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ALLĀH:

The Concept of God in Islam

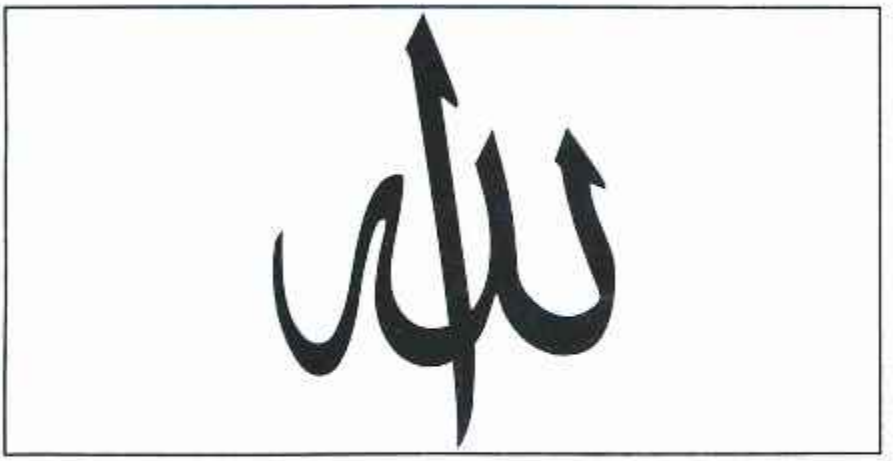
WITH THE ATTRIBUTES OF ALLAH

Yasin T. al-Jibouri



Ansariyah Publications





ALLĀH:

The Concept of God in Islam

By

Yasin T. al-Jibouri

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Tel: 0098 251 7741744 Fax 7742647
Email: ansarian@noornet.net
www.ansariyan.org & www.ansariyan.net

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH,
THE BENEFICENT THE MERCIFUL

DEDICATION

To the One Who made me what I am, Who invited me, the unworthy servant of His that I am, to accept His True Religion, to visit His House, to disseminate His creed in this part of His vast and spacious universe, to thank Him for all the innumerable blessings with which He has blessed me, the undeserving slave of His that I am. To my Lord and Maker, Creator and Cherisher. To the One Who is dearer to me than my precious parents or anyone else in the whole world and beyond. To the One Who never failed me whenever I invoked Him, the sinner that I am. To the One Who lives in my heart, in my mind, in my veins, in my soul, in my existence, in everything related to me. To the One Whom I see whenever the wind blows, whenever I smell a rose, whenever I freeze in the cold, whenever I hear a tale about Him told, whenever I see a baby laugh or cry, whenever I see the birds fly high and high, whenever I see how the grass is green, how He exists in every scene, in the heavens, on earth, or in-between. To the One Who saved me from the clutches of today's Pharaoh and his tribe and brought me to the land of modern day Babylon. To the One Who taught me the value of time, Who trained my ears to appreciate every rhyme, Who taught me the language of modern day tyrants and oppressors, Who gave me the courage to tell them who they really are, to name them, and to shame them. To the One Who protected me when I was in the jaws of death many a time. To the One Who made me realize that He never forgets me even when I for a moment or so forget Him or get distracted from Him. To the One Who looks after me when I am heedless, mindless, careless, or penniless. To the One Who deserves all the Praise in the heavens and on earth by each and everyone He created, be it as big as the cosmos or as small as the electrons, protons, or neutrons. To the One Whose justice I dread and fear, Who is to me quite near and very, very Dear; to Allāh, Blessed, Praised, and Exalted is His Name, pleading to Him to accept this humble effort as a token of my appreciation of all what He has done for me and bestowed upon me, including His blessing of writing this book...

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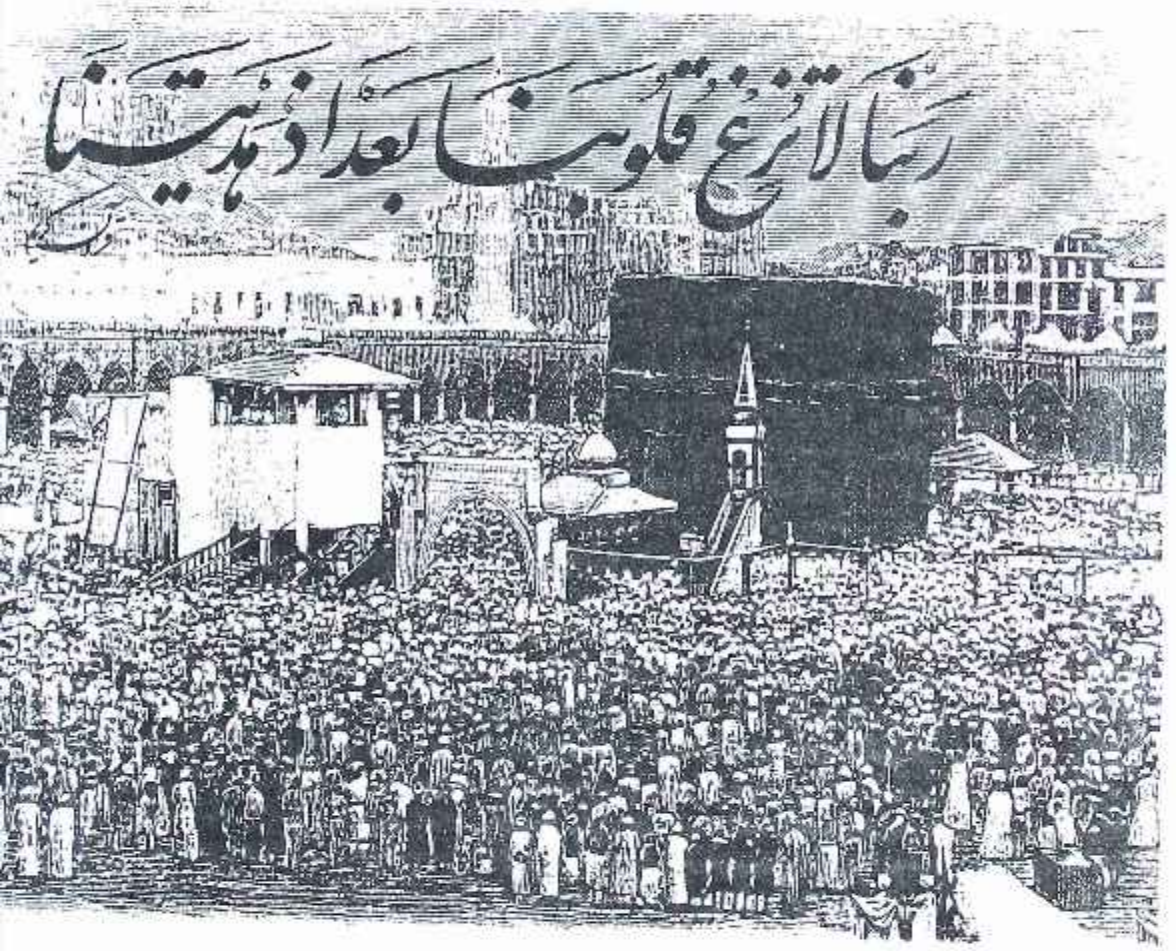

PUBLISHER'S PREFACE

This is the second book by Yasīn T. al-Jibouri which Anṣāriyan Publications is pleased to publish, the first being *Fast of the Month of Ramaḍān: Philosophy and Aḥkām*, and we hope it will not be the last. Since the reader may be interested in knowing who the author is and what scholarly achievements he has acquired, we would like to state the following in order to satisfy such curiosity.

Al-Jibouri was born on August 14, 1946 in Baghdad, Iraq, living mostly at the holy city of Kaẓimain. In 1969, he graduated from the College of Arts, Baghdād University, where he majored in English which he taught in Iraq and in Saudi Arabia. In September of 1972, he started studying for a Graduate degree in English at Atlanta University (Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A.), graduating in 1978. In the Winter of 1973, he founded the Islamic Society of Georgia, Inc. and started in January of 1974 editing and publishing its newsletter *Islamic Affairs* which developed from a four-page to a twelve-page newsletter, becoming the most widely circulated Shī'a publication in the United States.

In 1975, al-Jibouri received instructions to help facilitate the arrival to the United States of the first representative of the Supreme Ayatullah (Ayatullah al-Uzma) *marhoom* Abul-Qasim al-Khoei in the U.S. and Canada. The name of that representative is Shaikh Muhammed Sarwar. Al-Jibouri sponsored the Shaikh and became his personal guarantor during his stay in the U.S. which eventually became permanent.

Al-Jibouri has made good use of his time while being in the United States. He is now a typesetter, art designer, translator, editor and author. With the exception of only three titles, all other books he wrote, edited, or translated were typeset by him (including this one) and often their covers were designed by him, too. He obtained in March of 1988 a Certificate with Honors in Microprocessors and Microcomputers from N.R.I. of Washington, D.C. and three Certificates in electronics and programming, including Advanced Programming.

Al-Jibouri has edited and revised the English translations of the Holy Qur'ān by S.V. Mir Aḥmed Ali, by A. Yūsuf Ali, and by M.H. Shākir, in addition to editing and typesetting several newsletters and magazines, including *Middle East Business Magazine* of which he became Senior Editor. Among the other books which he edited are: *Socio-Economic Justice with Particular Reference to Nahjul-Balāgha* by Dr. S.M. Waseem, and *A Biography of Leaders of Islam* by Sayyid Ali Naqi Naqwi, English

translation by Dr. Sayyid Nazir Hasan Zaidi.

The author has written *Mary and Jesus in Islam* and Vol. 1 of his autobiography titled *Memoirs of a Shīʿa Missionary in America: Two Decades of Daʿwah*. He is the first person ever to translate works of the martyred economist Ayatullah Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr such as *Contemporary Man and the Social Problem, A General Outlook at Rituals* (both published in the Islamic Republic of Iran and the second also published in the U.S.), *The General Bases of Banking in the Muslim Society*, and *What Do You Know About Islamic Economics?* He published two of these titles himself in the U.S., namely *A General Outlook at Ritual*, and *The General Bases of Banking in the Muslim Society. What Do You Know About Islamic Economics?* was published in the United States by the Imamia Center of Lanham, Maryland.

He has translated and/or published numerous titles; among them are: *A Biography of Muḥammed Bāqir al-Ṣadr, The Form of Islamic Government and Wilāyat al-Faqeeh, About the World Political Situation From a Muslim's Viewpoint*, and *Our Faith* (by Sayyid Muḥammd Ḥusain al-Jalāli), *A Biography of Imam al-Rida* (by the late Shaikh Muḥammed Jawad Fadlallah), in addition to a large number of political tracts, pamphlets and translations. He also translated from the Arabic the first four volumes of the series titled *Al-Islam Risalatuna* which were published in Lebanon. In addition to all these books, he completed the first authentic English translation of *Al-Murajaʿāt* ("The Right Path") by Sayyid Sharafuddeen Sadrud-Deen al-Moosawi (printed in Lebanon) and translated: *Best Month, Best Night; The Book of Istikhara; Weapon of the Prophets; Miracles of the Holy Qur'an*; and *The Great Names of Allah (Asmā' Allāh al Ḥusna)*. His latest translated work is Dr. Muḥammed al-Tījāni al-Samāwi's book *Shīʿas are the Ahl al-Sunnah* which has been published in New York by Vantage Press. And all these works he has completed in his spare time.

Yasin T. al-Jibouri has received honours and recognition from both Muslims and non-Muslims in the U.S. and abroad. He was discussed by Prof. Larry Poston in his book *Islamic Da`wah in the West* where his achievements were noted. At the present time, he is editing and typesetting his own translation of *Al-Maqtal*, the complete epic story of Imām Ḥusain's martyrdom wiritten by the late ʿAbdul-Razzāq al-Mūsawi. He is also translating the famous classic work *Al-Iḥtijāj* and planning to write several new books.

May Allāh accept our humble effort and yours, *Allāhomma Āmeen*.

Ansairyan Publications



INTRODUCTION

In any theistic religion, the concept of God rests at the core of its beliefs, tenets and practices, and it determines what its adherents regard as admissible or otherwise. It shapes their attitudes towards others whom they label as "unbelievers." It inspires their perceptions, formulating how they conceive their role in life, how they should treat one another, what they should do when they sin or fall into error. It determines the extent of their humanity and provides them with a yardstick to measure that of others. It dictates to them ways to treat other living beings around them: animals, plants, the environment at large, how they look at nature and how they envision their responsibility to protect and preserve it. It paves their path to worldly happiness and to salvation in the hereafter. No words can over-estimate the significance of such a concept in any given faith based on the belief in a Supreme Deity, God Almighty, Creator of everything and everyone.

This book is written primarily for open-minded non-Muslims. This is why I have refrained from using the usual salutation of "peace be upon him and his family" whenever the name of Prophet Muḥammed is mentioned, or "peace be upon him" whenever the name of a messenger or a prophet of Allāh or an Imām is mentioned. Needless to say, the primary reference utilized is the Holy Qur'ān. A colon (:) separates the number of its Chapter (*Sura*) from that of the verse (*āya*). For example, 2:255 refers to Chapter 2 (al-Baqarah, the Cow), verse 255, or *āyat al-kursi*, verse of the Throne.

For about quarter of a century living in exile here in America, I have had the opportunity to closely discern the attitudes of non-Muslims around me towards Islam and Muslims, often visiting a number of churches—and one synagogue in Atlanta, Georgia—to observe first-hand how they worship God, what their faith enjoins or prohibits, how they look at those who do not subscribe to their beliefs. When I was living in Atlanta, Georgia, from 1972 to 1979, as many as five churches had my

name and address on their mailing lists. Beautiful young ladies would come to my apartment to escort me and my roommates (a Pakistani Hindu and an Indian Sunni Muslim) to various church functions. The food was always good, although I and my Indian roommate had to always make sure no pork or any of its derivatives would pollute our systems. And there were many good looking young ladies there. The trap was well set for us. And we were single and available, young and healthy. And temptation was always there. I had asked those churches to place my name and address on their mailing list, to let me know when they had a function, and to send their good-looking young ladies to my apartment for the ride to the church. All of that did not happen coincidentally. In my view, nothing, absolutely nothing, happens by a coincident, not even a stone rolling down a mountain or a leaf falling on the ground. Everything happens according to a plan put forth by the Planner and Executor of the world, the One and Only God Who created it and everything in it. "Accidentally," "coincidentally," and "by chance" are words and expressions which should be eliminated from language altogether; they are intruders. They are sacrilegious.

My visits to churches and Christian homes were never done out of a pure desire to have a good time, to socialize, to have one girl-friend or more as some of my roommates had anticipated, nor to kill time. To me, killing time is one of the worst murder crimes. I had a burning desire to see things for myself. Some promoters of those church programs were more aggressive than others. They wanted to gauge how serious we were about our religious beliefs in order, perhaps, to evaluate their chances to succeed in converting us to Christianity, and they did so in various ways.

From the very beginning, I realized that those churches were doing their best—and worst—to convert non-Christians to Christianity; after all, is not this what missionary work is all about?! And who could be better candidates than single foreign students studying for their graduate degrees? Once they go home, these students will disseminate their new faith with zeal and enthusiasm to others. At least this is what those churches were hoping. This is why many of their preachers and priests were distributing anti-Islamic literature, thinking that by attacking others' beliefs, they would protect their own and win new converts. They had forgotten about the laws of action and reaction. Some of those churches were showing movies derogatory to Islam and to the Prophet of Islam. Since my life's motto has always been the Prophet's tradition saying, "One who remains silent rather than says the truth is a tongue-tied Satan,"

I refuse to be that Satan.

While tolerant is our religion, hypocritical are most leaders of our Islamic world nowadays. The West seems to forget how indebted its civilization to our Islamic civilization, and very few Muslims, indeed, are doing their job in refreshing the West's memory. Although this book is not written for such an objective, it at least provides the reader, it is hoped, with a better understanding of the most important concept in Islam: the concept of God. The chapter dealing with the history of Prophet Muhammed brings to light (to many people for the very first time) the deeply rooted and prestigious family to whom Muhammed belongs. It takes the reader back in time to more than fifteen centuries ago to narrate the incidents involving some of the ancestors of the greatest personality that ever walked on the face of earth.

The book in your hands is not written for those who deliberately misrepresent our Islamic faith, for these will never see anything except through their own tinted glasses, and there is no cure for their blindness. These are mentally and psychologically sick with a sundry of contagious diseases: prejudice, arrogance, close-midedness, racist superiority complexes..., and it is a waste of precious time to try to deal with them. Rather, it is written for open-minded and fair non-Muslims who sincerely wish to know how Muslims conceive their Creator. It is for these non-Muslims, and for those Muslims whose extended stay in any non-Muslim country may have taken its toll on their faith, who changed their names from "Jasim" to "Jessy," from "Husain" to "Jose," etc., that this book is written.

In order to get to know the God of Islam, one must become familiar with His creation. A maker is known by what he makes, a Creator by what He creates. This book contains selected samples of what the Almighty has created from among the jinns and mankind. Supplications, too, provide clues to Muslims' concept of their Creator, so it contains a selected number of well known supplications. Some of the Almighty's prophets and messengers are also discussed, especially their very best: Muhammed, peace and blessings of the Almighty be upon him and his pure and sinless progeny.

If the reader wishes to comment on this book's contents or on those of my other books, I encourage him to write me; my address is included in the Conclusion. May Allāh *ta'āla* guide us to His Path, *Allāhomma Āmeen.*

PART ONE

KNOWING ALLĀH

Muḥammed, the Messenger of Allāh, has said, "One among you who knows Allāh best is the one who fears Him most, and I fear Him even more than him." Ibn ʿAbbās[1] says that a bedouin once came to the Messenger of Allāh and said, "O Messenger of Allāh! Teach me of the most unusual of knowledge!" He asked him, "What have you done with the peak of knowledge so that you now ask about its most unusual things?!" The man asked him, "O Messenger of Allāh! What is this peak of knowledge?!" He said, "It is knowing Allāh as He deserves to be known." The bedouin then said, "And how can He be known as He ought to be?" The Messenger of Allāh answered, "It is that you know Him as having no model, no peer, no antithesis, and that He is One and only: He is the One Who is Apparent yet Hidden, the First and the Last, having no peer nor a similitude; this is the true knowledge about Him."

Accurately knowing Allāh is the pillar whereupon Islam in its entirety hinges. Without such knowledge, any action in Islam does not have any real value whatsoever: it has neither essence nor value.

The Question is: "How can we get to know Allāh, and what is the venue for attaining such knowledge?" The answer is crucially conditional: If we do not know the right course, we can never reach our destination.

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[1]Ibn ʿAbbās was one of Prophet Muḥammed's cousins: he was Abdullāh ibn ʿAbbās ibn Abd al-Muṭṭalib, of Banu Hāshim, of Quraysh. Referred to as the Islamic nation's scribe, he was a highly respected *ṣaḥābi* whose *aḥādīth* are classified by al-Bukhāri and Muslim as "*ṣaḥīḥ*," accurate, authentic. He was born in Mecca, and he kept the Messenger of Allāh company and narrated his traditions. He fought on the side of Imām ʿAli during the Battle of the Camel (which started on Friday, Jumada I 16, 36 A.H./November 10, 656 A.H.) against ʿĀyesha and her supporters, and also during the Battle of Siffīn (which started in Thul-Hijjah 36 A.H./May 657 A.D.). During his later years, he became blind, so he retired to Ṭā'if where he died in 68 A.H./687 A.D. In both al-Bukhāri's and Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥ* books, there are 1160 *aḥādīth* transmitted through Ibn ʿAbbās alone.

Any erroneous approach to knowing Allāh is a major contributor to distancing a large number of people from accurately getting to believe in Allāh. The Holy Qur'ān narrates to us stories about those who disbelieved in Allāh in every age and time, depicting for us how they insisted, in order to believe in Him, on hearing or seeing Him, relying on their senses. Following are only a few examples:

Allāh Almighty has said,

> And those who have no knowledge say: Why does not Allāh speak to us or a sign come to us? Even thus did those before them say; (they said) the like of what such people say; their hearts are all alike. Indeed, We have made the signs (leading to belief in Him) clear for people who are sure. (Qur'ān, 2:118)

> And those who do not hope for Our meeting say: Why have no angels been sent down upon us, or (why) do we not see our Lord? Certainly they themselves are too proud and have revolted in great revolt. On the day they see the angels, there shall be no joy on that day for the guilty... (Qur'ān, 25:21-22)

> Pharaoh said: O Haman! Build me a tower so that I may attain the means of access, the means of access to the heavens, then (I may be able to) reach the God of Moses, and I surely think he is a liar. And thus was the evil of his deed made fair-seeming to Pharaoh, and he was turned away from the (right) course. (Qur'ān, 40:36-37)

"Turned away from the (right) course" refers to the course that ends with acquiring a sound and accurate knowledge of the Almighty. Such a goal should be our first and foremost concern. Without properly knowing Allāh, how can we properly worship Him? The Messenger of Allāh Muhammed has said in a *qudsi* tradition, "For everything there is a path, and the path to Paradise is knowledge." This is a humble attempt to search for such sound and accurate knowledge, the one that brings us closer to our Lord and leads us to the path of salvation, to happiness both in this life and in the eternal life to come.

Muslims Start Everything in the Name of Allāh

In one *hādīth*, the Messenger of Allāh is quoted saying, "Anything which does not start with the Name of Allāh is cut-off (from Allāh's blessing)." It is customary for Muslims to invoke the Name of Allāh

whenever they do anything important, or whenever they seek His protection against His arch-enemy and ours Satan the Accursed. Examples are: When they stand up or sit down, when they eat or drink, when they enter their homes, when they open the door of their cars or bathrooms or any room in the house, when they start the engines of their cars, when they put on or take off their clothes, when they ascend or descend a ladder, when they start writing something important, when they slaughter an animal decreed by Allāh as lawful for their food..., and even when they cohabit with their wives in the hope Allāh will bless them with righteous progeny. Such are the manners of good Muslims. So let us start in the Name of Allāh Who created and determined everything from nothing, the ever-Living, the Eternal Who is never affected by time, nor space, nor anything else, Who never initiated a place for His being, nor did He attain His might after having created everything, nor was He weak before then. In the Name of Allāh Who never needed company before creating everything. In the Name of Allāh the like of Whom there is none at all, nor was He without His domain before the latter's creation. In the Name of Allāh Who hears without a hearing faculty, Who sees without vision. In the Name of Allāh Who is Mighty without having to derive His might from His creation. In the Name of Allāh the eyes of Whose creatures can never see Him, the Most Exalted One, the all-Knowing. I testify that Allāh is the One and Only God; there is no partner with Him, the One and only One upon Whom all things and beings depend. He does not beget, nor is He begotten, nor is there anything like Him. I further testify that our master Muḥammed is His Servant and Messenger, bearer of His Message and of the glad tidings, the one whom He trusted for His revelation; blessings of Allāh be upon him and his righteous and pure progeny.

How Prophet Muḥammed Praised His Lord

Our master Muḥammed has said,

> All Praise is due to Allāh, the One and only God. His being Eternal is compounded by His being Divine. He is Proud in His own right and in His Greatness. He creates whatever He wills and initiates the creation without having to have a model for any of what He creates! Our Lord is the One Who has always been beyond time as such; through His knowledge has He split the seed; through His Might has He created all creation; through the light of the morning has He

started the dawn; there is none that can alter what He has created, nor is there any that can change what He has made, nor is there any that can revoke His decree or repeal His command or be exempted from His call! There is no extinction to His domain, nor is there a term for His Divinity. He is the first to create, the One Who is eternal even beyond eternity itself, the One Who has obscured Himself from His creation in the horizon of ambition, in the lofty Exaltation, in the abundant domain, higher than anything that is high. Yet He is close to everything, so He manifests Himself to His creatures even without being seen, while He is the most Sublime! By His Light He veiled Himself and ascended the height, obscuring Himself from His creation. He sent them messengers so that He would have the clear argument against them, and so that His messengers would testify against His creation. He sent prophets to them to bring them glad tidings and to warn them, so that He would guide whomsoever He pleases after providing them with His clear signs and bringing to life whomsoever He pleases with the same, hence the creation will know about their Lord that which they did not know, and they will know Him as their God after having rejected Him. They will believe in His Unity after having persisted in denying it.

Commonly Asked Questions About "Allāh"

Let us now try to answer a number of basic questions about the Almighty:

1) How can you describe Him?

Numerous verses of the Holy Qur'ān point out to His existence. Consider the argument of His Friend Ibrahīm (Abraham, as) who said: "My Lord is the One Who brings life and Who causes death" (Qur'ān, 2:258), and the argument of Moses who said, "[He is] your Lord and the Lord of your fathers of old" (Qur'ān, 26:26). Also consider these verses:

> Our Lord is the One Who gave everything its creation, then He guided it (to its destination). (Qur'ān, 20:50)

> The Lord of the East and the West: there is no god but He; therefore, take Him for a protector. (Qur'ān, 73:9)

2) Can you define Him?

The Exalted One says that He defies definition: "... nothing at all is like Him" (Qur'ān, 42:11).

3) Can one ask: "What is He?"

Pharaoh asked Moses, "And what is the Lord of the worlds?" (Qur'ān, 26:23). Moses answered by saying that He is "Your Lord and the Lord of your fathers of old" (Qur'ān, 26:26). There is no way to know Him by defining "what" He is; rather, one can get to know the proofs of His Existence, Might, Knowledge, Wisdom, Mercy and His being the Creator of everything. "Do not think about Allāh," said Imām `Ali, "rather, think about what Allāh has created, for thinking about Allāh only increases one's bewilderment."

4) Is He one or more?

The Glorified One has required the Muslims to

> Say: He, Allāh, is One. (Qur'ān, 112:1)
>
> And your God is One God! (Qur'ān, 2:163)
>
> Had there been in them any gods besides Allāh, they would both have certainly been in a state of disorder. (Qur'ān, 21:22)

5) Is He confined to any place?

The Holy Qur'ān tells us that:

> He is the Supreme (watching) over His worshippers. (Qur'ān, 6:61)
>
> They revere their Lord High above them. (Qur'ān, 16:50)
>
> The Beneficent God is firmly established on the throne (of authority). (Qur'ān, 20:5)

"Above them" in 16:50 refers to the Almighty being above His servants in His Might, Power, Loftiness, not to being above them in place, space, area, elevation, or physical location; these do not apply to Him. The Messenger of Allāh called upon His Lord during his ascension to heavens pleading to Him thus, "You are as You have praised Your own Self," and Prophet Younus (Jonah) son of Matti,

while being in the bottom of the sea, called upon his Lord saying, "There is no god but You! Glory to You! Surely I have become one of those who commit injustice against their own souls!" (Qur'ān, 21:87). The Messenger of Allāh has said, "Do not exalt me over him [over Younus] in nearness to Allāh just because I reached the High Throne while he was in the bottom of the sea, for the Adored One is above being confined to a space or a direction." He has also addressed Him saying, "You and he in the strata of the heavens;" the believers call upon Him saying, "You and them on earth." Had He been in a particular area or place, all these persons could not have differed from one another in His regard at any given time. He is above being confined to place or direction: "All those in the heavens and the earth glorify Allāh" (Qur'ān, 57:1).

6) When did He begin to exist?

The Praised One has said,

> He is the First and the Last, the Evident and the Immanent, and He has full knowledge of all things. (Qur'ān, 57:3)
>
> Everything is to perish except He. (Qur'ān, 28:88)

Anyone who asks when His existence came to be implies that there was a time when He did not exist, i.e. that void preceded Him. He is not "preceded" by anyone, nor is He "succeeded" by anyone. His continuation is above being tied to time. His existence is too holy to be dependent on time; such are characteristics of things or persons who come to be then perish, or of those whose being is possible in the future, but they do not apply to Him. Another verse which similarly describes His eternity and perpetuity is this one: "Everyone on earth will perish but will abide (forever) the Face of your Lord, full of Majesty, Bounty and Honour" (Qur'ān, 55:26-27), and also this: "Blessed is He in Whose hands is the dominion" (Qur'ān, 67:1). "Blessed," that is, *tabāraka*, is derived from *baraka*, blessing, which connotes constancy and lack of acceptance to change. His existence is everlasting, eternal, perpetual.

7) Over what does He rule?

The Almighty says, "Say: O Allāh! Master of authority! You give authority to whomsoever You please and take it away from

whomsoever You please" (Qur'ān, 3:26). He, and only He, is the King of kings; He grants others authority: "Blessed is the One in Whose hand is the kingdom" (Qur'ān, 67:1). Vanities and possessions owned by others will all disappear on the Day of Judgment: "Whose will be the dominion that Day? It is Allāh's, the One, the Subduer (of all)" (Qur'ān, 40:16).

8) What is [the extent of] His knowledge?

He has said,

> [He is] the One Who knows the unseen and the seen. (Qur'ān, 6:73)
>
> And with Him are the keys of the unseen treasures: none knows them except He. (Qur'ān, 6:59)
>
> Slumber does not overtake Him nor sleep. (Qur'ān, 2:255)
>
> And your Lord is not forgetful. (Qur'ān, 19:64)
>
> And you are not (engaged) in any affair, nor do you recite concerning it any portion of the Qur'ān, nor do you do anything, except that We are witnesses over you when you enter into it. (Qur'ān, 10:61)

9) What is His speech?

The Most Glorified and Exalted has said,

> Were every tree on earth (made into) pens and the sea (to supply it with ink), with seven more seas to add thereto, the words of Allāh would not have been exhausted; surely Allāh is Mighty, Wise. (Qur'ān, 31:27)
>
> Say: Were the sea (turned into) ink for the (recording of the) words of my Lord, the sea would surely be consumed before the words of my Lord are exhausted though We were to bring the like of that (sea) to add thereto. (Qur'ān, 18:109)

10) How is He?

The Exalted One says,

> Allāh's is the command before (now) and thereafter. (Qur'ān, 30:4)

The day on which no soul shall control anything for (another) soul, and the command on that Day shall be entirely Allāh's. (Qur'ān, 82:19)

11) Why is He the Praised One?

The Almighty has said that He is "... the Apparent and the Hidden" (Qur'ān, 57:3), that is, His Existence, Might and Wisdom are all evident if one observes the indications thereto, yet His reality is obscured from all intellects.

12) What is His will?

The answer to this verse is provided by verses such as these:

And you do not please except if Allāh [so] pleases. (Qur'ān, 76:30)

Allāh chooses whomsoever He pleases especially for His mercy, and Allāh is the Lord of mighty grace. (Qur'ān, 2:105)

Allāh grants His authority to whomsoever He pleases, and Allāh cares for all, and He knows all things. (Qur'ān, 2:247)

Allāh sets on the right path whomsoever He pleases. (Qur'ān, 2:272)

He it is Who shapes you in the wombs as He pleases. (Qur'ān, 3:6)

If He pleases, He may take you off and make whomsoever He pleases successors after you. (Qur'ān, 6:133)

13) Why is He the all-Knowing, the Omnipotent?

