

«AN YADIN» (QUR'ĀN, IX/29)

An attempt at interpretation

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THE crucial passage of Sūra IX/29 has been variously interpreted by commentators of the Qur'ān, scholars of Ḥadīṭ and lexicographers. In recent years F. Rosenthal, C. Cahen and M. M. Bravmann have dealt with this obscure passage¹. The following lines survey some of the Muslim interpretations of the expression 'an yadin and attempt to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion.

I

Abū 'Ubayda (d. 209 AH) explains the expression 'an yadin as yielding on the part of the subdued by payment (scil. of some tax) under compulsion². Al-Kalbī (d. 146 AH) is said to have interpreted the expression by *yamšūna bihā*, they are to bring the ḡizya walking³. This interpretation is quoted as an anonymous opinion by Abū 'Ubayd⁴. To Abū 'Ubayd (d. 224 AH) himself is attributed a similar explanation of 'an yadin: the payer would not come riding, nor would he send the ḡizya by a messenger⁵. Abū 'Ubayd records other interpretations: 'an yadin denotes payment of the ḡizya in cash, or that the payer should stand while the receiver of the ḡizya remains seated⁶. The latter interpretation is recorded by al-Naḥḥās (d. 338 AH) as an interpretation of a *ṣahābī*, al-Muḡīra b. Šu'ba and accepted by 'Ikrima (i.e. the *mawlā* of 'Abd Allah b. al-'Ab-

1. FR. ROSENTHAL, *Some minor problems in the Qur'ān*, in *The Joshua Starr Memorial Volume*, pp. 68-72 (Jewish Social Studies, Publications no. 5, New York 1953); Cl. CAHEN, *Coran IX, 29: Ḥattā yu'tū l-ḡizyāta 'an yadin wa-hum ṣāḡīrūna*, in *Arabica*, IX, 76-9; M. BRAVMANN, *A propos de Qur'ān IX, 29. Ḥattā yu'tū l-ḡizyāta . . .*, in *Arabica*, X, 94-5.

2. ABŪ 'UBAYDA, *Maḡāz al-Qur'ān*, I, 256 (ed. F. Sezgin; and see AL-ĠAṢṢĀṢ, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, III, 122 (Cairo, 1347 AH); and see *L.'A.*, s.v. *ydy* (vol. XV, 424, ed. Beirut).

3. *L.'A.*, *ibid.*

4. *K. al-Amwāl*, p. 54: *qāla ba'ḏuhum* (Cairo, 1353 AH).

5. *L.'A.*, *ibid.*

6. *al-Amwāl*, *ibid.*

bās) ¹. In fact this interpretation, included in the famous conversation of al-Muġīra with Rustum, is recorded by al-Suyūṭī (d. 911 AH) ², but is given not as an explanation of 'an yadin, but of the following phrase *wa-hum ṣāġirūna*. Ibn al-'Arabī (d. 542 AH) rightly remarks that this explanation refers to *wa-hum ṣāġirūna* ³; his gloss is quoted by al-Qurṭubī (d. 671 AH) ⁴. Al-Suyūṭī records interpretations of early scholars. Qatāda (d. 118 AH) rendered 'an yadin by 'an qahrin, under compulsion. Sufyān b. 'Uyayna (d. 198 AH) explains that it denotes payment of the tribute in person, not through a messenger ⁵. Abū Sinān explains 'an yadin by 'an qudratin, ability (i.e. being able to pay or having the ability to collect the tax—the definition is ambiguous) ⁶. Abū Bakr al-Siġistānī (d. 330 AH) records three interpretations: 'an qahrin, by compulsion on the part of the receiver and humbleness on that of the payer, 'an maqdiratin minkum 'alayhim wa-sultānin, strength and power of the receivers of the tribute in relation to the payers, 'an in'āmin, as recompense for a favour, i.e. the acceptance of the ġizya and leaving their life to them is a favour and kindness ⁷. Similar explanations are given by Rāġib al-Iṣfahānī ⁸. Abū Ḥayyān (d. 754 AH) records another explanation of Qatāda: the hands of the payers should be lower than the hands of the receivers of the tax ⁹. Two other explanations recorded by Abū Ḥayyān are the interpretation of the recompense for favour and the interpretation of the power of the receivers and the humbleness of the payers ¹⁰.

