

Part 5: *The Historic Reality of Paganism in Arabia*

Kitāb al-Tawḥeed

(Book of monotheism)

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2. The statement of the disbelieving Quraysh, ‘the angels are the daughters of Allah’

Cited in the *Tafsir* of Mujāhid with a *Ṣaḥīḥ isnād* dazzlingly resolute to Mujāhid:¹

From Mujāhid concerning his statement: *And they imagine kinship between him and the Jinn.*² The disbelievers of the Quraysh said: ‘The angels are the daughters of Allah, the exalted and majestic.’ Abu Bakr al-Ṣadiq, may Allah be pleased with him said: ‘So who are their mothers?’ They said in reply: ‘The esteemed daughters of the *Jinn*.’ Allah the majestic thus stated: *Whereas the Jinn well know they will be brought before (Him).*³ Saying: ‘Brought forth to account (for saying that the) female *Jinn* are angels.’⁴

With this being *mursal* from Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him. It is a confirmation of what they say: ‘*The angels are the daughters of Allah, the exalted and majestic,*’ with the additional clarificatory point of what their supposed ‘mothers’ are, the unsubstantiated claim that these ‘holy daughters’ are considered as ‘The esteemed daughters of the *Jinn*.’ As it is cited in the *Tafsir* of Ibn Abi Ḥātim:⁵

¹ *Tafsir* Mujāhid Vol. 3, p. 460, no. 1419

² *Qur’ān* 37: 158

³ *Ibid*, the latter portion of the verse

⁴ Although not mentioned in the original text here as it is outlined in full in an earlier chapter, the *isnād* for this is: Abdur-Raḥman reported to us he said Ibrāhim narrated to us he said Adam narrated to us he said Waraqā’ narrated to us from Ibn Abi Najih’ from Mujāhid. Similar appears in the *Tafsir* of al-Ṭabari, with a variance of wording at the end: Muḥammad ibn ‘Amr narrated to me he said Abu Aāṣim narrated to us he said Esa narrated to us; and al-Ḥārith narrated to me he said al-Ḥasan narrated to me he said Waraqā’ narrated to us, all of them (narrating) from Ibn Abi Najih’ from Mujāhid: *And they imagine kinship between him and the Jinn* [37: 158]; he (Mujāhid) said: The disbelievers of the Quraysh said: ‘The angels are the daughters of Allah.’ Hence Abu Bakr asked: ‘Who are their mothers?’ They (the Quraysh) replied: ‘The esteemed daughters of the *Jinn*.’ They considered that they were created from the same (essence) as what Iblis was created from.

⁵ *Tafsir* Ibn Abi Ḥātim Vol. 10, p. 3283, no. 18505

From Muḥammad ibn Uthmān al-Makhrami that the Quraysh said: They had judged for every man (of theirs) a man, of the companions of Muḥammad, had taken him (for Islam). So they assigned Abu Bakr may Allah be pleased with him, as he came to Ṭalḥa while he was among his people. So, Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, said: ‘What are you calling me to?’ Ṭalḥa said: ‘I invite you to the worship of al-Lāt and al-‘Uzza!’ Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, said: ‘What is al-Lāt?’ He said: Our lord. He said, ‘And al-‘Uzza?’ He replied, ‘Daughters of Allah.’ Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, said: ‘And who are their mothers?’ Ṭalḥa became silent, he didn’t answer. Ṭalḥa said to his companions: ‘Answer the man,’ but the people were silent. So Ṭalḥa said: ‘Arise, O Abu Bakr, I bear witness that there is no deity but Allah and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah.’ Thus, Allah revealed the verse: *And whoever turns himself away from the remembrance of al-Raḥman, We appoint for him a Shayṭān, so he becomes his associate.*⁶