He has responded to those who raised such a question by saying,

He cannot be questioned concerning what He does while they shall be questioned. (Qur'ān, 21:23)

All things are destined in the end to the One Who has facilitated their being what they are, the One Who cannot be explained; therefore, the attempt to analyze Him, His Attributes, and His actions, is simply impossible.

14) Does He have sons, daughters, parents, or any family members or relatives?!

The God of Islam and of all mankind has said, "Say: He, Allāh, is One. Allāh is He on Whom everyone [and everything] depends. He does not beget, nor is He begotten, and none is like Him" (Qur'ān, 112:1-4).

15) Does He forgive?

He has said, "Inform My servants that I am *the* Forgiving, *the* Merciful" (Qur'ān, 15:49).

16) What about His creation?

He has said,

> O man! What has beguiled you from your Lord, the Gracious One Who created you then made you complete, then He made you symmetrical? Into whatever form He pleased did He shape you. (Qur'ān, 82:6-8)

> Have they not considered that Allāh, Who created the heavens and the earth and was not tired by their creation...? (Qur'ān, 46:33)

> This is Allāh's creation, so show Me what those besides Him have created. (Qur'ān, 31:11)

17) Can He be seen?

He, the Most Exalted, the Most High, has told that

> When Moses came to the place appointed by Us, and his Lord addressed him, he said: "Lord! Show (Yourself) to me so that I may look upon You." Allāh said: "By no means can you see Me; but look at the mountain; if it abides in its place, then shall you see Me." When his Lord manifested His glory to the mountain, He made it like dust, and Moses fell in a swoon. When he recovered his senses, he said: "Glory to You! To You do I turn in repentance, and I am the first to believe." (Qur'ān, 7:143).

Sunnis, however, believe, as the reader will find out in a later part of this book, that the believers will be able on the Day of Judgment to see Allāh. Shī'as disagree with them as you will read later in this

18) How does He command?

He has said,

> His command, when He intends anything, is only to say to it: Be, and it is. (Qur'ān, 36:82)

> When He decrees an affair, He only says to it: Be, and it is. (Qur'ān, 40:68)

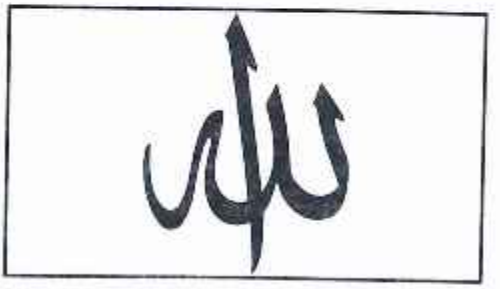
His creatures have always wondered about His Attributes, Praise and Glory to Him, so He provided them with the following verses wherein they can find the clear answer:

> And Allāh's are the most Beautiful Names (Attributes), so call upon Him thereby. (Qur'ān, 7:180)

> Allāh: there is no god but He; His are the very Best Names. (Qur'ān, 20:8)

> Say: Call upon Allāh or upon *al-Rahman*; whichever you call upon, He has the Great Names... (Qur'ān, 17:110).

> He is Allāh, besides Whom there is no other god; the King, the Holy, the One Who grants peace, the One Who gives security, the Guardian over all, the Mighty, the Supreme, the Possessor of greatness; Glory to Allāh from what they set up (with Him). He is Allāh the Creator, the Maker, the Fashioner; His are the most beautiful Attributes; whatever in the heavens and the earth declares His glory, and He is the Mighty, the Wise. (Qur'ān, 59:21-24)



PART TWO

THE NINETY-NINE ATTRIBUTES OF ALLĀH

In the Holy Qur'ān, we read the following verses:

> Allāh: There is no god but He; His are the Greatest Names. (Qur'ān, 20:8)

> Say: Call upon Allāh or call upon the Beneficent God (*al-Raḥmān*); whichever you call upon, He has the Greatest Names." (Qur'ān, 17:110)

> To Allāh belong the Greatest Names; therefore, call on Him thereby, and leave alone those who violate the sanctity of His Names..." (Qur'ān, 7:180)

In order to familiarize ourselves with Allāh's Attributes, we have to consult the Holy Qur'ān, traditions, or even common-sense. On page 220 of his *Book of Unity (of Allāh)*, Shaikh Muḥammed ibn ʿAli ibn Babawayh al-Qummi al-Ṣadûq quotes Imām Jaʿfer al-Ṣādiq quoting his forefathers quoting the Messenger of Allāh saying, "There are ninety-nine Attributes, one hundred minus one, of Allāh; whoever counts them will enter Paradise." He is also quoted saying that whoever learns these Attributes by heart and comprehends their meanings (and acts upon it) will enter Paradise. One should be familiar with the meanings and implications of these names, not just with their count. Nobody can sufficiently be acquainted with the Attributes of Allāh as He Himself says in 73:20: "He knows that you cannot (sufficiently) count Him (His Attributes)." A tradition says, "Derive your manners from the Attributes of Allāh." Allāh has willed to show His servant His Attributes which collectively describe Him without His Name being a separate part thereof, even though He is not identical to them in essence.

On page 112, Vol. 1, the renown scholar al-Kulaini al-Razi cites

derivation of the word "Allāh," the Imām said to him, "O Hishām! The proper noun `Allāh' is derived from `*ilāh*;' the Creator requires the existence of creation [to testify to His being its Creator]. This is a noun, not an adjective. Anyone who worships a name without worshipping what the name stands for is actually committing *kufr*, apostasy; in reality, he does not worship anything at all. One who worships the name and the meaning is also committing *kufr*, for he will be worshipping two. Only one who worships the meaning without the name is in line with the concept of Tawhid (Unity of God). Have you understood all of this, O Hishām?" He answered him in the affirmative, requesting him to provide more explanations, whereupon the Imām said, "There are ninety-nine Attributes of Allāh. Had each Attribute been the same as it describes, each one of them would have been a god by itself. But `Allāh' is the meaning one deducts once he becomes familiar with all these Attributes. They all, O Hishām, in their collective sense, are not the same as He Himself. Bread is something you eat. Water is something you drink. A garment is something you put on. And fire is something that burns. Do you understand all of this, O Hishām, fully enough so that you would promote it and fight the enemies of Allāh for its sake?!" Hishām answered him in the affirmative, whereupon the Imām added, "May Allāh grant you thereby benefits, and may He keep your feet firm thereupon, O Hishām!"

Imām Ja'fer al-Ṣādiq has said,

> O son of Adam! If a bird were to eat your heart, it would not have felt satisfied. If the hole of a needle were put before your vision, it would have covered it up. How dare you, using these two, expect to know by them the domain of the heavens and the earth?! Had you been truthful, you would have looked at this sun: it is one object among many of Allāh's creations. Had your eyes been able to see all of it, then, and only then, would you have really been truthful. Allāh, the Exalted and the Great, says, "And to your Lord is the [end] goal" (Qur'ān, 53:42). So, when speech reaches the subject of Allāh, it is then that you should hold your tongue...

EXPLANATION AND DERIVATION OF THE WORD "ALLĀH"

Views vary in this regard. One says it is derived from one who *ilah*s (as a verb) another when the latter seeks refuge with him during the time of fear or calamity, and he would grant him refuge and a safe haven; so, the word would become *ilah* (as a noun) of people, just as one may be their *imām* when he leads them in congregational prayers or becomes their undisputed leader, or just as a robe becomes a *ridā'* when it is worn, or *lihāf* when used as a covering. Since it is an adjective for someone who is great, "There is nothing like unto Him" (Qur'ān, 42:11), people desired to glorify Him by giving the word the prefix *al*, thus it became *Al-ilah*. But they found the *hamza* in the beginning and also in its midst, where it is quite heavily stressed, heavy on the tongue, so they eliminated it and it became just as it is revealed in the Holy Qur'ān, that is, "Allāh." This viewpoint is supported by al-Hārith ibn Asad al-Muḥāsibi and a group of scholars, and there are dissenters.

Derivation of the Word "Allāh"

Some say that the word "Allāh" is derived from the verb *walaha* (past tense), *yawlahū* (present tense), from the root noun *walah*. The *wāw* was replaced with a *hamza*, just as the case with *wisad* and *isad*, *wishāh* and *ishāh*, *wikāf* and *ikāf*. *Walah* is extreme love. Prophet Yahya (John the Baptist) used to be forlorn most of the time whereas Jesus used to be mostly merry and always wearing a smile on his face. They both sought the judgment of the Almighty in their regard, whereupon Allāh inspired them, "The nearest of you to Me is the one who thinks best of Me." And surely Allāh knows best.

The Almighty is Endless regarding His essence, perpetuity, eternity, Attributes, qualities and blessings. His creation, on the other hand, are described as reaching the end of their life terms, being limited in their characteristics, thoughts, and spheres. The one who is incapacitated cannot reach the Endless One. No wonder, then, that the minds are forever overcome by the lights of His Independence, and the reasons are too feeble to realize the brightness of His Greatness. He is as He describes Himself when He says in 6:18 and

6:61, "He is the Supreme above His servants."

The Creator is the One Who is adored, and He is worthy of it; hence, He is called *ilāh*. He has made it clear for us that He is the One who bestows His blessings upon those whom He creates in sundry ways. Adoring is the ultimate form of glorifying. Reason testifies that the ultimate end of glorification suits only the One Who is the source of benevolence and bliss. It is to this fact that the Almighty refers when He says, "How do you deny Allāh while you were dead and He gave you Life"? (Qur'ān, 2:28).

Nobody knows Allāh as He deserves to be known except Allāh Himself. In sermon 186 in *Nahjul Balāgha*, Imām ʿAli says the following:

> One who assigns conditions to Him does not believe in His Oneness, nor does one who likens Him to anything grasp the reality about Him. One who illustrates an example for Him does not revere Him. One who points at Him and imagines Him does not know the meaning of His Lordship. Anything known by itself is a created thing, and everything that exists by virtue of other things is the effect thereof. He does things but not with the help of instruments. He assigns measures but not with the faculty of thinking. He is rich but not by acquisition. Time does not keep company with Him, nor does He seek help from any means. His Being precedes time. His Existence precedes non-existence, and His eternity precedes beginning. By creating the senses, it is known that He does not have the same. By comparing antitheses, it is known that He has no antithesis, and by striking similarities between things, it is known that there is nothing similar to Him. He has made light the contrary of darkness, brightness the opposite of dimness, dryness the opposite of moisture, and heat the opposite of coolness. He causes harmony among opposites. He fuses together diverse things; He brings closer what is remote and distances what is joined together. He is not confined to limits, nor computed by figures. Matters are attracted to one another, and parts point out to what is similar to them; the word "since" disproves their eternity, and possibility disproves their perpetuity, while certain means keep them distant from perfection. Through them does the Creator manifest Himself to the intellect, and by them is He veiled from vision. Stillness and motion do not apply to Him; how can anything that He causes to have any effect on Him, and how can anything which He has created revert in its effect unto Him? Or how can anything have an

been so, He would have become subject to diversity, His Being would have become divisible (into parts), and His reality would have been prevented from being Eternal. Had He had a front, He would have had a rear! He would have needed to be completed had there been any shortage in Him. In that case, characteristics of His creatures would have appeared in Him, and He would have become a sign (leading to other objects) instead of the latter leading to Him. Through the might of His effectiveness is He distanced above being affected by things. Neither change nor extinction affect Him. He has not begotten anyone lest He should be said as having been Himself born. He has not been begotten lest He should have been confined to limits. He is too sublime to have sons, too pure to take women. Imagination cannot reach Him to assess Him. Comprehension cannot conceive Him and fancy a shape for Him. Senses do not perceive Him to probe Him. Hands cannot touch Him to feel Him. He does not change into any condition. He does not pass from one stage to another. Nights and days do not age Him. Light and darkness do not alter Him. It cannot be said that He has a limb or extremity, an end or an expiration, nor do things control Him to raise or lower Him, nor does anything support Him to bend Him or keep Him erect. He is not inside things nor outside them. He conveys news, but not with the tongue or voice. He listens, but not with ear holes or organs of hearing. He speaks but does not utter words. He remembers but does not memorize. He determines but not by exercising His mind. He loves and approves without sentiments. He hates and feels angry without any painstaking. When He intends to create a thing, He says to it "Be" and it is, but not through a voice that strikes (the ears). His speech is a manifestation of what He has created. His peer never existed before, nor is He regarded as old; otherwise, He would have become a second god. It cannot be said that He came into being after He had not been in existence because in that case the effects of creation would have been reflected on Him, and there would have remained no difference between them and Him, and He would have no distinction over them. Thus, the Creator and the created would have become equal, and the Initiator and the initiated would have been on the same level. He created creation without any model made by someone else, and He did not secure the assistance of any among His creation for creating. He created the earth and controlled it without having to hold it, retained it without having to support it, making it stand without poles, raising it without pillars, protecting it against bending or curving, defending it against crumbling or

fragmenting. He fixed mountains on it like pegs, solidified its rocks, caused its streams to flow and expanded its valleys. Whatever He made did not suffer any flaw, and whatever He strengthened did not permit any weakness. He manifests Himself over the earth through His authority and greatness. He is aware of what there is inside it through His knowledge and understanding. He has power over everything on earth by virtue of His sublimity and dignity. Nothing on earth that He asks defies Him, nor does it oppose Him to overpower Him. He is not in need of anyone to feed Him. All things bow down to Him and are humble before His greatness. They cannot flee away from His authority to someone else in order to escape His benefit or harm. There is no parallel for Him who may match Him, and none is like Him to equal Him. He will destroy the earth after its existence, till all that exists on it will become non-existent. But the extinction of the world after its creation is no stranger than its formation and invention the first time. How could it be? Even if all the beings on earth, be they birds or beasts, cattle or pasture herds, of different origins and species, clever or not so clever nations, all jointly combine efforts to create even a mosquito, they will not be able to bring it into being nor understand the means to its creation. Their wits are bewildered and they are aimlessly wandering. Their powers fall short and they fail, returning disappointed and worn out, realizing that they are defeated, admitting their inability to produce it. They will also realize that they are too weak (even) to destroy it. Surely, after the extinction of the world, Allāh the Glorified will remain alone with nothing else besides Him. He will be, after its extinction, as He was before then: without time or place, a moment or a period. Age and time will not then exist, and years and hours will disappear. There will be nothing except Allāh, the One, the Omnipotent. To Him is the return of all matters. The initial creation of all matters was never within the power of the latter, and the prevention of their own extinction was never within their reach. Had they had the power to prevent such an extinction, they would have existed forever. When He created any part of this world, its making did not cause Him any difficulty, and the creation of anything which He created and formed did not exhaust Him. He did not create it to enhance His authority, nor did He do so for fear of any loss or harm, nor to seek help against an overwhelming foe, nor to guard against any avenging opponent, nor for the extension of His domain, nor for boasting of it before a partner, nor because of His feeling of loneliness and desire to seek company. Then, after its creation, He will destroy it not because of

any worry that overcomes Him in maintaining and administering it, nor for any pleasure that will accrue to Him, nor for the cumbersomeness of anything over Him. The prolongation of its existence does not wear Him out to induce Him to its quick destruction. But Allāh, the Glorified One, has maintained it with His kindness, kept it intact with His command, and perfected it with His might. Then, after its destruction, He will bring it back to being again not for any need of His own for it, nor to seek the assistance of anything in it, nor to change the condition of loneliness to that of company, nor from ignorance to knowledge, nor from want and need to independence and plentitude, nor from disgrace and lowliness to honour and prestige.

In another sermon, wherein he discusses the beginning of the creation of the heavens and the earth, the Imām says,

Praise is due to Allāh Whose worth cannot be described by orators, Whose bounties cannot be counted by those who compute, the obedience to Whom cannot be satisfied by those who strive to do so, Whom the height of intellectual endeavor cannot appreciate, and the depths of understanding cannot reach, for Whose description no limit can ever be set, nor praise satisfies, nor time suffices, and no duration is fixed. He brought forth creation through His might, dispersed the winds as an act of His mercy, and He firmed the earth with the mountains. The foremost in religious obligation is to acknowledge Him, the perfection of acknowledging Him is to achieve His Pleasure, the perfection of achieving His Pleasure is to believe in His Oneness, the perfection of believing in His Oneness is to regard Him as the Pure, and the perfection of His purity is not to attach adjectives to Him because every adjective is an indication that it is different from that to which it is best named, and everything to which something is best named is different from the Best Name itself. Thus, whoever attaches adjectives to Allāh recognizes a peer like Him, and whoever recognizes His peer regards two gods; and whoever regards Him as One of two associate-partners with Him, and whoever associates partners with Him errs in His regard and does Him injustice, and whoever errs in His regard points out at Him, and whoever points out at Him admits limitations for Him, and whoever admits limitations for Him numbers Him. Whoever wonders where He is maintains that He is confined to a place, and whoever wonders above what He is maintains that He is not above something else. He is a Being but

maintains that He is not above something else. He is a Being but not through phenomenon of coming into being. He exists but not from non-existence. He is with everything but not in physical proximity. He is different from everything but not in any physical way. He acts but without connotations of movement or means. He sees yet none among His creation can see Him. He is One and Only, so there is none with whom He keeps company or whom He misses when absent.

THE ATTRIBUTES OF ALLĀH

Now let us discuss His Attributes in detail:

1. "Allāh"

The proper noun "Allāh" solely belongs to The Almighty God, the Truth. Anything succeeding it is regarded as an adjective describing it, while it remains a noun indicative of the True God. It combines all His Attributes, and it needs no introduction from others, whereas the other Attributes attain recognition when added thereto. "Allāh" is not given to anyone other than Him, nor should it ever be used for anyone besides Him.

"Allāh" is the ever-Existent, the One Who causes existence, Who maintains existence, Who creates everything that exists. Whatever He creates shall perish; He never will: "... say: `Allāh!' then leave them sporting in their vain discourses" (Qur'ān, 6:91).

2. "Al-Raḥmān"

Allāh has said, "All those in the heavens and the earth will come to the Beneficent God obediently" (Qur'ān, 19:93).

"Al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm" are two of the Attributes of Allāh which remind people of His mercy, of the fact that His act of affecting goodness and rewards reach whomsoever He pleases, thus warding off evil from them. "Al-Raḥmān" and "al-Raḥīm" are two concurrent Attributes of His each conveying more meanings of mercy than the other.

"Al-Raḥmān" is an Attribute specifically relevant to Allāh; none besides Him can be called or referred to as such, whereas "*al-raḥīm*" can be applied to people: One may be described as "raḥīm," merciful or kind, but a human cannot be "*raḥmān*".

Beneficent, the Most Merciful" (Qur'ān, 1:1); "The beneficent God is firm in power" (Qur'ān, 20:5). It is an Attribute demonstrating that mercy can be possible only through Him. It means "the One Who grants mercy beyond which there is no other mercy at all and the like of which does not at all exist."

Though derived from mercy, "al-Raḥmān" is both a noun and an adjective. Neither contradicts the other.

It is commonly known that mercy means: one's desire or power of will to bring goodness to one who is much less than him in status.

3. "Al-Raḥīm"

Allāh, Praise and Glory to Him, has said, "Inform My servants that I am the Forgiving, the Merciful" (Qur'ān, 15:49).

"*Al-Raḥīm*" is derived from "*raḥmah*," mercy or compassion. "*Raḥmah*" implies the salvation of those who receive it from harm and loss, and their being blessed with guidance, forgiveness and sound conviction. *Al-Raḥīm*, i.e. the One Who grants *raḥmah*, is a superlative. It is the highest derivative form of *raḥmah*. Allāh has said, "He it is Who sends His blessings on you, and (so do) His angels, so that He may bring you out of utter darkness into the light, and He is Merciful to the believers" (Qur'ān, 33:43).

Al-Raḥīm is the One Who bestows countless blessings. Some say that this word is derived from "*Raḥīm*," and we have already come to know that the root word for it is "*raḥmah*," that is, favours from Allāh and blessings; surely His blessings cannot be counted, nor can they ever be exhausted.

The Messenger of Allāh has said, "One who has no compassion towards people is deprived from Allāh's Compassion." He has also said, "One who does not respect the seniors among us, nor shows compassion towards our young, nor safeguards the rights of the scholars among us, is surely none of us." Compassion among the servants of Allāh is a sure path to achieving the mercy of Allāh. The Messenger of Allāh has said, "Be merciful unto those on earth so that those in the heavens may be merciful unto you."

4. "Al-Mālik"

God has said, "So exalted be Allāh, the True King" (Qur'ān, 23:116).

"*Al-Mālik*" conveys the meaning of "One Who is free, by virtue of His Own merits and characteristics, from depending on anything in

existence, while everything in existence depends on Him." Nothing in existence can do without Him, whereas everything that exists derives its existence from Him or because of Him. Everything/everyone is His.

Al-Mālik occurs in: "Master of the Day of Judgment" (Qur'ān, 1:4). Another method of recitation: *Melik*, King of the Day of Judgment. *Al-Maleek* exists in this verse: "In the seat of honour with a most Powerful King" (Qur'ān, 54:55). "Mālikul-Mulk" exists in: "O Allāh, Master of the Kingdom!" (Qur'ān, 3:26). "Al-Malakoot" exists in: "Therefore glory to the One in Whose hand is the kingdom of all things" (Qur'ān, 36:83).

The Almighty has described Himself as being "Mālikul-Mulk," the Owner of everything, of the whole domain, saying, "Say: O Allāh, Master of the Kingdom!" (Qur'ān, 3:26), and "Master of the Day of Judgment" (Qur'ān, 1:4), which is one of the first verses of the Holy Qur'ān.

A land's owner is its "mālik," one legally bound to obey the king, the "malik," with regard to land-related laws issued by the latter, whereas the opposite is not possible.

Among the Attributes of Allāh Almighty, the word "al-Mālik" has occurred independently, whereas the word "Mālik" is always added to something else, such as "Māliki yawmid-Deen," Master of the Day of Judgment; therefore, the first Attribute has to be more revered.

5. "Al-Quddoos"

Allāh has said, "Whatever in the heavens and in the earth declares the glory of Allāh, the King, the Holy" (Qur'ān, 62:1).

"*Al-Qudoos*" means: the One Whose characteristics cannot be conceived by the senses, nor can He be conceived by imagination, nor can He be realized by any mind or reason or judged by any intellect. Linguistically, it is derived from "*quds*," purity or cleanness. "Al-bayt al-muqaddas" means the Purified House, the one in which people purify themselves from the filth of sins. Paradise is also called the place of *quds* because it is free from the ills of the life of this world. Arch-angel Gabriel is called in Islam "*al-rūh al-quds*," the Holy Spirit, because he is free from any fault in delivering divine inspiration to the messengers of Allāh. Allāh has described Himself as "... the King, the Holy" (Qur'ān, 59:23), and He has also said, "Whatever in the heavens and in the earth declares the glory of Allāh, the King, the

heavens and in the earth declares the glory of Allāh, the King, the Holy" (Qur'ān, 62:1).

Al-Quddūs is the One Who is above need and Whose Attributes are above being deficient. He is the One Who purifies the souls against sinning, Who takes the wicked by their forelocks, Who is above being limited to space or time.

The Messenger of Allāh once sent one of his companions to teach Islam to a group of new converts and to lead them in congregational prayers. That companion used not to recite any chapter of the Holy Qur'ān (besides, of course, the Fātiḥa) other than Sūrat al-Tawḥīd (or al-Ikhlās), so those believers went back once to the Prophet and told him about it. The Prophet said to them, "Go back and ask him why he does so." Upon asking him, the companion answered them by saying, "... because it contains the Attribute of *al-Rahman*, and this is why I love to recite it so often!" When they told the Prophet this answer, he said to them, "Go back and tell him that the Praised and Glorified One loves him too."

Ibn ʿAbbās spent a night once with his cousin the Messenger of Allāh. When the Messenger of Allāh woke up and stood up on his bed, he raised his head towards the heavens and thrice repeated the following statement: "*Subḥānal Melik al-Quddūs*!" (Glory to the King, the Holy!) Then he recited the last verses of Sūrat Āli-ʿImrān starting with the verse: "Surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth..."

6. "Al-Salām"

Allāh Almighty has said that He is "... the King, the Holy" (Qur'ān, 59:23).

"*Al-Salām*" means: the One Who is free from defect and shortcoming, Whose qualities are above deficiency, Whose deeds are free from evil. Since He is as such, there can be neither peace nor security in existence without Him.

"*Salām*" means peace. Allāh Almighty has said, "... and Allāh invites to the abode of peace" (Qur'ān, 10:25), meaning Paradise: anyone who abides therein will have been saved from agony and perdition. Allāh has said, "And if he is one of those on the right hand, then peace to you from those on the right hand" (Qur'ān, 56:90-91), that is, rest assured that they are enjoying peace and tranquility. "*Salām!*" is a greeting; if a Muslim tells another Muslim "*As-Salāmu Alaikum*!" he will have assured him of safety and security, granting

him immunity against his evil or ill intentions. Allāh Almighty praises Yahya, John the Baptist, by saying, "And peace be on him on the day he was born..." (Qur'ān, 19:15).

The most precarious situations to which human beings are exposed are three: The time of birth, the time of death, and the time of resurrection. So Allāh honoured Yahya in all these three situations, granting him peace, safety and security against their woes. He saved him from the perils of all these three situations and granted him security against fear.

Muslims are repeatedly enjoined by the Holy Qur'ān to disseminate peace and to be receptive to those who offer it:

> O you who believe! Enter into peace one and all... (2:208)
>
> And if they incline to peace, do incline to it too and trust in Allāh. (8:61)
>
> And the servants of *al-Raḥmān* are the ones who walk on earth humbly, and when the ignorant ones address them, they say: *Salām* (Peace)! (25:63)
>
> And when those who believe in Our Signs come to you, say: Peace be on you! Your Lord has ordained mercy on Himself... (6:54)
>
> So turn away from them and say, Peace! For they shall soon come to know. (43:89)

Allāh's *Salām* is His speech. Likewise, the Messenger of Islam used to quite often enjoin the believers to disseminate the greeting of peace among them. There are numerous traditions testifying to this fact; among them are the following:

> *Assalāmu minal Islām*: The greeting of peace is an integral part of the creed of Islam.
>
> *Afshu al Salāma taslamu*: Disseminate the greeting of peace among you so you may achieve peace and security.
>
> Whoever upholds three things will have combined in him the meaning of conviction: 1) fairness to his own self, 2) disseminating of the greeting of peace to everyone, and 3) spending wisely out of

what he saves.

Afshu al Salāma baynakum: Disseminate the greeting of peace among you.

In one of his supplications, the Messenger of Allāh used to say, "Lord! Make us harbingers of peace to Your friends!" The Holy Qur'ān tells us that the name of Paradise is "Dar al Salām," the abode of peace; He, Glory and Exaltation to Him, says, "They shall have the abode of peace with their Lord, and He is their guardian because of what they did" (Qur'ān, 6:127). Allāh will make the greeting of the believers, when they meet Him, "Peace!" He says, "Their salutation on the Day they meet Him shall be: *Salām!* (Peace!)" (Qur'ān, 33:44). Referring to the believers, He says the following in Sūrat al-Ra'd, "... the gardens of perpetual abode which they will enter along with those who do good deeds from among their parents and spouses and offspring, and the angels will enter upon them from every gate (saying): Peace be on you because you were constant! How excellent, then, is the issue of the abode!" (Qur'ān, 13:23-24).

Thawban, servant of the Messenger of Allāh, has said, "Whenever the Messenger of Allāh finished his prayers, he would seek forgiveness of Allāh thrice, saying, `Lord! You are the Peace; from You is the Peace; Glory to You! Greatness and Honour are in You!'"

7. "Al-Mu'min"

Allāh has described Himself as *al-Mu'min*: "... the One Who gives peace, Who grants security" (Qur'ān, 59:23).

"*Al-Mu'min*" means: the One to Whom peace and security are rendered: He provides the means of their attainment, blocking all the avenues of fear. There is no peace nor security in this life against the causes of disease and perdition, nor in the life hereafter against the torment and the Wrath, except that He provides the means to attain it.

"*Imān*," linguistically speaking, is an infinitive (to believe) derived from two verbs: *tasdeeq*, testimony for the truth of something or someone, as in 12:17: "... and you will not believe us though we are truthful" (Qur'ān, 12:17), and *amān*, asylum or a peaceful haven as in 106:4: "... and gave them security against fear" (Qur'ān, 106:4). Some linguists are of the view that the derivation of *imān* is from this second verb.

If we say that the Almighty grants His servants security against anything they dread, we must be understood in the light of the circumstances of the life in this world and in the hereafter. As regarding the life in this world, the removal of the cause of fear is not reasonably accepted except when a precarious situation has actually taken place. Fear cannot be removed when the possibility of loss of life is present, and nobody can remove such a possibility except Allāh. Nobody can bring about peace and security other than He. A blind person is apprehensive of perishing on account of his inability to see the area from which death may overtake him. Sound vision grants him security against being annihilated. One whose arm is amputated fears the situation when he cannot defend himself except through the use of his arm. His healthy arm, then, is the cause of his feeling of security. The same can be said about all our senses and bodily parts. The One Who created all these parts is the same One Who has removed from man the causes of fear by granting him such parts. The One Who has created delicious food for man as well as good medicines and taught him how to make useful tools, thus sparing himself a lot of trouble, is surely the same One Who grants him security against all such dangers.

The Messenger of Allāh has said, "Anyone who believes in Allāh and the Last Day should bring security to his neighbor against his own misdeeds."[1]

8. "Al-Muhaimin"

In 59:23, we read: "He is Allāh besides Whom there is no other god, the King, the Holy, the One Who grants peace, the One Who grants security, the Guardian over all, the Mighty, the Supreme, the One Who possesses greatness; Glory to Allāh from whatever they set up (with Him)."

When applied to the Almighty, "*al-Muhaimin*" means that He is the One Who oversees His servants' actions, Who provides them with sustenance, and decrees their life-spans. He does so through His knowledge, control, and protection. Anyone who oversees something is its guardian; so he has full power over it. These Attributes can never be present in their absolute meaning except in Allāh.

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[1]This tradition is recorded on p. 12, "Kitāb al-Adab," Vol. 8 of al-Bukhāri's *Ṣaḥīḥ*.

This Attribute describes in 10:61 the One Who testifies for or against His servants who enter into mutual transactions: "... We are witnesses over you when you enter into it." Allāh is *al-Muhaimin*, the One Who witnesses all what His servants do, be it a speech or an action. The meaning of this verse incorporates the meaning of the word "*muhaimin*" thus: the One Who knows everything and from Whose knowledge nothing at all can escape, not even the weight of an atom in the earth or in the heavens.

Al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmed al-Farāhīdī says that "*al-Mu'min*" means: the One Who ever watches, Who ever protects. It is common in Arabic to describe someone as "*muhaimin*" if he protects someone else or is his guardian.

Al-Mibrad explains its meaning as: the One Who is most kind and compassionate. Arabs describe the bird that stretches its wings to protect its young as being "*muhaimin*" over them.

Al-Hassan al-Basri says it means the Guardian Who testifies to one's truth. Applied to the Almighty, it may carry one of two meanings: His testimony by word, hence His testimony informing us about His messengers being truthful, and His empowering those messengers to produce miracles, thus testifying to their truthfulness.