Three interpretations recorded by Abū Ḥayyān specially deserve to be stressed: the first one renders 'an yadin, 'an ġamā'atin.

1. *al-Nāsiḥ wa-l-mansūḥ*, p. 169 (ed. Cairo, 1357 AH).

2. *al-Durr al-manḥūr*, III, 228 (Cairo, 1314 AH: reprint offset: Teheran 1377 AH).

3. *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, I, 378 (ed. Cairo 1331 AH).

4. *al-Ġāmi' li-aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, VIII, 115 (Cairo, 1358 AH); AL-ĠAṢṢĀS, *op. cit.*, *ibid.*; see AL-ŠULĪ, *Adab al-kuttāb*, p. 215 (ed. BAĤĠAT AL-ĀTARĪ, Cairo 1341 AH).

5. Recorded by AL-NAḤḤĀS anonymously, *op. cit.*, *ibid.*; comp. above n. 5.

6. *al-Durr al-manḥūr*, *ibid.*

7. *Ġarīb al-Qur'ān*, p. 158 (ed. MUṢṬAFĀ 'INĀN, Cairo 1355 AH); see for *ġizya*: *ibid.*, p. 79.

8. *al-Mufradāt*, s.v. *yad* (Cairo 1324 AH).

9. *al-Baḥr al-muḥīṭ*, V, 30 (ed. Cairo, 1328 AH).

10. See AL-NAḤḤĀS, *op. cit.* *ibid.*; L.'A., s.v. *ydy*; NIẒĀM AL-DĪN AL-NISĀBŪRĪ, *Tafsīr ġarā'ib al-Qur'ān*, X, 66 (on margin of the *Tafsīr* of AL-ṬABARĪ, ed. Būlāq, 1327 AH); and see AL-ṬABARSĪ, *Maġma' al-Bayān*, X, 44-5 (ed. Beirut).

This would imply that the *ğizya* has to be paid for the whole community; no one would be exempted ¹. The second interpretation is that of Ibn Qutayba (d. 276 AH): '*an yadin* means *mubtadi*' *an ġayra mukāfi*'in; the *ğizya* is not a remuneration for a favour ². In the third interpretation, '*an yadin* does not refer to the receiver, but to the payer of the *ğizya*. The rendering is: . . . until they pay the *ğizya* out of (a situation of) ability and (financial) sufficiency ('*an ġinan wa-quḍratin*'); as *ğizya* is not collected from the poor ³.

Al-Zamaḥṣarī (d. 528 AH) explains the expression '*an yadin*' ⁴ as referring both to the payer and to the receiver of the tax: referring to the payer it denotes obedience, compliance and submission; referring to the receiver it denotes a powerful, compelling hand ⁵. Other interpretations quoted by al-Zamaḥṣarī are payment from hand to hand and payment as recompense for the kindness that their lives (i.e. of the payers) are spared. Bringing the tribute walking (not riding) is mentioned by al-Zamaḥṣarī in his description of the humiliation of the payers in connection with the expression *wa-hum ṣāġirūna*.

Ibn al-'Arabī (d. 542 AH) records 15 interpretations of the expression '*an-yadin*: 1. the tribute to be given by the payer standing, while the receiver is seated ('Ikrima); 2.—giving it in person; the tribute is brought walking; 3.—from hand to hand; 4.—out of strength; 5.—openly ('*an zuhūrin*); 6.—payment is made without acknowledgment (by the receiver) being made (*ġayra maḥmūdīn*); 7.—receiving (scil. the payer) a blow on his neck; 8.—being in a posture of humiliation; 9.—being in a situation of financial sufficiency (the payer); 10.—on the basis of a contract; 11.—paying in cash; 12.—admitting that the hands of the Muslims are above their hands (i.e. admitting the superiority of the Muslims); 13.—by compulsion; 14.—in recompense of a favour received; 15.—payment not being a recompense for a favour or kindness received ⁶.

The various definitions recorded by Ibn al-'Arabī are controver-

1. *Lā yu'fā 'an dī faḍlin li-faḍlihi*.

2. ABŪ ḤAYYĀN quotes IBN QUTAYBA: '*an yadin* is identical with '*an zahri yadin*'; the interpretation recorded by ABŪ ḤAYYĀN is given in IBN MUṬARRIF'S *al-Qurṭayn*, I, 193 (Cairo, 1355 AH).

3. *Fa-lā tu'ḥaḍu min al-ṣāġiri*.

