



FIQH-US-SEERAH  
UNDERSTANDING THE LIFE OF  
PROPHET  
MUHAMMAD

صلى الله  
عليه  
وسلم

فقه السيرة

محمد الغزالي

Muhammad Al-Ghazali

International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations  
**IIFSO**

Distribution By  
International Islāmic Publishing House

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
IN THE NAME OF ALLAH  
ALL COMPASSIONATE ALL MERCIFUL

© Copyright (1420 AH/1999 CE) by **IIPH**  
International Islamic Publishing House  
P.O. Box 55195 Riyadh 11534, Saudi Arabia  
Tel: (966-1) 4650818 - 4647213  
Fax: (966-1) 4633489  
E.Mail: [iiph1@hotmail.com](mailto:iiph1@hotmail.com)

First Edition (1419 AH/1998 CE) **ISBN: 9960-672-71-9**  
Revised Second Edition (1420 AH/1999 CE)

**ISBN 9960-850-37-4**

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without written permission from the Publisher.

جميع حقوق النشر والطبع والتوزيع محفوظة وغير مسموح بطبع أي جزء من هذا الكتاب ، أو  
خزنه في أي نظام لخزن المعلومات ، أو استرجاعه ، أو نقله على أي هيئة ، أو بأية وسيلة سواء  
أكانت إلكترونية ، أو شرائط ممغنطة ، أو ميكانيكية ، أو استنساخا ، أو تسجيلا ، أو غير ذلك  
بدون إذن كتابي من الدار العالمية للكتاب الإسلامي.

Please take part in this noble work by conveying your  
comments to **IIPH** through E.Mail, Fax or Mail address.

## **Contents**

<b>Preface</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>The Ḥādīths of this book</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Ḥadīth Terminology</b>	<b>21</b>
 <b>Chapter One</b>	 <b>23</b>
<b>A Message and a Leader</b>	<b>23</b>
Paganism Ruled the Ancient Civilizations	23
The Nature of the Final Message	27
The Arabs at the Advent of Islām	31
A Teacher Messenger	34
Status of the Sunnah in Relation to the Qur'ān	45
The Prophet (ﷺ) and his Miracles	57
 <b>Chapter Two</b>	 <b>69</b>
<b>From Birth to Prophethood</b>	<b>69</b>
The Opening of the Prophet's (ﷺ) Chest	75
Baḥīra, the Monk	80
A life of Toil	83
The Sacrilegious War	87
The Alliance of the Virtuous	88
Strength and Activity	90
Khadījah	92

The Ka‘bah	95
Seekers of truth	99
In the Cave of Ḥirā	102
Waraqah ibn Naufal	104
<b>Chapter Three</b>	<b>107</b>
<b>The Mission’s Struggle</b>	<b>107</b>
What is the Call?	109
The First Group	112
Announcement of the Call	114
Abū Ṭālib	117
Persecution	120
‘Ammār ibn Yāsir (ﷺ)	121
Bilāl (ﷺ)	122
Khabbāb (ﷺ)	123
Negotiations	125
The Migration to Abyssinia	130
Ḥamzah (ﷺ) and ‘Umar (ﷺ) Accept Islām	136
The General Boycott	138
The Year of Sorrow	144
In Ṭāif	147
The <i>Isrā’</i> and <i>Mi‘rāj</i>	150



The Wisdom of the <i>Isrā'</i>	155
The Completion of the Building	157
The Pure Nature	158
The Institution of Prayer	159
The Quraish Tribe and the <i>Isrā'</i>	160
<b>Chapter Four</b>	<b>163</b>
<b>The Mass Hijrah: Its Causes and Effects</b>	<b>163</b>
Differences Between the Two Towns	164
The Jews' Handiwork	166
The First Pledge of ' <i>Aqabah</i>	168
The Second Pledge of ' <i>Aqabah</i>	170
The Beginning of the Hijrah	176
In the Council Chamber	180
The Hijrah of the Prophet (ﷺ)	182
A Lesson in Diplomacy	184
In the Cave	185
On the Way to Madīnah	188
Supplication	189
Arrival at Madīnah	192
Settling Down in Madīnah	194
<b>Chapter Five</b>	<b>199</b>

<b>The Foundation of the New Society</b>	<b>199</b>
The Mosque	200
The Brotherhood	202
The Non-Muslims	207
The Chosen Ones	212
The Meaning of Worship	217
A Leadership Which Attracts the Hearts	225
 <b>Chapter Six</b>	 <b>233</b>
<b>The Bloody Struggle</b>	<b>233</b>
Flying Columns	237
The Expedition of ‘Abdullāh ibn Jahsh	240
The Battle of Badr	242
Assessment and Scolding	260
Aftermath of Badr	265
The Beginning of the conflict Between the Jews and the Muslims	267
Skirmishes with the Quraish	275
The Battle of Uḥud	279
Lessons from the Test	289
The Martyrs of Uḥud	298
The Effects of Uḥud	301
The Exile of the Banū al Naḍīr	308

The Second Badr	311
Dumat al Jandal	312
The Story of the Slander	317
The Battle of the Ditch / Confederates	322
With the Quraydhah	340
<b>Chapter Seven</b>	<b>353</b>
<b>A New Phase</b>	<b>353</b>
The ' <i>Umrah</i> of Ḥudaybiyah	353
With the Jews Once Again	372
Return of the Emigrants from Abyssinia	383
Harnessing of the Bedouin	385
Letters to the Kings and Rulers	387
'Umrat al Qaḍā'	397
The Mu'tah Expedition	399
Dhāt al Salāsil	404
The Conquest of Makkah	406
The Battle of Ḥunayn	421
Defeat	422
Rally and Victory	424
Booty	426
The Wisdom of the Distribution	428

Return of the Hawāzin Delegation	430
The Siege of Ṭā'if	431
To the Land of the Hijrah	432
The Attitude of the Hypocrites	434
Tabūk	435
Those Who Were Left Behind	443
The Mosque of Dissent (ḍirār)	448
The Beginning of the Deputations	450
The Pilgrimage of Abū Bakr (ﷺ)	453
A Deputation of the Pagans and a Deputation of the People of the Book	456
<b>Chapter Eight</b>	<b>467</b>
<b>The Mothers of the Believers</b>	<b>467</b>
Settling Down	485
The Farewell Pilgrimage	486
To Madīnah	491
<b>Chapter Nine</b>	<b>493</b>
<b>The Companion on High</b>	<b>493</b>
Epilogue	502
<b>Symbols used in this book</b>	<b>505</b>
<b>Transliteration Chart</b>	<b>506</b>
<b>Glossary</b>	<b>509</b>

## PREFACE

□ There are many great personalities whose biographies people have read to savour the strokes of genius in them and to follow in admiration their ways of life and their attitudes towards the difficulties and problems which confronted them. The mere act of reading might be only link between these great personalities and those who know them and it might develop into a deep study or a strong human bond.

□ I must hasten to say that I did not write about the greatest of all the personalities, Muhammad (ﷺ), 'Blessings and Peace be upon him' son of 'Abdullāh, with this limited concept in mind. I am a Muslim through knowledge: I know why I believe in Allāh (ﷻ) 'The Exalted', (Lord) of the Worlds, and in the prophethood of Muhammad (ﷺ), and why I follow the Book he brought to us. Indeed, I know why I call others to believe in all this which has brought tranquillity to my heart.

□ I happen to have previously published a number of treatises on the life of Muhammad (ﷺ). Did I ever digress from it in anything which I wrote? All the treatises in which I discussed faith, morals, social behaviour and government, I depended heavily on the life of Muhammad (ﷺ) for their material. Thus I can truthfully say that this book is not a sudden link with the Prophet of Islām (ﷺ), nor is it a collection of proofs for his truthfulness, nor ideas which occurred to me about his genius. All that has been analysed at length elsewhere. In producing this book I had a specific objective in mind and I hope it has been achieved.

□ The Muslims of today know only the surface layer of the life of Muhammad (ﷺ), which neither arouses emotions nor evokes resolutions. They extol the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions from inherited tradition and little knowledge, and think that verbal praise or some small act is sufficient.

□ Such shallow knowledge of Muhammad (ﷺ) is equivalent to ignorance of him. It is unjust to the great reality that it should be turned into a legend. It will be injustice to that period of history,

which was pulsating with energy and strength, to be presented in the shrouds of the dead. The life of Muhammad (ﷺ) is not for Muslims, the entertainment of an idle person nor the study of a neutral critic. It is the most excellent example for them to follow, and the source of the laws by which they are governed. So any shortcomings in the presentation of this biography or any confusion in its sequence of events will be a terrible injury to the reality of faith itself.

□ Thus I have done my utmost to give readers a true picture of the life of the Prophet (ﷺ) and I have made every effort to give the reasons and explanations for whatever took place during his life time. Then I have allowed the plain facts and their effects on minds without any bias or subterfuge. I have made good use of the biographies written by both ancient and modern scholars. The modern historians lean towards analysis, comparison, and the tying up of various events into a systematic whole. That is the best part of their method. However, the ancient historians rely on the collection of details, sifting of sources, and recording of small and big events. These numerous archives contain gems of importance if only proper use is made of them.

□ Perhaps here I have blended the two methods in a new way which extracts the best from them both. From the details of the biography I have compiled a cohesive topic, all of whose parts are bound by one spirit. Then I arranged the texts and narrations in such a way as to conform with the unity of the topic and help to complete the whole picture. My aim was to make the biography into something which nurtures faith, purifies characters and fans the struggle, which encourages one to embrace the truth and be faithful to it and which contains a wealth of relevant examples.

□ I wrote about the life of Muhammad (ﷺ) as soldiers would write about their general or employees about their employer or pupils about their teacher. I am not, as I have said, a neutral historian unrelated to whom I write about. Moreover, I wrote with the scenes of Muslim backwardness right in front of my

eyes. So do not be surprised if I relate the events of the life of Muhammad (ﷺ) in a manner which hints at our sorrowful state. Whenever I present a story I include in it references to the true sentiments, sound thoughts and noble actions of a Muslim to correct this terrible degradation.

□ Muhammad (ﷺ) is not a story to be read on his birthday as many people do now, nor is he to be extolled in fabricated prayers added to the words of the *Adhān* (prayer call), nor can love for him be expressed in poems of praise which may make his admirers sigh when they hear them. The ties that Muslims have with the noble Prophet (ﷺ) are stronger and deeper than these deviations which have been thrust into the faith. The Muslims have indulged in these acts to express their relationship with their Prophet (ﷺ) only when they have neglected the essentials of their faith and contented themselves with outward manifestations and formalism. However, since these formalisms are limited in Islām they have resorted to inventing new forms.

□ They should not innovate. To turn away from inventing formalities does not require much efforts. The effort that does require determination is to hold fast to the essence which has been neglected and return to the true faith. So instead of listening to the story of the Prophet's (ﷺ) birth being recited in a pleasant voice, one should get up and reform oneself in order to draw nearer to the Prophet's (ﷺ) practices in his worldly and spiritual life, in his likes and dislikes, in his knowledge and action, in his habits and forms of worship and in matters relating to war and peace. The Muslims in whose hearts the Prophet does not live and whose insight does not follow them in their actions and thoughts will never benefit by merely sending *Salāh* and *Salām* to him a thousand times a day.

□ I should like to emphasize here the necessity of separating seriousness from fun in our lives. It would be nice to fix a time for fun and relaxation and not exceed it and a time for seriousness and work and not fall short of it.

If people want to sing or listen to a song, let them do so. However turning Islām itself into a song, making the Qur'ān into beautiful tunes and the *sīrah* (life) (biography) into *qaṣīdahs* (poems) praising the Prophet and chants, have no justification and can be acceptable only to those who are negligent. This turnaround has been to the detriment of Islām since it was taken out of the field of behaviour and understanding into the field of play and entertainment. Those who do this are just the people described by the Qur'ānic *Āyah* (verse):

«And forsake those who take their religion for a pastime and a jest, and whom the life of the world beguiles.» (Qur'ān 6: 70)

□ The transformation of the Qur'ān into mere melodious chanting to which music lovers listen to is like the one what made the Jews and Christians broadcast it everywhere, confident that it would not revive the dead. The transformation of the Prophet's (ﷺ) life into stories, *qaṣīdahs* and unintelligible prayers has made listening to it a form of mental imbalance and eccentricity, which in my opinion stems from a perversion of the instincts, and a corruption of society. It would be much better for music lovers to listen to pure music. If they wish for serious work, they should seek it from pure sources, whether it be the Qur'ān which commands and prohibits, or the Sunnah which clarifies and explains so that it may be followed, or the *Sīrah* which gives the fragrance of pure literature, sound principles and upright politics. And that is Islām.

□ I began writing these pages while I was in Madīnah in the holy precinct, which brought me good fortune for a while and assisted me in completing some useful studies on the Sunnah and the life of Muhammad (ﷺ). To Allāh (ﷻ) belongs the Grace for whatever bounties He (ﷻ) has bestowed on me and perhaps He (ﷻ) will make me of those who love Him and His Messenger (ﷺ). Now, since I can speak and act only with frankness, I must point out that the distance between the Muslims and their Prophet (ﷺ) is wide indeed, no matter what love for him they have in their hearts and what prayers they



offer for him. I saw them visiting his grave with zeal and yearning before returning to their homelands to find those who envy them for their good fortune and long for the same chance.

□ No believer would dispute the fact that love for the Prophet (ﷺ) is compulsory and that love for him will vanish only from the heart of a stubborn hypocrite. How should one make this feeling expressed and show its allegiance to him. This is the question that needs explanation and clarification.

□ Yathrib, from the point of view of general economics, is smaller than it was under the Aus and Khazraj in the pre-Islāmic days. The proportion of its land planted and cultivated today is one-tenth of what the Arabs used to plant and cultivate in the old days, the majority of the inhabitants today are those pilgrims and visitors who remained behind after the pilgrimage. They preferred to be near the Prophet (ﷺ) and unemployed rather than to go home and work! And they call this Hijrah!

□ Is this Islām or love for the Prophet (ﷺ)? I remember meeting a group of Moroccans who claimed that they came to Madīnah to escape persecution for their faith. I explained to them that they were fleeing from the battlefield because their brothers were fighting the French invaders, and they were committing a crime in leaving them to bear the brunt of the struggle all by themselves.<sup>1</sup> Such a love for the Prophet (ﷺ) is incomprehensible and such a Hijrah to his Madīnah is unacceptable. The bond between the Prophet of Allāh (ﷺ) and the slaves of Allāh (ﷻ) is stronger and firmer than finding expression in such crooked, devious paths.

□ The enemies of Islām were able to demolish the structure of Islām and turn it into ruins as a result of the negligence of the Muslims. How could the heritage of Muhammad (ﷺ) be left open to the vicissitudes of time? How could the early days of *Jahilīyah* be allowed to return? How could such a dangerous transformation be allowed to occur in silence? How could such a

---

<sup>1</sup>The first Arabic edition of this book was published at a time when the French had occupied three regions of Morocco along with other Islāmic lands.

dangerous transformation be allowed to occur in the expressions of love for the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ)? Let the Muslims therefore understand fully the life of their great Prophet (ﷺ). This would never occur if the Message itself were clearly understood and the life of the one who conveyed it is studied and his teaching strictly followed. How cheap is the love when it is only a talk! And how dear it is when it is ideal, safe and assured!

□ I apologize for my inability to do proper justice to the subject. The Prophet's (ﷺ) importance is great, and explaining his life needs a sensitive mind and a sharp intellect. Let it suffice to know that this is my effort.

□ O Allāh (ﷻ)! bless Muhammad (ﷺ) and the family of Muhammad (ﷺ) just as you blessed Ibrāhīm (Abraham) (ﷺ) and the family of Ibrāhīm (Abraham) (ﷺ), and be bountiful to Muhammad (ﷺ) and the family of Muhammad (ﷺ) just as you were bountiful to Ibrāhīm (Abraham) (ﷺ) and the family of Ibrāhīm (Abraham) (ﷺ). Verily You are the Praiseworthy, All-Glorious.

**Muhammad Al Ghazālī**

## **The Ḥadīths of this Book**

□ I was glad that this new edition was published after being reviewed by the great scholar of Ḥadīth, Sheikh Muhammad Naṣiruddīn Al-Albānī, who commented on the ḥadīths of this book. I hope that I may be able to help in bringing to light the scientific truth and a sifting of historical events by way of this criticism. My thanks to him who volunteered.

□ The problem with the historians who document the life of Muhammad (ﷺ) and other events is their lack of verification and authentication. Many ancient as well as modern scholars fell into this trap, though there are some differences in their level of precision and observation. When I started to write the life of the Prophet (ﷺ) I strove to follow a sound method and rely only on trustworthy sources. I think I have achieved this aim and have gathered such material that would satisfy a keen researcher. However readers will see that Sheikh Naṣiruddīn's comments suggest that he doubts this is so. Thus I find myself compelled to clarify the method which I followed.

□ The scholars of the Sunnah may differ in the authentication or rejection of a Ḥadīth. Sheikh Naṣiruddīn may argue that a Ḥadīth is weak, and he has the right to do so since he has a firm grounding in the knowledge of the Sunnah. The majority of Ḥadīth scholars may think that a Ḥadīth is weak. However I may look at its wording and find that it is in total agreement with a *āyah* (verse) of the Qur'ān or an authentic Ḥadīth and thereby find no harm in relating or writing it. As I see it, the Ḥadīth brings nothing new into the field of law or good deeds; it only explains what has already been fixed in the authentic sources.

□ Take, for example, the first Ḥadīth which Sheikh Naṣiruddīn Judged to be weak: "Love Allāh (ﷻ) for the bounties He (ﷻ) bestows upon you and love me for the love of Allāh (ﷻ)". He may reject the authentication of this Ḥadīth by Al-Tirmidhī and Al-Ḥākim and he has the right to do so. However I found nothing in its meaning to prevent me from accepting it without hesitation.

- ❑ On the other hand, I hesitated to record the Ḥadīth of Muslim and Bukhārī in the way in which the Battle of the Bani Mustaliq took place. Their narrations of the Ḥadīth suggest that the Prophet (ﷺ) suddenly attacked that tribe without first offering them the *Dawah* or without any breaking of a treaty on their part or anything to rise suspicion occurring on their part or knowledge of any suspicious activities from their side.
- ❑ A battle began by the Muslims in such a manner finds disapproval in the logic of Islām, and is far removed from the character of the Prophet (ﷺ). Thus I refused to accept that the battle began and ended in this way. However, I was satisfied with the circumstances as narrated by Ibn Jarīr, who, in spite of the weakness of his narration as disclosed by Sheikh Naṣīruddīn, conforms to the assured principle of Islām of “no aggression except to the wrongdoers.” As for those who are peaceful and unaware, there is no justification for attacking them.
- ❑ The Ḥadīth as narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim can have no other explanation than its being the description of the second phase of the incident. In other words, taking them by surprise came only after hostilities had begun between that tribe and the Muslims, and each one was lying in wait for the other. Thus it was the Muslims who saw the opportunity and attacked their enemy, and ‘war is deception’ in this case there must be some preface to Bukhārī’s and Muslim’s narration similar to what Ibn Jarīr reported and was criticized by Sheikh Naṣīruddīn.
- ❑ I am not the first to adopt such a line of approach. It is the approach adopted by most of the scholars when confronted by both weak and strong narrations. They agree that a weak Ḥadīth may be accepted so long as it is in conformity with the basic general principles, which are of course, derived from the Qur’ān and the Sunnah. It was in the light of this balanced view that I related the Prophet’s (ﷺ) consultation with Al Ḥabbāb on the occasion of the Battle of Badr, even though the Ḥadīth scholars declared its chain of narrators to be weak, because it comes

within the scope of the good deeds which Allāh (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ) enjoined and there is no harm in relating it. This is so far as the weak ḥādīths are concerned.

□ As for the authentic ḥādīths Sheikhs Naṣiruddīn knows quite well that there is wide scope in their diverse meanings to accept or reject them. There is no scholar who has not rejected some authentic ḥādīths in preference to what appears to be more authentic. May Allāh (ﷻ) prevent us from provoking controversy over the Sunnah, which is undoubtedly the second source of Islām.

□ Nevertheless, if I study ḥādīths and find that, as a whole, they agree with the Qur'ān in principle that there was no war until after the *Da'wah* had been clearly conveyed, then how could I accept what suggests otherwise? Allāh (ﷻ) orders His Prophet (ﷺ) in the Qur'ān to say:

﴿Say: it is only inspired in me that your God is One God. Will you then surrender [to Him]? "But if they are averse then say: I have warned you all alike, although I know not whether near or far is that which you are promised."﴾ (Qur'ān 21: 108-109)

□ After this announcement, which is directed to both the callers and the called, and after the wars of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the righteous caliphs, in which they adopted this method of explaining the Message and allowing the people the opportunity of accepting or rejecting it, I do not think that anyone could force me to accept what the two Sheikhs (Bukhārī and Muslim) reported on the authority of 'Abdullāh ibn 'Aun. He said:

I wrote to Nāfi', May Allāh (ﷻ) bless him, asking him about the supplication before fighting. He replied that, that was in the early days of Islām, when the Prophet (ﷺ) attacked the Banū Muṣṭaliq unawares and killed their fighters and took their women captive, and it was then that he took Juwairiyyah as wife. He said that 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه), who was in the army, told him about it.

❑ Just as I bypassed this Ḥadīth, I also bypassed another, which stated that the Prophet (ﷺ) addressed his Companions and informed them of the persecutions which would take place until the Day of Judgement and those who would be responsible for them. It has been proved from the Qur'ān and the Sunnah that the Prophet (ﷺ), did not know the unseen in this strange, detailed and comprehensive manner.

❑ I preferred this method of writing the biography so I accepted the narrations whose wordings conformed to the fixed principles and laws, even if their chains of narrators were not sound. I rejected those ḥādīths which were described as authentic, because they did not conform to the fixed principles and laws according to my understanding of Allāh's religion and the methodology of the *Da'wah*.

❑ There is no space to comment on all my reasons for differing with Sheikh Naṣiruddīn over certain things. Nevertheless, there is space to record all of his comments on the sources I have used, since I very much appreciate his profound scholarship, and he represents a well stet founded point of view, in the sifting of religious matters. I also think that it is the readers' right to know the opinion of one of the meticulous researchers on the narrations which I have utilized here. It does not matter whether I disagree with him or not. May Allāh (ﷻ) reward him for his efforts to protect the heritage of the Prophet (ﷺ) and May He (ﷻ) guide us all to the straight path.

## Ḥadīth Terminology

The two Sheikhs	: Bukhārī and Muslim.
<i>Isnād</i> or <i>Sanad</i>	: The chain of narrators.
<i>Matn</i>	: The actual text of the Ḥadīth.
<i>Ṣaḥīḥ</i>	: An authentic Ḥadīth whose <i>Isnād</i> is complete without any deficiency and whose narrators are absolutely trustworthy and accurate.
<i>Ḥasan</i>	: A good Ḥadīth whose <i>Isnād</i> is complete without any deficiency and whose narrators are absolutely trustworthy but may not be very accurate.
<i>Ḍa'īf</i>	: Weak. There are different categories of weak Ḥadīth, of which all those listed below are examples.
<i>Mursal</i>	: The name of the <i>Ṣaḥabī</i> who heard it from the Prophet is omitted.
<i>Munqaṭī'</i>	: A name in the <i>Isnād</i> is omitted or an unknown name is mentioned.
<i>Mu'addal</i>	: Two or more names are omitted from the <i>Isnād</i> .
<i>Tadlīs</i> or <i>Mudallas</i>	: (1) The narrator gives the impression that he/she heard it directly from one of his/her contemporaries, although that is not so. (2) The narrator ascribes qualities to the person from whom he/she heard it which that person does not possess.
<i>Mu'allal</i>	: Apparently sound, but there is a hidden weakness in it.
<i>Shādh</i>	: A single trustworthy person narrates it, contrary to what other authentic sources have narrated.

<i>Munkar</i>	: An untrustworthy person narrates it, contrary to what comes from authentic sources.
<i>Gharīb</i>	: At one point in its chain there is a single narrator.
<i>Ḥasan Gharīb</i>	: A Ḥadīth which has the attributes of both <i>Ḥasan</i> and <i>Gharīb</i> .
<i>Mawḍū</i>	: A fabrication by liars who ascribe it to the Prophet (ﷺ). This is, strictly speaking, not a Ḥadīth.

Note: Pickthall's translation has been used for all the quotations from the Qur'ān except in a few cases where the context required a different translation.



## **Chapter One**

### **A Message and a Leader**

#### **Paganism Ruled the Ancient Civilizations**

The history of the mankind is sorrowful. Ever since Ādam (آدم), May Peace be upon him, and his children descended on earth, as time went by and civilizations flourished and generations rose on the remains of others, humans have been a motley mixture. If one day they are on the right track, they are lost for days soon after, and if they see the light of truth once, then the darkness of falsehood engulfs them many times (thereafter). If we were to scrutinize the history of the mankind in the light of belief in Allāh (ﷻ) and preparation for the Hereafter, we should find the world closely resembling a drunkard whose periods of drunkenness exceed his sobriety, or a sick man who is delirious and does not know what he says.

□ Although in experiences with themselves and their world, there are men's many deterrents from committing evil and many incentives to do good, but overwhelming passion cannot be subdued by knowledge alone.

□ How much of the world's life expired before the appearance of Muhammad (ﷺ)? Many centuries brought a wealth of experience and knowledge and encouraged the growth of the arts and sciences, philosophies and ideas. In spite of that, however, frivolity became the rule and many nations fell without achieving the status to which they aspired.

□ Look at the fate of the civilizations of Egypt and Greece, India and China, Persia and Rome. I do not mean their fate from the political point of view, but from the aspect of feelings and reason. Contemptible paganism destroyed them and made them fall into this miserable pit. And the human being, whom Allāh (ﷻ) appointed as His superior vicegerent in the heavens and on the earth, became a slave subservient to the lowliest thing in

these places. What else could there be after cows and calves are hallowed, wood and stones are worshipped? Entire nations became polluted with such perversions. Paganism comes from within the self and not from the environment. Just as sad people apply their feelings to their surroundings and frightened people imagine objects to be ghosts, similarly deformed personalities will apply their stupidity and sterility to their surroundings, and deify the stones and the animals.

□ Only when the small heart widens, the dormant thought awakens and people return to their lofty ideals, these pagan impressions will disappear automatically. Thus, the first work for the faith is within men and women themselves, for it is of no benefit in the fight against paganism simply to slaughter the holy cows and smash the proud idols while hearts remain in their previous darkness. The worshippers will just search for other gods to bow before and make offerings. There are many pagans in this world, though they have never met over an altar, and how quickly they ignore the real presence of their Lord and run after some new illusion.

□ Superstition does not follow its course in life by announcing its falsehood and exposing its nonsense. It conceals its shamelessness with the clothing of earnestness. It borrows the accepted wear of truth and may even adopt some of its premises and conclusions before adorning itself for the gullible. This is how paganism acts. It attacks the true religion and its plain realities, not as the bee attacks the flowers of spring, but as the worms break down and waste a fertile soil. Or locusts attack the luxurious gardens and turn them into barren wastelands. Now, if it corrupts what it leaves, then it will not correct what it takes, and if what it takes was good before it reached it, then it will become harmful after it has been turned into poison in its stomach. This is the secret why paganism, which does not know Allāh (ﷻ), claims to come closer to Him and seek His pleasure through its idols: a portion of truth in portions of falsehood, in a context which definitely diverts people from Allāh (ﷻ) and removes them from Allāh's presence.

□ The greatest catastrophe which befell the religions on account of the pagan attack on them was the terrible changes affecting the religion of Isā (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary). They turned its day into darkness and its peace into distress; they turned unity into idolatry, degraded the human race and hung its upliftment on a sacrifice. They turned the ideology of Jesus into a hotchpotch of unnatural beliefs, myths and legends. The myth of the Trinity and redemption was revived after early paganism succeeded in thrusting it upon the new Christianity. In this way it gained two victories: it strengthened itself and it led others astray. Thus when the sixth century of the Christian era arrived, the lights of guidance throughout the world had gone out and Satan was traversing the vast expanses of land, admiring the thorns he had planted and seeing how sturdy they had grown.

□ Magianism in Persia was stubborn vanguard of the widespread idolatry in China, India, the Arab countries and all parts of the ignorant globe. Christianity, which vehemently opposed it, borrowed most prominent characteristics feature the myths of the ancient Indians and Egyptians. It ascribed a wife and a child to Allāh (ﷻ) and seduced its followers in Rome, Egypt and Constantinople with a kind of polytheism more advanced than that of the fire-worshippers and the idol-worshippers: a polytheism mixed with monotheism and fighting pure polytheism! What is the value of these contradictions which Christianity collected together?

﴿They [Jews, Christians and pagans] say: "Allāh has begotten a son [children]." Glory is to Him! He is Rich [Free of all needs]. His is all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. No warrant you have for this. Do you say against Allāh what you know not. Say: "Verily, those who invent a lie against Allāh will never be successful" [A brief] enjoyment in this world! And then unto Us will be their return, then We shall make them taste the severest torment because they used to disbelieve [in Allāh, belie His Messengers, deny and challenge His *Āyāt* [proofs, signs, verses, etc]. ﴾ (Qur'ān 10: 68-70)

□ It seems that the bond of polytheism which linked the pagan religions to the distorted heavenly religions is what made them allies in the bid to destroy the Muslims from the day the latter began establishing their community on the basis of the worship of the One True God. Allāh (ﷻ) cautioned this Ummah on the persecution which would befall them from the idol-worshippers and from the People of the Book at the same time, and He advised them to fortify themselves with patience and steadfastness in the face of this intolerance:

﴿Assuredly you will be tried in your property and in your persons, and you will hear much wrong from those who were given the Scripture before you, and from the idolators. But if you persevere and ward off [evil], then that is of the steadfast heart of things.﴾  
(Qur'ān 3: 186)

□ The darkness which engulfed the hearts and minds in the absence of the lights of *tawhīd* contained in it also traditions of society and the systems of government. Thus the earth was a den haunted by murder and destruction where the weak had no hope of peace and tranquillity. And what good could be expected from paganism which rejected reason, forgot Allāh (ﷻ) and yielded to the hands of imposters?

□ It would not be strange if Allāh (ﷻ) refused to help them, as the Ḥadīth says:

"Allāh (ﷻ) verily looked at the people on earth and detested them all, both Arabs and non-Arabs except some remnants of the People of the Book." (From a long Ḥadīth narrated by Muslim)

It was these remains which were impenetrable by polytheism in spite of the tidal wave of unbelief which flooded the hills and valleys. Before the prophethood of Muhammad (ﷺ), the world was drowned in confusion and misery which weighed heavily on people's shoulders.

You came, while the people were in chaos: if you had passed by them you would have seen them worshipping idol upon idol.

The king of Rome oppressed his people and the king of Persia was deaf and blind from pride.

Finally Allāh (ﷻ) announced that He (ﷻ) would wipe out these traces and send His (ﷻ) choicest guidance to creation. He (ﷻ) sent Muhammad (ﷺ).

### **The Nature of the Final Message**

The prophethood of Muhammad (ﷺ) had the unique characteristic of being global and eternal. Allāh (ﷻ) was capable of sending a warner to every village and a guide in every age. Now if the towns are always in need of warners and the ages in need of guides, then why were they substituted by a single man? The truth is that this substitution resembles the brevity which contains many meanings in just a few words. The prophethood of Muhammad (ﷺ) was a complete substitution for the sending of an army of prophets distributed throughout the ages and the wide world. In fact, it filled the need for sending an angel to every person who lived and will live on this earth for as long as people look forward to guidance and salvation.

□ How is that? On a dangerous ground a sincere adviser may tell you: "Close your eyes and follow me," or, "Do not ask me about anything which arouses your attention." Safety may be in obeying him, thus you would prefer to walk behind him until you cross into a safe territory. In this case he is your appointed guide, who thinks and sees for you and who takes you by your hand. If he dies, so do you. However, if at the beginning a wise person comes to you, maps the itinerary, warns you of the dangerous places, shows you in detail what stages and difficulties you have to pass through and walks with you for a while in order to give you practical guidance in what you have learnt, then, in this case, you would be your own guide capable of relying on your own sight and reasoning. The first case is suited to children and simple-minded people, but the second case is to be applied when dealing with people of understanding.

□ When Allāh (ﷻ) sent Muhammad (ﷺ) to guide the world, He ensured that the message contained the principles which would open doors for intelligent people to understand what was and what would be. The Qur'ān which He (ﷻ) sent down on the Prophet's (ﷺ) heart is a Book from the Lord of the Worlds to all living people to guide them to goodness and inspire them with uprightness. Muhammad (ﷺ) was not a leader of tribes, people who were good because he was good, and when he died they faded away. He was a force of goodness which played a role in the moral world similar to the role played in the material world by the discovery of steam and electricity. His appointment as Prophet (ﷺ) represented a stage in the evolution of the mankind. Before that, people under the guardianship of their keepers were like confined children. Then they grew up and became capable of bearing responsibility themselves. So Allāh's message came to them, through the agency of Muhammad (ﷺ), and explained how they should live on earth and return to heaven. Thus whether Muhammad (ﷺ) remained or went away, it would not take anything away from his real Message which opened eyes and ears and sharpened perceptions and minds, and it was all contained in his huge legacy of the Qur'ān and Sunnah.

□ He was not sent to collect a set of people around him but to forge a link between creation and the truth by which their existence would be meaningful; between them and the light by which they would see their goal. So those who recognize the truth in their lives and walk among people with a light, have definitely acknowledged Muhammad (ﷺ), have taken shelter under his banner, even if they have never seen nor lived with their guide.

﴿O mankind! Verily, there has come to you a convincing proof [Prophet Muhammad] from your *Rabb*, and We sent down to you a manifest light [this Qur'ān]. So, as for those who believed in Allah and held fast to Him, He will admit them to His Mercy and Grace [i.e. Paradise], and guide them to Himself by the Straight Path.﴾  
(Qur'ān 4: 174-175)



So if you see children ignoring their teacher's lessons or clinging to his clothes while he is alive or holding onto his belongings after he is dead, then know that he is unworthy children. He is not fit to be addressed by the teaching of the Message, let alone standing firmly on its path.

❑ In the Prophet's (ﷺ) mosque in Madīnah I saw throngs of people seeking proximity to his grave and longing to spend their lives beside it. If the Prophet (ﷺ) came out alive and saw them he would abhor the sight of them and hate to be near them. Their shabby appearance, their lack of knowledge, their idleness and negligence, make their relationship with the Prophet of Islām (ﷺ) weaker than the web of a spider.

❑ I said to them: "what do you gain from being near the Prophet (ﷺ) and what does he gain from you?"

❑ Those who understand his Message and live it beyond the sands and seas know the secret of the Prophet (ﷺ) better than you. It is a spiritual and mental proximity above which forms the only bond between Muhammad (ﷺ) and those who are related to him. So how could sick spirits and feeble minds be related to him who came to deposit the good health of religion and the world in the spirits and minds? Is this proximity the sign of love and the means of forgiveness? You will never love for Allāh's sake unless you first know Allāh (ﷻ). The natural sequence is that before anything else you should know who is your *Rabb* and what is your faith. When you know this with a clean mind you will appreciate with a grateful heart the kindness of the one who conveyed the Message of Allāh (ﷻ) to you and bore hardships on your account. That is the meaning of the Ḥadīth: "Love Allāh (ﷻ) for the bounties He (ﷻ) provides you with and love me for the love of Allāh (ﷻ)"; And the meaning of the Qur'ānic verse:

﴿Say [O Muhammad to mankind]: If you [really] love Allāh, then follow me; Allāh will love you and forgive you of your sins. Allāh often is oft-Forgiving, All-Merciful.﴾ (Qur'ān 3: 31)

□ Then again, the Prophet of Islām (ﷺ) did not appoint himself as a “gateway” for forgiveness and blessings. He never did so for a single day, because he was never implicated in swindling. He tells you either to go with him or go along with someone else, and let us all stand before Allāh (ﷻ) and pray to Him (ﷻ):

﴿You [Alone] we worship, and you [Alone] we ask for help [for each and everything]. Show us the straight path; The path of those whom you have favoured; Not the path of those who deserve your anger nor of those who go astray.﴾ (Qur’ān 1: 5-7)

So if this Prophet (ﷺ) is pleased with you, he will pray to Allāh (ﷻ) for you: and if you are pleased with him and acknowledge his great work and status in your heart, then pray to Allāh (ﷻ) for him likewise. You will be participating with the angels, who recognize his greatness and pray for his increased reward:

﴿Look! Allāh and His angels shower blessings on the Prophet. You who believe! Ask for blessings on him and salute him with a worthy salutation.﴾ (Qur’ān 33: 56)

□ It is not Muhammad’s task to drag you to paradise with a rope. His task is only to implant insight into your heart to see the truth within. His means of doing that is a Book which falsehood can never approach either from in front or behind, which is easy to remember and safe from deviation. That is the secret of the permanency in his message.

□ Let us see, therefore, how the Prophet (ﷺ) treated the environment in which he was born, in the light of this essential nature of his message, and let us before that look at the conditions of this environment itself.



## **The Arabs at the Advent of Islām**

The people of Makkah were weak in thought, and strong in desire, since there is no relationship between the maturity of thought and the maturity of instinct, nor between the backwardness of societies in their intellect and the backwardness in lust and desire. The viciousness of desire and lust which we hear about in Paris and Hollywood is not much more than what was experienced in the past centuries when corruption was spread over the surface of the globe. The advance of civilization has had no effect from this point of view except to increase the means of gratification. The desires themselves remain the same before and after the flood [of the time of Nooh (Noah) (ﷺ)]. Selfishness, greed, showing off quarrelling and jealousy, as well as all the other despicable qualities, filled the world of old, although through the ages they appeared in different clothing. You can see in the primitive village or among members of a simple tribe rivalry for wealth and status exists as it exists in the most modern societies. Many people may lack vast reserves of knowledge and virtue but they never lack vast reserves of trickery, ambition and intrigue. You may be astonished at people who do not understand a problem just under their noses whereas they understand that so-and-so is no better than they.

□ From the time of (Nooh) (ﷺ), life contained a fair amount of such stupidity and stubbornness. Thus when Nooh's (ﷺ) people were invited to believe in Allāh (ﷻ) alone, their response to Nooh (ﷺ) showed no concern for the subject-matter of the invitation. All they cared about was the person who extended the invitation and the high status he would acquire with this message:

﴿But the chieftains of his folk, who disbelieved, said: this is only a mortal like you who would make himself superior to you. Had Allah willed, He surely could have sent down angels.﴾ (Qur'ān 23: 24)

□ There are many openings for personal desire to influence one's actions and the effects of desire on morals are very complicated. Among the violent waves of desire and sin and the people living in that environment were prominent examples of strong passion and paralysed thought, or thought which developed under the shadow and in the service of uncontrolled passion. Disbelief in Allāh (ﷻ) and the Last Day, concern for the pleasures of the world and engrossment in the satisfaction of them, strong desire for supremacy, grandeur and authority, fickle prejudices which wage war or make peace for these desires: they are the inherited traditions which direct the material and moral activities of the individual in this limited sphere.

□ It is a mistake to think of Makkah in those days as a village, cut off from civilization and in a desolate desert, aware of nothing in the world except the necessities which barely kept the body alive. On the contrary, it had its fill until it ran wild, disputed its arrogance until it crushed itself, and ungodliness sank deep into its being until it became almost impossible to extract it. The people were either blind to the truth or denied it. In this society which had never any sort of intellectual civilization, the individual's pride reached such an extent that there could be found those who vied with Pharaoh in his tyranny and arrogance.

□ 'Amr ibn Hishām said, justifying his disbelief in the Message of Muhammad (ﷺ):

"We rivalled the Banū 'Abd Manāf for honour and prestige until when we resembled two racehorses, they said: "Among us there is a Prophet who receives revelations. By God, we shall not believe in him and we shall never follow him unless we receive revelations too, just like him."

□ It is claimed that Al Walīd ibn Al Mughīra said to the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ): "If prophethood were true then I should have a priority to it rather than you, since I am older and have more wealth than you."

❑ Such arrogant stupidity was not displayed by Makkah alone: in Madīnah, ‘Abdullāh ibn Ubāyy’s disbelief was for similar reasons.

After the Hijrah Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) went to visit Sa’d ibn ‘Ubādah during his sickness before the Battle of Badr. He rode a donkey and had Usāmah ibn Zaid behind him. They rode until they passed by a gathering of people in which was ‘Abdullāh ibn Ubāyy. The gathering contained a mixture of Muslims, idolators and Jews, and among the Muslims was ‘Abdullāh ibn Rawaha.

When the dust from the animal reached the gathering ‘Abdullāh ibn Ubāyy covered his nose with his cloak and said: “Do not throw dust on us.”

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) greeted them and then stopped and dismounted. He called them to Allāh (ﷻ) and recited the Qur’ān to them. ‘Abdullāh ibn Ubāyy said: “Hey man, there is nothing better than what you say. If it is the truth then don’t annoy us with it in our gatherings. Go back to your mount, and whoever comes to you, tell him about it.”

❑ ‘Abdullāh ibn Rawaha said: “On the contrary O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), bring it to us in our gatherings. We love that.” Thereupon the Muslims, idolators and Jews began to abuse each other until they were on the verge of coming to blows. The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) continued to pacify them until they calmed down.

❑ Then he mounted and rode off and when he reached Sa’d ibn Ubādah he said: “Did you hear what Ibn Hibbān (that is, ‘Abdullāh ibn Ubāyy) said?”

❑ Sa’d asked what he said and the Prophet (ﷺ) told him. Then Sa’d said: “You must pardon him, Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), for by Him who revealed the Book to you, Allāh (ﷻ) has given you the truth which He (ﷻ) revealed to you. The people of this lake (Madīnah) had assembled to crown him and tie a band (of

honour) on his head. But when Allāh (ﷻ) prevented that with the truth He gave you, he was outmatched by that. And that is what made him do what you saw.”<sup>1</sup>

□ Ibn Ubāyy was tormented by Islām since he saw it, as a threat to his leadership, and it was the same with Abū Jahl before. Now, if these people turned away from the truth after understanding it clearly, there are thousands of others who, although they do not understand Islām, hate it and fight against it.

□ Amid these simple or compound forms of ignorance and these deliberate or misguided hostilities, amid innumerable examples of misguidance and unawareness, Islām began to spread its rays little by little until it took a whole nation out of darkness into light, in fact, Islām turned that nation into a brilliant lamp which provided illumination and guidance. The lessons which caused this amazing transformation and which raised tribes and nations from the Nadir to the Zenith were not medicine for a particular time or a specific set of people. They were essential cures for human nature whenever it got out of hand, and they shall remain as long as humans remain, and they shall ennoble them and resuscitate life.

### **A Teacher Messenger**

The news had spread among the followers of the previous Scriptures that the time for the appearance of a Prophet (ﷺ) had drawn near and this had its justifications. The people were accustomed to receiving one Prophet after another without too long a wait in between, and it often happened that prophets existed in the same age and lived in the same or neighbouring regions. After Jesus, however, the situation had changed. Almost six centuries had passed since his ministry and a new Prophet was yet to be seen.

□ When the world became crammed with vice and corruption,

---

<sup>1</sup> A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī with the explanation of *Fath al Bari*. It is also narrated by Muslim and Ahmad from the Ḥadīth of Usāma Ibn Zayd.

the eagerness for the awaited reformer increased. There were men who detested the prevailing ignorance and were looking forward to this noble position, wishing that they would be chosen for it. Among them was Umayyah Ibn Al Ṣalt, whose poetry was full of references to Allāh (ﷻ) and the praise that was due to Him. So much so that the Prophet (ﷺ) said of him: "Umayyah was about to accept Islām."<sup>2</sup>

□ 'Amr Ibn al Sharīd reported from Umayyah:

I was riding behind the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) one day and he said:

"Do you know any poem of Umayyah ibn al Ṣalt? I Said yes, so he said recite it. I recited a couplet, and he asked me to continue reciting until I had recited a hundred couplets."

However, Providence ignored these aspiring poets and revolutionaries and imposed the great trust on a man who never aspired for it nor had any thought of it:

﴿You had no hope that the Scripture would be inspired in you; but it is a mercy from your Lord, so never be a helper to the disbeliever.﴾  
(Qur'ān 28: 86)

Selection for the great roles do not come about by aspiration for them but by the strength to bear them. There are many people in life who desire but possess only the ability to desire, and there are many staunch people who remain silent but when they are given the trust they perform miracles with it.

□ No one knows the capacities of individuals except their Creator, and He (ﷻ) who wants to guide the entire world will choose for this great task a noble soul. The Arabs in their *jahilīyah* regarded Muhammad (ﷺ) with respect, for they saw in his character the signs of perfect manhood. However, they never thought for one moment that the future of life would be tied to his future, and that wisdom would burst forth from that

---

<sup>2</sup>A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Muslim and Ibn Majāh from Abū Huraira (رضي الله عنه). They also narrated it from Ibn al Sharīd as the completion of the following Ḥadīth.

pure mouth and traverse the deserts and the jungles, the hills and the plains. They saw of him only what a child sees of the surface of the sea: he is fascinated with the calm surface and knows nothing of its depths. Allāh's selection of Muhammad (ﷺ) was a surprise, but after the initial shock disappeared he braced his strong shoulders to bear the burden that was to be thrust on him. Thereafter, he applied himself to his task with clarity and Allāh's assistance.

□ For 23 years the Revelation descended upon him, each set of *Āyāt* (verses) being revealed according to circumstances and events. This long, vibrant period was one of learning and teaching. Allāh (ﷻ) taught His Prophet (ﷺ), who in turn received these interesting sciences and turned them over in his mind until they became a part of his being. Then he taught them to the people, and captivated their souls with the depth and beauty of their message. The Revelation of the Qur'ān over this long period was done by the Creator to provide a cure for ailing souls, to establish His (ﷻ) laws in the hearts and souls of people and to construct a new social order. The Qur'ān's harmony in its goals and meanings over such a long time is considered to be one of the aspects of its miraculous nature. The last portions to be revealed after almost a quarter of a century came in total conformity and harmony with its early portions, one complementing and reinforcing the other as if they had all been revealed at the same time. The Arabs wondered why the Qur'ān was revealed in that way:

﴿And those who disbelieve say: "Why is not the Qur'ān revealed to him all at once?" Thus [it is sent down in parts], that We may strengthen your heart thereby. And We have revealed it to you gradually, in stages. [It was revealed to the Prophet in 23 years]. And no example or similitude do they bring [to oppose or to find fault in you or in this Qur'ān], but We reveal to you the truth [against that similitude or example], and the better explanation thereof. ﴾

(Qur'ān 25: 32-33)



□ The Qur'ān explains the real nature of the faith as Allāh (ﷻ) made it and the history of this faith. In its general call it presents the doubts and answers them. It brings its proofs with clear understanding of its opponents' views. It follows all the accusations made against it to the farthest extent and then it presents its evidence and destroys all the accusations. The Qur'ān began among the people in whose hearts disbelief was firmly rooted and on whose tongues argument was ready. It was as if fate had chosen this environment to be the society representing the lowest level of doubt that could enter the heart and the most extensive challenge that falsehood could pose. Thus if Islām succeeded in dispelling these doubts and overcoming these hurdles, then it would be even more capable of facing the other challenges which are of a lesser degree.

