

THE ROLE OF TRADITION IN ISLAM

Malik M. Aslam



INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF THE PUNJAB, LAHORE.

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قَفَانَبِكَ مِنْ ذِكْرِي حَبِيبٍ وَمَنْزِلٍ

The posthumous publication of late Professor Malik Muhammad Aslam's insightful research work, The Role of Tradition in Islam, is indeed an auspicious cultural event. Professor Aslam was a dedicated scholar and one of those rare species of the homo sapiens who have since long gone totally out of production in God's factory. A lighthouse for us all, Almighty Allah had gifted the great Malik charming character and personality, enlightening vision and wisdom and inspiring thought and behaviour. His multi-purposive life-style never failed to ignite hope and inspiration among all those who came into contact with him even for a while.

I am leaving abruptly this attempted homage unfinished here obviously because the resurrection of those immortal dream memories have already begun to flood my benumbed eyes with torrential tears.

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(DR. ABDUR RAUF)
Chief Editor,
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EDITORS' NOTE

It is indeed a privilege and honour to introduce a scholarly work on the importance of *Hadith*.

It was a painstaking effort by our teacher late Prof. Muhammad Aslam Malik.

Prof. Muhammad Aslam Malik was a keen student of Philosophy and Islamic Studies. He taught the subject of *Hadith* to the Post Graduate Students in the Department of Islamic Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore. We observed in our student life the commitment and selflessness of great teachers i.e., Prof. Allama Ala-ud-din Siddiqui and Malik Muhammad Aslam. Prof. Siddiqui successfully laid foundation stone of the first department of Islamic Studies in the country. Prof. Malik was surely a helping hand in the consolidation of the department.

Professor Malik was so dedicated to the cause of Islamic Studies that he stood side by side with his teacher Prof. Siddiqui to promote and to defend it against all odds.

As a teacher of *Hadith* he was aware of the attacks on and suspicions about the authenticity of *Hadith*. He took up the task of an evaluation of the role of tradition in Islam keeping in mind the tradition of other religions. The topic was suggested by our worthy teacher Prof.

(i)

(ii)

Allama Ala-ud-Din Siddiqui and the sincere student embarked on the academic journey. It was initially a topic for Ph.D. which Prof. Malik submitted for the degree. Perhaps thesis was processed only a viva voce examination was to be held. He would have got the degree if a sudden heart attack had not taken his life.

Afterwards, it is a sad story of betrayal and selfishness. His colleagues and friends whom he always helped and protected stood in the way of awarding a posthumous degree. It is also worth noting that the thesis remained unattended. Quite a few times authorities were approached for its publication without any success.

Our thanks are due to Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar Ali Malik, Pro-vice Chancellor, Dean Faculty of Islamic and Oriental Learning and Principal, University Oriental College, who allocated funds for its publication. May Allah reward him for this.

It is our pleasure that we are presenting this scholarly work on an important topic to the academic community. As we are the students of Prof. Muhammad Aslam it is beyond our scope to make any comment on the work, we leave it to the readers to judge and benefit.

Suffice will be to say that it was a pending debt and we feel honoured that we are now able to pay it by presenting it to the readers.

For this edition we have edited the text and bibliography with necessary changes. As for the method of references we preferred to leave it as our learned teacher had adopted.

Khalid Alavi/Jamila Shaukat

PREFACE

This study has been undertaken on the earnest desire of my learned teacher and founder Head of the Islamic Studies Department, Prof. Allama Allauddin Siddiqui, who having noticed the extraordinary zeal and enthusiasm shown by the writer, while discussing the subject of Prophetic tradition and keeping in view his academic equipment and family background, suggested him to work on this topic for his Ph.D. Degree. The theme has a direct bearing on life and hence'forth is of great practical significance in these difficult days.

It is earnestly hoped that the present study conducted by an orthodox traditionalist Muslim point of view, with historic fair-mindedness and objectivity, will Insha' Allah prove helpful in demonstrating that Islam, the Ideological basis of Paksitan, is potentially capable to deal with all the complicated problems and difficult situations of the modern age. It can thus successfully meet the challenge of its modern critics who leave no stone unturned in distorting it in their speeches and writings and proclaiming to the world for their ulterior motives that:

“Islam is a barrier in some respects regarding certain social and political innovations for the higher civilization and progress of the nation”.¹

1 Alfred Guillaume, The Traditions of Islam, Oxford, 1924, P. 95.

The study will certainly dispel the doubts and set aside the wrong impression regarding traditions, created by the so-called progressivists and modernists, who have the obsession in claiming for themselves the honour of having found the ultimate truth.² This study attempts to rectify what seems to be infelicitous or erroneous statements on the part of such professed Muslims. In so doing, I am far from presuming to be infallible, and desire the arguments and expositions to rest on their merit. However, in referring to the opinions of others, whether by way of approbation or of criticism, I have sought to be fair and appreciative, and to aim at such a treatment of views divergent from my own as to promote an eventual accord rather than intensify the disagreement.

Moreover, it is a step towards meeting the long-felt paucity of reading material on Islam in English language,³ particularly in the field of Prophetic Tradition, presented from orthodox Muslim point of view. Prof. A. Guillaume while discussing the importance of traditions in Islam attempted to draw our attention to this fact as early as 1924 in the preface of his book, "The Traditions of Islam".

He observes:

"It is a curious fact that an empire containing more than a hundred million Muslims has not produced a book in the English language dealing with and explaining a great branch of Muhammadan

2 Cf. Dr. F. Rahman, Islamic Methodology in History, Karachi, 1965, Preface X.

3 Mohammad Ali, Religion of Islam, Preface.

literature which stands beside the Quran as a source of Muslim belief and practice. The lack of such a book on the Tradition of Islam is difficult to explain, because the everyday life of Muslims throughout the world is governed and directed by these traditions".⁴

It is not necessary to justify the choice I have made of books to be noticed or commented on. I will only say, respecting the work of those other scholars who have laboured in this field far longer and more fruitfully than I have done. In particular I would mention Prof. Mustafa As-Sibai of Egypt, whose As-Sunna wa Makanatuha fi't-Tashri `al-Islami, Cairo, 1961, will serve many years to come as the authoritative guide to future researchers in addition to the work of Muhammad Ajjaj al-Khatib ``As-Sunna Qabl al-Tadwin", Cairo 1963.

I wish to pay my tribute to the great Muslim Scholar, of the 20th century, Dr. Muhammad Zubayr Siddiqui, Sir Asutosh Professor of Islamic Culture, Calcutta University, whose Hadith Literature (Its origin, Development, special features and criticism) must form the basis of any work on the hadith literature. Though I have frequently referred to and have drawn freely from the above author, yet, I have felt constrained in some instances to dissent more or less positively from his conclusions. I desire for that very reason to express my warm admiration, not only of the scholarly thoroughness, ability, and Candor, but also of the reverent and Islamic spirit which characterizes this work.

4 A. Guillaume, op. cit., Preface.

My thanks are also due to Al-Sayyid Muhammad Rashid Rida, Mutfi `Abduh's most renowned follower, and an ardent advocate of Islam, whose undernoted bold remarks (while introducing Arabic translation of A. J. Wensinck's Concordance and Indices of Muslim Tradition by Muhammad Fu'ad `Abd al-Baqi, entitled Miftah Kunuz as-Sunna) proved to be a source of great encouragement in pursuing the present investigation. The original wordings are:

ولولا عناية اخواننا علماء الهند لعلوم الحديث في
هذا العصر - لقضى، عليها بالزوال من امصار
الشرق بقدر ضعف في مصر و الشام و العراق و
العجاز منذ القرن العاشر للهجرة حتى بلغت
منتهى الضعف في اوائل هذا القرن الرابع عشر -
واننى لما هاجرت الى مصر سنة ١٣١٥ رايت
خطباء مساجدها الازهر وغيره يذكرون العاديت
في خطبهم غير مخرجة و منها الضعيف والمنكر
واموضوع-5

(And had it not been due to the kind attention paid in the present epoch towards the sciences of tradition by our brethren scholars of India, they would have been doomed to cease in the countries of the East. Since the tenth century A. H. these sciences were on the decline in Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia and Arabia; so much so that they stooped to the lowest ebb in the beginning of the fourteenth century. Indeed, when I emigrated to Egypt in the year 1315 A.H., I found the orators of the Azhar mosques and others mentioning in their

5 Muhammad Fu'ad Abd al-Baqi, Miftah Kunuz As-Sunna, Egypt 1934, Int., (ق)

sermons traditions without quoting their sources including weak, disapproved and even concocted ones).

It may be made clear that the citations from the Qur'an are mainly based on the translation of M. Muhammad `Ali (4th Ed., Lhr. 1951) except on very few controversial issues, although other translations have been consulted besides the actual Qur'anic text itself. Of these other translations, mention must be made of that of Marmaduke Pkthal (2nd Ed., Hyderabad Deccan, 1938), Maulana `Abdul Majid Daryabadi (1st Ed., 1957), `Abdullah Yusuf `Ali (3rd Ed., Lhr, 1938). Help has been sought from the Urdu version of Shaikh al-Hind M. Mahmud Hasan and M. Shabbir Ahmad `Usmani (1369 A.H., U.P., India). Most of the *ahadith* quoted may be found in the original compilations on *hadith*, like the six canonical works. However, *Mishkat al-Masabih* of `Abd Allah Muhammad Wali-ud-Din al-Tabrizi, alongwith its three english translations by Mathew, Fazlul Karim and Robson, respectively, have also been used.

I will be failing in my duty if I do not proclaim my indebtendness, my heartfelt thanks and my sense of gratitude to my respected teacher and learned guide, Prof. Allam Alauddin Siddiqui, for suggesting me this undertaking and persistently assisting me with helpful criticism in formulating a well-balanced view of the subject under study. He has been a source of great inspiration to me from the very outset till today. without his valuable help, wonderful guidance, keen interest, worthy and kind attention and constant encouragement and full co-operation it would have been completely impossible for me to complete this thesis.

In conclusion, I take this occasion to thank my all the learned teachers and colleagues for the sustained lively interest evinced by them in the execution of the task undertaken.

It is hoped that this analysis will prove a serviceable contribution to the many testimonies in favour of Islamic truth.

Thanks and all praise is for Allah only - the Lord of All Being, The Benevolent, the Merciful.

Mohammad Aslam Malik

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**TRADITION,
ITS MEANING AND
SIGNIFICANCE**

In order to facilitate a clear understanding of the problem under investigation, *THE ROLE OF TRADITION IN ISLAM*, it is indispensable to make a few preliminary observations regarding the character of the concepts of Man, God and knowledge in Islam i.e., regarding the anthropological, theistic and epistemological view points of Islam. It is difficult to avoid the temptation of citing verbatim the highly illuminating remarks made in this connection by the most renowned Swiss orientalist, Mr. Frithjof Schuon. He observes :

“Islam is the meeting between God as such and man as such. Man as such : that is to say man envisaged, not as a fallen being needing a miracle to save him, but as man, a theomorphic being endowed with an intelligence capable of conceiving of the absolute and with a will capable of choosing what leads to the absolute to say ‘man’ is to say ‘theomorphism’, ‘transcendent’, ‘intelligence’ and ‘free will’. God as such ... To say ‘God’ is to say also ‘being’, ‘creating’, ‘revealing’; in other words it

is to say 'Reality', 'Manifestation', 'Reintegration'. These are, in the author's meaning, the premises of the Islamic perspective, those which explain its very application and must never be lost sight of by anyone wanting to understand any particular aspect of Islam".¹

As regards man, his nature and role in this universe, these are very important considerations; for it can be said of religions :

"As is the man, so for him is God; in other words, the way in which man is envisaged influences the way in which God is envisaged and vice versa".²

Islam esteems man very high and the Holy Qur'an is replete with very definite assertions such as :

واذ قال ربك للملائكة ائني جاعل في الارض خليفة.³

(And when your Lord said to the angels, I am going to place a vicegerent in the earth....)

وعلم آدم الاسماء كلها.⁴

(And He taught Adam all the names)

فاذا سويته ونفخت فيه من روحي فقعوا له ساجدين فسجد

الملائكة كلهم اجمعون الا ابليس.⁵

(So when I have made him complete and breathed into him of My spirit, fall down making obeisance

1 Understanding Islam, Eng. Tr. D. M. Matheson, London. 1963, p. 13.

2 Ibid., p. 111.

3 Al-Qur'an, 2/30.

4 Ibid., 2/31.

5 Ibid., 38/72 - 74; 15/29 - 31.

to him. So the angels made obeisance all of them together-But *Iblis*).

الم تروا ان الله سخر لكم ما في السموات وما في الارض
واسبع عليكم نعمه ظاهرة وباطنة. 6

(See you not that Allah has made subserviant to you whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, and granted to you His favours complete outwardly and inwardly).

ولقد كرمنا بنى آدم... وفضلناهم على كثير ممن خلقنا
تفضيلاً. 7

(And surely We have honoured the children of Adam and We have made them to excell highly most of those whom We have created).

وان تعدوا نعمت الله لا تحصوها. 8

(And if you count Allah's favours, you will not be able to number them).

اما هدينه السبيل اما شاكراً واما كفوراً. 9

(We have truly shown him the way; he may be thankful or unthankful).

The above verses of the Holy Book make it clear that man was destined to be the representative and vicegerent of God on earth and hence, he was created with great potentialities to assimilate Divine attributes in order to fit himself for the job. The total cosmic order in all its variegated details is subservient to the law of

6 Ibid., 31/20; 22/65; 14/32 - 33.

7 Ibid., 17/70.

8 Ibid., 14/34.

9 Ibid., 76/3.

necessity in the sense that it has no option but to submit to the law which it cannot over-ride or infringe: man, on the other hand, is determined to be free. He has been the recipient of the gift of "freedom" and has also been endowed with superior knowledge and capacity to use that freedom as he likes, within well-defined limits. In other words, man's responsible existence started with his free will and his endowment of knowledge. Unlike all other creation, man has been given the faculty to discriminate and choose between good and evil, right or wrong in addition to his other creative instincts. On one side man is born with divinely gifted nature and on the other, every thing in this world is made submissive to him.

In spite of all his intuitive distinctions and countless divine favours, man sometimes forgets to make proper use of his extraordinary capabilities. Rather, he is, sometimes found too weak to overcome the evil suggestions of the Devil and thus abuses the trust of "freedom". Consequently, he renders himself in wilderness. As the Holy Qur`ān puts it :

ونفس وما سواها فالهيمها فجورها وتقورها قد افلح من زكها
وقد خاب من دسها. ¹⁰

(By the soul and its perfection! So He reveals to it its way of evil and its way of good. He is indeed successful who causes it to grow. And he indeed fails who buries it).

Now we must suppose, either that God left man to himself, to acquire the knowledge of religion and his

10 Ibid., 91/7 - 10.

duty by the mere force of his own unassisted reason and experience, or that the Wise Author of his being, at his first creation, communicated to him such a knowledge of religion as enabled him immediately to know his Maker and the duty required of him. With us it is not probable that God would leave the first man without adequate religious knowledge. It is quite evident that though the main principles of all religions, when clearly propounded to the human mind, are perfectly agreeable to the most improved reason and understanding of man, yet it can hardly be supposed that the first man or men, if left to themselves without any instruction or information, would have been able to have formed in a short time a right scheme of religion for themselves founded upon those principles.

In short, according to Islam, God could not have left man to himself (for long) and must, therefore, at the very outset have made Himself more particularly known to help humanity out of wilderness.¹¹

This presupposes the belief in a Personal God as such:

“To say ‘God’ (in Islam) is to say also ‘being’ ‘creating’, ‘revealing’; in other words it is to say ‘Reality’ ‘Manifestation’, ‘Reintegration’.”¹²

Man being a religious animal has a natural tendency to theism. He possesses mental and moral impulses which favour a belief in the existence of God. That is

11 Cf. Al-Qur`ān, 2/37 - 38.

12 Op. Cit., F. Schuon, p. 13.

why the great majority of men are believing in God without any reference to the arguments which have been used to establish His existence.¹³

According to the Holy Qur`an, there is an evidence of Divine Impress on Man's Nature :

واذ اخذ ربك من بنى آدم من ظهورهم ذريتهم واشهدهم
على انفسهم الست بربكم قالوا بلى شهدنا ان تقولوا يوم
القيامة انا كنا عن هذا غافلين.¹⁴

(And when your Lord brought forth from the children of Adam, from their loins, their descendants, and made them bear witness about themselves : Am I not your Lord? They said : Yes; We bear witness. Lest you should say on the day of Resurrection : We were unaware of this).

Now, in so far as the question before us is, how each individual first received the definite notion and the assured conviction, of the existence of a divine being, it is not absolutely settled by this demonstration of the tendency to the belief. No man can probably recall having distinct conception of God, antedating all instruction on the subject. The theistic notions held by the adults are communicated to the children as soon as they are able to grasp them. When parents have any religious belief; they do not wait for the children to develop their own religion. Moreover :

13 Calderwood, Philosophy of the Infinite, p. 47.

14 Al-Qur`an, 7/172.

“To the child’s mind the parents’ word ought to be, as it is, evidence far stronger than the conclusions of his unpractised reason”.¹⁵

Whether the current belief is monotheism, polytheism, fetichism or atheism, the rule is, that what the adults are such also the children become. The Prophet of Islam says :

كُلُّ مَوْلُودٍ يُولَدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ فَابْوَاهُ يَهُودَانَهُ أَوْ نَصْرَانَهُ أَوْ
مَجْسَانَهُ.¹⁶

(‘Man is born with divinely gifted nature (he brings no creed with him); it is his parents who make him a Jew, or a Christian or a Magian’,).

Similarly, we find the Holy Qur`an very emphatically endorsing the above view point :

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا إِلَىٰ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَالْيَاسِرَ قَالُوا
حَسْبُنَا مَا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَنَا.¹⁷

(And when it is said to them, Come to that which Allah has revealed and to the Messenger. They say! Sufficient for us is that wherein we found our fathers).

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ قَالُوا بَلْ نَتَّبِعُ مَا وَجَدْنَا
عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَنَا.¹⁸

(And when it is said to them, Follow that which Allah has revealed they say : Nay, we follow that wherein we found our fathers).

15 E. R. Conder, Basis of Faith, 2nd ed., p. 102.

16 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Egypt, (N. D.), Kitāb al-Qadr, Vol. 7, p. 52.

17 Al-Qur`ān, 5/104.

18 Ibid., 31/21; 10/78.

واذا فعلوا فاحشة قالوا وجدنا عليها آباءنا. ¹⁹

(And when they commit an indecency they say : We found our fathers doing this).

The above quoted verse of the Holy Qur`an makes it clear that false notions may be, and have been, propagated from one generation to another for ages. These notions though sometimes become corrected through more careful observation, yet mostly people never undertake either to question or to substantiate the belief in which they have been trained. They believe because, and only because, they have been told. But whether true or false, it is to be remembered that the impulse to trust the word of others is as original and innate as the impulse to trust the validity of one's own cognitions. With regard, for example, to the reality of an outward world, everyone seems to have a direct perception of it. But this impression may be a mistaken one. One may be deluded by a purely subjective affection of his own nerves as the Prophet of Islam proclaimed :

حبك الشئى يعمى ويصم. ²⁰

(Your liking of a thing may turn you blind and deaf (with regard to reality)

And the Holy Qur`an testifies it:

وعسى ان تحبوا شيئاً وهو شرككم. ²¹

19 Ibid., 7/28.

20 Abu Da'ud, Sunan (Matba' Sa'adat Egypt, 1951), 5/454.

21 Al-Qur`an, 2/216.

(And it may be that you love a thing while it is evil for you).

If however, man finds that everybody else has a similar impression, he sees that his experience is not to be explained as a delusion. Each one perceives for himself; but each one is made confident of the accuracy and reality of his perception by learning that others have the same experience. Even

“Our natural beliefs do not belong to the individual, but to the race”.²²

They are a common possession in which no one is wholly independent of others.

Similarly what is commonly regarded as an object of direct perception becomes in the full sense an object of knowledge only through the consentient testimony of men. Thus as regards the general question of objective reality, the individual experience depends for its certainty on the confirmatory experience of mankind in general.

The human faculties are from the first subjected to an educational process, without which a child would hardly equal in intelligence the brute creation. A human being, unlike the brutes, left in infancy without the help and stimulus of human Companions, would even if able to survive, yet never manifests distinctly human traits. The social element is, therefore, a much more vital thing in man's nature than in the brutes. As faintly burning coals lying separate only tend to die out, but when laid

22 J. J. Murphy, Scientific Basis of Faith, p. 101.

together kindle one another into a glowing flame; so the spark of human reason left in any one wholly without the kindling influence of Companion minds would grow dull and feeble, while contact with others quickens and brightens it into a burning light. In life the chief element by far is personal intercourse. This is the true educator of man.²³

The most of what every one knows respecting history, natural science, and indeed respecting the world in general, he obtains from books or oral instruction, and not from direct perception.

All knowledge, accordingly, is purely a matter of communication; and the assurance of the correctness of it comes from the confidence that is felt in the trustworthiness of testimony. This holds true of the conceptions which men cherish concerning God, as well as of everything else. As a matter of historic fact :

“Man in general get the notion of a God from tradition. The belief is a communicated belief. The belief that there is one God, infinite in power, wisdom and goodness, i.e. omnipotent and all perfect and good, has certainly not been wrought out by each one of us for himself, but has been passed on from man to man, from parent to child”.²⁴

Knowledge, especially knowledge of the higher sort, is not genuine knowledge till it can be expressed in language; and language is essentially the means whereby

23 R. T. Smith, Man's Knowledge of Man and God, p. 234.

24 R. Flint, Theism, 5th ed., p. 23.

thought is communicated. Nevertheless, there must be some means of verifying men's theistic notions; there must be an ultimate ground for the beliefs underlying the traditional communications of them, or else they are all superstitions blindly cherished and blindly accepted.

The faith in God may be, and is, a communicated faith; but we cannot reasonably rest our faith on testimony alone. There must be some more original and conclusive evidence of the divine existence than is found in the mere prevalence of the belief. If theism is founded in fact, then somewhere they must have been a direct knowledge, an evidence, concerning the Deity, which serves as the foundation of the testimony and gives it its value. The point here emphasized is that the transmitted notion must, if valid, have some other basis than the mere fact of the transmission. There must be or must have been something like an immediate cognition of God somewhere, or else the theistic belief must take its place alongside of other fancies which after being for generations handed down and believed, have at length been exploded, because found to be without evidence or contrary to evidence.

According to Islam, Revelation is a firm ground of assured belief in a personal God and of a definite knowledge of Him. But belief in a revelation must presuppose this inclination to belief in the existence of a Divine Being.

Whenever a religious faith is vigorous or positive, it rests on a real or supposed revelation. When faith in the genuineness of the revelation is undermined, the religion

itself loses its vitality. When the Greek and Roman mythologies began to be recognized as fables, general religious scepticism came in; theism instead of being a firm faith became a matter of speculation. And so generally, when faith in a supernatural revelation is lost, faith in a personal Deity is either lost or becomes doubtful and lifeless.

A philosophic God whose existence and character are only inferred from the phenomena of the universe, with its mixture of good or bad, beauty and ugliness, pleasure and suffering, with its doubtful progress towards the better; and with no certain message from its Author to tell men whether He cares for them or even has a personal consciousness of their existence, - such a God cannot long retain the clear and strong faith of His creatures. There cannot be a community holding one definite conviction concerning a Divine Being and united in a common worship of Him, unless the Deity is supposed somehow to have authentically and authoritatively revealed Himself. Such a supposition will develop itself, with or without good grounds. If a Buddha or Confucius merely by his own insight detects the errors of his fellows and teaches a new or a reformed religion, and if his teachings are accepted and become the foundation of a new religious community, he will come to be regarded (whether himself claiming it or not) as specially inspired, and his teachings as therefore having a higher authority than that of mere human opinion.

To sum up, belief in the Divine Being springs from the direct operation of the individual mind, i.e. primary and innate impulses, tendencies, or intuitions of the

individual mind lead to the conception of monotheistic belief.

وفي الأرض آيات للموقنين - وفي انفسكم افلا تبصرون. 25

(And on earth are signs for men of firm belief; And also in your own selves).

And the assurance of the correctness of this belief comes from corroborative testimony of tradition originally founded on revelation as pointed out in the Holy Qur`an:

فستلوا اهل الذكر ان كنتم لا تعلمون. 26

(So ask the followers of the Reminder if you know not).

The Islamic monotheistic concept disposes off at once those views and hypotheses advanced under the impact of materialistic evolution by the anthropologists and social philosophers of the 19th century like, Spencer, Taylor, Darwin, Robertson Smith, Fiske, Feuerbach and Durkheim, who tried to derive the notion of God from Manism, Animism, Evolutionary Process, Totemism, Personification, Self-deification and Necromancy respectively.

“It is this concept which is the measure of its worth; for in the last analysis, it is only the character of the concept of God which a religion presents that determines its moral and spiritual value to life”.²⁷

25 Al-Qur`an, 51/20 - 21.

26 Al-Qur`an, 16/43; 21/7.

27 Abu'l Kalam Azad, Tarjuman al-Qur`an, Eng. Tr., p. 99 ff. Lahore, 1960.

With the above theistic, anthropological and epistemological premises of the Islamic perspective in view we feel better qualified to understand the issues involved in the present study. The Prophets who have been responsible for establishing the Religious way of life have been divinely guided to accomplish their task of providing detailed instructions to the human race, both in the sphere of securing for Man the perception of what is right as also providing to him incentives to act upon that which he believes to be the right course of conduct. And they have done so from a level of consciousness of which we can have no direct experience. Faith in a Prophetic utterance necessarily involves the belief that the source of this type of knowledge is unique and is not available for verification to normal consciousness. That is why it is impossible to equate the findings of philosophers with the truth of religious teachings. After all, human knowledge is provisional and is liable to revision in the light of new experiences and discoveries where as the reality of the religious way of life stands on a different footing and does not need any such periodic revision. That is why religion is supposed to be the most conservative factor in human history. While people tend to change their political and social life radically over a period of time, they change their religious beliefs slowly. It is due to the fact that they have sacred traditions believed to be inspired and handed down from early times with the halo of the divine about them.

The character of revealed truth and the essence of Prophets' function are matchless and sublime. True faith in the Prophet implies belief that there exists a sphere

above our intelligence and that to those who are within that sphere, are revealed truths that human intelligence cannot compass. Thus it is that, the need to have some guidance on the matters, concerning a good grasp of the plan of the creation, the successful conduct of life, from some one qualified to speak about them is so great that mankind has time and again gratefully turned to those who have claimed, on the basis of Divine inspiration to know the truth of man's Destiny and have with their superior way of life, come to man's rescue by responding to this need. They have rightly been regarded as saviours of humanity.

The 'revealing' God ever since the dawn of human consciousness has provided man, His 'masterpiece' with audio-visual aids. Listen to the Book revealed and look at the *Sunnah* of the Prophet, the upholder of the Book for practical guidance. This has been the course of nature, (*Sunnat-Ullah*), from the very inception of humanity.

With these objectives in view, this thesis has been divided into four chapters, in addition to an introduction. It has been ventured to discuss in the first chapter the different meanings and aspects of the word 'tradition': literal as well as technical; its use in the Primitives; tradition and the different religions like, Hinduism, Buddhism; Judaism, Caristianity and Zoroastrianism. The second chapter shall deal with 'Tradition and Islam': significance of tradition; early sublime conduct of the Prophet of Islam; fourfold duties of the Prophet; Revelation of the Book and revelation of the Hikmah. Chapter third is devoted to the 'Juridical

Authority of the Prophetic tradition in Islam': relevant Qur`anic injunctions; the concept of man-apostle; *Ismah* and infallibility of the Holy Prophet; his *Uswa* in *Ṣalāt*, *Zakat*, *Hajj* and do's and don'ts of *Shari`ah*. The fourth chapter shall enshrine the result of the whole study: 'The Role of Tradition in Islam'; its multifarious, universal and lasting characteristics; sublimity and excellence of the Prophetic conduct; the homogeneity of the Islamic culture; role of tradition in the life-time of Prophet; Tradition with the rightly-guided caliphs, Tradition and the *Imams*, *Sunnis*, *Shi`as*, *Mu`tazilah*, *Khawarij* and the *Sufi`s*; forgery in tradition, its criticism and the Western scholars, the Orientalists and other critics; Historicity and documentation, purity and preservation of the texts, biographical records and evolvment of other branches of relevant *Ulum*; the 'Conclusion'.

1

**TRADITION AND
PREVIOUS RELIGIONS**

Throughout the ages, 'tradition' has played a vital role for advancement of knowledge and progression of humanity, especially through the sphere of religion. The term 'tradition' is one of very wide scope. For example, it includes in its general social sense the total body of accepted group beliefs. It is the subjective or ideational side of social behaviour, as custom is its objective or behaviouristic side. It provides the historical background and rationalization of custom. Tradition may be either oral or written. Legends are traditions of slow growth embodying popular feeling and consisting of admixtures of fact and fancy which are presented as historical. Myths are legends which lack the nucleus of fact. Some authorities would limit tradition to beliefs which lack a competent rational or factual basis, and hence would exclude such transmitted systems of thought as philosophy, and especially science and mathematics. But it may be observed that discoveries in these fields, once made, establish themselves as traditions and are

dislodged with difficulty by new discoveries not in accord with the accepted beliefs.¹ Similarly folklore is the science of tradition. It deals with superstition, practices, tales and songs that are the property of the unlearned and are transmitted by word of mouth as contrasted with manuscripts or printed books.² In this social sphere 'tradition' can be compared with the Qur'anic phrase 'Sunnat al-Awwalin' (سُنَّةُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ), mostly used in deleterious sense; meaning thereby:

فقد مضت سنة الاولين - الا ان تاتيهم سنة الاولين - وقد

خلت سنة الاولين - فهل ينظرون الاسنة الاولين.³

(Way of the ancients, way of those of the old etc).

Therefore, it would be well to determine what the term tradition really signifies in context with the present study, before passing on to the consideration of its immense role in the field of religion, particularly in Islam. Etymologically speaking, the word 'tradition' means "handing over". The concept, therefore, implies:

- (a) a deposit which is handed over and
- (b) depositaries, i.e., persons who are in possession of the deposit and are commissioned to preserve it, and transmit it to successors.⁴

1 An Encyclopedia of Religion, Ed. Vergilius Ferm (New York), 1945, p. 212.

2 Idem. p. 282.

3 Al-Qur'an, 8/38; 18/55; 15/13; 35/43; respectively.

4 Cf. Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, (London, 1934) I, p. 618.

As such 'tradition' can be treated as equivalent to 'Hadith', where we have the text (متن) for deposit and the chain of narrators (سند) for depositaries. Literally, both the terms 'tradition' and 'Hadith' can be taken, with some justification as synonymous.⁵ However, tradition, sometimes, includes in the realm of religion other than Islam, all sorts of sacred deposit, while on the contrary, *Hadith* in its technical sense is never applied to the Holy Qur'an.

To be more precise, religious 'tradition' represents the Prophetic precedent, a saying of his or about him, which directly or by implication describes his usage, or else contains a statement touching the present or future condition of his community. However, it excludes divinely revealed scriptures such as the Vedas, the pentateuch and the Holy Qur'an but still it contains an element of inspiration. It may be either oral or written, subject to divine guidance. The Prophetic tradition which is the proper subject of this thesis has a halo of sacredness and infallibility about it which makes it most reliable and powerful means to translate the revealed precepts and principles into a living reality. It should be known that God has chosen certain individuals and honoured them by addressing (them) The sign by which this type of human being can be recognized is that before receiving revelations they are good, innocent and averse to any blame-worthy, sinful action. This is what is meant by *ismah* (immunity from sin and error, infallibility). Another sign is the fact that they make

5 A. J. Robson, Eng. Tr. Mishkāt al-Maṣābiḥ, (Lhr. 1960) p. 1.

propaganda for religion and divine worship by means of prayer, almsgiving and charity Another sign is the fact that they have prestige among their people Still another sign is that they work wonders which attest to their truthfulness.⁶ The new life brought about into the world by these Prophets is an expansive one, propagating itself from generation to generation and from race to race but remaining in itself essentially the same. As such Islam is a great believer in the continuity of human culture and the essential unity of its fundamentals. In this sense it claims no originality. The eternal Islam from Ādam to Muḥammad (peace be upon them) remained unchanged.⁷

انّ الدين عند الله الإسلام وما اختلف الذين اوتوا الكتاب
الا من بعد ما جاءهم العلم بغيا بينهم.⁸

(Surely the (true) religion with Allah is Islam. And those who were given the Book differed only after knowledge had come to them, out of envy among themselves).

Islam is being particularly mentioned here as the religion of all the Prophets. This is the most wonderful declaration of the cosmopolitan principle by Islam as regards a substratum of truth underlying all religions. Not only is Islam the religion of every Prophet, but according to the Holy Qur'an, it is also the only acknowledged religion.

6 Cf. Ibn Khaldun, The Muqaddimah, Eng. Tran. F. Rozenhal, (London, 1958) I, p. 184 F.

7 Kh. Abdul Hakim, Islamic Ideology, (Lahore, 1960), Int.

8 Al-Qur'an, 3/18.

ومن يبتغ غير الإسلام ديناً فلن يقبل منه وهو في الآخرة من الخاسرين.⁹

(And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will not be accepted from him, and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers).

That is why, keeping in view this cosmopolitan nature of the religion, a Muslim accepts the whole truth; the truth as revealed to any Prophet anywhere in the world;¹⁰ the followers of other religions accept only partial truth, the truth revealed to them only,¹¹ not truth as revealed to all mankind. It is obvious, therefore, that religion is considered not a dogma with must but as a science based on the universal experience of humanity.¹² All that is good and noble in man has been inspired by faith in God, through the recipients of Divine revelation, is a truth at which perhaps even an atheist would not cavil.

The fundamental importance of the Qur'anic statement of a general law, that Divine Revelation will be granted to the whole of humanity and Prophet will appear everywhere from time to time, and that it would be by following the Guidance, sent by God through His Prophets, that men will attain to perfection can hardly be over estimated. This state of perfection is described in the Holy Qur'an as under:

9 Idem., 3/84.

10 Idem., 2/4.

11 Idem., 2/113.

12 Cf. M. Ali, Religion of Islam, (Lahore, 1960), Int.

فَاَمَّا يَاتِيكُمْ مِنِّي هُدًى فَمَن تَبِعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا
 هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ.¹³

(Surely there will come to you a guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, no fear shall come upon them, nor shall they grieve).

Particularly important is the context in which the above heavenly promise of the beginning of guidance of Revelation to mankind is being proclaimed. It immediately follows the lapse of Adam in the garden - his confession, repentance, forgiveness, and the commencement of a new phase of life on this earth. Here the Holy Qur'an contradicts in unambiguous terms the general view held by the anthropologists and social philosophers of the 19th century that 'the early religious beliefs of man were stimulated by superstition born of the impulses generated by the material conditions of life lived in the early times, and that these beliefs underwent, under the stress of the law of evolution, varying changes from time to time assuming eventually the form of a belief in a supreme being'.¹⁴ The Qur'anic contention is that the first vision that man had of God was one of divine unity, the vision of an unseen great being who must have created all that man could see about and around him, and that this vision of an unseen great being who must have created all that man could see about and around him, and that this vision gradually began to undergo a change, marking a sort of retrogression

13 Al-Qur'an, 2/38.

14 Abu'l-Kalam Azad, Tarjuman al-Qur'an, Eng. Tran. S. M. Latif, (Lahore, 1960) p. 99.

expressing itself in the concept of multiplicity, or of associating with God the things of creation. In fact a reverse process is what we notice in this field, a process, so to say, of retrogression or devolution. Light comes first and darkness follows. Such is the view point of the Holy Qur'an:

وما كان الناس الا امة واحدة فاختلّفوا. ¹⁵

(Men were at first of one religion: Then they fell to variance).¹⁶

كان الناس امة واحدة فبعث الله النبيّن مبشّرين ومنذرين. ¹⁷

(Mankind was but one people, so Allah raised Prophets as hearers of glad tidings and warners).

The belief in the existence of God is ingrained in human nature, and does not alter under the stress either of his intellect or of his environment. However in the field of attributes of God, the theory of progressive comprehension may hold good.

The Prophets who rose in different climes and at different times to deliver the message of divine unity and avoidance of evil had necessarily to take note of the condition of the mind which had to respond to their message. In presenting or explaining the attributes of God to the people of their times, the Prophets adopted a method suited to their intellectual standard. It is from this standpoint that there has been an evolutionary process going on in the exposition of divine attributes;

15 Al-Qur'an, 10/19.

16 Azad, Tarjuman al-Qur'an, p. 104.

17 Al-Qur'an, 2/213.

from anthropophism to polytheism, to monotheism from the concept of awe and terror to that of love.¹⁸

Now it must be fully recognized that the blessing of heavenly guidance for the whole of humanity is found embodied in the history of mankind in the shape of divine appointment of Prophets and messengers. This is a unique feature of Islamic teachings unparalleled in the history of religious thought for which the entire humanity will always be under the deepest obligation to the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him), for this broad humanitarian principle. The Holy Qur'an is replete with-very emphatic statements such as:

ولقد بعثنا في كل أمة رسولا أن اعبدوا الله واجتنبوا
الطاغوت.¹⁹

(And certainly We raised in every nation a messenger, saying: Serve Allah and shun the devil).

وان من أمة إلا فيها نذير.²⁰

(And there is not a people but a warner has gone among them).

ولكل قوم هاد.²¹

(And for every people a guide).

ولكل أمة رسول.²²

(And for every nation there is a messenger).

18 Azad, Op. Cit., p. 105.

19 Al-Qur'an, 16/36.

20 Idem, 35/24.

21 Idem, 13/7, 38.

22 Idem, 10/47.

وما كنا معذبين حتى نبعث رسولا.²³

(And we are not going to chastise until we raise a messenger).

This broad doctrine that a Prophet was raised among every nation without distinction is proclaimed time and again in the Holy Qur'an, and, curiously enough, it is found in the earlier revelation at Makkah as well as the later revelation at Madinah. This great truth, which had remained hidden for thousands of years from the wisest saints of the world, had shone upon the mind of an unlettered Arabian, who did not even know that nations then existed and what scriptures they possessed. This great doctrine alone could form the basis of the universality of a Divine message to the whole of mankind. Only he who had the breadth of mind to recognize truth in all could unite all men.²⁴

“These Prophets came among their people as the children of their time; they represented the burning aspirations of the human soul for truth, purity and justice. Each was an embodiment of the spiritual necessities of his age; each came to purify, to reform, to elevate a degraded race, a corrupted commonwealth. Some came as teachers of smaller cultures, to influence a smaller sphere, others came with a world-wide message - a message not confined to one race or nation, but intended for all humanity”.²⁵

23 Idem, 17/15.

24 M. `Ali, Eng. Tran. of the Holy Qur'an, F. N. 2055.

25 Syed Amir `Ali, The Spirit of Islam, (London, 1949), Int. XVIII.

A series of Prophets followed in succession to bring home to mankind the truth which they had neglected. The message of these Prophets was one and the same and as such had a universal application. The Qur'an says that there has been no founder of religion, who has not emphasized the observance of a single religion by all mankind and has not discouraged differences therein. Therefore, all Prophets are here declared to be one community, having one religion.

“This unity and universality of religion is one of the basic concepts of Islam which guarantees its eternal survival. It is this distinguishing feature of Islam which made the modern sage Bernard Shaw pronounce the verdict that fundamental Islam would be the religion of the future. (Shaw a mortal enemy of all orthodoxies and all systems of vested interest”.²⁶

يَا أَيُّهَا الرِّسَالُ... وَإِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ
فَاتَّقون فَتَقَطَّعُوا أَمْرَهُم بَيْنَهُمْ زُبُرًا كُلَّ حِزْبٍ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ
فَرِحُونَ. 27

(O ye messengers And truly this your religion is one religion; and I am your Lord, so keep your duty to Me. But they became divided into sects, each party rejoicing in that which was with them).

According to the Holy Qur'an, numerous Prophets were raised in the past, though only a few of them are mentioned by name.

26 Kh. Abdul Hakim, Op. Cit., Int. XVII.

27 Al-Qur'an, 23/51 - 53.

28 **ورسلاً قصصهم عليك من قبل ورسلاً لم نقصهم عليك.**

(And messengers We have mentioned to thee before and messengers We have not mentioned to thee).

ولقد ارسلنا رسلاً من قبلك منهم من قصصنا عليك ومنهم

من لم نقصص عليك. 29

(And certainly We sent messengers before thee - of them are those We have mentioned to thee and of them are those We have not mentioned to thee).

It is said that approximately one hundred and twenty four thousand Prophets have been raised in all the nations,³⁰ but mention of only about twenty of them is made by name in the Qur'an viz.,

Noah, Hud, Abraham, Salih, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Shu'aib, Solomon, David, Job, Moses, Aaron, Iut, Jonah, Elisha, Dhu-l-Kifl, Idris, Zacharias, John, Jesus and Muhammad (Peace be upon them).

Moreover, the Prophets spoken of above, all belong to the semitic race. Now the Holy Qur'an necessitates the belief of some true Prophets having existed in continents and sub-continents, having vast countries and nations. This great truth forms the primary basis of the present chapter. Everything else that this thesis presents rests on it. If this fundamental is discarded, the entire framework of the message of Islam will get out of order. But look at the irony of religious history - the greater the emphasis is laid on this truth, the stronger has been the

28 Idem., 4/164.

29 Idem., 40/78; 4/163.

30 Mishkat Al-Masabih, (Damascus, 1962), III, H/No. 5737 p. 122.

inclination on the part of the holders of the book including Muslims to side-track it. In fact, no other truth of the Qur'ān has been kept so deliberately out of sight than this, resulting in mutual conflict and hatred.

The need of the moment is the publication of material that will bring the subject into discussion among Muslim intelligentsia. This is a field of Islamic study which offers almost unbroken ground and presents numerous problems for investigation. One of them is the question of old religious tradition of the Indo-European Aryans, Africans, Chinese, South-East Australians, the peoples of Arctic culture and the primitives of North America and wild tribes of the islands in the Pacific Ocean.

If sufficient interest is created among students of Islam to enable systematic search to be made, it is possible that we may yet recover some of the early signs of the Qur'ānic truth through archaeological finds and pantological surveys.

Before we proceed further, let us take a brief survey of the different religions of the globe.

“The study of man from primitive times to the present day discloses no people without some belief in a power or powers ruling the universe, some form of worship, and some code of conduct or morals. This universal nature of religion is an outstanding fact in the history of mankind”.³¹

31 The Sacred Writings of the World's Great Religions, Selected and Edit. S. E. Frost, (New York, 1989), Preface.

This continuity of religious progress among the peoples of the world is a subject of enthralling interest to the student of humanity. It follows that there is something in these several teachings which is common to them all and which serves as a point round which everything else revolves. For, when one and the same idea of divine appointment of Prophets and messengers, is stated and emphasized, at different times, in different places, among different peoples, under diverse names, in different languages, the natural conclusion that forces itself for attention is that there is something real and abiding about it.

A number of great pre-historic religions have risen, flourished for a time, and then died out; simply because they could not transmit their message to posterity, nay because they did not have the measures to preserve and carry on their religious tradition too far. Nothing is more certain than the fact that they lost their originals and consequently lost their utility and ceased to exist. It appears that their religious literature was scattered as they have left no sacred canon or body of scripture. Among them are the religions of ancient Egypt, Babylonia, and the Hittites, the beliefs of the ancient Greeks, the Romans and the cult of the Sungod called Mithraism.³²

On the other hand most living religious systems claim to bear within themselves a deposit, consisting of ceremonial, myth, dogma, or ethics, or some of these elements revealed by some ultimate divine or quasi-

32 *Idem.*, *Op. Cit.*, Int. p. I.

divine authority, and meant to be handed down to posterity by a succession of duly qualified trustees. Each religion lays claim to being the avenue of some divine revelation of truth through its founder or early leader, who is believed to have had some supernatural access to truth and had shown the same to his followers.