4. *al-Kaššāf*, II, 147 (inf.) - 148 (ed. Cairo 1354 AH).

5. Quoted by ABŪ ḤAYYĀN; and see the explanation in IBN AL-ATĪR'S *Nihāya*, s.v. *ydy*.

6. *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, I, 378 (Cairo, 1331 AH).

sial. Ibn al-'Arabī is aware of this fact ¹ and tries to trace the differences back to various meanings of the word *yad*: whether it is used in the literal sense, a hand, or it is used metaphorically. Literally it denotes payment from hand to hand in person; metaphorically it indicates power, prompt payment or favour and kindness ².

II

One of the principal difficulties in the understanding of this obscure expression was to determine whether the noun *yad* refers to the receiver of the tribute or to the payer. The expression '*an yadin*' is defined as *ḥāl* ³ and is interpreted by different commentators as denoting either the payer or the receiver of the tax, according to the suffix added ⁴. The interpretations in which two divergent meanings are attached to '*an yadin*', are an interesting attempt to solve the problem. It is obvious that the interpretations: strength, compulsion, payment from hand to hand, recompense for favour or humbleness of the payer were the current and prevailing ones. These definitions suited the views of the majority of the *fuqahā'*, accorded with the position of the *ahl-al-dimma* and the actual tax-collecting procedure ⁵.

In order to explain the expression in accordance with some of the interpretations, the preposition '*an*' had to be glossed by the preposition *bi* ⁶. In these interpretations '*an yadin*' is conveniently complemented by the following circumstantial clause *wa-hum ṣāğīrūna*.

But nothing seems to point to the fact that these are the early ones. One may assume that a quite early interpretation was the

1. *Hādīhi l-aqwālu minhā mutadāḥilatun wa-minhā mutanāfiratun.*

2. for *yad* explained literally and metaphorically, see IBN QUTAYBA, *al-Iḥṭilāf fī l-laḥẓ*, p. 28 (ed. AL-KAWTARĪ, Cairo 1349 AH); and see AL-BAYHAQĪ, *al-Asmā' wa-l-ṣifāt*, p. 319 (ed. Cairo 1358 AH); and see AL-ŠARĪF AL-MURTADĀ, *Amāli*, II, 3-5 (ed. Cairo 1954).

3. RĀĞIB AL-IṢFAHĀNĪ, *op. cit.*, *ibid.*; AL-'UKBARĪ, *Imlā'u mā manna bihi l-raḥmān*, II, 13: *fī mawḍi'ī i-ḥālī* (ed. IBR. 'ATWA 'AWAD, Cairo 1961).

4. '*an maqḍiratīn minikum 'alayhim* (AL-SIĞISTĀNĪ, *op. cit.*, *ibid.*); '*an in'āmin minikum 'alayhim* (AL-QURṬUBĪ, *op. cit.*, *ibid.*), etc.

5. Comp. the discussion about *it'āb al-anbā'* in ABŪ 'UBAYD'S *Amwāl*, *ibid.*; see AL-ĞAŞŞĀS, *op. cit.*, *ibid.*; see the tradition of SA'ĪD B. AL-MUSAYYAB in *al-Durr al-manṭūr*, *ibid.*; and see A. FATTAL, *Le statut légal des non-Musulmans en pays d'Islam*, p. 286-8.

6. Comp.: '*an yadin ya'nī 'an naqḍin min qawlihim yadan bi-yadin* (AL-ĞAŞŞĀS, *ibid.*); . . . *aw bi-aydihim . . . ḡa-'an 'ala ḥāḍā bi-ma'nā l-bā'*, *ḡa-l-ḡarṭu laḡwun* (AL-ĞAMAL, *al-Futūḥāt al-Ilāhiyya*, II, 288).

interpretation of *'an yadin* by *'an 'ahdin* (no. 10 in the list of Ibn al-'Arabī). According to this interpretation the phrase would be rendered:

... «till they pay the tribute on the basis of a pact (concluded by them with the Muslims) they being inferior (in status)».

According to this interpretation the tribute is in fact paid by the *ahl al-ḍimma* in respect of their blood not being shed and their being allowed to reside in the abode of Islam; this is defined by a pact¹. *Ṣaḡār* is interpreted as compliance with the law of Islam². This interpretation fairly reflects the spirit of the early period of Islam in which the conquering Muslims concluded pacts with the conquered. It does, indeed, seem to be an early interpretation. The problem whether this is in fact the intention of the phrase of the Qur'ān is, however, not solved.

