

The Indication of *Zanna* in Holy Quran

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Abstract

This article addresses the indication of *Zanna*/ “to believe, think or suppose,” in the Holy Quran. The author argues that *Zanna* retains its original meaning and does not indicate certitude, as many scholars have stated. Based on the position of *Zanna* in the verses of the Quran, the claims that it denotes certitude can be interpreted as suppositions. The reason why many scholars have interpreted *Zanna* as “knew” or “ascertained” is the fact that the meaning of *Zanna* in the verses is close to certitude to reach the most widely thought; thus, they interpreted it with as such.

The indication of *Azzan* in the Holy Quran might be in the meaning of “predominant supposition and thoughts,” as well as “false belief.” All of these meanings are determined by the contexts in which *Zanna* is mentioned.

Introduction

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, and prayers and peace be upon the faithful Messenger of Allah, and upon his family and companions, and after,

This study addresses the indications of the word *Zanna* on the basis of its different occurrences in the Quran. The importance of this research is that it aims to achieve and reach an accurate indication or meaning of the word *Zanna* in light of the disagreements among scholars over its meaning and due to its

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confusion with other meanings like “certitude” and “preponderance.” The study follows an analytical inductive approach, as it reviews the statements of most important linguistics scholars regarding this word. The researcher tracks the occurrences of *Zanna* in Quran and clarifies the opinions of the *Mufasssereen*/ interpreters of the Quran and of linguists regarding its meaning. After that, a comparison of the opinions of the scholars is made, and suitable meanings for the word are proposed based on the contexts of the verses in which it appears.

Research Plan

This article is divided into a prologue, three main topic sections, and a conclusion. The prologue addresses the statements and the opinions of scholars on the meanings of *Zanna* and clarifies the predominant opinions, as well as its use and in the Quran.

The first topic after the prologue concerns the indication of predominant supposition”; the second, the indication of supposition and thoughts”; and the third, the indication “ false belief or impression.”

Prologue

The Indication of the Word *Zanna*/ اظنّ “Believe,” “Think,” or “Suppose” in the Holy Quran

The book *Al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Quran (The Exegesis of Strange Terms in the Holy Quran)* book reported that “*Azzan* / (الظَّنّ)/ ‘belief’ or ‘supposition’ is a noun referring to the result of a sign, and whenever that sign got strengthened it led to knowing, and whenever it got extremely weakened it did not exceed the edge of delusion or false belief.”² *Al-Kulliyat*, a dictionary of linguistic

² *Al-Mufradat*, p. 320

differences, states that “*Azzan*/ ‘belief’ or ‘supposition can be certitude and doubt and it is the preponderant hesitancy between both sides of the uncertain belief.”³ Lisān al-‘Arab states that “*Azzan* (the noun for the verb *Zanna*) is a doubt and a certitude, yet it is not a physical certitude but a sensible certitude as the physical certitude cannot be measured but by a physical sign.”⁴ According to these scholars, *Azzan*/ “belief” or “supposition” varies in meaning between thinking and certitude, such that it might reach the level of certitude. Thus, some scholars set rules for cases that are certainties and cases that are suppositions, and they try to quote verses of Qur’an that support the opinion they have reached.⁵ I argue that *Azzan*/ “belief” or “supposition” holds its original meaning as possible,⁶ but the word can be interpreted as if the pure meaning is certitude. The original meaning is applied to all the occurrences of *Azzan* as it is most appropriate to interpret it as it is written; however, if that meaning cannot be applied, then the word can be interpreted figuratively. It can be seen that the Holy Quran is characterized by this feature; it always considers the original meanings and preserves them. Now, we are going to view the indication of *Zanna* without its being interpreted otherwise, as absolute *Zan* / “belief” or “supposition.” *Zan* is so close to the truth that it might as well be certitude and so close to thinking that it has the same meaning. The word *Zanna* appears 61 times in the Quran.

