

Jerusalem Future Outlook Insights in the Noble Quran

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Abstract

The people of the Book's failure to shoulder the responsibility of the divine message had significant consequences. They were deprived from the great honour of holding the trust, and it was transferred to Ishmael's children, to be completed and sealed by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). That was also accompanied by major shifts. On the one hand, the Qibla came back to Mecca. On the other hand, the association between the Grand Mosque of Mecca and Al-Aqsa Mosque of Jerusalem constitutes a pivotal indicator of a continuous conflict between the new trust holders, Muslims, and those who deviated from the straight path, people of the Book. A number of forms of the conflict were mentioned in the Noble Quran, in which the latter exceeded the limits and offended mosques and other places of worship. As a result, they necessarily deserved present and future destruction. Divine rules are always valid against those who prohibit people from entering Almighty Allah's mosques, since disgrace, fear, insecurity and instability shall be omens of their termination.

Keywords: Jerusalem, divine rules, future, the Noble Quran, Qibla.

INTRODUCTION

Questions of the study:

The study is expected to answer the following questions:

How would the following verse be comprehended in light of the transfer of the final message from Isaac's children to those of Ishmael?

Are there any relevant future indicators?

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Almighty Allah says: "Say (O Muhammad): 'O Allah! Lord of the kingdom, You give the kingdom to whom You please, You take away the kingdom from whom You please; You give honor whom You please, You humiliate whom You please; all the good is in Your authority. Surely, you have power over every thing. You make the night into the day and You make the day into the night. You bring out the living from the dead and You bring out the dead from the living. You give sustenance to whom You please without limit'" (Al-Imran: 26-27).

As the shift of the Qibla– in terms of command, divine rules and reality – from the Grand Mosque to Al-Aqsa Mosque led to major results in the present and future, what are the relevant directions?

Within the ongoing conflict and its present and future signs, how can the verse below be comprehended. Almighty Allah says: "Who could be more wicked than those who prohibit the mention of Allah's name in His places of worship and strive to have them deserted? Such people should not enter them without fear: there is disgrace for them in this world and painful punishment in the Hereafter" (Al-Baqara: 114).

How can the above be explored in light of the divine rules of the verse: "Those who have been driven unjustly from their homes only for saying, 'Our Lord is Allah.' If Allah did not repel some people by means of others, many monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques, where Allah's name is much invoked, would have been destroyed. Allah is sure to help those who help His cause- Allah is strong and mighty" (Al-Hajj: 40).

Therefore, the study is divided into the following:

Section One: The Ummah of the Message

Section Two: Shift of the Qibla

Section Three: Divine Rules about Mosques

Section One: The Ummah of the Message

The issue centers on the verse: "Say (O Muhammad): 'O Allah! Lord of the kingdom, You give the kingdom to whom You please, You take away the kingdom from whom You please; You give honor whom You please, You humiliate whom You please; all the good is in Your authority. Surely, You have power over every thing. You make the night into the day and You make the day into the night. You bring out the living from the dead and You bring out the dead from the living. You give sustenance to whom You please without limit'" (Al-Imran: 26-27).

When Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) conquered Mecca, he promised his Ummah to possess the lands of Persians and Romans. So, the hypocrites and people of the Book mocked it and wondered how he could beat both nations, which were "very much stronger". It is also

narrated that when Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) started the Trench and dedicated 10 people to each 40 cubit. While they were digging, a huge rock was so solid that they sent Companion Salman to the Prophet (PBUH). So, when he hit it with a pickaxe, a massive lightning flashed and the Muslims exclaimed: "Allah is the Greatest." He said: "The palaces of Al-Heera (of Iraq) flashed like canines of dogs." When he hit again, he said: "The red palaces of the Roman land (of Iraq) flashed." When he hit for a third time, he said: "The palaces of Sana flashed, and Jibreel told me my Ummah would control them all, so rejoice." The hypocrites seized the chance and asked the Muslims how they could believe the Prophet promoting 'lies' that he, from Al-Medina, can see the palaces of Al-Heera and the Khosroes' capital and that they will be yours, while you are digging a trench out of fear and cannot leave your city. In another narration, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) prayed to Almighty Allah to grant him the lands of Persians and Romans and liberate the Arabs to defeat them, which indicates that his invocation will be fulfilled. When prophets are commanded to pray, their prayers shall be accepted (Al-Razi, 2000).

