

# THE MEANING OF THE QUR'ĀN

Vol. X

Sūrah Luqmān—Sūrah Saba

(ARABIC TEXT WITH TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY)

By  
S. ABUL A'LĀ MAUDUDĪ

*English Rendering By:*  
'ABDUL 'AZIZ KAMĀL, M.A.

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A.A.K.

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XXXI

LUQMĀN لُقْمَانُ





بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

XXXI

LUQMĀN لُقْمَانُ

INTRODUCTION

**Name**

The Sūrah has been named Luqmān after Luqmān the Sage, whose admonitions to his son have been related in vv.12-19 of this Sūrah.

**Period of Revelation**

A perusal of the subject-matter shows that it was sent down in the period when persecution to suppress and thwart the invitation to Islam had begun and every sort

of machination had started being employed for the purpose. This is borne out by vv. 14-15, in which the young converts to Islam have been told that although the rights of the parents are the uppermost after God, they should not listen to them if they prevented them from accepting Islam, or compelled them to revert to the creed of *shirk* and polytheism. The same thing has been said in Sūrah Al-‘Ankabūt, which indicates that both these Sūrahs were sent down in the same period. A study of the style and subject-matter of the two Sūrahs on the whole, however, shows that Sūrah Luqmān was sent down earlier, for one does not see any sign of the antagonism in its background though, contrary to this, while studying Sūrah Al-‘Ankabūt one can clearly feel that the Muslims were being severely persecuted during the period of its revelation.

### Theme and Subject-matter

In this Sūrah the people have been made to understand the meaninglessness and absurdity of *shirk* and the truth and reasonableness of *Tauhīd*, and they have been invited to give up blind imitation of their forefathers, consider with a cool mind the teachings which the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) is presenting from the Lord of the worlds, and see with open eyes the manifest Signs found in the universe around them and in their own selves, which bear evidence to its truth.

In this connection, it has also been pointed out that this is not a new teaching which might have been presented in the world, or in the land of Arabia, for the first time, and with which the people might be unfamiliar. The learned and wise people of the past ages said and taught the same thing which Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is teaching today. It is as if to say, "O people: In your own country there has lived a wise man, named

Luqmān, whose wisdom has been well known among you, whose proverbs and wise sayings are cited in your daily conversation and who is often quoted by your poets and orators. Now you should see for yourselves what creed and what morals he used to teach.”



الْمَرَّةَ تِلْكَ آيَةُ الْكِتَابِ الْحَكِيمِ ۝ هُدَىٰ وَرَحْمَةً لِلْمُحْسِنِينَ ۝ الَّذِينَ  
 يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ ۝ أُولَٰئِكَ  
 عَلَىٰ هُدَىٰ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ۝ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَشْتَرِي  
 لَهْوَ الْحَدِيثِ لِيُضِلَّ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ ۝ وَيَتَّخِذَهَا هُزُوًا ۝ أُولَٰئِكَ  
 لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ ۝ وَإِذَا نُتِيَ عَلَيْهِ آيَاتُنَا وَلَّىٰ مُسْتَكْبِرًا ۝ كَانَ لَمْ يَسْمَعْهَا  
 كَانَ فِي أذُنَيْهِ وَقَرَأَ فَبَشَّرَهُ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ۝ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ  
 لَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ النَّعِيمِ ۝ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ حَقًّا ۝ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ۝  
 خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ بِغَيْرِ عَمَدٍ تَرَوْنَهَا ۝ وَالْقَىٰ فِي الْأَرْضِ رَوَاسِيَ أَن تَمِيدَ بِكُمْ  
 وَبِكُمْ فِيهَا مِن كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ ۝ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا مِن كُلِّ  
 زَوْجٍ كَرِيمٍ ۝ هَذَا خَلْقُ اللَّهِ فَأَرُونِي مَاذَا خَلَقَ الَّذِينَ مِن دُونِهِ ۝ بَلِ  
 الظَّالِمُونَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ۝ وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا لُقْمَانَ الْحِكْمَةَ ۝ إِنَّ اشْكُرَّ لِلَّهِ ۝ وَ  
 مَن يَشْكُرْ فَإِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهِ ۝ وَمَن كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ ۝ وَإِذْ قَالَ  
 لُقْمَانُ لِابْنِهِ ۝ وَهُوَ يَعِظُهُ ۝ يَا بُنَيَّ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ ۝ إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ ۝  
 وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حَسَنَةً ۝ أُمَّهُ وَهَنًا عَلَىٰ وَهْنٍ ۝ وَفِضْلُهُ فِي عَامِينَ

# XXXI

## LUQMĀN لُقْمَان

Verses: 34

Revealed at Makkah

*In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate*

Alif. Lām. Mīm. These are the verses of the wise 1-5  
Book,<sup>1</sup> a Guidance and Mercy for the righteous people<sup>2</sup>,  
who establish the *Ṣalāt*, pay the *Zakāt* and fully believe in  
the Hereafter.<sup>3</sup> They are the ones who are on the right  
path enjoined by their Lord, and they are the ones who will  
attain true success.<sup>4</sup>

And there is among the men such a one also<sup>5</sup>, who  
buys alluring tales<sup>6</sup> so that he may lead the people astray  
from Allah's Way, without any knowledge,<sup>7</sup> and make a  
mockery of the invitation to it.<sup>8</sup> For such people there is a  
disgraceful torment.<sup>9</sup> When Our Revelations are recited  
to him, he turns his face away disdainfully as though he did  
not hear them, as though his ears were deaf. Well, give  
him the good news of a painful torment. However, for  
those who believe and do good works, there are blissful  
Gardens<sup>10</sup> wherein they shall live for ever. This is a true  
promise of Allah: He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.<sup>11</sup>

He<sup>12</sup> created the heavens without pillars that you 10-11  
could see;<sup>13</sup> He set mountains in the earth lest it should tilt  
away along with you<sup>14</sup>; He scattered all kinds of animals  
in the earth, and sent down rainwater from the sky and  
caused a variety of bounteous vegetation to grow in it.  
This is Allah's creation: now, show Me what have these  
others created?<sup>15</sup>—The fact is that these wicked people are  
involved in manifest error.<sup>16</sup>

We<sup>17</sup> had bestowed wisdom on Luqmān that he may 12  
be grateful to Allah.<sup>18</sup> Whoever is grateful, his gratefulness

is for his own good, and whoever is ungrateful, then Allah is indeed Self-Sufficient and Self-Praiseworthy.<sup>19</sup>

13 Remember the time when Luqmān was admonishing his son, saying, "My son, join not another as an associate with God:<sup>20</sup> the truth is that joining associates (with God) is a grave iniquity."<sup>21</sup> . . . .

1. That is, verses of the Book which is full of wisdom and whose every teaching is based on wisdom."

2. That is, "These verses give guidance to the Right Way and have been sent down as a mercy from God. But the people who can profit by this mercy and guidance are only those who adopt a righteous attitude, who wish to become good, who crave for their own well-being, whose quality is that they avoid the evil when they are warned of it, and follow the good when they are shown the ways to it. As for the wicked and mischievous people, they will neither profit by this guidance nor receive any share from this mercy."

3. It does not mean that "the righteous people" bear only these three qualities. By using the common epithet of "righteous" for them it has been pointed out that they refrain from all those evils which this Book forbids and practise all those good things which this Book enjoins. Then, the three qualities of "the righteous" have been especially mentioned in order to show that all other good acts depend on these three things. They establish the *Ṣalāt* which engenders God-worship and piety as a permanent habit with them; they pay the *Zakāt* which strengthens the spirit of sacrifice in them, subdues the love of the world and arouses a desire for the goodwill of Allah; and they believe in the Hereafter, which instils the sense of responsibility and answerability, which does not allow them to live like an animal, which is free to graze at will in the pasture, but like a man who is fully conscious of the fact that he is not independent but the slave of a Master before Whom he is answerable for all his activities of life. Owing to these three qualities, these "righteous" people are not the kind of the righteous persons who happen to do good just by chance, who may commit evil as often and as freely as they would do good. Contrary to this, these qualities inculcate in them an enduring system of thought and morality owing to which goodness issues forth from them in a regulated and systematic manner, and the evil, if at all committed, is committed just by chance. They do not have any deeprooted motives, which might be arising from their own system of thought and morality and leading them on to the evil way under their own natura impulse.

4. At the time when these verses were sent down, the disbelievers of Makkah thought, and said so openly, that Muḥammad (upon whom

be Allah's peace) and those who accepted his message were wasting and ruining their lives. Therefore, it was rejoined with full force and emphasis: " . . . these are the ones who will attain true success." That is, "They will not ruin themselves as you seem to think in your ignorance, but they in fact are the ones who alone will attain true success, and the utter failures will be those who have refused to adopt this way."

Here, the one who regards "true success" as confined to the world, in the sense of material prosperity, will be wholly missing the Qur'ānic concept of it. To understand the real concept of the true success one should study the following verses of the Qur'ān along with the relevant E.N.'s: Al-Baqarah: 2-5, Āl-'Imrān: 102, 130, 200, Al-Mā'idah: 35, 90, Al-An'ām: 21, Al-A'rāf: 7, 8, 157, At-Taubah: 88, Yūnus: 17, An-Nahl: 116, Al-Ḥajj: 77, Al-Mu'minūn: 117, An-Nūr: 51, Ar-Rūm: 38.

5. That is, "On the one hand, there is this Mercy and Guidance sent down by Allah, of which some people are taking full advantage, and on the other, there are also some unfortunate people living side by side with the fortunate ones, who are adopting this sort of attitude as against the Revelations of Allah."

6. The words *lahv al-ḥadīth* in the Text imply such a thing as may allure and absorb a listener completely and make him heedless of everything else around him. Lexically, there is nothing derogatory in these words, but in custom and usage they apply to evil and useless and vain things, such as gossip, nonsensical talk, joking and jesting, legends and tales, singing and merry-making, etc.

"To buy" alluring tales may also mean that the person concerned adopts falsehood instead of the Truth, turns away from the guidance and turns to those things which can neither benefit him in the world nor in the Hereafter. But this is the metaphorical meaning. The real meaning of the sentence is that a person should purchase an absurd and useless thing for his money, and this is supported by many traditions. Ibn Hishām has related on the authority of Ibn Ishāq that when the disbelievers of Makkah could not stop the message of the Holy Prophet from spreading in spite of their best efforts, Naḍr bin Ḥārith said to the people of Quraish: "The way you are counteracting this man will avail you nothing. He has lived a lifetime among you. Until now he was the best of your men morally: he was the most truthful and the most trustworthy person among you. Now you say that he is a sorcerer and enchanter and a poet and a madman. Who will believe all this? Don't the people know the way the sorcerers talk? Don't they know the enchanters and the way they conduct their business? Are they unaware of poetry and of the states of madness? Which of these accusations sticks to Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) by exploiting which you would turn the

people's attention away from him? Look! I will tell you how to deal with him." Then he left Makkah for Irāq and managed to get from there legends and tales about the kings of Iran and Rostam and Isfandyar and started to arrange tale-telling parties to distract the people from the Qur'ān and to absorb them in the tales. (Ibn Hishām, vol. I, pp. 320-321). The same tradition has been cited by Vāhidī in *Asbāb un-Nazūl* on the authority of Kalbī and Muqātil. And according to Ibn 'Abbās, Naḍr had bought singing girls also for the purpose. Whenever he heard that someone was coming under the Holy Prophet's influence, he would impose a singing girl on him with the instruction: "Feed him and entertain him with your songs so that he is absorbed in you and distracted from the other side." This was the same device which the arch-criminals of the nations have been employing in every age. They try to get the common people so absorbed in fun and sport and musical entertainments in the name of culture that they are left with no time and sense to attend to the serious problems of life, and in their heedlessness they do not even feel what destruction they are being driven to.

The same commentary of *lahv al-ḥadīth* has been reported from a large number of the Companions and their immediate followers. 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd was asked, "What does *lahv al-ḥadīth* mean in this verse?" He said thrice emphatically, "By God! it means singing." (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Shaibah, Ḥākim, Baihaqī). Similar traditions have been reported from scholars like 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Jābir bin 'Abdullah, Mujāhid, 'Ikrimah, Sa'id bin Jubair, Ḥasan Baṣrī and Makḥūl. Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥātim and Trimidhi have related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū Umāmah Baheli that the Holy Prophet said, "It is not lawful to buy and sell and trade in singing girls nor is it lawful to take their price." In another tradition, the last sentence is to the effect: "... it is unlawful to eat their price." Yet another tradition from Abū Umāmah is to the effect: "To teach music to slave-girls and to trade in them is not lawful and their price is forbidden." All these *Aḥadīth* also elucidate that the verse containing *lahv al-ḥadīth* was sent down in this very connection. Qāḍī Abū Bakr Ibn al-'Arabī has related in the *Aḥkam al-Qur'ān* a *Ḥadīth* from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mubārak and Imām Mālik on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Anas, saying, that the Holy Prophet said: "He who hears the song of a singing-girl in a musical concert, will have molten lead poured into his ear on the Day of Judgement." (In this connection, one should also note that the "culture" of music in those days flourished almost entirely through the slave-girls. Free women had not yet become "artistes". That is why the Holy Prophet spoke about trading in slave-girls, and described their wages and earnings as their price, and used the word *qaynah* for the singing-girl,



which is specifically used for a slave-girl in Arabic).

7. "Without any knowledge" may be connected with "buys" and also "lead . . . astray". In the first case, it would mean: "The ignorant foolish person buys this alluring thing and does not know that he is buying a ruinous thing at the cost of a highly valuable thing. On the one hand, there are the Divine verses which are full of wisdom and guidance, which he can obtain without any cost, but he turns away from them. On the other, there are these absurd things, which are disastrous for his morals and he is expending his wealth to obtain them." In the second case, it would mean: "He has come out to guide the people without any knowledge: he does not know what burden of sin he is taking on himself by trying to lead the people astray from Allah's Way."

8. That is, "This person wants to make fun of the Divine Revelations by alluring and absorbing the people in legends and tales and music. He intends that the invitation of the Qur'ān should be derided and ridiculed and laughed away. He plans to fight the Religion of God with the strategy that as soon as Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) should come out to recite Revelations of God to the people, there should be a charming, sweet-voiced damsel giving her performance in a musical concert, on the one hand, and a glib-tongued story-teller telling tales and legends of Iran, on the other, and the people should become so absorbed in these "cultural activities" that they may not be in a mood to hear anything about God and the morals and the Hereafter."

9. This punishment will be in accordance with their crime. They want to debase and disgrace God's Religion, His Revelations and His Messenger; God will take His vengeance on them by giving them a disgraceful torment.

10. Instead of saying "There are blessings of Paradise (Gardens) for them," it has been said, "there are blissful Gardens for them." In the first case, it would have meant this: "They will enjoy the blessings but the Gardens will not belong to them." In the second case, it automatically becomes evident that the whole Gardens will be handed over to them, and they will take advantage of their blessings as an owner does of his own possession, and not like the one who is allowed to use something without giving him ownership rights over it."

11. That is, "Nothing can withhold Him from fulfilling His promise, and whatever He does, He does strictly according to the demands of wisdom and justice. The object of mentioning these two attributes of Allah after saying: "This is a true promise of Allah", is to stress that Allah neither violates His promise wilfully nor is there in this universe any such power as can prevent Him from fulfilling His

promise. Therefore, there can be no chance that one may not receive what Allah has promised to give as a reward for faith and righteous deeds. Moreover, Allah's open promise to bestow this reward is wholly based on His wisdom and His justice. He does not misjudge: it cannot be that He may deprive a deserving person of his reward, and reward a non-deserving one instead. The people characterised by true faith and righteous deeds indeed deserve this reward and Allah will bestow this on them only."

12. After the above introductory sentence, the discourse now turns to the real theme, *i.e.*, the refutation of *shirk* and the invitation to *Tauhid*.

13. The actual words *bi-ghair-i 'amad-in tarauna-hā* in the Text may have two meanings: (1) "You can see for yourself that they stand without pillars"; and (2) "they stand on the pillars which you cannot see." Ibn 'Abbās and Mujāhid have favoured the second meaning, and many other commentators take the first meaning. If the meaning is expressed in terms of the natural sciences of the present day, it can be said that the countless stars and planets in the heaven have been established in their positions and orbits without any visible support and prop: there are no strings and wires which might have tied them together; there are no iron bars which might be withholding them from falling on one another. It is the law of gravitation which is supporting the system. This interpretation is according to the present-day knowledge. It may be that tomorrow some new addition to our knowledge enables us to interpret the reality better.

14. For explanation, see E.N. 12 of Sūrah An-Nahl.

15. "These others": "the beings' whom you have set up as your deities, whom you regard as makers and un-makers of your destinies, whom you have been worshipping as such persistently."

16. That is, "When they do not point out in this universe any creation of anyone else than Allah, and obviously they cannot, their setting up the non-creators as associates in Godhead and bowing before them in worship and invoking them for help, is nothing but mere stupidity, because their foolish conduct cannot be explained in any other way. Unless a person has taken leave of his senses he cannot commit the folly that he should himself admit before you that his deities are non-creators and that Allah alone is the Creator, and yet insist on their being the deities. If somebody has a little of the common sense, he will inevitably think how the one who has no power to create anything, and who has no share whatever in the creation of anything in the earth and heavens, can be our deity. Why should man bow before it and adore it as a deity? Does it possess any power that it could fulfil one's needs and requirements? Even if it hears one's prayers, what could it do to

answer them when it did not have any power to create anything? For, evidently, afflictions can be removed only by him who can create something and not by him who can create nothing.”

17. After presenting a rational argument to refute *shirk* the Arabs are being told that this rational point of view is not being presented before them for the first time, but the wise and learned people before them also have been saying the same thing, including their own famous sage, Luqmān. Therefore, they cannot refute the Holy Prophet's message, saying, “If *shirk* was an irrational creed, why didn't it strike so to somebody else before?”

Luqmān was well known as a wise and learned man in Arabia. He has been mentioned in the poetry of the pre-Islamic poets like Imra'ul-Qais, Labīd, A'ashā, Ṭarafa and others. Some educated Arabs also possessed a collection of the wise sayings of Luqmān. According to traditions, three years before the Hijrah the very first person of Madīnah to be influenced by the Holy Prophet was Suwaid bin Šāmit. He went to Makkah for Ḥajj. There the Holy Prophet was as usual preaching Islam to the pilgrims coming from different places, at their residences. When Suwaid heard his speech, he submitted, “I have also got a thing similar to what you preach.” When the Holy Prophet asked what it was, he said, “The roll of Luqmān.” Then on the Holy Prophet's instance, he read out a portion of it, whereupon the Holy Prophet said, “This discourse is fine, but that which I have is better still.” Then he recited the Qur'ān to him, and Suwaid admitted that that was certainly better than the wisdom of Luqmān. (Ibn Hishām, vol. II, p. 378). According to the historians, this person (Suwaid bin Šāmit) was known by the title of Kāmil (Perfect) in Madīnah on account of his ability, bravery, nobility and poetry. But when after his meeting with the Holy Prophet he returned to Madīnah, he was killed in the battle of Bu'āth, which was fought some time afterwards. His tribesmen were of the opinion that he had become a Muslim after his meeting with the Holy Prophet.

Historically, Luqmān is a disputed personage. In the dark centuries of ignorance there was no compiled history. The only source of information were the traditions that were being handed down since centuries. According to these, some people thought that Luqmān belonged to the people of 'Ād and was a king of Yaman. Relying on these traditions, Maulānā Sayyid Sulemān Nadvī has expressed the opinion in the *Ard al-Qur'ān* that Luqmān was a descendent of the believers who remained safe with the Prophet Hūd after the destruction of the people of 'Ād by a Divine torment, and he was one of the kings of Yaman when it was ruled

[ Contd. on p. 16

النصف

أَنْ اشْكُرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ إِلَى الْمَصِيرِ ﴿١٥﴾ وَإِنْ جَاهَدَاكَ عَلَى أَنْ تُشْرِكَ  
 بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا وَصَاحِبُهُمَا فِي الدُّنْيَا مَعْرُوفًا وَآتِيَهُ  
 سَبِيلٌ مِّنْ أَنَابٍ إِلَىٰ تَعْرِيفٍ إِلَىٰ مَرْجِعِكُمْ فَأَنِتَّكُمْ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٦﴾ يُبْنَىٰ  
 إِنَّمَا إِنْ تَكُ مِثْقَالَ حَبَّةٍ مِّنْ خَرْدَلٍ فَتَكُنْ فِي صَخْرَةٍ أَوْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ أَوْ  
 فِي الْأَرْضِ يَأْتِ بِهَا اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَطِيفٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٧﴾ يُبْنَىٰ أَقْبِعِ الصَّلَاةَ وَأْمُرُ  
 بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَانْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأَصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا أَصَابَكَ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ  
 الْأُمُورِ ﴿١٨﴾ وَلَا تُصَعِّرْ خَدَّكَ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا  
 يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ ﴿١٩﴾ وَاقْصِدْ فِي مَشْيِكَ وَاعْضُضْ مِّنْ صَوْتِكَ إِنَّ  
 أَنْكَرَ الْأَصْوَاتِ لَصَوْتُ الْحَمِيرِ ﴿٢٠﴾ أَلَمْ تَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَّا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ  
 وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَأَسْبَغَ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعَمَهُ ظَاهِرَةً وَبَاطِنَةً وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن  
 يُجَادِلُ فِي اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَلَا هُدًى وَلَا كِتَابٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٢١﴾ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ  
 اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ قَالُوا بَلْ نَنْبَغُ مَا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَنَا أَوَّلًا كَانِ  
 الشَّيْطَانُ يَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَىٰ عَذَابِ السَّعِيرِ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَمَنْ يُسَلِّمْ وَجْهَهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَهُوَ  
 مُحْسِنٌ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ عَاقِبَةُ الْأُمُورِ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَمَنْ  
 كَفَرَ فَلَا يَحْزُنكَ كُفْرُهُ إِلَيْنَا مَرْجِعُهُمْ فَنُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا عَمِلُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ  
 الصُّدُورِ ﴿٢٤﴾ نُسَبِّحُكُمْ قَلِيلًا ثُمَّ نَضْطَرُّهُمْ إِلَىٰ عَذَابِ غَلِيظٍ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَلَئِنْ سَأَلْتَهُمْ  
 مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ قُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا  
 يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾ اللَّهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَلَوْ  
 أَنَّ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ أَقْلَامٌ وَالْبَحْرُ يَمْدُءُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ سَبْعَةُ أَبْحُرٍ

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And<sup>22</sup> the fact is that We have Ourselves enjoined on man to recognize the rights of his parents: his mother bore him in her womb with weakness upon weakness and his weaning took two years.<sup>23</sup> (That is why We admonished him to the effect:) "Give thanks to me and to your parents: to Me you have to return. But if they press you to join with Me another about whom you have no knowledge,<sup>24</sup> do not obey them at all. Treat them kindly in the world, but follow the way of him who has turned to Me. Then to Me will all of you return;<sup>25</sup> then I shall tell you what you had been doing."<sup>26</sup> 14-15

(And Luqmān<sup>27</sup> had said:) "My son, even if a thing be equal to a grain of mustard seed and hidden in a rock, or in the heavens, or in the earth, Allah will bring it forth.<sup>28</sup> He is Knower of subtleties and is All-Aware. O my son, establish the *Ṣalāt*, enjoin good, forbid evil and bear with fortitude every affliction that befalls you.<sup>29</sup> These are the things which have been strictly enjoined.<sup>30</sup> And do not speak to the people with your face turned away,<sup>31</sup> nor walk proudly on the earth, for Allah does not love any self-conceited, boastful person.<sup>32</sup> Be moderate in your gait,<sup>33</sup> and lower your voice, for the most disagreeable of all voices is the braying of the asses".<sup>34</sup> 16-19

Do you not see that Allah has subjected to you whatever is in the earth and the heavens,<sup>35</sup> and has bestowed on you all His favours, visible as well as invisible?<sup>36</sup> Yet there are some among the people who wrangle about Allah,<sup>37</sup> without any knowledge, or guidance, or an enlightening Book.<sup>38</sup> And when it is said to them, "Follow what Allah has sent down," they say, "We shall only follow that upon which we found our forefathers." What ! will they still be following them even if Satan had been calling them to the raging Fire?<sup>39</sup> 20-21

Whoever surrenders himself to Allah,<sup>40</sup> and is a doer of good,<sup>41</sup> he has indeed taken hold of a reliable support,<sup>42</sup> and the ultimate disposal of all affairs is in the hand of Allah. 22-24

As for the one who disbelieves, let not his disbelief grieve you.<sup>43</sup> To Us they have to return; then We shall tell them what they had been doing. Most surely Allah knows the hidden secrets of the breasts. We are allowing them to enjoy themselves for a while in the world; then We shall drag them to a severe torment in a helpless condition.

-26 If you ask them, "Who has created the earth and the heavens?" they will surely say, "Allah." Say, "Praise is then only for Allah,"<sup>44</sup> but most of them do not know.<sup>45</sup> Whatever is in the heavens and the earth, is Allah's.<sup>46</sup> Indeed, Allah is Self-Sufficient and Self-Praiseworthy.<sup>47</sup> . . .

*Contd. from p. 13 ]*

by the 'Ād. But other traditions which have been reported from some learned Companions and their immediate followers do not support this view. Ibn 'Abbās says Luqmān was a negro slave, and the same is the opinion of Ḥadrat Abū Hurairah, Mujāhid, 'Ikrimah and Khālid ar-Rab'ī. According to Ḥadrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah Anṣārī, he belonged to Nūbah. Sa'īd bin al-Musayyib says that he was an Egyptian negro. These three sayings closely resemble one another. The Arabs generally called the black people negroes (*Ḥabashīs*) in those days, and Nūbah is the country south of Egypt and north of Sudan. Therefore, calling the same person an Egyptian and a Nūbian and a negro, in spite of the difference in words, is one and the same thing. Then the elucidations made by Suhayli in *Rauḍ al-Unuf* and Mas'ūdī in *Murūj adh-Dhahab* also throw some light on the question as to how the wisdom of this Sudanese slave spread in Arabia. They both agree that this person though originally a Nūbian was an inhabitant of Madyan and Aylah (modern, 'Aqabah). That is why he spoke Arabic and his wisdom spread in Arabia. Besides, Suhayli also elucidates that Luqmān the Sage and Luqmān bin 'Ād were two different persons, and it is not correct to regard them as one and the same man. (*Rauḍ al-Unuf*, vol. I, p. 266; Mas'ūdī, vol. I, p. 57).

Another thing may also be made clear here. The Arabic manuscript from the Library of Paris, which the orientalist Derenbourg has published under the title *Amthāl Luqmān Ḥakīm* (Fables De Loqman Le Sage) is a fabricated thing which has nothing to do with the Roll of Luqmān. These Fables were compiled by somebody in the 13th century A.D. Its Arabic is poor, and a perusal shows that it is, in fact, a translation of some other book in a different language, which the author or translator has himself ascribed to Luqmān the Sage. The orientalists make such researches with a special object in view. They bring out such forged and

fake things in order to prove that the narratives of the Qur'ān are un-historical legends and therefore unreliable. Anyone who reads B. Heller's article on "Luqmān" in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* will not fail to understand the real motive of these people.

18. That is, "The very first demand of the wisdom and knowledge, insight and sagacity, granted by Allah was that man should have adopted the attitude of gratefulness and obedience before his Lord, and not of ingratitude and thanklessness. And this gratefulness should not have merely been lip-service but expressed and translated in thought and word and deed. One should have the conviction in the depths of one's heart and mind that whatever one has got, has been given by God. One's tongue should always be acknowledging the favours of God; and practically also one should be trying to prove by carrying out His Commands, by avoiding sins, by striving to achieve His goodwill, by conveying His blessings and favours to His servants and by fighting those who have rebelled against Him that one is really a grateful servant of one's God."

19. That is, "The one who is ungrateful and unbelieving, his unbelief is harmful to his own self. Allah does not lose anything. He is Independent and does not stand in need of anyone's gratitude. The gratitude of someone does not add anything to His Godhead, nor does anyone's ingratitude and disbelief change the factual reality that whatever the servants have got, has been granted by Him. He is Self-Praiseworthy whether someone praises Him or not. Every particle in the universe bears testimony to His Perfection and Beauty, His Creativity and Providence, and every creature is paying homage to His glory perpetually."

20. This particular admonition from the wisdom of Luqmān has been cited here for two reasons: (1) He gave this admonition to his son, and obviously, no one can be insincere to one's own children. A person may deceive others, may behave hypocritically towards them, but no one, not even a most depraved person, will try to deceive and defraud his own children. Therefore, Luqmān's admonishing his son thus is a clear proof of the fact that in his sight *shirk* was indeed the most heinous sin, and for that very reason he first admonished his dear son to refrain from this iniquity. (2) The second reason for this narration is that many parents from among the disbelievers of Makkah were compelling their children to turn away from the message of *Tau id* being preached by the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and remain steadfast on the creed of *shirk*, as is being stated in the following verses. Therefore, those foolish people are being told, as if to say, "The well-known sage of your own land had wished his

children well by admonishing them to avoid *shirk*; now you should judge it for yourself whether you are wishing your children well or ill when you compel them to follow the same creed of *shirk*."

21. *Zulm* means to deprive someone of his right and to act unjustly. *Shirk* is a grave iniquity because man sets up such beings as equals with his Creator and Providence and Benefactor as have no share whatever in creating him, nor in providing for him, nor in bestowing the blessings on him, which he is enjoying in the world. There could be no greater injustice than this. The Creator's right on man is that he should worship Him alone, but he worships others and so deprives Him of His right. Then, in whatever he does in connection with the worship of others than Allah, he exploits many things, from his own mind and body to the earth and heavens, whereas, all these things have been created by Allah, the One, and man has no right to use any of them in the worship of any other than Allah. Then, the right of man's own self on him is that he should not debase and involve it in punishment. But when he worships others than his Creator, he debases his self as well as makes it deserving of the punishment. Thus, the entire life of a *mushrik* becomes *Zulm* in every aspect and at all times and his every breath becomes an expression of injustice and iniquity.

22. The whole passage from here to the end of the paragraph is a parenthesis, which Allah has inserted as a further explanation of the saying of Luqmān.

23. From these words, Imām Shāfe'ī, Imām Aḥmad, Imām Abū Yūsuf, and Imām Muḥammad have drawn the conclusion that the suckling period of the child is two years. If a child has been suckled by a woman within this period, they will be forbidden for each other, but if outside and beyond this period, they will not be so. A saying of Imām Mālik also supports this. But Imām Abū Ḥanīfah has proposed the period of two and a half years as a precaution, and has added that if the child has been weaned after two years, or even earlier, and it is no longer dependent upon suckling for its food, no woman would be forbidden for him if she gave him suck after that period. However, if the real food of the child is still milk, suckling during the period will render him and her forbidden for each other in spite of his eating the other food in a more or less quantity. For, the verse does not mean that the child should be suckled necessarily for two years. In Sūrah Al-Baqarah it has been said: "The mothers shall suckle their children for two whole years, if the fathers desire the suckling to be completed." (v. 233). Ibn 'Abbās from these words has concluded, and other scholars have agreed with him in this, that the shortest period of pregnancy is six months, for the Qur'ān at another place says: "His bearing (in the womb) and his weaning took



thirty months." (Aḥqāf : 15) This is an important legal point which helps resolve many disputes concerning legitimate and illegitimate births.

24. That is, "About whom you have no knowledge that he is My associate."

25. "All of you": the children as well as the parents.

26. For explanation, see E. N.'s 11 and 12 of Sūrah Al-'Ankabūt.

27. The other admonitions of Luqmān are being narrated here to imply that like the basic beliefs, the teachings pertaining to morals that the Holy Prophet is presenting, are not anything new in Arabia.

28. That is, "Nothing can escape Allah's knowledge and His grasp. A seed in the rock may be hidden for you, but it is known to Allah. A particle in the heavens may be very distant for you, but for Allah it is very near. A thing lying in the layers of the earth may be lying in darkness for you but for him it is in full light. Therefore, you cannot do anything good or bad, anywhere or any time, which may remain hidden from Allah. He is not only aware of it, but when the time for accountability comes, He will place before you a full record of each act of yours."

29. In this there is a subtle allusion to this that whoever will enjoin good and forbid evil, will inevitably have to face and undergo afflictions and hardships in the world.

30. Another meaning can be: "These are things which require courage and resolution. To rise for the reformation of the people and to brave the hardships of the way cannot be the job of a mean-spirited and cowardly person."

31. *Tuṣa'ir* in the original is from *ṣa'ar*, a disease in the camel's neck due to which it keeps its face turned to one side. The idiom implies the attitude of a person who shows arrogance and vanity, turns his face away and treats others with scant respect.

32. *Mukhtāl* in the original implies a person who has an over-high opinion of himself, and *fakhūr* is the one who boasts of his superiority over others. A man becomes haughty and arrogant and vain in his gait only when he is puffed up with pride, and wants that others should feel his superiority.

33. According to some commentators it means this: "Walk neither fast nor slow but at a moderate pace;" but the context shows that here the pace or the rate of walking is not the question. There is nothing morally wrong with a fast or a slow pace in itself, nor can there be a rule made for it. When a man is in a hurry, he has to walk fast, and there is nothing wrong if one walks slow when walking for pleasure. Even if there is a standard for the moderate pace, it cannot be made a law for every person at all times. What is actually meant by this is to reform

the state of the self under which a person walks haughtily. The haughtiness and arrogance of a person inevitably manifests itself in his gait and style of walking, which shows the state of his mind and also the cause of his pride and haughtiness. Wealth, authority, beauty, knowledge, power and such other things cause a man to become proud and vain, and each of these gives him a special style of gait. Contrary to this, manifestation of humility in the gait is also the result of one or the other morbid mental state. Sometimes the hidden conceit of the self of a man takes on the form of ostentatious humility, piety and godliness and this is shown by his gait; and sometimes man really feels so embittered by the frustrations of the world that he adopts a sick man's gait. What Luqmān means to say is this: "Avoid these states of the mind and self and walk the gait of a simple, honest and noble person, which neither shows any vanity and haughtiness nor weakness nor ostentatious piety and humility."

The taste of the Holy Prophet's great Companions in this regard can be judged from a few instances. When Ḥa'rat Umar once saw a man walking with his head hung down, he shouted out to him, saying, "Walk with your head raised up. Islam is not sick." He saw another person walking like a weak, sick man, and said, "O wretch! Do not sully our religion!" Both these incidents show that in the sight of Ḥa'rat 'Umar religious piety did not at all require that one should walk cautiously like the sick man and show undue humility by one's gait. Whenever he saw a Muslim walking such a gait, he would have the apprehension that it would misrepresent Islam and would depress the other Muslims. A similar incident was once met with by Ḥa'rat 'Ā'ishah. She saw a person walking as if run down and exhausted. She asked what was the matter. It was said, "He is one of the reciters of the Qur'ān (i.e. a person who remains engaged in reciting and teaching the Qur'ān and in worship)." At this she said, "'Umar was the chief of the reciters of the Qur'ān, but as it was he would walk with a firm foot, and he would speak with force and strength, and he would give a good beating if he had to." (For further explanation, see E.N. 43 of Bani Isrā'il and E.N. 79 of Al-Furqān)

34. This does not mean that one should always speak in a low voice and should never raise one's voice. By citing the braying of the asses, it has been clearly indicated what sort of the tone and voice in speech is meant to be discouraged. One kind of lowness and loudness, roughness and softness, of the tone and voice is that which is needed under natural and genuine requirements. For example, when speaking to a man close at hand, or to a small group of the people, one would speak in a low voice, and when speaking to a man at a distance, or to a large

number of the people, one would inevitably have to speak loudly. Similar is inevitably the difference in tones depending on the occasion and situation. The tone of praise has to be different from the tone of condemnation, and of the expression of goodwill from that of indignation. This thing is in no way objectionable. Nor does the admonition of Luqmān imply that one should always speak in a soft and low voice and tone regardless of the occasion and requirement. What is objectionable is that one should shout oneself hoarse and produce a voice like the ass's braying in order to bully and debase and browbeat the other person.

35. A thing can be subjected to somebody in two ways: (1) The thing may be made subordinate to him and he may be authorised to use and exploit it as he likes, and (2) the thing may be subjected to a law and system so that it becomes useful for him and serves his interests accordingly. Allah has not subjected everything in the earth and heavens to man in one and the same sense, but has subjected certain things in the first sense and certain others in the second sense. For example, He has subjected the air, water, earth, fire, vegetation, minerals, cattle and many other things in the first sense, and the sun, the moon, etc. in the second sense.

36. "Visible favours" imply those favours which are perceived by man in one way or the other, or are known to him. And the "invisible favours" are those which are neither perceived by him nor are known to him. There are countless things in man's own body and in the world outside him, which are working in his interest, but man is utterly unaware of the means which his Creator has provided for his protection and safety, for his development and provision of sustenance to him, and for his well-being and happiness. Research of man in the different branches of science is revealing many such favours of God as were hidden from him before. And the favours and blessings which have so far been revealed are insignificant as against those which still lie hidden from man.

37. "Who wrangle about Allah": Who wrangle and dispute about questions such as these: Does Allah exist or not? Is He One God alone, or are there other gods also? What are His attributes and what is their nature? What is the nature of His relationship with His creations etc.?

38. That is, "They neither have any means of knowledge by which they might themselves have observed or experienced the reality directly, nor do they have the guidance of a guide available to them, who might have guided them after observing the reality, nor do they

[ *Contd. on p. 24*

مَا نَفِدَتْ كَلِمَتُ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٥﴾ مَا خَلَقَكُمْ وَلَا بِعَمَلِكُمْ إِلَّا  
 كَفِّسَ وَاحِدَةً إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٢٦﴾ أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُولِجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي  
 النَّهَارِ وَيُولِجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ كُلٌّ يَجْرِي إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ  
 مُّسَمًّى وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿٢٧﴾ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ وَأَنَّ مَا  
 يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ الْبَاطِلُ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْكَبِيرُ ﴿٢٨﴾ أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ الْفُلْكَ  
 تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِنِعْمَتِ اللَّهِ لِيُرِيكُمْ مِنْ آيَاتِهِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ  
 لِّكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُورٍ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَإِذَا غَشِيَهُمْ مَوْجٌ كَالظُّلَلِ دَعَوْا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ  
 الدِّينَ فَلَمَّا نَجَّاهُمْ إِلَى الْبَرِّ فَمِنْهُمْ مُّقْتَصِدٌ وَمَا يَجْحَدُ بِآيَاتِنَا إِلَّا كُلُّ  
 خَتَّارٍ كَفُورٍ ﴿٣٠﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ وَأَخْشَوْا يَوْمًا لَا يَجْزِي وَالِدٌ عَنْ  
 وَلَدِهِ وَلَا مَوْلُودٌ هُوَ جَارٍ عَنِ وَالِدِهِ شَيْئًا إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ فَلَا تَغُرَّنَّكُمُ  
 الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا ۗ وَلَا يَغُرَّنَّكُمُ بِاللَّهِ الْغُرُورُ ﴿٣١﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ ۗ  
 وَيُنزِلُ الْغَيْثَ ۗ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْأَرْحَامِ ۗ وَمَا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ مَّاذَا تَكْسِبُ  
 غَدًا ۗ وَمَا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ بِأَيِّ أَرْضٍ تَمُوتُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿٣٢﴾

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If all the trees in the earth were to become pens and the ocean (an inkpot) which is replenished with ink by seven more oceans, (the writing of) Allah's Words would not exhaust.<sup>48</sup> Allah is indeed All-Mighty and All-Wise. Your creation and your resurrection are as simple for Him as (the creation and resurrection) of a single soul. The fact is that Allah hears everything and sees everything.<sup>49</sup> 27-28

Do you not see that Allah causes the night to pass into the day and the day into the night? He has subjected the sun and the moon,<sup>50</sup> each voyaging (in its course) till an appointed time.<sup>51</sup> And (do you not know) that Allah is aware of whatever you do? This is because Allah is the very Truth,<sup>52</sup> and all those whom the people invoke instead of Allah, are false,<sup>53</sup> and (this is because) Allah alone is the High, the Great.<sup>54</sup> 29-30

Do you not see that the ship sails in the sea by Allah's grace so that he may show you some of His Signs?<sup>55</sup> Indeed, there are many signs in this for every patient and grateful person.<sup>56</sup> And when a wave (in the sea) covers them like the mountains, they invoke Allah making their faith pure for Him alone. Then, when He brings them safe to the land, some one among them follows the middle way<sup>57</sup> and does not deny Our Signs except the one who is treacherous and ungrateful.<sup>58</sup> 31-32

O people! Avoid the wrath of your Lord and fear the Day when no father shall avail anything for his son, nor shall any son avail anything for his father.<sup>59</sup> Allah's promise is surely true.<sup>60</sup> So let not this world's life deceive you,<sup>61</sup> nor let the deceiver deceive you concerning Allah.<sup>62</sup> 33

Allah alone has the knowledge of the Hour: He alone sends down the rain and He alone knows what is taking shape in the wombs of the mothers. No living being knows what he will earn the next day, nor does anybody know in what land he will die. Allah alone is All-Knowing, All-Aware.<sup>63</sup> 34

*Contd. from p. 21 ]*

possess a Divine Book, which might be the basis of their belief.”

39. That is, “It is not at all necessary that the forefathers of every person and every family and nation should have been on the right path. The mere argument that a particular way of life had been bequeathed by the elders cannot be a proof of its being right also. No sane person can commit the folly that he should blindly go on following the way of his forefathers even if they were not rightly guided, and should never bother to find out where the way is leading him.”

40. “Whoever . . . Allah”: Who submits himself wholly to the service of Allah, entrusts all his affairs to Him and makes His Guidance the law of his entire life.

41. That is, practically also he should adopt the attitude of an obedient servant of Allah.

42. That is, “He will neither have the apprehension that he will be misguided, nor the fear that he will meet an evil end after having served Allah.”

43. This means to say, “O Prophet, the one who refuses to listen to you, thinks that by rejecting Islam and insisting on unbelief he has harmed you, but in fact he has not harmed you but harmed only himself. If he does not listen to you, you need not bother yourself about him at all.”

44. That is, “Thank God that you at least know this and believe in this. But if this be the reality, all praise should then belong to Allah alone. How can any other being deserve praise when it has no share whatever in the creation of the universe?”

45. That, is, “Most of the people do not know what are the inevitable results and demands of accepting Allah as the Creator of the universe, and what contradicts it. When a person acknowledges Allah as the Creator of the earth and the heavens, he should also acknowledge that Allah alone is the Deity and Lord: that He alone is worthy of worship and obedience: that He alone can be invoked for needs, and no one other than He can be the Law-Giver and Ruler of His creation. To acknowledge one as the Creator and another as the deity is contrary to reason and a contradiction in terms, which can be upheld only by an ignorant person. Likewise, it would be a contradiction in terms to believe in one Being as the Creator and to regard another from among the creation as remover of hardships or as a deity and possessor of power and authority and sovereignty, which no reasonable will acknowledge and accept.”

46. That is, “The reality is not merely this that Allah is the Creator of the earth and the heavens, but in fact He alone is the Master of all

things found in the earth and heavens. Allah has not created this universe and left it to others to become masters of the whole or a part of it, but He Himself is Master of His creation and everything that exists in this universe is His. Here, He alone possesses Divine rights and powers and no one else."

47. This has been explained in E. N. 19 above.

48. "Allah's Words": Allah's creative works and the manifestations of His power and wisdom. This very theme has been presented in Sūrah Al-Kahf: 109 above a little differently. A person might think there is exaggeration in this, but if one considers the matter a little deeply, one will feel that there is in fact no exaggeration whatever in it. All the pens that can be made from the trees of the world and all the ink that can be provided by the oceans of the world, which are replenished by seven more oceans, cannot perhaps help prepare a complete list of all the creations in the universe, not to speak of all the manifestations of Allah's power and wisdom and creative works. When it is impossible even to count all the things found on the earth only, how can one bring into writing all the creations found in this limitless universe?

Here, the object is to make man realize that no creature can become a deity and an associate in the works of Allah, Who has brought into being such a vast Universe, Who is administering its affairs and Whose powers and resources are limitless. Not to speak of becoming an associate in the administration of this vast Kingdom, it is not within the power of any creation to obtain a mere nodding acquaintance with the minutest portion of it. How can then one imagine that one or the other creation can have any share in the Divine powers and authority on the basis of which it may answer prayers and make or un-make destinies?

49. That is, "He is hearing every sound in the universe distinctly at one and the same time, and no sound can absorb his hearing so completely that He may hear no other sound. Likewise, He is seeing the whole universe in each of its details as to thing and event at one and the same time and nothing can absorb His sight so completely that He may see nothing else. The same precisely is the case concerning the creation of men and their re-creation also. He can re-create instantaneously all the men who have been born since the beginning of the creation and will be born till the end of time. His creative power is not absorbed so completely in the creation of one man that He may be unable to create other men at the same time. For Him the creation of one man and of the billions of men, therefore, is equal and one and the same thing."

50. That is, "The appearance and alternation of the day and night consistently and regularly by itself shows that the sun and the moon have been subjected to a system." The sun and the moon have been mentioned here in particular because both these are the most prominent bodies of the heaven, which man has been worshipping as deities since the earliest times, and which many people worship as gods even today. The fact, however, is that Allah has bound all the stars and planets of the universe including the earth into an unalterable system from which they cannot deviate even by an inch."

51. That is, nothing in the world, whether the sun or the moon, or any other star or planet, in the universe, is eternal and ever-lasting. Everything has a term for it and can function only till its expiry. Everything has a beginning in time before which it was not there and an end in time after which it will not be there. This means to imply that such temporal and powerless things cannot become the deities of men.

52. That is, the real Sovereign is Allah. He alone is the real Owner of power and authority over the creation and its disposal.

53. That is, "They are figments of your own imagination. You have yourselves presumed that so-and-so has got a share in Godhead, and so-and-so has been given the powers to remove hardships and fulfil needs, whereas in fact none of them has any power to make or un-make anything."

54. That is, "He is the Highest of all before Whom everything is low, and He is the Greatest of all before Whom everything is small".

55. That is, "Such Signs as show that all powers rest only with Allah. Man may make as strong and suitable ships for his sea journeys as he likes, and may achieve whatever perfection in marine science and in the related knowledge and experience, these by themselves cannot avail him anything to perform safe voyages especially when confronted by the terrible forces at the sea, unless he is succoured by the grace of Allah. As soon as Allah's grace is withdrawn, man immediately realizes how meagre and insufficient are the means and resources and knowledge of the sciences. Similarly, man in the state of peace and security may be a hardened atheist or polytheist, but when his boat loses balance in the storm at sea, even the atheist comes to realize that there is God and the polytheist that there is only One God."

56. That is, "When the people who possess these two qualities, recognize the reality by these signs, they come to understand *Tauhid* clearly and stick to it firmly. The first quality is that they should be patient: they should not be fickle but firm and persistent: they should remain steadfast on the righteous belief under all circumstances, pleasant



or unpleasant, difficult or easy, favourable or unfavourable. They should not have the weakness that when the hard times come they start imploring God humbly, and when they change into good times, they forget God altogether. Or that, to the contrary, they should worship God in good times and start cursing Him when touched by afflictions and misfortunes. The other quality is that they should be grateful: they should not prove ungrateful and thankless, but appreciative of favour and should remain perpetually disposed from within to render thanks to the one who conferred the favour."

57. "*Iqtisād*" in the original may mean uprightness or moderateness. In the first case, the verse would mean: "A few of them only remain steadfast on *Tauhīd*, which they had promised to follow when overwhelmed by the storm, and this makes them adhere to uprightness ever afterwards." If it is taken to mean moderateness, it would mean: "Some of them become moderate and less rigid in their creed of atheism and polytheism, or they lose some of their fervour and enthusiasm that had been caused by the incident of calamity." Most probably Allah has used this meaningful sentence here in order to allude to all the three states simultaneously. The object probably is to point out the fact that during the storm at sea the mind of everybody is automatically set right, and everybody gives up atheism and polytheism and starts invoking One Allah for help. But as soon as they safely land on the shore, only a few of them seem to have learnt any enduring lesson from their experience. Then, this small number also is divided into three groups: those who adopt uprightness ever afterwards, and those who become moderate in their disbelief, and those who retain some of the spirit of enthusiasm caused temporarily by the calamity.

58. These two qualities are the antithesis of the two qualities mentioned in the preceding verse. A treacherous person is he who is utterly disloyal and who has no regard for his promise and pledge, and the ungrateful he who does not acknowledge the good and the gains and the benefits received by him, and even behaves rebelliously towards his benefactor. The people having these qualities return to their disbelief, their atheism and their polytheism without any hesitation as soon as the danger has been averted. They do not admit that they had perceived some signs in their own selves as well as outside themselves of Allah's existence and of His being only One when overwhelmed by the storm, and their invoking Allah was in fact the result of their recognition of the same reality. The atheists among them explain away their act, saying, "It was a weakness which we manifested in the state of confusion and bewilderment, whereas there exists no God, Who might have saved us from the storm: we in fact succeeded in escaping by virtue of such and such a device and means

and resources." As for the *mushriks*, they generally say, "We had the succour and protection of such and such a saint or god and goddess available to us by virtue of which we escaped." Therefore, as soon as they land on the shore, they start giving thanks to these false gods and presenting offerings at their shrines. They do not bother to think that when they had lost hope, there was none beside Allah, the One, whom they might have implored and invoked for help.

59. That is, "The relationship of a person with his friend, or his leader, or his spiritual guide, etc. is not so close and intimate as the relationship that exists between the children and their parents. But on the Day of Resurrection even the son and the father will not be able to help each other. The father will not have the courage to come forward and say that he may be seized instead of the son for his sins, nor will the son have the nerve to say that he may be sent to Hell instead of the father. How can then a person expect that one will be able to avail something for the other there? Therefore, foolish is the person who spoils his Hereafter in the world for the sake of another, or adopts the way of sin and deviation by dependence on others. Here, one should keep in view the theme of verse 15, in which the children have been admonished not to accept deviation in the matter of the faith and religion on behest of the parents, though in affairs of mundane life they are duty bound to serve them as best as they can."

60. "Allah's promise": the promise of Resurrection, when the Court of Allah will be established and everyone will be called to render an account of his deeds.

61. The life of the world involves the people, who only see the superficial, in different kinds of misunderstandings. Someone thinks that life and death only belong to this world, and there is no life hereafter; therefore, whatever one has to do, one should do it here and now. Another one who is lost in his wealth and power and prosperity, forgets his death and gets involved in the foolish idea that his grandeur and his power are everlasting. Another one overlooking the moral and spiritual objectives regards the material gains and pleasures in themselves as the only objectives and does not give anything any importance but the "standard of living", no matter whether his standard of humanity goes on falling lower and lower as a result thereof. Someone thinks that worldly prosperity is the real criterion of truth and falsehood: every way of life that ensures this is the truth and everything contradictory to it is falsehood. Someone regards this very prosperity as a sign of being Allah's favourite, and assumes the law that whoever is leading a prosperous life here is Allah's beloved no matter by what means he might have achieved this prosperity, and whoever is leading a miserable life in the

world, even if it be so due to his love of the truth and his uprightness, will live a miserable life in the Hereafter, too. These and other such misunderstandings have been called "deceptions of the worldly life" by Allah.

62. *Al-gharūr* (the deceiver) may be Satan or a man or a group of men, or even man's own self, or something else. The reason for using this comprehensive and meaningful word in its absolute form without identifying a particular person or thing, is that for different people there are different means that cause them deception. Any particular means or cause that deceived a person to be misled and misguided from the right way to the wrong way, will be *al-gharūr* in his particular case.

"To deceive (someone) concerning Allah" are also comprehensive words, which include countless kinds of deceptions. "The deceiver" deceives one man with the idea that there is no God at all, and another man with the idea that God after making the world has handed over its control and administration to the men and is no more concerned with it; he misleads another one, saying, "There are some favourite ones of God: if you attain nearness to them, you will surely win your forgiveness whatever you may do, or may have done, in the world;" he deceives another one, saying, "God is All-Forgiving and All-Merciful: you may go on committing sins freely, and He will go on forgiving each sin of yours." He gives another person the idea of determinism and misguides him, saying, "Everything that you do is pre-ordained: if you commit evil, it is God Who makes you commit it; if you avoid goodness, it is God Who makes you avoid it." Thus, there are countless kinds of such deceptions with which man is being deceived concerning God. When analyzed it comes to light that the basic cause of all errors and sins and crimes is that man has been deceived concerning God in one way or the other, and that is how he has been misled to some ideological deviation or moral error."

63. This verse is, in fact an answer to the disbelievers' question as to when the Hour of Resurrection will come, which they asked when they heard the Holy Prophet mention it and the promise of the Hereafter, again and again. The Qur'ān has answered this sometimes by citing the question and sometimes without citing it, because the addressees knew what they were asking. This is one of those verses which answer the question without citing the question itself.

The first sentence: "Allah alone has the knowledge of the Hour", is the real answer to the question. The four sentences that follow constitute the argument to support it. The argument means this: "O man, you do not have the knowledge even about those things with which you are most closely and intimately concerned in life. How then can it be

possible for you to know as to when will the whole world come to an end? Your prosperity and adversity mainly depend on the rain. But its control and regulation is entirely in the hand of Allah. He sends down the rain whenever and wherever and in whatever measure He pleases and withholds it whenever he pleases. You do not at all know how much of the rain will fall at a particular place at a particular time and which land will remain without it, and which land will be adversely affected in spite of it. Your wives conceive by your own sperm-drop, which perpetuates your race in the future, but you do not know what is taking shape in their wombs, and in what form and with what good or evil it will emerge. You do not even know what you are going to meet with the next day. A sudden accident can change your destiny; but you are unaware of it even a minute before its occurrence. You do not know where your present life will eventually come to an end. Allah has kept all this information with Himself alone, and has not given you any knowledge of any of these. You actually desire that you should have the knowledge of each of these things so that you may make necessary preparations beforehand, but you have no other course open to you than to depend only on Allah's decree and disposal in these matters. Likewise, about the end of the world also there is no alternative but to rely on Allah's decree and decision. The knowledge of this also has neither been given to anybody, nor can it be given."

Here, another thing also should be understood well, and it is this: This verse does not give a list of the unseen and hidden things, which are known to no one but Allah. Here, only some of the most apparent things have been pointed out only to serve as an illustration. These are the things with which man is most deeply and intimately concerned, yet he is unaware of them. From this it would be wrong to conclude that these are the only five unseen and hidden things which are known to no one but Allah. As a matter of fact, *ghaib* applies to every such thing which is hidden from the creation but is in the knowledge of Allah, and such things are countless and limitless. (For a detailed discussion of this, see An-Naml: 65 and the E.N.'s thereof).

XXXII

AS-SAJDAH السجده



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

XXXII

AS-SAJDAH السَّجْدَةُ

INTRODUCTION

### **Name**

The Sūrah has been entitled As-Sajdah after the theme of *Sajdah* (prostration) as expressed in verse 15.

### **Period of Revelation**

From the style of the Sūrah it appears that it was sent down during the middle Makkan period, more particularly in its initial stage, for one does not find in its background that severity of the persecution and tyranny which one finds in the Sūrahs sent down in the later stages.

### **Theme and Topics**

The main theme of the Sūrah is to remove the doubts of the people concerning *Tauhīd*, the Hereafter and the Prophethood, and to invite them to all these three realities. The disbelievers of Makkah, when they talked of the Holy Prophet in private, said to one another, "This person is forging strange things. Sometimes he gives news of what will happen after death. He says: when you have become dust, you will be called to render your accounts, and there will be Hell and Heaven. Sometimes he says: these gods and goddesses and saints are nonentities: One God alone is

the Deity. And sometimes he says: the discourses which I recite are not my own but Allah's Word. All these are strange things which he presents." The answer to these doubts and misgivings forms the theme and subject-matter of this Sūrah.

In this connection, the disbelievers have been told: "Most certainly it is Allah's Word, which has been sent down in order to arouse a people who are sunk in heedlessness, being deprived of the bounties and blessings of Prophethood. How can you call it a fabrication when its having been sent down from Allah is manifest and self-evident?"

Then, they have been asked, "Use your common sense and judge for yourselves which of the things presented by the Qur'ān is strange and novel? Look at the administration of the heavens and the earth: consider your own creation and structure. Don't these things testify to the teaching which this Prophet is presenting before you in the Qur'ān? Does the system of the universe point to *Tauhīd* or to *shirk*? When you consider this whole system and your own creation, does your intellect testify that the One Who has given you your present existence, will not be able to create you once again?"

Then a scene of the Hereafter has been depicted, the fruits of belief and the evil consequences of disbelief have been mentioned and the people exhorted to give up disbelief even before they meet their doom and accept the teaching of the Qur'ān, which will be to their own advantage in the Hereafter.

Then they have been told: It is Allah's supreme mercy that He does not seize man immediately for his errors to punish him finally and decisively but warns him beforehand by afflicting him with small troubles and hardships and calamities and losses and strokes of misfortune so that he may wake up and take admonition.



Then it is said: "This is not the first and novel event of its kind that a Book has been sent down upon a man from God. Before this the Book had been sent upon Moses also, which you all know. There is nothing strange in this at which you should marvel. Be assured that this Book has come down from God, and note it well that the same will happen now as has already happened in the time of Moses. Leadership now will be bestowed only on those who will accept this Divine Book. Those who reject it shall be doomed to failure."

Then the disbelievers of Makkah have been admonished to the effect: "See the end of the doomed communities of the past by whose ruined habitations you pass during your trade journeys. Will you like to meet the same doom yourself? Do not be deluded by the apparent and superficial. Today you see that no one is listening to Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) except a few young men and some slaves and poor men, and he is being made the target of curses and ugly remarks from every side. From this you have formed the wrong impression that his mission will fail. But this is only a deception of your eyes. Don't you see the phenomenon in your daily life that a land previously lying absolutely barren starts swelling with vegetation and plant life everywhere just by a single shower of the rain though before this no one could ever imagine that under the layers of its soil there lay hidden such treasures of greenery and herbage?"

In conclusion, the Holy Prophet has been addressed to the effect: "These people mock at what you say and ask as to when you will attain this decisive victory. Tell them: when the time comes for the final judgement regarding you and us, believing then will not profit you at all. If you have to believe, believe now. But if you intend to await the final judgement, then await it as you please."





الْعَرُودُ تَنْزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ مِنْ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۗ أَمْ يَقُولُونَ  
 افْتَرَاهُ بَلْ هُوَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ لِتُنذِرَ قَوْمًا مَّا أَتَاهُمْ مِنْ نَذِيرٍ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ  
 لَعَلَّهُمْ يَهْتَدُونَ ۗ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فِي  
 سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ ۗ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ ذَلِيٍّ وَلَا شَفِيعٍ ۗ

## XXXII

### السَّجْدَةُ AS-SAJDAH

Verses: 30

Revealed at Makkah

*In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate*

Alif. Lām. Mīm. The revelation of this book is, without any doubt, from the Lord of the Worlds.<sup>1</sup> Do<sup>2</sup> the people say that this man himself has forged it?<sup>3</sup> Nay, but it is the Truth from your Lord so that you may warn a people to whom no warner has come before you.<sup>4</sup> Maybe they are guided aright.<sup>5</sup>

1-3

1. Several Sūrahs of the Qur'ān begin with one or the other such introductory sentence, which is meant to declare at the outset wherefrom this discourse is being issued. This is apparently the same sort of an introductory sentence as an announcer speaks in the beginning of a radio programme to tell which radio station he is speaking from. But unlike the ordinary announcement from a radio station, when the extraordinary declaration at the beginning of a Sūrah is made to the effect that this message is being issued by the Ruler of the Universe, it is not merely meant to specify the origin of the discourse, but, besides, it also

puts forward a big claim, a great challenge and a severe warning, for at the very outset it gives the big news that this is not human but the Lord of the Worlds' Word. This declaration at once brings man face to face with the grave question: "Should I or should I not accept this claim? If I accept it I shall have to bow my head in submission before it for ever. Then, I shall be left with no freedom concerning it. If I do not accept it, I shall have to take the great risk that if it be really the Lord of the Worlds' Word, I shall have to meet with eternal misery and misfortune in consequence of rejecting it." That is why this introductory sentence solely on account of its extraordinary nature compels man to listen to this Word with full attention and seriousness, and then take the decision whether he would accept it as Divine Word or not.

