in which by *dhann* is meant an absolutely positive notion. Two verses can be considered in this meaning: verses 46 and 249 of sura 2. Context of the first verse concerns command and prohibitions to the believers. In the verse 45 of that sura God calls the believers upon patience and prayer, and mentions that such an act is difficult but for the humble. Then, He describes the humble in this way: “Those who have *dhann* that they shall encounter their Lord and that unto Him they are returning” (2,46). Quranic commentators have generally asserted that *dhann* in this verse means

knowledge and certainty, for having *dhann* and doubt in fundamental teachings of religion is not enough (al-Amin, 1,310). In *Majma' al-Bayan*, al-Tabrisi treats *dhann* in this verse as meaning knowledge and certainty in attaining God's promises in the world to come. Also, he considers *dhann* in the verse 20 of sura 69 "Certainly I had *dhann* that I should encounter my reckoning" as being of the same kind (al-Tabrisi,1,129). Then, he cites two other views on whose basis *dhann* in the said verse does not mean certainty: first, the humble have *dhann* lest they encounter God while they are sunk into sins, and second, they have *dhann* concerning the time of their death. According to this view, by encountering God is meant death (*Ibid.*). Al-Gunabadi has also held that *dhann* in this verse means certainty, arguing that since the knowledge of soul, contrary to that of heart and spirit, is not always in conformity with the reality and sometimes is contradictory to it, it is reported in most cases by the term *dhann* (al-Gunabadi,1,92 & 216).

In a hadith attributed to Imam Ali it is said that he had asserted concerning the meaning of this verse: "The humble are certain that they will be raised in the hereafter, will be reckoned, and will be rewarded or punished." (al-Bahrani,1,95;

al-‘Ayyashi,1,44; al-Huwayzi,1,76-7). Al-Allama al-Tabatabaee says, “Should by ‘encountering their Lord’ be meant the occurrence of the Resurrection, by ‘they have *dhann*’ in this verse should be meant certainty; since one must be certain of the Resurrection (‘and they are certain concerning the hereafter’ (Q.,2.4)) and doubt in that would not be acceptable” (al-Tatabaee,1,152). In *Partovi az Quran*, Taleghani writes, “Here, some have considered *dhann* as meaning certainty, neglecting this point that here *dhann* is more eloquent than certainty; since even *dhann* in encountering God would cause humbleness and anxiety let alone certainty, for all anxieties, hopes, and motions rise from *dhann*” (Taleghani,1,146). On the meaning of *dhann* in the verse 46 of sura 2, al-Allama al-Tabatabaee writes, “Should we consider the verse as being about the Resurrection, we could justify the application of *dhann* in such a case in this way that the process of *man’s soul attaining knowledge* is accomplished in four phases: (a) realizing the subject, (b) doubting in it, (c) preferring one side, and (d) certainty in one side. When man considers such a dreadful subject as the Day of Judgment, as soon as that consideration reaches the phase of *dhann* (preference of the probability of occurrence of the

Resurrection) he should feel humble. Therefore, generation of humility in man concerning the Resurrection is not in need of attaining the phase of certainty; rather, having *dhann* about it as well as the reckoning would be enough to make man follow the way of precaution and action on the basis of what has been said in divine religions. If so, this verse practically conveys the same meaning of the verse 110 of sura 18: “Then who hopes for the encounter with his Lord should work righteousness, and not associate with his Lord's service anyone” (al-Tabatabaee, 1,152).

According to those who hold that application of one term to more than one meaning is possible, it may be said that *dhann* in the said verse can have both meanings of certainty and doubt - depending upon what is meant by “encountering God”. If it means encountering God’s special mercy in the Resurrection, no one is certain whether he attains it; and if it means the Resurrection in principle, *dhann* in this verse must mean certainty, for believers must be certain of the hereafter.

Criticism, and Point of View

In our opinion, the said verse is by no means concerning the explanation of belief in the hereafter so that we should say one

should be certain of the Resurrection; rather, it is about encountering God in the state of satisfaction. The humble are those who, while believing in and confirming the Resurrection, are doubtful of the situation of their actions and therefore have *dhann* whether they attain Divine Reward for their good deeds or not. It should be said that this is the very requisite of the quality of humility. If man says that he will encounter God in the state of satisfaction, this is closer to vanity than to humility. Man becomes humble when he fears God's punishment along with his hope for Divine reward. Al-Tabrisi tends to this perspective asserting on the meaning of the said verse, "They expect encountering His reward and attaining what is with Him." (*Jawami' al-Jami'*,1,43). In the Quranic exegesis attributed to Imam al-Hassan al-Askari (the eleventh Shi'a Imam) it is said on this verse, "It is said that they have *dhann* only because they do not know how their affair would be ended, since the futurity is hidden from them" (238).