□ Those questions which were directed to the Prophet or were expected to be directed to him in relation to their varying beliefs and laws found satisfactory answers in the Qur'ān, with the understanding that the question represented not only the need of the questioner but also the need of the mankind at all times. In this atmosphere full of questions, requests for clarification, or challenges, Revelation came to the Prophet (ﷺ) with the words: "Say this" or "Say that". There are many *Āyāt* (verses) which begin with this command in reply to a question asked or assumed. When you read these elaborate answers, you feel a wave of certainty flowing into your heart as if the misgivings you harboured or were likely to harbour had been swept away. These strong bonds are what tie the eternal Message to the conscience of the people. The Qur'ān is a living messenger: you ask it and it answers you; you listen to it and it satisfies you.

□ Look how it establishes the concept of the resurrection, reward and punishment; how it stresses the comprehensiveness of Allāh's will and power in the course of an answer to a question asked. Look how the concepts are interwoven in a give and take, in an objection and rebuttal as if it were a flowing discussion which extended farther than the immediate speaker and affected all the mankind to the end of time.

«Does not man see that We have created him from *Nuṭfah* [mixed male and female sexual discharge – semen drops]. Yet behold he [stands forth] as an open opponent. And he puts forth for Us a parable. And forgets his own creation. He says “Who will give life to these bones after they are rotten and have become dust?” Say: [O Muhammad] “He will give life to them Who created them for the first time! And He is the All-Knower of every creation!” He Who produces for you fire out of the green tree, when behold you kindle therewith. Is not He Who created the heavens and the earth, Able to create the like of them? Yes, indeed! He is the All-knowing Supreme Creator. Verily, His Command, when He intends a thing, is only that He says to it, “Be!- and it is! So glorified is He and exalted above all that they associate with Him, and in Whose Hands is the dominion of all things: and to Him you shall be returned.» (Qur’ān 36: 77-83)

□ This is one example of reasoning based on accurate vision. It is not specific for one age or one place. It is addressed to the general intellect in all the mankind and it is an explanation of the wisdom behind the Revelation of the Qur’ān in installments. The *Āyāt* (verses) came to the Prophet (ﷺ) with the order “say such-and-such” in reply to the questions put to him during his efforts to call mankind to Allāh (ﷻ). Then both the question and the answer are recorded, so that the knowledge thus gained may benefit mankind till the end of time. The command to “say” attracted the concern of the scholars: It is an instruction from Allāh (ﷻ) to His Messenger (ﷺ) and an instruction from the Messenger (ﷺ) to the people; and after this command came the statements which contained all that Allāh (ﷻ) wished of advice, exhortations and regulations.

□ When the idolators wanted as was their custom to transfer the field of dispute from the real nature of the faith to the person of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his followers, the following *Āyāt* (verses) were revealed:



﴿Say [O Muhammad]: "Have you thought; whether Allāh causes me [Muhammad] and those with me to perish or has mercy on us, still, who will protect the disbelievers from a painful doom?" say: "He is the Beneficent. In Him we believe and in Him we put our trust. And you will soon know who it is that is clearly in error.">﴾ (Qur'ān 67: 28-29)

Look how He extracts the marrow from amid the dust of argument! What good would it do to you if Muhammad (ﷺ) and all those with him were wiped out? Just think how superstitions destroyed you and diverted you from the straight path! It is not the duty of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions to think about themselves and their good fortune. They are simply callers to the Beneficent: they believe in Him and put their trust in Him. So if you want, the way to the Beneficent, it is prepared and easy!

□ It is not necessary for a question to be asked for the answer "Say" to come from Allāh (ﷻ). It may be that the method used to present the principles and etiquette of the *da'wah* requires this kind of opening. Thus the purpose behind it would be to explain the need for Islām and the Prophet in such a clear and satisfactory manner that all doubts are uprooted before they are born.

﴿Say [O Muhammad]: "Truly, my Lord has guided me to a Straight Path, a right religion, the religion of Ibrāhīm [Abraham], *Hanifa* [i.e. the true Islāmic Monotheism – to believe in One God [Allāh i.e. to worship none but Allāh, Alone]and he was not of *Aṭ-Mushrikūn* [Polytheists]. Say [O Muhammad]: "Verily, my *Ṣalāt* [prayer], my sacrifice, my living, and my dying are for Allāh, the Lord of the '*ālamīn* [mankind, jinn and all that exists]. "He has no partner. And of this I have been commanded, and I am the first of the Muslims." Say: "Shall I seek a lord other than Allāh, while He is the Lord of all things? No person earns and [sins] except against himself [only], and no bearer of burdens shall bear the burden of another. Then unto your Lord is your return, so He will tell you that wherein you have been differing."﴾ (Qur'ān 6: 161-164)

This address to the Prophet (ﷺ) implies a command to all living beings in his era as well as the era of the afterwards to contemplate with their intellect what is being revealed to him and judge with their consciences the extent of its accuracy and sincerity. Thus If one's heart is full of faith, it is faith in the Lord of everything and the Prophet's (ﷺ) task ends at this point: when the intellect and heart arrive at their Creator and the straight path becomes clear to them. After that every man and women must (themselves) bear the consequences of the good or evil that they do.

□ The Prophet (ﷺ) is not an intermediary who bears for you the good you performed, nor a sacrificial victim who bears for you the punishment you deserve. Herein lies the deep gulf between Christianity and Islām. Islām rates highly the value of humans and gives them their appropriate reward according to their righteousness or depravity. In Christianity, however, humans are too lowly to have direct access to the Lord of the Worlds: there must be another whom they can approach and who accepts their repentance. And who is that other? An adopted son! If people confess to sins, it is not they who face the penalty: the sacrifice was offered in a past age for these sins, and they must believe in that if they want to gain salvation! This insanity is in need of heavy drag lines to travel through life opposed to logic and justice.

□ In Islām, Allāh (ﷻ) tells His Prophet (ﷺ) something which opens up the eyes and intellect:

﴿Say [O Muhammad]: "Who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth?" Say: "Allah!" Say: "Do you then take [others] beside Him for protectors who can neither benefit nor hurt even themselves?" Say: "Is the blind man equal to the sighted man, or is darkness equal to light?" Or assign them to Allah partners who created the like of His creation so that creation [which they made and His creation] seemed alike to them? Say: "Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is the One, the Almighty."﴾ (Qur'ān 13: 16)

These questions come one after the other like whiplashes which sting falsehood, awaken the sleeper and spur humankind to embrace the truth and rise high with it. This is what the Messenger of Islām (ﷺ) proclaimed and worked for.

□ Islām encountered the strongest opposition from the paganism of that time. It did not breathe its last after a battle or two; instead it fought hard for every handful of earth. After the death of the Prophet (ﷺ) it was thought that paganism had exhausted its strength. On the contrary, it grew stronger and the whole peninsula was in a turmoil during Abū Bakr's (رضي الله عنه) reign. The Muslims were surrounded by a storm of blind apostasy and they began fighting it once more. However, they were unable to defeat it until after they sustained losses greater than those they had experienced in the Prophet's (ﷺ) lifetime while fighting those idolaters. The people who remained steadfast to the truth after the death of their Prophet were the real Muslims. Islām is a commitment to principles, not people. Allāh (ﷻ) taught His Prophet (ﷺ) and the Muslims through him, how to adhere to the truth they had recognized and to hold fast to it no matter how much they were attacked and opposed.

□ The world is overflowing with incentives to deviation, and it attempts first and foremost not to leave any space in itself for faith. If faith gains any progress after struggling hard, it will try to make it forgo a portion and be content with a portion. If it succeeds in manoeuvring faith into this position, it will then be easy to finish it off. This is why Allāh (ﷻ) gives the decisive order in the Qur'ān, decreeing that faith is an integrated whole which cannot be divided and that this fact must never cease to be impressed upon the unbelievers. Thus we must hold fast to these interrelated teachings, love and hate according to their directives and make peace or war on their behalf. The value of emotion in the service of Islām is no less than the value of reason relevant. The relevant Qur'ānic *Āyāt* (verses) are actually command to the Muslims which came in the form of an address to the Prophet (ﷺ).

﴿O Prophet! Remember your duty to Allāh and do not obey the disbelievers and the hypocrites. Behold! Allah is knower, Wise. And follow that which is inspired in you from your Lord. Behold Allah is Aware of what you do. And put your trust in Allah, for Allah is sufficient as Trustee.﴾ (Qur'ān 33: 1-3)

It is not expected that the Prophet (ﷺ) would obey the non-believers and hypocrites for him to be warned of it. It is we who are meant by this directive. Similarly we find the verse:

﴿"Call [the mankind] to your *Rabb*, and do not be of those who ascribe partners [to Him]. And do not call any other god along with Allah"﴾ (Qur'ān 28: 87-88)

From the very start of his *da'wah* the Prophet (ﷺ) waged war on polytheism and false gods, and it is from him that the people learned of this battle, thus it is not possible to expect otherwise from him.

□ Similarly the Qur'ān says:

﴿Do not strain your eyes towards that which We cause some wedded pairs among them to enjoy, and do not be grieved on their account, and lower your wing [in tenderness] for the believers.﴾ (Qur'ān 15: 88)

﴿And do not obey him whose heart We have made heedless of our remembrance, who follows his own lust and whose case has been abandoned Say: [it is] the Truth from the *Rabb* of you [All].﴾ (Qur'ān 18: 28-29)

﴿And if you [O Muhammad] are in doubt concerning that which We reveal you, then question those who read the Scripture [that was] before you. Indeed, the truth from your Lord has come to you. So, do not be one of the waverers. And do not be one of those who deny the Revelations of Allāh, for then you will be one of the losers.﴾ (Qur'ān 10: 94-95)

The commentators say that the *Ummah* was addressed by these *Āyāt* (verses) in the person of its Prophet (ﷺ), just as orders are given to the leader though he is the soldier who execute them.

Others say that the Prophet (ﷺ) himself was addressed by them in order to spur him on and make him more determined. It is like the strong person who is told not to weaken, or the intelligent person who is told not to be stupid, not because it is feared that they will be so but to encourage them to maintain these qualities of strength and wisdom. In a similar manner courageous people will go forward into the jaws of death if they are told not to be cowardly.

□ In any case the Prophet (ﷺ) is the most excellent example and from his pattern of behaviour the people take his ideal. Both he as well as ourselves have been ordered to steer clear of the misguided people and not to adopt their attitudes and actions, the reason for this being is that on many occasions truth is in a weak position and hard to follow whereas falsehood is strong and has many attractions. An ideology has the right to demand of its adherents their total support and their rejection of anything opposed to it. The orders which command these attitudes will never be short of sternness: what more could there be after Allāh (ﷻ) says to His Prophet (ﷺ):

«If you ascribe a partner of Allah your work will fail and indeed you will be among the losers. No, it is Allāh you must serve, and be among the thankful.» (Qur'ān 39: 65-66)

This mode of address resounds in the ears and it is used for a purpose. It had the effect of rousing the feelings of the Muslims against corruption and frightening them against allowing it to happen, lest they fall into it.

□ The opinions of the commentators which previously quoted are also equally applicable to this *Āyāh* (verse):

«And if you [Muhammad] are in doubt concerning that which We reveal to you, then question those who read the Scripture [that was] before you.» (Qur'ān 10: 94)

This is addressed to the reader or the listener or to the Prophet (ﷺ) himself by way of exhortation as you already know, since the Prophet would never doubt his prophethood.

This statement supposes the impossible to happen, for in another chapter, the Qur'ān says:

﴿Say [O Muhammad]: The Beneficent One has no son. I am first among the worshippers.﴾ (Qur'ān 43: 81)

that is, if He had a son, I should be the first to worship him.

□ So what is the meaning of asking the People of the Book? The commentators say, it means the trustworthy and just among them, for they would not hide the evidence of truth if they were asked. However, think that such truthful people among the People of the Book are very scarce and one cannot depend on what they say. I do not think this is the meaning of the verse. One comes to appreciate the value of what one has, when one sees the confusion among others. So if you ever have any doubt about the Qur'ān being from Allāh (ﷻ), then search through the Old and New Testaments and you will quickly return to your Book and hold fast to it, and praise the Almighty a thousand times for having guided you to it! I think this is what the verse is referring to, since the truth in Islām becomes stronger and clearer when one discovers the corruption that happened to the earlier religions. This understanding agrees with Allāh's saying:

﴿And if you do follow their desires after the knowledge which has come to you, then you will have from Allah no protecting friend nor helper.﴾ (Qur'ān 2: 120)

□ It is also supported by the saying which Bukhārī reports from Ibn 'Abbās. He said:

"O gathering of Muslims, how could you ask the People of the Book while your Book which was revealed to your Prophet is the most recent book from Allah (ﷻ)? You recite it in its pure form without any corruption, and Allah (ﷻ) tells you that the People of the Book changed and interpolated the Book of Allah (ﷻ). They wrote the Book with their own hands and said it was from Allah (ﷻ) so that they might sell it for a little price! Does not the



knowledge which came to you prevent you from asking them? No, by Allāh (ﷻ), we do not see a single one of them ever asking you about what was revealed to them!"

❑ Islām from the educational point of view is knowledge of the truth, and from the emotional point of view love for and support of it and hatred and open enmity towards falsehood. There are some people who show calmness in their feelings and with this they receive an opinion and its opposite. This may be acceptable in trifling matters. However, if it concerns faith and disbelief, morality and immorality, then it is not. It is Allāh (ﷻ) who taught His Prophet (ﷺ) the Book and faith, and from this recognition of Allāh's bounty to him he held his faith dear and felt proud of the Qur'ān. He lived with them, and for them he waged war and made peace. Many a time did his enemies long for him to compromise a little with them, but they were disappointed.

﴿Who would have had you compromise, that they may compromise.﴾ (Qur'ān 68: 9)

❑ The nation who is worthy of belonging to his fold is that nation which struggles for truth and does not allow it to be disparaged or wronged. One of its characteristics is that, it is a nation with an ideology and a methodology: its moral and material existence depend on the energy it expends for this purpose and the fruits it produces.

### **Status of the Sunnah in Relation to the Qur'ān**

It is the duty of Muslim to arrange in order, the sources from which they take their faith and to know the correct position of the recorded sayings and actions of the Prophet (ﷺ) in relation to the complete record of divine Revelation with which the final message was crowned. The Qur'ān is the spirit and essence of Islām, and its conclusive verses its constitution was laid down and its method explained. Allāh (ﷻ) himself undertook to protect it and in this way the reality of the faith was preserved

and everlasting life was decreed for it. The man to whom Allāh (ﷻ) chose to convey His signs and deliver His message was a “living Qur’ān” who walked among men. He was a perfect example of faith and humility, striving and struggle, truth and strength, understanding and expression. It is no wonder, therefore, that his sayings, actions, tacit agreements, morals and rules as well as all aspects of his life are counted as the pillars of faith and legislation for Muslims.

□ Allāh (ﷻ) chose him to speak in His name and convey His message: so who is more capable than he of understanding the meaning of Allāh’s words? And who is more capable than he of defining the method which conforms to the Qur’ānic references and suggestions? The application of the law is no less important than its formulation. The law has its letter and its spirit, and when efforts are made to interpret different events according to the law, one finds juristic opinions and advice being given and experiences and lessons being recalled, sometimes the application of the law in these various circumstances seems to be nearer to the letter, and at other times it seems nearer to the spirit.

□ The Qur’ān is the law of Islām and the Sunnah its application, and Muslims are required to respect this application just as much as they are required to respect the law itself. Allāh (ﷻ) Himself gave His Prophet (ﷺ) the right to be followed in all that he ordered or prohibited, since in these things he did not speak of his own accord but under guidance from his Lord. Thus obedience to him is obedience to Allāh (ﷻ) and it is not blind submission to a human being. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

﴿Those who obey the Messenger obey Allāh, and those who turn away, We have not sent you as a warden over them.﴾ (Qur’ān 4: 80)

﴿And We have revealed you the Remembrance so that you may explain to people that which has been revealed for them, and that perhaps they may reflect.﴾ (Qur’ān 16: 44)



﴿And whatsoever the Messenger gives you, take it. And what-so-ever he forbids, abstain [from it].﴾ (Qur'ān 59: 7)

□ It must be remembered, however, that divine inspiration does not paralyse the higher human faculties. It is a mistake to think that the prophets are puppets whom the angels cause to talk or keep quiet. Even if they were not prophets, they would have been respectable men qualified to be in the forefront. Revelation does not come to people haphazardly. Only those are selected for it, who are the most perfect of all people in their intellect, virtue and character. Their way of life is not to be discarded nor are they to be neglected, above all when all these qualities are reinforced by infallibility and the sagacity by correct direction.

□ To follow the footsteps of the Prophets (ﷺ) is total virtue and, as such, the Sunnah of Muhammad (ﷺ) was made a primary source of law along with the Qur'ān by which Allāh (ﷻ) honoured him and all the Muslims. The things that are reported from him must be adopted, however, be scrutinized carefully before they are accepted as genuine, because of the distortions which occurred in the past. Not everything which is authentically proved to come from him is always understood correctly or given its rightful position. The Muslims were not hurt by the fabricated ḥādīths as much as by the misinterpretation of genuine ḥādīths. This reached such a great extent that finally people began to look at the entire collection of ḥādīths with a sceptical eye and wished that the Muslim would eradicate them.

□ This is an error on two counts. Firstly, it ignores historical reality, since the world has never known any man whose every action was recorded and minutely scrutinized as those of Muhammad Ibn 'Abdullāh. How could they then be thrown into the dustbin? Secondly, there are many gems of wisdom in the Sunnah, and if they were to be ascribed to anybody else, that person would be considered one of the greatest reformers, so why allow them to go waste and deprive people of their benefit?

□ When we study the legacy of Muhammad (ﷺ) in morals and when we review his sayings which run into the thousands on virtue, we have the impression that if an army of psychologists and educationists were to come together and try to produce such advice, they would fail. Yet morality is only one branch of the Prophet's (ﷺ) message. Nevertheless, no-one can be an authority on the Sunnah unless he or she fulfils all the requirements necessary to make the study of it beneficial to Islām and the Muslims.

(1) No-one can be an authority on the Sunnah unless he or she studies the Qur'ānic sciences in detail. The Qur'ān is the sole constitution of Islām, and it is what defines precisely for Muslims their duties and rights, it delegates to them all their responsibilities in order, and it demarcates their acts of devotion, their lives, so that one act does not cross out another or cause them to neglect their work and duties in life. Those who fail to acquire this knowledge from the Qur'ān will never be compensated for its loss by anything else, and any picture which forms in their minds about Islām from a non-Qur'ānic source is defective and may be totally contrary to the truth. For this reason the leading *Ṣaḥābah* were keen to clear the way for the noble Qur'ān to occupy its rightful place in their hearts and they ensured that nothing vied with it for priority.

□ Ibn 'Abdul Barr reported in his book *Jāmi' Bayān al'Ilm wa Fadlih* from Jābir Ibn<sup>3</sup> 'Abdullāh ibn Yasār who said he heard 'Alī (ؓ) saying:

I strongly urge all those who have written collections (other than Qur'ān) to go back and destroy them, for the people perished only because they followed sayings of their scholars and cast aside the Book of their Lord.

---

<sup>3</sup>This is how it is written in the book "*Jāmi' Bayān al'Ilm..*" It is a mistake either from the copier or the printer. Originally it should be "from 'Abdullāh ibn Yasār". This Jābir is Al Ja'fī and he is very weak. Al Jauzajani and others called him a liar.

□ He also reported from Al Zuhri from ‘Urwa<sup>4</sup> that ‘Umar ibn al Khattāb (رضي الله عنه) wanted to write down the Prophetic (ﷺ) sayings and consulted the Companions about it. They agreed, and ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) prayed for one month, asking Allāh’s guidance in the matter. One day he came, confident of Allāh’s decision, and said:

I had wanted to write down the prophetic sayings but I remembered a people before you, who wrote books and held fast to them and forgot the Book of Allāh (ﷻ). By Allāh (ﷻ), I shall not mix the Book of Allāh (ﷻ) with anything at all. [or in another version] shall not cause the Book of Allāh (ﷻ) to be forgotten.

□ Also, on the authority of Ibn Sirin who said: “The children of Israel went astray because of some books they inherited from their fathers.

□ ‘Alqama and Al-Aswad visited ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd and they had a scroll containing an interesting text. ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd then told his servant to bring a bowl of water and with it he washed out the writing, repeating,

﴿We relate unto you [Muhammad] the best of stories through Our Revelations unto you, of this Qur’ān. And before this [i.e. before the coming of Divine Revelation to you], you were among those who knew nothing about it [the Qur’ān].﴾ (Qur’ān 12: 3)

□ They said to him, “Look, it contains wonderful sayings.”

□ But he continued to wash it out and said: “These hearts are vessels, so fill them with the Qur’ān and do not fill them with anything else.” The scroll had contained a portion of the sciences of the People of the Book.

---

<sup>4</sup> He is ‘Urwa son of Al Zubayr. He never heard from ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) and in fact, never saw him. This quotation is therefore weak. It is reported in the same manner by Al-Khatib with the exception of the version of Rashid who reported it from Al Zuhri and connected it by mentioning ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar ibn ‘Urwa and ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه). However, this report is rare, as Al-Khatib himself explained.

□ Also, on the authority of Āmir al Sha‘bī from Quraza ibn Ka‘b (ؓ), who said:

We left the town, heading for Iraq and ‘Umar (ؓ) went with us as far as, Sirar, then he said: “Do you know why I have walked with you?”

□ They said: “Yes. We are the Prophet’s (ﷺ) Companions so you have walked with us in order to see us off and honour us.”

□ Then he said, “You are going to the people of a town who recite the Qur’ān with a humming sound like that of the bee. Do not distract them with the Ḥadīth. Recite the Qur’ān to the best of your ability and keep to the minimum your quotations from the Prophet (ﷺ), peace be upon him. Continue and I shall be your partner.”

□ When Quraza reached Iraq, the people asked him to narrate the Prophet’s (ﷺ) sayings and he said, “Umar (ؓ) stopped us from doing that.”

□ ‘Umar (ؓ), ‘Alī (ؓ) and the other leading Companions did not reject the Sunnah. Nevertheless, they wanted to give the Qur’ān the greatest share of reception and appreciation, and this is the natural sequence. One must fully and correctly understand the law before delving into the details and explanations which are given for some parts of it, since the details and explanations are not needed by everyone. Also people’s minds might be clustered up and no space left in them for the necessary and important principles.

□ Care must be taken especially since the way in which the Ḥadīth are narrated brings together various sayings which the Prophet (ﷺ) made on different occasions and at different times. ‘Urwa ibn al Zubayr reports that ‘Ā’ishah said:

(1) Are you not surprised at Abū Hurairah (ؓ)? He came and sat next to my room and narrated Ḥadīth from the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), wanting me to hear. I was praying and he left before I

finished my prayer. If I had caught him I should have replied to him. The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) did not recite Ḥadīth as you do.<sup>5</sup> (2) After the understanding of the Qur'ān comes the correct understanding of the authentic ḥadīths. It is best for those who know the Sunnah to refrain from quoting the Prophet (ﷺ) if they do not understand the full implication of the quotation, though they may understand the literal sense of the words. The Sunnah suffered greatly in the past from those who memorized much of it but understood very little. 'Ā'ishah's astonishment at Abū Ḥurairah's (رضي الله عنه) quoting of ḥadīths was not because she was accusing him of lying. His method of narrating Ḥadīth neglected the circumstances under which they had been said and strung one Ḥadīth to another. Muslim narrates that 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) struck Abū Ḥurairah (رضي الله عنه) because he heard him quoting the Ḥadīth of the Prophet (ﷺ): "who-ever says 'there is no god but Allāh (ﷻ) will enter paradise.'" Perhaps 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) did so because he found Abū Ḥurairah (رضي الله عنه) mentioning the Ḥadīth to those who understood nothing about it except that Islām is a spoken statement and there is no action behind it.<sup>6</sup> Stopping the Ḥadīth, even if it be authentic, is better than reporting it in this manner, surrounded by ignorance.<sup>7</sup>

□ Ibn 'Abdul Barr reports that Abū Ḥurairah (رضي الله عنه) himself said: "I am narrating to you Ḥadīth which if I had done so during 'Umar's (رضي الله عنه) time, he would have struck me with a cane." 'Umar's (رضي الله عنه) reason for preventing the narration of Ḥadīth was because he wanted to build society on the teachings of the Qur'ān, and encourage people to study the Qur'ān and extract what they needed from it. If the Sunnah were narrated after this had been accomplished, it would be absorbed by enlightened minds and

<sup>5</sup> Narrated by Bukhārī, Muslim and Ibn Abdul Barr.

<sup>6</sup> This explanation is improbable even impossible, since the Ḥadīth itself as narrated by Muslim says that 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) was the first to meet Abū Ḥuraira (رضي الله عنه) and hear it from him. May be the author should look at it again.

<sup>7</sup> What I say is correct. Sheikh Nāṣiruddīn has no reasonable objection to my explanation. (Author).

would not be misinterpreted. Abū Hurairah (رضي الله عنه) might have been able to quote a hundred ḥādīths on *ṣalāh* because of his good memory, and perhaps ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) would have no objection to them being taught in a specialist school. However, he disliked the Muslim masses to be occupied with such things when a few ḥādīths were sufficient for them, and then they could devote more time to what would be beneficial for Islām and all its people. This is the reason why he objected to those who narrated too many ḥādīths. Ibn Ḥazm reported almost a thousand pages of Ḥadīth on *wuḍū*, for those who were interested in this kind of knowledge, although to occupy the masses of Muslims with the like would be sheer stupidity! What time would be left for the Qur’ān itself? In fact, to occupy the Muslims with the Qur’ān in this manner is to trespass on the religion.

□ The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said:

“Recite the Qur’ān and do not exaggerate in it nor shun it, and do not eat by it.”<sup>8</sup>

If any credit should go to the memorizers, it is because they conveyed the knowledge to those who could benefit from it. In a similar vein the Prophet said:

“Perhaps the carrier of knowledge is not knowledgeable. Perhaps one carries knowledge to a person who is more knowledgeable than one self.”<sup>9</sup>

□ Abū Yūsuf said:

Al A‘mash asked me about a problem. The two of us were alone and I answered him. He said:

“Where did you get this from, Ya‘qub?” I said: “From the Ḥadīth which you told me and I told others!”

Then he said to me: “O Ya‘qub, I learnt this Ḥadīth before your parents were married and I never knew its meaning until now.”

<sup>8</sup> A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Aḥmad and Al-Ṭahāwī in *Sharḥ Ma‘anī al-Āthār* from Abū Ḥazm ibn Shibl.

<sup>9</sup> A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Ibn ‘Abdūl Barr as well as other compilers.

Abū Yūsuf, the scholar, might have seen what Al A'mash, the memorizer, did not. It is not forbidden to memorize without understanding. What is forbidden is that, one should understand incorrectly.

□ The technical arrangement of the ḥādīths as they were recorded and came down to us, places all matters of faith in one chapter and all matters of law in another, and so on. Now, since Islām is a collection of all these truths, the Sunnah has come to resemble a huge clothing store in which different garments are arranged in different corners. Here you will find the headwear, across there the trousers, and beyond that the shirts, etc. Naturally, those who want a complete outfit will go to every corner and select what suits them. It often happens, however, that you see someone buying two caps and leaving barefoot, and another buying a handkerchief but is without a proper shirt! This is what happened to many groups who studied the Sunnah.

After much speculation, they came out to the people armed with a toothbrush and turban without a tail. This for them is Islām. The secret is that they entered this large showroom and came out thinking that the whole of the religion was contained in one or two Ḥadīth. Thus they harmed the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. (3) Lack of understanding of the Sunnah, in spite of the preoccupation with it, has harmed the orientation of the Muslims and spread among them a set of unsuitable laws and restrictive traditions. These are rejected by the spirit of the Qur'ān and Sunnah, although they may be based on an authentic Ḥadīth not properly understood.

□ The cause of this is that Islām has presented a set of laws on all important matters, and they are contained in the Qur'ān and Sunnah; they are all complementary, verified and supported by one another. Thus if there appears to be something which contradicts all the others, it is investigated until a rational explanation is found for it which conforms to all the others, or it is rejected in favour of those which are more authenticated. Many of the scholars think that the Ḥadīth narrated by one authentic



individual (and these ḥadīths are known technically as *aḥād*) must be rejected if they contradict the evident meaning of the Qur'ānic verses or other authentic sources or if they contradict the reasoning of *qiyas* (analogy) based on the Qur'ān itself. They differentiate between the ḥadīths narrated by the jurists and those narrated by people who are memorizers only. Let me give you an example of how nations may be exposed to stagnation and loss as a result of their misunderstanding of events.

□ Many Muslims rule that women should not see any stranger or be seen by any stranger, and in Madīnah the women walked in the streets wearing loose garments covering them from head to toe. There are two slits for them to see through, although these may be covered by pieces of glass or celluloid. This widespread tradition is based on a Ḥadīth which I heard the *Imām* of the Prophet's (ﷺ) Mosque quoting in the pulpit during a Friday prayer. The Ḥadīth states that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) objected to his wives seeing 'Abdullāh ibn Umm Maktūm and when they pointed out that he was blind, he asked them, "Are you blind?"<sup>10</sup>

□ I objected to the preacher's citing of this Ḥadīth, since the scholar of the Sunnah had spoken about its meaning. It is sheer

---

<sup>10</sup> Narrated by Abū Dāwūd Al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Sa'd and Al Baihaqi through Al-Zuhri. The last said: "Nabhan, slave of Umm Salmah, reported from Umm Salāmah that she said:

"I was with the Prophet (ﷺ) and so was Maimūna and Ibn Umm Maktūm approached. This was after *ḥijab* was instituted. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: Veil yourselves from him.

So we said: "O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), isn't he blind and cannot see or recognize us?

He replied: "Are you blind? Aren't you seeing him?"

Al-Tirmidhī said it is a good and sound Ḥadīth, and Ibn Hajar declared its chain of narrators to be strong in his *Fath al Bari*. This is doubtful, however, since Nabhan is accepted as authentic only by Ibn Hibbān who is known for his negligence in authenticating the narrators. This fact is pointed out by Ibn Hajar himself in his introduction to *Lisan al-Mizan*. For this reason we see that he did not authenticate Nabhan in *Al Taqrib* but said of him: "Acceptable when scrutinized. But no scrutiny was done of him as regards this Ḥadīth. This statement can only mean that this Ḥadīth is unacceptable. Ibn 'Abdul Barr says: "He is not of those whose ḥadīths are authentic and this Ḥadīth of his is unknown", as quoted by Ibn al Turkmani in *Al Jawhar Al Naqi*.



ignorance of the Sunnah to cite it when speaking of the duties of women, their way of life and the principles of their participation in society in general. Why do we not mention the Hadīth reported by Bukhārī in this connection since they are more precise and authentic?

□ Under the heading “Women at War and their Fighting with the Men” Bukhārī narrates that Anas (رضي الله عنه) said:

“When it was the day of Uhud the people (Muslims) retreated from around the people. And I saw ‘Ā’ishah, daughter of Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه), and Umm Sulaym: their garments were tucked in and I could see the outline of their legs. They were carrying waterbags on their backs, pouring the water into the mouths of the people and returning to fill them and repeat the same procedure.”

He also mentioned under the heading “Women at War at Sea” that Anas (رضي الله عنه) said:

“The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) entered the house of Milhan’s daughter. He lay down and slept. Then he laughed.

She asked: “Why did you laugh, Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ)?

He said: ‘I saw people from my *Ummah* sailing across blue sea in the path of Allāh (ﷻ) as if they were kings seated on thrones.

She said: O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), pray to Allāh (ﷻ) to make me one of them.

He said: “O Allāh (ﷻ), make her one of them.”

Then he slept again, and he laughed. She asked him the reason and he repeated his dream as before.

She said: “Pray to Allāh (ﷻ) to make me one of them.”

He said:” You are among the first, not among the last.”

□ She married ‘Ubādah Ibn al Ṣamit after that, and she sailed across sea with Bint Quraza. When they reached shore she mounted her horse. It stumbled and she fell off and died.

□ He also mentioned under the heading of “Women’s Carrying of Waterbags to the People in Battle” that ‘Umar ibn Al Khaṭṭāb

(ﷺ) distributed scarves to the women of Madīnah and one excellent scarf remained.

Some of those with him said: "O Commander of the faithful, give this one to the grand daughter of Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ), who is with you. They meant Umm Kulthum, daughter of 'Alī (ﷺ).

'Umar (ﷺ) Said: "Umm Salit is more deserving of it. She was one of the Anṣār women who took the pledge with Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ)."

'Umar (ﷺ) continued: "She used to sew water bags for us on the day of Uhud."

He also mentioned under the heading of "Women's Attendance to the Wounded in Battle" from Al Rubayyi' bint Mu'awwadh. She said: "We were with the Prophet, giving water to drink, attending the sick and removing the wounded to Madīna," etc.

□ Let us suppose that Bukhārī did not narrate these authentic ḥadīths: should the Ḥadīth of the blind man be imposed upon society? Should women be confined to their homes and never able to leave this prison? Such a ruling cannot be seen in the Qur'ān. In fact, the Qur'ān makes this ruling the punishment for women who commit fornication!

﴿As for those of your women who are guilty of lewdness, call to witness four of you against them. And if they testify [to the truth of the allegation] then confine them to the houses until death take them or [until] Allāh appoint for them a way [through new legislation].﴾ (Qur'ān 4: 15)

□ However, the Muslims, when they found the civilized ways of educating men and women too hard because of their deviation from the Qur'ān resorted to prisons and castles, and what happened is well known. The Muslims abandoned the Qur'ān for the ḥadīths. Then they abandoned the ḥadīths for the sayings of the scholars. Then they abandoned the sayings of the scholars for the method of the blind followers. Then they abandoned these blind followers and their sternness for the ignorant people

and their confusion. The evolution of Islāmic thought in this manner was a disaster for Islām and the Muslims. Ibn ‘Abdul Barr reports from Al-Dahhāk ibn Muzāhim:

“There will come a time over people when the Qur’ān will be left on the shelf and spiders will build their webs over it: no use will be made of what is in it and men’s actions will be according to narrations and ḥādīths.”

□ The path of rectitude in this blind alley is to return to the Qur’ān and make it the main pillar of our intellectual and spiritual lives. Then when we are fully conversant with it we should look into the Sunnah and benefit from the Prophet’s (ﷺ) wisdom, way of life, worship, character and regulations. Nobody should be allowed to speak on the Sunnah who has little understanding of the Qur’ān, or little understanding of the variety of narrations, or is unaware of the occasions and circumstances under which they were said.

### **The Prophet (ﷺ) and his Miracles**

The life of the Prophet (ﷺ), both public as well as private, went according to the customary laws of nature and, as a whole, did not go beyond them. As a human being, he felt hunger and satisfaction, he had his periods of health and sickness, he became tired, he rested, he felt sad and glad. However, humans in these things are of various categories and they are not all bound by a general law. There are those who are passionate about their necessities, and if they diminish just a little their hearts palpitate and their energies are drained. And there are others who are sturdy and content with their small share. They march towards their goal with high head and firm footsteps. The machines which run on oil are of different categories. There is the bad kind which consumes much fuel and gives little benefit, and there is the good kind which produces much with a small fuel consumption. Human beings are just like that with their bodies, necessities and luxuries.

□ Anyone who pursues the *Sīrah* of Muhammad (ﷺ) Ibn ‘Abdullāh will see from his private life the sturdiness of the material which moulded his body in such a manner that giants could not compete with him. He was able to bear the burdens of life and the difficulties of the struggle with complete bravery and rectitude. Yes there are geniuses who are blind or deaf, who have stomachache or pains in their chest, but genius is not prophethood.<sup>11</sup> Allāh’s perfect favour to anybody is that He (ﷻ) should grant him freedom from all these diseases so that all the elements may be complete which would rectify his vision of life and his behaviour in it. From this point of view Muhammad (ﷺ) was a perfect human being and his life was in total accordance with Allāh’s universal laws concerning outstanding heroes.

□ As for his public life, as a Messenger (ﷺ) conveying the Message from Allāh (ﷻ), training the believers, resisting the unbelievers and persisting in the spread of his *da’wah* until it bore fruit in all corners of the globe.

□ There is no doubt that, the Qur’ān is a miraculous book, it awakens the higher faculties in the human race. It is somewhat similar to the great events which happen to people and cause them to think deeply and with insight. It is therefore a human book which assists the general awareness to be more mature and accurate.

﴿Behold! We have appointed it a lecture [Qur’ān] in Arabic that perhaps you might understand.﴾ (Qur’ān 43: 3)

A Scripture whereof the *Āyāt* (verses) are expounded, a lecture (Qur’ān) in Arabic for people who have knowledge.

﴿Good tidings and a warning.﴾ (Qur’ān 41: 4)

□ The difference between the education of the Arabs by the Qur’ān and the education of the Jews by the Torah is like the difference between the voice of guidance which shows the intelligent person the way and the whip of punishment which

<sup>11</sup> See my book *The Ideology of the Muslim*.

stings the back of the stupid beast to make it move forward, but it takes one step forward and then jibs. ‘Abdullāh ibn Rawāha used to chant:

“Among us is the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) reciting His (ﷻ) Book.

When a hidden ray of sunlight splits the dawn. He showed us guidance after blindness.

So our hearts have faith in him, that what he says is true. At night he forsakes his bed.

When beds make the idolaters heavy with sleep.”

□ Some scholars say that the Qur’ān is the only miracle of the Prophet. Here they are looking only at the literal sense of the word miracle (Arabic *mu’jiza*), which is a supernatural occurrence combined with a challenge, and such a challenge was offered only by the Qur’ān. I have accepted a similar meaning<sup>12</sup>, not because of the literal definition of miracle, but in consideration of the intrinsic value of other miracles in relation to the noble goals Islām brought by.

□ There is, however, no relationship between belief or action and these studies: wicked people will not be forgiven their wickedness because of their belief that the Prophet was sheltered by a cloud or addressed by a rock, nor will righteous people lose their status if they deny such miracles. Such studies go back to the scientific assessment of the evidence for and against such occurrences and the evaluation of their significance. Accuracy or inaccuracy in this matter will not take away from one’s faith.

□ A terrible craze took over the Muslims in the ascribing of miracles to righteous people. The majority of them went to the extent of linking miracles to the level of faith, and one writer on *tawhīd* even said in verse: “Affirm the ability of saints to perform miracles, And who denies it, reject whatever he says.” The relationship of this to *tawhīd* is like its relationship to grammar or astronomy! In other words the essence of the religion is far removed from these studies whether they conclude

<sup>12</sup> See my book *The Ideology of the Muslim*.

in the affirmative or negative. The miracles which are attributed to the saints by their admirers are evil expressions of the vices of laziness and stupidity which are hidden within them, just as the nightmares of a sleeper are the expressions of their disturbed minds and frayed nerves. This saint opened a locked door without key; that saint flew in the air without wings; that other one urinated on a rock and it turned into gold; and that other one had knowledge of the unseen!

□ There is much nonsense of this sort, reflecting ignorance of the real nature of the religion (Islām) and of the world. It also shows that its promoters are too deviant in their minds and hearts to understand fully the lives of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions. Muhammad (ﷺ) was not a man of fanciful imagination who built his life and mission on fictitious tales. He was a man of reality who perceived from near and afar, and if he wanted anything he would take the necessary steps to achieve it. In taking these steps, as can be seen in the light of bitter reality, he took the utmost precautions and expended his utmost energies. Neither he nor his Companions ever thought that heaven would strive for him if he relaxed, act for him if he was lazy, or look after him if he was negligent. Never were miracles or supernatural occurrences the foundations or girders in the building of a great man or a great nation.

□ Muhammad (ﷺ) and his Companions learnt and taught, fought and made peace, defeated and were defeated. They spread their call throughout the horizons and they struggled on a handful of earth. No earthly law was ever broken for them and no universal law was ever bent for them. In fact, they sweated more than their enemies did and bore heavy losses in the path of their Lord, and thus in the struggle for survival they had the priority of steadfastness and victory. Allāh (ﷻ) taught them harsh lessons so that they might not expect any favouritism from Providence in any clash, although they were too sharp-witted to expect such favouritism. Allāh (ﷻ) says to His Prophet (ﷺ):

﴿And when you [Muhammad] are among them and arrange [their] worship for them, let only a party of them stand with you [to worship] and let them take their arms. Then when they have performed their prostration, let them fall to the rear, and let another party come that has not worshipped, and let them worship with you, and let them take precautions and their arms. Those who disbelieve long for you to neglect your arms and your baggage that they may attack you once for all. It is no sin for you to lay aside your arms if rain impedes you or you are sick. But take precautions. Behold! Allāh prepares for the disbelievers a shameful punishment.﴾ (Qur'ān 4: 102)

Look how they are ordered, while standing in prayer before Allāh (ﷻ) to be extremely cautious and attentive. Allāh (ﷻ) did not allow any hope to them into thinking that the angels would descend and assist them. If they did not protect themselves, then no-one would protect them. That is what Allāh (ﷻ) said to Muhammad (ﷺ) and his Companions.

❑ When the Muslims failed to heed this lesson in the Battle of Uhud, they were dealt a painful blow, which felled seventy of their heroes and made them taste bitter defeat. On that day the leader of the unbelievers, Abū Sufyān, stood up and shouted "Long live Hubal!" (Their chief god). The Prophet (ﷺ) was severely tested in his ability to save the situation: he fought and killed and was wounded.

❑ Abū Hurairah (رضي الله عنه) narrates that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said on the day of Uhud:

"May Allah's anger be severe on the people who do this to their Prophet. [Pointing to his teeth]. "May Allah's anger be severe on a man who is killed by Allah's Messenger in the path of Allah (ﷻ)." <sup>13</sup>

Anas (رضي الله عنه) said that the Prophet's (ﷺ) front teeth were broken on the day of Uhud and his head was gashed. He began wiping away the blood from his face, saying: "How could a people be successful who gashed their Prophet's (ﷺ) head and

<sup>13</sup> A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim.



broke his teeth while he was calling them to Allāh (ﷻ)? ” Upon this Allāh (ﷻ) revealed:

﴿It is no concern at all of yours [Muhammad] whether He relents toward them or punish them; for they are evildoers.﴾ (Qur’ān 3: 128)<sup>14</sup>

Do you think that negligence of the steps toward victory brought anything other than defeat? Even though those who were defeated were representatives of true *tawhīd*? Even though those who gained victory were upholders of pure paganism?

□ Whenever the Prophet (ﷺ) wanted to attack, he feigned otherwise, saying: ‘War is Deception’.<sup>15</sup> In spite of his taking precautions according to Allāh’s order, and his respect for the natural laws which regulate human life, some of the Arab tribes were able to trick him. They persuaded him to send a group of *Qurra’* of the Holy Qur’ān who were some of the choicest *Ṣaḥabah*, and they killed them all to the last man at Bi’r Ma’una. Only the birds discovered their place of death and hovered in the air above the bodies of these martyrs. These men who fell victims to treachery were some of the best-loved of Allāh’s creation to Him, yet He did not give permission to any of them to fly without wings or escape his inevitable fate, is to be thought by the backward Muslims of today.

□ If precaution and care were the Prophet’s (ﷺ) practice, then even more so were preparation and exhaustion of energy. How do you think Muhammad (ﷺ) gained victory over the mankind? He brought his men to maturity with faith just as the summer ripens its sweetest fruits with its slow heat. Thus when he dispatched them to all corners of the earth, they went with a roar like that of a violent storm. Islām from the day it started was a battle led by Revelation, thus its first flowing impressions were like a storm with lightning and thunder:

<sup>14</sup> A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim in the same chapter.

<sup>15</sup> A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Abū Dāwūd from Ka’b ibn Mālik (رضي الله عنه). Bukhārī and Muslim narrated something similar.



﴿Or like a rainstorm from the sky, wherein in darkness, thunder and the flash of lightning. They thrust their fingers in their ears by reason of the thunderclaps, for fear of death. Allah encompasses the disbelievers [in His guidance].﴾ (Qur'ān 2: 19)

Do you think that relaxation and negligence would have left any opening in these crowded ranks? Shame on the Muslims of today for expecting miracles in a world which has bared its fangs to annihilate them from the roots.

□ I do not deny that miracles happen to people. However, they happen to the believer and the unbeliever, the righteous person as well as the sinner. If a man walks on water without his feet getting wet, this does not prove he is righteous since righteousness can be determined only by one's faith and action as Allāh (ﷻ) prescribed. Stories that certain people performed miracles is a purely historical matter for whoever feels so inclined, and it has nothing to do with faith or responsibilities. This is, of course, not speaking of the miracles of the prophets, which emphasized the truth of what they conveyed from Allāh (ﷻ). Nevertheless, even those miracles which came with prophethood are a thing of the past and there is no benefit in arguing over them. We also learn that the miracle of Muhammad (ﷺ) was not like those which preceded his era. It was a human, rational and perpetual miracle, around which Allāh (ﷻ) organized his life and mission according to the law of cause and effect, as you have seen.

□ Muhammad (ﷺ) did not know the unseen. He was like any other human being not knowing what he would earn the next day. Nothing of the sort should be expected of him after the clear command of Allāh (ﷻ) came to him:

﴿Say: "For myself I have no power to benefit, nor power to hurt, save that which Allah will so. Had I knowledge of the unseen, I should have abundance of wealth, and adversity would not touch me. I am but a warner, and a bearer of good tidings to folk who believe.﴾ (Qur'ān 7: 188)

He might be approached by someone who intended evil but expressed love, and he knew nothing of that until the man was exposed by his actions:

﴿And among the town people of Al Madīnah [there are some who] persist in hypocrisy whom you [O Muhammad] do not know. We know them.﴾ (Qur'ān 9: 101)

On the Day of Judgement he will be confronted by men whom he left thinking that they were staunch believers but were later exposed as to their black hearts and evil intentions. He will then say, as Jesus said:<sup>16</sup>

﴿I was a witness over them while I dwelt amongst them, but when you took me up you were the Watcher over them.﴾ (Qur'ān 5: 120)

□ Allāh (ﷻ) might have given him knowledge of some unseen things for specific reasons, like the prophesy in the Qur'ān of the Romans defeating the Persians, after the victory that the latter had gained over them. This gladdened the pagans and saddened the Muslims for they supported the People of the Book.

□ There are many authentic ḥadīths which apparently suggest that the Prophet (ﷺ) was aware of the future. For example, there is the Ḥadīth of 'Adī ibn Ḥātim, in which he said:

“While I was with the Prophet (ﷺ) there came to him a man complaining of famine. Then came another complaining of highway robbers. Upon this he said: “Adī, have you seen Ḥirah?”

□ I said: “No. But I have been told of it.”

□ He said: “If your life is prolonged, you will see women on camels travelling from Ḥirah to the Ka'bah, not fearing anyone but Allāh (ﷻ).”

□ I said to myself: “So where will be the homes of (the tribe of) Tayy who have become high ranking in the land?”

□ He said: “And if your life is prolonged, you will see the treasures of Khosrau being opened up.”