Here, what has been said is not merely this that this Book has been sent down by the Lord of the Worlds, but, besides, it also asserts most forcefully: "It is without any doubt the Book of God: there is absolutely no room for doubt about its having been revealed by Allah." If this assertive sentence is studied in the actual context itself, it will be seen that it contains the argument also along with the assertion, and this argument was not hidden from the people of Makkah before whom the assertion was being made. The whole life of the person presenting it had been spent before them. They had known him before he presented the Book as well as after he had presented it. They knew that the person presenting the Book with that assertion was the most righteous, the most serious and the most pious and virtuous man of their society. They also knew that until a day before he made the claim to Prophethood, no one had ever heard from him those things which he had started presenting suddenly just after his claim to Prophethood. They found a marked difference between the diction and style used in the Book and the diction and style used by Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) himself, in his daily life, and they also recognized naturally that one and the same person could not have two styles so different from each other. They were also experiencing the highly miraculous literature being presented in the Book and, being the Arabic speaking people themselves, knew that all their literary men and poets were feeling utterly helpless in producing anything the like of it. They were also not unaware that there was a world of difference between the literary productions and orations of their poets and sorcerers and orators, and the Divine discourses being recited before them and the sublimity of the pure themes being presented in them. They did not see in the Book and in the message of the one presenting it any trace whatever of selfishness, which is always present in the work and message of a false claimant

to prophethood. They could not find out, however, had they might have tried, that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) by laying claim to Prophethood was trying to secure a certain benefit for himself or his family or his clan and tribe, or that he had a vested interest in the message he gave. Then, they could also see what sort of the people of their society were being drawn to his message and what great revolution was taking place in them as soon as they came in contact with his invitation. All these things together supported and proved the assertion and claim. That is why in that background it was enough to say that it is beyond any doubt a Book that has been sent down by the Lord of the Worlds. No further argument was needed to substantiate the claim.

2. After the above introductory sentence, the first objection of the polytheists of Makkah, which they raised concerning the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet, is being dealt with.

3. This is not merely a question but also an expression of great surprise and astonishment. It means to imply this: In spite of all those things on account of which this Book is, without any doubt, a Revelation from Allah, do those people yet say stubbornly that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) has himself forged it and is falsely attributing it to Allah? Don't they feel any shame in uttering such a senseless and baseless accusation? Don't they at all realize what opinion will those people form who are aware of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and his work and his discourses and also understand the Book, when they hear their absurd accusation?

4. Just as in the first verse it was considered sufficient to say, "It is without any doubt the Book of God," and no further argument was needed to be advanced to prove the Qur'ān to be Divine Word, so in this verse also the only thing being said to refute the disbelievers' charge that the Qur'ān was being forged is: "It is the Truth from your Lord." The reason for it is the same as we have given in E.N. 1 above. The listeners were well aware of the person who was presenting the Qur'ān, of the environment in which he was presenting it and the confidence and grace with which he was presenting it; they also knew the Book, its diction and literary excellence and its themes; they were also feeling the influence and impact it was having on contemporary society of Makkah. Under those conditions the Book's being the Truth sent down by the Lord of the Worlds, was such an evident factual reality that the mere mention of it in clear and definite terms was enough to refute the accusation of the disbelievers. Any attempt to strengthen this assertion by resort to reasoning would have caused it to be weakened instead. The case would be like this. Supposing it's day and the sun is shining bright,

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أَفَلَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ يَعْرُجُ إِلَيْهِ فِي  
 يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ مِمَّا تَعُدُّونَ ﴿١١﴾ ذَلِكَ عَلِيمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ  
 الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٢﴾ الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ وَبَدَأَ خَلْقَ الْإِنْسَانِ مِنْ  
 طِينٍ ﴿١٣﴾ ثُمَّ جَعَلَ نَسْلَهُ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِّنْ مَّاءٍ مَّهِينٍ ﴿١٤﴾ ثُمَّ سَوَّاهُ وَنَفَخَ  
 فِيهِ مِنْ رُّوحِهِ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ قَلِيلًا مَّا  
 تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿١٥﴾ وَقَالُوا عَرَاذَا ضَلَلْنَا فِي الْأَرْضِ أَإِنَّا لَفِي خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ بَلْ  
 هُم بِلِقَائِ رَبِّهِمْ كَفِرُونَ ﴿١٦﴾ قُلْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْمَوْتِ الَّذِي وُكِّلَ بِكُمْ ثُمَّ  
 إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَ لَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذِ الْمُجْرِمُونَ نَاكِسُوا رُءُوسِهِمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ  
 رَبَّنَا أَبْصَرْنَا وَسَمِعْنَا فَارْجِعْنَا نَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا إِنَّا مُوقِنُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَلَوْ شِئْنَا  
 لَآتَيْنَا كُلَّ نَفْسٍ هُدًىٰ وَلَكِنْ حَقَّ الْقَوْلُ مِنِّي لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنَ  
 الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٩﴾ فَذُوقُوا بِمَا نَسِيتُمْ لِقَاءَ يَوْمِكُمْ هَٰذَا إِنَّا نَسِينَاكُمْ  
 وَذُوقُوا عَذَابَ الْخُلْدِ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾ إِنَّمَا يُؤْمِنُ بِآيَاتِنَا الَّذِينَ إِذَا  
 ذُكِّرُوا بِهَا خَرُّوا سُجَّدًا وَسَبَّحُوا بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَهُمْ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ السَّجْدَةُ  
 تَتَجَافَىٰ جُنُوبُهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ  
 يُنفِقُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾ فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَّا أُخْفِيَ لَهُمْ مِّن قُرَّةِ أَعْيُنٍ جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا  
 يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ أَفَمَن كَانَ مُؤْمِنًا كَمَن كَانَ فَاسِقًا لَّا يَسْتَوُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ أَمَّا الَّذِينَ  
 آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ الْمَأْوَىٰ نُزُلًا بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَأَمَّا  
 الَّذِينَ فَسَقُوا فَمَأْوَاهُمُ النَّارُ كُلَّمَا أَرَادُوا أَن يَخْرُجُوا مِنْهَا أُعِيدُوا فِيهَا وَ  
 قِيلَ لَهُمْ دُوقُوا عَذَابَ النَّارِ الَّذِي كُنتُمْ بِهِ تُكَذِّبُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَلَنذِيقَنَّاهُمْ مِّن

Allah it is<sup>6</sup> Who created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in six days, and then sat Himself upon the throne.<sup>7</sup> You have no supporter and helper besides Him nor any intercessor before Him. Will you not then take heed?<sup>8</sup> He administers the affairs of the world from the heavens to the earth, and the report of this administration ascends (to be presented) before Him in a Day whose length, according to your reckoning, is a thousand years.<sup>9</sup> He alone is the Knower<sup>10</sup> of the hidden and the open, the All-Mighty,<sup>11</sup> the Compassionate,<sup>12</sup> Who gave everything He created the best form.<sup>13</sup> He began the creation of man from clay; then spread his progeny by an extract of the nature of a despicable water;<sup>14</sup> then He shaped him<sup>15</sup> and breathed into him of His Spirit;<sup>16</sup> and He gave you the ears, and the eyes and the hearts:<sup>17</sup> yet you are seldom grateful.<sup>18</sup> 4-9

And<sup>19</sup> the people say, "When we have become dust, shall we be created again?" The fact is that they disbelieve in the meeting with their Lord.<sup>20</sup> Say to them, "The angel of death who has been appointed over you, shall seize you completely, and then to your Lord you will be made to return."<sup>21</sup> 10-11

Would<sup>22</sup> that you could see the criminals when they will be standing before their Lord with hanging heads. (Then they will be saying:) "Our Lord, we have indeed seen and heard: now send us back so that we may act righteously: we are now convinced." (In reply it will be said:) "Had We so willed We would have given every soul its guidance from the beginning,<sup>23</sup> but the Word of Mine, which I had said, has been fulfilled that I shall fill Hell with jinns and men,<sup>24</sup> all together. So, taste now the recompense of your having forgotten the meeting of this Day.<sup>25</sup> We, too, have forgotten you now! Taste the everlasting torment in consequence of your misdeeds." 12-14

Only such people believe in our Revelations, who, when these are recited to them for their admonition, fall 15-20

down prostrate and glorify their Lord with His praises, and are not proud;<sup>26</sup> who forsake their beds and invoke their Lord in fear and in hope;<sup>27</sup> and who spend out of what We have given them.<sup>28</sup> No living being knows what comfort of the eyes has been kept hidden from them as a recompense for their deeds.<sup>29</sup> Can he who is a believer be like him who is a sinner?<sup>30</sup> They cannot be alike.<sup>31</sup> For those who have believed and done good works, there will be Gardens for their dwellings,<sup>32</sup> an entertainment as a recompense for their deeds. As for those who have adopted evil, their abode shall be Hell. Whenever they try to get out of it, they will be pushed back into it and it will be said to them, "Taste now the torment of the Fire which you used to deny."

*Contd. from p. 39]*

and a stubborn person calls it a dark night. To refute him it would be enough to say: "Do you call it a night when the bright day is clearly visible all around?" If after this, one tried to bring logical arguments to prove the day to be day, it would not in any way strengthen the reply but would rather weaken it instead.

5. That is, "Just as its being the Truth and a Revelation from Allah is absolutely certain, so is its being based on wisdom and Allah's mercy for you also evident. You yourselves know that for the past many centuries no Prophet has been raised among you, and you also know that your entire nation has been involved in ignorance and moral degeneration and sheer backwardness. In a state like this if a Prophet has been raised among you to awaken you and show you the right way, you should not be surprised. This was a great need which Allah has fulfilled for the sake of your own welfare and well-being.

One should note that in Arabia the light of the true Faith was first of all spread by the Prophets Hūd and Šāliḥ, who lived in the pre-historic age. They were followed by the Prophets Abraham and Ishmael, who lived 2,500 years before the Holy Prophet. After them the last Prophet to be raised in Arabia before the Holy Prophet was the Prophet Shu'aib, who had passed about 2,000 years earlier. This is a very long period. That is why it has been said, and rightly so, that no warner had come to those people. This did not mean that no warner had ever come to them, but it meant that the people had long stood in need of a warner.



Here, another question may arise in the minds, which should be answered straightaway. One may ask: When no Prophet had come to the Arabs for hundreds of years before the Holy Prophet, what would be the basis of accountability of the people who had lived in that age of ignorance? They could not tell guidance from deviation and error. Then, if they had gone astray, how could they be held responsible for their deviation? The answer is this: The detailed knowledge of the true Faith might have been lost to those people, but even in that age of ignorance the people were not unaware that the true Faith was based on *Tauhid*, and the Prophets had never taught idol-worship to their followers. This truth was also contained in those traditions which the Arabs had received from the Prophets born in their own land, and they were also aware of this through the teaching of the Prophets Moses, David, Solomon and Jesus (peace be upon all of them) who had been born in the land adjoining their own. In the traditions of Arabia also it was well known that in the earliest times the Arabs' real religion was the Religion of Abraham and that idol-worship had been introduced among them by a person named 'Amr bin Lubayy. In spite of the prevalence of *shirk* and idol-worship, there were living in different parts of Arabia many such people, who rejected *shirk*, professed *Tauhid* and openly condemned offering of sacrifices at the shrines of idols. In the age close to the Holy Prophet's own, there had passed people like Quss bin Sā'idat-il-Iyādī, Umayyah bin Abī aṣ-Ṣalt, Suwaid bin 'Amr al-Muṣṭaliqī, Wakī' bin Salamah bin Zuhair al-Iyādī, 'Amr bin Jundub al-Juhanī, Abū Qais Ṣarmah bin Abī Anas, Zaid bin 'Amr bin Nufail, Waraqah bin Naufal, 'Uthmān bin al-Huwairith, 'Ubaidah bin Jaḥsh, 'Āmir bin az-Zarb al-'Advānī, 'Allāf bin Shahāb at-Tamīmī, Al-Mutalammis bin Umayyah al-Kinānī, Zuhair bin Ab Salmā, Khālid bin Sinān bin Ghais al-'Absī, 'Abdullah al-Qu'ā'ī and many others, who were known as *Hunafā'*. These people publicly professed *Tauhid* as the basis of the Faith and declared their dissociation from the religion of the *mushriks*. Obviously, they had got this concept from whatever had remained behind from the influence of the teaching of the Prophets. Moreover, the inscriptions belonging to the 4th and 5th centuries A.D., which have been discovered in Yaman as a result of modern archaeological research and investigation, reveal that a monotheistic religion existed there in that age, whose followers acknowledged *ar-Rahmān* (the All-Merciful) and *Rabb-us-samā' wal-ard* (Lord of the heavens and earth) alone as the One and only Deity. An inscription dated 378 A.D. has been found from the ruins of a house of worship, which says that this house of worship has been built for the worship of "God of heavens" or "Lord of heavens". In an inscription of 465 A.D. there are words which

clearly point to the doctrine of *Tauhid*. Similarly, an inscription of 512 A.D. has been discovered at Zabad, a place between the river Euphrates and Qinnasrīn, in northern Arabia, bearing the words: *Bism-ilāhu, lā 'izza illā lahū, lā shukra, illā lahū*. All this shows that before the advent of the Holy Prophet, the teachings of the former Prophets had not altogether been forgotten, and there still existed many means which at least reminded man of the truth: "Your God is only One God." (For further explanation, see E.N. 84 of Sūrah Al-Furqān).

6. Now the second objection of the *mushriks* which they raised against the Holy Prophet's message of *Tauhid*, is being dealt with. They were severely critical of him because he rejected their gods and saints and openly invited the people to the creed that there is no helper, no fulfiller of needs except Allah and no answerer of prayers, no remover of ills and no sovereign other than Him.

7. For explanation, see E.N. 41 of Al-A'rāf, E.N. 4 of Yūnus and E.N. 3 of Ar-Ra'd.

8. That is, "Your real God is the Creator of the heavens and earth. But you in your folly have set up others than Him as your helpers and supporters in the vast Kingdom of this Universe. The Creator of this whole Universe and whatever it contains is Allah. Here, everything except Himself is created, and Allah has not gone to sleep after having created and made the world go. But He Himself is the Ruler and Sovereign and Sustainer of His Kingdom. Then, how senseless you are that you have set up a few of His creatures as the masters of your destinies! If Allah does not help you, none of them has the power to help you. If Allah should seize you, none of them has the power to secure your liberty. If Allah does not permit, none of them has the power to intercede for you before Him."

9. That is, "The events of a thousand years of your history are a day's work for Allah. He entrusts His scheme of work to the "angels of destiny", who submit their report of work before Him and receive orders for the scheme of the next day (whose length according to your calculation would be a thousand years)." This thing has been expressed at two other places also in the Qur'ān, the study of which can help to understand it fully well. The disbelievers of Arabia said, "Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) claimed to be a Prophet many years ago. He has warned us again and again that if we did not accept his message and rejected his invitation, we would be seized by Allah's torment. He has been repeating this threat since many years, but the torment has not overtaken us, although we have denied and rejected him clearly over and over again. Had his threats any substance in them, we would have been seized in the torment long ago." In this connection, in Sūrah Al-Hajj

Allah says: "These people are demanding of you to hasten the chastisement. Allah will never fail to fulfil His threat, but a day with your Lord is equal to a thousand years as you reckon." (v. 47)

In Sūrah Al-Ma'ārij (vv. 1-7), it has been said: "An asker has asked for a torment, (the torment) which must befall the disbelievers. There is none to avert it. It is from that God Who is the Owner of the Steps of Ascent. The angels and the Spirit ascend to His Presence in a day whose measure is fifty thousand years. So, have patience, O Prophet, a graceful patience! They think it is far off, but We see it near at hand."

What is meant to be impressed in these verses is this: Allah's decrees are not passed and enforced in the history of mankind according to the earthly watches and calendars. When a nation is warned that if it adopted such and such an attitude in life, it would meet with such and such an end, the people would be foolish if from this they understood that the predicted consequences would follow their evil acts and deeds immediately. Not to speak of days and months and years, the occurrence of the results may even take centuries.

10. That is, "For others one thing may be open and known but countless other things hidden. Whether angels or jinns, prophets or saints, or other pious people, none of them has the knowledge of everything. It is Allah alone Who knows everything. He knows all that has passed, all that is present, and all that will happen in the future."

11. "The All-Mighty": The One Who is dominant over everything: no power in the universe can hinder Him in His Design and Will and obstruct His Command from being enforced. Everything is subdued to Him and nothing can resist Him.

12. That is, He is not tyrannous to His creatures but is Gracious and Merciful in spite of being overwhelmingly dominant and possessor of all power and authority.

13. That is, "In this limitless universe He has created countless numbers of things, but none of them is ugly and ill-shaped: everything has its own special beauty: everything is proportionate and symmetrical in its own way. Whatever He has made for a particular purpose, He has given it the most appropriate form and invested it with the most suitable qualities for it. No better and more appropriate structure could be conceived, for example, for the eye and the ear which have been made for seeing and hearing. The air has precisely the same qualities which it should have for the purpose for which it has been made, and the water precisely the same qualities for the purpose for which it has been made. No one can point out any defect or flaw in the design of anything made by God, nor can anyone offer an

alteration or modification in it.”

14. That is, “In the beginning He created man directly by His own act of Creation, and then placed in man himself such a procreative ability that similar men continue being produced by his sperm-drop. By one excellent act He gave life and consciousness and intellect to a combination of earthly elements by His creative Command so that a wonderful creation like man came into being; by another excellent act He placed in man's own organism such a wonderful machinery for the production of similar more men in the future, whose mode of functioning is highly astonishing and amazing.

This is one of those verses of the Qur'ān, which points to the direct creation of the first man. The scientists since the time of Darwin have felt greatly critical of this concept and have rejected it with contempt as un-scientific. But the fact is that they cannot get rid of the concept of the direct creation of the first germ, if not of the first man, or of the first species of animals. If creationism is not accepted, then one will have to accept the utterly absurd idea that life originated merely accidentally; whereas even the simplest form of life as found in the single cell organism is so full of complexities and subtleties that regarding it as the result of an accident would be a million times more un-scientific an idea than what the evolutionists think of creationism. And if once it is accepted that the first germ came into being by an act of direct creation, it would be no longer difficult to accept that the first member of every species of animal life was created by the Creator's own act of creation, and then its race started through different forms of procreation. If accepted this concept would explain away all those riddles and complexities which have remained unsolved in their theory of evolution in spite of all the scientific theorizing by the upholders of Darwinism. (For further explanation, see E.N. 1 of An-Nisā', E.N. 10 and 146 of Al-A'rāf, and E.N. 17 of Al-Hijr).

15. “Shaped him”: developed him from a microscopic organism into a full-fledged human being and perfected him with limbs and other organs of the body.

16. “Spirit” does not merely imply the life because of which a living thing moves, but the essential human characteristic which imbues man with consciousness and thought, discretion and judgement, discernment, and discrimination, by virtue of which he is distinguished from all other earthly creations and becomes possessor of a personality and self and worthy of Allah's vicegerency. Allah has called this “Spirit” His own either because it belongs to Him alone, and its being attributed to Himself is just like a thing's being attributed to its master, or because the attributes of knowledge, thought, consciousness, will, judgement, dis-

cretion, etc. with which man has been characterised are a reflection of the attributes of Allah. They have not arisen from any combination of matter, but from Allah Himself. Man has received knowledge from Allah's Knowledge, wisdom from Allah's Wisdom, and discretion and authority from Allah's Authority. He has not received these from a source which is without knowledge, without wisdom and without discretion and authority. (For further explanation, see E.N. 19 of Al-Hijr).

17. This is a fine way of saying something. Before the mention of "breathing into him of His spirit", man has been referred to in the third person: "He created him . . . spread his progeny . . . shaped him . . . breathed into him His spirit," for till then he was not even worthy of being addressed. Then, when the spirit had been breathed into him, he became worthy of the honour and it was said: "He gave you the ears . . . gave you the eyes . . . gave you the hearts," for after having been blessed with the Spirit, man became worthy of being addressed.

The ears and the eyes imply the instruments by which man obtains knowledge. Although the senses of taste and touch and smell are also instruments of obtaining knowledge, hearing and sight are the major and by far the more important senses. Therefore, the Qur'an has mentioned only these two at different places as the most important gifts of God to man. "The Heart" implies the mind which arranges the information obtained through the senses and draws inferences from it, and selects a possible way of action and decides to follow it.

18. That is, "The wonderful human spirit with such excellent qualities has not been given to you so that you may live like the animals in the world and plan life for yourselves as an animal would. You were given the eyes so that you may see things with insight and not that you should live like the blind people; you were given the ears so that you may hear things with attention and not that you should live like the deaf people; you were given the hearts so that you may understand the reality and adopt the right way in thought and action and not that you should expend all your capabilities for collecting the means of nourishing and sustaining your animality, or that you may devise philosophies and programmes of rebellion against your Creator. After having received these invaluable blessings from God, when you adopt polytheism and atheism, when you assume godhead yourself or become servants of other gods, when you lose yourself in sensual pleasure by serving your lusts, you in fact tell your God: "We were not worthy of these blessings: You should have made us a monkey, or a wolf, or an alligator, or a crow, instead of man."

19. After answering the disbelievers' objections about the Prophet-hood and *Tauhid* now their objection about the Hereafter, which is the third basic belief of Islam, is being dealt with. The conjunction *wāw* (and) in the beginning of the verse connects this paragraph with the foregoing theme, as if the sequence were like this: "They say: Muḥammad is not Allah's Messenger," "They say: Allah is not One and the only Deity," and "They say: we shall not be raised back to life after death."

20. The gap between the preceding and this sentence has been left for the listener to fill. The objection of the disbelievers as cited in the first sentence is so absurd that no need has been felt to refute it. Only its citation was regarded as enough to show its absurdity. For the two parts which make up the objection are both unreasonable. Their saying: "When we have become dust" is meaningless for that which is "we" can never become dust. Dust is the destiny of the body after it has become devoid of the "we". The body itself is not the "we". When alive, limbs and other parts of the body may be cut off one by one, but the "we" remains intact. No part of it is cut off with the cut off limb. And when the "we" has vacated a body, the "we" remains no longer applicable even in its remotest sense although the body still remains intact. That is why a sincere lover goes and buries the body of his beloved, because the beloved is no more in the body. He buries not the beloved but the empty body, which was once the home of his beloved. Thus, the very first premise of the disbelievers' objection is baseless. As for its second part, "Shall we be re-created?" this question containing surprise and denial would not have arisen, had the objectors considered and taken into account the meaning of the "we" and its creation. The present existence of this "we" is nothing more than this that a little of coal and iron and lime and some other earthly substances got together from here and there to combine themselves into a body, which became the home of the "we". Then, what happens when it dies? When the "we" has left the body, the constituent substances of its abode which had been gathered together from different parts of the earth go back to the same earth. The question is: He who had made this home for the "we", can He not make the same home from the same substances once again and settle the "we" in it? When this was possible before and has in actual fact existed, what can hinder its possibility and its existing as an actual fact once again? These are such things as can be understood by the application of a little of the common sense. But why doesn't man allow his mind to think on these lines? Why does he raise the meaningless objections about the life hereafter and the Hereafter? Leaving out all these details, Allah has answered this question in the

second sentence, saying: "The fact is that they disbelieve in the meeting with their Lord." That is, "The real thing is not this that the recreation of man is something odd and remote in possibility, which they cannot understand, but in fact, what prevents them from understanding this is their desire to live freely and independently in the world and commit any sin, any excess that they please and then escape scot-free from here: they should not be held accountable for anything, nor answerable for any of their misdeeds."

21. That is, "Your 'ego' will not mix in the dust, but as soon as its term of action comes to an end, God's angel of death will come and will take it out of the body and seize it completely. No part of it will be allowed to become dust with the body. It will be taken intact into custody and produced before its Lord."

Let us consider in some detail the facts which have been presented in this brief verse:

(1) It says that death does not occur as a matter of course, like the stopping of a watch suddenly when it needs re-winding, but for this purpose Allah has appointed a special angel, who comes to receive the soul precisely in the manner as an official receiver takes something into his custody. From the details which have been mentioned at other places in the Qur'an, it becomes apparent that the chief angel of death has a whole staff of the angels under him, who perform a variety of duties in connection with causing the death, seizing the soul and taking it into custody. Moreover, their treatment of a guilty soul is different from their treatment of a believing, righteous soul. (For details, see An-Nisā': 97, Al-An'ām: 93, An-Nahl: 28, Al-Wāqī'ah: 83-94).

(2) It also shows that man does not cease to exist after death, but his soul survives the body. The words of the Qur'an: "The angel of death shall seize you completely," point out the same reality. For something which does not exist cannot be seized. Seizing something and taking it into custody implies that the seized thing should be in possession of the seizer.

(3) It also shows that at the time of death that which is seized is not the biological life of man but his self, his ego, which is connoted by the words like "I" and "we" and "you". Whatever personality this ego may have developed during its life-activity in the world, the same is taken out intact as a whole, without effecting any increase or decrease in its characteristics, and the same is made to return to its Lord after death. The same personality will be given a new birth and a new

body in the Hereafter; the same will be subjected to trial; the same will be called to account; and the same will have to experience rewards or punishments.

22. This will be the scene when after returning to its Lord the human 'ego' will be standing before Him to render an account of its deeds.

23. That is, "Had it been Our will to give guidance to the people after having made them observe and experience the reality, We would not have brought you here after making you undergo this hard test in the world. We could have given you such guidance even before. But We had a different scheme for you from the very beginning. We wanted to test you by keeping the reality hidden from your eyes and senses in order to see whether you could recognize it by your intellect after perceiving its signs in the universe and in your own selves or not, whether you could take advantage of the help that We provided to you through Our Prophets and Our Books to recognize the reality or not, and whether after knowing the reality you could attain such control over your self or not that you should free yourselves from the service of your desires and lusts and believe in the reality and mend your ways and attitudes accordingly. You have failed in this test. Now setting the same test once again will be useless. If the second test is set in a condition when you remember everything that you have seen and heard here, it will be no test at all. And if, like before, you are given re-birth in the world, while you do not remember anything and the reality is kept hidden from you, and you are set the test once again as before the result will not be any different." (For further explanation, see Al-Baqarah: 210, Al-An'ām: 7-9, 27-28, 158; Yūnus: 19; Al-Mu'minūn: 99-100).

24. The allusion is to what Allah had said, addressing Satan, at the creation of Adam: In vv. 69-88 of Sūrah Ṣād the whole story of that time has been related. When Satan refused to prostrate himself before Adam and asked for respite till Resurrection in order to seduce mankind, Allah had replied: "The truth is this, and the truth only I speak, that I shall fill Hell with you and all those who follow you from among mankind."

The word *ajma'in* (all together) here does not mean that all jinns and all men will be cast into Hell, but it means that the satans and the men who follow them, will be cast into Hell all together.

25. That is, "You became so absorbed in pleasure-seeking in the world that you totally forgot that you had to meet your Lord on this Day."



26. In other words, they do not regard it as below their dignity to give up their false notions and believe in Allah's Revelations and adopt His service and obedience. Their conceit does not hinder them from accepting the truth and obeying their Lord.

27. That is, "They worship their Lord instead of enjoying sensuous pleasures at night. They are not like the world-worshippers, who seek entertainments in music and dancing, drinking and merry-making, in the night in order to get relief from the day's fatigue and labour and toil. Instead, when they are free from their day's work and duties, they devote themselves to the adoration of their Lord, spend their nights in His remembrance, tremble out of fear of Him, and pin all their hopes on Him."

"Who forsake their beds" does not mean that they do not sleep at all at night, but that they spend a part of the night in Allah's worship.

28. In the original, *rizq*: lawful provisions. Unlawful provisions have nowhere been called *rizq* by Allah. The verse therefore means: They spend from whatever little or much of pure provisions We have given them; they do not over-spend and do not grab unlawful wealth in order to meet their expenses.

29. Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhi and Imām Aḥmad have in different ways cited on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abī Hurairah that the Holy Prophet said: "Allah says: I have got ready for My righteous servants that which has neither been seen by the eye, nor heard by the ear, nor ever conceived by any man." The same thing has been reported with a little difference in wording by Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa'īd Khudrī, Mughīrah bin Shu'bah and Sahl bin Sa'd as-Sā'idī from the Holy Prophet and related with authentic links by Muslim, Aḥmad, Ibn Jarīr and Tirmidhi.

30. Here *mu'min* (believer) and *fāsiq* (sinner) have been used as two contrasting terms. *Mu'min* is he who believes in Allah as his Lord and the One and only Deity and adopts obedience of the Law which Allah has sent down through His Prophets. Contrary to this, *fāsiq* is he who adopts the attitude of *fiṣq* (disobedience, rebellion, independence and obedience to others than Allah).

31. That is, "They can neither have the same way of thinking and life in the world nor can they be treated alike by God in the Hereafter."

32. That is, "The Gardens will not merely be a means of entertainment for them, but the same will be their dwelling-places in which they will live for ever."

الْعَذَابِ الْأَدْنَىٰ دُونَ الْعَذَابِ الْأَكْبَرِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ  
 مِمَّنْ ذُكِّرَ بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِ ثُمَّ أَعْرَضَ عَنْهَا إِنَّا مِنَ الْمُجْرِمِينَ مُنتَقِمُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾  
 وَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ فَلَا تَكُنْ فِي مِرْيَةٍ مِّنْ لِّقَائِهِ وَجَعَلْنَاهُ هُدًى  
 لِّبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ آيَةً يَّهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا لَمَّا صَبَرُوا وَكَانُوا  
 بِآيَاتِنَا يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ يَفْصِلُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ  
 يَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾ أَوَلَمْ يَهْدِ لَهُمْ كَمَا أَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِنَ الْقُرُونِ يَمْشُونَ  
 فِي مَسْكِنِهِمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ أَفَلَا يَسْمَعُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾ أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا نَسُوقُ  
 الْمَاءَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ الْجُرُزِ فَنُخْرِجُ بِهِ زَرْعًا تَأْكُلُ مِنْهُ أَنْعَامُهُمْ وَأَنْفُسُهُمْ  
 أَفَلَا يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَىٰ هَذَا الْفَتْحُ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾ قُلْ  
 يَوْمَ الْفَتْحِ لَا يَنْفَعُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِيمَانُهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يُنظَرُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾ فَأَعْرِضْ  
 عَنْهُمْ وَانْتَظِرِ إِنَّهُمْ مُنْتَظَرُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

21-22

Even in this world We shall make them taste (one or the other) lesser torment before that greater torment; maybe they desist (from their rebellious attitude).<sup>33</sup> And who could be more wicked than the one who is admonished by the Signs of his Lord and he spurns them?<sup>34</sup> We shall certainly take vengeance on such criminals.

23-25

Before this We gave Moses the Book. You should, therefore, have no doubt on receiving the same.<sup>35</sup> We had made that Book a Guidance for the children of Israel;<sup>36</sup> and when they showed patience and continued to have faith in Our Revelations, We raised among them such leaders as guided (the people) by Our Command.<sup>37</sup> Surely on the Day of Resurrection your Lord alone will decide those things about which (the Israelites) have been differing among themselves.<sup>38</sup>

And have they found no guidance (in the historical events) that before them We have destroyed many a nation in whose dwelling-places they move about?<sup>39</sup> There are many Signs in this. Do they not hear? And have they never seen how We cause the water to flow to a barren land and therefrom bring forth crops of which their animals and they themselves eat? Do they not see anything?<sup>40</sup> They ask, "When will this judgement take place if you are truthful?"<sup>41</sup> Tell them, "To believe on the Day of Judgement will not in any way profit those who have disbelieved, nor will they get any respite after that."<sup>42</sup> Well, leave them to themselves, and wait: they too are waiting.

26-30

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33. "The greater torment" is the torment of the Hereafter, which will be imposed on the guilty ones in consequence of disbelief and disobedience. "The lesser torment", in contrast, implies those calamities which afflict man even in this world, e.g., diseases in the life of individuals, deaths of the near and dear ones, serious accidents, losses, failures, etc. and storms, earthquakes, floods, epidemics, famines, riots, wars and many other disasters, in collective life, which affect hundreds of thousands of the people simultaneously. The reason given for sending these calamities is that the people should take heed even before they are involved in the "greater torment" and give up the attitude and way of life in consequence of which they will have to suffer the greater torment ultimately. In other words, it means this: Allah has not kept man in perfect security in the world so that he may live in full peace, and become involved in the misunderstanding that there is no power above him, which can cause him harm. But Allah has so arranged things that He sends disasters and calamities on individuals as well as on nations and countries from time to time, which give man the feeling that he is helpless and that there is above him an All-Powerful Sovereign Who is ruling His universal Kingdom. These calamities remind each individual and group and nation that there is another Power above him Who is controlling their destinies. Everything has not been placed at man's disposal. The real Power is in the hand of the Sovereign. When a calamity from Him descends on man, you can neither avert it by any artifice, nor can escape from it by invoking a jinn, or a spirit, or a god or goddess, or a prophet or saint. Considered in this light, these calamities are not mere calamities but warnings of God, which are sent to make man conscious of the reality and to remove his misunderstandings. If

man learns a lesson from these and corrects his belief and conduct here in the world, he will not have to face the greater torment of God in the Hereafter.

34. "The Signs of his Lord" include all kinds of the Signs. A perusal of all the Qur'ānic verses in this regard shows that these Signs are of the following six kinds:

(1) The Signs which are found in everything from the earth to the heavens and in the system of the universe as a whole.

(2) The Signs which are found in man's own creation and in his constitution and body.

(3) The Signs which are found in man's intuition, his unconscious and subconscious mind and in his moral concepts.

(4) The Signs which are found in the continuous experience of human history.

(5) The Signs which are found in the coming down of the earthly and heavenly calamities on man.

(6) And, over and above all these, the Revelations which Allah sent through His Prophets so that man may be made conscious in a rational way of those realities, which are pointed out by all the above-mentioned Signs.

All these Signs proclaim consistently and clearly: "O man, you are neither without God, nor the servant of many gods, but your God is only One God: no other way of life is correct for you except the way of His service and obedience. You have not been left to live a free and independent and irresponsible life in this world, but you have to appear before your God and render an account of your deeds after your life-activity here has come to an end, and be rewarded or punished accordingly. Therefore, it is in your own interest that you should follow the guidance which your God has sent through His Prophets and His Books for your instruction and desist from an independent way of life." Now, obviously, the man who has been warned in so many different ways, for whose admonition countless different Signs have been provided, and who has been blessed with the eyes to see and the ears to hear and the minds to think, and yet he closes his eyes to all these Signs, and closes his ears to the admonitions of his well-wishers, and uses his mind also for inventing stupid and blind philosophies only can be a wretched and wicked person. He only deserves to be given full punishment for rebellion when he appears before his God after the expiry of the period of test in the world.

35. The address apparently is to the Holy Prophet, but the real addressees are the people who doubted his Prophethood and the revelation of the Divine Book to him. From here the discourse turns to the

same theme that was mentioned in the beginning of the Sūrah (vv. 2-3). The disbelievers of Makkah were saying: "No book has come down to Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) from Allah. He has himself forged it, but claims that it has been sent down by Allah." The first answer to this was given in the initial verses. This is the second answer. The first thing said in this regard is: "O Prophet, these ignorant people regard it as impossible that a Book should be sent down to you, and want that every other person also should at least be involved in suspicion about it even if he does not reject it altogether. But the revelation of a Book to a servant from Allah is not a novel and new event, which might have occurred for the first time today in human history. Before this Books have been sent down to several Prophets, the most well-known among these being the Book which was sent down to the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him). A Book of the same nature has been sent down to you now. Therefore, there is nothing odd and strange in this, which may cause doubts in the minds of the people."

36. That is, "That Book was made a means of guidance for the children of Israel, and this Book, likewise, has been sent down for your guidance." As has already been elucidated in verse 3, the full meaning of this verse can be understood only if one keeps in view the historical background. History bears evidence, and the disbelievers of Makkah also were not unaware, that the children of Israel had been passing miserable lives for centuries in Egypt. At such a juncture, Allah raised the Prophet Moses among them, and delivered them from bondage. Then He sent down the Book among them, because of which the same very suppressed and subdued nation got guidance and became a prominent nation in the world. Alluding to this historical background, the Arabs are being told: "Just as that Book was sent for the guidance of the Israelites, so has this Book been sent for your guidance."

37. That is, "Whatever progress the children of Israel made and whatever heights they attained by that Book, was not simply due to the reason that a Book had been sent among them. It was not an amulet that they might have hung around their necks and they might have started ascending the steps of glory under its good and protective influence. But the glory was the direct result of their firm faith in the Revelations of Allah, and of the patience and perserverance that they showed in following the Divine Commandments. Among the Israelites themselves also leadership fell to the lot of only those who were true believers of the Book of Allah and were not tempted at all by the greed of worldly gains and enjoyments. When in their love of the truth they stood firm against every danger, endured every loss and affliction, and exerted their

utmost against every hostile force, from the lusts of their own selves to the external enemies of the true Faith, then only did they become the leaders of the world. The object is to warn the disbelievers of Arabia that just as the coming of the Book of Allah had decided the destinies of the children of Israel, so will this Book decide the destinies among you. Now only those people will become the leaders, who will believe in it and follow the Truth presented by it patiently and resolutely. Those who turn away from it are destined to end up in failure and wretchedness."

38 The allusion is to the differences and schisms in which the children of Israel were involved after they became deprived of the faith and belief and gave up obedience of their righteous leaders and were given to the workings of the world. One result of this is obvious and before the wave would they suffer from disgrace and infamy and misfortune. The other result is that which is not known to the world: it will appear on the Day of Resurrection.

39 This is to have they not learn any lesson from this continuous succession of misery that to whoever nation a Messenger came, the fortune of its nation became dependent upon the attitude it adopted towards the Messenger. The rejected as Messengers, it could not escape its fate. The only people to escape were those who believed in the Messenger. There was no difference between the joy of waiting for the Messenger.

40 Copying the content of the verses becomes obvious that this thing has been repeated here for the sake of showing its importance in the Qur'an. It is generally found in the Qur'an that in the matter of a nation's fortune. This is the case with a single allusion to the fact that a nation's fortune is determined by its attitude towards the Messenger. The same thing is repeated here in the case with the message of Allah to the Arabian people. People think that it is not enough to say that the people will be judged by the Qur'an.

41 This is to show that the people will be judged by the Qur'an and the people will be judged by the Qur'an. The people will be judged by the Qur'an and the people will be judged by the Qur'an.

42 This is to show that the people will be judged by the Qur'an and the people will be judged by the Qur'an. The people will be judged by the Qur'an and the people will be judged by the Qur'an.

XXXIII

AL-AHZĀB الْأَحْزَاب





بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## AL-AHZĀB الْأَحْزَاب

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Name**

The Sūrah derives its name *Al-Aḥzāb* from verse 20.

#### **Period of Revelation**

The Sūrah discusses three important events which are: the Battle of the Trench (or *Al-Aḥzāb*: the Clans), which took place in Shawwāl, A.H. 5; the raid on Banī Quraizah, which was made in Dhil-Qa'dah, A.H. 5; and the Holy Prophet's marriage with Ḥaḍrat Zainab, which also was contracted in Dhil-Qa'dah, A.H. 5. These historical events accurately determine the period of the revelation of this Sūrah.

#### **Historical Background**

The Islamic army's setback in the Battle of Uḥud (A.H. 3) that resulted from the error of the archers appointed by the Holy Prophet so boosted up the morale of the Arab pagans and the Jews and the hypocrites that they started entertaining the hope that they would soon be able to exterminate Islam and the Muslims completely. Their high state of morale can be judged from the events that occurred in the first year after Uḥud. Hardly two months had passed when the tribe of Banī Asad of Najd began to make preparations for a raid on Madīnah, and the Holy Prophet had to despatch an expedition under Abū Salamah

to counteract them. In Ṣafar A.H. 4 some people of the tribes of 'Aḍal and Qārah asked the Holy Prophet to send some men to instruct them in Islam. Accordingly six of the Companions were allowed to accompany them for the purpose. But when they reached Rajī' (a place between Rābigh and Jeddah), they summoned Hudhail against them, who killed four of the Companions, and took the other two (Ḥaḍrat Khubaib bin 'Adī and Ḥaḍrat Zaid bin ad-Dathinnah) to Makkah and sold them to the enemy. Then in the same month of Ṣafar, on the request of a chief of Banī 'Āmir, the Holy Prophet sent another deputation of 40 (according to others, 70) preachers, consisting of the Anṣār young men, to Najd. But they were also betrayed. The people of 'Uṣayyah and Ri'l and Dhakwān, tribes of Banī Sulaim, surrounded them suddenly at Bi'r Ma'ūnah and slew all of them. Meanwhile the Jewish tribe of Banī an-Naḍīr of Madīnah, getting encouragement, continued to commit breaches of the treaties; so much so that in Rabī'ul Awwal, A.H. 4, they plotted against the life of the Holy Prophet himself. Then in Jamādī al-Ūlā, A.H. 4, Banī Tha'lbah and Banī Muḥārib, the two tribes of Banī Ghaṭafān, started making preparations to attack Madīnah and the Holy Prophet had to go to punish them. Thus, after their setback at Uḥud, the Muslims went on encountering repercussions continuously for seven to eight months.

However, it was the Holy Prophet's determination and wisdom and his great Companions' spirit of sacrifice that changed these adverse conditions completely within a short span of time. The economic boycott by the Arabs had made life hard for the people of Madīnah. All the polytheistic tribes around Madīnah were becoming rebellious. Inside Madīnah itself the Jews and the hypocrites were bent upon mischief. But the successive steps taken by a handful of the sincere Muslims, under the leadership of the Holy Prophet, not only restored the image of strength of Islam in Arabia but also increased it manifold.

### Raids preceding the Battle of the Trench

The first such step was taken immediately after the Battle of Uḥud. The very next day when quite a large number of Muslims lay wounded and the martyrdom of the near and dear ones was being mourned in many houses, and the Holy Prophet himself was injured and sad at the martyrdom of his uncle, Ḥaḍrat Ḥamzah, he called out to the devoted servants of Islam to accompany him in pursuit of the pagans so as to deter them from returning and attacking Madīnah again. The Holy Prophet's assessment was absolutely correct. He knew that, although the Quraish had retreated without taking any advantage of their almost complete victory, they would certainly regret their folly when they would halt and consider the whole matter coolly on the way, and would return to attack Madīnah again. Therefore, he decided to go in pursuit of them, and 630 of the Muslims at once volunteered to accompany him. When they reached Ḥamrā' al-Asad on the way to Makkah and camped there for three days, the Holy Prophet came to know through a sympathetic non-Muslim that Abū Sufyān had stayed at Ar-Rauḥā', 36 miles short of Madīnah, with an army 2,978 strong: they were regretting their error and were, in fact, planning to return and attack Madīnah once again. But when they heard that the Holy Prophet was coming in pursuit of them with an army, they lost heart and gave up their plan. Thus, not only were the Quraish deterred by this action but the other enemies living around Madīnah also realized that the Muslims were being led by a person, who was highly well-informed, wise and resolute, and that the Muslims were ever ready to lay down their lives at his command. (For further details, see Introduction to Sūrah Āl-i 'Imrān and E.N. 122 thereof).

Then as soon as the Banī Asad started making preparations for a raid on Madīnah, the Holy Prophet's secret agents gave him timely information about their intention. Thus, before they could come in force to attack Madīnah,

he sent an army 150 strong, under Ḥaḍrat Abū Salamah (the first husband of Ḥaḍrat Umm Salamah) to punish them. They took Banī Asad by surprise, who fled in panic leaving all their possessions behind, which fell into the Muslim hands.

After this came the turn of the Banī an-Naḍīr. The day they plotted against the life of the Holy Prophet, and the secret was disclosed, the Holy Prophet ordered them to leave Madīnah within ten days and warned that anyone who remained behind after that would be put to death. 'Abdullah bin Ubayy, the chief of the hypocrites of Madīnah, encouraged them to defy the order and refuse to leave Madīnah. He even promised to help them with 2,000 men, and assured them that the Banī Ghaṭafān from Najd also would come to their aid. Accordingly, the Banī an-Naḍīr sent word that they would not leave no matter what the Holy Prophet might do.

As soon as the time limit of ten days came to an end, the Holy Prophet laid siege to their quarters, but none of their supporters had the courage to come to their rescue. At last, they surrendered on condition that every three of them would be allowed to load a camel with whatever they could carry and go away leaving the rest of their possessions behind. Thus, the whole suburbs of the city which were inhabited by the Banī an-Naḍīr, and their gardens and their fortresses and other properties fell to the Muslims, and the people of this treacherous tribe became scattered in Khaiber, Wād il-Qurā' and Syria.

Then the Holy Prophet turned his attention to the Banī Ghaṭafān, who were preparing for a war against Madīnah. He took 400 of the Muslims and overtook them at Dhāt ar-Riqā'. They were so taken by surprise that they fled their houses without a struggle and took refuge in the mountains.

After this in Sha'bān A.H. 4, the Holy Prophet went forth to Badr to fight Abū Sufyān. At the end of the

Battle of Uḥud, he had challenged the Holy Prophet and the Muslims, saying, "We shall again meet you in combat at Badr next year." In reply the Holy Prophet announced through a Companion: "All right: we accept your challenge." Accordingly, at the appointed time he reached Badr with 1,500 of the Muslims. From the other side, Abū Sufyān left Makkah with an army of 2,000 men, but could not have the courage to march beyond Marr-aḏ-Zahrān (modern, Wādī Fāṭimah). The Holy Prophet waited for him at Badr for eight days; the Muslims during these days did profitable business with a trading party. This incident helped more than restore the image of strength of the Muslims that had been tarnished at Uḥud. It also made the whole of Arabia realize that the Quraish alone could no longer resist Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings). (Please also refer to E.N. 124 of Āl-i 'Imrān).

This image and position of the Muslims was further strengthened by another event. Dūmat al-Jandal (modern, Al-Jauf) was an important place at the border between Arabia and Syria. When the caravans of the Arabs, trading between 'Irāq in the south and Syria and Egypt in the north, passed that way, they were harassed and looted by the natives. In Rabī' al-Awwal, A.H. 5, the Holy Prophet himself went to punish them with an army of 1,000 men. They could not muster up courage to come out and fight him and, therefore, fled the place. This caused the whole of northern Arabia to dread the power of Islam, and the tribes began to realize that the great power emerging from Al-Madīnah was formidable and could no longer be resisted by one or a few of the tribes.

### **The Battle of the Trench**

Such were the conditions when the Battle of the Trench took place. It was in fact a combined raid by many of the Arab tribes, who wanted to crush the power of Madīnah. It had been instigated by the leaders of the

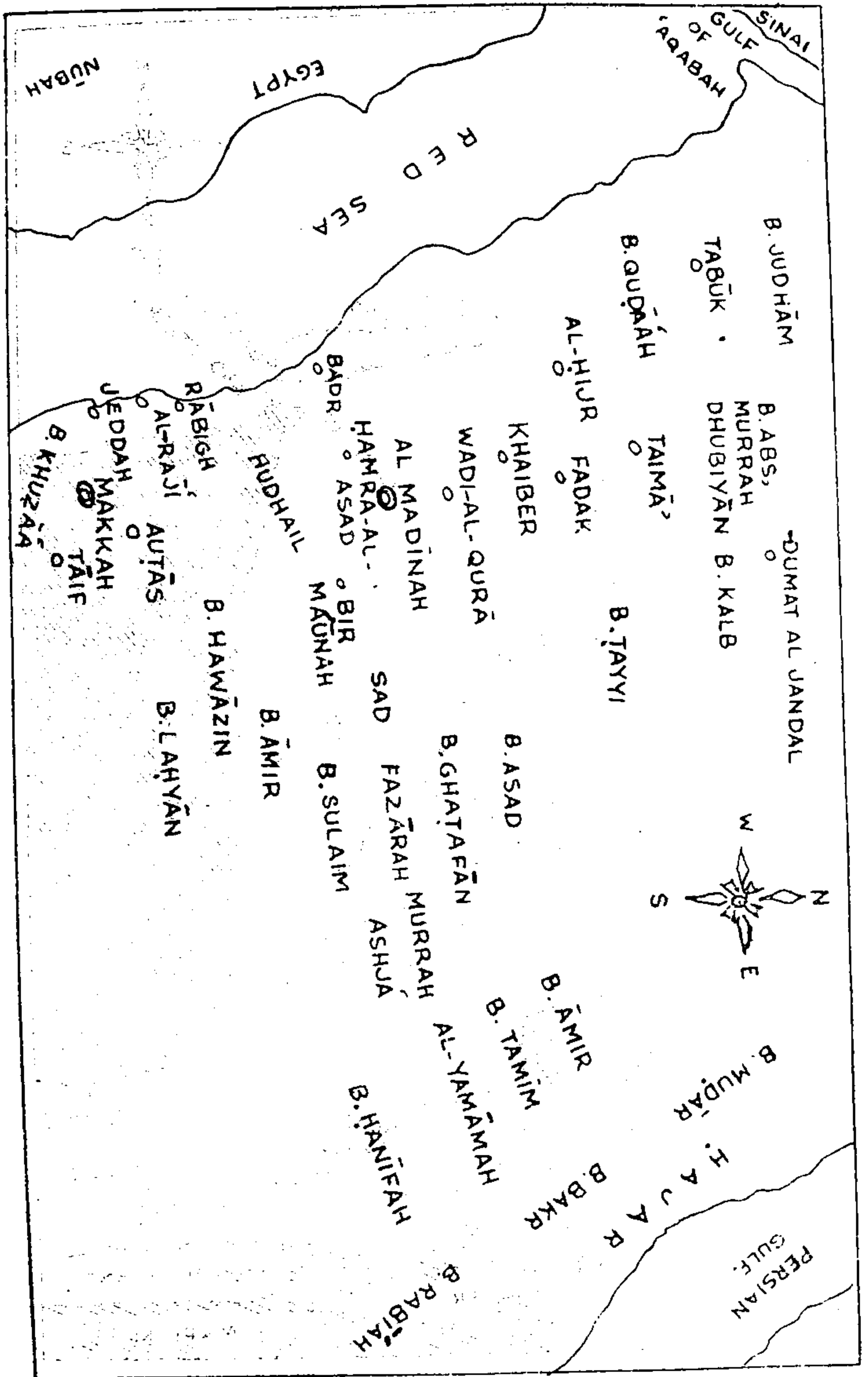
Banī an-Naḍīr, who had settled in Khaiber after their banishment from Madīnah. They went round to the Quraish and Ghatafān and Hudhail and many other tribes and induced them to gather all their forces together and attack Madīnah jointly. Thus, in Shawwāl, A.H. 5, an unprecedentedly large army of the Arab tribes marched against the small city of Madīnah. From the north came Jews of Banī an-Naḍīr and Banī Qainuqā', who after their banishment from Madīnah, had settled in Khaiber and Wād il-Qura'. From the east advanced the tribes of Ghatafān—Banī Sulaim, Fazārah, Murrah, Ashja', Sa'd, Asad, etc.—and from the south the Quraish, along with a large force of their allies. Together they numbered from ten to twelve thousand men.

Had it been a sudden attack, it would have been disastrous. But the Holy Prophet was not unaware of this in Madīnah. His intelligence men and the sympathisers of the Islamic movement and the people influenced by it were present in every tribe, who kept him informed of the enemy's movements.<sup>1</sup> Even before the enemy could reach his city, he got a trench dug out on the north-west of Madīnah in six days, and having the Mount Sal' at their back, took up a defensive position with 3,000 men in the protection of the Trench. To the south of Madīnah there were many gardens (even now there are) so that it could not be attacked from that side. To the east there are lava rocks which are impassable for a large army. The same is the case with the south-western side. The attack, therefore, could be made only from the eastern and western sides of the Uhud, which the Holy Prophet had secured by digging a trench. The disbelievers were not at all aware that they would have to counter the trench outside Madīnah. This

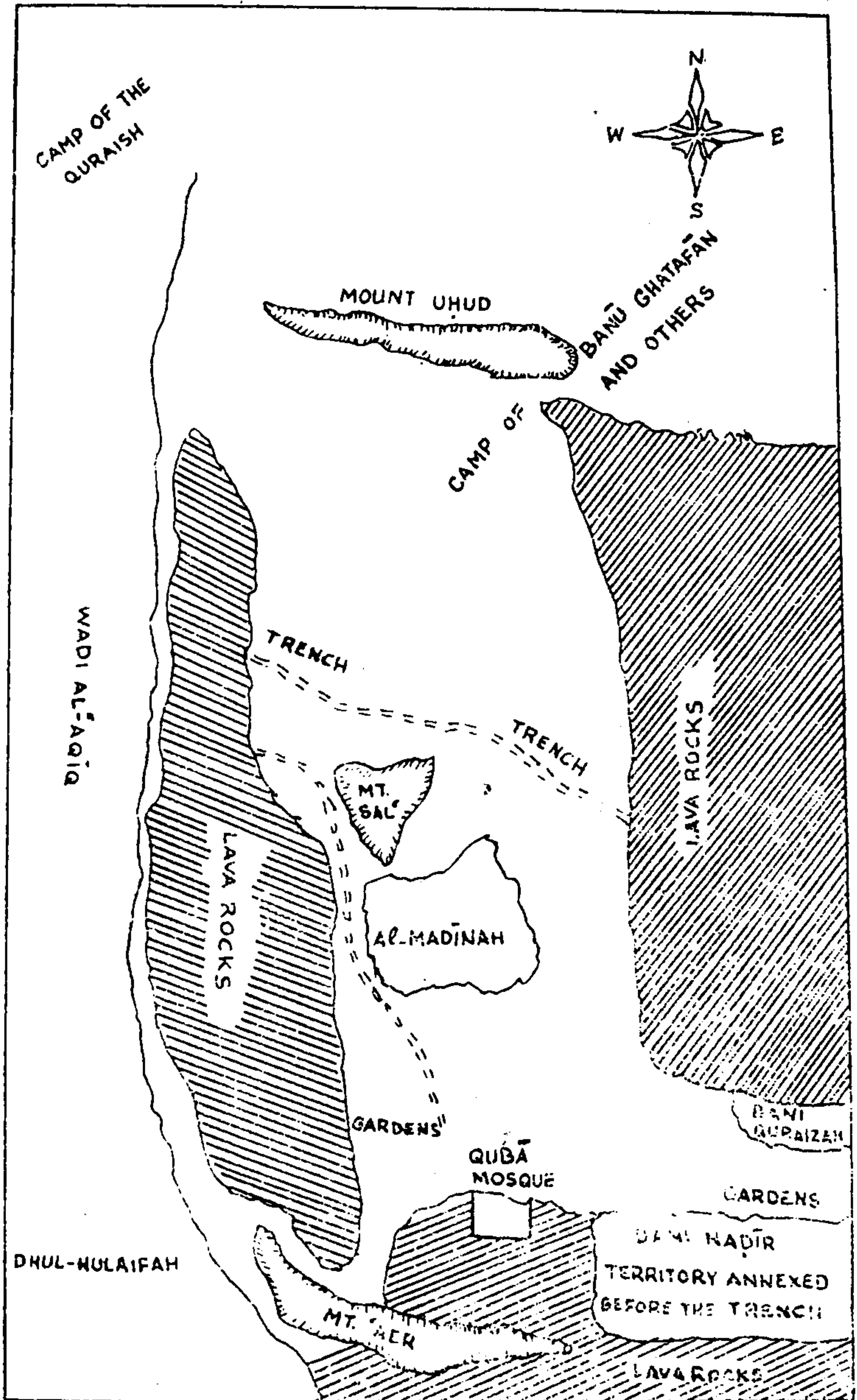
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1. This is an important factor of the superiority of an ideological movement over nationalist hordes, who only rely on the support of the individuals of their own tribes and nations. An ideological movement, on the other hand, advances in every direction, and draws its supporters even from among the nationalist hordes themselves.

# ARABIAN TRIBES IN HOLY PROPHET'S TIME



# BATTLEFIELD OF THE TRENCH





kind of a defensive stratagem was unknown to the Arabs. Thus, they had to lay a long siege in winter for which they had not come prepared.

After this, only one alternative remained with the disbelievers: to incite the Jewish tribe of Banī Quraizah, who inhabited the south-eastern part of the city, to rebellion. As the Muslims had entered a treaty with them that in case of an attack on Madīnah they would defend the city along with them, the Muslims had made no defensive arrangement there and had even sent their families to take shelter in the forts situated on that side. The invaders perceived this weakness of the Islamic defenses. They sent Ḥuyayy bin Akḥṭab, the Jewish leader of the Banī an-Naḍīr, to the Bani Quraizah so as to induce them to break the treaty and join the war. In the beginning, they refused to oblige and said that they had a treaty with Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), who had faithfully abided by it and given them no cause for complaint. But when Ibn Akḥṭab said to them, "Look, I have summoned the united force of entire Arabia against him: this is a perfect opportunity to get rid of him. If you lose it, you will never have another opportunity," the anti-Islamic Jewish mind prevailed over every moral consideration and the Banī Quraizah were persuaded to break the treaty.

The Holy Prophet received news of this. He at once told Sa'd bin 'Ubādah, Sa'd bin Mu'ādh, 'Abdullah bin Rawāhah and Khawwāt bin Jubair, chiefs of the Anṣār, to go and find out the truth. He advised them that if they found Banī Quraizah still loyal to the treaty, they should return and say so openly before the Muslim army; however, if they found that they were bent upon treachery they should only inform him so that the common Muslims would not be disheartened. On reaching there the Companions found the Banī Quraizah fully bent on mischief. They told the Companions openly, "There is no agreement and no

treaty between us and Muhammad." At this they returned to the Islamic army and submitted their report to the Holy Prophet, saying, "Aḍal and Qārah." That is, "The Quraizah are bent upon doing what the 'Aḍal and Qārah had done with the preachers of Islam at Rajī."

This news spread among the Muslims and caused great consternation among them, for they had been encircled and their city had been endangered on the side where there existed no defensive arrangement and where they had also sent their families to take shelter in the forts. This further increased the activities of the hypocrites and they started making psychological attacks to break the morale of the Muslims. One said, "How strange! We were being foretold that the lands of Caesar and Chosroes would fall to us, but here we are that not one of us can go out even to relieve himself." Another one asked for permission to leave his post at the Trench so that he could go and protect his own house which was in danger. Another one started making secret propaganda to the effect: "Settle your affair with the invaders yourselves and hand over Muhammad to them." This was a highly critical hour of trial, which exposed every person who harboured any hypocrisy in his heart. Only the true and sincere Muslims remained firm and steadfast in their resolve and devotion.

The Holy Prophet at that critical moment initiated peace negotiations with the Banī Ghatafān and tried to persuade them to accept one-third of the fruit-harvest of Madīnah and withdraw. But when he asked Sa'd bin 'Uḇādah and Sa'd bin Mu'ādh, chiefs of the Anṣār, for their opinion about the conditions of peace, they said, "O Messenger of Allah: Is it your personal wish that we should agree on these conditions, or is it Allah's Command that we have no option but to accept it? Or, are you giving this proposal only in order to save us from the enemy?" The Holy Prophet replied, "I am proposing this only to save you: I see that the whole of Arabia has formed

a united front against you. I want to divide the enemy." At this the two chiefs protested, saying, "Sir, if you want to conclude this pact for our sake, kindly forget it. These tribes could not subdue us under tribute when we were polytheists. Now that we have the honour of believing in Allah and His Messenger, will they make us sink to this depth of ignominy? The sword now shall be the arbiter till Allah passes His judgement between them and us." With these words they tore up the draft for the treaty which had not yet been signed.