Further citations of this may be found in *al-Durr al-Manthur*,⁷ in chapters on the circumstances of revelation, by al-Suyūṭī,⁸ and in the *Tafsir al-Muneer* of al-Zuhayli,⁹ as well as others. Likewise in this version, cited without an *isnād*: al-Makhrami, but rather it is al-Makhzumi, and this is from the copyist, and Muḥammad ibn Uthmān, this is an illusion or an old manuscript from Ibn Abi Ḥātim or his Sheikh. What is correct and authentic in all other sources is, Muḥammad ibn ‘Abbād, likewise, the wording ‘our lord’ an illusion or an old manuscript from Ibn Abi Ḥātim or his Sheikh. This is so because the idol ‘al-Lāt’ is definitively female, as will be exhaustively explained in a standalone chapter. Hence the correct one would be ‘*Rabatuna*.’ Similarly, as expressed by Ṭalḥa: ‘daughters of Allah,’ thereby authenticating it, ‘a daughter of Allah,’ or from the ‘daughters of Allah,’ as it must be. The authentic text is therefore as follows:

They had judged for every man (of theirs) a man, of the companions of Muḥammad, had taken him (for Islam). So they assigned Abu Bakr may Allah be pleased with him as he came to Ṭalḥa while he was among his people. So, Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, said: ‘What are you calling me to?’ Ṭalḥa said: ‘I invite you to the worship of al-Lāt and al-‘Uzza!’ Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, said: ‘What is al-Lāt?’ He said: *Rabatuna*. He said, ‘And al-‘Uzza?’ He replied, ‘a daughter of Allah’ [or] ‘from the daughters of Allah.’ Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, said: ‘And who are their

⁶ *Qur’ān* 43: 36

⁷ *al-Durr al-Manthur*, Vol. 7, p. 377

⁸ *Bab al-Nuzul*, al-Suyuti, Vol. 1, p. 180

⁹ *Tafsir al-Muneer* al-Zuhayli, Vol. 25, p. 154

mothers?’ Ṭalḥa became silent, he didn’t answer. Ṭalḥa said to his companions: ‘Answer the man,’ but the people were silent. So Ṭalḥa said: ‘Arise, O Abu Bakr, I bear witness that there is no deity but Allah and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah.’ Thus, Allah revealed the verse: *And whoever turns himself away from the remembrance of al-Raḥman, We appoint for him a Shayṭān, so he becomes his associate.*¹⁰

As for the channels of transmission, these are all reliably reported to Muḥammad ibn ‘Abbād al-Makhzumi end-to-end. For example, as reported in *Ansāb al-Ashrāf* of al-Balādhuri:¹¹

And Abdul-Wāhid ibn Ghayāth al-Basri narrated to me Ḥammād ibn Salamah narrated to us Dāwud ibn Abi Hind reports from Muḥammad ibn ‘Abbād al-Makhzumi that the Quraysh said: They had judged for every man (of theirs) a man, of the companions of Muḥammad, had taken him (for Islam). So they assigned Abu Bakr may Allah be pleased with him, as he came to Ṭalḥa ibn ‘Ubaydallah while he was among his people, or he said unto his people: Arise O Abu Bakr. Abu Bakr thus replied: ‘To what are you summoning me to?’ Ṭalḥa said: ‘To invite you to al-Lāt and al-‘Uzza.’ Abu Bakr replied, ‘And what is al-Lāt and al-‘Uzza?’ Ṭalḥa said: ‘Daughters of Allah.’ Abu Bakr said: ‘So who is their father?’ Ṭalḥa fell silent, not answering. Gesturing to his companions to answer, his people were also silent. Ṭalḥa thus said: ‘Arise Abu Bakr, indeed I bear witness that there is no deity but Allah, alone without partner, and that Muḥammad is the slave and Messenger of Allah.’ Thus, Allah revealed the verse: *And whoever turns himself away from the remembrance of al-Raḥman, We appoint for him a Shayṭān, so he becomes his associate.*

The variance of wording here, ‘Who is their father?’ is evidently a mistake, as the original has ‘Who is their *mother*?’ which is correct by necessity. Further, this is also cited in ‘*Uyun al-Akḥbār*’:¹²

Muḥammad ibn Abdul-Aziz narrated to me he said Abu Salamah narrated to us from Ḥammād ibn Salamah he said Dāwud ibn Abi Hind reported to us from Muḥammad ibn ‘Abbād al-Makhzumi that the Quraysh said: They had judged for every man (of theirs) a man, of the companions of Muḥammad, had taken him (for Islam). They had assigned Ṭalḥa ibn ‘Ubaydallah while he was among his people, or he said unto his people. He said: Arise to me O Abu Bakr. Abu Bakr replied: ‘To what are you summoning me to?’ Ṭalḥa said: ‘Inviting you