<sup>16</sup> The meaning of this is in a Ḥadīth of Ibn 'Abbās as narrated by Bukhārī in the chapter on *Tafsīr*.

□ I said to myself: "Khosrau son of Hurmuz?

□ He said: "Khosrau son of Hurmuz. And I saw the women on camels travelling Hirah and circumambulating the Ka'bah fearing none but Allāh (ﷻ), and I was among those who conquered the treasures of Chosroes."<sup>17</sup>

In truth these ḥādīths and others like them were not information of the unseen.<sup>18</sup> They were a testament to the truth of Allāh's promise that the future belonged to Islām and that this religion would become supreme in all corners of the globe. They were thus an explanation by the Prophet of Allāh's (ﷺ) words:

﴿He it is who has sent His messenger with the guidance and the religion of truth, that He may cause it to prevail over all religions. And Allah suffices as a witness.﴾ (Qur'ān 48: 28)

﴿Allah has promised those of you who believe and do good works that He will surely make them to succeed [the present rulers] in the earth, even as He caused those who were before them to succeed [others]; and that he will surely establish for them their religion which He approved for them and will give them in exchange safety after their fear.﴾ (Qur'ān 24: 55)

□ Similar to that are the ḥādīths which warn of persecution. A person who knows the market forces will not hesitate, after a brief examination of the prevailing conditions, to issue a correct judgement of them. Someone who intimately understands psychology will, after a quick glance, fathom what lies beneath the surface. It is like the poet's couplet: "*Al Alma'ī* who is suspicious of you as if he actually saw and heard!"

<sup>17</sup> A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī and others.

<sup>18</sup> Indeed, they were information of the Unseen, by the knowledge that Allāh (ﷻ) gave him. The above-mentioned explanation has no support for it as long as the author, May Allāh (ﷻ) protect him, accepts the possibility of Allāh's informing him. The Ḥadīth itself contains the proof of this: the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "If your life is prolonged." Could this precise temporal definition be known by any "expert" if Allāh (ﷻ) did not grant him that information?

□ Muhammad (ﷺ) had a deep knowledge of people and their qualities, of the world and its stages, of time and its vicissitudes, of the earlier religions and what they and their adherents suffered in blazing their trail through life. The minds of the prophets were unblemished and sharpened and they had clear inspiration. So imagine what the highest of all prophets was like: Providence took care of him from birth and brought him up, so that he might bear the message whose miracle lay in its method and whose method was to purify the natures of people and sharpen their intellects.

□ This made him the best person to evaluate the conditions of the time and expect what the future would hold. Is it possible for a traveller in the northern regions to expect the sky to be clear of heavy fog, or is it possible for a traveller in the equatorial regions to expect a hailstorm? How then is it worthy of the Prophet of a great religion to forget the persecution which affected his teachings and his followers, whether it was in the near or distant future, and whether it was blatant or hidden.

□ Thus the Prophet (ﷺ) talked much about persecution, and his aim was not to prophesy it but to caution against it, suffering will affect people because of their different ways of thinking and their different personalities; suffering will occur because worldly pleasures will attract people who will rival one another for them; and suffering will affect the *Ummah* after unbelief regains its strength. He cautioned his Companions about all of these in ḥādīths too numerous to quote here.

□ The gravest of all these sufferings is the decay which will set into the Islāmic teachings themselves.

*Salāh* will lose its spirit which is humility then its body will be eroded and it will become absurd.

*Jihād* will lose its spirit, which is sincerity and will become a fight for booty and slaves; then it will lose its sharpness and be shelved.

Fasting will cease to be perseverance in a time of privation and self-control, and will become a time of feasting and double expenditure.

Government will change from being service to the people with their consent into making oneself their god by suppression and force. Then it will fall and both the ruler and the ruled will be destroyed.

Even the Muslims' love for their Prophet will become, after his death, a market place around his grave, full of awe-inspiring clamouring and droning.

□ When I visited Madīnah I went to the Prophet's (ﷺ) grave. The feelings were flowing from my heart and ringing in my ears. As I caught sight of the grave I headed for it, feeling very humble as if I was a bull being rolled under the feet of some giant. I paid my respects in the prescribed manner and did not say anything else except one verse of poetry. I did not know how it came to me because of the emotional state I was in. My lips murmured it but my ears did not hear: "O you, best of all creation, whose bones are buried in the earth, the fragrance of which has caused the hills and plains to be fragrant." Then I went away.

□ I saw, however, waves of people coming in and shouting long phrases. Someone was reading from a book, and another listening to someone who had memorized much; this one was disturbing that one, and everybody was disturbing the people at prayer. These waves were coming constantly and were never-ending.

□ Was it not that which the Prophet (ﷺ) meant when he said: "O Allah (ﷻ), do not make my grave after me an idol to be worshipped."<sup>19</sup>

□ As soon as I became aware of the condition of the visitors and residents in the Mosque, I almost stopped praying in it, for I

---

<sup>19</sup> A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Aḥmad and Ibn Sa'd in his *Tabaqāt* on the authority of Abū Hurairah (رضي الله عنه).

detest most vehemently innovations, chaos and ignorance. I remembered the story of 'Urwah ibn Al Zubair:

When he built a castle in the vale of 'Aḥīq and kept away from Madīnah, the people said to him: "You have forsaken the mosque of the Prophet (ﷺ)!"

He replied: "I saw your mosques being neglected, your markets overcrowded and lewdness wide spread in your streets. In the vale is a security from what you are involved in. It is said that when he was scolded about this, he replied: "What is left? All that is left are those who rejoice at the misfortune of others and who are jealous of the good fortune of others."

□ We ask Allāh's pardon and refuge.

## Chapter Two

### From Birth to Prophethood

Muhammad (ﷺ) was born of a family of pure lineage and noble ancestry which combined all the good qualities of the Arabs and which held itself aloof from their evil tendencies. The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said about himself:

"Surely Allāh (ﷻ) purified the *Kinānah* from the children of Isma'īl (ﷻ), purified the Quraish from among the *Kinānah*, purified the Banū Hashīm from among the Quraish and purified me from among the Banū Hashīm."<sup>1</sup>

Noble ancestry does not grant status to those who are failures. It is like steel: when it is left to rust no benefit can be derived from it, but when crafts people utilize it they make it do wonders. Thus when the Prophet (ﷺ) was asked who was the noblest of people he replied:

"You ask me about the qualities of the Arabs?" They replied yes, so he said: "The best of them in (the days of) *jahilīyah* are the best of them in Islām if they acquire knowledge."<sup>2</sup>

□ The Prophet's (ﷺ) birth in such a distinguished family was one of the means to success which Allāh (ﷻ) prepared for His Messenger. Early Arab society was based on keen tribalism which led a tribe to extinction in defence of its own honour and the honour of anyone allied to it. For a time Islām remained under the protection of these long-observed traditions until it was able to stand on its own feet, just as a plant is no longer in need of the pot when grows sturdy and tall. Even Lūt (ﷺ) had wished that such traditions were in existence when he felt the danger to his guests and could find no clan to extend protection to them. At that point he said to his people:

---

<sup>1</sup> A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Muslim on the authority of Wa'ila ibn Al Asqa'. It is also declared sound by Al Tirmidhī.

<sup>2</sup> A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim on the authority of Abū Hurairah (رضي الله عنه).



﴿And his people came rushing towards him, and since aforetime they used to commit crimes [sodomy], he said: "O my people! Here are my daughters [i.e. the women of the nation], they are purer for you [if you marry them lawfully]. So fear Allāh and degrade me not with regard to my guest! Is there not among you a single right-minded man?"﴾ (Qur'ān 11: 78)

Thereafter he said:

﴿Would that I had strength to resist you or had some strong support [among you].!﴾ (Qur'ān 11: 80)

□ In spite of his noble lineage, however, Muhammad (ﷺ) did not have great wealth. It was this lack of wealth combined with his nobility which enabled him to acquire the best traits of all classes of people. The sons of noble families are led by their wealth to become haughty. If they lose this weapon, though they will still have their noble traditions and status which they will sacrifice their utmost to maintain.

One of them says: "Because of the vicissitudes of time which affect us, we resist any calamities for fear of being disgraced. Some of them may find nothing shameful in announcing their poverty or letting their circumstances be known. Nevertheless, there are others who keep their grief to themselves and show a determined face to the world. Such a one was 'Abdul Muṭṭalib.

□ 'Abdul Muṭṭalib was the chief of Makkah. However, this chieftom which he inherited ended with him and was not passed on to his descendants. Their rivals for the leadership of Makkah vied fiercely with them and it seemed as if they would take it over entirely. In a few years 'Abd Shams came to power. Yet no sooner had another few years passed than the leadership fell into the hands of Abū Sufyān and remained out of the control of Banū Hāshim.

□ 'Abdullāh was the youngest of 'Abdul Muṭṭalib's sons and was greatly loved by him. He married him to Āminah bint Wabb and then left him to make his own way in life. After only a few

months of marriage ‘Abdullāh left on a trading journey, and as it was summer, he went with a caravan to Syria. He never returned. The caravan came back with the news of his sickness and soon after came the news of his death. Āminah was awaiting her strong, youthful husband to tell him the news of her pregnancy and the joy they would soon have of their first child. However, fate for a higher purpose ended these sweet dreams. The wife who was once envied now became a widow, and she began counting the days when her only child, an orphan, would be born into this unpredictable life.

□ Al Zuhri reports that ‘Abdul Muṭṭalib sent his son ‘Abdullāh to Yathrib to buy their ration of dates and he died there. Others say he was in Syria from where he travelled to Yathrib with the caravan of the Quraish. In Madīnah he fell sick and died and was buried in the precinct of al Nabigha Al Ja‘di. He died at the age of 25 years and before the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) was born.

□ Muhammad’s (ﷺ) birth at Makkah was ordinary. There was nothing in it to attract attention or cause astonishment. The historians have not been able to pinpoint precisely the day, month or year of his birth. However, most sources are inclined to the year when Makkah was attacked by the Abyssinians, which corresponded to 570 of the Christian Era. The date of his birth is set at 12 Rabi‘i al Awwal 53 BH, that is, before the Hijra.

□ The exact date of the Prophet’s (ﷺ) birth has no religious significance in Islām, and the celebrations held on this occasion are a worldly tradition which has nothing to do with the *Sharī‘ah*. Some sources report that premonitions of his prophethood occurred when he was born: fourteen balconies of Khosrau’s palace collapsed; the fire worshipped by the Zoroastrians went out; and the churches around Lake Sawah crumbled after the lake dried up. Al Busiri says:<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> A poet famous for his *Qasidat al Burda* in praise of the Prophet (ﷺ) (Translator).

The event of his birth disclosed the purity of his origin  
 O What a good beginning and a good end!  
 That day when the Persians perceived  
 The premonition of disaster and destruction,  
 And there appeared cracks in the palace of Khosrau,  
 Disunited just like the henchmen of Khosrau,  
 And the fire went out in regret for it,  
 And the river dried up,  
 And Sawah became sad at the drying up of its lake,  
 And everyone coming to it for a drink felt angry with thirst.

These words are the wrong expression of a correct idea. The birth of Muhammad (ﷺ) was truly a proclamation of the fall of tyranny and the end of its reign. So also was the birth of Moses (ﷺ). Do you not see that when Allāh (ﷻ) described Pharaoh's tyranny over his people and announced His intention of freeing the slaves and the oppressed, He unfolded to us the story of the hero who would undertake this task? Allāh (ﷻ) says:

**﴿And We inspired the mother of Moses.﴾** (Qur'ān 28: 7)

□ Muhammad's (ﷺ) mission was the most momentous of all revolutions known to the world, which undertook a mental and physical liberation of mankind. The Qur'ān recruited the most upright of men ever known in history and directed their efforts towards disposing of all the dictators one by one. After this liberation from the yokes of dictatorship, when the people wished to outline what actually happened, they imagined the occurrence of these premonitions and invented tales to fit them. Muhammad (ﷺ) is not in need of any of this, the great role that he plays now in our present age makes us think little of such tales.

□ 'Abdul Muṭṭalib received the news of his grandson's birth with exuberance and joy. Maybe it compensated him for his son who had died in the prime of life and so he turned his affection from the past to the newcomer and showed pride and concern in him. It was amazing that he should be inspired to name his

grandson Muhammad (ﷺ),<sup>4</sup> a name probably inspired by a noble angel! The Arabs heard this name for the first time and they asked the grandfather why he did not choose the name of one of his ancestors.

He replied: "I wanted Allāh (ﷻ) to praise him in the heavens and mankind to praise him on earth. This wish was a perception of the future, for no one of Allāh's (ﷻ) creation is so deserving of the sentiments of thanks and praise for what he accomplished as much as that Arab Prophet, Muhammad (ﷺ).

□ Abū Hurairah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"Do you not wonder at how Allāh (ﷻ) diverts from me the curses and abuses of the Quraish? They abuse Mudhammam and I am Muhammad (ﷺ)!"<sup>5</sup>

□ However, the harsh reality still remained in spite of the loving grandfather's attention. Muhammad (ﷺ) was an orphan, born after his father had left this world. So be it! If we supposed that 'Abdullāh had remained alive, then what would he have done for his son? Could he have trained him to become a Prophet? Of course not: the father is only one of a number of factors which determine the future of a child. Even if prophethood could be acquired through effort, his father's being alive would not make it more achievable, so what about when it is in fact a selection [made by Allāh (ﷻ)]?

□ While Ya'qūb was alive he was provided for. He reached old age and acquired experience and wisdom. In fact, he was granted prophethood. One day he looked round and did not see Yūsuf (عليه السلام) next to him: he had lost him in the most crucial period of his life. Yūsuf (عليه السلام) was a young lad full of zeal and energy, and in spite of the corruption which prevailed in those

<sup>4</sup> He gave him this name on the seventh day after his birth after circumcising him.

<sup>5</sup> A sound Ḥadīth reported by Bukhārī. The Quraish used to say Mudhammam (the blameworthy) instead of Muhammad (ﷺ) (the praiseworthy) when referring to the Prophet (ﷺ) (Translator).

societies through which he passed, his inner being still overflowed with piety and chastity. He was like a bright lamp on a dark night. When father and son met again, Ya'qub saw his son as a staunch prophet.

□ 'Abdullāh passed away, leaving his son an orphan. Nevertheless, this orphan was being prepared from the first moment for a noble task. He was being prepared as the leader of all the righteous people chosen by Allāh (ﷻ). Father and grandfather, relatives and friends, heavens and earth were nothing but means which Allāh (ﷻ) utilized to accomplish His decree and to shower His bounty on the one whom He himself fashioned.

□ Āminah showered her affection on her son, patiently awaiting the best nurses who would come from the desert, seeking to be the guardians of the children of the nobility. These bedouin women who went to Makkah for this purpose were looking for sustenance and good pay. Muhammad (ﷺ) however, had no father from whom gifts could be expected, nor did he have wealth to attract them. So it is no wonder that these went nurses turned away from him and sought other children. Ḥalīmah, daughter of Abū Dhu'aib of the tribe of the Banu Sa'd, was one of those who came to Makkah, wishing to return with an infant who would be her means of sustenance. At first she was not pleased to take the orphan, although when she could not find any other child she felt ashamed of returning home empty-handed. So she went back to Āmina and took Muhammad (ﷺ) from her.

□ There was untold blessing in his coming with her. Before that, her life had been one of hunger and hardship. Now Allāh (ﷻ) showered His mercy on her and bestowed on her many benefits: the animals started giving plenty of milk after they had been dry, and her life became one of ease and fertility. Ḥalīmah, her husband and her son felt that their return from Makkah was one of the blessings and gain, not poverty and orphanhood. They thus became very attached to the child and were proud of him.

□ The upbringing of children in the desert, where they can play in the pastures of nature and enjoy its pure air, is best for the natural development of their bodies and minds, and the freeing of their thoughts and feelings from prejudices. It is unfortunate that Saudi children should live in suffocating apartments in buildings all crammed together as boxes, sealing in their inhabitants and preventing them from enjoying and breathing the refreshing air. There is no doubt that one of the causes of the neurosis which has affected modern civilization is its being so unnatural and steeped in artificiality. We therefore appreciate the tendency of the people of Makkah to make the desert and its wide expanses the nursery for their children. Many educational psychologists would like to see nature as the first cradle for children so that their faculties may develop in with the realities of creation in which they find themselves. However, this seems to be a dream hard to realize.

### **The Opening of the Prophet's (ﷺ) Chest**

Muhammad (ﷺ) spent five years with the Banu Sa'd during which time he developed a healthy body and grew fast. These were the first five years of his life so it is not expected that anything strange should occur in that time. The authentic accounts of his life, however, do record an incident which came to be known as the opening of his chest. Anas (رضي الله عنه) reports:

“Jibrīl (عليه السلام) came to Muhammad (ﷺ) while he was playing with other boys. Jibrīl (عليه السلام) held him, threw him down, opened his chest, took out his heart and removed a lump from it. He said: “This is Satan’s portion of you.”

Then he washed him in a basin made of gold with the water of *Zamzam*. Then he sealed his chest and returned him to where he was. The boys ran to his mother (meaning his nurse) and shouted that Muhammad (ﷺ) had been killed. They came to

him and found him pale.<sup>6</sup>

□ This incident, which scared Ḥalīmah and her husband, we find recurring when Muhammad (ﷺ) had become a Prophet and was over 50 years old. Mālik ibn Ṣa'sa'ah reports that the Prophet (ﷺ) told them about the night of the *Isrā'*, saying:

“While I was in Al Ḥatīm perhaps he said in Al Ḥajr reclining between sleep and wakefulness, someone came to me and split me from here to here (meaning from the hollow of his neck to his stomach) and extracted my heart. I was brought a basin of gold filled with faith, my heart was washed, then filled with it, then it was returned to its position.”<sup>7</sup>

□ If evil were the secretions of a gland in the body and could be prevented by stopping the secretions, or if good were a substance which could be poured into the heart as fuel is poured into an aeroplane to make it fly, then I should say the literal sense of the words should be taken. Evil and good are beyond the physical, however, and in fact it is obvious that it has more to do with the spiritual side of people. If it is a matter concerning the limits within which the soul has to operate or, in other words, if the study takes us to the point where we must discover the means by which the soul motivates its outer covering of flesh and blood, then it is no use pursuing it since this is beyond our capacity of discovery.

□ There is one thing which we can extract from these ḥadīths: that the Providence does not leave an outstanding human being like Muhammad (ﷺ) to be the target of subtle whisperings which cause confusion among other people. If there are waves of evil filling the atmosphere and if there are hearts quick to absorb them or are swayed by them, despite this, however, the hearts of the Prophets (ﷺ) by Allāh's care of them will not receive or be

<sup>6</sup> A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Muslim and Aḥmad, who has the addition: Anas (رضي الله عنه) said: “I used to see the mark of the needle in his chest. The Ḥadīth is reported from many authentic sources.

<sup>7</sup> A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī, Muslim and Al Nasa'ī.



affected by these currents. Thus the efforts of the prophets will be directed towards constant progress and not resistance to evil; towards purifying the people from evil, not self-purification, since Allāh (ﷻ) has already cleansed them of pollution.

□ ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd reports that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"There is nobody at all who has not been assigned a Companion from the Jinn and Companion from the angels.

They asked: "And you too, Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)?"

He replied, "And me too. But Allah (ﷻ) has helped me to overcome him and he has submitted. Now he orders me to only good things."<sup>8</sup>

In another Ḥadīth ‘Ā’ishah reports that the Prophet (ﷺ) asked her:

"Were you jealous?"

And she replied: "Why shouldn't someone like me be jealous of someone like you?"

The Prophet (ﷺ) then said to her: "Your devil has come to you."

She said: "Is there a devil within me?"

He replied: "Everyone has a devil within him."

She said: "And you?"

He said: "Yes. But Allāh (ﷻ) has helped me to overcome him and he has surrendered."<sup>9</sup>

Perhaps the significance of the Ḥadīth which tells of the incident of the opening of the Prophet's (ﷺ) chest is that they highlight the care with which Allāh (ﷻ) nurtured His Prophet (ﷺ) and made him from childhood free from the defects of human nature and worldly temptations.

□ Al Khāzin quoted the first-mentioned incident, that is, the opening of the Prophet's (ﷺ) chest during childhood, in his commentary on Chapter 94 of the Qur'ān:

<sup>8</sup> A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Muslim.

<sup>9</sup> A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Muslim.

﴿Have We not caused your chest to dilate﴾ (Qur'ān 94: 1)

The dilation of the chest to which these āyāt (verses) refer are not the result of a surgical operation carried out by an angel or a doctor. The metaphorical expressions in the Sunnah deserve some attention at this point. 'Ā'ishah reports that some of the Prophet's (ﷺ) wives said:

❑ O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), which of us will be the quickest to catch up with you (that is, die after you)?"

❑ He replied: "That one among you who has the longest hand." So they took a reed to measure their hands and it was Saudah who had the longest hand. Afterwards we learnt that a long hand meant the charity which she gave out. She loved to give charity and she was the quickest of us to catch up with him.<sup>10</sup>

❑ Muhammad (ﷺ) returned to Makkah after spending some wonderful years in the desert. He returned to find a loving mother who dedicated herself to him and an aged grandfather who sought consolation in him for his son who had passed away in the prime of life. However, days refused to allow him tranquillity among these tender hearts and one by one deprived him of them. Āminah thought of visiting her husband's grave in Yathrib in faithfulness to his memory, and so she left Makkah on this journey of 500 kilometres, taking with her son Muhammad (ﷺ) and her maid Umm Aiman. 'Abdullāh did not die in a strange land but it was the land of his maternal uncles, the Banu Najjar. Ibn Athir reports.

Hāshim went on a trading trip to Syria. On his way he

<sup>10</sup> An authentic Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī through Masrūq from 'Ā'ishah. His version, however, reads: "She was the quickest of us to catch up with him and she loved to give charity. Muslim also narrated this Ḥadīth through 'Ā'ishah bint Ṭalha, and Al Ḥākim through 'Amrah, both of whom reported it from 'Ā'ishah. In their narration, though, they say: "the one with the longest hand among us was Zainab because she used to work with her hands and give charity. This contradicts Bukhārī's report, from which we gather that Saudah was the first to die after the Prophet (ﷺ). But this is a clear mistake for Ibn Ḥajar's investigation shows that Muslim's narration is the authentic one. Who ever wishes to see the full investigation can refer to Ibn Ḥajar's *Fatḥ al Bari*. The Zainab referred to here is Bint Jahsh, not Bint Khuzaima as some people have misunderstood.

stopped in Madīnah and stayed with ‘Amr ibn Lubaid of the Khazraj tribe. There he saw Salma, daughter of ‘Amr and fell in love with her. He married her under a stipulation made by her father: that she should give birth to her children only in the home of her relatives. Hāshim went on his way, and on his return he consummated the marriage with her, then took her to Makkah where she conceived a child. When the time for her delivery approached, he took her back to her relatives and went to Syria. He died in Ghaza and Ṣalma gave birth to ‘Abdul Muṭṭalib, who remained for seven years in Madīnah.

□ Muhammad (ﷺ) spent about one month among his mother’s relatives near his father’s grave, and then he set out to return to Makkah. From the start of the journey, however, his mother became seriously ill. She died at Abwā, leaving him alone with the bereaved maid. He was then 5 years of age. This new misfortune caused old scars to reopen and sharpened the feelings of tenderness which ‘Abdul Muṭṭalib had for the young boy. From then on he never left him alone, but took him along to all his public gatherings. When he sat on his mat beside the Kaba he held the boy close while all the elders sat around him. Abdul Muṭṭalib lived a long time, and it is said that he died at the age of 120 years. Nevertheless, when he died, Muhammad (ﷺ) was only nearing his eighth year. Before he died, ‘Abdul Muṭṭalib thought it best to entrust the boy’s uncle Abū Tālib with the care of the boy.

□ Abū Tālib carried out his duty toward his nephew to the best of his ability. He included him among his sons and even preferred him to them. For over forty years he continued to support and protect him and to befriend or oppose on his behalf. Muhammad (ﷺ) grew up in Abū Tālib’s home and acquired a deep understanding of his environment. He insisted on sharing the burdens of life with his uncle since Abū Tālib was not wealthy and had many children. When Abū Tālib decided to travel to Syria for trade, Muhammad (ﷺ) insisted on going with him although he was only about 13 years old.

## **Bahīra, the Monk**

There are no authentic accounts of the details of this journey. Travelling is one of the most fertile gateways to knowledge and has the deepest effects. The lessons would not have escaped a person like Muhammad (ﷺ) with his keen mind and pure heart in all that he saw at home or on his travels. It is certain, however, that he did not go out to study religion or philosophy nor did he meet anyone with whom he could discuss these matters. The history books relate some strange occurrences which happened to him, such as his encounter with the monk Bahīra. This man saw in his face and on his back the signs of prophethood.

He asked Abū Tālib, "What is this boy to you?"

Abū Tālib replied, "my son."

He said, "His father should not be alive!"

Abū Tālib then said, "Infact he is the son of my brother who died when the child's mother was still pregnant with him.

The monk said: "Now you have spoken the truth. Take him back to your country and be careful of the Jews over him."

□ This story may be authentic since the news of a Prophet after Jesus is to be found in the Bible of the Christians. Ever since they rejected Muhammad's (ﷺ) message they have been awaiting the expected prophet but he will never come because he has already come. Whether this story of Bahīra is authentic or not,<sup>11</sup> the fact is that it left no after-effects, for neither did Muhammad (ﷺ) start to aspire to or prepare for prophethood after hearing the monk nor did the travellers in the caravan spread this news. It was forgotten as if it never happened, and this makes it more likely to be unauthentic.

---

<sup>11</sup> It is indeed authentic because Al Tirmidhi narrated it on the authority of Abū Mūsā Al Ash'arī and he certified it as a good Ḥadīth. Furthermore, I say it has a sound chain as Al Jazari said. The latter also said "The mention of Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) and Bilal (رضي الله عنه) in it is not recorded (i.e. not authentic)." I also add that Al Bazzār narrated it with the following words: "His uncle sent a man with him."

□ It is also reported that a party of Roman horsemen came to Bahīra as if they were searching for something.

When he asked them what they came for, they said, "We have come because a prophet will appear this month and men have been sent in all directions to arrest him. Bahīra argued with them until he was able to convince them that their search was futile.

□ The investigators! Who are these investigators? And where did the fabrication come from? This account is in the above-mentioned Ḥadīth narrated by Abū Mūsā (ؓ) and you have seen that this is authentic. What is wrong in this similarity to the Christians if it is proved to be authentic? Does not the story of Pharaoh's search for Moses in order to kill him, which comes in the Qur'ān, resemble what the Bible-writers say? Should we then reject this story because of this resemblance?

No. Although I appreciate Sheikh Nāṣiruddīn's comments, I shall quote here what some of the scholars and investigators say about this story:

□ Al Jazari states, as already quoted by Sheikh Nāṣiruddīn: "Its chain is sound and its narrators are those of the authentic tradition or one of them. But the mention of Abū Bakr (ؓ) and Bilāl (ؓ) in it is not authentic according to our *imāms*, and this is true. The Prophet's (ﷺ) age at that time was 12 years and Abū Bakr (ؓ) was younger than he by two years, and perhaps Bilāl (ؓ) was not born yet!"

□ Al Dhahabi says in *Mizanul I'tidal*: "It is said that one of the proofs that this Ḥadīth is not authentic is the statement "And Abū Bakr (ؓ) sent Bilāl (ؓ) with him' Bilāl (ؓ) was not yet created and Abū Bakr (ؓ) was only a young boy."

□ The author of *Tuhfatul Ahwadhi* says: "Al Dhahabi considered this Ḥadīth to be weak because of the statement: 'And Abū Bakr (ؓ) sent Bilāl (ؓ) with him,' since Abū Bakr (ؓ) had not at that time purchased Bilāl (ؓ).

□ Ibn Hajar says in his *Al Isābah*: "Its narrators are trustworthy and it contains nothing questionable except this point. It is

possible that this piece was taken from another Ḥadīth and inserted here by one of its narrators unintentionally.”

There is a similar statement to this in *Al Mawahib Al Ladunniyah*.

❑ Ibn al Qayyim says in *Zādul Ma‘ād*: “In Al Tirmidhī’s book as well as others it is stated that Abū Bakr (ؓ) sent Bilāl (ؓ) with him. This is clear mistake. Bilāl (ؓ) was probably not in existence and even if he was, he certainly was not with the Prophet’s (ﷺ) uncle or with Abū Bakr (ؓ).” See *Tuhfatul Ahwadhi*.

Now, Ibn Kathīr says in his *sīrah*: “This Ḥadīth is narrated by Al Tirmidhī, Al Ḥākim, Al Baihaqī and Ibn ‘Asakir. I say, (i.e. Ibn Kathīr says) this Ḥadīth is unusual: it is *mursal* (i.e. the *Ṣaḥabī* who narrates it does not say it comes from the Prophet (ﷺ) but this may be understood). Abū Mūsā Al Asha‘ari only came to Madīnah in the year when Khaybar was conquered (7 AH), so in any case it is *mursal*.

❑ Therefore the Ḥadīth is *mu‘allal* (contains a weak point according to the principles of the Ḥadīth scholars) asserts that this Ḥadīth is fabricated, similar to what the gospel-writers say about some people who were looking for Jesus soon after his birth in order to kill him. The Christians took this from the Buddhists who say that the Buddha, when his virgin mother gave birth to him, was sought by his enemies who wanted to kill him!

❑ The scholars of the Sunnah investigate all statements from both the point of view of their meaning as well as their chain of narrators, and if they are unable to verify their authenticity they set them aside. Many myths have become attached to the biographies of the prophets and if they were to be scrutinized according to the rules laid down in the Ḥadīth sciences, they would be proved unauthentic and they could be justifiably discarded.

## **A Life of Toil**

Muhammad (ﷺ) returned from this trip to resume his life of toil with his uncle, for it was not the habit of men to sit idle. The prophets before him used to eat from the labour of their own hands and they did different crafts to earn their living. It is correct that Muhammad (ﷺ) worked as a shepherd in his early life.

Of this he said: "I used to graze sheep for the people of Makkah in return for a few carats. It is also true that a number of prophets used to graze sheep.<sup>12</sup> Perhaps this was what accustomed them to leadership of the people: gentleness to the weak and wakefulness for their protection.

Perhaps this was what accustomed them to leadership of the people: gentleness to the weak and wakefulness for their protection.

□ You may wonder if all the realities of the universe and what is beyond it and knowledge of the mankind and all that they are concerned with were suddenly poured into the hearts of the prophet without prior and systematic preparation? The answer is, of course not. Even though the prophets did not acquire knowledge by the same means and laws as we do, they had a sound ability to think and reason, and this put them in the forefront of all educated people. What is the knowledge that elevates one's soul? Is it the memorization of lessons and the absorption of principles and laws? There are many parrots who repeat all they hear without understanding. At times we witness small children who memorize perfectly and are able to recite the speeches of the most famous politicians and leaders. Neither do the children become great men because of what they memorize nor do the parrots become human beings.

---

<sup>12</sup> Bukhārī narrates on the authority of Abū Hurairah (رضي الله عنه) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "There is no Prophet sent by Allāh (ﷻ) who did not tend sheep." His Companions asked: "And did you?"

He replied: "Yes. I used to graze them for the people of Makkah in return for a few carats."



□ You may find someone who learns and understands, argues and wins. Even so, knowledge in itself is like the veins of gold in a neglected piece of rock. It neither promotes good nor prevents evil. The Qur'ān likened to donkeys the Jewish rabbis who carry the Torah and do not discipline themselves by it:

«The likeness of those who are entrusted with the Law of Moses, yet do not apply it, is as the likeness of the donkey carrying books.»  
(Qur'ān 62: 5)

Those people who have knowledge but do not reform themselves by it are actually doing it an injustice. Thus it is good to withhold it from such people. A Ḥadīth says:

"The one who gives knowledge to those who do not deserve it is like the person who adorns pigs with jewels, pearls and gold."<sup>13</sup>

□ Then there are those people who believe in fables and reject realities. Their brains are like a pair of scales, one side of which is heavy for no reason and thus cannot weigh correctly. They freely accept the impossibilities and attack the realities. I have seen people who have studied continually, but when they are confronted with problems they grope around blindly. On the other hand, when these same problems are presented to people in the street who remain unblemished in their nature and reasoning, they immediately hit the nail on the head. The significance of this is that there are people who spend twenty years trying to straighten their intellect, study and research, yet they are unable to reach the status of someone who was granted uprightness in thought by mother nature.

□ I am convinced, by my readings of the life of Muhammad (ﷺ), that he was of a special category of people who are clear-

<sup>13</sup> A very weak Ḥadīth. Ibn 'Abdul Barr left it undecided in his *Jāmi 'bayān al-'ilm*, and also Ibn Majāh. In its chain of narrators is Hafs ibn Sulaiman al Asadi, about whom Ibn Kharrash says: "He is a liar who invents Ḥadīth. Others declare him to be weak. Abū Ḥatīm says he is rejected, and a similar statement is made in *Al Taqrīb* by Ibn Hajar.

thinking and of keen perception. He was living with an open and wakeful heart in the depths of the desert; sober among drunkards and negligent people, before and after tending sheep, and before and after going into trade.

□ The atmosphere of the Arabian peninsula was such that it nurtured the lethargy of the lethargic and the keenness of the keen, just as the sun's rays nurture the thorns side by side with the roses. Muhammad (ﷺ) sought the assistance of its long silence which stretched across the days and nights and across the sands and oases to think long and deep and seek out the truth where it lay. The degree of mental development which one reaches from constant observation is undoubtedly much higher than that of memorization without understanding or understanding without discipline. Moreover, someone like the Prophet (ﷺ), who respects the natural laws of life and the universe, is more worthy of being selected than any of those who believe in superstition and live by it.

□ There is no doubt that Providence surrounded him with protection so that he might keep to this unique orientation. Whenever he inclined towards some worldly enjoyment, which was really no serious crime, Providence came between him and the fulfilment of it. Ibn Athīr narrates that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"Only twice did I ever attempt to do something which the people of *jahiliyah* used to do, and on both occasions Allah (ﷻ) prevented me from doing it. Thereafter I never attempted such things until Allah (ﷻ) blessed me with the role of His Messenger (ﷺ). One night I said to the boy who was grazing sheep with me in upper Makkah: "Will you watch my sheep for me so that I can go into Makkah and spend the night as the youths do."

He agreed and I went off. When I reached the first house in Makkah I heard some music, and I asked: "What is this?" They said, "So-and-so's wedding with so-and-so."

I sat down to listen but Allah (ﷻ) sealed my hearing and I fell asleep. It was only the heat of the sun which woke me. I went to my companion and he asked me (about the night) and I told him. Another night I did the same and went into Makkah but the same thing happened to me as on the previous night. After that I never attempted to do anything wrong."<sup>14</sup>

□ The various levels of education are stages in a continual struggle to discipline one's mind and strengthen its faculties and to correct one's outlook on the universe, life and living things. Thus every educational system which fails to take its students to this peak is not worthy of attention in spite of its beautiful certificates. What is much more worthy of being honoured and much nearer to the ultimate goal is that people should attain a high level of intelligence, and the capacity to think deeply, and have a clear vision of means and ends. The Qur'ān referred to Prophet Ibrāhīm's (Abraham) (ﷺ) abundance of these qualities when it said:

﴿And indeed We gave Abraham of old his proper course, and We were Aware of him, When he said to his father and his people: what are these images to which you devote yourselves?﴾  
(Qur'ān 21: 51-52)

□ In this respect Muhammad (ﷺ) was like his forefather Ibrāhīm (Abraham). He did not acquire knowledge from any monk or sorcerer or philosopher of his age. Instead he scrutinized the pages of life and the condition of people and groups with his fertile intellect and pure nature, rejected all superstition and evil things and associated with people on the basis of understanding. Whatever he found good, he participated in it to some extent, otherwise he would withdraw into his accustomed seclusion and resume his constant contemplation of the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. This was better for

<sup>14</sup> A weak Hadīth narrated by Al Hākim through Ibn Is-hāq.

him than those kinds of knowledge which may be termed as compound ignorance, and better than a society which had had no guide for centuries and every day was thus adding a new form of corruption to the old ones. He saw nothing wrong in taking part in the general affairs of his people, such as the Sacrilegious War in which he assisted his uncles and the Alliance of the Virtuous which came in its aftermath.

### **The Sacrilegious War**

As far as the Quraish were concerned, this war was in defence of the sanctity of the sacred months and the Holy Land. These symbols were the remains of the religion of Ibrāhīm (Abraham), which the Arabs still respected. The respect shown to these sanctuaries was the source of great benefit for them, and a guarantee for the protection of their interests and the settling of their disputes. A man would meet his father's murderer in the sacred month and his consciousness of this sanctity would restrain him from seeking revenge. When Islām came, it approved of these heritages of the religion of Ibrāhīm (Abraham) (ﷺ):

﴿Behold! The number of months with Allah is twelve months by Allah's ordinance on the day that He created the heavens and the earth. Four of them are sacred: that is the right religion. So do not indulge in wrong doing during that time.﴾ (Qur'ān 9: 36)

□ However, the people of *Jahilīyah* soon encountered those people who violated the sanctities and indulged in wrong doing. The Sacrilegious War was one of the consequences of this blatant violation. There are no details about this war except that it lasted four years. Muhammad's (ﷺ) age at that time was between 15 and 19 years. Some sources claim that he himself fought, and others claim that he only assisted the fighters.

## The Alliance of the Virtuous

This alliance is proof that no matter how dismal the pages of life become and how widespread the evils, it will never be devoid of those noble souls who arouse the sympathy and kindness of society. In that sterile *jahiliyyah* there arose some promoters of good, and they made a pact among themselves to establish justice, fight oppression and revive the virtuous qualities which had been obliterated in the Holy Land. Ibn Athīr said:

“Thereafter some of the clans of the Quraish called for this alliance, and they all swore to it in the house of ‘Abdullāh ibn Jad‘an because of his virtue and age. They were: the Banū Hāshim, Banū Muṭṭalib, Banū Asad ibn ‘Abdul ‘Uzza, Zuhrah ibn Kilāb and Taym ibn Murrah. They formed the alliance and pledged to one another that if ever they found a wronged person in Makkah, whether from their own people or from any other tribe, they would stand by his side and defend him so that the wrong done to him might be redressed. This pact was called the Alliance of the Virtuous by the Quraish, and was witnessed by the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ).”

After Allāh (ﷻ) chose him as Prophet, he said: “I witnessed an alliance with my uncles in the home of ‘Abdullāh ibn Jad‘an and I should not like to exchange it for the choicest luxuries. If I were called in Islām to participate in it, I should respond.”<sup>15</sup>

□ One can see clearly in these words of the Prophet (ﷺ) his approval of this alliance. Vehemence against any oppressor, no matter how powerful he or she may be, and sympathy for any oppressed person, no matter how insignificant he or she may be, are the spirit of Islām. Islām enjoins good and forbids evil, and

<sup>15</sup> Narrated by Ibn Is-hāq and Ibn Hishām in their biographies of the Prophet (ﷺ). Their chains of narrators are sound except that they are *mursal* [i.e. the *Ṣaḥābī* who reported it did not say he heard it from the Prophet (ﷺ)]. However, comes from other sources too which strengthen its authenticity. Ahmad narrated it from ‘Abdul Rahmān ibn ‘Auf, who said he heard it from the Prophet (ﷺ), although it does not contain the statement “If I were called in Islām to participate in it, I should respond”. Its chain is authentic.

confines itself to the limits set by Allāh (ﷻ). It is Islām's duty to fight injustice in the politics of nations and the relationships between human beings with the same fervour.

□ It is said of the cause of this alliance that a man from Zubayd, who came with some merchandise and sold it to Al 'Asī ibn Wā'il al Sahmi, but the latter refused to pay for them. Although the man pleaded with the clans of the Quraish and their allies to help him, no one paid him any attention. So the wronged stranger stood in front of the Ka'bah and repeated some couplets of poetry bewailing his misfortune.

□ On hearing this, Al Zubayr ibn 'Abdul Muṭṭalib got up and said: "Is there nobody to assist him?" He gathered together those whom Ibn Athīr mentioned above, and after concluding the Alliance of the Virtuous, they went to Al Asī ibn Wā'il and demanded the man's due from him. Al Asī seems to have been an unsavoury, evasive fellow for he had also made a deal with Khabbāb ibn-ul Aratt. Khabbāb was a blacksmith who had made a sword for Al Asī.

When he went to him and asked for payment for it, Al Asī said: "I shall not pay you until you disbelieve in Muhammad (ﷺ).

□ Khabbāb replied: "I shall not disbelieve until Allāh (ﷻ) causes you to die and resurrects you."

□ Al Asī said: "Am I going to die and be resurrected?." Khabbāb replied yes. So Al Asī said: "Let me die and be resurrected, then I shall have great wealth and many children and I shall pay you for the sword."

□ The following āyāt (verses) were then revealed:

﴿Have you seen him who disbelieves in Our Revelation and says: Assuredly I shall be given wealth and children? Has he perused the Unseen, or has he made a pact with the Beneficent? No, but We shall record what he says and prolong for him a span of torment. And We shall inherit from him that of which he spoke, and he shall come to Us alone [Without his wealth and children].﴾

(Qur'ān 19: 77-80)

There were many like Al Asī in trade and politics, and Muhammad (ﷺ) was the best man to oppose and confront them, and the best men to be were Muhammad's (ﷺ) Companions, those who helped him against such people and pledged with him to fight them.

### **Strength and Activity**

When the Sacrilegious War ended and the Alliance of the Virtuous was concluded, Muhammad (ﷺ) was entering the third stage of his life. This was the period of zealous youthfulness, active instincts and far-reaching ambitions. Muhammad (ﷺ) was a man with a strong body, tall stature and determination. His amazing strength was noticed even forty years afterwards. Abū Hurairah (رضي الله عنه) said:

"I never saw anybody more handsome than the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). It was as if the sun was shining in his face! And I never saw anyone walk more quickly than the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). It was as if the earth folded itself up for him!

Whenever we walked with him, we would exert ourselves while he stayed cool."<sup>16</sup>

❑ Such a man attracts life to himself even if he is not attracted to life. Beside him who should attract life? Should life be attracted to dreamers, introverts and pessimists? Muhammad (ﷺ), however, in spite of the means at his disposal to enjoy life, was not swayed by fleeting lusts or burning desires, and it was never recorded of him that he made any attempt to attain position or wealth. On the contrary, his life began by illuminating Makkah with the qualities which distinguished him over his contemporaries: a sweet disposition, a noble character, deep thought, sound reasoning and a trustworthy attitude.

<sup>16</sup> This Hadīth has a weak chain. It is narrated by Al Tirmidhī in his *Sunan* and *Shamā'il*. He declared it to be weak because one of its narrators was Ibn Luhai'ah, who is weak because his memory was bad and his books were burnt.



□ It is not nobility that human desires for the goodness in life should be non-existent, or existent without the means to satisfy it. Nobility means that the power of chastity should be stronger than the power of desire. Thus if one's soul remains in a state of tranquillity, it means that the internal negative and positive forces have balanced each other. We may see flighty people who can never keep their desires or instincts in check, yet if they are compared with the controlled desires of others, they would not reach one-tenth of their strength. The fact is that the latter have found the strength of character to control their desires, whereas the former have no intelligence to warn them nor the strength of character to stay away, so their desires rebel and overrule them.

□ Although Muhammad's (ﷺ) manhood was of the highest perfection, his moral and spiritual purity endowed it with the good qualities of discipline, uprightness and contentment. Moreover, he was free from those hateful psychological complications which affect the youth: they love greatness with pomp and show and they seek leadership with flattery and the purchasing of sentiments. If we add to that his fierce dislike for the idols which were worshipped by his people, his contempt for the myths and superstitions which prevailed throughout and beyond the Arabian peninsula, and his awareness that truth was something totally different from all that, it becomes clear to us why he preferred the mountains and the open air, why he felt comfort in grazing sheep in these far-off places and was content with the little earnings he gained from them.

□ Is this abstention from wealth and worldly life? Of course not. It is engrossment with the higher realities with which worldly life is reformed and to which wealth is subjugated. Great men are not satisfied with treasures of gold and silver when they are thirsty for the truth. They do not feel any profit in being kings over their people when they see evil dragging everyone's life into an abyss and stripping them of all goodness and uprightness.

□ In this manner Muhammad (ﷺ) entered the third phase of his life. It was the phase in which he became acquainted with his first wife, Khadījah bint Khuwaylid.

### **Khadījah**

Khadījah was an excellent example of a woman who completes the life of a great man. Those men with great roles to play are endowed with extremely sensitive hearts and they encounter terrible stupidity from the environment they wish to change, and undergo a tremendous struggle on behalf of the good they wish to establish. They are the people most in need of someone to shower their private lives with love and comfort, as well as understanding and assistance. Khadījah was foremost in these attributes and she had a positive effect on Muhammad's (ﷺ) life. Ibn Athīr said:

“Khadījah was merchant woman of nobility and wealth. She used to employ men to run her business and she would agree on their portion of the profit. When she heard of the Prophet's (ﷺ) truthfulness, trustworthiness and noble character, she sent for him, asking him to go as a trader for her to Syria. She gave him better wages than she used to give others, and he had with him her slave Maysarah.

□ Muhammad (ﷺ) accepted this offer and travelled to Syria as a trader for the mistress who had selected him. It appears that he was more successful on this trip than on his previous one with his uncle Abū Ṭālib. Khadījah's profit was greater and she was pleased with his performance. However, her admiration for the man whom she tested was much deeper.

□ She was a woman of noble lineage and vast wealth, and she was known for her determination and intelligence. Although she was desired by the leaders of the Quraish, what she despised in most men was that they were seeking her wealth and not herself. When she saw Muhammad (ﷺ), however, she learnt of another

brand of men. She had found a man who was not swayed by want. Perhaps when she settled her trading accounts with other men she found greed and trickery. In Muhammad (ﷺ), she saw a man whose character was spotless and who did not desire her wealth or beauty. He handed over all that he had for her and went away well - pleased and pleasing.

□ Khadijah found in him what she was looking for. She spoke her mind to her friend Nafisah bint Munabbah, who went to Muhammad (ﷺ) and spoke to him about marrying Khadijah. He did not delay in announcing his approval, then he consulted his uncles about it, and Abū Tālib, Ḥamzah and others went to Khadijah's uncle 'Amr ibn Asad since her father had died in the Sacrilegious War and sought her hand in marriage on behalf of their nephew. They presented her with the dowry of twenty camels.

Abū Tālib stood up and spoke at the wedding ceremony. He said: "If Muhammad (ﷺ) were weighed with any youth of the Quraish, he would outweigh him in lineage, nobility, virtue and intelligence. If he has little wealth then (let it be known that) wealth is a fleeting shadow and a borrowed thing which must be returned. He desires Khadijah bint Khuwaylid and she has the same feeling for him."

□ Khadijah's uncle, 'Amr replied: "He is the stallion whose nose cannot be ringed." And the marriage ceremony was concluded.

□ It is said that this last statement was made by Abū Sufyān when Muhammad (ﷺ) married his daughter Umm Habibah. At that time the war between them was at its fiercest. Abū Sufyān made an excuse for that, saying that Muhammad's (ﷺ) status was such that to become his father-in-law was a great honour! The enmity between them did not detract in anyway from Muhammad's (ﷺ) status, and his marriage with Abū Sufyān's daughter did not disgrace Abū Sufyān at all, even though he was at that time his most ardent enemy!