“The student who attentively surveys the whole field can hardly fail to discern a unity in the diversity which warrants the more comprehensive conception of a history of religion. The progress of civilization in varying degrees moralises religion; mythology and nascent philosophy take up the problem of cosmogony; and are led to unify the Creative power or the first principle; the demand for unity in the moral order of the world also tends towards monotheism The great religions of this class have their beginning in the centuries from the eighth to the fifth before the Christian era. This is the age of Taoism in China; of the Upanishads, of Buddhism, and of the precursors of Hinduism in India; of Zoroaster in Iran; of the Orphic - Pythagorean movement in Greece; and of the Hebrew Prophets”.³³

Today, there are eleven great ‘living’ religions and several smaller ones. Four of these, Christianity, Islam, Confucianism and Hinduism, are maintaining their growth. Four, Judaism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Taoism, show neither gain nor loss over a long period of time. Three of the world’s great religions, Zoroastrianism, Jainism and Shintoism, are definitely on the decline. According to Dr. Frost ‘the world’s ‘living’ religions

33 G. F. Moore, History of Religions, (Edinburgh, 1950) Preface, VII.

differ from the 'dead' religions in that they cherish certain definite writings as sacred.³⁴

The professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics of the University of Oxford introduces the living faiths of the world by assorting them into two well-defined groups which he terms, the two great religious traditions, radically distinct in the matter of content.³⁵

On the one side we have 'Prophetic tradition', Judaism, Christianity and Islam, each claiming to be a direct revelation of the one True God to man through specially chosen out Prophet. This is the type in which it is for God to command, for man to obey. This Prophetic tradition is represented, in addition to the Semitic religions, also by zoroastrianism, which, though non-semitic, arose in the eastern provinces of ancient Iran, is nonetheless animated by the same Prophetic spirit that informs the Semitic religions.

The other may be termed as 'mystical' or 'immanentist' Indian tradition comprising of Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Shintoism and lastly Confucianism and Taoism. The Indian tradition as it develops in history starts with Upanishads - these are 'mystical' treatises - primitive philosophical speculations and not by any means a direct confrontation of God and man. Man, rather, is groping towards God and his groping leads him to experience the immortality of his own soul. At no stage does Indian religion have any clear

34 S. E. Frost, *Op. Cit.*, Int. p. I.

35 R. C. Zaehner, Ed., The Concise Encyclopaedia of Living Faith's, (London, 1959) p. 15.

conception of God as Lord and Maker of all things out of nothing. From the time of Mahavira on, the principle preoccupation of Indian religion is deliverance of the human soul, which is immortal, from the bondage of the body. But Buddhism and Jainism regard this as bring the essential core of religion. Further both Buddhism and Jainism and originally a theistical creed.³⁶ This needs emphasizing, for this whole tradition is fundamentally indifferent to God as eternal Law-Giver, who must be obeyed: in its extreme form it denies the existence of God altogether and puts its exclusive emphasis on the deliverance of the immortal soul from the body.

Its attitude is throughout conditioned by an unquestioned belief in re-incarnation which it regards not as a desirable process but as the supreme evil.

With this background in view let us discuss the role of tradition in the primitive societies as well as in the living faiths, taken each one separately:

TRADITION AND PRIMITIVES

Anthropological studies³ and pantological surveys have categorically proved a marked characteristic of people in primitive societies, with few exceptions, of resisting change and having what may be called a religious fear of deviating even by an iota from the traditional customs and beliefs of the group. Moreover, gifted or atypical individuals - the analogues of geniuses and talented eccentrics in other cultures may in rare instances add new contents to the old traditions and thus

36 Zaehner, Op. Cit., Loc. Cit.

expand the range of thought and action. On the whole, however, tradition and custom are closely followed.

The old customs and beliefs are adaptive in nature, unifying, comfortable, and sacred. They are adaptive in the sense that they are the means by which primitives have learned, with what they feel to be success, to adapt themselves as individuals and groups to their environment; they are unifying because they are the means by which unanimity in action is attained; they are comfortable because they provide for every individual a not too difficult life pattern that is suited to his status and approved in advance; and they are sacred because it is felt that the ancestors and the spirits that most affect the well-being of the group have hallowed them. Primitives almost universally prefer to run, so to say, on schedules, according to commonly accepted and detailed patterns of behaviour. This is a universal human tendency. On closer inspection these customs and beliefs are seen to be in response to strong biological and psychological demands.³⁷ And the assurance of the correctness of these beliefs comes from the corroborative testimony of traditions supposed to be inspired and handed down from early times with the halo of the divine about them.³⁸ Prof. W. Schmidt of the University of Vienna has proved logically in his masterly work that this is true of most gipsy tribes, also of the Tierra del Fuegians, the primitive Bushman, the Kurnai, Julin and Yuin of South-East Australia, the peoples of Arctic culture..., and well-

37 J. B. Noss, Man's Religions, Rev. Ed. (New York, 1956), p. 11.

38 Supra, Int. p. 10.

nigh all the primitives of North America.³⁹ The researches made in Egyptology, and the excavations made in `Iraq have also revealed the fact which goes in favour of Prof. Schmidt's findings. The people whom the Chaldeans and the Sumerians succeeded and the people of Mohenjadro like the ancient Arab tribes - `Ad, Thamud, `Amaliqa, Haksus, Sawabi, Ashuri, Akadi, Sumeri, Ilami, Arami and Hebrew and others - disclose the same above mentioned historic fact.

TRADITION AND HINDUISM

The latest researches in world anthropography reveals the fact that in ancient times the necessity for migration was apparently felt in two definite regions of the globe. One was the desert of Arabia and the other, the Gobi desert of central Asia. The tribes who migrated from the former are known as the Semitics and the other as the Indo-European Aryans. From amongst the latter, the Indo-Aryans had hardly won a place for themselves in India before they began to develop an extensive oral tradition.⁴⁰ That is why late, Khalifa Abdul Hakim, once director of The Institute of Islamic Culture remarked `en passant' that ``Religious tradition takes charge of the Hindu even before he is born".⁴¹

In the early days of Aryan settlement in India, folk-tales and epic stories took shape rapidly. Their intertribal clashes were to be immortalized in the great Hindu

39 The Origin of Growth of Religion, Fact & Theories, (London 1931), p. 8.

40 Noss, Op. Cit., p. 116 F.

41 Hakim, Islamic Ideology, p. 198 F.

epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. At the same time the Hymns and prayers of their priests gave voice to their religious conceptions side by side with their ancient magic runes and spells resulting in Hinduism's earliest sacred writings, held in high esteem by the Indo-Aryans themselves, no less than their descendants.

The earliest knowledge of this people and its ways, its civilization and religion is derived from the Rig-Veda. Veda means "knowledge", pre-eminently religious knowledge and is applied in later times to the whole sacred literature regarded as revealed.⁴² The Rig-Veda (literally, the veda of mantras) is an anthology of religious poetry in ten books, containing over a thousand hymns composed by priestly poets for princely patrons, to be recited or sung on sacrificial occasions, and representing the creative efforts of many generations. It was not reduced to writing until about the 8th century B.C.; before it that existed in oral form.⁴³ The other three Vedas viz., Sama, Yajur and Athara, are in many respects dependent upon, even appendages of the Rig-Veda.

Already in the Creation hymn in the last book of the Rig-Veda appears that tendency to philosophical speculation which has always been characteristic of India. Alongwith the prevailing belief in the multiplicity of demi-gods, the concept of a higher being, the creator of all, was also silently gathering strength in the time of Rig-Veda, perhaps due to a heritage from any previous age of thought. Thus we clearly notice in the hymns of

42 G. F. Moore, Op. Cit., Religions of India: The Religion of Veda.

43 Noss, Loc. Cit.

the tenth Mandala of the Rigveda and urge turning from polytheism to henotheism, from an endless variety of demigods to Varuna, Indra, Agni and then to Praja pati or Visvakarman, Yama, Matarisvan - to Rta, Aditi and finally to Ekamsath or sole Reality, the Truth. This tendency is developed in the prose treatises known as the Brahmanas, the Aranyakas (forest books) and the Upanishads (secret doctrines) attached to the vedas and bearing towards them something of the relation of the Talmud to the Old Testament.⁴⁴ In Upanishads we notice for the first time in Hinduism, Brahma in the form of Iswara with presentation of pantheistic view of life on which were raised the metaphysical systems of Vedantism. Later on the Vedantic philosophy expanded itself enormously and a sort of monotheistic polytheism came to be the prevailing religion, meeting the demands both of the unitary urge and the polytheistic.

The fact is to be borne in mind that the Aryan concept of unity of God, inspite of its great philosophic heights, could not dissociate itself in practice with the concept of polytheistic multiplicity. The endless variety of demigods after all assumed in the Vedantic philosophy the position of intercessors with God. That was exactly the attitude of the polytheists of Makkah at the time when the Prophet of Islam got his first revelation and to which the Qur'an itself refers:

والذين اتخذوا من دونه اولياء ما نعبدهم الا ليقربونا الى

الله زلفى. 45

44 Cassell, Encyclopaedia of Literature, Ed., S. H. Stein/Berg, (London, 1953) I, p. 291, col. 2.

45 Al-Qur'an, 39/3.

(And those who choose protectors besides Him say): We serve them only that they may bring us nearer to Allah).

This is the pretention of all worshippers of false deities that such deities are served only to get nearer to God, as if God Himself were otherwise unapproachable. Hence it is that Islam requires sincere obedience to God alone:

الا لله الدين الخالص.⁴⁶

(Surely pure religion is for Allah only)

It will not be out of place to quote here the apologetic ideas put forward on this topic by the great intellectual giant and renowned religious philosopher of the 20th century India, Dr. Sir Radha Krishnan. He observes:

“The polytheistic conceptions were too deeply rooted in the Indian Consciousness to be easily overthrown. The many gods were subordinated to the one The Upanishads, no doubt, shattered the authority of these gods in the world of thought, but did not disturb their Sway in the world of practice.... Compromise between the philosophic faith of the few and the fancied superstition of the crowds is the only possible reconciliation; we cannot abolish the old forms, for that would be to ignore the fundamental nature of humanity, as well as the patent differences in the normal and intellectual states of believers who were not capable of acquiring at once the heighest wisdom”.⁴⁷

46 Idem.

47 Indian Philosophy, 2nd ed., I, p. 144 F.

But with Islam, plainly speaking the above argument of the learned Indian scholar is not logically demonstrative because it misinterprets human nature. Pure and simple monotheism is the fundamental nature of humanity,⁴⁸ while perverted humanity descended into very low depths of polytheism.⁴⁹ So much so, that every stone became a god, and every tree claimed goodhead. In short the unbridled license of a wild imagination of the Aryans deified all possible objects of the world,⁵⁰ and as if, these were not enough, added to them monsters, shapes and symbols of fancy.⁵¹

It is beyond the power of the writer of this thesis to contradict, Dr. Radha Krishan on the above theme. Even at the risk of repetition this must be emphasized that;

“The polytheistic conceptions were, too deeply rooted in the Indian consciousness to be easily overthrown”.⁵²

A living proof is found today in the shape of saint worship and tomb worship among the Muslim converts in the Indo-Pak subcontinent. This is the same old doctrine of intercession which everywhere has vitiated the belief in the unity of God.

After the four vedas, the next great source of Aryan Tradition is Manu's Dharma Shastra; which is still the stronghold of all Hindu orthodoxy. Marriage,

48 *Supra*, Int. p. 5.

49 Al-Qur'an, 95/4 - 5.

50 Passim, Miles Arthur, The Land of the Lingam, (London, 1933).

51 Radha Krishnan, *Op. Cit.*, p. 45.

52 *Supra*, p. 17.

inheritance, trade, caste regulations, dietetics, in short every aspect of life is covered by this religious code and Hindu society until it is completely metamorphosed beyond recognition, is theocratic through and through. It was not so much the tenacity of any fixed system of beliefs but the force of religiously sanctioned tradition which stands like a rock among the tempests that might rise. Customs and traditions and an undefined belief in Hindu solidarity recently strengthened by the feeling of nationalism which was a product of impact with the west, hold Hindu society together; but there is no inner or organic unity.⁵³ Still all Hindus hold the fundamental beliefs in common, the divine authority of the Vedic hymns, and of their custodians, the Brahmin priesthood; the caste system; the sacredness of the cow, and the doctrine of the transmigration of the soul.⁵⁴ In the end, let me say, even the great modern Hindu thinkers, Mr. Gandhi and Raj Ram Mohan Roy, firmly believed that a state should not be secular in the sense that it leaves out God and the spiritual tradition and experience handed down through the centuries by the great saints and Prophets, not of Hinduism only but of all great religions.

Similarly when we analyse the basic principles of Jainism, an off-shoot of early Brahminic religion, we find that:

“Neither of Mahavira’s convictions was new, for Mahavira took them from his predecessors in the tradition of thought with which his name is now

53 Hakim, Op. Cit., p. 198 F.

54 Stein-Berg, Op. Cit., p. 290.

associated; but the faithfulness and sincerity with which he lived by them were remarkable".⁵⁵

TRADITION AND BUDDHISM

A group of the 19th century Orientalists endeavoured to prove Buddhism as an off-shoot of the philosophical teachings of the Upanishads. With them:

"From the Upanishads to Buddhism was only a short step".⁵⁶

Out of the numerous methods for winning salvation by meditation, Buddhist tradition gives a clearer and fuller account of its Nirvana, meaning thereby a state of returning to the spiritual sources from which human life originally proceeded. So Buddhism has been termed with great justification as an Eastern form of Spirituality.⁵⁷ On the other hand, it is generally believed that Buddhism does not inculcate a belief in God and human soul. Its principles deal only with goodness in life and freedom from it. But if one carefully looks into the saying attributed to Buddha, he will definitely come to the conclusion that the attitude of Buddha was not one of denial of God in His essence, but a denial of Him in attributes. The fact, however, stands out that a denial of attributes suspends all intellectual inquisitiveness and imposes nothing but silence. And it can be definitely asserted that in Buddhistic tradition Buddha observes

55 Noss, Op. Cit., p. 144.

56 Stein-Berg, Op. Cit., p. 291.

57 Edward Conze, Buddhism, its essence & Development, (Library of Congress Catalog Card No. 59 - 10345, N. Y. 1959), Int.

silence in this respect and his reservation is noticeable on this issue.

The most convincing explanation for the partial denial of God on the part of Buddha can be gathered from the sight of the evils of image or idol worship prevalent in India before the appearance of Buddhism.

“In the prevailing religion of the period of Buddha, the dominant feature was the spirit of barter established between gods and men. While the Brahma of the Upanishads was high and noble, yet ever so many gods, the heavenly orbs, as well as, the material elements, plants, as well as, animals, mountains, as well as, rivers were popularly accepted. The unbridled license of a wild imagination deified all possible objects of the world, and as if these were not enough, added to them monsters, shapes and symbols of fancy”.⁵⁸

It was this polytheistic multiplicity against which Buddha took a reactionary, rather revolutionary decision of avoiding any reference to Deism in his concepts, which later on was being taken by one group as agnosticism and by another as atheism. Similar was the charge levelled against Socrates by the city state council of Athens. Most curiously enough, Al-Beruni, who came to India in the 11th century, pointed out, at that time, that the course of development in religious tradition in India and Greece was exactly the same. He substantiated his assertion by comparing passages from the Greek literature with that from the Hindu sacred writings. Look at the irony of fate that the followers of Buddha

58 Radha Krishnan, *Op. Cit.*, p. 45.

hastened to assign to him after his death a super human position and began to worship his relics. It is said that when the Buddhists found the seat of God vacant, they in their degeneration could not leave it un-occupied and in hurry, installed Buddha himself in that seat. Then began the contagious disease of image worship; so much so, that today more than a half of the world is peopled by these images. Though it is a truth that we don't possess any definite information regarding Buddha's claim to Prophetic guidance, yet it is equally true that his contribution to the realm of religion is not less than a Prophet in any respect; keeping in view his basic achievements as a teacher of a reformed religion and a founder of a new religious community, Buddha is to be regarded whether himself claiming it or not, as specially inspired, and his teachings as therefore, having a higher authority than that of mere human opinion.

With regard to our present study it can be said, without any fear of refutation, that in the absence of any claim to directly revealed word of God, Buddhism is unique in the sense that it is wholly and solely dependent on tradition.

“For about four hundred years the tradition was transmitted only orally, by schools of reciters. Some features of the older scriptures are clearly those of an oral tradition, such as the many repetitions, and a fondness for verse and for numerical lists. Owing to this preference for oral transmission, many just of the oldest documents are now lost”.⁵⁹

59 Conze, *Op. Cit.*, p. 29; Cf., Noss, *Op. Cit.*; p. 183, F. N.

The tradition has it that immediately after the Buddha's death five hundred arahats, under the leadership of Kassapa, gathered to spend the rainy season at Rajagaha and there recited and chanted together the precepts now found in the TRIPITAKA. Whether this be so or not, the teachings of the Buddha were early fixed in the repetitious forms of oral tradition.⁶⁰

The followers of Buddha preserved his precepts in three baskets (TRIPITAKA) in an early dialect known as Pali (the text). These were the VINAYA, rules for the monastic orders; the SUTRA, narrative about the Master's doings and teachings; and the ADHIDHARMA, higher philosophy of Buddhism, a sort of commentary on the teachings. Of these only the SUTRA is of fundamental importance with literary interest.

"A sutra is a text which claims to have been spoken by the Buddha himself. It always begins with the words, Thus have I heard at one time. The Lord dwelt at The 'I' here means the disciple ANANADA, who recited the entire Buddha-word immediately after the Buddha's death".⁶¹

"The Sutra Pitaka also includes accounts of the master's first sermon at Benares and of his last hours; poems and discourses; the Fatakas, folk stories about his meritorious deeds in previous incarnations; and an anthology of Buddhist sayings known as the Dharma pada (Path of the Law)".⁶²

60 Noss, Op. Cit., p. 183.

61 Conze, Op. Cit., p. 28.

62 Cassell's Encyclopaedia of Literature, Ed., S. H. Steinberg, (London, 1953) I, p. 291.

It appears that many sutras which were not spoken by the historical Buddha himself were composed centuries after the death of Buddha and the actual authors of these are, of course, not known. The Hinayana sect considers all those sutras unauthentic which were not recited at the first Great Council held at Rajgiri after the death of Buddha and at which his favourite disciple ANANDA disclosed his Master's parting testament to his followers. In the Hinayanist areas, the monk is the central figure with his ancient Pali texts and he keeps to the same old tradition of daily schedule of Gautama's day.

The religious transformation of the original deposit of Buddhist tradition began to develop rapidly after the Kanishka's conversion in the first century after Christ. It was the time when the fourth Great Council was held at Beshawar (Peshawar) and the basic religion of Buddha was converted into a regular church, with intricate network of ritual and ceremonial. The doctors of the church especially of Mahayana section such as Nagarjuna, Vasubandhu, and others, composed in Sanskrit manuscripts after manuscripts on shastras, thus adding immense stores of knowledge to the devout.⁶³ The total literary output of the Buddhists was enormous. Only fragments have reached us. As regards its historicity, it did not matter to them who said something, but whether it was true, helpful and in keeping with tradition.⁶⁴

63 Conze, *Op. Cit.*, p. 29.

64 Idem.

TRADITION AND JUDAISM

From amongst the Prophetic religions, Judaism is unique in the sense that numerous Prophets were raised in it without any break. The Jews, often mentioned in the Qur'an, as children of Israel after the nick name of Jacob, son of Isaac, son of Abraham, were bestowed upon with political supremacy combined with spiritual dominance; manifestly a favour which was not bestowed upon any of the other contemporary nations. The Holy Qur'an refers to this fact time and again.

ولقد آتينا موسى الكتاب وقفينا من بعده بالرسل.⁶⁵

(And indeed We gave Moses the Book and We sent messengers after him one after another).

واذ قال موسى لقومه يقوم اذكروا نعمة الله عليكم اذ جعل فيكم انبياء وجعلكم ملوكا واتكم ما لم يؤت احدا من العالمين.⁶⁶

(And when Moses said to his people: O my people remember the favour of Allah to you when He raised Prophets among you and made you kings and gave you what He gave not to any other of the nations).

Although Judaism is ascribed to Judah, son of Jacob, yet the position occupied by Moses in the long chain of Hebrew Prophets is fundamental. Similarly his pentateuch occupies a special position in relation to the other books of the Old Testament. Whereas the Prophetic

65 Al-Qur'an, 2/87.

66 Ibid. 5/20.

books are "inspired", the Pentateuch is God's very word, literally spoken or dictated to "My servant Moses" to whom God did not speak, as to all Prophets "in a vision or a dream" but "mouth to mouth" even apparently and not in dark speeches.⁶⁷ For "the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend".⁶⁸ Similarly numerous verses of the Holy Qur'an bear testimony to this greatness of Moses :

وكلم الله موسى تكليماً.⁶⁹

(And to Moses Allah addressed His word, speaking (to him).

ولما جاء موسى لميقاتنا وكلمه ربه.⁷⁰

(And when Moses came at our appointed time and his Lord spoke to him)

Moses is repeatedly spoken of as being endowed with all those qualities of greatness which place him amongst the list of those messengers who were exalted above others.

تلك الرسل فضلنا بعضهم على بعض منهم من كلم الله
ورفع بعضهم درجات.⁷¹

(We have made some of these messengers to excel others. Among them are they to whom Allah spoke, and some of them He exalted by degrees of rank).

67 The Bible, Numbers, XII, g - 8.

68 Ibid., Exodus, XXXIII, 11.

69 Al-Qur'an, 4/164.

70 Ibid., 7/143.

71 Ibid., 2/253.

Although the history of the Prophetic tradition represented by Judaism is so rich and varied that we simply cannot take in all its manifestations and stages of development at one synoptic glance, yet it is an established fact:

“That Judaism has to this day remained the religion of one particular nation - Israel or the Jewish people and the Bible, in spite of its universal import, is the book of a particular people”.⁷²

Moreover,

“The Jews found the Mosaic Law with its wealth of detail insufficient by itself without the assistance of case law and tradition, and the Talmud arose to supply this need”.⁷³

In order to give a really adequate account of a religious system, one would have to pay equal attention to its ideas, beliefs, hopes and expectations as well as to its life and practice. Hence it was Talmud which served as a storehouse of customs, morals, ritual and wisdom;

“Which undoubtedly would otherwise have disappeared, and which next to the Bible itself, have preserved and helped to shape the culture and spirit and life-ways of the Jews”.⁷⁴

72 R. J. Zwi Werblowsky's art. 'Judaism' in The Concise Encyclopaedia of Living Faiths, Ed. R. C. Zaehner (London 1959) p. 29.

73 Alfred Guillaume, The Traditions of Islam, Reprint, (Beirut 1966), p. 1.

74 Encyclopaedia of Literature, Ed., Joseph. T. Shiplay, (New York 1946) p. 389.

Likewise there existed from early times in Judasim a tradition of interpretation and analysis of the written Law, and this was handed down orally from generation to generation. The importance of this oral Law was emphasized by the tradition that it was given to Moses on Sinai together with the Written Law.⁷⁵ In this sense we can compare it to a great extent with Prophetic tradition in Islam, which is termed as implicit revelation (وحي غير متلو) or unrecited revelation (وحي خفي). During the intertestamental period, the ancient oral tradition was upheld by the Pharisees and supported by the majority of the populace.⁷⁶ These Jew traditionalists of the Second Temple Period are noted for strict observance of rites and ceremonies of the written law and for insistence on the validity of the oral law. They are the *Ahle-Hadith* of their community. On the other hand, during the same period we find the Sadducees and the Essenes, the Mu'tazilites of the Jewish people discarding the above said oral law. They, however, possessed their own traditions regarding the interpretation of the written Law.⁷⁷

A brief survey of the history of development and growth of tradition literature in Judaism is essential to have a clear notion of the problem under study. Ever since the days of Ezra and the scribes, the study of the Law was made the paramount concern of the Jews. Ezra inaugurated the custom of public reading from the pentateuch, and commenting on the portions read, on market days and the Sabbath. This developed a school of

75 The Standard Jewish Encyclopaedia, Ed., Cecil Roth (London 1959), p. 1174.

76 Idem.

77 The Standard Jewish Encyclopaedia, Loc. Cit.

teachers and preachers, who would elaborate and expound upon the chapters read. There also were the scribes and the members of the Great Assembly, who were called upon to elaborate and define some of the laws found in the Pentateuch. Their method of analysis and exposition was called from the Hebrew word *darash* (to search, to probe), *Midrash*, pl., *Midrashim*. Those concerning strict interpretation of the law were called *Halachoth*. The others of a homiletic style, concerned with expounding ethical precepts and endearing to the masses the study and knowledge of the Scriptures, are known as *Haggadoth*.⁷⁸

These *Midrashim*, as well as the legal decisions of the Great Assembly and later of the Sanhedrin, were known as the Oral Law in contradistinction to the Bible which was known as the Written Law.

In time, individuals recorded privately parts of the Oral Law which they feared might be forgotten. Rabbi Ishmael (1st century A.D.) Rabbi Simon ben Yohai (2nd century A.D.) and Rabbi Akiba (50 - 136 A.D.) were the pioneers in the field of written collections of *Midrashim*. Rabbi Akiba divided the *Halachoth* according to subject matter, like - Civil laws dealing with women etc. The great work of compiling and arranging the laws, rather its codification, initiated by Simon, was accomplished by his son Rabbi Yehuda (Jehudah) Ha-Nasi (135 - 219 A.D.) and his disciples, who were the last of the series called the *Tannaim* (teachers). Through his authority as the President of the Sanhedrin, Yehuda reduced the oral law to writing, codified it and made it valid as the

78 *Ency. of Lit.*, Ed. J. T. Shipley, I, p. 387.

MISHNA, "the repetition of the laws". With the help of a committee of his academy, he established a definite Hebrew text of the Mishna, consisting of sixty-three treatises with five hundred and twenty four chapters, divided into six main sections of "orders" called Sedarim, each of which deals in orderly fashion with its subject-matter respectively.⁷⁹ They are as under serial wise:

1. ZERAIM
(Seeds) : It consists of 11 tracts, the first dealing with the laws of prayer and the remainder with Agricultural laws.
2. MOED
(Set Feast) : It includes 12 tracts, dealing with the laws concerning the Sabbath, festivals and fast days.
3. NASHIM
(Women) : Comprising of 7 tracts, dealing with betrothal, marriage, divorce, the general relationship of husband and wife, vows and the law of the Nazirite.
4. NEZIKIN
(Damages) : It is also referred to as YESHUOT (Deeds of help). it consists of 10 tracts treating of money-matters and all damages which are decided by the courts, criminal law and oaths. It also contains a tractate on ethical teachings.

79 Op. Cit., Shipley, p. 388; Cf. E. Royston Pike, Ency. of Religion & Religions, (London 1951), p. 367; Stand. Jewish Ency., Op. Cit., p. 1784; Ency. Brit. Vol. 21, p. 771.

5. KODASHIM Consisting of 11 tracts which deal (Holy Things) : with the law of ritual slaughtering, sacrifice and other subjects connected with the Temple ritual.
6. TOHOROT The sixth and last order of Mishna. (Purifications) : The name is a euphemism for ritual uncleanness, and all its 12 tracts deal with laws concerning impurity.

The discussions made on Mishna when recorded constitute the Gemara (Aram., completion), forming the second part of the Talmud, while Mishna is treated as the first basic half of the Talmud.⁸⁰

The Gemara is in the nature of a vast commentary on the Mishna. It exists in two recensions or versions, both written in the Aramic that was spoken by Jews in Palestine and Babylonia: the Jerusalem or Palestinian (Yerushalmi) and the Babylonian (Babli). The Mishna was first printed in 1492, the Babli Talmud in 1520 and the yerushalmi in 1523. The whole Talmud is now available in English.⁸¹ In order to have further idea of the contents of the six sections of the Mishna, let us see the 11 tracts of the first section entitled 'Zeraim':

- | | | |
|--------------|------------------|-------------|
| (1) Berakhot | (2) Peah | (3) Demai |
| (4) Kilaim | (5) Sheviit | (6) Terumot |
| (7) Maaserot | (8) Maaser Sheni | (9) Hallah |
| (10) Orlab | (11) Bikkurim | |

⁸⁰ S. J. Encyclop. Op. Cit., Art Talmud, p. 1784.

⁸¹ Eyclopaedia of Religion & Religions, Loc. Cit.

1. Berakhot : (Heb. ``Blessings'') It deals with the recitation of the Shema, blessings and prayer in general. (Shema Yisrael (Heb. ``Hear O Israel'': Deut. 6 : 4). Judaism's confession of faith; proclaiming the absolute unity of God).
2. Peah : (Heb. ``Corner'') It deals with the setting aside of the corners of the field for the use of the poor primarily but also considers the dues of the poor.
3. Demai : (Heb. ``Dubious Produce'' with reference to tithes) it deals with the requirement for tithing produce where there is doubt whether the proper tithes have already been given.
4. Kilaim : (Heb. ``Diverse Seeds'') It deals with the prohibitions of mingling different species of plants, animals, and clothings. (Lev 19 : 19; Deu 22 : 9).

Suffice it to say that the Mishna supplied the Casuistical interpretation of the written law.

In addition to the Mishna and Gemara, the body of traditions concerning the correct vocalic pronunciation of the Hebrew text of the old testament is known as MASORAH (Heb. tradition). The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Samaritan Hebrew Pentateuch display something of the diversity of manuscripts of the Bible current in the Second Temple Period. To stem such changes in the sacred text, Jewish scholars, especially those called the

Masoretes, fixed the spelling, writing and reading of the Hebrew Bible at an early date. Tradition has it that the Sopherim already "counted every letter in the Pentateuch" and such lists have survived, showing, e.g., the number of times each letter occurs in the Bible. The text which the Masorah tries to preserve is one showing many irregular spellings and difficulties, and the main effort is to prevent these being regularized or replaced by easier readings. The Masoretic text is the basis of modern editions of the current Hebrew Bible as distinct from that of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Samaritans text, or that from which the ancient versions were translated.⁸²

TRADITION AND CHRISTIANITY

The tradition has played an important role in the history of Christianity which grew out of Judaism and claims many of the Jewish religious traditions as its own. The Christian sacred book contains both the Old Testament and the New Testament. Jesus christ was himself a Jew, steeped in jewish tradition and culture. He observes,

"Think not that I am come to destroy the Law, or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil".⁸³

Being himself a member of the Jewish Church, Jesus disclaimed any idea of being a rebel against it. His object was, not to abolish the traditional Mosaic deposit or to annihilate the depository society - the 'congregation of the Lord' the 'Israel of God' -- but rather to develop and

82 Stand. Jew. Ency., Op. Cit., Art Masorah, Col. 1278.

83 The Bible, Matthew, V, 17.

expand, to reform and purify the deposit by blending it with the gospel or 'good news' of a glorious age to come. With regard to the purification of the deposit, Jesus insisted primarily upon its re-moralization.

"It may perhaps be said also that to a certain extent Christ demanded the re-intellectualization of the deposit. The authority of tradition is subordinated not merely to that of the moral law embodied in the written Word, but to that of common sense. This is illustrated by His various sayings on the subject of the Sabath".⁸⁴

We gain a very clear impression from a review of the Qur'anic teachings regarding Jesus christ's attitude towards the traditional deposti. It observes;

اذ قال الله يعيسى ابن مريم اذكر نعمتى عليك وعلى
والدتك اذ ايدتك بروح القدس تكلم الناس في المهد وكهلاً
واذ علمتك الكتاب والحكمة والتوراة والانجيل...⁸⁵

(When Allah will say : O Jesus, son of Mary, remember My favour to thee and to thy mother, when I strengthened thee with the Holy Spirit; thou speakest to people in the cradle and in old age, and when I taught thee the Book and the Wisdom and the Torah and the Gospel...)

ويعلمه الكتاب والحكمة والتوراة والانجيل ورسولاً الى بنى
اسرائيل.⁸⁶

(And He will teach him the Book and the Wisdom and the Torah and the Gospel):

84 Encyclop. of Religion & Ethics, p. 411.

85 Al-Qur'an, 5/110.

86 Al-Qur'an, 3/47 - 48.

And (make him) a messenger to the Children of Israel...)

Inter alia it may be mentioned here en passant that Jesus Christ, the last of the national Prophets himself claimed to be the Prophet sent only for the children of Israel. He told a non-Israelite Canaani woman that he was:

“Not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel”.⁸⁷

When further pressed, he only added:

“It is not meet to take the children’s bread, and to cast it to dogs”.⁸⁸

The Holy Qur’an also depicts Jesus as testifying Torah and modifying the Mosaic law:

ومصدقاً لما بين يدي من التوراة ولاحل لكم بعض الذي
حرّم عليكم.⁸⁹

(And (I am) a verifier of that which is before me of the Torah, and I allow you part of that which was forbidden to you).

On the other hand a review of the teachings of Christ as recorded in the Synoptic Gospels discloses that:

“His attitude towards the Rabbinical tradition was simultaneously both reverential and critical, both conservative and progressive”.⁹⁰

87 The Bible, Matthew XV, 24.

88 Ibid., XV, 26.

89 Al-Qur’an, 3/49.

90 Ency. of Religion & Ethics, VIII, p. 415.

Three quarters of Christendom, Catholics - have a view of tradition that the deposit of faith was partly taken over by Christ from the existing Jewish Church and partly revealed by him to his apostles and other hearers during his earthly life and especially during the 'great forty days' which, according to St. Luke intervened between his resurrection and ascension, and during which he spoke of 'the things pertaining to the 'kingdom of God'. He told his adherents that they were to consider themselves as being the true Israel, his Ecclesia. With this divinely founded society he promises to be present all the days, even unto the consummation of the age, and to it he promises to send the PARACLETE, who would guide its members into all truth,⁹¹ The Holy Prophet of Islam is referred to here as the following citation from the Qur'an bears it out.

واذ قال عيسى ابن مريم يبنى إسرائيل انا رسول الله اليكم
مصدقاً لما بين يدي من التوراة ومبشراً برسول باتى من
بعدى اسمه احمد...⁹²

(And when Jesus, son of Mary, said: O Children of Israel, surely I am the messenger of Allah to you, verifying that which is before me of the Torah and giving the good news of a Messenger who will come after me, his name being Ahmad).⁹³

The 'Catholics' believe that Jesus guaranteed in his promises the infallibility of the Church in the

91 The Bible, St. John, V XI, 13.

92 Al-Qur'an, 61/6.

93 Cf. Mohammed Ali, The Holy Qur'an, f. n. 2496, Eng. Tr., revised edition.

interpretation and definition of the authentic contents of the deposit. It is further taken for granted that within the Church the special task of preserving and interpreting the deposit was committed by Christ to the twelve apostles and to their successors, the bishops. Curious enough, the living force of the Christian tradition spontaneously generated the same complex mechanism for its own preservation and perpetuation as may be seen, endeavouring to struggle into existence, in the case of Zoroastrianism and Buddhism.

The following account taken from the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* further clarifies the issue under discussion.

In the beginning, the only scriptures which the christian church possessed were those of the Jewish Church as it existed outside Palestine i.e., the Septuagint Old Testament, containing the books now called Apocrypha. Side by side a handful of disciples of Jesus Christ transmitted to the next generation an oral tradition comprising of the sayings of their master, with stories of his life, death, and resurrection and their own meditations on the meaning of Christ's work and persons. It was the Marcionite controversy of the 2nd century which made the Church to form a collection of apostolic writings for the purpose of demonstrating the identity of the oral tradition and refuting the Gnostic claim to possess a secret tradition other than and opposed to, the ecclesiastical tradition. This apostolic collection became canonized as 'The New Testament' of equal authority and inspiration with the original scriptures, the Old Testament of the Jewish Church.

In the 2nd and 3rd centuries appeal to the unbroken succession of the bishops and to point to their unanimous consent as a proof of the authenticity of the ecclesiastical tradition was possible as against the alleged secret traditions of the various Gnostic sects. But it came to be realized towards the end of the periods of persecution that the Bishops might disagree as to its contents; and these disagreements could only be resolved in Christianity as in Buddhism by the expedient of summoning a council of chief depositaries, the total episcopate of the world. The object of a council was not so much to discover fresh truth as to determine what, as a matter of fact, was the doctrine which had been believed in the Church from the beginning. Hence, though each bishop had, in theory, the right to put before the council that version of the faith which he had received from his predecessors and which had been handed down to his local church from its first founder, the greatest weight was naturally attached to the testimony of the great 'apostolic sees'. Complete unanimity in the acceptance of one particular version of the faith would, of course, have stamped it in the minds of Catholic Christians as unquestionably authentic and apostolic; but, if complete unanimity had been possible of attainment, it would probably have been unnecessary to summon Councils. The principle was, therefore, arrived at that an overwhelming majority of the depositaries, especially if it included the occupants of one or more of the great apostolic sees, had the same authority as the whole body... Hence it follows that a small minority of the depositaries, contumaciously refusing to submit to the authority of the majority,

necessarily becomes schismatic. It is sufficient to note that each of the great decisive doctrinal formulations of the conciliar period was followed by a split between the majority, and the minority, which rejected it. Thus, after Nicaea and Constantinople, a separate 'non juring', Arian Church came into existence among the Goths and other northern barbarians; after ephesus a 'non-juring' Nestorian Church was constituted in Syria and Persia; after Chalcedon the Monophysite Church, which still includes most of the Christians of Egypt and Armenia, split off from the rest of Christendom.⁹⁴

In the great church of the Greco-Roman Empire, the 'Melkite' or 'Imperial' church as it stood on the eve of the Great Schism of 1054, the four-fold structure of traditionalism had come into full, explicit and conscious existence, in the most imposing and magnificent form, which has ever existed upon earth. The Church, the heirarchy, the Canon of Scripture, and the ecumonious part in the task of preserving, elucidating, and refining the apostolic deposit.

To sum up, in the strict theological sense, 'tradition' with the Roman Catholics is the sum of revealed truths pertaining to faith and morals, not consigned to Scripture, but transmitted by God by word of mouth to the Church. Tradition is a source of revelation having equal authority with Sacred Scripture. Its complexus of truths has come from God through the words of Christ or through the Apostles inspired by the Holy Spirit. Its contents is all that revealed truth which has not been

94 Ency. of Religion & Ethics, pp. 412 - 13.

written down in Scripture. An infallible teaching body, the Church, defines through the Pope and in general councils and in its universal ordinary doctrine which truths are contained in Tradition. The chief source is the unanimous declarations of early christian writers.

That is why we notice that the Reformation was, in essence and in its earlier stages a revolt not so much against the authority of the deposit or of its Founder as against that of the existing depositary class in Western Europe - a revolt occasioned by the corruption and exactions of the pope and the hierarchy. In their fervour of indignation against the vices of the clergy, the great orthodox Protestant theologians of the 16th and 17th centuries deemed it necessary to deny the whole principle of a body of men divinely commissioned to safeguard the Christian revelation. Hence the logical effect of the Reformation was to knock away the authority of councils and synods. Consequently, those elements in the deposit were discarded the rejection of which followed immediately from the rejection of the heirarchy and as such, the oral tradition of the church was completely rejected.

The New Protestantism of the continent attacked the historicity of the traditional deposit and eventually proved that there was an absolute gulf between the teaching of Jesus and that of Paul. With them, Jesus considered himself only a teacher of morality or as the Prophet of a new eschatological enthusiasm. So he could have no idea of promulgating a deposit or constituting a depositary class. On this view it is Paul himself who was the real founder of Catholic Christianity. It was Paul who

led Christendom to identify The Prophet of Nazareth with the LOGOS of Platonic and Stoic metaphysics.

The above view, if sustained, demolishes the whole super-structure of traditional Christianity by severing the relation between the deposit, as it stands and its alleged founder. The three basic concepts of the Catholic deposit, Atonement, Trinity and Incarnation will be completely discarded. So dogma as an essential element in Christianity will entirely disappear and institutionalism will be reduced to the minimum. The so-called 'Modernists' of the 20th century Europe have gone a step further by denying Christ any authority to promulgate a deposit. According to them Jesus was a spiritual genius, not exempt from the errors and limitations of his period and people. This view, of course, destroys the whole traditional conception of Catholic Christianity.

On the other extreme we notice a recent development within the sphere of traditional Christianity. The vatican council of 1870 declared the Pope to be endowed, when performing his office of supreme pastor and teacher of Christians, with an equal infallibility ascribed to the Church previously by catholic traditionalism. Similarly, consensus theologorum (the theologians' opinions) have practically assumed the position of secondary deposit in Latin Catholicism.

ZOROASTRIANISM AND TRADITION

Among the non-semitic religions the Prophetic tradition is best represented by Zoroastrianism which ``is the result of a Prophetic reformation of the old Iranian

religion".⁹⁵ It was closely akin to that of the Vedic Indians; rather it "had the same source as the religion of the Vedic Aryans".⁹⁶ Its founder Zoroaster or Zrathushtra, to give him his proper name,⁹⁷ born in 660 B.C. in Media according to a Persian tradition, took a firm stand, to begin with, on the revelation he had received and then left no stone unturned to erase every vestige of Iranian heathenism. It seems to have been the great achievement of the Iranian Prophet that he eliminated all the ancient gods of the Iranian pantheon, leaving only Ahura Mazda, the 'Wise Lord' as the one True God.

'According to Greek sources, 'Zoroaster' received a revelation at the age of thirty and the traditional scene of the first and most startling vision is laid on the banks of the Daitya River near his home. The archangel Vohu Manah (Good Thought) appeared before Zoroaster and bade him to mount to the presence of Ahura Mazda, "the Wise Lord" and "Supreme Being".⁹⁸ He began to preach immediately after his divine call but was without success. When he got all sorts of discouragement he proclaimed with undoubted assurance:

95 G. F. Moore, History of Religions, I, P. 360.

96 J. B. Noss, Man's Religions, P. 433; G. F. Moore, History of Religions, I, P. 357.

97 R. C. Zaehner, The Concise Encyclopaedia of Living Faiths, P. 209.

98 A. V. W. Jackson, Zoroaster, The Prophet of Ancient Iran, (New York, 1898) P. 41.

“I shall not renounce the good Religion of the worshipers of Mazda, not though life, limb and soul should part asunder”...⁹⁹

“And though the task be difficult, though woe may come to me, I shall proclaim to all mankind Thy message, which Thou declarest to be the best”.
(Yasna 43).

In one of his lectures in the year 1930 at Manchester College, Oxford, Rabindranath Tagore paid his tribute to Zoroastrianism in the following words:

“I think it can be said without doubt that such a high conception of religion, uttered in such a clear note of affirmation with a sure note of conviction that it is a truth of the ultimate ideal of perfection which must be revealed to all humanity, even at the cost of martyrdom, is unique in the history of any religion belonging to such a remote dawn of civilization”.¹⁰⁰

The religion which Zoroaster taught was a unique ethical monotheism which may be compared in various ways to the work of the Hebrew monotheist, Moses, and its sacred scriptures have many points of resemblance to the Old Testament.¹⁰¹ According to the parsi tradition, the Comprehensive name of their scriptures is Avesta, of which only a fraction survives to-day. At present it consists of five parts: the YASNA, the VISPERED, the VENDIDAD, the YASHTS and the KHORDAH

99 Ibid. P. 52.

100 Sir Rabindranath Tagore, The Religion of man, (London, 1931) P. 50.

101 Cf. J. B. Noss, Op. Cit., P. 440; G. F. Moore, Op. Cit., P. 360.

AVESTA. Into the Yasna are inserted (chapters 28 - 54) a series of Gathas (songs or hymns) and These, since they are written in the first person, must be the work of Zoroaster himself. These Gathas are, then our principal, indeed our only, source for the teachings and the doctrines actually proclaimed by the Prophet Zarathustra. These Gathas represent the oldest and the most sacred part of the Avesta in the form of utterances of Zoroaster or revelation of God to him, written in an ancient dialect closely related to the Vedic. The other portions of Avesta are less reliable because of their later date and change in emphasis and world view. It may categorically be stated that the words of God and the utterances of the Prophets are admixed and interpolated in Zoroastrianism. Judiasm, and christianity in such a way that assortment of the same is next to impossible. But still as the most important thing for a proper understanding of a religious faith is a correct appreciation of how the believers themselves conceive of their religion, a synoptic survey of some of the Gathas will be helpful in ascertaining the exact role of Prophetic tradition in Zoroastrianism.