³ Al-Kulliyat, p. 593

⁴ Lisān al-‘Arab, zunan (root for verb zanna) material, vol. 13, p. 215

⁵ Look for: Al-Zarkasyi, B. (794 H). al-Burhan fi Ulum al-Quran. Verification: Mohammad Abu alfadl Ibrahim, 1st ed. 1975, Cairo: Dar Ihya At-Torath Al-Arabi, vol. 4, p. 156. al-Suyuti. Mu`tarak al-Aqran. vol. 2, p. 224.

⁶ Look for: Samarrai, Fadil Salih. Maani al-nahw. vol. 2, p. 20.

The following are the indications of the meaning of Zanna in the Holy Quran:

1. The meaning of “predominant belief.” Allah says, “If he divorces her, she shall not be lawful for him again until she has married another husband. If the latter divorces her, then there is no blame on them for reuniting, provided they (*zanna*) **think** they can maintain God's limits. These are God's limits; He makes them clear to people who know.”⁷

In his book *Al-Kashshaaf (The Revealer)*, Zamakhshari wrote, “... provided they think; if they think that they can maintain the conjugal rights, and the verse did not say ‘if they know that they can maintain the conjugal rights’ because the certitude is unknown and only God knows about it. Whoever interpreted *Azzan* here as ‘knowing,’ he was deceived by the expression and the meaning, as humans don’t know the future but they suppose and think what might happen.”⁸

This is a predominant belief that some scholars consider certain knowledge, but as Zamakhshari said, the future is unknown and only God knows how human souls can change; therefore, how can it be knowing? Also, it is known that most of *Fiqh* and *Sharia* laws are established according to predominant belief.⁹ The use of *Zann* in this rare event is intentional because it is probable that the spouses will not retract after the dispute and the opposition; thus, it is

⁷ Surat al-Baqarah, verse 32

⁸ *Al-Kashshaaf*, part 1, p. 273

⁹ The interpreters who adopted this interpretation: Al-Tabari, A. J. F. *Jāmi‘ al-bayān ‘an ta’wīl āy al-Qur’ān*. Verification: Ahmad Shaker. Beirut: Arrisalah institution. 1st ed. 2000. vol. 4, p. 598. Azzajaj. *Ma’ani al-Qur’an wa-i e rabuh*. Verification: Abdeljalil Abdo Shalabi. Cario: Dar al-Hadith, 1988. vol. 1, p. 309. Arrazi. *Mafateh al-Ghayb*. Beirut: Dar ihya’ atturath. 3rd ed. vol. 6, p. 450.

sufficient for them to just think they will get back together, and Allah knows best.

Allah says, “And they (*Zannoo*) **thought** their fortresses would protect them from God.”¹⁰ The People of the Book relied on their fortresses in previous battles, which protected them from the enemy and they were confident that they were protected.¹¹ However, their disbelieving and straying, and their awareness of the rightfulness of Mohammad (peace be upon him), shattered that confidence, so that they were no longer sure about the fortresses, thus, they fell into *zan* / “suspicion.” This suspicion came because they mistrusted God and underestimated his ability and his full knowledge of what they had. Also, because they depended very much on earthly reasoning, they fully believed that adopting physical means and depending on cleverness and deception such as strengthening their fortresses and defenses, would keep the Muslims away from them.

Allah says, “Why, when you heard about it, didn’t the believing men and women (*zanna*) **think** well of one another, and say, ‘This is an obvious lie?’”¹² Why did they not bring four witnesses to testify to it? If they failed to bring the witnesses, then in God’s sight, they were liars. This verse refers to the incident of al-Ifk and the talk of the hypocrites and some of the believers about the false allegations against Aa’ishah (RadiyAllau ‘anha). The verse teaches us a lesson and a method for conducting social relations using the word *Zanna*. The intended meaning here is “predominant belief.” The believers should make

¹⁰ Surat Al-Hashr, verse 2.

¹¹ Look for: Al-Baidawi, N. A. D. A. Sa’id Abdullah bin ‘Umar. *Anwar al-Tanzil*. tahqiq: Muhammad al-Mar’ashli. Beirut: Dar Ihya’al-Turath al-Arabi, 1st ed., vol. 5, w. 198.