III

The expression *'an zahri yadin* is interpreted by al-Zamaḡṣarī in «al-Fā'iq»³: it is explained as *'an zahri in'amin muḡtadi'an min ḡayri mukāfa'atin 'alā ṣanī'in*. The phrase: A'ṭā' l-ḡazila *'an zahri yadin* would be rendered thus: he gave plenty, giving it gratuitously i.e. without any favour being granted to him. *Asās al-balāḡa* of al-Zamaḡṣarī has the same explanation⁴: *'an zahri yadin, min ḡayri mukāfa'atin*. Two other expressions are recorded by al-Zamaḡṣarī in *Asās* and by Ibn Manẓūr in *L.ʿA.: Fulānun ya'kulu 'an zahri yadi fulānin idā kāna huwa yunfiḡu 'alayhi* and *al-fuḡarā'u ya'kulūna 'an zahri aydī l-nāsi*⁵. It is evident that the phrase denotes to live on the expenses, means or resources of somebody.

Al-Šarīf al-Raḡiyy (d. 406 AH) explains the word *zahr* in the saying *al-ṣadaḡatu 'an zahri ḡinan* as *quwwatun min ḡinan*⁶.

1. See IBN AL-'ARABĪ, *op. cit.*, I, 379 sup.: ... *annahā taḡību bi-l-mu'āḡadati wa-l-tarādī* ...; and see the refutation of this view, *ibid.*, I, 3-4; and comp. AL-ĠAMAL, *op. cit.*, II, 288: ... *ka-annahū ḡila ḡātilūhum ḡattā yu'ṭū l-ḡiyyata an fībi naḡsin wa-nḡiyādin dūna an yukrahū 'alayhi, fa-idā ḡtiḡa fī aḡḡihā minhum ilā l-ikrāhi lā yabḡā 'aḡdu l-ḡimmati*.

2. See AL-BAYHAQĪ, *Aḡkām al-Qur'ān*, p. 79 (ed. AL-KAWṬARĪ, Cairo 1952).

3. III, 228 (ed. 'ALĪ MUḡ. AL-BIĠĀWĪ—MUḡ. ABŪ L-FADL IBRĀHĪM, Cairo 1945-48).

4. II, 366, s.v. *ydy*; the same interpretation is recorded in *L.ʿA.*, s.v. *zahr*.

5. *Asās al-balāḡa*, s.v. *zhr*; *L.ʿA.*, s.v. *zhr* (vol. IV, p. 521, ed. Beirut).

6. *al-Maḡāzāt al-nabawīyya*, p. 66 (n^o. 44, ed. MAḡMŪD MUṢṬAFĀ, Cairo 1937); and comp. the explanation of this expression in *L.ʿA.*, s.v. *zhr*.

In this passage al-Šarīf al-Raḍiyy explains the expression *a'ṭaytu fulānan kadā 'an zahri yadin* as giving somebody (a gift) out of a position of strength, power of resistance, as opposed to humbleness and fear (*an imtinā'in wa-quwwatin, lam u'tihi 'an ḥifatin wa-dillatin*). « This meaning, says al-Šarīf al-Raḍiyy, is contrary to the meaning inherent in the words of Allah *hattā yu'tū l-ḡizyata wa-hum sāgirūna* ». « It seems, continues al-Raḍiyy, that the omission of the word *zahr* in the phrase of the Qur'ān changed the meaning ». Al-Šarīf al-Raḍiyy concludes that *'an yadin* in the discussed sentence of the Qur'ān denotes humbleness, submission, fear; the contrary of it is *'an zahri yadin* denoting strength, free choice and man's own will¹. In his *Talḥiṣ al-bayān*, al-Šarīf al-Raḍiyy explains the expression *'an yadin* as a metaphor denoting paying the tribute humbly and submissively (*an ḥuṣū'in wa-ḍarā'atin wa-dullin wa-stikānatin*)².

He compares this meaning with the idea inherent in the expression *a'ṭā fulānun bi-yadihi* (other explanations — already mentioned — are also quoted).

It is not all the more striking to find al-Zamaḥṣarī interpreting *'an yadin* in his *Asās al-Balāḡa*³, as paying the ḡizya in a position of submission and obedience or payment in cash without postponement.