The Gathas, time and again set forth the claim of Zarathustra that Ahura Mazda, the Wise Lord, has revealed to him the word which he proclaimed to men, and he tells at length of his calling to this ministry. It is his mission to teach men to obey 'Ahura Mazda' and strive after the Right (Asha). This is in reality the mission of all the Prophets as set forth in the Holy Qur'an.

ولقد بعثنا في كل أمة رسولا أن اعبدوا الله واجتنبوا
الطاغوت.¹⁰²

(And certainly We raised in every nation a messenger, saying: Serve Allah and Shun the devil).

Zarathustra gave all his devotion to one God, the supreme, deity, supreme in power, value and creation.

Like all the semitic Prophets, Zarathustra believes this universe as an act of Ahura Mazda's creation when he declares:

“I strive to recognize by your creation Thee, O Mazda, creator of all things through the Holy spirit”. (Yasna 44.7)¹⁰³

But at the same time he had a rich conception of Ahura Mazda's way of accomplishing results.

“Mazda expresses His will through a Holy Spirit (Spenta Mainyu) and various modes of divine actions called the “Immortal Holy Ones” or Amesha Spentas, such as Vohu Manah (Good Thought or Sense), Asha (Right), Kshathra (Power or Dominion), Haurvatat (Prosperity), Armaiti (Piety), and Ameretat (Immortality). Other modes of divine expression are named besides the Amesha Spentas - e.g., Sraosha (Obedience), Gens Urva (The Ox creator or spirit that protects cows) and still others. The Spenta Mainyu (Good Spirit) is opposed by Angra Mainyu (the Bad Spirit). This is an important belief of zoroaster - over against Asha (right) is Druj (The Lie). The view which throughout prevails the Gathas is that Ahura Mazda did not

102 Al-Qur'an, 16/36.

103 James Hope Moulton, Early Zoroastrianism.

create the Evil Spirit. He discovered it was just the natural thing to find evil where there is good and darkness beside light".¹⁰⁴

We find in Gathas Zoroaster's cardinal moral principle of free-will. According to him good people were those who accepted the true religion and the bad were those who rejected it, especially those who continued to practice the old popular religion with its worship of the daevas. The polytheists were not merely to be shunned:

"Resist them with the weapon". (Yasna 31 : 18)¹⁰⁵

"I repudiate the Daevas. I confese myself a worshipper of Mazdah, a zarathustrian, as an enemy of the Daevas, a Prophet of the Lord". (Yasna 12).¹⁰⁶

The most important of all outstanding facts of Iranian history is the religious reform brought about by Zarathustra. Though surrounded by believers in magical rites, he proclaimed in those dark days of unreason the doctrine of monotheism and preached that good thoughts, good words and good deeds are the real religious values. There can hardly be any doubt that he was the greatest of all the pioneer Prophets who set forth the religious tradition in ancient Iran quite distinct from the belief of the people hitherto. The Gathas preserve the first profound record of the change of direction in Iranian religion towards Prophetic tradition. This unique achievement of his makes un understand the greatness of

104 J. B. Noss, Op. Cit., P. 441.

105 J. H. Moulton, Op. Cit., p. 354.

106 G. F. Moore, Op. Cit., I, P. 366.

Zarathustra. The orthodox old Persian idolatory and bloodstained magical rites being discountenanced by Zarathustra not only shows his course, but the strength of his realization of the Prophetic mission. Thus it is amazing to see that Zoroastrianism, though non-semitic as it arose in the Eastern provinces of ancient Iran, is nonetheless animated by the same Prophetic spirit that informs the semitic religions. It is a corroborating proof of the Qur'anic thesis of the unity and universality of the revealed guidance and existence of world wide Prophetic tradition. All the historians of world religion agree that Zarathustra has a firm belief in life after death and the day of judgement, paradise and hell, Bridge of the Separator and he also held that a man's self makes his destiny:

Their own Soul and their own Self shall torment them when they come to the Bridge of the Separator. To all time they be guests for the House of the Lie - a place called the "worst existance". (Yasna 46 : 11). On the other hand, the righteous will dwell beyond the great bridge in "the House of Song", the Gathas' Paradise, "the best existence" and the abode of "the best thought".¹⁰⁷

"It may be incidentally mentioned here, as showing the parallel to this in the Islamic teachings, that all through the Makkan Suras the above theme is repeatedly emphasized in similar terms".¹⁰⁸

In the end it may be made clear that in Zarathustra's teachings, which are best reflected in his Gathas, we have

107 James Hope Moulton, The Treasure of the Magi, (London, 1917) P. 37.

108 Al-Qur'an; 101/6 - 11; 98/6 - 8; 90/18 - 20; 88/8 - 16; et passim.

hardly any mention of the ritualism of the fire worship. The monotheism of the Gathas is much more advanced than that of the loftiest Vedic hymns to Varnva; Ahura Mazda has no partner, nor rival. This Monotheism is central to Zoroastra's doctrine and as such he did not worship the fire, as his ancestors had done, or as some of his followers later did; it was to him a precious symbol of Ahura Mazda, and no more, through which he could realize the nature and the essence of the Wise Lord.¹⁰⁹

To sum up, it can be claimed from the view point of the present study that Zoroastrianism is an example par excellence for the tremendous role of Prophetic tradition in religion. Whatever was said and done by Zorathustra was and is in the real sense of the term Zoroastrianism. It is amazing to see how Zarathustra was the first among his people who cultivated the moral and spiritual ideals as the true form of worship defying the prescribed path of heathen tradition.

109 J. B. Noss, *Op. Cit.*, P. 445.

2

**TRADITION AND
ISLAM**

In the light of the observations, already made in the introduction of the present study,¹ regarding the epistemological and theistic view points of Islam, it is quite obvious that the Divine revelation is the fundamental characteristic of Islam. It is also an established historic fact that the Prophet of Islam, Hadrat Muhammad (peace be upon him), claimed to have received the Divine call at the age of forty. Now, the whole structure of Islam rests on the correctness of the above claim and the assurance of its correctness comes from corroborative testimony of the truthfulness of the Prophet, before he received the Prophetic call. Fortunately, Islam being the most recent of the revealed religions, "Its rise and early progress lie more fully than any other in the daylight of history".² The Holy Qur'ān, which contains the most trustworthy account of the Prophet's life, invites our attention to his sublime character during the forty years that he had passed

1 Supra, P. 14.

2 G. F. Moore, *op. cit.*, II, P. 386.

among the non-believers and polytheists of Makkah, before he received the Divine call, as follows :

فقد لبثت فيكم عمرا من قبله افلا تعقلون.³

(I have lived among you a life time before it. Do you not then understand).

It was in his youth that, on account of his pure and praise worthy character and his love for truth and honesty, he received from his compatriots the title of *al-Amin* (the Truthful or the faithful one). His worst enemies, even at the height of their enmity, admitted that he had never told a lie on any occasion during his entire life. The Holy Qur'an testifies the truthfulness of the Prophet of Islam in the clearest terms on another occasion as below :

فانهم لا يكذبونك ولكن الظالمين بآيت الله يجحدون.⁴

(For surely they give not thee the lie, but the wrongdoers give the lie to Allah's messages).

The argument is, that it was only after he received the Divine revelation that he was belied, otherwise he was known before it as the truthful one; hence it was in reality the denial of the Divine revelation, not a denial as to the Prophet's truthfulness. Similarly, when the Prophet was Commanded by God as under :

وانذر عشيرتك الاقربين.⁵

(And warn your nearest relations),

3 Al-Qur'an, 10 : 16.

4 Al-Qur'an, 6 : 33.

5 Ibid., 26 : 214.

he called out all the various families of the Quraish at Mount *Safa*, among those assembled was his bitterest opponent, abu Lahab - The Holy Prophet thus addressed them :

ارايتم لو اخبرتكم ان خيلاً بالوادي تريد ان تغير عليكم
أكنتم مصدقي؟ قالوا: نعم، ما جرئنا عليك إلا صدقاً.⁶

(Tell me, if I were to inform you that a mighty army in the valley lies in wait to make a raid upon you, would you believe me?)

They all replied in one voice :

“Yes, we would; We have never known anything but truth from thee”.

In the early days of Islam, when Abu Bakr was told that his friend Muhammad claimed to have received revelation from his God, he abruptly remarked that he must be true in his claim, because a man who had never uttered a falsehood against his fellowbeings could not utter a falsehood against God.

Similarly, the statement given by Ja'far b. Abu Talib before Negus, the King of Abyssinia, when a deputation of polytheists of Makkah petitioned the King for the extradition of the first muslim emigrants to his country, throws a flood of light on the sublime character of Muhammad, on one side, and the vices of his contemporary countrymen on the other. He stated :

“O king, we were an uncivilized people, worshipping idols, eating corps of dead animals, committing abominations, breaking natural ties,

⁶ Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. 6, P. 140. (Egypt, 1345 A. H.)

treating guests badly, and our strong devoured our weak. Thus we were until God sent us an apostle whose lineage, truth, trustworthiness, and clemency we know. He summoned us to acknowledge God's unity and to worship him and to renounce the stones and images which we and our fathers formerly worshipped. He Commanded us to speak the truth, be faithful to our engagements, mindful of the ties of kinship and kindly hospitality, and to refrain from crimes and bloodshed. He forbade us to commit abominations and to speak lies, and to devour the property of orphans, to vilify chaste women We confessed his truth and believed in him, and we followed him in what he had brought from God, and we worshipped God alone without associating aught with Him. We treated as forbidden what he forbade, and as lawful what he declared lawful. Thereupon our people attacked us, treated us harshly... circumscribed our lives, and came between us and our religion, we came to your country (for asylum)".⁷

Still later, when opposition of the Quraish was at its highest, rather they were at war with the Prophet, the King of Rome, Heraclius, called Abū Sufyān, the Quraish leader of opposition, who was then in Syria for trading purposes, and asked him numerous questions regarding the Prophet. One of these questions was :

فهل كنتم تتهمونه بالكذب قبل ان يقول ما قال - قلت
 8

7 Alfred Guillaume, The Life of Muhammad, P. 151 - 2, (London, 1955).

8 Sahih al-Bukhari, I, P. 5, (Egypt, 1345 A. H.).

(Did you ever blame him for telling a lie before he said that he was a Prophet? Abu Sufyan's reply was "No")

Another strong corroborative fact of Muḥammad's truthfulness is that the earliest converts to Islām were not only of upright character, but his own bosom friends and people of his household, who, intimately acquainted with his private life, could not fail otherwise to have detected any discrepancy between his words and deeds. His wife, Khadija, was the first to believe in him and accepted as true what he brought from God, and helped him in his work. She strengthened him, lightened his burden, proclaimed his truth and comforted him, saying:

كَلَّا وَاللَّهِ مَا يَخْزِيكَ اللَّهُ أَبَدًا إِنَّكَ لَتَصِلُ الرَّحْمَ وَتَحْمِلُ الْكَلَّ
وَتَكْسِبُ الْمَعْدُومَ وَتَقْرِي الضَّيْفَ وَتَعِينُ عَلَى نَوَائِبِ الْحَقِّ.⁹

(That God would certainly never disgrace you because you loved his kinsmen, and bore the burden of those who were weary, and helped the poor and honoured the guest and gave relief to those who were in distress).

She was followed by `Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, Zaid b. Ḥāritha, freedman of the apostle, and Abū Bakr b. Abu Quhafa. These were either closely related to the Prophet or were his most intimate friends. When Abū Bakr became a Muslim, he began to call to Islām all whom he trusted of those who came to him and sat with him. At his invitation, `Uthmān b. `Affān, Zubair b. Al-`Awwām, `Abdul-Raḥmān b. `Auf, Sa`d b. Abi Waqqāṣ and Ṭalāḥa

9 Ibid., I, P. 3.

b. `Ubaidullah, all the five, accepted Islam.¹⁰ The Prophet of Islam used to say : "I have never invited anyone to accept Islam but he has shown signs of reluctance, suspicion, and hesitation, except Abu Bakr. When I told him of it he did not hold back or hesitate".¹¹ These were the first earliest eight converts to Islam who believed in the divine inspiration of the apostle. They are referred to in the Holy Qur'an as under :

وَالسَّابِقُونَ السَّابِقُونَ أُولَئِكَ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ فِي جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ.¹²

(And the foremost are the foremost. These are drawn nigh (to Allah) in Gardens of Bliss).

Naturally, those who accepted the Holy Prophet in the earliest stage of his mission and had to make greatest sacrifices, had the greatest reward. Those foremost in doing good are foremost in reaping their reward.

There lies for the present study a point of paramount importance in these earliest converts. They all declared their belief in whatever was said and claimed by Muhammad (peace be upon him), simply because they had a faith in his unimpeachable truthfulness and infallible veracity. What was the actual condition or state of new religion being presented by the Holy Prophet at that time? Save a few revealed verses of the Holy Qur'an which again were being honoured on the authority and reliability of Muhammad b. `Abdullah, firstly as a noble man and then as a Prophet and messenger of God, there

10 Ibn Hisham, Sirat, P. 162, (Cairo, 1355 A. H.)

11 Ibem.

12 Al-Qur'an, 56 : 10 - 12.

was neither any revealed scripture, nor any religious schedule of Do's and don'ts. Even the concept of revelation and that of the revaealing God was being introduced by Muḥammad (peace be upon him), as if for the first time in the Arab world. In spite of the missionary efforts of the Jews and Christians, carried on for hundreds of years one after the other with material power of the kingdom at their back, the Arabs and especially the non-believers and polytheists of Makkah were completely ignorant even of the remotest idea of Prophethood and Divine revelation. The native Arab movement of the *Hanifs* proved an even greater failure in this regard. That is why, the non believers in their height of enmity accused the Prophet of being a poet,¹³ a sorcerer,¹⁴ a soothsayer,¹⁵ a madman,¹⁶ a dreamer,¹⁷ and of being possessed.¹⁸ They could not even think of a human being, being appointed as an apostle from on High, presumably due to the distorted and perverted impression regarding Prophethood created through the doctrines of divinity of Ezra and Jesus Christ by the Jews and Christians respectively :

وقالت اليهود عزير ابن الله وقالت النصارى المسيح ابن الله
 ذلك قولهم بافواههم.¹⁹

13 Al-Qur'an; 52 : 30.

14 *Ibid.*, 74 : 24.

15 *Ibid.*, 52 : 29.

16 *Ibid.*, 68 : 2.

17 *Ibid.*, 21 : 5.

18 *Ibid.*, 25 : 8.

19 Al-Qur'an, 9 : 30.

(And the Jews say : Ezra is the son of Allah; and the Christians say : The Messiah is the son of Allah. These are the words of their mouth.)

Their very conception of a Prophet of God, if any, was so confused that they remarked about the Prophet, Muhammad (peace be upon him), as under :

مال هذا الرسول ياكل الطعام ويمشى في الاسواق لولا انزل
اليه ملك فيكون معه نذيراً.²⁰

(What a Messenger is this? He eats food and goes about in the markets. Why not an angle been sent down to him to be a warner with him?)

It is a unique contribution to human civilization by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), that he raised the dignity of man to the noblest of God's creation by declaring all Prophets and messengers of God including himself as human beings, subject to human laws. The Holy Qur'an emphatically declares :

وما ارسلنا قبلك من المرسلين الا انهم لياكلون الطعام
ويمشون في الاسواق.²¹

(And we did not send before thee any messengers but they surely ate food and went about in the markets.)

As regards the second objection, that why an angel has not been sent down to him to be a warner with him, it is thus overruled :

ولو انزلنا ملكاً لقضى الامر ثم لا ينظرون ولو جعلناه ملكاً
لجعلناه رجلاً وكلبنا عليهم ما يلبسون.²²

20 Ibid., 25 : 7.

(And if we send down an angel, the matter would be decided and then they would not be respited. And if We had made him an angel, We would certainly have made him a man, and (thus) made confused to them what they confuse.)

Again, when the disbelievers demanded from the Prophet to work for them wonders in proof of his claim, like, causing a spring to gush forth from the earth or cause the heaven to come down or ascend into heaven and bring Allah and the angels face to face or bring from heaven a book to read and so forth and so on, the Prophet was commanded to proclaim :

قل سبحان ربي هل كنت الا بشرا رسولا.²³

(Say : Glory to my Lord : am I aught but a mortal messenger.)

Similarly the Holy Qur'an asserts :

وما منع الناس ان يؤمنوا اذ جاءهم الهدى الا ان قالوا
ابعث الله بشرا رسولا.²⁴

(And nothing prevents people from believing, when the guidance comes to them, except that they say : Has Allah raised up a mortal to be a messenger.)

A very convincing and logical argument has been put forward to counteract the above conventional stupidity of the disbelievers :

21 Ibid., 25 : 20.

22 Ibid., 6 : 8 - 9.

23 Ibid., 17 : 93.

24 Ibid., 17 : 94.

قل لو كان في الأرض ملائكة يمشون مطمئنين لنزكنا من
السماء ملكاً رسولاً.²⁵

(Say : Had there been in the earth angels walking about as settlers, We would have sent down to them from the heaven an angel as messenger.)

In short, according to Islam, the Prophet must be a human being to whom Divine will is revealed, because only a man could serve as a model for men; the reformation of mortals could be entrusted to mortals alone. Even an angel could not have served that purpose because man had been made to excel all created things,²⁶ including the angels, who were required to make obeisance to man.²⁷

Moreover, Islam has affirmed in the clearest words that as Prophets are needed to enable man to rise to higher stages of life by reforming and purifying him, they must be free from all impurities. They are rather supposed to be sinless, both their words and deeds being in accordance with Divine Commandments.

ما كان لنبى ان يغفل.²⁸

(And it is not for a Prophet to act dishonestly.)

وما ارسلنا من قبلك من رسول الا نوحى اليه... بل عباد
مكرمون لا يسبقونه بالقول وهم بامرهم يعملون.²⁹

25 Ibid., 17 : 95.

26 Ibid., 7 : 140.

27 Ibid., 2 : 34.

28 Ibid., 3 : 160.

29 Ibid., 21 : 25 - 27.

(And We sent no messenger before thee but We revealed to him.....! Nay, they are honoured servants. They speak not before He speaks and according to His Command they act.)

The Prophets were given books for the guidance of their people.

فبعث الله النبيين مبشرين ومنذرين وانزل معهم الكتاب بالحق ليحكم بين الناس فيما اختلفوا فيه. ³⁰

(So Allah raised Prophets as bearers of good news and as Warners and He revealed with them the Book with truth, that it might judge between people concerning that in which they differed.)

As the disbelievers were destined to reject all sorts of signs from God :

وما تاتيهم من آية من آيت ربهم الا كانوا عنها معرضين. ³¹

(And there comes not to them any sign of the signs of their Lord but they turn away from it),

They must have disbelieved the Book even if it would have been sent down to them in a material shape.

ولو نزلنا عليك كتابا في قرطاس فلمسوه بايديهم لقال الذين كفروا ان هذا الا سحر مبين. ³²

(And if We had sent down to thee a writing on paper, then they had touched it with their hands, those who disbelieve would have said : This is nothing but clear enchantment.)

30 *Ibid.*, 2 : 213.

31 *Ibid.*, 6 : 4.

32 *Ibid.*, 6 : 7.

The meaning is that the Book itself even if revealed in the physical form would not have served the purpose. It was only the charm and irresistible attraction of the character and personality of the Prophet that first of all convinced the people and they were constrained to accept him as an infallible model. It was actually the magnetic force of the irresistible words and deeds of the mortal messenger that fascinated the people to accept the Divine revelation in its entirety. Never in the history of religion, since the dawn of humanity, a Book was sent down without a Prophet. The revealing God had to choose and appoint men for the job as it was the only course possible for the betterment of humanity :

ان الله اصطفى آدم ونوحاً وآل ابراهيم وآل عمران على
العالمين. 33

(Truly Allāh chose Adam and Noah and the descendants of Abraham and the descendants of Amran above the nations.)

The Holy Prophet of Islam, appearing among superstitious and ignorant people, could have claimed any supernatural powers for himself, and the people would willingly have accepted him. But he told the people plainly that he was but a man; he had no treasures, nor did he lay claim for himself as a man to know the secrets of the future, nor did he profess to be any more than a mortal. What distinguished him from the rest of mankind was that Allāh revealed His will to him, and he faithfully followed and translated into practice everything that he received from on High. His main object was to make people true followers of the

high principles of life, which had been revealed to him, through his own personal example.

قل لا اقول لكم عندى خزائن الله ولا اعلم الغيب ولا اقول
لكم انى ملك ان اتبع الا ما يوحى الى قل هل يستوى
الاعمى والبصير افلا تتفكرون.³⁴

(Say : I say not to you, I have with me the treasures of Allah, nor do I know the unseen, nor do I say to you that I am an angel; I follow only that which is revealed to me. Say : Are the blind and the seeing alike? Do you not then reflect?)

The unique greatness of the Holy Prophet lies in the fact that he never tried to put himself before people as superhuman. As a Prophet he did his utmost to abolish all sorts of superstitions and to remove all types of misconceptions regarding the Prophethood, in order to establish the doctrine of Divine unity in all its purity. For this object in view, for the first time in the history of religious literature, Islam draws a distinct line of demarcation between the Word of God and the words of the Prophet. It was made possible by safeguarding the Word of God as explicit Divine revelation (*وحى جلى*) or revelation to be recited (*وحى متلو*), under the most sacred title of Al-Qur'an, from its very beginning. Every part revealed was both written down and committed to memory by the Prophet's Companions under his direct dictation and supervision as soon as it was revealed. Thus, the whole of the Holy Qur'an revealed by God during the twenty three years of Prophetic career of the

34 Al-Qur'an, 6 : 50.

unlettered Prophet of Islam, was preserved in manuscripts by the specially appointed amanuenses on one hand, and in the memories of *huffaz* on the other, both, in the life time of the Prophet. The written manuscripts were gathered together in the book form immediately after the death of the Prophet by the order of Hadrat Abu Bakr, his first successor, and "of the authenticity of its contents there has never been any (substantial) question."³⁵ The historians of Comparative study of religions do agree that Islam does not overburden the minds of its adherents "With a multitude of scriptures and a plethora of abstruse doctrines. It has kept to one basic scripture, preserved from the first in a state of textual purity such that no variant readings have ever arisen to confuse the commentators".³⁶

Beside the word of God in the Holy Qur'an, the words of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), in his own name, were dealt with separately along with the record of his decisions and regulations on questions of justice or morals or religious observance under the specific title of the Prophetic tradition or (*حديث*) *Hadith*. The word *Hadith* is treated as equivalent to tradition³⁷ and in its technical use strictly excludes the Holy Qur'an, though it is believed to contain an element of implicit Divine revelation (*وحي خفي*) or revelation not to be recited (*وحي غير متلو*). It is argued that while the Qur'an is the eternal, uncreated Word of God, which is not subject

35 Cf. Moore, op. cit., II. P. 386.

36 J.B. Noss, op. cit., P. 683.

37 *Supra*, P. 18.

to any human adaptation of wording, the tradition conveys the words of the Prophet, but uttered under divine guidance. Literally speaking, 'Hadith' (حديث) stands for any thing new,³⁸ an announcement or narrative in general, and in its primary sense, it really means a story or a report,³⁹ and so represents an account of what happened whether secular or religious, historical or legendary, of whatever sort it may be.⁴⁰ This word has been used in the Holy Qur'an on several occasions, but always in its literal sense; sometimes it has been used even for the Holy Qur'an itself. Let us consider a few instances :

لقد كان في قصصهم عبرة لاولى الالباب ما كان حديثا
يفترى....⁴¹

(In their histories there is certainly a lesson for men of understanding. It is not a narrative which could be forged.)

The commentator Allama Ibn Kathir explains that the word *Hadith* here signifies the Holy Qur'an.⁴²

فلعلك باخع نفسك على آثارهم ان لم يؤمنوا بهذا الحديث
اسفا.⁴³

(Then may be thou wilt kill thyself with grief, sorrowing after them, if they believe not in this announcement.)

38 Ibn Manzur, *Lisān al-Arab* (Beirut, 1958) II, P. 131.

39 E. W. Lane, *Arabic English Lexicon*. BK. I, Pt. II, P. 529.

40 Cf. Murtaḍā Al-Husaini, *Taj al-'Arūs* (Egypt, 1306 A.H.), I. P. 612.

41 Al-Qur'an, 12 : 111.

42 'Allama Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, (Egypt, 1348), IV, P. 492.

43 Al-Qur'an, 18 : 6.

Allāma Ibn Kathīr again writes that the word *Al-Hadith* means here *Al-Qur'an*.⁴⁴

اللّه نزل احسن الحديث كتاباً متشابهاً مثاني تقشعراً منه
جلود الذين يخشون ربهم. 45

(Allah has revealed the best announcement a Book consistent, repeating (its injunctions), whereat do shudder the skins of those who fear their Lord.)

While discussing (احسن الحديث) Ibn Kathīr explains :

هذا مدح من الله عزوجل بكتابه القرآن العظيم. 46

(This is the approbation of the Book, *Al-Qur'an al-Azim* by Lord Almighty.)

فليأتوا بحديث مثله ان كانوا صادقين. 47

(Then let them bring a saying like it, if they are truthful.)

In connection with this verse Ibn Kathīr's comments are as under :

ان كانوا صادقين في قولهم تقوله وافتراه فليأتوا بمثل
محمد من هذا القرآن. 48

(If they are truthful in their claim which we have mentioned that he has forged it, they are permitted to bring the like of the *Qur'an* brought by Muhammad.)

فبأي حديث بعده يؤمنون. 49

44 *Tafsir*, op. cit., V. P. 252.

45 *Al-Qur'an*, 39 : 23.

46 *Tafsir*, op. cit., V. P. 252.

47 *Al-Qur'an*, 52 : 34.

48 *Tafsir*, op. cit., VIII, PP: 7 - 8.

(In what announcement after this will they then believe.)

Commenting upon this verse of the Holy Qur'an Allama Ibn Jarir Tabari writes :

فباي تخويف وتحذير وترهيب بعد تحذير كتاب الله. ⁵⁰
هل اتك حديث موسى. ⁵¹

(Has not there come to thee the story of Moses.)

فمال هؤلاء القوم لا يكادون يفقهون حديثاً. ⁵²

(But what is the matter with these people that they make no effort to understand anything.)

يا أيها الذين آمنوا لا تدخلوا بيوت النبي إلا أن يؤذن لكم
إلى طعام غير ناظرين إياه ولكن إذا دعيتم فادخلوا فإذا
طعمتم فانتشروا ولا مستأنسين لحديث. ⁵³

(O you who believe, enter not the houses of the Prophet unless permission is given to you for a meal, not waiting for its cooking being finished - but when you are invited, enter, and when you have taken food, disperse - not seeking to listen to talk.)

While discussing the occasion of revelation of the above (آيت الحجاب) (the verse of seclusion), Ibn Kathir informs us that when the Prophet married Zainab bint Jahsh, he invited his Companions, to the wedding feast.

49 Al-Qur'an, 7 : 185.

50 Jāmi' al-Bayān, (Egypt), XII, P. 290.

51 Al-Qur'an, 79 : 15.

52 Ibid., 4 : 78.

53 Ibid., 33 : 53.

The Companions after taking food dispersed except three of them who stayed on indulging in table-talk in the house of the Prophet.

وبقى ثلاثة رهط يتحدثون في البيت.⁵⁴

The above quotations from the Holy Qur'an make it clear that the word *Hadith* could be applied to any kind of news or information and throughout the revealed Book it has been used in its literal sense.

The Prophet himself applied in his sermons the word of *Hadith* for the Holy Qur'an itself :

وعن جابر قال: كان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول في خطبته: أما بعد! فإن أصدق الحديث كتاب الله.... وفي رواية: أما بعد، فإن خير الحديث كتاب الله وخير الهدى هدى محمد... الحديث، رواه الإمام أحمد ومسلم وغيرهما.⁵⁵

“The most truthful *Hadith* or the best *Hadith* is the book of Allah, and the best guidance is that of Muhammad”.⁵⁶

But, from the very beginning of Islam, this word was given a new technical sense when used in connection with information about the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), telling what he said and did, and his reaction to things said or done in his presence.⁵⁷ Thus, it acquired in the life-time of the Prophet its narrowed

54 *Tafsir*, op. cit., VI, P. 586.

55 Nasa'i, K. Zinah, 33, III, p. 188.

56 Abu Dawud, (Cairo, 1280 A.H.), P. 240.

57 Abul-Baqa, *Kulliyat*, (Al-Am'riya, 1280 A.H.) P. 152.

distinctive connotation of an oral tradition ascribed to him. It has also been asserted :

وقال شيخ الإسلام ابن حجر في شرح البخاري المراد
بالحديث في عرف الشرح ما يضاف الى النبي صلى الله
عليه وسلم وكأنه اريد به مقابلة القرآن لانه قديم. 58

(That Shaikh al-Islam Ibn Hajar has maintained in his commentary on *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī* that in the terminology of *Sharia'h* the word *Ḥadīth* means that which is ascribed to the Prophet (peace be upon him). And as if it has been used in contradistinction to the Holy Qur'an which is *Qadim*.)

The German Orientalist, Ignaz Goldziher while commenting upon the tradition : (احسن الحديث كتاب الله.. الخ) writes :

“A certain type of *Ḥadīth* is here particularly praised and favoured, and it is for this type also that the term is later used in preference to others. The book of Allah, however, ‘this most beautiful and perfect *ḥadīth*’, is contrasted with the general concept of *ḥadīth* as being the highest of all religious authorities, and the term *ḥadīth* is restricted to the Prophet's sayings, made either on his own initiative or in response to a question”. 59

The Prophet of Islam himself termed his saying as *Ḥadīth*,⁶⁰ most probably to discriminate it from the Word of God on the one hand and from the sayings of other people on the other. Imam Bukhari narrates that

58 Jalal al-Din al-Syuti, *Tadrib al-Rawi* (Egypt, 1966), I. P. 42.

59 *Muhammadanische Studien*, (Halle, 1889), II, P. 4.

60 Subḥi Ṣalīh, *Ulūm al-Ḥadīth*, (Beirut, 1965), P. 5.

when Hadrat Abu Hurayra put to the Prophet the question :

(من اسعد الناس بشفاعتك يوم القيامة)

(Who is the most likely to be made happy by your intercession on the day of the resurrection?)

The Prophet replied to him :

انه علم ان لن يسأله عن هذا الحديث احد قبل ابي هريرة
لحرصه على طلب الحديث. 61

(That he knew that Abu Huraira would be the first to question him about this *Hadith*, as he has observed how eager he was for the *Hadith*.)

Dr. Muḥammad Zubayr Siddiqi, while elucidating this point, writes that :

“The Muslims since the very life-time of Muhammad called the reports with regard to his sayings and doings the best *Hadith*, and by and by its use was confined to the reports of Muhammad’s words and deeds only. Muhammad himself as well as his immediate followers have used it in this sense more than once. When Muhammad said to Abu Hurayra that he knew his anxiety about the *Hadith*,⁶² he did not mean but his own *Hadith*. `Utba referred to this kind of *Hadith* only when he said that Ibn `Abbas related only two or three *Ahadith* in a month.⁶³ `Umar I did not mean but the *Hadith*⁶⁴ of Muḥammad when he asked his friends

61 Sahih al-Bukhari, Kitab al-Riqaq, No. 51.

62 Ibid., 1, 20.

63 Al-Dārimī, Sunan, (Kanpur, 1292 - 93 A.H.) P. 46.

64 Al-Dhahabi, Tadhkirat al-Huffaz, (Hyderabad 1330 A. H.), I. P. 6.

not to relate too many *Ahadith*. When `Ali said : "If you write the *Hadith* write it with the *Isnad*"⁶⁵ he meant the *Hadith* of Muhammad only".⁶⁶

A certain type of *Hadith*, on the other hand, is designated *Hadith Qudsi* (حديث قدسى) or also *Hadith Ilahi* (حديث الهى) or *Hadith Rubbani* (حديث ربانى) i.e., "Holy" or "divine" tradition. Abu`l-Baqā says in his *Kulliyat* :

واما الحديث القدسى، فهو ما كان لفظه من عند الرسول،
ومعناه من عند الله بالالهام او بالنام. ⁶⁷

(And as regards *Hadith al-Qudsi*, it means what God has told to his Prophet by inspiration or in a sleep and the Prophet has proclaimed it in his own phraseology.) Such traditions usually begin with :

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فيما يروى عن ربه. ⁶⁸

(The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said while narrating from his Lord) or

قال الله تعالى فيما رواه عنه رسول الله صلى الله عليه
وسلم. ⁶⁹

(Allah Almighty says through the narration of the messenger of Allah, peace be upon him.)

So in contradistinction to the ordinary *Hadith Nabawi* (حديث نبوى). Prophetic tradition, it is designated *Hadith Qudsi* (حديث قدسى). Divine tradition. Although a Divine

65 Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Qastallani, Al-Mawāhib al-Ladunniyah, (Egypt, 1291 A.H.), V, P. 454.

66 Hadith Literature (Calcutta, 1961), P. 1 - 2.

67 Abu`l Baqa op. cit., P. 288.

68 Subhi Salih op. cit., P. 12.

69 Al-Qasimi, Qawaid al-Tahdith, P. 65.

tradition is supposed to convey Divine revelation, yet the Holy Qur'an is esteemed above it because it is believed :

ان القرآن ما كان لفظه ومعناه من عند الله بوحى جلى.⁷⁰

(That the Qur'an contains the words and meanings both from Allah, revealed through explicit revelation.)

Allama Ibn Arabi has collected one hundred and one such Holy traditions in a book entitled :

مشكاة الانوار في ما روى عن الله سبحانه وتعالى من
الاخبار.

and after that, Shaikh Abdur Rauf al-Munawi compiled a booklet containing only the Holy traditions, arranged in an alphabetical order but without mentioning the chains of narrators and named it :

الاحاديث القدسية.⁷¹

It, therefore, concludes that though mostly *Hadith* contains implicit revelation, yet on the other hand each and every Holy *Hadith* (حديث قدسى) is believed to be the direct revelation but next to the Holy Qur'an only.

With the above connotation of the term *Hadith*, is closely connected the meanings of *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet. In the terminology of the traditionists Sunnah signifies :

70 Abu'l Baqa, Idem.

71 Muhammad b. Ja'far al-Kattani, Al-Risalat Al-Mustatrafa, (Karachi, 1960), P. 68.

ما اثر عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم من قول او فعل او
تقرير او صفة خلقية او خلقية او سيرة، سواء كان قبل
البعثة او بعدها - وهي بهذا ترادف الحديث عند بعضهم.⁷²

(What relates to the saying or doing or unspoken approval or trait of the personality, innate or acquired or life (itself), of the Prophet (peace be upon him), whether before appointment or after that. As such it has been treated identical with *Hadith* by some.)⁷³

The modern Orientalist A. J. Wensinck opines,

“That Muhammad’s *Sunnah* in the sense of his words, actions and silent approval is fixed orally and in writing in the *Hadith*. In theory the conceptions of *Sunnah* and *Hadith* are separate but in practice they often coincide, which may be due to the fact that some of the collections of *Hadith* have the title *Sunan* (e.g., the collections of Abu Da’ud, Ibn Maja and al-Nasa’i.)”⁷⁴

Though originally the word *Sunnah* stood for mode or manner of acting or conduct, whether good or bad, approved or disapproved,⁷⁵ yet it has been used by the Muslims for the doings and practices of Muhammad only. The distinction between them is theoretical. The

72 Muṣṭafā as-Sabā’i, Al-Sunnah wa Makanatuhā fi al Tashrī al-Islamī, (Cairo, 1961) P. 59.

73 Cf. Ignaz Goldziher, Muhammedanische Studien, P. 11 F.; A. Guillaume, The Traditions of Islam, P. 10. Dr. M. Z. Siddiqī, op. cit., P. 2.

74 Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, (Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1953) Art. *Sunnah*, P. 552 f.

75 Cf. *Sunnah*, Lane, op. cit., Bk. 1, Pt. IV, P. 1438.

great Lexicographer Ibn Manzur Afriqi observes in connection with *Sunnat* :

والاصل فيه الطريقة والسيرة واذا اطلقت في الشرع فانما يراد بها ما امر به النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم ونهى عنه وندب اليه قولاً وفعلاً مما لم ينطق به الكتاب العزيز ولهذا يقال له في ادلة الشرع الكتاب والسنة اى القرآن والحديث.⁷⁶

(In reality (literally) it is the way and the conduct but when applied in *shari'ah* (law), it signifies only what the Prophet (peace be upon him) has commanded or prohibited and what he has recommended to do by word or deed or such things as are not mentioned in the Holy Qur'an.⁷⁷ That is why, while discussing the sources of law, it is said, The Book and the *Sunnah* i.e., al-Qur'an and *al-Hadith*.)

According to the present writer, by Sunnah is to be understood Muhammad's Sunnah only (peace be upon him.) The point under discussion has been completely elaborated in the fuller statement of the famous traditionist Hafiz Ibn Hajar 'Asqalani :

..... قول الصحابي من السنة كذا، فالأكثر على أن ذلك مرفوع ونقل ابن عبد البر فيه الاتفاق قال واذا قالها غير الصحابي فكذلك ما لم يضيفها إلى صاحبها كسنة العمرين وفي نقل الاتفاق نظر. فمن الشافعي في أصل المسئلة قولان وذهب أنه غير مرفوع أبو بكر الصيرفي من الشافعية وأبو بكر الرازي من الحنفية وابن حزم من أهل الظاهر واحتجوا بأن السنة تتردد بين النبي صلى الله عليه

76 Lisan al-'Arab, Vol. XIII, P. 225.

77 Cf. Al-Shaṭibi, Al-Muwāfaqat, Vol. IV, P. 3.

وسلم وبين غيره واجيبوا بان احتمال ارادة غير النبي صلى
الله عليه وسلم بعيد وقد روى البخاري في صحيحه في
حديث ابن شهاب عن سالم بن عبد الله بن عمر عن ابيه في
قصته مع الحجاج - حيث قال له ان كنت تريد السنة فهجر
بالصلوة قال ابن شهاب فقلت لسالم افعله رسول الله صلى
الله عليه وسلم فقال وهل يعنون بذلك الا سنته صلى الله
عليه فنقل سالم وهو احد الفقهاء السبعة من اهل المدينة
واحد الحفاظ من التابعين من الصحابة انهم اذا اطلقوا
السنة لا يريدون بذلك الا سنة النبي صلى الله عليه
وسلم....⁷⁸

“(As regards the assertion of the Companion of the Prophet that such and such belongs to *Sunnah* - Majority considers it *marfu'* and Ibn `Abd al-Barr has conveyed agreement on it. He asserted that the above saying will be taken as *marfu'*, even if uttered by a non-Companion - so far as it is not associated with its performer like, the *Sunnah* of `Umarain, (i.e., Abu Bakr and `Umar). But the report of agreement is questionable. In this matter two versions have come down from Imam *Shāfi`i*. Abū Bakr al-Sairafi, Abu Bakr al-Razi and Ibn Hazm, from amongst the Shafi`ites the Hanafites and the Zahirites respectively, do`nt consider it *marfu'* and they argue that *Sunnah* is frequented between the Prophet (peace be upon him) and others. On the other hand, it is contended by others that the likelihood of aiming at *Sunnah* of anyother than the Prophet is remote. And Bukhari has reported in his *Sahih* a tradition on the authority of Ibn Shihab from Salim b. `Abdullah b. `Umar from his father in

78 Sharh Nukhbat al-Fikar, (Deoband, U. P., 1371 A.H.) P. 79. F.

his account with Hajjaj, when he told him (Hajjaj), "If you aim at the *Sunnah* then perform the noon prayer before time". Ibn Shihab reported, I asked Sālim, "Was that the doing of the Prophet?" He replied, "And do they mean by that except the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (peace be upon him)". So Sālim, who is one of the seven jurists of Madina and one of the *ḥuffaẓ* from amongst the successors, narrated on the authority of the Companions that when they applied the term *Sunnah*, they meant not but the *Sunnah* of the Prophet only (peace be upon him)".

To be more precise, *Ḥadīth* is the record of *Sunnah* and as such "Ḥadīth enshrines the *Sunnah*"⁷⁹ and the knowledge of both of them is rooted in tradition.⁸⁰ Dr. Subḥī Ṣāliḥ, in order to prove the two terms, *Ḥadīth* and *Sunnah*, as identical or relatively synonymous, poses the following questions :

فهل السنة العملية إلا الطريقة النبوية التي كان الرسول صلوات الله عليه يؤيدها بأقواله الحكيمة واحاديثه الرشيدة الموجهة؟ وهل موضوع الحديث يغاير موضوع السنة؟ إلا بدوران كلاهما حول محور واحد؟ إلا ينتهيان أخيراً إلى النبي الكريم في أقواله المؤيدة لأعماله وفي أعماله المؤيدة لأقواله؟⁸¹

(Is the *Sunnah* pertaining to action not the same Prophetic way which is supported by the sagacious utterances of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and

79 A. Guillaume, op. cit., P. 10.

80 Ignaz Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien*, 1961, II, P. 12.

81 *Ulūm al-Ḥadīth wa Mustalīhuhu*, (Beirut, 1965, 3rd Ed.), P. 9.

his rightly guiding and directing *Ahadith*? And is the caption of *Hadith* incompatible to that of *Sunnah*? Do, they both, not revolve around the same pivot? Do, both of them, finally, not end at the sayings of the Holy Prophet supporting his doings and at the deeds of the Prophet supportings his utterances?)

In consequence thereof, Dr. Subhī Ṣāliḥ concludes, that when such questions arise in the minds of the critics, they do not find any hesitation in acknowledging the unrefutable reality, that barring the etymological application, *Hadith* and *Sunnah* are one and the same thing. Hence, most of the traditionists declare them identical.⁸²

Maulavi Muhammad `Ali reiterates the above fact in the preface of his compendium on *Hadith* as under :

“It shows what the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, said and did, and what lives his Companions led. This is technically known as the *Sunnah* (lit., a manner of acting or a mode of life) of the Holy Prophet and is popularly known as *Hadith* (lit., a saying) being a record of what he said, did or approved”.⁸³

On the other hand, several attempts have been made by the orientalist and our so-called modernists, not only to keep ‘*Sunnah*’ and ‘*Hadith*’ permanently distinct from one another, but to explore the possibility of showing the contents of *Hadith* contradicting *Sunnah* and vice versa.

82 Subhī Ṣāliḥ, op. cit., P. 10.

83 A. Manual of Hadith, (Lahore n.d.) P. 3.

In this connection a saying of `Abd al-Rahman b. al-Mahdi is often quoted :

ان سفيان الثوري امام في الحديث والاوزاعي امام في
السنة وليس بامام في الحديث ومالك بن انس امام فيهما
جميعاً.⁸⁴

(That Sufyan al-Thawri was an *Imām* in the *Hadith* (but not in the *Sunnah*); and al-Awzā'ī was an *Imām* in the *Sunnah*, but not in the *Hadith*; and Malīk b. Anas was an authority in the both.)

While introducing the above mentioned great merit and masterly expert qualities of Malik b. Anas, Alfred Guillaume opines :

“But there is no necessary connexion between them (*Hadith* and *Sunnah*), and we often find that tradition is in conflict with custom”.... He further states : “Perhapes the best example of the distinction is in the title of a book cited by the *Fihrist*”,⁸⁵ ‘the book of the *Sunnahs* with confirmatory *hadith*’.

كتاب السنن بشواهد الحديث⁸⁶

Dr. Faḡlur Raḡman argues from the above illustration “that *Hadith* meant the traditional materials whereas *Sunnah* signified the deduction of practical norms from these materials by the exercise of

84 Al-Zurqāni, *Sharh al-Muwatta*, 1, P. 4, Cf. Goldziher, *loc. cit.*; A. Guillaume, *op. cit.*, P. 11; Faḡlur Raḡman, *Islamic Methodology in History*, (Karachi, 1965) P. 1.

85 Ibn Nadīm, *Al-Fihrist*, P. 230.

86 A. Guillaume, *loc. cit.*

understanding". And as such treading on the heels of Goldziher, he further justifies his stand by asserting :

"Similarly, Abu Dawud (apud Goldziher, *ibid*, P. 11, footnote 6). after narrating a *Hadith* about a person who kills an animal during the state of *ihram*, quotes Ahmad b. Hanbal as saying : 'There are five *Sunnahs*' (i.e. points of law) that follow from this *Hadith*".⁸⁷

The wordings of Imām Ahmad b. Hanbal i.e.,

في هذا الحديث خمس سنن⁸⁸

(Five *Sunnahs* are contained in this *Hadith*), are not honestly rendered into English by learned Dr. Sahib).