¹² Surat An-Nur, verse 12.

their goodness predominate over their badness. Also, if believers are exposed to atrocious umors and hearsay from hierocrats and the turning- away peopleso that they begin to have false thoughts, then they should give predominance to goodwill and put aside false thoughts. Also, they should call for the production of evidence to prevent slanderous fabrications.

Allah says, “And the sinners will see the Fire, and will (*zanno*) **realize** that they will tumble into it. They will find no deliverance from it.”¹³ The majority of Mufasssireen (interpreters of the Quran) and linguists interpret the word *Zanno* (“they thought”) as “they realize” or “they know.” Abu As-Soud implied that it could be interpreted according to the original meaning of *Azzanm*, as he says *Zanno* (“they thought”) means “they realized”¹⁴ that they were going to be tumbled into the fire, or they thought, as they saw it from a distance, that they were being be tumbled into it at that very moment.¹⁵

Al-Alousi gathered in his *Tafseer* the gist of the opinions on interpretations of this word; he stated that (*zanno* means “knew,” as verified and accepted by Abderazeq and al-Jamqa’a transmitted by Qutadah. Knowing and realizing was their obvious state after Allah said that they were asking for help from the ones

¹³ Surat al-Kahf, verse 53.

¹⁴ Al-Tabari, A. J. F. *Jāmi’ al-bayān*, vol. 1, p. 19. Abi Al-Hasan Ali bin Ahmad, *Al-Waseet fi Tafseer-ul-Quran-ul-Majeed*, Beirut: Dar Al-Kotob Al-Ilmia, 1st ed. Al-Jawzi, I., & al-Faraj, A. (1994). *Zād al-Masīr fi ‘Ilm al-Tafsīr*. Beirut: Dār al-Kitab Al-Arabi, 1st ed, vol. 3, p. 91. Al-Mubarrid. (285 H). Al-Muqtadab. Verification: Hasan Hamad. Beirut: Dar Al Kutub al-ilmeyah. 1st ed. 1998. Ya’ish, I., & Ali, I. *Sharh Al-Mufasssal*. vol. 4, p. 323. *Sharh ibn annazem al Alfiyat ibn Malik*. Verification: Mohammad Basil oyon assoud. Beirut: Dar Al-Kotob Al-Ilmia, 1st ed. 2000. vol. 1, p. 144.

¹⁵ *Irsha al-aql as-salim*, vol. 4, p. 198.

they claimed were associated with God. However, they did not respond, and then God placed a cliff between them. One interpretation holds that that they thought, but did not know, that they would be tumbled into the fire, because they did not lose all hope that God would have mercy upon them before they were burned. Another holds that when they saw it from a distance, they thought the fire was consuming them at that moment.¹⁶

My opinion is that the *Tafseer al-Alousi* is the rightful *tafseer* because preserving the original meaning is more appropriate than assigning it another meaning. Also, both meanings exist, as the mercy of Allah encompasses everything, and the disbeliever will not lose the hope of obtaining that mercy even in his last moments before he is tumbled in the fire. That is because the disbeliever will see some of his companions survive, even if they are burned by the flames, as the Hadith states.¹⁷ Also, it is possible to adopt the second meaning, as they expect to burn at any moment, and from that, the meaning of *Zanna* is deduced.

Allah says, “And he said to the one he (*Zanna*) **thought** would be released, ‘Mention me to your master.’ But Satan caused him to forget mentioning him to his master, so he remained in prison for several years.”¹⁸ *Zanna* in this verse means “most probable”; in this regard, the expression of prophets, as is known, is rightful, but the expression possesses a kind of discretion, and the prophet, like any other human, can be right or wrong in that discretion. In this verse, if *Azzan* is coming from the cupbearer, then he is not of the religion of Yousuf (peace be upon him) and does not completely believe Yusef and his

¹⁶ Rūḥ al-ma‘ānī, vol. 4, p. 431

¹⁷ Look: Hajar' Asqalani, I. *Fath al-Bari fi Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari*. Beirut: Dar al-Fikr. 1st ed., 1995. vol. 15, p. 380

¹⁸ Surat Yousuf, verse 42

interpretation of dreams. However, the good morals of Yousuf and his honesty lead the cupbearer to trust him and his interpretation, and the cupbearer thinks it is most likely to be true.