As for those who say that having *dhann* in the hereafter is enough to make man humble, although this assertion may be praiseworthy *per se*, the context of the verse does not confirm it, for the verse is concerning description of the humble. The verse asserts that the humble are those who have *dhann* in

encountering their Lord. This is different than *dhann* in the hereafter causing quality of humility. Should the verse intend to explain the belief in the Resurrection, it could not be said that degree of belief of the humble in the Resurrection could be less than certainty. But as we said, the verse does not essentially intend to explain the belief in the hereafter and Resurrection. This verse is like such verses which present “hope in encountering the Lord,” as what follows:

“Then who hopes for the encounter with his Lord should work righteousness, and not associate with his Lord's service anyone” (18,110).

“Whoso looks to encounter God, God's term is coming. He is the All-hearing, the All-knowing” (29,5).

“You have had a good example in God's Messenger for whosoever hopes for God and the Last Day, and remembers God oft” (33,21).

“You have had a good example in them for whomever hopes for God and the Last Day” (60,6).

It can also be concluded from other verses that by encountering God in such verses is probably meant attaining God's special mercy in the hereafter, like the following verses:

“The believers, and those who emigrate and struggle in God's way, those have hope of God's compassion; and God is All-forgiving, All-compassionate” (2,218).

“They are those who call upon and are themselves seeking the means to come to their Lord: which of them shall be nearer; they hope for His mercy, and fear His chastisement, Surely your Lord's Chastisement is a thing to beware of.” (17,75).

The humble are the best examples of those who both hope for God's mercy and fear His chastisement, but since the very concept of humility contains the concept of fearing God's chastisement as well, the verse has mentioned only their hope in encountering the Lord and attaining His mercy for their description.

What was said on the verse 46 of sura 2 can be presented concerning the verse 249 of the same sura too. Reporting the situation of Saul's army confronted with Goliath's hosts, this verse expounds the thought of the patient group among Saul's army and confirms it: “As Saul set out with the troops, he said, ‘Allah will test you with a stream: anyone who drinks from it will not belong to me, but those who do not drink from it will belong to me, barring someone who draws a scoop with his hand.’ But they drank from it, [all] except a few of them. So

when he crossed it along with the faithful who were with him, they said, ‘We have no strength today against Goliath and his troops.’ Those who had *dhann* that they will encounter God said, ‘How many a small party has overcome a larger party by God's will! And God is with the patient.’” (2,249).

On the said verse, al-Tabrisi writes, “There are three probabilities concerning that: a) *dhann* meaning certainty, b) *dhann* meaning psychic conversation, which is the main meaning of *dhann*, and c) *dhann* meaning doubt and supposition, but the verse means that they suppose that they will be killed in the battle and thereby attain God's mercy” (*Majma' al-Bayan*, 2,459). On the said verse, al-allama al-Tabatabaee says, “*Dhann* in encountering God in this verse either means certainty or, allusively, humility.” (2,293). Al-Shirazi writes, “By encountering God is meant the Resurrection, and *dhann* in the Resurrection is enough for man to make him perform jihad and good deeds.” (2,100).

3. *Shakk* (Doubt)

3.1. *Shakk* from Lexicographers' Viewpoint

Lexicographers hold that the main meaning of *shakk* is “interference” and “mutual entrance.” “شككت بالرمح” means “I

let the lance go in.” The prevailing meaning of *shakk* (i.e., doubt) is also related to this meaning, since when one doubts something two things interfere in such a way that he wonders and cannot know which one is correct and which one is incorrect. Defining *shakk*, al-Raghib al-Isfahani writes, “*Shakk* is the equality of two contradictory affairs, sometimes both being accompanied by a sign of confirmation and sometimes none being so” (265).

An example may clarify al-Raghib’s definition of *shakk*. When we doubt whether someone has returned from his journey or not, two assumptions are available. First, we have no sign proving his coming or vice versa; here, we are ignorant of both sides of *shakk*. Secondly, we have an uncertain sign for either of them; for instance, we have seen his car at his office, which can be a sign for his returning, but we have a sign for his non-return as well, i.e., whenever we call him we receive no answer. It is clear that such signs are not certain signs for proving his return or vice versa. Therefore, despite those two signs, we still have doubt concerning his return.