In reality, he has left no stone unturned in creating confusion and obscuring the whole issue of *Hadith* and *Sunnah*, simply, in order to decimate the authority of the Prophetic tradition, in the name of so-called modern scholarship and Islamic methodology in history. In fact his prepossessions led him astray. But the conscientious scholars of Islam in general and the Muslim Community of Pakistan in particular, have neither shared his progressivism, nor forgiven his "Confusionism and obscurantism".⁸⁹

The main points discovered by the minute researches of our distinguished modern scholar, mostly based on the presumptions of the learned orientalist, like Ignaz

87 Fazlur Rahman, *loc. cit.*, (F. N. 22. P. 146.).

88 Abu Da'ud, *Sunan*, Vol. II, P. 48.

89 Cf., Fazlur Reḥman, *op. cit.*, P. 70.

Goldziher and Joseph Schacht, may be summed up in the context of our present study as under :

1. That the *Sunnah* of the Prophet was very meagre, situational, and unspecific and there was a valid organic relationship between the *Sunnah*, *Ijtihād* and *Ijmā'*. Thus the free thinking activity of the early legists of Islam enriched the content of *Sunnah* to a great extent.⁹⁰
2. That the mass-scale *Hadīth* movement destroyed the *Sunnah*, *Ijtihād* and *Ijmā'* organic relationship and in order to make *Ijtihād* and *Ijmā'* operative again, we must infer the *Sunnah* validily from the *Hadīth*-material. A thorough reinterpretation and revaluation of different elements in *Hadīth* under the changed moral and social conditions of today is prescribed. "This can be done only by a historical study of the *Hadīth* - by reducing it to the "living *Sunnah*" and by clearly distinguishing from the situational back ground the real value embodied in it".⁹¹
3. The Prophetic *Sunnah* or Ideal *Sunnah* in sense (1), meaning thereby, an "authoritative" or "normative" precedent, progressively developed through the personal free-thought activity of the early generations of Muslims (*Ra'y*, *Qiyās* and *Ijtihād*) into living *Sunnah* in sense (2) - an agreed practice, identical with *Ijma'*.

90 Cf., *Ibid.*, P. 6.

91 *Ibid.*, P. 78.

“This shows that the community as a whole has assumed the necessary prerogative of creating and recreating the content of the Prophetic Sunnah and that Ijma’ was the guarantee for the rectitude, i.e., for the working infallibility (as opposed to absolute or theoretical infallibility, such as assumed by the Christian Church) of the new content”.⁹²

4. The Holy Prophet sought the advice of his major Companions on important policy decisions with regard even to religion and “thus in the behaviour of the Prophet, religious authority and democracy were blended with a finesse that defies description”.⁹³
5. Though *Ḥadīth* is not to be regarded in general as strictly historical, yet the terms “forgery” or “concoction” should not be used with reference to it. Instead the term “formulation” may be employed.

“This is because although *Ḥadīth*, verbally speaking, does not go back to the Prophet, its spirit certainly does, and *Ḥadīth* is largely the situational interpretation and formulation of this Prophetic Model or spirit. We cannot call *Ḥadīth* a forgery because it reflects the living Sunnah and the living Sunnah was not a forgery but a

92 Ibid., P. 19.

93 Fazlur Raḥmān, ‘Islam’, vide Islamic Methodology in History, P. 12.

progressive interpretation and formulation of the Prophetic Sunnah".⁹⁴

The overall character of the above findings, in its essential features is open to question and no conscientious Muslim is expected to share it.

A complete critical analysis of the same shall be presented in its proper place in the present study; here it is enough to point out that it is not only utterly irrational and completely nonsensical but also religiously dishonest and deceitful to hoodwink the real issue in the name of "progressiveism". The essential point we wish to make here is, that the religion of Islam was completed with the completion of the last revelation,⁹⁵ and the gate-

94 Fazlur Rahman, 'Islam', vide Islamic Methodology in History, P. 80.

95 Al-Qur'an : 5 : 3.

اليوم اكملت لكم دينكم واتممت عليكم نعمتى ورضيت لكم الإسلام ديناً

(This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour to you and chosen for you Islam as a religion.) All the authorities agree that this verse was revealed towards the close of the holy Prophet's life and no precept was revealed after it. It is even an explicit testimony to the perfection of religion in Islam, no such claim being put forward by any other revealed book or religion. It was regarding this occasion that some Jews told Ḥaḍrat `Umar : O, Amīr al-Mu'minīn, "Had this verse been revealed to us, we would have celebrated the occasion as 'Īd-day. Thereupon Ḥaḍrat `Umar replied, "Do'nt you know the day it was revealed on us, the Muslims enjoyed two *Īds*. It was revealed on the day of `Arafah, Friday-afternoon, the 10th A.H., on the occasion of Farwell-Pilgrimage, where more than forty thousand pious companions gathered around the holy prophet and he survived only for eighty one days after that".

way of Tashri`was closed till the doom's day with the expiry of the Holy Prophet's time. As such, only the Prophetic *Sunnah*, in addition to the Holy Qur'an is the infallible, the authoritative and the perfect Model covering the whole code of life, distinctly preserved for all times to come. So we do'nt need ``to recast the *Hadith* into living *Sunnah* terms by historical interpretation'' to modify and restate the case of determinism and free-will,⁹⁶ (taken for example by The learned Dr. Sahib, as if with him this is the most fundamental religious problem of Islam, agitating the minds of Muslims of the world). In fact the 23 years' exemplary conduct of the Holy Prophet not only covered prayer, *zakāt*, fasting and pilgrimage in their minute details but also laid down specific rules for the minutiae of all walks of life, covering almost every topic on which guidance may be sought. A cursory look over the subjects covered by Imam Bukhārī in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, which is divided into 97 books, will well illustrate the above claim, such as :

96 F. Rahman op. cit., P. 78. (It appears to be a great childishness of the twentieth century to name the "living *Sunnah*" of the 2nd century A.H. with all the legal religious and moral idea's wealth, on one hand, as chaotic and on the other hand to argue for and aim at again to recast the *Hadith* material into living *Sunnah* terms by historical interpretation.)

(Bad' al-Wahy)	- بدء الوحي	(Al-'Amal fi'l - العمل في الصلاة - Ṣalāt)	
(Iman)	- ايمان	(Sahw)	- السهو
(`Ilm)	- علم	(Janā'iz)	- الجنائز
(Wuḍū')	- وضوء	(Zakāt)	- الزكاة
(Ghusl)	- الغسل	(Hajj)	- الحج
(Haid)	- الحيض	(`Umra)	- العمرة
(Tayammum)	- التيمم	(Muḥṣar)	- المحصر
(Ṣalāt)	- الصلاة	(Jazā' al-Ṣaid)	- جزاء الصيد
(Mawāqit al- Ṣalāt)	- مواقيت الصلاة	(Fadā'il al- Madīna)	- فضائل المدينة
(Ādhān)	- الاذان	(Ṣawm)	- الصوم
(Jum'a)	- الجمعة	(Tarāwih)	- صلاة التراويح
(Ṣalāt al-Khawf)	- صلاة الخوف	(Fadl Lailat al- Qadar)	- فضل ليلة القدر
(Īdāin)	- في العيدين	(I'tikāf)	- الاعتكاف
(Witr)	- الوتر	(Buyū')	- البيوع
(Istisqā')	- الاستسقاء	(Salam)	- السلم
(Kusūf)	- الكسوف	(Shuḥ'a)	- الشفعة
(Sudjūd al-Qur'ān)	- سجود القرآن	(Ijāra)	- الاجارة
(Taasir al-Ṣalāt)	- تقصير الصلاة	(Hawalāt)	- الحوالات
(Tahajjud)	- التهجد		
(Al-Ṣalāt fi Masjid Makka wa'l-Madīna)	- الصلاة في مسجد مكة والمدينة		

(Kafālah)	- الكفالة	(Jizya)	- الجزية
(Wakālah)	- الوكالة	(Bad 'al-Khalq)	- بدء الخلق
(Al-Harth wa'l-Muzāra'a)	- الحرث والمزارعة	(Anbiyā')	- الانبياء
(Sharb)	- الشرب (المساقاة)	(Manāqib)	- المناقب
(Musākāt)		(Fada'il Aṣḥāb al-Nabi)	- فضائل اصحاب النبي
(Istiqrāḍ wa Adā' al-Duyūn)	- الاستقراض واداء الديون	(Manāqib al-Anṣār)	- مناقب الانتصار
(Khuṣūmāt)	- الخصومات	(Maghāzī)	- المغازي
(Luqṭa)	- اللقطة	(Tafsir al-Qur'ān)	- تفسير القرآن
(Al-Mazālim wa l-Ghaḍab)	- المظالم والغصب	(Fada'il al-Qur'ān)	- فضائل القرآن
(Shirka)	- الشركه	(Nikāh)	- النكاح
(Rehn)	- الرهن	(Ṭalāq)	- الطلاق
(`Itq)	- العتق	(Nafaqāt)	- النفقات
(Mukātab)	- المكاتب	(Aṭ'ima)	- الاطعمة
(Hiba)	- الهبة	(`Aqīqa)	- العقيقة
(Shahadāt)	- الشهادات	(Zabā'ih)	- الذبائح والصيد والتسمية على الصيد
(Ṣulḥ)	- الصلح	(Adāhī)	- الاضاحي
(Shurūṭ)	- الشروط	(Ashriba)	- الاشرية
(Waṣāya)	- الوصايا	(Al-Mardā)	- المرضى
(Jihād)	- الجهاد والسير	(Ṭibb)	- الطب
(Fard al-Khums)	- فرض الخمس		

(Libās)	- اللباس	(Istitābat al-Murtaddīn)	- استتابة المرتدين
(Ādāb)	- الادب	(Ikrah)	- الاكراه
(Isti'dhān)	- الاستئذان	(Hiyal)	- الحيل
(Da'awāt)	- الدعوات	(Ta'bir al-Ru'yā)	- تعبیر الرؤيا
(Riqāq)	- الرقاق	(Fitān)	- الفتن
(Qadar)	- القدر	(Aḥkām)	- الاحكام
(Al-Aimān wa'l Nuzūr)	- الايمان والنور	(Tamannī)	- التمني
(Kaffārāt)	- الكفارات	(Akhbār al-Aḥād)	- اخبار الاحاد
(Farā'id)	- الفرائض	(I'tisām bi'l Kitāb wa'l-Sunnah)	- الاعتصام بالكتاب والسنة
(Ḥudūd)	- الحدود	(Tawḥīd)	- التوحيد
(Diyāt)	- الديات		

When the biggest Islamic Republic of Pakistan founded in the name of religion itself refers in her constitution to *Kitāb* and *Sunnah*, it is aimed at something very specific by the later terms *Sunnah*, though flexible and not rigid, yet left well-bounded and well-formulated by the Prophet himself. He is reported to have said in his sermon of the Farewell Pilgrimage :

تركت فيكم امرين، لن تضلوا ما تمسكتم بهما - كتاب الله
وسنت رسولہ. 97

(I have left with you two things, if you hold fast to them you will never fall into error - the book of Allah and the *Sunnah* of his messenger.)

97 Ibn Hisham, The Sira, P. 969.

After the Holy Prophet, none can claim in Islam the infallibility, neither absolute nor relative, such as guaranteed by revelation or inspiration as assumed by the Christian Church.⁹⁸ Hence, the talk about the Prophetic *Sunnah* being "progressively developed" by the early generation of Muslims is not only an acute crisis of human confidence and uncompromising cynicism but an utter nonsense and religious dishonesty. Particularly important is the belief that Islam is the last revealed religion. Therefore, it is blasphemous to assign to anyone other than the Prophet the task of the formulation of the Divine religion. Though, it is a truth never to be surrendered that each Muslim must believe in the Holy Qur'an, as the words of Allāh, yet, it is equally true that no one can attain a genuine faith which is not largely the product of Prophetic instructions.

بمصطفی برسان خویش را که دین همه اوست

اگر بار نرسیدی تمام بولهبیت

With the above spirit, the word "Shari" is used as a technical term for the Prophet as the preacher of the *Shari'a*, but more frequently it is applied to Allāh as the law-giver".⁹⁹

Dr. Muḥammad Dā'ūd Rahbar, once elucidated the above point by saying :

"Human situations are inexhaustible. No book comprehensible by men can exhaust them, for such

98 *Supra*, P. 61.

99 Joseph Schacht, Art. *Shari'a*, *Shorter Ency. of Islam*, (E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1953), P. 524.

a book must be as big as the Universe itself. And who will read such a big book?¹⁰⁰

Therefore, it is only through the medium of a reasonable length of time that the spirit in which the more fundamental day to day situations of all times are to be met can be made known. No message can be sent to men except with reference to actual concrete situations. The Eternal Word of God speaks with reference to actual concrete situations. The Eternal Word of God speaks with reference to the human situations and events of the last twenty-three years of the Prophet's life, in particular. These years are the historical context of the Eternal Divine Word".¹⁰¹

Even Dr. Fazlur Rahman was constrained to acknowledge it and declared as such :

"It goes without saying that the Qur'an was taught as the nucleus of the new Teachings. But the Qur'an is obviously not intelligible purely by itself..... It would be utterly irrational to suppose that the Qur'an was taught without involving in fact the activity of the Prophet as the central background

100 Cf. Al-Qur'an, 18 : 109 : **قل لو كان البحر مداداً لكلمت**

ربى لنفد البحر قبل ان تنفذ كلمت ربي لو جئنا بمثله مداداً.

(Say : If the sea were ink for the words of my Lord, the sea would surely be exhausted before the words of my Lord were exhausted, though We brought the like of it to add (thereto);

Ibid., 31 : 27 : **ولو ان ما في الارض من شجرة اقلام والبحر**

يمده من بعده سبعة ابحر ما نفدت كلمت الله.

(And if all the trees in the earth were pens, and the sea will seven more seas added to it (were ink), the words of Allah would not be exhausted).

101 Art. The Challenge of Modern Ideas and Social Values to Muslim Society, P. 5. (Islamic Colloquium papers, Lahore, 1958).

activity which included policy, commands, decisions, etc. Nothing can give coherence of the Qur'anic teaching except the actual life of the Prophet and the milieu in which he moved".¹⁰²

Never in the history of the religions of the world we find a Book being revealed without the appointment of a Prophet, yet on the other hand, thousands of the Prophets were raised without being given individual, separate revealed Books. It is said that approximately one hundred and twenty-four thousand Prophets were raised in this world,¹⁰³ but only one hundred and four Divine Books were revealed in all.

اخرج البيهقي عن الحسن قال انزل الله مائة واربعه كتب
اودع علومها اربعة منها التوراة والانجيل والزبور والفرقان
ثم اودع علوم الثلاثة الفرقان.¹⁰⁴

It was possible because all the Prophets were equipped with *Hikmah*, a highly developed intellectual faculty,¹⁰⁵ which bestowed upon them not only knowledge of the true natures of things but also acquainted them with excellent ways and means of performing exemplary deeds according to the requirements thereof. It was a type of Divine Inspiration as is evident from the following quotations from the Holy Qur'an.

102 Dr. Fazlur Rehman, op. cit., P. 9.

103 *Supra*, P. 27.

104 Abdul Hayee Al-Kattānī, *Al-Tarātib Al-Idāriyya*, Vol. II, P. 169. (Beirut, n. d.)

105 E. W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, BK. I, Pt. 2, P. 616.

واذ اخذ الله ميثاق النبيين لما آتيتكم من كتاب وحكمة ثم
جاءكم رسول مصدق لما معكم لتؤمنن ولتنصرنه. ¹⁰⁶

(And when Allah made a covenant through the Prophets : Certainly what I have given you of Book and Wisdom -- then a messenger comes to you verifying that which is with you, you shall believe in him, and you shall aid him.)

Again, in *Surah al-Nisa'*, it has been mentioned with particular reference to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) as such :

وانزل الله عليك الكتاب والحكمة وعلمك ما لم تكن تعلم
وكان فضل الله عليك عظيما. ¹⁰⁷

(And Allah has revealed to thee the Book and the Wisdom, and taught thee what thou knewest not, and Allah's grace on thee is very great.)

In fact it was beseeched in the Prophetical prayer made by Hadrat Abraham while raising the foundations of the Sacred House at Macca :

ربنا وابعث فيهم رسولا منهم يتلوا عليهم آياتك ويعلمهم
الكتاب والحكمة ويزكيهم انك انت العزيز الحكيم. ¹⁰⁸

(Our Lord, and raise up in them a Messenger from among them who shall recite to them thy messages and teach them the Book and the Wisdom, and purify them. Surely thou are the Mighty, the Wise.)

As such, the appointment of the Holy Prophet has been termed a great favour of Lord Al Mighty; and the

106 Al-Qur'an, 3 : 80.

107 *Ibid.*, 4 : 113, C. f. 2 : 231.

108 *Ibid.*, 2 : 129.

fourfold functions of the Prophet mentioned in this connection do include repeatedly the teaching of *Hikmah* as well :

لقد منّ الله على المؤمنين إذ بعث فيهم رسولا من أنفسهم
يتلوا عليهم آياته ويزكيهم ويعلمهم الكتاب والحكمة. 109

(Certainly Allāh conferred a favour on the believers when He raised among them a Messenger from among themselves, reciting to them His messages and purifying them, and teaching them the Book and the Wisdom...)

All the above Qur'anic verses make it clear that the Holy Prophet was granted two things, the *Kitāb* and the *Hikmah* and he transmitted and taught both these things to his *ummah*. After quoting the above mentioned verses Imam Shafi'i argues :

فذكر الله الكتاب وهو القرآن وذكر الحكمة، فسمعت من
ارضى من اهل العلم بالقرآن يقول: الحكمة: سنة رسول الله. 110

(So Allah mentioned His Book - which is the Qur'an - and Wisdom, and I have heard those whom I approve as learned in the Qur'an saying that Wisdom is the *Sunnah* of the Messenger of Allah.)

وهذا يشبه ما قال، والله اعلم لان القرآن ذكر وأتبعته
الحكمة- وذكر الله منه على خلقه بتعليمهم الكتاب
والحكمة فلم يجز- والله اعلم- ان يقال الحكمة هاهنا الا
سنة رسول الله. 111

109 *Ibid.*, 3 : 163; 2 : 151; 62 : 2.

110 *Al-Risalah* (Ahmad Shakir Edition, Cairo, 1938) P. 78.

111 *Imām Shāfi'ī, Idem.*

(This is similar to that what He said; but Allāh knows best! For the Qur'an is mentioned first, followed by *Hikmah*; and Allāh mentioned His favour to His creation by teaching them the Book and the *Hikmah*. So it is not permissible - and Allāh knows best - For *Hikmah* to be called here except the *Sunnah* of the Messenger of Allāh.) He continues:

وذلك انها مقرونة مع كتاب الله وان الله افترض طاعة
رسوله وحتم على الناس اتباع امره - فلا يجوز ان يقال لقول
فرض الا لكتاب الله ثم سنة رسوله - لما وصفنا - من ان
الله جعل الايمان برسوله مقرونا بالايمان به - وسنة رسول الله
مبينة عن الله معنى ما اراد - دليلاً على خاصه وعامه - ثم
قرن الحكمة بها بكتابه فاتبعها اياه - ولم يجعل هذا لاحد
من خلقه غير رسوله. 112

(And this is because *Hikmah* is linked with the Book of Allāh and He has imposed the obligation of obedience to His Messenger, and imposed on people the duty to obey his orders. So it is not permissible to consider anything obligatory except that contained in the Book of Allāh, then the *Sunnah* of His messenger. As we have stated, Allāh made the faith in Him. And the *Sunnah* of the Messenger of Allāh clarifies the meaning of what Allāh intended; indicating His general and specific (orders). Then He linked the Wisdom implied in the *Sunnah* with His Book and made it subservient to the Book. Allāh has never prescribed this for any one of His creatures except His Messenger.)

In short, Imam Shāfi`i is very emphatic in declaring *Hikmah* referred to in the Holy Qur`ān as *Sunnah* of the Apostle of Allāh, ``which complements the Qur`ān``.¹¹³ A very interesting discussion has been recorded by Imam Shāfi`i in this connection.¹¹⁴ When A critic of *Hadith* objected to Imam Shāfi`i's point of view and put forward the argument that the wives of the Prophet were required by the Qur`ān to recite the *Hikmah* :

واذ كرن ما يتلى في بيوتكن من آيات الله والحكمة¹¹⁵

(And remember that which is recited in your houses of the messages of Allāh and the *Hikmah*.....)

Hence, it is evident that *Hikmah* is included in the Qur`ān, otherwise, who recites the traditions. Imam Shafi`i pleaded that in the verse : (يعلمهم الكتاب والحكمة) two separate things were mentioned, because conjunction (عطف) demanded distinction (تغاير). Therefore, *Hikmah* is something besides the Qur`ān and that is tradition. The critic questioned about the nature of recitation of *Hikmah* or tradition. The Imām replied, ``Recitation in Arabic language does not mean reading by sight from an opened book, but it signifies speech (نطق). And as the communication of the Qur`ān is proved through the word of mouth of the Prophet, similar is the case with *Hadith*. Had the meaning of recitation been the reading of an opened book, it would

113 Khalil I. Semaan, Ash-Shafi`i's Risalah : Basic Ideas, (Lahore, 1961) P. 2.

114 Kitab al-Umm, (Bulaq, 1321 - 5 A.H.) VII, PP. 282 - 287.

115 Al-Qur`an, 33 : 34.

have, consequently followed, that the Holy Prophet used to read before his Companions the Qur'ān by sight". It silenced the critic and he approved the significance of *Hadith*.

Prof. H. A. R. Gibb remarks :

"Where such traditions were found to exist, it was held, the rulings they contained, explicitly or implicitly, were decisive and mandatory for all Muslims. The *Sunnah* of the Prophet obviously superseded all other *Sunnahs*, and still more any speculative reasoning. This argument (elaborated by the jurist al-Shāfi'i d. 820) was so clearly unchallengeable that it was perforce accepted in principle by all the schools of Law".¹¹⁶

In the same way Ibn Qutayba has elucidated the thesis of the Divine origin of the *Sunnah* by putting forth very sound arguments and relevant examples.¹¹⁷

Similarly, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzī asserts :

والكتاب هو القرآن والحكمة هي السنة باتفاق السلف وما
 اخبر به الرسول عن الله فهو في وجوب تصديقه والايان به
 كما اخبر به الرب تعالى على لسان رسوله هذا اصل متفق
 عليه بين اهل الإسلام - لا ينكره الا من ليس منهم وقد قال
 النبي صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم انى اوتيت الكتاب ومثله
 معه.¹¹⁸

116 'Islam'.

117 Cf. *Mukhtalaf al-Hadith* (Cairo, 1909) PP. 194, 232.

118 *Kitāb-al-Rūh*, 2nd Ed. (Hyderabad Deccan, 1324 A.H.) P. 119.

(The Book referred to is the Qur'an, and the *Hikmah* is the *Sunnah* with the unanimity of the predecessors. And whatever was narrated by the Apostle on the authority of Allah is to be compulsorily testified and believed upon in the same way as that was narrated by Lord Almighty on the tongue of His Apostle. This is a basic fact agreed upon by all the Muslims and none denies it save those who are outside the pale of Islam. And the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "verily I am given the Book and the like besides.")

Thus it must be fully recognized that everything that the Prophet ordained, especially in religious matters, was decreed at Allah's Command :

ان الله شرح لنبیه سنن الهدی. 119

- the theological term is *Sunan al-Hudā*; and it was revealed to the Prophet as was the Holy Qur'an, with the difference that in the Qur'an, the Prophet was given the actual words of Allah, while in the case of *Sunnah*, the words used were his own but uttered under Divine guidance :

گفته او گفته الله بود - گر چه از حلقوم عبد الله بود.

Besides the *Hikmah*, the Apostles were granted *al-Mizān* as mentioned in the *Surah Al-Hadid* :

لقد ارسلنا رسلنا بالبينات وانزلنا معهم الكتاب والميزان
ليقوم الناس بالقسط. 120

119 Abu Dawud, *Sunan*, P. 47.

120 Al-Qur'an, 57 : 25.

(Certainly We sent Our messengers with clear arguments, and sent down with them the Book and the Balance, that men may conduct themselves with equity.....)

On another occasion, it has been mentioned with special reference to the Holy Prophet :

الله الذي انزل الكتاب بالحق والميزان. ¹²¹

(Allāh is He, Who revealed the Book with truth, and the Balance...)

The purpose of revealing the Balance is that people may justly conduct their lives by adhering to the example of the Prophet who acts according to the ordinances contained in the Book. The Prophet thus, is not only a preacher but also an exemplar. He translates the Divine Commandments into deeds, so that it is by following his example that people are led aright. The Balance is therefore apparently the standard conduct or *Sunnah* of the Prophet, which is as essential for the exact guidance of people as The Book itself. That is why it has been acknowledged even by the non-muslim orientalisists that all rules and regulations are found in the Qur'ān and in the *Sunnah*, the "Model Behaviour" of the Prophet,¹²² and are derived from the "Methods of utilizing"¹²³ these two sacred sources.

121 *Ibid.*, 42 : 17.

122 Joseph Schacht, The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence (Oxford University Press, 1950) P. 2.

123 H. A. R. Gibb, Muhammadanism, (London, 1950), P. 101.

In *Surah Al-Ma'idha* the Holy Prophet has been referred to as a *Noor* :

قد جاءكم من الله نور وكتاب مبين- يهدي به الله من اتبع
رضوانه سبل السلم ويخرجهم من الظلمات الى النور باذنه
ويهديهم الى صراط مستقيم. 124

(Indeed, there has come to you from Allah, a light and a clear Book. Whereby Allah guides such as follow His pleasure into the ways of peace, and brings them out of darkness into light by His will, and guides them to the right path.)

It makes clear that the Apostle of Allah is the greatest spiritual Light to guide humanity to the right goal. Still more, the Prophet has been spoken of as a light-giving Sun also!

يا أيها النبي انا ارسلتك شاهداً ومبشراً ونذيراً وداعياً الى
الله باذنه وسراجاً منيراً. 125

(O Prophet, surely We have sent thee as a witness, and a bearer of good news and a warner, And as an inviter to Allah by His permission, and as a light-giving sun.)

The Prophet thus, was allotted the central seat of guidance to make the fallen humanity rise to its highest eminence.

To sum up, the Divine origin of the practices and utterances of the Prophet assigned a sublime status to

124 Al-Qur an, 5 : 15 - 16.

125 *Ibid.*, 33 : 45 - 46.

tradition and it is therefore not surprising that from the very beginning of Islam the believers accepted it as the second infallible basis with the Qur'an.

3

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Islam has attached such great importance to the subject of the authority of the Prophets that it has assumed the status of an article of faith with the Muslims. The Holy Qur'an is replete with injunctions inculcating extra ordinary respect and reverence for the Prophets; and proclaims it indispensable for the faithful to have belief in all the Prophets and particularly the Prophet of the day, to whom unconditional obedience is to be rendered alongwith the belief in Allāh :

يا أيها الذين آمنوا آمنوا بالله ورسوله والكتاب الذي نزل
على رسوله والكتاب الذي انزل من قبل ومن يكفر بالله
وملائكته وكتبه ورسله واليوم الآخر فقد ضلّ ضلالاً بعيداً. 1

(O you who believe, believe in Allah and His Messenger and the Book which He has revealed to His Messenger and the Book which He revealed before. And whoever disbelieves in Allah and His angels and His Books and His Messengers and the Last Day, he indeed strays far away.)

1 Al-Qur'an, 4 : 136; Cf. 2 : 285; 57 : 7 - 8.

While drawing attention to the salient aspects of faith in Allāh, the Holy Qur'ān points out here that it should take the form of not only belief in God but also belief in His Angels, Books and Messengers, as well as, in the Day to come. A belief such as this is the only true belief. Again it has been proclaimed :

فَأْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَإِن تُؤْمِنُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَلَكُمْ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ.²

(So believe in Allah and His Messengers. And if you believe and keep your duty, you will have a great reward.)

Although on most all the occasions the reference to the belief in the Prophets is made together with the belief in Allāh, yet in *Surah Al-A'raf*, belief in the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is spoken of separately, highlighting his functions, without any reference to the belief in Allāh.

الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ النَّبِيَّ الْأُمِّيَّ الَّذِي يَجِدُونَهُ مَكْتُوبًا
عِنْدَهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ يَأْمُرُهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَاهُمْ عَنِ
الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُحِلُّ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْخَبَائِثَ وَيَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ
أَصْرَهُمْ وَالْأَغْلَالَ الَّتِي كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ فَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِهِ وَعَزَّرُوهُ
وَنَصَرُوهُ وَاتَّبَعُوا النُّورَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ مَعَهُ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ.³

(Those who follow the Messenger-Prophet, the *Ummi*, whom they find mentioned in the Torah and the Gospel. He enjoins them good and forbids them evil, and makes lawful to them the good things and prohibits for them impure things, and removes from them their burden and the shackles which

2 *Ibid.*, 3 : 178; 7 : 158.

3 *Ibid.*, 7 : 157; Cf. 57 : 28.

were on them. So those who believe in him and help him, and follow the light which has been sent down with him - these are the successful.)

The above verse also makes an important historic announcement to the effect that whatever the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) possessed in the form of knowledge was what he received through the Divine Revelation delivered to him as he had had no occasion to undergo any formal course of education. That is why the Prophet has been styled here as "Al-Ummi", like his countrymen of his time in general, who were not a people given to learning.⁴ Attention is drawn to this fact of the life of the Prophet because it fits into the picture of the Prophet looked forward to by the Torah and the Gospel.⁵ The unique influence of the personality of the Prophet to be exercised on his Companions and associates is quite evident from the following verses of Surah Al-Noor :

انما المؤمنون الذين آمنوا بالله ورسوله واذا كانوا معه على امر جامع لم يذهبوا حتى يستأذنوه ان الذين يستأذنونك اولئك الذين يؤمنون بالله ورسوله.... لا تجعلوا دعاء الرسول بينكم كدعاء بعضكم بعضا..... الآية. 6

4 Cf. *Ibid.*, 62 : 2 : (He it is Who raised among the illiterates a Messenger from among themselves)

(هو الذي بعث في الاميين رسولا منهم)

5 The Old Testament, *Deut*, 18 : 15, 33 : 2; The New Testament, *Matt* : 13 : 31, 21 : 33 - 44 ; *Mark*. 12 : 1 - 11 ; *Luke* 20 : 9 - 18 ; *John* : 1 : 22, 14 : 16 & 26.

6 Al-Qur'an, 24 : 62 - 63.

(Only those are believers who believe in Allah and His Messenger, and when they are with him on a momentous affair, they go not away until they have asked leave of him. Surely they who ask leave of thee, are they who believe in Allah and His Messenger.

..... Make not the calling among you of the Messenger as your calling one of another So let those who go against his order beware, lest a trial afflict them or there befall them a painful chastisement.)

While discussing the obligation of man to accept the Authority of the Prophet, Imam Shafi'i states :

وضع الله رسوله من دينه وفرضه وكتابه الموضع الذي ابان
جل ثناؤه انه جعله علماً لدينه بما افترض من طاعته، وحرّم
من معصيته وابان من فضيلته بما قرن من الايمان برسوله مع
الايمان به. 7

(Allah has placed His Messenger - with regard to His religion, His commands, and His Book - in the position, made evident by the Most Praiseworthy, of a standard of His religion by making his obedience obligatory and his disobedience as prohibited. He has made his excellence manifest by associating belief in His Messenger with the belief in Him.)

فلو آمن عبد به ولم يؤمن برسوله: لم يقع عليه اسم كمال
الايمان ابداً حتى يؤمن برسوله معه - وهكذا سن رسول الله
في كل من امتحنه للايمان. 8

7 Al-Risalah, ed. Ahmad M. Shakir, P. 73.

8 Ibid., P. 75.

(If a person believes in Allah only and does not believe in His Messenger, the name of the perfect faith will never apply to him, until he believes in His Messenger as well with Him. And the Messenger of Allah laid down the *Sunnah* for testing the faith of every one similarly.)

The Commentators of the Holy Qur'an do agree with Imam Shafi'i on this fundamental aspect of the Apostle that no faith will be perfect unless belief is shown and declared in him.⁹

In support of his above assertion of reciting the Prophet's name together with that of Allah, Imam Shafi'i quotes on the authority of his *Shaikh*, Imam Malik, the tradition of Mu'awiya¹⁰ b. al-Hakam, who said :

اتيت رسول الله بجارية، فقلت: يا رسول الله، على ربة
افاعتقها؟ فقال لها رسول الله: اين الله؟ فقالت: في
السماء فقال ومن انا؟ قالت: انت رسول الله، قال:
فاعتقها.¹¹

(I came with a slave-girl to the Messenger of Allah and told him, "O Messenger of Allah, I am under an obligation to free a slave; may I free her". The Messenger of Allah asked her, "Where is Allah"? She replied, "In heaven". Then he asked, "And who am I". She answered, "You are Messenger of Allah". He said, "you may free her".)

9 Cf. Tabari, *Tafsir*, IX, P. 422; Baidawi, *Tafsir*, PP. 137 - 38.

10 Imam Malik has not correctly recorded the name of this transmitter. Instead of Mu'awiya b. al-Hakam, he has reported, 'Umar b. al-Hakam, which is wrong, as pointed out by Imam Shafi'i & others.

11 Imam Shafi'i, *Idem*.

In *Surah al-Nisa* we find a very emphatic proclamation concerning the obligation of belief in the Apostle of Allah :

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ الرَّسُولُ بِالْحَقِّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَآمِنُوا خَيْرًا
لَكُمْ وَإِنْ تَكْفُرُوا فَإِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ. 12

(O mankind, the Messenger has indeed come to you with truth from your Lord, so believe, it is better for you. And if you disbelieve, then surely to Allāh belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth.....)

In *Surah al-Fath*, the believers are enjoined to help and revere the Apostle and the non-believers are threatened with burning Fire :

لَتُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتُعَزِّرُوهُ وَتُوَقِّرُوهُ... 13

(That you may believe in Allah and His Messenger and may aid him and revere him.)

وَمَنْ لَمْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ فَإِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ سَعِيرًا. 14

(And whoever believes not in Allāh and His Messenger - then surely We have prepared burning Fire for the disbelievers.)

Similarly, the opening verses of *Surah al-Hujurat* contain injunction which imply the utmost respect and reverence to be observed towards the Holy Prophet. These teachings are intended for not only to inculcate good manners and high morals but also for the regulation of social conduct of the Community :

12 Al-Qur'an, 4 : 170.

13 *Ibid.*, 48 : 9.

14 *Idem.*, 13.

يا أيها الذين آمنوا لا تقدموا بين يدي الله ورسوله...
يا أيها الذين آمنوا لا ترفعوا اصواتكم فوق صوت النبي
ولا تجهروا له بالقول كجهر بعضكم لبعض ان تحبط
اعمالكم وانتم لا تشعرون- ان الذين يعضون اصواتهم عند
رسول الله اولئك الذين امتحن الله قلوبهم للتقوى لهم مغفرة
واجرة عظيم- ان الذين ينادونك من وراء الحجرات اكثرهم لا
يعقلون- ولو انهم صبروا حتى تخرج اليهم لكان خيرا لهم
والله غفور رحيم. 15

(O you who believe, be not forward in the presence of Allāh and His Messenger..... O you who believe, raise not your voices above the Prophet's Voice, nor speak loudly to him as you speak loudly one to another, lest your deeds become null, while you perceive not. Surely those who lower their voices before Allāh's Messenger are they whose hearts Allah has proved for dutifulness. For them is forgiveness and great reward. Those who call out to thee from behind the private apartments, most of them have no sense. And if they had patience till thou come out to them, it would be better for them. And Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful.)

Having emphasized the need for belief in the Apostle, the Holy Qur'an turns to advance a corollary to it and that is the obligation of unconditional allegiance and strict obedience of the Apostle. It has been maintained that the Messengers were always appointed to be obeyed and followed :

وما ارسلنا من رسول الا ليطاع باذن الله... 16

15 Ibid., 49 : 1 - 5.

16 Al-Qur'an, 4 : 64.

(And We went no messenger but that he should be obeyed by Allah's Command.)

In reality it was considered to be the obedience of Allah Himself :

من يطع الرسول فقد اطاع الله....¹⁷

(Whoever obeys the Messenger, he indeed obeys Allah.)

Imam Shāfi'i keeping in view the importance of the issue under discussion has devoted a separate chapter to it under the caption :

باب فرض الله طاعة رسول الله مقرونه بطاعة الله ومذكورة وحدها. 18

(Allah's Command ordering obedience to the Messenger is both accompanied with obedience to Him and enjoined as well separately.)

Time and again the Holy Qur'an lays down the duty of the believers as under :

واطيعوا الله واطيعوا الرسول.¹⁹

(And obey Allah and obey the Messenger.....)

واطيعوا الله ورسوله ان كنتم مومنين.²⁰

(And obey Allah and His Messenger, if you are believers.)

واطيعوا الله ورسوله ولا تنازعوا....²¹

17 Ibid., 4 : 80.

18 Al-Risalah, P. 79.

19 Al-Qur'an, 5 : 92.

20 Ibid., 8 : 2.

(And obey Allah and His Messenger and dispute not one with another.)

In *Surah Al-Nur* it has been reiterated :

قل اطيعوا الله واطيعوا الرّسول فان تولوا فانا عليه
ما حمل وعليكم ما حملتم وان تطيعوه تهتدوا وما على
الرّسول الا البلاغ المبين. 22

{Say : Obey Allah and obey the Messenger. But if you turn away, he is responsible for the duty imposed on him, and you are responsible for the duty imposed on you. And if you obey him, you go aright. And the Messenger's duty is only to deliver (the message) plainly.}

In *Surah Muhammad* the same theme has been put forward in another form :

يا أيها الذين آمنوا اطيعوا الله واطيعوا الرّسول ولا تبطلوا
اعمالكم. 23

(O you who believe, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and make not your deeds vain.)

In all the above quoted verses the Command for the obedience of the Messenger is associated with that of Allah Himself, yet on so many other occasions, the need for the obedience of the Messenger is ordained separately with its underlying objective and aimed purpose. For instance let us consider the following quotation :

21 *Ibid.*, 8 : 46.

22 *Ibid.*, 24 : 54.

23 *Ibid.*, 47 : 33.

واقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَاطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ لَعَلَّكُمْ
 تَرْحَمُونَ.²⁴

(And keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate and obey the Messenger, so that mercy may be shown to you.)

Again, the authority of the Prophet has been asserted in another context where it has been made quite clear that those who do not believe in his orders and decisions are not actual believers :

فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىٰ يُحْكُمَ لَكَ فِيمَا بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيَسْلَمُوا تَسْلِيمًا.²⁵

(But no, by thy Lord! they believe not until they make thee a judge of what is in dispute between them, then find not any straitness in their hearts as to that which thou decidest and submit, with full submission.)

It has been agreed upon by the renowned scholars of Islam that this verse was revealed in connection with land watering dispute between a local of Madinah and Hadrat Zubair in which the Prophet gave a decision in favour of the latter. And this decision is a *Sunnah* laid down by the Apostle.²⁶

In addition to the obedience to Allāh and His Apostle, the Holy Qur'an on one occasion enjoins on the

24 Ibid., 24 : 56.

25 Ibid., 4 : 65.

26 Abu Yusuf, Kitab al-Kharaj (Cairo, 1347 A.H.) P. 106; Tabari, Tafsir, VIII, P. 519 - 23; Shafi'i, Risalah, P. 83; Ibn Hajar, Fath al-Bari, V. 26 - 31.

believers to obey also the ulu al-`amr, (اولوا الامر) meaning those in authority :

بِأَيِّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي
الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ فَإِن تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ
إِن كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا. 27

(O you who believe, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority from among you; then if you quarrel about anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you believe in Allah and the last Day. This is best and more suitable to (achieve) the end.)

Three basic principles are laid down in this verse for the welfare of the Muslim Community and proper functioning of the Muslim State affairs. In the first place obedience to Allah and His Messenger is mentioned; secondly, obedience to those invested with authority from among the Muslim; and thirdly, referring disputes to Allah and His Messenger only. In other words it is made clear that the Holy Qur'an and the Prophetic tradition are the final authority. While commenting on this very verse Imām Shāfi'ī argues :

فقال بعض اهل العلم: اولوا الامر: امراء سرايا رسول الله.
والله اعلم. وهكذا اخبرنا. وهو يشبه ما قال.. لان كل من
كان حول مكة من العرب لم يكن يعرف اماراة وكانت تانف
ان يعطى بعضها بعضا طاعة الامارة. فلما دانت لرسول
الله بالطاعة لم تكن ترى ذلك يصلح لغير رسول الله فامروا

ان يطيعوا اولى الامر الذين امرهم رسول الله لا طاعة مطلقه بل طاعة مستثناة فيما لهم وعليهم فقال (فان تنازعتم في شئى فردوه الى الله) يعنى: ان اختلفتم في شئى - وهذا - ان شاء الله - كما قال في اولى الامر الا انه يقول (فان تنازعتم) يعنى - والله اعلم - هم وامراؤهم الذين امروا بطاعتهم (فردوه الى الله والرسول) يعنى - والله اعلم - الى ما قال الله والرسول ان عرفتموه فان لم تعرفوه سالتم الرسول عنه اذا وصلتكم او من وصل منكم اليه. لان ذلك الفرض الذي لا منازعة لكم فيه لقول الله: 28
(وما كان لمؤمن ولا مؤمنة اذا قضى الله ورسوله امرا ان يكون لهم الخيرة من امرهم). 29

(Some learned persons have held that the term (اولوا الامر) signifies the Commanders of the Messenger of Allah's army. And God knows best. But that is what we have been told.³⁰

And this amounts to what Allah said, that the Arabs around Makkah were unaware of obeying command and the very concept of some submitting to the Command of others was repugnant to them. When, however, they made an obeisance to the authority of the Apostle, they

28 Al-Risalah, PP. 79 - 81.

29 Al-Qur'an, 33 : 36.

30 Some commentators hold that the phrase (اولوا الامر) has a wide significance, so that in different walks of life different persons would be in authority. Besides army Commanders it may refer to the leaders in matters of religion and law. Cf. Tabari, Tafsir, VIII, P. 495 ; Baidawi, Tafsir, P. 115.

did not deem it fit that such authority should rest with anyother person than the Apostle.

So they were ordered to show obedience to (اولوا الامر) (those in authority) - whom the Apostle himself assigned the Command - not absolute obedience but conditional one, with regard to their rights and responsibilities. But Allah said, "If you quarrel about anything, refer it to Allah", i.e., in case of disagreement Imam Shafi'i says, "And this is - if God will, as He said about (اولوا الامر), viz., that "if you quarrel" - And Allah knows best - they and the Commanders whom they were ordered to obey - should "refer it to Allah and the Messenger" for a decision on the basis of what Allāh and the Messenger decreed, if they knew it. If you do not know it, ask the Messenger about it when you meet him or any one of you who is able to approach him. For this is an obligation regarding which there is no dispute, in accordance with Allāh's saying; "And it behaves not a believing man or a believing woman, when Allāh and His Messenger have decided an affair, to exercise a choice in their matter".)

Imam Shafi'i further states :

ومن ينازع من بعد رسول الله رد الامر الى قضاء الله ثم
قضاء رسوله، فان لم يكن فيما تنازعوا فيه قضاء نصاً
فيهما ولا في واحد منهما - ردوه قياساً على احدهما.³¹

(With regard to the disputes which took place after the expiry of the Messenger of Allāh, the matter

31 Al-Risalah, P. 81.

was disposed off in accordance with Allah's judgment (i.e., as laid down in the *Sunnah*.) But if a clear verdict was not present regarding the disputed affair in the Book and the *Sunnah*, the same was deduced by analogy on the basis of a precedent found either in the Book or the *Sunnah*.)