Tafseer Az-Zamakhshari stated that the one who “thought” (*Zanna*) is Yousuf, but only if his interpretation comes by discretion; if it was by revelation, then the one who “thought” (*zanna*) is the cupbearer, and the meaning here is “certitude.”¹⁹ *Az-Zamakhshari* is more likely to consider that *zann* has its original meaning. Here it is predominant *zann* if it was discretion on the part of Yousuf, but if it was a revelation, then it is from the cupbearer, and it becomes certitude, as if he said this in a context of weakening. *Az-Zamakhshari*’s attributing *Azzan* to the cupbearer is weak because the request comes from Yousuf, as he is the one who should “suppose or think” not the cupbearer as Al-Alousi stated.²⁰ This means that Yousuf asked the cupbearer to tell his master about his unjust situation according to his estimation and thinking, not according to the cupbearer’s. If so, there is no point in attaching the request to the *Zann* / “supposition” of the cupbearer.

The second proof that *Azzan* belongs to Yousuf (peace be upon him) is the use of “would go free” instead of “will go free,” which indicates certainty. Also, *Azzan* is used out of courtesy and politeness to God, as al-Alousi²¹ noted, and God knows the best.

Allah says, “He said, ‘He has done you wrong by asking for your ewe in addition to his ewes. Many partners take advantage of one another, except those who believe and do good deeds, but these are so few.’ David **realized** that we were testing him, so he sought forgiveness from his Lord, and fell down to his

¹⁹ Al-Kash-shaaf, p. 453.

²⁰ Look: Rūḥ al-ma‘ānī, vol. 7, p. 372.

²¹ Look: Rūḥ al-ma‘ānī, vol. 16, p. 253.

knees, and repented.”²² The use of the word *Zann* in this verse is intended to reveal the meaning and to show the repentance of the prophet Dawood (peace be upon him), given how fast he asked for forgiveness from the Lord. This is very compatible with the verse that opened the story, in which Allah says, “Be patient in the face of what they say, and mention Our servant David, the resourceful. He was obedient.”²³ Therefore, he thought²⁴ that the two adversaries came to kill him, which made him ask for forgiveness, bow in prostration and show remorse for that unintended thought (*Zann*). However, this is significant for a great prophet like Dawood (peace be upon him); the use of the word in its pure meaning calls for more respect and praise for Dawood.

Allah says, “Indeed, when it has reached the breast-bones, and it is said, ‘Who is the healer?’” And He (*Zanna*) **realizes** that it is the parting.”²⁵ *Azzan* here also retains its original meaning, yet most Mufasereen have said it indicates certitude. Rūḥ al-ma‘ānī reported that *Azzan*, according to Abi Hayan is the same, but most of Mofasereen interpret it as certitude. Al-Imam said that certitude here might be denoted by *Azzan* because as long as the human soul is attached to his body, we desire life out of a deep love of this worldly existence, and we cannot stop wishing for it to continue, just as we cannot be in a state of certainty regarding death. Instead, we will continue to suppose and expect the continuity of life. Else, it might be called *Zann* out of mockery,²⁶ There is

²² Surat Saad, verse 24.

²³ Surat Saad, verse 17

²⁴ Al-Andalusī, A. H. (1978). al-Bahr al-Muhit. vol. 9, p. 151. *Al-Marāghī, Aḥmad Muṣṭafā*. "Tafsīr al-Marāghī." Miṣr: Sharikah Maktabah wa Maṭba ‘ah Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa Awlāduhu (1946). vol. 23, p. 19.

²⁵ Surat al-Qiyamah verse, 26.28.