Based on the definition of *shakk* presented by al-Raghib, it can be concluded that *shakk* is sometimes an example of

ignorance and sometimes an instance of *dhann*. *Shakk* means ignorance of both contradictory sides of a statement where there is no sign for its proving nor for its negating. However, should both sides have supporting but uncertain signs, *shakk* concerning both sides means *dhann* and supposition about either of them. It should be noted that the meaning of *dhann* presented by al-Raghib is to make a judgment concerning something on the basis of a sign which generally does not cause certainty (al-Raghib,317). For instance, if we judge that someone is rich merely because of his precious cloth, this judgment is based on *dhann*; for he might not be rich despite wearing such a cloth.

Considering the application of *shakk* in the sense of *rayb* and *mirya* and vice versa, it is necessary to mention their meanings too. Al-Raghib has treated *mirya* as being more particular than *shakk* (al-Raghib, 467). It is understood from Quranic verses firstly that, contrary to *shakk*, *mirya* is a voluntary affair, since it is prohibited and prohibition from an involuntary affair is senseless; and secondly, *imtira'* is used in causing *mirya* in a truthful affair (Q.,10,94). Thus, it may be said that *mirya* is not the ordinary *shakk*, but rather is equivalent to suspicion.

In *Furuq al-Lugha*, Abu Hilal al-Askari writes, “*Imtira*’ means causing problematic suspicion. Later, however, its application has been expounded in such a way that *mirya* and *shakk* are used in one another’s meaning” (al-Askari,80). Therefore, it is possible that sometimes by *shakk* should be meant *mirya* in the Quran.

“*Rayb*” is also more particular than *shakk*. Abu Hila al-Askari holds that the difference between *irtiyab* and *shakk* is that the former is the *shakk* accompanied by accusation (*Ibid.*). Even some lexicographers consider accusation as the main meaning of *rayb* (Ibn Durayd,1,280). It is understood from Quranic verses that *irtiyab* is, like *imtira*’, a voluntary action being the work of wrongdoers (Q.,29,48; 24,50). *Shakk* and *rayb* are sometimes used in one another’s meaning.

3.2. Application of Shakk in the Quran

Considering the context of verses in which the term *shakk* is used, it is clearly understood that *shakk* is applied to two completely different senses; it is sometimes used in its real meaning being equivalent to ignorance or *dhann*, and sometimes in the figurative sense. Application of *shakk* in the sense of *mirya* and *rayb* can be considered of that kind.

3.2.1. Application of Shakk in the Real Sense (i.e., Doubt)

Addressing the holy prophet, the Almighty God says, “So, if you are in *shakk* (doubt) regarding what We have sent down to you, ask those who recite the Book before you” (10,94). Although it is said in hadiths that the holy prophet never doubted nor asked people of the Book (al-Suyuti,4,389; al-Tabari,7,167), this important point should not be ignored that, according to the said verse, the assumption of doubt is accepted concerning the holy prophet. It is also possible that this verse intends to expound a general rule concerning doubt and addresses all people (al-Tabari,7,169). If so, the verse denotes that doubt of anybody and about anything is not a crime nor a sin, let alone infidelity. No one could be questioned why he doubts such and such an object.

Doubt is among states appearing to mind and psyche of any human being. But the point is the way doubt is treated. This verse expounds that the doubter must inquire and investigate the subject of his doubt in order to remove it. Should doubt in doctrinal subjects be considered a sin for individuals or the person of the holy prophet, even its assumption concerning the holy prophet should have been dealt with in another way. It is said in the Quran that if the prophet invented any sayings

against God, God would severely punish him (Q.,69,44-5). It is obvious that the holy prophet would never invent a single word against God and this is just an assumption in the Quran, but since forging falsehood against God is a serious crime, even its assumption is severely treated. Nonetheless, the assumption of doubt of the prophet is not treated that way. Should doubt in doctrines, context of revelation, and so forth be a criminal act like forging falsehood against God, the prophet should be told if he doubted what was revealed to him he would be punished. Therefore, doubt is principally a natural affair appearing possibly to anybody, and should be dealt with naturally. The only way to treat the scholarly doubt is the scholarly inquiry and investigation. But if someone did not accept the truth after it had been manifested and argued against it, this would be considered *imtira'*, which is prohibited by the holy Quran. In sura 10, where God says to the holy prophet if you have any doubt just ask, He immediately asserts, "The truth has come to you from your Lord; so do not be of the doubters. Nor be of those who cry lies to God's Signs, so as to be of the losers" (10,94-5). It can be said that this verse explains the difference between *shakk* and *mirya* quite well. *Shakk* (doubt) is not a voluntary affair and may naturally happen to anybody, hence

no one can be prevented from doubting. But *mirya* or *imtira'* is a voluntary affair from which people can be prohibited. That is why God addresses the holy prophet saying “Do not be of those who make *imtira'*” (Q.,3,60). Also, it can be understood from the verse 95 of sura 10 that *imtira'* and *takdhib* (crying lies) are two equivalent verbs.