Al-Muhaimin is the One Who encompasses in His knowledge the management of the affairs of all His creation from the smallest atom to the largest planet in the cosmos.

9. "Al-ʿAzīz"

The Almighty has said, "O Moses! Surely I am Allāh, the Omnipotent, the Wise" (Qur'ān, 27:9).

The root word of this Attribute is *ʿizz*, might, power, strength, victory, elevation, non-submission. Its verb means: to strengthen or to support as in: "We sent them two [messengers] but they called them liars, so We strengthened them with a third," (Qur'ān, 36:14) that is, supported them and their argument with a third messenger. Linguistically, its verb means: to overcome, to gain the upper hand, to subdue...

Al-ʿAzīz is the One Who Alone has all honour; He is never humiliated, nor is He ever wronged; neither imagination nor intellect can ever conceive Him. He is the One Who cannot be overcome or in any way harmed, the One Who has no peer nor a similitude, Who is very much needed, Who is victorious and is never vanquished, the

Mighty, the Omnipotent Who can never be reached.

The Almighty has described Himself as *al-ʿAzīz*, narrating in His Book, the Holy Qur'ān, an anecdote about Jesus pleading to Him thus "... if You forgive them, surely You are the Mighty, the Wise" (Qur'ān, 5:118). He has also said, "And to Him belongs greatness in the heavens and in the earth, and He is the Mighty, the Wise" (Qur'ān, 45:37). He has proven that He has in Him all the Attributes of Greatness, saying, "To Allāh belongs the might, and to His Prophet, and to the believers" (Qur'ān, 63:8), and also, "Glory to your Lord, the Lord of Honour, above what they describe" (Qur'ān, 37:180). While discussing Iblis, He quotes him saying, "... by Your Might I will surely make them live an evil life, all of them" (Qur'ān, 38:82).

The Messenger of Allāh used to say, "I seek refuge with Your Honour, for You are the One Who is the One and Only God Who never dies, while the jinns and men die."

10. "Al-Jabbār"

Allāh has said, "He is Allāh besides Whom there is no other god, the Sovereign, the Holy, the Source of peace (and perfection), the Guardian of Faith, the Preserver of safety, the One Exalted in Might, the Irresistible, the Supreme; Glory to Allāh! (High is He) above the partners they attribute to (Him)" (Qur'ān, 59:23).

Linguistically, "*al-Jabbār*" is derived from *jabr*, the opposite of breaking. It suggests the forceful mending of something broken, fractured, shattered, crushed..., etc. It is also said that the adjective *jabbar* means great, huge, inaccessible. Linguists say that *al-Jabbār* is the Most Great. It is a superlative adjective derived from *jabr*; He is the One Who not only mends what is broken but also enriches the one who is incapacitated by poverty and want. In short, He is the One Who repairs everything broken or impaired.

Abdullāh ibn ʿAbbās says that *al-Jabbār* is the Great King, while Ibn al-Anbāri says that *al-Jabbār* is the One Who is beyond anyone's reach. Others have said that "*al-Jabbār*" means the One Who cannot be harmed by any mighty oppressor, and nobody can dispute with Him about anything. It is said that "*al-Jabbār*" conveys the same meaning conveyed by the Attribute "*al-Mutakabbir*," the Proud or the Supreme One. Pride and Supremacy are commendable Attributes only when applied to Allāh. If applied to anyone else, on the other

hand, they become abominable qualities. It is also said that the meaning of "*al-Jabbār*" connotes: the One Who forces His will on others. Nothing can happen in His domain except whatever He pleases, whether His beings like it or not. Or it may mean the One Who repairs, improves, or reforms, as is the analogy with one who mends, say, a broken limb.

One of its derivatives is *jabaroot*, supremacy or greatness. According to one tradition, the Messenger of Allāh has supplicated thus, "Glory to the One Who has all the *jabaroot* and all the domain." In one of his statements, Imām `Ali ibn Abu Ṭālib has said, "He is the One Whose will has manifested itself on the nature of hearts," that is, He firmed the hearts according to the way He created them and according to their level of knowing Him; those who know Him are the happy ones, while those who do not are the wretches.

"*Al-Jabbār*" connotes forcefulness and forcibleness. We can find out that all parts of the body have been driven to perform their functions without any will of their own. Cast a look at the sun as it moves in its orbit without deviating from it as little as an inch, whether it likes it or not. Man has no control over the time when Allāh chooses his life to begin, or how he is born, or when he dies, or the family in which he is to be born. All these are predestined for him, and he has no control over them. So is the case with all other beings on the face of earth. They all have been created with the ability to adapt to life on earth, and nobody has any choice in this matter: "It is He Who has spread out the earth for (His) creatures; therein are fruits and date-palms, producing spathes (containing dates)" (Qur'ān, 55:10-11). All of these things are created without the choice of any human being.

11. "Al-Mutakabbir"

Allāh has said, "He is Allāh besides Whom there is no other god, the Sovereign, the Holy, the Source of peace (and perfection), the Guardian of the Faith, the Preserver of safety, the One Exalted in Might, the Irresistible, the Supreme; Glory to Allāh! (High is He) above the partners they attribute to (Him)" (Qur'ān, 59:23).

Understanding "*al-Mutakabbir*" requires a good deal of reasoning and insight. Its root word "*kibriyā*'" means greatness and sovereignty, and it incorporates the meanings of the perfection of one's self and existence; nobody can be described as such except Allāh. Greatness,

as far as Allāh Almighty is concerned, is the loftiness of status: "By His command does He send the spirit (of inspiration) to any of His servants He pleases so that it may warn (men) of the Day of mutual meeting" (Qur'ān, 40:15). *Al-Mutakabbir* is the One Who possesses all greatness, Who is above having any of the qualities of His creatures, Who is above being harmed by the oppressors among His creation, Whose greatness and pride are the super-most. He is too great to be deficient in anything or in need for anyone or anything, the One Who is above having any of the characteristics and attributes of His creatures, the One Who Alone has all greatness and pride. None besides Him is justified to conceive himself as great, or as mighty, or as the sovereign. He is the One Who is too Holy to be afflicted by any calamity; so, no greatness is justified for anyone besides Him; He is the One Who has all might and kingdom. This Attribute means: the One Who has combined in Him, and Who rightly deserves so, all the attributes of greatness, perfection, pride and glory, all at the same time.

He is too Great to submit to others; rather, submission is due to Him, and only to Him. The Holy Qur'ān bestows the Attribute of greatness upon the Almighty in Sūrat al-Jāthiya: "To Him be Glory throughout the heavens and the earth, and He is Exalted in Power, full of Wisdom" (Qur'ān, 45:37). Pride due to the sense of being great is of two kinds:

One is when actions of such a person are indeed great and better than those of anyone else's; He is "... the Source of peace (and perfection), the Guardian of Faith, the Preserver of security, the One Exalted in Might, the Irresistible, the Supreme" (Qur'ān, 59:23).

The other is that one conceives himself artificially to be as such, and this applies to most people:

> Thus does Allāh set a seal over the heart of everyone who is proud, haughty. (40:35)
>
> Surely evil is the dwelling place of those who are proud. (16:29)
>
> Isn't there in hell an abode for those who are proud? (39:60)

Quoting the Lord of Greatness, the Almighty God, the Messenger of Allāh has said, "Pride is My cloak; Greatness is My garment; whoever disputes with Me regarding either, I shall surely hurl him

into the fire." Here the Almighty informs and admonishes us that greatness, might and pride are all His prerogatives, that none among His servants is worthy of claiming any of them for himself.

In one of his supplications, the Messenger of Allāh says, "I seek refuge with You, Lord, against the evil of pride." He is also quoted as saying that pride is an indication of ingratitude towards the Truth, the Almighty; he has said, "Pride is ingratitude towards the Truth." Imām `Ali has said, "The son of Adam is truly amazing! A wound can end his life, a bug can cause him a pain, his sweat can make him stink, so how can he ever feel proud?"

The Messenger of Allāh has warned us against pride and of being proud of ourselves, saying, "Nobody will enter Paradise if he has even the weight of a mustard seed of pride, and nobody will enter the fire if there is a likewise weight of conviction in his heart." As the lucky[1] ones enter Paradise, their hearts will be purged of any pride and jealousy: "And we will root out whatever rancor there is in their hearts" (Qur'ān, 15:47).

The Attribute "*al-Mutakabbir*" is mentioned only once in the text of the Holy Qur'ān in 59:23, and Allāh knows best.

12. "Al-Khāliq"

Allāh has said, "He is Allāh the Creator..." (Qur'ān, 59:24).

"*Al-Khāliq*" is derived from *khalq*, creating. Allāh, *al-Khāliq*, the Creator, is the One Who brings things into existence after their non-existence, Who invents and innovates without a prior model. Some scholars say that *al-Khāliq* is the One Who creates things out of naught then bestows upon them their characteristics of movement and other qualities. Others say that He is the One Who invents whatever the eyes can see, Who perfects their creation. Still others say that He is the One Who determined the measure of all things when they were enshrouded by void, perfecting them by His bounties and goodness, bringing them into existence according to His will, desire and wisdom. Anyone who thinks that there is anyone else besides Him who creates is indeed one who commits *kufr*, apostasy, blasphemy, disbelief. Allāh

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[1]The word "lucky" is used here only because the Holy Qur'ān states in 41:35 that the residents of Paradise will surely be the very lucky ones. The Almighty's use of this word is quite different from that of humans. It is humans' use of this word that we reject.

Almighty has said the following:

> ... the Creator of everything; therefore, worship Him. (6:102)
>
> ... is there any creator besides Allāh...? (35:3)
>
> Yea, indeed! For He is the Supreme Creator, of (infinite) skill and knowledge. (36:81)
>
> ... so blessed is Allāh, the best of creators. (23:14)
>
> Is it not His to create and to govern? Blessed is Allāh, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds. (7:54)

Ibn ʿAbbās is reported as saying that whenever the Messenger of Allāh looked in the mirror, he would say, "Praise to Allāh Who has made both my creation and my manners good, Who beautified in me what He has not done in others." According to a narration by our master Imām ʿAli ibn Abu Ṭālib, the Messenger of Allāh used to say the following whenever he looked in the mirror, "Praise is due to Allāh! Lord! Just as You have made my form good, I implore You to make my manners, too, good."[1]

13. "Al-Bāri"

Allāh has said, "He is Allāh the Creator, the Evolver, the One Who bestows forms (or colors) upon what He creates. To Him belong the Attributes" (Qur'ān, 59:24).

There are viewpoints regarding the explanation of "*al-Bāri*": One says it refers to the One Who brings about something out of nothing, the One Who creates something which was never there before. It is said that Allāh is *al-Bāri* of creation, the One Who brought all things into existence out of non-existence.

The other meaning conveys the cutting off or severing of something. The root verb of this word means cutting and shaping something such as a twig or a pencil. One may say that illness has parted from him, or that he is free of a claim put forth by another. It can also be applied metaphorically such as one person severing his

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[1]Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, p. 260, "Book of Athkār."

partnership with another, or a woman separating from her husband.

Allāh has *bara'a*, created or initiated, the creation without a model; *bariyyah* means those whom He has created. Another meaning is curing or healing. A wise saying states that one who is cured should express gratitude to the One Who cured him.

Ja`fer ibn Sulaymān is quoted as having said that he passed once by a blind old woman grieving over herself and wailing, so he asked her, "What does it take to sustain you?" She answered him saying, "Stop sticking your nose where it does not belong; I have reached this stage of life without needing you or others." Then she added, "Have you not heard the statement made by the Friend of Allāh who said, `[Allāh] Who created me then showed me the way, and He provides me with food to eat and with water to drink, and when I am sick, He restores my health to me' (26:78-80)?"

One who knows the real meaning of "*al-Bāri*", therefore, is one whose heart is not affected by events, nor can momentous events overtake him by surprise. It is also said that anyone who comes to know Who *al-Bāri* really is will dissociate himself from claiming to have anything to do with his own form or shape, fearing his Creator's Might, knowing that he is not doing Him a favour by worshipping and obeying Him. It is also said that He is the One Who has dissociated Himself from everyone else, the One Who is never surprised by whatever events take place. It is also said that anyone who recognizes Him as *al-Bāri* will dissociate himself from committing anything prohibitive, seeking refuge with the King, the Most Forgiving One.

14. "Al-Muṣawwir"

Allāh has said, "He is Allāh the Creator, the Evolver, the Bestower of forms (or colors). To Him belong the Attributes" (Qur'ān, 59:24).

Al-Muṣawwir is the One Who fashions, Who gives something its distinctive form and shape. The general human form is distinguished from that of non-humans. Allāh says, "... and He formed you and made your forms good" (Qur'ān, 40:64), "Into whatever form He pleased He shaped you" (Qur'ān, 82:8), and "He it is Who shapes you in the wombs as He pleases (3:6)."

Al-Muṣawwir means: the One Who invents the forms and shapes of whatever He creates, Who beautifies them according to His wisdom, giving everything its own distinctive shape and form. He creates humans in different forms and shapes, making some of them

different from others in physique, size, complexion, etc. This may be the meaning of the verse saying, "And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your tongues and colors; most surely there are signs in this for those who have knowledge" (Qur'ān, 30:22). "He it is Who shapes you in the wombs as He pleases; there is no god but He, the Mighty, the Wise" (Qur'ān, 3:6); "And certainly We created man of an extract of clay, then We made him a small seed in a firm resting-place, then We made the seed a clot, then We made the clot a lump of flesh, then We made in the lump of flesh bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh, then We caused it to grow into another creation; so, blessed be Allāh, the best of creators" (Qur'ān, 23:12-14).

Whenever the Messenger of Allāh prostrated, he used to say, "Lord! To You have I prostrated, in You have I believed, and to You have I submitted! My countenance has prostrated to the One Who created it and shaped it, Who created hearing and vision for it; so, blessed is Allāh, the best of creators!"

Among the supplications of the Messenger of Allāh when he prostrated is this one: "My face has submitted to the One Who created and formed it and Who made its form good." The Holy Qur'ān has informed us a good deal about *al-Muṣawwir*, Allāh. In Sūrat al-Aʿraf, for example, we read the following: "And certainly We created you then fashioned you" (Qur'ān, 7:11). In Sūrat al-Taghābun, we read, "He has created the heavens and the earth in just proportions, and He has given you shape and made your shapes beautiful, and to Him is the final resort" (Qur'ān, 64:3). In Sūrat Ghafir, we read, "Allāh is He Who made the earth a resting-place for you and the heavens a canopy, and He formed you then made your forms good, and He provided you with good things; that is Allāh, your Lord; blessed then is Allāh, the Lord of the worlds" (Qur'ān, 40:64). In Sūrat Āli-ʿImrān, we read, "He it is Who shapes you in the wombs as He pleases; there is no god but He, the Mighty, the Wise" (Qur'ān, 3:6). In Sūrat al-Infitar, we read, "O man! What has beguiled you from your Lord, the Gracious One Who created you then made you complete, then He made you symmetrical? Into whatever form He pleased He constituted you" (Qur'ān, 82:6-8). And in Sūrat al-Ḥashr we read, "He is Allāh the Creator, the Evolver, the Bestower of forms (or colors). To Him belong the Attributes; all those in the heavens and on earth declare His Praises and Glory, and He is

Exalted in Might, Wise" (Qur'ān, 59:24).

Allāh Almighty has said, "And He created pairs, the male and the female, from the small seed when it is adapted, and upon Him is its bringing forth a second time" (Qur'ān, 53:45-47).

15. "Al-Ghaffār"

Allāh has said, "Surely I am most Forgiving to whoever repents and believes and does good deeds" (Qur'ān, 20:82).

Al-Ghaffār is one of Allāh's Attributes derived from *ghufr* and *ghufrān*, both nouns which convey the meaning of: veiling, hiding, concealing. Allāh's *maghifra*, forgiveness, is His veiling of one's sins, and His forgiveness by granting him His favour and mercy. *Al-Ghaffār* is the One Who has manifested what is beautiful and veiled what is ugly in the life of this world and Who does not inflict His penalty on him in the life hereafter. He is the One Who forgives sins, veils the shortcomings, wipes out the sins by accepting one's repentance. He accepts His servants' repentance and is pleased thereby, and the One Who forgives the sins and turns them into good deeds by His great favour. He is the One Who forgives the sins though they may be great, and He veils them though they may be numerous.

The words derived from forgiveness have mostly been associated with Allāh. One of them is *al-Ghāfir* as in this verse: "The One Who forgives the sins" (Qur'ān, 40:3). The second is *al-Ghafūr*; He has said, "... then [if he] asks forgiveness of Allāh, he shall find Allāh Forgiving, Merciful" (Qur'ān, 4:110). A third is *al-Ghaffār* as in: "And surely I am most Forgiving to one who repents and believes and does good deeds" (Qur'ān, 20:82), "... seek forgiveness of your Lord; surely He is the most Forgiving" (Qur'ān, 71:10), and "... surely He is the Mighty, the great Forgiver" (Qur'ān, 39:5). It is proven, by making a reference to the Holy Qur'ān, that all these Attributes, which are derived from forgiveness, are applied only to Allāh, the Most Exalted One.

Having killed a Copt, Moses implored his Lord thus: "Lord! Surely I have harmed my own self; so, forgive me" (Qur'ān, 28:16). He first admitted his sin then sought His forgiveness. Allāh also revealed the fault of David then said, "So We forgave him this (lapse)" (Qur'ān, 38:25). He addressed Muḥammed saying, "So that Allāh may forgive your past and future faults" (Qur'ān, 48:2). Has He not in these examples exposed a sin then forgiven it? In one of his

supplications, Prophet Muhammed says, "Lord! I implore You to forgive me an apparent forgiveness and a concealed one, and to forgive open and secret sins."

The meanings of *maghifra*, the root word of *al-Ghaffār, al-Ghāafir,* and *al-Ghafūr* are clear in the verse saying: "The One Who forgives the sins and accepts the repentance, the One Who is severe in punishment, the Lord of bounty; there is no god but He; to Him is the eventual return" (Qur'ān, 40:3).

Al-Ghaffār is the One Who very often veils [the sins and faults of His servants], so much so that He does not propagate one's sins in the life of this world nor in the life hereafter. One of the companions of the Messenger of Allāh was asked once, "What did you hear the Messenger of Allāh say with regard to one's silent supplication?" He answered by saying that he had heard the Messenger of Allāh say, "Allāh, the most Honoured, the Most Great, will touch His servant who believes in Him with His mercy by veiling his sin from the public in the life of this world, and in the life hereafter He will ask him about each and every sin and fault he had committed. Once he admits all of them and realizes that he is going to perish on their account, the Almighty will say, 'I have veiled your sins in the past short life, and in this one I am going to forgive them.' Then he will be handed the book of his good deeds." All this happens to those who believe in Him; as regarding those who do not, and the hypocrites, He will deal with them quite differently.

16. "Al-Qahhār"

Allāh has said, "Say: Allāh is the Creator of all things, and He is the One, the Supreme" (Qur'ān, 13:16).

Linguistically, "*al-Qahhār*" is derived from *qahr*, conquest, subduing, vanquishing, winning a victory. It means the overtaking of something or someone with the intention to humiliate him. One who takes another by way of *qahr* is one who takes him against his will. "*Al-Qahhār*" is a superlative of "*al-Qāhir*", the Victor or Subduer. Allāh, indeed, is the One Who, by His Might, has subdued everything He created to His Authority and Power, using His creatures as He pleases, whether they like it or not. *Al-Qāhir* is the One Who has the upper hand over all creation; "... and Allāh is the master of His affair" (Qur'ān, 12:21).

Al-Qahhār is the One Whose vengeance nobody can withstand.

He humiliates oppressors, splits the spine of kings and emperors. He is the One besides Whose Might all creation is powerless, without Whose Power all beings are helpless. If we submit to Him, He will satisfy our needs, but if we do not, He will make us suffer as we try to achieve our objectives. He is the One Who splits the spine of the tyrants and oppressors from among His foes, subduing them by taking their lives away, and by humiliating them, while there is nothing in existence that can escape His Might and Power: everyone and everything is helpless in His grip.

Al-Qahhār effects His will with regard to His creatures, whether they like it or not, whether they are willing or unwilling. He has subdued the souls of the worshippers by instilling in the hearts the fear of His retribution, and the hearts of those who are endowed with knowledge with the Might of nearness to Him, and the souls of those who love Him by unveiling the truth about Him to them. He has subdued all beings by death, so none is safe from Him, not even an angel who enjoys a special status with Him, nor a prophet, nor a messenger. Allāh will make even the angel of death, Israel, taste of death; so, when his soul is taken out, the angel of death will say, "By Your Honour do I swear that had I known the taste of death to be like this, I would never have taken away anyone's soul at all!" It is to such a meaning that the word *qahr*, upon the taking of the souls of all beings, conveys as implied in the verse saying, "To whom does the kingdom belong this day? To Allāh, the One, the Subduer (of all)" (Qur'ān, 40:16).

If one who believes in Allāh desires to personify within him the meanings embedded in this Attribute, he has to subdue his own self, his *nafs*, and control his evil desires, by not plotting in cooperation with Satan, and by returning to Allāh, submitting to His will in all matters. The path whereby man derives light from the Attribute "*al-Qahhār*" is that one should view his *nafs*, which is ever present within him, as the worst of his enemies, so he subdues it and strangles it, doing exactly the opposite of what it tells him to do, so much so that it will have no choice except to submit to divine commandments. Then he will have to subdue his stubborn opponent, i.e. Satan, staying on his guard against his evil suggestions, blocking his avenues. Then he will have to subdue his carnal desires and insinuations by not following what they inspire him to do.

17. "Al-Wahhāb"

Allāh, the Most Exalted, the Most High, has said, "Lord! Do not let our hearts deviate after having guided us, but grant us mercy from Your own Presence, for You are the Grantor of bounties without measure" (Qur'ān, 3:8).

"*Al-Wahhāb*" is derived from the proper noun *hibah* the verb of which, *yahib*, means: to make someone else the owner of what the giver, the first party (the doer), rightfully owns without asking the second party for any compensation in return. It is the gift which is free from any recompense or gain for the giver. If someone gives out such gifts quite often, he will earn the titles of *jawād* and *wahhāb*, the generous one, the oft-giving, respectively. Allāh Almighty is described as *the* Most Generous, *the* Most Giving, i.e. *al-Wahhāb*, simply because He gives everyone according to his means. Among Allāh's Attributes are *al-Wahhāb* and *al-Wāhib*. The latter Attribute means: the giver, whereas the first is a superlative of the latter. One who is *wahūb* is one who grants many gifts.

Al-Wahhāb is the One Who gives away without a compensation; He bestows His favours upon His servants without a selfish end; He grants even without being asked; He is the One Who initiates giving, and He is the oft-Giver. Allāh is surely *al-Wahhāb* because He is *the* Most Munificent, *the* Most Giving, *the* One Who ever tries to get closer to His servants, Who graciously bestows His favours upon them, Who gives them even before they ask Him, the ever-Giver Who gives everyone what he needs. *Al-Wahhāb* bestows His blessings upon His servants, and this indicates His inclusion of everyone as He continuously gives. He does not give painstakingly, nor does He seek a benefit, or an advantage, for Himself by doing so. *Al-Wahhāb* showers you with His blessings without having to have a reason or a means to do so. *Al-Wahhāb* gives away without being compensated for what He gives, and He causes all beings to die without a particular purpose He seeks to achieve for Himself. According to Sūrat al-Shūra, "He bestows (children), male or female, according to His Will (and Plan)" (Qur'ān, 42:49).

Whenever the Messenger of Allāh used to wake up during the night, he would supplicate thus: "Lord! There is no god but You! Glory to You! Lord! I seek Your forgiveness for my sins, and I plead to You, by Your mercy, O Lord, to increase my share of knowledge, not to permit my heart to deviate after having guided it, and to grant

me, from You, a mercy, for surely You are *al-Wahhāb*..."[1]

18. "Al-Razzāq"

"*Al-Razzāq*" is derived from *rizq*, sustenance, or anything of any benefit to man, animals, plants, etc., whereby the latter are sustained or are helped in their growth. Rain is also called *rizq*; it helps sustain every living being on our planet. In 51:58, we read: "Surely Allāh is the One Who bestows sustenance, the Lord of Power, the Strong One." Another verse referring to our sustenance is this: "And in the heavens is your sustenance and what you are threatened with" (Qur'ān, 51:22). "In the heavens is your sustenance" may be a reference to the rain that descends from the heavens, the sky[2]. As to the phrase "and what you are threatened with," this may be a clue that the end of life on this earth will be terminated by a collision of an asteroid or a large size cosmic debri with the earth, but this is not the place to discuss such interpretations or speculations. If Allāh so wills, I intend to write a complete *tafsīr*, an exegesis, of the Holy Qur'ān that will contain such interpretations and speculations the like of which has never been written in English before. If the reader wishes to see such a book published, he is requested to pray the Almighty to make it happen. Prayers go a long way, had people only known. Allāh listens to each and every supplication no matter who the supplicant is so long as the latter is a true believer in Him.

The word *rizq* may be used for means of income, livelihood, sustenance, money, wealth..., or for the earning of something good, be it during the life of this world or in the life to come, or it may be applied to one's lot or fortune, or even to anything eaten. "*Al-Razzāq*" is a superlative of "*al-Rāziq*," the One Who provides *rizq*. *Al-Razzāq* is applied to none other than Allāh. There are two types of *rizq*: one sustains the body, such as food and drink, while the other sustains the soul, which is knowledge and true inspiration. The latter is the best

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[1]Abu Dawūd, *Al-Athkār*, p. 81.

[2]Notice that the word "heavens" is used throughout this book as singular due to its reference to one: the sky. If it is at all used in the plural, it will then be referring to the seven layers or spheres of the sky. As for the word "heaven," it is often used by non-Muslims to refer to Paradise. Non-Muslims' concept of Paradise is certainly different from that of Muslims.

type of sustenance simply because what sustains the soul lasts forever, while what sustains the body has a temporary duration.

Al-Razzāq is the One Who creates all types of sustenance, Who extends His favour to cover making such sustenance attainable to His creatures, Who provides means for getting them to attain their sustenance. He sustains all His creation by whatever means needed to keep them alive. He sustains the minds with knowledge, the hearts with understanding, the souls with manifestations, the bodies with food, and so on. Only He can do so. Anyone who realizes this fact will recognize the fact that his own sustenance, and that of everyone and everything else, is controlled by none other than Allāh.

References to *rizq* have been made in several Qur'ānic verses such as these:

> ... Allāh provides means of subsistence to whomsoever He pleases without a measure. (2:212)
>
> Allāh is Benignant to His servants; He gives sustenance to whomsoever He pleases, and He is the Strong, the Mighty One. (42:19)
>
> ... and whoever fears Allāh, He will make an outlet for him and give him sustenance from whence he does not expect. (65:2-3)
>
> ... these are the believers truly; they shall have forgiveness and an honourable provision. (8:74)
>
> ... and the sustenance (provided) by your Lord is better and more abiding. (20:131)
>
> Most surely this is Our sustenance: it shall never deplete. (38:54)
>
> Say: The (blessing) from the presence of Allāh is better than any amusement or bargain. (62:11)
>
> ... surely the things you worship besides Allāh cannot sustain you. (29:17)
>
> There is no creature moving on earth except that its sustenance depends on Allāh. (11:6)

One of the Islamic manners inspired by the Attribute "*al-Razzāq*" is that a servant of Allāh becomes convinced that there is no partner with his Lord in providing sustenance, just as He has no partner in creating everything. He, therefore, pleads to Him for anything small or big. He also feels satisfied with what *al-Razzāq* has allotted for him, just as He has said, "And they are the ones who, when spending, are neither extravagant nor parsimonious but keep the just means between these [extremes]" (Qur'ān, 25:67), and also, "Those who, when spending, are neither extravagant nor niggardly but hold a just (balance) between these (extremes)" (Qur'ān, 17:29).

The abundance of Allāh's sustenance is without a limit. He is the One Who says the following in Sūrat Hūd: "There is no creature moving on earth except that its sustenance depends on Allāh: He knows the time and place of its definite abode and its temporary deposit: all is in a clear record" (Qur'ān, 11:6).

19. "Al-Fattāḥ"

The Almighty has said, "Say: Our Lord will gather us together and will in the end decide the matter between us (and you) in truth and justice, and He is the One to decide, the One Who knows everything" (Qur'ān, 34:26).

In Arabic, *fataḥa*, the verb, means "opened," and *muftāḥ* means key, whereas *fatḥ* means victory or conquest. *Fatḥ* also means flowing water, a creak, or a river. It also means: to arbitrate between two opponents. "*Istiftāḥ*" means: seeking help or achieving victory. Both *al-Fātiḥ* and *al-Fattāḥ* are among the Attributes of Allāh. They exist within the text of the Holy Qur'ān. "*Al-Fattāḥ*" is a superlative of *al-fatḥ*. To say that Allāh is *al-Fattāḥ* is to say that He is the One Who judges between those whom He creates, His servants, the obedient ones and the rebellious. It is derived from *fatḥ* which means, in such usage, arbitration or decision-making. It exists in this meaning in the verse saying, "Lord! Decide between us and our people with truth, and You are the best of those who decide" (Qur'ān, 7:89). It also means: the One Who grants victory as in this verse of Sūrat al-Anfāl: "If you pray for victory, then indeed victory has come to you" (Qur'ān, 8:19).

Al-Fattāḥ is the One Who opens deadlocked matters and issues, Who reveals the truth, Who simplifies whatever seems to be complicated, Who controls the affairs of the heavens and the earth:

"And with Him are the keys of the unseen treasures: none knows them but He, and He knows what is in the land and in the sea" (Qur'ān, 6:59). So He is the One Who opens what is closed and Who has the keys to everything, Who widely opens the gates of sustenance and brings down rain whereby He brings life back to dead lands, Who grants victory and support for His prophets whom He sends to various lands so that the light of the truth may shine therein, and so that He may purge their souls from evil intentions. He opens the closed hearts and fills them with His light, so they become tranquil, and they enjoy the feeling of success.

The Attribute "*al-Fattāḥ*" inspires good manners which ought to be followed by anyone who correctly grasps the meanings it implies, who deeply contemplates upon it, who sincerely desires to be blessed by it. Among such manners is that one should maintain an attitude of beautiful anticipation of the Grace of Allāh, continuously expecting to receive His favours, always looking forward to earning His blessings. He abandons haste, feels satisfied with his lot and with whatever his Lord has decreed for him. "Contentment is a treasure that never depletes," says an Arabic axiom. How true!

20. "Al-ᶜAleem"

Allāh has said, "... and trust in Allāh; surely He is the Hearing, the Knowing" (Qur'ān, 8:61).