²⁶ Rūḥ al-ma‘ānī, vol. 16, p. 252.

another interpretation in which the context is the disparagement of disbelievers who reject the truthful message. Allah says, “He neither believed nor prayed, but he denied and turned away.”²⁷ Without a doubt, disbelievers believe in death because they see it in front of their eyes. However, they do not believe in after death nor in reward and punishment. Thus, when the angel takes away their life and removes the veil from their eyes, Allah says, “You were in neglect of this, so we lifted your screen from you, and your vision today is keen.”²⁸ In that moment, they are mostly thinking that they will leave behind their false beliefs and false theories. Thus, this verse comes after: “And it is said, ‘Who is the healer?’” which the Angel says in mockery, and God knows best.

Allah says, “**I knew** I would be held accountable.”²⁹ *Zann* in this verse holds the same meaning. The meaning “to be held accountable” is the easy reckoning, as Surat Al- Inshiqaq interprets it in the verse “As for him who is given his book in his right hand, He will have an easy reckoning.”³⁰ The messenger (peace be upon him) interpreted “easy reckoning” as an exposition in which the man’s deeds are exposed to him then God hides them and he is not held accountable for these deeds, because whoever argues about the reckoning gets punished as the hadith mentions.³¹ Thus, the meaning of the verse would be: “I thought because of my good deeds in life, I would get an easy reckoning, which means exposition, but that can happen only to believers”; in other words, “I thought I was going to meet God as a good believer,” and God knows best.”

²⁷ Surat al-Qiyamah verse, 31, 32.

²⁸ Surat Qaf, verse 22

²⁹ Surat al-Haqah, verse 20.

³⁰ Surat al-Inshiqaq, verse 7.

³¹ Look: al-Zabidi, A. A. L. (1996). *Mukhtasar Sahih al-Bukhari*. Riyadh: Dar as-Salam, 1st ed. p. 57.

Some *tafseer* state that the meaning of *Zann* in this instance is thoughts that occur to a person,³² but I do not see that as *Zann* at all.

Allah says, “And when We suspended the mountain over them, as if it were an umbrella, and they **thought** it would fall on them: ‘Hold fast to what We have given you, and remember what it contains, so that you may be saved.’”³³ Most scholars claim that *Azzan* in this verse means certitude, because some of the Israelites refused to accept the Torah; thus, the mountain was raised above them, and they were ordered to accept the Torah or the mountain will fall on them. Therefore, they thought with certainty that it would fall on them if they did not accept the law of the Torah. *Azzan* in this verse has its original meaning because human beings always aspire to obtain God’s mercy, which expands everything; in this event, they expected punishment, but they did not believe in its certainty, as they hoped to obtain God’s mercy and forgiveness. Also, this was because they had experienced God’s mercy in many situations as in the Surat al-Baqarah, God forgave them when they asked to see him manifest after they had worshipped the calf, and he showed them that this mercy expanded everything.

Allah says, “Also towards the three who were left behind. Then, when the earth, as vast as it is, closed in on them, and their very souls closed in on them, and they **realized** that there was no refuge from God, except in Him, He redeemed them, so that they may repent. God is the Redeemer, the Merciful.”³⁴ In this occurrence, *Zann* also holds its original meaning,³⁵ and there is no need

³² Al-Baidawi, N. A. D. A. Sa’id Abdullah bin ‘Umar. *Anwar al-Tanzil*. vol. 5, p. 241.

³³ Surat al-A’raf, verse 171.

³⁴ Surat at-Tawbah, verse 118

³⁵ Al-Andalusi, A. H. *Al-tazyeel Wa Takmeel Fi. Sharh Al-Tasheel*. (verivecation: Hasan al-Hindawi. Damascus: Darr Al-Qalam. 1st ed. vol. 6 p. 34.

to interpret it as knowing and certitude. The meaning of the verse is that those who were left behind were shunned and abandoned, and they felt melancholy, sorrow, and pain. Thus, when they saw how things ended up with them and saw the persistence of the believers who abandoned them, they most likely thought that the messenger (peace be upon him) and the believers anticipated receiving orders from God on how to deal with them and thought that he was their only refuge. Another interpretation is that they most likely believed as they repented sincerely to God that God would not abandon them but would perceive their repentance and alleviate their suffering.