3.2.2. Application of Shakk in the Figurative Sense

In so many Quranic verses, doubt and doubters are dealt with in a negative way. Considering what we said on the verse 94 of sura 10 that doubt cannot principally be treated as a sin, it should be said that in those cases the doubt, in principle, is not treated in a negative way, but rather the presence of other elements such as *mirya*, *rayb*, or negligent ignorance has caused such a treatment. In order to prove that, here we present some cases of Quranic application of *shakk* in this sense, which is in fact a figurative application:

In sura 40 we read: “Joseph brought you the clear signs before, yet you continued in *shakk* concerning what he brought you. Until, when he perished, you said, ‘God will never send forth a Messenger after him.’ Even so God leads astray the prodigal and the doubter” (34). According to this verse, Joseph

presented some clear proofs for his claim. It was expected that all audience should accept those proofs when they saw them - and in that case they would deserve to be described as “those who are certain” - but some of them were still in doubt in spite of observing such clear proofs. It is understood from the rest of the verse that they were those whom God describes as *musrif* (prodigal) and *murtab* (*rayb* maker) being in such a situation to undergo divine misleading. Considering other Quranic verses, God’s misleading covers those who are astray and in the meantime are certain and knowledgeable of their misguidance (Q.,45,23). Therefore, this group were not in real doubt concerning Joseph’s call, but rather were people of *mirya* - as are all people of misguidance and idolatry: “And the unbelievers will not cease to be in doubt of it until the Hour comes on them suddenly or there shall come upon them the chastisement of a barren day” (22,55). Also, it can be concluded from the end of the verse in question that the said group have been people of *irtiyab*. *Irtiyab* is the work of those who wish to withdraw the truth under any pretext and make others doubt too. Reminding an advantage of illiteracy of the holy prophet, the holy Quran asserts, “Not before this did you recite any Book or inscribe it with your right hand, for then

those who follow falsehood would make *irtyab*” (29,48). According to this verse, if the holy prophet were literate, those who follow falsehood would use it as a pretext to propagate that he has brought Quranic suras through studying previous holy books and rewriting them. This verse also indicates that *irtyab* is the work of those who follow falsehood with the intention of making others doubt, hence it is accompanied by illness in another Quranic verse (Q.,24,50).

Generally speaking, it can be said that what is presented by the Quran concerning doubt of idolaters and the misguided is in fact *rayb* and *irtyab*. As said by lexicographers, in *rayb* there is a concept of accusation. Polytheists accused the holy prophet of making the Quran himself and attributing it to God (al-Jazairi,136-7). Hence, in most of such verses the term *shakk* is accompanied by *murib* (one who makes rayb), such as 11,110; 41,45 and (34,54) - a fact denoting implicitly that *rayb* and *irtyab* are different than *shakk* (al-Mustafawi,4,252).

In hadiths, it is narrated from the holy prophet that *irtyab* was infidelity (al-Mufid,343). Thus, the reason why Quran condemns infidels is not this point that they have really been in doubt, but rather such verses principally speak of those infidels who make others doubt while truthfulness of prophets' call is

proved. In another case, the holy Quran asserts, “And they denied Our Signs, though their souls acknowledged them, wrongfully and out of pride. Behold how was the end of the workers of corruption” (27,14). It is this group of infidels to whom warning and not warning is equal: “As for the unbelievers, alike it is to them whether you have warned them or have not warned them, they do not believe” (Q.,2,6). Therefore, it is certain that those who undergo doubt in their way to understand religious beliefs cannot be compared with that group and be treated as infidels as well.

4. *Yaqin* (Certainty)

4.1. Meaning of *Yaqin*

Lexicographers have defined *yaqin* in various forms. By referring to dictionaries, one can summarize those definitions in the following three ones:

First Perspective: Yaqin Meaning Annihilation of Doubt

Ibn Faris holds that *yaqin* is equivalent to “annihilation of doubt” (6,157). According to this definition, any *yaqin* is preceded by a doubt. In other words, the relation between *yaqin* and doubt is that of privation and possession. Therefore,

we only say that someone is endowed with *yaqin* and is among those who have *yaqin* when he has already undergone doubt. But if someone knows something without any previous doubt, this kind of knowledge is not called *yaqin*, but rather '*ilm*. Hence, any *yaqin* is '*ilm*, but not any '*ilm* is *yaqin*. Therefore, the logical ratio of '*ilm* and *yaqin* is absolute generality and particularity.