Moreover, the achievement of the sublime goal of life, that is, the love of Allah, for which earlier nations have been boasting to the exclusion of other nations of the world,³² has been declared subservient to the adherence to the doings of the Messenger of Allah :

قل ان كنتم تحبون الله فاتبعوني يحببكم الله ويغفر لكم
ذنوبكم والله غفور رحيم - قل اطيعوا الله والرسول...³³

(Say : If you love Allah, follow me : Allah will love you, and grant you protection from your sins. And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.....)

This is a Divine proclamation to the effect that by following the Apostle, they will not only become beloved ones of Allah but also be granted forgiveness. It will be quite relevant to mention here that the above citation enjoins on the believers two things in connection with the authority of the Prophet, *Ittibā'*, *اطاعت* and *اتباع*, in Arabic means to follow the footsteps of someone,³⁴ whereas *Itā'at* signifies to obey the Command. This has been made clear in the Holy Qur'an with regard to the

32 Al-Qur'an, 5 : 18. **وقالت اليهود والنصرى نحن ابناؤ الله واجباؤه**
(And the Jews and the Christians say : We are the sons of Allah and His beloved ones.)

33 Al-Qur'an, 3 : 30 - 31.

34 Cf. Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, VIII, P. 26.

warning given to the calf-worshipping Jews by the Prophet of Allāh Ḥaḍrat Aaron, brother of Moses (may peace be upon them) :

ولقد قال لهم هارون من قبل يقوم انما فتنتم به وان ربكم
الرحمن فاتبعوني واطيعوا امرى. 35

(And Aaron indeed had said to them before : O my people, you are only tried by it, and surely your Lord is the Beneficent God, so follow me and obey my order.)

In this connection it is argued that as the traditions of the Prophet mostly depict his deeds and words Lord Almighty in order to make the pursuit of both these things obligatory on the believers, has used in the Holy Qur'an two separate words.³⁶ *Ittiba'* and *Ita'at* - the former covering the doings and the latter denoting the sayings of the Prophet.³⁷ Moreover, the term *Ittiba'* is nowhere used in the Holy Qur'an with regard to Allah, whereas the word *Ita'at* is employed time and again both for Allah and His Messenger. No human being can follow the absolute, Who is Infinite, Omnipotent, Omniscient, all Perfect and Good. Nothing is like Him³⁸ and human eyes cannot take sight of Him.³⁹ Consequently, Allah always raised up His Prophets from human beings as it was deemed important that those

35 Al-Qur'an, 20 : 90.

36 Cf. M. Ibrahim Sialkoti, Tarikh Ahl al-Hadith, P. 175, (Islami Publishing Company) Lahore, 1953.

37 Al-Qur'an, 3 : 30 - 31.

38 Ibid., 42 : 2 (ليس كمثلہ شیء)

39 Ibid., 6 : 104 (لا تدركه الابصار)

(قل ان كنتم تحبون الله فاتبعوني ..)

قل اطيعوا الله والرسول

who were intended to serve as guides and models for humanity must of necessity be entirely human in respect of their physical and mental attributes.

That is why the Holy Qur'an points to a most significant truth and a distinguishing characteristic of the Holy Prophet in these words :

لقد كان لكم في رسول الله اسوة حسنة لمن كان يرجوا الله
واليوم الآخر وذكر الله كثيرا. ⁴⁰

(Certainly you have in the Messenger of Allah an excellent exemplar for him who hopes in Allah and the latter day, and remembers Allah much.)

The Apostle is being pronounced here as the highest model of virtue for the faithful under all circumstances. The history bears it out that he not only gave practical rules of guidance in all walks of life, but also demonstrated by his own life a practical illustration of all those rules. Hence the believers are enjoined to follow the example of the Holy Prophet.

It will be interesting to note that though the Apostles' lives exhibited perfect *Uswa-i-Hasanah*, yet they cease to be of any help to us once we assign them super human status or presume Divinity in them. There has been a great deal of misunderstanding among different peoples of the world with regard to the nature of the Prophets. Some have gone to the extent of calling them the incarnations of Allah, others thought that the Prophets should be from among the celestial beings. But

40 Ibid., 33 : 21.

they forgot that only a Man-Apostle can well understand the needs and aspirations of human beings and it is only his guidance that can succeed among them. The entire concept of Prophethood is rendered meaningless as soon we accept the Prophets as gods incarnate or sons of God. They cannot serve as our ideals. We can follow only him who is a man of a like fashion as ourselves. The Prophet of Islam was made to announce repeatedly that he was but a human being among others whom Allah has appointed as His Messenger :

قل سبحان ربي هل كنت الا بشرا رسولا.⁴¹

(Say : Glory to my Lord! am I aught but a mortal Messenger?)

قل انما انا بشر مثلكم يوحى الى انما الهكم اله واحد...⁴²

(Say : I am only a mortal like you - it is revealed to me that your God is one God.)

The Holy Qur'an has attached such importance to the theme of the humanity of the Apostles that it has assumed the status of an article of faith in Islam.

Here arises the most ticklish question of the Philosophy of religion, viz., if the Prophet is a human being and all human beings are susceptible to err, then how is it possible to regard him infallible in his non-revelatory doings and sayings? Arguing on the basis of the Holy Qur'an itself, it goes without saying that the Holy Prophet said or did certain things either on account

41 Ibid., 17 : 93.

42 Ibid., 18 : 110.

of his own individual effort of opinion (personal reasoning) and common sense or on account of the result of his consultations⁴³ with the Companions and the Lord Almighty did not approve some of them. The Holy Qur'an cites the following five instances where the Divine disapproval of the Prophet's non-revelatory matters is manifested. In one of the early revelations it is stated :

عيس وتولى ان جاء الاعمى وما يدريك لعله يزكى او
 يذكر فتنفه الذكرى اما من استغنى فانت له تصدى وما
 عليك الا يزكى واما من جاءك يسعى وهو يخشى فانت عنه
 تلهى. 44

(He frowned and turned away, Because the blind man came to him. And what would make thee know that he might purify himself, or would be mindful, so the Reminder should benefit him? As for him who considers himself free from need, To him thou dost attend. and no blame is on thee, if he purify himself not. And as to him who comes to thee striving hard, And he fears - to him thou payest no regard.)

Imam Tirmidhi while discussing the background of the revelation of the above verses has reported that the blind man was Ibn Umme Maktum, who came to the Holy Prophet while he was explaining the doctrines of Islam to an assembly of the leaders of the Quraish and, interrupting, asked to be taught what Allah had revealed

43 Ibid., 3 : 158.

44 Ibid., 80 : 1 - 10.

to him. The Apostle taking this untimely interruption ill, frowned and did not pay any heed to his question, on which the Apostle was conveyed Allah's dislike of his approach. so much so that this chapter - `Abasa (عيس), received its title from the touching incident with which it begins.⁴⁵

Again in *Surah Al-Anfal* it is mentioned :

ما كان لنبى ان يكون له اسرى حتى يشخن في الأرض
 تريدون عرض الدنيا والله يريد الآخرة والله عزيز حكيم لولا
 كتاب من الله سبق لمسكم فيما اخذتم عذاب عظيم.⁴⁶

(It is not fit for a Prophet to take captives, unless he has fought and triumphed in the land. You desire the frail goods of this world, while Allah desires (for you) the Hereafter. And Allah is Mighty, Wise. Were it not for an ordinance from Allah that had gone before, surely there would have befallen you a great chastisement for what you were going to do.)

The Commentators are of the opinion that the above verses refer to releasing the prisoners of war taken at the battle of Badr after accepting ransom from them, which act, it is said, is here disapproved. While introducing the above two verses Ibn Hishām maintains :

“Then God reproached him (the Apostle) about the prisoners and the taking of booty, no other Prophet before him having taken booty from his enemy. Muḥammad Abū Ja'far b. 'Alī b. al-Ḥusain told me that the Apostle said : I was helped by dread; the whole earth was made a place to pray, and clean; I

45 *Al-Jami'*, 44 : 80.

46 *Al-Qur'an*, 8 : 67 - 68.

was given all-embracing words; booty was made lawful to me and to no Prophet before me; and I was given the power to intercede; five privileges accorded to no Prophet before me".⁴⁷

Similarly, in *Sūrah Al-Barā'at* it has been stated :

عفا الله عنك لم اذنت لهم حتى يتبين لك الذين صدقوا
وتعلم الكاذبين.⁴⁸

(Allāh pardon thee! Why didst thou permit them until those who spoke the truth had become manifest to thee and thou hadst known the liar-?)

This verse was revealed during the journey to Tabuk, where most of the hypocrites were not present. As Tabūk was a far away place - midway between Madīnah and Damascus, and the Arabs were not accustomed to fighting away from home, hence the insincere stayed back offering one excuse or another. But the Divine purpose in this last expedition of the Prophet was to bring about a clear distinction, and to expurgate the Muslim society of the hypocritical element thoroughly, hence the permission to stay away granted by the Prophet was disapproved by Allah.

Again it is announced in the same *Surah Al-Barā'at* :

استغفر لهم اولا تستغفر لهم - ان تستغفر لهم سبعين مرة
فلن يغفر الله لهم - ذالك بانهم كفروا بالله ورسوله والله لا
يهدي القوم الفاسقين.⁴⁹

47 *Sirat*, P. 484 ; Cf. *Sahih* Bukhari, BK. 7, Ch. 1, H. 2.

48 *Al-Qur'an*, 9 : 43.

49 *Ibid.*, 9 : 80.

(Ask forgiveness for them or ask not forgiveness for them. Even if thou ask forgiveness for them seventy times, Allah will not forgive them. This is because they disbelieve in Allah and His Messenger. And Allah guides not the transgressing people.)

Ibn Hishām reports on the authority of Al-Zuhri that 'Abdullah b. 'Abbās heard Hadrat 'Umar saying, "When 'Abdullah b. Ubayy died, the Apostle was asked to conduct the burial service; and when he went and stood by him about to pray, I changed my position so as to object to it and said, "Are you going to pray over Allah's enemy Abdullah b. Ubayy, the man who said so and so on such and such occasions? The Apostle smiled when I had made a long story and said, "Get behind me, 'Umar, I have been given the choice and I have chosen. It was said to me, 'Ask pardon for them or ask it not. If you ask pardon for them seventy times Allah will not pardon them.' Did I know that if I added to the seventy he would be forgiven I would add thereto". Then he prayed over him and walked with him till he stood over his grave until he was disposed off It was not long before these verses came down :

ولا تصل على احد منهم مات ابدا ولا تقم على قبره انهم
كفروا بالله ورسوله وماتوا وهم فسقون.⁵⁰

(And never offer prayer for any one of them who dies, nor stand by his grave. Surely they disbelieved in Allah and His Messenger and they died as evil-doers.) "Afterwards the Apostle never prayed over a disaffected person until the day of his death".⁵¹

50 *Ibid.*, 9 : 84.

51 A. Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad*, P. 623.

Similarly in *Sūrah Al-Taḥrīm* the Prophet has been reminded of as under :

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ لِمَ تَحْرِمُ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكَ تَبْتَغِي مَرْضَاتِ
ازْوَاجِكَ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ. ⁵²

(O Prophet, why dost thou forbid (thyself) that which Allāh has made lawful for thee? Seekest thou to please thy wives? And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.)

The above verse is said to contain a reference to the Prophet's forbidding himself the company of his wives for a month,⁵³ or to his having forbidden himself the use of honey in deference to the wishes of one of his wives.

The above citations disclose that certain *Ijtihādī* estimations of the Holy Prophet were disapproved by Allah and His disapproval was received from Allāh, it was inferred that the non-revelatory decisions and judgments of the Apostle were in conformity with the Divine Will. Thus it exhibits the human-nature of the Prophet on one hand and establishes his Divine protection from every sort of mistake on the other. The Holy Prophet was promised Divine protection or *ʿIṣmah*, as is mentioned in *Sūrah Al-Mā'idah* :

وَاللَّهُ يَعْصَمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ....⁵⁴

(And Allah will protect thee from men).

52 Al-Qur'an, 66 : 1.

53 *Sahih Bukhari*, BK. 65, *Hadith* 406.

54 Al-Qur'an, 5 : 67.

Imām Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī while Commenting on the word *Ḥimāh* states :

عصمة الانبياء عليهم السلام حفظهم بما خصوا به من صفاء
الجواهر ثم اولاهم من الاخلاق والفضائل ثم بالنصرة وتثبيت
اقدامهم ثم بانزال السكينة عليهم ويحفظ قلوبهم وبالتوفيق. 55

(The *Ḥimat* of the Prophets is Divine protection of them, firstly by characterizing them with purity of essence, then by granting them moral and spiritual excellence, then by helping them and keeping them firm, then by sending down tranquillity upon them and by the protection of their hearts and by the celestial succour).

Again, in *Surah al-Hajj* it has been proclaimed :

وما ارسلنا من قبلك من رسول ولا نبي الا اذا تمنى القى
الشيطان في امنيته فينسخ الله ما يلقي الشيطان ثم يحكم
الله آياته - والله عليم حكيم. 56

(And We never sent a Messenger or a Prophet before thee but when he desired, the devil made a suggestion respecting his desire; but Allāh annuls that which the devil casts, then does Allāh establish His messages. And Allāh is Knowing, wise.)

Keeping in view the significance of the above verses of the Holy Qur'an it can logically be concluded that the Apostle, inspite of his human nature which is susceptible to mistake, is by assignemnt made sinless and infallible

55 Al-Mufradāt fī Gharīb Al-Qur'an, P. 341 (Muṣṭafā al-Bābī Ḥalabī, Egypt - n.d.)

56 Al-Qur'an, 22 : 52.

under Divine supervision for the whole of his Prophetic career, viz., thirteen years at Makkah and ten years at Madīnah. That is why it is announced by Allāh with regard to the Holy Prophet :

ما ضلّ صاحبكم وما غوى وما ينطق عن الهوى ان هو الا
وحي يوحى. 57

(Your Companion errs not, nor does he deviate. Nor does he speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed.)

Two statements are made here. Firstly, erring on the part of the Prophet is negated to demonstrate that he had a correct knowledge or he did not err in theory; and secondly, deviation from the right course is negated to show that his practice accorded with the theory.

Even the unspoken approval of the Apostle (تقرير رسول), which forms a part of the Prophetic tradition, is claimed to have Divine Authority behind it. For the Apostle was duty bound to check the evil and to enjoin the good and as such it was not conceivable that any uncalled-for thing should have happened in his presence and he would have kept silent over it. As the Holy Qur'an commands :

يا أيها الرسول بلغ ما انزل اليك من ربك وان لم تفعل فما
بلغت رسالتك. 58

(O Apostle, preach that which has been revealed to thee from thy Lord; and if thou do it not, then thou hast failed to fulfil the function of a messenger.)

57 Ibid., 53 : 2 - 5.

58 Ibid., 5 : 67.

If the disciples or the Companions of the Holy Prophet said or did anything and he simply tolerated it, that was meant to have received the tacit consent of the *Shāri'*. And it drew its juridical authority from the various injunctions of the Holy Qur'an viz.,

يامرهم بالمعروف وينههم عن المنكر ويحل لهم الطيبات
ويحرّم عليهم الخبيث ويضع عنهم اصرهم والاغلال التي
كانت عليهم...⁵⁹

(He enjoins them good and forbids them evil, and makes lawful to them the good things and prohibits for them impure things, and removes from them their burden and the shackles which were on them...)

The above verse details out the various functions of the Prophet and assigns him legislative powers in Islam. The point is that the sayings and doings of the Prophet, i.e., his tradition is in practice a source of legislation as valid as the Qur'an, though it is not on the same level as the infallible Qur'anic Communications.

كما ارسلنا فيكم رسولا منكم يتلوا عليكم آياتنا ويزكيكم
ويعلمكم الكتاب والحكمة ويعلمكم ما لم تكونوا تعلمون.⁶⁰

(Even as We have sent among you a Messenger from among you, who recites to you Our messages and purifies you and teaches you the Book and the wisdom and teaches you that which you did not know.)

59 *Ibid.*, 7 : 157.

60 *Ibid.*, 2 : 151; Cf., 3 : 163; 62 : 2.

This verse discloses the four-fold specific duties of the Holy Prophet.

وانزلنا اليك الذكر لتبين للناس ما نزل اليهم...⁶¹

(And We have revealed to thee the Reminder that thou mayest make clear to people that which has been revealed to them.....)

The Apostle Muḥammad (may peace be upon him) is required not only to transmit and teach the Holy Qur'ān to the people sincerely and faithfully but also to explain the real purport of the Qur'ānic teachings and then give them a visible shape so that mankind may see, along with the injunctions of Allāh, the process of their transformation into reality and the outward forms in which they are to be crystallised. Words alone, however powerful and however pointed, cannot be completely comprehended unless these conjure before our minds definite forms and shapes. Hence it is indeed a great favour of Lord Almighty that, alongwith His message, He also sent to us His Messenger to elucidate and elaborate it, and then transmute it into practical reality under His direct supervision and guidance. It is through Muḥammad (Peace be upon him) that the Holy Qur'ān has been vouchsafed to us and it is in his august personality that we find its visible expression. In reality they are both so closely co-related, that we cannot conceive of their separate and independent existance.⁶² The Holy Qur'ān declares :

61 Ibid., 16 : 44.

62 'Abdul Ḥamīd Ṣiddīqī, Eng. Tr. Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Bk. I, Fas. I, P. 1, (Lahore, 1971).

هو الذي ارسل رسوله بالهدى ودين الحق ليظهره على الدين
كله.⁶³

(He it is Who sent His Messenger with guidance and the Religion of Truth, that He may cause it to prevail over all religions.)

It should be borne in mind that the word guidance has a wider significance than the term *Shari'ah* because the latter is also a part of the former. If we first look at the Holy Qur'an which could be a real guide to us in every walk of life because it is free from all alterations, interpolations and substitutions, we notice that the *awāmir* and *nawāhi* (commands and prohibitions), only form a small portion of it, although every verse of it is a source of guidance; hence the whole book is called *hudā*. No doubt Allāh gave *Shari'ah* (Laws) also to the nations and obviously these laws were only a part of the Book. The Holy Qur'an declares :

لكل جعلنا منكم شرعة ومنهاجا.⁶⁴

(For every one of you We appointed a law and a way.)

It may be asserted that every Prophet brought guidance with him, whether he brought a law or not. That is why it is said that Moses brought law and Jesus brought grace. Yet in the Holy Qur'an, we do not find any discrimination between Prophethood with a law and without law, though special mention of the perfection of

63 Al-Qur'an, 9 : 33.

64 Ibid., 5 : 48.

law, as well as guidance has been made regarding the Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) :

اليوم اكملت لكم دينكم واتممت عليكم نعمتى...⁶⁵

(This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed my favour to you...)

The Holy Qur'an, unlike most other religious books is not only a scripture containing principles and ideas alone but pre-eminently a book of practice; having a complete code of human conduct and behaviour; covering almost all the various aspects of human life for all the peoples and for all times to come. And, as such, practice requires demonstration. But who could be a better demonstrator than the person who received the Book direct from Almighty God and whose heart was illumined by a close impact of the source of all knowledge. Rightly, therefore, "the Prophet of Islam personally implemented the revelation. The period prior to the *hijra* to Madinah (B.H. 13 to A.H. 1) is of vital interest in stressing the fundamental personal character requirements. This period also affords guidance to Muslims living today, in non-Muslim states; for, in this period, the emphasis was on the personal and non-state aspects of *Shari'ah*.

In the environment of Madinah it became possible to apply the law of Islam not merely in its personal aspects, as had been the only amount feasible in Makkah, but also in the social, economic and political spheres as well. Furthermore, this all-embracing law of Islam was carried

65 *Ibid.*, 5 : 3.

out by the Prophet himself, and the precedents and conventions he established are of the greatest possible value to later generation in demonstrating how the *Shari'ah* of the Qur'an was applied to a concrete situation. (This was the period, i.e., A.H. 1 to A.H. 10), of the social Implementation of the Revelation.

For the thirty years after the death of the Prophet, until A.H. 40, the affairs of the Muslim Community were in the hands of the Companions or *Sahāba* of the Prophet, who endeavoured to follow the Qur'anic injunctions after the manner in which the Prophet had done so and which they had been privileged to witness..... This generation was successful in emulating the Prophet's manner of obeying the Commands of God essentially because they had been converted to Islam in their hearts."⁶⁶

In the light of the above observation it becomes easy to comprehend the real import of the saying of the Prophet.

عليكم بسنتي وسنة الخلفاء المهديين الراشدين...⁶⁷

(Follow my *Sunnah* and the *Sunnah* of the rightly-guided Caliphs.)

No doubt the term *Sunnah* or *Hadith* is occasionally referred to the example of the Companions as well as the successors of the Holy Prophet, yet it must be remembered that as the authority to formulate Islam lies only with Allah and His Prophet, the Companions are

66 Kamal A. Faruki, *Islamic Jurisprudence*, P. 21. (Karachi, 1962).

67 Abu Da'ud, *Sunan*, II, P. 506 (Egypt, 13771 A.H.)

considered as only the propagators of the *Sunnah* of the Prophet. Consequently, whenever and wherever, *Sunnah* or *Hadith* is ascribed to the Companions or the Successors, mention of the same is deemed necessary in order to preserve the original teachings of the Prophet distinctively. For this purpose in view the traditionists call the Prophetic tradition *Marfū'* (مرفوع) and that of the Companion and the Successor *Mauqūf* (موقوف) and *Maqtū'* (مقطوع) respectively. The Companions of the Prophet received the *Sunnah* from him just as they received the Holy Qur'an. The *Sunnah* of the Apostle expounded the Book and made it perspicuous in so many different ways.⁶⁸

Firstly, the basic practices of Islam which Almighty God has made obligatory on His believers in the Holy Qur'an cannot be executed without the precedent and mode of acting upon them by the apostle Muḥammad (peace be upon him). While commenting upon the point under discussion Imām Shāfi'ī writes :

فجماع ما ابان الله لخلقه في كتابه مما تعبدهم به لما مضى
من حكمه جلّ ثناء من وجوه..... ومنه: ما احكم فرضه
بكتابه وبين كيف هو على لسان نبيه مثل عدد الصلاة
والزكاة ووقتها وغير ذلك من فرائضه التي انزل من كتابه.⁶⁹

(The aggregate of what Allāh has declared to His creatures in His Book, by which He invited them to worship Him in accordance with His prior decision,

68 Cf. Imam Al-Ghazzali, *Al-Mustasfa*, I, P. 154. Imam Baqillāni, *I'jaz Al-Qurān*, PP. 70, 320 ; Al-Shatibi, *Al-Muwāfaqat*, III, PP. 310 - 14 ; Al-Amidi, *Al-Ihkām Fi Usul al-Ahkām*, II, P. 121 F.

69 *Al-Risalah*, op. cit., P. 21 - 2.

includes various types..... To it belongs the obligation which He established in His Book, but the modes of which he made clear by the tongue of His Prophet. The number of prayers and the (schedule) of *Zakāt* and their timings are cases in point; and there are other similar duties which He revealed in His Book.)

“The Qur’an is often succinct; it is in the practice of the Prophet that one must look for the method of application, the details and necessary explanations. An illustration in point is : The Qur’an has said only: “Establish the service of worship”, without giving the details of the manner in which it should be celebrated. The Prophet also could not describe everything merely by words. That is why one day he told the faithful : “Look at me, see how I worship, and follow me”.⁷⁰

صلوا كما رايتموني اصلى. 71

Inspite of the fact that the Holy Qur’an has emphasized time and again the importance of the obligation of establishing the ritual prayers, the uniformity found in its discharge throughout the whole Muslim World from the very inception of Islam till today was made practicable only by the Prophetic tradition.⁷² Otherwise, the Holy Qur’an speaks of the *salat* of the polytheists of Pre-Islamic Arabia as under :

وما كان صلاتهم عند البيت الامكاء وتصديتة. 73

70 Dr. Muhammad Hamidullah, ed. Introduction to Islam, P. 22, (Secunderabad, 1957).

71 Bukhari, Sahih Bukhari, I, P. 88 (Egypt, 1954).

72 Cf., Kitab al-Umm, op. cit., V, P. 113.

73 Al-Qur’an, 8 : 35.

(And their prayer at the House is nothing but whistling and clapping of hands.)

The point is that with the non-believer Arabs of the time of the Holy Prophet, this was the concept of prayer and how the Apostle of Allah performed the gigantic task of formulating the institution of prayer service, as envisaged by the Holy Book, can be visualized from a perusal of the chapters as captioned under the *Kitab al-Salat* of *Mishkat al-Masabih* :

١- كتاب الصلوة.

⁷⁴The Chapter on the Timings of Prayer

٢- باب المواقيت.

The Chapter on Observing Prayer Early in its period.

٣- تعجيل الصلوة.

The Chapter on Observing the Virtues of Prayer.

٤- فضائل الصلوة.

⁷⁵The Chapter on Observing Call to Prayer.

74 *Ibid*, 4 : 103 ; 17 : 78; Although the times of prayer were fixed by Divine ordinance, yet the scheduled time span of all the prayers was detailed out separately by the Prophetic tradition. The Prophet himself determined the time limits of each prayer by his sayings and doing under Divine guidance.

75 *Ibid*, 62 : 9; The institution of *Adhan* and *Iqamah* was established solely through the Prophetic tradition. From the day of the Apostle till today *Adhan* is being employed with the same wordings and details throughout the whole world and as such it is universally regarded as one of the signs of Islam (شعار الاسلام).

٥- باب الاذان.

The Chapter on Excellence of *Adhān* and the Response to the *Mu'adhdhin*.

٦- فضل الاذان واجابة الموزن.

The Chapter on Relating to the Virtues of *Adhān* and *Iqāmat*.

٧- فيه فصلان.

⁷⁶The Chapter on Mosques and Places of Worship.

٨- باب المساجد ومواضع الصلوة.

The Chapter on the Suitable dress (In prayer).

٩- الستر.

The Chapter on the Screen.

١٠- السترة.

The Chapter on the Nature of Prayer.

١١- صفة الصلوة.

The Chapter on What is Recited after the *Takbir*.

١٢- باب ما يقرأ بعد التكبير.

⁷⁷The Chapter on What is recited during the Prayer.

١٣- باب القراءة في الصلوة.

The Chapter on Bowing.

١٤- باب الركوع.

The Chapter on Prostration and its Excellence.

١٥- باب السجود وفضله.

76 *Ibid*, 72 : 18 ; Again, the tradition determined the whole earth as mosque (جعلت لي الارض مسجدا) *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī* Bk. VII, Ch. 1), except the under-noted seven places :
الزبله - المجذرة - المقبرة - القارعة الطريق - الحمام - معاطن الابل - فوق ظهر بيت الله -

77 *Ibid*, 73 : 20, The Holy Prophet declared the recitation of the Opening Chapter of the *Qur'an* Compulsory.

١٦- باب التشهد. The Chapter on The *Tashahhud*.

١٧- باب الصلوة على النبي وفضلها. The Chapter on Blessing on the Prophet, its Excellence.

The Chapter on The Supplication at the *Tashahhud*.

١٨- باب الدعاء في التشهد.

The Chapter Making Mention of God after the Prayer.

١٩- باب الذكر بعد الصلوة.

The Chapter on What is not premitted during Prayer.

٢٠- ما لا يجوز من العمل.

٢١- السهو. The Chapter on Forgetfulness (in Prayer).

The Chapter on Prostration during the Recitation of Qur'an.

٢٢- سجود القرآن.

The Chapter on Times when Prayer is prohibited.

٢٣- اوقات النهي.

78 The Chapter on The Congregation and its Excellence.

٢٤- الجماعة وفضلها.

The Chapter on Straightening the Rows.

78 *Ibid.*, 4 : 102 (واذا كنت فيهم فاقمت لهم الصلوة ..) The establishment of the congregational prayer by the Holy Prophet himself is being stressed in this verse. It was envisaged to be a unique force for the unification of the human race. Therefore, the Holy Prophet, while alive, always led the congregational prayer himself acting as *imam*; and when he was physically unable during his last illness to perform the function, he ordered that Abu Bakr should lead the *Jama'at*. The Holy Prophet's practice is conclusive proof that who holds the highest place of honour in the Community should conduct the prayer-service. The Muslims of the world today have overlooked this important *Sunnah* of the Prophet, hence they are down-trodden everywhere.

٢٥- تسوية الصف.

٢٦- باب الموقف. The Chapter on Where to Stand.

٢٧- باب الامامة.. The Chapter on The Office of *Imām*.

The Chapter on The *Imām's* Duty.

٢٨- باب ما على الامام.

The Chapter on The Manner in which one who is led in prayer by an *Imām* must follow him, and the rule applying to the one who is preceded by him.

٢٩- باب ما على الماموم من المتابعة وحكم المسبوق.

The Chapter on One who says a prayer twice.

٣٠- من صلى صلاة مرتين.

The Chapter on The *Sunan* Prayers and their virtues.

٣١- السنن وفضائلها.

٣٢- صلاة الليل. The Chapter on Prayer at Night.

The Chapter on What one says when one gets up during the night.

٣٣- ما يقول اذا قام من الليل.

The Chapter on Encouragement to get up during the night.

٣٤- تحريض على قيام الليل.

The Chapter on Moderation in what is done.

٣٥- القصد في العمل.

٣٦- الوتر. The Chapter on the *Witr*.

٣٧- القنوت. The Chapter on Humble Supplication.

The Chapter on Night Prayers during *Ramaḍān*.

٣٨- قيام شهر رمضان.

The Chapter on Prayer in the Forenoon.

٢٩- صلوة الضحى.

٤- التطوع. The Chapter on Optional Prayers.

The Chapter on the Prayer while travelling.

٤١- باب صلوة السفر.

٤٢- باب الجمعة. The Chapter on the Friday - Prayer.

The Chapter on The obligation of observing Friday.

٤٣- باب وجوبها.

The Chapter on Cleansing and going out early.

٤٤- باب التنظيف والتكبير.

The Chapter on The Sermon and the Prayer.

٤٥- باب الخطبة والصلوة.

⁷⁹The Chapter on Prayer in Time of Danger.

٤٦- صلوة الخوف.

The Chapter on The Prayer at the two *Eids*.

٤٧- باب صلوة العيدين.

The Chapter on the Prayer at an Eclipse.

٤٨- باب صلوة الخسوف.

The Chapter on Prostration in Gratitude.

79 *Ibid.*, 4 : 103; *Salat al-Khauf* is the only prayer details of which are given to some extent in the Holy Qur'an. This shows the importance of prayer in Islam which cannot be neglected even when facing the enemy in the battle-field. And the Holy Prophet is required to lead the same. Evidently what is meant is to provide the believers with the Prophetic example per excellence.

٤٩ - باب في سجود الشكر.

The Chapter on The Prayer for Rain.

٥ - باب صلوة الاستسقاء.

Space does not allow citation of illustrations here and as such attention may be drawn to the concluding remarks that the observance of the details supplied by the Prophetic tradition in connection with *ṣalat* is as important and obligatory as the Qur'anic injunctions regarding it. Otherwise the often repeated institution of *ṣalat* (prayer service) in the Holy Qur'an would have never been established in the world in a uniform way as it is seen today.

Similarly, the Holy Prophet was asked to collect *Zakat* (poor - rate) from the believers as under :

خذ من اموالهم صدقة تطهرهم وتزكيتهم بها وصل
عليهم.....⁸⁰

(Take alms out of their property thou wouldst cleanse them and purify them thereby - and pray for them.....)

In the terminology of Islam *Zakat* is the obligatory charity which forms with the keeping up of prayer the basis of Islam. It is the most important obligation next to prayer and that is why the Holy Qur'an is replete with the injunction :

واقبموا الصلوة واتوا الزكوة.⁸¹

80 *Ibid.*, 9 : 103.

81 *Ibid.*, 2 : 43, 83, 110 ; 4 : 77 ; 22 : 78 ; 24 : 56 ; 58 : 13 ; 73 : 20.

(And keep up prayer and pay the *Zakat*).

But inspite of its utmost importance the Holy Qur'an is again succinct with regard to its working details which were chalked out by the Apostle of Allah. Though the beneficiaries of *Zakat* have been specified under eight different heads through an ordinance from Allah :

أَنَا الصَّدَقَاتِ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَالْعَامِلِينَ عَلَيْهَا....

الآية. 82

(Charity is only for the poor and the needy, and those employed to administer it)

Yet the goods on which *Zakat* is to be paid to the exclusion of others and the percentage to be paid and all other minute particulars have been specified by Allah through His Prophet's tongue.⁸³ The Holy Prophet exempted certain things from payment, formulated the *niṣab* and particularly prohibited his family members to receive *Zakat* money. He laid down the *Sunnah* that the rate of payment on land products would be one-tenth if watered by rain or from a spring and half of the one-tenth if watered by wells and on *rikaz* (natural and hidden treasures) one fifth.

قال فيما سقت السماء والعيون او كان عشريا العشر وما

سقى بالنضح نصف العشر⁸⁴

..... وفي الركاك الخمس. 85

82 Ibid., 9 : 60.

83 Cf. Shafi'i Kitab al-Umm, Vol. II, P. 7, Imam Shawkani, Nayl al-Awtar, Vol. IV, P. 141.

84 Ṣaḥiḥ Bukhari, 24 : 55 ; Abu Dawud, Vol. II, P. 108.

Commenting upon the role of Prophetic tradition with particular regard to the establishment of the institution of *Zakat* Imam Shafi'i remarks :

ولولا دلالة السنة كان ظاهر القرآن ان الاموال كلها سواء
وان الزكاة في جميعها - لا في بعضها دون بعض.⁸⁶

(If it were not for the evidence of *Sunnah*, all goods would have been treated on an equal footing due to the literal meaning of the Qur'an and *Zakat* would have been imposed on all, not on some only.)

Similar is the case with Fasting and Pilgrimage, the other two recognised pillars of Islam. The fundamental ordinances are given in the Holy Qur'an.

يا أيها الذين آمنوا كتب عليكم الصيام.....⁸⁷

(O believers, fasting is prescribed for you...)

ولله على الناس حج البيت من استطاع اليه سبيلا..⁸⁸

(And pilgrimage to the House is a duty which men owe to Allah - whoever can find a way to it.....)

But the minute directions are contained in the Prophetic *Sunnah*. 'Adi Ibn Hatim, a Companion of the Apostle of Allah reports :

لما نزلت حتى يتبين لكم الخيط الابيض من الخيط الاسود
عمدت الى عقال اسود والى عقال ابيض فجعلتهما تحت

85 *Sahih* Bukhari, Vol. I, PP. 381 - 382, Imam Malik, Vol. I, PP. 249 - 50.

86 *Risalah*, P. 196.

87 Al-Qur'an, 2 : 183.

88 *Ibid.*, 3 : 96.

وسادتي فجعلت انظر في الليل فلا يستبين لي فغدوت على
رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فذكرت له ذلك فقال انما
ذلك سواد الليل وبياض النهار.⁸⁹

(When it was revealed, "Untill the *khait al-abyad* becomes distinct to you from the *khait al-aswad*", I betook myself to a black cord and a white cord and put them under my pillow, and I looked at them during the night but I could not distinguish between them; then I cam to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) in the morning and I mentioned this to him. He said, "By this is meant only the blackness of the nights and the whiteness of the day".)

The Prophet of Islam specified that the Fast not only consists in abstaining daily, from dawn till sunset, from food and drink and sexual intercourse but one must cultivate the habit of abstaining from evil, foul talk and falsehood.⁹⁰

As regards pilgrimage Allah imposed this duty on all who can find a way (*al-sabil*) to it. The Holy Prophet explained *al-sabil* to denote the necessary provisions and transport.⁹¹ He also specified the formula known as *Talbiyah* to be uttered by all the pilgrims in a uniform way while performing the duty :

لَبَّيْكَ اللَّهُمَّ لَبَّيْكَ لَبَّيْكَ لَا شَرِيكَ لَكَ لَبَّيْكَ أَنْ الْحَمْدُ وَالنِّعْمَةُ
لَكَ وَالْمُلْكُ لَكَ لَا شَرِيكَ لَكَ.⁹²

(من لم يدع قول الزور

89 Sahih Bukhari, 30 : 16.

90 Ibid, 30 : 8. (والعمل به فليس لله حاجة في ان يدع طعامه و شرابه).

91 Tabari, Tafsir, VII, PP. 37 - 46; Shafi'i, Kitab al-Umm, II, P. 96.

92 Bukhari, Sahih, 25 : 26.

(I am at Thy service, O Allah! I am at Thy service. "I am at Thy service; Thou hast no associate, I am at Thy service." Thine is the praise and Thine the favour and Thine the kingdom, Thou hast no associate.)

Similarly, the Prophet appointed places for entering into the state of *ihram*, called *miqat* for pilgrims coming from different directions, also known as *muhill*, the place of raising voices with *labbaika*.⁹³

عن ابن عباس قال ان النبي وقت لاهل المدينة: ذا الحليفة
ولاهل الشام: الجحفة ولاهل نجد قرن المنازل ولاهل اليمن:
يللمم هن لهمن ولمن اتى عليهن من غير اهلهم ممن اراد الحج
والعمرة ومن كان دون ذلك: فمن حيث انشا حتى اهل مكة
من مكة. 94

(It is reported by Ibn 'Abbas that the Prophet appointed for the people of Madinah Dhu-l-Hulaifah as the place where they should enter into the state of *ihram*; for the people of Syria, Juhfah; for the people of Najd, Qarn al-Manazil; and for the people of Yaman, Yalamlam. These are for them and for those who come upon them from other places, of those who have determined the performance of the *Hajj* and *Umrah*; and for him who is on the nearer side, the appointed place is from where he starts, so that for the people of Makkah it is Makkah.)

93 *Ibid.*, 25 : 7.

94 *Ibid.*, 25 : 62.

He also specified the time of pilgrimage, and other procedural matters like the inaugural circumambulation (طواف قدوم⁹⁵) of the Ka'bah, the first devotional act of *Hajj*, halt at 'Arafat on the 9th Dhu-l-Hijjah called (وقوف العرفاة), the most important devotional act of *Hajj* so much so that there is no *Hajj* without it,⁹⁶ and passing of the night at Muzdalifah, where the *Maghrib* and 'Ishā' prayers are to be Combined,⁹⁷ the throwing of the stones at Mina (Jamrah), the shaving of the head or clipping of the hair⁹⁸ and the final devotional acts, the *tawāf al-ifādah* (طواف الافاضة⁹⁹) the *tawāf al-wadā'* (طواف الوداع), etc. The Holy Prophet performed the *Hajj* and decreed :

خذوا عني مناسككم...¹⁰⁰

(Learn from me your formalities of (Hajj)).

A Companion of the Prophet named Al-Aqra' asked him :

يا رسول الله - الحج في كل سنة او مرة واحدة.

95 Idem, In the *tawaf*, the first three circuits are made running and the last four walking.

96 Here the Holy Prophet delivered his famous Farewell Sermon on the mount known as the Jabal al-Rahmah (جبل الرحمة). Now every year pilgrims halt at 'Arafat, only for a few hours, from afternoon till sunset, and the *Imām* delivers a sermon on the mount and the *Zuhr* and 'Aṣr prayers are combined here.

97 Bukhari, Saḥiḥ, 25 : 96.

98 Ibid., 25 : 127.

99 Ibid., 25 : 104.

100 Muslim, Saḥiḥ, Vol. II, H. No. 310, P. 943; Jami' Bayan al-'Ilm Vol. II, P. 190.

(O Messenger of Allāh! Is the pilgrimage to be performed every year or only once?)

قال بل مرة واحدة فمن زاد فهو تطوع. 101

(He replied: "Only once; and whoever does it more than once, it is supererogatory".)

It is evident from above that the Holy Prophet explained Allāh's prescribed acts and all other matters connected with them, including their time of fulfilment and the mode of their performance through his doings and sayings, which became as binding and obligatory on the believers as the communications of Allāh.

Imam Shaṭibi writes :

كل ذلك بيان لما وقع مجملا في القرآن، وهو الذي يظهر
دخوله تحت الآية الكريمة وانزلنا اليك الذكر لتبين للناس ما
نزل اليهم. 102

(All that is a clear explanation of the Qur'anic injunctions which draws its authority from the verse : And We have revealed to thee the Reminder that thou mayest make clear to men that which has been revealed to them.)

Imran b. Husain, a renowned Companion of the Prophet once said to a man, "you are a fool." "Do you find in the Book of Allāh, the noon prayer mentioned with four cycles and silent recitals from the Qur'an?"

101 Abu Dawud, op. cit., Bk. 11, Ch. I.

102 Al-Muwafaqat, Vol. IV, P. 26; Cf. Imam Sha'rani, Kitab al-Mizan, Vol. I, P. 34.

Then he enumerated the duties of prayer, *Zakat* and the like and said ``Do you find all this in the Book explained perspicuously? Verily the Book has given them in short and the *Sunnah* has detailed them out''.¹⁰³

Similarly, a large number of Prophetic tradition, inter alia, specifies and particularizes the general injunctions of the Holy Qur'an and this fact bestowes on the tradition utmost legal importance. The topic has been fully discussed in most of the works on Islamic Jurisprudence and as a matter of fact, Prophetic tradition has been recognized as an important source of Islamic law since the life time of the Prophet himself.

``All the orthodox Muslim Jurists, however, are unanimously of the opinion that every tradition of the Prophet which is proved to be reliable according to the canons laid down by them and is of religious character, is of great legal importance, second only to that of the Qur'an. In this there is no difference of opinion between the traditionists and those who are known as *Aṣḥab al-Ra'iy* (the people of opinion). All the important Muslim Jurists belonging to the first three generations of the Muslims preferred the traditions to *Qiyas*. As a matter of fact, many of them refused to express their own opinion on legal matters in cases in which no tradition was known to them.¹⁰⁴ The practices followed by the Companions were also accepted as legal authority by the Muslims of the next two generations, because

103 Cf. Ibn Qayyim, *I'lam al-Mūwaqqi'in*, Vol. II, P. 288; Shafi'i, *Risalah*, P. 177; *Al-Muwafaqat*, Idem.

104 Shafi'i, *Risalah*, PP. 117 - 119; Ibn `Abd al-Barr, *Jami' Bayan al-`Ilm*, II, PP. 31 - 33.

they reasonably presumed that they must have been based on the traditions and the practices of the Prophet, which were followed by the Companions scrupulously after due consideration. This was the basis of the principle followed by Imam Malik in accepting the practices of the Companions as an important legal authority".¹⁰⁵

It must be fully recognised that Muslim law seeks to regulate the entire field of human life, in its material aspect as well as the spiritual one. That is why it comprises not only the law of inheritance (*فرائض*), the *hadd*-punishments, the commandments and prohibitions but covers the totality of Allāh's Commandments relating to the activities of man. It comprises, without restriction, as an infallible doctrine of duties, the whole of the religious, political, social, domestic and private life of those who profess Islam, and the activities of the members of other faiths, so far as they may not be detrimental to Islam. A manual on Islamic law usually begins with the rites and practices of the cult, and discusses under this caption also the constitutional question of sovereignty, since the Imām, who is the head of the state is also the ex-officio leader of the service of worship in the Mosque.¹⁰⁶ One should not, therefore, be surprised that this part includes also the head of the payment of taxes,¹⁰⁷ since the Holy Qur'an has often

105 Dr. M. Z. Siddiqi, *Hadith Literature*, P. 197.

106 The Holy Prophet himself led the five times daily prayers in his Madinah Mosque till his last days. After him, all the four rightly-guided caliphs did the same.

107 It was because of this that the first Caliph of Islam Abū Bakar realized from the defaulters *Zakat* money by force, saying :

spoken of worship and the *Zakāt*-tax in the same breath. Thereafter are discussed contractual relations of all sorts; then the crimes and penalties, and finally the rules governing heritage and wills. The prescriptions of the Muslim law may be classed in three main groups according to their subject :

1. *ʿIbādāt* (regulations relating to worship and ritual duties),
2. *Muʿamalāt* (obligations regarding civil and legal matters) and
3. *ʿUqūbāt* (punishments).

Space does not allow citation of illustrations where the Prophetic tradition specified the Qurʾānic regulations regarding juridical and political nature. Still, to catch a fleeting glimpse of what has been wrought by the *Sunnah*, attention may be drawn to but one or two examples.