Allah says, “And he entered his garden, wronging himself. He said, I do not **think** this will ever perish.”³⁶ And he also says, “And I do not **think** the Hour is coming. And even if I am returned to my Lord, I will find something better than this in return”;³⁷ also, “They **thought**, as you **thought**, that God would never resurrect anyone.”³⁸ These verses and others talk about the beliefs of the disbelievers, which are mostly spoken of in terms of *Zann* because they do not have a complete certainty in what they believe. Also, the evidence of creation, human nature and reason proves the falsity of their beliefs, as they hold that there is no judgment day. However, the evidence of creation and the stability of the universe prove that the universe will end at some point and that there will be reward and punishment. Therefore, *Zann* retains its original meaning because these disbelievers ground their creed in *Zann*, and it will never reach certitude because it will clash with creation, human nature, and reason.

³⁶ Surat al-Kahf, verse 35

³⁷ Surat al-Kahf, verse 36

³⁸ Surat al-Jin, verse 7

Allah says “We gave Moses nine clear signs—ask the Children of Israel. When he went to them, Pharaoh said to him, ‘I **think** that you, Moses, are bewitched.’”³⁹ Pharaoh knows the reality of Moses and knows that he has no relation to magic, and to prove that, Moses told Pharaoh in the following verse, “You know that none sent these down except the Lord of the heavens and the earth—eye openers; and I **think** that you, Pharaoh, are doomed.”⁴⁰ Another verse regarding Pharaoh and his people states, “And they rejected them, although their souls were certain of them, out of wickedness and pride.”⁴¹ Yet if this was so, why did he say *Azzunuka*? The reason is that the strong evidence of the validity and authenticity of Moses’s message made the people think that he was probably honest, and some of them believed him. Thus, it was not appropriate for Pharaoh to assert that Moses was a magician and to falsify his Da’wah, nor to say that Moses was most likely a bewildered man to look logical and realistic in front of his people. That is when Moses replied, “You know that none sent these down except the Lord of the heavens and the earth—eye openers; and I think that you, Pharaoh, are doomed.”⁴² Also, he replied with *Zann* either as a way of mocking the Pharaoh and replying to him in kind or as a way of being polite with God, because knowing the unknown is a characteristic only of God the almighty, and Moses was also giving the Pharaoh a chance to repent and believe.

³⁹ Surat al-Isra’, verse 101.

⁴⁰ Surat al-Isra’, verse 102.

⁴¹ Surat an-Naml, verse 14.

⁴² Surat al-Isra’, verse 102.

Allah says “Woe to the defrauders, those who, when they take a measure from people, they take in full, but when they measure or weigh to others, they cheat, do these **not know** that they will be resurrected? For a Great Day?”⁴³ These verses talk about the type of people who are malicious, corrupt, and wayward, who defraud others and steal their money. If they ever thought about it, or even had a conscience, they would suppose there is a judgment day, when they will stand before God, and this should be enough to deter them from oppression and tyranny. Also, God spoke to them using logic familiar to them, which goes by the rules of gain and loss. Thus, if a trader thinks that he is going to lose by selling, then he will not complete the deal until he can get profit from it. out of his sell. Allah also says, “Those who **know** that they will meet their Lord, and that to Him they will return.”⁴⁴ Most scholars interpret *Zann* in this verse to mean knowing and certitude, but it holds the original meaning of *Zanna* because the intended meaning is to meet God while they still believe in and are devoted to Allah, which is no one knows but Allah. Ham’ al-Hawame’ wrote, “Abu-Bakr Mohammad bin Abdallah al-Abdary claimed that the use of *Zanna* in the previous verse to mean ‘knowing’ is not common in Arab discourse; thus, he interpreted the verse using the original meaning of *Azzan*, which is not complete certitude. That’s because even good believers are still afraid of feeling hypocrisy.”⁴⁵

⁴³ Surat al-Mutaffifin, verse 1-5.