In the meantime Nu'aim bin Mas'ūd, a member of the Ashja' branch of the Ghaṭafān tribe, became a Muslim and came before the Holy Prophet and submitted: "No one as yet knows that I have embraced Islam: You can take from me whatever service you please." The Holy Prophet replied: "Go and sow the seeds of discord among the enemy."<sup>1</sup> So, first of all, Nu'aim went to the Quraizah with whom he was on friendly terms, and said to them, "The Quraish and the Ghaṭafān can become wearied of the siege and go back, and they will lose nothing, but you have to live here with the Muslims. Just consider what will be your position if the matter turns that way. Therefore, I would advise you not to join the enemy until the outsiders should send some of their prominent men as hostages to you." This had the desired effect upon the Banī Quraizah and they decided to demand hostages from the united front of the tribes. Then he went to the chiefs of the Quraish and the Ghaṭafān and said to them, "The Banī Quraizah seem to be slack and irresolute. May be they demand some men as hostage from you, and then hand them over to Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) to settle their affair with him. Therefore, be very firm and cautious in your dealing with them." This made the leaders of the united front suspicious of Banī Quraizah

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1. On this occasion the Holy Prophet had said: "It is permissible to practise deception in war."

and they sent them a message, saying, "We are tired of the long siege; let there be a decisive battle; let us, therefore, make a general assault simultaneously from both the sides." The Banī Quraizah sent back the word, saying, "We cannot afford to join the war unless you hand over some of your prominent men to us as hostages." The leaders of the united front became convinced that what Nu'aim had said was true. They refused to send hostages. And the Banī Quraizah, on the other side, also felt that Nu'aim had given them the correct counsel. Thus, the strategy worked: it divided the enemy against itself.

The siege was prolonged for more than 25 days. It was winter. The supply of food and water and forage was becoming more and more scarce everyday and division in the camp was also a great strain on the state of morale of the besiegers. Then, suddenly one night a severe windstorm accompanied by thunder and lightning hit the camp. It added to the cold and darkness. The wind overthrew the tents and put the enemy in disarray. They could not stand this severe blow of nature. They left the battleground even during the night and returned to their homes. When the Muslims awoke in the morning, there was not a single enemy soldier to be seen on the battlefield. The Holy Prophet, finding the battlefield completely empty, said: "The Quraish will never be able to attack you after this: now you will take the offensive." This was a correct assessment of the situation. Not only the Quraish but the united front of all the enemy tribes had made their final assault against Islam and had failed. Now they could no longer dare invade Madīnah; now the Muslims were on the offensive.

### **Raid on Banī Quraizah**

When the Holy Prophet returned from the Trench, Gabriel came to him in the early afternoon with the Divine Command that the Muslims should not lay aside the arms yet but should deal with the Banī Quraizah as well. On

receipt of this Command, the Holy Prophet got announced: "Everyone who is steadfast in obedience should not offer his 'Aṣr Prayer till he reaches the locality of the Banī Quraizah." Immediately after this, he despatched Ḥaḍrat 'Ali with a contingent of soldiers as vanguard towards the Quraizah. When they reached there, the Jews climbed on to their roof tops and started hurling abuses on the Holy Prophet and the Muslims, but their invectives could not save them from the consequences of their treachery. They had committed breach of the treaty right at the most critical moment of the war, joined hands with the invaders and endangered the entire population of Madīnah. When they saw the contingent of Ḥaḍrat 'Ali, they thought that they had come only to overawe them. But when the whole Islamic army arrived under the command of the Holy Prophet himself and laid siege to their quarters, they were very frightened. They could not stand the severity of the siege for more than two or three weeks. At last, they surrendered themselves to the Holy Prophet on the condition that they would accept whatever decision Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin Mu'ādh, the chief of the Aus, would give. They had accepted Ḥaḍrat Sa'd as their judge because in the pre-Islamic days the Aus and the Quraizah had been confederates and they hoped that in view of the past ties he would help them quit Madīnah as had happened in the case of the Banī Qainuqā' and the Banī an-Naḍīr before. The people of the Aus themselves wished that Ḥaḍrat Sa'd treat their previous allies leniently. But Ḥaḍrat Sa'd had just experienced and seen how the two Jewish tribes who had been allowed to leave Madīnah previously had instigated the other tribes living around Madīnah and summoned the united front of ten to twelve thousand men against the Muslims. He was also aware how treacherously this last Jewish tribe had behaved right on the occasion when the city was under attack from outside and threatened the safety of the whole of its population. Therefore, he decreed

that all the male members of the Quraizah should be put to death, their women and children taken prisoners, and their properties distributed among the Muslims. The sentence was carried out duly. When the Muslims entered their strongholds they found that the treacherous people had collected 1,500 swords, 300 coats of mail, 2,000 spears and 1,500 shields in order to join the war. If Allah's succour had not reached the Muslims, all this military equipment would have been used to attack Madīnah from the rear right at the time when the polytheists were making preparations for a general assault on the Muslims after crossing the Trench. After this disclosure there remained no doubt that the decision of Ḥadrat Sa'd concerning those people was absolutely correct.

### **Social Reforms**

Though the period of two years between the Battles of Uhud and the Trench was a period of disturbance and turmoil and the Holy Prophet and his Companions could hardly relax in peace and security even for a day, the work of reform as a whole and the reconstruction of the Muslim society continued uninterrupted. This was the time when the Islamic laws pertaining to marriage and divorce were complemented; the law of inheritance was introduced, drinking and gambling were prohibited, and the new laws and regulations concerning many other aspects of the economic and social life were enforced.

In this connection, an important thing that needed to be reformed was the question of the adoption of a son. Whoever was adopted by the Arabs as a son was regarded as one of their own offspring: he got share in inheritance; he was treated like a real son and real brother by the adopted mother and the adopted sister; he could not marry the daughter of his adopted father and his widow after his death. And the same was the case if the adopted son died or divorced a wife. The adopted father regarded

the woman as his real daughter-in-law. This custom clashed in every detail with the laws of marriage and divorce and inheritance enjoined by Allah in Sūrahs Al-Baqarah and An-Nisā'. It made a person who could get no share in inheritance entitled to it at the expense of those who were really entitled to it. It prohibited marriage between the men and the women who could contract marriage perfectly lawfully. And, above all, it helped spread the immoralities which the Islamic Law wanted to eradicate. For a real mother and a real sister and a real daughter cannot be like the adopted mother and the adopted sister and the adopted daughter, however one may try to sanctify the adopted relations as a custom. When the artificial relations endued with customary sanctity are allowed to mix freely like the real relations, it cannot but produce evil results. That is why the Islamic law of marriage and divorce, the law of inheritance and the law of the prohibition of adultery required that the concept and custom of regarding the adopted son as the real son should be eradicated completely.

This concept, however, could not be rooted out by merely passing a legal order, saying, "The adopted son is not the real son." The centuries old prejudices and superstitions cannot be changed by mere word of mouth. Even if the people had accepted the command that these relations were not the real relations, they would still have looked upon marriage between the adopted mother and the adopted son, the adopted brother and the sister, the adopted father and the daughter, and the adopted father-in-law and the daughter-in-law odious and detestable. Moreover, there would still exist some freedom of mixing together freely. Therefore, it was inevitable that the custom should be eradicated practically, and through the Holy Prophet himself. For no Muslim could ever conceive that a thing done by the Holy Prophet himself, and done by him under Allah's Command, could be detestable.

Therefore, a little before the Battle of the Trench, the Holy Prophet was inspired by Allah that he should marry the divorced wife of his adopted son, Zaid bin Hārithah (may Allah be pleased with him), and he acted on this Command during the siege of the Banī Quraizah. (The delay probably was caused for the reason that the prescribed waiting period had not yet ended, and in the meantime the Holy Prophet had to become busy in the preparation for war).

### **Storm of Propaganda at the Marriage of Ḥaḍrat Zainab**

As soon as the marriage was contracted, there arose a storm of propaganda against the Holy Prophet. The polytheists, the hypocrites and the Jews, all were burning with jealousy at his triumphs which followed one after the other. The way they had been humbled within two years after Uhud, in the Battle of the Trench, and in the affair of the Quraizah, had made them sore at heart. They had also lost hope that they could ever subdue him on the battlefield. Therefore, they seized the question of this marriage as a god-send for themselves and thought they would put an end to his moral superiority, which was the real secret of his power and success. Therefore, stories were concocted that Muḥammad, God forbid, had fallen in love with his daughter-in-law, and when the son had come to know of this, he divorced his wife, and the father married his daughter-in-law. The propaganda, however, was absurd on the face of it. Ḥaḍrat Zainab was the Holy Prophet's first cousin. He had known her from childhood to youth. So, there could be no question of his falling in love with her at first sight. Then he himself had arranged her marriage with Ḥaḍrat Zaid under his personal influence, although her whole family had opposed it. They did not like that a daughter of the noble Quraish should be given in marriage to a freed slave. Ḥaḍrat Zainab herself was not happy at this arrangement. But everyone had to submit to the Holy Prophet's command. The marriage was



solemnized and a precedent was set in Arabia that Islam had raised a freed slave to the status of the Quraishite nobility. If the Holy Prophet had in reality any desire for Ḥaḍrat Zainab, there was no need of marrying her to Ḥaḍrat Zaid; he himself could have married her. But in spite of all this, the shameless opponents invented stories of love, spread them with great exaggeration and publicised them so vehemently that even some Muslims also began to accept them as true.

### **Preliminary Commandments of Purdah**

The fact that the tales invented by the enemies also became topics of conversation among the Muslims was a clear sign that the element of sensuality in society had crossed all limits. If this malady had not been there, it was not possible that minds would have paid any attention whatever to such absurd and disgusting stories about a righteous and pure person like the Holy Prophet. This was precisely the occasion when the reformative Commandments pertaining to the law of *Hijāb* or Purdah were first enforced in the Islamic society. These reforms were introduced in this Sūrah and complemented a year later in Sūrah An-Nūr, when a slander was made on the honour of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah. (For further details, see Introduction to Sūrah An-Nūr).

### **Domestic Affairs of the Holy Prophet**

There were two other problems which needed attention at that time. Though apparently they pertained to the Holy Prophet's domestic life, it was necessary to resolve them for the domestic and mental peace of the person, who was exerting every effort to promote the cause of Allah's Religion and was day and night absorbed in this great mission. Therefore, Allah took these two problems also officially in His own hand.

The first problem was that economically the Holy Prophet at that time was in straitened circumstances. During

the first four years he had no source of income whatever. In 4 A.H. after the banishment of the Banī an-Nadīr, a portion of their evacuated lands was reserved for his use by the Command of Allah, but it was not enough for his family requirements. On the other hand, the duties of the office of Prophethood were so onerous that they were absorbing all his energies of the mind and body and heart and every moment of his time, and he could not make any effort at all for earning his livelihood. In conditions such as these when his wives happened to disturb his mental peace because of economic hardships he would feel doubly strained and taxed.

The other problem was that before marrying Ḥaḍrat Zainab, he had four wives already in the houses: Ḥaḍrat Saudah, Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, Ḥaḍrat Ḥafṣah, and Ḥaḍrat Umm Salamah. Ḥaḍrat Zainab was his fifth wife. At this the opponents raised the objection, and the Muslims also started entertaining doubts, that as for others it had been forbidden to keep more than four wives at a time, but how the Holy Prophet himself had taken a fifth wife also.

### **Subject Matter and Topics**

These were the questions that were engaging the attention of the Holy Prophet and the Muslims at the time Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb was revealed, and replies to the same form the subject-matter of this Sūrah.

A perusal of the theme and the background shows that the Sūrah is not a single discourse which was sent down in one piece but it consists of several injunctions and commandments and discourses, which were sent down, one after the other, in connection with the important events of the time, and then were put together in one Sūrah. Its following parts stand out clearly distinguished from one another:

1. Verses 1-8 seem to have been sent down before the Battle of the Trench. Their perusal, keeping the his-

torical background in view, shows that at the time of their revelation Ḥaḍrat Zaid had already divorced Ḥaḍrat Zainab. The Holy Prophet was feeling the necessity that the concepts and customs and superstitions of ignorance concerning the adoption of the son should be eradicated, and he was also feeling that the delicate and deep sentiments the people cherished about the adopted relations merely on emotional grounds would not be rooted out until he himself took the initiative to eradicate the custom practically. But at the same time he was hesitant and considering seriously that if he married the divorced wife of Ḥaḍrat Zaid then, the hypocrites and the Jews and the *mushriks* who were already bent on mischief would get a fresh excuse to start a propaganda campaign against Islam. This was the occasion of the revelation of vv. 1-8.

2. In verses 9-27 an appraisal has been made of the Battle of the Trench and the raid against the Banī Quraizah. This is a clear proof that these verses were sent down after these events.

3. The discourse contained in vv. 28-35 consists of two parts. In the first part Allah has given a notice to the wives of the Holy Prophet, who were being impatient of the straitened circumstances, to the effect: "Choose between the world and its adornments, and Allah, His Prophet and the Hereafter. If you seek the former, you should say so openly: you will not be kept back in hardship even for a day, but will be sent off gracefully. And if you seek the latter, you should co-operate with Allah and His Messenger and bear patiently." In the second part, initial steps were taken towards the social reforms whose need was being felt by the minds moulded in the Islamic pattern themselves. In this regard, reform was started from the house of the Holy Prophet himself and his wives were commanded to avoid behaving and conducting themselves in the ways of the pre-Islamic days of ignorance, to remain in their houses with dignity, and to exercise great caution

in their conversation with the other men. This was the beginning of the Commandments of Purdah.

4. Verses 36-48 deal with the Holy Prophet's marriage with Ḥadrat Zainab. In this section the opponents' objection about this marriage have been answered; the doubts that were being created in the minds of the Muslims have been removed; the Muslims have been acquainted with the Holy Prophet's position and status; and the Holy Prophet himself has been counselled to exercise patience on the false propaganda of the disbelievers and the hypocrites.

5. In verse 49 a clause of the law of divorce has been laid down. This is a unique verse which was sent down on some occasion probably in connection with the same events.

6. In verses 50-52 a special regulation of marriage has been laid down for the Holy Prophet, which points out that he is an exception to the several restrictions that have been imposed on the other Muslims in regard to marital life.

7. In verses 53-55 the second step was taken towards social reform. It consists of the following injunctions: Restriction on the other men to visit the houses of the Holy Prophet's wives; Islamic etiquette concerning visits and invitations; the law that only the near relatives could visit the holy wives in their houses; as for the other men, they could speak to or ask them a thing from behind a curtain; the injunction that the Holy Prophet's wives were forbidden for the Muslims like their mothers; and none could marry any of them after him.

8. In verses 56-57 warning was given to stop criticizing the Holy Prophet's marriage and his domestic life, and the believers instructed not to indulge in fault-finding like the enemies of Islam, but to invoke the blessings of Allah for their Prophet; moreover, they were instructed that they should avoid falsely accusing one another even among themselves, not to speak of the person of the Prophet.

9. In verse 59 the third step for social reform was taken. All the Muslim women were commanded that they should come out well covered with the outer-garments and covering their faces whenever they came out of their houses for a genuine need.

After this till the end of the Sūrah the hypocrites and other foolish and mean people have been rebuked for the propaganda that they were carrying on at that time against Islam and the Muslims.





يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ اتَّقِ اللَّهَ وَلَا تُطِعِ الْكَافِرِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا  
 حَكِيمًا ۝<sup>١</sup> وَاتَّبِعْ مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ  
 خَبِيرًا ۝<sup>٢</sup> وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا ۝<sup>٣</sup> مَا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِرَجُلٍ مِنْ  
 قَلْبَيْنِ فِي جَوْفِهِ ۚ وَمَا جَعَلَ أَزْوَاجَكُمْ الَّتِي تَظْهَرُونَ مِنْهُنَّ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ وَمَا  
 جَعَلَ أَدْعِيَاءَكُمْ أَبْنَاءَكُمْ ذَٰلِكُمْ قَوْلُكُمْ بِأَفْوَاهِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَقُولُ الْحَقَّ وَهُوَ  
 يَهْدِي السَّبِيلَ ۝<sup>٤</sup> أَدْعُوهُمْ لِأَبَائِهِمْ هُوَ أَقْسَطُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ ۚ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَعْلَمُوا

## XXXIII

### AL-AHZĀB الْأَحْزَاب

Verses: 73

Revealed at Madīnah

*In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate.*

O Prophet,<sup>1</sup> fear Allah and do not obey the disbelievers and the hypocrites; in fact, Allah alone is All-Knowing, All-Wise.<sup>2</sup> Follow that which you are being inspired with from your Lord: Allah is aware of whatever you do.<sup>3</sup> Have trust in Allah, for Allah alone is sufficient as a Guardian.<sup>4</sup>

1-3

Allah has not put two hearts in a person's body,<sup>5</sup> nor has He made those wives of yours whom you divorce by *Zihār* your mothers,<sup>6</sup> nor has made your adopted sons your real sons.<sup>7</sup> These are the things which you utter from your

4-5

mouths, but Allah says that which is based on the reality and He alone guides to the Right Way. Call your adopted sons after their fathers' names: this is more just in the sight of Allah.<sup>8</sup> And if you do not know who their fathers are, then they are your brothers in faith and your friends.<sup>9</sup> There is no blame on you if you say something unintentionally, but you will surely be to blame for what you say with the intention of your hearts.<sup>10</sup> Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.<sup>11</sup>

1. As we have mentioned in the Introduction to the Sūrah, these verses were sent down at a time when Ḥaḍrat Zaid had already divorced Ḥaḍrat Zainab. Then the Holy Prophet himself was feeling, and Allah also had inspired him with this, that that was the right time for striking at the root of the tradition and customs of ignorance regarding the adopted relations, and that he should take the initiative and marry the divorced wife of his adopted son (Zaid) so that the custom was completely eradicated. But the reason why he was hesitant in this regard was the fear that this would provide a strong excuse to the disbelievers and the hypocrites, who were already burning with jealousy at his successive victories, to start a propaganda campaign against him. This fear was not due to any apprehension for personal defamation, but for the reason that it would harm Islam; it would cause mistrust of Islam among the people who were inclined towards it; it would make the neutral people to join the enemy; and it would cause the weak-minded people among the Muslims themselves to be involved in doubts and suspicions. Therefore, the Holy Prophet thought it was unwise to take a step for the eradication of a custom of ignorance, which would harm the greater interests and objectives of Islam.

2. In the first very sentence, in the beginning of the discourse, Allah removed all the apprehensions of the Holy Prophet, as if to say: "We know better what is useful and beneficial for our Religion and what is not. We know what would be wise and what unwise in this regard. Therefore, you should not behave in a manner which would suit the disbelievers and the hypocrites, but you should behave in a manner which is according to Our Will. You should fear Us and not the disbelievers and the hypocrites."

3. This sentence is addressed to the Holy Prophet as well as to the Muslims and the opponents of Islam. It means this: "If the Prophet earns defamation by acting according to the Command of Allah, and bears patiently the attacks of the enemy on his honour, his devoted and



sincere services will not remain hidden from Allah. The state of the Muslims who remain steadfast in their loyalty to the Prophet and of those who are involved in doubts and suspicions will be known to Allah. And Allah will also not remain unaware of the attempts of the disbelievers and the hypocrites who try to defame the Prophet."

4. The addressee of this sentence is again the Holy Prophet. He is being instructed to the effect: "Carry out the duty that is being entrusted to you with full confidence in Allah, and do not care at all even if the whole world turns hostile to you." When a man comes to know with certainty that a certain Command has been given by Allah, he should have the satisfaction that his whole well-being and his good lies in its compliance. Then, it is not for him to see and understand its wisdom, but he should carry it out with full confidence in Allah. Allah is enough for him that the servant should entrust all his affairs to Him. He is enough for his guidance as well as help, and He alone is also responsible that the one working under His guidance should never meet with evil consequences.

5. That is, "One and the same person cannot be a believer and a hypocrite, truthful and false, wicked and righteous, at one and the same time. He does not have two hearts in his chest that one should have sincerity in it and the other fearlessness of God. Therefore, a man can have only one kind of character at a time: either he will be a believer or a hypocrite, a disbeliever or a Muslim. Now if you call a believer a hypocrite, or a hypocrite a believer, it will not change the reality. The true character of the person will inevitably remain the same."

6. *Zihār* is a term in Arabic. In old days when an Arab, in the heat of a domestic quarrel, would say to his wife: "Your back for me is as the back of my mother," it was thought that the woman was no longer lawful for him because he had compared her to his mother. About this Allah says: "A woman does not become a man's mother just because he has called her his mother or compared her to his mother. His mother is the woman who bore him. Only his calling his wife his mother cannot change the reality." (For the Islamic Law concerning *Zihār*, see *Sūrah Mujādalah*: 2-4).

7. This is what is intended to be said. The two preceding sentences are meant to support and emphasize this same point.

8. The first reform introduced in connection with the implementation of this Command was that Zaid, the adopted son of the Holy Prophet, began to be called Zaid bin Ḥārithah, after his real father, instead of Zaid bin Muḥammad. Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhi and Nasā'ī have

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آبَاءَهُمْ وَأَخْوَانَهُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَمَوَالِيَهُمْ ۗ وَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ فِيمَا أَخْطَأْتُمْ  
 بِهِ ۚ وَلَكِنْ مَتَا تَعَمَّدَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ۝ التَّبِيُّ أَوْلَى  
 بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجُهُ أُمَّهَاتُهُمْ وَأُولُوا الْأَرْحَامِ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلَى  
 بِبَعْضٍ فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ إِلَّا أَنْ تَفْعَلُوا إِلَىٰ أَوْلِيَائِكُمْ  
 مَعْرُوفًا كَانَ ذَلِكَ فِي الْكِتَابِ مَسْطُورًا ۝ وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ مِيثَاقَهُمْ  
 وَمِنْكَ وَمِنْ نُوحٍ وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ ۚ وَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُمْ  
 مِيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا ۝ لِيَسْئَلَ الصَّادِقِينَ عَنْ صِدْقِهِمْ ۚ وَأَعَدَّ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابًا  
 أَلِيمًا ۝ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذْ ذُكِّرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ جَاءَتْكُمْ جُنُودٌ فَأَرْسَلْنَا  
 عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحًا وَجُنُودًا لَمْ تَرَوْهَا ۚ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرًا ۝ إِذْ جَاءَكُمْ  
 مِنَ فَوْقِكُمْ وَمِنْ أَسْفَلَ مِنْكُمْ وَإِذْ زَاغَتِ الْأَبْصَارُ وَبَلَغَتِ الْقُلُوبُ  
 الْحَنَاجِرَ وَتَظُنُّونَ بِاللَّهِ الظُّنُونًا ۝ هُنَالِكَ ابْتُلِيَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَزُلْزِلُوا زِلْزَالًا  
 شَدِيدًا ۝ وَإِذْ يَقُولُ الْمُنْفِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ مَتَا وَعَدْنَا اللَّهُ  
 وَرَسُولَهُ إِلَّا غُرُورًا ۝ وَإِذْ قَالَتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْهُمْ يَا أَهْلَ يَثْرِبَ لَا مُقَامَ لَكُمْ  
 فَارْجِعُوا ۚ وَيَسْتَأْذِنُ فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمُ النَّبِيَّ يَقُولُونَ إِنَّ بُيُوتَنَا عَوْرَةٌ ۚ وَمَا هِيَ  
 بِعَوْرَةٍ ۚ إِنَّ يُرِيدُونَ إِلَّا فِرَارًا ۝ وَلَوْ دَخَلَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ أَقْطَارِهَا ثُمَّ سَأَلُوا  
 الْفِتْنَةَ لَا تَوْهًا وَمَا تَلَبَّثُوا فِيهَا إِلَّا بَسِيرًا ۝ وَلَقَدْ كَانُوا عَاهِدُوا اللَّهَ مِنْ  
 قَبْلُ لَا يُؤَلُّونَ الْأَذْبَارَ ۚ وَكَانَ عَهْدُ اللَّهِ مَسْئُولًا ۝ قُلْ لَنْ يَنْفَعَكُمْ الْفِرَارُ  
 إِنْ فَرَرْتُمْ مِنَ الْمَوْتِ أَوِ الْقَتْلِ وَإِذَا لَا تُسْتَعُونَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ۝ قُلْ مَنْ ذَا  
 الَّذِي يَعْصِيكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ إِنْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ سُوءًا أَوْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ رَحْمَةً ۚ وَلَا

Indeed, the Prophet is preferable for the believers to their own selves,<sup>12</sup> and the Prophet's wives are their mothers.<sup>13</sup> But, according to the Book of Allah, the blood relations have a greater right on one another than the other believers and the migrants. However, you may do any good (you wish) to your friends.<sup>14</sup> This is written in the Divine Book. 6

And (O Prophet,) remember the Covenant that We took from all the Prophets—from you as well as from Noah and Abraham and Moses and Jesus son of Mary. We took a solemn Covenant from all of them<sup>15</sup> so that (their Lord) may question the truthful about their truth;<sup>16</sup> as for the disbelievers, He has indeed reserved a painful punishment for them.<sup>17</sup> 7-8

O people<sup>18</sup> who have believed! Remember the bounty of Allah, which He has (just now) shown you. When the hosts came down on you, We sent against them a violent wind and the armies which you could not see.<sup>19</sup> Allah was watching all that you were doing. When the enemies came upon you from above and from below you,<sup>20</sup> when eyes were petrified due to fear and the hearts leapt up to the throats, and you began to entertain all sorts of doubts about Allah, the believers then were thoroughly tested and severely shaken.<sup>21</sup> 9-11

Remember the time when the hypocrites and all those whose hearts were diseased were openly saying that the promises Allah and His Prophet had made with them,<sup>22</sup> were nothing but a delusion; when a party of them said, "O people of Yathrib, you have no chance to stay, so go back;"<sup>23</sup> when a section of them sought leave of the Prophet, saying, "Our homes are insecure,"<sup>24</sup> whereas they were not insecure;<sup>25</sup> in fact, they wished to flee (the battle front). If the enemies had made entry from all sides of the city, and these people had been urged to treachery,<sup>26</sup> they would have committed it, and would have little hesitated to become partners in it. They had indeed already made a 12-15

pledge with Allah that they would not show their backs; and the pledge made with Allah had to be questioned.<sup>27</sup>

16-17

O Prophet, say to them, "If you flee from death or slaughter, your flight will avail you nothing; after that you will enjoy life but for a little while only."<sup>28</sup> Ask them, "Who can protect you from Allah if He intends harm for you? And who can prevent Him if He intends to show you mercy?" In fact, they cannot find a protector and helper against Allah.

*Contd. from p. 81]*

related this tradition from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar that in the beginning the people called Zaid bin Ḥārithah Zaid bin Muḥammad. After the revelation of this verse they began calling him Zaid bin Ḥārithah. Moreover, after this Revelation it was forbidden that a person should assign his parentage to any other man than his own real father. Bukhārī, Muslim and Abū Da'ūd have related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin Abī Waqqās that the Holy Prophet said: "Paradise is forbidden for the one who called himself son of another person than his own father." Other traditions bearing on the subject have been related in *Hadiths*, which have regarded this as a heinous sin.

9. That is, even in such a case it will not be right to ascribe the parentage of a person to someone else.

10. It means this : "There is no harm if a person is called a son out of love. Likewise, there is no sin if someone calls another one a mother, or a daughter, or sister or brother, etc. out of affection and regard, but if such a thing is said with the intention that the one being called so will be accorded the same status and position and rights and privileges as actually belong to these relations, it would certainly be objectionable and one will be held answerable for it."

11. That is, "Allah has forgiven the errors already committed in this regard; no one will be called to account for them." Another meaning is: "Allah does not call a people to account for actions done unintentionally. He will not punish a person for doing something which he did not do intentionally although it resembled a forbidden act apparently."

12. That is, "The relationship of the Holy Prophet with the Muslims and of the Muslims with the Holy Prophet is of a superior nature, over and above all human relationships. No other relationship is in any way comparable with the relationship that exists between the Holy Prophet and the believers. The Holy Prophet (may Allah's peace

and blessings be upon him) is more compassionate and affectionate and a great well-wisher of the Muslims than their own parents, even their own selves. Their parents and their wives and children can harm them, can treat them in a selfish manner and mislead them, can make them commit errors and mistakes, can push them into Hell, but the Holy Prophet's case is different: he will do for them only that which results in and leads to their eternal well-being and enduring happiness. They can commit follies resulting in their own ruin and disaster, but the Holy Prophet will wish for them only that which is beneficial and useful for them. And when it is so, the Holy Prophet also has a right on the Muslims that they should regard him dearer than their own parents, their own children, even their own selves. They should love him more than anything and anybody else in the world; should prefer his judgement and opinion to their own and should submit to every command that he gives.

The same thing has been said by the Holy Prophet in a *Hadith*, which Bukhārī and Muslim and others have related with a little difference in wording: "No one of you can be a believer until I become dearer to him than his own father and his own children and all mankind."

13. On the basis of the special relationship mentioned above, another characteristic of the Holy Prophet is that his wives are forbidden to the Muslims just like their own real mothers although their adopted mothers are in no sense their real mothers. This thing is peculiar only to the person of the Holy Prophet and of no other man in the world.

In this connection, one should also know that the wives of the Holy Prophet are mothers of the believers only in the sense that the Muslims are under obligation to have reverence and respect for them, and no Muslim could marry them. As for other matters they are not like the mothers. For example, apart from their real relatives, all other Muslims were *non-ma'ram* for them from whom they had to observe *Purdah*; their daughters were not like real sisters for the Muslims, so that no Muslim could marry them; their brothers and sisters were not like the maternal uncles and aunts for the Muslims; they could not be inherited by a Muslim, unless a close relative, as a mother is inherited by her son.

Another noteworthy point in this connection is that according to the *Qur'ān*, this status accrues to all the wives of the Holy Prophet among whom *Hadrat 'Ā'ishah* is also included. But, when a section (of the Muslims) made *Hadrat 'Alī* and *Fāṭimah* (may Allah be pleased with them) and their children the centre of their Faith and made the whole system of religion revolve around them, and made *Hadrat 'Ā'ishah* also,

along with many other Companions, the target of curse and abuse, this verse became a hindrance for them, for according to it every person who claims to be a believer has to acknowledge her as his mother. Consequently, to overcome this difficulty a strange claim was made to the effect: The Holy Prophet had given Ḥaḍrat 'Ali the authority that after his death he could allow any of his wives he liked to retain her position of the holy wife and divorce any other on his behalf. Abū Mansūr Aḥmad bin Abū Ṭālib Ṭabṛasi has written this in *Kitāb al-Ihtijāj* and Sulemān bin 'Abdullah al-Baḥrānī has related that the Holy Prophet said to Ḥaḍrat 'Ali: "O Abul Ḥasan: this honour will last till the time that we remain steadfast on obedience to Allah. Therefore, you may divorce any of my wives, who after me disobeys Allah by revolting against you, and deprive her of the honour that belongs to the mothers of the faithful."

This is a false tradition even according to the principles of reporting *Hadīth*. But if one studies vv. 28-29 and 51-52 of this very Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb itself, one finds that this tradition goes against the Qur'ān as well. For after the revelation of the "verse of the option" (v. 29), the Holy Prophet's right of divorce those of his wives who chose to remain with him through every difficulty had been curtailed. For further explanation, see E.N.'s 42 and 93 below.

Moreover, if an unbiased person only uses his common sense and considers this tradition carefully, he will find that it is utterly absurd and highly derogatory in respect to the Holy Prophet. The rank and position of the Messenger of Allah is very high and exalted. It cannot even be expected of an ordinary man that he would think of divorcing his wife after his death and on leaving the world would authorise his son-in-law to divorce her on his behalf if there arose a dispute between him and her in the future. This shows what regard these sectarians have for the honour and reverence of the Holy Prophet himself, and even for the Divine Law.

14. The verse means this: As for the Holy Prophet the nature of the Muslims' relationship with him is unique. But as far as the common Muslims are concerned, their mutual relationship will be based on the principle that the rights of the relatives on one another are given priority over the rights of others. No charity is right if a person overlooks the needs and requirements of his own parents and children and brothers and sisters, and gives away charities to others. The *Zakāt* money also will be used first of all to help one's own poor relatives and then the other needy people. The inheritance will necessarily be divided among those who are nearest in relation to the deceased. As for others, the dying person

may give them a part of his wealth as a gift or by trust and will. But in no case is he allowed to deprive his rightful heirs and give away everything to others. After this Divine Command the system of "Brotherhood" that had been established between the *Muhājirīn* and the *Ansār* after the Hijrah also became abolished, for according to it the *Muhājirīn* and the *Ansār* became heirs to one another only on the basis of their relationship of being the brethren in faith. Allah enjoined the law that inheritance will be divided only on the basis of blood relationship; however, a person could help his brother-in-faith by making him a gift or through a will if he so liked.

15. Allah in this verse has reminded the Holy Prophet that, like all other Prophets, He has taken from him too a solemn covenant which he should abide by strictly. A study of the preceding verse shows that the Covenant implies this: "The Prophet will first himself obey and follow every Command received from Allah, and then make others also to obey and follow it: he will convey Allah's Commands intact to others and will show no laxity in the struggle to enforce them practically." This Covenant has been mentioned at several other places in the Qur'ān, e.g. (1) "He has appointed for you the same way of life which He appointed for Noah and which (O Muḥammad,) We have now revealed to you, and which We had already enjoined on Abraham and Moses and Jesus, stressing this: 'Establish this Way and be not divided in it.'" (Ash-Shūrā: 13).

(2) "And remember that Allah had made the Covenant with the people who had been given the Scripture, and enjoined: 'You shall spread the teachings of the Book among the people and shall not conceal them.'" (Āl-i 'Imrān: 187).

(3) "Remember that We made a solemn Covenant with the children of Israel to the effect: 'Worship (and submit to) none save Allah.'" (Al-Baqarah: 83).

(4) "Has not the Covenant of the Book been taken from them...: 'Hold fast the Book We have given you, and keep in mind what it contains: it is expected that you will refrain from wrong ways.'" (Al-A'rāf: 169-171).

(5) "Keep in mind the blessing Allah has bestowed on you and do not forget the solemn Covenant which He made with you, when you said, 'We have heard and submitted.'" (Al-Mā'idah: 7)

The reason why Allah is reminding of this Covenant in this context is that the Holy Prophet was feeling hesitant to break the custom of ignorance in respect of the adopted relations due to the apprehension that the enemies of Islam would put him to a disadvantage. He was feeling shy time and again at the thought: "The question is of marrying

a woman. I may take this initiative with the purest intention only for the sake of a social reform, but the enemies will certainly say that I have done so for the purpose of satisfying my sensual desires, and I am in fact trying to deceive others under the guise of a reformer." That is why Allah assures him, saying: "You are a Prophet appointed by Us. Like all other Prophets, you also are bound in the Covenant that you will carry out whatever Command We give yourself and command others to follow it. Therefore, you should not bother at all about taunts and derision by others, do not be afraid and fight shy of others, and carry out without hesitation the service that We want to take from you."

A section of the people think that this Covenant is the covenant that was taken from all the Prophets and their communities, who came before the Holy Prophet, to the effect that they would believe in the Prophet who came afterwards and cooperate with him. On the basis of this interpretation they claim that the door to Prophethood is still open after the Holy Prophet and this covenant has been taken from the Holy Prophet too, that his followers will believe in the prophet who will come after him. But the context in which the verse occurs is explicit that this interpretation is absolutely wrong. There is no occasion whatever in the context to indicate that other prophets will come also after the Holy Prophet and his followers should believe in them. If the verse is read in this meaning, it becomes irrelevant and incoherent. Moreover, there is no indication in the words of the verse to show which covenant is implied here. Therefore, to find out the nature of the covenant, we shall have to turn to other verses of the Qur'ān in which mention has been made of the covenants taken from the Prophets. Now, if only one sort of the covenants had been mentioned in the entire Qur'ān, *i.e.*, the covenant that the people shall believe in the prophets coming afterwards, it would be correct to think that here also the covenant implied the same covenant. But anyone who has studied the Qur'ān with an open mind knows that it has mentioned many covenants, which were taken from the Prophets and their followers. Therefore, only that covenant from among the different covenants would be implied here, which fitted in with the context here, and not the one which was altogether irrelevant. Such wrong interpretations reveal the mentality of the people who wish to draw no guidance from the Qur'ān but want to re-interpret it instead.

16. That is, "Allah has not just taken the covenant but will also question as to how far it has been kept. Then only those who will have kept Allah's Covenant faithfully, will be declared to be the truthful."

17. To understand the theme of vv. 1-8 well these should be read together with vv. 36-41 of this Sūrah.



18. In vv. 9-27 an appraisal has been made of the Battle of the Trench and the raid against the Bani Quraizah and were revealed at the end of the raid. One should keep the details of these events in view as given in the Introduction above.

19. The windstorm did not lash the enemy hordes immediately on their arrival but it occurred when the siege of Madinah had lasted about a month. "Armies which you could not see" implies the hidden powers which operate in the affairs of men under Allah's Command and of which men are wholly unaware. Man regards the occurrence of events and incidents as resulting from apparent causes and does not take into account the hidden forces at work, whereas in most cases these very hidden forces play the decisive role. As these forces function under the Command of Allah's angels, the "armies" may imply the angels as well though there is no indication here of sending the armies of the angels.

20. It may mean: "The enemies came upon you from every side, and also that those coming from Najd and Khaiber came from above and those coming from Makkah from below you."

21. "The believers": All those who accepted the Holy Prophet as Allah's Messenger and became included among his followers, which comprised both the true believers and the hypocrites. In this paragraph Allah has made mention of the Muslim community as a whole. In the following three paragraphs the attitude of the hypocrites has been commented upon, and the next two deal with the Holy Prophet and the true believers.

22. That is, "Promises to the effect that the believers will get Allah's support and succour and will be helped to attain victory in the end."

23. This sentence has two meanings: The apparent meaning is that there is no chance for them to stay at the Trench against the polytheists; therefore, they should return to the city. And the hidden meaning is that there is no chance for them to remain in Islam; therefore, they should return to their ancestral religion, so that they might escape the danger in which they had involved themselves by earning the hostility of the whole of Arabia. The hypocrites uttered such mischievous things so that they could make the one who would listen to them understand the intended hidden meaning, but in case someone took exception to their words, they could say they had been misunderstood.

24. That is, "When the Banī Quraizah also joined the invaders, the hypocrites had a good excuse for defection and they started asking the Holy Prophet for leave to go and protect their houses and families, which, they said, had been endangered, whereas at that time the Holy

[ *Contd. on p. 92* ]

يَجِدُونَ لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا ﴿١٨﴾ قَدْ يَعْلَمُ اللَّهُ الْمَعْرُوقِينَ  
مِنْكُمْ وَالْقَائِلِينَ لِإِخْوَانِهِمْ هَلُمَّ إِلَيْنَا وَلَا يَأْتُونَ الْبَاسَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿١٩﴾  
أَشِحَّةً عَلَيْكُمْ ۚ فَإِذَا جَاءَ الْخَوْفُ رَأَيْتَهُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَيْكَ تَدَاوُرَ أَعْيُنِهِمْ  
كَالَّذِي يُعْشى عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْمَوْتِ ۚ فَإِذَا ذَهَبَ الْخَوْفُ سَلَقُوكُمْ بِالسِّنَةِ  
حَدَادٍ أَشِحَّةً عَلَى الْخَيْرِ ۗ أُولَئِكَ لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا فَأَحْبَطَ اللَّهُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ ۗ وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ  
عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا ﴿٢٠﴾ يَحْسَبُونَ الْأَحْزَابَ لَمْ يَذْهَبُوا ۗ وَإِنْ يَأْتِ الْأَحْزَابُ يَوَدُّوْنَ  
لَوْ أَنَّهُمْ بَادُونَ فِي الْأَعْرَابِ يَسْأَلُونَ عَنْ أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ ۗ وَكَانُوا فِيكُمْ مَآ  
فَلَوْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿٢١﴾ لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِمَنْ كَانَ  
يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا ﴿٢٢﴾ وَكَمَا رَأَى الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الْأَحْزَابَ  
قَالُوا هَذَا مَا وَعَدَنَا اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَصَدَقَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ ۗ وَمَا زَادَهُمْ إِلَّا  
إِيمَانًا وَتَسْلِيمًا ﴿٢٣﴾ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ رِجَالٌ صَدَقُوا مَا عَاهَدُوا اللَّهَ عَلَيْهِ ۚ فَمِنْهُمْ  
مَنْ قَضَىٰ نَحْبَهُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَنْتَظِرُ ۗ وَمَا بَدَّلُوا بَدِيلًا ﴿٢٤﴾ لِيَجْزِيَ اللَّهُ  
الضَّالِقِينَ بِصِدْقِهِمْ وَيُعَذِّبَ الْمُنْفِقِينَ ۖ إِنْ شَاءَ أَوْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْهِمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ  
كَانَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿٢٥﴾ وَرَدَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِغَيْظِهِمْ لَمْ يَنَالُوا خَيْرًا ۗ وَكَفَىٰ  
اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الْقِتَالَ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ قَوِيًّا عَزِيزًا ﴿٢٦﴾ وَأَنْزَلَ الَّذِينَ ظَاهَرُوهُمْ  
مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مِنْ صَيَاصِيمٍ وَقَذَفَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الرُّعْبَ ۖ فَرِيقًا تَقْتُلُونَ  
وَتَأْسِرُونَ فَرِيقًا ﴿٢٧﴾ وَأَوْرَثَكُمْ أَرْضَهُمْ وَدِيَارَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ وَأَرْضًا لَمْ  
تَطُوبُوا ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرًا ﴿٢٨﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِمَ أَذْوَاجُكُمْ  
كُنْتُمْ تُرَدُّنَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَزِينَتَهَا فَتَعَالَيْنَ أُمَتِّعْكُنَّ وَأَسْرِحَلْكُنَّ سَرَّاحًا

Allah knows very well those among you, who create hindrances (in the war effort), who say to their brothers, "Coms to us,"<sup>29</sup> who take part in the fighting only to be counted in, who are ever reluctant to join you.<sup>30</sup> When there is danger, they look towards you, their eyes rolling like the one who is fainting, being on the point of death. But when the danger is gone, they come out to greet you with their scissor like sharp tongues in greed for gains.<sup>31</sup> These people have not believed at all; so Allah has made all their works fruitless,<sup>32</sup> and this is an easy thing for Allah.<sup>33</sup> They think that the invading hosts are not yet gone, and if they should attack again they would (rather) wish to be in the desert among the beduins and seek information about you from there. However, even if they remained among you, they would take but little part in the fighting. 18-20

There was indeed the best model for you in the Messenger of Allah,<sup>34</sup> for every such person who looks forward to Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah much.<sup>35</sup> And when the true believers (at that time)<sup>36</sup> saw the invading hosts, they cried out, "This is what Allah and His Messenger had promised us: Allah and His Messenger were absolutely true."<sup>37</sup> This increased them all the more in faith and resignation.<sup>38</sup> There are among the believers those who have been true in their pledge to Allah: some one of them has fulfilled his vow, and some other is waiting for it:<sup>39</sup> they have made no change in their attitude. (All this happened) so that Allah may reward the truthful for their truthfulness, and punish the hypocrites, or accept their repentance as He will. Indeed Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Merciful. 21-24

Allah turned back the disbelievers: they retreated in their rage without gaining any advantage, and Allah was sufficient to fight on behalf of the believers: Allah is All-Powerful, All-Mighty. Allah brought down from their fortresses those of the people of the Book, who had joined forces 25-27

with the invaders<sup>40</sup> and created such terror in their hearts that some of them you are slaying today and some taking as prisoners. He made you heirs of their land and their dwellings and their wealth and gave you that land which you had never trodden before. Allah is All-Powerful.

*Contd. from p. 89]*

Prophet was responsible for the defence and protection of all the people of Madīnah. After the treachery of the Quraizah it was for the Holy Prophet to devise plans for the protection of the city and its people and not of the soldiers of the army individually."

25. That is, "The Holy Prophet had already made arrangements for protection against the danger, which were a part of the collective scheme of defence being implemented by him as Commander of the Islamic forces. Therefore, there was no immediate danger in the face of which these people could justifiably make such an excuse."

26. "Urged to treachery": Urged by the disbelievers to join them to vanquish the Muslims after entering the city as conquerors.

27. That is, "They had felt regret at the weakness they had shown on the occasion of the Battle of Uḥud and pledged to Allah that they would compensate for their error in any trial that they would confront in the future. But Allah cannot be deceived by empty words. He puts to one or the other test everyone who makes a pledge with Him so that his sincerity of intention or otherwise is found out. Therefore, just after two years of the Battle of Uḥud, He made them confront an even more serious danger and discovered how far they were sincere in their pledge."

28. That is, "This flight of yours will not add anything to your life. In no case will you live for ever and gain the whole wealth of the world. Hardly a few years will you live after your flight and enjoy life only as long as it is destined for you."

29. That is, "Abandon this Prophet and do not become involved in dangers and afflictions only for the sake of the Faith and Truth. Live a life of ease and comfort as we do."

30. "Who are ever reluctant...": Who are not at all willing to spend their energies, their time, their wealth, etc. in any way in which the true believers are expending whatever they have. Not to speak of exerting themselves and braving the dangers, they do not want to co-operate with the believers in anything with an open heart."

31. Lexically, this verse has two meanings: (1) "When you return victorious from a war, they receive you warmly, and try to impress you with a glib tongue that they too are sincere believers and they too have

made their contribution to promote the cause of Islam, and therefore, they too deserve a share from the booty." (2) "If victory is attained these people show great powers of the tongue at the time of the division of the spoils and make great demands for their shares, recounting their services to the cause of Islam."

32. That is, "Allah will make null and void all the prayers that they offered, all the fasts that they observed, the *Zakāt* that they paid, and other good works that they did after embracing Islam, and will give them no reward for these. For Allah does not judge actions and deeds according to their external form but on the basis of the faith and sincerity underlying them. When the actions are altogether devoid of this quality, there will be mere show and, therefore, meaningless. Here, one thing is especially noteworthy. A clear verdict has been given about the people who professed to believe in Allah and His Messenger, offered the Prayers, observed the fast, gave the *Zakāt* and co-operated with the Muslims in other good works, to the effect that they did not believe at all. This verdict has been given because when they were put to the test during the conflict between Islam and un-Islam, they showed double-facedness, preferred selfish interests above the interests of the Faith, and shirked offering their selves and their wealth and their energies for the protection of Islam. This shows that the real criterion of the judgement are not the apparent deeds but the loyalties of man. If a person is not loyal to God and His Way, his profession of the Faith and his worship and other good deeds are worthless."

33. That is, "As their deeds and actions do not carry any value, Allah renders them fruitless without the slightest hesitation; and as they do not have any power to resist Allah has no difficulty in destroying their deeds altogether."

34. In view of the context in which this verse occurs, the object of presenting the Holy Prophet's conduct and way of life as a model was to teach a lesson to the people, who had been motivated by considerations of selfish interests and personal safety on the occasion of the Battle of the Trench. They are being addressed, as if to say: "You claimed to be the believers and Muslims and followers of the Holy Messenger. You should have seen how the Messenger whose followers you claimed to be conducted himself on the occasion. If the leader of a group is himself a seeker of personal security, is lazy and indolent, gives preference to personal interests to everything else, and is ever ready to flee danger, it would be reasonable to expect manifestation of such weakness from his followers. But here the case was different. The Holy Prophet endured along with others every toil and labour that he asked others to

endure, and endured better than others; there was no trouble which others might have experienced and he himself did not. He was among those who dug the trench, and endured hunger and other afflictions just as the common Muslims did. He did not leave the battlefield even for a moment during the siege nor retreated an inch. After the betrayal of the Banī Quraizah his own family had also been exposed to danger even as the families of the other Muslims were. He did not make any special arrangement for his own and his family's protection, which did not exist for others. He was always in the forefront to offer maximum sacrifices for the great objectives for which he was constantly asking others to make sacrifices. Therefore, whoever made a claim of being his follower should have followed the practical example set by the leader.

This is the meaning of the verse in the context here. But its words are general and there is no reason why it should be confined to these meanings only. Allah does not say that only in this respect His Messenger's life is a model for the Muslims to follow, but has regarded it as a model absolutely. Therefore, the verse demands that the Muslims should take the Holy Prophet's life as a model for themselves in every affair of life and should mould their character and personality according to it.

35. That is, "The Prophet's life is no model for the person who is forgetful of God, but it certainly is a model for him who remembers Allah much and consistently and not only occasionally just by chance. Likewise, this life is no model for him who has no hope from Allah and does not expect Resurrection to take place, but it is most surely a model for the person who is hopeful of Allah's grace and His favours, and who is also mindful that the Day of Judgement will come when his well-being will wholly depend on how closely his conduct resembled the conduct and character of the Messenger of Allah in this world."

36. After drawing attention to the model of the Holy Prophet, Allah now presents the model of his Companions so that the character of the false claimants to faith and of the sincere followers of the Messenger is clearly contrasted. Although both were alike apparently in the affirmation of the faith, both were counted as Muslims, and both attended at the Prayers, they were separated from each other as soon as the time of the trial approached, and it became clear who were loyal to Allah and His Messenger and who were Muslims only in name.

37. Here, one should keep verse 12 in view. There it was said that when the hypocrites and the people with diseased hearts found themselves surrounded by a huge force of ten to twelve thousand men from the front and by the Banī Quraizah from behind, they openly started saying: "The promises that Allah and His Messenger had made with us were

nothing but a delusion. We were promised that if we believed in Allah's religion, His succour would be at our back and we would rule Arabia and the world outside and all the wealth of Caesar and Chosroes will be ours, but here we are that the whole of Arabia is bent upon exterminating us, and there is no sign yet of the armies of the angels in sight, who would save us and protect us against this grave calamity." Now they are being told: "One meaning of the promise of Allah and His Messenger was that which was understood by these false claimants to faith. The other meaning is that which is understood by the sincere and true Muslims. When they saw the storms of danger gathering, they too remembered the promises of Allah, but these promises did not mean that as soon as they affirmed the faith they would overwhelm and subdue the whole world without the slightest effort, and the angels would come to perform their coronation, but the promises actually meant that they would have to pass through severe trials, endure extreme hardships and afflictions, offer supreme sacrifices; then only will Allah bless them with His grace and they will be granted successes of the world and the Hereafter, which Allah has promised His believing servants.

"Do you think that you will enter Paradise without undergoing such trials as were experienced by the believers before you? They met with adversity and afflictions and were so shaken by trials that the Prophet of the time and his followers cried out: 'When will Allah's help come?' — "Yes, Allah's help is near." (Al-Baqarah: 214).

"Do the people think that they will be left alone after they have once said, 'We have believed', and they will not be tested? The fact is that We have put to the test all those who have gone before them. Surely, Allah has to see who are the truthful and who the liars." (Al-'Ankabūt: 2-3).

38. That is, "On seeing the hard times of affliction approaching they did not waver in their faith but were strengthened in it all the more, and instead of giving up Allah's obedience they became ready to resign and surrender to Him whatever they had with complete conviction and satisfaction of the heart."

Here, one should fully understand that faith and resignation is indeed a quality of the self which is put to trial and test at every command and demand of the Faith. At every step in life man comes across situations where the Faith either enjoins something or forbids something, or requires one to make sacrifices of life and wealth and time and desires of the self. At every such occasion the faith and conviction of the person who deviates from obedience will suffer decline and the faith and conviction of him who submits to the command and demand

[ Contd. on p. 98

جَمِيلًا ۖ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُرَدُّونَ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَالدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ أَعَدَّ  
لِلْمُحْسِنِينَ مِنْكُمْ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ۖ يُنْسَاءُ النَّبِيِّ مَنْ يَأْتِ مِنْكُمْ بِفَاحِشَةٍ  
مُبِينَةٍ يُضَعَفُ لَهَا الْعَذَابُ ضِعْفَيْنِ ۗ وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا ۖ

وَمَنْ يَقْتُلْ مِنْكُمْ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتَعَمَلْ صَالِحًا ثَوَّتَهَا أَجْرَهَا مَرَّتَيْنِ ۖ

وَأَعْتَدْنَا لَهَا رِزْقًا كَرِيمًا ۖ يُنْسَاءُ النَّبِيِّ لَسْتُمْ كَأَحَدٍ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ ۖ إِنْ  
اتَّقَيْتُمْ فَلَا تَخْضَعْنَ بِالْقَوْلِ فَيَطْمَعَ الَّذِي فِي قَلْبِهِ مَرَضٌ وَقُلْنَ قَوْلًا  
مَعْرُوفًا ۗ وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْأُولَىٰ وَأَقِمْنَ  
الصَّلَاةَ وَآتِينَ الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِعْنَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ ۗ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ  
عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا ۖ وَاذْكُرْنَ مَا يُتْلَىٰ فِي

بُيُوتِكُنَّ مِنْ آيَةِ اللَّهِ وَالْحِكْمَةِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ لَطِيفًا خَبِيرًا ۖ إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ  
وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْقَنَاتِينَ وَالْقَنَاتِ وَالصَّادِقِينَ  
وَالصَّادِقَاتِ وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّابِرَاتِ وَالْخَشِيعِينَ وَالْخَشِيعَاتِ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ  
وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ وَالصَّابِغِينَ وَالصَّابِغَاتِ وَالْحَفِظِينَ فُرُوجَهُمْ وَالْحَفِظَاتِ  
وَالذَّكِرِينَ اللَّهُ كَثِيرًا وَالدَّكِرَاتِ ۖ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ۖ  
وَمَا كَانَ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَا الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ إِذَا قَضَىٰ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُمُ  
الْخَيْرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ ۗ وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا مُبِينًا ۖ  
وَإِذْ تَقُولُ لِلَّذِي أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَأَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِ أَمْسِكْ عَلَيْكَ زَوْجَكَ وَ  
اتَّقِ اللَّهَ وَتُخْفَىٰ فِي نَفْسِكَ مَا اللَّهُ مُبْدِيهِ وَتَخْشَى النَّاسَ وَاللَّهُ أَحَقُّ  
أَنْ تَخْشَاهُ ۗ فَلَمَّا قَضَىٰ زَيْدٌ مِنْهَا وَطَرًا زَوَّجْنَاكَهَا لِكَيْ لَا يَكُونَ عَلَىٰ



O Prophet,<sup>41</sup> say to your wives, "If you seek the world and its adornments, come, I shall give you of these and send you off in a good way. But if you seek Allah and His Messenger and the abode of the Hereafter, you should rest assured that Allah has prepared a great reward for those of you who do good."<sup>42</sup> 28-29

Wives of the Prophet, whoever among you commits a manifest indecency, will be doubly punished:<sup>43</sup> this is an easy thing for Allah.<sup>44</sup> And whoever among you obeys Allah and His Prophet, and does good works, We shall doubly reward her,<sup>45</sup> and for her We have prepared an honourable provision. 30-31

Wives of the Prophet, you are not like the other women.<sup>46</sup> If you are Godfearing, do not talk in a soft voice lest the man of the diseased heart should cherish false hopes from you, but speak in an unaffected manner.<sup>47</sup> Stay in your houses,<sup>48</sup> and do not go about displaying your fineries as women used to do in the days of ignorance.<sup>49</sup> Establish the *Ṣalāt*, pay the *Zakāt*, and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah only intends to remove uncleanness from you, O people of the Prophet's household, and purify you completely.<sup>50</sup> Remember the Revelations of Allah and the wise sayings which are recited in your houses.<sup>51</sup> Surely, Allah is the Knower of everything<sup>52</sup> and is All-Aware. 32-34

Most surely<sup>53</sup> the men and the women who have surrendered themselves to Allah;<sup>54</sup> who are believing,<sup>55</sup> obedient,<sup>56</sup> truthful,<sup>57</sup> and patient;<sup>58</sup> who bow down before Allah,<sup>59</sup> practise charity,<sup>60</sup> observe the fasts,<sup>61</sup> guard their private parts<sup>62</sup> and remember Allah much:<sup>63</sup> Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a vast reward.<sup>64</sup> 35

It<sup>65</sup> does not behove a believing man and a believing woman that when Allah and His Messenger have given their decision in a matter, they should exercise an option in that matter of theirs; and whoever disobeys Allah and His Prophet, has indeed strayed into manifest error.<sup>66</sup> 36

O Prophet,<sup>67</sup> remember the time when you were saying 37

to the man, whom Allah as well as you had favoured, "Keep your wife and fear Allah."<sup>69</sup> You were at that time keeping hidden in your heart that which Allah intended to reveal: you were fearing the people, whereas Allah has a greater right that you should fear Him.<sup>70</sup> So, when Zaid had fulfilled his desire of her,<sup>71</sup> We married (the divorced woman) to you<sup>72</sup> so that there remains no hindrance for the believers in regard to the wives of their adopted sons when they have fulfilled their desire of them.<sup>73</sup> And Allah's Command had to be carried out.

*Contd. from p. 95]*

will be strengthened and enhanced. Although in the beginning a man becomes a believer and Muslim only by embracing the fundamental creed (*Kalimāh*) of Islam, yet his state of faith does not remain static but is open to both deterioration and development. Decline in sincerity and the spirit of obedience causes it to deteriorate; so much so that constant retrogression may cause the person to reach the last limits of the faith where the slightest move backward may turn him from a believer to a hypocrite. Contrary to this, the more sincere a person is, the more perfect his obedience and the greater his devotion and dedication to the cause of the true Faith, the stronger and more sound will he grow in faith and may even attain the supreme rank of the truthful. But this increase and decrease in the faith has only the moral significance which can be judged and reckoned by none but Allah. As for the man, faith is simply the act of affirmation by which a Muslim enters Islam and is regarded as a Muslim as long as he remains steadfast to it. In this regard we cannot say that so and so is half a Muslim, or one-third a Muslim, and another one double a Muslim or triple a Muslim. Likewise, in legal rights the Muslims are equal and alike. It cannot be that one is regarded a greater believer and given more rights and another one a lesser believer and given less rights. In these aspects there can be no question of the increase and decrease in the faith, and in fact, in this very sense has Imām Abū Ḥanīfah said: "Faith in Islam neither increases nor decreases."

39. That is, "Someone has already offered his life in the way of Allah, and someone is awaiting the time when he will offer it for the sake of his Faith."

40. That is, Jews of the Banī Quraizah.

41. The verses from here to 35 were sent down in the period contiguous to the Battle of the Trench and the raid on Banī Qurai'ah, whose

background we have touched upon in the Introduction to this Sūrah. According to a tradition related in Muslim on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah, "One day when Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr and Ḥaḍrat 'Umar visited the Holy Prophet, they saw that his wives were sitting around him and he was quiet. Addressing Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, he said: 'They are sitting around me as you see: they are asking for money for household expenditure.'" At this both the Companions rebuked their daughters and said, "Why do you embarrass the Holy Prophet and demand from him that which he does not have." This event shows how hard pressed the Holy Prophet was economically at that time and how distressed and embarrassed he was feeling at his wives' demand for domestic expenditure during the period when a bitter conflict was going on between Islam and paganism.

42. At the time when this verse was sent down, the Holy Prophet had four wives with him: Ḥaḍrat Saudah, Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, Ḥaḍrat Hafṣah and Ḥaḍrat Umm Salamah. He had not yet married Ḥaḍrat Zainab. (Ibn 'Arabi: *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, Egyptian Edition, 1958, vol. III, pp. 512-13). When this verse was revealed, he first spoke to Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, and said: "I ask you a thing; do not be hasty in answering; consult your parents, then decide." Then he told her of Allah's Command and recited this verse. She replied: "Should I consult my parents about this?—I seek Allah and His Messenger and the Hereafter." After this he went to each of his wives and asked the same thing and each one gave the same reply as had been given by Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah. (Musnad Aḥmad, Muslim, Nasā'i).

