

القرآن الكريم

﴿وَيَقْدِفُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ﴾



(سبأ: ٥٣)

Question

Please shed some light on the translation of this *āyah* from *Sūrah Saba*?

﴿وَيَقْدِفُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ مِنْ مَكَانٍ بَعِيدٍ﴾

- especially the part: ﴿وَيَقْدِفُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ﴾

Faḍīlat al-Shaykh Dr. V. Abdur Rahim (حفظه الله) replies:



Dear Br Abdullah AbdurRaheem

وعليكم السلام

Here is the answer to your question:

قَذَفَ بِالْحِجَارَةِ قَذْفًا (a-i), *to hurl a stone at someone.*

In modern Arabic قَذِيفَةٌ (pl قَذَائِفُ) means *a missile, a shell, a bomb.*

Metaphorically, قَذَفَ بِالْغَيْبِ means *to conjecture, to guess.*

It is a beautiful imagery of one trying to understand a problem by hurling conjectures (الغَيْبِ) at it.

The verb رَجَمَ رَجْمًا (a-u) also means *to stone* as in Q18:20.

And the expression رَجَمَ بِالْغَيْبِ is also metaphorically used to mean *to guess* as in Q18:22:

﴿سَيَقُولُونَ ثَلَاثَةً رَابِعُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ خَمْسَةً سَادِسُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ رَجْمًا بِالْغَيْبِ﴾ 

Some will say they were three, the fourth being their dog while others will say they were five, the sixth being their dog merely based on guess.

Now, we turn to Q34:52-53. Here is a translation of these two *āyāt* :

﴿وَقَالُوا آمَنَّا بِهِ وَأَنَّى لَهُمُ التَّنَاطُشُ مِنْ مَكَانٍ بَعِيدٍ﴾ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَقَدْ كَفَرُوا بِهِ
 ﴿مِنْ قَبْلُ وَيَقْدِفُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ مِنْ مَكَانٍ بَعِيدٍ﴾ ﴿٥٣﴾

(52) They will say (in the Hereafter), 'We believe in it (now).' But how can they reach (faith) from afar off (53) seeing that they had earlier disbelieved it merely on the basis of wild guess?

The imagery in ﴿يَقْدِفُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ مِنْ مَكَانٍ بَعِيدٍ﴾ is of one who is throwing stones at a fruit which is far beyond the reach of his stones.

The disbeliever is hurling conjectures at concepts (like divinity, prophethood, religion, etc) which are far beyond the reach of his intellect.

The distance in the imagery is physical. In the case of the disbeliever, it is metaphorical: the loftiness of the ideas he is aiming at, and the utter inadequacy of his tools which are mere conjectures.

I hope this helped you understand the *āyah*.

والسلام

abdur rahim