In both interpretations (of al-Raḍiyy and of al-Zamaḥṣarī) a line is thus drawn between *'an yadin* and *'an zahri yadin*. *'An yadin*, contrary to *'an zahri yadin*, is explained as submission, obedience, humbleness, etc.

But the true meaning of *'an yadin* can be gauged from the following verse of Durayd b. al-Šimma:

*A-'ādila inna l-ruz'a fī miṭli Ḥālidin
wa-lā ruz'a fīmā ahlaka l-mar'u 'an yadi*⁴.

« O reprover, misfortune is in (the death of a man) like Ḥālid, misfortune is not in what a man squanders (by lavish spending) out of plenty ».

Yad in this verse explicitly denotes wealth, or sufficient resources for spending (on the poor and needy), or generous distribution (of gifts).

That *'an yadin* is identical with *an zahri yadin* is explicitly stated by Ibn Qutayba⁵. Al-Māwardī records as one of his two

1. *op. cit.*, p. 67 inf. - 68 sup.

2. P. 59 (ed. Bagdād, 1953).

3. s.v. *ydy*.

4. *al-Aṣma'iyyat*, XXIV, 3 (p. 23, ed. AHLWARDT).

5. Quoted in *al-Baḥr al-muḥīṭ*, see above note 2, p. [3].

interpretations of the discussed expression: 'an ġinan wa-qudratin, paying the ġizya in a situation of (having) sufficient means and resources and ability to pay¹.

It is essential to point out that Abū 'Ubayd accepts the idea of the payer's financial ability (*wa-hādā 'indanā maḍhabu l-ġizyati wa-l-ḥarāġi, innamā humā 'alā qadri l-ṭāqati min ahli l-dimmati*) as the basis for fixing the amount of the tax². This passage of Abū 'Ubayd is repeated verbatim by his pupil, Ibn Zangawayh³.

This seems to have been, in fact, the intention of the discussed phrase in the Qur'ān. The āya was revealed on the eve of the expedition of Tabūk⁴. The intention was not to give instructions regarding the ways and procedures governing the collection of taxes⁵; it was an injunction as to the attitude to be adopted by the Muslim warriors towards the *ahl al-dimma*. The phrase enjoined the warriors to combat the enemy until they agreed to pay tribute according to their means and capacity. This idea is clearly reflected in the terms of the pacts concluded with the *ahl al-dimma*. The pacts concluded with the people of Iṣfahān and Ğurġān, for instance, positively state that the amount of the ġizya would be fixed according to the payer's ability ('alā anna 'alaykum (min al-ġazā'i fī kulli sanatin 'alā qadri ṭāqatikum)⁶. The phrase *wa-hum ṣāġirūna* is not a complementing phrase for 'an yadin; it constitutes a crucial pronouncement concerning the position of the *ahl al-dimma*: but they are inferior in status. The phrase may be rendered:

... «fight them ... until they pay the ġizya out of ability and sufficient means, they (nevertheless) being inferior».

It is interesting to note that this interpretation is given by the modern Egyptian scholar Rašid Riḍā. He renders 'an yadin by 'an qudratin wa-sa'atin⁷.

This rendering seems to be faithful to the original intent of the phrase of the Qur'ān.

1. AL-NUWAYRĪ, *Nihāyat al-arab*, VIII, 235; and see F. ROSENTHAL, *op. cit.*, p. 70, quoted from AL-BAYDĀWĪ: 'an ġinan; and see the interpretation in *al-Baḥr al-muḥīṭ*, above note 2, p. [3]; and see the interpretation n^o 9 in the list of IBN AL-'ARABĪ.

2. *al-Amwāl*, p. 41-42 (n^o 106-7). 3. *al-Amwāl*, ms. Burdur 183, f. 16a.

4. See NÖLDEKE-SCHWALLY, *Die Geschichte des Qorans*, I, 224.

5. See F. ROSENTHAL, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

6. AL-SAHMĪ, *Ta'riḥ Ğurġān*, p. 5 (ed. Hyderabad, 1950); ABŪ NU'AYM, *Geschichte Iṣbahans*, I, 26 (ed. S. Dederling). I am indebted to Professor Cl. Cahen for his kind remarks, which stimulated me to check these sources.

7. *al-Waḥyul-muḥammadī*, p. 278 (ed. Cairo, 1354 AH):