The invocation coming at the beginning of the above verse: "O Allah! Lord of the kingdom" is argued by Al-Tabari (1998) to be associated with the following items. In other words, O Allah, You give the kingdom to whom You please, You take away the kingdom from whom You please; You give honor whom You please, You humiliate whom You please; all the good is in Your authority. Surely, You have power over every thing. Others deviate and claim to have another lord, that You have a partner or that You have a son. In addition, you have the power to do these and all things: You make the night into the day and You make the day into the night, so You can expand or reduce them. You bring out the living from the dead and You bring out the dead from the living. You give sustenance to whom You please of Your creation without limit. No one but You can do that (Al-Tabari, 1998).

A basic question in this verse is how to interpret the term Kingdom. Ibn Attiyya (2000) reported that Mujahid said it was prophethood, although the former suggested it referred to the general sense of the word. In fact, it is indisputable that Almighty Allah is the Lord of the entire Kingdom with all its types, and that the best kingdom He would grant is that of the Hereafter.

For Abu Hayyan (1998), Kingdom means power and victory. As the Giver is the one who commands and should be followed, the one who is given is Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his Ummah, whereas the losers are the Persians and Romans. He also cites that some contend that the losers are Abu Jahl and the leaders of Qurayish, while for others the parties given are the Arabs and leaders of Islam and the losers are Persians and Romans.

He also said that Kingdom may indicate prophethood as well. In this case, however, the negative part cannot mean taking it away, but could be deprivation from prophethood in the first place.

As for “You give honour to whom You please, humiliate whom You please,” it is argued that it refers to the Battle of Badr. When Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) led his companions in an army of 12 thousand troops and conquered Mecca, he humiliated the leaders of Quraysh, took their heads and threw them in the Qulleib well. Some argue that the humiliated were the Persians and Romans. Other opinions relate honour with obedience to Almighty Allah and humiliation to His disobedience; victory and booty to the former and murder and tribute to the latter; and wealth to the former and scarcity to the latter.

According to Al-Tabari (1998), “You give honour to whom You please” is about kingdom and power, and “You humiliate Whom You please” is about taking away the kingdom and enabling the enemy to overpower them. Then, “all the good is in Your authority” means it is all in Your hand, and no one has such a power. You can do everything, but not any of your creation nor those taken as Allah’s associates by polytheists of the people of the Book or illiterate Arabs, such as Jesus Christ and other rivals to Almighty Allah.

Abduh (in Rida, 1990) links the verse: “Say (O Muhammad): ‘O Allah! Lord of the kingdom, You give the kingdom to whom You please, You take away the kingdom from whom You please’” to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)’s invocation to Almighty Allah to make the kingdom of the Persians and Romans in his Ummah to be the occasion of the revelation. Whether the link is authentic, the context is related to the Prophet’s situation with the addressed polytheists and people of the Book. On the one hand, the polytheists denied the prophethood of the one who eats food and goes about in the market, as was done with previous prophets. On the other hand, the people of the Book rejected a prophet who is not one of them.

In different parts of the Noble Quran, Almighty Allah alleviates any stress which befalls Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) by reminding him of the disbelievers’ rejection and stubbornness as well as Almighty Allah’s ability to support and achieving victory for His religion. In other words, if these polytheists and people of the Book persist in their ignorance and arrogance, you have to resort to Almighty Allah in invocation and praise, keeping in mind that everything is up to Him to do what He wishes. This is also consistent with his response to the Christians of Najran in the verse: “If they argue with you [Prophet], say, ‘I have devoted myself to Allah alone’” (Al Imran: 20).

Accordingly, he added, kingdom may indicate prophethood, bearing in mind that prophethood is a great power on bodies and spirits. Almighty Allah says: “We gave the descendants of Abraham the

Scripture and wisdom- and We gave them a great kingdom” (Al-Nissa’:54). As for taking it away, that refers to punishment of other nations which used to receive prophets, from which prophethood was shifted through the dispatch of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). It may be also interpreted as deprivation, since prophethood is granted and deprived by Almighty Allah as He wishes.

In spite of not accepting the previous interpretation, Rida (1990) argues that it emphasized the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)’s victory over his enemies of the people of the Book and polytheists.

When Abu Sufian saw the Muslim army heading to Mecca, he told Al-Abbas: “Your Nephew’s kingdom has become great.” Al-Abbas replied: “No, its prophethood” (Al-Asbahani, 1986). Abu Sufian did not mean kingdom per se, but the whole matter was the foundation of one. In other words, though they may be close in meaning but, actually, there is a big difference between the cause and the effect.