This is termed *takhyir*, i.e. to give the wife the option to decide for herself whether she would stay in wedlock or would separate from the husband. This was obligatory for the Holy Prophet because he had been commanded by Allah to offer such an option to his wives. If a lady from among the holy wives had opted to separate she would not have separated automatically but would have been separated by the Holy Prophet, as is clear from the words: "... I shall give you of these and send you off gracefully." But the Holy Prophet would certainly have separated her because as a Prophet it would not behove him not to honour the word. After divorce apparently the lady would have stood excluded from the category of the holy wives, and she would not be forbidden to any other Muslim; for she would have chosen divorce from the Holy Prophet only for the sake of the world and its adornments of which she had been given the choice, and obviously the option could not be exercised in case she was forbidden to re-marry. On the other hand, the intention of the verse also seems that the Holy Prophet was not left with any authority to divorce the wives who chose Allah and

His Messenger and the Hereafter in preference to the world. For *takhyir* had only two sides: if a wife opted for the world, she would be divorced ; if she opted for Allah and His Messenger and the Hereafter, she would not be divorced. Obviously, if a lady chose one alternative, the other would become forbidden in her case by itself.

In Islamic Law *takhyir*, in fact, amounts to delegation of the right to obtain divorce. The husband himself gives the wife the choice to stay in wedlock with him or be separated. Here are briefly the injunctions which the jurists have derived from the Qur'ān and *Sunnah* in this regard:

(1) Once a husband has given this choice to a wife, he can neither withdraw it nor stop her from exercising it. However, it is not necessary that the woman must exercise it. She may choose to remain in wedlock with the husband, or may prefer to separate, or may opt nothing and let the right of divorce be annulled.

(2) There are two conditions of this choice being transferred to the woman: (a) The husband should have given her the right of divorce in clear words, or if there was no clear mention of the divorce, he should have had the intention of giving this right; e.g. if he says, "You have the choice" or "your business is in your own hand," such indirect words will not transfer the right of divorce to the woman without the intention of the husband. If the woman claims it and the husband states on oath that he had no intention of giving the right of divorce, his statement will be admitted, unless the woman produces evidence to the effect that those words were said during a dispute, or in connection with divorce, because in that context delegation of the right would mean that the husband had the intention of giving the right of divorce. (b) The woman knows that she has been given the right of divorce. If she was absent, she should receive information of this, and if she is present, she should hear the words. Unless she hears the words, or receives the news, the right will not be transferred to her.

(3) As to the time limit within which the wife has to exercise her right if the husband gives it her absolutely without specifying any limit, there is a difference of opinion among the jurists. Some jurists have expressed the opinion that the woman can exercise the right at the same sitting at which the husband gave it her; if she leaves the place without making a response, or turns her attention to something else which indicates that she does not want to make a response, she forfeits the right invested in her and her choice no longer remains. This is the opinion of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān, Ḥaḍrat Ibn Mas'ūd, Ḥaḍrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah, 'Attā, Jābir bin Zaid, Mujāhid, Sha'bi, Nakha'i, Imām Mālik, Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Imām Shāfe'i, Imām Auzā'i, Sufyān Thaurī

and Abū Thaur. The other opinion is that her exercise of the choice is not confined to that sitting but she can exercise it even afterwards. This opinion is held by Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣrī, Qatādah and Zuhri.

(4) If the husband specifies a time limit and says, for instance, "You have the option for a month or a year, or your business is in your own hand for so long," the wife would enjoy the option only for that long. However, if he says, "You can exercise this option as and when you like," her option would be unlimited.

(5) If the woman intends to obtain separation, she should express her intention clearly and definitely. Vague words which do not express the intention clearly will have no effect.

(6) Legally, the husband can give the option to the wife in three forms: (a) He may say, "Your business is in your own hand;" or (b) he may say, "You have the option;" or (c) "You are divorced if you so please." The legal consequences of each are separate, as explained below:

(a) If the husband has said: "Your business is in your own hand," and the woman responds clearly to the effect that she would opt for separation, it would amount to an irreversible divorce according to the Hanifites. That is, after this the husband will forfeit his right to have her back as his wife. However, they can remarry if they so like after the expiry of the waiting period. And if the husband said, "Your affair is in your own hand to the extent of one divorce," this will be regarded as the first reversible divorce. That is, the husband can take her back as his wife within the waiting-period. But if the husband had the intention of all the three divorces at the time of delegating to the woman the right of divorce, or mentioned this specifically, the woman's exercise of the option in such a case would amount to divorce no matter whether she pronounces divorce thrice on herself or says only once that she has chosen separation or divorced herself.

(b) If the husband gives the woman the option to separate with the words: "You have the option," and the woman opts for separation in clear words, it will amount to one reversible divorce according to the Hanifites even if the husband had the intention of giving option for three divorces. However, if the husband has clearly given option for three divorces, the three divorces will take place only on the woman's exercise of the option for divorce. According to Imām Shāfe'ī, if at the time of giving the option, the husband had the intention of divorce, and the woman opts for separation, it will amount to one reversible divorce. According to Imām Mālik, it will amount to three divorces in case the wife had been enjoyed; in case she had not been enjoyed, the husband's claim to have intended only one divorce will be admitted.

(c) In case the words "You are divorced if you so please" have been used and the woman has opted for divorce, it will be a reversible divorce and not an irreversible one.

(7) If after the husband has given the option for separation, the woman chooses to remain in wedlock, no divorce will take place at all. This is the opinion of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, Ḥaḍrat Abū ad-Dardā, Ibn 'Abbās and Ibn 'Umar, and the same has been adopted by majority of the jurists. When Masrūq asked Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah about this, she replied: "The Holy Prophet had given his wives the option and they chose to continue to live as his wives. Then, was it deemed to be a divorce?" The opinion of Ḥaḍrat 'Alī and Zaid bin Thābit that has been reported in this regard is that one reversible divorce will take place. But according to another tradition these two great Companions also held the opinion that no divorce will take place at all.

43. This does not mean that there was, God forbid, any chance of the Holy Prophet's wives committing an indecency, but this was meant to make them realize that they were the mothers of the Muslims; therefore, their responsibilities were accordingly very high, and so their moral conduct should be the purest. This is just like Allah's addressing the Holy Prophet to the effect: "If you committed *shirk*, all your works would be rendered vain." (Az-Zumar: 65). This also does not mean that there was, God forbid, any chance of the Holy Prophet's committing *shirk*, but this is meant to make the Holy Prophet realize, and through him the common Muslims, that *shirk* is a most heinous crime which must be guarded against most judiciously.

44. That is, "You should not be under the delusion that your being the Prophet's wives will protect you from Allah's punishment, or that it will be difficult for Allah to call you to account on account of your high rank and position in the world."

45. The reason for giving a double punishment for a sin and a double reward for a good work is that those whom Allah honours with a high rank in society generally become the leaders of men and the majority of the people follow them for good or for evil. Thus, their evil does not remain their own evil but becomes the cause of a people's degeneration, and their goodness does not remain their own goodness but becomes the cause of the true success of many other people also. Therefore, when they commit evil they are punished for their own as well as for others' degeneration, and when they do good they are not only rewarded for their own good works but also for this that they guided others also to do good.

This verse also gives the principle that the greater the degree of prohibition and trust in respect of somebody and something the greater

and more serious will be the crime of violating that prohibition and trust and the greater will be the punishment for it. For example, drinking in the mosque is a much more serious crime than drinking privately in the house, and therefore, it will entail a severer punishment. Likewise, committing adultery with the prohibited relations is a far more serious crime than committing it with another woman, and therefore, will call for a severer punishment.

46. The verses from here to the end of the paragraph are those with which the Commandments of Purdah were introduced in Islam. In these verses though the wives of the Holy Prophet only have been addressed, the intention is to enforce reforms in all the Muslim houses. The object of addressing the Holy Prophet's wives particularly is that when a pure way of life will start from his house, it will be followed by the women of all other Muslim houses as well, because this house was looked upon by the Muslims as a model to follow. Some people, when they see that these verses have been addressed only to the wives of the Holy Prophet, assert that these Commandments were only meant for them. But when one reads what follows in these verses one feels that there is nothing which might have been meant particularly for the holy wives and not for the other Muslim women. Could Allah have intended only this that the holy wives alone should be free from uncleanness and they alone should obey Allah and His Prophet and they alone should offer the *Ṣalāt* and pay the *Zakāt*? If this could not be the intention, then how could the Command for them to stay in their houses and avoid displaying the fineries and abstain from talking to the other men in an alluring voice be meant particularly for them to the exclusion of all other Muslim women? Is there any rational proof on the basis of which some Commands in one and the same context and series be regarded as general and some others as particular and special?

As for the sentence, "You are not like the other women," it also does not mean that the other women should come out in full make-up and should talk to the other men coquettishly and flirt with them, but "as for you, you should not adopt such a conduct." The style, to the contrary, is such as if a gentleman would tell his child, "You are not like the common children of the street: you should not use abusive language." From this no sensible person would ever conclude that the speaker regarded only his own child using abusive language as bad; as for others he would not mind if they used abusive language.

47. That is, "There is no harm if the other man is spoken to in case of a genuine need, but on such an occasion the woman's tone and manner of speech should be such as does not let the other man think that he could cherish any false hope from her. There should be no undue

softness in her tone, no allurements in her conversation, no consciously affected mellowness in her voice, which should excite the male hearer's emotions and encourage him to make advances.

About such a manner of speech Allah clearly says that this does not behove a woman who has any fear of God in her heart and desire to avoid evil. In other words, this is the way and manner of the wicked and unchaste woman's speech and not of the believing pious woman's speech. If this verse is read together with verse 31 of Sūrah An-Nūr, in which Allah says: "They should not stamp the ground in walking lest their hidden decoration is revealed," the intention of the Lord clearly seems to be that the women should not attract other men by their voice or the jingle of their ornaments unnecessarily and if at all they have to speak to the other men, they should speak to them in an un-affected tone and manner. That is why it is forbidden for the woman to pronounce the call to the Prayer. Moreover, if a woman is attending a congregational Prayer and the Imām commits a mistake, she is not permitted to say *Subhān-Allah* like the males but should only tap her hands to call the Imām's attention to the error.

Now just consider this: When Islam disallows the woman to talk to other men in a soft and sweet tone and even forbids her to produce her voice before the other men without a genuine need, will it approve her to appear on the stage and sing, dance, flirt and behave coquettishly? Will it permit her to sing love songs over the radio and excite the people's emotions by presenting sweet melodies full of obscene themes? Will it permit that she should play the roles of the wives and sweet-hearts of others in dramas? Or that the women should be made the air-hostesses and be especially trained to charm and allure the passengers? Or that they should visit clubs and attend social functions and gatherings in full make-up and mix freely with men and have fun and a good time with them? From which Qur'ān has this culture been derived? For the Qur'ān that was sent down by God there is to be found no hint as to the admissibility of this sort of culture.

48. The word *qarna* in the original is derived from *qarār* according to some lexicographers and from *waqār* according to others. In the first sense, it will mean: "Settle down, stick firmly;" and in the second sense: "Live peacefully, sit with dignity." In both the cases the verse means to impress that the woman's real sphere of activity is her home; she should carry out her functions within that sphere peacefully, and she should come out of the house only in case of a genuine need. This meaning is clear from the words of the verse itself and the Holy Prophet's *Ḥadīths* also impress it even more forcefully. Ḥāfiẓ Abū Bakr Bazzār has related on the authority of Ḥa'rat Anas that the women made a



submission to the Holy Prophet, saying: "All kinds of virtues have been secured by the men: they fight and accomplish great deeds in the way of Allah. What should we do that we may also get a reward equal to that of the warriors?" The Holy Prophet replied: "The one who sits in her house from among you, will attain the reward of the warriors." What he meant was this: The warrior can fight confidently and with full peace of the mind in the way of Allah only when he is sure that all is well at home: his wife is there to look after the house and the children, and there is no cause for him to worry that she will betray him in his absence. The woman who will provide him this satisfaction and peace of the mind will be an equal partner with him in his fighting though she will be sitting back at home. According to another tradition that Bazzār and Tirmidhi have related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, the Holy Prophet said: "The woman must remain veiled and concealed. When she comes out of her house, Satan stares at her. And she is closer to Allah's mercy when she is inside her house." (For further details, see E.N. 49 of Sūrah An-Nūr).

In the presence of such a clear and express Command of the Qur'ān, it is not at all permissible that the Muslim women should seek membership of the councils and parliaments; that they should run after social activities outside the house; that they should work side by side with men in the government offices, should get education along with boys in the colleges, serve as nurses in the male wards of hospitals, should be employed as hostesses in the aeroplanes and rail cars, and should be sent abroad for education and training. The greatest argument that is given in support of the permissibility of the women's outdoor activities is that Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah had taken part in the Battle of the Camel. But the people who present this argument perhaps do not know what was Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah's own opinion in this regard. 'Abdullah bin Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal has related in his *Zawā'id az-Zuhd* and Ibn Mundhir, Ibn Abi Shaibah and Ibn Sa'd in their own books the tradition from Masrūq, saying that when Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah during her recitation of the Qur'ān would reach this verse (*wa qarna fī buyūt-i kunna*), she would start crying involuntarily; so much so that her head-wrapper would become wet, for this reminded her of the error that she had committed in the Battle of the Camel.

49. In this verse two important words have been used, which must be understood for the proper understanding of its intention. They are *tabarruj* and *jāhiliyyat al-ūlā*.

The word *tabarruj* in Arabic means to become manifest and appear openly before others. The Arabs use the word *baraj* for every conspicuous and elevated object. A *burj* (tower) is so called because of its promi-

nence and elevation. A sailing-boat is called *bārijah* because its sails become visible from a distance. The word *tabarruj* when used in respect of a woman will have three meanings: (1) that she should show the charms of her face and body before the people; (2) that she should display the adornments of her dress and ornaments before others; and (3) that she should make herself conspicuous by her gait and figure and coquetry. The same explanation of this word has been given by the leading lexicographers and commentators. Mujāhid, Qatādah and Ibn Abī Nujaiḥ say: "*Tabarruj* means to walk in a vain, alluring and coquetish manner." Muqātil says: "It means a woman's displaying of her necklaces, ear-rings and bosom." Al-Mubarrad says: "That a woman should reveal her adornments which she should conceal." Abū 'Ubaidah comments: "This that a woman should make herself conspicuous by display of her body and dress to attract the attention of men."

The word *jāhiliyyat* has been used at three other places in the Qur'ān besides this, in Āl-i 'Imrān: 154, where about those who shirk fighting in the way of Allah, it has been said: "They began to cherish about Allah thoughts of Ignorance (*jāhiliyyat*) which were void of the truth," and in Al-Mā'idah: 50, where about those who want to be judged by their own law instead of the law of Allah, it has been said: "Do they desire to be judged by the laws of ignorance (*jāhiliyyat*)?" and in Al-Fath: 26, where the prejudice of the people of Makkah due to which they did not permit the Muslims to perform 'Umrah, has been called as "the haughty spirit of paganism (*jāhiliyyat*)." According to a *Hadīth*, once Ḥaḍrat Abū ad-Dardā' in the heat of a quarrel abused another person in respect of his mother. When the Holy Prophet heard of it, he remarked: "You still have *jāhiliyyat* in you." According to another *Hadīth*, the Holy Prophet said: "Three things show *jāhiliyyat*: to taunt the lineage of another person, to take omens from the movement of the stars, and to mourn over the dead." All these customs show that *jāhiliyyat* in the Islamic terminology is every such conduct which goes against Islamic culture and civilization and Islamic morality and etiquette and Islamic way of thinking and behaviour. Thus, *jāhiliyyat al-ūlā* would mean all those evils in which the Arabs of the pre-Islamic days and the people of the entire world were involved.

This explanation makes it abundantly clear that what Allah forbids women is to move out of their houses showing off their physical charms and beauty. He instructs them to stay in their houses because their real sphere of activity is their home and not the world outside. However, if they have to move out of the house for an out-door duty, they should not move out as the women used to do in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance. For it does not behove the women of a Muslim society to

walk out fully embellished to make their face and figure conspicuous by adornments and tight-fitting or transparent dresses, and to walk coquetishly. These are the ways of ignorance which Islam does not approve. Now everybody can see for himself whether the culture which is being made popular in our country is the culture of Islam, according to the Qur'ān, or the culture of ignorance.

50. The context in which this verse occurs makes it manifest that the word *ahl al-bait* (people of the house) here implies the wives of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace), because the address begins with: "O wives of the Prophet," and they are the addressees in the whole discourse preceding it as well as following it. Moreover, the word *ahl al-bait* in Arabic is used precisely in the sense in which the word "household" is used in English, which includes both a man's wife and children. No one would exclude the wife from the "household." The Qur'ān itself has used this word at two other places besides this, and at both the wife is included in its sense, rather as the most important member of the family. In Sūrah H d, when the angels give the Prophet Abraham the good news of the birth of a son, his wife exclaims: "Shall I bear a child now when I have grown too old, and this husband of mine has also become old?" The angels say: "What! Are you surprised at Allah's decree, O people of Abraham's household? Allah's mercy and blessings are upon you." In Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ, when the Prophet Moses reaches the Pharaoh's house as a suckling, and the Pharaoh's wife is in search of a suitable nurse for the child, the Prophet Moses' sister says, "Shall I tell you of a household whose people will bring him up for you and look after him well?" Thus, the Arabic idiom and the usage of the Qur'ān and the context of this verse, all point clearly to the fact that the Holy Prophet's wives as well as his children are included in his *ahl al-bait*; rather the more correct thing is that the verse is actually addressed to the wives and the children become included in the household only because of the sense of the word. That is why according to Ibn 'Abbās and 'Urwah bin Zubair and 'Ikrimah, the word *ahl al-bait* in this verse implies the wives of the Holy Prophet.

But if somebody says that the word *ahl al-bait* has been used only for the wives and none else can be included in it, it will also be wrong. Not only this that the word "household" includes all the members of a man's family, but the Holy Prophet has himself explained that this includes even himself. According to Ibn Abi Hātim, once when Hadrat 'Ā'ishah was asked about Hadrat 'Ali, she said, "Do you ask me about the person who was among the most loved ones of the Holy Prophet and whose wife was the Holy Prophet's daughter and most beloved to him?" Then she related the event when the Holy Prophet had called Hadrat 'Ali

and Fāṭimah and Ḥasan and Ḥusain (may Allah be pleased with them all) and covered them all with a sheet of cloth and prayed: "O Allah, these are my household, remove uncleanness from them and make them pure." Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah says, "I said: I also am included among your household (i.e. I may also be covered under the sheet and prayed for)." Thereupon the Holy Prophet replied: "You stay out: you, of course, are already included." A great many *Ḥadīths* bearing on this subject have been related by traditionists like Muslim, Tirmidhi, Aḥmad, Ibn Jarīr, Ḥākim, Baihaqī, etc. on the authority of Abū Sa'īd Khudri, Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, Ḥaḍrat Anas, Ḥaḍrat Umm Salamah, Ḥaḍrat Wāthilah bin Asqa' and some other Companions, which show that the Holy Prophet declared Ḥaḍrat 'Alī and Fāṭimah and their two sons as his *ahl al-bait*. Therefore, the view of those who exclude them from the *ahl al-bait* is not correct.

Similarly the view of those people also is not correct, who, on the basis of the above-cited *Ḥadīths*, regard the wives of the Holy Prophet as excluded from his *ahl al-bait*. In the first place, anything which has been clearly stated in the Qur'ān cannot be contradicted on the basis of a *Ḥadīth*. Secondly, these *Ḥadīths* also do not have the meaning that is put on them. As related in some traditions that the Holy Prophet did not cover Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah and Ḥaḍrat Umm Salamah under the sheet of cloth which he put on the four members of his family, does not mean that he had excluded those ladies from his "household." But it means that the wives were already included in *ahl al-bait*, because the Qur'ān, in fact, had addressed them as *ahl al-bait*. The Holy Prophet, however, thought that the apparent words of the Qur'ān might cause somebody the misunderstanding about these members that they were excluded from the *ahl al-bait*. Therefore, he felt the need for clarification in their case and not in the case of his wives.

A section of the people have not only misconstrued this verse to the extent that they have made the word *ahl al-bait* exclusively applicable to Ḥaḍrat 'Alī and Fāṭimah and their children to the exclusion of the holy wives, but have gone even further and concluded wrongly from its words "Allah only intends to remove uncleanness from you and purify you completely", that Ḥaḍrat 'Alī and Fāṭimah and their children are infallible like the Prophets of Allah. They say that "uncleanness" implies error and sin, and, as Allah says, these *ahl al-bait* have been purified of this, whereas the words of the verse do not say that uncleanness has been removed from them and they have been purified. But the words are to the effect: "Allah intends to remove uncleanness from you and purify you completely." The context also does not tell that the object here is to mention the virtues and excellences of the Holy Prophet's household. On the contrary, they have been

advised here what they should do and what they should not, because Allah intends to purify them. In other words, they have been told that if they adopted such and such an attitude and way of life, they will be blessed with cleanness, otherwise not. However, if the words "Allah intends to remove uncleanness from you . . ." are taken to mean that Allah has made them infallible, there is no reason why all the Muslims who perform their ablutions before offering the Prayer are not held as infallible, because about them also Allah says: "But Allah wills to purify you and complete His blessings upon you." (Al-Mā'idah: 6)

51. The word *wadhkurna* in the original has two meanings: Remember and mention. According to the first meaning the verse would mean: "O wives of the Prophet, you should never forget that yours is the house from where the world is being instructed in Divine Revelations and Wisdom; therefore, your responsibility is very great. Let it not happen that the people might see specimens of ignorance in this very house." According to the second meaning, it would mean: "O wives of the Prophet, you should mention and relate before the people whatever you hear and see, for by virtue of your close and constant social association and attachment with the Prophet you will know and experience many such things which the other people will not be able to know by any other means than you."

Two things have been mentioned in this verse: (1) The Revelations of Allah; and (2) the wise sayings. The revelations of Allah are the verses of Allah's Book, but *hikmat* (wisdom) is a comprehensive word which includes all those wise things which the Holy Prophet taught the people. This word may also imply the teachings of the Book of Allah, but there is no reason why it should be made exclusively applicable to them. It inevitably includes the wisdom that the Holy Prophet taught by his pure character and by his sayings besides reciting the verses of the Qur'an. Some people, only on the basis that the word *mā yutlā* (that which is recited) has been used in the verse, make the assertion that the "Revelations of Allah" and "Wisdom" imply only the Qur'an, for the word "recitation" as a term is specifically used for the recitation of the Qur'an. But this reasoning is absolutely wrong. The use of the word "recitation" specifically as a term for the recitation of the Qur'an or the Book of Allah is the work of the people of the later ages. The Qur'an has not used this word as a term. In Sūrah Al-Baqarah: 102, this same word has been used for the incantation of the magical formulas which the satans falsely attributed to the Prophet Solomon and taught the people. ("They followed that which the satans recited attributing it to the kingdom of Solomon.") This shows that the Qur'an uses this word in its lexical meaning, and does not specify it

for reciting the verses of the Book of Allah.

52. "Knower of everything": Knower of even the most secret and hidden things.

53. Presentation of this theme immediately after the foregoing paragraph contains a subtle allusion to this that the instructions given above to the Holy Prophet's wives are not exclusively meant for them but the Muslim society as a whole should reform itself in accordance with them.

54. "Who have surrendered themselves to Allah": Who have accepted Islam as a code of life for themselves, and have decided to follow it in their lives, and who have no wish to resist the Islamic way of life and thought, but have adopted the way of obedience and submission to it.

55. "Who are believing": Whose obedience is not merely outward nor unwilling but who sincerely regard the guidance given by Islam as based on the truth, whose faith is that the way shown by the Qur'ān and the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) is the only right and straight way in following which alone lies their true success. That which has been declared as wrong by Allah and His Prophet is certainly wrong even according to their judgement and that which has been declared as right by Allah and His Prophet is certainly right even according to their thinking and sense. Psychologically and intellectually also they do not regard as improper any injunction that has been enjoined by the Qur'ān and *Sunnah*, and do not remain on the lookout to change it somehow to suit their own desire or mould it according to the current trends of the world, avoiding at the same time the blame that they have effected a change in the Command given by Allah and His Prophet. The Holy Prophet has described the true state of faith in a *Hadith* in these words:

"He who reconciled himself to Allah as his Lord and to Islam as his Way of Life and to Muḥammad as his Messenger, has the true taste of Faith." (Muslim)

In another *Hadith*, he has explained it thus:

"None of you becomes a believer until the desires of his self become subordinate to what I have brought." (*Sharḥ as-Sunnah*)

56. That is, "They do not rest content with mere belief but are obedient practically also. They are not the sort of the people who would honestly believe that what Allah and His Messenger have commanded was true but would violate it in practice: that they would sincerely regard what Allah and His Messenger have forbidden as bad but would go on following the same in practical life."

57. That is, "They are truthful in their speech and honest in their dealings. They do not deal in lies, deceptions, frauds and forgeries. They utter with their tongues only what their conscience approves as true. They practise and perform only what they honestly find to be in accordance with righteousness and truth, and they are honest in all their dealings with others."

58. That is, "They patiently and steadfastly bear and face all the obstacles, dangers, difficulties and losses that they might have to encounter in following the right way taught by Allah and His Messenger and in establishing Allah's Religion in the world; no fear and no temptation and no lust of the self can succeed in diverting them from the right way."

59. That is, "They are free from pride, vanity and haughtiness: they have full understanding of the reality that they are servants and they have no other position than that of servitude. Therefore, their hearts as well as their bodies remain bowed before Allah, dominated by fear of Him. They never display the attitude which is the hall-mark of the lives of those who are fearless of God and are involved in arrogance." From the sequence it appears that the mention of *khushū*' (expression of humility) in particular along with the general attitude of the fear of God implies the Prayer, for the mention of the practice of charity and fast has been made just after it.

60. This does not only imply payment of the obligatory *Zakāt*, but it also includes general charity. It means to say that they spend their wealth freely in the way of Allah and they are not at all niggardly in the matter of helping the servants of Allah as much as they can. No orphan and no sick or afflicted person, no weak or disabled person, no poor and needy one remains deprived of their support in their dwelling; and if there arises the need for monetary help for promoting the cause of Allah's Religion, they are never miserly in expending their wealth for that purpose.

61. This includes both the obligarory and the voluntary fasts.

62. This has two meanings: (1) They refrain from adultery; and (2) they avoid nudity. One should also note that nudity does not only mean being naked but it is also nudity to put on a thin dress which shows the body; or is so tight-fitting that it reveals all the outlines of the body.

63. "Remember Allah much" means that one should mention Allah's name in one way or other at all times in every business of life. Man cannot develop such a state of the mind unless the thought of God becomes deeply embedded in his heart. When this idea has passed beyond his conscious mind and settled deep in his subconscious and unconscious mind, then only he will remember and mention God's name

in whatever he does and in whatever he says. He will begin with *bismillah* when he eats and say *al-ḥamdu-lillah* when he finishes; he will remember Allah when he goes to bed, and mention Allah's name when he gets up. In his conversation also he will again and again pronounce *bismillah*, *al-ḥamdu-lillah*, *inshā-Allah*, *mā shā Allah*, etc. and ask for Allah's help in every matter, and thank Him for every blessing. He will seek His mercy in every affliction, and turn to Him in every trouble. He will fear Him on encountering every evil, and ask for His forgiveness when he happens to have committed an error and will pray to Him for fulfilment of every need. In short, in every state and in every business of life his function will be to remember Allah. This, in fact, is the essence of the Islamic life. For all other acts of worship there is a prescribed time when they are performed, and one is free when one has performed them. But this is the worship which has no special time; it has to be performed constantly so that it links up the man's life with Allah and His service permanently. The other worships and religious acts themselves also become meaningful only when the heart of man remains inclined to Allah not only at the time when the act is actually being carried out but at all times when the tongue is uttering Allah's name constantly. In such a state as this worship and religious acts develop and flourish in a man's life precisely in the same manner as a plant grows in a congenial climate and environment. Contrary to this, the example of the religious services and worships which are carried out only on special times and occasions in the life which is devoid of this constant remembrance of Allah is of the plant which has been planted in an un-congenial climate, and which is growing only due to the special attention and care of the gardener. This very thing has been explained by the Holy Prophet in a *Hadīth*, thus:

“Mu'ādh bin Anas Juhanī relates that a person asked the Holy Prophet of Allah, who among those who fight in the way of Allah will get the highest reward? He replied: The one who remembers Allah the most. The man asked: Who among the observers of the fast will get the highest reward? He replied: The one who remembers Allah the most. The man then asked the same question about the offerer of the Prayer, the payer of the *Zakāt* and charities and the performer of *Hajj*, and the Holy Prophet in every case gave the same answer, saying: He who remembers Allah the most.” (Musnad Aḥmad)

64. This verse plainly tells what qualities and characteristics are of real worth in the sight of Allah. These are the basic values of Islam which have been compressed into one sentence. As regards these, there is no difference between the man and woman. However, as for their life-activity, the two sexes have separate spheres to function. The males



have to function in some particular spheres and the females in some others. But if they possess these qualities and characteristics equally, Allah will raise them to equal ranks and bless them with equal rewards. It will in no way affect their rank and reward if one carried out household chores and the other performed the duties of caliphate and enforced the *Shri'ah* injunctions; one reared children in the house and the other went to the battlefield and fought for the sake of Allah and His Religion.

65. From here begin the verses which were sent down in connection with the Holy Prophet's marriage with Ḥaḍrat Zainab.

66. Ibn 'Abbās, Qatādah, 'Ikrimah and Muqātil bin Ḥayyān say that this verse was sent down at the time when the Holy Prophet proposed Ḥaḍrat Zainab for Ḥaḍrat Zaid, and Zainab and her relatives did not agree. According to Ibn 'Abbās, when the Holy Prophet made the proposal, Ḥaḍrat Zainab said, "I am better than him in lineage." Ibn Sa'd says that she also said, "I do not approve him for myself. I am a Quraishite by birth." The same sort of disapproval was expressed by her brother, 'Abdullah bin Jaḥsh, because Ḥaḍrat Zaid was a freed slave of the Holy Prophet and Ḥaḍrat Zainab was the daughter of his paternal aunt, Umaimah bint 'Abdul Muṭṭalib. They did not like the Holy Prophet to propose a girl of a noble Quraishite family, who was none other than his own first cousin, for his freed slave. At this, this verse was sent down and on hearing it Ḥaḍrat Zainab and all her relatives yielded to the proposal at once. Then the Holy Prophet married them, paid ten dinārs and 60 dirhams from his own pocket as dower on behalf of Zaid, provided the bridal dress and sent some articles of food for domestic use.

Though this verse was sent down on a special occasion, the injunction given in it is the cardinal principle of the constitutional law of Islam, and it applies to the entire Islamic system of life. According to it no Muslim individual or nation, or institution, or court or parliament or state, is entitled to use its own freedom of opinion in a matter in which Allah and His Prophet have already given a decision. To be a Muslim means to surrender one's freedom of opinion and action before Allah and His Messenger. It would be a contradiction in terms if a person or a nation claimed to be Muslim and then reserved for itself the freedom of choice and action. No sensible person can think of combining the two contradictory attitudes together. The one who desires to remain a Muslim will inevitably have to bow down to the Command of Allah and His Prophet, and the one who is not inclined to bow will have to admit that he is not a Muslim. If he does not admit he will be regarded as a hypocrite both by God and by the people even though he might proclaim to be a Muslim at the top of his voice.

67. The discourse from here to verse 48 was sent down after the Holy Prophet had married Ḥaḍrat Zainab, and the hypocrites, the Jews and the *mushriks* had started a relentless propaganda campaign against him. While studying these verses one should bear in mind the fact that this Divine discourse was not meant for the instruction of the enemies who were engaged in a wilful campaign of vilification and slander and falsehood to defame the Holy Prophet intentionally and to satisfy their rancour. But its real object was to protect the Muslims against the influence of their campaign and to safeguard them against doubts and suspicions. Evidently, the Word of Allah could not satisfy the unbelievers. It could give peace of mind only to those who knew and believed it to be Allah's Word. There was a danger that those righteous people also might be confused and influenced by the objections that were being raised by their enemies. Therefore, on the one hand, Allah removed all possible doubts from their minds, and on the other, taught the Muslims as well as the Holy Prophet himself how they should conduct themselves under the circumstances.

68. It refers to Ḥaḍrat Zaid as has been mentioned clearly below. In order to understand how Allah had favoured him and how the Holy Prophet, it is necessary here to relate his story briefly. He was the son of Ḥārithah bin Shuraḥbīl, a person of the Kalb tribe, and his mother, Su'dā bint Tha'labah, was from the Banī Ma'n, a branch of the Ṭay tribe. When he was eight years old, she took him along to her parents. There the people of Banī Qain bin Jasn raided their camp, plundered their goods and took some men prisoners, Ḥaḍrat Zaid included. Then they sold Zaid at the fair of 'Ukāz near Ṭā'if. His buyer was Ḥakīm bin Hizām, a nephew of Ḥaḍrat Khadijah. Ḥakīm brought him to Makkah and presented him to his paternal aunt. When the Holy Prophet married Ḥaḍrat Khadijah he found Zaid in her service and was so impressed by his good manners and conduct that he asked him of her. Thus, this fortunate boy entered the service of the best of men, whom Allah, after a few years, was going to appoint a Prophet. Ḥaḍrat Zaid at that time was 15 years old. Afterwards when his father and uncle came to know that their child was at Makkah, they came to the Holy Prophet and requested him to return him in exchange for ransom. The Holy Prophet said, "I shall call the boy and leave it to him whether he would like to go with you or stay with me. If he chose to go, I would take no ransom but would let him go with you. However, if he chose to stay back, I am not the one who would turn out a person who would like to stay with me." They said, "This is perfectly right and just. Please ask the boy." The Holy Prophet called Zaid and asked him, "Do you know these two gentlemen?" He said, "Yes sir, this is my

father and this my uncle." The Holy Prophet then said, "Well, you know them as well as me. You have the choice to go with them, or stay with me if you so desire." He said, "I have no wish to leave you and go with anyone else." His father and uncle said, "Zaid, will you prefer slavery to freedom, and choose to stay with others in preference to your parents and family?" He replied, "After what I have seen of this person I cannot now prefer anything else of the world to him." Hearing the reply the father and uncle of Zaid were reconciled to his remaining with the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet set Zaid free immediately and proclaimed before a gathering of the Quraish in the Ka'bah, "Bear witness that hence-forth Zaid is my son: he will receive inheritance from me and I from him." Thereafter, he began to be called Zaid bin Muḥammad by the people. All this happened before the Holy Prophet's advent as a Prophet. Then, when he was blessed with Prophethood by Allah, there were four persons who accepted his claim to it without a moment's hesitation as soon as they heard of it from him. They were Ḥaḍrat Khadijah, Ḥaḍrat Zaid, Ḥaḍrat 'Ali and Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr. Ḥaḍrat Zaid was 30 years old then, and had already spent 15 years in the Holy Prophet's service. In the fourth year after Hijrah, the Holy Prophet married him to his first cousin Ḥaḍrat Zainab, paid her dower on his behalf and provided them with necessary articles for setting up the house.

This is to what Allah has alluded in the verse, saying: "Whom Allah as well as you had favoured."

69. These words were said when the relations between Ḥaḍrat Zaid and Ḥaḍrat Zainab had become very strained, and after making repeated complaints Ḥaḍrat Zaid had finally told the Holy Prophet that he intended to divorce her. Although Ḥaḍrat Zainab had accepted to be married to him in obedience to Allah and His Messenger's command, she could not overcome her feeling that Zaid was a freed slave, who had been brought up by her own family, and she in spite of being the daughter of a noble Arab family, had been wedded to him. Due to this feeling she could never regard Ḥaḍrat Zaid as her equal in matrimonial life, and this caused more and more bitterness between them. Thus after a little more than a year the marriage ended in divorce.

70. Some people have misconstrued this sentence to mean this: The Holy Prophet desired to marry Ḥaḍrat Zainab and wanted that Zaid should divorce her. But when Zaid came to the Holy Prophet and said that he wanted to divorce his wife, the Holy Prophet stopped him from this only half-heartedly. At this Allah said: "You were keeping hidden in your heart that which Allah intended to reveal." The real

[Contd on p. 118

الْمُؤْمِنِينَ حَرْجٌ فِي أَزْوَاجِ أَدْعِيَائِهِمْ إِذَا قَضَوْا مِنْهُنَّ وَطْرًا وَكَانَ أَمْرُ  
 اللَّهِ مَفْعُولًا ۗ مَا كَانَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ مِنْ حَرْجٍ فِيمَا فَرَضَ اللَّهُ لَهُ سُنَّةَ اللَّهِ  
 فِي الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ قَدَرًا مَقْدُورًا ۗ الَّذِينَ يُبَلِّغُونَ  
 رِسَالَاتِ اللَّهِ وَيَخْشَوْنَهُ وَلَا يَخْشَوْنَ أَحَدًا إِلَّا اللَّهَ ۗ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ حَسِيبًا ۗ  
 مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَا أَحَدٍ مِّن رِّجَالِكُمْ وَلَكِن رَّسُولَ اللَّهِ وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ ۗ وَ  
 كَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا ۗ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا ۗ  
 وَ سَبِّحُوهُ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا ۗ هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَلِّيْ عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَلَائِكَتُهُ لِيُخْرِجَكُم مِّنَ  
 الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَكَانَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَحِيمًا ۗ تَحِيَّتُهُمْ يَوْمَ يَلْقَوْنَهُ سَلَامٌ  
 وَ أَعَدَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا كَرِيمًا ۗ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَاهِدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَ  
 نَذِيرًا ۗ وَ دَاعِيًا إِلَى اللَّهِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَسِرَاجًا مُنِيرًا ۗ وَ بَشِيرًا لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ بِأَنَّ  
 لَهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ فَضْلًا كَبِيرًا ۗ وَلَا تُطِعِ الْكُفْرِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ وَدَعَا أَذَاهُ  
 وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ ۗ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا ۗ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا نَكَحْتُمُ  
 الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ ثُمَّ طَلَقْتُمُوهُنَّ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَسُوهُنَّ فَمَا لَكُمْ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ عِدَّةٍ  
 تَعْتَدُونَهَا فَتَعُوهُنَّ وَسِرْحُونَهُنَّ سِرَاحًا جَمِيلًا ۗ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِنَّا أَحْلَلْنَا  
 لَكَ أَزْوَاجَكَ الَّتِي آتَيْتَ أَجُورَهُنَّ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ يَمِينُكَ مِنَّمَا آفَاءَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ وَ  
 بَنَاتِ عِمَّتِكَ وَبَنَاتِ خَالِكَ وَبَنَاتِ خَلِيَّتِكَ الَّتِي مَا جَرْنَ مَعَكَ  
 وَامْرَأَةً مُؤْمِنَةً إِن وَهَبْتَ نَفْسَهَا لِلنَّبِيِّ إِنْ أَرَادَ النَّبِيُّ أَنْ يَسْتَنْكِحَهَا  
 خَالِصَةً لَّكَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۗ قَدْ عَلِمْنَا مَا فَرَضْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ فِي أَزْوَاجِهِمْ  
 وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ لِيُكُونَ عَلَيْكَ حَرْجٌ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ۗ

There is no harm for the Prophet to do a thing which Allah has ordained for him.<sup>74</sup> The same has been the Way of Allah with regard to all the Prophets who have gone before, and Allah's Command is an absolutely settled decree.<sup>75</sup> (This is the Way of Allah for those) who convey His messages, who fear Him alone and fear none but One God: Allah is enough to take account.<sup>76</sup> 38-39

(O people,) Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the last of the Prophets, and Allah is the Knower of everything.<sup>77</sup> 40

O you who have believed, remember Allah much and glorify Him morning and evening.<sup>78</sup> He it is Who blesses you, and His angels pray for His blessings for you, so that He may bring you out of darkness into light: He is very Kind to the believers.<sup>79</sup> Their salutation on the day they meet Him will be "Peace",<sup>80</sup> and Allah has prepared for them an honourable reward. 41-44

O Prophet,<sup>81</sup> We have sent you as a witness,<sup>82</sup> a bearer of good news and a warner,<sup>83</sup> an inviter to Allah by His leave<sup>84</sup> and a luminous lamp. Give good news to those who have believed (in you) that there are great bounties in store for them from Allah, so do not yield to the disbelievers and the hypocrites, disregard their persecution and put your trust in Allah: for Allah is sufficient for being entrusted with all one's affairs. 45-48

O you who have believed, when you marry the believing women, and then divorce them before you have touched them,<sup>85</sup> they do not have to fulfil a waiting term, whose completion you may demand of them; so provide them with something and send them off gracefully.<sup>86</sup> 49

O Prophet, We have made lawful to you those of your wives, whose dowers you have paid,<sup>87</sup> and those women who come into your possession out of the slave-girls granted by Allah, and the daughters of your paternal uncles and aunts, and of your maternal uncles and aunts, who have migrated with you, and the believing woman who gives 50

herself to the Prophet if the Prophet may desire to marry her.<sup>88</sup> This privilege is for you only, not for the other believers.<sup>89</sup> We know what restrictions We have imposed on the other believers concerning their wives and slave-girls. (You have been made an exception) so that there may be no hindrance to you;<sup>90</sup> and Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Merciful.

*Contd. from p. 115]*

meaning, however, is contrary to this. If this sentence is read with verses 1, 2, 3 and 7 of this Sūrah, one can clearly see that in the very days when bitterness was increasing between Ḥaḍrat Zaid and his wife, Allah had hinted to His Prophet that when Zaid had divorced his wife, he would have to marry the divorced lady. But since the Holy Prophet knew what it meant to marry the divorced wife of the adopted son in the contemporary Arab society, and that too at a time when apart from a handful of the Muslims the entire country had become jealous of him, he was hesitant to take any step in that direction. That is why when Ḥaḍrat Zaid expressed his intention to divorce his wife, the Holy Prophet said to him, "Fear Allah and do not divorce your wife." What he meant by this was that Zaid should not divorce his wife so that he was saved from facing the trial, otherwise in case the divorce was pronounced he would have to comply with the command, and thus provoke a severe storm of criticism and vilification against himself. But when the Holy Prophet deliberately forbade Zaid to divorce his wife so that he himself might be saved from what he feared would cause him defamation, Allah found this below the high position that He wanted His Prophet to enjoy, whereas Allah intended to effect a great reform through this marriage of the Prophet. The words "You were fearing the people, whereas Allah has a greater right that you should fear Him," clearly point to the same theme.

The same explanation of this verse has been given by Imām Zain-ul-‘Ābedīn Ḥaḍrat ‘Ali bin Ḥussain (may Allah be pleased with him). He says, "Allah had indicated to His Prophet that Zainab would be included among his wives. But when Zaid complained about her to him, the Holy Prophet admonished him to fear Allah and keep his wife. At this Allah said to His Prophet, 'I had informed you that I would marry you to Zainab. But when you were forbidding Zaid to divorce his wife, you were hiding that which Allah was going to reveal.'" (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Kathīr on the authority of Ibn Abī Ḥātim).

‘Allāma Alūsī also in his *Rūḥ al-Ma‘āni* has given the same meaning of it. He says, "This is an expression of displeasure on abandoning

the better course, which was that the Holy Prophet should have kept quiet, or should have told Zaid to do as he liked. The displeasure amounted to this: 'Why did you tell Zaid to keep his wife, whereas I had informed you beforehand that Zainab would be included among your wives?'

71. That is, Zaid divorced his wife and her waiting-period came to an end. The words "fulfilled his desire of her" by themselves give the meaning that Zaid was left with no desire attached to her. And this state of affairs does not appear on mere pronouncement of the divorce, because even during the waiting-period the husband can take his wife back if he has any interest in her; and the husband also has this desire left with the divorced wife that it should become known whether she is pregnant or not. Therefore, the desire of her former husband with the divorced wife comes to an end only on the expiry of the waiting-period.

72. These words are explicit that the Holy Prophet had married Hadrat Zainab not because of any personal desire but under the Command of Allah.

73. These words clearly indicate that Allah accomplished this social reform through the Holy Prophet to effect a great change which could not be enforced by any other means. There was no way to put an end to the wrong customs that had become prevalent in Arabia in respect of the adopted relations but this that Allah's Messenger himself should take initiative to abolish them. Therefore, Allah arranged this marriage not for the sake of adding a wife to the Holy Prophet's household but for fulfilling an important social change.

74. These words show that for the other Muslims such a marriage is just permissible but for the Holy Prophet it was a duty which Allah had imposed on him.

75. That is, "For the Prophets it has always been a law that whatever Command they receive from Allah, they have to act on it as a duty which they cannot in any case avoid. When Allah enjoins something on His Prophet, he has to accomplish it even if the whole world is deadly opposed to it."

76. The words in the Text have two meanings: (1) That Allah is enough to counter every fear and danger; and (2) that Allah is enough to take account: none else but Allah should be feared for accountability.

77. This one sentence cuts at the root of all those objections which the opponents were raising in connection with this marriage of the Holy Prophet.

Their first objection was that he had married his own daughter-in-law, whereas according to his own law the son's wife is forbidden for the

father. This was answered by saying: "Muhammad is not the father of any of your men." That is, Zaid was not his real son, and so it was not unlawful to marry his divorced wife.

Their second objection was that even if his adopted son was not his real son, it was not necessary that he should have married his divorced wife. This was answered by saying: "... but he is the Messenger of Allah." That is, it was his duty as the Messenger of Allah to have put an end to all kinds of prejudices about a lawful thing which custom and tradition had made unlawful without good reason and declare it to be lawful once again.

The point was stressed by saying: "... and (he is) the last of the Prophets." That is, not to speak of a Messenger, no other Prophet would be raised after him, who could make up for a possible deficiency in the enforcement of a reform in the law and society that might have been left un-enforced in his time. Therefore, it had become all the more necessary that he should himself root out the custom of ignorance.

Again, to further emphasize this point, it was said: "Allah has knowledge of everything." That is, Allah knows best why it was imperative to get the custom of ignorance rooted out at that juncture through the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) rather than let it remain as it was. He knows that no other prophet would be coming after him in the future; therefore, if He did not abolish this custom through His Last Prophet, no other person after him would be able to abolish it for all the Muslims of the world for ever. Even if the later reformers would abolish it, no action of any one of them will have the permanent and universal authority behind it so that the people of every country and every age might start following it, and none of them would have a personality endowed with that holiness and sanctity that an action's being merely his way (*sunnah*) might root out every feeling of aversion and abhorrence from the mind of the people.

It is a pity that a section of the people in our age have given wrong interpretations of this verse and opened the way to a great mischief. We have therefore added a comprehensive appendix at the end of the commentary of this Sūrah for the explanation of the question of the Finality of Prophethood and the eradication of the misunderstanding spread by these people.

78. This is meant to instruct the Muslims to the effect: When the Messenger of Allah is being showered with taunts and abuses by the enemies and his person being made the target of a propaganda campaign to frustrate his Mission, the believers should neither listen to these absurd things unconcerned nor should become themselves also involved in the doubts and suspicions spread by the enemies, nor should resort to abusive



language in retaliation, but they should turn to Allah and remember Him more than usual as a special measure. The meaning of "remembering Allah much" has been explained in E.N. 63 above. "To glorify Allah morning and evening" means to glorify Him constantly, to express His holiness and purity by word of mouth and not merely by counting beads on the rosary.

79. This is meant to make the Muslims realize this: "The jealousy and malice of the disbelievers and hypocrites towards you is only due to the mercy that Allah has shown you through His Messenger. It is through him that you have been blessed with the faith, that you have come out from the darkness of unbelief and ignorance into the light of Islam, that you have developed the high moral and social qualities by virtue of which you stand distinguished above others. It is this which has filled the jealous people with malice and rage against the Messenger of Allah. However, in this state you should not adopt any unbecoming attitude which might alienate you from the mercy of Allah."

The word *ṣalāt* when used with the preposition *'alā* by Allah in respect of the servants, it means mercy and kindness and compassion and when used by the angels in respect of the human beings, it means the prayer for mercy. That is, the angels pray to Allah to bless the human beings with His bounty and favours. Another meaning of *yusālī 'alaikum* is: "Allah blesses you with renown among the people and exalts you to a high rank so that the people begin to praise you and the angels begins to eulogize you."

80. This can have three meanings: (1) That Allah will Himself receive them with: "Peace be upon you," as has been stated in Sūrah Yā Sīn: 58: "... they have been greeted with 'Peace' from the Merciful Lord." (2) That the angels will greet them, as stated in Sūrah An-Nahl: 32: "This is the reward for those pious people whose souls are received in a pure state, by the angels, who welcome them, saying: 'Peace be upon you: enter into Paradise as the reward of your good deeds.'" (3) That they will greet one another among themselves, as stated in Sūrah Yūnus: 10, thus: "Therein their prayer will be, 'Glory to Thee, O Lord,' and their greeting: 'Peace be to you,' and the burden of their hymn: 'Praise is for Allah alone, Lord of the universe.'"

81. After admonishing the Muslims, Allah now addresses a few words of consolation to His Prophet, as if to say: "We have blessed you with such and such a high rank and raised you to an exalted place of honour. Your opponents will not be able to harm you in any way by their propaganda campaign of slander and calumny. Therefore, you should not take their mischief to heart, nor give any weight to their

propaganda. You should continue doing the duties of your mission, and let them utter whatever nonsense they like." Along with this, incidentally, the other people, both the believers and the unbelievers, also have been told that the person they have to deal with is not an ordinary man but a great personality, whom Allah has raised to the highest ranks of honour and glory.

82. The meaning of the Prophet's being a "witness" is very vast. It includes three kinds of evidence:

(1) *Verbal evidence*, i.e. the Prophet should bear out the truth of the realities and principles on which Allah's Religion is based and tell the world plainly that they are the truth and all that is opposed to them is falsehood. He should rise to proclaim without hesitation and fear the Being of Allah and His Unity, the existence of the angels, the coming down of Revelation, the occurrence of life-after-death, the Hell and Heaven, all are realities, even if they appear strange to the world, and the people mock the one presenting them, or call him a madman. Likewise, the Prophet should openly present before the people the concepts, values, principles and rules pertaining to morality and civilization and social life that God has revealed to him, and reject as wrong all the concepts and ways which are prevalent and are opposed to them, even if the whole world rejects them as wrong and violates them in practice. Similarly, the Prophet should proclaim as lawful what is lawful in Allah's Law even if the whole world regards it as unlawful, and should proclaim as unlawful whatever is unlawful in Allah's Law even if the world regards it as lawful and pure.

(2) *Practical evidence*: That is, the Prophet in his own life should practically demonstrate all that he has been commissioned to present before the world. His life should be free from every shade of that which he calls evil, and his own character should clearly reflect that which he calls good; he should be the foremost in carrying out what he regards as obligatory, and most cautious in refraining from what he calls sinful. He should exert his utmost to enforce the code of life which he calls Divine. His own character and conduct should bear out how sincere and truthful he is in his invitation; and his own self should be such a model of his teaching that anyone who sees him should know what kind of a man he wants to produce by the Faith to which he invites the world, what kind of a character he wants to instil in him and what system of life he wants to be established through him in the world.

(3) *Evidence in the Hereafter*: That is, when the Court of Allah is established in the Hereafter, the Prophet should give evidence to prove

that he had conveyed to the people the whole message, without making any alteration or change in it, that had been entrusted to him, and that he had shown no slackness in making the truth manifest before them, by word and by deed. On the basis of this evidence it will be determined what reward the believers deserve and what punishment the disbelievers deserve.

From this one can have an idea of how great a responsibility had Allah placed upon the Holy Prophet by raising him to the position of a "witness", and how great should be the personality worthy of that high position. Evidently, there has been no slackness whatever on the part of the Holy Prophet in the matter of giving evidence with regard to the Faith, verbally as well as practically. That is why in the Hereafter he will be able to testify that he had made the Truth plain to the people, and that is how Allah's argument will be established against them; otherwise, if, God forbid, there had been any slackness on the part of the Prophet in providing evidence, he could neither be a witness against them in the Hereafter nor could any case be established against the deniers of the Truth.

Some people have tried to give a different interpretation to the word "witness". They say that the Holy Prophet in the Hereafter will bear witness to the acts and deeds of the people. From this they conclude that the Holy Prophet is watching and witnessing the acts of all the people; otherwise he could not bear the witness. But according to the Qur'ān this interpretation is absolutely wrong. The Qur'ān tells us that Allah has arranged a different system for recording the acts of the people. For this purpose His angels are preparing the conduct-book of every person. (See in this connection Sūrah Qāf : 17-18, and Al-Kahf : 49). After this He will make the people's own limbs also to bear witness against them. (Yā Sīn : 65, Hā Mīm As-Sajdah : 20-21). As for the Prophets, they are not to testify to the acts of the people, but to give evidence to prove that they had conveyed the Truth to the people. The Qur'ān clearly says:

"On the Day when Allah will assemble all the Messengers, He will ask : 'What was the response you received?' They will answer, 'We have no knowledge: You alone have the full knowledge of all that is hidden.'" (Al-Mā'idah : 109)

In the same connection, the Qur'ān says about the Prophet Jesus that when he will be questioned about the deviation of the Christians, he will say : "I was a witness to their conduct as long as I remained among them, but after You recalled me, You watched over them." (Al-Mā'idah : 117)

These verses clearly show that the Prophets will not be witnesses in regard to the acts of the people. As to what they will bear witness to the Qur'ān gives an equally clear answer :

“O Muslims, We have made you a community of the ‘Golden Mean’ so that you may be witnesses in regard to mankind and the Messenger may be a witness in regard to you.” (Al-Baqarah : 143)

“(O Muḥammad, warn them of) the Day when We shall call a witness from among every community to testify against it. And We shall call you to testify against these people.” (An-Nahl : 89)

This shows that on the Day of Resurrection the Holy Prophet's evidence in its nature will not be any different from the evidence for bearing which the Holy Prophet's community and the witnesses in regard to every other community will be summoned. Evidently, if it be an evidence in regard to the acts, then the omnipresence of all of them also becomes necessary. And if these witnesses will be called to give evidence to confirm that the Creator's message had reached His creation, inevitably the Holy Prophet also will be called upon to give a similar evidence.

The same is supported by the *Hadīth* which Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Ibn Mājah, Imām Aḥmad and others have related on the authority of ‘Abdullah bin Mas‘ūd, ‘Abdullah bin ‘Abbās, Abū ad-Dardā’, Anas bin Mālik and many other Companions (may Allah be pleased with them all), whose common theme is this: “The Holy Prophet on the Day of Resurrection will see some of his Companions being brought, but instead of coming to him they will either be going or being pushed to the other side. Thereupon the Holy Prophet will say: ‘O Allah, they are my Companions!’ Allah will say: ‘You do not know what misdeeds they committed after you’.” This theme has been reported by numerous Companions and with so many chains of authorities that there remains no doubt about its authenticity. This proves that the Holy Prophet is not at all a witness to each individual of his community and to each of his acts. As for the *Hadīth* which says that the acts of the people of his Ummah are presented before him, it does not in any way contradict this, because its purport is that Allah keeps him informed of the affairs of his Ummah, which does not mean that the Holy Prophet is actually witnessing the acts of every person.

83. One should note that a person's giving the good news of a good end for belief and righteous acts and the warning of an evil end for disbelief and evil acts, in his personal capacity, is a different thing, and another's being appointed by Allah as a bearer of the good news and a warner is quite another thing. The one who is appointed to this office by Allah necessarily possesses an authority to give the good news and administer the warnings due to which his good news and his warnings are

invested with legality. His giving a good news for an act has the meaning that the Greatest of all Judges, Who has sent him, approves of the act and holds it worthy of a reward; so, it is certainly imperative or obligatory or commendable in nature, and its doer will surely get a reward. On the other hand, his giving a warning of an evil end for an act has the meaning that the Sovereign forbids that act; so, it is certainly sinful and unlawful, and its doer will surely be punished. The good news and warnings of the one who is not divinely appointed cannot ever be invested with such an authority.

84. Here also the same difference as pointed out above exists between the preaching of a common man and of a Prophet. As for the invitation to Allah, it is given, and can be given, by every preacher, but he is not appointed by Allah to do so. Contrary to this, a Prophet rises to call the people towards Allah by the leave of Allah. His call is not mere preaching but has also the support of the authority of the Lord of the Universe, Who sent him. That is why resistance and opposition to the inviter to Allah amounts to rebellion against Allah Himself precisely as resistance to a government official when he is performing official duty is regarded as hostile to the government itself.

85. This sentence is explicit that the word *nikāḥ* here has been used for the contract of marriage only. The lexicographers have greatly disputed over the real meaning of the Arabic word *nikāḥ*. One section of them says that as a word it is common both for intercourse and for the contract of marriage. The second section says that in its meaning it is common for both. The third section opines that its real meaning is the contract of marriage and for intercourse it is used only figuratively. And the fourth section expresses the opinion that its real meaning is intercourse and for the contract of marriage it is used only figuratively. Each section has cited Arabic poetry in support of its view. But Raghīb Isfahānī has emphatically asserted this: "The real meaning of the word *nikāḥ* is contract of marriage; it has been used for intercourse metaphorically. It is impossible that its real meaning be intercourse and may have been used for the contract of marriage only metaphorically." The argument he gives is that all the words that have been actually coined for intercourse in Arabic, or in other languages of the world, are obscene and vulgar. No gentleman would like to utter them in a civilized gathering. Therefore, it is not possible that a society should use the word which has actually been coined for this act for marriage as a metaphor. For conveying this meaning only chaste words have been used in every language of the world and not obscene words.

As far as the Qur'ān and *Sunnah* are concerned, *nikāḥ* is a term, which either implies only contract of marriage, or intercourse after the contract

of marriage; but it has nowhere been used for intercourse outside marriage. This kind of intercourse has been called *zinā* (adultery) by the Qur'ān and *Sunnah* and not *nikāh*.

86. This is a unique verse which was sent down probably in the same period respecting some case of divorce, and so inserted in this context. This shows that it was sent down after the preceding and before the following discourse.

Below is given a summary of the legal injunctions that have been derived from this verse:

(1) Although the word "believing women" has been used, which apparently may give the impression that the law enunciated in this verse is not applicable to the women of the people of the Book, yet all scholars are agreed that this very injunction is applicable to them also. That is, in case a Muslim has married such a woman, all the injunctions relating to her divorce, dower, waiting-period (*'iddat*) and provision at divorce are the same as of marriage with a believing woman. The scholars are also agreed that Allah's mentioning the believing women here in particular is actually meant to tell the Muslims that only the believing women are suitable for them. That is, although it is permissible for them to marry Jewish and Christian women, it is not proper and commendable. In other words, the Qur'ān seems to impress that Allah expects that the believers would marry only the believing women.

(2) The word *mas* (to touch) here has been used for intercourse by implication. Thus, the verse apparently implies that if the husband has not had intercourse with the woman, even though he has had seclusion with her and has even touched her with the hand, she will not have to observe the waiting-term (*'iddat*) in case of divorce. But the jurists, for the sake of precaution, have decreed that if they have had seclusion proper (i.e. seclusion during which intercourse could be possible), waiting-period will have to be observed if divorce is pronounced after it, and the waiting-period would be annulled only in case divorce was pronounced before they have had the seclusion.

(3) The annulment of the waiting-period in case of divorce before the event of seclusion means that in this case the man forfeits his right to take the woman back as his wife, and the woman becomes entitled to marry anyone she likes immediately after the divorce. But it should be borne in mind that this applies only to the divorce which is pronounced before the event of the seclusion. If a woman's husband dies before having had seclusion, the waiting-period that has to be observed after death will not be annulled, but she will have to pass the same waiting-period of four months and ten days as is obligatory for a married

woman in normal conditions. (*Iddat* is the waiting-period before the expiry of which a divorced woman or a widow is forbidden to remarry).