Regarding inheritance, the Holy Qurʾān declares :

بوصيكم الله في اولادكم للذكر مثل حظّ الاثنتين فان كن
نساءً فوق اثنتين فلهنّ ثلثا ما ترك...¹⁰⁸

ولكم نصف ما ترك ازواجكم ان لم يكن لهن ولد فان كان
لهن ولد فلکم الربع مما تركن من بعد وصية يوصين بها او
دين... وصية من الله والله عليم حلیم.¹⁰⁹

والله لا قاتلن من فرق بين الصلوة والزكوة

108 Al-Qurʾān, 4 : 11.

109 *Ibid.*, 4 : 12.

(Allāh enjoins you concerning your children : for the male is the equal of the portion of two females; but if there be more than two females, two thirds of what the deceased leaves is theirs; and if there be one, for her is the half And yours is half of what your wives leave if they have no child; but if they have a child, your share is a fourth of what they leave after payment of any bequest they may have bequeathed or a debt — This is an ordinance from Allāh : and Allah is Knowing, Forbearing.)

Imam Shafi'i while commenting upon the above verses under the sub-heading :

باب ما نزل عاما دلت السنة خاصة على انه يراد به
الخاص. 110

maintains :

فابان ان للوالدين والازواج مما سمي في الحالات وكان عام
المخرج فدلّت سنة رسول الله على انه انما اريد به بعض
الوالدين والازواج دون بعض وذلك ان يكون دين الوالدين
والمولود والزوجين واحدا ولا يكون الوارث منهما قاتلا ولا
مملوكا. 111

(So it is made clear that parents and wives are among those Allah named in various circumstances. But the *Sunnah* of the Prophet indicated that these general terms intended to mean only some fathers and wives, excluding others, provided that the religion of the fathers, children and wives is the

110 Chapter dealing with the General Revealed Declaration which the *Sunnah* specifically indicates is meant to be particular.

111 *Risalah*, P. 65.

same,¹¹² and that each heir is neither a killer¹¹³ nor a slave.¹¹⁴

Moreover, the Apostle of Allah made it plain that bequests must not exceed one third of the deceased's estate,¹¹⁵ and the heirs cannot benefit through bequests¹¹⁶ and he also made it clear that debts take precedence over bequests and inheritance.

112 The Holy Prophet said, "The Muslim cannot inherit from a non-Muslim, nor the non-Muslim from the Muslim".

قال رسول الله صلعم: "لا يرث المسلم الكافر ولا الكافر المسلم"

Cf., Imām Mālik, Muwatta, Vol. II, P. 519; Muslim, Sahih, Vol. XI, P. 51; Imām Shāfi'i, Kitāb al-Umm, Vol. IV, P. 2; Abu Dāwūd, Sunan, Vol. III, P. 125; Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal, Musnad, Vol. V, P. 200.

113 The Holy Prophet said, "He who kills cannot inherit".

(قال رسول الله صلعم: "ليس لقاتل شئ")

Cf. Imām Mālik, Muwatta, Vol. III, P. 70; Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal, Musnad, Vol. I, P. 49; Abu Dawud, Sunan, Vol. IV, P. 313; Imām Tirmidhī, Sunan, Vol. II, P. 14. Imām Shawkānī Nayl al-Awtar, Vol. VI, PP. 194 - 196.

114 The Holy Prophet said, "He who sells a slave possessing property, the property belongs to the seller unless the buyer stipulated otherwise".

قال رسول الله صلعم:

"من باع عبدا وله مال فماله للبائع الا ان يشترطه المبتاع"

Cf., Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal, Musnad, Vol. II, P. 9; Imām Shāfi'i, Kitāb al-Umm, Vol. IV, P. 3; Abū Dāwūd, Sunan, Vol. III, P. 268.

115 Cf. Imām Shāfi'i, Kitāb al-Umm, Vol. IV, P. 24; Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal, Musnad, Vol. IV, P. 426; Imām Muslim, Sahih, Vol. II, P. 23; Abū Dāwūd, Sunan, Vol. IV, P. 50; Imām Tirmidhī Sunan, Vol. I, P. 255; Imām Nasā'i Sunan, Vol. I, P. 278.

116 The Holy Prophet said, "No bequest to a successor is valid, nor shall a believer be slain for an unbeliever".

قال النبي صلعم: لا وصية لوارث ولا يقتل مومن بكافر

Similarly the Lord Almighty enjoins :

والسَّارِقُ وَالسَّارِقَةُ فَاقْطَعُوا أَيْدِيَهُمَا جَزَاءً بِمَا كَسَبَا نَكَالًا
من الله. 117

(As for the thief, male and female, cut off their hands as a punishment for what they have earned - a chastisement from Allāh.)

The Holy Prophet made it plain that the cutting off the hand of the thief was intended to be the punishment for one who steals a thing which is not liable to be picked up by people,¹¹⁸ and that the price of the thing stolen should at least be a quarter of a *dīnār*.¹¹⁹ He also specified the joint where from the hand is to be cut off.

He also prohibited certain foods :

اكل كل ذى ناب من السباع حرام. 120

(The eating of any of the beasts which have fangs is forbidden.)

And declared lawful others :

احلت الميتتان - الميتان والجراد. 121

Cf. Imam Shāfi'i, Kitāb al-Umm, Vol. IV, P. 27; Abū Dāwūd, Sunan, Vol. III, P. 113; Imām Shawkāni, Nayl al-Awtār, Vol. VI, P. 43; Dārimī Sunan, Vol. II, P. 149; Ibn Sa'd, Tabaqāt, Vol. II, P. 131.

117 Al-Qur'ān, 5 : 38.

118 Abū Dāwūd, Sunan, Vol. IV, P. 138.

119 Imām Shāfi'i Kitāb al-Umm, Vol. VI, P. 118; Abū Dāwūd Sunan, Vol. IV, P. 136; Imām Mālik, Muwattā', Vol. II, P. 839.

120 Abū Dāwūd, Sunan, Vol. III, P. 355.

121 Al-Shaṭībī, Al-Muwāfaqāt, Vol. IV., P. 38.

(Two dead (bodies) are permissible, the fish and the locust.)

On several occasions, the Qur'ān has, after instituting certain prohibitions, expressly added that all the rest was lawful in the relevant field. So, all that does not go against the legislation emanating from the Prophet is permissible, and constitutes good law. There are in the Qur'ān numerous examples concerning legislation but we have discussed only some of the general principles on the strength of which the meanings of other examples may be sought. It goes without saying that these examples suffice us for others hitherto not dealt with.

To sum up, it is in the Prophetic tradition that one must look for the method of application, the details and necessary explanations of the Qur'ānic injunctions. Maulanā Sulaimān Nadwī has employed such a beautiful metaphor to express the point under discussion that we cannot resist the temptation of quoting him in verbatim :

علم القرآن اگر اسلامی علوم میں دل کی حیثیت رکھتا ہے
تو علم حدیث شہ رگ کی - یہ شہ رگ اسلامی علوم کے
تمام اعضاء و جوارح تگ خون پہنچا کر ہر آن ان کیلئے
تازہ زندگی کا سامان پہنچاتا رہتا ہے - آیات کا شان
نزول اور انکی تفسیر، احکام القرآن کی تشریح و تعیین،
اجمال کی تفصیل، عموم کی تخصیص مبہم کی تعیین -
سب علم حدیث کے ذریعہ معلوم ہوتی ہے۔ 122

122 Manazir Ahsan Gilani, Tadwīn Hadīth, (Karachi, 1956), P. 5.

The status of Hadrat Muḥammad (peace be upon him) as the Messenger of Allāh ``was responsible for the exceptional prestige he held. So much so that not only his words, but even his acts also constituted law for the Muslims in all walks of life; even his very silence implied that he did not oppose a custom which was practised around him by his adherents. This triple source of legislation, viz., his words, his deeds, and his tacit approval of the practices and customs of his adherents, has been preserved to us in the Qur'ān and the *Hadith*.....

The death of the Prophet marks the cessation of the Divine revelations which had the force of ordering every law, abrogating or modifying every old custom or practice. Thereafter the Muslim community was obliged to be contented with the legislation already accomplished by the Prophet, and with the means of the development of law authorized by this same legislation".¹²³

The present writer fully endorses the point of view of Imām Sha'rānī when he states that he heard Shaikh al-Islam Zakariyyā saying :

لولا بيان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم والمجتهدين لنا ما
اجعل في الكتاب والسنة لما قدر احد منا على ذلك كما
ان الشارع لولا بين لنا بسنته احكام الطهارة ما اهدينا
لكيفيتها من القرآن ولا قدرنا على استخراجها منه وكذلك
القول في بيان عدد ركعات الصلوات من فرض ونفل

¹²³ Muḥammad Ḥamidulah, Ed. Introduction to Islam, P. 107.

وكذلك القول في احكام الصوم والحج والزكاة وكيفيةها
 وبيان انصبتها وشروطها وبيان فرضها وسنتها وكذلك
 القول في سائر الاحكام التي وردت مجملة في القرآن لولا
 ان السنة بينت لنا ذلك ما عرفناه والله تعالى في ذلك
 حكم واسرار يعرفها العارفون.¹²⁴

124 Kitāb al-Mizān, Vol. I, PP. 34 - 35; Cf. Imām Shāfi'i, Risālah, P. 66 and PP. 72 - 73.

4

**THE ROLE OF
TRADITION IN ISLAM**

The role of tradition in Islam is tremendous. It is multifarious, universal and everlasting.

For the first time in the history of world religion we find the Prophet of Islam, Haḍrat Muḥammad (peace be upon him) being Commanded by Lord Almighty to proclaim to the world :

قل يا أيها الناس انى رسول الله اليكم جميعا. ¹

(Say : O mankind, surely I am the Messenger of Allah to you all.)

Similarly, at another occasion the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) is spoken of and having been sent to the whole of mankind.

وما ارسلناك الا كافة للناس بشيرا ونذيرا..... ²

(And We have not sent thee but as a bearer of good news and as a warner to all mankind.)

1 Al-Qur'an, 7/158.

2 Ibid., 34/28.

Again it is said about the Holy Prophet :

تبارك الذي نزل الفرقان على عبده ليكون للعالمين نذيرا.³

(Blessed is He Who sent down the *Furqan* upon His servant that he might be a warner to the nations.)

Thus with the appearance of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) a new era had dawned in which the idea of nationality would give place to the broader idea of one humanity. That is why his very advent has been named as a mercy to the nations :

وما ارسلناك الا رحمة للعالمين.⁴

(And We have not sent thee but as a mercy to the nations.)

No other Prophet ever claimed to have been raised for all the nations. On the other hand Jesus Christ clearly said : ``There is still much that I could say to you, but the burden would be too great for you now. However, when he comes who is the spirit of truth, he will guide you into all truth".⁵ On another occasion he is reported to have replied to a canaanite-woman; ``I was sent to the lost Sheep of the house of Israel, and to them alone, and it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to dogs".⁶ But the Holy Qur'an repeatedly claims that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was a purifier of his immediate followers as well as those who would come later on :

3 Ibid., 25/1.

4 Ibid., 21/107.

5 New Testament, John, 16 : 12 - 13.

6 Ibid., Mathew, 15 : 24, 26.

هو الذي بعث في الاميين رسولا منهم يتلوا عليهم
آياته..... وآخرين منهم لما يلحقوا بهم وهو العزيز
الحكيم. 7

(He it is Who raised among the illiterates a Messenger from among themselves, who recites to them His messages..... and others from among them who have not yet joined them. And He is the Mighty, the Wise.)

In the case of earlier Prophets, their nations were not competent enough and their periods were not fit enough to receive the final perfect message. Since each nation in those days lived almost an exclusive life, and the means of communication between different regions and races were wanting, the responsibility of the Prophets was quite naturally, limited to the reformation and spiritual regeneration of a particular people or clan only. But the ultimate goal, which the Divine scheme had in view, was the uplift and unification of the entire human race. A time came at last when the human mind reached the stage through the teachings of the Prophets when it was able to receive the final message for the attainment of its perfection meant for the whole of humanity. Thus it was through the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) that all aspects of guidance, with explanation and necessary details were given to the World for all times to come. The Holy Qur'an says :

انا نحن نزلنا الذكر وانا له لحافظون. 8

7 Al-Qur'an, 62/2, 3.

8 Ibid., 15/9.

(Surely We have revealed the Reminder and surely We are its Guardian.)

This is a unique Divine promise, (never heard in connection with previous scriptures) that the Holy Qur'an will for all time be preserved safe against all attempts to destroy it and from every kind of corruption. Here lies the significance of the finality of the Prophethood of Muḥammad. On the one hand, the final Divine Message was brought to perfection, and on the other, a promise was given for its protection and in this way the door of Prophethood was closed for ever. It is for this reason that the Holy Qur'an declares :

ما كان محمد ابا احد من رجالكم ولكن رسول الله وخاتم
النبيين وكان الله بكل شئ عليما.⁹

(Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets. And Allah is evr knower of all things.)

There is complete unanimity of views among the Muslim Scholars that the term *Khātam al-Nabiyyīn* means that the Prophet Muḥammad was the last and final of all the Prophets. With the completion of his mission Divine revelation as a source of infallible knowledge was absolutely stopped for all times to come.

Imam Muslim has narrated :

عن سعد ابن ابى وقاص قال قال رسول الله لعلى انت منى
بمنزلة هارون من موسى ولكن لاتبى بعدى¹⁰

9 Ibid., 33/40.

10 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Vol. VI, P. 72.

(On the authority of Sa'd, son of Abī Waqqāṣ it is reported that the Messenger of Allah said to `Ali : You stand to me in the same relation as Aaron stood to Moses except that there is no Prophet after me.)

As no Prophet is to appear after the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him), the role of the Prophetic tradition in Islam becomes universal, unchangeable and eternal.

By proclaiming to be the last of divine dispensations, the universal religion of humanity in all its entirety, Islam thereby inaugurated a final era which humanity never before contemplated. Indeed the inculcation of the unity of world religious belief is a miracle of Islam. This notion of religious unity would have been regarded as an intellectual impossibility, were it conceived in the earlier days on account of the fundamental differences which existed between religions. Some philosophers imagined this unity to be attainable only through the abandonment of all religions.¹¹ Indeed, it is still regarded by the sociologists of even today who are unacquainted with Islam, as a far-off hope because of the intermingling of religions with national and social affairs. One of the great human aspects which lends immortality to Islam and establishes for it an historical right to intercourse with all people is its removal of watertight compartments of race, clan, region and nationality, formed on the basis of considerations of blood or geography.¹²

11 The Dialogues of Plato, Republic, Bk. II., P. 378, (Oxford University Press, London, 1893).

12 Al-Qur'an, 4/1.

In fact, such arbitrary divisions had, in course of time given birth to jealousy and mistrust, hatred and discord among the nations. In their self-conceit and arrogance some people styled themselves as the chosen few of Allāh. Humanity was bitterly divided and every people had lost the message of God and obliterated through neglect, fraud or cunning the Divine favour which God had sent through His Apostles.

It was in the midst such conditions and environment that humanity was favoured with the appointment of the World Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) to lead it to its unification and to the highest pinnacles of glory and excellence. In this context one feels better equipped to understand the import of the Qur'ānic verdict :

وما ارسلناك الا رحمة للعالمين.¹³

(And We have not sent thee but a mercy to the nations.)

The Divine mercy which commenced with Adam¹⁴ in the shape of revealed guidance reached its zenith in the form of the Holy Qur'ān on the one hand and in the personality of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) on the other. While claiming finality and world-wide universality Islam never put forward the claim for originality. Rather it proclaimed that, in its doctrinal principles, it is not a new religion; but it is the first Faith which Allāh had revealed unto Noah and

13 Al-Qur'ān, 21/107.

14 Ibid., 2/37.

Continued to reveal to all Prophets after him.¹⁵ If men however, find religions to differ in those principles, it is because of the corruption and distortion effected by the advocates of those religions and the arbitrary and misguided interpretations which they gave thereto out of spite and mutual jealousy. The author of 'man's Religions' has expressed the above fact as under :

"The Moslem's pride in his faith is not decreased by the convincing array of evidence that can be gathered to show that Muhammad's teaching was neither new nor original. It is Islam's proud boast that the Qur'an completes and fulfills the (half truths) that other religions before it haltingly declared".¹⁶

Some of the learned orientalist have tried in vain to trace out the sources of the Qur'an and the Prophetic tradition.¹⁷

Dr. Khalīfa Abdul Ḥakīm has very successfully attempted to dispel the doubts created by the orientalist in connection with the Islamic concept of steady progress of humanity towards perfection. He states that in the

15 *Ibid.*, 4/163; 12/3.

16 J. B. Noss, *op. cit.*, P. 683, (Noss does not appear to be well-acquainted with Islamic belief in this regard. All revelations were whole truth with Islam, turned into half truths by corruption).

17 Arthur Jeffery, Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'an, (Leiden, 1937).

Cf. A. Geiger, Was hat Muhammad aus dem Judentum aufgenommen? (1833). P. XVI.

Cf. Dwight M. Donaldson, Studies in Muslim Ethics, (London, 1953) P. 268.

terminology of the famous German Philosopher Hegel one might say that it is an antithesis that springs out of the inevitable inner contradictions of a thesis, but the thesis or the previous state is not completely annihilated, it acts alongwith its antithesis to create a new synthesis. This is a general law of life and the progressive realisation of its values. This law is recognised by the Qur'an when it says :¹⁸

ما تنسخ من آية أو تنسخها نأت بخير منها أو مثلها الم
تعلم ان الله على كل شئ قدير. ¹⁹

(Whatever message We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We bring one better than it or one like it. Knowest thou not that Allah is Possessor of power over all things?)

The above Divine statement appears as an answer to the objection of the Jews to the revelation of the Prophet, that they could not accept a new revelation which was not granted to an Israelite.²⁰

It was the Charm of his winsome personality and the magic of his sublime Character which made the Prophet of Islam a perfect model for the whole of humanity, for all times to come. With his appointment all previous *Shari'ats* were withdrawn by Lord Almighty and as such he had to face the stern opposition of the holders of the Book, i.e., the Christians and the Jews. He is reported to have observed that "If the illustrious Apostle, Moses, were alive today, he too would be following the Divine

18 Islamic Ideology, (Lahore, 1951), P. XVI.

19 Al-Qur'an, 2/106.

20 Ibid., 2/90.

law brought by me".²¹ He had to bring about first of all the union of the warring tribes of the Arabs, who were in a state of continual internecine warfare as is stated by Allah Himself :

واذكروا نعمت الله عليكم اذ كنتم اعداء فالف بين قلوبكم
فاصبحتم بنعمته اخوانا وكنتم على شفا حفرة من النار
فانقذكم منها. ²²

(And remember Allah's favour to you when you were enemies, then He united your hearts, so by His favour you became brethren. And you were on the brink of a pit of fire, then He saved you from it.)

The Arabs were the most disunited people and the Holy Prophet captivated their hearts with his sublime conduct.

The Holy Qur'an states :

فبما رحمة من الله لنت لهم ولو كنت فظا غليظ القلب لا
انفضوا من حولك....²³

(Thus it is by Allah's mercy that thou art gentle to them. And hadst thou been rough, hard-hearted, they would certainly have dispersed from around thee.)

The Holy Book is full of references to the Apostles' gentleness and kind dealing with all those who came in contact with him.

21 Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, Musnad,

22 Al-Qur'an, 3/102

23 Ibid., 3/159.

(ولو كان موسى حيا ما وسعه
الا اتباعي)

On another occasion it maintains :

لقد جاءكم رسول من أنفسكم عزيز عليه ما عنتم حريص
عليكم بالمؤمنين رؤوف رحيم. 24

(Certainly a Messenger has come to you from among yourselves; grievous to him is your falling into distress, most solicitous for you, to the believers compassionate and merciful.)

As already discussed the Holy Prophet had won, even before his appointment, from his Companions the recognition of his sublime conduct, inasmuch as he had obtained the title of *al-Amin*.²⁵ The Arabs were the most contentious people.²⁶ On account of their haughty temperament and family and tribal feuds, they could not bow their heads to a man who was neither a monarch, nor the chief of a tribe, nor a great warrior, nor a famous poet. By acknowledging Hadrat Muḥammad the faithful one (الامين), they expressed their high appreciation of his sublime conduct, and considered him to be the most trustworthy in all affairs. His moral greatness which in reality was the embodiment of the Qur'ān itself,²⁷ paved the way for the acceptance of his religious mission. This is a glaring historic fact which even the non-muslim orientalisists could not lose sight of :

“For us it goes without saying that the hold which Mohammad gained over the wills and affections of his Companions was due to the influence of his

24 *Ibid.*, 9/128.

25 *Supra*, P. 70.

26 Al-Qur'ān, 19/97. (قوما لدا)

27 Hadrat `A'ishah said : (كان خلقه القرآن)

Cf. Suyūṭī, *Sharḥ Jāmi' al-Sagḥir*, (Egypt, 1954) Vol. II, P. 177.

personality. Without that they would have paid little heed to the claims of the Prophet. It was because of his moral qualities, not because of his religious teaching that the men of Medina, invoked his assistance".²⁸

The Prophet of Islam took the opportunity of applying his teachings to all the important walks of life. He gave his adherents practical demonstration concerning all human activities, individual as well as collective, temporal as well as spiritual. He lived for twenty-three years after being raised as an Apostle of Allah for fulfilling his mission. He endowed his community with a religion which was fully exemplified in his life long practice. It can easily be said that Islam as a system of life is a mirror of the activities and out-look of Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the Qur'an can be taken as his biographical sketch and a code of his ethics and conduct. Naturally therefore,

"It is the desire of every pious Muslim to model his life in every possible particular upon that of the Prophet".²⁹

It is so because in the Holy Prophet's personality alone we find an all - comprehensive model to serve as an inspiration in a great variety of situations. The lives of pre-Islamic Prophets do not cover a very rich diversity of situations. Inspiring as the example of each and every reformer undoubtedly is, it is unfortunately only a

28 H. A. R. Gibb, Mohammedanism, (N. York, 1955 - Mentor Ed.) P. 34.

29 D. S. Margoliouth, Early Development of Muhammadanism, (London, n.d., Home Library Ed.,) P. 239.

partial example. There has not been a single one of these national Prophets who alone can suffice by himself to serve as a guide in the multiple aspects of this complicated struggle of life. In the Prophet David, we have an exemplar of kingship, in Joseph, of a minister of state, in Joshva, of a general, in Jesus Christ, as a teacher of tender morals, but not one of them constitutes an all-comprehensive model.

حسن یوسف دم عیسیٰ بد بیضاداری

آنچه خوبان همه دارند تو تنها داری

“No teacher of a great religion was afforded by history the opportunity to pass through the essential phases of social, economic and political existence. The Prophet of Islam started as a poor shepherd and worker; then travelled as a commercial agent; then led an ideally happy life as a husband and a father,³⁰ then cried as a persecuted warrior against the injustice of man. He conquered his enemies primarily by love, and, when necessity compelled, used the minimum physical force³¹ to overwhelm the savage persecutors; then having conquered them forgave persecutors; then having conquered them forgave them with open hearted generosity for which history offers no parallel.³² He set up a state from a scratch among a people who had no political experience beyond their tribal organisations, and

30 Would it not be futile to look for the ideal domestic life's guidance in the person of Jesus Christ, who, so far as we are aware of him through the Gospels, never entered into matrimonial relation?

31 Cf. Dr. M. Hamidullah, Battle-fields of Muhammad, P. 6.

32 Cf. Sirat, Ibn Hsham, Vol. 4, P. 53.

(لا تشریب علیکم الیوم اذہبوا فانتم الطلقاء)

promulgated laws that were more advanced and more humane than his contemporary world dreamed of. Then he dealt with international relations in peace and war and finally completed his work having chalked out a system of social justice based on liberty, fraternity, and equality embodied not only in a moral code but in a definite framework of economic justice. The same golden thread of humanity and simplicity runs through out the web and woof of the variegated pattern of his many sides life..... Does history offer any parallel to this life which looks like the life of all humanity concentrated in an individual existence".³³

To sum up, the situations the Prophet of Islam was placed in, covered every aspect of human life, which brought out the mettle of his character in all its facets. And to every one of these he brought a lustre which shines undimmed at this distance of time. He is as good model to a poor man in the hut as to a prince in the palace. A humble farmer and teacher finds as much inspiration in him as a general on the battle-field or a statesman in his cabinet. A son, a father, a husband, a friend, a foe, an ally, there is an object lesson in his life for everyone. This is what made him the perfect model for humanity for all times to come.³⁴

This is the most distinguishing feature of the life of the Holy Prophet. And after his death, the Prophetic tradition is treated to play the same important role till the doom's day. That is why it is said by our scholars

33 Khalifa Abdul Hakim, Islamic Ideology, P. XI. Cf. Ibn Qayyim, Zād al-Ma'ād, Passim; Syed Sulaimān Nadvī, Khutabāt Madrās, PP. 105 - 129.

34 Cf. Syed Amir Ali, The Spirit of Islam, P. 111.

that the house which contains any Compilation on *Ḥadīth* literature : *فكانما فيه نبي يتكلم*

The same idea is conveyed by the following saying of the Holy Prophet :

انى تركت فيكم امرين لن تضلوا ما تمسكتم بها كتاب الله
وسنة رسوله.³⁵

(I have left amongst you two things, you will not go astray so far you hold fast to them-the Book of Allah and the *Sunnah* of His Apostle.)

Hence the present writer does not consider the so called modernists justified in their assertion that the Prophetic tradition was valid only during the life-time of the Prophet, and that now he is no more amongst us, we need follow only the injunctions of the Holy Qur'an and treat the record of the sayings and doings of the Apostle as an account of the past which has no practical value as a code of conduct. These misguided people little realise that a denial of the eternal validity of the *Sunnah* amounts to a denial of the Holy Qur'an's claim that the Prophethood of Muḥammad (peace be upon him) is not time-bound; it is universal and the Prophet's words and deeds are the timeless expressions of the Divine Will.

Another unique feature of the Prophetic tradition is its practical demonstration. It indeed, points to a distinguishing characteristic of the Holy Prophet, viz., that he gave by his life a practical illustration under varying mundane conditions and circumstances of all his

35 Syed Sulaimān Nadvi, Intro. P. 6. Tadwīn Ḥadīth, Manāzīr Aḥsan Gilānī, (Karachi, 1956).

teachings. There is not a single teaching that has come down from the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) but we find it fully implemented in his practical life. So strict was the conformity between his teaching and practice that his wife `Ā'ishah, when asked what sort of morals and manners he possessed, replied : (كان خلقه القرآن) i.e., his morals were just what the Qur'ān is. As regards all standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may well ask, is there any man greater than he? This is the exact significance of the Divine tribute :

وانك لعلی خلق عظیم. 36

(And surely thou hast sublime conduct.)

To this great quality was added his anxiety for a fallen humanity. The Qur'ān refers to it time and again :

لقد جاءكم رسول من انفسكم عزيز عليه ما عنتم حريص
عليكم بالمؤمنين رؤوف رحيم. 37

(Certainly a Messenger has come to you from among yourselves; grievous to him is your falling into distress, most solicitous for you, to the believers is compassionate, merciful.)

فلعلك باخع نفسك على آثارهم ان لم يؤمنوا بهذا الحديث
اسفا. 38

(Then may be thou will kill thyself with grief, sorrowing after them, if they believe not in this announcement.)

36 Al-Qur'ān, 68/4.

37 Ibid., 9/128.

38 Ibid., 38/6.

This verse affords us an insight into the absolute devotion to the cause of a fallen humanity which the life of the Holy Prophet exhibits. Again it is said in *Surah al-Shu'arā* :

لعلك باخع نفسك الا يكونوا مؤمنين.³⁹

(Perhaps thou wilt kill thyself with grief because they believe not.)

The same theme is repeated in *Sūrah al-Fāṭir* :

فلا تذهب نفسك عليهم حسرت.⁴⁰

(So let not thy soul waste away in grief for them.)

All the above verses furnish a clear proof that Prophet of Islam exerted himself heroically to save his people by bringing about a mighty transformation for which he was so anxious that he is mentioned here as almost killing himself with grief. The transformation wrought within the short space of less than a quarter of a century is in fact unparalleled in the history of the world. The amazing success which the Holy Prophet achieved is yet another outstanding characteristic of his Prophetic career.⁴¹ The complete mission of Muḥammad (peace be upon him) was accomplished in his life-time. This is a fact in which lies his distinctive superiority over the Prophets, sages, and philosophers of other times and other countries. There is not a single reformer who brought about such an entire change in the lives of a whole nation inhabiting such a vast country. None, in

39 *Ibid.*, 26/3.

40 *Ibid.*, 40/8.

41 *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th Edition, Art. Koran.

fact, found his people at such a depth of degradation as the Prophet of Islam found the Arabs and no one raised them spiritually, morally and materially to the height to which he raised them.⁴² Jesus, Moses, Zoroaster, Plato, all had their notions of realms of God, their republics, their ideas, through which degraded humanity was to be elevated into a new moral life; all had departed from this world with their aspirations unfulfilled, their bright visions unrealised or had bequeathed the task of elevating their fellowmen to sanguinary disciples or monarch pupils. It was for Muḥammad (peace be upon him) to fulfill his mission, and that of his predecessors too. Syed Ameer Ali's account of this aspect of the Holy Prophet's career is worth quoting :

“The humble preacher, who had only the other day been hunted out of the city of his birth, and been stoned out of the place where he had betaken himself to preach God's words, had, within the short space of nine years, lifted up his people from the abysmal depths of moral and spiritual degradation to a conception of purity and justice. His life is the noblest record of a work nobly and faithfully performed..... with an enthusiasm and fervour which admitted no compromise, conceived no halting; with indomitable courage which brooked no resistance, and allowed no fear of consequences; with singleness of purpose which thought of no self..... This unlettered Prophet whose message was for the masses, proclaimed the value of knowledge and learning..... His persistent and unvarying appeal to reason and to

42 The Law and Philosophy of Zakat, by Farisha G. de Zayas, (Damascus, 1960), Foreword.

the ethical faculty of mankind, his rejection of miracles, "his thoroughly democratic conception of divine government, the universality of his religious ideal, his simple humanity", — all serve to differentiate him from his predecessors, all affiliate him", says the author of *Oriental Religion*, "With the modern world".⁴³

Similarly, Imām Ghazālī after drawing a pen-picture of the character of the Prophet of Islam, as manifested in the tradition, states :

"The high standard which he set in moral behaviour as a citizen, free or persecuted, as a husband, as a chief, as a conqueror, was never reached by any individual before or since..... The practical code of life established by the Prophet exercised a great influence on the society of his day and later, it transformed the whole social structure of human society when the message of Islam penetrated the remotest corner of the World".⁴⁴

In order to acquaint ourselves with the achievements of the Holy Prophet and to discover all that could be known about him we have to consult the *Hadīth* literature. We are fortunate enough in having his life events recorded in the minutest detail with historic authenticity.⁴⁵ As his life and work are not wrapt in mystery, no fairy tale has been woven round his personality. And hence the value of his example as an inspiration in every sphere of life is inevitable. Other religious teachers no doubt must have lived up to their

43 *The Spirit of Islam*, op. cit., PP. 111 f.

44 *Ihyā' 'Ulum al-Dīn*, Vol. II, PP. 313 ff.

45 *Supra*, P. 69.

teachings. But unfortunately their life stories have been so lost in myths, legends and folklore that for lack of historicity they can provide no inspiration in the complicated problems of human life. On the other hand the faith of Islam retains to this day its original integrity. The reason is that every incident of the Prophet's life which has been so carefully preserved, gives us the most authentic interpretation of the Qur'anic teaching. And a teaching illustrated through practice leaves no room for ambiguity of interpretation and hence, the unanimity of the entire Muslim world on the basic teachings of their faith. This is not the case in any other religion. Since the practice of the teacher is not available to throw light on the real significance of what he taught, nothing can be trusted as historic and authentic. The examples of the founders of other religions, therefore, in the form as they have come down to us, carry little conviction, and hence their lack of inspiration and driving force.

Perhaps there was a Divine plan underlying the obliteration of the true teachings of these racial Prophets. Their teachings served their day, and became outmoded with the growth of society, and the new demands it brought. A curtain of oblivion was therefore drawn on them. The Holy Qur'an asserts :

ما ننسخ من آية أو ننسها نأت بخير منها...⁴⁶

(Whatever message We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We bring one better than it or one like it.....)

46 Al-Qur'an, 2/106.

Similarly, the Holy Bible declares the Covenant of the Old Testament imperfect. It is little less than self-evident that, if the Old Testament revelation had been ideally perfect, there would have been no need of another. It lies on the surface of the New Testament that the Mosaic dispensation was in some sense insufficient and temporary. The New Testament abounds in utterances which imply or assert this. The whole matter is succinctly stated as under :

“If that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second”.⁴⁷

With the advent of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him), human society had reached a stage of development, where all social and national barriers were to crumble down, and mankind was to be merged into somewhat of a single community for all times to come. It was in the fitness of things, therefore, that the Divine Book and the Prophetic *Sunnah* of the final and eternal Apostle of Allāh should be carefully preserved for ever. It is a most significant historic truth that the Holy Qur’ān, unlike other scriptures, has to this day been immune against the corrupting influences of the lapse of time. Nor is there the slightest apprehension that any corruption may in future creep into its pure text — as proclaimed by Lord Almighty Himself :

انا نحن نزلنا الذكر وانا له لحافظون.⁴⁸

(Surely, We have revealed the Reminder, and surely We are its guardian.)

47 The New Testament, Hebrews, 8 : 7.

48 Al-Qur’an, 15/9.

It is a unique distinction rather an outstanding evidential miracle of the Koran.⁴⁹ There are thousands of "ḥuffāz" in all Muslim Lands who have committed the Holy Qur'ān to memory. Again this is a distinction which is the monopoly of the Islamic Scripture alone. The double method adopted for the preservation of the Holy Qur'ān by the order of the Prophet of Islam was perpetuated, viz., recording in writing and learning by heart, both done simultaneously.

“As in the case of the Qur'ān, the Muslims were attached also to the sayings of their Prophet. The reports of his sayings and doings, both public and private, were preserved. The preparation of such memories began even in the life-time of the Prophet, on the private initiative of certain of his Companions, and was continued after his death, by a process of collection at first hand knowledge. As in the case of the Qur'ān authentication was insisted on in all transmissions. One could relate all that is known of the lives of Noah, Moses, Jesus, Buddha and other great men of antiquity, in a few pages only but the details known of the biography of the Prophet Muḥammad fill hundreds of pages, so great was the care that was taken to preserve for posterity documented and precise data”.⁵⁰

It is true that the Prophetic tradition forms the body of what is termed the Oral Law, because it was not committed to writing by the scribes of the Holy Prophet,⁵¹ still the Muslims since the life-time of their

49 H. A. R. Gibb, Mohammedanism, (London 1953) P. 33.

50 Dr. M. Ḥamidullāh, Ed., Introduction to Islam, P. 148.

51 Aḥmad A. Galwash, The Religion of Islam, (Cairo, 1961) P.V.

Prophet took keen interest in it. During the time of the Prophet, his Companions eagerly learnt *Aḥādīth* from him. Many of them wrote them down, cultivated them, and spread them among their co-religionists.⁵² According to Dr. Muḥammad Ḥamīd Ullāh, the Apostle of Islam took all necessary and possible steps for the preservation of the Holy Qur'an and Had he taken the same steps for the preservation of his own sayings, he would have been considered by some as an egoist. For this reason, the story of the *Ḥadīth* is quite different from that of the Qur'an.⁵³

Still the double method of safeguard, viz., committing to memory and preserving at the same time by writing - in which each method helps the other and conserves the integrity of the reports was also employed for the Prophetic tradition. There is a part of the Prophetic tradition, the very nature of which required that it should be written down viz., the official documents of the Prophet ; like the Peace-Treaty of Ḥudaybiya, Pact of Madīnah, first census of the Muslim population of Madīnah, Treaties of alliance, Missionary letters and judicial and administrative instructions to the provincial governors.⁵⁴ Moreover, the biographers of the Companions of the Prophet affirm that the number of the Companions of the Prophet Muḥammad who have reported at least one incident of the life of the Prophet exceeds a hundred thousand. There will certainly be

52 Muḥammad Zubayr, *Ḥadīth Literature*, op. cit., P. XIX.

53 *Introduction to Islam*, P. 23.

54 Cf. Dr. M. Ḥamīdullāh, *Al-Wathāiq al-Siyāsiya*, Urdu Tr. *Siyāsi Wathīqa Jāt* by Abū Yaḥyā Imam Khan Naushahrawī (Lahore).

repetitions therein, yet the very multiplicity of the sources for one and the same event does but increase the trustworthiness of the report. We possess in all scarcely ten thousand reports, excluding the repetitions, of the *Hadith* on the life of the Prophet of Islam, and these touch all aspects of his own life together with directions given by him to his disciples both in spiritual and temporal matters.⁵⁵ The number of first hand witnesses of the Prophetic tradition in Islam is so great that no other religion on earth can even think of it. Christianity, the last revealed religion before Islam, had only twelve original disciples of Jesus Christ known as the twelve Apostles. The learned orientalist Professor Wilfred Cantwell Smith, Ex-Director of the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, Montreal, has tried to misguide people by presenting a wrong analogy between the New-Testament and the Prophetic Tradition. He states in his article "Some Similarities and Differences between Christianity and Islam" that :

"The Qur'an is in Islam What Christ is in Christianity, and Muhammad stands in relation to it as the Twelve Apostles to the Logos. The *Hadith*, the record of how the Revelation occurred, and the Acts of the Apostle, or Messenger, is to Islam then roughly what the New Testament is to Christianity".⁵⁶

There is no difficulty for an honest and reasonable man to judge that the above comparison lacks reality. Dr. Muhammad Hamidullah asserts :

55 M. Hamidullah, *Int. of Islam*, P. 31.

56 John Alden Williams, Ed., *Islam*, (New York, 1963) P. 44.

“The Brahmanists, Buddhists, Jews, Parsis, and Christians may compare the preservation of the basic teachings of their respective religions with those of the Muslims : Who has written down their books, who has transmitted them from generation to generation, whether the transmission has been of the original texts or only their translations, whether fractricidal wars have not caused damage to the copies of the texts, whether there are no internal contradictions or lacunas to which references are found elsewhere, and so on?”⁵⁷

It is a remarkable fact that in the year 10 A.H. the Prophet of Islam was able to address at `Arafat (Makkah) about 1,40,000 Muslims who had come for pilgrimage (without counting many others who had not come to Makkah that year.)⁵⁸ Hence, it is apparent that as a founder of religion he had an immense success and his Prophetic tradition created a uniform culture throughout the Muslim world. The role played by tradition in establishing a common culture for the whole Islamic world is very important.⁵⁹ The learned orientalist, Professor Von Johann fück, has very profoundly proved this thesis in his scholarly article : ‘Die Rolle des Traditionalismus in Islam’. He commences that :

“Die Einheitlichkeit der islamischen Kulture stellt eines der fesselndsten Probleme dar, die mit der Ausbreitung des Islams von den bescheidenen Anfängen in Makkah bis zur heutigen 250 Millionen Bekenner zählenden Weltreligion verknüpft sind. Wie is es gekommen, dap im weiten islamischen

57 M. Hamidullah, op. cit., P. 15.

58 Ibid., P. 30 F.

59 Dr. M. Z. Şiddiqi, Hadith Literature, P. XVIII.

Raum trotz allen örtlichen und Zeitlichen Besonderheiten, die sich aus den Nachwirkungen früherer Kulturen and Religionen und aus dem weiterleben bodenständiger Sitten, Gebräuche und Anschauungen ergaben, dennoch eine ihm eigentümliche Kultur herrschit? Wie war es überhaupt möberhaupt möglich, dap die islamische Kultur diesen weiten Raum durchdrang, in dessen einzelnen Ländern die erste islamisierung zu den verschiedensten Zeiten und in den mannigraltigsten Formen stattgefunden hat: bald als Eroberuug durch muslimische Heere, bald als Folge friedlichen Anschlusses; dan wieder durch die Zielbewusste Propaganda missionierender Orden oder durch die unbeabsichtigts Werbekraft, die der muslimische Kaufmann in Gebieten niederer Kultur ausübte. Diese Fragen sind mit dem Hinweis auf die Gleichheit des Glaubens nicht gelöst; denn die einheitlichkeit dieser Kultur beschränkt sich ja nicht auf das gleiche Bekenntnis, sie äussert sich vielmehr in der gleichen seelischen Haltung und in dem gleichen Lebensstil, welcher über den Bezrik des im abendländischen Sinne Religiösen weit hunuasreichend alle Gebiete des personalichen und öffentlichen Lebens durchdringt. Auch der Koran Kann dafür nicht in erster Linine verantwortlich gemacht werden; denn die Geschichte seiner Exegese zeigt, wie stark die Auslegung des Gotteswortes von dem jeweiligen Zeitgeist und den Einflüssen der umwelt abhing. Es ist vielmehr das vorbild des Propheten, die *Sunnah*, die mit ihrer durch die Jahrhunderte gehenden gleichmässign Wirkung auf die Lebenshaltung der Gläubigen eine der Hauptursachen für die islamische Kultureinheit geworden ist. Sie hat das Gesicht des Islams geprägt und ihm die züge verliehen, die wir heute noch überall in der islamischen Welt vor uns sehen." Die Vorbildlichkeit des Propheten liegt im Wesen des

Islamstief begründet In ihm hatte sie nach den Worten des Korans "ein schönes Beispiel" (Sure 33, 21).⁶⁰

(The homogeneity of the Islamic culture represents one of the most captivating problems. With the spreading of Islam from the backward beginning in Makkah it has tied together till today 250 million confessors of world religion. How it happened that in far off Islamic space, the local and temporal peculiarities resulting from the earlier cultures and religions, distant life settled habits, customs and views, yielded; nevertheless an odd culture prevailed? How was it generally possible that the Islamic culture penetrated into far off space and how in those particular lands the first conversion to Islam in various times and in manifold forms had taken place; sometimes by conquest through Muslim armies, then by consequent peaceful connections, then again through the purposeful propaganda of the missionary orders or through the un-intentional publicity force of the Muslim merchant which exercised itself in the lower cultural domain. These are the questions which never miss to direct towards the uniformity of faith, as the homogeneity of this culture confines itself to the similar creed which expresses, rather, in the like physical holding and in the similar style of living, which in the Western religious sense penetrated into far off all spheres of personal and public life. The Qur'an also cannot be made responsible for that in the first place as the history of its exegesis shows that how strongly depends the interpretation of God's word on the respective age-spirit and the environmental influences.)

60 Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft (Leipzig, 1939) Vol. 93, PP. 1 - 32.

It is, rather the model of the Prophet, the *Sunnah*, which has become, with its symmetrical effect on the standard of living of the believers during the centuries, one of the essentials of the Islamic cultural unity. It has stamped the history of Islam and granted it the characteristics which we today observe in the overall Islamic World. The model depiction of the Prophet lies deep-rooted in the system of Islam..... In the wording of the Qur'an there is in the Prophet 'an excellent example'.⁶¹

Whereas all other religions failed in becoming cultures and became cults instead, Islam succeeded, because it did not content itself with defining the relations between man and the Unseen but boldly stepped into the sphere of practical life and its every-day problems, of bread, and sexual relations, of politics and trade and finance — and thus removed the barriers between Caesar's and God's domains. Islamic culture realised the unfulfilled endeavours of previous religions to find a common cultural denominator for human striving beyond the accidents of geographical location or tribal grouping. This is one of the main reasons for the astounding success of Islam in its beginning. People saw that Islam not only theoretically advocated an international community and brotherhood of men united by their adherence to a common idea without any restriction of colour, caste or race but that it also laid before that proposed community a ready frame for its practical fulfilment in the form of the model of the Prophet.