"*Al-ᶜAleem*" is derived from *ᶜilm*, knowledge, which results from comprehending the truth about something and from the sure conviction which agrees with reality. "*Al-ᶜAleem*," when applied to the Almighty, is the One Who is most Knowing; surely His knowledge encompasses everything in existence even before anything begins to exist. Nothing at all can escape His knowledge. He is the One Whose knowledge is inclusive, be it apparent or hidden, minute or magnanimous. He knows its beginning and its end, what is above or underneath it, and what results therefrom.

Al-ᶜAleem is also the One Who knows what has happened and what will. The knowledge of the unknown is with Him, and so is the knowledge of the Hour; He knows what the wombs bear, when the rain falls, what every soul earns, what evil intentions one harbors, what worldly desires he/she conceals, when and where anyone will die. *Al-ᶜAleem* is the One Who knows the details of all things, the particulars of things, what one's conscience and soul hide. Nothing at

all, not even the weight of an atom in the earth or in the heavens, can ever escape His knowledge. From the word *ʿilm* have many other words been derived. *Al-ʿĀlim* is one. It occurs in Sūrat al-Mā'ida in this verse: "... surely You are the great One Who knows the unseen" (Qur'ān, 5:109). Another is *al-Aʿlam* which occurs in Surat al-Anʿām: "Allāh best knows where He places His message" (Qur'ān, 6:124). *Al-ʿAleem* is a superlative of *al-ʿĀlim*.

The Holy Qur'ān contains the following verses which demonstrate the various meanings and types of knowledge:

> He knows that there is weakness in you. (8:66)
>
> He knows that there will be sick ones among you. (73:20)
>
> And surely We know that your breast straitens at what they say. (15:97)
>
> Allāh knows what every female bears. (13:8)

"*Al-ʿAleem*," one of the ninety-nine Attributes of Allāh, occurs in many Qur'ānic verses such as:

> ... that is the ordinance of the Mighty, the Knowing. (36:38)
>
> The revelation of the Book is from Allāh, the Mighty, the Knowing. (40:2)
>
> ... surely He knows what is in the breasts. (11:5)
>
> ... We have no knowledge except what You have taught us; surely You are the Knowing, the Wise. (2:32)
>
> And the sun runs [its course] to a term appointed for it; that is the ordinance of the Mighty, the Knowing. (36:38)

This word is coined as a superlative derived from a verb meaning: "to know or to be familiar with."

The Messenger of Allāh is quoted saying that one who supplicates in the morning by thrice repeating, "In the Name of Allāh with Whose Name nothing at all, be it in the earth or in the heavens, can ever harm, and He is the Hearing, the Knowing," will not be afflicted

by any sudden calamity till evening time, and if he says so in the evening, he will not be afflicted by any sudden calamity till daybreak.

21. "Al-Qābiḍ"

Allāh has said the following in the Holy Qur'ān: "... and Allāh straitens and amplifies..." (Qur'ān, 2:245).

Linguistically, *qabd*, root verb of "*al-Qābiḍ*," means: to take, hold, seize, grip, catch, handle, and the like. It is the holding of something with the hand such as a sword's handle, etc. It is meant as a way to forcefully take control of something or someone. Allāh Almighty has said the following in this sense: "... and Allāh straitens and amplifies..." (Qur'ān, 2:245), meaning He straitens, withholds, His sustenance of some while amplifying it for others.

"*Al-Qābiḍ*" means: "the One Who takes hold of the souls by subduing them, the spirits by effecting justice in their regard, the means of sustenance by His wisdom, and the hearts by making them fear His Glory." *Al-Qābiḍ* is the One Who causes the souls to be taken away from their bodies, their temporary homes, at the time of death. The angel who takes the souls away (i.e. the *qābiḍ*) is called in Islam "Israel." *Al-Qābiḍ* is the One Who takes hold of the hearts, Who controls them, Who isolates them through their lack of knowledge, through their own oversights. He takes hold of some hearts, so He unveils to them His Greatness and Glory. He pleases other hearts through the means whereby He gets closer to them out of His own Kindness, Munificence, and Beauty. *Al-Qābiḍ* is the One Who unveils His Glory to you, so He protects you; He is the One Who makes you dread being distanced from Him.

Al-Qābiḍ is the One Who controls the entire cosmos; in the following verse, He makes a reference to His control over the earth: "... and the whole earth shall be in His grip on the Day of Resurrection and the heavens rolled up in His right hand" (Qur'ān, 39:67). The Almighty has neither a right nor a left hand; He has no hands at all; this is only a figure of speech denoting His total control over the heavens and the earth and everything in them. The expansion of the earth is done by Him during the life of this world; says He, "Have We not made the earth an even expanse?" (Qur'ān, 78:6) meaning spread like a carpet. On the Day of Judgment, the earth shall also be there, but it will look quite different from its present appearance...; everything about how it will look and what will

happen above and underneath it is detailed in books of *hādīth*, in traditions that will, God willing, see the light for the first time in English..., but let us not digress here by borrowing from another book of mine soon, *Inshā-Allāh*, to be written!

Al-Qābid receives the knowledge of and appreciates acts of charity; to be charitable is to be a true servant of His, a blessed one. He says, "... Allāh accepts repentance from His servants and takes the alms" (Qur'ān, 9:104). He straitens the hearts, that is, places heavy burdens on them, burdens of woes and worries, of fears or of aspiration, and He also eases them.

22. "Al-Bāsiṭ"

Linguistically, "*al-Bāsiṭ*" means: one who stretches his hand, be it as a gesture of good will (in order to shake hands with someone else), or otherwise (to harm someone else, be it by inflicting a physical harm on it, or by causing damage to his property or his own self). It may be applied literally or metaphorically. The Almighty, for example, has quoted Cain son of Adam saying the following to his brother Able: "If you stretch forth your hand towards me to slay me..., etc." (Qur'ān, 5:28). It also means: to please. According to one tradition, the Messenger of Allāh has said, "Fāṭima is part of me; whatever pleases her pleases me, and whatever displeases her displeases me, too." Literally, it means: to relax the facial muscles in order to express pleasure and happiness, elation or excitement; all other meanings branch out of that. *Inbisāṭ*, its noun, means, among other things, abandoning modesty. "*Al-baseeta*" is the outstretched tract of land, and "*bast*" is: expansion or propagation.

Al-Bāsiṭ is the One Who pleases the souls by making them happy and delighted. He is the One Who plants the seeds of life in the bodies to signal the beginning of life therein. He, at the advent of resurrection, brings life back to them in order to show people, in the life hereafter, what they used to do during their temporary life in this world.

The Attribute "*al-Bāsiṭ*" does not exist in the text of the Holy Qur'ān, yet its derivatives certainly do; these are examples where such derivatives exist:

> Nay! His hands are spread out; He expends as He pleases. (5:64)

Allāh has made for you the earth a wide expanse. (71:19)

Allāh is the One Who sends forth the winds, so they raise a cloud, then He spreads it forth in the sky as He pleases, and He breaks it up, so you see rain coming forth from it; when He causes it to pour upon whomsoever He pleases of His servants, lo, they rejoice! (30:48)

The Holy Qur'ān speaks of decorating the bodies with strength: "... and increased you in excellence in respect of physique" (Qur'ān, 7:69). And it speaks of pleasing through both knowledge and excellence of physique when it says, "... and He has increased him abundantly in knowledge and in physique" (Qur'ān, 2:247).

We have to point out here that we ought to mention both divine Attributes of *al-Qābiḍ* and *al-Bāsiṭ* together in order to convey the meanings of might and wisdom. The Almighty is *al-Qābiḍ* just as He is *al-Bāsiṭ*.

23. "Al-Khāfiḍ"

Some scholars say that both Attributes *al-Khāfiḍ* and *al-Rāfiʿ* ought to be used simultaneously. If applied to our Islamic creed, both Attributes connote misguidance and guidance respectively. If applied to knowledge or obedience to Allāh, they imply the highest and the lowest of ranks respectively; it is in this sense that they occur in this verse: "Abasing (one party), exalting (the other)" (Qur'ān, 56:3), meaning abasing the unbelievers who occupy the lowest ranks of hell while exalting the believers to the highest ranks of Paradise.

Allāh has said, "And be kind to him who follows you from among the believers" (Qur'ān, 26:215). *Khafḍ* is the opposite of *rafʿ*: the first implies vanquishing, lowering the status of, abasing, insulting, humiliating. The Hour is sometimes described as such in 56:3: "Abasing (one party), exalting (the other)" (Qur'ān, 56:3), meaning abasing some people because of their transgression, hurling them into the pit of hellfire. In Sūrat al-Ḥijr, we read more about the *khafḍ*: "... be kind to the believers" (Qur'ān, 15:88), and in Sūrat al-Isrā' we read: "Be submissively gentle to them, compassionate" (Qur'ān, 17:24).

Al-Khāfiḍ is the One Who humiliates the oppressors and tyrants, lowering their ranks and insulting them. He abases at will. *Al-Khāfiḍ* is the One Who lowers, through humiliation, all those who think of

themselves as being great, the arrogant and the conceited. He lowers entire nations. He lowers falsehood. *Al-Khāfid* is the One Who lowers the rank of all those who disobey Him, Who humiliates those upon whom His wrath descends, Who lowers the ranks of those who deserve to be treated as such. He humiliates the unbelievers by exposing them to misery, His foes by distancing them from Him, and by exposing them to perdition.

Al-Khāfid is the One Who has lowered the status of those who do not believe in Him, of those who are arrogant, of the liars, and of those who swerve away from His Path, the Path of Islam, His final Word of truth.

24. "Al-Rāfiʿ"

The Holy Qur'ān states the following: "Allāh will exalt those of you who believe, and those who are granted knowledge, to high degrees" (Qur'ān, 58:11).

Al-Rāfiʿ is one of the Attributes of Allāh whose root word is *rafʿ*, lifting, raising, exalting, elevating, and the like. It can be used for objects as in 2:63: "... and lifted the mountain over you," and in 13:2: "Allāh is the One Who raised the heavens without any pillars so that you may see [His might] and He is firm in power." It can also be used for raising the structure of a building as is the case in the verse saying, "And when Abraham and Ishmael raised the foundations of the House..." (Qur'ān, 2:127). It is also used for exalting or revering someone's status as in this verse: "... and exalted your esteem" (Qur'ān, 94:4). It is also used to exalt the status or degree of someone honoured as in the verse saying, "... and We have exalted some of them above others in degrees" (Qur'ān, 43:32), and also, "... and exalted thrones..." (Qur'ān, 56:34), that is, thrones the status of which is exalted by nearness to Him.

Al-Rāfiʿ is Allāh Who exalts the status of His friends, granting them victory over their foes and His, and that of the righteous, to the highest degrees. He exalts the truth; He exalts the believers by granting them happiness; He exalts His friends from among the believers by getting closer to them; He exalts the status of His friends by granting them the upper hand, and He exalts the status of those who befriend Him in truth and in equity. *Al-Rafi'* raised the heavens without pillars, raised the clouds over the winds, raised the birds in the air: "Have they not seen the birds above them expanding (their

wings) and contracting (them)? Who withholds them save the Beneficent God? Surely He sees everything" (Qur'ān, 67:19).

Al-Rāfiʿ has raised the status of His friends in the life of this world by making the believers humble themselves before them, and by making people pay homage and respect to them even if they do not wield any power, even if they have no wealth at all: "Now surely the friends of Allāh shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve. Those who believed and guarded (themselves against evil) shall have glad tidings in the life of this world as well as in the life hereafter; there is no alteration to the words of Allāh; that is the mighty achievement" (10:62-65). *Al-Rāfiʿ* exalts the reputation of those who are regarded as weaklings among their own people, supporting the wronged against those who wrong them.

In Sūrat al-Baqarah, the Almighty says, "We have made some prophets excel over others; among them are those to whom Allāh spoke, and some of them He exalted by (many degrees of) rank" (Qur'ān, 2:253). In Sūrat al-Anʿām, He says, "And this was Our argument which We gave to Abraham against his people; We exalt in dignity whomsoever We please; surely your Lord is Wise, Knowing" (Qur'ān, 6:83). In the same chapter, the Almighty tells us that "He it is Who has made you successors in the land and raised some of you above others by (various) degrees so that He may try you by what He gives you; surely your Lord is quick to requite (evil), and He is most surely the Forgiving, the Merciful" (Qur'ān, 6:165). Other references occur in the following verses:

> Allāh said: O Jesus! I am going to terminate the period of your stay (on earth) and cause you to ascend to Me, to purify you from those who disbelieve, and to make those who follow you above those who disbelieve till the Day of Resurrection; then to Me shall be your return, so I will decide among you concerning that in which you differed. (3:55)

> And mention Idris (Enoch) in the Book; surely he was a truthful man, a prophet, and We raised him high in heaven. (19:56-57)

> And the heavens He raised and established the balance. (55:7)

One who is granted a blessing through the inspiration of this Attribute of Allāh is one who rises above his abominable desires and

inclinations; such a person will be exalted by Allāh to a status as high as that enjoyed by the angels with Him or even higher...

25. "Al-Muʿizz"

Allāh has said,

> Whoever desires honour, to Allāh belongs the honour all of it. To Him do the good words ascend, and the good deeds He raises; (as for) those who plan an evil plan, they shall have a severe chastisement, (as for) their plan, it shall surely perish. (35:10)

He has also said in Sūrat Āli-ʿImrān:

> Say: O Allāh, Master of the kingdom! You bestow the kingdom upon whomsoever You please and take the kingdom away from whomsoever You please, and You exalt whomsoever You please and abase whomsoever You please; in Your hand is the good (all of it); surely You have power over all things. (3:26)

Allāh has said, "Those who take the unbelievers for guardians rather than the believers: do they seek honour from them? Surely all honour is Allāh's" (Qur'ān, 4:139).

"*Al-Muʿizz*" conveys the meaning of: the One Who honours whomsoever He pleases from among His servants. Linguistically, *maʿazza*, the noun derived from the verb *yuʿizz*, means power, strength, might. Allāh is surely *al-ʿAzīz*, the Mighty One Who subdues and is never subdued, Who strengthens His friends by His favour, protecting them against sinning, forgiving their faults, permitting them to reside in Paradise, the abode of His Munificence. Then He honours them by permitting them to witness His manifestations and see His signs. He is the One Who empowers His prophets by protecting them against erring, granting them victory, protecting them, raising their status among their people. He honours one who obeys Him even if poverty is his lot, and He raises the status of a pious servant of His even if he were an Abyssinian slave. Allāh, God, The Truth, Praised and Glorified is His Name, is referred to as such in various verses of His Book, the Holy Qur'ān. Among such references are the following:

> Do not let their speech grieve you; surely might is wholly Allāh's;

He is the Hearing, the Knowing. (10:65)

Glory to your Lord, the Lord of Honour, above what they describe. (37:180)

To Allāh belongs the might, and to His Prophet, and the believers, but the hypocrites do not know. (63:8)

Imām ʿAli ibn al-Husain Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn is quoted saying, "If one desires to be honoured even though his tribe is not distinguished, or to be held in high esteem even though he has no authority, or to be a man whose wealth does not diminish, he should get out of the humiliation of disobedience and enter into the honour of obeying his Lord."

Essentially, the way how God honours His servants is by making them feel satisfied, contented, for humiliation lies in one being greedy. Had it not been for false hopes, no free man would have ever been enslaved by anything which, in all truth, is insignificant. The Almighty places one who persists in praising His Name in the center of honour, instilling love and respect for him in people's hearts. A servant of Allāh who aspires to earn a good share of personifying this Glorified Name has to honour the Messenger of Allāh and those who are knowledgeable among his own contemporaries, showing respect and humility to them.

26. "Al-Muthill"

The Almighty has said, "Those who oppose Allāh and His Prophet shall be (herded) among the most abased" (Qur'ān, 58:20). "*Al-Muthill*" is one of the Attributes of Allāh derived from the noun *thull*, whatever results from subduing, vanquishing, overcoming, conquering, someone. The Almighty says, "... walk in the ways of your Lord submissively," (Qur'ān, 16:69), that is, freely. He has also said, "... its fruits shall be made accessible (to them), always easy to reach" (Qur'ān, 76:14). *Al-Muthill* is the One Who abases or humiliates whomsoever He pleases, depriving them of all prestige. He is the One Who justly abases His foes when they disobey Him and rebel against His commandments. He insults them and dismisses them, causing them to be hurled into the abode of His chastisement, the inferno of hell. *Al-Muthill* is the One Who abases His foes by depriving them of knowing Him, enabling them to have their way and to go against His

injunctions. He will then have them transported to the abode of His chastisement, insulting them by dismissing and cursing them.

Al-Muthill is the One Who abases the unbelievers through the power of the truth, Who subdues whomsoever He pleases. Allāh has not honoured any servant of His more than He has to one who abases his own evil-insinuating self, his *nafs*, and He has not abased any servant of His more than one who is preoccupied with trying to earn distinction, prominence, and prestige for himself. In Sūrat al-Aʿrāf we read the following verse: "(As for) those who took the calf (for a god), surely wrath from their Lord and disgrace in the life of this world shall overtake them" (Qur'ān, 7:152). Anyone who looks niggardly at people to see how he can take advantage of them, who is never satisfied with what he has had, one who is dragged by his own schemes to elevate himself to prominence while keeping himself in the darkness of ignorance..., is one whom Allāh has surely disgraced and deprived. Such an individual is implied in verses such as this: "But you caused yourselves to fall into temptation, and you waited and doubted, and vain desires deceived you, till the threatened punishment of Allāh came while the arch-deceiver [Satan] deceived you about Allāh, so today ransom shall not be accepted from you" (Qur'ān, 57:14). This is the lowest degree of humiliation.

Thull, or bringing it about, that is, *ithlāl*, comes in many types, shapes and sizes. Allāh abases an oppressor by making him fall a prey to disease, or to his lust for women, or to his greed for wealth, or by making him in dire need of others. Let us supplicate thus: "Lord! Take us out of the humiliation of disobedience to the honour of obedience to You, and do not permit any of those whom You created to disgrace us, and crown us with the crown of Your honour." Honour is in needing nobody. The absolutely perfect degree of such honour, to be sure, belongs to none other than Allāh Who has said, "Surely all honour is Allāh's" (Qur'ān, 4:139). Next in degree of being honoured is one who is closest to the Almighty: "... to Allāh belongs the honour, to His Prophet, and to the believers" (Qur'ān, 63:8).

27. "Al-Sameeʿ"

Allāh has said, "And to Him belongs whatever dwells in the night and in the day, and He is the Hearing, the Knowing" (Qur'ān, 6:13).

Al-Sameeʿ is the One–and Only One–Who listens to everything in existence without the use of a faculty for hearing or a hearing aid.

Allāh hears each and every sound and voice even if it is hidden from us. His hearing encompasses everything: He hears the pleas of those who are in distress; He responds to the supplications of those in need; He helps those who are desperate for help; He hears the praising of those who praise Him, so He rewards them for it, and the supplication of those who plead to Him, so He responds to them. He hears the sound of the black ant walking on a solid rock in the darkest night; and He hears what the hearts contemplate and what scruples penetrate the conscience. His response to the supplication of one person does not distract Him from responding to another; He knows where the vision trespasses and what the breasts conceal; He hears every silent plea; He hears you and me. Nothing on earth or in the heavens can ever be hidden from Him.

"*Al-Samee*ᶜ" is derived from "*sam*ᶜ". It conveys the fact that Allāh, the Most High, realizes the truth about each and every sound even if it is, to our limited ability, quite silent. He, Glory to Him, realizes and distinguishes sounds as well as colors just as He realizes and distinguishes everything else.

"*Sam*ᶜ" may mean: acceptance of and a favourable response to. It exists, for example, in a tradition wherein the Messenger of Allāh says, "Lord! I seek refuge with You against a statement which is not heard," meaning a supplication which does not receive His favourable response. It is also similar to one Muslims pronounce during their obligatory daily prayers: "*Samiʿa Allāhu liman ḥamidah*," that is, Allāh responds favourably to the pleas of those who praise Him.

The Almighty has said,

> Surely I am with you both: I do hear and see. (20:46)

> Or do they think that We do not hear what they conceal and their secret discourses? Aye! And Our messengers (angels) are with them writing (everything) down. (43:80)

> Allāh has indeed heard the plea of the [woman] who pleads to you about her husband. (58:1)

> And if they resolve to divorce, Allāh is surely Hearing, Knowing. (2:227)

One who comes to realize that Allāh knows everything will

safeguard his tongue against uttering falsehood. He will always say what is right. One who realizes that Allāh hears even our thoughts will adopt the manners of one who watches over his conduct and who always holds himself accountable for what he contemplates, says, or does. A servant of Allāh ought to know that Allāh did not create the hearing faculty for him except so that he would listen to the speech of Allāh which He revealed unto His Prophet in order to benefit from it and to be guided by it. If a servant of Allāh seeks to be close to his Lord by offering *nawāfil* (optional acts of adoration), he will be loved by Allāh Who will then pour over his hearing of His divine light, thus making his insight very sharp, so much so that such a person will be able to see beyond the world of matter. If a servant of Allāh remains straightforward in his worship of Allāh, continuously seeking to please Him, Allāh will surely provide him with goodness from Him and with divine light.

28. "Al-Baṣeer"

Allāh has said, "He is with you wherever you are, and Allāh sees whatever you do" (Qur'ān, 57:4).

In language, seeing is achieved through the faculty of vision; it is the reflection of light on what can be seen and its impression on the eyes. Seeing is also an insight, a discretion, an innermost conviction. One who is *baseer* is one who sees deeply, who is knowledgeable, who is an expert. Also, to "see" means not to rush, but to contemplate, to be acquainted with things, and to be firm in adhering to the creed.

Al-Baseer sees everything, the apparent and the hidden, without using the faculty of vision. When applied to the Almighty, Glory to Him, vision receives the perfection whereby the qualities of anything that can be seen are realized. *Al-Baseer* fully knows every visible thing, and to Him the truth in their regard is apparent, evident. He knows where vision trespasses and what the breasts conceal. He sees and oversees; nothing in the high heavens nor in the earth, nor in what is between them both, nor what is under the ground, can ever be concealed from His vision, and He is the ever-Present Who is never absent.

One who realizes that Allāh has such an attribute will be disciplined by constantly keeping a vigil on his conduct, by being precise when holding his soul to account. One who safeguards his hearing and vision against incurring the wrath of the Almighty, not

committing anything that does not beseem him or is not commendable, is loved by Allāh, and he will be blessed with hearing and vision as indicated in sacred traditions.

29. "Al-Ḥakam"

The Almighty has said, "The judgment is only Allāh's; He relates the truth and He is the best of those who decide" (Qur'ān, 6:57).

Both "*al-Ḥakam*" and "*al-Ḥākim*" convey the same meaning; the origin of the first means the same as that of *manᶜ*, prohibition, from which a word such as *ḥakama*, an iron rein piece used to restrain horses, is derived.

"*Al-Ḥakam*" means: the One Whose word is final in determining what is right and what is wrong, in distinguishing between acts of righteousness and those of sinning. He rewards each soul according to what it earns, Who decides between His servants as He pleases, Who distinguishes between the wretch and the lucky, tormenting the first and rewarding the latter. *Al-Ḥakam* is the precise Arbitrator, the absolutely correct Judge Whose decision none can overturn, nor can anyone repeal His decree.

Al-Ḥakam is the One in Whose promise there should be no doubt at all, in Whose action there is no fault at all; He has decreed that the hearts must be contented and pleased with Him, that the souls must be submissive, obedient, to Him. He separates the truth from falsehood. In Sūrat al-Anᶜām, we read: "Shall I then seek a judge other than Allāh? He it is Who has revealed to you the Book (which is) made clear" (Qur'ān, 6:114). In Sūrat Younus we read: "Follow what is revealed to you and persevere till Allāh gives His judgment, and He is the best of judges" (Qur'ān, 10:109). Other such references are:

> Then who calls you a liar with regard to the judgment after this? Is not Allāh the best of judges? (95:7-8)

> Judgment is only Allāh's; on Him do I rely, and on Him let those who are reliant rely. (12:67)

There are many derivations from this word in various places throughout the Holy Qur'ān.

Among Allāh's judgment with regard to His servants is that everyone will receive the rewards of what he earns, and that his

endeavor will be witnessed, noted, recorded, preserved; those who do good deeds will receive eternal bliss, whereas those who sin will receive eternal damnation. He makes righteousness the path to heaven and sinning the path to hell. Shurayh ibn Hāni has said that his father Hani ibn Yazīd said, "I came to see the Messenger of Allāh once and he heard people calling me `Abu [father of] al-Hakam.' He said to them, `Al-Hakam is Allāh! Why are you named like that?!' I said to him, `Whenever my people dispute with one another, I judge between them to the satisfaction of both disputing parties.' The Prophet then asked me if I had any sons. `Yes. They are: Shurayh, Abdullāh and Muslim, sons of Hani.' `Who is their oldest?' the Messenger of Allāh asked me. I told him it was Shurayh. He then said, `You are Abu Shurayh,' then he invoked Allāh to bless me and my sons."[1]

30. "Al-ʿAdl"

Allāh has said, "Surely Allāh enjoins the doing of justice and of good deeds (to others) and the giving to the kindred, and He forbids indecency, evil, and rebellion; He admonishes you so that you may be mindful" (Qur'ān, 16:90).

ʿAdl means moderation; *al-ʿAdl* is above oppressing or being inequitable to anyone in His decrees and actions. Rather, He grants everyone what is due to him; He puts everything in its right place; nothing ensues from Him except justice. He does whatever He pleases, and His decree regarding His servants is carried out.

In Sūrat al-Anʿām, the Almighty says, "And the word of your Lord has been accomplished truly and justly; none can change His words, and He is the Hearing, the Knowing" (Qur'ān, 6:115). He enjoins justice and equity and says the following in Sūrat al-Nisā' (Women): "When you judge between people, you should judge with justice; surely Allāh admonishes you with what is excellent; surely Allāh is Seeing, Hearing" (Qur'ān, 4:58).

There are many traditions narrated about the Messenger of Allāh pointing out to *ʿadl* and highlighting the status of those who act upon it. One of them is his saying, "There are seven types of people whom Allāh will shade on a Day when there will be no shade except His: a

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[1]Abu Dawūd, *Jāmiʿ al-Fawā'id*, Vol. 2, p. 410.

just imām, a young man who grows up adoring Allāh, a man whose heart is always attached to mosques, two men who love one another for the sake of Allāh: they meet and they part only accordingly, a man sought by a woman of prominence and beauty [for illicit sex] and to whom he says, `I fear Allāh,' a man who pays charity and hides his action, so much so that his left hand does not know what his right hand gives away, and a man who mentions the Name of Allāh for the sake of remembering Him while his tears overflow." This tradition is recorded by al-Bukhāri and Muslim and is quoted on pp. 164-165, Vol. 3, of *Al Targheeb wal tarheeb*, and on p. 30 of *Qabāsat min hadīi al nubuwwah*.

31. "Al-Lateef"

Allāh has said, "... surely my Lord is benignant to whomsoever He pleases; surely He is the Knowing, the Wise" (Qur'ān, 12:100).

"Al-Lateef" is one of Allāh's Attributes derived from extreme kindness and compassion in a way which no human faculty can ever fathom. *Al-Lateef* continuously pours His blessings unto His servants; His actions are good and beautiful. This Attribute also means: the One Who cannot be sensed by human senses or those of all other beings, Who knows hidden and minute matters. *Al-Lateef* has combined in Him terse and wise compassion as well as minute and detailed knowledge of all affairs and of the means to make them reach whomsoever He pleases from among His creation.

Al-Lateef pleases His servants when He removes the clouds of His wrath away from them, the One Who is compassionate towards His servants even in matters related to His decree; He knows all hidden matters. He is the One Whose knowledge encompasses everything minute regarding all facts. His will is carried out, the will whereby He protects His creatures. He knows the most intricate of details relevant to interests and their obscurities; He gently makes them reach their destinations. He is Most Kind and Compassionate to His servants even when they are not aware of it; He manages their affairs and wishes everything good for His servants. He desires their ease and makes for them the means of righteousness and goodness attainable. He eases everything difficult, Who joins everything broken. Allāh has said, "Does He not know, being the One Who created (everything and everyone)?! He knows the subtleties, the One Who is ever-Aware (of everything)" (Qur'ān, 67:14).

One of the signs of His kindness towards His servants is that He has given them more than enough and required them to do less than what they can, thus making the achievement of eternal happiness attainable by easy endeavor during a short period of time, i.e. one's life-span, which is too short to be compared with the eternity of the hereafter.

Al-Lateef has conceived everything within the framework of its own antithesis. Allāh, for example, hid for prophet Joseph the prominence of authority in the garb of slavery till he himself eventually came to say: "... surely my Lord is benignant to whomsoever He pleases; surely He is the Knowing, the Wise" (Qur'ān, 12:100). A man was taken once to prison although he was innocent of the charge, so he kept repeating Joseph's invocation saying, "... surely my Lord is benignant to whomsoever He pleases; surely He is the Knowing, the Wise" (Qur'ān, 12:100). A young man came to him during one night and said to him, "Stand up so that I may get you out of your jail." The man asked the youth how he could get out since the doors were all locked, but the youth ordered him for the second time to stand up. He walked with the young man till he got out of town, then he said to him, "Recite: `Surely my Lord is benignant to whomsoever He pleases; surely He is the Knowing, the Wise" (Qur'ān, 12:100).

32. "Al-Khabeer"

The Most Exalted One has said, "Vision does not comprehend Him, while He comprehends all vision, and He knows the subtleties, and He is the Aware" (Qur'ān, 6:103).

Al-Khabeer is one of the Attributes of Allāh, and it means: the One Who knows everything and from Whose knowledge nothing at all escapes. He knows the essence of everything and is acquainted with the truth in its regard. *Al-Khabeer* is familiar with the most intricate matters; He knows the ailment and its remedy.

Al-Khabeer knows the innermost of everything; nothing takes place in His domain without His knowledge; no atom moves nor stands still, nor a soul is upset or eased, except that He knows about it. He is the One from Whose knowledge nothing in the earth or in the heavens is hidden; nothing moves in the heavens or in the earth except that He knows about its final resting point or destination.

Scholars have distinguished between *al-Khabeer* and *al-ʿAleem*.

The first connotes knowledge, but when knowledge is applied to hidden matters, it is then called *khibra*, and the One Who knows it is called *al-Khabeer*.

The Almighty has said, "What?! Do you think that you will be left alone while Allāh has not yet ascertained those of you who have struggled hard and have not taken anyone as an adherent besides Allāh and His Prophet and the believers?! Allāh is Aware of all what you do" (Qur'ān, 9:16). Anyone who has a certain need about which he likes to ask Allāh for something should recite the verse saying "Does He not know, the One Who created?! He knows the subtleties, and He is the Aware" (Qur'ān, 67:14) repeatedly till he falls asleep.

33. "Al-Ḥaleem"

Allāh has said, "... certainly Allāh has pardoned them; surely Allāh is Forgiving, Forbearing" (Qur'ān, 3:155).