(4) The words "they do not have to fulfil a waiting-period for you", show that the waiting-period is a right of the man on the woman. But it does not mean that this is only the man's right. It, in fact, includes two other rights as well: the right of the children, and the right of Allah or of the Law. The man's right is on the ground that he has the right to take the woman back as his wife during the period, and also on the ground that the proof of the parentage of his children, which depends on the woman's being pregnant or otherwise, becomes established in the waiting-period. The reason for including the right of the children is that the proof of a child's parentage is necessary for the establishment of his legal rights and his moral status also depends on this that his parentage should not be doubtful. The reason for including the right of Allah (or the right of the Law) is that even if the people and their children become heedless of their rights, the Divine Law requires that their rights should be protected. That is why even if a man gives a warrant to a woman that after his death or after obtaining divorce from him, there will be no waiting-period binding on her from him, the Divine Law will in no case annul it.

(5) "Provide them with something and send them away with kindness": The intention of this injunction would be fulfilled by acting in either of the two ways: If the dower had been fixed at the time of marriage, and then divorce pronounced before the event of seclusion proper, payment of half of the dower will be obligatory, as enjoined in Al-Baqarah: 237. To give more than what is obligatory is not binding but certainly commendable. For instance, it is commendable that besides paying half of the dower the man should let the woman retain the bridal garments, or any other articles that he had sent her for the occasion of marriage. But if no dower had been fixed at the time of marriage, it is obligatory to pay her something before sending her away, and this "something" should be according to the status and financial means of the man, as has been enjoined in Al-Baqarah: 236. One section of the scholars hold that something in any case has to be paid in case of divorce as an obligation whether dower has been fixed or not.

(6) "Sending off in dignity" does not only mean that the woman should be provided with something on divorce but this also that separation should be adopted in a gentlemanly way, without any kind of vilification. If a man does not happen to like a woman, or there has been some other cause of complaint due to which he does not want to

keep the woman, he should divorce her like a gentleman and send her away. He should not start mentioning her faults and relating his complaints against her before the people so as to also prejudice them against her. This instruction of the Qur'ān clearly shows that annexing the enforcement of divorce to the permission of a local council or court is wholly against the wisdom and spirit of the Divine Law, for in that case there remains no chance of "sending her away gracefully", but defamation, revilement and vilification do inevitably result even if the man does not so will. Moreover, the words of the verse also do not admit that the power of the man to divorce should be bound up with the permission of a local council or court. The verse is clearly giving the married man the power of divorce and placing on him alone the responsibility that if he wants to release the woman before touching her he must pay her half the dower as an obligation, or something else according to his means. From this the object of the verse clearly seems to be that in order to prevent divorce from being taken lightly the man should be placed under the burden of a financial responsibility so that he himself uses his power of divorce with sense, and there is no chance of an external interference in the internal affair of the two families.

(7) Ibn 'Abbās, Sa'id bin al-Musayyib, Ḥasan Baṣrī, 'Ali bin al-Husain (Zain al-'Ābedīn), Imām Shāfe'ī and Imām Aḥmad bin Hanbal have deduced from the words, "when you marry...and then divorce ..." that divorce takes effect only when marriage has been contracted. Divorce before the contract of marriage is without effect. Therefore if a person says, "If I marry such and such a woman, or a woman of such and such a tribe or nation, or any other woman, she is divorced," it will be an absurd and meaningless thing; no divorce can take effect from this. The following *Hadiths* are presented in support of this view:

"The son of Adam is not entitled to use his power of divorce in respect of that which he does not possess." (Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah). And: "There is no divorce before marriage." (Ibn Mājah). But a great number of the jurists hold that this verse and these *Hadiths* apply in the case when a man says to a woman, who is not his wife, "You have divorce on you," or "I divorce you." Saying such a thing is no doubt absurd, and is of no legal consequence, but if he says, "If I marry you, you are divorced," this is not divorcing before the marriage, but the person is in fact declaring his intent that when the woman is married to him, she will stand divorced. Such a declaration cannot be absurd and without effect, but, as a matter of fact, whenever the woman is married to him, divorce will fall on her. The jurists who hold this view have further differed as to the extent this kind of divorce



will have effect.

Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Imām Muḥammad and Imām Zufar hold that divorce will take place in any case whether a person specifies a woman or a tribe or a nation, or talks generally so as to say, "Any woman whom I marry is divorced." Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣāṣ has cited the same opinion also from Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Ibrāhīm Nakha'ī, Mujāhid and 'Umar bin 'Abdul 'Azīz (may Allah show mercy to them all).

Sufyān Thaurī and 'Uthmān al-Battī say that divorce will take place only in case the person says, "If I marry such and such a woman, she is divorced."

Hasan bin Ṣāliḥ, Laith bin Sa'd and 'Āmir ash-Sha'bī say that such a divorce will take place even if something is said in general terms provided that a particular class of the people has been mentioned; for instance, if the person has said, "If I marry a woman of such and such a family, or such and such a tribe, or such and such city or country or nation, she is divorced."

Ibn Abī Lailā and Imām Mālik, disputing the above opinion, have added a condition that the time limit also should be determined. For example, if the man said, "If I marry within this year or the next ten years such and such a woman or a woman from such and such a class, she is divorced," divorce will take place, otherwise not. Imām Mālik also adds that if the time limit is so long that the man is not expected to outlive it, his declaration will have no effect.

87. This, in fact, is an answer to the objection of the people who said that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) forbade others to keep more than four wives at a time but had himself taken a fifth wife. This objection was raised because at the time the Holy Prophet married Ḥaḍrat Zainab, he already had four wives with him: (1) Ḥaḍrat Saudah whom he had married in the 3rd year before the Hijrah, (2) Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah whom he married in the 3rd year before the Hijrah but who came to live with him in Shawwāl, A.H. 1, (3) Ḥaḍrat Ḥafṣah whom he married in Sha'bān, A.H. 3, and (4) Ḥaḍrat Umm Salamah whom he married in Shawwāl, A.H. 4. Thus, Ḥaḍrat Zainab was his fifth wife. Here Allah has answered the objection of the disbelievers and the hypocrites, as if to say, "O Prophet, We have made lawful for you all these five wives whom you have married by giving them their dowers." In other words, the answer means this: "It is We Who have imposed the restriction of four wives on others, and it is also We Ourselves Who have made Our Prophet an exception to the restriction. When We could impose the restriction, We could also make the exception."

About this answer also one should note that it was not meant to

satisfy the disbelievers and the hypocrites but those Muslims to whom the opponents of Islam were trying to impart evil suggestions. Since they believed that the Qur'ān is Allah's speech and has been sent down in Allah's own words, Allah declared through a clear and decisive verse that the Prophet had not made himself an exception from the general law about four wives of his own accord, but the exception in regard to him had been decreed by Allah.

88. Besides making the fifth wife lawful for the Prophet, Allah in this verse also granted him the permission to marry a few other kinds of the women:

(1) The woman who came into his possession from among the slave-girls granted by Allah. According to this the Holy Prophet selected for himself Ḥaḍrat Raiḥānah from among the prisoners of war taken at the raid against the Bani Quraizah, Ḥaḍrat Juwairiyah from among the prisoners of war taken at the raid against the Bani al-Muṣṭaliq, Ḥaḍrat Ṣafiyyah out of the prisoners of war captured at Khaiber, and Ḥaḍrat Mārīah the Copt, who was presented by Maqauqis of Egypt. Out of these he set three of them free and married them, but had conjugal relations with Mārīah on the ground of her being his slave-girl. In her case there is no proof that the Holy Prophet set her free and married her.

(2) The ladies from among his first cousins, who emigrated along with him. The words "who emigrated with you" do not mean that they accompanied the Holy Prophet in his migration journey but this that they also had migrated in the way of Allah for the sake of Islam. The Holy Prophet was given the choice to marry any one of them he liked. Accordingly, in A.H. 7 he married Ḥaḍrat Umm Ḥabībah. (Incidentally, in this verse it has been elucidated that the daughters of one's paternal and maternal uncles and aunts are lawful for a Muslim. In this regard the Islamic Law is different both from the Christian Law and from the Jewish Law. Among the Christians one cannot marry a woman whose line of descent joins one's own anywhere in the last seven generations, and among the Jews it is permissible even to marry one's real niece, i.e. daughter of one's brother or sister).

(3) The believing woman who gives herself to the Prophet, i.e. who is prepared to give herself in marriage to the Prophet without a dower, and he may like to marry her. On account of this permission the Holy Prophet took Ḥaḍrat Maimānah as his wife in Shawwāl, A.H. 7, but he did not think he should have conjugal relations with her without paying her the dower. Therefore, he paid her the dower even though she did not demand or desire it. Some commentators say that the Holy Prophet did not have any wife who had offered herself to him; but this in fact means that he did not keep any wife without paying her the dower although

she offered herself to him.

89. If this sentence is taken to be related with the preceding sentence, it will mean that it is not permissible for any Muslim to take in marriage a woman who gives herself to him, without paying her the dower; and if it is taken to be related with the whole preceding passage, it will imply that the concession to marry more than four wives is only reserved for the Holy Prophet, not for the other Muslims. This verse also shows that certain commandments are specifically meant for the Holy Prophet to follow and are not applicable to the other Muslims. A study of the Qur'ān and *Sunnah* reveals several such commandments. For example, the *Tahajjud* Prayer was obligatory for the Holy Prophet but is voluntary for the Ummah. It is unlawful for him and his family to receive charities though it is not so for others. The inheritance left by him cannot be divided; as for the inheritance left by others relevant commandments have been given in *Sūrah An-Nisā'*. Keeping of more than four wives was made lawful for him though he was not enjoined to do justice to them. He was permitted to marry a woman who gave herself to him without any dower, and after his death his wives were forbidden for the Ummah. None of these privileges could be enjoyed by any other Muslim. Another special thing that the commentators have mentioned in this regard is that it was forbidden for the Holy Prophet to marry a woman from among the people of the Book though it is lawful for the Muslims to do so.

90. This is the reason why Allah made the Holy Prophet an exception to the general rule. "So that there may be no restraint on you" does not mean that he was, God forbid, a very lustful person, and therefore, he was permitted to marry several wives so that he might not feel any hindrance due to the restriction to four wives. This meaning will be understood only by the person who, blinded by prejudice, forgets that the Holy Prophet at the age of 25 married a lady who was 40 years old, and lived a happy, contented married life with her for full 25 years. Then, when she died, he married another old lady *Hadrat Saudah*, who remained his only wife for the next four years. Now, no sensible and honest person can imagine that when he became over fifty-three he was suddenly filled with lust and needed to have more and more wives. In fact, in order to understand the meaning of "no restraint", one should, on the one hand, keep in view the great task whose responsibility Allah had placed on the Holy Prophet, and on the other, understand the conditions and circumstances under which he had been appointed to accomplish the great task. Anyone who understands these two things

[ *Contd. on p. 134*

تُرْجَىٰ مَن تَشَاءُ مِنْهُنَّ وَتُؤَمَّرُ إِلَيْكَ مَن تَشَاءُ ۗ وَمِنَ ابْتِغَايَتِ مِمَّنْ عَزَلْتَ  
فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكَ ذَلِكَ أَدْنَىٰ أَلَّا تَقْرَأَ عَيْنُهُنَّ وَلَا يَحْزَنَ وَلَا يَرْضَيْنَ بِمَا  
اَسْتَيْتَهُنَّ كُلَّهُنَّ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَلِيمًا ۗ لَا  
يَحِلُّ لَكَ النِّسَاءُ مِنْ بَعْدُ وَلَا أَنْ تَبَدَّلَ بِهِنَّ مِنْ أَزْوَاجٍ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكَ  
حُسْنُهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا مَلَكَتْ يَمِينُكَ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ رَّقِيبًا ۗ يَا أَيُّهَا  
الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتَ النَّبِيِّ إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ إِلَىٰ طَعَامٍ غَيْرِ  
نَظَرٍ إِنَّهُ ۗ وَلَكِنْ إِذَا دُعِيتُمْ فَادْخُلُوا فَإِذَا طَعِمْتُمْ فَانْتَشِرُوا وَلَا  
مُسْتَأْنِسِينَ لِحَدِيثٍ إِنْ ذَلِكَ كَانَ يُؤْذَى النَّبِيَّ فَيَسْتَجِ مِنْكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ  
لَا يَسْتَجِ مِنَ الْحَقِّ ۗ وَإِذَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُنَّ مَتَاعًا فَسَلُّوهُنَّ مِنْ وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ  
ذَلِكُمْ أَطْهَرُ لِقُلُوبِكُمْ وَقُلُوبِهِنَّ ۗ وَمَا كَانَ لَكُمْ أَنْ تُؤْذُوا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَلَا  
أَنْ تَنْكِحُوا أَزْوَاجَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ أَبَدًا ۗ إِنْ ذَلِكَ كَانَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمًا ۗ  
إِنْ تَبَدُّوا شَيْئًا أَوْ تَخَفُوهُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا ۗ لَا جُنَاحَ  
عَلَيْهِنَّ فِي آبَائِهِنَّ وَلَا أَبْنَائِهِنَّ وَلَا إِخْوَانِهِنَّ وَلَا أَبْنَاءَ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ وَ  
لَا أَبْنَاءَ أَخَوَاتِهِنَّ وَلَا نِسَائِهِنَّ وَلَا مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُنَّ ۗ وَاتَّقِينَ اللَّهَ  
إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدًا ۗ إِنْ اللَّهُ وَمَلَائِكَتُهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى  
النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا ۗ إِنْ الَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ  
اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا مُهِينًا ۗ  
وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ بِغَيْرِ مَا اكْتَسَبُوا فَقَدِ احْتَمَلُوا  
بُهْتَانًا وَإِثْمًا مُبِينًا ۗ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِأَزْوَاجِكَ وَبَنَاتِكَ وَنِسَاءِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

You are granted the option that you may keep aside any of your wives you please, and keep to yourself any of them you please, and call back any of them you had set aside: there is no blame on you in this regard. Thus, it is expected that their eyes will be cooled and they will not grieve, and they will all remain well satisfied with whatever you give them.<sup>91</sup> Allah knows whatever is in your hearts, and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Forbearing.<sup>92</sup> No other women are lawful to you after this, nor are you allowed to have other wives instead of them, even if their beauty may be very pleasing to you.<sup>93</sup> You may, however, have slave-girls.<sup>94</sup> Allah is Watchful over everything. 51-52

O you who have believed, do not enter the houses of the Prophet without permission,<sup>95</sup> nor stay watching for the meal time; but if you are invited to meals, do come,<sup>96</sup> and when you have taken food, disperse. Do not engage in familiar talk,<sup>97</sup> for such behaviour causes trouble to the Prophet but he is shy of saying anything, and Allah does not feel shy in telling the truth. If you have to ask the wives of the Prophet for something, ask for it from behind a curtain. This is a better way for the purity of your as well as their hearts.<sup>98</sup> It is not at all permissible that you should trouble the Messenger of Allah,<sup>99</sup> nor is it permissible that you should marry his wives after him.<sup>100</sup> This is a grave offence in the sight of Allah. Whether you reveal something or conceal it, Allah has full knowledge of everything.<sup>101</sup> 53-54

There is no blame on the wives of the Prophet that they are visited in their houses by their fathers, their sons, their brothers, their brothers' sons, their sisters' sons,<sup>102</sup> their familiar women<sup>103</sup> and their slaves.<sup>104</sup> (O women,) you should avoid the disobedience of Allah, for Allah observes everything.<sup>105</sup> 55

Indeed Allah and His angels send blessings on the Prophet.<sup>106</sup> O you who have believed, you also should ask and send blessings and peace on him.<sup>107</sup> 56

57-58

Allah has cursed in this world and in the Hereafter those who cause trouble to Allah and His Messenger, and has prepared for them a disgraceful punishment.<sup>108</sup> And those who cause trouble to the believing men and women for no fault of theirs, have indeed born on their head the burden of a grave slander<sup>109</sup> and a manifest sin.

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*Contd. from p. 131]*

with an unbiased mind, will certainly realize why it was necessary to grant him freedom in respect of the wives and what "hindrance" was there for him in the restriction to four wives.

The task entrusted to the Holy Prophet was that he should mould and chisel by all-round education and training an uncouth, uncultured nation which was not uncivilized only from the Islamic point of view but from a general viewpoint as well, into a highly civilized, refined and virtuous nation. For this purpose it was not enough only to train men but the training of the women also was equally necessary. However, the principles of social life and civilization which he had been appointed to teach forbade free mixing of the sexes together, and it was not possible for him to impart direct training to the womenfolk himself without violating this rule. Therefore, for imparting education to the women the only alternative left for him was that he should marry several women of different ages and mental capabilities and should prepare them by education and training to become his helpers, and then employ them to give religious instruction to the young, middle-aged and old women of the city and desert and teach them the new principles of morality and civilization.

Moreover, the Holy Prophet had also been appointed to abolish the system of life of the pre-Islamic days of ignorance and replace it with the Islamic system of life practically. For the accomplishment of this task a conflict was inevitable with those who upheld the system of ignorance, and this conflict was being encountered in a country where the tribal system of life was prevalent with all its peculiar customs and traditions. Under these conditions, besides other devices, it was also necessary that the Holy Prophet should marry in different families and clans in order to cement many ties of friendship and put an end to enmities. Thus, the selection of the ladies whom he married was to some extent determined by this object besides their personal qualities. By taking Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah and Ḥaḍrat Ḥafsah to wife he further strengthened and deepened the relations with Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr and Ḥaḍrat 'Umar. Ḥaḍrat Umm Salamah was the daughter of the family to which Abū Jahl and Khālid bin Walid belonged, and Umm Ḥabibah was the

daughter of Abū Sufyān. These marriages neutralized the enmity of these families to a large extent; so much so that after Umm Ḥabībah's marriage Abū Sufyān never confronted the Holy Prophet on the battlefield. Ḥaḍrat Ṣafīyyah, Ḥaḍrat Juwairiah and Raiḥānah belonged to Jewish families. When the Holy Prophet married them, after setting them free, the hostile Jewish activities against him subsided. For according to the Arab traditions when the daughter of a clan or tribe was married to a person, he was regarded as the son-in-law of not only the girl's family but of the entire tribe, and it was disgraceful to fight the son-in-law.

Practical reformation of the society and abolition of its customs of ignorance was also included among the duties of his office. Therefore, he had to undertake one marriage for this purpose also, as has been related in detail in this Sūrah Aḥzāb itself.

For these reasons it was essential that there should be no restriction for the Prophet in respect of marriage so that in view of the requirements of the great mission entrusted to him he could marry as many women as he wanted.

This also brings out the error of the view of those people who think that polygamy is permissible only under special personal requirements and apart from these there can be no other object for which it may be permissible. Evidently, the reason for the Holy Prophet to marry more wives than one was not that the wife was sick, or barren, or that he had no male child, or that there was the question of the bringing up of some orphans. Without these restrictions he married all his wives either in view of the educational requirements, or for the reformation of society, or for political and social objectives. The question is, when Allah Himself has not kept polygamy restricted to a few particular needs, which are being mentioned these days and the Messenger of Allah took several wives for many purposes other than these, how is another person entitled to propose some restrictions in the law and then claim that he is imposing these in accordance with the *Sharī'ah*? As a matter of fact, the root cause for the imposition of these restrictions is the Western concept that polygamy is an evil in itself. That very concept has given rise to the idea that this unlawful thing can become lawful only in case of extreme circumstances. Now, however hard one may try to label this imported concept with Islam artificially, it is entirely alien to the Qur'ān and *Sunnah* and the whole Muslim literature.

91. This verse was meant to relieve the Holy Prophet of the domestic worries and anxieties so that he could carry out his duties with full peace of mind. When Allah clearly gave him the power and the authority to treat any of his wives as he liked, there remained no chance that those believing ladies would trouble him in any way, or

would create complications for him by their mutual rivalries and domestic squabbles. But in spite of having this authority from Allah the Holy Prophet meted out full justice to his wives. He did not prefer one to the other and would visit each of them regularly by turns. Only Abū Razīn from among the traditionists has said that the Holy Prophet visited only four of his wives (Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, Ḥaḍrat Ḥafṣah, Ḥaḍrat Zainab and Ḥaḍrat Umm Salamah) by turns and no turn had been fixed for the other wives. But all other traditionists and commentators contradict this and prove by authentic traditions that even after having this authority the Holy Prophet visited all his wives in turn and treated them alike. Bukhārī, Muslim, Nasā'ī, Abu Da'ūd and others have reported on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah that even after the revelation of this verse the Holy Prophet's practice was that whenever he wanted to visit any of us, his wives, on the turn of another wife, he would first ask her permission for it. Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣāṣ relates from 'Urwah bin Zubair that Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah told him, "As to our turns the Holy Prophet never preferred any of us to the other, although it seldom happened that he did not visit all his wives on the same day, but he never touched a wife unless it was her day by turn." And this also is a tradition from Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah that during his last illness when it became difficult for him to move about he asked for his other wives' permission to stay with her, and only on their approval he passed his last days in her apartment. Ibn Abī Ḥāṭim has cited this from Imām Zuhri that the Holy Prophet is not known to have deprived any of his wives of her turn. To this Ḥaḍrat Saudah only was an exception, who on account of her advanced age had willingly surrendered her turn in favour of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah.

Here, nobody should entertain the doubt that Allah had, God forbid, shown an undue privilege to His Prophet and deprived his wives of their rights. As a matter of fact, the great objectives for the sake of which the Holy Prophet had been made an exception to the general rule in respect of the number of wives, also demanded that he should be afforded full peace in domestic life and anything that could cause him distraction and embarrassment should be eradicated. It was a unique honour for the holy wives that they were privileged to be the life-partners of the greatest of all men like the Holy Prophet, and by virtue of this they got the opportunity to become his Companions and helpers in the great task of reform and invitation that was to become the means of true success for mankind till the end of time. Just as the Holy Prophet was offering every kind of sacrifice for the sake of this objective and the Companions also were following his example according to their capabilities, so it was the duty of his wives also to display



selflessness in every way. Therefore, all the wives accepted Allah's decision with regard to themselves happily and willingly.

92. This is a warning for the Holy Prophet's wives as well as for all other people. For the wives it is a warning in the sense that if after the coming down of this Divine Command they did not feel reconciled to it in their hearts, they would not escape Allah's punishment. And for others the warning is that if they entertained any kind of suspicion in their hearts in regard to the Holy Prophet's matrimonial life, or harboured any misgiving in any recess of their minds, this would not remain hidden from Allah. Along with this Allah's attribute of forbearance also has been mentioned so that one may know that although even a thought of insolence in regard to the Prophet is also punishable, yet if a person got rid of such a suspicion he might have the hope of His forgiveness.

93. This has two meanings: (1) "No other woman except those made lawful to you in verse 50 above, is any more lawful to you"; and (2) "when your wives have become pleased and ready to stay with you through every kind of hardship and have rejected the world in preference to the Hereafter, and are satisfied that you may treat them as you please, it is no longer lawful for you that you should divorce any of them and take another wife instead."

94. This verse explains why one is permitted to have conjugal relations with one's slave-girls besides the wedded wives, and there is no restriction on their number. The same thing has also been stated in Sūrah An-Nisā': 3, Al-Mu'minūn: 6, and Al-Ma'ārij: 30. In all these verses the slave-girls have been mentioned as a separate class from the wedded wives, and conjugal relations with them have been permitted. Moreover, verse 3 of Sūrah An-Nisā' lays down the number of the wives as four, but neither has Allah fixed the number of the slave-girls in that verse nor made any allusion to their number in the other relevant verses. Here, of course, the Holy Prophet is being addressed and told: "It is no more lawful for you to take other women in marriage, or divorce any of the present wives and take another wife in her stead; slave-girls, however, are lawful." This shows that no restriction has been imposed in respect of the slave-girls.

This, however, does not mean that the Divine Law has provided the rich an opportunity to purchase as many slave-girls as they like for their carnal indulgence. This is in fact how the self-seeking people have exploited and abused the Law. The Law had been made for the convenience of the people; it had not been made to be abused. One could, for instance, similarly abuse the Law concerning marriage. The *Shari'ah*

permits a man to marry up to four wives and also gives him the right to divorce his wife and take another one. This law had been made in view of man's requirements and needs. Now, if a person, merely for the sake of sensual enjoyment, were to adopt the practice of keeping four wives for a time and then divorcing them to be replaced by another company of them, it would be abusing the provisions of the law, for which the person himself would be responsible and not the *Shari'ah*. Likewise the *Shari'ah* has allowed that the women who are captured in war and whose people do not exchange them for Muslim prisoners of war nor ransom them, may be kept as slave-girls, and gave the persons to whom they are assigned by the government the right to have conjugal relations with them so that they do not become a moral hazard for the society. Then, as it was not possible to determine the number of the prisoners of war, legally also it could not be determined how many slave-girls a person could keep at a time. The sale of the slaves and slave-girls was also allowed for the reason that if a slave or a slave-girl could not pull on well with a master, he or she could be transferred to another person so that the same person's permanent ownership did not become a cause of unending torture for both the master and the captive. The *Shari'ah* made all these laws keeping in view human conditions and requirements for the convenience of men. If these have been made a means of sexual enjoyment and luxury by the rich, it is they who are to blame for this and not the *Shari'ah*.

95. This is an introduction to the general Command that was given in Sūrah An-Nūr: 27 about a year later. In the ancient times the Arabs would enter one another's house unceremoniously. If a person had to see another person he did not think it was necessary to call at the door or take permission for entry, but would enter the house and ask the womenfolk and children whether the master was at home or not. This custom of ignorance was the cause of many evils and would often give rise to some serious evils. Therefore, in the beginning a rule was made in respect of the houses of the Holy Prophet that no person, whether a close friend or a distant relative, could enter them without permission. Then in Sūrah An-Nūr a general command was given to enforce this rule for the houses of all the Muslims.

96. This is the second command in this connection. An uncivilized practice prevalent among the Arabs was that the visitors would call on a friend or acquaintance right at the time of the meals, or would come and prolong their stay till the meals time approached. This would often cause the master of the house great embarrassment. He could neither be so discourteous as to tell the visitors to leave because it was his meals time, nor could feed so many unexpected guests together. For it is not

always possible for a person to arrange meals immediately for as many visitors as happened to call on him at a time. Allah disapproved of this practice and commanded that the visitors should go for meals to a house only when invited. This Command did not in particular apply to the Holy Prophet's house only but the rules were in the beginning enforced in that model household so that they become general rules of etiquette in the houses of the other Muslims as well.

97. This was to reform yet another foolish practice. The guests at a feast, after they had finished eating, would sit down to endless gossip and familiar talk much to the inconvenience of the people of the house. They would often embarrass the Holy Prophet also by this practice, but he would forbear and forget. At last on the day of the marriage feast of Ḥaḍrat Zainab the embarrassment thus caused crossed all limits. According to the Holy Prophet's special attendant, Ḥaḍrat Anas bin Mālik, the feast was held at night. Most of the people left after taking food but a couple or two of them got engaged in familiar gossip. Disconcerted the Holy Prophet rose and went round to his wives. When he returned he found the gentlemen still sitting. He turned back and sat in Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah's apartment. When a good deal of the night had passed he came to know that the gentlemen had left. Then he returned and went to the apartment of Ḥaḍrat Zainab. After this it became inevitable that Allah Himself should warn the people of these evil practices. According to Ḥaḍrat Anas these verses were sent down on this occasion. (Muslim, Nasā'i, Ibn Jarīr).

98. This is the verse which is called "the verse of the veil". Bukhārī has related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Anas that before the coming down of this verse, Ḥaḍrat 'Umar had made a suggestion several times to the Holy Prophet to the effect: "O Messenger of Allah, all sorts of the people, good and bad, come to visit you. Would that you commanded your wives to observe Purdah. According to another tradition, once Ḥaḍrat 'Umar said to the holy wives, "If what I say concerning you is accepted, my eyes should never see you." But since the Holy Prophet was not independent in making law, he awaited Divine Revelation. At last, this Command came down that except for the *maḥram* males (as being stated in v. 55 below) no other man should enter the Holy Prophet's houses, and whoever had to ask some thing from the ladies, should ask for it from behind a curtain. After this Command curtains were hung at the doors of the apartments of the wives, and since the Holy Prophet's house was a model for the Muslims to follow, they too hung curtains at their doors. The last sentence of the verse itself points out that whoever desire that the hearts of the men and women should remain pure, should adopt this way.

Now whosoever has been blessed with understanding by Allah can himself see that the Book which forbids the men and women to talk to each other face to face and commands them to speak from behind a curtain because "this is a better way for the purity of your as well as their hearts," could not possibly permit that the men and women should freely meet in mixed gatherings, educational and democratic institutions and offices, because it did not affect the purity of the hearts in any way. For him who does not want to follow the Qur'ān, the best way would be that he should disregard its Commands and should frankly say that he has no desire to follow it. But this would be the height of meanness that he should violate the clear Commandments of the Qur'ān and then stubbornly say that he is following the "spirit" of Islam which he has extracted. After all, what is that spirit of Islam which these people extract from sources outside the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*?

99. The allusion is to the false allegations that were being made in those days against the Holy Prophet, and some weak-minded Muslims also were joining the disbelievers and the hypocrites in doing this.

100. This is the explanation of what has been said in verse 6: "... the Prophet's wives are mothers of the believers."

101. That is, "If a person entertains an evil thought in his heart against the Holy Prophet, or harbours an evil intention about his wives, it will not remain hidden from Allah, and he will be punished for it."

102. For explanation, see E.N.'s 38 to 42 of Sūrah An-Nūr. 'Allāma Ālūsī's commentary in this connection is also noteworthy. He says, "Brothers and sons of brothers and sisters include all those relatives who are unlawful for a woman, whether they are blood relations or foster relations. This list does not mention the paternal and maternal uncles because they are like the parents to the woman, or perhaps they have been left out because there was no need to mention them after mentioning their sons. For the reason for not observing purdah from the brother's son and sister's son is the same as of not observing it from the paternal and maternal uncles." (*Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī*).

103. For explanation, see E. N. 43 of An-Nūr.

104. For explanation, see E. N. 44 of An-Nūr.

105. It means this: "After the coming down of this absolute Command no person outside the circle of the relatives, who have been made an exception, should be allowed to enter the houses without purdah being observed from them." Another meaning is: "The woman should never adopt the attitude that they should observe purdah when the husband is present, but should appear without purdah before the other men, when he is away. Such a conduct may remain hidden from

the husband but not from Allah.

106. "Allah's sending His blessings on His Prophet" means this: "Allah is very kind to His Prophet: He praises him, blesses his work, exalts his name, and showers His mercies on him." "Blessings of the angels" means: "They love the Prophet most dearly and pray to Allah to bless him with the highest ranks, cause his religion and *Sharī'ah* to flourish and exalt him to the laudable position." One can clearly see from the context why this thing has been said here. This was the time when the enemies of Islām were making all sorts of false allegations against the Holy Prophet in order to satisfy their jealousy on the success of Faith. By sullyng him they thought they would destroy his moral influence through which Islam and the Muslims were gaining more and more ground every day. Such were the conditions when Allah sent down this verse, as if to warn the people: "However hard the disbelievers and the hypocrites and the polytheists might try to vilify and slander My Prophet with a view to frustrating his mission, they are bound to suffer disgrace and humiliation in the end, for I am kind to him, and the angels, who are administering the entire universe, are his supporters and admirers. His enemies cannot gain anything by their condemnation of him because I am exalting his name and My angels are adoring him constantly. They cannot harm him by their mean machinations when My mercies and blessings are with him, and My angels pray for him day and night to the effect: "O Lord of the worlds, raise Muḥammad to even higher ranks and make his Religion flourish and prosper."

107. In other words, it means this: "O people, who have found the right path through Muḥammad, the Messenger of Allah, you should recognize his true worth and be grateful to him for his great favours to you. You were lost in the darkness of ignorance: He afforded you the light of knowledge: you had become morally bankrupt: he raised you high on the moral level so that the people now feel envious of you; you had sunk to barbarism and savagery: he adorned you with the most refined human civilization. The disbelievers everywhere have turned his enemies only because he has done you these favours; otherwise personally he has not done any harm to anyone. Therefore, the inevitable demand of your gratitude to him is that you should regard him with an equal, or even greater, love than the malice and grudge these people display against him; that you should show a greater attachment to him than the hatred these people show towards him; that you should praise and adore him even more fervently than they condemn him; that you should wish him well even more heartily than they wish him ill, and pray for him just as the angels do day and night, saying: "O Lord of the worlds: Just as Your Prophet has done us countless and endless

favours, so do You also show him endless and limitless mercy: raise him to the highest ranks in the world and bless him with the greatest nearness to Yourself in the Hereafter."

In this verse, Muslims have been commanded two things: (1) *Ṣallū 'alaihi*; and (2) *sallimū taslimā*. The word *ṣalāt* when used with the associating particle *'alā* gives three meanings: (1) To be inclined to somebody, to attend to him with love, and to bend over him; (2) to praise somebody; and (3) to pray for somebody. Obviously, when the word is used in regard to Allah, it cannot be in the third meaning, for it is absolutely inconceivable that Allah should pray to someone else; it can only be used in the first two meanings. But when this word is used for the servants, whether angels or men, it will be in all the three meanings. It will contain the sense of love as well as praise and prayer for mercy. Therefore, the meaning of giving the Command of *ṣallū 'alaihi* to the believers for the Holy Prophet is: "Be attached to him, praise and adore him and pray for him."

The word *salām* also has two meanings: (1) To be secure from every kind of affliction and fault and defect; and (2) to be at peace and refrain from opposing the other person. Therefore, one meaning of *sallimū taslimā* in regard to the Holy Prophet is: "You should pray for his well-being and security," and another meaning is: "Cooperate with him with all your heart and mind; refrain from opposing him and obey him most faithfully and sincerely."

When this Command was sent down, several of the Companions said to the Holy Prophet, "O Messenger of Allah, you have taught us the method of pronouncing *salām* (i.e. of saying *as-salāmu 'aliaka ayyuhan-nabiyyu wa rahmatullahi wa barakāt-u-hū* in the Prayer, and *as-salāmu 'alaika yā Rasūl-Allah* as a greeting), but what is the method of sending *ṣalāt* on you?" In response to this, the methods of pronouncing *ṣalāt* and *darūd* that the Holy Prophet taught to many people on different occasions are as follows:

**Ka'b bin 'Ujrah:** *Allahumma ṣalli 'alā Muḥammad-in wa 'alā āl-i Muḥammad-in kamā ṣallaita 'alā Ibrahīma wa 'alā āl-i Ibrahīma innaka Ḥamid-um-Majīd, wa bārik 'alī Muḥammad-in wa 'alā āl-i Muḥammad-in kamā bārakta 'alā Ibrahīma wa 'alā āl-i Ibrahīma innaka Ḥamid-um-Majīd.* This *darūd* with a little difference in wording has been reported by Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhi, Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, Imām Aḥmad, Ibn Abī Shaibah, 'Abdur Razzāq, Ibn Abī Ḥātim and Ibn Jarīr on the authority of Ḥaḍrāt Ka'b bin 'Ujrah.

**Ibn 'Abbās:** From him also the same *darūd* as given above has been reported with a slight difference. (Ibn Jarīr).

**Abū Ḥumaid Sā'idī:** *Allahumma ṣalli 'alā Muḥammad-in wa azwāji-hi wa dhurriyāti-hi kamā ṣallaita 'alā Ibrāhīma wa 'alā āl-i Ibrāhīma wa bārik 'alā Muḥammad-in wa azwāji-hi wa dhurriyūt-hi kamā bārakta 'alā āl-i Ibrāhīma innaka Ḥamid-um-Majīd.* (Mālik, Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, Nasā'ī, Abū Da'ūd, Ibn Mājah).

**Abū Mas'ūd Badrī:** *Allahumma ṣalli 'alā Muḥammad-in wa 'alā āl-i Muḥammad-in kamā ṣallaita 'alā Ibrāhīma wa 'alā āl-i Ibrāhīma wa bārik 'alā Muḥammad-in wa 'alā āl-i Muḥammad-in kamā bārakta 'alā Ibrāhīma fil-'ālam n innaka Ḥamid-um-Majīd.* (Mālik, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhi, Nasā'ī, Aḥmad, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Ḥabbān, Ḥākim).

**Abū Sa'id Khudrī:** *Allahumma ṣalli 'alā Muḥammad-in 'abdika wa rasūli-ka kamā ṣallaita 'alā Ibrāhīma wa bārik 'alā Muḥammad-in wa 'alā āl-i Muḥammad-in kamā baraktā 'alā Ibrāhīm.* (Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah).

**Buraidah al-Khuzā'i:** *Allahummi-aj'al ṣalātaka wa rahmataka wa barākāti-ka 'alā Muḥammad-in wa 'alā āl-i Muḥammad-in kamā ja'altahā 'alā Ibrāhīma innaka Ḥamid-um-Majīd.* (Aḥmad, 'Abd bin Ḥumaid, Ibn Mardūyah).

**Abū Hurairah:** *Allahumma ṣalli 'alā Muḥammad-in wa 'alā āl-i Muḥammad-in wa bārik 'alā Muḥammad-in wa 'alā āl-i Muḥammad-in kamā ṣallaita wa bārakta 'alā Ibrāhīma wa 'alā āl-i Ibrāhīm fil-'ālam innaka Ḥamid-um-Majīd.* (Nasā'ī).

**Talhah:** *Allahumma ṣalli 'alā Muḥammad-in wa 'alā āl-i Muḥammad-in kamā ṣallaita 'alā Ibrāhīma innaka Ḥamid-um-Majīd, wa bārik 'alā Muḥammad-in wa 'alā āl-i Muḥammad-in kamā bārakta 'alā Ibrāhīma innaka Ḥamid-um-Majīd.* (Ibn Jarīr).

All these *darūds* agree in meaning despite the difference in wording. A few points concerning them should be understood clearly:

First, in all these the Holy Prophet tells the Muslims that the best way of sending *darūd* and *ṣalāt* on him is that they should pray to Allah, saying, "O God: send *darūd* on Muḥammad." Ignorant people who do not possess full understanding of the meaning immediately raise the objection: "How strange that Allah commands us to send *darūd* on His Prophet, but we, in return, implore Allah that He should send it." The fact, however, is that the Holy Prophet has instructed the people, as if to say, "You cannot do full justice to sending of *darūd* and *ṣalāt* on me even if you want to. Therefore, pray only to Allah to bless me with *ṣalāt*." Evidently, the Muslims cannot raise the ranks of the Holy Prophet, Allah only can raise them; the Muslims cannot repay the Holy Prophet for his favours and kindness, Allah only can adequately reward him for this; the Muslims cannot attain any success in exalting the Holy Prophet's name and promoting the cause of religion unless Allah favours

them with His help and succour. So much so that the Holy Prophet's love can be impressed in our hearts only by Allah's help; otherwise Satan can turn us away from him by every kind of evil suggestion and suspicion. May Allah protect us from this! Therefore, there is no other way of doing full justice to sending of *darūd* and *ṣalāt* on the Holy Prophet than this that we should supplicate Allah to send *ṣalāt* on him. The person who says: *Allahumma ṣalli 'alā Muḥammad-in*, in fact, admits his helplessness before Allah, and says: "O God: it is not in my power to send *ṣalāt* on Your Prophet as it should be sent. I, therefore, implore You to send it on my behalf and take from me whatever service You will in this regard."

Secondly, the Holy Prophet did not want to have this prayer reserved for only himself but included his followers and his wives and offspring also. The meaning of the wives and offspring is obvious. As for the word *āl* it does not merely denote the people of the Holy Prophet's household, but it applies to all those people who follow him and adopt his way. Lexically, there is a difference between the words *āl* and *ahl*. By the *āl* of a person are understood all those people who are his companions, helpers and followers, whether they are related to him or not, and his *ahl* are those who are related to him, whether or not they are his companions and followers. The Qur'ān has used the word *āl Fir'aun* at fourteen places but nowhere has it been used to mean the people of Pharaoh's household only; everywhere it implies all those who sided with him in the conflict against the Prophet Moses.<sup>3</sup> (For example, see Al-Baqarah: 49-50, Āl-i 'Imrān: 11, Al-A'rāf; 130, Al-Mu'min: 46). Thus, from *āl-Muḥammad* is excluded every such person who is not on the way of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), whether he be a member of his household, and in it is included every such person, who is following in his footsteps, whether he is not even distantly related to him by blood. However, those members of the Prophet's household who are related to him by blood and are also his followers are most worthy to be regarded as *āl-Muḥammad*.

Thirdly, the same thing found in all the *darūds* taught by the Holy Prophet is that he may be blessed with the same kindness with which Abraham and the followers of Abraham have been blessed. The people have found it difficult to understand this. The scholars have given different interpretations of it but none of them is appealing. In my opinion the correct interpretation is this (though the real knowledge is with Allah): Allah blessed the Prophet Abraham in particular with something with which He has blessed no one else in the world, and it is this: All those human beings who regard the Prophethood and the Revelation



and the Book as the source of guidance are agreed on the leadership of the Prophet Abraham, whether they are Muslims or Christians or Jews. Therefore, what the Holy Prophet means to say is this: "O Allah, just as You have made the Prophet Abraham the refuge of the followers of all the Prophets, so You make me also the refuge, so that no one who is a believer in Prophethood, may remain deprived of the grace of believing in my Prophethood."

That it is an Islamic practice to send *darūd* on the Holy Prophet, that it is commendable to pronounce it when the Holy Prophet's name is mentioned, that it is a *Sunnah* of the Prophet to recite it in the Prayer in particular, is agreed upon by all the scholars. There is also a consensus that it is obligatory to pronounce the *darūd* on the Holy Prophet at least once in a lifetime, because Allah has clearly commanded it, but apart from this there are differences among the scholars regarding it.

Imām Shāfe'ī holds the view that it is obligatory to recite *ṣalāt* on the Prophet during *tashahhud* in the final sitting of the Prayer, for without it the Prayer would be void. Ḥaḍrat Ibn Mas'ūd, Abū Mas'ūd Anṣārī, Ibn 'Umar and Jābir bin 'Abdullah from among the Companions, Sha'bi, Imām Muḥammad bin Bāqir, Muḥammad bin Ka'b al-Qurẓī and Muqātil bin Ḥayyān from among the immediate followers of the Companions, and Ishāq bin Rahwayah from among the jurists also held the same opinion, and Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal also had adopted the same in the end.

Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Imām Mālik and the majority of the scholars hold that the pronouncing of the *ṣalāt* is obligatory only once in a lifetime. It is just like the *Kalimah*: whoever affirmed the divinity of Allah and the Prophethood of the Messenger of Allah once in a lifetime carried out his duty. Likewise, the one who pronounced the *darūd* and *ṣalāt* once in his lifetime would be deemed to have done his duty of pronouncing the *darūd* on the Holy Prophet. After it, it is neither obligatory (*fard*) to recite the *Kalimah* nor the *darūd*.

Another group holds that it is absolutely *wājib* to recite it in the Prayer but not necessarily in the *tashahhud*.

Still another group holds the view that it is *wājib* to pronounce the *darūd* in every supplication. Some others say that it is *wājib* to pronounce it whenever the Holy Prophet's name is mentioned, and according to another group recitation of the *darūd* is *wājib* only once in an assembly or sitting no matter how often the name of the Holy Prophet is mentioned during it.

These differences only pertain to the *darūd's* being obligatory in

[Contd. on p. 148

يُدِينَنَ عَلَيْهِنَ مِنْ جَلَابِيْبِهِنَّ ۗ ذٰلِكَ اَدْنٰى اَنْ يُعْرَفْنَ فَلَا يُؤْذِنَنَّ ۗ وَ  
كَانَ اللّٰهُ غَفُوْرًا رَّحِيْمًا ۗ اٰتَيْنَ لَمْ يَنْتَهِ الْمُنْفِقُوْنَ وَالَّذِيْنَ فِيْ قُلُوْبِهِمْ  
مَّرَضٌ وَالْمُرْجِفُوْنَ فِي الْمَدِيْنَةِ لَنُغْرِبَنَّكَ بِهِمْ ثُمَّ لَا يُجَاوِرُوْنَكَ فِيْهَا  
اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ۗ مَّتَّعُوْنِيْنَ ۗ اٰتَيْنَا ثِقَفًا اٰخِذُوْا وَ قَاتِلُوْا تَقِيْلًا ۗ سُنَّةَ اللّٰهِ فِي  
الَّذِيْنَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ ۗ وَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ اللّٰهِ تَبْدِيْلًا ۗ يَسْئَلُكَ النَّاسُ عَنِ  
السَّاعَةِ ۗ قُلْ اِنَّمَا عَلِمَهَا عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ ۗ وَ مَا يُدْرِيْكَ لَعَلَّ السَّاعَةَ تَكُوْنُ قَرِيْبًا ۗ  
اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَعَنَ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ وَاَعَدَّ لَهُمْ سَعِيْرًا ۗ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا اَبَدًا ۗ لَا يَجِدُوْنَ  
وَلِيًّا وَّلَا نَصِيْرًا ۗ يَوْمَ تَقْلَبُ وُجُوْهُهُمْ فِي النَّارِ يَقُوْلُوْنَ يٰلَيْتَنَا اَطَعْنَا  
اللّٰهَ وَاَطَعْنَا الرَّسُوْلًا ۗ وَقَالُوْا رَبَّنَا اِنَّا اَطَعْنَا سَادَتَنَا وَ كِبْرٰءَنَا فَاَضَلُّوْنَا  
السَّبِيْلًا ۗ رَبَّنَا اِنْتَهُمْ ضَعَفِيْنَ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ وَاَعْنَهُمْ لَعْنَا كَثِيْرًا ۗ يٰاَيُّهَا  
الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تَكُوْنُوْا كَالَّذِيْنَ اٰذُوْا مُوْسٰى فَبَرَّاهُ اللّٰهُ مِمَّا قَالُوْا وَا كَانَ  
عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ وَجِيْهًا ۗ يٰاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا اتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَ قُوْلُوْا قَوْلًا سَدِيْدًا ۗ  
يُصَلِّ لَكُمْ اَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوْبَكُمْ ۗ وَ مَنْ يُطِعِ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهُ فَقَدْ  
فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيْمًا ۗ اِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْاٰمَانَةَ عَلٰى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الْاَرْضِ وَ الْجِبَالِ  
فَاَبِيْنَ اَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَ اَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَ حَمَلَهَا الْاِنْسَانُ ۗ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ ظَلُوْمًا  
جَهُوْلًا ۗ لِيُعَذِّبَ اللّٰهُ الْمُنْفِقِيْنَ وَالْمُنْفِقٰتِ وَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ وَ الْمُشْرِكٰتِ وَ  
يَتُوْبَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَ الْمُؤْمِنٰتِ ۗ وَ كَانَ اللّٰهُ غَفُوْرًا رَّحِيْمًا ۗ

معانقه ١٢

الربع

١٠ ع

٩ ع

O Prophet, enjoin your wives and daughters and the women of the believers that they should let down over their faces a part of their outer-garments;<sup>110</sup> it is expected that they will thus be recognized and not molested.<sup>111</sup> Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.<sup>112</sup> 59

If the hypocrites and those whose hearts are diseased<sup>113</sup> and the scandal-mongers in Madīnah<sup>114</sup> do not desist, We shall stir you up to take action against them; then they will hardly be able to live in this city as your neighbours. They will be cursed from every side and will be seized wherever they are found and killed mercilessly. This has been the Way of Allah with regard to such people before, and you will never find any change in the Way of Allah.<sup>115</sup> 60-62

The people ask you as to when will Resurrection take place.<sup>116</sup> Say, "The knowledge of it is with Allah alone: you may not know that it may well be near at hand. In any case, it is certain that Allah has laid curse on the disbelievers and has prepared for them a blazing Fire, in which they will live for ever and will have no protector and helper. On the Day their faces are rolled about on the Fire, they will say, "Would that we had obeyed Allah and His Messenger!" And (they) will say, "Our Lord, we obeyed our chiefs and our great men, and they led us astray from the right path. Lord, give them a double chastisement and curse them severely."<sup>117</sup> 63-68

O you who have believed,<sup>118</sup> do not be like those who had maligned Moses; then Allah cleared him of what they said of him, and he was honourable in the sight of Allah.<sup>119</sup> O believers fear Allah and say the right thing: Allah will adorn your deeds and will overlook your errors. Whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, has indeed attained a great success. 69-71

We offered this trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains but they refused to bear it and were afraid of it, the but man undertook to bear it. Indeed, he is unjust and ignorant.<sup>120</sup> (The inevitable result of bearing the burden 72-73

of the trust is) that Allah should punish the hypocritical men and women and *mushrik* men and women, and accept the repentance of the believing men and women: Allah is indeed Forgiving and Merciful.

*Contd. from p. 145]*

status or otherwise. As for its merit and excellence, its being conducive to high spiritual rewards and its being a great righteous act, there is complete unanimity among the Ummah. No one who is a believer in any degree can have any different opinion about it. The *darūd* is the natural supplication of the heart of every Muslim, who realizes that the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is the Ummah's greatest benefactor after Allah. The greater one's appreciation of Islam and the Faith, the greater will one be appreciative of the favours of the Holy Prophet himself; and the greater one's appreciation of the favours of the Holy Prophet, the more often will he pronounce the *darūd* and *ṣalāt* on him. Thus, in fact, the frequency with which a person pronounces the *darūd* is the measure which shows the depth of his relationship with the Holy Prophet's Religion and the extent of his appreciation of the blessing of the Faith. On this very basis the Holy Prophet has said: "The angels send *darūd* on him who sends *darūd* on me, as long as he does so." (Aḥmad, Ibn Mājah). "He who sends *darūd* on me once, Allah sends *darūd* on him ten times over." (Muslim) "The one who sends *darūd* on me most often will deserve to remain close to me on the Day of Resurrection" (Tirmidhi). "Niggardly is the person who does not send *darūd* on me when I am mentioned before him." (Tirmidhi)

As to whether it is permissible to use the words *Allahumma ṣalli 'alā* so-and-so, or *ṣallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, or similar other words for others than the Holy Prophet, it is disputed. One group of the scholars of whom Qāḍī 'Iyād is most prominent holds it as absolutely permissible. Their argument is this: Allah Himself has used the word *ṣalāt* in respect of those who were not prophets at several places in the Qur'ān, e.g. in Al-Baqarah; 157, At-Taubah: 103, Al-Aḥzāb: 43. Similarly, the Holy Prophet also prayed for those who were not prophets using the word *ṣalāt* on several occasions. For example, he prayed for a Companion, thus: *Allahumma ṣalli 'alā āl Abi 'Aufā*; on the request of Ḥaḍrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah's wife, he said: *Ṣallallahu 'alaiki wa 'alā zaujiki*. Then concerning those who came with the *Zakāt* money, he would say: *Allahumma ṣalli 'alaihim*. Praying for Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin 'Ubādah he said: *Allahumma aj'al ṣalātaka wa raḥmataka 'alā āl-i Sa'd bin 'Ubādah*. And about the soul of the believer the Holy Prophet gave the news that the angels prayed for him, thus: *Ṣallallahu 'alaika wa 'alā jasadika*.

However, the majority of the Muslim scholars opine that it was correct for Allah and His Messenger but not so for the Ummah. They say that it has become a convention with the Muslims to use *ṣalāt-o-salām* exclusively for the Prophets. Therefore, it should not be used for those who are not prophets. On this very basis Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar bin ‘Abdul ‘Azīz once wrote to one of his governors, saying: “I hear that some preachers have started using the word *ṣalāt* in respect of their patrons and supporters in the manner of *ṣalāt ‘alan-Nabī*. As soon as you receive this letter, stop them from this practice and command them to use *ṣalāt* exclusively for the Prophets and remain content with the prayer for the other Muslims.” (*Ruḥ al-Ma‘ānī*). Most scholars also hold that using the words *ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa sallam* for any other Prophet than the Holy Prophet is not correct.

108. “To trouble Allah” implies two things: That Allah should be disobeyed, that an attitude of disbelief and *shirk* and atheism be adopted with regard to Him, and that things made unlawful by Him be made lawful; and (2) that His Messenger be troubled, for just as obedience to the Messenger is obedience to Allah, so is opposition and disobedience of the Messenger opposition and disobedience of Allah.

109. This verse determines the definition of slander. It is to ascribe a fault to a person which he does not have, or an error which he has not committed. The Holy Prophet also has explained it. According to Abū Da‘ūd and Tirmidhi, when he was asked as to what is *ghibat* (backbiting), he replied: “It is to make mention of your brother in a manner derogatory to him.” The questioner said, “And if the fault is there in my brother?” The Holy Prophet replied: “If the fault that you mentioned is there in him, you backbite him; if it is not there, you slandered him.” Such an act is not only a moral sin, which will entail punishment in the Hereafter, but this verse also requires that in the law of an Islamic State also false allegation should be held as a culpable offence.

110. *Jilbāb* is a large sheet and *idnā’* is to draw close and wrap up, but when this word is used with the associating particle *‘alā*, it gives the meaning of letting something down from above. Some modern translators, under the influence of the West, have translated this word “to wrap up” so as to avoid somehow the Command about covering of the face. But if Allah had meant what these gentlemen want to construe, He would have said: *yudnina ilai-hinna* and not *yudnina ‘alai-hinna*. Anyone who knows Arabic knows that *yudnina ‘alai-hinna* cannot merely mean “wrapping up.” Moreover, the words *min jalābīb-i hinna* also do not permit of this meaning. It is obvious that the preposition *min* here signifies a part of the sheet, and this also that wrapping up is done by

means of a whole sheet and not merely by a part of it. The verse, therefore, clearly means this: The women should wrap themselves up well in their sheets, and should draw and let down a part of the sheet in front of the face.

This same meaning was understood by the major commentators who lived close to the time of the Holy Prophet. Ibn Jarīr and Ibn al-Mundhir have related that Muḥammad bin Sirin asked Ḥaḍrat 'Ubaidah as-Salmānī the meaning of this verse. (This Ḥaḍrat 'Ubaidah had become a Muslim in the time of the Holy Prophet but had not been able to visit him. He came to Madīnah in the time of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar and settled down there. He was recognized as equal in rank with Qāḍī Shuraiḥ in jurisprudence and judicial matters). Instead of giving a verbal reply Ḥaḍrat 'Ubaidah put on his sheet and gave a practical demonstration by covering his head and forehead and face and an eye, leaving only the other eye uncovered. Ibn 'Abbās also has made almost the same commentary. In his statements which have been reported by Ibn Abī Ḥātim and Ibn Mardūyah, he says: "Allah has commanded the women that when they move out of their houses for an outdoor duty, they should conceal their faces by drawing and letting down over themselves a part of their sheets, keeping only the eyes uncovered." The same explanation of this verse has been given by Qatādah and Suddī.

All the great commentators who have passed after the period of the Companions and their immediate followers have given the same meaning of this verse. Imām Ibn Jarīr Ṭabarī, in his commentary of this verse, says: "The respectable women should not look like the slave-girls from their dress when they move out of their houses, with uncovered faces and loose hair; they should rather draw and let down over them a part of their sheets or outer-garments so that no evil person may dare molest them." (*Jāmi' al-Bayān*, vol. XXII, p. 33).

'Allāma Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣāṣ says: "This verse points out that the young woman has been commanded to conceal her face from the other men; when moving out of the house she should cover herself up well to express chastity and purity of character so that people of doubtful character do not cherish any false hope when they see her." (*Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, vol. III, p. 458).

'Allāma Zamakhshari says: "It means that they should let down a part of their sheet over themselves, and should cover their faces and wrap up their sides well." (*Al-Kashshāf*, vol. II, p. 221).

'Allāma Niẓāmuddīn Nishāpūrī says: "That is, they should let down a part of the sheet over them; in this verse, the women have been

commanded to cover the head and face." (*Gharā'ib al-Qur'ān*, vol XXII, p. 32).

Imām Rāzī says: "What is meant is that the people may know that they are not promiscuous women. For the woman who covers her face, though the face is not included in the *satar*, cannot be expected to uncover her *satar*, which is obligatory to cover before the other man. Thus, everyone will know that they are modest and virtuous women who cannot be expected to do anything indecent." (*Tafsir Kabir*, vol. VI, p. 591)

Incidentally, another thing that is proved by this verse is that the Holy Prophet had several daughters, for Allah Himself says: "O Prophet, enjoin your wives and daughters." These words absolutely refute the assertion of those people who without any fear of God make the claim that the Holy Prophet had only one daughter, Ḥaḍrat Fāṭimah, and the other daughters were not from his own loins but by the former husbands. These people are so blinded by prejudice that they do not even bother to consider what crime they are committing by denying the parentage of the children of the Holy Prophet, and what severe punishment will await them in the Hereafter. All authentic traditions concur that from Ḥaḍrat Khadijah the Holy Prophet had not one daughter, Ḥaḍrat Faṭimah, but three other daughters as well. The Holy Prophet's earliest biographer, Muḥammad bin Ishāq, after mentioning his marriage with Ḥaḍrat Khadijah, says: "She was the mother of all the Holy Prophet's children except Ibrāhīm, namely Qāsim and Ṭāhir and Ṭayyib and Zainab and Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthūm and Fāṭimah." (Ibn Hishām, vol. I, p. 202).

The famous genealogist, Hāshim bin Muḥammad bin as-Sā'ib al-Kalbī, states: "The first born child to the Messenger of Allah before his call to Prophethood was Qāsim; then Zainab was born to him, then Ruqayyah, then Umm Kulthūm." (*Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa'd*, vol. I, p. 133). Ibn Ḥazam writes in *Jawāmi' as-Sīrah* that from Ḥaḍrat Khadijah the Holy Prophet had four daughters, the eldest being Zainab, then Ruqayyah, then Fāṭimah and then Umm Kulthūm (pp. 38-39). Ṭabari, Ibn Sa'd, Abū Ja'far Muḥammad bin Ḥabīb (author of *Kitāb al-Muḥabbar*) and Ibn 'Abd al-Barr (author of *Kitāb al-Isti'āb*) state on the strength of authentic sources that before her marriage with the Holy Prophet Ḥaḍrat Khadijah had two husbands, Abū Hālah Tamīmī by whom she had a son named Hind bin Abū Hālah, and 'Atīq bin 'Ā'idh Makhzūmī, by whom she had a daughter named Hind. Then she was married to the Holy Prophet and all the genealogists agree that from his loins she had the four daughters as stated above. (See Ṭabari, vol. II, p. 411; Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol. VIII, pp. 14-16; *Kitāb al-Muḥabbar*, pp. 78,

79, 452; *Al-Isti'āb*, vol. II, p. 718). All these statements are authenticated by the Qur'ānic declaration that the Holy Prophet had not one but several daughters.

111. "... will thus be recognized": will be recognized to be noble and chaste women from their simple and modest dress, and not women of ill repute from whom some wicked person could cherish evil hopes. "... are not molested": will not be teased but let alone.

Let us pause here for a while and try to understand what spirit of the social law of Islam is being expressed by this Qur'ānic Command and what is its object which Allah Himself has stated. Before this in *Sūrah An-Nūr*: 31, the women have been forbidden to display their adornments before others except such and such men and women, and "also that they should not stamp their feet on the ground lest their hidden decoration (ornaments) should be known." If that Command is read with this verse of *Al-Aḥzāb* it becomes obvious that the intention of the Command for the woman to cover herself well with the sheet here is to conceal her adornments from others. And, evidently, this purpose can be fulfilled only if the sheet or the outer-garment itself is simple; otherwise wrapping up oneself with a decorated and attractive sheet will defeat the purpose itself. Besides, Allah does not only command the woman to conceal her adornment by covering herself with the sheet, but also enjoins that she should let down a part of the sheet over herself. No sensible person can take any other meaning of this Command than this that it requires to conceal the face along with the concealment of the adornments of the body and dress. Then, Allah Himself states the reason for enjoining the Command, saying: "This is an appropriate way by adopting which the Muslim women will be recognized and will remain safe from trouble." Evidently, this instruction is being given to those women who regard flirtation and stares and evil advances by men as annoying and troublesome and not as enjoyable, who do not want to be counted among ill-reputed, immodest society-girls, but wish to be known as chaste and modest domestic women. To such noble and pious women Allah says: "If you really wish to be known as good women, and the men's lustful attention is not pleasurable but embarrassing for you, then you should not come out of your houses in full make-up like the newly-wed brides so as to display your beauty and physical charms before the greedy eyes of the people, but the best way for this would be that you should come out in a simple sheet fully concealing your adornments and covering your face and walking in a manner that even the jingle of your ornaments does not attract attention. The woman who applies herself to make-up and does not step out of the house until she has fully embellished and decorated herself with every



adornment cannot have any other intention that to become the centre of attention of all the men, whom she herself allures. After this if she complains that the greedy looks of the people cause embarrassment to her, and she does not wish to be known as a "society woman" and a "popular lady", but wants to live as a chaste house-wife, it will be nothing but a fraud. It is not the word of the mouth of a person that determines his intention, but his real intention is manifested in his act and mode of behaviour. Therefore, the act of the woman who appears before the other men attractively itself shows what motivates her behaviour. That is why the mischievous people cherish the same hopes from her as can be cherished from such a woman. The Qur'an tells the women: "You cannot be chaste women and society women at one and the same time. If you want to live as modest, chaste women, you will have to give up the ways that are conducive to becoming society women only, and adopt the way of life that can be helpful in becoming chaste women."