With regard to the part: “You give honor whom You please, You humiliate whom You please,” honour and humiliation are understood. The former leads to the protection of the truth, obedience of orders, abundance of followers and gain of hearts through power, useful knowledge, good sustenance and Almighty Allah’s help to support people. The latter leads to inability for protection, satisfaction with indignity and, most probably, weakness – which could be a common cause. Nevertheless, honour and kingdom may not be associated. A king, for instance, may be cringing if he lacks independence through mismanagement, so other states take their rights as can be seen. How many a cringing person takes the shape of a dignified one! How many a leader or monarch cheats idiots by his external splendor and they think he is honourable, although he is internally undignified. Such a person resembles the acting stars who pretend to be great scholars.

It is noteworthy that the same chapter – Al Imran – already refers to humiliation and its consequent wretchedness on the part of Muslims and some people of the Book. However, for Muslims it is about the past, while for people of the Book it is about both the past and future.

Almighty Allah says: “Allah helped you at Badr when you were very weak. Be mindful of Allah, so that you may be grateful” (Al Imran: 123).

Almighty Allah says: “Unless they hold fast to a lifeline from Allah and from mankind, they are overshadowed by vulnerability wherever they are found. They have drawn Allah’s wrath upon themselves. They are overshadowed by weakness, too, because they have persistently disbelieved in Allah’s revelation and killed prophets without any right, all because of their disobedience and boundless transgression” (Al Imran: 112).

Other verses also mention their humiliation and wretchedness. For example, Almighty Allah says: “Remember when you said, ‘Moses, we

cannot bear to eat only one kind of food, so pray to your Lord to bring out for us some of the earth's produce, its herbs and cucumbers, its garlic, lentils, and onions.' He said, 'Would you exchange better for worse? Go to Egypt and there you will find what you have asked for.' They were struck with humiliation and wretchedness, and they incurred the wrath of Allah because they persistently rejected His messages and killed prophets contrary to all that is right. All this was because they disobeyed and were lawbreakers" (Al-Baqara: 61).

Almighty Allah also says: "Those who took to worshipping the calf will be afflicted by their Lord's wrath, and by disgrace in this life.' This is the way We repay those who invent such falsehoods. But your Lord is most forgiving and most merciful towards those who do wrong, then repent afterwards and truly believe" (Al-A'raf: 152-153).

Al Imran, in particular, cites scenes of the disbelievers' indignity and defeat, which should necessarily lead to change in the balance of power in the region.

For instance, Almighty Allah says at the beginnings of the chapter: "Neither their possessions nor their children will be any use to the disbelievers against Allah. The disbelievers will be fuel for the Fire. Just as Pharaoh's people and their predecessors denied Our revelations, and Allah punished them for their sins: Allah is severe in punishing. [Prophet], say to the disbelievers, 'You will be defeated and driven together into Hell, a foul resting place. You have already seen a sign in the two armies that met in battle, one fighting for Allah's cause and the other made up of disbelievers. With their own eyes [the former] saw [the latter] to be twice their number, but Allah helps whoever He will. There truly is a lesson in this for all with eyes to see" (Al Imran: 10-13).

Towards the end of the chapter, Almighty Allah says: "[Prophet], do not be deceived by the disbelievers' [lucrative] trading to and fro in the land. This is only a brief enjoyment, after which Hell will be their home- a miserable resting place" (Al Imran: 196-197).

Ibn Katheer (1999) argues that the above verse draws attention to the significance of showing gratitude to Almighty Allah for the blessings of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) and this Ummah. Almighty Allah shifted prophethood to the one from Quraysh in Mecca, who is illiterate and became the absolute seal of prophets sent to both humans and jinn. He was granted privileges no messenger has ever been provided with, such as knowledge about Almighty Allah and His Sharia, past and future Unseen, reporting of Hereafter facts, spread of his Ummah all over the world and victory of his religion over all others. Accordingly, when Almighty Allah says: "Say (O Muhammad): O Allah! Lord of the kingdom, You give the kingdom to whom You please, You take away the kingdom from whom You please; You give honor whom You

please, You humiliate whom You please; all the good is in Your authority. Surely, You have power over every thing,” this means that You are the actual doer in Your creation and You do what You wish. Almighty Allah also responds to disbelievers: “Are they the ones who share out your Lord’s grace? We are the ones who give them their share of livelihood in this world and We have raised some of them above others in rank” (Al-Zukhruf: 32). This indicates that Almighty Allah says: acts upon His creation the way He wishes, with no objector or defender, and He has the wisdom and reason for that. He also gives prophethood to whoever He wishes. Other verses in the same direction are: “But Allah knows best where to place His messages” (Al-An’am: 124), and “See how We have given some more than others— but the Hereafter holds greater ranks and greater favours” (Al-Isra’: 21).