"*Al-Haleem*" is an Attribute of the Almighty derived from the root word *hilm* which means: taking the time to do something. It also means care, attention, and sensibility. Allāh's *hilm* is His postponement of chastising those who deserve to be chastised, so He delays the penalty of some of those who deserve it. After that, He may penalize them or overlook their faults. Or He may swiftly penalize some of them. He witnesses the transgression of transgressors and the disobedience of those who disobey Him without being provoked by anger or overwhelmed by wrath, and He does not rush to penalize despite His ability to do so. Allāh has said, "Had Allāh destroyed men on account of their iniquity, He would not have left on earth a single creature" (Qur'ān, 16:61).

Al-Haleem does not bring about a swift vengeance; had He intended to effect revenge at a later time, He would have been called spiteful, vengeful, and if He does not intend to seek revenge at all, then surely He is Forgiving. He can also be called *al-Haleem* if He does not intend to seek revenge at all provided He does not declare His intention. If He does declare it, He then is called Forgiving. *Al-Haleem* quite often overlooks sins and covers up shortcomings. He forgives after having covered up. He safeguards His affection for His servants. His promise is good. He fulfills His promise. *Al-Haleem* shields those who indulge in sins with His forgiveness, Who pardons those who violate His laws, Who is not slighted by the rebellion of the rebellious, and no oppression of any oppressor can ever provoke Him.

The Holy Qur'ān has described some of Allāh's messengers as *haleem*; for example, Abraham, the Friend of Allāh, is described as, "... most surely Abraham was very tender-hearted, forbearing" (Qur'ān, 9:114), and in Sūrat Hūd, he is praised likewise: "Most surely Abraham was forbearing, tender-hearted, oft-returning (to Allāh)" (Qur'ān, 11:75). The Holy Qur'ān states the following in Sūrat al-Saffāt about Ishmael "So We gave him the glad tidings of a boy [Ishmael] possessing forbearance" (Qur'ān, 3:101). *Hilm* is a gracious and a noble attribute, so much so that one tradition recorded in *Al-Athīr* cites the Messenger of Allāh saying, "*Hilm* is the master of all good conduct." It also records another such tradition saying, "One who is *haleem* is almost on the same footing with Allāh's prophets." *Hilm* enjoys a high status and esteem despite the abundance of one's sins and the repetition of one's repentance.

Allāh has said, "Allāh does not call you to account for what is vain of your oaths, but He will call you to account for what your hearts have earned, and Allāh is Forgiving, Forbearing" (Qur'ān, 2:225). He has also said, "The seven heavens declare His glory and the earth, too, and those who are in them, and there is not a single thing but glorifies and praises Him, but you do not understand their glorifying; surely He is Forbearing, Forgiving" (Qur'ān, 17:44).

A forbearing and munificent person, then, is one who often forgives the sins and conceals the shortcomings. He is the one who forgives after shielding one's sins, who safeguards his compassion, who is true to his word, who forgives those who break his law, who is not stirred by the rebellion of transgressors, nor is he provoked by oppression. Allāh's Munificence regarding the sinners is great: "... and He is the Most High, the Great" (Qur'ān, 2:255).

It is narrated that Abraham saw a man committing a sin, so he prayed Allāh to cause him to perish, and so it happened. He saw a second and a third, and he repeated his plea, and they, too, perished. Then he saw a fourth and invoked Allāh likewise to annihilate him. It was then that Allāh inspired him, "O Abraham! Stop! If We were to annihilate each one of Our servants who commits a sin, then only a small number will survive; but if one sins, We give him a respite; if he repents, We accept his repentance, and if he persists, We postpone his penalty knowing that he cannot escape from Our domain."

It is also narrated that a young man used to commit many sins, and he used to persist in sinning; nay, he even used to repent and

immediately go back to sinning. Having done so quite often, he was addressed by Satan thus, "For how long will you keep sinning and repenting?" Satan wished that Allāh would cause that man to lose hope in His mercy and become despondent. When night came, the man performed his ablution and offered two *rekᶜāts*, then he raised his eyes to the heavens and said, "O You Who protects the righteous against sinning, Who safeguards those who are protected from sinning, Who makes the righteous what they are! If You neglect me, You will find me losing heart; my forelock is in Your hand; my debts are before You! O You Who changes the hearts! I invoke You to keep my heart firm on following Your creed!" Allāh, thereupon, said to His angels, "O angels of Mine! Have you all heard his statement? Bear witness, then, that I have forgiven all his past sins and safeguarded him against sinning for the rest of his life."

34. "Al-ᶜAẓeem"

The Almighty has said, "So glorify the Name of your Lord, the Great" (Qur'ān, 56:96).

"Al-ᶜAẓeem" is a superlative derived from the noun *ᶜizam*, greatness, magnanimity, dignity, honour, esteem, pride... The Absolute *Aẓeem* is the One Whose greatness cannot be grasped by vision; it is beyond all limits, so much so that no human intellect can ever absorb it. Allāh has said, "He is the Most High, the Great" (Qur'ān, 2:255).

The most prominent person in a town is called its greatest. This is the meaning of what the unbelievers say as the Holy Qur'ān quotes them: "... to a man great in both towns..." (Qur'ān, 43:31). Allāh has said, "... and the great Qur'ān" (Qur'ān, 15:87). When the Messenger of Allāh wrote a letter to Heraclius (which will be discussed later in this book *Insha-Allāh*), he addressed him as "the *azeem* man of Rome," that is, the greatest dignitary in Rome. Heraclius, who ruled from 610 - 641 A.D., was a Byzantine emperor, ruler of the Eastern Roman empire. was involved in many wars with the Persians from 634 - 642 A.D. He did not accept Islam; his armies were eventually conquered by Islamic troops, so he lost Syria, Palestine and Mesopotamia (upper Iraq) as well as Egypt, one after the other.

If you consider the greatness of al-ᶜAẓeem, you will come to know that anyone besides Him is insignificant. The human being, no matter how knowledgeable, is limited in the scope and content of his knowledge. How can you compare such a limited amount of

knowledge with that of the Almighty? An example of His might exists in 31:28: "Neither your creation nor your raising (*baʿth*, the reunion between the soul and the recreated body) is only like (that of) a single soul" (Qur'ān, 31:28). To the Almighty, the creation of the entire cosmos is as easy as the creation of one single soul: "Our word for a thing when We intend it is only to say to it: Be, and it is" (Qur'ān, 16:40).

Allāh has required us to revere His signs; He says, "That (shall be so), and whoever respects the signs of Allāh, it surely is (the sign) of the piety of the hearts" (Qur'ān, 22:32). One who highly regards the signs of Allāh, respects religious rites, holds in high esteem anything related to Allāh, is surely held in high esteem by both Allāh and His servants.

The Messenger of Allāh, Muhammed, has conveyed the following glad tidings: "One who learns then becomes fully knowledgeable then acts upon what he has learned is called great in the kingdom of the heavens."

Ibn ʿAbbās quotes the Messenger of Allāh saying, "If someone enters a room to visit a sick person on the brink of death and he repeats seven times the saying of: 'I plead to Allāh the Great, Lord of the Great Throne, to heal you,' that sick person will be healed by the Will of Allāh."

35. "Al-Ghafoor"

Allāh has said, "... surely Allāh forgives the faults all of them; surely He is the Forgiving, the Merciful" (Qur'ān, 39:53).

"*Al-Ghafoor*" is derived from the root word *ghafr*, veiling or covering. He is *al-Ghafoor* because He quite often veils the sins and forgives those who commit them. He does not dispute about them with His servants. *Maghfira* means the covering and the forgiving of sins. Allāh's forgiveness means His protection of a servant of His against His torment. Its verb means: to openly overlook his sins.

Al-Ghafoor is the Master Whose power is perfect; He may unconditionally forgive due to the favours He bestows upon His servants, and to His benevolence.

The Holy Qur'ān has referred quite often to forgiveness, and Allāh has diversified it so that the hearts of those who disobey Him may not lose hope of His mercy, and so that no criminal will despond of the mercy of Allāh. He forgives the sins and accepts the

repentance. In Sūrat Ghāfir, we recite this verse: "The One Who forgives the faults and Who accepts repentance, Who is Severe in punishing, the Lord of bounty" (Qur'ān, 40:3). Other such references are as follows:

> ... so forgive us and have mercy on us; You are the best of those who forgive. (7:155)

> Most surely I am the most Forgiving to one who repents and believes and does good deeds then continues to follow the right guidance. (20:82)

> He has created the heavens and the earth with the truth; He makes the night cover the day and the day overtake the night, and He has made the sun and the moon subservient (to His will): each runs to an assigned term; surely He is the Mighty, the oft-Forgiving. (39:5)

As regarding the verse saying, "Inform My servants that I am the Forgiving, the Merciful" (Qur'ān, 15:49), some companions of the Prophet were once indulged in laughter as the Messenger of Allāh passed by. He greeted them then said to them, "Do you laugh while the fire is before you?" They regretted and felt extremely depressed. He soon went back to them and said, "Gabriel has just come to me and said that Allāh asked why I caused some of His servants to lose hope in His mercy," then he repeated 39:5 quoted above.

The lot of one who wishes to personify the Attribute "*al-Ghafoor*" is that he constantly seeks His forgiveness; he forgives His servants time and over again. This is the key to obtaining the forgiveness of Allāh as referred to in 24:22: "Do not let those among you who possess grace and abundance swear against giving to the near of kin and the poor and those who have fled in Allāh's way; they should pardon and overlook. Do not you love that Allāh would forgive you? Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful."

36. "Al-Shakoor"

Allāh has said, "So that He may pay them back their rewards in full and give them more out of His grace: surely He is the Forgiving, the One Who multiplies the rewards" (Qur'ān, 35:30).

Linguistically, "*al-Shakoor*" is derived from the root word *shukr* which conveys the meaning of: an increase. Arabs describe a land as

such if its plants are abundant. They describe an animal as such if it is fattened. Plants sustained by a little amount of water are called *shakoor*. *Al-Shakoor* thanks quite often, Who appreciates acts of righteousness, charity and kindness. A servant of Allāh who is *shakoor* is one who perseveres to thank his Lord by obeying Him and by carrying out the obligations which He has mandated on him. *Shukr* is recognition and propagation of goodness.

Al-Shakoor, Allāh, appreciates even the few good deeds His servants do, doubling His rewards for them. His way of thanking them is by giving them of His bounties though He was the One Who enabled them to do such good deeds in the first place. He planted in their hearts the desire to do them, then He provided for them all the means to carry them out. He enables His servants to be grateful for the blessings which He bestows upon them, so He rewards them even for small acts of obedience to Him with an abundance of His good things. He grants for a few days' endeavor a bliss in the hereafter that never ends.

Al-Shakoor accepts the little and Who gives a lot. Allāh has called Himself *al-Shakoor* in order to tell us that He rewards His servants for thanking Him; hence, the reward for such gratitude is called *shukr*, just as the penalty for a bad deed is called bad; He has said, "And the recompense of evil is a like punishment" (Qur'ān, 42:40).

One of the tokens of accepting one's expression of appreciation is that he receives an increase of Allāh's blessings according to 14:7: "If you are grateful, I will certainly give you more, and if you are ungrateful, My chastisement is truly severe." The truth about appreciation is not related to the qualities of Allāh: appreciation comes from people; it is simply the expending of the blessings granted by Allāh in the way for which He created them. Linguistically, appreciation is coupled with blessing, grace, gratitude. Nobody can do Allāh a favour for which He has to thank him; therefore, His appreciation must be understood metaphorically according to *Tafsīr al-Manār*. Allāh's gratitude means that He is capable of rewarding the doers of good, that He does not permit the deeds of such doers to be wasted or unrewarded. It is in this sense that rewarding the doer of good with what he deserves is called appreciation, and Allāh has thus called Himself appreciative. Allāh has also promised those who appreciate His blessings to increase His blessings upon them; so, such gratitude also falls under the same type of appreciation. The most

Appreciative One has said, "... and whoever does good spontaneously, surely Allāh is Grateful, Knowing" (Qur'ān, 2:158). Thus do we come to know that Allāh, Glory to Him, has a conduct which is surely the most perfect one when He called Himself appreciative of the worlds although whatever good they do neither benefits Him nor harms Him in the least; rather, its benefit is surely for our own good. It is, in reality, a sign of His own blessings upon us that He guides and enables us to do it; so, it does not beseem any sensible person to observe the great favour bestowed upon him by Allāh without thanking Him for it, or without obeying Him.

Allāh also says, "Therefore remember Me, so I will remember you, too, and be thankful to Me, and do not be ungrateful to Me" (Qur'ān, 2:152). In this verse, Allāh teaches His servants to be appreciative, ordering them to remember the blessings which He has bestowed upon them by their hearts, tongues and senses. Their reward for it is that He reminds them of His permission to continue to enjoy such blessings, and to increase them, ordering them to praise Him by His Attributes, to discuss His countless blessings, to glorify Him openly and secretly, so that He may mention them in His high company and mention His being pleased with them. In a *qudsi* tradition, the Messenger of Allāh quotes the Almighty saying, "I am as My servant thinks of Me: I am with him; if he mentions Me silently, I shall mention him likewise, and if He mentions My Name before a crowd of people, I shall mention him before a better crowd; if he gets closer to Me as much as a span, I shall get closer to him as much as a yard; if he gets closer to Me as much as a yard, I will get closer to him more than twice that much. If he comes to Me walking, I shall come to him running." Allāh commands His servants to be grateful to Him and not to deny the blessings which He has bestowed upon them. This is a warning for this nation against that wherein previous nations had fallen due to the latter's denial of the blessings which the Almighty had showered upon them. He granted them the powers of reason, emotion, judgment, and other such blessings.

A servant of Allāh should never tire of thanking and praising Him, incessantly and unhesitatingly. In a supplications by the Messenger of Allāh, he says, "Lord! I am incapable of praising You enough; You are as You have praised Yourself." Praising Allāh and thanking Him as He really deserves is not within the human capacity. A servant of Allāh, therefore, must leave it to the One Who can do

so: Allāh, Praise is due to Him, and ONLY to Him. How can man acquire perfection in such an area while he contemplates upon some blessings bestowed upon him by Allāh and says to himself: "I was mere naught and Allāh caused me to be, then He granted me the beautiful outward appearance, and the power of reason which is the very best of my inner qualities, then He granted me hearing and vision and guided me to know Him, then He made His great rewards attainable and even praised me in his Great Book"? If you move your tongue and say: *Alhamdu-lillāh* (Praise to Allāh), thinking that mere saying so is sufficient to express gratitude for all the great favours He has bestowed upon you, then you surely have taken leave of absence from your sanity, for you surely will not have thanked Him at all. "Talk is cheap," says an axiom, whereas "actions speak louder than words." Express your gratitude towards your Maker by actions, not only by words. A servant's true expression of gratitude is his own admission that he simply is incapable of sufficiently expressing his gratitude to His Maker, Sustainer, and Benefactor.

Jābir ibn Abdullāh al-Anṣāri has quoted the Messenger of Allāh saying, "If one is given something while being capable of finding a way to likewise give, let him do so, but if he is not, then let him praise the giver, for one who remains silent and says nothing commits *kufr*, apostasy. And if one were to put on clothes which he was not given, he would then be like one who wears two outfits of forgery."[1]

37. "Al-ᶜAliyy"

Allāh has said, "... what they call upon besides Him is falsehood; Allāh is the High, the Great" (Qur'ān, 22:61).

"*Al-ᶜAliyy*" is one of Allāh's Attributes, and it is derived from *uluww*, height, sublimity, or loftiness versus lowliness. The height referred to here is that of status. *Al-ᶜAliyy* is High, so High that He can never be conceived nor visualized. Minds are at a loss regarding His Greatness; intellects are incapable of conceiving His perfection. According to *Al-Mufradāt*, one who is *ᶜaliyy* is a prominent person, a man of distinction. When applied to the Almighty, as in 22:61 cited above, the implied meaning is that He is above being described by anyone or truly known by anyone, and He is above what anyone says

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[1]al-Tirmithi, *Sunan*, Vol. 4, p. 379.

He is the One above Whose status there is none at all, and everything in existence is under His control. Allāh has said, "He is the Most High, the Great" (Qur'ān, 2:255), "... judgment belongs to Allāh, the High, the Great" (Qur'ān, 40:12), and, "... the Great, the Most High" (Qur'ān, 13:9).

"High" and "low" may be applied both to tangible as well as intangible things. As regarding the tangible ones, the *ʿArsh* (Throne) is said to be higher than the *Kursi* (the Seat of Authority), and the heavens is higher than the earth. Such words are applied only to tangible things, things which have dimensions. Since the Almighty is above having dimensions, His being *al-ʿAliyy* is above being as such.

The One Who is *al-ʿAliyy* is above being conceived by any intellect, and Whose Attributes are too great to be described. He is the One in Whose Greatness minds are puzzled, and in trying to realize His Essence the intellects fall short.

Among the good manners adorning a believer are: humbleness and submissiveness before the Glory of the Almighty. It is only then that He exalts his status. Al-Qushayri has reported saying that Allāh inspired Moses to go near a mountain so that He would address him. Every mountain there vied with the others in the hope of being the one near which such a divine address would take place. Mount Sinai thought very humbly of itself saying, "Since when do I deserve the honour of being the site worthy of the status of Moses when addressed by his Lord?" For this reason, Allāh inspired Moses to go near Mount Sinai due to the latter's humility.

According to *Al-Asmā' wal ṣifāt*, where a *qudsi* tradition is quoted, the Messenger of Allāh heard during the Night of Isrā (the night journey to Jerusalem) a praising in the high heavens saying: *Subhan al-ʿAliyy al-Aʿla, Subḥānahu wa Taʿāla*, that is, "Glory to the Most High, Glory to Him and Exaltation." Iyas ibn Salāmah has quoted his father saying that he had heard the Messenger of Allāh starting every supplication by saying, "*Subḥana al-Aʿla al-Wahhāb*," "Glory to the Most High, the ever-Giving."

38. "Al-Kabeer"

We read the following in the Holy Qur'ān: "They shall say: What is it that your Lord said? They shall say: The truth. And He is the Most High, the Great" (Qur'ān, 34:23).

Linguistically, one who is *kabeer* is a great person, a dignitary, a distinguished personality. Allāh, Glorified and Exalted is His Name, is greater than everything and everyone, and He is the Absolutely Great One, the One Who is Great on His own merits, in His qualities and Essence, above being in any way like any of His creatures; "There is nothing like Him," the One Who is superior to the praise of any of those who praise, glorify, or attempt to describe Him. He is the most perfect of anything in existence, the One Who has all the Glory, the Greatness, the Honour and the Sublimity. He is above what the beings He has created conceive Him to be. He is too Great to be described or His actions to be comprehended.

The Almighty has said,

He is the High, the Great. (40:12)

Proclaim His greatness magnifying (Him). (17:111)

And your Lord do magnify. (74:3).

To Him belongs greatness in the heavens and the earth. (45:37)

The Almighty has been lauded with characteristics of this sort:

One is *al-Kabeer*. The other is *al-Mutakabbir*, the explanation of which has already been dealt with. The third is *al-Akbar* as in 9:72: "... and best of all is Allāh's goodly pleasure" (Qur'ān, 9:72), and in 29:45: "... certainly the remembrance of Allāh is the greatest." But it has not been used in the Holy Qur'ān as a reference to the Almighty, yet it occurs as an Attribute of His in the Sunnah such as our saying: *Allāhu Akbar!* The fourth is *al-Kibriyā'*; Allāh has said, "And to Him belongs greatness..." (Qur'ān, 45:37). So, let us discuss these Attributes:

As regarding *al-Akbar*, there are two ways to look at it: First, He is greater than anything else in existence. It is possible to view the "Allāhu Akbar!" which Muslims pronounce audibly when saying their prayers in the same light, meaning that Allāh is greater than anyone or anything else; hence, one's mind will not be occupied by anyone or anything else besides Him, nor is his heart attached to anyone or anything else besides Him.

"Allāhu Akbar!" is a statement derived from "*al-Kabeer*" and is pronounced to initiate the obligatory prayers, during the time of

rukooᶜ, sujood or *qiyām*, that is, when bowing, prostrating or standing during the performance of obligatory prayers. It is called *takbeer*, Glorification of al-*Kabeer*, the Great One, the Most Great. *Takbeer* is required on several occasions such as the *athān*, *iqāma*, prayers, both feasts, funeral prayers, upon seeing the Kaᶜba, throwing the stones [during the pilgrimage], and announcing the time for *jihad*, holy war. The Messenger of Allāh is said to initiate anything of significance with "Allāhu Akbar!"

Ibn ᶜAbbās is quoted saying that the Messenger of Allāh used to teach his companions a supplication whereby they could shun all ailments and types of fever which said, "In the Name of Allāh *al-Kabeer*; we seek refuge with Allāh al-Azeem from the evil of any feverish vein, and from the inferno of hellfire."

The Attribute "*al-Kabeer*" is repeated five times throughout the text of the Holy Qur'ān.

39. "Al-Ḥafeez"

The Almighty has said in the Holy Qur'ān, "And he has no authority over them, but so that We may distinguish the one who believes in the hereafter from the one who is in doubt concerning it, and your Lord preserves all things" (Qur'ān, 34:21).

"*Al-Ḥafeez*" is derived from the root word *ḥifz*, safeguarding something or someone. Its antithesis is *sahu*, forgetfulness, negligence, inattentiveness. Women who safeguard the property of their husbands when the latter are absent are described in the Holy Qur'ān as *ḥāfizātin lil ghayb*. A book is called *ḥafeez* because its contents safeguard records of actions and statements from being lost (from people's memory, etc.).

Al-Ḥafeez very much maintains the existence of everything that exists, Who safeguards contradictory elements against overwhelming one another such as what is hot and what is cold, what is moist and what is dry, qualities which Allāh has created, making them inherent in our creation as well as in that of all animals and plants. Had He not thus safeguarded them, by neutralizing them once and by increasing the amount of what diminishes thereof another, they would not have coexisted with one another, their mixing would have been annulled, their composition would have diminished, and their ability to be composed or amalgamated would have disappeared. *Al-Ḥafeez* carries a stronger meaning than that of *al-Ḥāfiz*. *Al-Ḥafeez* has two

meanings: One is the opposite of oversight or forgetfulness, and its meaning is derived from knowing. When we say that the Almighty safeguards things, we mean that He knows them in all their quantities and intricacies, and that such knowledge is not altered by diminution, oversight, negligence, or forgetfulness. The other is that *al-Hafeez* safeguards things against loss: He guards them, and all His characteristics and perfection are above extinction. He has also said: "Attend constantly to prayers and to the middle prayers, and stand up truly obedient to Allāh" (Qur'ān, 2:238), and, "... the preservation of them both does not tire Him" (Qur'ān, 2:255). He protects His Divine statements, i.e. the Holy Qur'ān, hence the verse, "We have revealed the Reminder, and We are its Guardian" (Qur'ān, 15:9), meaning Protectors against alteration, distortion, or any tampering with its sacred text, applied here particularly to the text of the Holy Qur'ān.

Despite the greatness of his status, the Friend of Allāh Abraham supplicated thus: "Lord! Grant me wisdom and join me with the righteous" (Qur'ān, 26:83), and, "Lord! Make us both submitting to You" (Qur'ān, 2:128). Moses, who spoke to the Almighty, also supplicated saying, "Lord! Expand my breast for me" (Qur'ān, 20:25). The Almighty has said the following to His Prophet and Messenger Muhammed: "... had it not been that We had already established you..." (Qur'ān, 17:74), and, "... Allāh will protect you from people" (Qur'ān, 5:67). He admonished the believers to pray by saying, "Lord! Do not make our hearts deviate after You have guided us aright" (Qur'ān, 3:8).

One who contemplates on the meanings of *al-Hafeez* and eagerly longs for Him with all his heart is one in whose heart the love for His Lord is borne, the Lord Who protects His servant even when the latter is disobedient to Him, falling short of worshipping Him, lagging behind in adoring Him. He reawakens his heart from its inattentiveness. It is then that Allāh makes his heart like a preserved treasure of secrets, so he takes courageous stands, safeguarding his senses against committing sins, protecting his heart against spiritually harmful insinuations.

40. "Al-Muqeet"

In the Holy Qur'ān, we read: "Whoever joins himself (to another) in a good cause shall have a share thereof, and whoever joins himself (to another) in an evil cause shall be responsible for it, and Allāh

controls all things" (Qur'ān, 4:85).

"*Al-Muqeet*" is derived from the root noun *qoot*, sustenance, the food that sustains the human body. Ibn ʿAbbās has said that *al-Muqeet* is *al-Muqtadir*, the Omnipotent. *Al-Muqeet* creates all beings, creating likewise the means for their sustenance. He provides ways for them to have access to such means of sustenance; He has made accessible to them what is necessary and what is a luxury. He sustains the bodies and the souls. He has taken upon Himself to sustain His creation. *Al-Muqeet* hears the silent supplication and responds to it and knows the affliction and removes it. "*Al-Muqeet*" conveys the same meaning as that of "*al-Hafeez*," the Protector; so, He protects and sustains the living beings.

Reference to *qoot* exists throughout the Holy Qur'ān. For example, Allāh has said the following in Sūrat Fussilat: "And He made in it mountains above its surface, and He blessed therein and made therein its foods, in four periods: alike for the seekers" (Qur'ān, 41:10). He sustains the hearts through knowledge, so He is *al-Razzāq* but in a more specific way, for sustenance includes both food and non-food items. *Qoot* is food sufficient to keep someone's body alive. It may also mean the One Who takes full control over something or someone, Who is Capable of managing his/her affairs. *Al-Muqeet* Alone is Capable and Knowledgeable of everything.

One of the good manners inspired by this Attribute is that when food is brought to you, you must recognize *al-Muqeet* Whose sustenance is quite spacious and encompassing, through Whose Grace are you provided with food. Such a recognition will cause the light of this Attribute to lift you spiritually. God will then make you the treasure-house for His servants, enabling you to sustain others, teach them knowledge, and lead them to the ever-Living, the Sustainer.

Do not seek the achievement of all your wishes and desires except from Allāh, for He surely holds the keys to the treasures of His sustenance. According to one *qudsi* tradition, Allāh said to Moses, "O Moses! Ask Me with regard to everything, including your shoe strings and the salt for your pot."

41. "Al-Ḥaseeb"

Allāh has said in the Holy Qur'ān, "... those who deliver the messages of Allāh and fear Him and not fear anyone save Allāh, and Allāh suffices for taking account (of everything)" (Qur'ān, 33:39).

Al-Haseeb is one of Allāh's Attributes, and it is often explained as the One Who rewards. Its meaning may also be understood as the One Who provides sufficiently, Who grants whatever His servants need; He is the Master upon Whom all rely; there is no *haseeb* besides Him, and all His creation are in need of His help and support. It is also said that *al-Haseeb* is the One to Whom everything honourable is referred, and with Him does every glory end. He calls His servants to account for their deeds, Who tries those who obey Him and rewards them for such obedience, Who calls those who disobey Him to account and penalizes them for their disobedience; He, and only He, tries everyone.

Things are connected to one another, and in the end they are connected to Allāh Who has said, "O Prophet! Allāh suffices you and the believers who follow you" (Qur'ān, 8:64). If we look at this great cosmos, which is fixed and unaffected by external effects since millions of years, we will conclude that there is a complex accounting system for it which is spontaneous. It makes cosmic criteria fixed in order to guarantee the preservation of human life on earth in the best way so that man may be able to perform the function for which Allāh created him, that is, to worship Him. The number of computations required to run such a tremendous cosmos can never be conceived by any human mind; so, how can one imagine the spontaneous alterations of some while the rest remain the same?! It is the Great *al-Haseeb*, the computing One, the Great, the most swift of all those who compute. It truly is an Attribute which deserves a close look. If a thinking person were to remain thinking all life, he will never be able to compute except very, very little indeed. Yet I like through these simple statements to give the reader an idea that may provide him with a glimpse of the greatness of this miraculous Attribute:

The verb "*hasaba*" means: counted, computed, calculated, deducted a total, etc. "*Hisab*" means: counting, computing, calculating, or accounting, and it is accomplished by adding, subtracting, and such related steps. The science of *hisab* is arithmetics from which more advanced sciences: algebra, mathematics, and calculus, are derived. The Holy Qur'ān contains references to *al-Haseeb* and the derivatives of its root word in verses such as these:

> ... and though there may be the weight of a grain of mustard seed, We will (still) bring it, and sufficient are We to take account.

(21:47)

Then are they sent back to Allāh, their Master, the True One; now surely His is the judgment, and He is the swiftest in taking account. (6:62)

They shall have (their) portion of what they have earned, and Allāh is swift in reckoning. (2:202)

There is none to repeal His decree, and He is swift to take account. (13:41)

... there he finds Allāh, so He pays him back his reckoning in full, and Allāh is swift in reckoning. (24:39)

In order to be acquainted with the secret of Allāh's Power as embedded in His Attribute "*al-Haseeb*", as it manifests itself upon His creation, let us take a look at the chemical, physiological and astronomical balance existing in the cosmos. We will see that there is a high computing power too great to be conceived, one capable of conducting such computations and controlled by One Who is fully knowledgeable of the cosmos in its entirety, of the smallest atom in it up to the largest planet. Had it not been so, its cosmic computations would not have remained fixed. In order to form an idea about the complexity of such computations, we have to provide an example:

Were we to think for one moment about the number of computations which take place inside our bodies, we will surely be unable to calculate them. So, how can man conceive the number of computations in the whole cosmos from the smallest atom to the largest planet in their various types, orbits, and environments? The mind, no matter how great, can never do so, and it will definitely recognize Allāh and His Absolute Power, and that He is the only capable *al-Haseeb* Who can make such computations; so, let us contemplate on this Attribute so that we may honour and thank Him. Allāh has pointed out in the text of the Holy Qur'ān the calculation according to which the cosmos is arranged in accordance with places very well computed in their locations, orbits and speeds: "Surely We have created everything according to a measure. And Our command is but one, as (swift as) the twinkling of an eye" (Qur'ān, 54:49-50).