□ Muhammad (ﷺ) was 25 years old when he married Khadijah and her age was then about 40 years. This marriage lasted until Khadijah died at the age of 65 years. Throughout this time she was the source of honour and respect and she bore all the Prophet's children for him except Ibrāhīm. First she gave birth to Al Qāsim, and this is the *Kunniya* by which he was known in the era of prophethood. Then came Zaynab, Ruqayya, Umm Kulthūm, Fāṭimah and Abdullāh, who is also known as Ṭāhir. Al Qāsim died when he was old enough to ride animals, 'Abdullāh died as a baby, and all daughters of Muhammad (ﷺ) died during his lifetime with the exception of Fāṭimah, who died six months after him. Muhammad's (ﷺ) union with Khadijah was a blessing for both of them, and there is no doubt that, that house was touched by the spirit of its master; the spirit of purification from the filth of *Jahilīyah* and contempt for the worship of idols.

□ After marriage Muhammad (ﷺ) resumed the life of contemplation and seclusion which he had known before. He kept away from all that in which the Arabs indulged during their boisterous parties such as alcohol, showing off, gambling, rivalry etc. However, this did not prevent him from conducting his trade, earning his living, travelling in the land or walking in the market-places. An intelligent man living among a frivolous group of people is required to exercise great care and consideration, especially if he has the tendency to be softhearted and pleasant.

□ There was nothing in this successful marriage to raise concern, except the fact that Khadijah was grieved at the death of all her sons in that society where sons were given a high status, and daughters were buried alive and the fathers' faces were dark with anger and gloomy on receiving news of the birth of a daughter. It was strange that the Arabs, after the Prophet's ministry, would jeer him for this and announce expectantly that his progeny would be cut off and he would have none to remember him. Ibn 'Abbās reported that the Quraish pledged

among themselves to persist in disbelief.

They said: 'What we are doing is more lasting than what the amputated *Ṣunbūr* is doing.' The *Ṣunbūr* is a date palm whose roots are broken. By this they meant that when he died, Muhammad (ﷺ) would have no progeny to inherit him or carry on his mission.

﴿Or they say: is he a poet, [one] for whom we may expect the accident of time? Say [them]: "Expect [your fill]! Behold! I am with you among the expectant.﴾ (Qur'ān 52: 30-31)

□ Muhammad (ﷺ) and his mission were above these petty desires. Nevertheless, as a father, his heart grieved when he lost his sons and the old pains of his orphanhood were revived by this loss. He was able to survive and grow up in spite of his parents dying while he was a baby. Now, however, he was seeing those flowers withering which he and his wife had longed to see in full bloom. It was as if Allāh (ﷻ) wanted sad tenderness to be a part of his being! The men who rule nation adopt haughtiness only when their hearts are nurtured on harshness and egotism, and when they live in happiness without a touch of sadness. On the other hand, those who have experienced pain will be the quickest to sympathize with those who are sad and grief-stricken.

## The Ka'bah

The Ka'bah was one of the vestiges of Ibrāhīm's (ﷺ) religion which the Arabs in *jahilīyah* still respected. It resembles a large room built heavy of stones and its ceiling is supported by expensive wooden pillars. It was first erected by the father of prophets, Ibrāhīm (ﷺ), and his son Isma'il (ﷺ). The purpose of building was that, it should be a place for the worship of Allāh (ﷻ) and a mosque in which only His name would be mentioned. Ibrāhīm (ﷺ) underwent a painful struggle to destroy the idols of his people and the temples in which they

were worshipped. Then Allāh (ﷻ) revealed to him that he should build this house to be a pillar and cornerstone of *tawhīd* and a place of refuge and security for everyone. Of course, since not all the pilgrims could fit inside, the land surrounding it was annexed and considered a sanctuary for them.

□ The implication of this is that the Ka‘bah itself is a piece of stone which can neither benefit nor harm. The sanctity which it acquired was on account of the associations and aims which lay behind it. For this reason the Prophet (ﷺ) emphasized that people’s honour, wealth and blood were holier in the sight of Allāh (ﷻ) than the Kab‘ah and more worthy of respect. To think that the Kab‘ah or a piece of it has the power to harm or benefit is idolatry which Islām will oppose till the end of time.

□ You are well aware that when the rulers, leaders and soldiers salute the flag of their country and struggle for it, they are not in fact worshipping a piece of cloth. It is actually a show of respect and veneration for the deeper meanings that lie behind it. It is easy to understand that the first mosque ever to be built on the face of this earth should have a special historical status and be the *qiblah* (direction faced) of the mosques which were built later. Nevertheless, the real goal of any prayer or show of humility is Allāh (ﷻ) alone. Abū Dharr (رضي الله عنه) said:

“I asked the Prophet (ﷺ) which was the first mosque to be built on the earth?”

He replied: “The Sacred Mosque” (that is, *Al Masjid Al Harām*). Then I asked: “and what next?”

He said: “the Furthest Mosque” (that is, *Al Masjid Al Aqsa*).

I asked: “How long was it between the two?”

He said: “Forty years, and furthermore, the earth is a mosque for you. So wherever the time for prayers catches you, then offer prayers, for there is virtue in it.”<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī, Muslim, Al Nasā’ī, Ibn Mājah, Al Bayhaqī, Al Tayālisi and Aḥmad.



❑ The Ka'bah, being an ancient monument, was exposed to the vicissitudes of time, which weakened its structure and cracked its walls. A few years before the Prophet's (ﷺ) ministry a heavy flood swept through Makkah and the Ka'bah was almost destroyed. The Quraish felt that they must renovate its structure to protect its sanctity. The leaders and great personalities of the Quraish all took part in the renovation. They pulled down the weak portions that remained and erected a new structure in their place.

❑ A structure whose foundations were laid by Ibrāhīm (عليه السلام) and Isma'il (عليه السلام) in the distant past could not be entrusted to ordinary labourers. So it is not surprising that the leaders and Sheikhs of the tribe should take part in this activity, and among them were Muhammad (ﷺ) and his uncles.

❑ 'Amr ibn Dinār reports that he heard Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh (رضي الله عنه) saying:

"When the Ka'bah was being rebuilt the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) and 'Abbās went to carry stones.

'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) said to the Prophet (ﷺ): "Lift your *izār* (loin cloth) over your shoulder and it will protect you from the stones. He did so this was before prophethood and he fell to the ground in a faint.

His eyes flashed towards the heavens and he said: "My *izār*! My *izār*!" It was fastened back in place and after that he was never again seen naked."<sup>18</sup>

❑ The clans vied with each other in rebuilding the Kab'ah, each of them wanting to be foremost and gain the prestige from it. This contest almost turned into a bloody war in the holy sanctuary. Enmity spread among the builders when they prepared to replace the black stone in the side of the Kab'ah. Abū Umayyah ibn Al Mughirah of the Makhzūmi clan saved the situation by suggesting that they should settle the matter by asking the first person to enter through the gate of Safā to decide between them. Allāh (ﷻ) willed that Muhammad (ﷺ) should

<sup>18</sup> A sound Hadīth narrated by Bukhārī, Muslim and others.



be that person, and when they saw him they shouted: "Here is Al Amīn (the trustworthy)! We accept him as arbitrator!"

□ Muhammad (ﷺ) called for a cloth and he placed the black stone in the middle of it. Then he called the heads of the disputing clans and all of them held on to an edge of the cloth. They lifted it and took it to the Ka'bah and Muhammad (ﷺ) himself put it in its rightful place.<sup>19</sup>

This was the solution offered by someone endowed with sound judgement, at whose sight the people were filled with optimism and ease and whom they willingly accepted as arbitrator. This shows the high status which he had attained in their eyes.

□ In spite of the effort made by the Quraish to rebuild the Ka'bah, they fell short of the foundations laid by Ibrāhīm (عليه السلام). Nevertheless, after the Prophet (ﷺ) had gained supremacy in the Arabian peninsula he did not see any need to adjust the building but chose to leave it as it was.

'Ā'ishah 'May Allāh be pleased with her, reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) told her:

"Don't you see that when your people built the Kab'ah they fell short of the foundations laid by Ibrāhīm (عليه السلام)?"

She Said: Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), will you not have it extended to the foundations of Ibrāhīm (عليه السلام)?"

He said: "If it were not for the fact that your people were recently unbelievers, I should have done so."

Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) said: "If 'Ā'ishah 'May Allāh be pleased with her, heard this from the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), then I do not think that he ignored greeting the two corners next to the black stone except for the reason that they were not completed on the foundations of Ibrāhīm (عليه السلام)."

□ The scholars say that the Prophet's (ﷺ) statement mentioned

<sup>19</sup>A good Hadīth narrated by Ahmad. It would have been better for the author to quote the text of the Hadīth itself rather than use the words of the book of *sīrah*, which have no support.

above meant that the people had just come out of *jahilīyah* and faith had not yet taken a complete hold of them, which made the Arabs averse to demolishing the Ka'bah and redesigning it. If it was compulsory to rebuild the Ka'bah as Ibrāhīm (عليه السلام) had built it, the Prophet (ﷺ) would never have left it as it was. Nevertheless, the matter was not so important as to provoke complications.

### Seekers of truth

We have said that paganism adorns its falsehood with veneer of truth to make it easy for people to swallow its bitterness. It claims to believe in a God who created the heavens and earth but at the same time it associates with Him other gods who are the means and intermediaries to approach Him. Now, since the creation of the heavens and the earth was far removed from our sight, the stubborn idolaters take comfort in the gods, that are close at hand. They visit them day and night until their relationship with these gods becomes much stronger than their relationship with the True God, and mention of Him to Whom they appeal through the agency of others is made only when arguing or apologizing.

﴿And if you ask them who created them, they will surely say: Allāh why then do they turn away? And he said "my *Rabb!* Look Those are people who do not believe." Then bear with them [Muhammad] and say: Peace! But they will come to know.﴾ (Qur'ān 43: 87-89)

□ Persistence in such nonsense, however, went beyond its limits and the masses became totally absorbed in what they had inherited. They lost the blessing of a free mind even a perceptive mind and lived in praise of that of which they had no knowledge. As for those who were endowed with the ability to think, their thinking collided with the boundaries of their inclinations and desires, and maybe they concealed what they knew or even fought it. Only a few people dared to oppose the

traditions which had taken root in society and voice the truth, and even fewer lived for it or sacrificed themselves on its behalf.

□ Before the Prophet's ministry there were those who looked at the paganism of the Arabs with scorn, and those who knew that their people were indulging in superstitious beliefs but could not find the means to prevent them. Bukhārī<sup>20</sup> narrated from Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, He met Zayd ibn 'Amr ibn Nufayl in lower Baldah before he became a prophet and offered him some food containing meat. Zayd (رضي الله عنه) refused to eat it. Saying:

"I do not eat from what you sacrifice on your altars;<sup>21</sup>

I eat only that one on which Allāh's (ﷻ) name has been mentioned." He used to condemn the way, the Quraish slaughtered their animals by saying: "The sheep was created by Allāh (ﷻ) and it is He who caused the water to descend for it from the sky and who caused the pasture to grow for it from the earth. But you slaughter in someone's name other than Allāh's!

□ In another narration it is said of Zayd ibn 'Amr (رضي الله عنه) that he went to Syria and asked about religion in order to follow it.

He met a Jewish scholar and asked him about his religion, saying: "Perhaps I'll follow your religion!"

The Jew said "You will not follow our religion unless you take your share of God's anger."

Zayd (رضي الله عنه) said: "I am fleeing only from God's anger, and I shall not bear any of God's anger at all while I am able. Will you show me something else?"

The Jew said: "I know of nothing else except that you should be a *Hanīf*."

<sup>20</sup> Also narrated by Aḥmad on the authority of Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه). The Hadīth comes from another source too with an addition that contradicts the author's explanation below. This addition is not authentic, however.

<sup>21</sup> Zayd (رضي الله عنه) thought that the meat offered to him was of the kind prohibited by Allāh (ﷻ). Nevertheless, it is certain that the Prophet's (ﷺ) house never ate the sacrifices made to idols. Zayd (رضي الله عنه) wanted to be sure of himself and so declared his religion. The Prophet (ﷺ) remembered this and was pleased with it.

Zayd (ﷺ) said: "And what is a *Hanīf*?"

The Jew replied: "Abraham's (ﷺ) religion. He was neither a Jew nor a Christian and he worshipped none beside God."

□ Zayd (ﷺ) left and he met a Christian scholar and asked him the same.

The Christian replied: "You will not follow our religion unless you take your share of God's curse."

Zayd (ﷺ) said: "I shall always flee from God's curse while I am able, so will you show me something else?"

The Christian replied: "I know of nothing else except that you should be a *Hanīf*."

Zaid (ﷺ) asked: "And what is a *Hanīf*?"

The Christian replied: "Abraham's (ﷺ) religion. He was neither a Jew nor a Christian and he worshipped none beside God."

□ When Zayd (ﷺ) heard this about Ibrāhīm (ﷺ), he left, and when he was outside he raised his hands and said: "O God, I call You to witness that I have adopted the religion of Ibrāhīm (Abraham) (ﷺ)."

□ These narrations show the great amount of confusion which had spread throughout the world and observed the prevailing religions. The Jews felt that they were being persecuted in the land and were rejected in every region, and so anyone who accepted their religion had to bear the burden of God's anger against them. The Christians disputed among themselves the nature of Christ and his mother's relationship to the Supreme God. These disputes led them into violent wars among themselves and divided them into sects, each of them cursing the others. The Christians of Syria whom Zayd (ﷺ) asked were the Jacobites and they differed with the official creed of the Roman Catholic Church. Thus it was not strange that they should inform Zayd (ﷺ) of the curses that would be heaped upon him if he entered their religion. Or perhaps this curse was the consequence of the sin committed by Ādam (ﷺ) and passed on

to all his progeny, as claimed by the Christians, who justify Jesus's crucifixion because of this. It was Zayd's (ﷺ) right to abandon all of them and return to the religion of Ibrāhīm (ﷺ) to look for his roots.

□ Bukhārī narrates from Asmā' bint Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنها):

"I saw Zayd ibn 'Amr ibn Nufayl (رضي الله عنه) standing with his back leaning against the Ka'bah and he was saying: "O assembly of Quraish, by God, none of you is following the religion of Ibrāhīm (ﷺ) but myself." He used to rescue the buried baby girls and say to their fathers when they wanted to kill their baby daughters: "I shall take care of her for you." He would take the girl and when she was big enough he would say to her father: 'If you wish I shall give her back to you, or if not, I shall continue bringing her up.<sup>22</sup>

□ Zayd (رضي الله عنه) was one of those rare thinkers who despised the wrongs of *jahilīyah*, were thankful for their ability to see the truth and did not underestimate their value in their society. Fate, however, had selected a man who perceived the truth and possessed the ability to disseminate it throughout all parts of the globe in spite of the efforts to preserve falsehood at the cost of lives and possessions. Fate was in the process of preparing that towering personality to fulfil this tremendous role, and great tasks are equalled only by great personalities.

### **In the Cave of Hīrā**

Muhammad (ﷺ) was nearing his forties. His previous dedication to contemplation had widened the mental gulf between himself and his people. His opinion of them had come to resemble the opinion of scientist of a modern world towards those who believe that the earth is balanced on the horns of a bull, or that of an atomicist towards those who pelt one another with stones when they fight and travel on horseback.

<sup>22</sup> A sound Hadīth.

□ That was as far as the mental side was concerned. As for the spiritual side, scepticism had spread among the people of *jahilīyah* and it caused them to swear their utmost by God that He would not resurrect the dead. This deep-rooted and obtrusive scepticism had caused the best people to be confused and question the fate of this world. If existence was firstly and lastly of this fleeting life span on earth then extinction was far better! Was there no glimpse of light in this pervading darkness?

□ Every year Muhammad (ﷺ) used to leave Makkah to spend the month of Ramaḍān in the cave of Ḥirā, situated a few miles from the population in the heart of one of the hills overlooking the city, and which was free from the people's vanities and aimless talk. In this secluded mountain Muhammad (ﷺ) took provisions to last those long nights. There he would detach himself from the world and turn towards the Lord of the World with his eager heart. From that covered cave a lone soul could look down upon the world which was heaving with troubles, rivalries and disappointments. Then it would withdraw into itself, full of sorrow and helplessness because it did not know of any way out of all that nor did it know of any cure! In that far-off cave a penetrating eye observed the legacy of the previous prophets sent by Allāh (ﷻ) and found it to be like a deep mine from which the precious metal could be extracted only by tremendous effort, and even then the ore would be mixed with the earth and no human being could separate them.

□ In the cave of Ḥirā Muhammad (ﷺ) used to meditate and worship; his heart shone; his soul was purified; he approached the truth with all his energy and kept away from falsehood as much as he could. Finally he reached such a high state of purity that the rays of the Unseen began to reflect from his heart. There was no dream that he saw without it being realized like the dawn of the morn. In this cave Muhammad (ﷺ) met with the heavenly hosts.

❑ Before him the desert had witnessed a brother of his who came in flight from Egypt, and traversed the dry, barren lands, seeking peace, security and guidance for himself and his people. He was attracted by the sight of a burning bush on the right hand side of the valley, and when he went toward it, his hearing and senses were filled with the holy call:

﴿Behold! I, even I, am Allah. There is no God save me. So worship Me and establish worship for My remembrance.﴾ (Qur'ān 20: 14)

❑ One flame of this fire reached across the centuries to flare up once more in the depths of the cave wherein was a man devoted to worship and self-purification, who kept his body and soul away from the filth and evils of *jahilīyah*. However, this flame was not a fire to attract the onlooker: it was a light which shone with inspiration and guidance on the startled heart and brought stability and consolation to it. Muhammed (ﷺ) listened in amazement to the voice of the angel telling him: "Read."

❑ He replied in wonder: "I cannot read."

❑ The question and reply were repeated and thereafter flowed the first āyāt (verses) of the noble Qur'ān:

﴿Read: In the name of your Lord Who creates, Creates man from a clot. Read: and your *Rabb* is the Most Bounteous, Who teaches by the pen, Teaches man that which he knew not.﴾ (Qur'ān 96: 1-5)<sup>23</sup>

### **Waraqah ibn Naufal**

Muhammad (ﷺ) was a human being like ourselves. However creation does not know such great disparity among the members of a single species as that existing among the mankind: some of them are higher than the resplendent stars whereas others are not worth the droppings of a goat. Nevertheless, all of them are human beings. This disparity occurs among people who have not had the support of revelation, so when a human

<sup>23</sup> An authentic Ḥadīth.



being has been selected, he is enlightened with the rays of divine guidance and support, what will he be like?

﴿He sends down the angels with the Spirit of His command whom He will of His servants [saying]: warn mankind that there is no god save Me, so fulfil your duty to me.﴾ (Qur'ān 16: 2)

□ When the soul is breathed into the embryo Allāh (ﷻ) makes him a new creation different from what he was in his first six stages of being: a type of mud, then a sperm, then a clot, then a morsel of flesh, then bones, then a body clothed in flesh. Similarly, when the Prophets receive revelation and its new spirit runs in them, they become new human beings and no-one is able to match them at all in excellence and enlightenment.

□ This crucial change is the reason for Allāh's reminding Muhammad (ﷺ) of the Power which created man from a clot: The power which created this wonderful human being from a parasital clot will, by Allāh's Bounty, make Muhammad (ﷺ) a human prophet, able to read after his illiteracy.

﴿And thus have We inspired in you [Muhammad] a spirit of Our command. You did not know what the Scripture was, nor what the faith was. But We have made it a light with which We guide whom We wish of Our servants. And behold indeed you guide a right path. The path of Allah, Whom belongs whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth.﴾ (Qur'ān 42: 52-53)

□ It was as if the previous forty years were only a day, and the morning of the next day began the Revelation. That searching, yearning mind could now expect the light of truth, and that troubled heart could now feel the coolness of certainty and the expanse of hope. That far-reaching change had occurred it was prophethood! How wonderful was the coming blessing and how great were the anxieties Muhammad (ﷺ) would have to face on its behalf.

□ Thus he quickly regained his composure, and his wife's reaction to it was one of the noblest reactions to come from a

woman past or present. She soothed him when he was perturbed, she made him rest when he was exhausted and she reminded him of the virtues of his character, emphasizing that righteous people like himself could never be humiliated, and that when Allāh (ﷻ) moulded a man with the most excellent traits of character it was to bestow honour and kindness on him. With this well-balanced opinion and purity of heart, Khadijah deserved the salutations sent to her by the Lord of the Worlds through the Faithful Spirit [Angel Jibrīl (ﷺ)].<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> The author is referring to an authentic Ḥadīth reported by Bukhārī and Muslim on the authority of Abū Hurairah (رضي الله عنه), in which he said:

“Jibrīl (ﷺ) came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said: “O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), here is Khadijah coming with a pot of soup or food or drink. When she reaches you, convey *salām* to her from her Lord and from myself, and give her the good tidings of a home in Paradise made of jewel, in which there shall be no Clamour or fatigue.

## Chapter Three

### The Mission's Struggle

The dark clouds of confusion dispersed and the scenes of reality took shape. Muhammad (ﷺ) knew with certainty that he had become a Prophet of Allāh (ﷻ), The High Exalted, and that it was the ambassador of Revelation who came to him with news from the heavens. The awe of contact between angel and man, however, had left its mark of exhaustion in his being as if he had undertaken a strenuous task. This is not surprising, since he remained for a long time feeling the effects of the Revelation. Allāh (ﷻ) wished the Revelation to cease after its commencement, as we have described above, so that the Prophet's (ﷺ) eagerness and expectancy for it would again provide him with the strength and stability to bear it when it returned. In spite of that, however, the human capacity was tested by its pressure. Jibrīl (ﷺ) came for the second time.

□ Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh (رضي الله عنه) reported that he heard the Prophet (ﷺ) speaking about the cessation of Revelation and saying:

"While I was walking, I heard a voice from the sky, so I looked up. There was the angel who had come to me in Hīrā, and he was seated on a throne between the earth and the sky. I was so terrified of him that I fell to the ground. Then I went back to my family and said, Cover me up! And they wrapped me up in a blanket. Then Allah (ﷻ) Revealed:

﴿O you enveloped in your cloak, Arise and warn! Your *Rabb* magnify, Your raiment purify, Pollution shun!﴾ (Qur'ān 74: 1-5)<sup>1</sup>

□ These decisive, successive orders heralded for the Prophet (ﷺ) the end of the past with its dreams, peace and quiet, and that he was now on the threshold of a new occupation which required wakefulness and determination, warning and acquittal.

---

<sup>1</sup> Narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim.

Let him therefore bear the message, let him guide the people, and seek support in the Revelation, for it is the source of his message and the reinforcement of his call.

□ Revelation is the inspiration of the heart with what Allāh (ﷻ) wants in a clear manner which contains no possibility of doubt. It takes various forms, some of which are easier than others. 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) is reported to have said: Whenever Revelation descended on the Prophet (ﷺ), a sound like the buzzing of bees was heard near his face.<sup>2</sup> Sometime it would come like the ringing of a bell, and this was the hardest form for him. The angel would come upon him in such a way that his forehead would sweat profusely on a cold, wintry day,<sup>3</sup> and his mount would lie down on the ground if he was riding it.<sup>4</sup> Once Revelation came to him while his thigh was resting on the thigh of Zayd ibn Thābit (رضي الله عنه), and it became so heavy that Zayd's (رضي الله عنه) thigh almost broke.<sup>5</sup> At other times it might come more easily and lightly than that.

□ One might ask why did the first Revelations come with such intensity and why did the Qur'ān not begin to be Revealed as inspiration in a dream or inspiration in wakefulness as the incident described by the Prophet (ﷺ):

"The Holy Spirit Jibrīl (عليه السلام) inspired my heart with the fact that no soul shall die until it has exhausted its sustenance; so fear Allāh (ﷻ) and be restrained in seeking.<sup>6</sup> Is this not less likely to cause fright and exhaustion?"

<sup>2</sup> A weak Ḥadīth, narrated by Al Tirmidhī, who mentioned that there was some dispute about its chain. The chain has Yūnus ibn Sālim in it, and from him 'Abdul Razzaq, narrated it. But Yūnus is not known. 'Abdul Razzaq was asked about him, and he said: "I don't think he is anything."

<sup>3</sup> This is the meaning of the Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī on the authority of 'Ā'ishah.

<sup>4</sup> This is the meaning of the Ḥadīth narrated by Aḥmad and Al-Ḥākim on the authority of 'Ā'ishah.

<sup>5</sup> This is the meaning of the Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī on the authority of Zayd ibn Thabit (رضي الله عنه).

<sup>6</sup> A sound Ḥadīth coming from different sources, each strengthening the other.

□ The answer is that the Qur'ān first began to be Revealed in this manner,<sup>7</sup> so that there might be no doubt that the words and the meaning were from Allāh (ﷻ) and that Muhammad (ﷺ) was entrusted with it after having been singled out for it. Thus it is not the fabrication of a recluse who had certain visions, nor the invention of a philosopher who excelled in logic and beautiful speeches; it is the word of Allāh (ﷻ) who is Absolute Truth.

﴿It is naught save an inspiration that is inspired, Which one of mighty powers has taught him, One vigorous; and he grew clear to view, When he was on the uppermost horizon, Then he drew close and came down, Till he was [distant] two bows' length or even nearer, And He revealed to His servant that which he revealed. The heart did not lie [in seeing] what it saw. Will you then dispute with him concerning what he sees?﴾ (Qur'ān 53: 4-12)

### **What is the call?**

Muhammad (ﷺ) began telling the people about Islām and urging them to join the religion with which Allāh (ﷻ) had sent him. The Sūrahs of the Qur'ān which were revealed at Makkah explain the beliefs and actions which Allāh (ﷻ) charged His servants to uphold, and he commissioned the Prophet (ﷺ) to establish and nurture them. The most important are:

**1. Absolute Unity.** Humans are not servants to any being on earth or in heaven because all in the heavens and the earth are servants to Allāh (ﷻ): they submit to His Majesty and obey His Command. There are no partners with Him, nor intercessors, nor intermediaries. It is every person's right to approach Allāh (ﷻ) directly without going through any other creation, whether big or small. It is every person's duty to denounce those who establish themselves or others as intermediaries and bring them down to their rightful position, whether they happen to be

---

<sup>7</sup> Communication of the physical body with the unseen world is strenuous for human nature. It may be compared to what the mediums experience during hypnosis, though there is a great difference.

human or stone or anything else. All individual and collective links ought to be built on the basis that Allāh (ﷻ) is Supreme in His Kingdom with this Perfect Oneness.

□ The consequences of this belief were that the stones which the Arabs worshipped became no better than the stones with which they used to build their houses or pave the roads, and that the human beings who were deified in other religions were given their rightful status. It was made plain that they were servants to the One who created and fed them, that they would progress or regress only if they obeyed or disobeyed Him, and that they had no say in creation or the provision of sustenance.

## **2. The Hereafter:**

The day will inevitably come when people will have to face their Lord and be questioned on every minute detail of their previous life.

﴿And whoever does an atom's weight of evil, will see it then.﴾  
(Qur'ān 99: 7-8)

Thereafter will be either eternal bliss for the good people to enjoy or dreadful punishment in which the evil-doers will remain miserable.

□ Considering the Hereafter in every action that one performs or avoids is an established principle of behaviour in Islām. Just as passengers on a train know that they will get off at the next stop, likewise Muslims know that time will inevitably take them back to their Creator where they shall harvest the fruits of what they have planted in this life.

**3. Purification of the Self:** This is done by adhering to the prescribed acts of worship and keeping away from other actions in order to avoid their evil consequences.

﴿Say: "Come, I shall recite to you that which your *Rabb* has made a sacred duty for you: that you ascribe nothing as partner to Him; that

you do good to parents; that you do not kill your children because of penury. We provide for you and for them and that you avoid indecency whether open or concealed. And that you do not destroy the life which Allāh has made sacred, save in the course of justice. This He has commanded you, in order that you may discern. And do not touch the wealth of the orphan, except to improve it, till he reaches maturity. Give full measure and full weight in justice. We do not test any soul beyond its capacity. And if you give your word, do justice to it, even though it may be [against] a kinsman; and fulfil the Covenant of Allāh. This He commands you so that perhaps you may remember.﴾ (Qur'ān 6: 151-152)

□ And He (ﷺ) commands you, saying:

﴿This is My straight path, so follow it. Do not follow other ways, lest you be parted from His Way. This He has ordained for you, that you may ward off [evil].﴾ (Qur'ān 6: 153)

□ Aktam ibn Sayfī said: "Surely what the Prophet (ﷺ) brought, if it did not become a full fledged religion, it would have been good moral teachings for the people."

#### **4. Protection of the well-being of the Muslim community.**

The Muslim community must be considered to be a solid unit based on brotherhood and co-operation. This demands that the wronged should be championed, the deprived should be assisted and the weak should be strengthened. In Sūrah (Chapter) 74, which is the first Sūrah in which the Prophet (ﷺ) was ordered to preach openly, we read these āyāt (verses):

﴿Every soul is a pledge for its own deeds; Save those who will stand on the right hand, In gardens they will ask one another, Concerning the guilty: What has brought you to this burning? They will answer: we were not of those who prayed; Nor did we feed the wretched; We used to take part [in vain dispute] with [all] the disputes, And we used to deny the Day of Judgement, Till the



Inevitable came to us. The mediation of no mediators will avail them then.﴾ (Qur'ān 74: 38-48)

Whenever Abū Bakr (ؓ) saw any of the weak and oppressed Muslims being tortured, he would spend all his energy and wealth to free him. This is the individual's right over society.

### **The First Group**

The propagation of Islām began to increase in Makkah. It took effect in those broad-minded individuals, who quickly abandoned their former *Jahilīyah* and secretly embraced the new faith. The āyāt (verses) of the Qur'ān descended on the hearts of those who had accepted the seeds of faith as rain descends on fertile soil:

﴿When We send down water on it, it thrills and swells and put forth every single kind [of growth].﴾ (Qur'ān 22: 5)

□ The believers in this ideology gathered around their leader with determination, and in love and admiration they listened to him explaining the principles of their ideology. Faith is a magical force: once it has taken root in someone's heart it can make the impossible possible. We have seen old men and youths meeting over a particular thought and giving it the position of firm faith in their hearts. Although it is only a materialistic thought, it makes their lives the fuel for its spreading and it urges them to bear the worst kinds of suffering on its behalf.

□ In the prisons now are men who graduated from the universities of the West. They spend a large part of their lives with murderers and drug traffickers. This is because they see it as part of the necessary effort they must make to achieve success for their principles. How much more effective it would have been if the faith which appeared at that time was faith in Allāh (ﷻ), Lord of all the worlds, and faith in the Hereafter, where people encounter their Lord after they leave this world, and where they find lush gardens and exquisite palaces under which rivers flow? The first group was in the process of formation and

it was increasing daily.

□ It was natural that the Prophet (ﷺ) should present Islām first to those who were closest to him among his household and friends. These people had never had any doubts about the greatness of Muhammad (ﷺ) or his truthfulness, so it is no wonder, therefore, that they were the first to support and follow him. His wife, Khadijah, believed in him and so did his slave freed, Zayd ibn Hārithah, and his cousin, ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, who was a young boy living under the care of the Prophet (ﷺ). His bosom friend, Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه), also accepted Islām and was very active in propagating it and he persuaded those whom he loved and trusted to accept it too. These were ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān (رضي الله عنه), Ṭalha ibn ‘Ubaidullāh and Sa’d ibn Abi Waqqas. The Christian scholar, Waraqah ibn Naufal, also believed in him, and it is reported,<sup>8</sup> that the Prophet (ﷺ) saw him in a dream after his death in a state of bliss, which meant that he had found favour with Allāh (ﷻ). Al Zubayr ibn al ‘Awwām, Abū Dharr al Ghifārī, Umar ibn ‘Anbasa and Sa’īd ibn al ‘As accepted Islām, and Islām spread in Makkah among those whose hearts Allāh (ﷻ) enlightened. The propagation of Islām going on in secret without any open show of zealousness or provocation.

□ The news filtered down to the Quraish, although they paid no attention to it. Perhaps they thought that Muhammad (ﷺ) was one of those religious fanatics who would speak of Divinity and its rights as Umayyah ibn Al Ṣalt used to do, or the Christian scholar Ibn Sa’idah or ‘Amr ibn Nufayl and others like them. Nevertheless, their fear grew when his fame started to spread and so they began to observe him and his call. The secret propagation of the *Da’wah* continued for three years, then the order was revealed to the Prophet (ﷺ) to announce it to his people and openly confront their falsehood and denounce their idols.

<sup>8</sup> This is a good Ḥadīth, and the words “it is reported” are not appropriate since they suggest that it is not authentic. The Ḥadīth comes from two sources, both of which have been authenticated by Ibn Kathīr. It is also strengthened by the Prophet’s (ﷺ) saying: “Do not curse Waraqah for I dreamt of a garden or two belonging to him.”

## Announcement of the Call

Ibn 'Abbās said that when the āyah (verse) "And warn your tribe of close relatives" (Qur'ān 26: 214), was revealed the Prophet (ﷺ) climbed the hill of *Safā* and started shouting: "O Banū Fihir, O Banū 'Adī," calling all the clans of the Quraish to assemble, and those who could not come out sent a messenger to see what had happened.

When they all had assembled the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"What would you say if I told you that there was an army of horsemen in the valley wanting to attack you, would you believe me?"

They said: "We have never heard you tell a lie."

He said: "Well, I am warning you of terrible punishment!"

Abū Lahab then shouted: "May you be in misery all day long! Is this what you called us for? Then Allah (ﷻ) revealed *Sūrat ul Lahab* (Chapter).<sup>9</sup>

□ According to Abū Hurairah (رضي الله عنه), when this āyah was revealed, the Prophet (ﷺ) stood up and said:

"O assembly of Quraish! Purchase your own (freedom), I shall not avail you in any way before Allah (ﷻ); O Banu 'Abdul Muṭṭalib, I will not avail you in any way before Allah (ﷻ); O 'Abbas ibn 'Abdul Muṭṭalib, I will not avail you in any way before Allah (ﷻ); O Safiyyah, aunt of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ), I will not avail you in any way before Allah (ﷻ)."<sup>10</sup>

This loud call was the final degree of communication. The Prophet (ﷺ) severed relations with his people on account of his call. He explained to those who were closest to himself that belief in this message is what would keep alive the relationship between him and them and that the blood kinship which the

<sup>9</sup> A Sound Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim.

<sup>10</sup> A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim with two chains of narrators through Abū Hurairah (رضي الله عنه).

Arabs upheld had melted in the heat of this warning coming from Allāh (ﷻ).

□ Muhammad (ﷺ) had enjoyed a high status in his town and was the object of confidence and love. Nevertheless, here he was confronting Makkah with what it disliked and exposing himself to opposition from the foolish people and the men of high rank. The first group whose affection he risked losing was his nearest of kin, although such pain was insignificant compared with the truth with which Allāh (ﷻ) had enlightened his heart. It was not for him, therefore, to find rest at night while Makkah was shaking with astonishment and condemnation, and was preparing to put an end to this revolution which had suddenly descended upon it and was about to sweep away its custom and inherited traditions.

□ The Quraish continued moving along their path: the path of obstinacy and avoidance of truth. Likewise Muhammad (ﷺ) continued moving along his path, calling them to Allāh (ﷻ), being gentle in his presentation of Islām, exposing the disgraces of paganism, listening and answering, attacking and defending. His keenness to bring guidance to his close relative, however, spurred him on to have another try at presenting Islām to them. Winning them over would have far-reaching benefits since they held a position of honour among the Arabs. Moreover, they were his close relatives for whom he wished good and whom he hated to have Allāh's anger descend.

□ Ibn Athīr reports that Ja'fār ibn 'Abdullāh ibn Abil Ḥakam said that when the *āyāh* "and warn thy tribe of near kindred" was revealed, the Prophet (ﷺ) became very worried and sat at home like a sick man.

His aunts came to visit him and he said to them: "I do not have any complaint of sickness. However, Allāh (ﷻ) ordered me to warn my close relatives."

□ They said, "Well, call them, but do not invite Abū Lahab, for he will not respond to you."

□ He called them together and they all came, and along with

them came some from the clan of the Banu Muṭṭalib ibn ‘Abd Manāf. They totalled forty-five men. Abū Lahab was the first to speak. He said: “Here are your uncles and cousins, so speak and do not act childishly, and know that your people do not have any power against the entire Arab nation, and I am the most fitting person to stop you. So let your father’s children be enough for you, and if you remain steadfast in what you are doing, then it is easier for them than to have the clans of the Quraish ambush with the help of the Arabs. I have never seen any man bringing so much evil on his father’s children as you have brought.”<sup>11</sup>

□ The Prophet (ﷺ) kept quiet and did not speak in that gathering. Then he called them on another occasion and said: “Praise be to Allāh (ﷻ): I praise Him and seek His help, and I believe in Him and place my Trust in Him. And I bear witness that there is no god but Allāh (ﷻ), Who is Alone and has no partner.” Then he continued, “A leader does not lie to his family. By Allāh (ﷻ), besides Whom there is no other god, I am Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) to you in particular and to the mankind in general. By Allāh (ﷻ), you shall die even as you fall asleep; you shall be resurrected even as you wake up; you shall be called to account for what you are doing; and then it will be paradise forever or hell forever.”

□ Abū Ṭālib said: “How we would love to assist you! And how eager we are for your advice! And how sincerely we believe in what you have said! Here is your clan gathered together and I am one of them. However, I am the quickest of them to accept what you say, so proceed to execute the orders that come to you from Allāh (ﷻ), I shall continue to protect you although my heart will not bear to part from the religion of ‘Abdul Muṭṭalib.”

<sup>11</sup> I did not find this narrator in the list of narrators. There is Ja‘far ibn ‘Abdullāh ibn Hakam, who is a Tabi‘i of the tribe of Dus. He narrated from Anas (رضي الله عنه) and the Tabi‘in. If he is this person, then the chain is *mursal* and therefore weak. I did not encounter this ascription being made to him. However, if it is someone else, then I have no knowledge of him.

□ Then Abū Lahab said: "This, by Allāh (ﷻ), is a disgrace! Take hold of his hands before others take hold of you!"

□ Abū Ṭālib replied: "By Allāh (ﷻ), we shall protect him as long as we live."

## Abū Ṭālib

In spite of remaining in idolatry and holding fast to the religion of his forefathers, Abū Ṭālib's affection for his nephew did not change. He clearly understood the hardships which this call would bring himself and his family. Nevertheless, his consideration for Muhammad (ﷺ) and dislike of hurting his feelings led him to assure the Prophet (ﷺ) of complete freedom of action. In fact, Abū Ṭālib undertook to protect him while he was conveying the message of his Lord! Abū Ṭālib was one of the few great men of Makkah. He was respected in his family and among the people, and no-one dared to defy his authority. His remaining with the people of Makkah in the worship of their gods was a good reason for his influence to spread and his rights to be upheld.

□ On the other hand, Abū Lahab was the example of those family heads who bent over backwards to protect their own interests and prestige without any regard for right or wrong. Any action which exposed his interests to destruction or marred his status would rouse his anger and impel to do something foolish. In Abū Lahab's nature was a streak of harshness which led him into self behaviour. His sons 'Utbah and Utaybah, were married to the Prophet's (ﷺ) daughters, Ruqaiyyah and Umm Kulthum. So he ordered his sons to divorce them which they did. Perhaps Abū Lahab was influenced in his violent hatred for Muhammad (ﷺ) by his wife, Umm Jamīl, daughter of Harb and sister of Abū Sufyān. She was a domineering woman, incited into hatred for the Prophet (ﷺ) and his religion by a variety of reasons. So she let her loose tongue spread innumerable slanders against him.

□ If the passions of *jahiliyyah* could incite Muhammad's (ﷺ) uncle to act so selfishly and harshly towards him, what would be



the behaviour of those who were not related to him and who would like to see every upright person stumble and every innocent sentenced? Nevertheless, what was Abū Lahab, what were the Quraish and the Arabs, what was the entire world worth compared with a man who bore a message from Allāh (ﷻ). Sovereign of the heavens and the earth, who wanted restore rationality to a world which had lost its reason and erase superstition from a people suffocated by it like a sandstorm? What could be the effect of the attitude of an ignoramus, or the indignation of a haughty man? Could they stop this great message from proceeding towards its distant goal?

□ Floating seaweed cannot stop an ocean liner. If the people of *jahilīyah* were angry with the Muslims for abandoning their people for this call to the extent that they called them apostates, then the Muslims were even more angry with them because they made fools of themselves and disgraced their intellects: they stuck stubbornly to superstitious beliefs for which had no authorization from Allāh (ﷻ). The call which Muhammad (ﷺ) started in Makkah was not for the building of a small nation. It was a complete renaissance for nations and generations which would continue to inherit the truth and spread it in all corners of the globe until the story of life and living things ended on this earth.

□ What, then, could the enmity of an individual or a tribe do to message which had this role to play in its present and future? And who were those enemies? Prejudiced people with closed minds and whose pride and power told them to strike violently at anyone who opposed them.

﴿And when Our Revelations are recited to them, you know the denial in the faces of those who disbelieve; they all but attack those who recite Our Revelations to them.﴾ (Qur'ān 22: 72)

Or those in ease and luxury who were in love with falsehood because it came to them comfortably couched, and who disliked truth because it was devoid of embellishments:



﴿And when Our clear Revelations are recited unto them, those who disbelieve say to those who believe: which of the two parties [yours or ours] is better in position, and more imposing then any army?﴾ (Qur'ān 19: 73)

Or obstinate people who believed that Allāh's guidance was the joke of youngsters or the fashions of a pretty girl so that they could say, leave this and bring that!

﴿And when Our clear Revelations are recited to them, they who do not look for the meeting with Us say: Bring a lecture [Qur'ān] other than this or change it.﴾ (Qur'ān 10: 15)

Or fools who tried to outdo one another in making the loudest noise when the Revelations were being recited so that they might not be heard and understood and so influence pure and healthy hearts and minds:

﴿Those who disbelieve say: do not heed this Qur'an and drown its recitation; perhaps you will be victorious.﴾ (Qur'ān 41: 26)

□ If the people Makkah had hesitated in accepting Muhammad (ﷺ) until they could study the matter and scrutinize his message weighing it carefully with what they possessed, no intelligent person could have done better than they. Instead, however, they fled from Islām as a criminal flees from the courtroom after his crimes have been exposed and his guilt proved.

The Prophet (ﷺ) was grieved by this rejection coupled with disbelief and provocation, and it is the right of any noble, truthful man to feel sadness and pain when he finds himself disbelieved and shun. However, Allāh (ﷻ) consoled him and showed him the real nature of those who disbelieved and joined forces against him:

﴿We know well how their talk grieves you, though in truth they do not deny you [Muhammad], but evil-doers flout the Revelations of Allāh.﴾ (Qur'ān 6: 33)

□ Thus Muhammad (ﷺ) had to continue preaching and overcoming all the obstacles that were placed in his way, and those who believed in his Message had to be firm and steadfast. Their steadfastness was not to be in their own interests alone, nor even in fulfilment of the duties of faith, but also in the interests of the future generations. A skyscraper does not rest on the surface of the earth but on foundations which go deep into the earth, and these bear its weight and pillars. The early Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) with their strength of conviction and sincere loyalty were the pillars of his call and the roots which extended in later days in all directions of the globe.

### **Persecution**

The idolaters decided that they would spare no efforts to fight Islām and persecute those who entered it. Ever since the Prophet (ﷺ) had proclaimed his mission openly and condemned his people's deviation, which they had inherited from their forefather, Makkah erupted in a storm of anger. For years it remained like that, regarding the Muslims as outlaws and rebels. The earth shook under their feet and the security of the holy sanctuary was violated with the spilling of their blood and the looting of their wealth and honour. No-one in their position could expect anything but oppression and persecution.

□ This atmosphere filled with hatred was accompanied by a war of ridicule and humiliation, the intent behind it being to demoralize the Muslims. The Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions were accused and abused, and a group was formed to carry out these campaigns against Islām and its followers. It is a similar strategy to that used by the newspapers when they publish satirical reports about their rivals and amusing pictures to lower the public confidence in them. With this two-pronged attack the Muslims were caught in a tight spot their Prophet was being accused of madness:

﴿And they say: O you whom the Reminder is revealed, Look! You are indeed a madman.﴾ (Qur'ān 15: 6)

And accused of indulging in magic and telling lies:

﴿And they marvel that a warner from among themselves has come them, and the disbelievers say: this is a wizard, a charlatan.﴾ (Qur'ān 38: 4)

This spreads and he is met with hostile stares and feelings of rage:

﴿And Behold! Those who disbelieve would like to upset you with their stares when they hear the Reminder, and they say: Look! he is indeed mad.﴾ (Qur'ān 68: 51)

□ The lot of the Muslims was no better than this sort of treatment. Morning and evening they were the objects of amusement and derision:

﴿Behold! The guilty used to laugh at those who believed, And wink one to another when they passed them; And when they returned to their own folk, they returned jesting; And when they saw them, they said: "Behold! These have gone astray." Yet they were not sent as guardians over them.﴾ (Qur'ān 83: 29-33)

This war turned into torture and bloodshed as far as the weak and oppressed believers were concerned. Those of them who had no clan to defend them could not be saved from humiliation and murder by anything. They were held and tortured painfully until they disbelieved, died or became unconscious.

#### **‘Ammār ibn Yāsir (ؓ)**

Among them was ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir, who was one of the earliest converts to Islām. He was a freed-slave of the Banū Makhzūm. He, his father and his mother accepted Islām, and they were dragged by the idolaters into the hot sands of Makkah in the blazing midday heat and there they were tortured.

One day the Prophet (ﷺ) passed by them in this state and he said: "Patience, family of Yāsir, for your rendez-vous is Paradise."<sup>12</sup> Yāsir died of the torture. His wife, Sumayyah, shouted curses at Abū Jahl; he stuck a spear into her heart and she died. She was the first female in Islām to be martyred.

They redoubled their torturing of 'Ammār, sometimes by heat and at other times by placing a stone on his chest or by ducking him underwater and saying: "We shall not let you go until you curse Muhammad (ﷺ) or say something good about Al Lāt and Al Uzza. Eventually he did so and they let him go. He came to the Prophet (ﷺ), weeping, and the Prophet (ﷺ) asked him what was the matter. He replied by explaining what had happened.

□ Then the Prophet (ﷺ) asked: "How do you find your heart?"

□ He replied: "I find it content with faith."

□ The Prophet (ﷺ) then advised him: "O Ammār, if they do it again then do the same as before." Thereafter Allāh (ﷻ) revealed:

﴿Save him who is forced into it and whose heart is still content with faith.﴾ (Qur'ān 16: 106)<sup>13</sup>

'Ammār was one of those who accompanied the Prophet (ﷺ) on all his expeditions.

## **Bilāl (رضي الله عنه)**

Among them also was Bilāl ibn Rabah, whose master, Umayyah ibn Khalaf, would force him to lie on his back, then on his stomach on the scorching sands during the midday heat of Makkah.

