

al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī, Aḥmad b. Yūsuf b. ‘Abd al-Dā’im. *Umdat al-Huffāz fī-l-tafsīr ashraf al-alfāz; mu’jam lughawī li-alfāz al-Qurʿān al-karīm*. Ed. Muḥammad Bāsīl ‘Uyūn al-Sūd. 4 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1417/1996.

Suyūṭī. *Itqān*.

Ṭabarī. *Tafsīr*.

Ṭarafa, Abū ‘Amr b. al-‘Abd al-Bakrī al-Wā‘ilī. *Dīwān Ṭarafa b. al-‘Abd*. Ed. Maḥdī Muḥammad Naṣīr al-Dīn. 2nd ed. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1423/2002.

Zabīdī. *Tāj*.

Zarkashī. *Burhān*.

See also: BELIEF; BOUNDARIES OF ALLAH; CERITITUDE; CONTEMPLATION; DOUBT; FIR‘AWN; HYPOCRISY AND HYPOCRITES; JĀHILIYYA; KNOWLEDGE; YŪNUS, UPON HIM PEACE.

MUZAFFAR IQBAL

CONSULTATION

SHŪRĀ

This entry comprises the following sections: (i). Definitions and Usage; (ii). A Characteristic of the Believers; (iii). A Prophetic Consultation (Q 3:159); (iv). Prophetic Consultations in Sīra; (v). Consultation for Weaning a Child (Q 2:233); (vi). Juristic Consultations; (vii). Other References; (viii). Bibliography.

Definitions and Usage

Consultation is the act of drawing forth another’s opinion, advice, counsel, or command. Two verbal nouns, shūra and mashūra, from the root sh-w-r, on the pattern of maf‘ulatun, synonymously mean “to consult someone, or to ask someone’s opinion in a specific matter” (Ibn Manzūr, sub sh-w-r). Abū Bakr Ibn al-‘Arabī (468-543/1075-1148) says, “shūrā is the concord of the community (ulfaṭ li-l-jamā‘a), the probe of intellects (misbār li-l-‘uqūl), and the means to the correct [resolution] (sabab ilā al-ṣawāb), so long as those exchanging opinions are rightly guided.” Its scope in religious matters is limited as “the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, consulted his Companions on matters of warfare—and there are many narrations about this—but he never consulted them about legal rulings (fīl-ahkām), for these are revealed by Allah, in all categories: obligatory, recommended, objectionable, permitted, and prohibited” (Aḥkām, sub Q 42:38). Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Fayyūmī (d. 770/1368) says,

“shāwartuhu (I asked his advice) has the same meaning as istashartuhu (I sought his opinion), that is, rāja‘tuhu (I consulted him), to find his opinion on the matter... Good advice is compared to drinking milk (an allusion to the meaning of the first form) ...and al-shūrā is a noun derived from this form” (Miṣbāḥ).

Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad al-Rāghīb al-Aṣfahānī (d. ca.502/1108) defines the root’s three verbal derivatives (*tashāwur, mushāwara, mashūra*) as “reaching an opinion by referring the matter from one to another. By extension, *al-shūrā* also denotes the matter on which consultation is sought” (*Mufradāt*). Badr al-Dīn al-‘Aynī (d. 855/1451) summarizes the sense of the term as, “I presented my issue to him so that he could show me the correct view” (*‘Umda, Aḥkām, biṭānat al-imām wa ahl mashūratiḥ*).

Consultation is directly mentioned in three verses: Q 2:333, in reference to the weaning of a child; 3:159 in reference to the Battle of Uḥud; and Q 42:38 as a characteristic of the believers. It is also alluded to in several others verses (see below). Q 42 is called Sūrat al-Shūrā.

As a Characteristic of the Believers (Q 42:38)

Consultation as a characteristic of the believers (*q.v.*) is mentioned in Q 42:38, which can be better understood in the context of the preceding and following verses, which also describe the believers:

Now whatever you have been given is but a passing comfort for the life of the world, and that which Allah has is better and more lasting for those who believe and put their trust in their Lord; those who shun enormities and indecencies and who, when angry, forgive; those who answer their Lord and establish the prayer, their affairs being [a matter of] counsel between them, and who spend from what We have provided them; and those who, when afflicted by a great wrong (al-baghy), defend themselves (Q 42:36-39).

Being a characteristic of the believers, such consultation is understood to be a universal injunction. Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. al-Sirrī al-Zajjājī (d. 311/923) explains this to indicate that the believers are those who “do not adhere to individual opinions but gather around one opinion”. ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq b. Ghālīb Ibn ‘Aṭīyya (d. 481-541/1088-1147) says, “the whole verse is a general praise by Allah for all who believe in Him. He also praised those whose affair is a matter of consultation among them, for this means agreement (*ijtimā‘ al-kalima*) by discussion, mutual affection, joining forces, and cooperation for the best” (*Muḥarrar*). ‘Alī