61 Al-Qur'an, 33/21.

Thus it introduced a new idea of the unity of the human race into the world, an idea so mighty that it welded together nations which had warred with and hated each other since the world began. It not only cemented together the warring tribes of one country but it established a brotherhood of all nations of the world, even joining together those which had nothing in common except their common humanity. It obliterated differences of colour, race, language, and even differences of culture. If unification be the true basis of human civilization i.e., civilization of humanity as a whole, then Islam is undoubtedly the greatest civilizing force the world has ever known or is likely to know. Mr. A. K. Brohi, a leading philosopher lawyer of Pakistan, while discussing Islam as a fecundating principle of human civilization and culture, asserts :

“It is essential to realise that Islam as a spiritual force is capable of vivifying, fertilizing all earthly formations....., and of raising them, of transforming them into becoming the expressions of the Divine. This it achieves because of its universality, because of its lack of specific content. Islam rightly understood, is a principle of growth, of vitality. It, by itself, has hardly any content except of course that it proclaims the oneness of all life and the Divine origin of all things..... Islam is not just one religion amongst or side by side with other religions. It came to finish the era of revealed religion and to declare open the era of ‘Realization’ of what had been revealed to man”.⁶²

62 A. J. Brohi, Fundamental Law of Pakistan, (Karachi, 1958) P. 798.

The point to be emphasized is this that the Islamic teachings and particularly the Prophetic tradition played a tremendous role in establishing a common culture not only for the Muslim World but for the whole of humanity.

Another important aspect of the tradition which highlights its role in Islam is its many-sided workability. That is why the every day life of Muslims throughout the world is governed and directed by these traditions beside the Holy Qur'an since the very inception of Islam. It is still wielding a great influence on the minds of the Muslims and is bound to influence them in the future also.⁶³

One of the renowned critics of tradition remarks :

“Experience as a political officer in the Arab Bureau during the war convinced me of the importance of *Hadith*. I have, for instance, seen it invoked by doctors to settle the question as to whether the faithful might eat horseflesh, and by Bolshevists to persuade Muhammadans that republics are of divine appointment”.⁶⁴

Again he continues :

“While the Prophet was alive he was the sole guide in all matters whether spiritual or secular. *Hadith*, or tradition in the technical sense, may be said to have begun at his death,⁶⁵ for the extraordinary influence of his personality on his Companions and

63 Dr. M. Zubayr Siddiqi, *Hadith Literature*, P. XVIII.

64 Alfard Guillaume, *The Traditions of Islam*, (Beirut, 1966) P. 6.

65 This assertion of Mr. Guillaume is rationally unsound and is refuted by his own statement, in this very passage.

associates created from the beginning a demand that believers should be informed what the Prophet had done and taught in various circumstances in order that the life of the community and the individual might be modelled on that of the revered leader."⁶⁶

The feverish desire to know what the Prophet said and did was great in his life time and after his death grew greater and greater, Like every new and sincere convert, the devotion and enthusiasm of the Companions and particularly of the devoted ones was exemplary. In illuminating instance may here be noted. Hadrat `Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb reports that on his arrival in Madīnah, he became contractual brother of a local Muslim — at the time of the famous Fraternisation ordered by the Prophet rehabilitating the Makkan refugees — and both of them worked alternatively in a farm of date - palms.⁶⁷

He proceeds on :

كنت انا وجار لى من الاتصار في بنى امية بن زيد - وهي
من عوالى المدينة - وكنا تتناوب النزول على رسول الله ينزل
يوماً وانزل يوماً - فاذا نزلت جنته بخير ذلك يوم واذا نزل
فعل مثل ذلك.⁶⁸

(I was living alongwith one of my *Anṣār* neighbour in the suburb of Madīnah..... and we used to attend the Apostle of Allah turn by turn on every alternate

66 Alfred Guillaume, op. cit., P. 13.

67 M. Hamidullah, op. cit., P. 25; M. Zubayr Ṣiddīqī, op. cit., P. 6.

68 Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ, Kitāb al-ʿIlm, Bab al-Tanāwub, Vol. I P. 19

day and I reported to him the news of the day of my turn and in his turn, he did the same).

While commenting upon the above report Dr. Muṣṭafā As-Sibā'ī argues :

وليس هذا إلا دليلاً على نظر الصحابة إلى رسول الله نظرة
اتباع واسترشاد برأيه وعمله لما ثبت عندهم من وجوب
اتباعه والنزول عند أمره ونهيه. 69

(It is not but a proof that the Companions of the Apostle of Allāh sought guidance from and followed the sayings and doings of the Prophet because it was an established duty with them to obey him and attend to his commandments and prohibitions.)

It is reported that Hadrat Abu Huraira at the cost of all wordly pursuits kept the Prophet's company for three years, simply to watch his doings and to listen to his sayings.⁷⁰ Moreover, he daily devoted his considerable time to learn by heart the Prophet's traditions.⁷¹ He was a regular residential student among the *Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffa* and the course of study prescribed for them by the Prophet included the Holy Qur'an, the prophetic tradition and the art of writing.⁷²

69 Muṣṭafā As-Sibā'ī, -As-Sunnah wa Makānatuhā Fi'l-Tashrī' al-Islamī, P. 69.

70 Ibn Sa'd, Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr, Vol. IV, Part 2. (Leiden, 1904 - 18) P. 56.

71 Dārimī, Sunan, P. 45.

72 Hammām b. Munabbih, Ṣaḥīfah, Ed., by Dr. H. Ḥamidullāh, (Paris, 1380 A.H.) P. 9.

The Holy Prophet attached considerable importance to the knowledge of his own tradition. He is said to have asked his disciples to make known his *Aḥādīth* widely, with the care that they should avoid contributing to him false things.⁷³ Some of the Companions of the Prophet, viz., `Abdallāh Ibn `Amr Ibn al-`Ās, Anas ibn Mālīk, `Alī Ibn Abi Ṭālib, Sa'd Ibn `Ubāda, and others wrote down *Aḥādīth* in *ṣaḥīfas*.⁷⁴

After the death of the Holy Prophet, his immediate successors took the knowledge of tradition into consideration while discharging their state duties, beside modelling their lives on the pattern of the Prophet. The practice of Haḍrat Abū Bakr, the first amongst the rightly-guided caliphs of the Prophet has been reported by Imām Dārimī as follows :

كان أبو بكر إذا ورد عليه الخصم نظر في كتاب الله فان
وجد فيه ما يقضى به بينهم فاقضى به وان لم يجد في كتاب
الله نظر في سنة رسول الله.⁷⁵

(Whenever any legal matter came to Abu Bakr, he looked into the Book of Allāh and decided the matter according to it, if he found it there. But if he did not find it in the Book of Allāh, he looked into the practice of the Apostle of Allah and decided accordingly.....) Often he used to consult his Companions and if they informed him of any

73 Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, *Ulūm al-Ḥadīth*, (Egypt, 1326 A.H.) P. 32.

74 A. Sprenger, *On the origin and progress of writing down historical facts among the Musulman*, *JASB*, Vol. XXV, 1856, PP. 303 F.F.

75 *Sunan*, P. 32.

decision of the Prophet in the case, it was his wont to thank Allah and decide the case accordingly.⁷⁶

The day, Prophet of Islam left this world there arose a dispute in the hall of Banū Sā'ida (سقيفه بنى ساعده) in connection with the succession of the Prophet. Haḍrat Abū Bakr settled this most dangerous dispute between the locals of Madīnah and the *Muhājirīn* by quoting the Apostle of Allāh as follows :

قریش ولایة هذا الامر.⁷⁷

(This authority lies in the clan of Quraish.)

That is, the Quraish being the best of the Arabs in blood and country, they will recognize authority only in this tribe.⁷⁸ History relates how the people of Madīnah present at that occasion receded from their position after listening to the Prophetic tradition.

The second dispute regarding the place of the burial of the Prophet was again solved by Haḍrat Abū Bakr through a saying of the Holy Prophet.

When the preparations for burial had been completed on the Tuesday he was laid upon his bed in his house. The Muslims had disputed over the place of burial. Some were in favour of burying him in his Mosque, while others wanted to bury him with his Companions.⁷⁹

76 Ibn Qayyim, *I'lām al-Muwaqqi'in*, Vol. I, P. 51; Ibn Ḥajar 'Asqalānī, *Fath al-Bārī*, (Egypt, 1319 A.H.) Vol. III, P. 288.

77 Ibn al-Athīr, *Tarīkh al-Kāmil*, (Cairo 1301 A.H.) Vol. III, P. 225.

78 Alfred Guillaume, *The Life of Muḥammad*, (Karachi, 1967) Page 686.

79 *Ibid.*, P. 688.

Abu Bakr said :

سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول - ما قبض نبي

الايد فن حيث قبض. 80

(I heard the Apostle of Allah (peace be upon him) saying, "No Prophet dies but he is buried where he died".)

So the bed on which he died was taken up and they made a grave beneath it.⁸¹ When Abū Bakr despatched an army under the Command of Khālid bin Walīd in order to dispel the apostasy movement, the caliph handed over the banner of Islam of Khalid and said :

انى سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول نعم عبد

الله واخو العشيرة خالد بن الوليد وسيف من سيوف الله

سله الله عزوجل على الكفار والمنافقين. 82

(Verily I heard the Apostle of Allah (peace be upon him) saying, What a slave of Allah and brother of the clan is Khalid b. walid, and a sword amongst the swords of Allah, drawn by Him, the Mighty and Powerful against the non-believers and the hypocrites.)

Similarly, when Hadrat Fāṭimah, daughter of the Prophet claimed the inheritance of her father from the first caliph of Islam by saying :

فما لى لا ارث ابى. 83

80 Ibn Hishām, Sirat, P. 1020; Tirmidhī, Sunan, II, P. 139.

81 Ṭabari Tarikh al-Rusul w'al-Mulūk, (Leiden 1879).

82 Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal, Musnad, Vol. I, P. 143.

83 Tirmidhī, Sunan, Kitāb al-Siyar, P. 194.

(Why should I not inherit my father.)

He quoted her a saying of the Prophet :

لَانُورِثُ مَا تَرَكَنَا صَدَقَةٌ. ⁸⁴

(We are not inherited; whatever we leave is a charity.)

It is reported by Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal that Ḥaḍrat Faṭīma thereupon said to Abū Bakr :

فَانْتَ وَمَا سَمِعْتَ مِنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَعْلَمُ. ⁸⁵

(You know better what you heard from the Apostle of Allāh (peace be upon him.)

Similar was the practice of `Umar, `Uthmān and `Alī (may Allāh be pleased with them). Whenever and wherever the Apostle's order was related to Ḥaḍrat `Umar, he obeyed it despite his prior contradictory decision based on his own opinion. It is reported that Ḥaḍrat `Umar did not collect the poll-tax from the Zoroastrians and once he said, "I do not know what we should do with regard to them".⁸⁶

Thereupon `Abd al-Raḥmān b. `Awf said : "I bear witness that I heard the Apostle of Allāh say :

سَنُوا بِهِمْ سُنَّةَ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ. ⁸⁷

(Follow the same usage with regard to them as you do with regard to the People of the Book.)

84 Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ, BK. 85, Ch. 2, Bab Farḍ al Khumus.

85 Musnad, Vol. I, P. 160 and 177 - 8.

86 Mālik, Muwatta, Vol. I, P. 278.

87 Abū `Ubaid b. Sallām, Kitāb al-Amwāl (Cairo, 1353/1935). PP. 31 - 32.

him), kissing thee, I would not have kissed thee, then he kissed it.)

There are also reported cases in which the Companions of the Prophet migrated away from a place because some of the people living there preferred their own personal opinions to the traditions which were quoted to them.⁹³ Mu'awiya b. Sufyān once sold a gold or a silver mug for more than the value of its weight. Abū al-Dardā', a Companion of the Prophet told Mu'awiya "I heard the Apostle of Allāh prohibit that sort of deal". Thereupon Mu'awiya said, "I do not see any harm in it". Then Abū al-Dardā' asked :

من يعذرني من معاوية! اخبره عن رسول الله ويخبرني عن
رأيه؟ لا اسألك بارض.⁹⁴

(Who will support me against Mu'awiya? I relate to him from the Messenger of Allah and he gives me his own opinion. I cannot live in the same land with you.)

The matter was reported to the Caliph `Umar by Abū al-Dardā' and `Umar forbade Mu'awiya to conclude the transaction.⁹⁵

Similarly, Imām Shāfi'i states that we have been told:

ان ابا سعيد الخدري لقي رجلا فاخبره عن رسول الله شينا
فذكر الرجل خيرا يخالفه- فقال ابو سعيد: والله لا اوانى
واياك ستف بيت ابداء.⁹⁶

93 M. Z. Siddiqi, Hadith Literature, P. 196.

94 Mālik, Muwattā, Vol. II, P. 135.

95 Cf. Joseph Schacht, Origins of Muhammadan Juris Prudence, P. 5.

96 Risalah, P. 447.

(That Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī met a man to whom he related something from the Messenger of Allāh; the man, however, narrated something contrary to it. So Abū Sa'īd exclaimed, "By Allāh, may I never be with you under the same roof".)

Even the practices followed by the Companions of the Prophet (آثار صحابه) were accepted as legal authority by the Muslims of the next two generations, because they reasonably presumed that they must have been based on the traditions and the practices of the Holy Prophet which were followed by the Companions scrupulously after due consideration.⁹⁷ This was the basis of the principle followed by the compilers of books on tradition in recording *mauqūf* and *maqṭū'* *Aḥādīth* also in their compendiums besides marfu' ones.

All the orthodox Muslim doctors belonging to the Sunnī or shi'ā schools of Islamic thought are unanimously of the view that every tradition of the Prophet which is proved to be reliable according to the canons laid down by them, is of great religious importance next only to the Holy Qur'ān.

Imam Sha'rānī has narrated with reference to Shaikh Muḥayyud-Dīn's book *Al-Futuḥāt al-Makkiyyah* that Imam A'zam Abū Ḥanīfah used to say :

إياكم والقول في دين الله تعالى بالراى وعليكم باتباع السنّة
فمن خرج عنها ضلّ.⁹⁸

97 M. Z. Siddiqi, *Hadith Literature*, P. 197.

98 *Kitāb al-Mizān*, Vol. I, P. 55. (Azhariyya Press, Egypt, 1932) Cf. Jamāl al-Dīn Qāsimī, *Qawā'id al-Tahdīth*, P. 296.

(Beware of your verdict based on the opinion in the faith of Allāh and stick to the following of the *Sunnah*; whoever left it went astray.)

Once a man from Kufah entered upon Imām A'zam when tradition was being read before him. The man said:

دعونا من هذا الاحاديث فزجره الامام اشد الزجر وقال له
لولا السنّة ما فهم احد منا القرآن ثم قال للرجل ما تقول في
لحم القرد واين دليله من القرآن فافحم الرجل فقال للامام
فما تقول انت فيه فقال ليس هو من بهيمة الانعام. 99

(Leave us alone from these traditions. Thereupon the Imam rebuked him severely and said, "Had there been not the *Sunnah*, none of us would have understood the Qur'an". Then he asked him, "What do you say regarding the flesh of monkey and where is its argument in the Qur'an. The man became answerless.....")

He also used to assert :

لم تزل الناس في صلاح مادام فيهم من يطلب الحديث فاذا
طلبوا العلم بلا حديث فسدوا. 100

(People will not decline in righteousness, so far as seekers of tradition are present in them; when they seek knowledge without tradition they become perverted.)

واتبعوا ما انزل اليكم من ريبكم وما جاء عن نبيكم وان لم
تفهموا المعنى فسلموا لعلمائكم ولا تجادلوهم..... 101

99 Idem, Cf. M. Muḥammad Idrīs Kandhalwī, Ta'liq al-Sabih, (Damascus, 1941) Preface.

100 Idem.,

101 Ibid., P. 56.

(And follow that which has been revealed for you by your Lord and that which has come to you from your Prophet. If you do not understand the significance leave it to your learned scholars and do not contend with them...)

After deducing or elucidating a judgment Imām Mālik used to ask his Companions :

انظروا فيه فانه دين وما من احد الا وماخوذ من كلامه
ومردود عليه الا صاحب هذه الروضة يعنى به رسول الله
صلى الله عليه وسلم. 102

(Look into it because it is faith and there is no body but his statement is accepted and rejected as well except the dweller of this mausoleum i.e., the Apostle of Allah, (peace be upon him.)

Suffice it to say that the first authentic treatise on tradition, named *Al-Muwattā*, belongs to Imām Mālik.

Imām Sha'rānī has reported the following sayings of Imām Shāfi'ī in this context.

١- حديث رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم مستغن بنفسه
اذا صح

٢- لولا اهل المعابر لمخبطت الزنادقة على المنابر.

٣- اهل الحديث في كل زمان كالصحابة في زمانهم.

٤- اذا صح الحديث فهو مذهبي.

٥- اذا رايتم كلامي يخالف كلام رسول الله صلى الله عليه

وسلم فاعملوا بكلام رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم

واضربوا بكلامي الحائط. 103

102 *Idem.*,

103 *Ibid.*, PP. 56 - 57.

All the above citations point to the extraordinary importance of the Prophetic tradition with Imam Shafi'i. His works in this field like the '*Risalah*' and the '*Kitab al-Umm*' are upto this time considered unsurpassed in the history of Islamic thought. so the people of Makkah named him '*Nasir al-Hadith*' (ناصر الحديث).¹⁰⁴

Similarly, Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal's attachment with Prophetic tradition was much more than the other three above referred Sunni Imams. Imam Bayhaqi narrates that when Imam Ahmad was consulted regarding any problem he used to say :

او لاحد كلام مع رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم.¹⁰⁵

(Is there a say for anybody as compared with the Apostle of Allah, peace be upon him.)

It is a unique peculiarity of Imām Aḥmad that his whole religion is traditional i.e., unlike other Imāms his personal views are nowhere compiled. whatever he heard and whatever he believed in, was collected in his *Musnad*, the most voluminous anthology on the Prophetic tradition.¹⁰⁶

As regards Shi'as, they consider the Holy Prophet and their Imāms as infallible and as such Prophetic tradition is binding with them, provided it is narrated on the authority of *Ahl al-Bait* and their Imāms.¹⁰⁷ The

104 See : Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir, Muqaddimah Risalah Imām Shāfi'i, P. 6.

105 Sha'rānī, op. cit., P. 58.

106 Cf. As-Siba'i, op. cit., P. 498.

107 Ibid., P. 149.

starting point of almost all the cults of shi'as is the recognition of `Ali as the legitimate caliph after the death of the Prophet.

So, great emphasis is laid on the tradition that when the Holy Prophet was coming back from his farewell pilgrimage to Makkah, he halted at a spot known as Ghadīr Khum, and there he announced to those who were with him that it was his desire that `Ali should be his successor.....¹⁰⁸ Mullā Muḥammad Bāqir, al-Majlisī, has attempted to give a full account of the incident. He has given a summary of the traditions that relate what happened at Ghasdīr Khum.¹⁰⁹ The Sunnī version of the tradition is reproduced below :

“Muḥammad (peace be upon him), set out at night, straight for Madinah. When he came to a place, in the vicinity of al-Juhfa which was Ghadīr Khum, on the eighteenth of the month of Dhul-Hijja he stood up to deliver an inspired utterance. Taking the hand of `Ali, he said, “Am I not dearer to the believers than their own lives?” They replied, “Yes O Apostle of God”. He then declared, whoever recognises me as his master (*mawla*) will know `Ali as his master.....”¹¹⁰ Again it is reported that When Muhammad (peace be upon him) was on his way back from the expedition to al-Hudaybiya he is said to have made this statement, “He Whose Master I am, has also, `Ali for his master”.¹¹¹

108 Dwight W. Donaldson, The Shi'ite Religion, (London, 1933) P. 1.

109 Hayatu'l-Qulub, Vol. III, P. 339.

110 Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, Musnad, Vol. I, P. 87, 118.

111 Mas'udi, Tanbih wa'l-Ishraf, P. 255, I.

They base their claim on their most celebrated traditions, like:

“`Alī is Aaron; `Alī is the *waṣī* who is designated by the Prophet and Allah. He is the *mawlā*; the Holy family is the ark of Noah; the Holy family and the Kur’an are the two treasures of the earth; Muḥammad, `Alī, Fāṭima, Ḥasan and Ḥusain are the five Companions of the cloak.”¹¹²

All those Companions of the Prophet who paid homage to Abū Bakr, the first caliph of Islam are credited by the majority of the Shi’as with *ridda*. Hence, the whole sunnī literature on tradition is regarded by them untrustworthy. As already stated they judged tradition from their own point of view and only declared such traditions reliable as were based on the authority of `Alī and their adherents. They have therefore their own anthologies on the subject of *Ḥadīth*.

“The fact of most significance is that in the Buwaihid period there were ‘three Muḥammads’ ‘who wrote the four books’, which are still considered as the standard collections of traditions from the Shi’ite point of view”.¹¹³

1. Muḥammad ibn Ya’qūb al-Kulainī (d. 328) is the first and most highly esteemed of these great traditionists, who wrote *Al-Kāfi fi `Ilm al-Dīn* (A compendium of the Science of Religion). It is said to

112 R. Strothmann, art. *Shi’a*, Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam, P. 535; Cf. A. J. Wensinck, A Handbook of Early Muhammadan Traditions, P. 15.

113 Dwight W. Donaldson, The Shi’ite Religion, P. 284; Th. W. Juynboll, art. *Hadīth*, Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam, P. 120., Col. I.

contain over sixteen thousand traditions, spread over thirty chapters. The first eight chapters are included in the first volume which is called the *Usul al-Kāfi*, or the Roots of the Compendium; while the second volume, including chapters viii to xxx, is called the *Furū' al-Kāfi* or the Branches of the Compendium. It took Al-Kulaini, twenty years to compile the *Kāfi* and in recognition of his diligence in collecting the traditions, he was called '*Thiqat al-Islam*' (the trustworthy Authority of Islam)¹¹⁴

While introducing the subject '*al-Hadith 'Inda' al-Shi'a'*', it is stated in it :

ان اول كتاب في الحديث الف في الاسلام كتاب على عليه
السلام - املاه رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وخطه على
عليه السلام على صحيفة. 115
فيها كل حلال وحرام وله كذلك صحيفة في الديات كان
يعلقها بقراب سيفه وقد نقل البخاري منها. 116

(Indeed, the first book composed in Islam on *Hadith* was the Book of 'Ali, peace be upon him. It was dictated to him by the Apostle of Allah, peace be upon him, and written down by 'Ali in a *ṣahīfah*; in it was all, permissible and prohibited. Likewise, 'Ali had a *ṣahīfah* containing the laws relating to compensation for damage, and he used to hang it from the scabbard of his sword. And Imām Bukhārī has narrated from it.)

114 Ibid., P. 285; R. Strothmann, art. Shi'a, Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam. P. 537, Col. 2.

115 Kulaini, Al-Usul min'l-Kafi, P. 1. (Tehran, 1325 A.H.)

116 Bukhari, Sahih Vol. I, P. 40, Bab. Kitab al-'Ilm.

2. Muḥammad b. `Alī b. al-Ḥusain b. Mūsā b. Babuwaiḥī al-Kummi (d. 381) - is the second of the great Shi'ite traditionists who compiled his famous work on tradition entitled :

ان لا يحضره الفقه

`Man lā yahḍuruhū'l - faqīh (Every man his own lawyer). It is one of the four canonical collections on *Hadith*, highly esteemed by Shi'ites and contains 4496 traditions.

3. Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī (d. 460 A.H.) is the third of the three traditionists of the early period who composed two books on tradition :

- (i) *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām* (correcting of Judgements).
- (ii) *Al-Istibṣār fī ma Ikhtulifa min al-Akhbār* (or on Examination of the difference in traditions).

All the above noted books are said to contain material on the Prophetic tradition and wield great influence on the life and thought of the Shi'a community on the whole along with *`Nahj al-Balāghah* (alleged sayings of Haḍrat `Alī) of `Alī ibn Ṭāhir al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā (d. 436 A.H.) The learned Orientalist Dwight W. Donaldson has discriminated between the Sunni and Shi'a approach in the field of the Prophetic tradition as under :

“For whereas the Sunnite traditionists have to trace the *isnād* of each separate tradition back through seven or eight generations, covering a period of approximately two hundred years until they arrive at the testimony of a contemporary of the Prophet,

the Shi'ite traditionists need only ascribe a statement through three or four creditable witnesses to one of the Imams and trace it to his predecessors as far back as they desire".¹¹⁷

But all this, does not in any way, diminish the role of Tradition in Shi'ism.

Similar is the case with Sufis in Islam. They regard the Holy Prophet as the Perfect man (*Al-Insan al-Kamil*) and claim their doctrines and rules of conduct to be based on the Holy Qur'an and the lives of the Prophet and his Companions. As such, the traditions of the Holy Prophet played a great role in the development of Sufiism. Its cosmological view is based on the so-called *Hadith Qudsi* :

118 كنت كنزا مخفيا فاحببت ان اعرف فخلقت الخلق ليعرفوني.

(I was a gem concealed, Me My burning ray revealed - (Emerson) or I was a hidden treasure and desired to be known, and therefore, I made the Creation that I might be known).

Likewise, their philosophy of the Ego is based on the alleged tradition :

119 من عرف نفسه فقد عرف ربه.

(Whoever knoweth his self knoweth his Lord.)

117 The Shi'its Religion, op. cit., P. 288.

118 Ibn Khaldūn, Muqaddimah, Urdu Tr. P. 489.

119 It appears to be a saying of a saint based on the famous dictum of Socrates : know thyself; and as such it is not a Prophetic tradition.

The Sufis endeavoured to emulate each and every aspect of the Prophet's life. For example, the retirement of the Prophet to the cave of the Hira for meditation for a certain period of time every year, set a precedent to the Sufis to retire from society. The ascetic aspects of Sufiism are based on the simplicity of the life followed by the Prophet. In short, it is an established fact that the Prophet of Islam used to wash his clothes, repaired his shoes, milked his goats and never on any occasion did he take his meal to his fill. He would give away what had come into his possession before going to sleep.¹²⁰

Accordingly, Professor Nicholson maintains :

“Every Sūfī who adheres to Islam and for the present we ignore the wild pantheists and free-thinking *dervishes* who reject positive religion altogether - must acknowledge that above the saints, even the most perfect of them, stands the Prophet Muḥammad. The religious life in Islam could not find its supreme ideal anywhere but in the person of Muḥammad”.¹²¹

It may therefore be concluded that there is not a single sect of Muslims to be reported to have either denied the obligation of the obeisance of the Apostle of Allah or have rejected his words and deeds as not representing the sources of *Shari'at*. If anybody does it, that amounts to the rejection of the Qur'anic injunctions

120 Ghazali, Kimiya-i-Sa'adat, P. 280.

121 R.A. Nicholson, The Idea of Personality in Islam, P. 57. (Cambridge, 1923).

and the consensus of the Companions of the Prophet and the Muslim Community on the whole.¹²²

Similar is the view of 'Allāma Ibn Ḥazm when he asserts :

ولو ان امرا قال- لا ناخذ الا ما وجدنا في القرآن لكان
كافرا باجماع الامة، ولكان لا يلزمه الا ركعة ما بين دلك
الشمس الى غسق الليل واخرى عند الفجر لان ذلك هو
اقل ما يقع عليه اسم صلاة ولا حد اكثر في ذلك وقائل
هذا كافر مشرك حلال الدم والمال. 123

(If somebody says, "we don't accept save that which we find mentioned in the Qur'an" - he is a *kafir* according to the unanimous opinion of the *Ummah*. And it is not necessary for him except one *rak'at* from the declining of the sun till the darkness of the night and the second one at dawn; because this is the least on which the term *ṣalat* can be applied. Similarly there is no limit for more in it. Such a person is non-believer and polytheist, whose blood and belongings are lawful for the believers.)

Even Dr. Fazlur Raḥmān acknowledges this fact when he says that :

"It may be remarked here that there was no group in classical Islam - be it the *Khawārij* or the *Mu'tazilah* - who ever denied the validity of the *Sunnah*.....".¹²⁴

He again asserts that :

¹²² *As-Sibā'i*, op. cit., P. 160.

¹²³ *Al-Iḥkām fi Uṣūl al-Aḥkām*, Vol. II, P. 80.

¹²⁴ *Islamic Methodology*, op. cit., P. 70.

“It is, indeed, a curious phenomenon of Muslim religious history that even the Mu'tazilah who claimed to derive moral imperatives (*husn wa qubh* = right and wrong) directly from reason did not differ in legal matters at all from the rest of the Community, although law is no more than application of morals to a society. We are not, of course, supporting the Mu'tazilah stand on morals.....for us, a rational understanding of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* is the only reliable method for arriving at moral imperatives and the Mu'tazilah base their doctrine of the infallibility of the Holy Prophet on rational argument and say that the Prophet must be regarded as immune from fundamental errors and as infallible on the whole because it would be irrational to believe that a person capable of committing large-scale errors should be the recipient of the Divine Revelation, viz., the Qur'an;¹²⁵ on the other hand, to believe that the Prophet is beyond all errors would put him beyond the pale of humanity which is also absolutely irrational”.¹²⁶

Imam Shafi'i has referred to the acceptance of *Sunnah* by the Mu'tazilah,¹²⁷ while Al-Jahiz has tried to prove the same attitude of acceptance of *Sunnah* by the Khawarij also by reporting a speech made by Abu Hamzah, a Khariji leader.¹²⁸ Similarly, Ibn Qutaybah has reported the acceptance of *Hadith* by the Kharijis.¹²⁹

125 *Ibid.*, PP. 137 - 38.

126 *Ibid.*, P.168.

127 *Kitab al-Umm*. Vol. VII, P. 252.

128 *Al-Bayan wa'l-Tabyin*, Vol. VII, P. 122, Cairo, 1948.

129 *Ta'wil Mukhtalif al-Hadith*, P. 3, Cairo, 1326 A.H.

FORGERY IN HADITH LITERATURE

Another very forceful and convincing argument, which can be put forward in support of the important role of tradition is the large-scale forgery committed in the field of *Hadith* literature. It is an established truth never to be surrendered that next to the Qur'an itself, the most important textual material is the *Hadith*; the body of transmitted actions and sayings of the Prophet and his Companions. But here one must understand something which seems at first paradoxical; there are vast number of *Aḥādith* which are admitted by Muslim scholars to be spurious. As the *Hadith* conveys precious information regarding Islam :

“It is indeed precisely the preciousness of the material which led to its being counterfeited”.¹³⁰

It is accepted as axiomatic that every act the Prophet of Islam made after the beginning of the revelation was preserved by God from errors; had it not been so, then the Revelation itself would be cast into doubt, a thing God could never have permitted. Therefore, the slightest act the Prophet did was rightly guided and was worthy of study and emulation with the Muslims from the very inception of Islam. Keeping in view the great importance and fundamental role of traditions in Islam, the Prophet's misguided opponents as well as his shrewd enemies concocted a large number of them and wrongfully attributed to him. In this regard Dr. Zubayr Siddiqi remarks :

130 J.A. William, ed., *Islam*, P. 45, Washington Square Press, N.Y., 1963.

“It has been accepted by all the traditionists that there has been committed a great deal of forgery in *Hadith*. Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal said that in no other branch of literature there had been committed so much forgery as in *Hadith* and *Tafsīr*.... ‘Allāma Ibn Hazm.... (has) quoted an incident which took place during the life-time of the Prophet. He says : After the Prophet’s *hijra*, a man went to a suburb of Madinah, and told a tribe living there that the Prophet had given him authority over them. He had resorted to this fraud because he wanted to marry a girl who was a member of the tribe, to whom he had proposed marriage before the Hijra, but who had never been given in marriage to him. The tribe sent a messenger to the Prophet to make enquiries concerning the authority that was claimed in his name. The Prophet denounced the pretender, and ordered that he be put to death - if he were still alive”.¹³¹

It all goes in favour of establishing the enormous role of tradition in Islam on the one hand and refuting the allegation of some of the orientalist¹³² on the other, that *Hadith* was not acknowledged as an authority until the time of al-Shafi’i. The Prophet of Islam must have felt the need, on such an occasion as quoted above by ‘Allāma Ibn Hazm, of proclaiming :

من كذب على متعمداً فليتبوأ مقعده من النار.¹³³

(Whoever tells a deliberate lie about me, should prepare a seat in hell.)

131 *Hadith Literature*, op. cit., PP. 127 - 28.

132 Cf. Joseph Schacht, *A Revaluation of Islamic Traditions*, art. in *JRAS*, 1949, PP. 143 - 154.

133 Bukhari, *Sahih*, Chapter, al-Ilm, I, P. 35. Dar al-Fikr, 1981.

It is a common-sense question that if *Ḥadīth* was not accepted by all the Muslims as an authority, there would be no need in forging it for any purpose. The Western scholars and Orientalists like A. Sprenger, Edward E. Salisbury, O. V. Houdas, L. Krehl, I. Goldziher, T. W. Juynboll, J. Horowitz, A. J. Wensinck, W. Watt, J. Schacht, J. Robson, D. S. Margoliouth and others have been taking keen interest in applying modern methods of literary and historical criticism of *Ḥadīth* literature.¹³⁴ They have edited, translated and published many of the original texts of *Ḥadīth* Collections as well as other branches of literature connected with *Ḥadīth*. They have as well discussed many fundamental issues relating to it and have written learned critical articles on some of the intricate basic problems regarding the original development and the authority and authenticity of *Ḥadīth* literature. As regards the role of tradition in Islam Prof. Margoliouth remarks :

“From the definition of the name Moslem given above, it follows that the place fitted by the founder in the system is exceedingly prominent; if it is man’s business to obey God, it is from Muhammad only that his business can be learned”.¹³⁵

Discussing the extraordinary importance of the contribution of the Western scholars in this field Dr. Ṣiddīqī states :

“For more important than the contributions of Sprenger, Goldziher, and others is the preparation

134 See : Handbuch der Islam Literatur, By D. G. Pfannmuller, Berlin, Leipzig, 1923.

135 Mohammedanism, P. 42, Home Lib. edition (N. D.) London.

of the Concordance and Indices of Muslim Tradition which is based upon the six canonical collections, the *Sunan* of al-Dārimī, the *Muwattā* of Imām Malīk and the *Musnad* of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal. It was originally planned by Juynboll, Wensinck, Horowitz and some other Orientalists, was patronized by the Royal Academy of Amsterdam, and aided and helped by more than a dozen of Academies and educational institutions of different countries. The work has been continued by de Haas and assisted by M. Fu'ād `Abd al-Bāqī and others. The actual work of preparing the Concordance was begun in 1916 and is continued by about 40 scholars of different countries. The first part of it was published in 1936, and the twenty-sixth part in 1961..... This huge work is of great permanent value, and is sure to serve as a solid foundation for all the important future works on the various aspects of Arabic literature in general and of *Ḥadīth* Literature in particular".¹³⁶

In the opinion of the present writer, where the Orientalists have emphasized the important role of tradition in Islam on the one hand, they have mostly tried to prove on the other, its apocryphal origin and doubtful character to uproot the edifice of this great religion from its very foundation. According to Juynboll: "it was A. Sprenger who pointed out for the first time that a great many traditions had to be considered as forgeries". G. Weil, W. Muir, and also R.P.A. Dozy were not so sceptical, however; they declared at least half of the traditions in Bukhārī Collection to be authentic. Ignaz Goldziher submitted the vast tradition literature to a

136 Ḥadīth Literature, P. XXI.

painstaking examination in his fundamental Muhammedanische Studien, Vol. II.¹³⁷

Let us consider the findings of the researches made by this greatest European scholar in this field i.e., "Ignaz Goldziher, German Orientalist whose Muhammedanische Studien according to A. Guillaume must form the basis of any work on the *Hadith* literature".¹³⁸

In the words of Allama Iqbal traditions of the Holy Prophet have been the subject of great discussion both in ancient and modern times. Among their modern critics Professor Goldziher has subjected them to a searching examination in the light of modern canons of historical criticism, and arrives at the conclusion that they are, on the whole, untrustworthy.¹³⁹ According to Dr. Zubayr, Professor Goldziher's "general conclusion is that *Hadith* Literature does not represent the original ideas and ideals of the Prophet of Islam, but that it reflects those of a much later period. It, therefore, cannot serve as a source for the ideas preached by Muhammad, but serves as an important source of information for the history of the development of the different aspects of Islamic culture of the later periods under the foreign non-Islamic influences,¹⁴⁰ like that of the New Testament".¹⁴¹ In the words of Prof. Juynboll, Ignaz Goldziher has reached the

137 The Authenticity of the Tradition Literature, P. I, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1969.

138 A Guillaume, The Traditions of Islam, P. 5.

139 The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, P. 171.

140 Hadith Literature, op. cit., P. XXI.

141 Ignaz Goldziher, Muhammedanische Studien, Vol. II, P. 346.

conclusion in his fundamental Muhammedanische Studien, Vol. II "that scarcely a single tradition could be proven to be the genuine words of the Prophet or a reliable description of his behaviour". Rather one has to regard the tradition literature as the result of the religious, historical and social evolution of Islam during the first two centuries. (Cf. The Authenticity of the Tradition Literature P. I, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1969.)

Similarly, Professor Joseph Schacht following Goldziher has tried to establish that *Sunnah* of the Prophet in Islam is another name of the *Sunnah* of the Pre-Islamic Arabs. With him it was originally the practice of the community or the 'living tradition' of the early Muslims attributed to the Prophet, and as this concept came to be accepted, *Hadith* was forged on a large scale so much so that there is probably hardly any *Hadith* which may be genuinely from the Prophet himself.¹⁴² Thus he has come to hold the view that the entire corpus of *Hadith* is apocryphal. In fact his thesis centres around the 'back-projection' of legal opinions to the Prophet and the early authorities.¹⁴³

The same theme of creating hatred against the authenticity of *Hadith* literature first put forward by Ignaz Goldziher finds expression in the utterances of Alfred Guillaume, when he says :

142 The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence, P. 80.

143 Joseph Schacht, art. Pre-Islamic background and Early Development of Jurisprudence, (Law in the Middle East), ed. Majid Khadduri, Washington, 1955, Vol. I; Cf., Ahmad Hasan, The Early Development of Islamic Jurisprudence, P. VI, Islamic Research Institute, Islamabad, 1970.

“The reverence in which the Prophet was held by his contemporaries.... naturally led them preserve and repeat his sayings on all subjects. The feverish desire to know what he had said and done, which is well marked in the second generation, increased in intensity until it reached its height in the absurdities of the exercise known as *Talab al-`Ilm*. The foundation of the enormous mass of traditions which afterwards accumulated was laid by the Companions who were scattered throughout the Muhammadan world; but it would be rash to dogmatize as to how much of existing material can be safely ascribed to them. Our estimate of traditions circulated in their name cannot but be adversely affected by the frequent accusations of forgery levelled against many of the professional traditionists, by the many anachronisms they contain, and by the political and sectarian bias they display.¹⁴⁴ When all these factors are allowed for, and account is taken of the inevitable mistakes that must occur when traditions are handed down through a long line of speakers, it is difficult to regard the *Hadith* literature as a whole as an accurate and trustworthy record of the sayings and doings of Muhammad. But however sceptical we are with regard to the ultimate historical value of the traditions, it is hard to overrate their importance in the formation of the life of the Islamic races throughout the centuries. If we cannot accept them at their face value, they are of inestimable value as a mirror of the events which preceded the

144 See, Margoliouth, Mohammed and the Rise of Islam, London, 1905, P. VI. “The number of motives leading to the fabrication of traditions was so great that the historian is in constant danger of employing as veracious records what were deliberate fictions”.

consolidation of Islam into a system..... But of the resultant mass of tradition few can be confidently regarded as emanating from the authorities whose names they bear".¹⁴⁵

In the name of modern critical method of literary and historical research, the Western scholars have declared the most authentic and unanimously accepted genuine traditions, to have been forged, merely on account of their own baseless presumptions. A very striking example of Alfred Guillaume's unsound sceptic attitude towards traditions of Islam may be evidenced in his remarks on the well acknowledged historic fact referred to in *Muwattā* Imām Mālik :

فكتب عمر بن عبد العزيز الى عامله على المدينة ابي بكر
بن محمد بن حزم الانصارى التابعى انظر ما كان عندك اى
في بلدك من سنة او حديث فاكتبه فانى خفت دروس العلم
وذهاب العلماء ولا تقبل الاحديث النبي صلى الله عليه
وسلم....¹⁴⁶

(So `Umar b. `Abd al-`Aziz wrote to Abu Bakr b. Hazm, the governor of Madīnah : "See what *Sunnah* or *Hadith* is extant with you i.e., in your city, and write it down; for I stand in dread of the disappearance of knowledge and of the death of the learned, and do not accept, save the *Hadith* of the Prophet, peace be upon him".)

Guillaume comments that it is difficult, if not impossible, to suggest a cogent reason why such an early

145 Alfred Guillaume, *The Traditions of Islam*, op. cit., PP. 10 - 13.

146 Muḥammad b. Ja'far al-Kattānī, *al-Risālah al-Mustatrafah*, op. cit., P. 4.

collection, if it existed, should never have been mentioned by later scholars whose life-work it was to recover the genuine *Ḥadīth* of the apostolic period. For this reason the *Ḥadīth* must be regarded as an invention designed to connect the pious caliph, whose zeal for the *Sunnah* was gratefully recognized by theologians, with the tradition literature of Islam. This seems the more likely, as another tradition connects Ibn Shihab Al-Zuhri with `Umar II in this work.¹⁴⁷

Another glaring example of unfounded attack by one of the greatest of the Western scholars of *Ḥadīth*, Goldziher, against the most trustworthy and soundest tradition of the whole *Ḥadīth* literature is quoted below.¹⁴⁸ He asserts that after the fabrication of *Ḥadīth* had become a common practice :

“With pious intention fabrications were combated with new fabrications, with new *Ḥadīths* which were smuggled in and in which the invention of illegitimate *Ḥadīths* were condemned by strong words uttered by the Prophet..... The most widely spread polemical *Ḥadīth* of this nature is the saying which survives in many versions”.¹⁴⁹

150 من كذب على متعمداً فليتبوا مقعده من النار.

(One who lies intentionally in regard to me takes his abode in Hell.)

147 A Guillaume, The Traditions of Islam, P. 19.

148 Ḥadīth Literature op. cit., P. XXVI.

149 Ignaz Goldziher, Muhammedanische Studien, P. 127.

150 Suyūṭī, Tadrib al-Rāwī, Vol. II, P. 177.

According to Goldziher's version, about eighty Companions not counting some paraphrases - hand down this saying, which is recognizable as a reaction against the increasing forgery of Prophetic sayings.

According to Guillaume "an extraordinary number of Companions are cited as witnesses to the above *Hadith*."¹⁵¹ Yet Goldziher and following him Alfred Guillaume treat this *Hadith* a fabrication to combat the rapid increase of faked *Hadiths*.

With the present writer, rejection of this *mutawātir*¹⁵² *Hadith* by the Orientalists sets aside all standards of test and is tantamount to a grave irrationality, a sin against history. It was for such an occasion that the Persian proverb was coined :

چه دلاور است دزدی که بکف چراغ دارد.

By adopting such an uncalled - for attitude towards traditions of Islam, the Orientalists tried in vain to

151 The Traditions of Islam, P. 78; Dr. Fazlur Rahman holds the same view when he says : "We have already remarked that it is highly probable that anti-*Hadith* traditions originated before the pro-*Hadith* traditions". Islamic Methodology op. cit., P. 45. He further opines that it was later modified to read, "whoever tells a deliberate lie.... in order to lead people astray....." on this basis then a general principle was formulated that "*Hadith* arousing pious feelings is not to be rejected". P. 73.

152 Hafiz Ibn Hajar in his Sharh Nukhbah (P. 11), after describing the requirements of Mutawātir Hadith says :

ذکر ابن صلاح ان مثال المتواتر علی التفسیر المتقدم يعز وجوده الا ان يدعى ذلك في حديث من كذب علی متعمدا.....
Similarly, Hāfiz Suyūṭī writes in Tadrib (P. 177) about this

counteract the true charges of concoction levelled against the traditions which record the sayings of Jesus Christ. We cannot go into the vexed question in detail here, but must refer to the remarks made by Syed Amīr `Alī in this connection.

“They have gone through such a process of elimination and selection, that it is hardly possible at the present moment to say which are really his own words and which are not”.¹⁵³

According to Milman, the ancient collectors and the modellers of the Christian Gospels were rude and simple historians.¹⁵⁴ They must have exercised a discretionary latitude in the reception of the traditions. If a narrative or scripture was, in its tone and substance, agreeable to their preconceived views, they looked upon defective external evidence as complete; if it was not agreeable, the most sufficient was explained away as a misunderstanding. Hence a great many additions were made, though unconsciously, to the saying and doing of Jesus. On this point the testimony of Celsus, with every allowance for exaggeration, must be regarded as conclusive when he says the Christians were in the habit of coining and remodelling their traditional accounts.¹⁵⁵

Hadith : قال ابن صلاح رواه اثنان وستون من الصحابة
قال العراقي: بضعة وسبعين صحابيا - العشرة المشهود لهم بالجنة

153 S. Amir `Ali, The Spirit of Islam, P. 194.

154 History of Christianity, Vol. I, P. 126; he admitted that the traditions regarding the acts and sayings of Jesus, which were floating about among the Christian Communities, were not cast into their present shape till almost the close of the first half of the second century.