According to Al-Qassimi (2002), the general Arabic term ‘man’ (whom/whomever) reminds those of intellect that authority will be given to those who were far away from the people of the Book, especially the Arabs, which implies that Almighty Allah will turn it to them from the Persian and Romans. This is what actually took place, as the Arab Muslims took the lead, then came the other nations who joined the Ummah.

As for Ibn Ashour (1998), it is an allusion to people of the Book, whose rejection springs from envy due to losing prophethood and authority. They are subject to threat and conclusive argument. Thus, it is no wonder that prophethood moved to the Arabs, bearing in mind that the Sharia is associated with authority.

Al-Sa’di (1998) seems to learn from Ibn Katheer, explaining that the verse: “Say (O Muhammad): ‘O Allah! Lord of the kingdom,’” means that You are the King Who owns all kingdoms, Your authority is absolutely Yours, the entire upper and lower worlds are Yours and action is all Yours. Then, he elaborates on some of Almighty Allah’s exclusive deeds. For instance, “You give the kingdom to whom You please, You take away the kingdom from whom You please.” It tells that Almighty Allah will strip authority from the Persians and Romans to grant it to Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)’s Ummah, and He did. Gaining and losing authority are both subject to the will and fate of Almighty Allah, which does not contradict with His own worldly rules. Among the rules leading to authority are faith and good deeds, including the Muslims’ harmony, employment of the necessary tools, patience and avoidance of dispute. Almighty Allah says: “Allah has made a promise to those among you who believe and do good deeds: He will make them successors to the land, as He did those who came before them” (Al-Noor, 55).

The above stresses many points. As prophethood was sealed by Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), glory shall be granted to his Ummah

other than the people of the Book, which necessitates being connected with authority in space and time. Then, when it comes to Jerusalem and the surrounding area – which is the spot of revelation as well as the Night Journey and Ascension – it is more obvious.

The aforementioned verses constitute a certain rule and explicit divine pledge, which follows Almighty Allah's absolute will and power. However the enemy expands, the believers must not have doubts about Almighty Allah's promise to return them to Jerusalem. This kind of confirmation is essential in raising the moral in the psychological war, so that the Ummah would not be frustrated and, thus, defeated.

On the other hand, this rule entrusts the Ummah with a great responsibility to use all the possible means of spiritual and physical power to go back to Islam – the original source of dignity and honour. The Muslims should search for tools to achieve unity and prevent any form of divide.

The two main verses above also stress two elements: The first is the importance of invocation. This is referred to by Al-Tabari (1998), Ibn Atiyya (2000) and others from the beginning of the verse: "O Allah." The hearts of the entire Ummah in every space and time should always resort to Almighty Allah for victory and empowerment, bearing in mind their responsibility towards Jerusalem. They need to relentlessly supplicate to Almighty Allah to lift the disasters which befall the Ummah and protect Jerusalem from the plotting of the people of the Book as well as their agents of traitors and hypocrites.

The second is about promoting the culture of hope and the knowledge of divine rules. Their association is noted in the following verbs:

- 'give' vs. 'take away',
- 'give honour' vs. 'humiliate',
- 'make the night into the day' vs. 'make the day into the night',
- 'bring out the living from the dead', vs. 'bring out the dead from the living, and
- 'give sustenance to whom You please without limit'.

The verse was concluded by the mention of sustenance, since everyone has gone through a relevant experience of hope.

Section Two: Shift of the Qibla

The issue starts with the verses: "The foolish people will say, 'What has turned them away from the prayer direction they used to face?' Say, 'East and West belong to Allah. He guides whoever He will to the right way.' We have made you [believers] into a just community, so that you may bear witness [to the truth] before others and so that the Messenger may bear witness [to it] before you. We only made the direction the one you used to face [Prophet] in order to distinguish those who follow the Messenger from those who turn on their heels:

that test was hard, except for those Allah has guided. Allah would never let your faith go to waste [believers], for Allah is most compassionate and most merciful towards people. Many a time We have seen you [Prophet] turn your face towards Heaven, so We are turning you towards a prayer direction that pleases you. Turn your face in the direction of the Sacred Mosque: wherever you [believers] may be, turn your faces to it. Those who were given the Scripture know with certainty that this is the Truth from their Lord: Allah is not unaware of what they do. Yet even if you brought every proof to those who were given the Scripture, they would not follow your prayer direction, nor will you follow theirs, nor indeed will any of them follow one another's direction. If you [Prophet] were to follow their desires, after the knowledge brought to you, you would be doing wrong" (Al-Baqara: 142-145).