He has also said,

> But nay! I swear by the falling of the stars, and most surely it is a very great oath, if you only know... (56:75-76)

> The sun and the moon follow a reckoning. (55:5)

> (As for) the moon, We have ordained for it stages till it becomes again like an old dry palm branch. (36:39)

> ... and ordained for it mansions so that you may know the computation of years and the reckoning. (10:5)

> He causes the dawn to break, and he has made the night for (you to) rest, and the sun and the moon for reckoning. (6:96)

As a matter of fact, there is hardly any verse which does not contain one indication or more about the computed system of the cosmos or of the human body, but the Holy Qur'ān highlights a specific significance for a different type of calculations: the calculations of the sustenance of Allāh's servants according to the wisdom of Allāh, some of which are according to a measure, and some coming from whence a servant of Allāh does not know: "... and Allāh gives means of subsistence to whomsoever He pleases without measure" (Qur'ān, 2:212). Such is usually the sustenance of the righteous whom Allāh sustains from whence they do not know or expect: "... and whoever is careful of (his duty to) Allāh, He will make an outlet for him and give him sustenance from whence he does not expect" (Qur'ān, 65:2-3). Also, Allāh's giving is great, so great that its true value can never be conceived or computed. There is still a greater calculation: the calculation of the deeds and the intentions behind them, their recording as well as the rewards for them in the life of this world or in the one to come, or in both, for the Almighty says the following in this regard:

> ... only the delivery of the message is (incumbent) on you, while calling (them) to account is Ours. (13:40)

> So that Allāh may requite each soul (according to) what it has earned; surely Allāh is swift in reckoning. (14:51)

... so We called it to account severely and We chastised it with a stern chastisement. (65:8)

Surely to Us is their return, then surely upon Us is the taking of their account. (88:25-26)

... surely Allāh takes account of all things. (4:86)

"Whoever brings a good deed," says the Almighty in the Holy Qur'ān as He refers to the Day of Judgment, "he shall have ten like it, and whoever brings an evil deed, he shall be recompensed only with the like thereof, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly" (Qur'ān, 6:160). People on the Day of Judgment will be simultaneously judged just as they are being judged in the life of this world. Their sustenance will be forwarded to them at once, and Allāh is never diverted by anything from another: "So that Allāh may requite each soul (according to) what it has earned; surely Allāh is swift in reckoning" (Qur'ān, 14:51). Those who are endowed with understanding know the precision of the Divine computation from their own dealing with Him, for He has said, "... and whether you manifest what is in your minds or hide it, Allāh will call you to account according to it, then He will forgive whomsoever He pleases and chastise whomsoever He pleases, and Allāh has power over all things" (Qur'ān, 2:284). God's management of the affairs goes on forever and ever. Our master Muḥammed has said, "Call your own selves to account before you yourselves are called upon to account for them."

42. "Al-Jaleel"

Allāh has said, "And the person of your Lord will forever endure, the Lord of glory and honour" (Qur'ān, 55:27), and also, "Blessed be the Name of your Lord, the Lord of Glory and Honour" (Qur'ān, 55:78)!

Linguistically, the verb "*yujill*" means: to magnify or glorify someone or deem him great. The Attribute "*al-Jaleel*" is derived from honour, dignity, and greatness. He is too Great to do anything which does not fit His Honour, Who purifies the heart by manifesting the qualities of His Glory to it, Who reveals what is hidden by the attributes of His beauty and what is in the world, all of it, of glory, perfection, goodness and magnificence by the lights of His Essence and the effects of His qualities. *Al-Jaleel* is worthy of bidding and forbidding; besides Him, every great person is not great at all, and

every gigantic thing is dwarfed. He grants glory to those who approach Him and humiliation to those whom He dismisses from His presence.

The Absolute *al-Jaleel* is Allāh. The Attribute "*al-Kabeer*" describes the perfection of the Self, whereas "*al-Jaleel*" describes the perfection of His qualities. "*Al-ʿAzeem*" refers to the perfection of the Self. All qualities of His are referred to according to the extent one can conceive; so, He exhausts the mind and is not exhausted; He can never be seen by anyone, yet He sees everyone. When the qualities of glory are attributed to a reasoning mind capable of conceiving them, they are called beauty, and the one they describe is called beautiful. Originally, the Attribute "*al-Jameel*" was linguistically applied to a picture which can be discerned by the eyes no matter what it represents, one which suits and agrees with the vision. Then it was applied to an inner picture which may be conceived by the mind such as one may talk about "a beautiful conduct," for it is conceived by the mind rather than the eyesight. Inner pictures, then, if harmonious and combining the qualities of perfection that suit them, just as they ought to be, convey an inner beauty just as they convey to whoever discerns and conceives them a visual pleasure, and their inner beauty is more intense than their outward one.

The share a servant of Allāh may derive from the inspiration of this Attribute is that he adorns himself with beauty and bears in mind that it is He Who has bestowed upon him the blessings of beauty, be it the beauty of a visible image or of the inner self. The inner beauty of the soul is surely higher and greater than that of the beauty of the body. The Messenger of Allāh used to thus supplicate after his prayers: "*Allāhomma anta as-Salām wa minka as-salām; tabārakta wa taʿālayta yā thal jalāli wal ikrām*," that is, "Lord! You are the Peace and the source of peace; Glory to You, You are the One with all the Greatness and Honour!"

The Messenger of Allāh has also said, "Hold Allāh in high esteem so that He may forgive you," that is to say, Glorify Him by obeying Him and by distancing yourselves from committing any disobedience of Him, and seek nearness to Him, Glory to Him, by performing what He has enjoined you to perform.

43. "Al-Kareem"

Allāh has said, "... whoever is grateful, he is grateful only for (the

good of) his own soul, and whoever is ungrateful, surely my Lord is self-Sufficient, Honoured" (Qur'ān, 27:40).

Scholars say that anything regarded as good, precious, of great importance, is *kareem*. Linguistically, a person who is out-giving is also called *kareem*, generous. Anything held in its own category in high esteem is called *kareem*. Allāh is called "*al-Kareem*," an Attribute that describes His benevolence and beneficence. Allāh has always been Generous, and He will always be so. He is high above any lowliness; He gives abundantly, and He gives beautifully.

Al-Kareem forgives though He is capable of inflicting the most severe of punishment; He fulfills His promise; He gives more than what one pleads to Him for; He does not mind how much He gives and to whom; He does not permit anyone who seeks refuge with Him to suffer loss; He does not need means to do what He does. One Who can combine in Him all these qualities is the Absolute *al-Kareem*; none other than Allāh is as such.

The Almighty has said, "O man! What has beguiled you from your Lord, the Gracious One...?" (Qur'ān, 82:6), and, "Read and your Lord is the Most Honourable" (Qur'ān, 96:3).

Arabs are used to calling anything *kareem* if it has a commendable merit or quality. Muḥammed, the Messenger of Allāh, has said, "Yousuf is the most *kareem* of people," meaning in lineage and descent. They may describe something the presence of which can be identified by one of the physical senses as *kareem*. For example, the Egyptian women, upon seeing Yousuf said, "... this is but a noble angel" (Qur'ān, 12:31). Describing Paradise, the Almighty says it is a "... noble place" (Qur'ān, 44:26). This word may also be applied to anything honourable; the Almighty has said, "... surely the most honourable of you with Allāh is the one who is most careful (of his duty towards Allāh)" (Qur'ān, 49:13).

Arabs may also apply it to something that has many benefits or advantages, such as what is implied in this verse which narrates the story of prophet Solomon: "Surely an honourable letter has been delivered to me" (Qur'ān, 27:29). According to exegesis, *kareem* in this verse means quite significant and weighty, containing very good statements.

One of the signs of His greatness and generosity is that He provides His bounties even to those who do not deserve them. He doles out His benevolence even without being asked. If a suppliant

prays Him for forgiveness, one of the signs of His greatness is that He will erase that suppliant's sin if he truly repents, and He records a good deed for him in its place. Allāh has said, "The parable of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allāh is like the parable of a grain growing seven ears (with) a hundred grains in each, and Allāh multiplies for whomsoever he pleases, and Allāh is ample-Giving, Knowing" (Qur'ān, 2:261). Among the signs of His greatness is that in the life of this world He covers the sins of the sinners and hide their shortcomings.

In one incident, the Messenger of Allāh has narrated a story about the forgiveness of the Almighty which is thought-provoking. He said, "I know the last person who will enter Paradise and the last one to get out of hellfire. He is a man who will be approached and it will be said, `Show him his minor sins and suspend the major ones,' whereupon he will be shown his minor sins. He will then be asked if on such-and-such a day he did such-and-such, and he will answer in the affirmative, fearing the penalty from his major sins. He will be told, `In place of each of your sins, you will be granted a good deed,' whereupon he will say, `Lord! But... I have committed other sins which I do not see here among them!'" The narrator of the anecdote says that he saw the Messenger of Allāh smile at that juncture of the story till his front teeth became visible.

Allāh is *"al-Kareem mutaghāfil,"* that is, the Great One Who deliberately and quite often overlooks. One of the signs of His Greatness is that He forgives whenever He is prayed for forgiveness; Allāh has said, "Ask forgiveness of your Lord; surely He is the most Forgiving" (Qur'ān, 71:10). And among the signs of His Greatness is that He forgives without reminding those whom He forgives of the types of sins and ugly things they had committed.

And among the signs of His Greatness is that if they come to Him after having obeyed Him only a little, He will grant them quite a generous reward and will honour them by praising them beautifully. Among the signs of His Greatness is that He includes them in His Covenant; He has said, "... fulfill (your) covenant with Me, I will fulfill (My) covenant with you" (Qur'ān, 2:40). He even makes them worthy of His love: "... He shall love them and they shall love Him" (Qur'ān, 5:54).

Among the other signs of His Greatness is that He has made this world the loaned property of His servants saying, "He it is Who

created for you all that is in the earth" (Qur'ān, 2:29), and the hereafter as well, "... and a Garden, the extensiveness of which is like the heavens and the earth, prepared for those who guard (themselves against evil)" (Qur'ān, 3:133).

Also among the signs of His Greatness and generosity is that He has made everything in the heavens and the earth subservient to man: "And He has made whatever in the heavens and in the earth, all of it, subservient to you, [a gift] from Him" (Qur'ān, 45:13). One of the signs of a believer's good conduct in as far as the Attribute "*al-Kareem*" is concerned is that he directs himself wholeheartedly towards His Lord. He makes it his habit to feed and clothe the orphans and be good to his kith and kin. In order to attract the attention of the Muslims to this weighty matter, Prophet Muhammed has said, "If someone held in high esteem by his folks comes to you, be generous to him." He has also said, "Your Lord, Honour and Glory belong to Him, is ever-Living, Generous, too shy to disappoint any of His servants who plead to Him."

It is a sign of good manners to habitually forgive the doers of evil deeds, including repeated offenders, and to cover the faults of your brethren in all circumstances. Such generosity of manners is surely more precious than any materialistic generosity, for the latter preserves the body whereas the first sustains the soul. The Messenger of Allāh has said, "You will not be able to please all people with your wealth; so, do please them with your good manners." He has also said, "Allāh, Honoured is His Name, is Generous, and He loves good manners and hates a lowly conduct." The Messenger of Allāh has said, "The generous one is close to Allāh, close to [the hearts of] people, close to Paradise, distant from the fire. A miser is distant from Allāh, distant from people, distant from Paradise, close to the fire."

As for "*al-Akram*," i.e. the most Generous, surely it is Allāh, the Most Generous of all those who are generous. This Attribute may also bear the same meaning embedded in that of "*al-Kareem*."

44. "Al-Raqeeb"

Allāh has said, "... and be careful of (your duty to) Allāh through Whom you demand (your rights of) one another, and to the ties of kinship; surely Allāh ever watches over you" (Qur'ān, 4:1).

"*Al-Raqeeb*" is one of Allāh's Attributes, and He is the Witness

Who is never absent from the scene. In language, a *raqeeb* is a vigilante, a watchman who stands to protect and guard. In the army, the *raqeeb* is the one in the vanguard. *Al-Raqeeb* is Allāh Who safeguards everyone and everything, the One from Whose knowledge nothing at all can escape. According to one sacred tradition, the Messenger of Allāh has said, "Safeguard Muhammed in his household," meaning safeguard his name and honour it. "*Raqeeb*" also means offspring. The angel who writes down whatever we do and say is also called "*raqeeb*": "He does not utter a word except that there is by him someone watching at hand" (Qur'ān, 50:18). *Al-Raqeeb*, that is, *the* One Who truly ever watches over us, is, of course, Allāh. One Who is *raqeeb* regarding Allāh is one who acknowledges that He oversees whatever we do and say, so he observes his duties towards Him. Allāh, al-*Raqeeb*, knows our conditions and counts our breath. Al-*Raqeeb* never laxes nor forgets, Who is always present and is never absent, Who knows everything and nothing regarding the conditions of His creation can ever escape His knowledge. He manages the affairs of His servants, Who knows what they say, Who watches over His servants, Who observes what they do, Who is familiar with their innermost thoughts.

Narrating the story of Jesus son of Mary, the Almighty quotes Jesus saying, "... but when You caused me to die, You were the Watcher over them, and You witness all things" (Qur'ān, 5:117). He has also said, "... and Allāh is Watchful over all things" (Qur'ān, 33:52). There are two viewpoints that explain the meaning of "*al-Raqeeb*":

One: Linguistically, He safeguards things, Who watches over everyone, Who guards everyone, Who is free of any oversight or negligence. He takes care of and safeguards everything. The Almighty has said, "He does not utter a word except that there is by him a watcher at hand" (Qur'ān, 50:18), meaning an angel who records his deeds and takes note of everything he contemplates, says, or does, while Allāh is *al-Raqeeb* Who looks after His servants, knows their conditions and whatever they utter.

As regarding observation, it is His saying: "... surely I (Allāh) am with you both: I hear, and I see" (Qur'ān, 20:46). Regarding knowledge, it is His saying: "Allāh knows what every female bears, and that of which the wombs fall short of completion, and that in which they increase" (Qur'ān, 13:8). Other such references include:

... and He knows what is in the land and the sea. (6:59)

He knows what goes deep down into the earth and what comes forth out of it. (57:4)

The other viewpoint says that this word is derived from *irtiqāb*, waiting. Allāh has said, "Wait, therefore; surely they (too) are waiting" (Qur'ān, 44:59). Such a viewpoint is impossible to accept; therefore, it is rejected on the ground that one who waits for something needs to reach its commencement, desiring to find out its outcome. The correct meaning of this latter verse is that Allāh wants His servants to reach out to Him, to make Him the goal of their adoration, submission and humility.

Al-Raqeeb, then, is the Witness Who is never absent. The virtues of one who watches himself is implied in a tradition wherein the Messenger of Allāh Muhammed says, "*Ihsān* (goodness) is that you worship Allāh as though you see Him, for if you do not see Him, He surely sees you."

It is narrated that a man once passed by a young slave tending sheep and pointed to an ewe and said, "Sell me this ewe, young shepherd!" The young slave told him that it was not his; therefore, he could not sell it, whereupon the man said, "Where is your brilliance?! Can't you tell its owner that a wolf ate one of his sheep?" He answered him by saying, "Then where is Allāh?!" The man was very impressed by his answer, so he bought the young slave and set him free, then he bought the herd and gave it to him as a gift. Since then, that man kept repeating "Then where is Allāh?!" quite often. It is, therefore, one of the good manners of a believer towards Allāh, *al-Raqeeb*, to keep in mind that Allāh ever watches over him and sees whatever he does. He knows that his self, that is, his *nafs*, is his enemy, and that the accursed Satan, too, is another, and that they both seize every opportunity to make him lax and disobey his Lord; therefore, he must always be on his guard. He must close all the pitfalls in which he may fall and block all the avenues from which Satan may approach him. It is also one of the signs of good manners of a believer in this regard to watch himself and his senses, to keep vigil, and to make whatever he does solely for the achievement of the Pleasure of his Lord in a pure intention, to observe his obligations towards his Muslim brother, and not to expose the latter's faults to others.

45. "Al-Mujeeb"

Allāh has said, "And to Thamūd (We sent) their brother Ṣaliḥ. He said: O my people! Worship Allāh; you have no other god besides Him; He brought you into being from the earth and made you dwell in it; therefore, ask forgiveness of Him, then turn to Him; surely my Lord is Nigh; he ever answers" (Qur'ān, 11:61).

Linguistically speaking, both nouns *ijāba* and *istijāba* mean basically the same, and "*al-Mujeeb*" has two meanings: One is: the One Who answers the pleas. The other is: the One Who grants what He is pleaded for.

Al-Mujeeb, Allāh, responds to the plea of those who plead to Him and helps them, Who favourably answers the supplication of those who supplicate to Him, Who removes the need of those in need and gives them sufficiently. He even gives prior to being asked and accepts even prior to being pleaded. He knows the need of those who are in need before they pray Him, and He since eternity knows all their needs, so He has provided them with means to satisfy all their needs: He creates foods and all types of sustenance for them; He creates the tools and the means to get such tools to the hands of those who need them. *Al-Mujeeb* responds to the pleas of those who plead to Him. Since time immemorial, He knew in advance what they needed. He goes to the rescue of those who are in dire need of help, and He does not disappoint anyone who pleads to Him.

This theme recurs quite often throughout the Holy Qur'ān. Examples are:

> And Noah called upon Us, and most excellent are We to answer the prayer. (37:75)

> So their Lord accepted their prayer: That I will not waste the deed of one who does a good deed among you, whether male or female, each one of you being from the other. (3:195)

> And Job (Ayyūb) cried out to his Lord: Harm has afflicted me, and You are the most Merciful of the merciful. So We responded to him and removed the harm from him, and We gave him his family and the like (number) of them in addition: a mercy from Us and a reminder to the worshippers. (21:83-84)

> Or Who answers the [prayer of] the distressed one when he calls

upon Him and removes the evil, and Who will make you successors in the earth? Is there a god with Allāh? Little is it that you mind! (27:62)

... you sought aid from your Lord, so He answered you: I will assist you with a thousand of the angels following one another. (8:9)

When My servants ask you concerning Me, then surely I am very near; I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls on Me. (2:186)

And your Lord says: Call upon Me, I will answer you; surely those who are too proud to worship Me shall soon enter hell abased. (40:60)

For those who respond to their Lord there is goodness, and those who do not respond to Him, had they had all that is in the earth and the like thereof with it, they would certainly have offered it for a ransom. (As for) those (latter ones), an evil reckoning shall be theirs, and their abode is hell, and evil, indeed, is the resting-place. (13:18)

O you who believe! Answer (the call of) Allāh and His Prophet when he invites you to that which gives you life, and be informed that Allāh intervenes between man and his heart, and that to Him you shall be gathered. (8:24)

Allāh is capable of responding in various ways. When some of His friends are in need of something, He satisfies their need, and He may even make some circumstances deliberately hard for them only to test them and raise their status due to their perseverance, and to their thanking Him during the time of ease as well as the time of hardship. So when they almost lose hope, He comes to their rescue with beautiful rewards and with indications of His being pleased with them. Allāh guarantees for His servant that He will respond favourably to his supplication in the way which He knows to be in his best interest, and at the time He chooses, rather than the time chosen by His servant; so, do not lose hope because of His delay in answering your plea, for such a delay may prove to be better for you. Allāh May even opt to grant you better than what you ask Him for; so, plead to Him as one convinced of His favourable response.

The Messenger of Allāh used to say, "Plead to Allāh, being convinced of His answer to your pleas, and be advised that Allāh does not respond to the pleas of one who is inattentive, indifferent." This tradition has been recorded by al-Tirmithi. He has also said, "No Muslim pleads to Allāh a plea wherein there is no desire for committing a sin nor the severing of the ties of kinship except that Allāh will grant him one of three good rewards: He will either grant him an immediate response, or He may save the rewards for him in the life hereafter, or He may keep its equivalent of evil away from him." His companions said, "Then we will plead to Him a great deal, indeed." He said, "Surely Allāh is greater still!"

The Messenger of Allāh has said, "When you have a plea, plead to Allāh, and whenever you need help, seek help from Allāh." In another tradition, he says, "Allāh is too shy to disappoint any of His servants who pleads to Him for something good."

46. "Al-Wāsiᶜ"

The Most Exalted and Glorified One has said, "... whither you turn, there is Allāh's purpose; surely Allāh is Ample-giving, Knowing" (Qur'ān, 2:115).

"*Al-Wāsiᶜ*" is one of Allāh's Attributes, and its root word is derived from *siᶜa*, spaciousness, expanse, capacity, abundance, plentitude, etc. One may have an abundance of knowledge if he is acquainted with a good deal of it, or he may have an abundance of means. In his book *Al-Nihāya*, Ibn al-Atheer, who discusses Allāh's Attributes, says that *al-Wāsiᶜ* can enrich everyone who is indigent, Whose mercy encompasses everything. His authority never ends; His benevolence is unlimited; His domain is endless. He never stops giving; He is never distracted by knowing something from knowing another, nor by one issue from taking care of another. His knowledge encompasses everything. His knowledge encompasses everything; His might suffices everything. His mercy is spacious; He is independent; His authority is above everything; His knowledge, might, and benevolence are the greatest. He is the One for the meanings of Whose Attributes there can be no limit, Whose knowledge is spacious, and so are His mercy and forgiveness; His domain is tremendous.

The Absolute *al-Wāsiᶜ* is Allāh, Glorified and Exalted is He. There is no shore for the spacious ocean of His knowledge. Had the seas been ink, they would have been consumed before His words can

ever be exhausted. There is no end for what He is capable of giving and blessing.

The Holy Qur'ān has indicated that Allāh's knowledge is vast and endless; in Sūrat al-Anᶜām, the Almighty says, "And his people disputed with him. He said: Do you dispute with me regarding Allāh, and He has, indeed, guided me? And I do not fear in any way those that you set up with Him unless my Lord pleases; my Lord comprehends all things in His knowledge; will you not then mind" (Qur'ān, 6:80)? The Holy Qur'ān has described Allāh's mercy as vast; in Sūrat al-Aᶜraf it is stated that, "And ordain for us good in this world's life and in the life hereafter, for surely we turn to You. He said: (As for) My chastisement, I will afflict with it whomsoever I please, and My mercy encompasses all things; so I will ordain it (especially) for those who guard (themselves against evil) and pay the *zakat* and those who believe in Our signs" (Qur'ān, 7:156). In Sūrat Ṭāhā, His knowledge is described as vast: "Your only God is Allāh; there is no god but He; He comprehends all things in (His) knowledge" (Qur'ān, 20:98). Other references to the vastness of His knowledge, to His mercy and might, are as follows:

> Our Lord comprehends all things in His knowledge; in Allāh do we trust: Lord! Decide between us and our people with the truth, and You are the best of those who decide. (7:89)
>
> Those who bear the Throne and those around Him celebrate the praise of their Lord and believe in Him and ask protection for those who believe (saying): Lord! You encompass all things in mercy and knowledge; therefore, grant protection to those who turn (to You) and follow Your way, and save them from the punishment of hell. (40:7)
>
> And the heavens We raised high with power, and most surely We make things ample. (51:47)

We ought to ponder on Allāh's vast knowledge, for He is the Absolute- *al-Wāsiᶜ* Whose Grace has encompassed everything in existence, in fact, even prior to their existence, and even before the existence of time itself, since He has always been for all eternity. His knowledge encompasses everything. Nothing He knows distracts Him from knowing something else. His might overwhelms everything; no

issue distracts Him from another. His Hearing encompasses everything; no person's supplication can distract Him from hearing the supplication of another. His benevolence includes all His creation; His helping one particular needy person does not prohibit Him from helping another.

One of the ways for learning a code of ethics derived from this Attribute, "*al-Wāsi*ᶜ," is that you should include all servants of Allāh in your good treatment and kindness at all times; be gracious to all people. Help them when they seek your help, and treat all of them with the best treatment. A servant of Allāh ought to remember and seek wisdom from the conduct of the Messenger of Allāh who was saying his prayers once when he overheard a bedouin supplicating to his Lord saying, "O Allāh! Have mercy on me and on Muḥammed, and do not be merciful to anyone else besides us." The Prophet said to him, "You have prayed Him to limit what is limitless," meaning the mercy of Allāh. The Messenger of Allāh has also said, "If Allāh grants you an increase [of His blessings], do give your own self an increase."

47. "Al-Ḥakeem"

Allāh has said, "... and if You forgive them, then surely You are the Mighty, the Wise" (Qur'ān, 5:118).

"Ḥakeem" is a superlative form, a form for the glorification of the One Who has all the wisdom; hence, *al-Ḥakeem* is the very greatest in His wisdom. Allāh is the most wise in creating everything and in perfecting such a creation. His wisdom means His prior knowledge of everything and His bringing everything into existence most wisely and most perfectly.

Wisdom means: the best way of knowing something utilizing the very best of means. "Al-Ḥakeem" carries the same meaning as that of "*al-ᶜAleem*." Nobody knows Allāh except Allāh; therefore, al-*Ḥakeem* cannot be anyone but Allāh: He knows the origins of all things through His eternal and perpetual knowledge which nobody can ever conceive as being liable to extinction.

"*Al-Ḥakeem*" may also mean His being Holy, too Holy to do anything which does not beseem Him. In Sūrat al-Mominoon, Allāh says, "What?! Did you then think that We had created you in vain and that you will not be returned to Us?!" (Qur'ān, 23:115). Some scholars have said that *al-Ḥakeem* is equitable in His assessment, benevolent in His management of affairs, the One Who has

determined the measure of everything, the One Whose wisdom is the very ultimate end, the One Who places everything in its right place. Nobody can really appreciate Allāh's wisdom other than Allāh Himself.

Al-Ḥakeem is free from seeking any self-interest, nor can anyone object to anything He does. *Al-Ḥakeem* is adorned with wisdom, and wisdom is knowing the best of things through the best means. The best of everything is Allāh; so, He is the Absolute *al-Ḥakeem*; He knows everything by the very best means of eternal and everlasting knowledge, the knowledge which nobody can conceive as ever coming to naught, nor can there be any doubt about it, and nobody can be described as such except Allāh.

Some scholars say that wisdom means getting to know the truth for its own sake, and to know goodness in order to act upon it. A servant of Allāh, though his portion of knowledge and potential may be little, such a shortcoming is evident in him when compared to Allāh's knowledge and might and to the knowledge and ability of the angels. Yet whatever amount human beings have been given is quite significant by the token that Allāh Himself has deemed it great when he said, "... and whoever is granted wisdom is indeed granted a great deal of goodness" (Qur'ān, 2:269). Abraham prayed his Lord for wisdom saying, "Lord! Grant me wisdom" (Qur'ān, 26:83). Allāh said the following about David (prophet David): "We granted him wisdom and a clear judgment" (Qur'ān, 38:20). Scholars have said that wisdom means knowledge.

Knowledge may either be knowing what can exist without our choice or doing, which is theoretical knowledge, or it may be knowledge of what can happen by our choice and doing, which is practical knowledge. Theoretical knowledge may either be the means towards an end, or it may be an end by itself. The means, for example, may be the science of logic the deduction of which is determined by what concepts and assertions mankind can conceive in a way which does not permit except a very rare margin of error.

As regarding what is considered as the ultimate end, be informed that things may be classified into three categories: They may either comprise a form, or they actually are not supposed to exist in a certain form, or either case may be applicable to them. What is supposed to be in a form should either be in a particular one, and the science which researches such portion of what exists is called natural

science or physics. What ought not be a particular form and ought to be in some other form, the science that researches it is called the science of mathematics. As regarding the other category which is not supposed to be in a particular form at all, the science that researches it is called theology.

As regarding the third kind, the one which may be in a particular form or may not, the science researching it is called the inclusive science, and it is like the knowledge of the unit, the multiplicity, the causation, the deduction, the completion or the deficiency. All of this falls under the category of theoretical knowledge.

Practical knowledge may either be the researching of the conditions of man regarding his own body, which is called the science of physiology, or his conditions with members of his household, which is called the science of domestic management, or his conditions (ties to, relationship...) with the rest of the world, which is called political science.

The person who personified wisdom in his everyday conduct among people is the Messenger of Allāh by the token of this verse of Sūrat Āli-'Imrān: "Certainly Allāh conferred a benefit upon the believers when He raised among them a Messenger from among themselves reciting to them His signs and purifying them and teaching them the Book and the wisdom although before then they were surely in manifest error" (Qur'ān, 3:164).

The wisdom in as far as the servants of Allāh are concerned is to say and to do what is right as much as it is humanly possible. Allāh says in Sūrat al-Baqarah, "He grants wisdom to whomsoever He pleases, and whoever is granted wisdom is indeed granted a great deal of good and none but men of understanding mind" (Qur'ān, 2:269). A wise person among people is one who precisely calculates intricate things; he masters them and skillfully executes them. Wisdom is the greatest knowledge, and its greatness depends on the greatness of what is known, and surely there is nothing greater than Allāh. Anyone who gets to know Allāh is wise even if his share of all other secular branches of knowledge is most modest. The ratio of the wisdom of any of Allāh's servants to that of Allāh is like the ratio of such servant's knowledge to that of Allāh, and what a vast difference it is! And what a vast distance it is between both norms of knowledge! Yet despite the huge gap between both matters, wisdom is regarded as the most precious of all types of knowledge and the most fruitful, and

anyone who is endowed with wisdom is surely granted a great deal of good.

To derive a good conduct from the attribute *al-Hakeem* requires a servant of Allāh to be wise, that is, to do his best in whatever good deeds he does, and that his condition is pleasing to others, that is, based on following the commandments of Allāh and distancing himself from whatever He has enjoined us to be distant from. He takes extreme care in performing his religious obligations, distancing himself from following his own whims and desires, staying away from any doubtful matter.

The Messenger of Allāh has said, "The apex of wisdom is fearing Allāh." A wise person is one who indicts his own self and who learns about what will come after death. A feeble person is one who follows his own desires and still wants even more from Allāh. The Messenger of Allāh has made many wise statements in this regard. A bedouin once came to the Messenger of Allāh and asked him to teach him something good to say. He told him to say, "There is no god except Allāh, the One and only God Who has no partner; Allāh is Great, Greater than everything; Praise, a great deal indeed of Praise, is due to Allāh; Glory to Allāh, Lord of the Worlds; there is no power nor might except in Allāh, the Honoured One, the Wise." The bedouin said, "All this is for my Lord; what about something for my own self?!" The Messenger of Allāh taught him to say, "Lord! I invoke You to forgive me, to have mercy on me, to grant me guidance, to grant me good health, and to grant me an increase in sustenance."[1]

As regarding what some people consider as having "wisdom," anyone who knows "everything" without knowing Allāh is not worthy of being called wise because he has missed the knowledge of the best and the most significant of everything. One who knows Allāh is a wise person even if his share of all other branches of knowledge is very shallow, even if he stutters or is unable to absorb them. One who knows Allāh is one whose speech will sound different from that of anyone else, one who seldom indulges in frivolous matters. On the contrary, his speech will be inclusive, and he does not seek any vanishing interest.

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[1]Muslim, *Sahih*, Vol. 4, traditions 33 and 35.

48. "Al-Wadood"

The Most Glorified and Exalted One has said, "And He is the Forgiving, the Loving" (Qur'ān, 85:14).

"*Al-Wadood*" is an Attribute derived from the Arabic word "wudd" which conveys the meaning of love and friendship, and it applies to all avenues of goodness. Allāh is "*al-Wadood*" because He loves His servants and they love Him; He says the following in Sūrat al-Mā'ida: "O you who believe! Whoever among you turns back from his religion, Allāh will bring people whom He loves and who love Him, who are humble before the believers and mighty against the unbelievers...." (Qur'ān, 5:54).

The condition of true love is that it does not increase on account of loyalty, nor does it decrease on account of aversion. *Al-Wadood* ever tries to show His love for His friends by manifesting His knowledge to them. The "*wadood*" person is one who prefers you over all others, who removes from your heart any desire to notice or to love anyone else but him. *Al-Wadood* very much loves His servants, Who tries to be loved even by the sinners through His forgiveness, and by all His creation by sustaining them and granting them sufficiently. Allāh's righteous servants love Him due to their knowledge of His perfection and the perfection of His qualities, and due to His readiness to forgive.