⁴⁴ Surat al-Baqarah, verse 46.

⁴⁵ al-Suyuti. *Ham,u-I-. Hawa-mi.* vol. 3, p. 542.

Rawh al-Ma'ani stated, "The intention to meet God is either to meet his rewards or to see him, according to the scholars who believe that believers will see Allah directly. However, both are expectations because even if the devoted believer knows that there have to be rewards for good deeds or knows for sure that the believer will see his lord in the hereafter, how could he know his ending for certain. Thus, thinking but not surely knowing, is a sign for them to fear God's plan."⁴⁶

Azzan: Supposition and Thoughts

Allah says, "Until, when the messengers have despaired, and **thought** that they were rejected, our help came to them. We save whomever We will, and Our severity is not averted from the guilty people."⁴⁷ Scholars give different interpretations of the meaning of this verse because the messengers (peace be upon them) are too high for *Azzan* and too high to doubt their messages and God. The following are some of these interpretations.⁴⁸

1. The messengers thought that the people denied their message because of the affliction and because their Da'wah took a long time.
2. The followers of the messengers thought that the messengers lied with their promises of victory.
3. The messengers thought that their expectations and plans had failed them. Thus, they did not know when they were going to achieve victory, because the delay was long.

⁴⁶ Rūḥ al-ma'ānī, vol. 1, p. 196.

⁴⁷ Surat Yousuf, vers 110.

⁴⁸ Al-Tabari, A. J. F. Jāmi' al-bayān, vol. 16, p. 297.

I hold that is that there is no need for these interpretations if *Azzan* has its original meaning. Also, these interpretations deny and distort the exquisite rhetoric of the Quranic verses. Therefore, *Azzan* in this verse can hold the lowest degree of *Azzan* to fit the meaning, namely, these are the suppositions and thoughts that come to human beings,⁴⁹ which the almighty God tells us about that in the verse “Who whispers into the hearts of people.”⁵⁰ Az-Zamakhshari mentioned this meaning in his book *Al-Kashaf* and supported it with the statement of Ibn - Abbas, who wrote, “The believers thought (*Zanno*) when they got weakened and overwhelmed that they lost the victory that God promised them, and he said they were humans, and he recited, ‘And they were so shaken up, that the Messenger and those who believed with him said, “When will God’s victory come?’ If this is authentic and was indeed said by Ibn- Abbas, then he meant by *Azzan* that which comes to a human being in the form of thoughts, insinuations and internal dialogue.”⁵¹ The verse is a narration that forms a systematically well-arranged account about the messengers. Also, the pronouns seem to be linked to the closest referent, which are the messengers. Moreover, the exaggerated form of the phrase verb *Istay’asa* (“gave up hope”) indicates these insinuations and thoughts, which come from the nature of human beings.

Allah says, “When they came upon you, from above you, and from beneath you; and the eyes became dazed, and the hearts reached the throats, and you **harbored doubts** about God.”⁵² Some Mufasssereen divided *Azzan* in this verse into a set of categories in which the believers trust in Allah, while the hypocrites mistrust Allah, and so on. They also said that the intended meaning is the different

⁴⁹ Lamast Bayanya, Fadel as-Samera’i.

⁵⁰ Surat an-Nas, verse 5.

⁵¹ Al-Kashaf, vol. 2, p. 490.