They contain a host of elements. First, Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) and his companions used to pray towards Jerusalem. Second, after the migration to Al-Medina, they kept this direction for about 15 months before being ordered to pray towards Mecca. Third, the new Qibla is considered a quantum leap for the Ummah towards empowerment and testimony, which the people of the Book failed to achieve. Fourth, along with the shift of the Qibla, a number of new terms emerged, namely:

1. 'a just community': Al-Tabari (1998) argues that in the verse: "We have made you [believers] into a just community," Almighty Allah calls the Muslims 'just' because they do not stand in either of the two opposite extremes like the people of the Book did. They come in the middle between those who were too strict and those who were too aggressive, known for their disbelief, murder of prophets and falsification.

Therefore, the people of the Book are no longer holders of trust, while Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)'s Ummah is capable to hold it and lead humanity back to the divine track. Abu Said Al-Khudari narrated that Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) delivered a long speech after the evening prayer, elaborating on everything until the Day of Judgement. Then, he concluded that what is left of this life is very short, stating that this Ummah is the final and top nation in the eyes of Almighty Allah (Ibn Hanbal, 2001).

2. 'Witnesses before others': In the verse: "so that you may bear witness [to the truth] before others," a witness is the one who tells what he/she knows by seeing with his/her sight or insight, the last of which is a grace which has been chosen to praise prophets and scholars (Al-Qassimi, 2002).

In addition, 'so that' above indicates the guidance of the Ummah to deserve the position of being just and bear witness before others,

especially those of other religions who disbelieved, associated gods with Almighty Allah and falsified the truth.

In other words, the other nations, mainly the people of the Book, are no longer eligible to bear witness since they deviated from the straight path and gained Almighty Allah's wrath.

The previous direction to Jerusalem was a temporary procedure for a great wisdom, represents a significant phase of the Ummah's history and has a major impact on its progress. There was an educational purpose (Qutb, 1992) in the shift of Qibla from Mecca to Al-Aqsa Mosque. Almighty Allah says: "in order to distinguish those who follow the Messenger from those who turn on their heels." The Arabs used to glorify the Grand Mosque as their national pride. However, when Islam came, it aimed at purifying the hearts for Almighty Allah without any close connection with anything else. It attempted to get rid of historical, racial and any worldly discrimination. Thus, it removed them temporarily from the Grand Mosque to Al-Aqsa Mosque, which would expose those who would satisfactorily follow the Prophet and those who would cling to pre-Islamic links concealed in their hearts. When the Muslims submitted to the Qibla to which Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) directed – and some people of the Book used it as pretext for their own interest – Almighty Allah ordered the Muslims to shift to the Grand Mosque.

Being the Qibla for the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) and his companions made it an object for emotion and glory for them and a great responsibility for the Muslims after them. In other words, according to divine rules, Jerusalem is a test which differentiates true believers from hypocrites as well as raises the good and lowers the arrogant.

As the Qibla shifted, the battle became obvious for the truthful – the Muslims. They hold two responsibilities: that of the new eternal Qibla and that of the one towards which they prayed for several years. Furthermore, they were twinned by the Night Journey and Ascension – stressing the persistence of the clash, to be crowned with victory for the pious.

Sections Three: Divine rules about mosques

The first is stated in the verse: "Who could be more wicked than those who prohibit the mention of Allah's name in His places of worship and strive to have them deserted? Such people should not enter them without fear: there is disgrace for them in this world and painful punishment in the Hereafter" (Al-Baqara: 114).

The context is about those who were extremely oppressive, for they combined two crimes: prohibiting the mention of Allah's name in His places of worship and striving to have them deserted. Thus, they

deserved two penalties: disgrace for them (in this world) and painful punishment (in the Hereafter).