For all these reasons, *al-Wadood* is the Loving and the Beloved One. If a servant of Allāh dives deeply into the depths of the knowledge of Allāh's perfection, the perfection which causes a servant of Allāh to love his Lord more and more, his knowledge will be crystallized, and he will find a great deal of contentment while worshipping Him accordingly. His knowledge of Him will then bear good fruits, and he, the servant of Allāh, will turn to be the one who loves Him. He may also be understood to be the One Who loves His servants and the love for Whom bears good fruits according to the degree of love in the heart of each one of those who love Him. If someone sees through his heart his Lord to be self-Sufficient, Gracious, Honoured, Omnipotent, everyone is in need of Him while He does not need anyone or anything, yet He loves His servants and wishes the best for them and even tries to get closer to them by granting them His favours..., such a person will surely have been blessed with true vision and a clear sight.

One who tries to fashion his conduct according to the inspiration

of this Attribute ought to know that he should love all those whom Allāh loves such as the prophets, successors of the prophets, and the scholars. He should love everything Allāh loves and with which He is pleased such as acts of righteousness, piety, good deeds and exemplary conduct with others.

Such a person should be compassionate towards all people: He loves to see the disobedient returning to their Lord obediently, the righteous remaining firm in their righteousness. He becomes compassionate towards all servants of Allāh, forgiving those who abuse them, being kind to all people especially his family and kin. It is recorded that the holy Prophet has said to Imām ʿAli, "If you wish to surpass those who are close to Allāh, then join your ties with those who have cut them off from you, grant those who deprived you, and forgive those who wrong you." The attribute "*al-Wadood*" deserves from the servants of Allāh that they wish one another what they wish for their own selves, and even more so! They should prefer others over their own selves. A righteous man once said, "I wish to be a bridge over the fire whereupon people pass [to heaven] unharmed."

The perfection of such following is that anger, grudge, or harm received do not stop anyone who exemplifies this Attribute in his conduct from favouring others over himself and from being good to them; thus are we taught by our master the Messenger of Allāh. Four of his teeth were once broken, and his face was bleeding, yet all of that uncalled for abuse to which he was exposed at the hands of the infidels did not stop him from praying for them or from wishing them good. Ibn ʿAbbās is quoted saying that he had heard the Messenger of Allāh, who had just finished his prayers, supplicating thus: "Lord! I plead to You for mercy from You whereby You guide my heart, manage my affairs, unite my kinsfolk, and bring reform to those who are absent from among my kin. I plead to You for security on the Promised Day, for Paradise on the Day of Eternity, in the company of the witnesses who are near to You, those who bow down and prostrate, who fulfill their promise..., for surely You are the Most Merciful One, the Compassionate."

Regarding the explanation of the verse saying, "... for them will Allāh bring about love" (Qur'ān, 19:96), the "love" referred to here means that Allāh will make His creation love them, that is, He will make His servants experience love and affection on their own account. Supporting this explanation is a tradition wherein the

Messenger of Allāh says, "If Allāh loves one of His servants, He calls upon Gabriel to tell him so, whereupon Gabriel loves that person, so he calls upon the residents of the heavens saying, 'Allāh loves so-and-so; therefore, you, too, should love him,' whereupon the residents of the heavens respond to him in the affirmative. Love for him will thus be disseminated among the residents of the earth."

49. "Al-Majeed"

Allāh has said, "The mercy of Allāh and His blessings be upon you, O *Ahl al-Bayt* (People of the Prophet's House); surely He is Praised, Glorified" (Qur'ān, 11:73).

In language, *majd* is glory; when combined with good deeds, a person's own prestige will be enhanced, so he wil be called glorious. It also conveys the meanings of manliness, generosity, open-handedness, and gracious conduct.

"*Al-Majeed*" connotes general honour or abundance of wealth. A man who is *majeed* is extremely generous. *Al-Majeed* is Glorified to the utmost extent of Glorification due to His own merits, qualities, and actions. He is also Great in His attributes, beautiful in His power and authority. *Al-Majeed* has the utmost limit of glory; His benevolence is great. *Al-Majeed* is the great One, the One Whose status is Sublime, Who is most Benevolent. His status is tremendous, Whose Benevolence is great. He is Honoured, Whose actions are beautiful, Who is generous in giving. *Al-Majeed* grants His favours to all others, Who is Glorified because of His actions, Who is Praised by His creation due to His greatness. He alone has the perfect Honour, the vast kingdom since time immemorial, the One Who does not disappoint anyone, Whose will is always carried out. Whose Honour is not earned, Whose actions are never abhorred, Whose benevolence is beautiful, Who gives most generously...

All meanings of perfect and inclusive glory are always rendered to Allāh, and all of them combined are but a drop in the ocean of His Glory. Glory is also attached to His prophets, to the successors of the latter, and to the *mujahidin*.

Allāh has described the Holy Qur'ān as *majeed*, saying, "Qaf. I swear by al-Qur'ān *al-majeed*..." (Qur'ān, 50:1). The Holy Qur'ān is *majeed* because of the abundance of wealth of knowledge, ethics, and sublime objectives it contains and due to the benefits it contains; so, it is beneficial for man both in the life of this world and in the life to

come.

One who personifies in his conduct the essence of this attribute ought to be gracious in all circumstances and most cultured.

50. "Al-Bāʿith"

Allāh has said, "And the hour is coming; there is no doubt about it, and Allāh shall resurrect those who are in the graves" (Qur'ān, 22:7).

"*Al-Bāʿith*" is an attributes linguistically derived from *baʿth* which means: exciting or stimulating action, something stirring someone to action, sending someone somewhere, going out seeking revenge, or simply waking up someone. It also means sending a soldier to war: *baʿth* means army. It also means to bring life back to the dead.

The word "*al-Bāʿith*" conveys more than one meaning: 1) the Almighty will bring His creation back to life on the Day of Judgment as stated in Sūrat al-Hajj quoted above. 2) He sends messengers to His servants: In Sūrat al-Nahl, He says, "And certainly We raised in every nation an prophet" (Qur'ān, 16:36). 3) He commissions His servants to perform specific tasks by creating the impulses and motivations in them. 4) He sends aid to His servants who need it and helps the sinners by accepting their repentance.

Al-Bāʿith resurrects those in the graves, stirs things into motion, causes determination, manifests the knowledge of the unknown, brings His servants back to life, resurrects His creation on the Day of Judgment, Who records what the breasts conceal. *Baʿth* is the life hereafter. One who knows the real meaning of resurrection knows the real meaning of this Attribute. Most people have numerous general misconceptions and ambiguous presumptions about it. They imagine that death is the end of everything, and that resurrection starts a new creation from nothing, just as the first creation was started. Their belief that death is the end of everything is surely erroneous, for we have come to learn from studying the Sunnah that the grave is either a pit of fire or a piece of Paradise. The dead are either happy or miserable. The happy ones, such as the martyrs, are not dead; rather, Allāh says the following about them in Sūrat Āli-ʿImrān (the Family of Amram): "And do not reckon those who are killed in the way of Allāh as dead; nay! They are alive receiving sustenance from their Lord, rejoicing in what Allāh has given them out of His grace, and they rejoice for the sake of those who, (being left) behind them, have not yet joined them, that they shall have no fear, nor shall they

grieve" (Qur'ān, 3:169-170). The miserable, too, are living, leading a miserable life. For this reason, the Messenger of Allāh once addressed the latter in the aftermath of the Battle of Badr saying, "I have found what my Lord has promised me to be the truth; so, have you found what your Lord promised you to be true?" He was asked, "How can you address people who have turned into a stink?" He answered by saying, "You do not hear me better than they, except that they cannot answer me back."

Al-Ba'ith is also the One Who inspires determination in the heart of people to undertake lofty objectives on the battlefields of *jihad*, and to purify themselves. *Al-Bā'ith* plants the will to rise up to lofty endeavors, Who removes from your heart the evil whisperings, Who purges the innermost conscience from scruples and purifies the deeds from filthiness. He sends His messengers to convey His commandments: "Allāh raised prophets as bearers of glad tidings and as warners" (Qur'ān, 2:213). He brings the dead back to life: "Then We resurrected you after your death..." (Qur'ān, 2:56). He wakes up those who sleep by reawakening their bodies: "He it is Who takes your souls at night (while asleep), and He knows what you acquire during the day, then He raises you up therein so that an appointed term may be fulfilled, then to Him is your return, then will He inform you of what you were doing" (Qur'ān, 6:60). Glory, then, to Him for resurrecting the dead and recording what the breasts conceal.

The subject of *ba'th* is referred to in numerous places of the Holy Qur'ān; these are some of them:

> Certainly We raised in every nation an prophet saying: Worship Allāh and shun Satan. So there were some of them whom Allāh guided, and there were others against whom error was due; therefore, travel in the land and witness what the end of those who rejected [Our signs] was. (16:36)

> And during part of the night pray *Tahajjud* beyond what is incumbent upon you so that your Lord may raise you to a position of great glory. (17:79)

> Then We raised them up so that We might ascertain which of the two parties was best able to compute the time during which they remained (asleep). (18:12)

Those who disbelieve think they shall never be resurrected. Say: Aye! By my Lord! You shall most certainly be resurrected, then you shall most certainly be informed of what you did, and that is easy for Allāh. (64:7)

The portion of inspiration a servant of Allāh may be able to derive from the attribute *al-Baʿith* is his knowledge that a soul first has no knowledge of anything, just like the body. Allāh says the following in Sūrat al-Anʿām: "Is he who was dead then We brought him back to life and made for him a light whereby he walks among people like one who is in utter darkness from which he can never come forth? Thus what they did was made fair-seeming to the unbelievers" (Qur'ān, 6:122), and in Sūrat al-Nahl He says, "He sends the angels with the inspiration by His command to whomsoever He pleases of His servants saying: Give the warning that there is no god but I; therefore, be careful (of your duty) to Me" (Qur'ān, 16:2). If a servant of Allāh strives hard to learn, he will be as though he has instilled a new life in his soul after its death, and if he strives to teach the ignorant ones, he will be as though he brought their souls back to life after their death.

51. "Al-Shaheed"

Allāh has said, "Is it not sufficient as regarding your Lord that He is Witness over all things?" (Qur'ān, 41:53).

According to *Muʿjam maqayees al lugha* by Ibn Fāris, the topic of the verb *shahida*, saw, witnessed, or testified, indicates, linguistically, presence, knowledge, and the dissemination of such knowledge. The attribute "*al-Shaheed*" is derived from *shuhood*, [eye] witnesses, and it requires knowledge by observation: Allāh is *al-Shaheed* because He is present and observes all beings whom He has created and whom He will create at any time and in any place, and He is fully aware of such beings; "... and He is with you wherever you may be." *Al-Shaheed* is a superlative of *al-Shāhid*, the Witness. In his work *Taj al-Aroos*, al-Zubaidi has indicated that *al-Shaheed* is one of Allāh's Attributes meaning: "the One Who is faithful in His witness and from Whose knowledge nothing at all escapes." His knowledge is the very ultimate regarding all apparent matters, all things to observe and to witness. The Holy Qur'ān states the following in Sūrat Āli-ʿImrān: "Allāh bears witness that there is no god but He" (Qur'ān, 3:18). *Al-Shāhid* knows and manifests the knowledge of what He knows to a select

group from among His most sincere and loyal servants. Allāh has proven His being One through all what He has created. *Al-Shaheed* is ever-present; from His kingdom nothing at all can be absent; everything is included within the realm of His kingdom.

Addressing the Messenger, Allāh says the following in Sūrat al-Nisā': "... and We have sent you (O Muḥammed!) to mankind as an Prophet, and Allāh suffices as Witness (to that)" (Qur'ān, 4:79). That is, Allāh suffices as Witness to all people regarding the truth of your message: He testifies that you are His Messenger who does not have full control over His servants. In Sūrat al-Anʿām, He says, "Say: What is the weightiest in testimony? Say: Allāh is Witness between you and me" (Qur'ān, 6:19), that is, were we to paraphrase it, "Ask them: What is the greatest witness? Say: Allāh testifies with regard to you and to me." Allāh ordered His Messenger to ask the disbelievers, "Whose testimony is the greatest and the most accurate?" Then He ordered him to tell them that the greatest is the testimony of the One Whose statement does not permit any room for lying or erring. The testimony, that is, *shahāda*, of the Almighty is of three types: 1) His own telling people in His Book that He has sent the Prophet as His Messenger; 2) His own support for His Messenger in numerous ways the greatest of which is the Holy Qur'ān, which is the everlasting scholarly and rational miracle. It has been practically proven that all people put together are incapable of producing a chapter or a verse like it; 3) the testimony of previously revealed divine books and the fact that messengers before him had already brought the glad tidings of his Prophethood.

In Sūrat Younus, the Great Qur'ān says, "Allāh, therefore, suffices as Witness between us and you that we were quite unaware of your worship (of us)" (Qur'ān, 10:29). It may be paraphrased thus: Allāh suffices as Witness, O polytheists, and as Judge between us and you, for He is fully knowledgeable of our condition and yours, and we were not happy with your own associating partners with Him. In Sūrat al-Tawbah, the Almighty says, "... Allāh and His Prophet will witness your deeds, then you shall be brought back to the One Who knows the unseen and the seen, then He will inform you of what you did" (Qur'ān, 9:94), that is, He knows what you hide or manifest, what you conceal or reveal.

The Almighty has repeated the phrase "*ʿĀlim al ghayb wal shahāda*," the One Who knows the unseen and the seen, about ten

times; among such references are the following:

> ... His is the kingdom on the Day when the trumpet is blown, [and He is] the One Who knows the unseen and the seen, and He is the Wise, the Aware. (6:73)

> The One Who knows the unseen and the seen, the Great, the Most High (is He). (13:9)

> The One Who knows the unseen and the seen, so may He be exalted above what they associate (with Him). (23:92)

> Such knows the unseen and the seen, the Mighty, the Merciful. (32:6)

> Say: O Allāh! Originator of the heavens and the earth Who knows the unseen and the seen! You judge between Your servants as to that wherein they differ. (39:46)

> He is Allāh besides Whom there is no other god, the One Who knows the unseen and the seen; He is the Beneficent, the Merciful. (59:22)

> Say: (As for) the death from which you flee, it will surely overtake you, then you shall be sent back to the One Who knows the unseen and the seen, and He will (then) inform you of whatever you did. (62:8)

The believing nation, the nation that believes in Muḥammed as the Messenger of Allāh, always remembers that its Lord, Allāh, is the Witness over it, and it is also the nation of testimony in every field. Its Lord has said the following about it: "Thus have We made you a medium (just) nation so that you may be the bearers of witness to people, and so that the Messenger may be a bearer of witness to you" (Qur'ān, 2:143).

52. "Al-Ḥaqq"

Allāh has said:

> Allāh is the Truth, and He gives life to the dead, and He has power over all things. (22:6)

One of the attributes Allāh is "*al-Ḥaqq*", the Truth. His existence is proven to be true and so is His Divinity. He makes the truth manifest by the power of His words, Who supports those whom He loves by His signs. Allāh is the Truth, *al-Ḥaqq*, who is worthy of being adored, Who is always there and Who never disappears, Whose presence is proven to have always been, since time immemorial, and forever–even before time and above time. His presence is a reality standing on its own merits, and there is no existence except through Him, and by Him, and He never moves and is above motion or anything physical or material. He permits the truth to manifest itself. He creates everything as His wisdom dictates. He is present in a way which permits no room for Him to be absent, nor different, nor extinct. Everything that exists is from Him, and to Him is its ultimate end.

"*Al-Ḥaqq*" is the antithesis of falsehood. According to one tradition, the Messenger of Allāh has said, "*Labbayka Ḥaqqan Ḥaqqā!*" that is, "Here I am, O Truth, O Truthful One, here I am, in obedience to You! Here I am, O antithesis of falsehood!" Surely He is the truth beyond any doubt.

Allāh has said, "Then are they sent back to Allāh, their Master, the true One" (Qur'ān, 6:62). He has also said,

> This is so because Allāh is the Truth, and that which they call upon besides Him is falsehood. (31:30)

> And Allāh will show the truth to be true by His words. (10:82)

His promise is the very truth; He has said in this regard:

> Surely the promise of Allāh is true. (31:33)

Whenever the Prophet made *tahajjud* during the night, he would say, "Lord! All Praise is due to You! You are the Lord of the heavens and the earth and everything in them! All Praise is due to You! You are the One Who sustains the heavens and the earth and everything in them! You are the Truth; Your speech is the truth; Your promise is the truth; meeting with You is the truth; Paradise is the truth; Hell is the truth; the Hour [of Judgment] is the truth! Lord! To You have I submitted myself; in You have I believed; upon You have I relied; to You have I returned; for Your sake have I disputed with others,

based upon Your truth have I arbitrated; so, I implore You to forgive my past faults and my future ones, what I have concealed and what I have manifested! You are my Lord! There is no god but You!"

53. "Al-Wakeel"

Allāh has said, "... and trust in Allāh, and Allāh suffices as Protector" (Qur'ān, 4:81, 33:3).

"Al-Wakeel" is one of the Attributes of Allāh, these Attributes which link whoever repeats them quite often, being aware of their meanings, to the gardens of Allāh, the Truth, Who has all the beauty, perfection, and glory. *Al-Wakeel* is the Sustainer, the One Who has taken upon Himself to provide sustenance for His servants. He, and only He, takes charge of all the affairs of those who are in His custody, under His care. According to linguists, *"al-Wakeel"* is the One to Whom all affairs are entrusted to manage, Who provides His servants with everything they need. In other words, He takes charge of everything. *Al-Wakeel* benevolently looks after His pious servants. He is the One to Whom all affairs are referred, Who makes the truth manifest; so, whoever relies on Him will be self-sufficient, and whoever seeks sufficiency from Him will be independent and pleased.

The servants of Allāh have entrusted their affairs to Him and relied on His benevolence due to their inability to attain what they wish to attain versus His own ability to do so: He takes charge of the conditions of His servants, Who manages them as He pleases. Those who recognize Him will entrust Him to fare with their own affairs. He surely is the only One Who truly fares with His servants as He pleases. If one of His servants entrusts Him to fare with his own affairs, He will beautifully save him the hardship of any task and will grant him more than He grants others; He gives sufficiently to those who rely on Him. He takes care of the affairs of His servants. He initiated the giving to man without the latter having asked Him, and He gave man everything he needed. Whenever man pleads to Him, He directs His attention to him and beautifully looks after him. If he remains on the straight path, He will seal his deeds with the beauty of His guardianship.

Linguistically, a *wakeel* is one upon whom one relies; so, this is why it is said that one who relies on Allāh will come to know that Allāh suffices him in as far as his sustenance and affairs are concerned, so he relies on Him and only Him and depends on none but

Him. The *wakeel* of someone else is the person who efficiently represents him or does on his behalf what he is incapable of doing.

In Sūrat Hūd, Allāh addresses His Messenger Muḥammed saying, "You are only a warner, and Allāh is Custodian over all things" (Qur'ān, 11:12), that is, "Your responsibility is simply to convey the Message, to warn against the dire consequences of rejecting it, to invite people to accept it, while Allāh manages the affairs of His servants and watches over them, something which you do not have to do, since it is the responsibility of the Creator towards His creatures, and it is not a subject to be taught or conveyed."

Narrating the tale of Ya'qoob (Jacob) and his sons, the Almighty says in Sūrat Yousuf (Joseph), "And when they gave him their pledge, he said: Allāh is the One in Whom trust is placed as regarding what we say" (Qur'ān, 12:66). In Sūrat al-Aḥzāb, the Almighty addresses His Messenger Muḥammed saying, "The Lord of the east and the west; there is no god but He; therefore, take Him for Protector" (Qur'ān, 73:9). The address here is repeated twice to the Messenger of Allāh; therefore, the Messenger of Allāh used to quite often remember his Lord, *al-Wakeel al-Ḥafiẓ*, reminding his companions and followers never to neglect mentioning this Gracious Attribute during the time of trouble, hardship and affliction. The Messenger of Allāh once said, "How can I feel happy knowing that the one charged with blowing the horn (i.e. archangel Israfil) has picked the horn and bent his forehead listening to the order to blow it?" His companions asked him, "Then what are we supposed to say, O Messenger of Allāh?" He said, "Say: *`Hasbuna Allāh wa ni'mal-Wakeel* (Allāh suffices us, and Great is the Guardian)!"

The Messenger of Allāh used to plead to his Lord, *al-Wakeel*, on every occasion, saying, "Lord! I implore You not to permit me to rely on my own self even for the twinkling of an eye else I should surely perish." According to one *qudsi* tradition, the Almighty, addressing His Messenger, says, "You are My servant and Messenger, and I have named you *al-Mutawakkil* [one who trusts in and relies on his Lord];" therefore, the Messenger of Allāh was ordered by his Lord to do so; i.e. to always rely on Him. In Sūrat Āli-'Imrān, He says, "... so once you have made up your mind, place your trust in Allāh; surely Allāh loves those who trust (in Him)" (Qur'ān, 3:159), that is, "Having consulted your companions regarding a matter, you must rely on Allāh in effecting it, and have confidence in His assistance and help,

for He is *al-Wakeel*, and He is your Guardian." Allāh loves His servants who turn to Him and rely on Him provided they exert some effort and exhaust the means available to them.

Allāh has made His Messenger a role model to emulate in the reliance upon his Lord, for Allāh has ordered His believing servants to be among those who rely on Him. In Sūrat Yousuf, He says, "Judgment is only Allāh's; on Him do I rely, and on Him let those who are reliant rely" (Qur'ān, 12:67). In another verse of the same chapter, He says, "And what reason do we have not to rely on Allāh, and He has, indeed, guided us in our ways? And certainly we would bear with patience your persecution of us, and on Allāh should the reliant rely" (Qur'ān, 14:12). In 39:38 we read, "Say: Allāh suffices me; on Him do the reliant rely" (Qur'ān, 39:38).

One who chooses Allāh as his Guardian is one who has also to guard Allāh's interest in his own self by observing His rights and obligations and whatever He has required him to do, so he should be the opponent of his own evil-insinuating self day and night, without laxing for a moment, nor falling short even for the twinkling of an eye.

54. "Al-Qawiyy" and 55. "al-Mateen"

The Almighty has said, "Surely Allāh bestows sustenance, the Lord of Power, the Strong One" (Qur'ān, 51:58).

"*Al-Qawiyy*" and "*al-Mateen*" are two of Allāh's Attributes and are mentioned in such an order. They share the same basic meaning.

Linguistically, "*al-Qawiyy*" is derived from *quwwa*, strength, power, might, ability, etc. It is in lexicons indicative of strength versus weakness. Strength in this sense describes a complete and perfect might. Since He is very Strong, Allāh has the most perfect and absolute might and perfection; He has said, "... surely your Lord is the Strong, the Mighty" (Qur'ān, 11:66). "*Al-Qawiyy*" means: the One Whose strength is unlimited and before Whom the strength of His foe dwarves, and so does the greatness of anyone held as great. Allāh has granted the angels a mighty power whereby one angel, for example, can uproot a mountain or turn cities upside down. Yet such an angel, or his like, fears Allāh and His Might, shakes in awe for fear of His Greatness. *Al-Qawiyy* is the One Whose Might and Greatness are perfect: He subdues and is not subdued; He helps and is not helped; His Might is superior to the might of anyone else. It is also said that

He never suffers any weakness in Himself, in His qualities, or in His actions, and His strength is indicative of His complete Might.

There are many Qur'ānic verses that describe Allāh as the Strong One; among them are the following,

> O had only those who are unjust seen when they witness the chastisement that power is wholly Allāh's, and that Allāh is severe in requiting (evil)! (2:165)

> And wherefore did you not say, when you entered your garden: "It is as Allāh has pleased; there is no power save in Allāh"? (18:39)

> As regarding ʿAd[1], they were unjustly proud in the land, and they said: "Who is mightier than we are?" Did they not see that Allāh Who created them is mightier than them, and that they denied Our signs? (41:15)

When we discern the previously quoted glorious verses, we will find the Attribute "*al-Qawiyy*" existing in 8:52 and 40:22 as the One Who is severe in requiting evil. Seven times has the Attribute "*al-Qawiyy*" been combined with the Attribute "*al-ʿAzeez*"; strength is not suited except for those who are honourable. Might is accompanied by severity.

The root word, *matāna*, connotes solidness with expansion and extension. It may be applied to a solid rock, or to a distance traversed. *Al-Mateen* is *al-Qawiyy*, the Strong One, Who can do whatever He pleases, Who does not need an army to enforce His authority. He needs no help, nor supporters, nor assistants. Rest your hope on none besides Him. *Al-Mateen* is the One Whose Might is perfect; nothing in the heavens nor on earth can stand in His way. He is Allāh Who affects His will, Whose Might is eternal; He affects everything yet nothing can affect Him.

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[1]The people of ʿĀd were Arabs who lived in upper Hijaz near the area where the people of Thamūd, also Arabs, used to live. Prophet Hūd was sent to them; they did not heed his warning, so they were annihilated. As for the people of Thamūd, these used to live in Wadi al-Qura in the 8th century B.C.

56. "Al-Waliyy"

Allāh has said, "Allāh is the Guardian (*al-Waliyy*) of those who believe" (Qur'ān, 2:257).

Al-Waliyy connotes closeness, nearness, one who may be an ally, a neighbor, a guardian, a relative, etc. It also means the supporter, the beloved one.

Allāh has said, "Allāh is the Guardian of those who believe" (Qur'ān, 2:257). Quoting Yousuf, He has said, "You are my Guardian in this life and in the life hereafter" (Qur'ān, 12:101). Quoting the believers, He has said, "You are our Patron; so, help us against the unbelieving people" (Qur'ān, 2:286), and, "Then are they sent back to Allāh, their Master, the True One" (Qur'ān, 6:62). He has also said, "That is so because Allāh is the Protector of those who believe, and because the unbelievers shall have no protector" (Qur'ān, 47:11).

Allāh is the Guardian of His servants. A good servant of Allāh is also a friend of His. The Exalted One has said, "Surely the friends of Allāh shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve" (Qur'ān, 10:62). The word "*waliyy*" simultaneously conveys the meanings of a master and a slave, a supporter, a neighbor, a cousin, an ally, a guardian... The common denominator in the meaning of all these connotations is nearness. A "*waliyy*" is one who is near to someone else physically and figuratively. The Almighty has said, "*Awla laka fa awla*" (Qur'ān, 75:34): Nearer to you (is the destruction) and nearer, a clear warning meaning: "It (destruction) has come close to you, and that against which I have warned you has almost reached you; therefore, beware!"

This proves that the root word of this Attribute is derived from nearness, and this meaning is met in the case of a slave, a supporter, a cousin, an ally, or a guardian. In all these cases, there are situations which necessitate nearness required for proximity and communication. If this is proven, His being al-*Waliyy* of His servants is indicative of His being near to them. The Almighty has said, "... and He is with you wherever you are" (Qur'ān, 57:4). He has also said,

> ... and We are nearer to him than his life-vein. (Qur'ān, 50:16)

> Nowhere is there a secret counsel between three persons except that He is their fourth. (Qur'ān, 58:7)

Whoever repeats this Attribute, realizing its great meanings, must be a friend of Allāh. Any friend of Allāh is also a friend of people,

Allāh's servants. He looks after them, managing their affairs, and so on. Allāh says, "Believing men and women are guardians of one another" (Qur'ān, 9:71). Whoever aspires to be close to the Almighty will find Him willing to be his friend too, and whoever turns away from Allāh, Allāh will turn away from him, and Satan will welcome him with open arms.

57. "Al-Ḥameed"

The Almighty has said, "O people! You are the ones who stand in need of Allāh, while Allāh is the self-Sufficient, the Praised One" (Qur'ān, 35:15).

The root word of "*al-Hameed*" is *ḥamd* which means: praise, something more general than thanking. *Al-Hameed* is also *al-Mahmood*, the Praised One. Allāh is *al-Hameed* due to praising His own Self since time immemorial, and also due to His servants praising Him. His qualities, such as His being Glorified and Exalted, are due to the fact that those who mention His Attribute glorify and exalt it. *Ḥamd* in this context means enumerating or the attempt to enumerate the qualities of perfection conceived by those who praise Him. *Al-Hameed* grants you success and compliments you for it; He wipes out your sins and does not embarrass you by exposing them. He is Praised due to His merits.

One whose beliefs, conduct, speech and action are praiseworthy is called *hameed*. Such a description fits only the Messenger of Allāh and those whose ranks are close to his from among Allāh's prophets as well as others such as the friends of Allāh, and the scholars. Each one of these is *hameed* with regard to his beliefs, conduct, deeds and statements.

58. "Al-Muḥṣî"

Allāh has said, "So that He may ascertain that they have truly delivered the messages of their Lord, and He encompasses what is with them, and He records the number of all things" (Qur'ān, 72:28).

The root word of "*Al-Muḥṣî*" is *iḥṣā'* which means: counting or computing. Linguistically, it also means to tolerate or to be able to handle. It is also used to describe a tract of land where there is a large quantity of pebbles or stones.

Allāh is *al-Muḥṣî* Who counts what we do and readies it for the Day when we meet Him, that is, the Day of Judgment, the day of

hisāb, accounting or reckoning, the day of reward or punishment. *Al-Muhsi* knows all precise and minute matters, the secrets of what is decreed; He sees what is apparent and is fully knowledgeable of what is hidden. He counts the acts of obedience to Him, knows everything, counts our breath, and is acquainted with our insinuations. His knowledgeable of all beings in existence, when they move around or when they are still, and with all their affairs and deeds.

This Attribute's meaning and derivations exist in several places; here are some examples:

> Certainly He has a comprehensive knowledge of them, and He has numbered them a (comprehensive) numbering. (Qur'ān, 19:94)

> Surely We shall give life (back) to the dead, and We record what they have sent forth before and what they leave behind, and of all things have We taken account in a clear Book. (Qur'ān, 36:12)

> And We have recorded everything in a book. (Qur'ān, 78:29)

59. "Al-Mubdi"

Allāh, Glory and Exaltation are His, has said, "... as We originated the first creation, so shall We reproduce it, a promise (binding on Us); We shall surely bring it about" (Qur'ān, 21:104).

Both *"al-Mubdi"* and *"al-Muʿeed"* are among Allāh's Attributes, and most of those who have discussed them have dealt with them jointly.

In Sūrat al-Aʿrāf, we read the following: "Say: My Lord has enjoined justice, and set your faces upright at every time of the prayers and call upon Him, being sincere to Him in obedience; just as He brought you forth in the beginning, so shall you also return (to Us)" (Qur'ān, 7:29). And in Sūrat al-Naml, we read: "Or Who originates the creation then reproduces it, and Who gives you sustenance from the heavens and from the earth? Is there a god with Allāh? Say: Bring your proof if you are truthful" (Qur'ān, 27:64). In Sūrat al-ʿAnkabūt, we read this verse: "Say: Traverse the earth and see how He makes the first creation, then Allāh creates the latter creation; surely Allāh has power over all things" (Qur'ān, 29:20). Sūrat al-Room mentions these Attributes in two places:

> Allāh originates creation, then He reproduces it, then to Him you shall be brought back. (Qur'ān, 30:11)
>
> He it is Who originates the creation then reproduces it, and it is easy for Him, and His are the most exalted Attributes in the heavens and the earth, and He is the Mighty, the Wise. (Qur'ān, 30:27)

In Surat al-Burūj, we read: "Surely He it is Who originates and reproduces" (Qur'ān, 85:13).