<sup>12</sup> A good and sound Ḥadīth. It is narrated from various authentic sources, which strengthen one another.

<sup>13</sup> There is some doubt about the authenticity of this narration, since the name of the *Ṣaḥābī* who heard from the Prophet (ﷺ) is not mentioned (i.e. it is a *mursal* Ḥadīth). There is no doubt though, that the *āyāt* (verse) of the Qur'ān was revealed about 'Ammār (رضي الله عنه), for this is corroborated by various sources. However, Allāh (ﷻ) knows best.

He would order a huge stone to be placed on his chest and say: "You will remain like this until you die or disbelieve in Muhammad (ﷺ) and worship Al-Lāt and Al-Uzza."

Nevertheless Bilāl (رضي الله عنه) would only continue saying "One, One", with more vigour.

### **Khabbāb (رضي الله عنه)**

When the Quraish's savagery toward the oppressed Muslims became unbearable, one of them, Khabbāb ibn al Aratt, went to the Prophet (ﷺ) and sought help. Khabbāb (رضي الله عنه) reports:

"We went and complained to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and he was at that time lying in the shade of the Ka'aba using a cloak as a pillow. We said: "Will you not seek Allah's help for us? Will you not pray for us?"

He replied: "Before your time a believer would be taken and a hole dug in the earth and he would be put in it. Then a saw would be brought and placed on his head and it would be split into two. Or he would be combed with an iron comb reaching just short of his flesh and bones. Yet that would not deter him from his faith."

"By Allah, surely Allah (ﷻ) will bring this matter to a conclusion so that a traveller will be able to travel from San'a' to Hadramaut, fearing no-one except Allah (ﷻ), and the wolf over his sheep. However, you are being too hasty."

❑ What could Muhammad (ﷺ) have done for these oppressed people? He could not have extended protection to any-one of them since he did not possess the power even to protect himself. While at prayer in the Sacred Mosque, the intestines of a camel or the uterus of a sheep would be thrown on him, and at other times filth would be thrown in front of his doorstep, and all he could do was to bear it with patience.

❑ Muhammad (ﷺ) did not gather his Companions on the basis of any immediate or future gains. He removed the blind fold and they were able to see the truth which had been hidden from them

for some time; and he cleaned the rust from their minds and they became aware of the reality engrained in their natures, but of which they had been deprived by *jahilīyah*. He united people with their Lord, thus re-establishing their ancient and noble heritage, whereas before this they were in a state of perplexity and frustration. He balanced the fleeting and the everlasting for the people, and they chose the abode of the Hereafter in preference to this vanishing world. He offered them the choice between lowly idols and a Great God, and they discarded the idols and turned towards Him who created the heavens and the earth.

□ It was enough glory for Muhammad (ﷺ) that he should be the one to offer this limitless good, and it was enough glory for his Companions that they should be the ones towards whom Providence directed it. So if they were molested, they were to be patient and if the worshippers of the filthy idols waged war on them, they were to stick to what they knew. One day the war between unbelief and faith would come to an end and disclose the martyrs and the believers who stood firm to the command of Allāh (ﷻ), and the idolaters who were routed by the permission of Allāh (ﷻ).

﴿And say those who do not believe: Act according to your power. Look! We [too] are acting. And wait! Look! We [too] are waiting. And Allāh's is the Invisible of the heavens and the earth, and to Him will the whole matter be returned. So worship Him and put your trust unto Him. Look your *Rabb* is not unaware of what you [Mortals] do.﴾ (Qur'ān 11: 121-123)

□ The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) gradually inculcated the elements of trust in the hearts of his men and instilled in them what Allāh (ﷻ) had instilled in his heart; the deep confidence in the fact that Islām would be victorious; its principles would spread far and wide; and that the domination of the tyrannical rulers would crumble at the onslaught of its army at the east and the west. The scoffers, however, took this confidence as material for their taunts and jeering. Al Aswad ibn al Muṭṭalib and his

associates would, whenever they saw the Prophet's (ﷺ) Companions, wink at each other and say: "Here come the kings of the earth who will tomorrow conquer the kingdoms of Khosrau and Caesar." Then they would whistle and applaud.

□ Besides throwing obstacles in front of the *da'wah* in this manner, the idolaters urged one another to prevent any visitor in Makkah from listening to it. Al Walīd ibn al Mughīrah said to the men of the Quraish:

The people will come to you during the days of pilgrimage and ask you about Muhammad (ﷺ), and then you will all say different things. One will say "a poet", and another will say "possessed by a Jinn" However, he does not resemble any of those things, you say. The best that could be said of him is that he is a sorcerer because he causes division between a man and his brother and his wife.

□ These conspirators stood at the gates of Makkah during the Hajj season and cautioned the people against that propagandist who rebelled against his tribe. They accused him of indulging in sorcery to separate brothers and couples, as they had agreed. The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), nevertheless, went to the pilgrims in their gatherings and spoke to them of Islām and requested their support. Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh reported that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) would stand at the Hajj station and say: 'Isn't there any man who will take me to his people? The Quraish have prevented me from conveying the words of my Lord.'<sup>14</sup>

## Negotiations

The idolaters thought that their harsh treatment towards the weak Muslims would deter others from responding to the caller; they thought that the various methods of scorn and ridicule which they employed would demoralize the Muslims so much that they would hide for shame of their faith and soon return to

<sup>14</sup> A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Abū Dāwūd, Al Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah. Al Tirmidhī said it was a good and sound Ḥadīth. Al Ḥākim also narrated it and said it was authentic according to the stipulations of Bukhārī and Muslim.



the religion of their forefathers. The hopes of the idolaters were doomed to disappointment, however. Not a single Muslim forsook the truth with which Allāh (ﷻ) had blessed him; in fact the Muslims were on the increase. The methods of ridicule did not succeed in blocking anyone from Allāh's path or in distorting its features; they only strengthened the feeling of the Muslims that paganism contained nothing but disgrace and ignominy and that it ought to be rooted out from the society. What could the ridicule of an ignoramus do to a learned man?

﴿...though you mock us, yet we mock at you even as you mock. And you shall know to whom a punishment that will confound him comes, and upon whom a lasting doom will fall.﴾ (Qur'ān 11: 38-39)

□ The Quraish sought to employ another strategy, which contained both allurement and threat. They sent to Muhammad (ﷺ), offering him any worldly thing that he desired, and they sent to his uncle, who was protecting him, warning him of the consequences of maintaining such protection and urging him to silence Muhammad (ﷺ) so as not to cause any harm to himself and his family.

□ The Quraish sent 'Utbah ibn Rabī'ah, who was a calm and composed man. He went to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said:

"O nephew, you know the position which you hold among us because of your ancestry. However, you have brought a serious matter to your people and have broken up their community with it. So listen to me and I shall offer you some alternatives; perhaps you may accept one. If by this affair you wish to gain wealth, we shall collect all we can for you from ourselves so that you will become the richest of us. If you desire status, we shall make you our leader and shall never decide any affair without consulting you. If you desire to be a king, we shall make you king over us. And if that thing which visits you is an evil spirit which you cannot eradicate, we shall look for the best doctor and spend all we possess to have you cured."

□ When he had finished, the Prophet (ﷺ) recited to him the

opening *āyāt* (verses) of *Sūrah Al Sajdah*:

﴿Ha, Mim. A Revelation from the Beneficent, the Merciful, A scripture whose the *āyāt* (verses) are expounded, a lecture [Qur'an] in Arabic for people who have knowledge. Good tidings and a warning. But most of them turn away so that they do not hear. And they say: "Our hearts are protected from that to which you [Muhammad] call us, and in our ears there is a deafness, and between us and you there is a veil. Do then [as you wish] We shall also do [as we wish]." Say [to them, Muhammad]: "I am only a mortal like you. It is inspired in me that your God is One God therefore take the straight path to Him and seek forgiveness of Him. And shame on the idolaters, Who do not pay the welfare tax and who are disbelievers in the Hereafter."﴾ (Qur'an 41: 1-7)

He recited until he reached *āyah* 13, which says:

﴿But if they turn away, then say: 'I warn you of a thunderbolt like the thunderbolt [which fell of upon the old tribes] of 'Ad and Thamūd'.<sup>15</sup>﴾ (Qur'an 41: 13)

□ The Prophet (ﷺ) chose those *āyāt* (verses) from the blessed Revelation so that his interlocutor might know the reality of the message and the messenger. Muhammad (ﷺ) brought a Book from the Creator to His creation, which guided it away from error and saved it from destruction. He before all others was responsible for believing in it, acting upon it and submitting to all its dictates. Thus, when Allāh (ﷻ) demanded of His servants that they should tread the right path towards Him and seek His forgiveness it was Muhammad (ﷺ) who applied himself more than all the mankind to being upright and seeking forgiveness, without looking for kingship, wealth or status. Allāh (ﷻ) had already placed all of these things before him and he had turned away from them, disdaining to touch them. Instead, he gave away freely all the good-things that came his way. He spent a mountain of wealth in the path of Allāh (ﷻ) and when he left

<sup>15</sup>This story is transmitted by Ibn Is-hāq in *Al Maghāzī*. It is also narrated by Ibn Kathīr in his *Tafsīr* and in both cases the chain of narrators is a good one.

this earthly life he had not a *dirham* to bequeath to his progeny.

□ ‘Utbah on behalf of the Quraish wanted Muhammad (ﷺ) to give up calling towards Allāh (ﷻ) and establishing justice among the mankind. What would become of life if a piece of rock detached itself from the earth and flew through the strata of space to ask the sun or any other star to stop giving light and heat to the universe? What a strange request it was! How well it would be for the person who makes such a request to return home and stay there. In fact, after hearing these Qur’ānic āyāt ‘Utbah’s dormant thoughts began to stir. He listened to the threat and he was moved:

﴿But if they turn away, then say: ‘I warn you of a thunderbolt like the thunderbolt [which fell of upon the old tribes] of ‘Ad and Thamūd.﴾ (Qur’ān 41: 13)

‘Utbah put his hands to his side and got up as if the thunderbolt were going to strike him. He returned speedily to the Quraish and urged them to leave Muhammad (ﷺ) alone.

□ As for the Quraish’s delegation to Abū Ṭālib, they told him:

“O Abū Ṭālib, your nephew has cursed our gods and criticized our religion; he has belittled our ideals and accused our forefathers of having gone astray. Either you keep him away from us let us deal with him; you are one of us, for you disagree with his views.”

“Abū Ṭālib spoke nicely to them and rejected their proposal in a gentle manner. So they went away, and the Prophet (ﷺ) continued his *da‘wah*. Soon relations between him and them reached such a low level that he became the center of all the Quraish’s talk and plots. Once more they went to Abū Ṭālib and said:

“Abū Ṭālib, we respect you because of your age and nobility among us. We had requested you to restrain your nephew but you did not. By God, we shall not show tolerance to this cursing of our gods and forefathers and belittling of our customs. So either you restrain him from criticizing us or we shall fight him and you over this matter until one side perishes.”

Then they left him.

□ Abū Ṭālib felt very worried at the thought of separating from his people and at their show of enmity toward him. Nevertheless, he did not feel comfortable at handing over the Prophet (ﷺ) to them. So he sent a message to the Prophet (ﷺ), informing him of what the Quraish had said, and he urged: "look after yourself and me, and do not burden me with more than I can bear."

□ The Prophet (ﷺ) thought that his uncle had changed his mind, withdrawn his protection from him and was helpless to defend him. So he said: "O Uncle, by Allāh (ﷻ), if they put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left so that I might give up this matter until Allāh (ﷻ) causes it to prevail or I die in the process, I should not give it up."<sup>16</sup>

□ The Prophet (ﷺ) then wept and stood up. However, his uncle called him back and said: Go, nephew of mine, and say whatever you wish. By God shall never hand you over for anything." He also recited this couplet of poetry: "By God, they will never reach you with all their numbers until I am buried and sealed in the earth." Thus did allurements and threats fail to stop the *da'wah*.

□ The Quraish realized that their target was far beyond their reach, so they went back to their old ways, pouring their anger upon the believers and expending their utmost energy to torture them and turn them away from their faith. The Prophet (ﷺ) became very sad at the misfortunes that befell his Companions while he was unable to stop them. He intimated to those who had little support and were fearful of remaining in Makkah that they should migrate to Abyssinia. This was in the fifth year after his ministry, or two years after he openly proclaimed his message.

<sup>16</sup> A weak Ḥadīth narrated by Ibn Is-hāq and Ibn Jarīr. The person who reported this Ḥadīth, Ya'qub ibn 'Utbah, never met any of the Companions. He was thus a disciple of the Tabi'in. The story is also narrated by Al Ṭabarānī on the authority of 'Aqīl ibn Abi Ṭālib, and in this version, instead of "if they put..." it has, "I am no more capable of abandoning that with which I have been sent than of snatching a flame of fire from the sun." It continues, "And Abū Ṭālib said, "By God, my nephew has never lied. Go back and be of good cheer."

## The Migration to Abyssinia

The journey to Abyssinia was a secret procedure so as not to arouse the Quraish, who would try to stop it. Nor did it begin on a large scale. The first batch was made up of a few families, among whom were Ruqayyah, daughter of the Prophet (ﷺ), her husband, 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān (رضي الله عنه), and a small group of other emigrants not exceeding sixteen in total. They headed for the sea where Providence had waiting for them two merchant ships, which took them to Abyssinia. By the time the Quraish had reached the shore in pursuit of their trail, they had already set sail. However, it was not long after they had settled in that land when the news came to them that the idolaters had concluded a truce with Islām and had agreed to leave the Muslims free to practise their religion without molestation. Thus they felt there was no harm in returning to Makkah. This rumour has its effect on the Muslim emigrants and they decided to return to their home-town. When they approached Makkah, thought, the woeful reality became apparent: the idolaters were more bitter than ever in their enmity towards Allāh (ﷻ), His Prophet and the believers, and their aggression had not ceased for one second.

❑ Some simpletons claim that there was actually a truce between Islām and paganism and it all came about because Muhammad (ﷺ) sought to curry favour with the idolaters by praising their idols and recognizing their status. They claim that this truce had brought the Muslims back from Abyssinia, what Muhammad (ﷺ) said in praise of the idols. The simpletons claim that he said: «Those lofty cranes, And surely their intercession is to be sought.»

❑ Where did he say these words? In Sūrah *Al Najm*, between the Qur'ānic *āyāt* (verses) which mention these idols. Thus it became like this:

«Have you thought upon Al Lat and Al Uzzā and Manat, the third, the other?» (Qur'an 43: 19-20)

Those lofty cranes,

And surely their intercession is to be sought.

﴿Are yours the males and His the females? That indeed were an unfair division! They are but names which you have given, you and your fathers, for which Allah has revealed no warrant. They follow but a guess and that which [they] themselves desire. And now the guidance from their Lord has come to them.﴾ (Qur'ān 43: 21-23)

The meaning of this would be:

Tell me of your idols: are they so and so? Their intercession is desired. They are only names with no reality behind them: myths invented and followed. How do you make them feminine and ascribe them to Allāh (ﷻ) when you yourselves hate females (that is, daughters) to be ascribed to you? That would be an unfair division!

□ Can such words come from an intelligent person? Not to speak of it being Revelation from the All-knowing. Yet such nonsense was actually written and conveyed by someone. If Muhammad (ﷺ) had told a lie on Allāh (ﷻ) by inventing some statement and claiming that it came from Him, his neck would surely have been severed according to the same Book which he brought. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

﴿And if he had invented false sayings concerning Us, We assuredly had taken him by the right hand And then severed his life-artery, and not one of you could have held Us off from him.﴾ (Qur'ān 69: 44-47)

□ Nevertheless, the books of history and *tafsīr* which allowed the copyists and freethinkers to stuff them with falsities, also opened their pages to record this ugly calumny. Had the scholars been fully aware of its spuriousness it never should have been recorded at all. If you open the *tafsīr* of Al Khāzin at Sūrah *Hūd*, you read the following:

“When the droppings of the animals became too much in Nooh's (Noah) (ﷺ) Ark, Allāh (ﷻ) inspired him to squeeze the elephant's tail. He did so and a boar and a rat fell from it and they rushed to the droppings and devoured them. When the rat started causing confusion in the ark by gnawing at its boards and



rope, Allāh (ﷻ) inspired him to strike between the lion's eyes. He did so and a tom-cat and a she-cat came out of its nostrils; and they rushed to the rat and devoured it."

□ What do you think of such trash? What do you think of the story of the cranes? Quite a few short of these fairy tales exist in a variety of our literature and I do not know when our literary heritage will be purified of them. No doubt they were thrown in during the days of the Muslims' negligence and Jewish conspiracies against their thoughts and writings.

□ The authentic version of this story is that the Prophet (ﷺ) recited *Sūrah Al Najm* in a gathering of both Muslims and idolaters, and the final part of this *Sūrah* (chapter) was so striking that it stirred their hearts. So when the Prophet's (ﷺ) resounding voice reached the end of the *Sūrah*, the awesomeness of the truth had crushed the stubbornness in the hearts of the haughty and mocking idolaters and they could not hope but fall in prostration together with the Muslims. When they checked themselves, however, and found that they had been overcome by faith, they felt ashamed of themselves and wanted to make an excuse for what they did. They felt ashamed of themselves and wanted to make an excuse for what they did. They claimed that they prostrated with Muhammad (ﷺ) only because he had spoken kindly of their idols. This is not strange, coming from a people who were always composing satires to ridicule the Muslims, and one of them was not ashamed to say to the Prophet (ﷺ) and he was the Prophet's (ﷺ) cousin on his mother's side: "Today you have indeed spoken from heaven, Muhammad (ﷺ)."

□ There is nothing more disgusting than this excuse offered by the idolaters for their prostration except the acceptance of this excuse. The idolaters attempted to spread this calumny of theirs<sup>17</sup> to confuse the Prophet (ﷺ), confound Revelation and

<sup>17</sup> Where is the historical proof of this reasoning that it was the idolaters who fabricated this charge and attempted to spread it? Such matters must have historical proof. What is there to rule out that this charge could have been invented afterwards? In fact, this is more plausible since there is no authentic narration of it from a *Ṣaḥābī*. All of its sources stop short of the *Ṣaḥābah* and none of the narrators was known to



insinuate that the Prophet (ﷺ) sometimes had leanings towards them. However, this was far beyond their reach, since the war which the Prophet (ﷺ) waged against paganism only increased in strength as the days went by.

□ Those who had migrated to Abyssinia returned to Makkah to find that the persecution of the Muslims was fiercer and more cruel than ever. Some therefore entered under the protection of those whom they knew, while others hid themselves. But the Quraish insisted on persecuting them and incited other tribes to redouble their persecution of the Muslims. Thus the Prophet (ﷺ) saw no alternative but to advise his Companions to migrate to Abyssinia once more. The second migration was more difficult than the first since the Quraish had become aware of it and were determined to foil it. The Muslims were quicker, however, and on this occasion eighty-three men and nineteen women left. Allāh (ﷻ) made the journey a safe one for them and they reached the Negus of Abyssinia, where they found the security, protection and welcome they were seeking. It is apparent that the Negus was an upright man with a sound mind and good knowledge of Allāh (ﷻ), and correctly believed in Jesus being a servant and Prophet of Allāh (ﷻ). The flexibility of his thought was the secret of the good treatment which he accorded these Muslims seeking refuge in his kingdom to preserve their faith from persecution.

□ The idolaters felt terrible at the thought that the emigrants should find a place of refuge for themselves and their faith. They were incited by their hatred of Islām to send a delegation to the Negus, bearing gifts to dissuade him from extending his protection and kindness to the refugees. The delegation consisted of 'Amr ibn ul 'Ās and 'Abdullāh ibn Abi Rabi'ah before they accepted Islām and they sought the assistance of the Negus's men to approach him. They offered them gifts and supplied them with reasons for rejecting these refugees. They

---

exist at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ). I have explained in detail the falseness of this story in my forthcoming book.

said: "Some of our foolish people left the religion of their people and did not embrace the King's religion. Instead, they invented a new religion with which neither we nor you are acquainted."

□ They agreed to advise the Negus to expel the refugees. When he was confronted with this matter, the Negus thought it best to examine the case from all angles and listen to both parties concerned. He sent for the Prophet's (ﷺ) Companions and they came, having agreed to speak the truth to him in everything, whether it pleased him or not, and they selected Ja'far ibn Abi Tālib (رضي الله عنه) to be their spokesman.

□ The Negus asked them: "What is this religion because of which you separated from your people and did not convert to my religion or anybody else's religion?"

□ Ja'far (رضي الله عنه) replied: "O King, we were a people living in ignorance: we worshipped idols, ate carrion, committed all manner of indecencies, treated our relatives and neighbours badly, and the strong among us oppressed the weak. Then Allāh (ﷻ) sent to us a Messenger from among us, whose lineage, truthfulness, trustworthiness and chastity we knew well. He invited us to believe in Allāh's unity and not to associate partners with him, and to give up the worship of idols. He ordered us to be truthful in our speech, to fulfil our trust, to be kind to our kith and kin, to love our neighbours and keep away from the forbidden things and bloodshed. He forbade us immorality, lying and embezzling the orphan's wealth. He ordered us to establish prayer and fast. He enumerated all the principles of Islām, then continued: "So we believed in him and put our trust in him: we forbade what he forbade and we permitted what he permitted. However our people were aggressive towards us: They tormented and persecuted us so that we might relinquish our faith and go back to the worship of idols. So when their oppression became unbearable and they hindered us from practising our religion, we came to your country, choosing you above others and hoping that we should not be wronged in your presence."

□ The Negus said: "Do you remember any of the Revelations

which he has brought from Allāh (ﷻ)?" Jā'far (ﷺ) replied in the affirmative and recited to him a portion of Sūrah Maryam. The Negus and his bishops wept upon hearing it, and the Negus, speaking to 'Amr and Abdullāh ibn Abi Rabī'ah said: "Surely this and what Jesus brought came from the same niche. Go. By Allāh (ﷻ), I shall never hand them over to you."

□ So they left the palace and 'Amr said to 'Abdullāh: "By God, tomorrow I'll return to him with something that will wither their greenery." The next morning, he went back to the Negus and said: "These people are spreading a great slander about Jesus, son of Mary."

□ So the Negus again sent for the Muslims, asking them for their opinion of the Messiah, and Ja'far replied: "We say about him what our Prophet (ﷺ) told us: he is Allāh's (ﷻ) servant, messenger and spirit, and His word which He inspired into the Virgin Mary."

□ The Negus then took up a stick from the ground<sup>18</sup> and said: "Jesus does not exceed what you have said more than the width of this stick." At this his bishops objected, and he said, "Your objection doesn't make any difference." Then he said to the Muslims: "Go in peace. I should not like to have a mountain of gold in return for harming a single man among you!" He returned the Quraysh's gift to them and said: "Allāh (ﷻ) did not take any bribe from me so that I might take it from you, and the people did not submit to me so that I might obey them concerning Him."<sup>19</sup>

□ The Muslims remained in his country, enjoying the best reception. 'Amr's plan fell through and the delegation returned to Makkah in disappointment and failure. The Quraish realized that

<sup>18</sup> The Christians of old differed over the nature of Issā (Jesus) (ﷺ) and split into several sects as a result. There was one sect which considered him to be a human Prophet and not a god or partner of God. In the Christian West there still remain some people who profess this monotheistic faith. We believe that the Negus of Abyssinia was of this creed although the church hierarchy totally disagreed with him.

<sup>19</sup> This story was narrated by Ibn Is-hāq in his *Al Maghāzi* and Ahmad from him. The chain is good and it was Umm Salmah, wife of the Prophet (ﷺ), who reported it.

they could never appease their spite against Islām and the Muslims except within the borders of their jurisdiction. Thus they resolved to vengeance on any of the Muslims who fell into their hands.

### **Ḥamzah (ﷺ) and ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) Accept Islām**

It is possible that in the dark, heavily clouded sky lightning is produced which illuminates everything. The lines of the Muslims in Makkah were overlaid for many days with thick clouds which forced quite a few families to flee to protect their faith, while others remained and bore the insults, provocations and machinations of the idolaters. However, some new elements entered into Islām, which made the Quraish think twice before executing any of their dastardly plots.

□ Ḥamzah, son of ‘Abdul Muṭṭalib and uncle of the Prophet (ﷺ) as well as his foster brother, was a strong and energetic man. He accepted Islām because of the anger he felt upon hearing that Abū Jahl had abused and attacked the Prophet (ﷺ).

A slave woman belonging to ‘Abdullāh ibn Jud’ān, saw the incident and reported it to him, saying: “O Abū ‘Amarah! You should have seen what Abul Ḥakam ibn Ḥishām did to your nephew Muhammad (ﷺ)! He abused him and insulted him, and then left, but Muhammad (ﷺ) never uttered a word.”

□ Ḥamzah became infuriated and he hurried to meet Abū Jahl, who was sitting with other members of his clan. He stuck him on the head with his bow, which left a deep gash, and then he said: “Are you abusing him while I belong to his faith?” as the saying goes: “We sought knowledge for worldly life but God insisted that it should be for His faith.”

Ḥamzah’s acceptance of Islām was in the first place the reaction of a man who refused to let his protégé be insulted. Then Allāh (ﷻ) expanded his heart and he took a firm grasp of that iron handhold, and the Muslims were ever after to feel unlimited pride in him.

□ As for ‘Umar ibn al Khaṭṭāb (رضي الله عنه), he was one of those who used to insult and scoff at the Muslims. He was famous for his

hot temper and tremendous strength, and the Muslims had long met with all kinds of injuries from him. The wife of 'Āmir ibn Rabi'ah reported:

We were about to set out for Abyssinia, and 'Āmir had left to look for something when 'Umar (ؓ) appeared. At that time he was still an idolater and he used to treat us badly.

□ He approached me and said:

"Are you all leaving, Umm 'Abdullāh?"

□ I replied: "Yes, by Allāh (ﷻ), we are definitely going Allāh's land, so that Allāh (ﷻ) may show us a way out, since your people have injured and oppressed us."

□ 'Umar (ؓ) said: "May God be with you." I saw in him tenderness and sadness. So when 'Āmir returned I told him what had happened and said: I wish you had seen 'Umar's (ؓ) tenderness and sadness for us."

□ He then asked: "Do you have any hope that he will accept Islām?" I said yes. But he replied: "He will not accept Islām until Al Khattāb's donkey accepts Islām! This was as a result of what he saw of 'Umar's (ؓ) harshness and severity towards the Muslims.

□ Nevertheless, the woman's heart was truer than the man's opinion. 'Umar's (ؓ) harshness was just a thin veneer beneath which lay hidden springs of tenderness, compassion and forbearance. Apparently there was a conflict going on in 'Umar's (ؓ) mind between his respect for the traditions laid down by his ancestors and his indulgence in drunkenness and sport on the one hand, and his admiration for the staunchness of the Muslims and their capacity to bear injuries for the sake of their ideology on the other. Moreover, he must have reflected greatly, like any intelligent person, that what Islām was promoting, was nobler and purer than anything else he had known. Thus no sooner had he flared up, than he cooled down. He was going to kill Muhammad (ﷺ) but was diverted by the thought that his sister and her husband had accepted Islām. He confronted them in their home, shouting threateningly. He

struck his sister and injured her. The sight of flowing blood brought him to his senses and the feelings of goodness and virtue within him took over. He picked up a piece of paper on which a few Qur'ānic *āyāt* were written, and as he read them he said: "How excellent and noble are these words!" 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) bowed to the truth and walked to the Prophet (ﷺ), to whom he declared his conversion.

□ When his heart was cleansed from all its blemishes and his Islām was purified, he became a tremendous help to the army of Allāh (ﷻ). The Muslims felt braver and stronger while the unbelievers felt more angry and frustrated. The Quraish saw that Islām was going stronger and that their previous attempts at resisting it did not stop it from spreading or even deter its supporters. They reviewed their entire strategy and planned a new one, which was tougher, more detailed and more comprehensive.

### **The General Boycott**

Pagan malice produced an agreement whereby the Muslims and all those who approved of their religion or sympathized with them or protected any of them were considered to be outcasts from the rest of the society. The idolaters agreed not to trade with the Muslims nor to intermarry with them. They consequently wrote this agreement on a parchment and hung it inside the Ka'bah as a sacred pact. There is no doubt that the hot-tempered extremists among the pagans succeeded in imposing their views and satisfying their malice. Thus the Prophet (ﷺ) and his followers were forced into confinement in the Valley of Banū Hāshim and all of the Banū Muṭṭalib went with them, Muslims as well as unbelievers except Abū Lahab who supported the Quraish in their enmity toward his clan.

□ This blockade of the Muslims was tightly controlled, and as a result they were cut off from any assistance. At times their provisions ran so low that the plaintive cries of the children were heard outside the valley, and they endured such trying



circumstances that eventually their enemy took pity on them. Thus they really bore immense sufferings for the sake of Allāh (ﷻ).

❑ Al Suhayli reported:

Whenever a caravan arrived in Makkah, one of the *Ṣaḥābah* would come to the market to buy food for his family. However, Abū Lahab would stand up and say: Merchants, raise the prices of your goods for Muhammad's (ﷺ) Companions so that they cannot make any bargain with you. You are aware of my wealth and loyalty, and I stand surety that there will be no loss for you!" They would then increase the prices of their various commodities, and the Companion would return to his children who were writhing with hunger without any food to give them. The merchants would go to Abū Lahab the next morning and make a profit on whatever food or clothing they bought, whereas the believers were left hungry and ill-clad.

❑ Yūnus reported from Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqās who said:

"I went out one night to pass urine and I heard a crackle under the urine: it was a piece of dried camel's skin. I took it and washed it, then I roasted it and crushed it in water, and I gained strength from it for three days."

❑ Look in how serious a condition the blockade placed the Muslims, and how privation drove them to eat unpalatable stuff! These sufferings grieved those of the Quraish who had some feeling of compassion: one of them would load his camel with provisions, lead it in the direction of the valley, and then leave it to reach the inhabitants, and this would alleviate their distress to some extent.

❑ How long did this blockade last? For three long years only the bond of faith kept the hearts together and gave them strength to bear the conditions. It was natural that the Muslims would want to escape from their predicament as quickly as possible. For a long time they were promised victory and supremacy but they found only an unfair rest. Here they were being oppressed in a land which had rejected them. No doubt their hearts were filled with anger at those idolaters who scoffed at all the high moral



standards, and who were sceptical of their ever becoming and prevalent as they were sceptical of the Hereafter. Even if those who were being oppressed did not seek help to save them from their misery, they could surely have sought it to the unbelievers ashamed and to instil manners into those who were insolent.

□ Revelation would, however, descend and demand of the Muslims that they should remain with certainty and steadfastness without looking forward to any retribution of that sort. They ought to praise Allāh (ﷻ) for making aware of the realities of faith and should derive from that the ability to resist the pressures which the days brought them.

﴿Whether We show you [Muhammad] something of that which We promise them or [whether We] cause you to die, still to Us is their return, and Allāh, moreover, is witness over what they do. And for every nation there is a messenger. When their messenger comes [on the Day of Judgement] it will be judged between them fairly, and they will not be wronged.﴾ (Qur'ān 10: 46-47)

□ The idolaters too were in hurry to end the struggle between themselves and the Muslims. They were in a hurry because they thought it was an easy victory, and because they did not believe in a resurrection after death or a reward and punishment. It never occurred to them that one day, sooner or later, a dawn would break over Makkah emptied of Idols, when the call of unity would resound in every corner, and when those imprisoned in the valley would be in control while the rulers would be prisoners seeking amnesty! Their conviction that today and tomorrow belonged to them make it easy for them to poke fun at such threats.

﴿And they say: "When will this promise be fulfilled, if you are truthful?" Say: "I have no power to hurt or benefit myself save that which Allāh wishes. For every nation there is an appointed time: When their time comes, then they cannot put it off an hour, nor hasten it." Say: "Have you thought: when His doom comes to you as a raid by night, or in the [busy] day; what is there of it that the guilty ones

desire to hasten? "Is it [only] then when it has happened to you, that you will believe? What! [Believe] now when [until now] you have been hastening it on [through disbelief]?" (Qur'ān 10: 48-51)

□ Acceptance of Islām and remaining steadfast to it was beyond any suspicion of ulterior motive. It is possible that a group of people could embrace a particular ideology with sincerity and conviction and yet seek personal benefit and advancement by it. Nevertheless, those early converts to Islām knew that the first sacrifice they would have to make on behalf of their faith was loss of all personal benefits and interests. I cannot see anything more capable of nurturing sincerity and dedication to a cause in any soul than this self-sacrifice for the truth and the truth alone. Moreover, the Qur'ān was very determined in its eradication of trafficking with faith, enriching oneself at its expense and elevating oneself in its name.

﴿Whoever wishes for the life of the world and its pomp, We shall repay them for their actions in it, and they will not be wronged thereby. Those are they for whom there is nothing in the Hereafter save the fire. [All] that they contrive here is vain and [all] that they are wont to do is fruitless.﴾ (Qur'ān 11: 15-16)

□ The *Ṣaḥābah* benefited tremendously from this training and perfected their chastity, purity and sincerity to such an extent that history can find no match for them. Thus when the crowns of the kings fell at their feet and the wealthy regions surrendered to their armies, it was the motivation and objective of the faith which occupied their minds before and after victory. They did not give any thought to gold or silver. All they were concerned with firstly and lastly was the establishment of prayer, the payment of *Zakāh* and the enjoinder of good and prohibition of evil.

□ During the days of the blockade the Muslims continued to meet the pilgrims during the season of pilgrimage, and they did not allow their straitened conditions to stop them from conveying the message to every delegation. Suppression does not kill a movement; on the contrary it increases its roots in depth and its

branches in length. The Islāmic movement gained many supporters during this period, and gained, besides that, from the fact that the idolaters had started to disgrace among themselves, and were questioning the correctness of what they were doing. In addition, a group of them had begun working to frustrate the boycott and cancel the pact written on the parchment.

□ The first person to make a successful attempt was Hishām ibn ‘Amr, who was very upset about the terrible plight of the Muslims. He went to Zuhayr ibn Abi Umayyah, whose mother was ‘Athikah bint ‘Abdul Muṭṭalib, and who was very concerned about the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Muslims. He said to Zuhayr: O Zuhayr, are you content to eat food, wear clothes and marry women while your (maternal) uncles are in such a state? I swear by God that if they were the uncles of Abū Hakam (That is, Abū Jahl) and you invited him to do what he invited you to do, he would never respond to you!”

□ “What can I do? I am one man. By God, if there was another man with me I should break the pact!”

□ “You have found another man!”

□ “You! who is he?”

□ Me.”

□ Let’s find a third.”

□ So Hishām went to Al Mut‘im ibn ‘Adi and said to him: “Are you content to let two families of the Banu ‘Abd Manaf perish? Do you witness that and approve of it? By God, if you allow them to do that, you will find them quicker to do the same to you!”

□ “What can I do? I am only one man.”

□ “I have found a second.”

□ “Who?”

□ “Myself.”

□ “Find a third for us.”

□ “I have done so.”

□ “Who?”

□ “Zuhayr ibn Abi Umayyah.”

❑ "Find a fourth for us."

❑ So he went to Abul Bukhturi ibn Hishām and told him what he told Al Mut'im.

Abul Bukhturi asked: "Is there anyone to help us in this?"

❑ "Yes."

❑ "Who?"

❑ Myself, Zuhayr and Al Mut'im."

❑ "Find a fifth for us."

❑ So he went to Zam'ah ibn ul Aswad and spoke to him, mentioning their blood relationship.

Zam'ah asked: "Is there any helper in this cause?"

❑ "Yes." And he named the others. They climbed to Khatm al Hajum, in upper Makkah, where they assembled and pledged to do their best to destroy the parchment. Zuhayr volunteered to make the first move.

So the next morning, when the clans had assembled in their various meeting-places, Zuhayr arrived at the Kab'ah, circumambulated it, and then turned to the people and shouted: "People of Makkah! Shall we eat food and wear clothes while Banū Hāshim are left to perish no-one buying from them or selling to them? By God, I shall not sit down until that cruel pact is destroyed!"

❑ Abū Jahl replied: "You are a liar! By God, It will not be destroyed!"

❑ Zam'ah ibn al-Aswad said: "It's you who are a liar, by God. We have not been pleased with it since it was written!"

❑ Abul Bukhturi said: "By God, Zam'ah is telling the truth. We are not pleased with what is written in it."

❑ Al Mut'im ibn 'Adi said: "You are both right and anybody who says otherwise is a liar!" Hishām ibn 'Amr said something similar. Then Abū Jahl said: "This conspiracy was hatched last night!"

❑ Al Mut'im strode toward the parchment to tear it up, but found that the worms had already eaten it except the words: "In

Your Name, O God.” (The Arabs used to begin their writings with these words).

### **The Year of Sorrow**

The Muslims who left the valley to resume their previous activities after Islām had spent in Makkah almost ten years packed with momentous events. However, they had hardly taken a breath of relief from their troubles when the Prophet (ﷺ) was afflicted with the loss of his wife Khadījah and his uncle Abū Ṭālib. In other words, he was afflicted in both his public and private life at the same time.

□ Khadījah was one of Allāh’s greatest blessings on Muhammad (ﷺ). She supported him in the most trying times and assisted him in fulfilling his mission. She participated with him in the perils of bitter struggle, and encouraged him with her person and her wealth. You will appreciate the value of this bounty when you realize that of the wives of the previous prophets, there were those who betrayed their husbands, disbelieved in them, sided with the idolaters and waged war against Allāh (ﷻ) and His messenger.

﴿Allah has cited an example for those who disbelieve: the wife of Noah and the wife of Lot, who were under two of Our righteous servants yet betrayed them so that they [the husbands] availed them naught against Allah and it was said [to them]: enter the Fire along with those who enter.﴾ (Qur’ān 66: 10)

□ On the other hand, Khadījah was the truthful among women. She showered her love on her husband in the hours of distress; she was the breath of peace and righteousness; she wiped his sweating forehead during the after-effects of Revelation; she remained with him for a quarter of a century; she respected his contemplation, withdrawal and natural characteristics long before Revelation came; she suffered the conspiracies of his

enemies, the miseries of the blockade and the pains of the *da'wah* after Revelation came; and she died while he was in his fiftieth year and she was over 65 years of age. He was faithful to her memory for the rest of his life.

□ As for Abū Ṭālib, he was of a confusing character. In the same measure as one admires his nobility in bringing up Muhammad (ﷺ), and his courage in defending him as a Prophet after he had proclaimed his Lord's Message and warned his closest relatives, one is perplexed at the way his life ended, and how he insisted with his last breath that he belonged to the faith of his ancestors. The Prophet (ﷺ) was extremely sad at Abū Ṭālib's death: was he not the fortress which protected the *daw'ah* from the attacks of the arrogant and the foolish? Here he lay dead, the man who had exploited his position and authority to defend his nephew and protect him from any calamity. Now the Quraish did not need to fear anyone any-more in their confrontation with Muhammad (ﷺ). It is reported that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: "The Quraish were unable to make me do anything which I disliked until the death of Abū Ṭālib."<sup>20</sup>

□ They became bold in insulting him and they even threw dust on his head. Ibn Mas'ūd reported.

"While the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) was praying near the House (that is, the Ka'bah), Abū Jahl and his colleagues were seated nearby, where there had been a camel slaughtered the previous day."

Abū Jahl said: "Which one of you will take the stomach of so and so's camel and throw it between Muhammad's (ﷺ) shoulders (on his back) when he prostrates?" The most unfortunate of them got up, and when the Prophet (ﷺ) prostrated he threw it on his back, and they all laughed, leaning

<sup>20</sup> A weak Ḥadīth narrated by Ishāq as *mursal* with a sound chain on the authority of 'Urwah ibn Al Zubayr.

on one another. I was standing there, looking, and if I had had the protection I should have taken it off his back. However, the Prophet (ﷺ) remained in prostration, not raising his head until someone went and told Fāṭimah. Although she was still a little girl, she came and removed it. Then she turned to them and started abusing them. When the Prophet (ﷺ) finished praying he raised his voice and supplicated against them. It was his habit, whenever he supplicated, to supplicate three times, and whenever he asked, to ask three times.

□ "Three times he said: "O Allāh (ﷻ), seize the Quraish." When they heard this they stopped laughing, fearful of his supplication. Then he said: "O Allāh (ﷻ), seize Abū Jahl ibn Hishām; 'Utbaḥ ibn Rabi'ah, Shaybah ibn Rabi'ah, Al Walīd ibn 'Utbaḥ, Umayyah ibn Khalaf, 'Uqbah ibn Abi Mu'it," and he mentioned the seventh whom I do not remember. By Him Who sent Muhammad (ﷺ) with the truth, I indeed saw those whom he called killed on the day of Badr and thrown into the trench (which was dug for the dead after the battle)."<sup>21</sup>

□ Makkah had proceeded along the path of unbelief until she had penetrated deeply into it and reached its limits. Now she was delighting in polluting the prostraters with filth, and was bent double with laughter at the sight of its sliding down their shoulders. There was no space left in these hearts for a speck of goodness. In Arabian society, a daughter lived of her father, proud of his strength and enjoying his protection. What feelings would pass through a man's heart to see himself in a position where he had to be defended by his daughter while he himself was helpless? Muhammad (ﷺ) suppressed his hurt and suffered all the pains for Allāh's sake. Soon he began to think of redirecting his message to another town, which perhaps might

<sup>21</sup> A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī, Muslim, Al Nasā'ī and Aḥmad. It is Abū Is-hāq who said he mentioned "the seventh whom I do not remember." He was Al Sabai', as Muslim's narration clarifies. In a version of Bukhārī and Aḥmad, however, the seventh was 'Amarah ibn Al - Walid.



respond more quickly and favourably. He consequently took Zayd ibn Hāritha along with him and headed toward the tribe of Thaqīf, seeking their support.

### **In Ṭā'if**

The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) went to Ṭā'if where the Thaqīf lived. It is about 50 miles from Makkah, and he travelled there and back on foot. When he reached it he approached the men in the leadership and spoke to them about Islām, calling them to submit to Allāh (ﷻ). However, they all gave him a bad reception and responded harshly. He spent about ten days visiting them in their homes, but to no avail. When the Prophet (ﷺ) despaired of favourable response from them, he asked them to keep his visit a secret. He feared that if the matter should reach the ears of the Quraish, it would increase their enmity and malice.

The Thaqīf, however, were even ruder than expected. They replied, saying: "Get out of our country!" They incited the youngest and street rabble to pelt him with stones. Zayd (رضي الله عنه) tried in vain to defend him and in the process his head was injured. The Prophet (ﷺ) himself sustained such serious injuries that blood began to flow freely from them. The pursuers forced them to take refuge in garden belonging to 'Utbah and Shybah, sons of Rabi'ah. There he sat in the shade of a grapevine, seeking rest and security. The gardeners, who were around, chased away the rabble, and the Prophet (ﷺ) sat there, reflecting on his miserable condition. Memories of his sufferings at the hands of the Quraish came back to him: he was dragging behind him a heavy chain of consecutive failures. So he cried out:

"O Allāh (ﷻ), to you I complain of the weakness of my strength, the meagreness of my strategy and my insignificance to people. You are the Most Merciful of those who show mercy; You are the Lord of the oppressed and You are my Lord. To a distant person who will despise me, or to an enemy to whom you have granted power over me? If you are not angry with me then I do not care. However, Your pardon is best for me. I seek refuge in the light of Your Countenance, for which darkness has

become illuminated and upon which the prosperity of this world and the Hereafter stands, from your anger befalling me, or Your displeasure afflicting me. It is Your right to scold until you are pleased, and there is no strength or power save in You.”

□ The feelings of kinship stirred in the hearts of Rabi‘ah’s sons as they summoned a Christian slave of theirs, who was called ‘Addās, and asked him to take a handful of grapes to the Prophet (ﷺ).

When ‘Addās placed them in front of him, he said: “In the Name of Allāh (ﷻ),” then ate them.

□ Thereupon ‘Addās said: “This phrase is not used by the people of this land!”

□ The Prophet (ﷺ) then asked him: “What land are you from?”

□ “I am a Christian from Nineveh.”

□ “From the town of the pious man Jonah, son of Matta?”

□ Where did you hear about Jonah?”

□ “That is my brother. He was a prophet and I am a prophet.” ‘Addās bent over the prophet’s hands and feet and kissed them.

□ One of Rabi‘ah’s sons said to the other: “Now he has spoiled your slave for you!”

□ When ‘Addās returned they asked him what the matter was all about and he replied that there was no-one better than that man.<sup>22</sup> The two brothers then tried to belittle Muhammad’s (ﷺ) status and make their slave stick to his former religion as though they were upset at the thought of Muhammad (ﷺ) leaving Ṭā’if with any gain.

□ Muhammad (ﷺ) returned to Makkah, the town which had expelled the choicest of its people, some of whom migrated to Abyssinia and others who were forced to bear the perpetual persecution or flee to the mountaintops.

<sup>22</sup> This story is narrated by Ibn Ishāq with a sound chain from Muhammad ibn Ka‘b of the Banu Qurayzah as a *mursal* Ḥadīth. However, the statement “If you refuse, then keep it a secret”, and the whole of the *du‘ā* starting “O Allāh (ﷻ) to You I complain....” He quotes without reference. Likewise Ibn Jarīr narrated it through Ibn Is-hāq. Al Ṭabarānī also narrated the story from the Ḥadīth of ‘Abdullāh Ibn Ja‘far (ﷺ) in a shortened form and the *du‘ā* is mentioned in a similar manner. Al Haythami said: “In the chain is Ibn Ishāq and he is a fraud, but the rest of them in the chain are reliable. Thus the Ḥadīth is weak.

Zayd (ﷺ) asked: "How can you confront those who threw you out?"

□ The Prophet (ﷺ) replied: "O Zayd (ﷺ), Allāh (ﷻ) is going to provide release from what you see."

□ Undoubtedly the news from the Thaqīf had preceded him to the Quraish. Thus the Prophet (ﷺ) thought it best not to enter Makkah until he could assure safety for himself and his *Da'wah*. He sent a message to Al Mut'im ibn 'Adi, appealing for protection to continue preaching the Message of his Lord! Al-Mut'im acceded to this request and gathered his sons, who armed themselves and stood at the corners of the Ka'bah.

Al-Mut'im himself mounted his camel and called out: "O assembly of Quraish! I have given Muhammad (ﷺ) protection, so let none of you accost him."

The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) entered, and when he reached the Ka'bah he prayed two *raka't*. Then he went to his home with Al-Mut'im and his sons guarding him.<sup>23</sup>

It is reported that Abū Jahl asked Al-Mut'im: "Are you granting asylum or are you a follower, a Muslim?" He replied that he had only granted asylum, to which Abū Jahl said: "We have granted asylum to whom you have granted asylum!" The Prophet (ﷺ) always remembered this deed of Al-Mut'im, for he said on the day of Badr when the Makkans were taken captives. "If Al-Mut'im were alive I would have released these rascals for his sake."

□ Al-Mut'im, like Abū Tālib, remained in the religion of his ancestors. He was also like him in his courage and assistance to others. Abū Jahl wanted to ridicule a Prophet (ﷺ) who needed asylum! He might have wondered why did a group of angels did not descend to protect him. Thus when he saw him, he said: "Here is your Prophet (ﷺ), clan of 'Abd Manaf!"