¹⁰ *Qur’ān* 43: 36

¹¹ *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, al-Balādhuri Vol. 10, p. 119

¹² *Kitāb ‘Uyun al-Akḥbār* (A Book of Choice Narratives) by Ibn Qutaybah, Vol. 2, p. 216

to the worship of al-Lāt and al-‘Uzza.’ Abu Bakr replied, ‘And what is al-Lāt?’ Ṭalḥa said: ‘Daughters of Allah.’ Abu Bakr said: ‘So who is their mother?’ Ṭalḥa fell silent, he said to his companions: ‘Answer your friend,’ but they also kept quiet. Ṭalḥa thus said: ‘Arise Abu Bakr, indeed I bear witness that there is no deity but Allah, alone without partner, and that Muḥammad is the slave and Messenger of Allah.’ Abu Bakr took him by the hand to the Prophet peace be upon him.

Here in this narration, one of the narrators has mixed matters slightly, or it is an illusion of the copyist, as there is jump over the sentence: ‘He said: *Rabatuna*, He said: ‘And What is al-Uzza?’ Thus is the attribution found in this collection, but as well cited in *al-Aymā ila Zawā’id al-Amāli wal’Ajzā*.¹³

I would submit, Muḥammad ibn Abdul-Aziz is Ibn Abi Rizmah, *thiqa* (trustworthy) as noted in *Taqrib al-Tahzib*,¹⁴ and Abu Salamah is Maṣṣur ibn Salamah ibn Abdul-Aziz al-Khuzā’i al-Baghdadi, *thiqa thabt* (resolutely trustworthy) as mentioned by al-Ḥāfiz also in *Taqrib al-Tahzib*.¹⁵ Muḥammad ibn ‘Abbād al-Makhzumi is a ‘*Tabi* (successor), *thiqa mashur* (trustworthy and famous) from the class of the Imām Mujāhid ibn Jabr.

Further details regarding al-Uzza appear in the *Kitāb al-Aṣnām* by Abul’Mundthir Hishām ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Sā’ib al-Kalbi. The following two passages are cited directly:

The person who introduced al-'Uzza was Zālim ibn ‘Asad .Her idol was situated in a valley in Nakhlāt al-Shāmiyah called Hurād, alongside al-Ghumayr' to the right of the road from Mecca to al-'Iraq, above Dhāt-Irq and nine miles from al-Bustān. Over her [Zālim] built a house called Bass in which the people used to receive oracular communications. The Arabs as well as the Quraysh were won't to name their children ‘Abd-al-'Uzza. Furthermore al-'Uzza was the greatest idol among the Quraysh. They used to journey to her, offer gifts unto her, and seek her favours through sacrifice.¹⁶

The Quraysh were wont to venerate her above all other idols. For this reason Zayd ibn-'Amr ibn-Nufayl, who, during the *Jahiliyah* days, had turned to the worship of God and renounced that of al-'Uzza and of the other idols, said:

I have renounced both al-Lat and al-'Uzza,

¹³ *al-Aymā ila Zawā’id al-Amāli wal’Ajzā* by Nabil Sa’d al-Deen Jarrār.

¹⁴ *Taqrib al-Tahzib* Vol. 1, p. 547, no. 6092

¹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 497, no. 6901

¹⁶ The *Kitāb al-Aṣnām* (Book of Idols) by Hishām ibn al-Kalbi, Translated by Nabih Amin Faris, (1952) Princeton University Press, p. 18

*For thus would the brave and the robust do.
No more do I worship al-'Uzza and her two daughters,
Or visit the two idols of the banu-Ghanm;
Nor do I journey to Hubal and adore it,
Although it was our lord when I was young*

The custody of al-'Uzza was in the hands of the banu-Shayban ibn-Jabir ibn-Murrah ibn-'Abs ibn-Rifa'ah ibn-al-Harith ibn-'Utbah ibn-Sulaym ibn-Mansur of the banu-Sulaym. The last of them to hold its custody was Dubayyah ibn-Harami al-Sulami.¹⁷