In *al-Furuq al-Lughawiyya*, Abu Hilal al-Askari writes, "*Muqin* (one who has *yaqin*) is he who attains the state of knowledge after the wandering of doubt. The evidence for truthfulness of this assertion is that *yaqin* is used in opposition to doubt and they say "*shakk* and *yaqin*" and it is rarely said "*shakk* and '*ilm*". Therefore, *yaqin* is an awareness which annihilates the doubt" (63).

Since *yaqin* is preceded by doubt, God cannot be called *Muqin*. That is why God is not described by that attribute in the Quran and hadiths.

Second Perspective: Knowledge Produced by Reasoning

This definition is presented in *al-Misbah al-Munir* by al-Fayyumi. He emphasizes that this is the reason why God cannot be called *Muqin* (6,938). Some other lexicographers

have also adopted this definition that *yaqin* is the very confirmation of a scholarly proposition, which is in turn the result of a rational reasoning. In this definition, *muqin* is attributed to one who confirms the result of the reasoning after he has deliberated upon its preliminaries. Thus, it can be said of those who do not confirm true results of a rational reasoning that they are not *muqin* of such results, whether they doubt the truthfulness of the result or not.

Third Perspective: Peace of Mind

Distinguishing between *'ilm* and *yaqin*, Abu Hilal al-Askari writes, “*Yaqin* is the peace of mind of something concerning which there has already existed *'ilm*” (63). Al-Raghib in *Mufradat* and al-Tabrisi in *Majma' al-Bayan* have also emphasized the element of peace in the definition of *yaqin* (al-Raghib,552; al-Tabrisi,10,185). Al-Tabrisi has also emphasized that God cannot be described as *Mutayaqqin* (10,185). The significant characteristic of this definition is that it treats *yaqin* as a psychic affair which is different from *'ilm* in nature, for *'ilm* is a mental and not psychic affair; therefore, one may have knowledge of something without having *yaqin* in it. In other words, it is even possible that someone may confirm a

proposition while his mind is not peaceful. In this case, such a person is *muqin* according to the second definition, while he is not so according to the third one.

4.1.2. Harmonizing the Three-fold Definitions

In the beginning it seems that the three-fold definitions contradict one another, while they are not so; rather, each of them is connected to a certain realm of *yaqin*. The reality is that the term *yaqin* is used in two relatively different realms: sometimes in the realm of knowledge, and sometimes in that of psyche. Therefore, it can be said that *yaqin* is of two kinds: a) epistemological, and b) psychological.

Of the three-fold definitions, the second refers to the epistemological and the third to the psychological *yaqin*. The first definition, which is a negative one, deals with both realms of *yaqin* application, with one difference, that is, the epistemological *yaqin* is preceded by the epistemological doubt. Thus, one may confirm a proposition while he has psychological doubt (i.e., anxiety) of it. In this case, he has both epistemological *yaqin* and psychological doubt

concerning content of that proposition. For instance, one who knows that a dead man can do nothing but he passes through the cemetery with fear and panic does not have psychological *yaqin* concerning the proposition “dead man can do nothing”, although he has epistemological *yaqin* concerning that.

This explanation clarifies that both *yaqin* and doubt can be divided into two kinds of epistemological and psychological. If someone doubts the necessary conditions of truthfulness of a logical syllogism, he has epistemological doubt; and he will attain epistemological *yaqin* through confirming the result of that logical syllogism by removing probable ambiguity and problem and considering conditions of truthfulness. However, along this kind of doubt, which is concerning knowledge, there are psychic doubts among which can be considered that of scrupulous people.

In the investigation of *yaqin* in the Quran, one must see that which of those two kinds of *yaqin* is considered in each of Quranic verses. Similarly, when it is spoken of necessity of having *yaqin* in some principles of religion, it must be seen that which kind of *yaqin* is meant. This necessitates investigation of

text and context of those verses in which *yaqin* and its derivatives are used.

4.2. Quranic Applications of *Yaqin*

Investigation of Quranic verses indicates that by *yaqin* is sometimes meant epistemological and sometimes psychological *yaqin*. It is also understood that the requisite of the faith is epistemological and not psychological *yaqin* - although perfect faith necessitates psychological *yaqin* too.