□ 'Utbah ibn Rabi'ah said in reply, "And is it not possible that there should be a Prophet and a king from among us?"

<sup>23</sup> I did not find any claim for this narration. Ibn Jarīr also mentioned something similar without a chain. He said: "Someone mentioned.." and perhaps this someone is Al Amawi in his *Maghāzi* since Ibn Kathīr also ascribed it to him without a chain.

□ When the Prophet (ﷺ) was informed of Abū Jahl's question and 'Utbah's reply, he said: "As for you, 'Utbah, you did not get angry for Allāh's sake; you got angry for yourself."

This was because he said it out of clannishness and not out of faith. The Prophet (ﷺ) continued: "And as for you, Abū Jahl, by Allāh (ﷻ), it will not be long before you shall laugh little and cry much. And as for you, people of the Quraish, by Allāh (ﷻ), it will not be long before you enter into that which you are denying." In this comment there is enough evidence of the Prophet's (ﷺ) confidence in a bright future, even though the present might have been heavy with sufferings.

□ The Prophet (ﷺ) returned to Makkah to resume his previous methods of presenting Islām and conveying the message of Allāh, and while he was in pursuit of his struggle the events of the *Isrā'* and *Mir'āj* took place.

### **The *Isrā'* and *Mir'āj***

By the word *Isrā'* is meant that strange journey which started from the Sacred Mosque in Makkah and ended at the Farthest Mosque in Jerusalem. By the word *Mir'āj* is meant the ascension, which took place after this journey, into the layers of the heavens where to that point the knowledge of created beings stops and whose extent no-one can fathom, then the return to the Sacred Mosque in Makkah. The Qur'ān has referred to both journeys in different Sūrahs. The *Isrā'* and the reason for it are mentioned as follows:

﴿Glorified be He Who carried His servant by night from the Inviolable Place of Worship to the Far Distant Place of Worship, whose neighbourhood We have blessed, that We might show him Our tokens! Behold! He, only He, is the Hearer, the Seer.﴾  
(Qur'ān 17: 1)

The *Mir'āj* and its fruits are mentioned as follows:

﴿Indeed he saw him [that is, the Angel Gabriel] yet another time, By the lote-tree of the utmost boundary, is the Garden of Abode. When that which shrouds did enshroud the lote-tree, They turned not aside

nor yet was overbold. Indeed, he saw one of the greater revelations of his Lord.) (Qur'ān 53: 13-18)

Thus the reason for the *Isrā'*, as the āyah (verse) states, is that Allāh (ﷻ) wanted to show His servant some of His (ﷻ) signs; and the other āyāt explain that the Prophet (ﷺ) did actually see some of these greater signs.

□ The scholars of old have differed over whether this miraculous journey was in spirit alone or in spirit as well as body. The vast majority uphold the later view. Dr Haykal, however, has an unusual view. He considers it to be a mental and spiritual reinforcement of the oneness of existence throughout eternity in a period of unique spiritual enlightenment occurring to a pure and noble human being like Muhammad (ﷺ). During this period of enlightenment, in which he could see the whole of creation, he was able to absorb all the realities of faith and worldly life and witness all manner of reward and punishment, etc.

□ The *Isrā'* was thus real, although, according to him, it was spiritual not physical. Nevertheless it was in wakefulness, not in sleep. Thus it was not a true dream, as some people think, but an actual event happening exactly as he explains it. He goes on to say: "And no power can undertake that ascent except one who is beyond the understanding of human nature."

□ The truth is that the boundaries between the spiritual powers and the material powers have begun to fade, and what people considered easy in the spiritual world is not impossible in the world of matter. I believe of matter. I believe that now science has taken away the veil from the secrets of the universe, the problem of matter resembles the problem of the spirit: no-one knows its fullest extent except the Sustainer of the heavens and the earth. People have remained bewildered since they have learnt that the atom represents a solar system within itself, revolving around an axis. Although it is only a mere speck, it contains tremendous energy which, if released, could reduce everything to ashes.

□ The Prophet (ﷺ) was taken on this night journey and ascension. But how? Did he ride some vehicle which travelled

faster than the speed of sound, as people have lately invented? He rode the *burāq*, a being whose step reached the furthest extremity as if it walked with the speed of light. The word *burāq* is derived from *barq*, which means lightening. In other words, the power of electricity was used on this journey. However, the human body in its ordinary state cannot possibly be transported through the atmosphere at the speed of flashing light: there must be some special preparation which protects its various parts and fortifies them for this distant journey.

□ I believe that the narrations of the opening of the Prophet's (ﷺ) chest, the washing of his heart and its restoration are the symbols of this inevitable preparation. The story of the *Isrā'* and *Mir'āj* is flooded with such symbols conveying special meanings, although they are imperceptible to the simple-minded. The *Isrā'* and *Mir'āj* happened to the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) in person at a time when his spirit had reached its peak of enlightenment and the density of his body had decreased to the point where it had freed itself of most of the laws which controlled it.

□ Probing the reality of this journey and following all its stages with minute observation depends upon the ability of the human mind to perceive the reality of matter and spirit and the power and characteristics with which Allāh (ﷻ) has endowed it. Therefore we shall leave this discussion for one which is easier and more beneficial. We shall discuss those main features connected with Islām in its capacity as a universal message and as a clearly defined system of law.

□ The story of the *Isrā'* and *Mir'āj* should concern us from this point of view. Do you not see that psychology was not analysed deeply and did not flourish until the day when the world disentangled itself from discussions on the spirit and blind grouping into its importance.

Why was the journey first to Jerusalem, and why did it not proceed directly from the Sacred Mosque to the lote-tree of the utmost boundary?

□ This takes just back into ancient history. For long epochs the prophets came specifically to the Children of Israel, and



Jerusalem remained the centre of revelation, the lighthouse of the world and the metropolis of the chosen people of Allāh (ﷻ). When the Jews ignored the sanctity of revelation and broke the divine laws, Allāh's curse fell upon them and He decided to deprive them forever of prophethood. Thus revelation came to Muhammad (ﷺ), showing that the spiritual leadership of the world had been taken from one nation and handed over to another, from one country to another, from the Children of Isreal to the descendants of Isma'īl. This privation enraged the Jews and led them to reject it outright:

«Evil is that for which they sell their soul: that they should disbelieve in that which Allāh has revealed, grudging that Allāh should reveal of His bounty whom He will of His bondmen. They have incurred anger upon anger.» (Qur'ān 2: 90)

□ The will of Allāh (ﷻ) was done, however, and the new nation accepted its role. The Arab Prophet (ﷺ) inherited the teachings of Ibrāhīm (ﷺ), Isma'īl (ﷺ), Ishāq (ﷺ) and Ya'qub (ﷺ), and he undertook the struggle in order to spread them. He was successful in gathering the people to them, and thus he joined the present to the past.

□ It is therefore natural that all should be united in a single reality by Islām's observance of the Farthest Mosque as the third of its sanctuaries. Similarly the Prophet's journeying by night to it was a mark of respect for the faith which had of old been nurtured in its precincts. Moreover, Allāh (ﷻ) gathered all the previous prophets who brought guidance in this land and around it to form a reception for the bearer of the final Message. The prophets attested to the truth of one another, and each prepared the ground for the next. It is a fact that Allāh (ﷻ) took a covenant from the prophets of the Children of Israel in this regard.

«When Allāh made [His] covenant with the Prophets, [He said]: behold that which I have given you of the Scripture and knowledge. And afterward there will come to you a messenger, confirming that which you possess. You will believe in him and you will help him. He said: do you agree, and will you take up My burden [which I lay



you] in this [matter]? They answered: we agree. He said: then bear witness. I shall be a witness with you.》 (Qur'ān 3: 81)

□ In the authentic sources it is recorded that the Messenger led his brother prophets in two *rak'ahs* of prayer in the Mosque. This leadership was a plain acknowledgement that Islām was Allāh's last message to the mankind and had taken its final form in the hands of Muhammad (ﷺ) after the noble prophets of Allāh (ﷺ) had prepared the ground for it.

□ To reveal the status of Muhammad (ﷺ) and the faith he preached is not to eulogize him at celebrations organized in his honour. It is to explain the undeniable truth, which was established from the moment heaven undertook the responsibility to guide earth. He came at the time which was ordained for him and which was the most suitable.

□ The struggle which Muhammad (ﷺ) bore on his shoulders on behalf of the *da'wah* had exposed him to a violent storm of hatred and calumnies and shattered the calm of his followers. Since they had begun to believe in him they had never been able to taste the sweet comfort of family and wealth. The latest of these problems encountered by the *da'wah* was the Thaqīf's expulsion of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his re-entry into Makkah under the protection of an idolater. The contempt with which the people had looked at him since he had begun his preaching made him seek refuge in the Lord of the mankind with complaint and hope.

□ Thus as a consolation to the Prophet (ﷺ) and as a blessing, Allāh (ﷻ) prepared this heavenly journey to comfort his heart and make him aware that He had been watching him ever since the day he professed His unity and worship of Him and started to teach the mankind of His unity and worship. He would say: "If you are not angry with me, then I do not care."<sup>24</sup>

□ Thus that night he knew for certain that Allāh's pleasure with him was boundless and that his position among the best of those whom Allāh (ﷻ) had selected was first and foremost.

<sup>24</sup> This Hadīth has already been proved weak in the story of Ṭa'if.

The *Isrā'* and *Mi'rāj* took place almost midway in the span of prophethood, which lasted for twenty-three years, and so they were a balm for the hardships of the past and a planting of the seeds of success for the future. The sight of some of Allāh's greatest signs in the kingdom of the heavens and the earth must have had a decisive effect in belittling the plots of the unbelievers and their numbers while telling of their ultimate fate.

□ On this journey Muhammad (ﷺ) knew that his message would spread throughout the earth and settle in the fertile valleys of the Nile and the Euphrates, and that these regions would be wrested from the hands of the Persian fire-worshippers and Trinitarian Romans. In fact, the residents of these places would become the torch-bearers of Islām from generation to generation. This is the meaning of his seeing the Nile and the Euphrates in the heavens. It does not mean that the waters of these two rivers spring from Heaven, as simple-minded and foolish people believe.

□ Al Tirmidhī reported, for example, that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: "When one of you is given the *rayhān* sweet basil, he should not refuse it for it has come from heaven."<sup>25</sup>

Does this prove that the *rayhān* is from Heaven, while we are able to pick its flowers in the fields and gardens?

### The Wisdom of the *Isrā'*

Apart from that Allāh (ﷻ) provides the opportunity for His Messengers to observe the great manifestations of His power so that their hearts might be filled with confidence in Him and dependence on Him when they confront the allied forces of the

<sup>25</sup> A weak Ḥadīth narrated by Al Tirmidhī through Hanan, who reported from 'Abū 'Uthmān Al-Nahdī as a *mursal* Ḥadīth. Apart from it being *mursal*, Hanan is unknown and only Ibn Ḥibbān authenticated him. If the Ḥadīth was sound, it would be more fitting to take its surface meaning, which is that the *rayhān* is originally from heaven. This does not mean that whatever we pick in the fields is from heaven also, as the author thinks. Do you not see that when a man says about water in a glass, "this is from Heaven," he is telling the truth and this meaning is clear? Similar to this is the authentic saying of the Prophet (ﷺ) that four rivers are from heaven. This means that they were originally from heaven, not that they now spring from there.

unbelievers and attack their standing authority. Before sending Mūsa (Moses), Allāh (ﷻ) wished him to see His wonderful powers and so ordered him to throw down his staff.

﴿He said: "Cast it down, O Moses!" So he cast it down, and Behold! It was a snake, gliding. He said: "Grasp it and do not fear We shall return it to its former state. "And thrust your hand into your armpit; it will come out white without harm [that will be] another token. 'That We may show thee [Some] of Our greater portents.﴾ (Qur'ān 20: 19-23)

When his heart was filled with wonder at the sight of these great signs, Allāh (ﷻ) then said to him:

﴿Go to Pharaoh! Behold He has transgressed [the bounds].﴾  
(Qur'ān 20: 24)

□ You are aware that the fruit of the *Isrā'* and *Mir'āj* was that Allāh (ﷻ) showed the Prophet (ﷺ) these great signs, and you may say: "This happened almost twelve years after prophethood, contrary to the case of Moosa (Moses) (ﷺ)." This is true, and the secret of it is what we have already explained; that miracles in the lives of the previous prophets were meant to subdue their people into belief in their truthfulness. Miracles are thus a support for them, when forced with the wild accusations of their enemies. However, The life of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was above this level.

□ The Qur'ān took responsibility from the first day for convincing those who had understanding, and miracles came into the Prophet's (ﷺ) life as a form of distinction to his personality and consolation to himself. This did not disturb or paralyse the normal rational method that the Qur'ān employed.<sup>26</sup> The idolaters themselves had challenged the Prophet (ﷺ) to ascend into the sky and the reply came from Allāh (ﷻ).

<sup>26</sup> See my book '*Aqā'id al-Muslim*.

﴿Say [O Muhammad]: My Lord be glorified! Am I nothing but a mortal messenger?﴾ (Qur'ān 17: 93)

Afterwards, when he did ascend into the heavens, he never once mentioned that this was in reply to the challenge. The affair was, as we have mentioned, purely a distinction and additional information granted by Allāh (ﷻ) to His servant.

### The Completion of the Building

In the story of the *Isrā'* and *Mi'rāj* you will observe the close bonds which link all the Prophets of Allāh (ﷻ). This concept is a deep-rooted Islāmic principle.

﴿The messenger believes in that which has been revealed to him from his Lord and [so do] the believers. Each one believes in Allah and His angels and His scriptures and His messengers, we make no distinction between any of His messengers.﴾ (Qur'ān 2: 285)

The greeting that were exchanged between the Prophet (ﷺ) and his fellow Messengers give added strength to this bond. In every heaven where Allāh (ﷻ) had a prophet reside, Muhammad (ﷺ) was received with these words: "Welcome, righteous brother!"

□ Any difference between the prophets is a falsehood concocted by those nations who deviated from the straight path, or, more correctly, by the priests and tricksters who trade in religion. In response to that, Muhammad (ﷺ) openly declared that he was a Prophet sent to complete the building which was started by those who preceded him. He said:

"The likeness of me and the prophets before me is the likeness of a man who built a house and perfected and beautified it except for the placing of one brick in one of its corners. The people began circumambulating it with pleasure and wonder! And they were saying: "Will this brick not be set in place?" I am

that brick and I am the seal of the prophets."<sup>27</sup>

❑ The religions derived from divine revelation are well-known. Not included among them, naturally, are those which the people invented for themselves of idol worship and religious rites such as Hinduism, Buddhism, etc. Neither are those cults which have arisen in recent times under the patronage of Western imperialism and which have acquired many supporters in order to strangle the East and prevent the Muslims from breaking their bondage and rescuing from the slavery of the imperialist. Examples of these are Qadianism and Baha'ism.

❑ It is possible if intentions are sincere and truth is sought that just foundations for religious unity could be set up, and these should be based on respect for common principles and prevention of biased exploitation of the differences until such time as they are eliminated or reduced. Islām, which considers its teachings as a continuation of the early prophecies and as a final brick in its ancient building, will be the first to welcome such a move and support it.

### **The Pure Nature**

On the night of the *Isrā'* and *Mir'āj* the primary characteristic of this faith was highlighted, that it is the religion of nature. The Ḥadīth is as follows:

"Then I was brought a vessel containing wine and another containing milk. I took the milk and he (that is, the angel) said: "It is the true nature which you and your followers stand for."<sup>28</sup>

The purity of nature is the essence of Islām, and it is impossible for the gates of heaven to be opened for a person whose inner nature is corrupt and whose mind is sick. A corrupt nature is like an eye infected with conjunctivitis which

<sup>27</sup> A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim on the authority of Abū Hurairah (رضي الله عنه).

<sup>28</sup> A sound Ḥadīth. It is part of the Ḥadīth reported by Sa'sa ibn Mālik on the *Isrā'*.

discharges impurities as pus. Although these impurities may be hidden under a brightly coloured covering and people may be deceived by it, the Lord of men will never be deceived.

□ The day when the acts of worship themselves become a screen for an impure nature, they will be considered the lowest grade of wicked sins. The more the mankind advances in civilization the more it indulges in show and hypocrisy and the more it binds itself to strenuous acts of worship and traditions. Most of these affected airs are nothing but curtains which conceal the bright glare of nature and suppress its freshness and purity. There is nothing more hated by Allāh (ﷻ) than that these fetters should be fabricated in the name of religion and that souls should be left imprisoned and miserable in them.

### The institution of Prayer

In the *Mi'rāj* the five daily prayers were instituted. They were prescribed in heaven so that they might be a *Mir'āj* which elevated the mankind just as its lusts pulled it down to earth. However, the prayers which Allāh (ﷻ) prescribed are not the prayers performed today by many people. The sign of true prayers is that the performers keep away from despicable things and are ashamed to repeat them. Thus if prayers, which are so often repeated, do not raise those who pray to this level, then they are false prayers. "Prayer is a cleanser,"<sup>29</sup> as the Sunnah says. However it is a cleanser for a living person, not for a putrid corpse. Purification removes the accidental dust which accumulates on the living heart. Those things which frequently affect people in their lives and corrode their minds have even more means to remove them. A

---

<sup>29</sup> I am not aware of this wording. Perhaps the author mentioned the meaning. One of the Prophet's (ﷺ) saying in this connection is the following: "What do you think, if there were a stream at the door of one of you and he bathed in it five times a day, would there be any dirt left on him? That is like the five prayers: Allāh (ﷻ) wiped away sins with them." Narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim on the authority of Abū Hurairah (رضي الله عنه), and also by the two of them in the chapter "The actions of Allāh's slaves" on the authority of Jābir (رضي الله عنه).

Ḥadīth of the Prophet (ﷺ) is as follows:

"A man's deviations as regards his family, wealth, children, self and neighbours are expiated by fasting, prayers, charity, enjoining good and forbidding evil."<sup>30</sup>

Prayer will help people whose hearts are dead, although they will always remain in existence until their hearts are revived or they are buried in the earth.

□ Many ḥadīths have been reported which state that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) saw on this journey a variety of scenes depicting the rewards of the righteous and the punishments of the wicked. The biographies of the Prophet (ﷺ) convey these wonderful scenes as if they took place during the night of the *Isrā'* and *Mir'āj*. The truth is however, that they were seen in a dream on another night which was normal like all the others, as is confirmed in the authentic sources.<sup>31</sup>

### **The Quraish and the *Isrā'***

On the morning after this famous incident the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) spoke to the people of what happened to him and the greater signs of his Lord which he saw. As for those who denied

---

<sup>30</sup> A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim on the authority of Hudhayfah ibn al-Yaman.

<sup>31</sup> This is a reference to the Ḥadīth of Samurah ibn Jundub (رضي الله عنه), narrated by Bukhārī in several places of his compilation, and by Aḥmed also in his *Musnad*. However this does not negate the possibility of his having seen some rewards and punishments on the night of the *Isrā'*. In fact, this is as Anas (رضي الله عنه) reports in a Ḥadīth from the Prophet (ﷺ): "When my Lord took me up to the heavens I passed by a people with long claws of tin with which they were scratching their faces and chests. I asked: Who are these, Jibrīl (رضي الله عنه)?" He replied: "These are the ones who used to eat the flesh of men and attack their honour." This is narrated by Aḥmad and Abū Dāwūd with a sound chain. It is also narrated as *mursal* but *musnad* is more sound. Anas (رضي الله عنه) reports another Ḥadīth about his seeing on the night of the *Isrā'* the orators who do not practice what they preach. Ibn Hibbān narrated it in his authentic collection. On this matter there are a number of other Ḥadīths reported by various *Ṣaḥābah*, some of which are mentioned by Ibn Kathīr in his *Tafsīr* of *Sūrat al Isrā'*, and may be used for further reference.



the possibility of Revelation coming to earth: do you think that they would have accepted it happening in heaven? They quickly called one another to gather and listen to this strange wonder and thus strengthen their rejection of him. Some of them challenged him to describe Jerusalem if he had really seen it during the night.

□ Jābir (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said:

"When the Quraish denounced me, I began describing it as I had watched it!"<sup>32</sup>

□ We do not attach much importance to the way in which the *Isrā'* and *Mir'āj* took place. The two incidents were realities and they left their impressions on the mind of the Prophet (ﷺ). He became contented with the praises of his Creator and paid less attention to the ravings of the unbelievers and ignorant people. He stepped up his *da'wah* activities with the conviction that every day which passed brought him a step closer to certain victory.

□ Some writers claim that a group of Muslims apostated after the *Isrā'* and *Mir'āj* because they disbelieved it. Dr Haikal even adds that the Muslims weakened when this tale was spread on everyones lips and the idolaters dismissed its authenticity. This is all a mistake since neither does the historical evidence prove it<sup>33</sup> nor does objective reasoning lead to such a conclusion.

□ The Prophet (ﷺ) continued along his old path, warning by Revelation everyone whom he met, joining gatherings with his call, attending the seasonal gatherings, following the pilgrims

<sup>32</sup> A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī, Muslim, Ibn Ḥibbān and others. It is supported by a long Ḥadīth narrated by Aḥmad on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās and its chain is sound.

<sup>33</sup> This is refuted by the Ḥadīth of Ibn 'Abbās in the Musnad: "The Prophet (ﷺ) was taken to Jerusalem by night and he was returned the same night. He spoke to them of his journey to Jerusalem and of their caravan. Upon this some people said: 'Shall we believe what Muhammad (ﷺ) says?' They apostated and became unbelievers, and Allāh (ﷻ) struck their necks off with Abū Jahl.... Its chain is good. Also Ibn Kathīr says in his *Tafsīr*: "It is narrated by Al Nasā'ī and its chain is sound. I say: this is only one of the many proofs of one fact that the *Isrā'* was in body and soul, a fact to which the respected author does not attach much importance.

into their homes, walking to the market squares of 'Ukkāz, Majnah and Dhul Majāz, all the time inviting the people to discard the idols and listen to the guidance of the Qur'ān. He asked about the homes of every tribe and visited them. Soliciting them to believe in him, follow him and shield him.

□ However, his uncle, Abū Lahab, would walk behind him, shouting; "Do not obey him. He is an apostate and a liar!"

The reply of the tribes would invariably be: "Your family and relatives know you best! And they would cruelly reject him.

□ Among the tribes visited by the Prophet (ﷺ) and which rejected him were the following: Fazārah, Ghassān, Murrah, Ḥanīfah, Sulaym, 'Abs, Ba nu al Nadr, Kindah, Kalb, 'Adhrah, Hadarimah, Banū Āmir ibn Ṣa'sa'ah, Muḥārib ibn Ḥafṣah, etc. He never found an open heart or a broad mind in any of them. On the contrary, all travellers and residents were advising one another to keep away from him, and they would point him out. A man would return to his tribe from afar and be received by them with these words: "Beware of the man from the Quraish lest he misguide you."

□ In spite of this and in that suffocating atmosphere, the Prophet (ﷺ) never allowed frustration to befog his mind. He continued patiently in his struggle for the *da'wah* until finally providence announced the coming of relief.

## Chapter Four

### The Mass Hijrah: Its Causes and Effects

The idolaters of Makkah deprived themselves of all benefit when they rejected the message and sat on the wayside, threatening and debarring the believers from Allāh's way, wishing it were crooked. Even though their false propaganda succeeded in preventing many tribes from entering Islām, the truth had eventually to prevail, and those who were misguided and deceived were to return to it provided that its supporters remained faithful to it, eager to spread it, and were patient and steadfast. Allāh (ﷻ) ordained that a group should arise and rescue Islām from the environment which rejected it, provide it with land and stability after it had experienced isolation and homelessness, and enable it to blaze a trail through life when the huge obstacles had been removed from its path.

□ This change came about at the hands of delegations which came from Yathrib to Makkah during the pilgrimage season. The people of Yathrib<sup>1</sup> held the distinction over the rest of the Arabs of being neighbours of the Jews and acquainted with the ideology of *tawhīd*. It is possible that the Jews used to converse with them

---

<sup>1</sup> I see that the author uses the word Yathrib instead of Al-Madīnah or Ṭibah. Beside this word being of *Jahili* origin, there is a disregard here of Allāh's naming of it as ṭibah, as the Ḥadīth of Jābir ibn Samurah states: "They used to call Madīnah, Yathrib, then the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) named it Ṭibah", narrated by Muslim and Al Tayalisi and the wording belongs to the latter. Muslim's wording is: "Allāh (ﷻ) indeed named Al-Madīnah Ṭabah. "Aḥmed narrated it also in both forms. In this connection Bukhārī also narrated ḥadīths from Abū Ḥumayd, Muslim narrated from Zayd ibn Thabit and Aḥmad narrated from Faṭimah bint Qays, and their chains are all sound.

□ The best that we can derive from these ḥadīths is that this usage is disliked (*makrūh*) and that the use of Ṭabah or Ṭibah is advisable (*mustaḥabb*). In fact Aḥmad narrated on the authority of Al-Barra ibn 'Azib that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Whoever calls Madīnah, *Yathrib*, should ask Allāh (ﷻ) forgiveness: It is Ṭabah, it is Ṭabah," Al Haythami also narrates it on the authority of Abū Y'alā and says that its chain is strong. However, in Aḥmad's chain there is Yazīd ibn Abi Ziyāda, who is weak. If this Ḥadīth is weak, the previous ones are sufficient evidence. The etiquette (of calling Madīnah by its correct name) was abused by most people so I wanted to draw attention to it.

on matters of religion and deplore their worshipping of idols.

Whenever the controversy raged hot, the Jews would say to them: "God is about to send a Prophet whom we shall follow and we shall help him to destroy you as 'Ad and Iram were destroyed!" The strange thing, however, is that the Jews were the first to disbelieve the Prophet the day he appeared among them, and the Qur'ān decries this contradictory behaviour of theirs.

﴿And when there comes them a Scripture from Allah, confirming that in their possession though before that they were asking for a signal triumph over those who disbelieved and when there comes them that which they know [to be the truth] they disbelieve it.﴾  
(Qur'ān 2: 89)

❑ On the other hand, the Arabs, who were threatened with his coming, opened their hearts to him. When the pilgrimage season approached and the tribes of Yathrib arrived in Makkah, they saw the Prophet (ﷺ) inviting the people to Allāh (ﷻ), and some of them said: "O people, by God, you know that this is the one with whom the Jews threaten you. So do not let them precede you to (belief in) him."

❑ The talk of Islām began to spread gradually in Madīnah, and although it was not given a warm welcome, it was, nevertheless, not received with animosity. The elements of hatred and opposition to which it had grown accustomed in Makkah turned into elements of respect and acceptance here. Scarcely three years had passed since the new helpers had heard of Islām then they became its refuge and fortress.

### **Differences Between the Two Towns**

Makkah had lived a life of ease and tranquillity for a long time, assured of its food from all sources. This comfortable state of affairs was due to two factors: (1) the mercantile skill of its people: and (2) the religious status of its sanctuary. Both of these factors attracted benefits to the city and it grew so rich that

it became haughty, and it became so congested that it choked. Then it was overtaken by that which overtakes all societies upon which fortune and wealth smile: pride, hard-heartedness and inflexibility. So when Islām appeared in it and Muhammad (ﷺ) called towards the truth, it rejected him and all those who followed him. Stubbornness possessed it from the first day and it announced that its centre, which was a capital for paganism and idolatry and a focal point for pilgrims, would be lost if people listened to this religion and allowed it to take root.

□ The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) tried his utmost to convince the people of Makkah that their acceptance of the truth would not deprive them one iota of the benefits that they were enjoying. Nevertheless, the oppressors stuck doggedly to disbelief: And they said:

﴿“If we follow the guidance with you, we would be snatched away from our land.” Have We not established for them a secure sanctuary [Makkah], to which are brought fruits of all kinds, a provision from Ourselves, but most of them know not.﴾

(Qur’ān 28: 57)

□ Henceforth the leaders of Makkah were at war with Islām, and they considered it to be the defence of their material and economic well-being besides other factors. The result of these wars is well known.

﴿And how many a town [population] have We destroyed, which was thankless for its means of livelihood [disobeyed Allah, and His Messengers, by doing evil deeds and crimes]! And those are their dwellings, which have not been inhabited after them except a little. And verily! We have been the inheritors.﴾ (Qur’ān 28: 58)

□ As for the conditions in Yathrib, they were the opposite. Deep rooted enmity between its people had drained their blood, destroyed their unity and made them preoccupied with one another.. The perpetual wars had brought them down to such

depths that the intelligent were grieved and longed for salvation. The Aus and the Khazraj, who were originally of one stock, were suffering under the yoke of this deadly rivalry, so much, so that, their children inherited it from the cradle and grew up to be enemies of one another. The germ of this antagonism was laid by no other than the Jews.

### **The Jews' Handiwork**

The Jews who had settled in Madīnah and its environs had fled to the Arabian peninsula from the persecution of the Christians, who had long tried to Christianize or exterminate them. The reason for this was the Jewish attitude towards Jesus and his mother, and the Christians belief that the Jews had crucified Jesus.

□ There is no doubt that the Jews are the active people, and wherever they settle, they make great efforts to control the financial sector. Some of them do not mind using cunning and deception to attain their goals. In the Arabian Peninsula they found themselves a minority, and were afraid that if they clashed openly with the Arabs they would be annihilated. They thus resorted to the sowing of enmity between kith and kin. Soon their efforts bore fruit and the Arabs began to destroy one another in a series of wars which had no justification whatsoever. In the meantime the Jews grew stronger, their wealth increased, their fortresses were secured and their influence began to be feared.

□ A few years before the *Hijra* there occurred a ferocious battle, the battle of Buāth, between the Aus and the Khazraj. The Khazraj had the upper-hand, then the tables were turned and victory favoured the Aus. Both parties were on the verge of annihilating each other when sensible people intervened and advised them to live and let live, for it was better to be the neighbours of their brothers rather than neighbours of the foxes, that is, the Jews.

□ These tribulations made the people of Madīnah look to Islām with hope when the news of it reached them. Who knew? Perhaps it would give their life new meaning, restore peace among them and raise them spiritually above the Jews.

□ Ibn Ishāq reported: When Allāh (ﷻ) wished to make His religion victorious, strengthen His Prophet (ﷺ), and fulfil his promise to him, the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) went forth in the pilgrimage season, where he met the group of people from Madīnah. He introduced himself to the Arab tribes, as he would do on every pilgrimage, and while he was at *Al-Aqabah*, he met a group of pilgrims from the Khazraj tribe whom Allāh (ﷻ) wished to benefit. ‘Āṣim ibn ‘Umar ibn Qatāda (ؓ) spoke to me of what the elders of his tribe said.

□ “When the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) met them, he said: ‘Who are you?’

□ They replied: ‘A group of the Khazraj.’

He said: Clients of the Jews?’

They said, ‘Yes.’

He said: ‘Won’t you sit down and let me talk to you?’ They agreed and sat down with him. He then invited them to Allāh (ﷻ), explained Islām to them, and recited the Qur’ān for them.”

□ ‘Āṣim continued: “They responded to his call by believing in him, and they accepted what he offered to them of Islām.

They said: “We have left our people behind with so much enmity and evil among them. Perhaps Allāh (ﷻ) will unite them through you. We shall return to them and invite them to your affair, and we shall explain to them this faith which we have accepted from you. If Allāh (ﷻ) unites them under you, then there will be no man dearer to us than you!” Then they returned to their country, having believed and trusted.<sup>2</sup>

□ This small group was the vanguard of a successful campaign for Islām in Yathrib. Their efforts bore fruit rapidly, and there

---

<sup>2</sup> Its chain is good.



remained not a single home which Islām did not enter. When the year elapsed and the season of pilgrimage came around again, twelve men who had accepted Islām left Madīnah with the intention of meeting the Prophet (ﷺ), and strengthening their faith with him. Among them were the six to whom the Prophet (ﷺ) had spoken in the previous season.

### **The First Pledge of ‘Aqabah**

The Prophet (ﷺ) met them at ‘Aqabah and took from them a pledge to believe in Allāh (ﷻ) alone, practise all virtues and keep away from all vices. ‘Ubāda ibn Al-Ṣāmit said:

“On the night of the first pledge of ‘Aqabah, we pledged to the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) that we will not associate any partners with Allāh (ﷻ), we will not steal, we will not commit adultery, we will not kill our children, we will not make false accusations before our hands and feet, and we will not disobey him in what was right. The Prophet (ﷺ) then said:

“If you fulfil this you will have paradise. However, if you omit any of it and you are punished for it in this world, it is an atonement for you. If you conceal it until the Day of Judgement, then your matter will be left for Allāh (ﷻ) to decide: if He wills, He (ﷻ) will punish you, otherwise He will forgive you.”<sup>3</sup>

This is what Muhammad (ﷺ) was demanding and what *jahilīyah* was objecting to. Would anyone detest these pacts except a criminal who wished evil upon the mankind and corruption upon the earth?

□ The delegation from Madīnah completed this pledge, and then headed for home. The Prophet (ﷺ) thought it best to send along with it one of his trusted men, who would oversee the growth of Islām in Madīnah, teach its inhabitants the Qur’ān, and give them an insight into their religion. His choice fell on Mus‘ab Ibn

<sup>3</sup> A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim.

‘Umayr, who was to be their faithful teacher. Mus‘ab met with great success in the propagation of Islām among the people. He was able to overcome the difficulties which always confront someone away from home, and at the same time he strove to encourage the people to change from their familiar traditions to a new system, which encompassed the present and the future, and included both faith and action, behaviour and morals.

❑ Do not suppose that Mus‘ab was like those mercenary missionaries whom Western imperialism thrusts before itself as it marches on the East. You may see one of them crouching beside the bed of a sick man, saying to him: “This glass the Virgin is offering you and this loaf Christ is presenting to you.” Or perhaps one of them will open a school with education as its apparent aim, or a refuge with the sole purpose of charity, then he will direct the entrants to the goal he has in mind. This is a form of spiritual dishonesty which hides behind the title of missionary work, and those who represent this mockery find the courage to do their work from the states which send them. So if you see them determined and persevering, do not forget the powers that support them on land and sea and in the air.

❑ On the other hand, Mus‘ab was sent by a persecuted prophet whose message condemned the existing law and who had no material attractions to offer. The equipment that Mus‘ab acquired from the Prophet (ﷺ) was the sincerity to Allāh (ﷻ) and the astuteness, and this made him sacrifice his family’s wealth and position for the sake of his faith. Then there was this Qur’ān which he took pleasure in reciting, choosing from its gems of wisdom, and with it he confronted people’s hearts, which softened and opened up to the new religion.

❑ Mus‘ab returned to Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) in Makkah a little before the pilgrimage season, and informed him of the warm reception given to Islām in Yathrib. He told him of the large numbers who had entered into Islām out of heartfelt conviction, and who would be represented during the pilgrimage by their delegations sent to meet him.

## The Second Pledge of ‘Aqabah

The men who accepted Islām knew, without doubt, of its recent history and the tremendous difficulties with which it was faced. They felt disturbed that their brothers in Makkah should be oppressed and their Prophet (ﷺ) should call to Allāh (ﷻ) and receive no response except from an ungrateful sinner. Thus, they wondered as they left Madīnah for the House of Allāh (ﷻ); how can we leave the Prophet (ﷺ) to be persecuted and terrorized in Makkah? Faith had reached its peak in these young hearts, and the time was fast approaching when they would be able to express their enthusiasm and assist in breaking the suffocating siege, that was laid around the *da‘wah* and the Messenger (ﷺ).

□ Jābir Ibn ‘Abdullah (رضي الله عنه) reported:

“Thus seventy men from among us travelled to meet him in the pilgrimage season. We promised to meet him at ‘Aqaba, and so we arrived there in ones and twos until our numbers were complete. We said: “Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), what shall we pledge with you?

He replied: “You shall pledge to hear and obey me in times of activity and inactivity, to spend in ease and hardship, to enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong, to stand up for Allāh’s sake without fear of any reproach, and to aid and protect me when I come to you from all that which you protect your persons, wives and children from, and in return you will have paradise.”

□ So we stood up for to him, and As‘ad Ibn Zurārah, who was the youngest of the seventy after me, took his hand and said: “Slowly, people of Yathrib! We did not travel to him without knowing that he is the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), and to accept him now is a challenge to all the Arabs; it is the killing of your best and clashing with your swords. So either you understand that and accept it and then your reward will be by Allāh (ﷻ), or else you are afraid for your lives, so admit that plainly and it will be your excuse before Allāh (ﷻ).”

□ They said: As'ad, take your hand away. By Allāh (ﷻ), we shall not abandon this pledge nor shall we retire." So we stood up one by one and took the pledge with him.<sup>4</sup>

□ Ka'b Ibn Mālik (رضي الله عنه) reported:

We slept that night (the night of 'Aqabah) with our people in our camp. When a third of the night had passed, we left the camp for the rendez-vous with the Prophet (ﷺ), slipping away like cats and hiding until we were all assembled in the valley near 'Aqabah. We were seventy-three men and with us were two of our women Naseeba bint Ka'b (رضي الله عنها) and Asma' bint 'Amr ibn 'Adi.

□ We assembled and waited for the Prophet (ﷺ), and he came accompanied by 'Abbās ibn 'Abdul Muṭṭalib, who was still in the religion of the Quraish. Despite this, he had wanted to be present with his nephew and vouch for his integrity. When he sat down, he was the first to speak.

He said: "O people of Yathrib: Muhammad's (ﷺ) status among us is as you know. We have protected him from our people who hold the same opinion about him as we do. He is thus respected among his people and protected in his country. Now he insists on aligning with you and going over to you. If you think that you will be able to fulfil your promise to him and protect him from whoever opposes him, then that is your responsibility! But if you think you are going to betray him and withdraw your support after he has gone over to you, then leave him alone from now on for he is safe in his country."

Ka'b (رضي الله عنه) continued:

---

<sup>4</sup> Ahmad, Al Hākim and Al-Bayhaqi narrated it by way of Ibn Khaytham from Abū Zubayr from Jābir. Al Hākim says its chain is sound and Dhahabi agrees with him. Ibn Kathīr says that its chain is good according to Muslim's stipulations. Again, Ibn Hajar says: "Ahmed narrated it with a good chain, and Al Hākim and Ibn Hibbān consider it sound." However, I say there is a weakness in it since the chain has Abū Zubayr in it and he was a forger. Nevertheless, perhaps his narration is considered good or sound because there are other sound narration to the same effect. In any case Allāh (ﷻ) knows best.

We said to him: “We have heard what you said, so speak, O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) and decide for yourself and your Lord whatever you like.”

□ The Prophet (ﷺ) spoke and recited from the Qur’ān, called to Allāh (ﷻ) and invited us to Islām. Then he said, “I take your pledge that you will protect me from that, which you protect your women and children from.”

□ Then al-Barrā’ Ibn Ma’rūr took him by the hand and said: “Yes. By Him who sent you with the truth, we shall protect you from that which we protect our families from. We have made a pledge to you, O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), and, by Allāh (ﷻ), we are sons of war, having inherited it from our fathers and grandfathers.”

□ Abul Haytham ibn al Tahān then interjected and said: “O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), we have treaties with the Jews and we are going to annul them. Is it possible that if we do so and then Allāh (ﷻ) grants you victory, then perhaps you will return to your people and leave us?”

□ The Prophet (ﷺ) smiled, and then said: “No, blood is blood and destruction is destruction. I am one of you and you of me. I fight whom you fight and make peace with whom you make peace with.”

The Prophet (ﷺ) asked them to select twelve chiefs (*naqīb*) from among themselves, and they chose nine from the Khazraj and three from the Aus.<sup>5</sup> Then he said to them: “You are the guardians of your people just as the disciples were guardians on behalf of Jesus, son of Mary, and I am a guardian over my people.”

That was the pledge of ‘*Aqabah* with the agreements that were concluded and the discussions that took place.

□ Surely the spirit of certainty, sacrifice and daring reigned over this gathering and infiltrated every word that was uttered. It was clear that bubbling emotions did not direct conversations or dictate pacts. On the contrary, the account of the future was compared with the account of the present and the expected

<sup>5</sup> A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Ibn Ishāq in his *Maghāzi*. However, the last part “You are the guardians...” is *mursal* and therefore weak.

liabilities were examined before the supposed gains.

□ Gains? Where is the talk of gains in this pledge? The whole affair was concluded on the basis of pure self-denial and sacrifices. These seventy men were an ideal example of the spread of Islām by way of free will and personal conviction. They came from Yathrib, full of the firmest faith and responsibility to the call for sacrifice, even though their acquaintance with the Prophet (ﷺ) was only for a fleeting moment, and it was not expected to have lasting effects. We must not forget however, that the source of this active reserve of bravery and confidence was the Qur'ān itself. Although the Anṣār (the people of Madīnah who accepted Islām) had met the Prophet (ﷺ) only occasionally before making pledge with him, It was the resplendent Revelation from heaven which nevertheless lit up their way for them and illuminated their goal.

□ Almost half of the Qur'ān was Revealed in Makkah, and it flowed from the lips of the *Huffāz* (those who memorized the Qur'ān) and was recorded on scrolls by the honourable scribes. That portion of the Qur'ān revealed in Makkah illustrated the reward of the Hereafter in such vivid, visual terms that one could almost stretch out one's hand and pluck the fruits of Paradise. The bedouin, Arab of the desert, who loved the truth could transport himself in one moment of self-sacrifice from the heat of the Arabian peninsula to the Gardens under which rivers flow and where pure nectar is offered.

□ The Qur'ān also recounted the history of the early believers: how they were sincere to Allāh (ﷻ) and were saved with their Prophets from destruction. It spoke of the unbelievers of the past: how they transgressed and became complacent when Allāh's punishment did not overtake them. They rebelled further until finally Allāh (ﷻ) meted out justice and swept the oppressors away, leaving behind them a trail of destroyed houses and cities.

□ This faith in the truth was made by the Prophet (ﷺ) into a catalyst which automatically brought the believers together from all parts of the globe into a strong bond of mutual love and support. Thus the Muslim in Madīnah, although he had not seen his oppressed brother in Makkah, was overflowing with sympathy for him and anger towards his oppressor, and was willing to fight on his behalf. This is what brought the Anṣār from Yathrib, the feelings of love and devotion surging in their hearts, towards the out of sight brothers of faith whom they loved for Allāh's sake.

□ Abū Mālik al-Ash'ari reported that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said:

"O people, hear and understand, and know that Allāh (ﷻ) has servants who are neither prophets nor martyrs, but the prophets and the martyrs envy them for their high status and their closeness to Allāh (ﷻ)."

□ Thereupon a bedouin, who was at a little distance, rose on his knees, to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said: "O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), a group of people, neither prophets nor martyrs but envied by the prophets and the martyrs for their status and closeness to Allāh (ﷻ)? Describe them to us."

□ "They are the people from far-off tribes, who are not connected by any close blood relationship, love one another, and have bonded themselves into one rank for Allāh's pleasure. On the Day of Judgement Allāh (ﷻ) will erect pulpits of light for them and they will sit on them. He will make their faces and their clothes shine. The people on the Day of Judgement will be frightened, but not they. They are the friends of Allāh (ﷻ) upon whom no fear shall come nor shall they grieve.<sup>6</sup>

□ Faith in Allāh (ﷻ), and love for His pleasure, brotherhood in His religion and mutual support in His name. All of this was surging through the minds of those who were gathered there in the darkness

<sup>6</sup> A good Ḥadīth narrated by Aḥmad.



of that night near Makkah, still in her reckless rejection of faith. The announcement was about to be made that the Helpers (Anṣār) of Allāh (ﷺ) would defend His Prophet (ﷺ) just as they would defend their honour: they would protect him with their lives and no harm could befall him while they were alive.

□ The idolaters of Makkah thought that they had enclosed Islām within narrow confines, and had harassed the Muslims so much that they were now preoccupied with themselves. So they went to sleep like a criminal who has committed a crime and feels sure that no one saw him. Indeed, during this night the army of truth swore to one another that they would break the back of paganism once and for all and would wipe *jahilīyah* and its supporters off the face of the earth.

□ A devil from the idolaters was walking among the pilgrims' tents, and on hearing the noise coming from *Al-Aqabah* close by, he was able to guess what was happening. He shouted a warning to the people of Makkah "Muhammad (ﷺ), and his converts have gathered together to wage war on you!" His voice was loud enough to wake the sleepers. The Muslims realized that their plans for the idolaters had been uncovered, but they showed no concern for the consequences.

Sa'd Ibn 'Ubāda (رضي الله عنه) said: "O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), by Him Who sent you with the truth, if you wish we shall attack the people of Mina tomorrow with our swords." However, the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "We were not ordered to do that Return to your camps."

Ka'b (رضي الله عنه) continued his report, saying:

"When the morning came, some of the leaders of the Quraish approached our camps and said: "O Assembly of Khazraj! we were informed that you have come to our man to take him away from our presence and you have pledged with him to wage war on us. By God, there is no Arab settlement with which we should hate to be at war with more than yourselves."

At this some of the idolaters among us got up and swore that, there was nothing of the sort and that they had no knowledge of such a thing. And they were right: they had no knowledge of it.

Ka'b (رضي الله عنه) added: We exchanged glances with one another.<sup>7</sup>

□ However, circumstances proved the rumour to be true, and so the Quraish went after the people from Madīnah but were unable to catch up with them. The only one they caught was Sa'd Ibn 'Ubada, and they brought him back to Makkah in chains, dragging him by the hair and kicking him. However, Jubayr Ibn Mut'im and Al-Ḥaris Ibn Ḥarb rescued him from them, since Sa'd always used to extend to them his protection in Madīnah.

## The Beginning of the Hijrah

The success of Islām in founding a homeland of its own in the middle of a desert surging with disbelief and ignorance was its greatest gain since it began to be propagated. The Muslims called to one another from every corner: Come to Yathrib! The Hijrah was not only an escape from persecution and ridicule, it was in fact a movement to establish a new society in a safe country. It became the duty of all able Muslims to assist in the building of this new homeland and to put their utmost efforts into fortifying it and raising its status among other nations. Leaving Madīnah after migration to it

---

<sup>7</sup> This is from the Ḥadīth of Ka'b Ibn Mālik (رضي الله عنه) mentioned above. An observation here is that the author related the meaning of the first part of the Ḥadīth and not the words, which are as follows: "And when we took the pledge with the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), the devil shouted from the head of 'Aqabah in the most piercing tone I had ever heard, and the Prophet (ﷺ) said: 'This is the devil of 'Aqabah this is the son of the devil. Listen, enemy of Allāh (ﷺ), by Allāh (ﷻ), I shall soon apply myself to you.' It cannot be understood from this text that "the devil" refers to one of the idolaters nor is it likely that the Prophet (ﷺ) would say to one of them, "Enemy of Allāh (ﷻ), I shall soon apply myself to you."

□ Our view is supported by the *mursal* Ḥadīth narrated by Al Ṭabarāni on the authority of 'Urwa. In it is this statement: "And the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: 'Let not this voice scare you. It is the enemy of Allāh (ﷻ), *Iblis*. No-one whom you fear has heard him.'..."

became a shirking of responsibility and a betrayal of Allāh (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ) for life. In it was part of faith, since the establishment of the faith depended upon the development of Madīnah.