Whether a man's personal opinion is according to the Qur'an or opposed to it, and whether he wants to accept the Qur'anic guidance as a practical guide for himself or not, in any case if he does not wish to be intellectually dishonest in interpreting the Qur'an, he cannot fail to understand its real intention. If he is not a hypocrite he will frankly admit that the Qur'an's intention is what has been stated above. After this if he violates any Command, he will do so with the realization that he is violating the Qur'anic Command, or regards the Qur'anic guidance as wrong.

112. That is, "Allah will forgive the errors and mistakes that were committed in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance, provided that you reform yourselves now when you have received clear guidance, and do not violate it intentionally."

113. "Having diseased hearts" points to two kinds of evils: (1) That a person should be an ill-wisher of Islam and the Muslims although he gets himself counted among the Muslims; and (2) that he should be cherishing evil intentions and having criminal mentality and his evil tendencies be manifesting themselves in everything he thinks and does.

114. This implies the people who, in order to cause panic among the Muslims and to lower their morale, used to spread rumours in Madinah to the effect that the Muslims had suffered such and such serious setback, that a huge army was gathering together against them at such and such a place, that Madinah was under threat of a sudden attack, etc. Besides this, they had another pastime. They would con-

to concoct and spread imaginary stories about the domestic life of the Holy Prophet's household and of other Muslims so as to produce suspicions among the common people and destroy the moral influence of the Muslims.

115. That is, "This is a permanent law of Allah's *Sharī'ah* that in an Islamic society and state such mischief-mongers are never given an opportunity to flourish and prosper. Whenever the system of society and state is established on Divine Law, such people will be warned to mend their ways and if they still persisted in their evil ways they would be severely dealt with and exterminated."

116. The Holy Prophet was generally asked this question by the disbelievers and the hypocrites. By this they did not mean to obtain any knowledge but they did so out of fun and jest. As a matter of fact, they did not believe in the coming of the Hereafter at all; they regarded its concept as an empty threat only. They did not ask about the time of its coming so that they could set their affairs right, but what they really meant was this: "O Muḥammad, we have been doing everything to frustrate your mission, and you have not been able to do any harm to us so far; now let us know as to when will Resurrection take place when we will be taken to task by Allah."

117. This thing has been stated at several places in the Qur'ān. For instance, see Al-A'rāf : 187; An-Nāziyāt: 42-46; Sabā: 3-5; Al-Mulk: 24-27; Al-Muṭaffifīn: 10-17; Al-Hijr: 2-3; Al-Furqān: 27-29; Hā Mīm As-Sajdah : 26-29.

118. One should note that the Holy Qur'ān has at some places addressed the true Muslims with: "O you who have believed," and at others the Muslim community as a whole, which includes the believers as well as the hypocrites and the Muslims of the weak faith, and at still others only the hypocrites. When the hypocrites and the Muslims of the weak faith are addressed with: "O you who have believed," it is meant to put them to shame, as if to say, "You claim to have affirmed faith, but your acts and deeds do not support your claim." A little study of the context can easily show which class of the people has been addressed at a particular place. Here, obviously, the common Muslims are being addressed.

119. In other words, it means this: "O Muslims, do not behave like the Jews. You should not behave towards your Prophet as the children of Israel behaved towards the Prophet Moses." The Israelites themselves admit that the Prophet Moses was their greatest benefactor. Whatever they achieved as a nation was only due to him; otherwise in Egypt they would have been doomed to a worse fate than that of

the Shudras in India. But how the Israelites treated the greatest benefactor of theirs can be judged by a cursory glance at the following places of the Bible: Exodus, 5: 20-21, 14: 11-12, 16: 2-3, 17: 3-4. Numbers, 11: 1-15, 14: 1-10, 16 (the whole chapter), 20: 1-5.

The Qur'ān by referring to this ingratitude of the children of Israel, warns the Muslims, so as to say: "Refrain from adopting this same attitude towards Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace); otherwise you should be ready to face the same fate as the Jews.

This same thing was said by Holy Prophet himself on several occasions. Once he was dividing some goods among the Muslims. When the people dispersed, a man said; "Muḥammad in this division has shown no regard for Allah and the Hereafter." Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd heard this remark and told the Holy Prophet what had been said concerning him that day. He replied, "May Allah show mercy to Moses: he was maligned even more severely, but he showed patience." (Musnad Aḥmad, Tirmidhi, Abū Da'ūd).

120. In the end, Allah wants man to realize his real position in the world; if in that position he regarded the life of the world as mere fun and sport and adopted a wrong attitude carelessly, he would only be working for his own doom.

Here, the word "*amānat*" (trust) implies *khilāfat* (caliphate) which, according to the Qur'ān, man has been granted in the earth. The inevitable result of the freedom given to man to choose between obedience and disobedience, and the powers and authority granted him over countless creations for using that freedom, is that he himself be held responsible for his voluntary acts and should deserve rewards for his righteous conduct and suffer punishment for his evil conduct. Since man has not attained these powers by his own efforts but has been granted these by Allah, and he is answerable before Allah for their right or wrong use, these have been described by the word *khilāfat* at other places in the Qur'ān, and by *amānat* here.

In order to give an idea of how important and heavy this "trust" (*amānat*) is, Allah says that the heavens and the earth, in spite of their glory and greatness, and the mountains, in spite of their size and firmness, could not have the power and courage to bear it. But man, the weak and frail man, has borne this heavy burden on his tiny self.

The presentation of the trust before the earth and the heavens, and their refusal to bear it and their being afraid of it may be true literally, or it may have been said so metaphorically. We can neither know nor can comprehend Allah's relationship with His creations. The earth and the sun and the moon and the mountains are dumb, deaf and lifeless for

us but they may not be so also for Allah. Allah can speak to each of His creations and it can respond to Him, though its nature is incomprehensible for us. Therefore, it is just possible that Allah, in fact, might have presented this heavy trust before them, and they might have shuddered to see it, and they might have made this submission before their Master and Creator:

“Lord, we find our good and our convenience only in remaining as Your powerless servants: we do not find courage to ask for the freedom to disobey and do justice to it, and then suffer Your punishment in case we cannot do justice to it.” Likewise, it is also quite possible that before this present life Allah might have given another kind of existence to mankind and summoned it before Himself, and it might have willingly undertaken to accept the delegated powers and authority. We have no rational argument to regard this as impossible. Only such a person, who might have made a wrong estimate of his mental and intellectual powers and capabilities, can think of regarding it as impossible.

However, this also is equally possible that Allah may have said so allegorically. In order to give an idea of the extraordinary importance of the matter, He may have depicted the scene as if the earth and the heavens and the mountains like the Himalayas were present before Him on one side and a 5 to 6-foot man, on the other. Then Allah might have asked:

“I want to invest someone of My creation with the power that being a subject of My Kingdom, it may acknowledge My Supremacy and obey My Commands of its own free will; otherwise it will also have the power to deny Me, even rebel against Me. After giving him this freedom I shall so conceal Myself from him as if I did not exist at all. And to exercise this freedom I shall invest him with vast powers, great capabilities, and shall give him dominion over countless of My creations so that he may raise any storm that he may in the universe. Then I shall call him to account at an appointed time. The one who will have misused the freedom granted by Me, will be made to suffer a most terrible punishment; and the one who will have adopted My obedience in spite of all chances and opportunities for disobedience, will be raised to such high ranks as no creation of Mine has ever been able to attain. Now tell, which of you is ready to undergo this test?”

Hearing this discourse a hush might have prevailed for a while all through the universe. Then one huge creation after the other might have bowed down and submitted that it should be excused from the severe test. Then, at last, this frail creation might have risen and submitted: “O my Lord, I am ready to undergo this test. I shall brave all the

dangers inherent in the freedom and independence only in the hope that I shall be blessed with the highest office in Your Kingdom if I pass the test."

By imagining this scene through his mind's eye only can man judge exactly what delicate position he holds in the universe. Allah in this verse has called the person "unjust and ignorant", who lives a care-free life in the place of test, and has no feeling at all of how great a responsibility he is shouldering, and what consequences he will encounter of the right or wrong decisions that he makes in choosing and adopting an attitude for himself in the life of the world. He is ignorant because the fool holds himself as responsible to no one; he is unjust because he is himself preparing for his doom and is also preparing the doom of many others along with him.

## APPENDIX

### The Finality of Prophethood

(In continuation of E.N. 77)

A section of the people who in the present age have created great mischief by introducing a new prophethood, translate the word *khātam an-Nabiyyīn* as meaning the "seal of the Prophets." By this they imply that the prophets who would come after the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) would become the prophets only by bearing his seal; or, in other words, unless a person's prophethood was stamped with his seal, he could not be a prophet.

But this word, when considered in the context of the verse, does not at all bear this meaning. For if it had meant that, it would not only be irrelevant to the context but would also contradict the theme itself.<sup>1</sup> After all, what could be the relevance of saying abruptly that Muḥammad was the "seal of the Prophets" and anyone who became a prophet in the future would become so only by bearing his seal, when the context, in fact, related to the objections of the people concerning Ḥaḍrat Zainab's marriage and removal of their doubts in that regard? In this context not only is such a meaning absolutely irrelevant but, on the contrary, it also weakens the argument being advanced to answer the objections of the people. If it were so they would have been well justified by saying: "There would have been no harm if you did not contract this marriage at this time. If it was all that necessary to abolish this custom, one of the prophets coming after you, with your seal, could have abolished it."

Another interpretation given by these people is that

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1. For this please refer to E.N.'s 67 to 79 of this Sūrah.

“*khātam an-Nabiyyīn*” means “*afḍal an-Nabiyyīn*” (the best of the Prophets). That is, the door to new prophethoods is open, though the perfections of prophethood have been exhausted with the advent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah’s peace). But this meaning too suffers from the same drawback as we have indicated above. It also has no relevance to the context but contradicts it. The disbelievers and the hypocrites could very well say, “Sir, even if minor ones, prophets in any case will continue to come after you. Therefore, it was not necessary that you only should have abolished this custom.”

### Lexical Meaning of *Khātam an-Nabiyyīn*

Thus, as far as the context is concerned, it means that the word *khātam an-Nabiyyīn* here be only taken to mean that Prophethood has been brought to a close and no other prophet will come after the Holy Prophet Muḥammad. But this is not only the demand of the context but of the lexical considerations as well. According to Arabic lexicon, “*khatam*” means to put a seal, to close, and to be free after bringing something to completion. Thus, *khatam-al-‘amal* means *faragha min-al-‘amal*: (he) finished the work; *khatam-al-inā’*: (he) closed the mouth of the utensil and sealed it so that neither should anything come out of it nor enter it; *khatam-al-kitāb*: (he) closed the letter and sealed it so as to make it secure; *khatama ‘alal-qalb*: sealed the heart so that it neither understands anything new nor forgets anything already learnt; and *khitāmu kulli mashrūb-in* means “the flavour left by a drink after it has been drunk.” *Khatam-ash-shai’*: *balagha ākhiruhū*: “*khatam* of something is to reach the end of it.” In this very sense is the word *khatam-i-Qur’ān* understood, and in the same sense are the last verses of the Sūrahs called *khawātīm*. Similarly, *khatam-ul-qaum* implies the last person of the tribe. (See *Lisān-ul-‘Arab*, *Qāmūs*, *Aqrab-ul-Muwārid*).<sup>2</sup>

2. We have cited only three lexicons here but the same meaning  
(Continued)

On this very basis, all the lexicographers and commentators have unanimously taken *Khātam an-Nabiyyīn* to mean *Ākhir an-Nabiyyīn*. From the viewpoint of Arabic usage and lexicon, *khātam* does not imply the postal seal which is used to issue letters, but it implies the seal which is put on the envelope so that it is secured and neither should anything come out of it nor enter it.

of the word *khatam* will be borne out by every authentic lexicon of Arabic. The deniers of the Finality of Prophethood, however, in order to contravene the Religion of God, pay no attention to the lexicon but try to argue like this: Calling a person *khātam ash-shu'arā'*, or *khātam al-fuqahā'*, or *khātam al-mufassirin* does not mean that after such a person, no other poet, or jurist, or commentator would be born, but it means that this particular branch of knowledge was exhausted with that person. But this is a fallacious argument. The use of such a title as an exaggeration does not at all mean that the real meaning of *khātam* should become "perfect and excellent", and using it in the sense of "last and final" should be discontinued as absolutely wrong. Such a thing can be said only by a person who is unaware of the rules of language. In no language is there the rule that if a word is some times used in a figurative sense, apart from its real sense, the figurative meaning should become its real meaning, and the word be forbidden to be used in its real meaning afterwards. If somebody were to say *jā'a khātam al-qaum*, before an Arab, the latter would never understand it to mean that the most perfect man of the tribe had come, but that the entire tribe had come, and its last man had also arrived.

One should also note that the titles of *khātam ash-shu'arā'*, *khātam al-fuqahā'*, etc. given to some people, were given by human beings, and no human being can ever know that after the person whom he is calling *khātam* for some quality, another person of the same quality would never be born. That is why in human language, these titles are no more than mere exaggerations and recognition of excellence, but when Allah says that such and such a quality has been culminated and finalised in a particular person, there is no reason why we should understand it also in its metaphoric sense just as we do in case of human appellations. If Allah had called someone *Khātam ash-Shu'arā'*, most certainly there could be no poet after him. Likewise, after the one whom He has called *Khātam an-Nabiyyīn*, it is impossible that another prophet should come. This is so because Allah is the Knower of the unseen and hidden, man is not. Therefore, Allah's calling someone *Khātam an-Nabiyyīn* and the man's calling someone *khātam ash-shu'arā'* or *khātam al-fuqahā'*, etc. cannot be regarded as at the same level.



## Traditions of the Holy Prophet Concerning Finality of Prophethood

The meaning of the word *khātam* as understood from the Qur'ānic context and Arabic lexicon is further confirmed by the explanations given by the Holy Prophet himself. Below we quote some of the most authentic *Ḥadīths* in this regard:

(1) The Holy Prophet said: The children of Israel were guided by the Prophets. When a prophet died, another succeeded him. However, there will be no prophet after me: there will be only caliphs. (Bukhāri: *Kitāb al-Manāqib*).

(2) The Holy Prophet said: "My position in relation to the Prophets who came before me can be understood by a parable: A person erected a great building and decorated and adorned it well, but in a corner he left a niche, an empty space, for just one brick. The people went round the building and wondered at its beauty, but said: Why was not a brick laid here? So, I am that brick and I am the Last of the Prophets. (That is, with my advent the edifice of Prophethood has been perfected. Now there is found no empty niche, which may have to be filled by another prophet)." (Bukhārī: *Kitāb al-Manāqib*).

Four *Ḥadīths* on the same subject have been reported in Muslim (*Kitāb al-Faḍā'il: Khātam an-Nabiyyīn*) with the following additional words in the last *Ḥadīth*: *fa-ji'tu fakhatam-tal-anbiyā'*: "So, I came and I closed the line of the Prophets." This same *Ḥadīth* in these very words is found in Tirmidhi: *Kitāb al-Manāqib*, chap. *Faḍl an-Nabī*.

In Musnad Abū Da'ūd Ṭayālīsī, this *Ḥadīth* is one of those reported by Jābir bin 'Abdullah, and its last words are to the effect: "Through me the Prophethood was brought to a close."

In Musnad Aḥmad Traditions on the subject with a slight difference in wording have been reported on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Ubayy bin Ka'b, Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa'īd

Khudrī and Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah.

(3) The Holy Prophet said: "I have been distinguished from the other Prophets in six things: (1) I have been endowed with the eloquent speech, (2) I have been succoured with awe, (3) Booty has been made lawful for me, (4) the earth has been made a mosque for me as well as a means of obtaining purity (i.e. In my *Sharī'ah* the Prayer can be offered anywhere on the surface of the earth and not only in specific houses of worship, and *tayammum* (purification through dust) can be resorted to for ablutions in case water is not available, (5) I have been appointed a Messenger for the entire world, and (6) with me the office of Prophethood has been closed. (Muslim, Tirmidhi Ibn Mājah)."

(4) The Holy Prophet said: "The line of Prophethood and Apostleship has come to an end: after me there will neither be a prophet nor an apostle." (Tirmidhi)

(5) The Holy Prophet said: "I am Muḥammad, I am Aḥmad, I am the effacer: disbelief will be effaced through me. I am the assembler: after me the people will be assembled in the Plain of Resurrection. (That is, after me now only Resurrection is to take place). And I am the Last: after me there is no prophet." (Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Mu'wattā, Al-Mustadrak).

(6) The Holy Prophet said: "Allah has sent no Prophet who did not warn his people of the coming of the *Dajjāl* (the Antichrist, but he did not come in their times). Now I am the last of the Prophets and you are the last Community. Therefore, he is about to appear among you now." (Ibn Mājah).

(7) 'Abdur Raḥmān bin Jubair says: "I heard 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin 'Ās say that the Holy Prophet one day came out to us in a manner as though he were taking his leave. He said: I am Muḥammad, the un-lettered Prophet, thrice; then said: and no prophet will come after me." (Musnad Aḥmad: Traditions from 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin 'Ās).

(8) The Holy Prophet said: "There is no prophethood after me; there are only harbingers of good news. It was asked, "What are the harbingers of good news, O Messenger of Allah?" He replied: "A true vision," or said, "A righteous vision." (That is, there is no possibility of Divine Revelation now. At the most a person may receive an inspiration, which will be in the form of a true vision.) (Musnad Aḥmad, Nasā'i, Abū Da'ūd).

(9) The Holy Prophet said: "If there were a prophet after me, it would have been 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb." (Tirmidhi).

(10) The Holy Prophet said to Ḥaḍrat 'Ali: "You are to me as Aaron was to Moses, but there is no prophet after me." (Bukhārī, Muslim)

Bukhārī and Muslim have related this *Ḥadīth* in connection with the Tabūk Expedition. Two *Ḥadīths* on this subject have been related in Musnad Aḥmad on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin Abī Waqqās, the last sentence of one of which is to the effect: "But there is no prophethood after me." The detailed traditions related in this connection by Abū Da'ūd Ṭayālisī, Imām Aḥmad and Mūḥammad bin Ishāq show that on the eve of his departure on the Tabūk Expedition the Holy Prophet had decided to leave Ḥaḍrat 'Ali behind in the defence and protection of Madīnah. The hypocrites thereupon had an opportunity to pass discourteous remarks about him. He went to the Holy Prophet and asked him: "O Messenger of Allah, are you leaving me behind among the women and children?" On this occasion the Holy Prophet consoled him, saying: "You are to me as Aaron was to Moses." That is, "Just as the Prophet Moses, on his departure for Mount Ṭūr, had left the Prophet Aaron behind to look after the children of Israel, so am I leaving you behind for the defence of Madīnah." But at the same time, apprehending lest Ḥaḍrat 'Ali's comparison with the Prophet Aaron might cause mischief later, the Holy Pro-

phet immediately added : "But there will be no prophet after me."

(11) Thaubbān says that the Holy Prophet said: "... and that 30 impostors will appear in my community each one of whom will claim to be a prophet, whereas I am the last Prophet: there is no prophet after me." (Abū Da'ūd).

Abū Da'ūd has related another *Ḥadīth* on this subject in *Kitāb al-Malāḥim* on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah. Tirmidhi also has related these two Traditions on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Thaubbān and Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah; the second Tradition is to the effect: "So much so that about 30 impostors will arise, each of whom will claim to be a messenger of Allah."

(12) The Holy Prophet said: "There have been before you among the children of Israel such people, who were spoken to (by God) though they were not prophets. If there be such a one in my Ummah, it will be 'Umar.'" (Bukhārī: *Kitāb al-Manāqib*).

A *Ḥadīth* on this subject in Muslim has the word *muhaddathūn* instead of *yukallamūn*, which both mean the persons who are spoken to by God, or are spoken to from the unseen. This shows that if<sup>3</sup> there had been any in this Ummah, who could have the honour of being spoken to by God, without being a prophet, it would have been 'Umar.

(13) The Holy Prophet said: "There is no prophet after me, and there is no ummah (of any other prophet) after my Ummah." (Baihaqi: *Kitāb ar-Ru'yā'*, Ṭabarānī).

(14) The Holy Prophet said: "I am the last Prophet and my Mosque is the last Mosque (i.e. the Prophet's Mosque at Madīnah)."<sup>3</sup> (Muslim: *Kitāb al-Ḥajj*).

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3. The deniers of the Finality of Prophethood have argued thus, from this *Ḥadīth*: "Just as the Holy Prophet has called his Mosque the last Mosque, whereas it is not the last mosque, but countless other mosques have been built after it in the world, so when he said that he is

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These *Hadīths* have been reported by a large number of the Companions and related by many Traditionists with many strong chains of authorities. A study of these shows that the Holy Prophet has on different occasions in different ways and in different words affirmed that he is the last of the Prophets, that no prophet will come after him, that prophethood has been finalised in him, and that the people who claim to be messengers and prophets after him would be impostors<sup>4</sup>. There can be no more authentic and reli-

the last Prophet, it also meant that other prophets would continue to appear after him in the world; however, with regard to excellence and perfection he is the last Prophet and his Mosque the last Mosque." But interpretations such as these are, in fact, a proof that these people have lost the faculty of understanding the true meaning of the words of Allah and His Messenger. If a person has a glance through all the *Hadīths* on this subject as related in Muslim, he will understand precisely in what sense has the Holy Prophet called his Mosque the last Mosque. The Traditions related by Imām Muslim in this connection on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, Ḥaḍrat ‘Abdullah bin ‘Umar and Ḥaḍrat Maimūnah (wife of the Prophet) are explicit that there are three such Mosques in the world, which are superior to all other mosques in the sense that offering the Prayer in them carries a thousand times greater spiritual rewards than offering it in other mosques. On that very basis, to undertake a journey for the purpose of offering the Prayer in these three Mosques only is permissible. No other mosque has the right and merit that one should make a journey especially to it for offering the Prayer in it, apart from the other mosques. The first of these is the *Masjid al-Harām*, which was built by the Prophet Abraham; the second is the *Masjid al-Aqsā*, which was built by the Prophet Solomon; and the third is the Prophet's Mosque at Madīnah, which was founded by the Holy Prophet himself. What the Holy Prophet meant was this: "Since no other prophet will come after me, no fourth mosque will be built in the world, offering the Prayer in which might carry greater rewards than offering it in other mosques and making a journey to which especially for the purpose of offering the Prayer in it might be lawful."

4. As against all these Sayings of the Holy Prophet, the deniers of the Finality of Prophethood cite a saying of Ḥaḍrat ‘Ā'ishah to the effect: "Do say that the Holy Prophet is the last of the Prophets, but do not say that no prophet will come after him." But, in the first place,

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able and conclusive explanations of the Qur'ānic word *Khātam an-Nabiyyīn* than this. The Holy Prophet's statement by itself is authoritative and decisive. But when it explains a text of the Qur'ān, it becomes all the more authenticated and conclusive. The question is: Who can be better qualified to understand and explain the Qur'ān than the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) himself? Thus, if a person gives a different meaning to *Khatam Nubuwwat* (Finality of Prophethood), how can we hold it worthy of any attention or consideration, much less accept it as correct?

### **Consensus of the Companions**

After the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* the third place is accorded to the consensus of the Holy Prophet's Companions. All reliable historical traditions agree that the Companions by complete consensus had fought wars against the people who claimed to be the prophets and those who accepted them as such, immediately after the death of the Holy Prophet.

In this connection, the case of Musailimah the Liar is particularly noteworthy. This man did not deny the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet, but claimed that he had been made an associate with him in his Prophethood. Some time before the Holy Prophet's death, he had written:

“From Musailimah, the messenger of Allah, to

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to cite a saying of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah as against the authentic statements of the Holy Prophet is highly derogatory; besides, the tradition in which this saying has been ascribed to Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah is in itself un-authentic. No traditionist worthy of any mention has related it in any reliable *Ḥadīth* Collection. It is only traced to *Durr-i Manthūr*, a commentary of the Qur'ān, and *Takmilah Majma' al-Biḥār*, a dictionary of *Ḥadīth*, but without any reference to its chain of transmitters. How then can such a weak tradition containing a saying of a Companion be cited to contradict the Sayings of the Holy Prophet, which have been related by all the eminent traditionists with strong and authentic chains of the transmitters?

Muḥammad, the Messenger of Allah: Peace be on you: You should know that I have been made an associate with you in the work of prophethood.” (Ṭabari, vol. II, p. 399. Egyptian Edition).

Furthermore, the historian Ṭabari has related that in the call to the prayer that was pronounced under Musailimah, the words: *Ash-hadu anna Muḥammad ar-Rasūl Allah* were also included. In spite of this clear affirmation of the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet by him, he was declared a *kāfir*, excommunicated and fought against. History also proves that the Banū Ḥanīfah had believed in him in good faith, and they had been made to understand that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah’s peace) himself had made him an associate in his Prophethood. Moreover, the verses of the Qur’ān had been presented before them in a way as if they had been sent down to Musailimah, by a person who had received instruction in the Qur’ān at Madīnah. (*Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah*, vol. V, p. 51). But, in spite of this, the Companions did not accept them as Muslims and sent an army to fight them. Then, it cannot also be claimed that the Companions had fought against them not on account of apostasy but for the crime of rebellion. According to the law of Islam, in case war is fought against rebellious Muslims, their prisoners of war cannot be made slaves. Not to speak of Muslims, even the rebellious *dhimīs* cannot be made the slaves in case they are captured in war. But when invasion was made on Musailimah and his followers, Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr declared that their women and children would be made slaves; and when they were taken prisoners they were actually made slaves. Thus, it was from among them that a slave-girl was assigned to Ḥaḍrat ‘Ali of whom Muḥammad bin Ḥanafiah<sup>5</sup>, so well-known to the history of Islam, was born. (*Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah*, vol. VI, pp. 316, 325). Thus, evidently, it was not the crime of rebellion for which the

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5. Ḥanafiah: a woman of the tribe of Banū Ḥanīfah.

Companions fought them but the crime was that a person had claimed to be a prophet after the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and others had believed in his prophethood. This action was taken immediately after the death of the Holy Prophet, under the leadership of Abū Bakr, and the full consensus of all the Companions. Perhaps there does not exist a more explicit example than this of a perfect consensus of the Companions.

### Consensus of Religious Scholars

After the consensus of the Holy Prophet's Companions the next place with regard to authority is accorded to the consensus of the religious scholars who lived after the period of the Companions. A study of their verdicts shows that right from the first century after Hijrah till the present day the religious scholars of every country of the entire Muslim world have held the unanimous belief that there can be no prophet after the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), and this also that anyone who lays a claim to this office after him, or accepts such a claim, is a *kāfir*, and must be excommunicated from Islam. Some of these verdicts are given below:

(1) A man in the time of Imām Abū Ḥanifah (80-150 A.H.) claimed to be a prophet, and said, "Allow me to present proofs of my prophethood." The Imām ruled: "Anyone who demands a proof of prophethood from him, will also turn a disbeliever, for the Messenger of Allah has said: 'There is no prophet after me'." (*Manāqib al-Imām al-A'zam Abī Ḥanifah*, Ibn Aḥmad al-Makkī, vol. I, p. 161. Hyderabad Ed. 1321 A.H.)

(2) 'Allāma Ibn Jarīr Ṭabarī (224-310 A.H.) in his well-known commentary of the Qur'ān, has explained the meaning of this verse, thus: "He brought the Prophethood to a close and sealed it: Now this door will not open for anyone till Resurrection." (*Tafsīr Ibn Jarīr*, vol. XXII, p. 12).



(3) Imām Ṭaḥāwī (239-321 A.H.) writes in his *'Aqīdah Salfīyah*, in connection with the beliefs of the righteous, especially of Imām Abū Hanīfah, Imām Abū Yūsuf and Imām Muḥammad (may Allah show mercy to all of them), in respect of Prophethood, "And that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) is a chosen servant of Allah, His Prophet and favourite Apostle; and he is the last of the Prophets, the leader of the righteous, the chief of the Apostles, and beloved of the Lord of the worlds. Any claim to prophethood after him is deviation and worship of the lusts of the self." (*Sharḥ at-Ṭaḥāwīyah*, Dār al-Ma'ārif, Egypt, pp. 15, 87, 96, 97, 100, 102).

(4) 'Allāma Ibn Ḥazm Andalūsī (334-456 A.H.) writes: "Most certainly the coming down of the Revelation after the death of the Holy Prophet has ceased, the reason being that the Revelation comes down to none but a Prophet, and Allah Himself has stated: Muḥammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the last of the Prophets." (*Al-Muḥallā*, vol. I, p. 26).

(5) Imām Ghazzālī (450-505 A.H.) says: "There is complete consensus among the Muslim Ummah that there is no prophet after the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) . . . The whole Ummah is unanimous that the Holy Prophet by his words *Lā nabiyya ba'dī* meant nothing but this that after him there will neither be a prophet nor an apostle. Anyone who interprets this Saying in any other way, falls outside the pale of Islam; his interpretation would be nonsensical and his writing heretical. Besides, the Ummah is also unanimous that there is no scope whatever for any other interpretation than this; the one who denies it, denies the consensus of the Ummah." (*Al-Iqtisād fil-I'tiqād*, Egypt, p. 114).

(6) Muḥy-is-Sunnah Baghavī (d. 510 A.H.) writes in his Commentary *Ma'ālim at-Tanzīl*: "Allah closed the Prophethood through the Holy Prophet; thus, he is the last of the Prophets. . . . And Ibn 'Abbās says that Allah

Almighty (in this verse) has decreed that after him there will be no prophet." (Vol. III, p. 158).

(7) 'Allāma Zamakhsharī (467-538 A.H.) writes in his Commentary *Al-Khashshāf*: "If you ask: How can the Holy Prophet be the last of the Prophets when there is the belief that the Prophet Jesus will come down in the last days before Resurrection? I shall say: The Holy Prophet is the last of the Prophets in the sense that no other person will be raised as a prophet after him. As for the Prophet Jesus, he is one of those who had been made the Prophets before the advent of the Holy Prophet. And when he comes again, he will come as a follower of the *Sharī'ah* of Muḥammad (peace be upon him) and will offer the Prayer with his face towards his *qiblah* (the Ka'bah) like any other member of his Ummah." (Vol. II, p. 215).

(8) Qādī 'Iyād (d. 544 A.H.) writes: "He who lays a claim to prophethood for himself, or holds that one can acquire it and can attain the rank of prophethood through the purification of the heart, as some philosophers and so-called *sūfīs* assert, and likewise he who does not claim to be a prophet but claims that he receives Revelation . . . all such people are disbelievers and deniers of the Holy Prophet, for he has informed us that he is the last of the Prophets and that no prophet is to come after him. And he has conveyed this news from Allah that he has closed the Prophethood and that he has been sent to all mankind; and the whole Ummah is unanimous that these words have no other but the apparent meaning. There is no room for a different interpretation or special meaning. Therefore, there can be absolutely no doubt about such people's being *kāfir* both according to the consensus and the Traditions." (*Shifā'*, vol. II, pp. 270, 271).

(9) 'Allāma Shehrastānī (d. 548 A.H.) writes in his famous *Al-Milal wan-Niḥal*: "And likewise the one who says . . . that another prophet (except for the Prophet Jesus) will be raised after the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon

whom be Allah's peace), is a *kāfir* and there is no difference of opinion about this even between two men." (Vol. III, p. 249).

(10) Imām Rāzī (543-606 A. H.), explaining the verse of *Khātam-an-Nabiyyīn* says in his *Tafsīr Kabīr*: "In this context, the reason for saying *wa Khātam-an-Nabiyyīn* is this: If a prophet after whom another prophet is to be raised, leaves the work of admonition and explanation of injunctions somewhat incomplete, the one coming after him can complete it. But the Prophet after whom no other prophet is to be raised, is by far more compassionate to his people (Ummah) and gives them explicit guidance, for he is like the father who knows that after him his son has no guardian and patron to look after him." (Vol. VI, p. 581).

(11) 'Allāma Baiḍāwī (d. 685 A.H.) writes in his Commentary *Anwār at-Tanzīl*: "That is, the Holy Prophet is the last of the Prophets, who closed their line, or through whom the line of the Prophets was sealed. And the Prophet Jesus' second advent does not contradict the Holy Prophet's being the last Prophet, for when he comes, he will be a follower of his *Sharī'ah*." (Vol. IV, p. 164).

(12) 'Allāma Ḥāfiz ad-Dīn Nasafī (d. 710 A.H.) writes in his Commentary *Madārik at-Tanzīl*: "And the Holy Prophet is *Khātam an-Nabiyyīn*, i.e. the last of the Prophets: After him no other person will be appointed a prophet. As for the Prophet Jesus, he is one of those who had been appointed Prophets before him, and when he comes the second time, he will come as a follower of the Law of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), and as a member of his own Ummah." (P. 471).

(13) 'Allāma 'Alā' ad-Dīn Baghdādī (d. 725 A.H.) writes in his Commentary *Khāzin*: "*Wa Khātam an-Nabiyyīn*, i.e. Allah closed the line of the Prophethood in the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be His peace). Now there is neither any Prophethood after him nor any associate with him in this. . . . *wa kān-Allah-u bi-kulli shai'in*

'*Alīmā*: Allah has the knowledge that there is no prophet after him.'" (pp. 471-472).

(14) 'Allāma Ibn Kathīr (d. 774 A.H.) writes in his well-known Commentary: "Thus, this verse is an express injunction in this regard that after the Holy Prophet there is no prophet; and when there is no prophet after him, there can be no apostle either, for apostleship is specific and prophethood general: every apostle is a prophet but every prophet is not an apostle. . . . Anyone who lays a claim to this office after the Holy Prophet, is a liar and impostor and deviator and unbeliever, no matter what supernatural and magical spells and charms and sorcery he practises. . . . The same is the position of every such person who lays a claim to this office till Resurrection." (Vol. III, pp. 493, 494).

(15) 'Allāma Jalāl ad-Dīn Suyūṭī (d. 911 A.H.) writes in *Jalālayn*: "*Wa kān-Allāh-u bi-kulli shai'in 'Alīmā*: Allah knows that there is no prophet after the Holy Prophet; and when the Prophet Jesus comes down, he will be a follower of the Holy Prophet's *Sharī'ah*." (P. 768).

(16) 'Allāma Ibn Nujaim (d. 970 A.H.) writes in his *Kitāb al-Ashbāh wan-Nazā'ir*, the famous work on the principles of jurisprudence: "If a person disbelieves that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is the last of the Prophets, he is not a Muslim, for this is one of those fundamental things knowing and believing which is a basic requirement of the faith." (P. 179).

(17) Mullā 'Alī Qārī (d. 1016 A.H.) writes in *Sharḥ Fiqh Akbar*: "There is complete consensus of the Ummah that laying claim to prophethood after the Holy Prophet, Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is *kufr* (heresy)." (P. 202).

(18) Shaikh Ismā'īl Ḥaqqī (d. 1137 A.H.), explaining this verse in his Commentary *Rūḥ al-Bayān*, writes: "'Āsim has read the word as *Khātam*, which is the sealing instrument with which things are sealed. It implies that the

Holy Prophet came at the end and in him the line of the Prophets was closed and sealed. . . . Some people have read it as *Khātim*, which means the one who puts a seal. Thus, *Khātim* also is a synonym of *Khātam* . . . Henceforth the scholars of his Ummah will only inherit him in *Walāyat* (spiritual eminence, saintliness), the inheritance of the Prophethood having been brought to a close in him. And the second coming of the Prophet Jesus does not affect the Holy Prophet's being the last of the Prophets, for *Khātam an-Nabiyyīn* means that no other prophet will be raised after him. . . . And Jesus had been raised as a Prophet before him. When he comes the second time, he will come as a follower of the *Sharī'ah* of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). He will offer the Prayer with his face towards his *qiblah*, like any other man belonging to his Ummah. He will neither receive revelation nor issue new commands, but he will be a Caliph of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). . . . And the followers of the *Sunnah* believe that there is no prophet after our Holy Prophet, for Allah has said: "But he is the Messenger of Allah and the last of the Prophets," and the Holy Prophet has declared: "There is no prophet after me." Now whoever says that there is a prophet after our Holy Prophet, will be declared a *kāfir*, for he has denied a fundamental article of the faith; likewise, the one who doubts it, will also be declared a *kāfir*, for the Truth has been made distinct from falsehood. And the claim of the one who claims to be a prophet after the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) can be nothing but imposture." (Vol. XXII, p. 188).

(19) According to *Fatāwā 'Ālamgīrī*, a compilation of the 12th century after Hijrah, compiled by a board of eminent scholars under orders of Aurangzeb 'Ālamgīr: "If a person disbelieves that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is the last of the Prophets, he is not a Muslim; and if he claims that he is Allah's messenger or

prophet, he will be declared a *kāfir*." (Vol. II, p. 263).

(20) 'Allāma Shaukānī (d. 1255 A.H.) writes in his Commentary *Fath al-Qadīr*: "The majority of the scholars have read the word as *Khātim* and 'Āsim as *Khātam*. According to the first reading, it would mean this: "The Holy Prophet closed the line of the Prophets, i.e. he came at the end of them," and according to the second reading this: "He was like a seal for them, with which their line was sealed, and with whose inclusion their group was embellished." (Vol. IV, p. 275).

(21) 'Allāma Ālūsī (d. 1270 A.H.) writes in his Commentary *Ruh al-Ma'ānī*: "The word *Nabī* (Prophet) is general and *Rasūl* (Apostle) specific. Therefore, the Holy Prophet's being *Khātam an-Nabiyyīn* by itself requires that he should also be *Khātam al-Mursalīn*; and his being the last of the Prophets and Apostles implies that after his being blessed by Allah with the Prophethood in this world, the office of Prophethood for any jinn or human being has been abolished." (Vol. XXII, p. 32). "Whoever after him claims to be the recipient of revelation of prophethood, will be declared a *kāfir* and there is no difference of opinion among the Muslims in this regard." (Vol. XXII, p. 38). The Holy Prophet's being the last of the Prophets has been explicitly stated by the Book of Allah, clearly enunciated by the *Sunnah* and fully agreed upon by the entire Ummah. Therefore, whoever claims something contrary to it, will be declared a *kāfir*." (Vol. XXII, p. 39).

These elucidations have been made by the eminent scholars, jurists, traditionists and commentators of every Muslim country from India to Morocco and Spain and from Turkey to Yaman. A glance at their dates of birth and death will show that they include eminent authorities of every century of the history of Islam, from the first to the 13th. Although we could have cited the Muslim scholars of the 14th century as well, we have deliberately omitted them because someone might say that these scholars had

given this meaning of the Finality of Prophethood especially in order to counter the claim of the modern claimant to prophethood. Therefore, we have cited the writings of the earlier scholars who, evidently, could have no ill-will or animosity against any person of the present day. These writings conclusively prove that from the first century after Hijrah till today the entire Islamic world has unanimously understood the word *Khātam an-Nabiyyīn* to mean "the last of the Prophets," that there has been complete unanimity of belief among the Muslims of every age that the door to prophethood after the Holy Prophet has been closed for ever and ever, and that there has never been any difference of opinion in this that the one who laid claim to prophethood or apostleship after the Holy Prophet, and the one who accepted such a claim, would fall outside the pale of Islam.

Now it is for every sensible person to see and judge for himself what room is there for anybody to open the door of prophethood for a new claimant and to take the word *Khātam an-Nabiyyīn* in a meaning different from that which is established lexically, which is evident from the Qur'ānic context, which the Holy Prophet himself has explained, which is completely agreed upon by the Companions, and which has been accepted unanimously by the entire Ummah, from the time of the Companions till the present day; and how can such people be regarded as Muslims, who have not merely expressed the opinion that the door to prophethood is still open, but have practically affirmed belief in the prophethood of a person, who has actually broken into the sacred house of the Prophethood?

Three other things also merit consideration in this regard:

### **Is Allah the Enemy of Our Faith?**

In the first place, Prophethood is a delicate matter. According to the Qur'ān, it is one of those fundamental articles of the faith whose acceptance or rejection determines

whether a person is a believer or a non-believer. If a person is a prophet and one does not believe in him, one will be a *kāfir*; ; and if the person is an impostor and one believes in him, one will again be a *kāfir*. Concerning a delicate matter like this, Allah certainly could not be expected to have made any mistake. If a prophet were to be raised after the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), Allah would have clearly stated this in the Qur'ān, would have had it openly proclaimed through His Prophet, and the Holy Prophet would not have left the world until he had forewarned his followers in unequivocal terms that other prophets would come after him and that they must believe in them. After all, what enmity could Allah and His Prophet have against our faith and belief that although the door to prophethood had been open and another prophet had to come without believing in whom we could not be Muslims, yet not only should we have been kept uninformed, but, on the contrary, both Allah and His Messenger should have made such statements as would involve the whole Ummah, throughout 1,300 years, and even today, in the misunderstanding that no other prophet was to be raised after the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (may Allah's peace be upon him)?

Now, supposing the door to prophethood is still open and another prophet has also appeared, we will deny him straightaway without any hesitation. The only risk could be of our accountability before Allah. If Allah were to question us on the Day of Resurrection, we could produce the whole evidence in His Court to establish that, God forbid, we had been involved in disbelief and deviation only by Allah's own Book and the *Sunnah* of His own Prophet. We do not at all apprehend that Allah will still punish us in spite of the evidence for not having believed in the new prophet. But if, on the contrary, the door to propethood is really closed, and no new prophet is to be raised, and in spite of that someone believes in the prophethood of an



impostor, he should well consider what evidence he will produce in God's Court to escape the punishment for disbelief and deviation. Before the time comes for him to be produced in Allah's Court, he should examine his defence material here, and by comparison with the arguments presented above, should see and judge for himself whether a sensible person could run the risk of the punishment for disbelief by placing reliance on the kind of the defence pleas that he has at his disposal.

### **Is there Need for a New Prophet?**

The second point that demands consideration is that prophethood is not a quality which someone could develop by making himself worthy of it through worship and righteous acts, nor is it a prize which might be awarded for rendering some services. This is indeed an office to which Allah appoints a person to fulfil a specific need. When the need arises, a prophet is appointed to fulfil it, and when there is no need, or does not remain, prophets are not sent unnecessarily in vain.

When we turn the Qur'ān to find out as to what were precisely the conditions that made the appointment of the Prophets necessary in the past, we find that there have been four situations which made their appointment essential:

(1) A particular nation stood in need of a prophet because no prophet had come to it before, nor had the message of a prophet sent to another nation reached it.

(2) The appointment of a prophet became necessary because the teaching of the former prophet had been forgotten, or tampered with, and it was no longer possible to know and follow his message in practical life.

(3) The people might not have received the full message and guidance through the former prophet and more prophets were needed to supplement his teaching.

(4) A prophet might have needed another prophet to help and support him in carrying out his mission.

Now, evidently, none of these situations needs to be fulfilled after the advent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). The Qur'ān itself tells that the Holy Prophet has been raised for the guidance of the entire mankind and the cultural history of the world tells that since his advent conditions have been constantly such that his message and invitation could reach, and still can reach, every nation. Therefore, there remains no need for separate prophets to be sent to separate nations.

Again the Qur'ān bears evidence, and the whole *Hadīth* and biographical literature (on the Holy Prophet's life) testifies, that the teaching of the Holy Prophet still remains safe in its original form. It has not been tampered with in any way. The Book that he brought remains intact to each letter and syllable and will remain so till the Last Day. The full account and record of the guidance that he gave by precept and example is still available in its entirety and in such pure and original form as if we were a living witness to it. This sets aside the second need also.

Then the Qur'ān also proclaims unequivocally that the Religion of Islam was perfected through the Holy Prophet. Therefore, for the perfection of Religion also no new prophet is required.

As regards the fourth need, if a prophet were actually needed, he should have been appointed in the time of the Holy Prophet to assist him. Evidently, when none was appointed then, this need and condition is also eliminated.

Now we should be told what is that fifth kind of need for which a prophet may have to be raised after the Holy Prophet. If it is argued that the community has degenerated, and a prophet was needed for its reformation, we shall say that no prophet ever had been raised only for the sake of reformation in the world. A prophet is appointed so that Divine Revelation is sent to him; and Divine Revelation is needed either to convey a new message, or to supplement a former message, or to cleanse it of impurities and corrup-

tion. Now when the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) are safe and intact and the Religion has been perfected and completed, there remains no need for a new Divine Revelation. Now for the sake of the reformation only reformers will be needed and not any prophets.

### **A New Prophethood is a Curse rather than a Blessing for the Ummah**

The third point worthy of consideration is that whenever a prophet arises among a people, they will immediately be confronted with the question of belief and unbelief. Those who accept him will form one community and those who reject him inevitably a separate community. The difference between the two communities will not be of superficial nature but a fundamental one owing to their believing and disbelieving in a prophet, which will prevent them from ever uniting together unless one or the other community abandons its faith. Then practically also they will have separate sources of the guidance and law, because one community will derive its law from the Revelation and *Sunnah* of the Prophet accepted and recognized by it, while the other community will reject it altogether as a source of law. For this reason it will be impossible for the two communities to unite and become a cohesive society.

If one keeps these realities in view one will understand that the Finality of Prophethood is a great blessing of Allah, which alone has made it possible for the Muslim Ummah to become an enduring and universal brotherhood. It has secured the Muslims against every fundamental difference which might have caused a permanent division in it. Now, whoever accepts the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's, peace and blessings) as his guide and leader and is not prepared to turn to any other source of guidance except his teaching, is a member of this brotherhood and can always be. This unity could never have been achieved by the Ummah had the door to prophet-

hood not been closed and sealed, for it would have continued to suffer disintegration on the advent of every new prophet.

Any sensible person after a little deliberation can easily understand that when a prophet has been sent for the entire mankind, when Religion has been perfected and completed through him, when his teaching has been fully secured and preserved for ever, the door to prophethood should naturally be closed and sealed in order that the believers the world over may unite into a single community permanently by adherence to the teaching of the Last Prophet, and the appearance of the new prophets every now and then does not cause divisions to appear in the Ummah. Whether a prophet is a "shadow prophet" or a "reincarnation", or whether he is the follower of a former Prophet, or a law-giver and bearer of a book, in any case whenever such a prophet arises, and is sent by God, his emergence will necessarily cause mankind to be divided into two communities: those who accept him as a prophet will form the community of the believers and those who reject him will stand condemned as the disbelievers. This division is inevitable when there is really the need for a new prophet, but when there is no such need, it cannot be expected that Allah in His wisdom and mercy would cause His servants to be needlessly involved in the conflict of belief and unbelief and would prevent their becoming one integrated Ummah for ever. Therefore, whatever is established by the Qur'ān and confirmed by the *Sunnah* and consensus, is also corroborated by reason, and reason also demands that the door to prophethood should now remain closed and sealed for ever and ever.

### **The Reality about the "Promised Messiah"**

The inviters to the new prophethood usually tell the ignorant Muslims that the traditions of the Holy Prophet have foretold the coming of a "promised Messiah", and the Messiah (Jesus Christ) was a prophet, and therefore, his

second coming does not contradict the doctrine of the Finality of Prophethood. Thus, the doctrine of the Finality of Prophethood is true and, at the same time, the advent of the "promised Messiah" is also true.

In this regard, they also say that the "promised Messiah" does not imply Jesus son of Mary. Jesus is dead. The one whose coming has been foretold in *Ḥadīth* is a man like the Messiah, a Messiah like the Prophet Jesus, and he is so-and-so, who has already come. To believe in him is not contradictory to the belief in the Finality of Prophethood.

In order to expose this fraud we reproduce below, with full references to their sources, the authentic Traditions, which are found in the most reliable *Ḥadīth* Collections. By going through these Traditions everyone can know what the Holy Prophet has said in this regard and how it is being misconstrued and misinterpreted these days for ulterior motives.

### **Traditions Relating to the Second Advent of Jesus Son of Mary**

(1) Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah reports that the Holy Prophet said: "I swear by Him in Whose hand is my soul: the **son of Mary** shall descend among you, as a just ruler. Then he will break the Cross, and kill the swine<sup>6</sup>, and put an end to war (in another Tradition,

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6. "To break the Cross and kill the swine" means that Christianity will cease to exist as a separate religion. The entire creed of Christianity is based on the doctrine that God caused His only son (the Prophet Jesus) to die an "accursed" death on the Cross, which made him the Atonement for the sin of man. And the distinction of the Christians among the prophetic communities is that they abandoned the whole Divine Law and only took this doctrine; so much so that they made the swine lawful, which was forbidden in the Law of all the Prophets. Therefore, when the Prophet Jesus will himself declare: "I am neither son of God, nor did I die on the Cross, nor became atonement for anybody's sin," the Christian faith will have no basis left for it. Likewise, when he

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there is the word *jizyah* instead of *harb* (war), meaning that he will abolish *jizyah*);<sup>7</sup> then there will be such abundance of wealth that nobody will like to accept it, and (conditions will be such that) performing of one *sajdah* (prostration) before Allah will be considered better than the world and what it contains." (Bukhārī: *Kitāb Aḥadīth al-Anbiyā'*, *bāb Nuzūl 'Isā Ibn Maryam*; Muslim: *bāb Nuzūl 'Isā*; Tirmidhi: *Abu āb al-Fitan, Bāb fī Nuzūl 'Isā*; Musnad Ahmad: *Marwīyāt Abū Hurairah*).

(2) Another Tradition from Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah is to the effect: "Resurrection will not take place until **Jesus son of Mary** has descended . . ." (This is followed by the same theme as reported in the above cited Tradition). (Bukhārī: *Kitāb al-Maḏālim, Bāb Kasr aṣ-Ṣalīb*; Ibn Mājah: *Kitāb al-Fitan*).

(3) Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah reports that the Holy Prophet said: "How will you be when the **son of Mary** will descend among you, and your Imām at that time will be from among yourselves?"<sup>8</sup> (Bukhārī: *Kitāb Aḥadīth Anbiyā'*, *Bāb Nuzūl 'Isā*; Muslim: *Nuzūl 'Isā*; Musnad Ahmad).

(4) Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah has reported that the Holy Prophet said: "**Jesus son of Mary** shall descend; then he will kill the swine and destroy the Cross; and a congregation will be held for him for the Prayer; and he will distribute so much wealth that people will be satiated with it; and he

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will declare that he had neither made the swine lawful for his followers nor given them the freedom to disobey the Law, the other distinctions of Christianity will also disappear.

7. In other words it means: "All kinds of differences among the communities will disappear and human beings will join one community, the Community of Islam; thus, war will be put to an end to, and *jizyah* will cease to be imposed." This same thing is supported by the Traditions No. 5 and 15 below.

8. That is, "The Prophet Jesus, will not lead the people in the Prayer, but will perform his Prayer behind the existing Imām of the Muslims."

will abolish the tribute; and he will encamp at Rauḥā',<sup>9</sup> and from there will go to perform Ḥajj or 'Umrah, or both."<sup>10</sup> (The reporter is in doubt as to what exactly the Holy Prophet said). (Musnad Aḥmad: *Marwiyāt Abū Hurairah*; Muslim: *Kitāb al-Ḥajj*).

(5) Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah reports that the Holy Prophet (after making mention of the appearance of the *Dajjāl*) said: "In the meantime, when the Muslims will be making preparations to fight him, will be lining up (for the Prayer) and the *Iqāmah* will have been pronounced, **Jesus son of Mary** shall descend and lead them in the Prayer; and the enemy of Allah (i.e. the *Dajjāl*) on seeing him shall start dissolving like salt in water. If Jesus were to leave him alone, he would melt to death anyway, but Allah will have him killed at his hand, and he will show his blood on his spear to the Muslims." (Mishkāt: *Kitāb al-Fitan*, with reference to Muslim).

(6) Abū Hurairah reports that the Holy Prophet said: "There is no prophet between me and him (i.e. Jesus Christ), and **he shall descend**. So, recognize him when you see him. He is a man of medium height, of ruddy and fair complexion; he will be dressed in two yellow garments; the hair of his head will appear as though water was going to trickle down from it, whereas it will not be wet. He will fight people in the cause of Islam, will break the Cross and kill the swine and will abolish *jizyah*; and Allah will put an end to all communities in his time except Islam; and he will slay the Antichrist (*Dajjāl*); and he will stay in the world for 40 years; then will die and the Muslims will offer the funeral Prayer for him." (Abū Da'ūd: *Kitāb al-Malāḥim*; Musnad Aḥmad: *Marwiyāt Abū Hurairah*).

(7) Ḥaḍrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah says that he heard

9. A place at a distance of 35 miles from Madīnah.

10. One should note that the person who has been accepted as "Jesus incarnate" in our time performed neither Ḥajj nor 'Umrah during his lifetime.

the Holy Prophet say: “. . . then **Jesus son of Mary** will descend. The leader of the Muslims will say to him, ‘Come, lead us in the Prayer’, but he will say, ‘No: you yourselves are leaders over one another.’<sup>11</sup> This he will say in view of the honour that Allah has bestowed on this Community.” (Muslim: *Bayān Nuzūl ‘Isā Ibn Maryam*; Musnad Ahmad: *Marwiyāt Jābir bin ‘Abdullah*).

(8) Jābir bin ‘Abdullah reports (in connection with the story of Ibn Ṣayyād): “Then, ‘Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb submitted: O Messenger of Allah, permit me to kill him. The Messenger of Allah replied: If he is the same person (i.e. the *Dajjāl*), then you will not kill him, but he will be killed by **Jesus son of Mary**. And if he is not he (i.e. the *Dajjāl*), then you have no right to kill a man from among the *dhimīs*.” (Mishkāt: *Kitāb al-Fitan*).

(9) Jābir bin ‘Abdullah reports that the Holy Prophet (while relating the story of the *Dajjāl*) said: “At that time suddenly **Jesus son of Mary** (on whom be peace) shall appear among the Muslims. Then the people will stand up for the Prayer, and he will be asked, ‘Step forward, O **Spirit of Allah** (and lead us in the Prayer); but he will say, ‘No: your own leader should step forward and lead the Prayer.’ Then, after offering the Morning Prayer, the Muslims shall go forth to fight the *Dajjāl*.’ He said, ‘When the liar will see Jesus, he will start dissolving like the salt in water. Then Jesus will advance towards him and will slay him; and it will so happen that the trees and the stones will cry out: ‘O **Spirit of Allah**, here is a Jew hiding behind me.’ None will be left from among the followers of the *Dajjāl*, whom he (i.e. Jesus) will not kill.” (Musnad Ahmad: *Rawāyāt Jābir bin ‘Abdullah*).

(10) Ḥaḍrat Nawwās bin Sam‘ān Kilābī reports (in connection with the story of the *Dajjāl*): In the mean time when the *Dajjāl* will be busy doing this and this, Allah will send down **Messiah son of Mary, and he**

11. That is, “Your leader should be from among yourselves.”



**will descend in the eastern part of Damascus, near the white tower, dressed in the two yellow garments, with his hands resting on the arms of two angels.** When he will bend down his head, waterdrops will appear trickling down, and when he will raise it, it will appear as though pearl-like drops are rolling down. Any disbeliever whom the air of his breath reaches—and it will reach up to the last limit of his sight—will fall dead. Then the **son of Mary** will go in pursuit of the *Dajjāl*, and will overtake him at the gate of Lod,<sup>12</sup> and will kill him.” (Muslim: *Dhikr ad-Dajjāl*; Abū Da’ūd: *Kitāb al-Malāḥim*; Tirmidhi: *Abwāb al-Fitan*; Ibn Mājah: *Kitāb al-Fitan*).

(11) ‘Abdullah bin ‘Amr bin ‘Ās reports that the Holy Prophet said: “The *Dajjāl* will appear in my Ummah, and will live for forty (I do not know whether he said 40 days, or 40 months or 40 years). Then Allah will send **Jesus son of Mary**. He will closely resemble ‘Urwah bin Mas‘ūd (a Companion). He will pursue him and kill him. Then for seven years the people will live in such a state that no ill-will and enmity will exist between any two of them.” (Muslim: *Dhikr ad-Dajjāl*).

(12) Ḥudhaifah bin Asīd al-Ghifārī says: Once the Holy Prophet joined our company and we were engaged in mutual talk. He asked, “What are you talking about?” The people said, “We were talking about Resurrection.” He said, “Resurrection will not take place until ten Signs have appeared.” He then pointed out the ten Signs: (1) Smoke, (2) the *Dajjāl*, (3) *Dābbat al-Ard*, (4) Rising of the sun in the west, (5) Descent of **Jesus son of Mary**, (6) Gog and Magog, (7) Three big landslides: one in the east, (8) the second in the west, (9) the third in the Arabian peninsula, and (10) a fire which will arise from the Yaman and will drive mankind towards the plain of Resurrection.” (Muslim: *Kitāb al-Fitan*; Abū Da’ūd: *Kitāb al-Malāḥim*).

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12. Lod (Lydda) is situated 13 miles south-east of Tel-Aviv, Capital of Israel, and is the most important airport of the country.

(13) *Thaubān*, the freedman of the Holy Prophet, reports that the Holy Prophet said: "Allah has saved from the fire of Hell two armies of my Ummah: the army which will invade India, and the army which will be with **Jesus son of Mary.**" (*Nasā'i: Kitāb al-Ḥihād; Musnad Aḥmad: Rawāyāt Thaubān*).

(14) *Mujammi' bin Jāriah Anṣārī* says: "I have heard the Holy Prophet say that the **son of Mary** will slay the *Dajjāl* at the gate of *Lod*." (*Musnad Aḥmad; Tirmidhi: Abwāb al-Fitan*).

(15) *Abū Umāmah Bāheli* (while mentioning the *Dajjāl* in a lengthy *Hadīth*) reports: Exactly at the time when the *Imām* of the Muslims will have stepped forward to lead them in the Morning Prayer, **Jesus son of Mary** shall descend upon them. The *Imām* will step back so that Jesus may step forward (to lead the Prayer), but Jesus, placing his hand between his two shoulders, will say, "No, you should lead, for the congregation has assembled to follow you." So, the *Imām* will lead the Prayer. After the salutation, Jesus will say, "Open the gate;" so the gate will be opened. Outside there will be the *Dajjāl* along with 70,000 of the armed Jews. As soon as he will look at Jesus (upon whom be peace) he will start melting like the salt in water, and will flee. Jesus will say, "I shall strike you a blow which will not let you live." And he will overtake him at the eastern gate of *Lod*, and Allah will cause the Jews to be defeated. . . . And the earth will be so filled with the Muslims as a vessel is filled with water. The entire world shall recite and follow one and the same *Kalimah* and none shall be worshipped except Allah." (*Ibn Mājah: Kitāb al-Fitan*).