4.2.1. Epistemological *Yaqin* in the Quranic Application

As mentioned briefly earlier, Quran describes the faithful as having *yaqin* in Divine Signs and hereafter. Describing all people of piety, prosperity, and guidance, the verse 4 of sura 2 says, "And in the hereafter, they have *yaqin*." It seems that by *yaqin* in this verse is meant confirmation and not the psychological *yaqin*. Principally, it can be said that hereafter is among subjects in which most believers are not expected to have psychological *yaqin* in addition to confirmation, for existence of hereafter and characteristics of the world to come are among subjects proclaimed to men by divine prophets through divine revelation and they can be confirmed only by

those who have faith in the truthfulness of prophets' claims and words. In other words, we confirm reports concerning the Resurrection as some reports conveyed by truthful reporters, while we have not observed the world to come with our eyes or our hearts. Therefore, when God says, "Believers have *yaqin* in the hereafter," such a proposition means that "Believers confirm the news of occurrence of hereafter" because they have faith in the truthfulness of prophets' reports. Similarly, when God describes another group as "not having *yaqin* in Divine Signs," it means nothing but that "they do not confirm truthful proposition," but rather they consider them lies while they cannot prove this. Describing a group of people, verse 82 of sura 27 says, "...those people did not have *yaqin* in Our Signs." In later verses, God explains their court in which they are questioned as being those who treated Divine Signs as lies: "Did you cry lies to My signs not comprehending them in knowledge, or what have you been doing?" (Q.,27,84). Opposition of crying lies to having *yaqin* in these verses clarifies obviously that here having *yaqin* means confirmation of Divine Signs.

Hence, it can be concluded that when, in the religious custom, they say "one must have *yaqin* in Islamic fundamental

teachings,” they mean that one must confirm religious propositions which are produced by correct premises or reported by a truthful reporter in whose truthfulness religionists believe. Should someone not confirm such propositions in spite of their truthfulness or should he cry lies to them without having any proof for that, he would be included in the Quranic judgment of “they have no *yaqin* in Divine Signs.” Such a judgment, however, would not cover those who confirm propositions delivered by prophets while their hearts have not exercised peace concerning them yet.

4.2.2. Psychological Yaqin in the Quranic Applications

Context of some Quranic verses indicates that *yaqin* is used in a meaning other than what was mentioned before. This meaning is beyond mere confirmation of divine propositions. In the Quran, we read of Abraham, “So We were showing Abraham the kingdom of the heavens and earth, that he might be of those having *yaqin*” (6,75). It is clear that Abraham has had belief in Divine Signs and had confirmed them beforehand. However, observing kingdom, which is the reality of Divine Signs, caused his confidence and peace of mind. A witness for truthfulness of this is that in another case, where Abraham asks

God to show him the reality of revival of the dead in the hereafter, when God asks him, “Do you not believe?” he replies, “Yes, but I want my heart to become confident” (Q.,2,260). Thus, Abraham confirmed occurrence of the Resurrection and revival of the dead before having observed revival of birds and was among those who are described by the Quran as “those who have *yaqin* in the hereafter,” but while having epistemological *yaqin*, he wished to attain psychological *yaqin* too.

Among other psychological applications of *yaqin* are such cases in which the term *yaqin* is used in the sense of death (Q.,15,99; 74,46-7). The reason why *yaqin* is used in the sense of death is that the latter causes perfect *yaqin* leaving no doubt in the truthfulness of Divine Signs. Through death, both unbelievers and believers attain ‘*ayn al-yaqin* in addition to ‘*ilm al-yaqin* (al-Sadiqi,29, 264). Through death, man observes clearly the truths prophets spoke of without any psychic doubt. This fact can also be understood from some Quranic verses (Q.,50,22; 102,5-6). It is clear that man is obliged to obtain *yaqin* in Divine Signs, i.e., to confirm them, in this world too; but since another level of *yaqin*, i.e., confidence of heart and peace of soul, occurs through observation of truths and

examples of such propositions after death, the Quran has called that level of man's existential travel, i.e., death, *yaqin*. Addressing the holy prophet, God says, "And serve your Lord, until the *Yaqin* comes to you" (15,99). Also, it is narrated from some hell dwellers that "And we cried lies to the Day of Doom, till the *Yaqin* came to us" (74,46-7).