⁵² Surat al-Ahzaab, verse 10.

suppositions of these groups in regard to God's victory and the consequences of the battle.⁵³ However, if we reflect and think about the verse, we can understand that the addressees are the believers. Allah says, "O you who believe! Remember God's blessings upon you, when forces came against you, and We sent against them a wind, and forces you did not see. God is Observant of what you do, when they came upon you, from above you, and from beneath you; and the eyes became dazed, and the hearts reached the throats, and you **harbored doubts** about God."⁵⁴ I argue that *Azzan* in this verse refers to the thoughts and insinuations that came into the believers' minds because of the affliction and horror that they experienced. These thoughts and suppositions revolve around the question of when the victory will occur and the end of the battle, as there is a possibility that the Muslims might lose the battle and that God might not help the believers to get victory believers. However, the reality is that these insinuations are from Satan, and they are meant to weaken the determination of the Muslims and cost them their lives. This situation is exactly like the situation of the messengers in the previous verse, which is a state of affliction and intense concern. Thus, the term "*Azzan*" was used to convey the same meaning in this verse.

⁵³ Al-Ālūsī, Rūḥ al-ma'ānī, vol. 11, p. 155. As-Sha'rawī. Tafseer As-Sha'rawī. vol. 19, p. 1196.

⁵⁴ Surat al-Ahzaab, verse 9-10.

Azzan: False Belief

Allah says, “And among them are uneducated who know the Scripture only through hearsay, and they only **speculate**.”⁵⁵ *Azzan* here holds the meaning of “false belief,” which is a degree of *Zann* that cannot be established based on knowledge or certain faith. The beliefs of the Jews do not go beyond the false beliefs and delusions that were promised to them by their rabbis, and they have no evidence from reality or the Book. Thus, it is probable *Zann* that equates to false belief and delusions. Thus, Allah followed the first verse with another, which is “And among them are uneducated who know the Scripture only through hearsay, and they only **speculate**.” This verse verifies the state of false belief, which is not based on knowledge, and this is the *Zann* which Allah disparages in his Holy Book, saying, “They have no knowledge of that. They only follow assumptions, and assumptions are no substitute for the truth”;⁵⁶ and “They follow nothing but assumptions, and what the ego desires, even though guidance has come to them from their Lord.”⁵⁷

Abu as-Soud says, “They do not know what is written in the book, but they wish wishes as their rabbis promised them, that God will forgive them and that the messengers will intercede for them, as well as other empty wishes that are based on the Book, as their leaders claim.”⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Surat al-Baqarah, verse 78.

⁵⁶ Surat an-Najm, verse 28.

⁵⁷ Surat an-Najm, verse 23.

⁵⁸ Irshad al-Aql as-Saleem, vol. 1, p. 154.

Azzan decreases in levels of meaning until it means “delusion” and increases until it means “certitude.” The intentional, verbal, and situational evidence clarify the meaning of *Azzan*, and *Azzan* is mentioned in Quran to mean a “false belief” or “impression.”

Allah says, “But you **thought** that the Messenger and the believers would never return to their families, and this seemed fine to your hearts; and you harbored **evil thoughts** and were uncivilized people.”⁵⁹ This *Zann* comes from the Arabic language of the people of the desert “Bedouins,” who have no level of objectivity or verification. However, their *zann* is based on their enmity to the believers and their wish to defeat them. Thus, Allah says, “And this seemed fine to your hearts.” Therefore, these are just insinuations coming from themselves and Satan, and “evil thoughts” means that their enmity has prevented them from seeing the reality of the believers’ (that is, their enemies’) power, which led them to this unconsidered assumption. Also, in *Zannantum* the *An* (أَنْ) is lightened because their *zann* is no more than deceptive delusion.

⁵⁹ Surat al-Fath, verse 12.

Conclusion

The most important findings of this study are as follows:

1. *Azzan* is used with its original meaning, which is *Azann* / “supposition,” but it might approach close to *certitude*, and it might also take on the meaning of “thoughts,” “delusions,” and “doubts.” All of these indications are determined by context.
2. . The reason for why many scholars have interpreted *help the believers to get victory* as certitude is the fact that its meaning in some cases is close to certitude, thus, they have conflated it with certitude.
3. The interpretation of *Azzan* according to the context is beneficial for recognizing psychological states, such as the doubts and the insinuations that come from the human mind and soul. Therefore, this interpretation clarifies the state of *Zann*—a state of doubt and fear in their minor and major manifestations in the human heart.

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