The apparent import of these narratives seems to show that the Quraysh had learned their lesson, so amongst the common people, they expressed the answer that was set out in the narration that was reported from Mujāhid, namely that the 'daughters' are from 'the esteemed noble of the *Jinn*.' This was without further specification of a name in what would seem to be a desperate attempt to avoid this ugly dilemma. Al-Shawkāni provides the following in the opening of his work *Fath al-Qadir*:

As reported by Ibn Abi Ḥātim from Muḥammad ibn Uthmān al-Makhzumi that the Quraysh said: They had assigned for every man (of theirs) a man, of the companions of Muḥammad, had taken him (for Islam). So they assigned Abu Bakr may Allah be pleased with him as he came to Ṭalḥa ibn Ubaydallah while he was among his people. Abu Bakr said: 'What are you calling me to?' Ṭalḥa said: 'I invite you to the worship of al-Lāt and al-'Uzza.' Abu Bakr said: 'What is al-Lāt?' Ṭalḥa said: 'Children of Allah.' Abu Bakr said: 'And what of al-'Uzza?' Ṭalḥa said: 'Daughters of Allah.' Abu Bakr said: 'And who are their mothers?' Ṭalḥa was silent, but he didn't answer. He said to his companions, 'Answer the man,' yet the people were silent. So Ṭalḥa said: 'Arise O Abu Bakr, I bear witness that there is no deity but Allah and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah.' Then Allah revealed the verse, *And whoever turns himself away from the remembrance of al-Raḥman...* [43: 36].¹⁸

Herein, there is quite a nasty mistake made in relation to al-Lāt, mentioned as 'Children of Allah,' or 'from the children of Allah.' Earlier references to this wording cannot be traced prior to al-Shawkāni's *Fath al-Qadir*. I would ask Allah that this is not a deliberate distortion or misrepresentation with the intention to try and make al-Lāt masculine, with the means of lying and evasiveness. Allah forbid.

¹⁷ Ibid. p. 19

¹⁸ *Fath al-Qadir* Vol. 6, p. 407

Thereafter, some of the individuals from the sect of Wahhabism ran with this mistake.¹⁹

Yet he was deceived by even the most vocal opponents of the Wahhābi sect from among the Twelver Shiites; we find in the book, *The Wahhābi defect in understanding Qur'anic Tawḥeed*:

Yes: It appears from the report that Ibn Abi Ḥātim cited on the authority of Muḥammad ibn Uthmān al-Makhzumi that they believed some of them to be masculine, he said: The Quraysh said: They had judged for every man (of theirs) a man of the companions of Muḥammad took him. So they assigned Abu Bakr may Allah be pleased with him as he came to Ṭalḥa while he was among his people. So, Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, said: 'What are you calling me to?' Ṭalḥa said: 'I invite you to the worship of al-Lāt and al-'Uzza!' Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, said: 'What is al-Lāt?' He said: Our lord. He said, 'And al-'Uzza?' He replied, 'Daughters of Allah'...

This is supported by the Almighty's saying: *And they make the Jinn associates with Allah, while He created them, and they falsely attribute to Him sons and daughters without knowledge.*²⁰

As well as quoting from *Faṭḥ al-Qadir* by al-Shawkāni! He has also observed with notable precision, grabbing this point with an iron fist, that al-'Uzza according to the Quraysh was from the genus of the *Jinn*, indeed being from the esteemed nobility of the *Jinn*. She was viewed as the consort of Allah, almighty and sanctified and that al-Lāt and Manāt were her daughters, being the genus of the angels and they were depicted as the 'daughters of Allah.' Namely, at the same time an idol, or rather considered as the greatest idol according to the Quraysh as per the reported text from Abul'Mundthir Hishām Muḥammad al-Kalbi.

¹⁹ For example, as cited in *al-Anwār al-Sāti'āt* by Abdul-Aziz al-Salmān (Vol. 2, p. 481) and also in the exposition and interpretation of the Qur'ān by Muḥay-al-Deen ibn Aḥmad Mustafa Darwish (d. 1403).

²⁰ *Qur'ān*, 6: 100