It should be notified that those verses do not denote that the only way of attaining psychological *yaqin* is death. It is for men in general that observation of truths occurred by death makes them attain psychological *yaqin* concerning religious propositions. For saints, however, this has happened and happens in this world too, as Abraham attained this level of *yaqin* through observing kingdom of heavens and earth and revival of birds. According to verses of sura 17 and 53, the holy prophet observed Divine Signs clearly and attained this level of *yaqin* in his ascent to heaven (17,1; 53,8-11). It is narrated from Imam Ali that he said, "Should the curtain be removed, I would have not increased in *yaqin*" (Ibn Shahr Ashub,1,317; al-Majlisi,46,135) which implies that if for others the removal of the curtain of this world (i.e., death) causes a sincere *Yaqin* in addition to ordinary *yaqin* (which is confirmation of divine truths), I have attained this level of

yaqin in this very world. According to this prophetic hadith “People are asleep, and when they die they will be awakened” (Ibn Abi Shaiba,8,338; al-Ahsaee,4,73; al-Majlisi,4,43), however, people in general would attain such a *yaqin* through death and observing the kingdom of things.

In the Quran itself variation of levels of *yaqin* is mentioned. In Quranic verses three expressions are presented in relation to *yaqin*, which imply multiplicity of levels of *yaqin*. Quran has spoken of *‘ilm al-yaqin*, *‘ayn al-yaqin*, and *haqq al-yaqin* (102,5-7; 56,95; 69,51). Quranic commentators assert that *‘ilm al-yaqin* is a knowledge produced by rational demonstrations in such a way that its contradictory is not probable. Second and third levels of *yaqin* are the station of observation and vision. *Ayn al-yaqin* is a *yaqin* produced by finding and observing, whose ratio to *‘ilm al-yaqin* is that of seeing to hearing. In other words, it is the pure *yaqin* into which no doubt can penetrate. *Haqq al-yaqin* is a level of *yaqin* which is both pure *yaqin* into which no doubt can penetrate and an objective, real affair – it is not merely a mental or psychic *yaqin* into which penetration of fault is possible (Banu Amin,14,86 & 15,255; al-Tabatabaee,20,352 & 19, 140). In a hadith, it is narrated that the holy prophet addressed one of his companions saying, “On

what state are you in this morning?” “On *yaqin*”, he replied. “What is the token of your *yaqin*?” the holy prophet asked. “I see as if the Resurrection has occurred and I am gathered among creatures too.” The holy prophet said, “God has dropped the light of faith into the heart of this servant of His” (al-Tabrisi,46). Concerning ‘*ayn al-yagin*, al-Maibudi says that it is observing without any doubt, and adds, “The prophet said, ‘The best thing dropped into the heart is *yaqin*’ ” (al-Maibudi,10,602-3).

The conclusion is that we encounter two kinds of *yaqin* in the Quranic applications:

First, *yaqin* meaning confirmation, which is expected from everyone who hears religious propositions. By this kind of *yaqin* believers are distinguished from unbelievers: believers are those who confirm prophets when they expound Divine Signs for them. Such a confirmation means having *yaqin* in Divine Signs. On the contrary, unbelievers are those who, after the Divine Signs have been expounded and while they have no reason for denying them, not only do not confirm them, but cry lies to them: “He did not confirm it, and did not pray. But he cried it lies, and turned away” (Q.,75,31-2). Thus, on this basis,

the believer is one who confirms and the unbeliever is one who cries lies.

The second Quranic application of *yaqin* is its use in the sense of peace of mind usually happening through observation of religious truths. It is not expected that all believers should attain this level of *yaqin* in religious beliefs. Therefore, it can be said that the minimum for the faith is confirmation. It is also narrated in hadiths that “Faith is utterance by tongue, doing by organs, and confirmation by heart” (al-Hur al-‘Amili,1,431; al-Muttaqi,1,23; al-Jaza’iri,1,117). Concerning the maximum for faith, however, it can be said that it has no limitation; rather, it increases by increase of *yaqin*. The holy Quran has explicitly spoken of increase of faith and *yaqin* (9,124; 74,31). It can be explained in this way that psychic affairs are of some levels. For instance, bravery, which is among psychic qualities, does not exist in all brave people at the same level; any high level you consider, higher than that can be assumed.