Other verses tend to mention either offence. For example, Almighty Allah says: “You who believe, do not violate the sanctity of Allah’s rites, the Sacred Month, the offerings, their garlands, nor those going to the Sacred House to seek the bounty and pleasure of their Lord—but when you have completed the rites of pilgrimage you may hunt. Do not let your hatred for the people who barred you from the Sacred Mosque induce you to break the law: help one another to do what is right and good; do not help one another towards sin and hostility. Be mindful of Allah, for His punishment is severe” (Al-Ma’ida: 2). Another verse is: “They were the ones who disbelieved, who barred you from the Sacred Mosque, and who prevented the offering from reaching its place of sacrifice. If there had not been among them, unknown to you, believing men and women whom you would have trampled underfoot, inadvertently incurring guilt on their account- Allah brings whoever He will into His mercy- if the [believers] had been clearly separated, We would have inflicted a painful punishment on the disbelievers” (Al-Fat’h: 25).

The divine rule is still valid, as Almighty Allah protected the Grand Mosque by torturing those who tried to destroy it. Almighty Allah says: “Do you [Prophet] not see how your Lord dealt with the army of the elephant? Did He not utterly confound their plans? He sent ranks of birds against them. Pelting them with pellets of hard-baked clay. He made them [like] cropped stubble” (Al-Feel: 1-5).

In reality, the polytheists of Quraysh prevented the Muslims from praying in the Grand Mosque. Although the companions came back in accordance with Al-Hudaybiyya agreement to perform Umra, that does not deny the polytheists’ dishonorable decision.

Many exegesis scholars also refer to damage caused by Crusaders (Al-Razi, 2000; Al-Tabari, 1998). Nowadays, some people of the Book deprive Muslims from visiting Al-Aqsa Mosque, indicating that they have combined both crimes.

In a bid to complete the picture of the divine rules and explore who deserves both penalties, there is the above verse (Al-Baqara: 114) along with the two below.

Almighty Allah says: “Those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger and strive to spread corruption in the land should be punished by death, crucifixion, the amputation of an alternate hand and foot, or banishment from the land: a disgrace for them in this world, and then a terrible punishment in the Hereafter” (Al-Ma’ida: 33). This resembles Bani Quraytha when they plotted to murder Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) (Ibn Atiyya, 2000).

Almighty Allah also says: "Messenger, do not be grieved by those who race to surpass one another in disbelief- those who say with their mouths, 'We believe,' but have no faith in their hearts, and the Jews who listen eagerly to lies and to those who have not even met you, who distort the meanings of [revealed] words and say [to each other], 'If you are given this ruling, accept it, but if you are not, then beware!'—if Allah intends some people to be so misguided, you will be powerless against Allah on their behalf. These are the ones whose hearts Allah does not intend to cleanse- a disgrace for them in this world, and then a heavy punishment in the Hereafter" (Al-Ma'ida: 41).

For the first impression, both verses seem to be associated with the shift of the Qibla to the Ka'ba and the people of the Book's attempt to oppose the order (Qutb, 1996). In fact, they have a discriminatory view and believe that Jerusalem is their exclusive right, although they already have differences in this regard. Almighty Allah says: "Yet even if you brought every proof to those who were given the Scripture, they would not follow your prayer direction, nor will you follow theirs, nor indeed will any of them follow one another's direction. If you [Prophet] were to follow their desires, after the knowledge brought to you, you would be doing wrong" (Al-Baqara: 145).

The Noble Quran stresses a fact that the people of the Book are conscious of the truth in this issue. Almighty Allah says: "Many a time We have seen you [Prophet] turn your face towards Heaven, so We are turning you towards a prayer direction that pleases you. Turn your face in the direction of the Sacred Mosque: wherever you [believers] may be, turn your faces to it. Those who were given the Scripture know with certainty that this is the Truth from their Lord: Allah is not unaware of what they do" (Al-Baqara: 144).

The last verse implies a stage of extreme weakness suffered by the Muslims, which would encourage the enemy to prohibit the mention of Allah's name in His places of worship and strive to have them deserted.

The issue that may be raised here is whether the context is about a past action. If so, it may be about Al-Aqsa Mosque but not the Grand Mosque.

On the one hand, if it covers the present, then it is the Grand Mosque and not necessarily Al-Aqsa Mosque. If the question in the verse indicates condemnation, then it is about a challenge of a matter which is taking place in the present and expected in the future.

On the other hand, combining the prohibition and causing of desertion would mean Al-Aqsa Mosque but not the Grand Mosque nor any other one.