□ In the twentieth century the Jews have been proud of themselves and have congratulated one another on being able to find a national homeland of their own after having lived for centuries in exile. We deny not the efforts made by the Jews to establish this state, nor the zeal of the immigrants who came from everywhere to live there and revive and develop the place. Nevertheless, how great is the difference between what the Jews have done in the twentieth century, or, to be more precise, what has been done for the Jews in the twentieth century and what was done by Islām and its children for themselves on the day they migrated to Yathrib, saving their *da'wah* and establishing their state.

□ The Jews came at a time when the Arabs were divided and in a state of weakness and negligence, and they wove their plots in the field of Western politics which held bitter enmity towards Islām and the Muslims. All of a sudden, the entire world attacked Palestine with wealth, arms, women and cunning. One million Arabs could not do a single thing, confined as they were within tight circles because of the treacherous acts of some. They could find no help from the rest of the world as a result of the agreement concluded by the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, France and... the Arab kings to desert those unfortunate Arabs. In this way a national homeland for the Jews came into existence. There was a campaign to solicit immigrants to it and assistance was given by political leaders and business tycoons in all parts of the globe.

□ How can we compare this decadence with those personalities whose hearts were dedicated to Allāh (ﷻ) and whose ambitions were above wordly gains; who ignored their own peace and comfort and cared only for those higher ideals in a world teeming with the deaf and dumb. They tied their future to the future of the message which they embraced and whose chief

proponent, they followed in his selflessness and hard struggle, who never tired of repeating:

﴿Say: This is my way: I call on Allāh with sure knowledge, I and whosoever follows me Glory be to Allāh! And I am not of the idolaters.﴾ (Qur'ān 12: 108)

Surely the Utopia which the philosophers dream of and as described in books is beneath what these early immigrants accomplished. They proved that a mature faith could transform the mankind into a creation competing with the angels in resplendence and purity. The Muslims with the Prophet's (ﷺ) permission hurried from Makkah and other places to Yathrib, motivated by certainty and guided by confidence.

□ The Hijrah was not an employee's transfer from a nearby town to a distant one, nor was it the wanderings of a person in search of food from a barren land to a fertile one. It was the coercion of a man with deep roots in his native place to give up his personal interests, sacrifice his wealth and flee empty-handed. It was to make him feel that he was a hounded man, whose life and property were not safe, who might be destroyed at the beginning of the path or at the end of it, and that he was moving toward an obscure future not knowing what trials and tribulations were in-store for him. If it was the adventure of a single individual one might have said he was reckless adventurer. On the contrary, however, it affected the length and breadth of the country; men took their wives and children, and at the same time they were content at heart and their faces were bright. It is nothing but faith which moves mountains and is not aimless. But faith in whom? Faith in Allāh (ﷻ), to whom belong the heavens and the earth, and to whom belongs all praise in this world and the Hereafter, and who is the Wise, the Aware. It is only believers who can bear these difficulties. As for the noisy, confused cowards they are unable to withstand any of that, for they are of those about whom Allāh (ﷻ) says:

﴿And if We had decreed for them: Lay down your lives or go forth from your dwellings, few of them would have done it.﴾  
(Qur'ān 4: 66)

As for those men who rallied around the Prophet (ﷺ) in Makkah, acquired the rays of a guiding light from him and exhorted one another to the truth and perseverance, they hastened, travelling light, as soon as they were told to migrate to where they would strengthen Islām and be assured of its future.

□ The idolaters looked around, and suddenly in Makkah there were houses once populated with families but now deserted. 'Utba, 'Abbās and Abū Jahl passed by the house of 'Umar Ibn Rabī'ah (رضي الله عنه) after it was shut up and the owner had migrated with his wife and brother, Aḥmad, who was a blind man. When 'Utba noticed the wind blowing through the window of this desolate house, he recited: "Every home even though it may remain safe for a long time, will one day be afflicted by disaster and outrage."

Then he said: "This home is now deserted by its owners."

Abū Jahl then said to 'Abbās: "This is your nephew's handiwork: he has divided our people, destroyed our unity and separated us." With this statement Abū Jahl displayed perfectly in himself the attitude of tyrants. They are the ones who commit the crime and put the blame on others: they are the ones who oppress the weak, who if they refuse to be subjected, are then the cause of all the problems!

□ Among the earliest *muhajirīn* (emigrants) were Abū Salma, his wife and his son.

When they decided on leaving, his in-laws said to him: "So you are determined to go in spite of us? But we shall not let you take our daughter to wherever you want," and they took his wife away from him.

Upon this his relatives became angry and said: "We shall not leave our son with her since you took her away from our brother."

There ensued a tug-of-war for the boy and his arm came out. They took him away and Abū Salma went alone to Madīnah. For a year ‘Umm Salma (Abū Salma’s wife) wept over her husband and child in Abtah, a place where she would go in the morning and stay till evening. Eventually one of her relatives felt sorry for her and urged her parents to release her. They did so, and she retrieved her son from her in-law and migrated to Madīnah.

□ When Ṣuhayb wanted to make the Hijrah, the Quraish said to him: “You came to us as a despised pauper, then your wealth grew with us and you attained your present status. Now you wish to go away with all your wealth. By God, that will not be!”

Ṣuhayb replied: “What do you say, if I give you my wealth, will you let me go?” They said yes, and Ṣuhayb showed them where he kept his wealth. When this news reached the Prophet (ﷺ), he said: “Ṣuhayb has profited!”<sup>8</sup>

□ Thus the *muhajirīn* continued to leave Makkah singly or in small groups until the city was almost emptied of Muslims. The Quraish began to feel that Islām had now acquired a home and a protective fortress, and they became apprehensive of the consequences of this dangerous stage in Muhammad’s (ﷺ) *da‘wah*. In their vein flowed the instincts of a beast of prey when it is cornered. Although Muhammad (ﷺ) was still in Makkah, he would no doubt soon join his Companions that day or the next, so they had to hurry and catch him before he slipped out of reach.

## **In the Council Chamber**

The tyrants of Makkah assembled in the Council Chamber to come to a firm decision on the matter. Some opined that Muhammad (ﷺ) should be put in chains, thrown into prison and kept in solitary confinement, although he should be given food until he died. Others thought that, he should be expelled

<sup>8</sup> A sound Hadīth narrated by Ibn Hishām as mursal. Al-Hākim supplied the links and said it was sound according to the requirements of Muslim. It is supported by a similar Hadīth from Ṣuhayb himself.



from Makkah and never allowed to re-enter it thus the Quraish would have washed their hands of him.

□ Both of these views were rejected, because they were not feasible. The decision reached was the view proposed by Abū Jahl that every clan should select a sound, strong young man from among themselves and they should all stab Muḥammad (ﷺ) in one attack. In this way the Banū Ḥashim would not be able to take revenge on the Quraish since, all of the clans would be implicated, and if they asked for blood money this could be paid. The conspirators agreed on this solution to the problem which had baffled them, and dispersed to execute it. The Qur'ān referred to this plot when it said:

﴿And when those who disbelieve plot against you [Muhammad] to put you infatally, or to kill you or to drive you out; they plot, but Allāh [also] plots; Allāh is the best of plotters.﴾ (Qur'ān 8: 30)

□ This decision was not taken in a secret meeting but in a general assembly so it was natural that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) should hear about it and know the reality of his position in Makkah. They were only waiting for the appointed time to execute their plot, and there would be food beforehand as an offering to the idols! In any case the Prophet (ﷺ) would not suggest to his Companions to migrate and not do so himself. He had planned his journey to Yathrib ever since he had urged the Muslims to migrate there. Al Zuhri narrated from 'Urwa who narrated from 'Ā'ishah, May Allāh be pleased with her, that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said to the Muslims while still in Makkah: "I was shown the home of your migration: I was shown a marshy-land and full of date palms between two mountains."<sup>9</sup>

Thus began the Hijrah of the Muslims to Madīnah, and those, who had migrated to Abyssinia returned and migrated to Madīnah.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī, Al-Ḥākim and Al-Bayhaqī on the authority of 'Ā'ishah, and by Bukhārī, Muslim and Ibn Mājah on the authority of Abū Mūsa.

<sup>10</sup> They began to return, and this continued until the year of the Hijrah.



## The Hijrah of the Prophet (ﷺ)

When the Prophet (ﷺ) decided to leave Makkah for Madīnah, the following prayer was Revealed to him:

﴿And say: My Lord! Cause me to come in with a firm entrance and to go out with a firm exit. And give me from your Presence a sustaining power.﴾ (Qur'ān 17: 80)<sup>11</sup>

No-other human being is known, who is more deserving of Allāh's (ﷻ) help than the Prophet (ﷺ), who met with all sorts of afflictions in His (ﷻ) cause. Nevertheless, his deserving of Allāh's aid does not mean that, he was negligent in the slightest of cause and effect. The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), accordingly made secure the route of his migration and prepared a plan for every contingency. In his calculations he did not leave anything to chance. It is the nature of believers to take all the normal causes and effects into considerations if there were everything needed for success. Then they place themselves in Allāh's hands, because nothing can take place except by His will.

□ Thus if people make all possible effort and fulfil their duties, but fail after that, then Allāh (ﷻ) will not blame them. For a defeat over which they had no control. However, this rarely happens unless it is totally beyond their capacity. It often happens that a person does all that is necessary for success and help comes from above, making this success produce double the expected fruit. It is like a ship steered by an experienced captain and also assisted by

---

<sup>11</sup> This is from the Ḥadīth of Ibn 'Abbās, who said "The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) was in Makkah, then he was ordered to migrate and this *ayah* was Revealed to him. It is narrated by Al Tirmidhī, Al'Hākim, Al Bayhaqī and Aḥmad by way of Qābūs ibn Abū Zibyan from his father from Ibn Abbās. However, Aḥmad's and Al-Bayhaqī's chain does not contain "from his father." Al Tirmidhī said it was a good, sound Ḥadīth, and Al-Hākim said, "Its chain is sound and Al Dhahabi has authenticated it."

There is doubt in this statement since Al-Dhahabi has mentioned Abū Zibyan in his *Al Mizan*, and has reported that Ibn Hibbān, says about him: He has a bad memory. He reports things from his father which have no basis. Sometimes he would report as *marfūʿ* what is *mursal* and as *musnad* what is *mauqūf*."

favourable winds and current, thereby reaching its destination in less than the appointed time.

□ The migration of the Prophet (ﷺ) from Makkah to Madīnah was of this nature. He asked Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) and ‘Alī (رضي الله عنه) to remain with him, and gave permission to all the other Muslims to precede him to Madīnah. Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) had come to him, asking for permission to leave, and the Prophet (ﷺ) had replied: “Do not hurry. Perhaps Allāh (ﷻ) give you a Companion.”<sup>12</sup>

Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) felt as if the Prophet meant himself by this statement. He therefore bought two mounts and kept them at home, feeding them in preparation for this event.

□ As regards ‘Alī (رضي الله عنه), the Prophet (ﷺ) had prepared him for a special role which he would have to play in this risky adventure. Ibn Ishāq said:

Someone with whom I find no fault reported to me on the authority of ‘Urwa Ibn Al Zubayr who reported that ‘Ā’ishah, May Allāh be pleased with her, said: “The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) never failed to come to Abū Bakr’s (رضي الله عنه) house once a day, either in the morning or in the evening. Then came the day when Allāh (ﷻ) gave his Messenger the permission to migrate from Makkah and the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) came to us at midday at a time when he never used to come. When Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) saw him he said: The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) has come at this hour only because some important event has taken place. When he entered, Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) stepped back from his bed and the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) sat down. There was no-one else present except my sister Asma’ and I.

The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said:

<sup>12</sup> Narrated by Ibn Ishāq without a chain. However, its meaning is to be found in the long Ḥadīth of ‘Ā’ishah on the Hijrah narrated by Bukhārī. The words are: “And Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) prepared himself to go to Madīnah and the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said, ‘Take your time for I hope that I shall be given permission.’ Abū Bakr said: shall we hope for that? May my father be sacrificed for you? He said yes, so Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) stayed behind so as to accompany the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), and he groomed two mounts for four months with the leaves of *Samr*.” This is also narrated by Ahmad.

“Let those who are with you leave my presence.”

Abū Bakr (ؓ) replied: “Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), they are my daughters. What is it? May my father and mother be your ransom.”

He Said: “Allāh (ﷻ) has ordered me to leave and migrate.”

□ Abū Bakr (ؓ) said: “Companionship, Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ)?”

He said: “Companionship.”

Ā'ishah, May Allāh be pleased with her, continued: “And, by Allāh (ﷻ), I had never before witnessed anybody crying for joy until I saw Abū Bakr (ؓ) crying for joy on that day.”

Abū Bakr (ؓ) then said: “Prophet of Allāh (ﷺ), I have groomed these two mounts for this.”

So they hired ‘Abdullāh Ibn Urayqit who was still an idolater to be their guide to Madīnah. They entrusted him with the two mounts and he kept them and groomed them until the appointed time.<sup>13</sup>

Ibn Ishāq continued:

“No one knew of the Prophet’s (ﷺ) departure from what I heard, except ‘Alī (ؓ), Abū Bakr (ؓ) and his family. As regards ‘Alī (ؓ), the Prophet (ﷺ) ordered him to stay behind, so that he could return the trusts that he was keeping for the people.” There was no-one in Makkah who possessed something precious and did not give it to the Prophet (ﷺ) for safekeeping, because of what they knew of his truthfulness and trustworthiness.

## **A Lesson in Diplomacy**

It should be noted that the Prophet (ﷺ) hid the secrets of his journey and disclosed them only to those with whom he had strong ties. Even so, he did not explain to them in detail except where it

<sup>13</sup> Ibn Ishāq narrated it from his Sheikh, whom he did not name. However, Ibn Ḥarir named him in a report from Ibn Ishāq as Muhammad Ibn Abdul Rahmān Al- Tamīmī. This Sheikh is not well-known others also narrated this Ḥadīth, e.g. Ibn Jarīr with a sound chain, Bukhārī and Aḥmad.

was necessary for them to take action. He hired a guide who was intimately acquainted with the desert to make use of his experience in enabling them to escape the pursuers. For this purpose he looked at the person's competence alone, and even though he was an idolater, the Prophet (ﷺ) still made use of his skill.

Together with this flexibility in his plan, the Prophet (ﷺ) also insisted on paying for his mount and refused to accept it free from Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه). Spending on this Hijrah was a form of worship which one should be keen to observe and for which there was no deputizing.

The Prophet (ﷺ) and Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) came to an agreement on the details of the departure. They chose the cave in which they would hide, deciding on one in the south in the direction of Yemen so as to fool the pursuers. They then selected the individuals with whom they would need to have contact while in the cave and assigned each one his duty.

□ The Prophet (ﷺ) then returned home to find that the Quraish had begun to surround it and had sent the youths who were given the responsibility of assassinating him. He instructed 'Alī to put on the cloak in which he [the Prophet (ﷺ)] normally slept in and to lie down on his bed. In the quiet of the night and unknown to the watchers, the Prophet (ﷺ) slipped out of his house and went to Abū Bakr's (رضي الله عنه) home. From there they left by way of a back entrance and headed for the cave of Thawr, the cave in which Providence entrusted the future of the last Message and the destiny of a perfect civilization. There it was left to be guarded by silence, eeriness and loneliness.

### **In the Cave**

The events unrolled as they planned. Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) had ordered his son 'Abdullāh to listen to what the people said about them, then report to them in the cave when he came in the evening. He had ordered 'Āmir ibn Fuhayra, his slave, to graze

his sheep during the day and bring them to the cave in the evening. Thus ‘Abdullāh would listen to the Quraish and in the evening he would recount it all to the Prophet (ﷺ) and Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه). Meantime, ‘Āmir grazed his sheep with the other shepherds during the day, and brought his sheep to the cave in the evening for the two of them to milk and slaughter. When ‘Abdullāh left to go back to Makkah, ‘Āmir would follow him and wipe out all their traces with the sheep.

□ This was the utmost precaution that could be taken, as necessity imposes on any one. The idolaters of Makkah followed the emigrants, keeping a careful eye on all the roads and investigating every refuge. They searched the hills of Makkah and its caves until they arrived quite close to the cave of Thawr. The Prophet (ﷺ) and Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) listened to their footsteps near the mouth of the cave. Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) felt a tremor and he whispered to the Prophet (ﷺ): “If one of them looked down under his feet he would see us.”

The Prophet (ﷺ) replied: “Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه), what is this thought of two. The third among us is Allāh (ﷻ).”<sup>14</sup>

□ The pursuers apparently became frustrated at not finding them in the vicinity, and they mounted their horses to return home. Aḥmad narrated:

“The idolaters followed the trail until they arrived at the mountain, Mount Thawr; then they were thrown into confusion. They climbed the mountain and passed by the cave. Over its mouth they saw a spider’s web, so they said: “If anyone had had entered here, there would be no web over the entrance.”

They spent three nights in the cave.

<sup>14</sup> The chain contains ‘Uthmān Al-Jazari which the author said is good. Apparently he has followed Ibn Kathīr in this just as Ibn Ḥajar did in his book *Fath al-Bārī*. But there is doubt about this since ‘Uthmān al-Jazari “is not to be followed in his Ḥadīth,” as Al-Aqili says. For this reason Ibn Ḥajar says in his book *Al-Taqrīb*, “There is a weakness in him. It is not strengthened either by the Ḥadīth mentioned by Ibn Kathīr and Ibn Ḥajar on the authority of Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī, because this Ḥadīth, apart from being *mursal*, contains Bishār al-Khaṭṭāf Ibn Musā, who is not trustworthy, as Ibn Mu’in, Al-Nasā’ī and others say.

Aḥmad's narration is good, even though the authentic books of the Sunnah do not report the same story and even though there is no mention of doves who laid eggs near the entrance of the cave, or other incidents.

□ Allāh (ﷻ) mentions the Hijrah thus:

﴿Although you did not help him, still Allah helped him when those who disbelieve drove him out, the second of two; when they were both in the cave, when he said to his comrade "Do not grieve. Look Allah is with us. Then Allah caused His peace of reassurance to descend upon him and supported him with hosts you cannot see, and made the world of those who disbelieved the nethermost, while Allah's word was that which became the uppermost. Allah is Mighty, Wise.﴾ (Qur'ān 9: 40)

□ The hosts which defeat falsehood and help truth to gain victory are not restricted to a particular kind of weapon or miracle. They are more general than to be either material or spiritual. Even if they are material, their importance has nothing to do with their size. A single virus, invisible to the naked eye, could destroy a strong army:

﴿None knows the hosts of your Lord, save Him.﴾ (Qur'ān 74: 31)

□ It was Allāh's action on behalf of His Prophet (ﷺ) that the enemies' eyes should be blind to him even though he was within arm's reach. This was not favouritism from Allāh (ﷻ) towards a people who had neglected to prepare all the means of escape. It was in fact a reward from Him for those who had taken every single precaution possible. How many plans have been drawn up to the best of the planners' ability, yet they pass through trying periods for reasons beyond their will or their consideration, and finally things settle down according to the dictates of Divine Wisdom and within the limits of Allāh's words:

﴿And Allah was predominant in His affair, but most of mankind was unaware of it.﴾ (Qur'ān 12: 21)

## On the Way to Madīnah

Three nights had passed since the Prophet (ﷺ) had taken shelter in the cave. The idolaters had lost their zeal to look further, so the two emigrants prepared to resume their hard journey. ‘Abdullāh Ibn Urayqit came at the appointed time with the mounts which he had groomed for long journey. The travellers loaded up with provisions and set out in the name of Allāh (ﷻ). However, the Quraish were angry at their failure to bring back Muhammad (ﷺ) and his Companion, and so they set the blood money for each of the two as a prize for anyone who brought them back dead or alive. Two hundred or even one hundred camels in the desert were tempting enough for anyone to undergo difficulties and take risks.

□ The Prophet (ﷺ) estimated that the pursuers would spare no effort to catch him, so he kept on the safe side throughout the journey. He was helped in this by the skill of the guide, who was able to take them along routes which the caravans did not normally use. Then they let the mounts go at full speed.

□ When they (the Makkans) passed by the district of Madhlaj a man saw them and said: “I have just seen some silhouettes on the coast and I think they are no other than Muhammad (ﷺ) and his Companion.” Upon this, the idea of gaining the prize all for himself flashed through the mind of Surāqa Ibn Mālik and he said: “No, they are so and so who have gone out on some errand of their own.”

He waited a little, then he got up and entered his tent, saying to his servant: “Lead the mare out from behind the tent and I’ll meet you behind the hillock.”

Surāqa himself described the incident:

“I took my spear and left from the back of the tent, drawing a line on the ground with its point. When I reached my mare I mounted her and spurred her on. She carried me rapidly until I was quite close to them, but my mare stumbled and I fell of her. I got up...”



Surāqa mounted his mare once again and spurred her on until he came close to the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companion. Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) was turning around frequently to see if he could recognize this daring pursuer, and as he came close Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) did recognize him.

He said to the Prophet (ﷺ), both of them bent on reaching their destination: "That is Surāqa Ibn Mālik chasing us!" He had hardly finished this statement when the mare stumbled again, throwing Surāqa off her back. He got up covered with dust and calling for an amnesty! It occurred to Surāqa that the Messenger (ﷺ) was genuine, so he apologized to him and asked him to pray to Allāh (ﷻ) for him.

He offered them his provisions, but they said: "We do not need them. However, you can cover our tracks for us."<sup>15</sup>

□ He agreed to this and turned back. Along the way he found the people still intent on their search, so whenever he met anyone he tried to dissuade him from pursuit, saying: "This road has already been checked." In the morning he was keen to seek them out, and in the evening he was covering up their tracks!

## **Supplication**

Desert travel wears out the strongest people who have no fear for their safety, so what about those who are being pursued and are fearful for their lives? Only one who has experienced it, can understand their circumstances. One day we went out into the heat of the noonday sun and were almost blinded by its white rays reflecting off the sand. So we hurried back, shielding our eyes for fear of being blinded. However, when you spend all day long among never-ending hills and valleys, you begin to see the world covered with dust and dark. Travellers have developed the habit of taking a siesta under any shade, and in low lying lands

---

<sup>15</sup> Up to here is narrated by Bukhārī and Al Ḥākim. The rest of the incident apart from the last line is narrated by Muslim. The last but one line is narrated by Muslim. The last line is narrated by both Bukhārī and Aḥmad.

where everything casts a shadow on them when the sun is in deadline, the languid travellers stir themselves to face the dehydration and sleepiness.

□ The Arabs had the strength to these hardships inspite of the lack of provisions and water. You have already seen that the Prophet (ﷺ), while still a child, had undertaken the same journey with his mother to visit his father's grave and had returned alone. Now he was undertaking it again at the age of 53, not for the purpose of visiting the graves of his parents, who had died in Madīnah, but for the preservation of his message, whose roots had taken a firm hold on the soil of Yathrib after having been rejected by Makkah.

□ He was the staunchest of all people in certainty that Allāh (ﷻ) would help him and cause His faith to triumph. Nevertheless, he was still grieved at the harsh reception given to the faith and the stubbornness which he had encountered from the beginning of his mission until he was forced to migrate under these trying circumstances. Here he was, being chased out of Makkah, and its leaders announcing generous rewards for anyone who could kill him.

□ Abū Na'im narrates that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) made the following supplication when he left Makkah and migrated to Madīnah:

“Praise be to Allāh (ﷻ), who created me, though I was nothing. O Allāh (ﷻ), help me bear the might of the word, the vicissitudes of time and the calamities of the nights and days. O Allāh (ﷻ), accompany me on my journey, and replace me in my family, and bless me in what you have provided me. To you I am humble, and in my good character keep me steadfast. Make me, O Lord, beloved to Yourself, and do not leave me to the people. You are the Lord of the oppressed and my Lord. I seek refuge in Your noble countenance by which the heavens and the earth were illuminated, by which the darkness was dispelled, and on which the affairs of the first and the last (of the mankind) were put in

order. I seek refuge from Your anger befalling me and Your displeasure overtaking me. I seek refuge in you from the withdrawal of Your bounty and the suddenness of Your vengeance, from the removal of Your blessings and the coming of Your wrath. And there is no power or might save in you.”

□ It is noteworthy that the news of the Prophet’s (ﷺ) departure from Makkah spread to every part of the desert. It was, as if, the telegraph wires had taken the news to the farthest corners, and both bedouin and town-dwellers all along the way as far as Yathrib had come to hear it. In fact, Makkah heard about the places through which the Prophet (ﷺ) passed, soon after he departed from them. Men usually enjoy stories of heroism and are excited by all sorts of challenges. They quickly pass on hot news by word of mouth and clothe it with an aura of legend. Many hearts were outstrip with Muhammad (ﷺ) in his bid to his pursuers, and their sentiments were translated into a piece of poetry which was sung everywhere yet its composer was not known!

□ Such was the case as described by Asmā’ bint Abi Bakr. She said: “We spent three nights not knowing where the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) had gone until a man came from lower Makkah, singing some couplets of poetry:

“May Allāh (ﷻ), the Lord of mankind, shower His choicest blessings on two Companions who visited the tents of Umm Ma’bad. They stayed in the area and then travelled on. And successful is he who becomes Muhammad’s (ﷺ) Companion.” Asmā continued: “When we heard this we realized which direction the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) had taken: he was heading for Madīna.”<sup>16</sup>

□ Who was the reciter? The narration says that he was a jinn, and that was the custom of the Arabs in ascribing their poetry: in their

<sup>16</sup> Its isnād is mixed up. Ibn Ishāq says in his *Sīrah*: “Asmā’ bint Abū Bakr said: ‘Three nights passed and we did not know in which direction the Prophet (ﷺ) was heading until a jinn came from lower Makkah, singing verses from the poetry of Arab songs. The people followed him, hearing his voice but not seeing him, until he left from upper Makkah. He was saying ...’ and she mentioned the verses.

eyes every poet had a devil.<sup>17</sup> It is probable that these couplets were composed by a secret believer at Makkah, who was on the lookout for news of the emigrants. He thus declared his joy at the success they were making and found a way to express his hidden feelings by means of this fluent poetry. These couplets refer to an event that took place during the Prophet's (ﷺ) journey. He had passed by the dwellings of Khuza'ah where he had entered the tent of Umm Ma'bad, rested for a while and drunk milk from her goat.

### Arrival at Madīnah

Similarly the news of the great traveller and his Companion had reached Madīnah. Its inhabitants would come out every morning and scan the horizon for signs of his approach and when the sun became too hot they would return to their houses with hopes and fear for the morrow. On 12 Rabi'i in the thirteenth year of the call, the *Anṣār*, as usual, went outside Madīnah to look for the Prophet (ﷺ). As noon approached and the heat became intense, they began to despair and were about to return to their homes when one of the Jews, who had climbed up a hillock for his own reasons, saw a cloud of dust approaching the city.

He shouted at the top of his voice, saying: "O Banu Oaylah! There is your man now arriving! There is your grandfather

---

<sup>17</sup> Let me (i.e. Naṣiruddīn) say: If the Arabs had permitted themselves to say this in *Jahilīyah*, was it permissible to them as Muslims? Allāh (ﷻ) had rid their hearts of fancies. Is it permissible to say of Asmā' that she called a believer "Jinn" or "Shaytan"? What is the need for the author to resort to such farfetched interpretations? Do you not see in the narration of the previous note that the people were following his voice but could not see him? Is this the case of a human being? It would be better for the author to ignore this narration entirely rather than interpret it in this manner. Especially since it is weak.

□ I found this Ḥadīth narrated as *Mursal* by Al-Ḥākim on the authority of Hishām Ibn Ḥabīb, and he said it had a sound chain. However, there is doubt about this. Al Haythami said: Al Ṭabarāni narrated it but his chain contained a number of men whom I do not know." The Ḥadīth has two other sources which are mentioned by Ibn Kathīr in his *Al Bidāyah*. Thus with its various sources the Ḥadīth is no less than *ḥasan* (Good).

whom you are awaiting!" The Anṣār hurried to take up arms and greet their Prophet (ﷺ) with the sound of "*Allahu Akbar*" echoing in every corner of Madīnah. Yathrib took on the appearance of a festival with all its exuberance.

□ Al-Barra' (رضي الله عنه) said:

"The first Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) to reach us were Mus'ab Ibn 'Umayr (رضي الله عنه) and the son of Umm Maktam, they began to teach the people the Qur'an. Next came 'Ammar (رضي الله عنه), Bilal (رضي الله عنه) and Sa'd (رضي الله عنه), then 'Umar ibn-ul Khaṭṭāb (رضي الله عنه) in a group of twenty riders. Then came the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and I have never seen the people more overjoyed with anything than they were overjoyed with his coming. I even saw the women, children and slave girls saying: "Here is the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) who has arrived."<sup>18</sup>

□ How strange are the contrasts in life and the difference among people! The one whom Makkah sought but failed to kill is warmly received by Madīnah, and its citizens offer him protection, arms and numerous supporters. One noteworthy point was that most of the people of Madīnah had never seen the Prophet (ﷺ) before. So when he arrived they could not at first distinguish him from Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه), and the women who were watching him from the rooftops were saying: "Which one of them is he?"

□ The Prophet (ﷺ) stayed as the guest of Banu 'Āmir Ibn 'Auf for fourteen nights, during which he laid the foundations for the Quba Mosque, the first mosque ever to be built in Islām. Allāh (ﷻ) revealed the following āyah (verse) about it:

﴿A place of worship which was founded upon duty [to Allāh] from the first day is more worthy that you should stand [to pray] in it, in which are men who love to purify themselves.﴾ (Qur'ān 9: 108)

<sup>18</sup> A Ṣaḥīḥ Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī and Al Tayālisi.

## Settling Down in Madīnah

A man of faith acts in accordance with it and finds tranquillity wherever it resolves that there should be reception and wider scope for the *dāwah*. People seek happiness in those things to which their minds cling and for which they yearn. They look at the world and they share in it the light of the feelings and thoughts deep down inside them. Thus a seeker after leadership will be content or displeased, will be active or idle in proportion to his closeness to or distance from his beloved target.

□ Look at Al-Mutanabbi: how much he eulogized and satirized; how he travelled from Syria to Egypt and from Egypt to other places; and look at what he said of others talking about him and his desires: “They ask me, what are you? In every town, and what do you want? What I want is too great to be named.” What was too great to name he did mention clearly everywhere else: he asked to be given charge of an estate or a province! In other words, some of that which luck had placed in the hands of kings and masters. And he even sought to fulfil his desire quickly by asking *Kafūr*: “Abul Misk, is there anything left in the cup that I can have? I shall become rich in a short while, and then you will drink.”

□ Al Mutanabbi, in my opinion, was quite capable of being in a high post because of his qualifications. Nevertheless, aspiration for worldly things with such haste and insistence is indicated by Allāh’s (ﷻ) will as mentioned in the following āyah (verse):

﴿Who-ever desires that [life] which hastens away, We hasten for him therein what We will for whom We please.﴾ (Qur’ān 17: 18)

□ Then there are those men who worship beauty and pursue women, who find satisfaction in being in their company, and afterwards feel at ease and humbled. They say: “I do not see the world by the light of the morning; I see the world by the light of the eye.”



- Then there is the one who pursues wealth, and spends most of the day and half of the night checking the figures in his cash book, counting what is in his hand and estimating what is not there yet. He may even neglect his clothes and food in following his instinct to possess, which has blinded him to everything else.
- Along with these classes of men you will find another group of people who cannot bear to give up rendering services, giving advice, looking after public welfare and sacrificing themselves to show those virtues which have totally possessed their hearts. They spend sleepless nights wondering whether they have failed to perform their duty. Their greatest source of comfort is their search for perfection and their utmost happiness lies in the day they are able to achieve it. Those people with great missions are pledged to carry out the responsibilities and trusts they have undertaken. Their earnings and their debts, their dwellings and their travels, their friendship and their enmity, all go back to the ideals with which they have identified themselves and for which they live.
- The man who had the greatest mission to fulfil, Muhammad (ﷺ) Ibn 'Abdullāh, made of himself a rare ideal for strivers. Ever since he had taken upon his shoulders the task of stripping away the darkness which had spread a thick blanket of idolatry and superstition over the world, nobody had succeeded in turning him away from his determination or blocking his path or swaying him by enticements or deterring him by threats. The differences of time and space all vanished before his eyes, for the person who was estranged from him became very close when he accepted the truth, his homeland when it rejected the guidance he rejected it, and those who believe in him until the end of time are his brothers even though they have never seen him.
- He had spent 53 years of his life in Makkah until it knew him well, but that day he left it for a new land in which he saw the fulfilment of his heart's desire and the fruits of what he had sown. People whose happiness springs from their hearts, and who are conscientiously committed to their principles, do not



revere an environment for itself but for the principles which they see reflected in it. It is small wonder, therefore, that Muhammad (ﷺ) should enter Madīnah with emotion and pride, happy at the victory that Allāh (ﷻ) had granted him and seeing the signs of further victory and prosperity.

□ A poet from Madīnah said: He had lived with the Quraish for about ten years, wondering if he would ever meet a friend or a pleasant man. He spoke to the pilgrims from afar, yet saw no-one to give him shelter or understand. So when he came to us and his mind was made up, being joyful and pleased at Taybah (Madīnah), and the tyrant far away no longer fearing his will, and he not fearing a rebel from the mankind, we sacrificed our lawful wealth for him and ourselves in times of war and peace. We became foes of his enemies, all of them, even though they had been our bosom friends, and we knew that there was no Lord save Allāh (ﷻ), and the Book of Allāh (ﷻ) was our only guide.

□ The organizing of a Hijrah and the reception of the refugees fleeing with their faith from various directions are not easy tasks. In our times such a condition is considered an emergency which needs an immediate solution.

□ When is the life of a great man ever free from emergencies? It so happened that at the time of the Hijrah Madīnah was suffering from an epidemic of malaria. In just a few days Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) and Bilāl (رضي الله عنه) fell ill, and the *Ṣaḥābah* began to feel upset by the atmosphere of the place which had given them refuge. Soon the feelings of homesickness began to stir in them.

□ The Prophet (ﷺ) had always urged his Companions to bear hardships and make a greater effort and sacrifice for the cause of Islām. On this occasion he said: "Anyone of my *Ummah* who endures the harshness of Madīnah will have me as his intercessor and witness on the Day of Resurrection, for it will be replaced in it by someone who is better than he."<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Ṣaḥīḥ: narrated by Muslim and Aḥmad on the authority of Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqās with an inversion of the sentences. Al Bazzār narrated it on the authority of 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) as quoted above, and Al Haythami said its chain was *Ṣaḥīḥ*.

This was his method of uniting the hearts towards Madīnah so that they might feel love for it, and hate to leave it.

‘Ā’ishah, May Allāh be pleased with her, reported: “When the Prophet (ﷺ), on whom be peace, arrived at Madīnah, Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) and Bilāl (رضي الله عنه) contracted fever. I visited them and said: “Father, how are you? And Bilāl (رضي الله عنه), how are you?”

□ Whenever the fever attacked Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) he would say in a couplet: “Every man who awakes in the morning among his family finds that death is closer to him than his shoelace.” And Bilāl (رضي الله عنه), too, would recite some couplets of poetry when the fever eased.

□ ‘Ā’ishah said: “I informed the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) of this, and he said: “O Allāh (ﷻ), make Madīnah as beloved to us as Makkah or even more so. O Allāh (ﷻ), make it a good place and bless us in its weights and measures and take away its fever and make it free from illness.”

□ Anas (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: “O Allāh (ﷻ), put in Madīnah double the blessings you put in Makkah.”

□ Abū Hurairah (رضي الله عنه) reported: “Whenever the Prophet (ﷺ) was brought the first crop of fruit, he would say: ‘O Allāh (ﷻ) bless us in our Madīnah and our fruits, in our weights and our measures, blessings upon blessings. O Allāh (ﷻ), Ibrahim (عليه السلام) was Your servant, prophet and friend, and I am your servant and prophet. He called you to Makkah, and I am calling you to Madīnah with the like of what he called you to Makkah and double that.” Then he would give it to the youngest of the children present.<sup>20</sup>

□ With this encouragement and concern, the morale of the Muslims rose high, youthful energies were directed into building and the past was forgotten. A pure Hijrah does not take back its

<sup>20</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ*, narrated by Muslim.

gift or recall its sacrifice or cry over what is already done. Instead, it is as the poet says: “When my mind is removed from a thing, I hardly ever look at it again until the end of time.”

## Chapter Five

### The Foundations of the New Society

The Islāmic *Ummah* is not a group of people whose aim is to live in any manner and head in any direction so long as they have enough food and amusement. On the contrary, Muslims possess an ideology which defines their relationship with Allāh (ﷻ) clarifies their vision of life, organizes their affair internally according to specific patterns and leads their external connections towards definite goals. There is a great difference between a person who says to you: "My only concern in this world is to live my life, and another who says: "If I do not protect my honour, safeguard my rights, please Allāh (ﷻ) and defend His cause, then may my legs not carry me and my eyes not guide me."

□ The *Muhajirīn* to Madīnah did not forsake their homeland out of desire for wealth or dominion. The Anṣār, who welcomed them, swore enmity to their own people and made their lands targets for all the Arabs, did not do so in order to live in any manner as chance would have it. All of them had the desire to be guided by Revelation, gain the pleasure of Allāh (ﷻ) and realize the ultimate goal, for which humans were created and life was established. Can those who deny their Lord and yield to their lusts by anything other than despicable creatures or accursed devils?

□ From this point of view the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), immediately after settling down in Madīnah, turned his attention to the laying of those foundations which were necessary for the fulfilment of his mission. The basic priorities were as follows:

- (1) The relationship of the *Ummah* with Allāh (ﷻ);
- (2) The relationship of the members of the *Ummah* with one another; and
- (3) The relationship of the *Ummah* with non-Muslims.

## The Mosque

Concerning the first item, the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) hastened to build the mosque in which the rites of Islām, which had long been suppressed, could be practised, and in which the prayers could be established, drawing people closer to their Lord and purifying hearts from the filth of the earth and the schemes of worldly life.

□ According to the report the Prophet (ﷺ) built his mosque where his camel knelt down, in an empty lot belonging to two orphans under the care of As'ad Ibn Zurārah. Although the two boys wished to donate the land for the cause of Allāh (ﷻ), the Prophet (ﷺ) insisted on paying the full price for it. This land, before being developed for a mosque like the mosques which abound in the Saudi Arabian countryside, was once covered with date palms and seeding trees, and had a few tombs belonging to idolaters.

□ The Prophet (ﷺ) ordered the palms to be cut down and the tombs to be levelled.<sup>1</sup> The palms were arranged to mark out the *qibla* of the mosque,<sup>2</sup> which was Jerusalem in those days. The length of the mosque from the *qibla* to the back wall was 100 *dhirā'*<sup>3</sup> and the two sides were approximately of the same length. The sides were made of stones and the foundations were dug 3 *dhirā'* deep and built of bricks. The Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions joined together in fetching the bricks and stones on their shoulders and they would cheer themselves up by singing: "O Allāh (ﷻ), there is no life except the life of the Hereafter, So forgive the Anṣār and the *muhajirīn*!" The Companions (*Ṣaḥāba*) became more enthused with the spirit to work when they saw the Prophet (ﷺ) himself toiling like any of them and disliking to

<sup>1</sup> They were tombs which had started to collapse and were abandoned, nobody being buried there.

<sup>2</sup> This is narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim as well as others on the authority of Anas (رضي الله عنه).

<sup>3</sup> A *dhirā'* is equivalent to a cubit, an ancient linear measure equal to the length of a forearm.

show himself superior to any of them. One of them sang this couplet: "If we sat down while the Messenger was working, that would be a misguided deed on our part."

□ The mosque was completed in all simplicity: its flooring was sand and pebbles, its ceiling palm branches and its pillars the trunks of trees. Perhaps when rain fell the ground would become muddy, and perhaps the dogs were able to pass in and out of the walls.

□ This simple, humble building nurtured the angels from among people, the educators of mighty personalities and the monarchs of the Hereafter. In this mosque Allāh (ﷻ) gave permission to his Prophet (ﷺ) to train the choicest of those who believed in him, and mould them with the discipline of heaven from early morning until the darkness of the night. The status of the mosque in Islāmic society is unique. It is an institution. It is the source of spiritual and material guidance, it is the hall for worship, the school for knowledge and the centre for literary pursuits. Strongly attached to the duty of prayers and the rows of worshippers are moral attitudes and traditions which form the essence of Islām. Now, however, the people, who are incapable of building personalities on the basis of strong morals, have sought consolation in the building of huge mosques containing dwarfish worshippers! In contrast to that were the early generations of believers. They avoided adorning their mosques but purified and disciplined themselves and were a true reflection of Islām.

□ The mosque which the Prophet (ﷺ) dedicated his efforts towards building before any other task was not just a piece of land on which prayers alone were offered. In fact, the whole earth is a mosque, and Muslims need not confine themselves to a specific place for the purpose of worship. It was in fact a symbol of that to which Islām attached the utmost importance. It was a symbol of the deep connection between the worshippers and their Lord, which is constantly renewed with the passage of time and recurs throughout the night and day. There can be no value in a civilization which is negligent of the One God, is ignorant of the Last Day and mixes the good with

the bad. The civilization which Islām brought constantly reminds people of Allāh (ﷻ), and the meeting with Him urges adherence to the good and repudiation of the bad and stays within the limits set by Allāh (ﷻ).

□ The Jews and the idolaters of Madīnah saw this new Prophet (ﷺ) labouring with his Companions to build the mosque and prepare it for prayers. Did they ever notice any behaviour which was questionable or any suspicious activity?

□ Al Bayhaqī reported on the authority of ‘Abdul Rahmān ibn ‘Auf,<sup>4</sup> who said:

“The first sermon delivered by the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) in Madīnah was when he stood up and praised Allāh (ﷻ) in a way befitting Him. He then said: “To proceed: O people, send on (your good deeds) for the benefit of your souls. You do know, by Allāh (ﷻ), that one of you will surely be struck dead. Then his Lord will surely ask him, and there will be no spokesman nor guardian between them: ‘Did My Messenger not come to you and convey (My message)? Did I not give you wealth and shower My bounties on you? What have you therefore sent forward for yourself?’ He will look right and left and will see nothing but hell. So whoever of you can protect himself from the fire, even by means of a single date, let him do so, and whoever cannot find that, then by a good word, for through it a good deed will be rewarded from 10 to 700 times its value. Peace be upon the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ)!”

## **The Brotherhood**

As regards the second item the relationship of the members of the *Ummah* with one another the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) based it on perfect brotherhood. It was brotherhood in which the word

<sup>4</sup> This is a mistake. Al-Bayhaqī reported it from Abū Salāmah ibn ‘Abdul-Rahmān ibn ‘Auf. This is how Ibn Kathir quoted it in *Al-Bidayah*, then he declared it to be *mursal* (therefore weak). Ibn Jarīr narrated with a sound chain another version of the first *khutba* which is totally different from this. This Ḥadīth is also weak owing to some complications.



“I” was non-existent, and individuals moved with the spirit, interests and hopes of the group, unable to see themselves as separate entities detached from it. This brotherhood meant that the racial prejudices of *jahilīyah* should dissolve; that only for Islām should one show enthusiasm; that all differences of lineage, colour and country should disappear; and that no-one should be placed in front or behind except his/her bravery and piety. The Prophet (ﷺ) made this brotherhood into a contract to be executed, not a mere word and deed linked to blood and wealth, nor a mere greeting muttered by the tongue and having no effect.

□ The feelings of altruism, beneficence and love were an integral part of this brotherhood and they filled the new society with the most wonderful examples. The Anṣār were so eager to welcome their brothers, the *Muhajirīn*, that lots had to be drawn for a *muhājir* to live with an Anṣārī. The *Muhajirīn* respected this sincere sacrifice and never exploited it nor took from it more than that which enabled them to establish themselves in free, dignified business.

□ Al-Bukhārī narrated:

“When they arrived at Madīnah the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) united Abdul-Rahmān ibn ‘Auf and Sa’d ibn al Rabī‘ in brotherhood.”

□ Sa’d (رضي الله عنه) said to Abdul Rahmān: I am the most wealthy of the Anṣār and I shall split my wealth into two halves for you. I have two wives, so see which of them is more pleasing to you: name her and I shall divorce her, and when her period of waiting is over you can marry her.”

□ ‘Abdul-Rahmān said: ‘May Allāh (ﷻ) bless you as regards your family and wealth. Where is your market-place?’ “So they showed him the market square of the Banū Qaynuqā, and he returned only to show that he had acquired some cheese and butter! Then he went out the next day, and one day he came back wearing various adornments.

Then Prophet (ﷺ) asked: “What is this?”

He replied: “I got married.”

The Prophet (ﷺ) asked: "How much did you give her?"

He replied: "A nugget of gold."

□ One's amazement at Sa'd generosity cannot be equalled except by one's amazement at 'Abdul - Rahmān's nobility. He competed with the Jews in their own market and outstripped them in their field. Within few days he was able to earn enough to safeguard his chastity (that is, to get married). Lofty determination is a characteristic of faith. May Allāh (ﷻ) disfigure the faces of those people who clung to Islām, devoured it and devoured in its name until they caused the truth to lose its dignity in this world.

□ The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) was the elder brother to this believing group. He did not distinguish himself above them by any honourable title. A Ḥadīth says:

"If I were to have taken anyone from my *Ummah* as a friend, I would have taken Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) as a friend. But the brotherhood of Islām is better."<sup>5</sup>

True brotherhood does not grow in a mean environment. Wherever ignorance, cowardice, miserliness and greed are prevalent, brotherhood will not appear and love will not flourish. If it were not for the fact that the Prophet's (ﷺ) Companions were brought up on pure qualities and were united on acceptable principles, the world would not have recorded for them that deep brotherhood for the cause of Allāh (ﷻ). The lofty ideal which had brought them together and the shining example which had led them to it were the two things which nurtured in them the qualities of virtue and honour and did not leave any space for the appearance of bad qualities.

□ Moreover, Muhammad (ﷺ) was a man in whom were accumulated all the virtues which were scattered throughout the mankind, and he was therefore a reflection of the highest peak of perfection attainable by humans. No wonder, therefore, that

---

<sup>5</sup> A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās.

those who acquired their training from him and always supported him were the one who lived by bravery, fidelity and generosity. Love is like a gushing spring which flows of its own accord. It does not need machinery to extract its water. Similarly, brotherhood cannot be imposed by laws and regulations. It can come about only when people eradicate their attitude of selfishness, greed and egotism. There was this interchange of brotherliness among the early Muslims because they had evolved to a higher level in all aspects of their lives through Islām, and had become brothers by becoming the servants of Allāh (ﷻ). However, Had they become slaves of their own selves, they would not have allowed one another to continue living.

❑ The Islāmic emphasis on the value of sublime attitudes in the building of brotherhood does not negate the fact that the ruler must institute a system among the people so that each is given his/her rights and does his/her duty. If he/she does not do so willingly, then he/she is compelled to do so. It is similar to compulsory education, taxes, military service etc.