5. The Relation of *Dhann* with *Shakk*, *Yaqin*, and *Jahl*

It is well known that *shakk* is a state between *dhann* and *yaqin*. According to al-Tabrisi, the difference between *dhann* and *shakk* is that in the former one side is more probable than the

other (*Majma' al-Bayan*,1,128). Al-Allama al-Tabatabaee holds that *dhann* is the preferred belief in which the opposite side is also probable (19,42). Some lexicographers have also emphasized this point in the definition of *shakk* (Al-Firuzabadi,4,348). It is also well known that if there is no opposite probability concerning a proposition the term *yaqin*; if the two sides of a proposition are equal and there is no preference the term *shakk*; and if one side is preferred, for the preferred side the term *dhann* and for the other side the term *wahm* are used. According to this division, *dhann* and *shakk* cannot be used in the same case, while Quran applies *dhann* and *shakk*, at least in denotation, as equivalent to one another. In the verse 157 of sura 4, God asserts that those who disputed concerning Jesus were in *shakk* about his death. He emphasizes then that they did not have '*ilm* on that, but followed nothing but *dhann*. In this verse, four terms of *shakk*, '*ilm*, *dhann* and *yaqin* are used together. According to this verse, Jew's not having '*ilm* of Jesus' death is introduced as an instance of both *shakk* and *dhann*. Thus, it can be, at least, said that some instances of *dhann* are instances of *shakk* too. It is not so that *shakk* is used only in a case where two sides of a proposition are equally probable – as it is said in the definition of *yaqin* as

the “removal of *shakk*”. Therefore, if an uncertain proposition is not changed into a certain one – even though it has some preferences - it can be treated as a proposition concerning which there is *shakk*.

Now, those four concepts and their relation can be drawn in this way:

A proposition which is not certain is a proposition for which two sides are assumed. It is possible that each side, or both sides, has a confirming sign. The side supported by the confirming sign is called *dhann*, and the other side is called *Jahl*. Thus, *shakk* is the encountering point of two sides of an uncertain proposition, whether both sides have the confirming sign, or none of them has it, or one side has it while the other does not.

Conclusion

The following statements are emphasized as the conclusion and summary of this essay:

1. In the Quran, *Jahl* is not used only for the lack of theoretical knowledge. Rather, those who know that something is bad but they do it are also treated as having *Jahl*.

2. Lexicographers and Quranic commentators have three viewpoints concerning the principal meaning of *dhann*: a) *dhann* is antonymous being used sometimes for *yaqin* and sometimes for *shakk*, b) *dhann* means psychic conversation, and c) what is acquired through a sign is *dhann*.

3. Al-Raghib's viewpoint on the semantics of *dhann* is more compatible with Quranic applications. According to him, affairs described by *dhann* are such affairs of which man has no immediate knowledge but knows them through a sign. Since signs are different in their reflection of reality, such affairs sometimes go close to the border of '*ilm* and *yaqin* and sometimes do not go farther than illusion.

4. Quranic applications of *dhann* can generally be divided into two groups: a) an incorrect, uncertain thought upon which unbelievers establish their beliefs. Quranic assertion indicates that unbelievers had established their beliefs upon illusions which, in turn, were founded on baseless aspirations, and b) a good thought based upon a remarkable sign. In ethical affairs, social relations, and judgments concerning Divine Acts one must think on the basis of good *dhann*.

5. It is well known that *dhann* is something between *shakk* and *yaqin*. Quranic applications, however, do not confirm that

conceptual relation of three notions of *shakk*, *dhann*, and *yaqin*. Quran has used both *shakk* and *dhann* in one case. Hence, *dhann* and *shakk* can be one in an instance, although they are different in their concepts. *Shakk* is the encountering point of two sides whose both sides may be of *dhann* or of *jahl*, or one side be of *dhann* and the other of *jahl*.

6. In the holy Quran, unbelievers are described as those who do not have *yaqin* in Divine Signs and the world to come, also as those who are in the state of *shakk*. On the contrary, believers are those who have *yaqin* in the hereafter and Divine Signs. These propositions appear to convey that having doubts in religious, doctrinal affairs is infidelity, and doubters in God, Prophet, and Divine Signs are infidels.

7. In some other Quranic verses, however, *shakk* is treated as a usual phenomenon in man's mental life. Even for such a great personality as the holy prophet undergoing *shakk* is assumed, and he is advised to inquire in case of *shakk* in order to remove it. Such verses, therefore, seem to be contradictory to those mentioned above.

8. Deliberation upon Quranic verses indicates that that *shakk* is close to infidelity which is an instance of *rayb*, *mirya*,

or *jahl*, and not mere mental or psychic doubt concerning religious propositions.

9. In linguistic applications, *yaqin* is used in two realms: epistemological, and psychological. What is introduced in the Quran as the requisite for faith is the epistemological *yaqin*, which is confirmation of true propositions. Nevertheless, psychological *yaqin* concerning religious propositions may be actualized for individuals through recollection of God as well as religious practice. It may never happen in this world concerning reality of so many propositions, especially those speaking of the Unseen; and will merely occur by death and entering the other world - that is why the holy Quran has called death *yaqin*.

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