(16) *Uthmān bin Abī al-ʿĀs* says: I have heard the Holy Prophet say: ". . . and **Jesus son of Mary** (peace be upon him) shall descend at the time of the Morning Prayer. The *Imām* of the Muslims will say: O Spirit of Allah, lead us in the Prayer. He will reply: The people

of this Ummah are themselves leaders one over the other. Then the *Imām* will step forward and lead the Prayer. After the Prayer, Jesus will hold his weapon and advance towards the *Dajjāl*. On seeing Jesus he will start melting like lead. Jesus will kill him with his weapon and his followers will flee, routed and vanquished, but will find no place to hide; so much so that the trees will call out: "O believer, here is a Jew behind me," and the stones will call out: "O believer, here is a Jew behind me." (Musnad Aḥmad, Ṭabarānī, Ḥākim).

(17) Samurah bin Jundub (in a lengthy *Ḥadīth*) has reported that the Holy Prophet said: Then in the morning **Jesus son of Mary** will join the Muslims, and Allah will cause the *Dajjāl* and his hosts to be routed, until the walls and the roots of the trees will cry out: "O believer, here is a disbeliever hidden behind me: come and kill him." (Musnad Aḥmad, Ḥākim).

(18) 'Imrān bin Ḥaṣīn reports that the Holy Prophet said: There will always be in my Ummah a group who will remain steadfast on the Truth, and will overwhelm the opponents, till Allah's Decree comes to pass and **Jesus son of Mary** (on whom be peace) descends. (Musnad Aḥmad)

(19) Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah has reported (in connection with the story of the *Dajjāl*): Then **Jesus** shall descend and kill the *Dajjāl*. After this Jesus will stay on the earth for forty years as a just leader and an equitable ruler.

(Musnad Aḥmad)

(20) Saḫīnah, freed slave of the Holy Prophet, reports (in connection with the story of the *Dajjāl*): Then **Jesus** (on whom be peace) will descend, and Allah will cause the *Dajjāl* to be killed near the mountain pass of Afīq.<sup>13</sup>

(Musnad Aḥmad)

13. Afīq (mod. Fīq) is the last Syrian city on the border between Syria and Israel. A little further on towards west at a few miles is the Lake Tiberias (Sea of Galilee), the source of River Jordan. Towards the south-west in the mountains is a low pass, which descends about

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(21) Ḥaḍrat Ḥudhaifah bin Yamān reports (with reference to the *Dajjāl*): Then, when the Muslims will stand up to offer the Prayer, **Jesus son of Mary** will descend just in front of them, and he will lead the Muslims in the Prayer. Then after the salutation, he will tell the Muslims to go away from between him and the enemy of Allah. . . . And Allah will make the Muslims to dominate over the followers of the *Dajjāl*, and they will inflict heavy casualties on them; so much so that the trees and the stones will cry out: "O 'Abdullah, O 'Abdur Raḥmān, O Muslim, here is a Jew, kill him." Thus, Allah will annihilate them, and the Muslims will be dominant; they will break the Cross, kill the swine and abolish the *Jizyah*. (*Mustadrak Ḥākim*. A brief version of this Tradition has also been reported in Muslim, and Ḥāfiz Ibn Ḥajar in his *Fatḥ al-Bārī* (vol. VI, p. 450) has declared it to be authentic).

These are 21 Traditions in all, which have been reported on the authority of 14 of the Companions of the Holy Prophet and related with correct references in the most reliable and authentic *Ḥadīth* Collections. Though, in addition to these, there are many other Traditions on the subject as well, we have cited<sup>3</sup> only those few which are sound and authentic as regards the chains of their transmitters.

### **What do these Traditions Prove?**

Anyone who goes through these Traditions will see for himself that they do not contain any mention whatever of the advent of a "promised Messiah", or "a man like the Messiah", or a "projection of the Messiah", nor do they admit that somebody in this age having been born from the womb of any mother and by the sperm of any father, should put forward the claim that he is the Messiah

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2,000 feet to the point from where River Jordan comes out from Lake Tiberias. This same mountain path is called 'Aqabah Afīq, the pass of Afīq.

whose coming has been foretold by the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). All these Traditions clearly and explicitly give the news of the advent of the same **Jesus Christ** (upon whom be peace) who was born of the Virgin Mary two thousand years ago. It would be useless to debate here the point whether Jesus has died or is still living somewhere in the universe. Even if he is dead, Allah has the power to raise him back to life;<sup>14</sup> otherwise also it is not beyond the power of Allah that He should keep a servant of His alive for thousands of years somewhere in His universe, and then bring him back into the world whenever He wills. In any case if a person believes in *Ḥadīth*, he will have to admit that the one whose advent has been foretold will be **Jesus son of Mary**; and if he does not believe in *Ḥadīth*, he cannot be a believer in the advent of anyone whatever, for the doctrine of the Advent is based on *Ḥadīth* and on nothing else. But this is strange logic that the people should adopt the doctrine of the Advent from *Ḥadīth* and then should discard the particularities given in the same *Ḥadīth*, which clearly state that the one whose advent has been foretold will be Jesus son of Mary, and not a "man who is spiritually like unto the Messiah."

Another thing which becomes equally evident from these Traditions is that the advent of the Prophet Jesus will not be in the capacity of a new Prophet: he will neither receive Revelation nor bring a new message or new injunctions from God, nor make any change or alteration in the *Sharī'ah* of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), nor will be raised in the world for the revival of Islam, nor will invite the people to believe in his prophethood, nor make a separate community of those who follow him.<sup>15</sup> He will

14. Those who deny this should see Al-Baqarah: 259, where Allah has clearly stated: "He (Allah) kept a servant of His dead for a hundred years and then brought him back to life."

15. The Islamic scholars have explained this in great detail. 'Allāma Taftāzānī (722-792 A.H.) writes in *Sharḥ 'Aqā'id Nasafī*: "This

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be sent for a specific task, which will be to crush the mischief created by the *Dajjāl*. For this purpose he will descend in a manner that the Muslims among whom he descends will have no doubt at all that he is Jesus son of Mary, who has appeared at the right time, as foretold by the Holy Prophet. He will immediately join the congregation of the Muslims, will offer his Prayer behind the Imām of the Muslims present at the time,<sup>16</sup> and will follow the leader of the Muslims as such so that there remains no room for anyone to entertain the doubt that he has come back to the world again to perform his prophetic duties in

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is an established fact that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is the Last Prophet ... If it is said that after him the coming of the Prophet Jesus has been mentioned in *Ḥadīth*, we shall say: yes, this thing has been mentioned, but he will come as a follower of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), for his *Sharī'ah* stands abrogated; therefore he will neither receive Revelation nor enjoin new injunctions, but will only work as a representative of the Holy Prophet." (Egyptian Ed. p. 135).

The same thing has been said by 'Allāma Ālūsī in *Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī*: "Then, when the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) will descend he will retain his previous prophethood and will not be divested of it, but he will not follow his previous *Sharī'ah*, because it stands abrogated for him as well as for all other people; he will be under obligation to follow this *Sharī'ah* in every detail. Therefore, he will neither receive Revelation nor enjoin new injunctions but he will function as a representative of the Holy Prophet and as a ruler from among the rulers of his Ummah" (Vol. XXII, p. 32).

Imām Rāzī has further elucidated this point like this: "The period of the Prophets was up to the advent of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). With his appointment as a Prophet, the era of the Prophets came to an end. Now it is not at all incomprehensible that the Prophet Jesus after his second advent will be a follower of the Holy Prophet." (*Tafsīr Kabīr*, vol. III, p. 343).

16. Although according to the Traditions (No. 5 and 21) the Prophet Jesus after his descent will lead the Muslims himself in the Prayer, most of the Traditions which are more sound comparatively tell that he will decline the request to lead the Prayer, and will tell the Imām present at the time to step forward to lead the Prayer. This same thing has the consensus of the traditionists and commentators.

his previous capacity as a Prophet. Evidently, when a Prophet of God is present in a community, no one else can act as an Imām or a leader. Thus, when he will join the Muslims' Community as an individual, it will by itself be a declaration that he has not come as a prophet. On this basis therefore there will be no question whatever of the violation of the sanctity of the seal of prophethood on his advent.

It may be said (without making any real comparison) that his advent will be like the visit of a former head of a state in the time of the ruling head of a state and his rendering some service to the state under him. Even a person of ordinary common sense can understand that the mere visit and arrival of a former head of the state in the time of a ruling head of the state does not affect the constitution at all. The constitution, however, would be violated in two cases: First, that the former head of the state should, on his return, try to resume the office of the head of state; second, that somebody should challenge his former position of the head of state, for this would be tantamount to challenging the validity of all the works that had been accomplished during his past tenure of office. If neither case exists, the former head of the state's arrival by itself does not effect any change in the constitutional position of the country. The same will be the case with the Prophet Jesus' second coming. His mere advent does not affect the Finality of Prophethood. However, if he resumes the office of Prophethood on his advent and starts performing the duties and functions of Prophethood, or somebody repudiates and disowns his being a former Prophet also, this would certainly violate the sanctity of Allah's Law of raising Prophets in the world. The Traditions have clearly ruled out the possibility of both. On the one hand, they explain that no other prophet will be raised after the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), and on the other, they give the news that Jesus son of Mary

will come for the second time. This clearly shows that this second coming of Jesus will not be for the purpose of performing the duties of the office of Prophethood.

Likewise, his second advent will also not create the new question of belief and unbelief among the Muslims. Even if a person disbelieves in his being a former Prophet today, he turns an apostate. The Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) himself believed in his Prophethood and his entire Ummah has been his believer from the very beginning. The same will be his position then. The Muslims will not have to believe in a new prophet, but will believe in Jesus son of Mary as a former Prophet as they do today. This is neither contrary to the belief in the Finality of Prophethood today nor will be so then.

The last thing which becomes evident from these and many other Traditions is that the *Dajjāl* for the eradication of whose mischief the Prophet Jesus will be sent, will be from among the Jews, and he will present himself as the "Messiah." A person cannot understand the reality of this unless he gets acquainted with the history of the Jews and their religious beliefs. After the death of the Prophet Solomon when the Israelites suffered one calamity after the other and were ultimately scattered throughout the world as slaves by the Babylonian and Assyrian empires, their Prophets began to give them the good news of the advent of a "Messiah", who would deliver them from their disgrace and humiliation. On account of these prophecies the Jews had been expecting the advent of a Messiah, who would be a king, would fight and conquer lands and would gather together the Jews from all over the world and assemble them in Palestine and create a mighty empire for them. But when, contrary to these expectations, the Prophet Jesus son of Mary came as a Messiah from God, and came without an army, the Jews refused to accept and acknowledge him as the Messiah and made up their mind



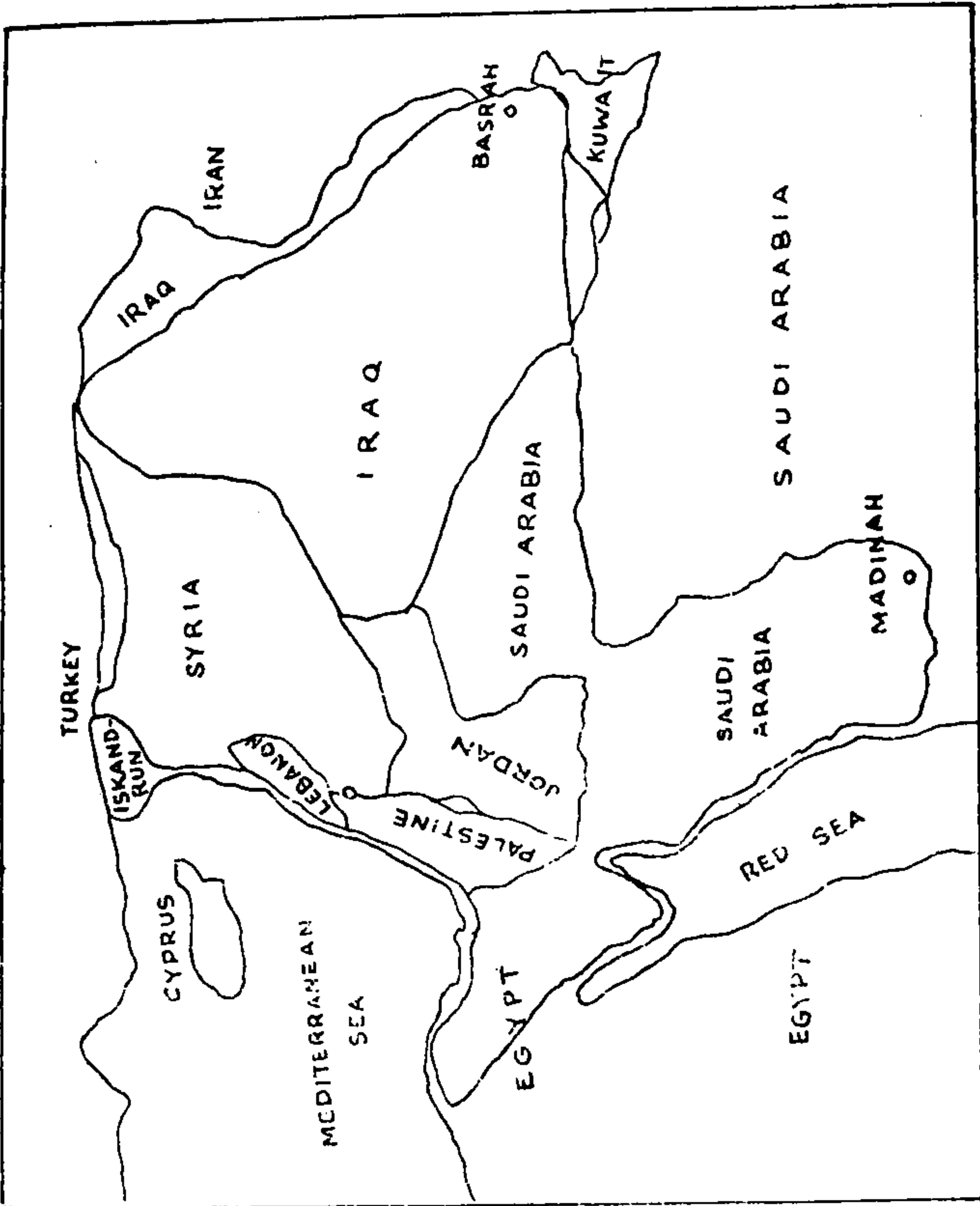
to kill him. Since then the Jews the world over have been awaiting the coming of the Promised Messiah, whose coming they had been foretold. Their literature is replete with the visions of the millenium. They have been waiting for many centuries the imaginary pleasures of the millenium as described in the Talmud and the rabbinical literature and living by the hope that the Promised Messish would be a great military and political leader, who would restore to them the whole land between the river Nile and the river Euphrates (which the Jews regard as their heritage), and will gather the Jews together from every part of the world and assemble them once again in this country.

Now if a person looks at the affairs of the Middle East and studies them in the light of the background of the Holy Prophet's prophecies, he will at once perceive that the stage is fully set for the emergence of the great *Dajjāl*, who would arise as the "promised Messiah" of the Jews as foretold by the Holy Prophet. The Muslims have been expelled from the major part of Palestine and a Jewish state of Israel has been established there. The Jews from all over the world are being drawn to it. The U.S.A., Britain and France have turned it into a great military power. The Jewish scientists and experts are developing it with the massive aid of the Jewish capital and its this power has become a great danger for the Muslim nations of the region. The leaders of Israel have never made a secret of their desire that they want to have the "land of their heritage". The map of the Jewish empire of the future which they have been openly publicising since long is given on the opposite page. This shows that they want to take the whole of Syria, the whole of Lebanon, the whole of Jordan and almost the entire Iraq in addition to Isken-derun from Turkey, Sinai and the Delta area from Egypt and the upper Hejāz and Najd from Saudi Arabia, which also includes Madīnah. From this one can clearly perceive that taking advantage of the confusion and chaos created

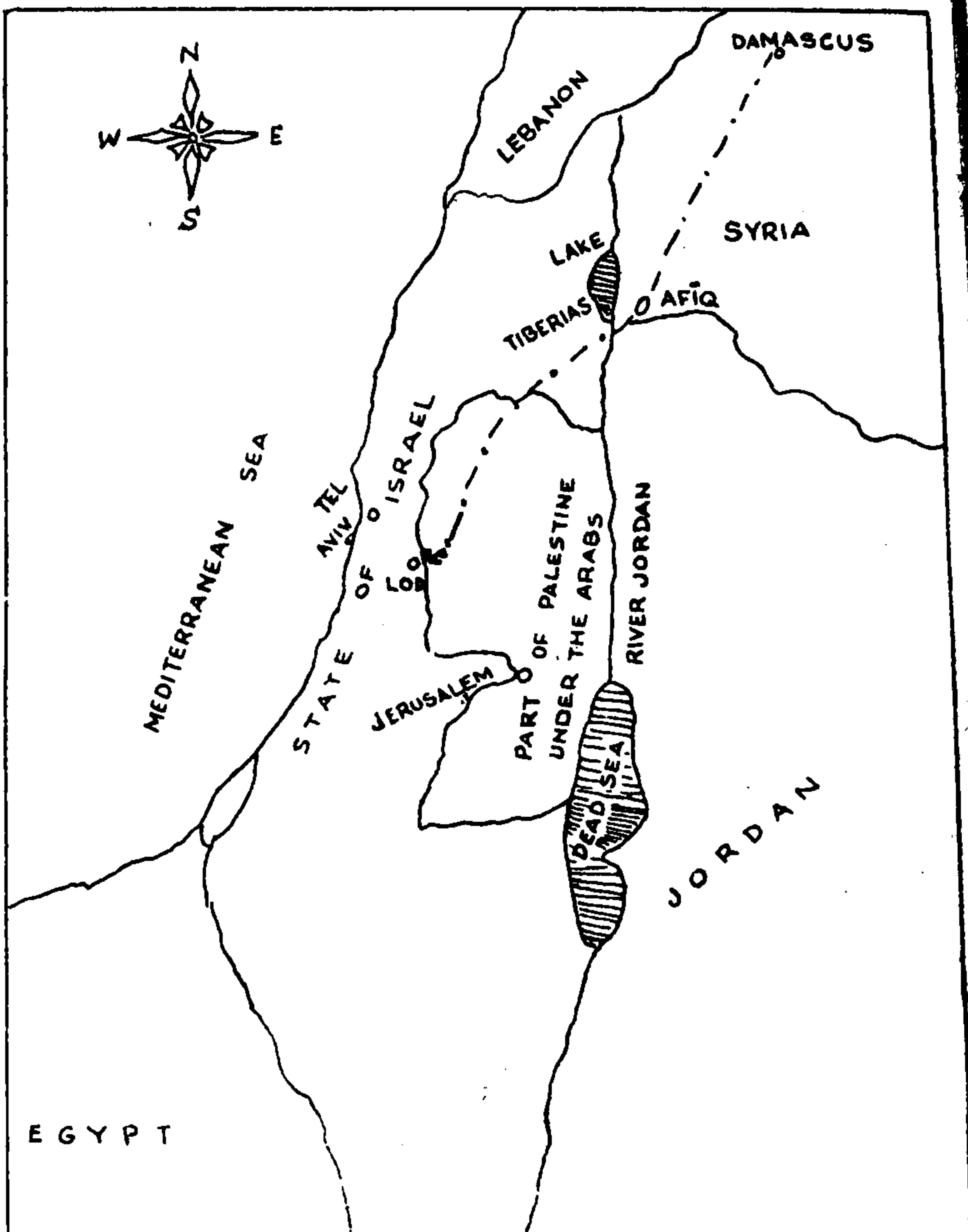
by the prospect of some future world war, they will try to occupy these territories. Right on that occasion the great *Dajjāl* will arise as their Promised Messiah. The Holy Prophet has not only given the news of his coming but has also foretold that the Muslims will suffer colossal hardships in those days; so much so that one day will appear as long as a year. That is why not only did the Holy Prophet himself ask for Allah's refuge from the great mischief of the *Dajjāl* but also exhorted his followers to implore Allah for protection against him.

To counter and fight this Antichrist Allah will not send a "man like the Messiah" but the real Messiah, whom the Jews had declined to acknowledge as such two thousand years ago, and whom they thought they had disposed of by putting him on the Cross. The place where the real Messiah will descend will not be in India or Africa or America, but in Damascus, for Damascus at that time will be the actual battle front. (Please see the map on the following page). In this map you will see that Damascus is hardly 50 to 60 miles from the Israeli border. From the foregoing Traditions it should not be difficult for anyone to understand that the *Dajjāl* will enter Syria with a Jewish army 70,000 strong, and will take position right in front of Damascus. Right at this critical moment the Prophet Jesus son of Mary shall descend in the eastern part of Damascus near a white minaret in the morning, and will lead the Muslims against him after the Prayer. The *Dajjāl* will retreat towards Israel by way of the Afīq Pass (with reference to Tradition No. 21), and Jesus will pursue him and overtake and kill him at the Lod airfield. (Traditions No. 10, 14, 15). After this the Jews will be picked off and killed wherever found so as to put an end to Jewish community (Traditions No. 9, 15, 21). Christianity also will be finished after the proclamation of the reality by the Prophet Jesus. (Traditions No. 1, 2, 4, 6), and all these communities will merge into the single Community of

THE JEWISH STATE OF WHICH THE ISRAELI LEADERS ARE DREAMING



# THE PLACE WHERE THE REAL MESSIAH WILL DESCEND



Islam (Traditions No. 6, 15).

This is the reality that becomes apparent from *Ḥadīth* without any ambiguity. In view of this, there remains no doubt that the business being spread in our country in the name of a “promised messiah” is no more than a deception and fraud.

The most peculiar aspect of this fraud and forgery is that the person who claims to be the subject of these prophecies has given the following explanation to prove that he himself is Jesus son of Mary:

“He (i.e. Allah Almighty) named me Mary in the third part of *Burāhīn-i Aḥmadiyyah*. Then, as is evident from *Burāhīn-i Aḥmadiyyah*, I was reared up with the nature of “Maryhood” for two years. . . . Then . . . the spirit of Jesus was breathed into me as it had been in the case of Mary, and I was made pregnant in the metaphorical sense. At last, after a period of several months, which did not last more than ten months, by virtue of the inspiration recorded at the end of the fourth part of *Burāhīn-i Aḥmadiyyah*, I was made Jesus from Mary. So, in this way I became son of Mary.” (*Kashtī-i Nūḥ*, pp. 87, 88, 89).

That is, he became Mary in the first instance, then became pregnant by his own agency, then from his own self took birth as Jesus son of Mary! One difficulty, however, remained to be overcome. According to the Traditions, Jesus son of Mary will descend in Damascus, which has been a well-known city in Syria for several thousand years, and still exists on the map of the world with the same name. This difficulty was overcome by another peculiar explanation:

“Let it be known that in respect of the interpretations of the word *Damishq* (Damascus) it has been explained to me through revelation by Allah that in this place the name Damascus has been given to a town whose

inhabitants possess the characteristics of Yazīd and follow the ways and notions of the unclean Yazīd. ... This town of Qādīan, for the reason that most of its inhabitants possess the qualities and characteristics of Yazīd, bears a resemblance and similarity with Damascus." (Footnote, *Izāla-i Auhām*, pp. 63 to 73).

Yet another difficulty needed to be resolved. According to the Traditions, the son of Mary would descend near a white tower. This was resolved when the "Messiah" later got a minaret built for himself, although, according to the Traditions the minaret should have been there before the descent of the son of Mary.

The last and most serious difficulty was that according to the Traditions, Jesus son of Mary was to kill the *Dajjāl* at the gate of Lod. To resolve this difficulty, in the beginning, different sorts of explanations were given. Sometimes it was said that Lod is the name of a village in the vicinity of Bait al-Maqdis (*Izāla-i Auhām*, published by Anjuman Ahmadiyyah, Lahore, p. 220). Then it was said, "Lud is a name given to the people who pick quarrels without reason. ... When the quarrels of the *Dajjāl* shall reach the extreme limits, the promised Messiah will appear, and he will put an end to all such quarrels." (*Izāla-i Auhām*, p. 730). But when this also did not help, it was plainly said that Lud meant Ludhiana, and the *Dajjāl's* being slain at its gate implied that in spite of the opposition of the mischief-mongers, it was from there that the first person swore fealty to the Mirzā Şahib. (*Al-Hudā*, p. 91).

Anyone who goes through these far-fetched interpretations will come to the conclusion that this is nothing but a clear case of imposture.

XXXIV

SABĀ سَبَا

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

XXXIV

سَبَا SABĀ

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Name**

The Sūrah takes its name from verse 15 in which the word *Sabā* has occurred, which implies that it is the Sūrah in which mention has been made of Sabā (i.e. the Sabaeans).

#### **Period of Revelation**

The exact period of its revelation is not known from any reliable tradition. However, the style shows that it is either the middle or the early Makkan period. If it is the middle period, it was probably its initial stage when the persecution had not yet become tyrannical and the Islamic movement was being suppressed only by resort to derision and ridicule, rumour-mongering, false allegations and casting of evil suggestions in the people's minds.



### Theme and Subject Matter

The Sūrah deals with those objections of the disbelievers, which they were raising against the Holy Prophet's message of *Tauhīd* and the Hereafter, and about his Prophethood itself, mostly in the form of absurd allegations and taunts and mockery. These objections have been answered, sometimes by citing them and sometimes without citing them, and the discourse itself shows which objection is being answered at a particular place. The answers mostly take the form of instruction and admonition and argument, but at some places the disbelievers have been warned also of the evil consequences of their stubbornness. In this connection, the stories of the Sabaeans and the Prophets David and Solomon have been related to impress this lesson: "You have both these historical precedents before you. On the one hand, there were the Prophets David and Solomon, who had been blessed by Allah with great powers and such grandeur and glory as had been granted to hardly any people before them. In spite of this, they were not proud and arrogant, but remained grateful servants of their Lord. They were never rebellious. On the other hand, there were the people of Sabā, who, when blessed by Allah, became proud, and were consequently so thoroughly destroyed and dispersed as to be remembered only in myths and legends. With these precedents in view, you may see and judge for yourselves as to which kind of the life is better: that which is built on belief in *Tauhīd* and the Hereafter and the attitude of gratefulness to Allah, or that which is based on disbelief and *shirk* and denial of the Hereafter and the worship of the world."



الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ فِي  
 الْآخِرَةِ ۗ وَهُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْخَبِيرُ ۝ يَعْلَمُ مَا يَلْبِجُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا يَخْرُجُ  
 مِنْهَا وَمَا يَنْزِلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَمَا يَعْرُجُ فِيهَا ۗ وَهُوَ الرَّحِيمُ الْغَفُورُ ۝ وَ  
 قَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَا تَأْتِينَا السَّاعَةُ ۗ قُلْ بَلَىٰ وَرَبِّي لَتَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ ۗ عِلْمُ الْغَيْبِ  
 لَا يَعْزُبُ عَنْهُ مِثْقَالُ ذَرَّةٍ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا أَصْغُرُ مِنْ  
 ذَلِكَ وَلَا أَكْبَرُ ۗ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُّبِينٍ ۝ لِيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا  
 الصَّالِحَاتِ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ ۖ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ ۝ وَالَّذِينَ سَعَوْا فِي آيَاتِنَا مُعْجِزِينَ  
 أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مِّن رَّجْزِ الْيَوْمِ ۗ وَيَرَى الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ  
 إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ ۗ وَ يَهْدِي إِلَى صِرَاطٍ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ ۗ وَقَالَ  
 الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هَلْ نَدُوكُمْ عَلَىٰ رَجُلٍ يَنْبِتْكُمْ إِذَا مَرِّقْتُمْ كُلَّ مَسْرِقٍ ۗ إِنَّكُمْ  
 لَفِي خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ ۗ أَفَتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَمْ بِهِ جِنَّةٌ ۗ بَلِ الَّذِينَ لَا  
 يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ فِي الْعَذَابِ وَالضَّلَالِ الْبَعِيدِ ۗ أَفَلَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَىٰ مَا بَيْنَ  
 أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ إِنَّ تَنَاسُخًا نَّخِيفُ بِهِمُ الْأَرْضَ  
 أَوْ نَسْقِطُ عَلَيْهِمْ كِسْفًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّكُلِّ عَبْدٍ مُّنِيبٍ ۗ ۝ ٤٩  
 وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا دَاوُدَ مِنَّا فَضْلًا ۗ يُجَالِ أَوْبَىٰ مَعَهُ ۗ وَالطَّيْرَ ۗ وَ آتَيْنَاهُ الْحَدِيدَ ۗ  
 أَنْ أَعْمَلَ سِغَتٍ ۗ وَقَدَّرَ فِي السَّرْدِ ۗ وَأَعْمَلُوا صَالِحًا ۗ إِنِّي بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ  
 بَصِيرٌ ۗ ۝ وَاسْلُبِ الرِّيحَ غُدُوها شَهْرٌ ۗ وَرَوَّاحُها شَهْرٌ ۗ وَأَسْلَبْنَا لَهُ

# XXXIV

## SABĀ سَبَا

*Revealed at Makkah*

Verses: 54

*In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate.*

Praise is for Allah alone Who is the Owner of every- 1-2  
thing in the heavens and the earth,<sup>1</sup> and the praise is for  
Him alone in the Hereafter, too:<sup>2</sup> He is the All-Wise, the  
All-Aware.<sup>3</sup> He knows whatever goes into the earth and  
whatever comes out of it; and whatever comes down from  
the sky and whatever ascends into it: He is the All-Merciful,  
the All-Forgiving.<sup>4</sup>

The disbelievers say, "How is it that the Resurrection 3-6  
is not coming upon us?"<sup>5</sup> Say, "By my Lord, Knower of  
the Unseen, it shall certainly come upon you.<sup>6</sup> Not an  
atom's weight of anything is hidden from Him, neither in  
the heavens nor in the earth, nor anything smaller than an  
atom nor greater than it: everything is recorded in a clear  
register."<sup>7</sup> Resurrection shall take place so that Allah may  
reward those who have believed and done good works. For  
them there is forgiveness and a generous provision. As for  
those who have striven hard to discredit Our Revelations,  
for them there is a painful torment of the worst kind.<sup>8</sup> O  
Prophet, those who possess the knowledge fully well know  
that whatever has been revealed to you from your Lord, is  
the very Truth, and it guides to the Way of the All-Mighty,  
All-Praiseworthy God.<sup>9</sup>

The disbelievers say to the people, "Shall we point out 7-8  
to you a man who gives the news that when your body will  
have been scattered into particles, you will be resurrected

once again? No one knows whether this man forges a lie in the name of Allah or is mad."<sup>10</sup>

8-9 Nay, but those only, who do not believe in the Hereafter, will incur the punishment and they are involved in gross error.<sup>11</sup> Have they never seen the earth, which surrounds them from front and from behind? If We will, We can sink them underground, or cause some fragments of the sky to fall down upon them.<sup>12</sup> There is indeed a Sign in this for every such servant who turns to God.<sup>13</sup>

10-11 We had blessed David with a great bounty from Ourselves.<sup>14</sup> (We commanded:) "O mountains, join with him in glorification," and (the same Command We gave to) the birds.<sup>15</sup> We made iron soft for him, saying, "Make coats of mail and set the rings in proper measure."<sup>16</sup> (O people of David,) "Do good works: surely I see whatever you do."

1. The Arabic word *ḥamd* is used both for praise and for gratitude, and both the meanings are implied here. When Allah alone is the Owner of the whole universe and of everything in it, then inevitably He alone deserves to be praised for every beauty, perfection, wisdom, power and excellent skill and design shown and manifested by it. Therefore, every inhabitant of the world must thank Allah alone for any benefit and pleasure that he draws from anything here. For when no one else is a partner in the ownership of these things, no one else deserves to be praised nor thanked.

2. That is, "Just as every blessing in this world is granted by Allah alone, so in the Hereafter also whatever a person will get, he will get from His treasures and by His grace. Therefore, in the Hereafter too, Allah alone deserves to be praised as well as thanked."

3. That is, "All His works are based on perfect wisdom and knowledge. Whatever He does, He does right. He has full knowledge about every creation of His as to where it is, in what state it is, what are its requirements, what precisely needs to be done for its well-being, what it has done so far and what it will do in the future. He is not unaware of the world created by Himself, but is fully aware of the condition and state of every particle in it."

4. That is, "If a person (or persons) is not being seized in spite of rebellion against Him in His Kingdom, it is not because this world is a lawless kingdom and Allah is an inept ruler, but because Allah is All-Merciful and All-Forbearing, Although it lies in His power to seize the

sinner and the wrongdoer immediately on the commission of sin, to withhold his sustenance, to paralyse his body, and to put him to death suddenly, yet He does not do so. It is the demand of his Beneficence that in spite of being All-Powerful He gives the disobedient servant plenty of rope and enough respite to mend his ways and as soon as he desists from his evil ways, He pardons and forgives him."

5. This they said satirically and mockingly. What they meant was this: "This Prophet has been giving us the news of the coming of Resurrection for a long time now, but Resurrection has not overtaken us so far although we have openly denied and rejected him as a Prophet, have been insolent to him, and have ridiculed him in every way."

6. The use of the attribute "Knower of the unseen" for Allah while swearing by Him by itself points to the fact that the coming of Resurrection is certain, but no one knows except Allah, Knower of the unseen, when exactly it will come. This same theme has been explained at different places in the Qur'an in various ways. For details, see Al-A'raf: 187, Tā Hā : 15, Luqmān: 34, Al-Aḥzāb: 63, Al-Mulk: 25-26, An-Nāziyāt: 42-44.

7. This is one of the arguments for the possibility of the Hereafter as is being stated in verse 7 below. One of the reasons why the deniers of the Hereafter regarded the life-after-death as irrational was this: They said that when all human beings will have become dust after death, and scattered away in particles, how it will be possible to bring all the countless particles together and combine them to be re-created as the same human bodies once again. Their this doubt has been dispelled, saying, "Every particle wherever it is, is recorded in God's Register, and God knows where a particle is. Therefore, when He wills to recreate, He will not face any difficulty in gathering together all the particles of the body of each and every man."

8. The above was an argument for the possibility of the Hereafter: this is an argument for its need and necessity. It means this: A time must come when the wicked should be requited for their wickedness and the righteous rewarded for their righteousness. Reason wants and justice demands that a worker of goodness should be rewarded and a worker of evil punished. Now when you see that in the present worldly life neither is an evildoer fully requited for his evil nor a worker of goodness for his goodness, rather there are opposite results of evil and goodness in most cases, you should admit that this necessary demand of both reason and justice must be fulfilled at some time in the future. Resurrection and the Hereafter will be the same time. It is not its coming but its not coming which is contrary to reason and against justice.

In this connection, another point becomes evident from the preceding verses. They tell that the result of faith and righteous acts is forgiveness and a bounteous provision, and for those who strive and act antagonistically in order to discredit and defeat Allah's Religion, there will be a torment of the worst kind. This makes it manifest that he who believes sincerely will not be deprived of forgiveness even though he may not get a bounteous provision owing to some flaw or weakness in his deeds. And the one who is a disbeliever but who does not adopt an attitude of enmity and antagonism towards the true Faith, will not be able to avoid the torment but he will be saved from the worst torment.

9. That is, "These antagonists cannot succeed in their object to prove the truth presented by you false, however hard they may try, for they can only delude and misguide the ignorant people by their designs. Those possessed of knowledge cannot be deceived by them."

10. The chiefs of the Quraish knew full well that it was extremely difficult for the common people to accuse Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) of being a liar, for the whole nation knew that he was a completely truthful person, and no one had ever heard a lie from him all his life. Therefore, they presented their charge against him before the people like this: "When this person utters an impossible thing like the life-after-death from his mouth, he is either uttering (God forbid) a falsehood deliberately, or he is mad." But this accusation of madness also was as absurd as of falsehood, for a stupid person only could admit that such a wise and intelligent man as the Holy Prophet could be mad. That is why Allah did not feel it was necessary to refute their absurd charge by an argument, and only made mention of their wonder which they expressed at the possibility of the life-after-death.

11. This is the first answer to their charge. It means this: "O foolish people, it is you who have lost your reason. For you do not listen to the one who is informing you of the truth and are recklessly galloping on the way that leads to Hell. But the height of your stupidity is that you are calling the one who is anxious for your salvation, mad."

12. This is the second answer to their charge. To understand it well one should bear in mind the fact that three things were most prominent among the reasons for which the disbelieving Quraish denied the life-after-death: (1) They did not want to believe in any kind of accountability before God, for after believing in such a thing they would be left with no freedom whatever to behave and act as they pleased in the world. (2) They thought it was inconceivable that Resurrection would take place and the present material order of the universe would be destroyed and replaced by a new order. (3) They thought it was impossible that the people who had died hundreds of thousands of

years in the past and whose bones even had decayed and disintegrated, would be raised back to life, with the same body and soul. The answer given above covers all these three aspects, and contains a severe warning as well. The details of the theme contained in these brief sentences are given below:

(1) If you ever had observed this earth and the heavens with clear sightedness, you would have seen that it is not a plaything nor has its creation come into being by accident. Everything in this universe points to the fact that it has been created by an All-Powerful Being with great wisdom. In such a wise system it would be highly absurd to think that somebody could be left to live an irresponsible and unaccountable life after he had been given the faculties of intellect and discrimination and authority.

(2) Anyone who sees the natural order with discerning eyes will realize that the occurrence of Resurrection is not at all difficult. It can take place suddenly as soon as the system in which the earth and the heavens are bound together is disturbed. And the same system testifies that the One Who has made and is running this world today can create another world again. If it were difficult for Him to do so, this world would not have existed as it does today.

(3) Your opinion and judgement about the Creator of the universe that it will be impossible for Him to resurrect the dead, is strange. The bodies of the men who die may utterly decay and disintegrate and be scattered but nevertheless remain within the bounds of this very universe and do not go anywhere outside its bounds. Then it is not at all difficult for the God Who has created this earth and the heavens to gather together everything from the earth and water and air wherever it happens to be. Whatever makes up your body today was collected and combined by Him, and brought out from this very earth, water and air. When the collecting and assembling of these elements together is possible today, how will it be impossible tomorrow?

Besides these three arguments, the discourse also contains a subtle warning to the effect: "You are surrounded by God's Kingdom on all sides. Wherever you may go, you would be covered and surrounded by the same universe. You cannot find any place of refuge against God, and God's power is such that He can afflict you whenever He likes with a calamity from under your feet or from above your heads. You do not know what forces might be working under the very surface of the earth which you find as an abode of perfect peace and safety for yourselves, and when they would cause an earthquake to take place and turn the same earth into your grave. You do not know when a disaster might befall you—a lightning, or a devastating rain, or some other calamity—

[Contd. on p. 210

عَيْنَ الْقَطْرِ وَمِنَ الْجِنِّ مَنْ يَعْمَلُ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِ وَمَنْ يَزِغْ  
مِنْهُمْ عَنْ أَمْرِنَا نَذِقْهُ مِنْ عَذَابِ السَّعِيرِ ﴿١٦٧﴾ يَعْمَلُونَ لَهُ مَا يَشَاءُ مِنْ  
مَحَارِبٍ وَتَمَائِيلٍ وَجِفَانٍ كَالْجَوَابِ وَقُدُورٍ رُسِيَّتٍ ﴿١٦٨﴾ اِعْمَلُوا آلَ دَاوُدَ  
شُكْرًا وَقَلِيلٌ مِّنْ عِبَادِيَ الشَّكُورُ ﴿١٦٩﴾ فَلَمَّا قَضَيْنَا عَلَيْهِ الْمَوْتَ مَا دَلَّهُمْ  
عَلَى مَوْتِهِ إِلَّا دَابَّةُ الْأَرْضِ تَأْكُلُ مِنسَاتِهِ ﴿١٧٠﴾ فَلَمَّا خَرَ بَتَّيْنَتِ الْجِنِّ أَنْ  
تَوَكَّأُوا يَعْلَمُونَ الْغَيْبَ مَا لَبِثُوا فِي الْعَذَابِ الْمُهِينِ ﴿١٧١﴾ لَقَدْ كَانَ لِسَبَإٍ  
فِي مَسْكِنِهِمْ آيَةٌ ﴿١٧٢﴾ جَنَّتَيْنِ عَنْ تَيْبِينَ وَشِمَالِهُ كُلُّوا مِنْ رِزْقِ رَبِّكُمْ وَ  
اشْكُرُوا لَهُ ﴿١٧٣﴾ بَلَدَةٌ طَيِّبَةٌ وَرَبُّ غَفُورٌ ﴿١٧٤﴾ فَأَعْرَضُوا فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ سَيْلَ  
الْعَرَمِ ﴿١٧٥﴾ وَبَدَّلْنَاهُمْ بِجَنَّتَيْهِمْ جَنَّتَيْنِ ذَوَاتِ أُكُلٍ خَشْبٍ وَأَثَلٍ وَشَيْءٍ  
مِّنْ سِدْرٍ قَلِيلٍ ﴿١٧٦﴾ ذَلِكَ جَزَيْنَاهُمْ بِمَا كَفَرُوا ﴿١٧٧﴾ وَهَلْ نُجِزِي إِلَّا الْكٰفِرِينَ ﴿١٧٨﴾  
وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ وَبَيْنَ الْقُرَى الَّتِي بَرَكْنَا فِيهَا قُرَى ظَاهِرَةً وَقَدَّرْنَا فِيهَا  
السَّيْرَ ﴿١٧٩﴾ سَيَرُوا فِيهَا لَيَالِيًا وَآيَاتًا أَمِينًا ﴿١٨٠﴾ فَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا بَعْدَ بَيْنِ أَسْفَارِنَا وَظَلَمُوا  
أَنفُسَهُمْ فَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أَحَادِيثَ وَمَرَّقْنَاهُمْ كُلَّ مَّرْقٍ ﴿١٨١﴾ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ  
لِّكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُورٍ ﴿١٨٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ صَدَقَ عَلَيْهِمْ إِبْلِيسُ ظَنَّهُ فَاتَّبَعُوهُ إِلَّا فَرِيقًا  
مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٨٣﴾ وَمَا كَانَ لَهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ سُلْطٰنٍ إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَن يُّؤْمِنُ  
بِالْآخِرَةِ ﴿١٨٤﴾ مَن هُوَ مِنْهَا فِي شَكٍّ ﴿١٨٥﴾ وَرَبُّكَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَفِيظٌ ﴿١٨٦﴾ قُلْ ادْعُوا  
الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَلَا  
فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا لَهُمْ فِيهَا مِنْ شَرِكٍ ﴿١٨٧﴾ وَمَا لَهُ مِنْهُمْ مِّنْ ظَهِيرٍ ﴿١٨٨﴾ وَلَا  
تَنْفَعُ الشَّفَاعَةُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا لِمَن أَذِنَ لَهُ ﴿١٨٩﴾ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فُزِعَ عَنْ قُلُوبِهِمْ قَالُوا



And for Solomon We subjected the wind which covered a month's journey in the morning and a month's journey in the evening;<sup>17</sup> and We made a fountain of molten copper to flow for him<sup>18</sup> and subdued such jinns to him who served before him by the command of his Lord.<sup>19</sup> Whoever from among them swerved from Our Command, We made him taste the blazing Fire. They made for him whatever he desired: lofty edifices, images,<sup>20</sup> bowls like troughs and immovable heavy cooking-pots.<sup>21</sup> — O people of David, work gratefully:<sup>22</sup> a few of My servants only are grateful. 12-13

Then, when we decreed death for Solomon, there was nothing to inform the jinns of his death except the wood-louse which was eating away his staff. So, when Solomon fell down, it became clear to the jinns<sup>23</sup> that if they had known the unseen, they would not have continued in the humiliating torment.<sup>24</sup> 14

For Sabā<sup>25</sup> there was a Sign in their own dwelling-place:<sup>26</sup> two gardens, on the right and on the left: eat of the provisions of your Lord and be grateful to Him: pure and pleasant is the land and Forgiving the Lord. But they turned away.<sup>28</sup> Consequently, We sent upon them a flood due to bursting of the dam<sup>29</sup> and replaced their two gardens by two other gardens producing bitter fruit and tamarisks and a few lote bushes.<sup>30</sup> This was Our retribution for their disbelief and We recompense none with such a retribution except the ungrateful. 15-17

And We had made between them and the habitations which We had blessed, (other) conspicuous habitations and set between them their travelling distances:<sup>31</sup> "Travel on these ways night and day in complete security." But they said, "Our Lord, make our journeys longer."<sup>32</sup> They wronged their own selves. Consequently, We made them mere legends and scattered them utterly.<sup>33</sup> Surely there are Signs in this for every patient and grateful person.<sup>34</sup> In their case Iblīs found his suspicions correct, and they all followed him except for a small group of the believers.<sup>35</sup> 18-21

Iblīs did not have any power over them, but whatever happened, it happened because We wanted to see who believed in the Hereafter and who cherished any doubt about it.<sup>36</sup> Your Lord is Watchful over everything.<sup>37</sup>

22-23

(O Prophet,)<sup>38</sup> say (to the *mushriks*), "Call those whom you worship as deities instead of Allah.<sup>39</sup> They neither own an atom's weight of anything in the heavens nor in the earth, nor have they anything to share in either, nor is any of them a helper of Allah. And no intercession before Allah can avail anyone except for the one for whom Allah permits it.<sup>40</sup> So much so that when dread is gone from their hearts, the people will ask (the intercessors), "What reply did your Lord give?" They will say, "The right reply! And He is the Exalted, the Great!"<sup>41</sup>

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*Contd. from p. 207]*

from the same sky under which you walk about with full peace and satisfaction of the heart as if it were the ceiling of your own house. In a state like this, your fearlessness of God, your heedlessness of any thought of the Hereafter and your vain and nonsensical talk against the admonition of a well-wisher has no other meaning than this—that you are only inviting your own doom."

13. That is, "The person who is neither prejudiced nor obstinate and stubborn, but is a sincere seeker<sup>3</sup> of guidance from his God, can learn many lessons from the observation of the earth and heavens; but the one whose heart is turned away from God, will see everything in the universe, but will never perceive any Sign pointing to the Truth."

14. This is an allusion to the countless favours with which Allah had blessed the Prophet David. He was an ordinary young man of the tribe of Judah, living at Bethlehem. In a campaign against the Philistines he slew the giant Goliath, the great enemy of Israel, and suddenly grew in esteem of the Israelites. With this event began his rise to prominence; so much so that after the death of Saul he was first elected king of Judah in Hebron (mod. Al-Khalil), and then a few years later he was made king over all the tribes of Israel. He took Jerusalem and made it the capital of the kingdom of Israel. It was under his leadership that for the first time in history a God-worshipping kingdom was established, whose boundaries extended from the Gulf of 'Aqabah to the western banks of the River Euphrates. In addition to these favours, he was further graced with Divine bounties in the form of knowledge and wisdom, and the

qualities of justice and mercy and devotion to the truth. (For details, see E.N. 273 of Al-Baqarah and E.N. 7 of Banī Isrā'il).

15. For this please refer to Al-Anbiyā': 79 and E.N. 71 thereof.

16. For this also please refer to Al-Anbiyā': 80 and E.N. 72 thereof.

17. For this also please refer to Al-Anbiyā': 81 and E.N. 74 thereof.

18. Some former commentators have taken this to mean that a spring from the earth had erupted for the Prophet Solomon from which molten copper flowed out instead of water. But another interpretation of this verse can be that in the time of the Prophet Solomon the work of melting and moulding copper for different uses was done on a very large scale and the same has been referred to here as the flowing of a spring of molten copper for him. (For further details, see E.N. 74 of Al-Anbiyā').

19. The question whether the jinns who had been subdued to the Prophet Solomon were human beings of the mountain tribes or really the jinns who are well known by this name as the hidden creation, has been discussed in detail in our commentary of Sūrah Al-Anbiyā' and Sūrah An-Naml. (Please see E.N. 75 of Al-Anbiyā' and E.N.'s 23, 45 and 52 of An-Naml).

20. The word *tamāthil* in the Text is the plural of *timthāl*, which in Arabic is used for every such thing as is made to resemble a natural thing, whether it is a human being, an animal, a tree, a flower, a river, or some inanimate object. "*Timthāl* is the name of every artificial thing which may have been made to resemble something made by God." (*Lisān al-'Arab*). "*Timthāl* is every such picture which may have been made to resemble the likeness of something else, whether living or dead." (The Commentary, *Al-Kashshāf*). On this basis the statement of the Qur'ān does not necessarily imply that the "images" made for the Prophet Solomon were the pictures or images of human beings and animals. They might have been floral designs or natural landscape or different kinds of decorations with which the Prophet Solomon might have decorated his buildings and works.

The misunderstanding has been created by some commentators who have stated that the Prophet Solomon had got the pictures of the Prophets and the angels made for himself. They took such things from the Israelite traditions and then explained them saying that in the former *Shari'ahs* it was not forbidden to make the pictures. But while accepting and citing these traditions without question, these scholars did not keep in mind the fact that the Prophet Solomon was a follower of the Mosaic Law and in that Law also making of the pictures and images of human beings and animals was forbidden as it is in the *Shari'ah* of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). And they also did not remember that because of the enmity which a section of the Israelites bore against the

Prophet Solomon they have accused him of crimes like polytheism, idolatry, sorcery and adultery. Therefore, one should not place reliance on the Israelite traditions and accept anything about this great Prophet, which might contradict any *Shar'ah* enjoined by God. Everyone knows that all the Prophets who came after the Prophet Moses till the Prophet Jesus among the Israelites were the followers of the Torah, and none of them had brought forth a new law, which might have abrogated the Law of the Torah. Now the Torah clearly enjoins repeatedly that making of the pictures and images of human beings and animals is absolutely forbidden.

“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in the heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.” (Exod., 20 : 4)

“Ye shall make you no idols nor graven image, nor rear you up a standing image, neither shall ye set up any image of stone in your land, to bow down unto it.” (Levit., 26: 1)

“Lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female. The likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air. The likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth.” (Deut., 4: 16-18).

“Cursed be the man that maketh any graven or molten image, an abomination unto the Lord, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and putteth it in a secret place.” (Deut., 27: 15).

In the face of these clear and express injunctions how can it be accepted that the Prophet Solomon might have employed the jinns to make pictures and images of the Prophets and the angels for him? And how can this thing be admitted on the authority of the statements of the Jews who accuse the Prophet Solomon of idolatry due to his love for polytheistic wives? (I Kings, ch., 11).

However, the Muslim commentators, while citing the Israelite traditions, had made it clear that in the *Shari'ah* of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) this thing is forbidden; therefore, it is no more lawful for anybody to make pictures and images in imitation of the Prophet Solomon. But some people of the modern time, who want to make photography and carving of idols lawful in imitation of the West, took this verse of the Qur'ān as an argument for themselves. They argue like this: “When a Prophet of Allah has done this and Allah Himself has mentioned this act of the Prophet's in His Book, and has expressed no disapproval of it either, it must be lawful.”

This argument of these followers of the West is wrong for two reasons. First, the word *tamāthil*, that has been used in the Qur'ān, does

not explicitly give the meaning of the human and animal pictures, but it applies to the pictures of lifeless things as well. Therefore, only on the basis of this word, it cannot be concluded that it is lawful to make the human and animal pictures according to the Qur'ān. Secondly, it is established by a large number of the *Ahādith*, which have been reported through authentic chains of transmitters, and commonly reported by many authorities, that the Holy Prophet absolutely forbade the making and keeping of the pictures of the living things. In this connection, we reproduce below the authentic Traditions of the Holy Prophet and the verdicts given by the eminent Companions:

(1) Mother of the faithful Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah has reported that Ḥaḍrat Umm Ḥabībah and Ḥaḍrat Umm Salamah had seen a church in Ḥabash, which had pictures in it. When they mentioned this before the Holy Prophet, he said: "The custom among those people was that when a pious man from among them died, they would build a house of worship at his grave and would make his pictures in it. On the Day of Resurrection, these people will be among the most wretched creatures in the sight of Allah." (Bukhārī: *Kitāb aṣ-Ṣalāt*; Muslim: *Kitāb al-Masōjid*; Nasā'ī: *Kitāb al-Masājid*).

(2) Abū Ḥujāifah has reported that the Messenger of Allah has cursed the maker of pictures. (Bukhārī: *Kitāb al-Buyū'*, *Kitāb at-Ṭalāq*, *Kitāb al-Libās*).

(3) Abū Zur'ah says, "Once when I entered a house along with Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah I saw that a painter was making pictures at the top. Thereupon, Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah said, 'I have heard the Holy Prophet say: Allah says who could be more wicked than the one who tries to create a thing like My creation? Let them, if they can, create a seed or an ant'." (Bukhārī: *Kitāb al-Libās*; Musnad Aḥmad. According to the tradition in Muslim, this was the house of Marwān).

(4) Abū Muḥammad Hudhali has reported on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Ali: The Holy Prophet was present at a funeral prayer when he said: Who from among you would go to Madīnah and demolish every idol that he sees, and level down every grave that he sees, and blot out every picture that he sees. A man said that he would go. So he went but came back without carrying out the task due to fear of the people of Madīnah. Then Ḥaḍrat 'Ali submitted that he would go, and the Holy Prophet allowed him to go. Ḥaḍrat 'Ali went, then came back and said: I have demolished every idol and levelled down every grave and blotted out every picture. Thereupon the Holy Prophet said: Now if any one made any of these things, he would be denying the teaching sent down on Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace)." (Musnad Aḥmad; Muslim:

*Kitāb al-Janī'iz*; Nasā'ī (*Kitāb al-Janī'iz*) also contain a Tradition on the same subject).

(5) Ibn 'Abbās has reported: "... And he who made a picture would be chastised and compelled to breathe the soul into it, which he will not be able to do." (Bukhārī: *Kitāb al-Ta'bir*; Tirmidhi: *Abwāb al-Libās*; Nasā'ī: *Kitāb az-Zinah*; Musnad Ahmad).

(6) Sa'īd bin al-Ḥasan says: "I was sitting with Ibn 'Abbās when a man came and said: O Ibn 'Abbās, I am a man who earns his living with his hand, and my profession is to make these pictures. Ibn 'Abbās replied: I shall say to you the same that I have heard from the Holy Prophet. I have heard this from him that Allah will chastise the one who makes pictures, and will not leave him till he breathes the soul into it, and he will never be able to breathe the soul into it. At this the man was much upset and his face turned pale. Ibn 'Abbās said: Well, if you have to make the pictures, make of this tree, or of something which is lifeless." (Bukhārī: *Kitāb al-Buyū'*; Muslim: *Kitāb al-Libās*; Nasā'ī: *Kitāb az-Zinah*; Musnad Ahmad).

(7) 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd has reported that the Holy Prophet said: "On the Day of Resurrection the ones to be most severely punished by Allah would be the painters of the pictures." (Bukhārī: *Kitāb al-Libās*; Muslim: *Kitāb al-Libās*; Nasā'ī; *Kitāb az-Zinah*; Musnad Ahmad).

(8) 'Abdullah bin 'Umar has reported that the Holy Prophet said: Those who paint the pictures will be punished on the Day of Resurrection. They will be asked to put life into what they have made. (Bukhārī: *Kitāb al-Libās*; Muslim: *Kitāb al-Libās*; Nasā'ī: *Kitāb az-Zinah*; Musnad Ahmad).

(9) Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah says that she bought a cushion in which pictures had been painted. Then the Holy Prophet came and stood at the door and did not enter. I said: "I repent before God of any sin that I may have committed." The Holy Prophet asked: "What is this cushion for?" I said: "This is here so that you may sit and may recline on it." He said: "The painters of these pictures will be chastised on the Day of Resurrection: they will be asked to put life into what they have made; and the angels (*i.e.* the angels of mercy) do not enter a house which has pictures in it." (Bukhārī: *Kitāb al-Libās*; Muslim: *Kitāb al-Libās*; Nasā'ī: *Kitāb az-Zinah*; Ibn Mājah: *Kitāb at-Tajārāt*; Mu'waṭṭā': *Kitāb al-Istidhān*).

(10) Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah says: Once the Holy Prophet came to my house, and I had hung a curtain which had pictures on it. The colour of his face changed. Then he took hold of the curtain and tore it and said: "Those who try to create like the creation of Allah will be among those who will be severely punished by Allah on the Day of Resurrection."

(Muslim: *Kitāb al-Libās*; Bukhārī: *Kitāb al-Libās*; Nasā'ī: *Kitāb az-Zīnah*).

(11) Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah says: Once the Holy Prophet came back from a journey and I had hung a curtain at my door, which had the pictures of winged horses on it. The Holy Prophet commanded me to remove it and I removed it. (Muslim: *Kitāb al-Libās*; Nasā'ī: *Kitāb az-Zīnah*).

(12) Jābir bin 'Abdullah says: The Holy Prophet prohibited keeping of the pictures in the house and also forbade that somebody should make pictures. (Tirmidhi: *Abwāb al-Libās*).

(13) Ibn 'Abbās has related on the authority of Abū Ṭalḥah Anṣārī: The Holy Prophet said that the angels (*i.e.* of mercy) do not enter a house where there is a dog, nor where there is a picture. (Bukhārī: *Kitāb al-Libās*).

(14) 'Abdullah bin 'Umar says: Once Gabriel promised to pay the Holy Prophet a visit, but the time passed and he did not come. The Holy Prophet felt troubled and came out of his house and met him. When he complained to him, he (Gabriel) replied: "We do not enter a house where there is a dog or a picture." (Bukhārī: *Kitāb al-Libās*. Several Traditions on this subject have been related by Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhi, Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, Imām Mālik and Imām Aḥmad on the authority of several Companions).

As against these, there are some other Traditions which allow some exceptions regarding the pictures. For example, according to a tradition of Abū Ṭalḥah Anṣārī, it is permissible to hang the curtain of a cloth which has pictures embroidered on it. (Bukhārī: *Kitāb al-Libās*); and according to Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah's tradition, when she tore a cloth having pictures on it and made a cushion from it to be spread on the floor, the Holy Prophet did not forbid it. (Muslim: *Kitāb al-Libās*); and Sālim bin 'Abdullah bin 'Umar's tradition that the prohibition is of the picture which is displayed and installed prominently and not of the one which is used as a carpet. (Musnad Aḥmad). But none of these traditions contradicts the Traditions which have been cited above. None of these sanctions the making and painting of the pictures. They only tell that if a person has got a piece of cloth having pictures on it, how he should use it. In this regard, the tradition of Abū Ṭalḥah Anṣārī cannot at all be accepted because it contradicts many other authentic Traditions in which the Holy Prophet not only forbade use of cloth having pictures on it as a curtain but even tore it into pieces. Moreover, Ḥaḍrat Abū Ṭalḥah Anṣārī's own practice that has been reported in Tirmidhi and Mu'waṭṭ'a, in this regard, was that he did not even like to use a piece of cloth which had pictures on it, as a carpet, not to speak of hanging it as a curtain.

As for the traditions related by Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah and Sālim bin 'Abdullah, they only permit that if a picture is not placed prominently out of respect and esteem but is used as a carpet disrespectfully and is trodden under the feet, it could be tolerable. After all, how can these Traditions be cited for obtaining sanction for the culture which regards the art of painting and portrait making and sculpture as an enviable achievement of the human civilization, and wants to popularize it among the Muslims?

The code of practice that the Holy Prophet left for his Ummah with regard to the pictures, can be seen from the conduct and practice of the eminent Companions, which they adopted in this regard. The admitted principle of law in Islam is that the authentic and reliable Islamic Law is that which the Holy Prophet enjoined during the latter part of his life after it had passed through gradual and preliminary injunctions and exceptions. And after the Holy Prophet the eminent Companions' practice and persistence on a particular way is a proof that he left the Ummah on that way. Now let us see how these holy and pious people treated and regarded the pictures.

Ḥaḍrat 'Umar said to the Christians: "We do not enter your churches because there are pictures in them." (Bukhārī: *Kitāb aṣ-Ṣalāt*).

Ibn 'Abbās would sometimes offer his Prayer in the church, but not in a church which had pictures in it. (Bukārī: *Kitāb aṣ-Ṣalāt*).

Abū al-Hayyāj al-Asadī says: Ḥaḍrat 'Ali said to me: "Should I not send you on the same mission on which the Holy Prophet had sent me? And it is this that you should not leave any idol that you should not break, and you should not leave any grave that you should not level down, and you should not leave any picture that you should not blot out." (Muslim: *Kitāb al-Janā'iz*; Nasā'ī: *Kitāb al-Janā'iz*).