Therefore, both crimes are attributed to the people of the Book, taking place in the form of a great deal of activity, serious agendas,

consecutive incursions and continuous excavations on the pretext of reviving Temple Mount. The plans for the prohibition and causing of desertion in relation to mosques, in general, and Al-Aqsa Mosque, in particular, are carried out by the people of the Book.

Among these agendas is to hamper the accomplishment of the mosques' message, reduce the impact of the Friday speech and ban lessons of Sharia scholars. That would undermine the greatness of Almighty Allah in the hearts of people, so they go astray by making many sins.

What is more, they referred to mosques as sources of terrorism and murder of innocents. Some even made use of the COVID-19 pandemic to shut the mosques, rather than employing them to resort to Almighty Allah to lift the crisis.

More particularly, the people of the Book cooperate to destroy the Islamic features of Jerusalem, by imposing physical and spiritual designs. Examples in Al-Aqsa Mosque cover arson, frequent incursions, spacial and temporal divisions, electronic gates, digging of graves and drug and tax wars.

It can be argued, accordingly, that the divine rules are valid with regard to those people. Firstly, they are so wicked for committing such an act, which is linked to the mosques to show how evil they are. For the part "Such people should not enter them without fear," they will be scared of believers to attack them and restore the mosques. It is a promise made by Almighty Allah that the believers shall have victory and take the mosques back. Part of their punishment is that "there is disgrace for them in this world." They will see their own corruption leading to humiliation, accompanied by the spread of indecencies and sins. Such leaders will not succeed in their rule, bearing in mind what happened to the Romans, Crusaders and Arab polytheists (Abu Al-Su'ood, 1982).

The Noble Quran exegesis scholars (Al-Qassimi, 2002; Ibn Atiyya, 2000; Ibn Katheer, 1999; Ibn Ashour, 1998) interpret those who prohibit the mention of Almighty Allah and strive to have mosques deserted to be any of the following: the people of the Book, Army of the Elephant, Quraysh polytheists, or hypocrites.

As for mosques, they could be generalized to those of any space and time. Or they could be specified to both or either of the Grand Mosque and Al-Aqsa Mosque.

The forms of the above prohibition may be physical or spiritual. The same applies to causing the desertion.

In terms of the worldly disgrace, each party received their own penalty as it had been promised by Almighty Allah, which constitutes a great sign. The Army of the Elephant became a lesson to everyone. The Polytheists and hypocrites were labelled 'unclean', as Almighty Allah says: "Believers, those who ascribe partners to Allah are truly unclean:

do not let them come near the Sacred Mosque after this year. If you are afraid you may become poor, [bear in mind that] Allah will enrich you out of His bounty if He pleases: Allah is all knowing and wise” (Al-Tawba: 28). The people of the Book were defeated from time to time by the believers and had to pay tribute.

In brief, whether the meaning is general or specific, the space of the scene is clear, for the battle over Jerusalem is becoming fiercer. The pledge made by Almighty Allah is definitely going to take place, displaying that Al-Aqsa Mosque is the sign of dignity, steadfastness and promise for the believers, on the one hand, and the sign of disgrace and defeat for the people of the Book and hypocrites, on the other.

The second divine rule is stated in this verse: “Those who have been driven unjustly from their homes only for saying, ‘Our Lord is Allah.’ If Allah did not repel some people by means of others, many monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques, where Allah’s name is much invoked, would have been destroyed. Allah is sure to help those who help His cause- Allah is strong and mighty” (Al-Hajj: 40).

Here, the following observations can be made to show how the future of Jerusalem is about to witness the victory of the truth.

The divine rule about the believers in preventing the destruction of mosques is persistent. For these people to be influential and victorious, their existence is associated with four elements set forth in the following verses:

- “Allah will defend the believers; Allah does not love the unfaithful or the ungrateful” (Al-Hajj: 38).
- “Those who have been attacked are permitted to take up arms because they have been wronged- Allah has the power to help them” (Al-Hajj: 39).
- “Those who have been driven unjustly from their homes only for saying, ‘Our Lord is Allah.’” (Al-Hajj: 40).
- “Those who, when We establish them in the land, keep up the prayer, pay the prescribed alms, command what is right, and forbid what is wrong: Allah controls the outcome of all events” (Al-Hajj: 41).