❑ The brotherhood contract continued to have priority over the rights of blood relationship in matters of inheritance until the Battle of Badr, when the following Qur'ānic āyah (verse) was Revealed:

﴿And those who are related are nearer to one another in the ordinance of Allāh. Indeed! Allāh is All-knowing.﴾ (Qur'ān 8: 75)

Thus inheritance through the contract of brotherhood was abrogated and it remained the sole right of the blood relatives. Bukhārī narrated on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās about the explanation of the following āyah (verse):

﴿And each we have appointed heirs of that which parents and close relatives leave; and as for those with whom your right hands have made a covenant, give them their due.﴾ (Qur'ān 4: 33)

He said: When the *Muhajirīn* arrived in Madīnah, a *Muhājir*

would inherit from an Anṣārī to the exclusion of his relatives. This was because of the bond of brotherhood with which the Prophet (ﷺ) had united them. So when the *āyāh* (And unto each We have...) was revealed, this was abrogated then the rest of the *āyāh* was revealed: "and as for those with whom your right hands have made a covenant, give them their due."

In other words, give them their due of support, kindness and advice since they can no longer inherit, although they can still receive something through your will.

□ It is reported in detail of this brotherhood that the Prophet (ﷺ) made 'Alī (ؓ) his brother, Ḥamza the brother of Zayd, Abū Bakr (ؓ) the brother of Kharijah, and 'Umar (ؓ) the brother of 'Utban ibn Mālik, etc. Some scholars have doubts about the Prophet (ﷺ) and 'Alī (ؓ) becoming brothers. However, this account is supported by the authentic Ḥadīth in which the Prophet (ﷺ) declared that 'Alī (ؓ) was to him as Hārūn (ؑ) was to Mūsā (ؑ).<sup>6</sup> This, however does not detract from the status of Abū Bakr (ؓ) and his deserving of the leadership.

<sup>6</sup> I say that there is no support here since the brotherhood referred to is more specific than that relationship [between Mūsā (ؑ) and Hārūn (ؑ)], and what is more specific cannot be proved by what is more general. Thus the brotherhood must be proved by a specific reference to it. I have studied the Ḥadīth on this issue and have found that they all contain a liar in their chains.

The most famous of them is the Ḥadīth narrated by Al Tirmidhī and Al-Ḥakīm by way of Ḥakīm ibn Jubayr from Jami' ibn 'Umayr from 'Umar (ؓ). This narration says that the Prophet (ﷺ) united his Companions in brotherhood, and 'Alī (ؓ) came to him, his eyes wet with tears, and said, "O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), you have united your Companions in brotherhood and you have not united me with anyone.

The Prophet (ﷺ) replied: "You are my brother in this world and the Hereafter.

Al Tirmidhī says: "This is a good and strong Ḥadīth.

Al-Mubarakpuri commented on this Ḥadīth and said that Ḥakīm ibn Jubayr was weak and suspected of being a Shi'ah. I say that both he and Al Tirmidhī missed the real weakness of the Ḥadīth, which is that Jam'ī bin 'Amīr was a *rāfiḍa* (belonging to an extremist group) who fabricated. He also said: 'Amīr was one of the worst liars."

Al Dhahabi then quoted this Ḥadīth.

□ The Ḥadīth in question is also reported by Sālim ibn Abū Ḥanīfah al Kahili, and Al-Kāhili has been declared a liar by Ibn Abi Shaybah and Mūsā ibn Hārūn. Also Dārquṭnī says: "He is one who fabricates Ḥadīth."

□ Whoever wishes to study the remaining Ḥadīth and their weaknesses can refer to *Al-Majm'a* and *Al-La'li Maṣnū'ah*.

## The Non-Muslims

As regards the third item the relationship of the *Ummah* with the non-Muslims the Prophet (ﷺ) instituted tolerant and indulgent laws which were never known before in a world filled with racism and prejudice. Whoever thinks that Islām is a religion which cannot accept being neighbours with another religion, and that the Muslims are a people who can never find rest unless they alone remain dominant in this world, is mistaken, or rather, biased and audacious.

□ When the Prophet (ﷺ) came to Madīnah he found Jews who had settled there and idolaters who were natives of the place. He did not begin to create any strategy to evict or wage war on these people. On the contrary, he accepted the presence of the Jews and idolaters with a good heart, and proposed that they make a covenant with himself as equals, they keeping their religion and he his.

□ We shall quote a few items from the terms of the contract which he concluded with the Jews as proof of Islām's stance in this matter. The clauses state:

That the Muslims of the Quraish and Yathrib and all who follow them, join them and wage *jihād* with them are one *Ummah*. That the believers shall unite as one person against any of them who rebels or seeks to spread evil, sin, transgression or corruption among the believers, even if he be the son of one of them.

That no idolater should grant asylum to the wealth or person of anyone from the Quraish and should not hinder a believer from access to such.

That it is not permissible for a believer, who has accepted this pact and believes in Allāh (ﷻ) and the Last Day, to assist a criminal or grant him refuge; and that anyone who assists or grants refuge to such will have the curse and anger of Allāh (ﷻ) on him on the Day of Judgement, and no compensation or fine shall be accepted from him.

That the Jews shall spend with the believers as long as they are at war.

That the Jews of the Banū 'Auf are a group of believers, and the Jews shall have the right to keep their religion just as those of the Muslims are entitled to theirs.

That the Jews of the Banū al Najjār, Al-Hārith, Sā'idah, Banū Jasham, Banū Aus, etc, shall have the same rights as the Banū 'Auf.

That the Jews shall bear their own financial burdens and that Muslims shall bear their own, and that they (the Jews and the Muslims) shall assist each other against anyone who wages war on the signatories to this agreement.

That among themselves they should be sincere, advise one another and be kind to one another.

That a man is not in the wrong if his ally commits a wrong; that assistance should go to the one who is wronged; and that any one who is given asylum is to be considered as oneself as long as there is no injury or sin.

That Allāh (ﷻ) is witness to the most pious and righteous items mentioned in this document.

That all shall assist one another against any surprise attack on Yathrib.

That whoever leaves is safe and whoever remains in Madīnah is safe, except the one who oppresses or sins.

And that Allāh (ﷻ) is the Refuge for the one who does righteous deeds and fears [Him (ﷻ)].<sup>7</sup>

□ This document expresses the desire of the Muslims for sincere co-operation with the Jews of Madīnah in order to establish peace and tranquillity throughout the city and put a stop to any transgressor or trouble-maker, whatever their religion might be. It clearly stated that freedom of religion was guaranteed. Thus there was not the least thought of attacking any group or oppressing any weak person. On the contrary, the words of this document clearly emphasized assistance to those who were oppressed, protection to

<sup>7</sup> Ibn Ishāq narrated this document without ascription (chain of narrators).



the one who sought refuge, and safeguarding all the general and specific rights. It sought the support of Allāh (ﷻ) for the best and most pious, just as it sought the wrath of Allāh (ﷻ) on anyone who was treacherous and deceitful.

□ The Muslims and the Jews agreed to defend Yathrib if an enemy attacked it, and they granted the right to leave Madīnah to anyone who wanted to leave and the right to remain as long as its sanctity was observed. It must be noted that the Prophet (ﷺ) made mention in this document of the standing enmity between the Muslims and the idolaters of Makkah, and he announced his decisive rejection of any co-operation with them and prohibited extending any form of aid to them. Could anything other than this be expected from a people whose wounds were still dripping blood from the assault of the Quraish and its allies on them?

□ Were the Jews truthful in their agreement to this treaty? It is almost certain that they were not serious when accepted the terms of this treaty. The problem with treaties is that faithfulness to them lasts only as long as one can see one's personal benefit from them. And when the treaty becomes stumbling block in fulfilling one's personal ambitions, adherence to it slackness and opportunities are sought whereby one will not have to remain bound by it. The Jews used to build their material and political power on the basis of disunity among the Arabs. However, when the Arabs entered into Islām, their old differences began to disappear and time began to show that Islām would make of them a single nation. Therefore the Jews started to feel uneasy. They were filled with anxiety. They soon began to plot against this new faith and lie in wait for its followers.

□ The Jews in Madīnah in fact represented an atmosphere in which abounded all the shameful apparent formal religiosity and despicable trade with the principles of heaven. The most prominent characteristics of such an environment were envy, hypocrisy, outward formalities without depth, and love of discord. And behind all that were devious hearts and corrupt minds.



Perhaps as a result of their proximity to the Arabs they had acquired some of the virtues of the desert such as generosity and bravery. Nevertheless, their racial introversion dominated their character and these virtues stuck to their selves just as wallpaper sticks to a cracked wall.

□ One would have expected the Jews to welcome Islām. Even if they did not do so, then at least one would have expected them to be more hesitant than the idolaters in opposing it, since Muhammad (ﷺ) was inviting towards monotheism, upright deeds and preparation for a more sublime life in the Hereafter. His religion esteemed Moosa (Moses) (عليه السلام), spoke highly of his Scripture and urged the Jews to execute its laws and keep within its limits. The Jews, at first, kept quiet as a doubtful person and then they decided to show their opposition openly.

□ Reference can be found in many Qur'ānic āyāt (verses) to the kind of welcome that was to be expected. For instance, when the idol-worshippers denied prophethood, then the people who possessed scriptures (the Jews and Christians) should have testified it.

﴿They who disbelieve say: you are no messenger [of Allāh]. Say: Allāh, and whoever has true knowledge of the Scripture, is sufficient witness between me and you.﴾ (Qur'ān 13: 43)

And when the idol-worshippers refused to be reminded of Allāh (ﷻ), the People of the Book should have been the ones who should act humbly when they were reminded:

﴿And now indeed We have caused the Word to reach them, that haply they may give heed. Those to whom We gave the Scripture before it, they believe in it.﴾ (Qur'ān 28: 51-52)

□ You will be astonished to find that the Jews were just as insolent as the idolaters towards Allāh (ﷻ), fleeing from His laws and speaking of Him in a disrespectful tone. If Islām shows anger at someone who ascribes a son to Allāh (ﷻ), whether human or of stone, then what would you say about one who describes the Lord of the heavens and earth as being poor and miserly?

«The Jews say: Allāh's hand is fettered. Their hands are fettered and they are accursed for saying so!» (Qur'ān 5: 64)

«Indeed Allāh heard the words of those who said: "Allāh, forsooth, is poor, and we are rich!" We shall record their words with their slaying of the prophets wrongfully and We shall say: you will taste the punishment of burning.» (Qur'ān 3: 181)

□ Islām, however, allows these stubborn people to remain in their error and does not root out their disbelief with the sword. It suffices by presenting its message, revealing its truthfulness and filling the air with its āyāt and signs. Those who are comforted by it and enter it will have its benefit. Otherwise they will be left to their own devices, and Islām will not ask anything of them except politeness and peace and allowing the truth to go on its way without hindrance or objection.

□ The Prophet (ﷺ) came to Madīnah and stretched out his hand in peace to the Jews. He bore all their insults with forbearance until he saw them uniting to destroy him and his faith. It was then that he turned on them and there occurred a number of incidents between him and them which we shall discuss in their appropriate places.

□ From fear of Allāh (ﷻ) and sincerity to Him, the spiritual side of the new society was created with sincere brotherhood its structure held together and its foundations remained firm. With justice, equality and co-operation, the policy towards outsiders was formulated and the followers of the other religions included in a treaty. As a consequence, the situation was stabilized and the Muslims found sufficient scope to rebuild their strength and regulate their affairs.

## **The Chosen Ones**

The believers who had the opportunity to be Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ), living close to him, were able to drink from the fountain of purity and perfection what was not available to others. One's feelings soften upon hearing sweet music and one's soul becomes elated upon reading of great heroes. In fact, those who witness the acting of wonderful stories are moved by the simulated atmosphere: they laugh and cry, they calm down and are roused. What, then, would you say of a people who follow a man upon whom descends Revelation, whose presence emanates perfection, and who envelops those around him in an aura of purity? When their souls slacken from doing the good he urges them forward, and when desires infiltrate their behaviour he purges them and restores their brightness to them. Great people reflect an aura which engulfs their environment. Just as a dimmed lamp will light up when it is put next to a blazing one, similarly, when ordinary people come close to great individuals they fall under their influence and follow in their footsteps.

□ Around Muhammad (ﷺ) flocked a group of pious saints who became his trusted disciples. As a consequence of being in his company, their hearts were purified and their natures became so translucent that the rays of inspiration penetrated them and radiated wisdom and sound judgement. Do not think that a powerful intellect, in spite of its deep innate ability, can reach perfection of its own accord. If it is not guided by a superior force, it may continue to wander in every direction without perceiving its goal or treading the correct path. It would be just like a pilot who is lost in the air as a result of thick fog, although he may try his best to correct his instruments and send out signals, if there is no-one to guide him and explain how he should land, he will remain hovering in the air until some disaster occurs.

□ How many a philosopher tackled the problems of the universe and life! Many of them totally missed the truth in spite of their

long search, and many others wasted much time before arriving at the truth. If they had simply followed the Prophets, their task would have ended in a few days without the wandering and stumbling. Moreover, humans are not intellect alone. They are, prior to that, hearts that ought to be freed from lust and sin, and saved from misery and darkness. The heart ought to be a force within its owner which leads towards goodness and love, and guide who directs toward beauty and mercy.

□ The noble prophets are the ones who undertake the education and training of human hearts, and the people who resemble them most are those who follow in their footsteps. Among them the most prominent are those who spent their lives in their company, sharing with them the burdens of their mission and the troubles of their struggle.

□ ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd said:

Whoever wishes to follow the Sunnah of anyone, let him follow the Sunnah of those who are dead because we cannot guarantee that the living will be safe from temptation.

□ Those are the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). They were the best of this *Ummah*, the purest in heart, the deepest in knowledge and the least sophisticated. Allāh (ﷻ) chose them to be the Companions of His Prophet (ﷺ) and to establish His *dīn*. So acknowledge their excellence, follow them in their footsteps and hold fast to whatever you can of their character and way of life, because they were straight guidance.

There is no doubt that Muhammad’s (ﷺ) Companions were superior to those of Moosa and Issa (Jesus)(ﷺ). The history of their faith, *jihād* and struggle to convey the *Da‘wah* to future generations is complete and witnessed, neither faulty nor distorted, nor like any other history.

□ We felt it necessary to make these preliminary remarks before discussing the *Adhān* (call to prayer) and how it began. Since the birth of this great feature of Islām it has contained clear indications of the greatness that can be achieved by people when

they purify themselves, defend the truth and become the recipients of inspiration.

□ Ibn Ishāq said:

When the Prophet of Allāh (ﷺ) arrived at Madīnah the people used to assemble for prayers at their prescribed times without there being any announcement. So the Prophet (ﷺ) wanted to use a bugle like that of the Jews with which they announced their prayers. Then he decided against the idea. Then he ordered a gong to be made and it was forged to be struck at the times of prayer.

□ While they were in that state, ‘Abdullāh ibn Zayd ibn Tha‘labah saw the call to prayer in a dream. He came to the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) and said:

"O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), last night I had a dream. A man wearing two green garments passed by me and he was carrying a gong in his hand.

□ I said: 'O servant of Allah (ﷺ), will you sell this gong?'

He replied: 'And what will you do with it?'

□ I said: 'We shall announce the prayers with it.'

□ He said: 'May I show you something better than that?'

I Said: 'What is it?'

He said: 'You should say: *Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar,*

*Ashhadu an laa ilaha illa-llah* (twice)

*Ashhadu anna Muhammadan rasulu-ullah* (twice)

*Hayya 'ala al salah* (twice)

*Hayya 'ala al falah* (twice)

*Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar*

*La ilahā illa-llah.'*

□ When the Prophet (ﷺ) was informed of this, he exclaimed: "it is a true dream, *inshā'Allah*. So stand up with Bilal (رضي الله عنه) and tell it to him so that he may proclaim it, for he has a louder and nicer voice than you."

□ When Bilāl (ؓ) gave the call to prayer, 'Umar (ؓ) heard him while he was still at home. He hurried out to the Prophet (ﷺ), dragging his robe. He said: "O Prophet of Allāh (ﷺ)! By Him who sent you with the truth, I dreamt the same as he did!"

□ The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"Allāh (ﷻ) be praised."<sup>8</sup>

In another version it says: "The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) ordered Bilāl (ؓ) and he proclaimed it."<sup>9</sup>

□ Az Zuhri says: "Bilāl (ؓ) added to the *adhān* of the morning prayers: *Al salatu khairum minan naum*" (twice) and the Prophet (ﷺ) approved it."<sup>10</sup>

□ In another Ḥadīth 'Umar (ؓ) is said to have seen in his dream someone saying:

"Do not use the gong but call people to prayer." 'Umar (ؓ) then went to the Prophet (ﷺ) to inform him of this dream but Revelation had already come to him about that. 'Umar (ؓ) was surprised when he heard Bilāl (ؓ) calling to prayer, and when he told the Prophet (ﷺ) of what he dreamt, the Prophet (ﷺ) replied:

<sup>8</sup> Narrated by Ibn Is-hāq in his *Al-Maghāzī*. He said: 'Muhammad ibn Ibrāhīm Al Ḥarīth reported to me from Muhammad ibn 'Abdullāh ibn Zayd ibn Tha'labah from his father...' and this is a good chain. It was also narrated by Abū Dāwūd, Darīmī, Ibn Majāh, Al-Dārquṭnī, Bayhaqī and Aḥmad, all by Ibn Isḥāq. Al Tirmidhī narrated it in a shortened form and he said it was a good and sound Ḥadīth. A number of other scholars consider it a sound Ḥadīth and I have mentioned their names in my book *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan Abi Dāwūd*.

<sup>9</sup> There is no need for this version since it already corresponds with the first.

<sup>10</sup> Narrated by Ibn Majāh from Al Zuhri with a weak chain, Aḥmad also narrated something similar but its chain is broken. Nevertheless, the meaning of the Ḥadīth is sound since there are many other supporting Ḥadīth, some of which I have quoted in my book *Al Thamar al-Mustatab al Fiqh al Sunnah wal Kitab*. For example, Anas (ؓ) narrates: "The Tathwib (*Assalatu khairūm minannaum*) is in the morning prayers: after saying 'Hayya-ala-falah' the *mu'adhdhin* says 'Assalatu khairūm minannaum' twice." This was narrated by Al-Dārquṭnī, Ṭahawī and Bayhaqī, and the last said that its chain was sound. Note: it is not obscure to the scholar of *fiqh* that Bilāl (ؓ) used to give the first *adhān* for the dawn prayer. When we join this to what has already been said, the result is that the Sunnah is to say the *tathwib* in the first *adhān*, not the second. This fact is mentioned clearly in a statement of Ibn 'Umar: "In the first *Adhān* after 'Al-Falah' there is *Assalatu khairum minan-naum*; *Assalatū khairum minan-naum*." Ṭahawī and others narrated it with a good chain, as Ibn Hajar says in *Al Talkhīs*.

“Revelation has preceded you to it.”<sup>11</sup>

This proves that Revelation came to confirm the dream that ‘Abdullāh Ibn Zayd saw.

□ These excellent words which resound at regular intervals, striking the ears, stirring the hearts and calling to the people to come to Allāh (ﷻ), were perceived by an enlightened mind in a true dream. That man hurried to the Prophet (ﷺ) to relate exactly what he saw, and it has become the call of the Muslims to prayer for as long as prayer continues on the surface of this earth.

□ This harmony between people and Revelation is the limit of enlightenment and the peak of perfection. It is a sign that the guidance has become an integral part of them, for they remain steadfast to it in wakefulness and sleep and they move towards it instinctively and after reflection. The Prophet (ﷺ) used to keep his Companions immersed in the Revelation which descended on him from above. He read it to them and they read it to him as an indication of the duties they had to carry out for the *da‘wah* and the responsibilities they had for their mission. In addition, they had to reflect on and understand its meaning.

□ ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd said that the Prophet (ﷺ) said to him: “Recite the Qur’ān to me.”

□ He said: “O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), should I recite the Qur’ān to you whereas it was revealed to you?”

□ The Prophet (ﷺ) said: “I love to listen to it from others.”

‘Abdullāh said: “So I recited for him from Sūrah *al Nisā* until I reached the āyah:

﴿But how [will it be with them] when We bring of every people a witness, and We bring you [O Muhammad] as a witness against these?﴾  
(Qur’ān 4: 41)

Then he said: “That’s enough now.”

‘Abdullāh turned to him and saw that his eyes were filled with tears.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup>The chain is not complete for the Hadīth is *mursal*.



In one version there is the addition, said by the Prophet (ﷺ):  
"A witness as long as I am with them."

□ If people can be guided to the words of the *adhān* (call for Prayer) by their pure hearts, devoted to the worship of the truth, then there were those Companions of Muhammad (ﷺ) also who had totally imbibed the meaning of faith and dedicated themselves sincerely to the fountain of prophethood to such an extent that Allāh (ﷻ) ordered His Prophet (ﷺ) to recite some of the Sūrahs of the Qur'ān to them as an acclamation of their status with Allāh (ﷻ) and their steadfastness in faith.

□ Anas ibn Mālik (رضي الله عنه) said that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said to Ubayy ibn Ka'b:

"Indeed Allāh (ﷻ) has ordered me to recite to you '*Al Bayyinah*.'"

Ubayy said: "Did he name me?" The Prophet (ﷺ) replied yes.

In another version Ubayy asked: "Did Allāh (ﷻ) name me to you?" He said, "yes". Ubayy said: "Was I mentioned by the Lord of the Worlds?" He said "yes", and Ubayy's eyes were filled with tears.<sup>12</sup>

## The Meaning of Worship

The secret of the high spiritual and collective status which was attained by the Companions (*Ṣaḥābah*) was that their relationship with Allāh (ﷻ) was on the proper basis. They did not feel, as many others do, any sort of inconvenience or discomfort in doing things for Him nor did they suffer from any distraction or confusion.

□ In the human nature two qualities are not unknown: admiration of greatness and acknowledgment of kindness. When you see a precision instrument or appliance, or an exquisite picture, or an eloquent article, you do not stop talking of its

<sup>12</sup> Narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim, and the wording is the latter's.

<sup>13</sup> Narrated by Bukhārī. The second version is also narrated by him as well as Muslim and Ahmad.

beauty until your praise extends to its creator. The deep wisdom or skill of individuals makes you bow to them involuntarily in respect and admiration. Likewise, when someone does you a favour, you always remember it, and your tongue expresses your gratitude just as your heart is filled with praise. A poet says: "Your favour has gained you three things from me: My hand, my tongue and my hidden heart.

□ The Prophet (ﷺ) of Islām came to arouse these two qualities in the hearts of mankind towards the One Who is most deserving of them. Do you not admire greatness and salute its possessor? Do you not appreciate kindness and show gratitude to its doer? You admire the inventor of the aeroplane, and every-time you see it streaking through the atmosphere your praise of his genius increases. So what do you think, therefore, of the One Who causes the thousands of stars to move in space without stopping or deviating? What do you think of Him Who created the mind of that inventor and deposited intelligence in the folds of his brain so that he could produce those things which arouse your admiration? Is not your Lord and the Lord of all things more deserving of your praise for His greatness and favours?

□ When you recognize His greatness through the magnificence of the creation which surrounds you, you will be ashamed to attack Him and attribute anything unworthy to Him and you will say, together with the people of knowledge:

﴿O our *Rabb* [Lord]! You did not create [all] this without purpose﴾ (Qur'ān 3: 91)

If generous people invite you to a meal and you see the smiles on their faces and the plentiful food, you will remember them as long as you live and will do your best to repay them. You will talk to everyone you know of these hospitable people. So what do you say of Him Who has taken charge of you and showered His bounties on you from the cradle to the grave? You eat only of what He has provided; you cover yourself only with the clothing He has given you; you take shelter only under His roof; and you do not

escape from any hardship except with His help.

□ Muhammad (ﷺ) indeed united the people with their Lord on the basis of acknowledgment of His greatness and appreciation of His bounty. Thus when they arose to obey Him they were impelled to perform their duty by their heartfelt desire and the sincere wish to pay their respects to the One who is great and to praise their Benefactor. Worship is not obedience by force and anger but obedience by will and love. Worship is not obedience from ignorance and negligence but obedience from knowledge and awareness.

□ The government may issue an order to control prices and merchants accept it unwillingly, or an order to lower wages and the employees accept it angrily. You may be able to control a dumb animal and lead it, although it does not know whether it is to food or death. All these are kinds of obedience far removed from the meaning of worship which Allāh (ﷻ) prescribed for mankind.

□ The words of worship which Allāh (ﷻ) caused us to repeat often in the āyah: ﴿You alone we worship and from you alone we seek help,﴾ and which He (ﷻ) made the purpose of creation in the āyah: ﴿I have not created jinn or men except to worship me,﴾ mean submission coupled with knowledge and love. In other words, it stems for admiration of greatness and appreciation of favour. There are numerous Qur'ānic āyāt which build the believers' attitude on these firm pillars. While acquainting them with Allāh (ﷻ), it shows them shining examples of His wonderful creation and His boundless favours, and it tears away the veils of ignorance and ingratitude from their eyes.

﴿Allah is He Who created the heavens and the earth and causes water to descend from the sky, thereby producing fruits as food for you; and makes the ships to be of service to you that they may sail upon the sea at His command, and has made the rivers of service to you. And he makes the sun and the moon, constant in their courses, to be of service to you, and has made the night and the day of service to you. And He gives you all that you ask of Him, and if you

counted the bounty of Allah, you could not reckon it. Indeed, Man is verily a wrongdoer, an ungrateful creature. (Qur'ān 14: 32-34)

□ People will not fulfil a task if they are driven to it with red-hot rods. Excellence and perfection are attained only when the task is accompanied by desire and willingness. When people accept a belief with their minds and souls they will give it their lives and feelings, they will live with it in their dreams, and it will spur them to activity in their waking hours. This will eventually elevate them to a position of understanding and perfection in their service. Hence Islām does not think highly of a purely theoretical faith, and does not accept it except as a stairway to something higher, which is faith with both understanding and emotion.

□ One's feelings must play a great role in the matters of faith. They are not Muslims who recognize Allāh (ﷻ) and hate Him. Nor is there any value in a Muslim who recognizes Allāh (ﷻ) while the feelings are empty and have no admiration nor gratitude, just as he has no disdain nor ingratitude. The Muslims every bit of them, are those, who know Allāh (ﷻ) with certain and definite knowledge and join to this knowledge their feelings which acknowledge the glory of the Glorious and bounty of the Bountiful. Faith in its manner is a productive faith and is the worker of miracles, the builder of nations and the establisher of advanced civilizations. It is what makes individuals relish the responsibilities placed upon them, and thus they will undertake them as their personal desires, not as religious duties.

□ Do you think that when the Prophet (ﷺ) stood at night, praying until his feet became swollen, he used to fight off the pain in his body like the truant pupil who is made to stand for long hours by way of punishment? Of course not. The sweetness of his private talk with Allāh (ﷻ) and his engrossment in humility made him unaware of any pains that might occur owing to the long hours of standing.

□ An enthusiastic man overflowing with zeal may continue working to such an extent that the less enthusiastic would find it impossible to keep up with him. The weight of affairs in the

eyes of those who possess faith and determination is unlike that in the eyes of those who are skeptical or weak-minded. Look at Hudhayfah ibn al Yamān when he went off to spy on the idolaters in the Battle of the Trench during a cold wintry night filled with howling winds. He said later about himself: "It was as if I were wading into the jaws of death."

The strength of his faith made him go into the darkness of the night as if he was an arrow shot accurately at its target.

□ This faith based on living feelings ignited fierce battles and led the Muslims to certain victory. It was the faith that destroyed the sovereignty of oppression and tyranny which had reigned for many centuries and was thought to be invincible. Its basis, as you have learnt, was the absorption of faith into both the heart and feelings, and its flowering tree was nurtured by ever-increasing knowledge of Allāh (ﷻ) and awareness of His greatness and bounty.

□ That is the Qurā'nic method of acquainting people with Allāh (ﷻ). This method sets them on a foundation of servitude to Him, consisting of love and self-sacrifice, not scorn and humiliation. It is a servitude of admiration of greatness and acknowledgment of favours not a servitude which takes away one's free will and debases the mankind.

ﷺ Say [O Muhammed] "Praise be to Allāh and peace be upon His servants whom he has chosen! Is Allāh best, or [all] that you ascribe as partners to [Him]? "Is not He [best] Who created the heavens and the earth and sends down for you water from the sky wherewith We cause to spring forth delightful orchards, whose trees it never has been your to cause to grow. Is there any god beside Allāh? No, but there are people who ascribe equals [to Him]! "Is not He [best] Who made the earth a fixed abode, and placed rivers in the fold thereof, and placed firm hills therein, and has set a barrier between the two seas? Is there any god beside Allāh? No, but most of them are ignorant! "Is not He [best] who answers the wronged one when he cries Him and removes the evil, and has made you viceroys of the

earth? Is there any god beside Allāh? Little do they reflect! "Is not He [best] Who guides you in the darkness of the land and the sea, He who sends the winds as heralds of His mercy? Is there any god beside Allāh? High exalted be Allāh from all that they ascribe as partners to [Him]! "Is not He [best] Who produces creation, then reproduces it and Who provides for you from the heaven and the earth? Is there any god beside Allāh? Say: bring your proof, if you are truthful!》 (Qur'ān 27: 59-64)

□ These questions, following quickly one after the other, open up for the soul wide horizons of intelligent faith, impel it toward Allāh (ﷻ) with sincerity, and make it flee from the evils of idolatry as grown men flee from the pranks of children. Most of the āyāt which call to contemplation and investigation spin around this fixed axis.

□ The soul, in times of haughtiness, may stand in need of discipline by force and threats to curb refractoriness. Nevertheless, this does not conflict at all with the principle which we have already established. A father's sternness to his child at times does not negate the natural love he has for him. The Qur'ān, when it stimulates the lofty tendencies in people and shows them the effects of Providence on them, sometimes couples that with sharp stings which awaken their sluggish feelings so that they may advance and use their minds, not recoil and show cowardice.

□ Allāh (ﷻ) says:

﴿Have you not seen how Allāh has sent down water from the sky and has caused it to penetrate the earth as watersprings, and afterwards thereby produces crops of diverse hues; and afterwards they wither and you see them turn yellow; then He turns them into chaff. Indeed, this is a reminder for men of understanding.﴾

(Qur'ān 39: 21)

Then He (ﷻ) says in the next āyāh:

﴿Is he whose bosom Allāh has expanded for the Surrender [al-Islām] [to Him], so that he follows a light from his Lord, [like the one who



disbelieves]? Then woe unto those whose hearts are hardened against remembrance of Allah. Such are in plain error.》 (Qur'ān 39: 22)

□ The Prophet (ﷺ) himself adopted the same course in implanting faith and nurturing its fruits. His way of approaching Allāh (ﷻ) was a living lesson which filled the hearts with Allāh's glory and greatness and urgency to obey Him and avoid sin. These hearts opened up to the guidance of Allāh (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ) and thereafter had space for nothing else.

□ Jubayr ibn Mut'im reported:

I heard the Prophet (ﷺ) reciting Sūrah *al Tūr* at the evening prayers (*Maghrib*) and when he reached the āyah:

《Or were they created out of nothing? Or are they creators? Or did they create the heavens and the earth? No, but they are sure of nothing! Or do they own the treasures of your Lord? Or have they been given charge [thereof]?》 (Qur'ān 52: 35-37)

my heart almost skipped a beat!<sup>14</sup>

□ The growth of faith from an idea in the head to a feeling in the heart, making a person pulsate with certainty and sincerity, is an integral part of the Sunnah. It is the bedrock of the noble virtues which possessed the Muslims and raised their status. It is what is meant by the famous Ḥadīth:

"There are three things, in which if they are present in a person, will be found the sweet taste of faith: that Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger should be more beloved to him than anything else; that he should love a servant [of Allah (ﷻ)] for no other reason than to gain Allah's pleasure; and that he should hate to return to *kufr* (disbelief) after Allah (ﷻ) has saved him from it, just as he would dislike being thrown into a fire."<sup>15</sup>

□ In a similar manner, faith in prophethood and love for the Prophet (ﷺ) should be so deep-rooted that one forgets oneself.

<sup>14</sup> An authentic Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī.

<sup>15</sup> An authentic Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim as well as others on the authority of Anas (رضي الله عنه).



One should be ready to sacrifice self and possessions for the sake of prophethood and the Prophet (ﷺ), not out of obligation or fear but out of love and devotion. ‘Abdullāh ibn Hishām said:

We were with the Prophet (ﷺ), on whom be peace, and he had taken ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) by the hand, when the latter said: Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ)! You are more beloved to me than anything else except myself.”

The Prophet (ﷺ) replied: “No, By Him in Whose hands my soul lies, unless I become more beloved to you than yourself.”

‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) then said: “Now, you are assuredly more beloved to me than myself.”

The Prophet (ﷺ) replied:

“Now, ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه).<sup>16</sup> (That is, now only has your faith been perfected.)

□ This Hadīth needs explanation. It is not right for virtues to be subjected to differing criteria. The people respected the virtue of faithfulness in Samuel when he let his son be sacrificed, preferring that he should fulfil his trust and return it safely to the person who trusted him. When people sacrifice themselves to protect their honour, they have carried out their duty.

□ Muhammad (ﷺ) did not demand of the people that they should sanctify his physical form of flesh and blood, or that they should kill themselves for him to live, or that they should debase themselves for him to attain honours, or that he should be made a god above them as Pharaoh and his family made themselves gods. Muhammad (ﷺ) wished the believers to sanctify the status of prophethood, follow its lofty ideals exemplified in himself, and protect, by way of his person, the landmarks of Revealed truth and the signs of universal mercy.

□ The Prophets do not live for themselves alone and misfortune does not befall them or their families alone. They live for the entire universe. Are they not the center of its complete guidance and general happiness? It is not surprising, therefore, that

<sup>16</sup> An authentic Hadīth narrated by Bukhārī and Aḥmad on the authority of ‘Abdullāh ibn Hishām.

sacrificing oneself for them should be an integral part of faith and a rung in the ladder of perfection. Muhammad (ﷺ) was indeed a man worthy of love. The world does not know of another man who was so much esteemed by people that they totally dedicated themselves to protecting and surrounding him as was recorded of the bearer of this great message of Islām, Muhammad (ﷺ), son of ‘Abdullāh.

### **A Leadership Which Attracts the Hearts**

‘Abdullāh ibn Salām reported:

“As soon as the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) arrived in Madīnah the people flocked towards him, and I was among those who came to see him. When I contemplated his face and scrutinized it I found that it was not the face of a liar.

He continued:

The first thing I heard him say was: “O People! Spread peace, feed others, pray at night while the people are asleep, and you will enter paradise in peace.”<sup>17</sup>

□ The light from one’s inner self is reflected on one’s face, and in its features can be read the signs of one’s purity. ‘Abdullāh went to acquaint himself with the news of this migrating leader. He looked at him in an effort to determine his truthfulness and the first thing that satisfied him after scrutinizing him was that he was no liar. It is not possible to recognize a person’s intellectual and moral standing by a fleeting glance. Nevertheless, the physical features which hid the spirit are often an accurate guide to what lies beneath.

□ Those who lived with Muhammad (ﷺ), however, loved him to the point of insanity. They did not care whether their necks were cut off so long as he was not scratched by a nail.

---

<sup>17</sup> An authentic Ḥadīth narrated by Al Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, Al-Ḥākim and Aḥmad. Al Tirmidhī said it was an authentic Ḥadīth, Al Ḥākim said it was according to the stipulations of Bukhārī and Muslim, and Al Dhahabī agreed with him.

Their love for him was only because the perfection which he had attained, and which is usually only a dream, was not seen in any other human being.

□ Thaubān, the close associate of the Prophet (ﷺ), loved him exceedingly and could not bear to part company with him. One day when he approached him, his face was pale and he looked sad. The Prophet (ﷺ) asked him what was the matter, and he replied:

O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), I have no pain or sickness except that whenever I do not see you I feel extremely miserable until I am able to meet you. Moreover, whenever I remember the Hereafter, I become afraid that I shall not see you because you will be raised to the lofty mansions (*illiyām*) with the Prophets, and if I enter heaven I shall be at a lower level than you, and if I do not enter it I shall never have the chance of seeing you again. Thereupon the following Qur'ānic āyah was revealed:

﴿Those who obey Allāh and the Messenger, are with those whom Allāh has shown favour: the prophets, the saints, the martyrs and the righteous. The best of company are they!﴾ (Qur'ān 4: 69)<sup>18</sup>

In one Ḥadīth, the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "A person shall be with whom he loves."<sup>19</sup>

This refers to the love of an ideal example, not the love of lust. When people love someone who has similar or higher qualities than themselves, then the basis of such a love is that

<sup>18</sup> Narrated by Al Wāhidī in *Asbab al Nuzūl* on the authority of Al Kalbī. Apart from the fact that there is a disturbance in its chain, Al Kalbī is a noted liar. However, the same Ḥadīth is also narrated by Al Ṭabarānī in *Al Mu'jam al Saghir*, by Abū Na'im in *Al-Hulyah* from the same chain, and Al-Wahidi from him. Also Ibn Mardawaih and Al-Muqaddisī narrated on the authority of 'Ā'ishah without the question "What is the matter?" Al-Muqaddisi says of it: "I do not see anything wrong in its chain." It is also supported by a Ḥadīth reported by Ibn 'Abbās and other versions reported by Sa'id ibn Jubayr and others. They are all quoted by Ibn Kathīr in *Al Bidāyah*.

<sup>19</sup> A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim on the authority of Anas (رضي الله عنه), Ibn Mas'ūd and Abū Mūsā. It is a *mutawatir* Ḥadīth, as affirmed by Ibn Kathīr and others, that is, it is reported through numerous authentic chains.

their hearts are receptive towards the noble qualities and innate abilities with which nature has endowed him or her.

□ The marks of bravery and generosity are not welcomed by those who are cowardly or miserly. They are welcomed only by those who possess them to some extent and are on their way to perfecting what they lack. It is a bounty of Allāh, therefore, that He has caused the great people to be surrounded by those who love them, the beauty of greatness. Thus Allāh (ﷻ) says after the previously quoted *āyāh*:

﴿Such is the bounty of Allah, and Allah suffices as knower.﴾

(Qur'ān 4: 70)

□ In truth, the follower and devotee is a virtuous person. However, there are many despicable people in the world who if they rise in status, show contempt to those below them, and if they fall, hate those above them. So how does one know when they will cleanse their hearts of the feelings of hatred and inferiority? As for those who are devoted to unblemished principles, no sooner do they see the ideal representatives who reflect them than they flock around them, and their eyes shine with devotion for them, that is, devotion for the principles which have come to life in them. Allāh (ﷻ) will not cause this firm belief to go to waste or allow its virtuous supporters to deviate.

□ Anas (رضي الله عنه) reported:

"On the day when the Prophet (ﷺ), entered Madīnah, everything in it became illuminated, and on the day when he died everything in it became dull, and as soon as we had finished burying him our hearts began to grieve."<sup>20</sup>

Look at the cheerfulness of overpowering emotions, how it paints the horizons in its wonderful colours. And look at the grief of loss, how it spreads its dullness over everything! Such

<sup>20</sup> An authentic Hadīth narrated by Al Tirmidhī, Al-Hākim and Aḥmad. Tirmidhī said it was a sound Hadīth, and Al-Hākim said it was sound according to the conditions of Muslim. Al Dhahabī agreed with this classification, and it is indeed as they say. Al Dārimī also narrated it in a similar manner and his chain is also sound according to the conditions of Muslim. This version is also narrated by Al-Hākim and Aḥmad.

was the home of the Hijrah. It loved Allāh (ﷻ) and it loved His Prophet (ﷺ), and it was this powerful love which was the secret of its absolute support for Islām and its willing sacrifice of all its precious possessions. Any nation who is so strongly attached to its leader is bound to crush mighty mountains with determination.

□ Hasan, son of ‘Alī (ؓ), asked Hind ibn Abi Hālah to describe the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) and he described his physical features as follows:

He walked modestly but briskly, with long strides. When he walked it was as if he was descending a slope that is, descending with force, and when he turned he turned with his whole body. His gaze was lowered, and he looked at the earth much more than he looked at the sky. His gaze was not noticeable, that is, he did not stare. He led his Companions and he first greeted anyone he meets with a *salām*.

□ Hassan said: “Describe to me his way of talking.”

□ Hind replied:

The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) was continually sad, always preoccupied. He was never at rest and he never spoke without need. He remained silent for long periods. He began and finished his speech with clear pronunciation without mumbling. He spoke few but comprehensive words and to the point. He said nothing superfluous nor did he say too little. His tone was mild neither harsh nor deriding. He magnified a blessing even though it might be small. He never criticized anything, and he never criticized nor praised a man of taste for what he ate. His anger was great if an attack was made on the truth, and could not be suppressed until he defended the truth. He would not, however, get angry if he was attacked, nor would he defend himself, out of forbearance. When he pointed with his whole arm and when he was surprised he would raise his arms. When he became angry he would turn away and when he became joyful he would lower his head. His laugh was less than a smile and he would become listless in a hailstorm or the like.

□ Hind described his relationship with the people in this way:

The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) used to hold his tongue except about what concerned him. He would keep his Companions together and not separate them. He would be kind to upstanding men of the community and appoint them over others. He was careful of people without keeping himself apart from any-one of them. He would enquire about his Companions and ask people about their conditions. He considered the bad as bad and disapproved of it. He was moderate in his affairs and did not change his mind. He was not neglectful for fear that they might be neglectful or become bored. He was prepared for every occasion. He never fell short of the truth nor did he bypass it for something else. Those nearest to him were the best of people. The most virtuous of them in his sight was the one who gave the most advice, and the greatest of them in status was the best of them in sympathizing with and assisting others.

□ Then he said, describing his manner of sitting:

The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) never sat down or stood up without mentioning Allāh (ﷻ). He never reserved any place for himself. When he entered a gathering he sat wherever there was space and he ordered others to do so. He gave all those sitting with him their due attention so that none should feel that another was more favoured than himself. Whoever sat with him or stood with him for some reason, he would be patient with him until he (the other man) left. Whoever asked a need of him, he would never send him away without (fulfilling) it, speaking kindly to him. His generosity and kindness extended to everyone, and he became a father to them while they drew close to one another under his guidance on the basis of truth, and vied with one another, under his direction, in the matter of piety. His gatherings were gathering of compassion and modesty, patience and faithfulness. Voices were not raised in them and gossip was not spread. They were compassionate towards one another: they showed respect to the elder, tenderness to the young, elderly



helped the needy and made the stranger feel at home.

As regards his character, he said:

He was always pleasant and easygoing. He was neither hard nor rude nor foul-mouthed. He neither scolded too much nor praised too much. He ignored what he did not like but did not become disheartened at it. He kept himself from three things: showing off, excessiveness and what did not concern him; and he kept three things from the people: he did not find fault with anyone, nor abuse anyone, nor seek out the weaknesses of anyone. He spoke only of those things from which he hoped to gain blessings. When he spoke, his audience would bow their heads as if there were birds sitting upon them. When he kept quiet, then they would speak, and they did not rival one another to speak in front of him. I was one of them who spoke in his audience. They would all listen until he had finished. Their statement was the statement of the first person to speak. He laughed at what they laughed at and wondered at what they wondered at. He would be patient with a stranger's uncouth manner of speaking, and he would say: "If you see a needy person seeking help, then assist him," and he would not seek appreciation except from someone capable."<sup>21</sup>

□ This is a rough outline of how the people saw the marks of perfection in the lifestyle of the "Praised" Prophet (ﷺ). However, It is not possible to fathom the depths of the qualities and attributes possessed by him. Detailed knowledge of great people cannot be possessed by every person, not to speak of that great man whose entire character was the Qur'ān. The community which he produced for the mankind in Madīnah

<sup>21</sup> A weak Ḥadīth narrated at length by Al Tirmidhī in *Al Shamā'il* on the authority of Jamī' ibn 'Amr, who said: "It was reported to me by a man from the Banū Tamīm, of the children of Abū Hālah, and he is called Abū 'Abdullāh Ibn Abi Hālah, and he heard it from Ḥasan, son of 'Alī (رضي الله عنه)." This is a weak chain since Jami is weak, and about him Abū Dawūd says: "I fear he may be liar."

Also Abū 'Abdullāh is unknown, while Hind ibn Abi Hālah has not been assessed as authentic or not. Abū Dawūd says about this Ḥadīth. "I fear it may have been fabricated," and Bukhārī indicated that It was not authentic.



had reached the pinnacle. They worked and strove only for Allāh (ﷻ), and pushed ahead to the aspired goal with joy and confidence. They flocked around their Prophet (ﷺ) as students would flock around their teacher, or as soldiers would flock around their general, or as children would flock around their loving father. They stood together shoulder to shoulder in strong bonds of brotherhood, and they were a single soul in many bodies and cemented bricks in a well-constructed building. They wished to establish relation with others on the basis of justice and righteousness: thus no innocent person would be wronged in their presence, and no-one in distress would be deprived of their kind concern.

□ They considered those who accepted Islām to be free of their past, in spite of the attacks they might have previously made on their community. So there would be no examination of the past of those who cleansed themselves of their *jahilīyah* and repented to their Lord. On the contrary, they would join the Muslim community as noble and respected members of it, their past sins forgiven, so that they might turn over a new leaf and start his new life with good deeds. As for those who remained disbelievers and strove to impede the progress of Islām, it was essential to equip oneself to fight them until the earth was purified of their disbelief and enmity.

□ That group of believers toiled for Allāh's pleasure and spent their days and nights in worshipping Him. They had resigned themselves to one of two alternatives: either to live for Allāh (ﷻ) or to die in His cause. If you made an attempt to balance the Muslims of those times against the rest of the mankind, you would find that all the factors of preference were in their favour, while on the other hand, other nations were constantly shaken by tribulations. It was no wonder, therefore, that within a few years they had become a youthful state executing the commands of Allāh (ﷻ) without interference.

□ In addition, detailed legislation began to be Revealed in Madīnah, organizing the private and public affairs of the Muslims and explaining the basis of the lawful and unlawful in stages until they reached their final form as was recorded by the history of legislation. The penal code was set, *zakāh* and fasting were made compulsory, and the number of *rak'at* in prayers was increased for the first time in Madīnah. According to a report of 'Ā'ishah *Ṣalāh* consisted of two *rak'at* when it was made compulsory and the *Ṣalāh* when travelling remained at that, whereas later the *ṣalāh* on non-travellers was increased.<sup>22</sup>

□ It is worth mentioning here that 'Ā'ishah started living with the Prophet (ﷺ) during the first year of the Hijrah although their marriage had taken place before the Hijrah.<sup>23</sup> We shall speak about polygamy and the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) in another chapter.

<sup>22</sup> An authentic Hadīth narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim on the authority of 'Ā'ishah. In one of Bukhārī's versions she is reported to have said: "*Ṣalāh* was made compulsory as two *rak'at*. Then the Prophet (ﷺ) migrated and four were prescribed, while the prayers when travelling were left as before."

<sup>23</sup> This is the meaning of the authentic report from 'Ā'ishah in which she said: "The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) married me after the death of Khadijah, two or three years before his departure for Madīnah while I was yet 7 years old. When he arrived in Madīnah some women came to me... then they took me to the Prophet (ﷺ) and I lived with him from the age of 9 years." Narrated by Bukhārī and Aḥmad. In another report she said: "He married me in *Shawwāl* and started living with me in *Shawwāl*."