Ḥanash al-Kinānī says: Ḥaḍrat 'Ali said to his chief of the police: "Do you know on what mission I am going to send you?—on the mission on which the Holy Prophet had sent me, that you should blot out every picture and level down every grave." (Musnad Ahmad).

This very established law of Islam has been accepted and acknowledged by the jurists of Islam and regarded as an article of the Islamic Law. Thus, 'Allāma Badruddīn 'Ainī writes with reference to *Tauḍīh*:

"Our elders (*i.e.* the Ḥanifite jurists) and other jurists say that making the pictures of a living thing is not only unlawful but strictly forbidden and a major sin, whether the maker has made it for a purpose where it would be held with contempt or for some other use and purpose. The making and painting of the picture anyway is unlawful, because it is an attempt to create like the creation of Allah. Likewise, the making of pictures whether in the cloth, or in the carpet, or on a



coin, or in a utensil, or in a wall, is in any case unlawful. However, making the pictures of something else, for instance, of a tree, etc., is not forbidden. Whether the picture casts a shadow or not is immaterial. The same is the opinion of Imām Mālik, Sufyān Thaurī, Imām Abū Ḥanifah, and other scholars. Qāḍī 'Iyād says that the dolls of girls are an exception, but Imām Mālik disapproved of even buying them." (*Umdat al-Qārī*, vol. XXII, p. 70). Imām Nawawī has elucidated this same view in greater detail in his commentary of Muslim. Please refer to *Sharḥ Nawawī*, Egyptian Ed., vol. XIV, pp. 81-82).

This is then the injunction about the making of pictures. As regards the use of the pictures made by others, 'Allāma Ibn Ḥajr has cited the views of the jurists of Islam as follows:

"Ibn 'Arabī, the Malikite jurist, says that the consensus of opinion is that the picture that casts a shadow is unlawful, whether it is regarded with contempt or not. Only the dolls of girls are an exception. ... Ibn 'Arabī also says that the picture which does not cast a shadow but which persists (as in the printed form, unlike the reflection of a mirror) is also unlawful, whether it is regarded with contempt or not. However, if its head is cut off, or its limbs or parts are separated, it may be used. ... Imām al-Ḥarmayn has cited a verdict according to which a curtain or a cushion having pictures on it may be used, but the picture hung on the wall or ceiling is forbidden, for it would show respect and esteem for it, while the picture on the curtain or cushion, on the contrary, would be held with contempt. ... Ibn Abi Shaibah has related on the authority of 'Ikrimah that the scholars among the immediate followers of the Companions held the opinion that the picture's being in the carpet or cushion is disgraceful for it; they also opined that the picture hung prominently is unlawful, but the one trodden under the feet is permissible. The same opinion has been cited from Ibn Sirīn, Sālim bin 'Abdullah, 'Ikrimah bin Khālid and Sa'id bin Jubair." (*Fatḥ al-Bārī*, vol. X, p. 300).

The details given above clearly show that the forbiddence of the pictures is not a controversial or doubtful matter in Islam, but it is an established article of the law according to the express instructions of the Holy Prophet, the practice of the Companions and the unanimous verdicts of the jurists of Islam, which cannot be changed by the hair-splitting of the people influenced by the alien cultures.

In this connection, certain other things should also be understood so that there remains no misunderstanding in this regard.

Some people try to make a distinction between a photograph and a painting, whereas the *Sharī'ah* forbids the picture itself and not any process or method of making pictures. There is no difference between a photograph and a painting: they are both pictures. Whatever difference

is there between them is due to the method of making them, and in this regard the *Shari'ah* injunctions make no difference between them.

Some people give the argument that the picture was forbidden in Islam in order to put an end to idol-worship. As there is no such danger now, this injunction should be annulled. But this argument is absolutely wrong. In the first place, nowhere in the Traditions has it been said that the pictures have been made unlawful in order to avoid the danger of *shirk* and idol-worship. Secondly, the assertion that *shirk* and idol-worship have been eradicated from the world is also baseless. Today in the Indo-Pak sub-continent itself there are millions of idol-worshippers and polytheists. *Shirk* is being practised in different regions of the world in different ways. The Christian people of the Book also are worshipping the images and portraits of the Prophet Jesus and Mary and other saints; so much so that even a large number of the Muslims also are involved in the evil of worshipping others than God.

Some people say that only those pictures which are polytheistic in nature should be forbidden, *i.e.*, pictures and images of those persons who have been made gods. As for the other pictures and images there is no reason why they should be forbidden. But the people who argue like this, in fact, become their own law-givers instead of deriving law from the Commandments and instructions of the Law-Giver. They do not know that the picture does not become the cause of polytheism and idol-worship only but has become the cause of many other mischiefs in the world, and is becoming so even today. The picture is one of those major means by which the aura of greatness of the kings, dictators and political leaders has been impressed upon the minds of the common people. The picture also has been used extensively for spreading obscenity and today this mischief has touched heights unknown to previous history. Pictures have also been used for sowing discord and hatred and for creating mischief between the nations and for misleading the masses in different ways. Therefore, the view that the Law-Giver forbade the picture only in order to eradicate idol-worship is basically wrong. The Law-Giver has absolutely forbidden pictures of the living things. If we are not our own law-givers but are the followers of the Law-Giver, we should desist from this accordingly. It is not at all lawful for us that we should propose from ourselves a basis for a particular injunction and then, on the basis of it, should declare some pictures lawful and some as unlawful.

Some people refer to some apparently "harmless" kinds of pictures and say that there could be no danger from these: they could not cause the mischiefs of *shirk*, obscenity, political propaganda or other evils; therefore, they should not be forbidden. Here again the people commit

the same error: they first propose a cause and a basis for an injunction, and then argue that when the cause is not found in a particular forbidden thing, it should not be forbidden. Furthermore, these people also do not understand the rule of the Islamic *Shari'ah* that it does not make vague and ambiguous boundaries between the lawful and the unlawful from which a man may not be able to judge when he is within the bounds and when he has crossed them; but it draws a clear line of demarcation which every person can see like the broad daylight. The demarcation in respect of the picture is absolutely clear: pictures of living things are unlawful and of the lifeless things lawful. This line of demarcation does not admit any ambiguity. The one who has to follow the injunctions can clearly know what is permissible for him and what is not. But, if some pictures of the living things had been declared lawful and some unlawful, no list of the two kinds of the pictures however extensive, would have made the boundary between the lawful and the unlawful clear, and the case of many pictures would still have remained ambiguous as to whether they were within the bounds of lawfulness or outside them. This is similar to the Islamic injunction about wine that one should completely abstain from it, and this marks a clear limit. But, if it had been said that one should abstain from such a quantity of wine as intoxicates, it would be impossible to demarcate between the lawful and the unlawful, and no one would have been able to decide what quantity of wine he could drink and where he had to stop. (For a further discussion, see *Rasā'il-o-Masā'il*, Part I, pp. 152-155).

21. This gives an idea of the generous and large scale hospitality practised by the Prophet Solomon. Big bowls like troughs had been arranged to serve as containers of food for the guests and heavy cooking pots were meant for cooking food for thousands of the people at one and the same time.

22. "Work gratefully": work like grateful servants. The mere verbal thankfulness of a person who acknowledges only verbally the favours done by the benefactor but uses them against his will is meaningless. The truly grateful person is he who acknowledges the favours with the tongue as well as uses and employs the favours according to the will of the benefactor.

23. Another meaning of the sentence can be: "The true state and condition of the jinns became clear and exposed." According to the first meaning, it will mean: "The jinns realized that their claim to have the knowledge of the unseen was wrong." According to the second, it will mean: "The people who taught that the jinns possessed the knowledge of the unseen, came to know that they had no such knowledge."

24. Some modern commentators have interpreted it as follows: As the Prophet Solomon's son, Rehoboam, was unworthy and given to luxurious living and surrounded by flatterers, he could not sustain the heavy burden of responsibility that fell on his shoulders after the death of his great father. A short time after his succession, the kingdom collapsed, and the frontier tribes (*i.e.*, of the jinns) whom the Prophet Solomon had subdued by his mighty power, rebelled and broke away. But this interpretation does not at all conform to the words of the Qur'ān. The scene depicted by the words of the Qur'ān is somewhat like this: Death came to the Prophet Solomon in a state when he was standing or sitting with the support of a staff. His body stood in place due to the staff, and the jinns continued to perform their duties and services, thinking that he was living. At last, when the wood-louse started eating away the staff and it became hollow from within, the Prophet Solomon's body fell down; then the jinns realized that he had died. After all, why should this clear and unambiguous description of the event be construed to mean that the wood-louse implied the unworthiness of the Prophet Solomon's son, and the staff implied his power and authority and the falling down of his body implied the disintegration of his kingdom? Had Allah meant to say all this, there was no dearth of the words in the vast Arabic language. The Qur'ān, in fact, has nowhere used such enigmatic language. How could the common Arabs, who were its first addressees, have solved this riddle?

Then, the most absurd part of this interpretation is that according to it the jinns imply the people of the frontier tribes whom the Prophet Solomon had subdued to perform certain services under him. The question is, which of these tribes had claimed to have the knowledge of the unseen, and whom did the *mushriks* regard as the knower of the unseen? A person who reads the last words of the verse with open eyes can himself see that jinn here necessarily implies a group of beings who either had themselves made a claim to have the knowledge of the unseen, or who, the people believed, had the knowledge of the unseen; and the secret of this group's being ignorant and unaware of the unseen became disclosed when they continued to serve the Prophet Solomon under the impression that he was living, whereas he had died. This statement of the Qur'ān was enough to induce an honest person to revise his opinion that the jinn imply the frontier tribes, but the people who feel shy of admitting the existence of the hidden creation called the jinn before the materialistic world still insist on this interpretation of theirs in spite of the plain meaning of the Qur'ān.

At several places in the Qur'ān Allah tells that the *mushriks* of

Arabia regarded the jinns as the associates of Allah, and as His children, and used to seek their refuge:

“They set up the jinns as partners with Allah, whereas He has created them.” (Al-An‘ām: 100). “And they have invented a blood-relationship between Allah and the jinns.” (As-Şaffāt: 158). “And that, some people from among the men used to seek refuge with some people from among the jinns.” (Al-Jinn: 6).

One of their beliefs was that they regarded the jinns as the knowers of the unseen and hidden, and used to turn to them to obtain knowledge of the hidden things. Allah has related this event here in order to repudiate this belief and to make the Arabs realize that they are following the false creeds of ignorance without any valid reason, whereas the fact is that these beliefs are absolutely baseless. (For further explanation, see E.N. 63 below).

25. To understand the continuity of the subject-matter one should keep in view the theme as expressed in vv. 1-9. There it has been pointed out that the pagans of Arabia regarded the coming of the Hereafter as irrational, and declared openly that the Messenger who was presenting this doctrine was either a mad man or deliberately was fabricating falsehood. In reply to this, Allah first gave some rational arguments, which we have elaborated in E.N.'s 7, 8 and 12 above. Then in vv. 10-21 the story of the Prophets David and Solomon and of Sabā has been related as an historical argument, which is meant to impress the reality that the history of the human species on the earth itself testifies to the law of retribution. If man studies his own history carefully he will see that this world is not a lawless kingdom, which might be functioning blindly, but it is being ruled by an All-Hearing and All-Seeing Being, Who treats and deals with His grateful servants in one way and with the ungrateful and thankless people in quite another way. If one wants one can learn this lesson from the same history that in the Kingdom of God, which has such a character, goodness and evil cannot have one and the same result. The necessary demand of its justice is that a time must come when goodness should be fully rewarded and evil fully punished.

26. That is, “A Sign of this that whatever they have is the gift of some one else and not of their own creation, and a Sign of this that the one worthy of their service and worship and gratitude is that God Who has blessed them with these favours and not those who have no share in bestowing these, and a Sign of this that their wealth is not imperishable but can perish even as it has been amassed”.

27. This does not mean that there were only two gardens in the whole country, but that the entire land of Sabā was like a garden.

Whoever a man stood he could see a garden on his right and a garden on his left.

28. That is, "They adopted the way of disobedience and ingratitude instead of obedience and gratefulness."

29. The word *'arim* as used in *sayl al-'arim* in the Text is derived from the South Arabic word *'ariman*, which stands for a "dam". In the ancient inscriptions that have been unearthed in the ruins of the Yaman, this word has been commonly used in this meaning. For example, in an inscription dated 542 or 543 A.D., which Abraha, the Abyssinian governor of the Yaman, had got installed after the repairs to the great dam of Maā'rib, this word has been used repeatedly in the meaning of a dam. Therefore, *sayl al-'arim* implies a flood that comes when a dam breaks.

30. That is, "As a result of the flood that came after the dam burst, the whole land was laid waste. The canals which the Sabaeans had dug out by building dams between the mountains, were ruined and the irrigation system destroyed. Then the same land which had been like a garden before, became a jungle of wild growth and no eatable plants were left in it except the small plum-like fruit of the lote bushes."

31. "Blessed habitations": the lands of Syria and Palestine, which have been generally mentioned in the Qur'ān by this title, as for instance, in Al-A'rāf: 137, Banī Isrā'il: 1, Al-Anbiyā': 71, 81.

"Conspicuous habitations": habitations situated on the highway and not inside the country. It may also mean that the habitations were not very far apart but contiguous so that as the outlying areas of one habitation came to an end those of the other started coming into view.

"Set...distances" implies that from the Yaman to the borders of Syria the whole journey passed through inhabited lands, and the distances between one station and another were known and determined. That makes the distinction between the journey through inhabited land and the journey through uninhabited desert area. In the desert the traveller continues to travel as long as he wills and halts when tired. Contrary to this, in settled areas as the distance between one habitation and the other is well known, the traveller can plan beforehand where he would break his journey, where he would have his midday rest and where he would stay for the night.

32. They may not have prayed thus in so many words. As a matter of fact, whoever is ungrateful to Allah for His blessings, tells Allah, as if to say that he is not worthy of those blessings. Likewise, the nation which abuses the bounties of Allah, in fact, prays to Him, as if to say, "Our Lord, withdraw Your blessings from us: we are not worthy of these."

Moreover, the words in the Text also seem to suggest that the Sabaeans perhaps regarded their large population as a calamity for themselves, and they also wanted like the other foolish peoples that their population should fall.

33. That is, "The people of Sabā were so dispersed in all directions that their dispersion became proverbial. Even today when the Arabs have to mention the complete dispersion of any people they refer to the people of Sabā as an example. When Allah caused His blessings to be withdrawn from them, the different tribes of the Sabaeans started leaving their homes and migrating to other parts of Arabia. The Banū Ghas-sān went to settle in Jordan and Syria, the Aus and Khazraj in Yathrib, and the Khuzā'ah in Tihāmah near Jeddah. The Azd left for 'Umān and the Banī Lakhm and Judhām and Kindah were also forced to give up their homes for other places. Thus, the "Sabaeans" ceased to exist as a nation and became a mere legend."

34. In this context the "patient and grateful person" implies every such person (or persons) who does not lose his balance after he has received blessings from Allah, nor exults at prosperity, nor becomes heedless of God Who has blessed him with these. Such a person can learn great lessons from the history of those people who adopted the way of disobedience after attaining opportunities for progress and prosperity and ultimately met with their doom.

35. History shows that in ancient times there lived among the Sabaeans a small group of the people, who believed in one God, apart from all other gods. The inscriptions that have been discovered in the ruins of Yaman as a result of modern archaeological research point to the existence of this small element. Some inscriptions of the period about 650 B.C. indicate that at several places in the kingdom of Sabā there existed such houses of worship as were exclusively meant for the worship of *dhu-samavi* or *dhū-samāvi* (i.e. *Rabb as-samā'*: Lord of the heavens). In some places this Deity has been mentioned as *Malikan dhu-samavi* (the King who is the Owner of the heavens). This remnant of the Sabaeans continued to live in Yaman for centuries afterwards. Thus, in an inscription of 378 A.D. also there is found the mention of a house of worship built in the name of *Ilāh dhu-samavi*. Then, in an inscription dated 465 A.D. the words are: *Bi-nasr wa ridā ilāh-in ba'l samīn wa arḍin* (i.e. with the help and support of that God Who is the Owner of the heavens and the earth). In another inscription of the period dated 458 A.D., the word *Rahmān* has been used for the same God, the actual words being *bi-ridā Rahmānan* (i.e. with the help of *Rahmān*).

36. That is, "Iblis did not have the power to have forcibly misled these people to the way of God's disobedience although they had wanted

to adopt His obedience. Allah had only given him the power that he may seduce and mislead them and make all such people his followers, who may like to follow him of their own accord. And *Iblis* was provided these opportunities for seduction so that the believers of the Hereafter were distinguished from those who entertained doubts about its coming."

In other words, this Divine statement makes the truth explicit that nothing in this world other than belief in the Hereafter can ensure man's adherence to the right way. If a man disbelieves that he is to be raised back to life after death and has to render an account of his deeds before his God, he will certainly be misled and go astray, for he will never be able to develop in himself the sense of responsibility which alone can make him adhere to the right way. That is why the artifice of Satan by which he ensnares man is that he makes him heedless of the Hereafter. The one who escapes this satanic enticement can never agree that he should sacrifice the interests of his real everlasting life to the interests of the transient life of the world. On the contrary, the one who disbelieves in the Hereafter under the evil influence of Satan, or at least entertains doubts about it, can never be induced to withdraw from the cash bargain being made in this world only due to the apprehension that it might cause loss in some later life. Whoever has gone astray in the world, has gone astray only due to the denial of the Hereafter, or some suspicion about it; and whoever has adopted righteousness has done so because his righteous deeds have issued from his belief in the Hereafter.

37. To understand fully the allusions made in the Qur'ān to the history of the Sabaeans, one should also keep in view the information that has been obtained through other historical sources about this nation.

Historically, "Sabā" were a great nation of Southern Arabia, which comprised some large tribes. Imām Aḥmad, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn 'Abd al-Barr and Tirmidhi have related from the Holy Prophet that Sabā was the name of an Arab, from whose race issued the following tribes of Arabia: Kindah, Ḥimyar, Azd, Ash'ariyyin, Madhḥij, Anmār (with its two branches: Khath'am and Bajillah), 'Āmilah, Judhām, Lakhm and Ghassān.

Since antiquity this Arabian nation has been well known to the rest of the world. Ur inscriptions of 2500 B.C. mention it by the name of Sabom. Then in the Babylonian and Assyrian inscriptions and also in the Bible it has been mentioned several times. (See, for instance, Psalms 72: 15; Jeremiah 6: 20; Ezekiel 27: 22, 38: 13; Job 6: 19). The Greek and Roman historians and the geographer Theophrastus (288 B.C.) have mentioned it continuously for many centuries of the Christian era since before Christ.



Its home was the south-western corner of the Arabian peninsula, now called al-Yaman. Its rise to prominence started in 1100 B.C. In the time of the Prophets David and Solomon the Sabaeans had become world famous as a wealthy people. In the beginning they were a sun-worshipping nation. Then, when their queen affirmed faith at the hand of the Prophet Solomon (965-926 B.C.) probably most of them became Muslims. But then in some unknown later period they again began to worship gods and goddesses like Almaqah (the moon-god), 'Athtar (Venus), Dhāt Ḥamīm, Dhāt Bad'ān (the sun-god), Ḥarmatam or Ḥarīmat and many others. Almaqah was their chief deity, and the kings made claim to the people's obedience as representatives of this deity. Many inscriptions have been unearthed in the Yaman, which show that the whole land abounded in the temples of these gods, especially of Almaqah, and thanksgiving services for them were held at every important event.

As a result of the modern archaeological researches about 3,000 inscriptions have been discovered, which throw a good deal of light on the history of this nation. Besides these, if the information yielded by the Arabian traditionists and the Roman and Greek historians is compiled, a detailed history of this nation can be prepared. According to this information the following are the important periods of its history:

(1) *The Pre-mid-seventh Century Period*: In this period Mukarrib was the title of the Sabaean kings. Probably a synonym of *Muqarrib*, it signified that the kings regarded themselves as the link between men and gods; or, in other words, they were the priest-kings. Their capital was Ṣirwāḥ, whose ruins are found at a day's journey to the west of Maā'rib, and are now called al-Kharībah. The foundations of the great Maā'rib dam were laid in this period: then the different kings extended it from time to time.

(2) *650 B.C. to 115 B.C.*: In this period the Sabaean kings discarded *Mukarrib* and adopted the title of *Malik* (king), which signified that theocracy was replaced by secular kingship. They left Ṣirwāḥ and made Maā'rib their capital and extended it in every way. This place lay 3900 feet above the sea, and is some 60 miles east of San'ā'. Even today its ruins bear evidence that it was once the centre of a highly civilized nation.

(3) *115 B.C. to 300 A. D.*: In this period the Sabaean kingdom fell under the domination of the tribe of Ḥimyar, a more numerous tribe of Sabā. They discarded Maā'rib and made their central place, Raydān, their capital, which later became known as Zafār. Its ruins can still be seen on a circular hill near the modern city of Yarīm. Closeby it there resides a small tribe by the name of Ḥimyar, perhaps

the remnant of the great nation which was once well known throughout the world for its glory and grandeur. In the same period the word Yamanat and Yamanāt began to be used for the first time for a part of the kingdom, which gradually became Yaman and the name of the entire land, which extends from 'Asir to Aden and from Bāb al-Mandab to Hadramaut. During this very period the decline of the Sabaeans began.

(4) 300 A.D. to the rise of Islam: This is the period of the Sabaeans' destruction. They started fighting civil wars, which provided occasion for external intervention. This resulted in the decline in their trade and their agriculture and even loss of political freedom. Taking advantage of the internal conflicts between the Himyarites and other tribes, the Abyssinians occupied the Yaman and ruled it briefly from 340 A.D. to 378 A.D. Then, though political freedom was restored, breaches began to appear in the great dam of Maā'rib, which in 450 or 451 A.D. led to the catastrophe occasioned by the "bursting of the dam" as has been referred to in verse 16 above. Although after it till the time of Abraha the dam was extensively repaired, the population that had dispersed could not be brought back, nor could the ruined system of irrigation and agriculture be restored. In 523 A.D., dhū-Nuwās, the Jewish king of the Yaman, carried out the great massacre of the Christians of Najrān, which has been referred to in the Qur'ān under "*aṣḥāb al-ukhdūd*" (LXXXV: 4). In retaliation, the Christian kingdom of Abyssinia invaded Yaman and occupied the whole land. Later the Abyssinian governor of Yaman, Abrahah, in a bid to put an end to the central position of the Ka'bah and to bring the whole of western Arabia into the sphere of the Byzantine-Abyssinian influence invaded Makkah in 570 or 571 A.D., a few days before the birth of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). The Abyssinian army was completely destroyed as alluded to under *aṣḥāb al-fil* in the Qur'ān. At last, in 575 A.D. Yaman fell to the Iranians; their rule came to an end in 628 A.D. when their governor Bādhān embraced Islam.

The Sabaeans owed their prosperity to two main factors: agriculture and commerce. They had developed their agriculture by means of a wonderful irrigation system unknown in the ancient world except in Babylon. There were no natural rivers in their land; in the rainy season small hill-torrents rose on which they had built dams every where in the country and collected water in small lakes from which they had taken out canals to water their lands. This had virtually turned the whole country into a vast garden as mentioned in the Qur'ān. The largest reservoir was the lake which had been formed by the construction of a dam on the opening in the Jabal Balaq near Maā'rib. But when Allah caused His

favours to be turned away from them, the great dam burst in the mid-fifth century A.D. and the resultant floods went on breaking one dam after the other on the way, destroying the entire irrigation system, which could never again be restored.

For commerce the Sabaeans had been blessed by God with the most favourable geographical position of which they took full advantage. For more than a thousand years they monopolised the means of trade between the East and the West. On the one hand, they received silk from China, spices from Indonesia and Malabar, fabrics and swords from India, negro slaves, monkeys, ostrich feathers and ivory from East Africa at their ports, and on the other, they transported this merchandise to the Egyptian and Syrian marts, to be supplied onward to Rome and Greece. Besides, they themselves were great producers of frankincense and myrrh and other perfumes, which were in great demand in Egypt and Syria and in Rome and Greece.

Two great routes existed for this international trade: the sea route and the land route. The maritime trade remained in the Sabaeans' control for more than a thousand years for they alone knew the mysteries of the Red Sea monsoons, breakers and rocks and the anchorages, and no other nation could risk navigation through these dangerous waters. Through this maritime route they took their trade goods to the harbours of Jordan and Egypt. The land routes from Aden and Ḥadramaut joined at Ma'ārib, from where a highway led to Petra through Makkah, Jeddah, Yathrib, Al-'Ulā, Tabūk and Aylah, forking at the northern end to Egypt and Syria. Along this land route, a number of Sabaean colonies had been established right from the Yaman to the borders of Syria, as mentioned in the Qur'ān, and trade caravans passed by these day and night. The signs of many of these colonies still exist on this route from which the Sabaean and the Ḥimyarite inscriptions are being discovered.

After the first century after Christ Sabaean trade began to suffer a decline. When the Greek, and then the Roman, kingdoms were established in the Middle East, the citizens began complaining of the high prices that the Arabian traders were charging for the oriental goods because of their monopoly, and urged their governments to take the initiative to break their supremacy in the sea trade. Thus, in the beginning, Ptolemy II (285-246 B.C.), the Greek ruler of Egypt, reopened the Nile-Red Sea canal originally dug by Pharaoh Sesostris some seventeen centuries previously. Consequently, it was through this canal that the Egyptian fleet entered the Red Sea for the first time, but it

[Contd. on p. 230

مَا ذَا قَالَ رَبُّكُمْ مَقَالُوا الْحَقِّ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْكَبِيرُ ۗ قُلْ مَنْ يَرْزُقُكُمْ مِنَ  
 السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ قُلِ اللَّهُ وَإِنَّا أَوْ إِيَّاكُمْ لَعَلَىٰ هُدًى أَوْ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ۗ  
 قُلْ لَا تُسْأَلُونَ عَمَّا أَجْرَمْنَا وَلَا نُسْأَلُ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ۗ قُلْ يَجْمَعُ بَيْنَنَا  
 رَبُّنَا ثُمَّ يَفْتَحُ بَيْنَنَا بِالْحَقِّ وَهُوَ الْفَتَّاحُ الْعَلِيمُ ۗ قُلْ أَرُونِي الَّذِينَ  
 الْحَقُّمُ بِهِ شُرَكَاءُ كَلَّا بَلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ۗ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا  
 كَافَّةً لِّلنَّاسِ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ۗ وَيَقُولُونَ  
 مَتَىٰ هَذَا الْوَعْدُ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ۗ قُلْ لَكُمْ مِيعَادُ يَوْمٍ لَا تَسْتَخِرُونَ  
 عَنْهُ سَاعَةً وَلَا تَسْتَقْدِمُونَ ۗ وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ بِهَذَا  
 الْقُرْآنِ وَلَا بِالَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ ۗ وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذِ الظَّالِمُونَ مَوْقُوفُونَ عِندَ  
 رَبِّهِمْ ۗ يَرْجِعُهُ بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَىٰ بَعْضٍ الْقَوْلَ يَقُولُ الَّذِينَ اسْتَضَعِفُوا لِّلَّذِينَ  
 اسْتَكْبَرُوا لَوْلَا أَنْتُمْ لَكُنَّا مُؤْمِنِينَ ۗ قَالَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا لِّلَّذِينَ اسْتَضَعِفُوا  
 أَنَحْنُ صَدَدُكُمْ عَنِ الْهُدَىٰ بَعْدَ إِذْ جَاءَكُمْ بَلْ كُنْتُمْ مُجْرِمِينَ ۗ وَقَالَ  
 الَّذِينَ اسْتَضَعِفُوا لِّلَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا بَلْ مَكْرُ الْيَلِّ وَالنَّهَارِ إِذْ تَأْمُرُونَنَا أَنْ  
 نَكْفُرَ بِاللَّهِ وَنَجْعَلَ لَهُ أَنْدَادًا ۗ وَأَسْرُوا التَّدَامَةَ لَمَّا رَأَوُا الْعَذَابَ وَجَعَلْنَا  
 الْأَغْلَلَ فِي آعْنَاقِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ۗ هَلْ يُجْزَوْنَ إِلَّا مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ۗ وَمَا  
 أَرْسَلْنَا فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِّنْ نَّذِيرٍ إِلَّا قَالَ مُتْرَفُوهَا إِنَّا بِمَا أُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهِ كَافِرُونَ ۗ  
 وَقَالُوا نَحْنُ أَكْثَرُ أَمْوَالًا وَأَوْلَادًا ۗ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُعَذِّبِينَ ۗ قُلْ إِنْ رَبِّي  
 يَبْسُطِ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ۗ وَمَا  
 أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُكُمْ بِالَّتِي تُقَرِّبُكُمْ عِندَنَا زُلْفَىٰ إِلَّا مَنْ آمَنَ وَعَمِلَ

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(O Prophet,) ask them, "Who gives you sustenance from the heavens and the earth?" Say, "Allah.<sup>42</sup> Only either we or you are on the Right Way or in manifest error."<sup>43</sup> Say to them, "You will not be questioned for the errors we have committed, nor shall we be answerable for what you are doing."<sup>44</sup> Say, "Our Lord will gather us together, then He will judge between us rightly. He is such a great Judge Who knows everything."<sup>45</sup> Say to them, "Just show me those whom you have made associates with Him."<sup>46</sup> Nay, never! Allah alone is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.

And (O Prophet,) We have sent you to the entire mankind as a bearer of good news and a warner, but most people do not know.<sup>47</sup>

These people say to you, "When will the promise (of Resurrection) be fulfilled if you are truthful?"<sup>48</sup> Say, "For you the appointment of a day is fixed, which you can neither hold back for an hour nor hasten on by an hour."<sup>49</sup>

The disbelievers say, "We shall never believe in this Qur'ān, nor in any other Book which came before it."<sup>50</sup> Would that you could see these wicked people at the time when they will be standing before their Lord! Then, they will blame one another. Those who had been oppressed in the world, will say to the arrogant, "But for you we would have been the believers."<sup>51</sup> The arrogant ones will say to the oppressed ones, "Did we hinder you from the guidance when it came to you? Nay, but you yourselves were guilty."<sup>52</sup> The oppressed ones will say to the arrogant ones, "Nay, but it was your plotting by day and night when you told us to deny Allah and to set up others as equals with Him."<sup>53</sup> At last, when they will see the torment, they will repent in their hearts, and We shall put fetters on the necks of the disbelievers. Can the people be requited except in accordance with their deeds?

It has never happened that We sent a warner to a habitation and its people of means did not say, "We disbelieve the message you have brought."<sup>54</sup> They always

said this: "We have more wealth and children than you, and we shall never be punished."<sup>55</sup> O Prophet, say to them, "My Lord gives abundantly to whom He wills and sparingly to whom He wills, but most people do not realize this."<sup>56</sup> It is not your wealth and your children, which bring you nearer to Us, save him who believes and does good works.<sup>57</sup> These are the ones who will have a double reward for their deeds, and they will live in peace in high mansions.<sup>58</sup> As for those who strive hard in order to frustrate Our Revelations, they shall be severely punished.

*Contd from p. 227]*

could not succeed much against the Sabaeans. When Egypt fell to the Romans they brought a stronger merchant marine into the Red Sea and put a naval fleet at its back. The Sabaeans could not withstand this force. Consequently, the Romans set up their trade colonies at every seaport, arranged supplies for the ships and also stationed their military troops wherever possible. At last, the time came when Aden passed under the military occupation of the Romans. In this connection, the Roman and the Abyssinian kingdoms also entered secret pacts against the Sabaeans, which ultimately deprived this nation of its political freedom as well.

After losing control over maritime trade the Sabaeans were left with trade over the land route only, but many factors combined to gradually break its back too. First, the Nabataeans ousted them from all the colonies of the upper Hejāz and Jordan, from Petra to Al-'Ulā. Then in 106 A.D. the Romans put an end to the Nabataean kingdom and captured all the Syrian and Jordanian territories up to the Hejāz. After this Abyssinia and Rome jointly tried to ruin the Sabaean trade completely by taking advantage of their internal conflicts. That is why the Abyssinians intervened in the Yaman again and again, till at last they brought the whole land under their occupation.

Thus, Allah's wrath caused this nation to be toppled from the heights of glory and prosperity into oblivion from which they were never able to rise again. There was a time when the Greeks and the Romans felt tempted when they heard of the legendary wealth of this people. Strabo writes, "The Sabaeans use gold and silver utensils and even the ceilings, walls and doors of their houses are bedecked with ivory, gold, silver and jewels." Pliny says, "The whole wealth of Rome and Persia is flowing into Sabaean hands. They are the richest people of the world today, and their fertile land abounds in gardens, crops and cattle." Artemido-

rus says, "These people roll in luxury. They burn cinnemon, sandalwood and other sweet smelling wood as fuel." Likewise, other Greek historians relate that the passengers passing by their shores can smell the perfumes of their land in the merchant ships at sea. For the first time in history they built a skyscraper, called the castle of Ghumdān, on the hill top in Ṣan'ā'. This citadel, according to the Arab historians, had twenty storeys, each storey being 36 feet high. Thus did they prosper and enjoy life as long as Allah favoured them with His bounties. At last, when they transgressed all limits in their ingratitude, the Almighty Allah also withdrew His attention, and they were so utterly destroyed as if they had never existed at all.

38. Until now the *mushriks*' wrong notions about the Hereafter have been dealt with. From here the discourse turns to the refutation of *shirk* itself.

39. That is, "Allah makes and un-makes the destinies of individuals and nations and kingdoms in ways as you have seen from the stories of the Prophets David and Solomon and the people of Sabā. Now, you may invoke, if you so like, these self-made gods of yours to see whether they also possess the power to change someone's good fortune into misfortune and misfortune into good fortune."

40. That is, "Not to speak of owning something, or being a partner in the ownership of something, or being a helper of Allah in any way, there exists no one in the universe, who of his own accord may intercede for someone before Allah. You are involved in the misunderstanding that there are some beloved ones of God, or some such powerful personalities, who can force and press God to accept their intercession, whereas the fact is that no one will dare utter a word of recommendation there without Allah's permission. Only such a one will be able to make his submissions, who is permitted by Allah to do so, and will intercede for him alone for whom permission for intercession is granted. (To understand the distinction between the Islamic concept of intercession and the polytheistic concept, see Yūnus: 3, 18; Hūd: 76, 105; Ṭā Hā: 109; Al-Anbiyā': 28; Al-Ḥajj: 76).

41. Here a graphic picture has been drawn of the time when on the Day of Resurrection an intercessor will be seeking permission to intercede on behalf of another. It presents this scene: "After submitting the application for permission, both the intercessor and the intercessee are awaiting the reply in a state of restlessness and awe. At last, when the permission is granted and the intercessee perceives satisfaction in the face of the intercessor he feels a little comforted and asks the intercessor: 'What reply has been received?' The intercessor says, 'The right reply: permission has been granted.' What is meant to be impressed is this:

'O foolish people! Such will be the awe of the great Court of Allah! How dare you entertain the notion that anybody will have you forgiven by his own power, or dare behave stubbornly and tell Allah: These are my favourites: they will have to be forgiven!'

42. There is a subtle gap between the question and the answer. The addressees were the *mushriks* who not only did not disbelieve in the existence of Allah but also knew and believed that the keys of the provisions are in His hand. But in spite of this they held others also as Allah's associates in His work. Now when they were confronted with the question: "Who gives you sustenance from the heavens and the earth?" they were put in a tight corner. If they mentioned another beside Allah they would say a thing contrary to their own and their people's creed. If they showed stubbornness and said such a thing, they feared that their own people would immediately refute them. And if they acknowledged that Allah alone is their Sustainer, they would immediately be confronted with the next question: "Then, why and what for have you made these others your gods?" When Allah is the Sustainer, why should these others be served and worshipped? Thus they stand confused and bewildered. Neither can they say that Allah alone is the Sustainer nor that another god is the sustainer. When the questioner sees that they do not make any answer, he himself answers his question and says, "Allah."

43. This sentence contains an important point of the wisdom of preaching. The logical conclusion of the question and answer cited above would be that the one who serves and worships Allah should be on right guidance and the one who worships others beside Him should be misguided. Therefore, apparently, the conclusion should have been: "Then, we are rightly guided and you are misguided." But such a plain and straight reply, although correct and true, would not have been a wise thing from the point of view of preaching. For when a person is addressed and told plainly that he is misguided and the speaker claims to be rightly-guided himself, he will become obdurate and will never be inclined to accept and acknowledge the truth. As the Messengers of Allah are not sent only for the sake of speaking the plain truth, but are also entrusted with the duty of reforming the wrongdoers as tactfully as possible, Allah has not asked His Prophet to tell them plainly; after the question and answer, that they are all misguided and that he alone is rightly-guided. Instead of this, it was said: "Tell them: it has become clear that we regard as our Deity only Him Who is the Sustainer, and you have taken as deities those who are not sustainers. Now, it is not possible that both you and we should be on right guidance simultaneously. Only one of us can be rightly-guided, and the other inevitably will be misguided. Now it is



for you to consider and judge who is being proved by reason to be in the right and who in the wrong."

44. The above question had already made the listeners to think seriously. This additional sentence was meant to make them think even more seriously, as if to say, "It is in our own interest individually that we should consider and decide the question of guidance and misguidance rightly. For if we are misguided, we shall ourselves bear the consequences of our error; you will not be held answerable for it. Therefore, it is in our own interest that we should consider seriously, before adopting a creed, that we are not following a wrong way. Likewise, you also should think seriously for your own sake, not for our sake in any way, and make sure that you are not investing your life's capital in a false creed. For if you committed an error in this regard, you would be harming only your own selves and not us."

45. This is the last and the strongest motive for the consideration of which the listeners' attention has been invited. It means to impress this: "The thing is not only this that there is the difference of the truth and the falsehood between you and us, but that both we and you have to be presented before our Lord, the Being Who knows the truth and is also fully aware of the affairs of each of us. There before Him not only will this thing be decided who, between you and us, was in the right and who in the wrong, but this issue also will be settled how we made every possible effort to make the truth plain to you, and how you opposed and resisted us in your antagonism to the truth."

46. That is, "Before ever you take the great risk due to your reliance on these deities, just tell me here who among them is so powerful as to arise in the Court of Allah as your supporter and save you from His punishment."

47. That is, "You have not been sent as a Prophet for the people of this city, or this country, or this age alone, but for the people of the entire world and for ever, but your compatriots do not recognize your worth and they do not realize how great a person has been raised among them as a Prophet and how uniquely they have been blessed by Allah."

The fact that the Holy Prophet has not been appointed a Prophet only for his own country or for his own age but for all mankind till Resurrection, has been stated at several places in the Qur'an. For instance,

"And this Qur'an has been revealed to me that I should thereby warn you and all those whom it may reach." (Al-An'am: 19)

"O Prophet, say: O mankind, I am a Messenger to all of you from Allah." (Al-A'raf: 158).

"O Prophet, We have sent you to be a real blessing for all the

people of the world." (Al-Anbiyā': 107).

"Highly blessed is He Who has sent down *Al-Furqān* to His servant so that he may be a warner to all mankind." (Al-Furqān: 1).

The same thing has been stated by the Holy Prophet in a number of *Hadiths* in different ways. For example,

"I have been sent to all mankind, the black as well as the white." (Musnad Aḥmad: *Marwiyāt Abū Mūsā Ash'ari*).

"I have been sent to all mankind as a whole, whereas every Prophet before me was only sent to his own people." (Musnad Aḥmad: *Marwiyāt 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin 'Ās*).

"Before me every Prophet was specifically sent to his own people; but I have been sent for all mankind." (Bukhārī and Muslim: From Traditions related by Jābir bin 'Abdullah).

"My appointment as a Prophet and Resurrection are like this. Saying this the Holy Prophet raised his two fingers." (Bukhārī and Muslim). What he meant by this was this: "Just as no third finger intervenes between these two fingers, so there is no prophethood between me and Resurrection. After me there will be Resurrection only, and I shall be the Prophet till Resurrection."

48. That is, "When will the time come about which you say: 'Our Lord will gather us together, then He will judge between us rightly?' We have been denying you persistently and opposing you openly for so long. Why is not then the judgement being passed against us?"

49. In other words, the reply means this: "Allah's judgements are not subject to your whims that He should be bound to do a thing at the time which you have fixed for it. He carries out His designs only according to His own discretion. You cannot understand how long is mankind to be allowed to function in this world in the scheme of Allah, how many individuals and how many nations are to be put to the test in different ways, and what will be the right time for the Day of Judgment and summoning mankind of all ages for rendering their accounts. All this will be accomplished only at the time which Allah has fixed for it in His scheme of things. Your demands can neither hasten it on by a second nor your supplications can withhold it by a second."

50. The allusion is to the pagans of Arabia, who did not believe in any Divine Book.

51. That is, "The common people who are following their leaders, chiefs, saints and rulers blindly, and are not prepared to listen to any word of advice from a well-wisher, against them. When the same people will see the actual reality and will also remember how their religious leaders used to misrepresent things, and when they will realize what doom they are going to meet on account of following their leaders, they will

turn on them, and say, "O wretched people, you led us astray: you are responsible for all our afflictions. Had you not misguided us, we would have listened to the Messengers of Allah and believed in what they said."

52. That is, "They will say: We had no power by which a few of us could have compelled hundreds of thousands of the people like you to follow us. If you had the will to believe, you could have deposed us from leadership and power and authority and government. In fact, you were our army: you were the source of our wealth and power. But for your offerings and gifts and taxes we should have been paupers. Had you not sworn allegiance to us, we could not have flourished as saints even for a day. Had you not appreciated and applauded us as leaders, we would have remained unknown. Had you not become our army and fought against the whole world for our sake, we could not have ruled over a single individual. Now why don't you admit that you yourselves did not want to follow the way that the Messengers had presented before you. You were the slaves of your own lusts and desires, and the demands of your selves could not be fulfilled by the righteous way of life presented by the Messengers but by what we presented before you. You were heedless of the lawful and the unlawful and craved for the luxuries of life, which we only could provide you. You were in search of such guides as could give you the licence to commit any sin, any crime, and take on themselves the responsibility to have you forgiven by God, in exchange for gifts. You wanted to listen to such religious scholars only who could please you by proving every kind of *shirk* and every innovation in religion and every lust of your self to be the very truth. You needed such forgers who could invent a new religion by altering the Religion of God after your desires. You wanted to follow such leaders who could help you become prosperous in this world, no matter how you fared in the Hereafter. You wished to have such rulers who were immoral and dishonest so that under their patronage you also could have the freedom to indulge in any sin, any immorality. Thus, you and we were equal partners in the bargain. Now you cannot delude anyone by saying that you were absolutely innocent and that we had spoiled and corrupted you against your will."

53. In other words, the common people's reply will be: "How can you hold us as equal partners in this responsibility? Do you also remember what sort of trickeries and deceptions and false propaganda you practised and what efforts you used to make to tempt and entice the people day and night. It is not just this that you presented the world before us and we were allured, but this also is a fact that you used to be-fool us by your frauds and deceptions and each one of you brought a new

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صَالِحًا فَأُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ جَزَاءُ الضَّعْفِ بِمَا عَمِلُوا وَهُمْ فِي الْغُرُفِ آمِنُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾  
 وَالَّذِينَ يَسْعَوْنَ فِي آيَاتِنَا مُعْجِزِينَ أُولَئِكَ فِي الْعَذَابِ مُحْضَرُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾ قُلْ إِنْ  
 رَبِّي يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَيَقْدِرُ لَهُ وَمَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَهُوَ  
 يُخْلِفُهُ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَيَوْمَ يُحْشَرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ يَقُولُ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ أَهْمُولَاهُ  
 أَيَّاكُمْ كَانُوا يَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾ قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ أَنْتَ وَلَدِنَا مِنْ دُونِهِمْ بَلْ كَانُوا يَعْبُدُونَ  
 الْجِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ بِهِمْ مُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾ فَالْيَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ نَفَعًا وَلَا ضَرًّا  
 وَنَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا ذُوقُوا عَذَابَ النَّارِ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ بِهَا تُكَذِّبُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَإِذَا نُتِلَى  
 عَلَيْهِمُ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ قَالُوا مَا هَذَا إِلَّا رَجُلٌ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَصُدَّكُمْ عَمَّا كَانَ يَعْبُدُ  
 آبَاؤَكُمْ وَقَالُوا مَا هَذَا إِلَّا إِفْكٌ مُفْتَرَى وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلْحَقِّ لَمَّا  
 جَاءَهُمْ إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَمَا آتَيْنَهُمْ مِنْ كِتَابٍ يَدْرُسُونَهَا وَ  
 مَا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ قَبْلَكَ مِنْ نَذِيرٍ ﴿٣١﴾ وَكَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَمَا بَلَّغُوا  
 مِعْشَارَ مَا آتَيْنَهُمْ فَكَذَّبُوا رُسُلِي فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيرِ ﴿٣٢﴾ قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَعْظَمُ  
 بِوَاحِدَةٍ أَنْ تَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ مِثْلِي وَفَرَادَى ثُمَّ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾ مَا بِصَاحِبِكُمْ مِنْ  
 جِنَّةٍ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ لَكُمْ بَيْنَ يَدَيْ عَذَابٍ شَدِيدٍ ﴿٣٤﴾ قُلْ مَا سَأَلْتُكُمْ  
 مِنْ أَجْرٍ فَهُوَ لَكُمْ إِنْ أَجْرِي إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ﴿٣٥﴾  
 قُلْ إِنْ رَبِّي يَقْذِفُ بِالْحَقِّ عَلَٰمُ الْغُيُوبِ ﴿٣٦﴾ قُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَمَا يُبَدِي  
 الْبَاطِلُ وَمَا يُعِيدُ ﴿٣٧﴾ قُلْ إِنْ ضَلَلْتُ فَإِنَّمَا أَضِلُّ عَلَى نَفْسِي وَإِنِ اهْتَدَيْتُ  
 فَمَا يُوجِّئِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّي إِلَّا سَمِيعٌ قَرِيبٌ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذْ فَرَغُوا فَلَا قُوَّةَ وَأُخِذُوا  
 مِنْ مَكَانٍ قَرِيبٍ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَقَالُوا امْتَايْهِ وَأَنْ لِيهِمُ التَّنَٰوُسُ مِنْ مَكَانٍ بَعِيدٍ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَ

O Prophet, say to them, "My Lord gives abundantly to whomever of His servants He wills and sparingly to whom He wills."<sup>59</sup> Whatever you spend, He replenishes it by other provisions: He is the best of Providers."<sup>60</sup> 39

And the Day when He will gather all mankind together, He will ask the angels, "Did they really worship you?"<sup>61</sup> They will reply, "Glory be to Thee: our connection is with Thee, not with them."<sup>62</sup> They, in fact, worshipped the jinns, not us. It was in them that most of them believed."<sup>63</sup> (At that time We shall say:) "Today you can neither help nor harm one another." And to the wrongdoers We shall say, "Now taste the torment of Hell which you used to deny." 40-42

When Our clear Revelations are recited to these people, they say, "This person only wants to turn you away from those deities whom your forefathers have been worshipping." And they say, "This (Qur'ān) is only a forged falsehood." When the Truth came before these disbelievers, they said, "This is plain magic," whereas We had neither given them a book before this that they might study it, nor sent to them any warner before you."<sup>64</sup> Those who have gone before them denied likewise. These people have not attained even a tenth of what We had given them. But when they treated My Messengers as liars, see how severe was My punishment!<sup>65</sup> 43-45

O Prophet, say to them, "I shall advise you of one thing: Think hard singly or in twos for the sake of Allah and reflect as to what is there of madness in your companion."<sup>66</sup> He is only a warner to you before the coming of a dreadful torment."<sup>67</sup> Say to them, "If I have asked you for a reward, keep it with yourselves,<sup>68</sup> for my reward is with Allah and He is a witness over everything."<sup>69</sup> Say to them, "My Lord inspires (me) with the Truth,<sup>70</sup> and He is the Knower of all the hidden realities." Say, "The Truth has come; now falsehood cannot succeed whatever it may do." Say, "If I have gone astray, the burden of my 46-50

going astray is on myself alone, and if I am on right guidance, it is by virtue of what my Lord reveals to me. He hears everything and is near at hand."<sup>71</sup>

51-52

Would that you could see these people when they will be in a state of confusion! They will not be able to escape but will be seized from a place closeby.<sup>72</sup> Then they will say, "We believe in it,"<sup>73</sup> whereas they cannot attain a thing gone far out of hand.<sup>74</sup>

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bait every day to tempt and lure the simple people."

The Qur'ān has made mention of the dispute between the religious guides and their followers at different places in different ways. For details, see Al-A'rāf: 38-39; Ibrāhīm: 21; Al-Qaṣaṣ: 63; Al-Aḥzāb: 66-68; Al-Mu'min: 47-48; Ḥā Mīm Sajdah: 29.

54. That the message of the Prophets was first of all opposed and resisted by the well-to-do people who possessed wealth and influence and authority, has been stated at many places in the Qur'ān. For instance, see Al-An'ām: 123; Al-A'raf: 60, 66, 75, 88, 90; Hūd: 27; Banī Isrā'īl: 16; Al-Mu'minūn: 24, 33 to 38, 46, 47; Az-Zukhruf: 23.

55. Their reasoning was this: "We are greater favourites of Allah's than you. That is why He has favoured us with the blessings of which you are deprived, or have received them in lesser measure. Why should Allah have given us all these provisions and wealth and power had He not been pleased with us? Now, how can we believe that Allah Who is showering us with all kinds of His blessings here will punish us in the Hereafter? He will punish only those who are deprived of His favours here."

This misunderstanding of the world-worshippers also has been mentioned at several places in the Qur'ān and refuted. For instance, see Al-Baqarah: 126, 212; At-Taubah: 55, 69; Hūd: 3, 27; Ar-Ra'd: 26; Al-Kahf: 34 to 43; Maryam: 73 to 77; Ṭā Hā: 131; Al-Mu'minūn: 55 to 61; Ash-Shu'arā': 111; Al-Qaṣaṣ: 76 to 83; Ar-Rūm: 9; Al-Muddaththir: 11-26; Al-Fajr: 15 to 20.

56. They do not understand the wisdom on which the system of the distribution of provisions is based in the world, and are thus involved in the misunderstanding that whoever is being given abundantly is a beloved of Allah's and whoever is being given sparingly is under His wrath. The fact, however, is that if a person looks around with open eyes he will see that in most cases the people with filthy and repulsive character are prosperous, and many good and noble people, who are known and recognized as morally pure, are found living in poverty. Now, how can a sensible person say that Allah dislikes the people of pure character and favours

the wicked wrongdoers?"

57. This can have two meanings and both are correct: (1) That which brings the people nearer to Allah is not wealth and children but faith and righteous deeds; and (2) wealth and children can become a means of nearness to Allah only for that believing, righteous person, who spends his wealth in the way of Allah and tries to make his children God-conscious and righteous by good education and training.

58. Here there is also a subtle allusion that their blessing shall be imperishable, and their reward endless. For one cannot enjoy with full satisfaction of the heart a reward which is likely to perish or withdrawn suddenly at any time.

59. The repetition of this theme is meant to impress this: The abundance or restriction of the provisions is connected with Allah's will, not with His pleasure and approval. Under the will of Allah every good or evil person is receiving his provision. Both those who believe in Him and those who do not believe are getting their provisions. Neither is abundance of the provisions a proof that one is Allah's favourite servant nor is its restriction a sign that one is under His wrath. Under His will a wicked and dishonest person prospers, although wickedness and dishonesty are disliked by Allah. On the contrary, under the same Divine will a truthful and honest man suffers losses and undergoes hardships although these qualities are liked by Allah. Hence, the person who regards the material gains and benefits as the criterion for the good and evil is grossly mistaken. The real criterion is Allah's pleasure and approval which is attained through the moral qualities liked and approved by Him. With these qualities if a person gets the worldly blessings as well it will certainly be Allah's bounty for which he should be grateful to Him. But if from the moral point of view a person is Allah's rebel and is disobedient to Him and in spite of that is being favoured with worldly blessings, it would mean that he is preparing himself for a strict accountability and a most severe punishment.

60. Sustainer, Creator, Inventor, Donor and many other such attributes are in actual fact the attributes of Allah, but are metaphorically applied to men also. For example, about a person we may say, "He provided a job for so-and-so, or he made or invented such and such a thing, or he made a gift to so-and-so." Accordingly, Allah has used the word *Khair ar-Rāziqin* (the Best of Providers) for Himself. It means to impress the fact that Allah is the best of Providers among all those about whom you think that they are in any way connected with arranging the provisions.

61. Since the earliest times the polytheists in every age have been looking upon the angels as gods and goddesses and carving their idols

and worshipping them. One has been regarded as the god of rain, another of lightning and another of wind; one is the goddess of wealth, another of knowledge and another of life and death. About this Allah says that on the Day of Resurrection the angels will be asked: "Were you being worshipped as deities by these people?" This question is not meant merely to find out the truth, but to ask, "Did you approve of their worship? Did you tell the people that you were their deities, so they should worship you? Or, did you wish that the people should do obeisance to you?" This question will not only be asked of the angels but of all those beings who have been worshipped as gods in the world. In Sūrah Al-Furqān it has been said: "On that Day (Allah) will gather all these people together as well as their deities, whom they worship beside Allah. Then he will ask them, 'Did you mislead these servants of Mine, or did they themselves go astray?'" (V. 17).

62. That is, "They will answer: You are Pure and Exalted far above this that another should be made a partner in Godhead with you. We have no connection with these people: we are not responsible for them, nor for what they did. We are Your servants only."

63. In this sentence, jinn implies the satans among the jinns. The answer means this: "Apparently these people worshipped us, by mentioning our names and by making our images according to their imaginations. But, in fact, they did not worship us but worshipped the satans, for the satans only had shown them the way that they should regard others than Allah as fulfillers of their needs, and should make offerings before them."

This verse clearly brings out the error of the view of those people who take the word "jinn" to mean the dwellers of the mountains and deserts and rural areas. Can a sensible person imagine, on the basis of this verse, that the people used to worship the dwellers of the mountains and the deserts and the villages and believed in them?

This verse also throws light on another meaning of *'ibādat*. It shows that *'ibādat* is not mere worship and service, but it also implies carrying out somebody's orders and obeying him without question. Even if one curses another (as one curses Satan) but at the time follows his way, one would be performing his *'ibādat*. For other examples, see An-Nisā': 117-119; Al-Mā'idah: 60; At-Taubah: 31; Maryam: 42; Al-Qaṣaṣ: 63.

64. That is, "Neither a book from God has come to them before this nor a messenger, who might have taught them to worship and serve others than God. Therefore, they are denying the invitation to *Tauhid* being given by the Qur'ān and Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) due to sheer ignorance, and not on the basis of any knowledge. They have in fact no authority for this."



65. That is, "The people of Makkah have not attained even one-tenth of the power and grandeur and prosperity that was possessed by those peoples. But just see how they went to their doom ultimately and their power and wealth could not avail them anything, when they refused to believe in the realities presented before them by the Prophets, and founded their system of life on falsehood."

66. That is, "Free yourselves of selfish interests and whims and prejudices and consider this sincerely for the sake of Allah: consider this singly as well as jointly in two's and three's and four's in an objective manner and consider it well and deeply: What after all can be the reason that the person whom you call a madman today was, until yesterday, being looked upon as a very wise man among you? The incident that happened a little before his appointment to Prophethood is well known among you. When after the re-construction of the Ka'bah the different clans of the Quraish were going to clash among themselves on the question as to who should place the Black Stone in the wall, you yourselves had unanimously agreed to accept Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) as the arbitrator, and he had settled the question amicably to the entire satisfaction of all concerned. Now, how is it that you have started calling the same person mad, whose wisdom and sagacity has been thus tested and experienced by your whole nation? What is it if not stubbornness? Do you really mean the same that you say with your tongues?"

67. That is, "Do you call him mad only for this reason? Do you regard as wise him who finds you following the path of ruin, and applauds you, and mad him who warns you beforehand of the coming of a disaster and shows you the way to safety and well-being?"

68. Another meaning of this can be: "I do not seek anything but your well-being: My only recompense is that you should be reformed." This thing has been expressed at another place thus; "O Prophet, say to them: I do not ask of you any recompense for this: I only ask of the one, who will, to adopt the way of his Lord." (Al-Furqān 57)

69. That is, "The accusers may say whatever they like but Allah knows everything. He is a witness that I am a selfless person: I am not performing this mission for any selfish motive."

70. The words *yaqdhifu bil-ḥaqq* give two meanings: (1) "He inspires me with the knowledge of the truth by Revelation;" and (2) "He is making the truth to prevail: He is crushing falsehood by means of the truth."

71. From this verse some people of the modern age have argued thus: "According to it the Holy Prophet also could go astray: rather used to go astray. That is why Allah has made the Holy Prophet him-

قَدْ كَفَرُوا بِهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَيَقْذِفُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ مِنْ مَكَانٍ بَعِيدٍ ۗ وَحِيلَ بَيْنَهُمْ  
وَبَيْنَ مَا يَشْتَهُونَ كَمَا فُعِلَ بِأَشْيَاعِهِمْ مِنْ قَبْلُ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا فِي شَكٍّ مُرِيبٍ ۗ

53-34

Even before they had disbelieved and used to conjecture without true knowledge.<sup>75</sup> At that time they will be deprived of that which they will desire, as will have been deprived their likes before them: Indeed they had been involved in a misleading suspicion.<sup>76</sup>

*Contd. from p. 239]*

self say: 'If I have gone astray, I am myself responsible for this. And I am on right guidance only when my Lord sends down Revelation (i.e., verses of the Qur'ān) to me.' By this wrong interpretation these unjust people in fact want to prove that the Holy Prophet's life was, God forbid, a combination of guidance and error, and Allah had made him confess this before the disbelievers lest one should adopt his obedience completely, taking him to be wholly on right guidance. The fact however is that whoever considers the theme in its correct context will know that here the words, 'If I have gone astray', are not meant to give the meaning that the Holy Prophet actually used to go astray, but this meaning: 'If I have gone astray, as you accuse I have, and my claim to Prophethood and my this invitation to *Tauhid* are the result of the same deviation, as you seem to imagine, then the burden of my going astray, will be on me alone; you will not be held responsible for it. But if I am on right guidance, as in fact I am, it is because I receive Revelation from my Lord, by virtue of which I have obtained the knowledge of the guidance My Lord is near at hand and is hearing everything. He knows whether I have gone astray or am on right guidance from Him.'

72. That is, "On the Day of Resurrection, every culprit will be seized in a way as though he lay in hiding closeby. As he will try to flee, he will be seized immediately."

73. "We believe in it": "We believe in the message presented by the Messenger in the world."

74. That is, "They should have believed when they lived in the world; they have come a long way away from it. After having arrived in the Next World how can they get a chance to repent and believe?"

75. That is, "They used to charge the Messenger and the believers with false accusations and used to taunt and mock his message. Sometimes they said he was a sorcerer or a madman; sometimes they ridiculed *Tauhid* and the concept of the Hereafter; sometimes they invented the

story that another one taught him everything; and sometimes they said that the believers had started following him only on account of folly and ignorance.”

76. As a matter of fact, no one adopts *shirk* and atheism and denial of the Hereafter by conviction, nor can he, for conviction comes from knowledge. And no one has the knowledge that there is no God, or that many others have a share in Divine authority, or that there should be no Hereafter. Thus, whoever has adopted these beliefs in the world, has raised a structure on mere conjecture, which has no basis except doubt and suspicion, and this suspicion has led him to sheer error. Consequently, they doubted God's existence, they doubted the truth of *Tauhid*, they doubted the coming of the Hereafter; so much so that they made this doubt their faith and did not listen to the Prophets and expended and wasted their whole lifetime indulging in a wrong creed and way of life.

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