Ibn Ashour (1998) elaborates on the connection between these and previous verses. In the verse “As for the disbelievers, who bar others from Allah’s path” (Al-Hajj: 25), Almighty Allah threatens to torture the polytheists for fighting against His path and the Grand Mosque, whereas He promises to reward the obedient believers in the Hereafter. In addition, as the context requires reassuring them about this life, He confirms that He would be their defender and supporter.

That would eliminate hesitation by any of them if they cannot help waiting for the triumph.

Ibn Ashour adds that the statement “Those who have been attacked are permitted” (Al-Hajj: 39) is very much linked to the previous verse “Allah will defend the believers” (Al-Hajj: 38). That is, since Almighty Allah defends the believers and has permitted them to fight, then He will secure them with victory, which would promote justice to those who were oppressed for their faith and sent out of their homes.

This is the very reality of the people of the blessed land – Palestine – who were expelled and wronged, as if the following sentence describes them: “Those who have been driven unjustly from their homes only for saying, ‘Our Lord is Allah’” (Al-Hajj: 40). On the other hand, Almighty Allah makes an unbreakable promise, stressed in several ways: “Indeed, Allah will defend,” “Indeed, Allah does not love the unfaithful or the ungrateful,” “Indeed, Allah has the power to help them,” “Allah is sure to help those who help His cause” and “Indeed, Allah is strong and mighty.”

Another argument states that aggression on mosques represents aggression on the entire Ummah. For Ibn Atiyya (2000), the verse addresses whoever prohibits mentioning Almighty Allah or destroying a Muslim city, because the whole earth is a place of prostration for this Ummah.

Therefore, the statement “Those who, when We establish them in the land” comes immediately after the divine rule of defence of Almighty Allah’s houses, concluded by “and mosques, where Allah’s name is much invoked.”

The near future, according to the divine rules, is holding good tidings: a dignified, glorious return of Jerusalem, Al-Aqsa Mosque and their surroundings, and the revival of the top target of the Ummah – empowerment and rightly-guided caliphate.

The third rule is found in the following verses: “...shining out in houses of worship. Allah has ordained that they be raised high and that His name be remembered in them, with men in them celebrating His glory morning and evening” (Al-Nour: 35-36).

The context describes what mosques should look like to play their required role on a continuing basis. The verse in Al-Baqara declares war on those who target mosques with prohibition and/or destruction. In the verse of Al-Hajj, the war will be subject to the divine rule, whereby the truthful will be supported and will have victory over those of falsehood.

In this regard, a contrast can be made. There are the two verses: “those who prohibit the mention of Allah’s name in His places of worship and strive to have them deserted,” and “If Allah did not repel

some people by means of others, many...and mosques, where Allah's name is much invoked, would have been destroyed."

Meanwhile, in the houses of Almighty Allah, where His mention is raised, the generation of victory will be built. These are "Men who are not distracted, either by commerce or profit, from remembering Allah, keeping up the prayer, and paying the prescribed alms, fearing a day when hearts and eyes will turn over" (Al-Nour: 37). They are the ones referred to as 'servants of Ours' in the verse: "When the first of these warnings was fulfilled, We sent against you servants of Ours with great force, and they ravaged your homes. That warning was fulfilled. But then We allowed you to prevail against your enemy. We increased your wealth and offspring and made you more numerous. whether you do good or evil it is to your own souls—and when the second warning was fulfilled [We sent them] to shame your faces and enter the place of worship as they did the first time, and utterly destroy whatever fell into their power" (Al-Isra': 5-7).

Furthermore, several forms of empowerment are listed in the following verses: "Allah has made a promise to those among you who believe and do good deeds: He will make them successors to the land, as He did those who came before them; He will empower the religion He has chosen for them; He will grant them security to replace their fear. 'They will worship Me and not join anything with Me.' Those who are defiant after that will be the rebels. [People], keep up the prayer, pay the prescribed alms, and obey the Messenger, so that you may be given mercy" (Al-Norr: 55-56). That would clearly show the persistent divine rule that Almighty Allah's will and Sharia shall prevail.

Conclusion:

The study can make the following conclusions:

- There is a significant connection between prophethood, message and authority, preparing for the Ummah's expected major role in testimony and leadership.
- Divine rules link the mosques' message with the merit to have empowerment on this earth.
- An honourable influential future is expected to spring from Jerusalem to show the victory of the truth and justice and the defeat of falsehood.
- The Mosque is the centre of change to produce the second generation of the awaited 'servants of Ours'.
- Other divine rules need to be explored.

It is recommended that future studies depart to examine divine rules and the integration between the verses of the Noble Quran.

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