155 S. Amir `Ali, The Spirit of Islam, P. 194, F.N. I.

Keeping in view such state of affairs another renowned Orientalist Prof. Wilfred Cantwell Smith attempted to put forward an analogy between the Traditions of Islam and the New Testament, in his article, "Some Similarities and Differences between Christianity and Islam". He wishfully asserts, "the *Hadith*, the record of how the Revelation occurred, and the Acts of the Apostle, or Messenger, is to Islam then roughly what the New Testament is to Christianity".¹⁵⁶

Under the influence of these Orientalists, some of our best contemporary scholars have tried to hoodwink the Muslim Community by indirectly affirming the findings of the Western scholars in the name of so-called modernism and Progressivism. Their scholarly approach however, is not free from deceit. They call it a great historic discovery, towards which the Orientalist has contributed so much.¹⁵⁷ It has been given the title of Islamic Methodology in History under the pretension of progressive fairmindedness and modern objectivity. One cannot but feel perplexed at the phraseology used by Dr. Fazlur Rehman for putting forward his own point of view on this issue. On the one hand, he asserts "that *Hadith* from the Prophet must have existed from the very beginning of Islam..... Rejection of this natural phenomenon is tantamount to a grave irrationality, a sin against history".¹⁵⁸ On the other hand, he writes, "It will have been noticed that although we do not accept *Hadith*

156 See : John Alden Williams, *Islam*, op. cit., P. 44.

157 See : Fazlur Rehman, *Isl. Methodology in History*, op. cit., P. IX.

158 *Ibid.*, P. 32.

in general as strictly historical, we have not used the terms "forgery" or "concoction" with reference to it but have employed the term "formulation". This is because although *Ḥadīth*, verbally speaking, does not go back to the Prophet, its spirit certainly does, and *Ḥadīth* is largely the situational interpretation and formulation of this Prophetic Model or spirit. This term "forgery" and its equivalents would, therefore, be false when used about the nature of *Ḥadīth* and the term "formulation" would be literally true".¹⁵⁹

With the present writer Dr. Fazul-ur-Rehman's above words imply in a round about way the same opinion expressed by the German Orientalist, Ignaz Goldziher, when he says :

"We are unlikely to have even as much confidence as Dozy regarding a large part of the *Ḥadīth*, but will probably consider by far the greater part of it as the result of the religious, historical and social development of Islam during the first two centuries. The *Ḥadīth* will not serve as a document for the history of the infancy of Islam, but rather as a reflection of the tendencies which appeared in the community during the maturer stages of its development".¹⁶⁰

While endeavouring to bridge the gap between the Orthodox traditional values and Western Scholarship,

159 *Ibid.*, P. 80

160 *Muhammedanische Studien*, op. cit., P. 5; Cf. Dr. Fazlur Rahman statement : But the most fundamental objection to our thesis of non-hisotricity of *Hadith* will not be scientific but religious, viz., that *Hadith* will thus turn out to be a gigantic conspiracy. (*Islamic Methodology*, P. 73).

Dr. Fazlur Rehman has created a worst sort of confusion. In his obsession to claim for himself the credit of having found the ultimate truth¹⁶¹ - he has adduced new evidence to introduce the concept of the inevitable continuity of the Prophetic example in the religious practice of the Muslims.

He asserts that the tradition literature reflects in addition to the limited veritable Prophetic *Sunnah*, a progressive interpretation and formulation of the Prophetic *Sunnah* termed as living Sunnah.

“What we want now to do is to recast the *Hadith* into living *Sunnah* terms by historical interpretation so that we may be able to derive norms from it for ourselves through an adequate ethical theory and its legal re-embodiment”.¹⁶²

How baseless, rather ridiculous appears to be the above argument of recasting the *Hadith* on one side into “living *Sunnah*”, which is considered by the learned scholar - still an on-going process,¹⁶³ and on the other side to discredit the same, by quoting Abu Yusuf’s following comments :

“Judgement regarding what is lawful and what is unlawful cannot be based upon such statements as ‘People have always been practising such and such’. For much of what people have always been practising is unlawful and should not be

161 Islamic Methodology, op. cit., P. X.

162 Islamic Methodology, op. cit., P. 80; Cf. Juynboll, The Authenticity of the Tradition Literature, op. cit., P. 2.

163 Ibid., P. 31.

practised..... The basis (of judgment) should be the *Sunnah* of the Prophet, or of the early generations (salaf), i.e., the Companions of the Prophet.....¹⁶⁴

Completely non-sensical is the view which pleads that the Prophetic tradition did not lay down rules regulating the fine details of human life from administration to those of ritual purity and the Prophet was a moral reformer who seldom resorted to general legislation as a means of furthering the Islamic cause.¹⁶⁵

Some of our Egyptians scholars of the twentieth century were also misled by the Orientalists' unfounded criticism of the Prophetic tradition in the name of so-called scientific methodology and progressive modernism.

Dr. Muṣṭafā Al-Sibā'ī points out :

فقد خدع ببحوث المستشرقين وخاصة المستشرق اليهودي
جولد تسيهر- عدد من كتابنا الفضلاء- امثال الدكتور
احمد امين رحمه الله والدكتور على حسن عبد القادر
والاستاذ محمود ابورية.¹⁶⁶

Professor Ahmad Amin expressed his views on *Hadith* literature in his book '*Fajr al-Islām*', PP. 255 - 274, Cairo 1959. According to Al-Sibā'ī :

فمزج السم بالدم وخلط الحق بالباطل¹⁶⁷

164 Abū Yūsuf's *al-Radd'ala Siyar al-Awza'i*, P. 76, vide Fazlur Rehman's *Islamic Methodology*, P. 32.

165 Cf. *Ibid.*, P. 10.

166 *Al-Sunnah wa Makānatuhā fi'l Tashrī' al-Islāmī*, op. cit., P. 28.

167 *Ibid.*, P. 212.

(He mixed pioson with lint and intermingled the truth with falsehood tampered with the Islamic realities and deviated from the right path treating unfairly many high ranking Companions and the Successors.)

Similarly, Dr. `Ali Hasan Abdul Qadir, following Goldziher, criticized Prophetic tradition unfairly but later changed his view in his work, Nazra `amma fi Tarikh al-fiqh al-Islami, Cairo, 1956, as mentioned by Muṣṭafā al-Sibā'i:

واظن ان الدكتور عدل عن رايه السابق في المستشرقين
وخاصة جولد تسيهر وبدل رايه في امانته واخلاصه للحق
وعدم تحريفه للنصوص. 168

The worst of all the critics of *Hadith* literature, who sometimes deliberately misquotes to his own advantage is Mahmud Abu Rayya. His courage in discussing the most important Islamic subject in his book '*Adwā' `ala al-Sunnah al-Muḥammadiyah*' (Cairo, 1958), in a way reminiscent of Western methods is noteworthy. He also employed deceitful means which justly irritated the Muslim Community. Muhammad `Abd al-Razzaq Ḥamza has pointed out his blunders in details very precisely.¹⁶⁹ Likewise, 'Allāma `Abd al-Raḥmān bin Yaḥya al-Mu'allimī al-yamanī refuted his allegations and objections in a very scholarly work entitled: 'Al-Anwār al-Kāshifah li-mā fī Kitāb Adwā' `ala al-Sunnah min al-dalal wa'l-Tadlīl wa'l-Majāzafah, Cairo, 1959."

168 Ibid., P. 31.

169 See, Zulumāt Abū Rayya imām Adwā' as - Sunnah al-Muḥammadiyah, Cairo, 1959.

Space does not allow here to discuss all the objections in detail raised against the Prophetic tradition by the so-called Muslim modernists and the Orientalists. All these have been properly dealt with and reasonably refuted by Dr. M. Zubayr Siddiqi,¹⁷⁰ Dr. Muṣṭafā Al-Sibā'ī,¹⁷¹ Muhammad 'Ajjāj al-Khaṭīb,¹⁷² and so many other renowned scholars of Islam. In the Indo Pak sub-continent Maulavī 'Abd-ullāh Chakrālwi, Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad Aslam Jairajpūrī and Ch. Ghulam Aḥmad Parvaiz objected to the authority of *Ḥadīth* literature on very flimsy grounds.¹⁷³ But their objections were overruled and met with in a very scientific manner by Maulana Muḥammad Idrees Kandhelvi,¹⁷⁴ Maulana Abu'l 'Ala Maududi,¹⁷⁵ Mr. Iftikhār Aḥmad Balakhi,¹⁷⁶ M. Abdur Rahman Khan,¹⁷⁷ Mr. Ghulam Bari,¹⁷⁸ and by so many other learned scholars.

In the opinion of the present writer the authenticity of the tradition literature has been the main issue with almost all these critics. If it is established that *Ḥadīth* literature is not authentic, it automatically loses its crucial importance and endangers the position of the

170 *Ḥadīth Literature*, op. cit., PP. XXII - XXVIII.

171 *Al-Sunnah wa Makānatuhā.....*, op. cit., PP. 40 - 58.

172 *Al-Sunnah Qabla't-Tadwīn*, Cairo, 1963.

173 Cf. Ch. Ghulam Ahmad Parvaiz, *Maqām-i-Ḥadīth*, Idarah Talu' al-islam, Karachi, 1953.

174 *Hujjiyat-i-Ḥadīth*, Tabi Insha Press, Lahore, (n.d.)

175 *Sunnat Ki Āini Hasiat*, Islamic Publications, Lahore 1963.

176 *Fitna Inkār-i-Ḥadīth Ka Manzar Aur Pas-Manzar* Maktaba' Chiragh-i-Rah, Karachi.

177 *Fitna parvaiz wa Haqiqat-i-Ḥadīth*, Sanaullah Khan, Lahore 1954.

178 *Munkarīn-i-Ḥadīth Kai I'tiradāt Kai Jawabat*.

Prophetic *Sunnah*. To acknowledge the genuineness of a tradition means that one is bound to put it into practice; and raising doubts as to its use as evidence or as a definite argument in legal matters or generally speaking, in affairs where the Prophetic behaviour is chosen as the guiding principle - means that one is not satisfied with the specific, tradition bound precepts of the *Shari'ah* and that one is searching for means to loosen its shackles. Thus the denial of historical authenticity of tradition also discards it to be used as source material for historical research. Consequently, the authority of the most sacred literature after the Holy Book is impaired.

As already stated, large-scale forgery has been committed in the field of tradition and this proves the most forceful argument in favour of the present thesis.¹⁷⁹ But we should not forget that the traditionists tried their best to check these forgeries and established definite principles for the sake of criticising the faked reports and of establishing the genuine and sound ones among them. The development of considerable literature on the discarded traditions called *Maudu'at*¹⁸⁰ is a certain and sure proof of it. One feels surprised to find that some of the Western scholars have used *Maudu'at* to prove that the traditions of Islam in general are unreliable.¹⁸¹ It was all due to the negligence of our Muslim '*Ulamā'* and '*Khutaba'* who themselves did not take the trouble of avoiding the forged traditions in their sermons¹⁸² as well

179 *Supra*, Chapter IV, f.n. 132.

180 See : Muḥammad b. Ja'far al-Kattānī, *Risāla al-Mustatrafah*, PP. 122 - 126.

181 Cf. M. Zubayr Ṣiddiqī, *Hadīth Literature*, P. XXV.

182 *Supra*, Preface.

as in their writings. 'Allāma Rashīd Raḍā al-Miṣrī in this connection very conscientiously depicted the adverse state of affairs at the greatest Muslim University of his time - Jāmi`a al-Azhar, and rightly gave the credit of reviving the knowledge of the Prophetic tradition to the Indian Muslim Scholars.¹⁸³

HISTORICITY OF THE TRADITION LITERATURE

It is not our purpose to examine here, how the learned critics repudiate traditions which do not support their enlightened views, nor to criticize their attitude towards *Hadith* from the same authorities when they tend to support their wishes. But it is interesting to note how the tradition literature is viewed by them, however absurd and untenable may be their process of reasoning and argumentative deduction. The style of Goldziher and Guillaume is a mixture of offence and abuse. After painting a very gloomy picture of tradition literature, Goldziher predicts : 'A time had to come when a reaction, whether religious or rationalistic, would set in.'¹⁸⁴ Again while discussing reaction against the fabrication of traditions, he asserts :

''Ibn Qutayba endeavours in his work *Mukhtalif al-Hadith* to refute all these objections from the standpoint of orthodox Muslims, but he is forced to use all manners of forced interpretations in order to lend some sense to the absurdities and sillinesses".¹⁸⁵

183 See : Dr. Muhammad Ishaq, India's contribution to the Study of Hadith Literature, University of Dacca, 1955.

184 Muhammedanische Studien, P. 132.

185 Ibid., P. 136.

It may have appeared from the preceding line in what manner and in what insulting language Goldziher chose to refute the views of a Muslim scholar of 'Allāma Ibn Qutayba's fame. A sentence or two of Goldziher's attract our special attention. It shows the point of view of Goldziher, who slanders Islam and constantly gives an untrue and unfair picture of the religion of Islam. It exposes the Jew. Whether he deliberately makes a false statement or indeed, has never heard of the highly developed science of *Jarḥ wa Ta'dil* is uncertain. Let us consider an example of his emotional argumentation which is not based on sound judgment. He remarks :

"It seems that teachings presented as sayings of Muhammad were received as such without much probing into the credentials which sought to prove them to be the oral teaching of the Prophet. The carelessness and credulity of people in those days and in those circles are shown in a phenomenon related to matters of tradition which demonstrates even more characteristically the facility with which the quotation of testimony from early times was undertaken".¹⁸⁶

It goes without saying that the Western scholars are justified in challenging the reliability of the tradition literature by attacking the characteristic features of its defective transmission, belated registration, large-scale forgery in traditions,¹⁸⁷ but the efforts made by the traditionists to determine the reliability and historicity of the Prophetic traditions are unprecedented in the history

186 *Ibid.*, PP. 49 - 50.

187 Cf. Alfred Guillaume, *Islam*, op. cit., P. 91; G.H.A. Juynboll, *The Authenticity of the Tradition Literature*, op. cit., P. 150.

of religious literature. They tried their utmost to check these forgeries, and established definite principles for the sake of criticising the faked reports and of establishing the true ones among them. It was made imperative from the very beginning to give the names of the narrators through whom they received the reports. They tried to be as exact in their reports as was humanly possible,¹⁸⁸ because the Muslims were enjoined through the revealed injunction to keep to the principle of the criticism of the reporters of the events as is evident from the following verse of the Holy Qur'an :

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن جَاءكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَن تُصِيبُوا

قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصْبِحُوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ. 189

(O you who believe, if an unrighteous Man brings you news, look carefully into it, lest you harm a people in ignorance, then be sorry for what you did.)

Similarly, in *Sūrah* al-Noor clear warning is given against the slanderers of *Ḥaḍrat* `Ā'ishah, the Prophet's wife, in the following words :

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ جَاءُوا بِالْأَفْكَ عَصَبَةٌ مِنْكُمْ لَا تَحْسِبُوهُ شَرًّا لَكُمْ بَلْ

هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ... لَوْلَا إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ ظَنَّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ

بِأَنفُسِهِمْ خَيْرًا وَقَالُوا هَذَا أَفْكٌ مِّبِينٌ. 190

(Surely they who concocted the lie are a party from among you. Deem it not an evil to you. Nay, it is good for you Why did not the believing men

188 Cf. Dr. M. Zubayr, *Ḥadīth Literature*, op. cit., P. 126.

189 Al-Qur'an, 49/6.

190 *Ibid.*, 24/11 - 12.

and the believing women, when you heard it, think well of their own people, and say : This is an evident falsehood.)

It has been termed as an apparent false accusation on account of the 'above-all suspicion', character of Hadrat 'A'ishah.¹⁹¹ Under the Divine directives, the Muslims enunciated the principles of historical criticism at an early period, and care was taken to determine the reliability of the Prophetic tradition during his life-time, as some of the *Aḥādīth* were forged then and there. The system of *Isnād* was introduced in a perfect form which is known as - the guaranteeing chain of transmission.¹⁹² All those reporters who were suspected of making forgery in their narrations were declared as unreliable. This *Isnād* system for checking the veracity of the narrators gave rise to a vast and genuine biographical information literature on the life and character of every reporter i.e., the *Asmā' al-Rijāl*.¹⁹³ It is a unique Islamic achievement and a characteristic feature of Muslim historical literature through which the biographies of five hundred thousand reporters of the Prophetic tradition were preserved for ever.¹⁹⁴

Isnād system not only contributed to eliminating the forged traditions through the untiring activity of our traditionists but also promoted the development of

191 Cf. Zubayr Ṣiddīqī, *Ḥadīth Literature*, P. 189.

192 Fazul ur Rahman, *Islamic Methodology*, P. 72.

193 Idem., Zubayr Ṣiddīqī, *Ḥadīth Literature*, P. 72.

194 See : Dr. Sprenger, Int., *Al-Isābah fi Tam'yiz al-Sahābah*, Ibn Hajar 'Asqalānī; Dr. M. Ḥamidullah, *Introduction to Islam*, P. 151.

various branches of literature¹⁹⁵ which served as foundations for the criticism of every individual tradition. As *Isnād* cannot constitute a solitary positive final argument for the genuineness of a tradition, some other principles were laid down in order to test and verify the truth of its text. That is why, the traditionists generally acknowledged the determining faculty¹⁹⁶ as the touchstone, that is developed by the specialists in the subject, by means of long continuous study of traditions and by means of constant discussions about them with other specialists, and by acquiring a deep insight into them. Rabi' b. Khusaim says :

فان للحديث ضوء كضوء النهار نعرفه وظلمة كظلمة الليل
ننكره. 197

(*Hadith* has a light like the day-light through which we recognise it and it has darkness like that of the night on account of which we discard it.)

Hāfiz Jalālud-dīn Suyūṭī has mentioned in this connection :

وقال ابن الجوزى - ما احسن قول القائل - اذا رايت الحديث
يباين المعقول او يخالف المنقول او يناقض الاصول فاعلم انه
موضوع قال: ومعنى مناقضته للاصول ان يكون خارجا عن
دواوين الإسلام من المسانيد والكتب المشهورة. 198

195 Imām Nawawī has mentioned fifty six funūn in his Sharh Muslim.

196 Cf. Ibn Hajar, Sharh Nukhbat al-Fikar, op. cit., P. 56.

197 Ṣubḥī Ṣāliḥ, Ulūm al-Hadīth, op. cit., P. 264.

198 Tadrib al-Rawi, op. cit., Vol. I, P. 277.

(Ibn al-Jauzī said, how nice goes the saying : When you find a *Ḥadīth* contradicting the *ma'qūl* or contrary to the *manqūl* or opposing the *usul*, know that it is forged. Suyūṭī says, and the implication of the opposition of *uṣūl* is exclusion from the standard works on Islam, the *Masānīd* and the other renowned books.)

Hafiz Ibn Hajar has described the following symptoms amongst others for distinguishing the faked *Aḥādīth* :

كان يكون مناقضا لنص القرآن او السنة المتواترة او
الاجماع القطعي او صريح العقل حيث لا يقبل شئ من
ذلك التاويل. 199

(It could be against the explicit Qur'anic version, or the *Sunnat al-Mutawātirah*, or the undisputed Consensus or the common-sense, without any provision for interpretation.)

Similarly, the famous traditionist Al-Dāraqutnī proclaimed according to Imām Sakhāwī :

يا أهل بغداد لا تظنوا ان احدا يقدر ان يكذب على رسول
الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وانا حي. 200

(O dwellers of Baghdad : Do'nt presume that anyone can dare to ascribe falsehood to the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, while I am alive.)

All the above quotations stand a clear proof to the effect that for the historicity of the Prophetic tradition specific rules and regulations were laid down and :

199 Sharḥ Nukhbat al-Fikar, op. cit., PP. 57 - 58.

200 Ibid., P. 56, Ḥashia 'Iqd al-Durar Fi Jid Sharḥ Nukbah.

“That the collectors of tradition rendered an important service to Islam and even to history; cannot be doubted. The vast flood of tradition poured forth from every quarter of the Moslem empire, and daily gathering volume from innumerable tributaries, was composed of the most heterogenous elements; without the labours of the traditionists it must soon have formed a chaotic sea, in which truth and error, fact and fable would have mingled together in undistinguishable confusion. It is a legitimate inference from the foregoing sketch, that tradition in the second century, embraced a large element of truth”.²⁰¹

The point of over all importance to the present writer is that the tradition literature cannot be discarded in its entirety as historically unreliable. It originated in the early life of the Prophet of Islam, developed largely throughout his life and spread simultaneously with the spread of Islam through-out the vast Muslim dominions. It had been preserved for about a century partly in writing, the very nature of which required that it should be written down, viz., the official documents of the Prophet, in the forms of written pacts and agreements, laws and letters dictated by the Prophet himself to his “Ummāl and different non-Muslim rulers;”²⁰² and partly in the memory of those who had associated with him and watched carefully his sayings and doings. The learned German Orientalist has established that about twelve or thirteen *Ṣaḥīfahs* were compiled by the

201 T. P. Hughes, A Dictionary of Islam, P. 645, Premier Books House, Lahore, 1965.

202 See : M. Ḥamidullāh, Doctoral Thesis; Al-Wathāiq al-Sayāsia, Paris; Introduction to Islam, PP. 23 - 30.

Companions and the Followers containing the Prophetic traditions.²⁰³ The publication of the *Ṣaḥīfah* of Hammām b. Munabbih by Dr. Ḥamidullāh, and the identification of its contents with that of a part of the *Musnad* of Ahmad b. Hanbal with very slight differences, strongly support the theory of A. Sprenger put forward in his article "on the origin and progress of writing down historical facts among the Musalmans".²⁰⁴

In the beginning of Islam the Holy Prophet prohibited the writing of any thing other than the Holy Qur'an by proclaiming :²⁰⁵ (لا تكتبوا عنى غير القرآن....) But Ibn Qutayba says that either this prohibition belonged to an earlier period in the life of Muḥammad, peace be upon him, and is cancelled by the late permission or it was meant only for those Companions who were not well-versed in the art of writing.²⁰⁶ Imām Nawawī in his commentary of *Ṣaḥīḥ* Muslim has put forward the explanation of preserving the text of the Holy Qur'an exclusively and has very rightly pointed out that Islam might not run into the same danger of previous religions, intermingling the word of God with that of the apostles; hence the prohibition was made at the outset of Islam. Ignaz Goldziher as usual regards the whole controversy as concocted, like the other tradition literature.²⁰⁷

203 Muḥammad Zubayr Ṣiddīqī, *Hadīth Literature*, P. XXII.

204 *JASB.*, 1856, PP. 317 FF.

205 Ahmad b. Hanbal, *Musnad*, Vol. II, P. 403;

Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Vol. II. P. 414.

206 *Mukhtalif al-Hadīth*, P. 344.

207 *Muhammedanische Studien*, PP. 196 FF.

After the death of the Prophet, it is usually asserted that `Umar b. `Abd al-`Azīz in the year 101 A. H. took steps towards the collection of tradition in book form. But Ibn Sa'd narrates that the Governor of Egypt, `Abd al-`Azīz b. Marwān ordered, even before seventy five A.H., Kathir b. Murrah al-Haḍrimī to record the tradition of all the Companions of Prophet, save those of Haḍrat Abū Hurairah, which were already recorded with him.²⁰⁸ After the expansion of the Islamic empire in the various countries, the custodians of the Prophetic traditions spread throughout these dominions. It was after the seekers of the traditions had travelled through all these countries, situated wide apart from one another, and collected together the traditions known to each of the traditionists that larger collections of traditions could be compiled during the second and third centuries. Since then, the traditionists have applied the critical method of determining the relative value of *Isnād* of each and every tradition contained in those collections. As *Isnād* was considered an indispensable part of traditions, the Muslim scholars, developed it a great deal, gave it a firm foundation by introducing to it the chronological method and by establishing various principles for determining the value of its different classes. The Muslims have taken great pride in this system and Prof. J. Robson has collected together most of what has been written by the Muslim scholars and the Orientalists on the subject, and has tried to evaluate it in his article "The *Isnād* in Muslim Tradition", reprinted from the Transactions of

208 Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr, Vol. VII, P. 157, Leiden, 1915 - 17; Cf. M. `Ajjāj al-Khaṭīb, Al-Sunnah Qabl al-Tadwīn, P. 72.

the Glasgow University Oriental Society, PP. 15 - 26.²⁰⁹ The Western scholars like Leone Caetani,²¹⁰ D. S. Margoliouth,²¹¹ J. Horowitz²¹² and others have tried to prove that the *Isnād* system did not originate with the Arabs. It was found in some form with the Greeks and the Romans, though rarely used, and several instances are present in the Jewish and Christian Literature.

Allama Ibn Hazam has described in detail the complete Islamic *Isnād* system used in the transmission of the Prophetic traditions and has also discussed its rudimentary use among the Christians and the Jews.²¹³ Occasional use of the *Isnād* is also found in the ancient Indian literature - Hindu, Buddhist as well as Jaina.²¹⁴ No other religion, however, so far it is known, ever made any attempt towards the methodic chronology and scientific treatment of *Isnād*. The methodical system of *Isnād*, was extended in addition to the Prophetic traditions, to many other branches of knowledge, like, geography, history, fiction etc., by the Arab authors. This is certainly a unique feature of tradition literature which enunciated the most critical methodology of *Isnād* on scientific basis alongwith other principles of the criticism

209 M. Zubayr, Hadith Literature, op. cit., P. 130.

210 Annali Dell 'Islam, Vol. I, P. 30. Milan, 1905.

211 Lectures on Arabic Historians, P. 20, Calcutta, 1930.

212 Alter Und Ursprung des Isnad, Der Islam, VII, PP. 39 - 47, (1917).

213 Al-Fisal fi al-Milal, Ed., 'Abd al-Rahman Khalifah, Vol. II, PP. 67 - 70, Cairo, 1348.

214 M. Zubayr Siddiqi, Hadith Literature, op. cit., P. 133; Cf. M. Winternitz, History of Indian Literature, Vol. II, P. 34, Calcutta University Press, 1927.

of the text of individual traditions which can undoubtedly be compared with the highest and severest criteria laid down by modern Western scholars for judging the historicity of any religious literature. With regard to its application to historical works compiled by Muslim scholars, Professor Phillip Hitti remarks :

“This form of historic composition is unique in the case of the Arabic historiography - namely, to go back to the source and trace the line of authorities”.²¹⁵

The care and exactitude of the leading traditionists is important from two points of view, one being assurance in the matter of authenticity and the other collection and preservation of the most varied details.²¹⁶ No other literature can compete with *Ḥadīth* literature in the attempt after exactitude made by its pious votaries. There certainly had been numerous forgers of *Hadith*. But they had little to do with *Ḥadīth* literature.²¹⁷ The scientific principles of the most modern form of criticism unparalleled in the history of world literature were evolved and formulated in connection with the historicity and documentation of the Prophetic tradition in numerous works on the ‘*Ulūm al-Ḥadīth*’, the Sciences of Tradition.²¹⁸

215 The Origins of the Islamic State, P. 3. Columbia University Press, 1924.

216 M. Ḥamidullāh, Ed., Introduction to Islam, P. 150.

217 M. Zubayr Ṣiddīqī, Ḥadīth Literature, P. 156.

218 See : Ibn Ḥajar ‘Asqalānī, Sharḥ Nukhbat al-Fikar, op. cit., PP. 3 - 4; Jalāl-ud-Dīn Suyūṭī, Tadrīb al-Rāwī, op. cit., Vol. I, PP. 5 - 10; Muḥammad b. Ja’far al-Kattānī, Risālāh al-Mustatrafah, op. cit., P. 118; Dr. Ṣubḥī Ṣāliḥ, ‘Ulūm al-Ḥadīth,

The present writer fully endorses the most convincing view of Dr. Fazl ur Rahman expressed in the preface of his work *Islamic Methodology in History*, :

“That neither Islam nor the Muslim Community will suffer from facing the facts of history as they are, on the contrary, historical truth, like all truth shall invigorate Islam for - as the Qur’an tells us - God is in intimate touch with history”.²¹⁹

If we undertake by the term ‘Criticism’ - the careful and discriminating examination of the facts concerning the origin and characteristics of tradition according to the best attainable evidence, it is evident that criticism is not only legitimate but desirable with reference to the tradition of the Prophet. Learning how a thing came to be is an important part of learning what it is. It would be the display of a narrow and foolish spirit to be afraid of the most searching investigation which scholarship can institute into the age, the authorship, the authenticity, and the import of the several books of the tradition. Whatever can thus be discovered ought to be welcomed by all fair minded Muslims.

But it should not be overruled that every critical study, however conducted, cannot be depended upon to arrive at sure and trustworthy results. There are limitations and difficulties in the nature of the subjects, there are prepossessions and imperfections in the critic, which may lead astray or leave the result indecisive.

PP. 105 - 138; Muhammad Jamāl-ud-Dīn al-Qāsimī, *Qawāid al-Taḥdīth*, op. cit., P. 41.

219 Fazl ur Rehman, *Islamic Methodology in History*, P. X.

In spite of all these limitations the work accomplished by the traditionists in the field of critical assessment of the Prophetic tradition is not only matchless and unique but also unprecedented in the history of religious literature of the previous nations.

The present writer may not be misunderstood to plead that everything, without exception, that is found in the tradition literature is to be accepted as absolutely unadulterated truth. He does not mean that all critical inquiry into the historical and scientific accuracy or logical soundness of traditions is to be cut off. The Prophetic tradition was transmitted and written by imperfect and fallible men; and it is only by the use of the rational and critical judgment that Muslims have come to regard the *Ṣiḥāḥi Sittah* and some other collections as of exceptional trustworthiness. If the same method of examination should reveal occasional instances of discrepancy and error, this would be nothing more than what might be expected, unless it has been demonstrated that the compilers were so inspired as to make them absolutely infallible. But no such demonstration has ever been made. On the contrary it has become one of the common places of traditional criticism, that the existence of discrepancies, on minor points, between different writers who have traversed the same ground is one of the best evidence of the independence, originality, and genuineness of the compilations.

But while the possibility and even probability of unimportant inaccuracies in the authentic and sanctioned traditions may be admitted, it must still be insisted that

the general faith in the genuineness of the Prophetic legacy carries with it such a presumption in favour of the trustworthiness of the *Ḥadīth* literature (excluding the discarded and rejected concoctions) not only in general, but in detail, that the burden of proof may now always be rightly thrown upon the critic who brings a charge of error even respecting minor and incidental matters. The common fact is that if one is predisposed to find error, he can make out a list of indefinite length,²²⁰ whereas if one is predisposed to believe that there are none at all, the apparent errors can be explained away with greater or less plausibility. On either side there is a liability to use some bias, in the interpretation of the fact. We cannot go here into the vexed question in detail but must refer to the commentaries like *Fath al-Bari*²²¹ and *Irshād al-Sārī*²²² and other works e.g., *Ta'wil Mukhtalif al-Ḥadīth*,²²³ *Kitāb al-Mizān*,²²⁴ *Kitāb al-Umm*²²⁵ etc., for the proper treatment of the several points in dispute.

And at all events, as regards the main purpose and drift of the record of the Prophetic *Sunnah*, the authentic tradition literature must be regarded as the perpetual fountain and only external standard of infallible truth and religious life alongwith the Holy scripture.

220 Cf. Ignaz Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien*; Alfred Guillaume, *The Traditions of Islam*; Abū Rayyah, *Adwā' ala al-Sunnah...*; Joseph Schacht - and others.

221 See : Ḥafiz Ibn Hajar `Asqalani.

222 See : Ahmad b. Muḥammad al-Qastallani.

223 See : Ibn Qutayaba.

224 See : Imam Sha'rānī.

225 See : Imam Shafi'i.

The assault of the present day on tradition exhibits, as at all times, various phases, now diverging only a little from the current Islamic view, now departing still farther and abandoning what is commonly held to be vital, and now going over into complete negation or agnosticism. But in general it may be said that the tendency of doubt at the present time is not so much to make attacks on the details of the doctrines of revealed religion - transmitted through the Holy scripture or the Prophetic tradition - as it is to attack the general notion of revelation itself. There is indeed no lack of assault upon the details of the Islamic beliefs; but the underlying tone - that which gives colour and force to the assaults - is a disbelief or doubt concerning the reality or possibility of a supernatural revelation.

The renewed attack must be met with renewed vigour and defense; else the stronghold will be regarded, at least by the doubtful and the indifferent, as surrendered.

The essentially atheistic cast of modern scepticism creates a special need of reconsidering and restating the reasons for the belief in the existence of a personal revealing God.

With the Western scholars, "The question of overriding importance" is : To what extent are modern Muslims affected by modern historical criticism, modern philosophy, and modern science? According to Alfred Guillaume, the answer must be that only those who have been students at universities with a Western tradition have any real understanding of these things, and they

are a small, but by no means negligible, minority. In conversation many of them will take an unorthodox view of the Qur'an and a highly critical view of tradition, and some, as will be seen, have written fearlessly on the latter.²²⁶ Then he takes pride in mentioning Dr. Taha Husayn's questioning the event of entry of Abraham and Ishmael in Makkah; denial of the Qur'anic injunction of *Ramaḍān* fasting by a lecturer at al-Azhar - who was supported by an editor of a journal in the following words :

"We want al-Azhar to be a citadel of free thinking, not a cemetery for freedom of, thought, or a stronghold of ignorance and reaction".

Again he asserts that the host of 'Ulamā', the *Muftis*, and the *Qādis* stands in the way of rejection of the falsely invented *Shari'a* for their livelihood. Still the modern scholarship has made the Muslims to drop the old laws of almsgiving, pilgrimage, and so on by all but a minority. The attack on the authenticity of tradition on which the Muslim's life is based has, in the opinion of A. Guillaume, come to the fore and much has already gone to the board. He yearns that :

"At the present day it is to Pakistan that we must look for the clearest and most uncompromising attitude towards the traditions of the past and the influence of modern historical criticism".²²⁷

In the foregoing, it has been attempted to analyse briefly the strong recent trend of Western scholarship

226 Alfred Guillaume, *Islam*, PP. 155 F. Cassell & Co., Ltd., 1963 Ed.

227 *Ibid.*, P. 158.

which, in the name of what it calls "progressivism" and "modernism", wish to brush aside the *Ḥadīth* and the Prophetic *Sunnah*. In their anxiety to "clear the way", they resort to methods much more questionable than Nero's method of rebuilding Rome.²²⁸ It is being propagated that the tradition of Islam is unhistorical, unreliable and lacks *Shari'ah* normativeness. It is, of course, beyond the scope of the present study to treat in an exhaustive manner all the inconsistent irrationalities of the modern researches in this field but the following shall serve as illustrations of the shallowness, rather lack of academic sincerity and proper insight of the Western Scholarship.

Regarding Sayyid Amīr `Ali, a learned Western scholar discloses : "This reformer went much further than any of his followers has been prepared to go : he regarded Muḥammad as the author of the Qur'an."²²⁹ Another great discovery is revealed in the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* that Hadrat `Alī, the son-in-law and the first cousin of the Holy Prophet had two hundred wives".²³⁰

If this is the state of affair of our modern methodology and scientific criticism, one is bound to support the assertion of Dr. F. Rahman : "Progress" we all want, not despite Islam, nor besides Islam but because of Islam for we all believe that Islam, as it was launched as a movement on earth in the seventh century Arabia,

228 *Islamic Methodology*, P. 69.

229 Alfred Guillaume, *Islam*, op. cit., P. 160.

230 *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, op. cit., P. 470, Vol. VIII.

represented pure progress - moral and material. But we can neither share nor forgive "Confusionism" and "obscurantism".²³¹ In European Universities of London, Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburgh, Glasgow and others, students are required to treat the works of Goldziher, Margoliouth and Schacht as their original sources. The Arabs and other Muslim Scholars are never allowed to select the topics of their own choice for their doctoral theses, in which either true picture of Islam could be presented or the deceitful presentations of the Orientalists, might be disclosed and rebutted.

Dr. Amīn al-Miṣrī had to face unsurmountable difficulties in getting his topic for Ph.D. approved in England. Professor Anderson flatly refused to accept his Caption for thesis, 'A Critical appraisal of Joseph Schacht's book', and Dr. Amin was told in clear words that if he wanted to secure the doctorate, he had to leave the idea of criticizing Schacht; consequently he was compelled to adopt the topic for his Ph.D., 'The Standards of Criticism of Hadith with the traditionists'.

232 معاير نقد الحديث عند المحدثين

CONCLUSION

Born in the full-light of history, Islam is the only final revealed religion which is duty-bound to shoulder the responsibility, not only of testifying and safeguarding the original truth of all the previous divine religions, but also of keeping the sublime light of

231 Islamic Methodology, P. 70

232 Dr. Muṣṭafā al-Sibā'ī, Al-Sunnah wa Makānatuhā fī'l Tashrī' al-Islāmī, op. cit., P. 27.

revealed teaching shining till the doom's day. Islam being the custodian of the Prophetic tradition, has taken society seriously and history meaning-fully, because it perceived that the betterment of this world was not a hopeless task but a purposeful pursuit in which God and man are involved together. The problem faced by Europe at the time of Reformation and Renaissance has been wrongly compared with the present reawakening in the Muslim World.²³³ The Muslim World, no doubt, is at the threshold of a Reformation, not at the cost of Islam but for the revival of Islam itself. If we look into the history of the intellectual development of Europe, we will find that the church hindered progress in every manner. It persecuted ruthlessly philosophers and scientists as heretics and thus created an atmosphere in which unbiased and free pursuit of knowledge became impossible. In this context lack of faith in religion was inevitable with the commencement of renaissance in Europe. Mohammad Lutfi Jumu'a has very aptly remarked that a most prominent difference between the Greeks and the Arabs is this that the Greeks acquired the knowledge of Philosophy in their pure hellenic period. with the spread of Christianity the downfall of their philosophy started and the philosophers began to disappear. It so happened on account of the opposition found inherent in the so-called new religion of Christ with that of Philosophy. In contradistinction to this, the Arabs were hundreds of miles away from Philosophy in their Pre-Islamic days of ignorance and idol-worship, although the Greeks were their contemporary since

233 Cf. A. Guillaume, *Islam*, P. 158.

antiquity. The Holy Qur'an not only took the Arabs out of ignorance, idol-worship and the intellectual dormant obscurities but also urged them to acquire different sciences and opened before their eyes the new vistas of philosophic study and scientific learning.²³⁴

While in Western countries religion was conceived to be completely divorced from the material existence of man. As such it was a matter of private belief and contemplation of individuals having little or no bearing upon man's worldly affairs' it was mainly concerned with the problems of the other World. Life was divided into two water-tight Compartments viz., private life and public life. Private life was entrusted to God and public life to the king. This was the concept of religion against which every sensible man was compelled to declare war. In Western civilization, religion became the most absurd expression in the realm of reason and intellect. Rather, the negation of religion was necessarily deemed to be the corner-stone of all progress and enlightenment.

On the other hand it is only the religion of Islam, preached and practised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, (peace be upon him) which can claim to tackle the human life in its entirety on the most rational as well as genuinely preserved divine basis. Muslims are taught to pray :

رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً...²³⁵

234 Tarikh Falasafat al-Islam, U. Tr., Dr. Mir Wali-ud-Din, P. 19, Nafis Academy, Karachi, 1964.

235 Cf. Al-Qur'an, 2 : 201.

(Our Lord, grant us good in this world and good in the Hereafter)

Thus Islam offered a middle course between pure spiritualism and materialism and was destined to abrogate all the previous *Sharā'i*. The role of the Muslim Community was to deliver the message of truth to the whole of humanity and to be its purifiers and leaders as proclaimed by the Lord Almighty Himself :

وكذلك جعلناكم أمة وسطا لتكونوا شهداء على الناس
ويكون الرسول عليكم شهيدا. ²³⁶

(And thus We have made you an exalted nation that you may be the bearers of witness to the people and the Apostle may be bearer of witness to you)

Maulāna Abul Kalām Āzād has offered the significance of this verse in the following words :

“He hath decided to raise you to the position of a model community, so that you might be an example unto others even as the Prophet hath been an example unto you”.²³⁷

The Apostle of Allāh most successfully demonstrated the truth of this great divine proclamation through his twenty three years Prophetic career, known as the Prophetic *Sunnah*.

All the conscientious Muslims of the World hold the view that every Prophetic tradition which is proved to be authentic and reliable, according to the canons laid down by the traditionists, depicts and transmits the *Sunnah* of

236 *Ibid.*, 2 : 143.

237 *The Tarjuman Al-Qur'an*, Eng., Tr., op. cit., Vol. II, P. 58.

the Apostle of Allāh and as such plays and shall *Insha' Allāh* play till the day of resurrection a fundamental role in every walk of Islamic thought and in every field of Islamic life, second only to that of the Holy Qur'ān. It has served as a basis for the establishment of a uniform culture for the whole of Islamic World and can definitely serve the whole of humanity in creating a common universal ideology for paving the way for the world peace. It is still wielding a great influence on the minds of the Muslims and is destined to be the only hope of the future religion.

Whatever was humanly possible has been achieved in the field of assessment of the Prophetic tradition. With regard to the fundamentals of the beliefs and practices of Islam-what we need is their practical enforcement and not their re-assessment and re-evaluation in the changing times and climes. What has been approved as authentically reliable and historically true and sound must be incorporated into the *Shari'ah*. It is the responsibility of the whole of the Islamic World and particularly of Pakistan "because it is unique among the Islamic nations in that it has come into being with the conscious and declared aim of showing the world what a free and enlightened Muslim State should be".²³⁸

Mere declaration of Islamic State constitution based on *Kitab* and *Sunnah* does not suffice. Rather, without the implementation of the agreed upon injunctions and commandments enshrined in the Prophetic tradition, it looks all force. The Holy Qur'ān declares :

238 Alfred Guillaume, Islam, op. cit., P. 164.

الذين ان مكنهم في الارض اقاموا الصلوة واتوا الزكوة
وامروا بالمعروف ونهوا عن المنكر.....²³⁹

(Those who, if We establish them in the land, will keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate and enjoin good and forbid evil.)

It deserves to be noted that those who do not follow the above directions are taken to amount in the next verse to reject the Holy Prophet, as did the people of Noah, and `Ad and Thamūd, reject. Imām Shāfi`ī has very nicely put it as under :

تعصى الاله وانت تظهر حبه
هذا محال في القياس بديع
لو كان حبك صادقاً لاطعته

ان المحب لمن يحب مطيع²⁴⁰

(You disobey God and also show His love; this is something impossible, and illogical. had you been sincere in your love, you would have obeyed Him, because the lover obeys the beloved).

It is only through the implementation of their sacred record into practice that the Muslims can convince themselves and the world, of the truth of the Islamic convictions. They are required to act upon all the reliable Prophetic traditions putting forward the detailed practical explanation of the Qur'anic injunctions and after that they can justify their claim that `Islam is the only religion with a complete record of its deposit and depositaries. Marmaduke Pickthall has invited our

239 Al-Qur'an : 22 : 41.

240 Diwan al-Shāfi`ī, P. 124, Dar al-Thiqafat, Beirut, 1962.

attention towards the fundamental psychological truth that no Holy Scripture can be fairly presented by one who disbelieves its inspiration and its message.²⁴¹ Consequently, Islam being the unique religion with complete faith in all the revealed books and divinely appointed Prophets, has a right and responsibility to probe into the religious literature of the world religions and form a just and honest appraisal of the same. The need of the moment is the publication of material that will bring the subject once again into discussion among the Muslim scholars. This is a field of Islamic study which offers almost unbroken ground and presents numerous problems for investigation. One of them is the question of probe into the historicity of the original divine nature of the Prophetic tradition of the world's revealed religions. This will *Inshā' Allāh* further the cause of Islam in the shape of bringing out the superiority of the well-preserved Holy scripture and well guarded Prophetic tradition of Islam, in this scientific and modern secular world.

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