Linguistically, the root word of this Attribute means to start, begin, initiate, and the like. Allāh starts, begins, initiates, the creation of all beings and Who brings them into existence. In Sūrat Saba', we read the following: "... falsehood shall vanish and shall not come back" (Qur'ān, 34:49). This verse may be paraphrased thus: "What can falsehood initiate, and what can it bring back?"

Al-Mubdi has brought the cosmos into being without a prior model, Who created all the worlds in a perfect manner, Who initiates the giving to and the assistance of His servants, proving Himself as the best to rely on.

One who remembers the Attribute "*al-Mubdi*" ought to seek His forgiveness whenever he remembers it and to always stay attentive while supplicating to Him.

60. "Al-Muʿeed"

Allāh has said, "Surely He it is Who originates and reproduces, and He is the Forgiving, the Loving" (Qur'ān, 85:13-14).

Linguistically, the root word of this Attribute means: to return, to go back. We supplicate thus: "Lord! We plead to You to grant us a return to Your House," that is, to go back to the Kaʿba after having visited it or after having been there. A man who is *muʿeed* is one who is knowledgeable of certain issues/topics, etc. *Al-maʿād* means: the Day of Judgment. According to one particular tradition, the Messenger of Allāh has supplicated saying, "... and make my abode in the hereafter good, for to it shall I return." It is narrated that Gabriel asked the Messenger of Allāh once, "O Muḥammed! Do you have a nostalgic feeling for your place of birth, to your homeland?!" He answered him in the affirmative, whereupon Gabriel quoted the Qur'ānic verse saying, "Most surely He Who has made the Qur'ān binding on you will bring you back to the destination" (Qur'ān, 28:85).

Al-Mu'eed brings life back to the dead. He gathers all beings for the Judgment Day together, lifting the veils from them and rewarding or punishing them, each according to what he/she had said and done. He tries them about how they fared with the blessings He bestowed upon them. Allāh will cause all things (beings as well as inanimate objects) to come to naught, then He will bring them back again into existence: "Say: The One Who brought them into existence at first will give life [back] to them, and He is Cognizant of all creation" (Qur'ān, 36:79).

We ought to return to Allāh regarding everything, and we have to bear in mind that Allāh created us when we were nothing at all; He determines our destiny.

61. "Al-Muḥyi"

Allāh has said, "Allāh gives life and causes death, and Allāh witnesses whatever you do" (Qur'ān, 3:156).

Allāh surely brings life to the bodies when He rejoins their souls to them. *Al-Muḥyi* creates life and grants it to whomsoever He pleases. He creates people out of nothing, then He brings them back to life when the Day of Judgment approaches after their death. He brings life into the heart of those who know through the light of His knowledge: "Is he who was dead then We raised him to life and made for him a light whereby he walks among people like him whose likeness is that of one who is in utter darkness from which he cannot come out?" (Qur'ān, 6:122). Allāh gives life to the sperm and to the leech-like clot. He causes rain to pour out of the clouds in order to bring life thereby to a dead land.

References to Allāh bringing life back to the dead are numerous throughout the Holy Qur'ān; here are some of them:

> So We said: Strike him (the dead corpse) with part of it (the sacrificed cow); thus does Allāh bring the dead to life, and He shows you His signs so that you may understand. (Qur'ān, 2:73)

> Allāh gives life and causes death, and Allāh sees whatever you do. (Qur'ān, 3:156)

> Say: O people! Surely I am the Messenger of Allāh to you all, [the Messenger] of Him to Whom the kingdom of the heavens and the earth belongs; there is no god but He; He brings (beings/things) to

life and causes death; therefore, believe in Allāh and in His Messenger, the *ummi* Prophet who believes in Allāh and in His words, and follow him, so that you may walk in the right way" (Qur'ān, 7:158).

Allāh's is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth; besides Allāh you have no guardian nor helper. (Qur'ān, 2:107)

He gives life and causes death, and to Him you shall be brought back. (Qur'ān, 10:56)

He it is Who gives life and causes death, and in His (control) is the alternation of the night and the day; do you not then understand? (Qur'ān, 3:80)

He brings forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living and gives life to the earth after its death; thus shall you be brought forth. (Qur'ān, 30:19)

One of His signs is that He shows you the lightning for fear and for hope and sends down water from the clouds, then He gives life therewith to a land after its death (barrenness); most surely there are signs in this for people who understand" (Qur'ān, 30:24).

He it is Who gives life and causes death; so, when He decrees an affair, He only says to it: Be, and it is. (Qur'ān, 40:68)

Or have they taken guardians besides Him? But Allāh is the Guardian, and He gives life to the dead, and He has power over all things. (Qur'ān, 42:9)

There is no god but He; it is He Who gives life and causes death, the Lord and Cherisher of yourselves and of your earlier ancestors. (Qur'ān, 44:8)

A believer ought to adorn his conduct by remembering this Attribute quite often so that Allāh may bring light into his heart through knowledge. His soul will then glow with the mysteries of manifestation. He should particularly remember Him as such in the depth of the night.

62. "Al-Mumeet"

Allāh has said, "He it is Who makes (men) laugh and makes (them) weep, and He it is Who causes death and gives life" (Qur'ān, 53:43-44).

Death is the antithesis of life. A wind dies when it stands still. A human dies when he sleeps; sleep is called death by way of analogy: it causes the faculties of reason and almost all other bodily movements to stop. The *mawāt* is the land which was never tilled. One whose heart dies is dumb, stupid, idiotic, the warmth of his reason cooled down and died out.

Al-Mumeet, the Almighty, decrees death for whomsoever He pleases; none causes death except He. He has subdued His servants by death, causing them to go back to the earth from which He had created them and to be covered with dust...

Al-Mumeet has caused the heart of sinners to die because of going against His will. He is the Creator of death. He has caused the tyrants to die out of His mercy for the living. He causes the oppressors to die on account of their disrespect for Him. He causes the land to die, rendering it barren, free from vegetation, then He brings it back to life when it produces. He brings to life His Sunnah by causing His prophets to inherit it from their predecessors, and He causes the death of innovations through the life of knowledge.

Once the Messenger of Allāh performed the *hajj* then stood over the *Safa*, overlooking the House, the Kaʿba. Then he made three *takbeers* saying, "There is no god except Allāh, the One and only God; there is no partner with Him; His is the kingdom; to Him is all Praise due; He brings to life and causes death; in His hand is all goodness, and He can do anything at all."

Abu Tharr al-Ghifari, may Allāh be pleased with him, is quoted as saying that whenever the Messenger of Allāh was ready to go to bed at night, he would say, "In Your Name do we die and live," and whenever he woke up, he would say, "All Praise is due to Allāh Who has brought us back to life after having caused us to die, and to Him is our final return."

63. "Al-Hayy"

The Almighty has said, "... as for the next abode, that most surely is the (real) life, had they only known!" (Qur'ān, 29:64). He has also said, "And rely on the ever-Living Who never dies" (Qur'ān, 25:58).

Life is the antithesis of death. Allāh brings life back to a "dead" land: He causes vegetation to grow in it; He brings it life through rain. When we discuss it as an Attribute of the Almighty, it means that He is the ever-Living Who is self-Sustaining since time immemorial and will continue to be so forever. Every living being besides Him is not alive on its own; it does not by itself sustain its life; rather, its life is sustained by *al-Hayy*. *Al-Hayy* never dies. The Holy Qur'ān states the following in Sūrat al-Zumar: "Surely you shall die, and so shall they" (Qur'an, 39:30).

Al-Hayy is the Doer, the Aware; any deed without an origin or an awareness is dead. The least degrees of awareness is awareness of one's own self. Anything which is not aware by itself is a dead inanimate object. Allāh is the Absolute Living One, and everyone and everything that live besides Him is alive according to the extent of its awareness.

Anas ibn Mālik has said, "I was once sitting with the Messenger of Allāh in our circle when a man was still performing his prayers. After having bowed down, prostrated and made the *tashahhud*, he supplicated to his Lord saying, `Lord! I plead to You by the very fact that to You is all Praise due; there is no god but You; You are the One Who gives without reminding the takers, Who created the heavens and the earth; O You Who has all the Honour and all the Glory! O ever-Living One, O Sustainer! I plead to You...' whereupon the Prophet said, `He surely has invoked Allāh by His Greatest Attribute: He answers favourably when He is asked thereby, and He gives when invoked.'"

Al-Mumeet causes your heart to die when you fail to remember Him, and your soul to die when you continuously permit yourself to slip away from His right path, and your mind to die when you permit your desires to take control of you. *Al-Muhyi* brings life to the hearts of those who know and who willingly submit to Him, while *al-Mumeet* causes the [spiritual] death of those who go against His will.

64. "Al-Qayyūm"

Allāh has said, "Alif, Lām, Mīm. Allāh, (there is) no god but He, the ever-Living, the self-Subsisting, the One through Whom all things subsist" (Qur'ān, 3:1-2).

One who is *qayyim* is a master and organizer of affairs. The "*qayyim* creed" is the Hanafi faith. The day of *qiyāma* is the Day when

everyone will stand before Allāh, Lord of the Worlds, for judgment. *Al-Qayyūm* is never created, Who manages all affairs.

Al-Qayyūm exists absolutely on His own, not through others, while every being exists through Him and because of Him. Nothing, no life whatever, can ever be sustained without Him. *Al-Qayyūm* is the ever-Lasting, the Eternal Who never suffers extinction. He effects justice and equity, Who is self-Sustaining, Who never sleeps.

According to Abdullāh ibn ʿAbbās, whenever the Messenger of Allāh used to stand up to perform his night prayers, he would say, "Lord! All Praise is due to You! You are the Lord of the heavens and the earth! All Praise is due to You! You are the *Qayyūm* of the heavens and the earth and everything in them; all Praise is due to You! You are the Light of the heavens and the earth; all Praise is due to You! You are the King in the heavens and the earth; all Praise is due to You! You are the Truth; Your promise is true, the meeting with You is true, Your speech is the truth; Paradise is true; the fire is true; the prophets are truthful; Muhammed is truthful, and the Hour is true! Lord! To You have I submitted; in You have I believed; upon You have I relied; to You is my return; for Your sake do I dispute; Your judgment do I seek; so, I implore You to forgive my sins, the ones I have committed and the ones I may commit in the future, what I have concealed and what I have declared, for You are the One Who advances and Who postpones; there is no god but You, and there is no strength nor might except in Allāh."

According to another tradition, he has invoked His Maker saying, "O *Ḥayy*! O *Qayyūm*! We solicit Your help by Your mercy! Lord! I invoke You to mend my affairs, all of them, and not to permit me to rely on my own self even for a twinkling of the eye, nor for a shorter time, nor on anyone from among Your creation."

Imām ʿAlī has said, "During the Battle of Badr, I participated in the battle for some time, then I came to the Messenger of Allāh to see what he was doing, and I found him making *sajdah* while repeating, `O *Ḥayy!* O *Qayyūm*!' So I went back to the battle-field, then I came back to him and I saw that he was still repeating the same words. I kept going there and coming back to him, and he was still doing exactly the same thing till Allāh granted us victory."

Abdullāh ibn ʿAbbās is quoted as saying that the Greatest of all Attributes of Allāh is *al-Ḥayy al-Qayyūm*. Anyone who truly realizes that He, Glory to Him, is the *Qā'im, Qayyim, Qiyām* and *Qayyūm* will

never detach his heart from loving the Creator.

Al-Qayyūm connotes His independence and the dependence of all others on Him, that He does not need anyone while everyone is in need of Him.

Allāh, Glory to Him, is the Only *al-Hayy al-Qayyūm*: He exists on His own, whereas everything that exists depends on Him to continue existing. So rely on *al-Qayyūm* besides Whom you need no other supporter, nor is there anyone else besides Him who can sustain you, nor can anyone else teach you whatever you need to know.

65. "Al-Wājid"

Allāh has said, "And whoever does evil or acts unjustly against his own soul then asks forgiveness of Allāh, he shall find Allāh Forgiving, Merciful" (Qur'ān, 4:110).

The root word of "*al-Wājid*" is "*jidda*," abundance and independence. *Al-Wajid* is the most Knowing: "And [did He not] find you lost and guide you?" (Qur'ān, 93:7); "... and there he finds Allāh, so He pays him back his reckoning in full" (Qur'ān, 24:39). The phrase "he finds Allāh" means "he finds out that Allāh..." *Al-Wājid* has everything; He lacks nothing; He is never incapable of doing whatever He pleases. *Al-Wājid* is the One from Whose knowledge nothing at all escapes; He does not overlook anything at all. He is the opposite of one who has lost everything. *Al-Wājid* lacks neither necessary things nor any of the requirements related to Divinity and its perfection; He is none but Allāh, the Most Exalted One. In such sense, He, and He alone, is the Absolute *al-Wājid*. Anyone besides Him who may have some of the attributes of perfection while still lacking a few things is not called *wājid* at all.

Al-Wājid has with Him everything He wants and desires; He can affect His decree; He knows everything and He determines everything; He is capable of doing everything; nothing is beyond His reach or might; His status is Sublime. He is the Most Honoured; His Might is the most perfect; He gives abundantly and generously.

The root word of this Attribute has many other meanings such as: finding out something through the power of the senses, the reaching of a point or a goal, the existence of something, the mental realization.

66. "Al-Mājid"

The Almighty has said, "... the handiwork of Allāh Who has made everything thoroughly" (Qur'ān, 27:88).

The root word of this Attribute is "*majd*," a noun meaning glory and honours. A man may be said to be *mājid* if he has descended from parents known to have established a deeply rooted reputation of glory and honours. A *mājid* person is very highly distinguished; he quite often showers others with his favours.

The Attribute "*al-Mājid*" means absolute perfection and dazzling glory; He is Beautiful in His qualities and actions, Who treats His servants most graciously, most generously, manifesting His Greatness to them through the light of His compassion for them. Among our supplications is this one:

> Lord! You are *al-Mājid al-Majīd*, the Doer of whatever pleases You! We plead to You to grant us security on the Promised Day; Glory to the One Who has been Gracious unto His servants through His Glory and Honours and is distinguished thereby! Glory to the One Who is Great, Whose Honour is Great, Whose Generosity is vast!

The Attribute "*al-Mājid*" underscores the meaning of the Attribute "*al-Wājid*", thus stressing their common meaning of independence. Abu Tharr al-Ghifāri, may Allāh be pleased with him, has quoted the Messenger of Allāh quoting, in turn, his Lord saying, "O servants of Mine! You are all sinners except those whom I have healed from sinning; therefore, seek My forgiveness so that I may forgive you by My might. Whoever among you comes to know that I am capable of forgiving, and he seeks My forgiveness, I shall forgive his sins and overlook them. You are all to perish except those whom I guide; therefore, seek My guidance so that I may guide you. You are all poor except those whom I enrich; therefore, ask Me so that I may grant you sustenance. O servants of Mine! If the first of you and the last, whatever is moist with you and whatever is dry, the living among you and the dead, should ever unanimously become as pious as the most pious person among My servants, it will not increase My domain as much as the wing of a mosquito. And if they all become as wretched as the worst wretch among My servants, it will not decrease My domain as much as the wing of a mosquito. If the first of you and the last, the moist with you and the dry, the living and the dead, were to ask Me, it will not decrease what is with Me in anything at all just

as any of you may pass by a sea shore and immerse a needle therein then takes it out. This is so because I am *al-Mājid*; I do whatever I please; My giving is only a word: Whenever I desire something, I say to it `Be!' and it is."

This Attribute instills in the hearts of the faithful the sincere desire to treat others with forgiveness, clemency, and patience. One should speak kindly to them, smile to them, and remove the dissension from among them. He should spend his wealth for the good of the poor, and he should be humble and kind to the weak among them. He should treat all people as though they were his own family members and brethren.

67. "Al-Wāḥid"

Allāh has said, "And your Lord is One (and Only) Lord! There is no god but He" (Qur'ān, 2:163). He has also said, "Say: He, Allāh, is One" (Qur'ān, 112:1).

Linguistically, "*al-Wāḥid*" means: the One Who does not socialize with people nor keeps them company. To believe in *Tawḥeed* is to believe that there is no partner at all with Allāh in His authority, and that being One is a quality of His which nobody else shares with Him.

Tawḥeed means recognition of the Unity of the One Who alone manages the affairs of His servants. None creates, nor sustains, nor grants, nor withholds, nor brings back to life, nor causes death, nor manages the affairs of the domain outwardly or inwardly, except Allāh. Whatever He wills comes to be, and whatever He does not never will. Not even an atom moves without His knowledge; nothing takes place without His will. No leaf falls down without His knowledge. Nothing escapes His knowledge, not even as much as the weight of an atom in the heavens or the earth, nor smaller than that nor bigger: His knowledge encompasses everything. His might overwhelms everything. His will is effected regarding everything. His wisdom dominates everything.

Tawḥīd, then, means that whatever comes to your mind of how He may be or anything which you think is appropriate for Him..., He is contrary to and above it, Glory to Him.

The subject of *Tawḥīd* is beyond anyone's description, for if you discuss the Almighty, there are too many views about Him to discuss, and there are too many ways to discuss Him through Him [i.e. through His statements]. Reason recognizes Him, yet the tongue can

never describe Him. *Tawhīd*'s meaning shatters any image and confuses all branches of knowledge, while Allāh remains just as He has always been and will always be. Glory to the One Who has made no means for His creatures to really know Him except by proving to them that they can never know Him. One who falls into the seas of *Tawhīd* will day after day feel more and more thirsty. *Tawhīd* is a prerogative, a privilege, of the Truth (the Almighty), yet His creatures are simply curious. Among people are those whose actions portray their belief in *Tawhīd*; they look at everything that happens through Him. And there are those who, when the truth is unveiled before their eyes, feel less and less concerned about anyone besides Him; they see everyone to be as one secret within another...

Muḥammed, the Messenger of Allāh, has said, "Allāh is One, and He loves oneness." This tradition indicates that He loves the heart that is solely dedicated to Him, Glory and Exaltation are His.

Al-Wāhid, the One and Only God, protects you, the individual that you are, against the group, a number of individuals, whereas the latter cannot protect you against Him. *Al-Wāhid* cannot be counted. He Alone is the source of all knowledge, the Only One Who reveals what is hidden. His existence has neither a duration nor a limit, nor can anyone carry out a decision against Him, nor can His Essence ever suffer any decrease or increase whatever.

68. "Al-Ṣamad"

Allāh, Glory and Exaltation are His, has said, "Say: He, Allāh, is One. Allāh is He on Whom all depend" (Qur'ān, 112:1-2).

Al-Ṣamad is an Attribute of Allāh whose linguistic meanings include the following: the ultimate goal, the obeyed Master without Whose command nothing can happen, the Support of those who need to be supported, the One to Whom all matters are referred, the One to Whom all issues are rendered and regarding which nobody else decides, the One to Whom pleas are directed. *A-Ṣamad* is approached to grant the pleas and is pleaded to make wishes come true. He is the Master sought during the time of need. Arabs describe a household as *ṣamad* if people go there in the hope of fulfilling their worldly needs. God is the final destination, the ultimate goal.

The one whom Allāh enables to be sought to satisfy people's needs, particularly those relevant to their creed, as well as those of every day life, the one who serves their interests by word and by

means is truly one upon whom Allāh has bestowed a great deal of goodness. It is goodness inspired by this Attribute.

Whoever recognizes Allāh as the ever-Lasting Who never dies will turn away from the adornments of this fleeting life and will have no desire for its material things... One of the good manners of a believer inspired by this Attribute is that he does not seek help from anyone besides Allāh to help him meet his worldly needs, nor does he rely on anyone else besides Him. He fashions his conduct after Him and becomes the one sought by people for the fulfillment of their needs. According to one *hādīth*, the Messenger of Allāh has said, "One who is most loved among people is the one who benefits them most."

69. "Al-Qādir"

In the Holy Qur'ān, we read, "Say: He has the power to send on you a chastisement from above you, or from beneath your feet, or throw you into confusion, (making you) different parties, and making some of you taste the fighting of others. See how We repeat the signs so that they may understand" (Qur'ân, 6:65).

Both *al-Qadeer* and *al-Qādir* are among Allāh's characteristics. They may be derived from *taqdeer*, estimation or assessment, or from *qudra*, might, power, or ability. *Al-Qadeer* does whatever He does according to the requirement of wisdom, no more, nor less. *Al-Qadeer* is not among Allāh's ninety-nine Attributes although it is repeated more than thirty times throughout the text of the Holy Qur'ān.

The root word of "*al-Qādir*" is the noun "*qudra*", might, power, prowess, ability, etc. *Laylat al-Qadr*, the Night of Power or of Destiny, is surely the Night of the great honour. In the Holy Qur'ān, we read the following verse in Sūrat al-Anʿām: "And they do not honour Allāh the Great Honour due to Him" (Qur'ān, 6:91), that is, they do not honour Him as He ought to be honoured. The word "*qadr*" means that Allāh is capable of doing anything without tackling it or using any means, etc.; therefore, it does not exert or exhaust Him to do whatever He wants. It means authority and power, that is, the complete dealing with the entire universe, the cosmos, without being opposed by an opponent. Who can oppose Him or escape His grip? His command is that whenever He decrees anything, he says to it: "Be!" and it is. It means the One Who has the Complete power, Who is not frustrated by anything at all, He needs no means to do anything. He measures His decree, Who manages the universe with

might and wisdom: "So We proportion it: how well We are at proportioning (things)!" (Qur'ān, 77:23) and also, "Surely We have created everything according to a measure" (Qur'ān, 54:49). The *qadar* is what Allāh, the Most Honoured and Glorified, decrees and decides.

A servant of Allāh has a measure of power to do a number of things, but it is deficient, for his ability is limited. Allāh, on the other hand, makes His servants capable of doing what they do through His might. A servant of Allāh has power to do a number of things, but he cannot do everything. He cannot create things out of nothing. Only Allāh can.

70. "Al-Muqtadir"

As regarding the Attribute "*al-Muqtadir*", the Almighty has said, "They rejected all Our signs, so We overtook them after the manner of a Mighty, Powerful One" (Qur'ān, 54:42).

"*Al-Muqtadir*" is a superlative of "*al-Qādir*" which enhances the prestige and awe inspired by the latter. *Al-Muqtadir* controls everything through His might which encompasses all His creation. His might is endless, Who manages all affairs, Who manifests His might to the souls through the light of His Attribute *al-Muqtadir* and thus grants them serenity and security. They recognize and venerate His might in the late hours of the night and at both ends of the day. The meaning it suggests is: "the One Whose Might is Great, Who, through His overwhelming Power, controls all His creatures; He subdues everyone and everything in His domain. He decreed, so existence came to be as a manifestation of His might: `... and Allāh holds power over all things'" (Qur'ān, 18:45).

One of the signs of the good manners of a believer in as far as *al-Muqtadir* is concerned is that this Attribute will always fill his heart, and he always remembers it, so much so that a glimpse of its light will shine upon him and will always surround him. The following is a tradition related by Jābir ibn Abdullāh al-Salāmi:

> The Messenger of Allāh used to teach his companions to follow *istikhāra* in all matters just as he used to teach them the text of the Holy Qur'ān. He used to always repeat saying, "If one of you decides to do something, let him prostrate twice besides what is incumbent upon him then say: `Lord! I seek Your *istikhara* and Your help to enable me to achieve what I aspire to achieve! I plead

to You to grant me of Your favours, for You can and I cannot, and You know and I do not, and You know the unknown. Lord! If You know that this matter (and here you indicate what it is) is good for me sooner or later, or good for my creed or sustenance, or for the ultimately good end of my affairs, then decree it for me and ease it for me, then bless it for me. Lord! If You know that it is evil for me regarding my creed or the ultimate end of my affairs, or regarding my matter sooner or later, then take me away from it and enable me to acquire goodness wherever it may be, then make me pleased therewith.'"

The Attribute "*al-Muqtadir*", Praised and Glorified is He, is mentioned *verbatim* in two verses of the Holy Qur'ān: in verses 42 and 55 of Sūrat al-Qamar, and once in verse 45 of Sūrat al-Kahaf.

71. "Al-Muqaddim"

Allāh has said, "... so that Allāh may forgive your past faults and your faults to come, to complete His favour unto you, and to guide you on the right path" (Qur'ān, 48:2).

Linguistically, *taqdeem*, the root word of this Attribute, means advancing, promoting, or preferring; "*al-Muqaddim*" means: the One Who presents things and places them in their right place. Whoever deserves to be advanced, preferred or favoured over others, the Almighty, *al-Muqaddim*, advances his rank or status. And He advances the living, each according to his sincerity of worshipping Him, protecting them against falling into disobedience of Him. *Al-Muqaddim* since the beginning of time advanced those whom He loves and made them happy through accurate comprehension and sound judgment. He prefers those who know over those who do not. He opens the gates of true conviction (*imān*) for everyone. He prefers humans over all others, making them Imāms. And He advances, prefers, favours scholars over ignorant folks, making the first party like stars guiding others to righteousness. He has advanced the Messenger of Allāh from the very beginning and will advance him at the very end, in the Hereafter. He took a covenant from all those whom He sent into this world that: "... when a Messenger comes to you verifying that which is with you, you must believe in him, and you must support him" (Qur'ān, 3:81). He also advanced him on Laylatul-Isrā', the Night Journey. Muhammed led all other Prophets in congregational prayers.

The Holy Qur'ān states the following: "Do not dispute in My presence, and indeed I warned you beforehand" (Qur'ān, 50:28). Muḥammed, the most honoured of all prophets, as Muslims regard him, enjoys a status that tops all those of other "*Ulul-ʿAzm*" prophets[1], peace be upon all of them. Next in status are *awliyā'*, the friends of Allāh, whose status is less only than that of the prophets.

Al-Muqaddim, therefore, advances whoever He pleases on account of one's piety and frequency of returning to Him, to His path, making them truthful; He responds favourably to their pleas. And *al-Muqaddim* advances the living who worship Him in ranks (in this life as well as in the one to come), protecting them against disobeying or displeasing Him.

72. "Al-Mu'akhkhir"

The Almighty has said, "Man shall on that Day be informed of what he had sent forth before and of what he had put off" (Qur'ān, 75:13).

Al-Mu'akhkhir causes the polytheists to lag behind while raising the ranks of the believers. He delays the disobedient ones and grants His guidance to those who obey Him. He postpones the penalty of the oppressor because He is Compassionate and Merciful. Whenever your heart is exposed to a glimpse of the light of His Attribute "*al-Mu'akhkhir*," you will be managing your affairs very well, postponing what the Legislator has decided must be postponed, and looking down at what the Wise Lord has Himself looked down upon. In Sūrat Ibrahīm (Abraham), we read the following verse: "And do not think that Allāh is heedless of what the unjust ones do; He only grants them a respite till a Day on which the eyes shall be fixedly staring (being horrified)" (Qur'ān, 14:42). He has forewarned people regarding the Day when His chastisement will approach them, so those who have wronged their own souls will plead to thus: "Lord! Grant us a respite till a near term so that we may answer Your call and follow the messengers" (Qur'ān, 14:44) but they will be told: "Did you not swear before now that there would be no passing away for you?!" (Qur'ān, 14:44).

The Messenger of Allāh used to supplicate by saying, "Lord! I plead to You to forgive my sins, my ignorance, my extravagance, and to grant me that which You know to be better for me. Lord! I plead

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[1]These are: Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammed.

to You to forgive my (unintentional) sins, my deliberate sins, my ignorance, when I am serious and when I am not, and I am guilty of all of that. Lord! I plead to You to forgive what I have advanced and what I have postponed, what I have revealed and what I have declared, for You are *al-Muqaddim*, and You are *al-Mu'akhkhir*, and surely You can do whatever You please."

Both Attributes "*al-Muqaddim*" and "*al-Mu'akhkhir*" are not mentioned in the text of the Holy. The discussion of advancing something and postponing something else has been dealt with in the Holy Qur'ān with reference to mankind in verses such as these:

> Man shall on that Day be informed of what he sent forth before and what he put off. (Qur'ān, 75:13)
>
> Surely We know those of you who have gone before and We certainly know those who shall come later. (Qur'ān, 15:24)
>
> And We do not delay it except till an appointed term (Qur'ān, 11:104).

One of the signs of a believer's good conduct with regard to both of these Attributes is that he should take a middle course between fear and excessive hope, and to always be on his alert.

73. "Al-Awwal"

Allāh has said, "He is the First (*al-Awwal*) and the Last (*al-Ākhir*) and the Ascendant (over all) and the One Who knows hidden things, and He is Cognizant of all things" (Qur'ān, 57:3).

The Attribute "*al-Awwal*" means: the One upon Whom all others rely, the One Who advances all others. Applied to the Almighty, it means: He was never preceded in existence by anyone at all; He does not need anyone else at all; He is Independent of everything and everyone.

A bedouin once asked the Messenger of Allāh, "Where was Allāh before creation?" He answered him by saying, "Allāh was and there was nothing with Him." The bedouin asked him again, "How about now?" He answered him by saying, "He is now just as He has always been." The Attribute "*al-Awwal*" exists in Sūrat al-Ḥadeed: "He is the First and the Last, the Ascendant (over all), the One Who knows hidden things, and He is Cognizant of all things" (Qur'ān, 57:3). And

He is referred to by implication in this verse: "We have ordained death among you and We are not preceded in doing so by anyone else" (Qur'ān, 56:60).

"Al-Awwal" is the first of anything different from Him. He has the upper hand over His foes, an advancement due neither to time nor to place nor to anything else that can be conceived by mind nor acquired by knowledge. *"Al-Awwal"* means the timeless, the perpetual, the One Who has neither a beginning nor an end. He is the First without a beginning; He exists on His own even before His creatures were ever there.

He is the Eternal One Who has always been and Who is never preceded by anyone at all. Allāh has said, "We have ordained death among you, and We are not preceded in doing so by anyone else" (Qur'ān, 56:60). This verse indicates that He, and Only He, has such power to effect death upon His servants, and He is the First to do so without anyone preceding Him.

74. "Al-Ākhir"

Allāh Almighty has said, "He is the First and the Last, the Ascendant (over all), the One Who knows all hidden things, and He is Cognizant of all things" (Qur'ān, 57:3).

Al-Ākhir is the Last without having to have a first, the Last in His Attribute of eternity and perpetuity; He postpones anything that is to come later. He is the Last by virtue of being above any adjectives whereby He may be described, the Last above extinction. He is the Last without anyone having delayed Him and made Him so, and He is the Last due to His sustaining us. He is the Last according to the rule of necessity: He is the First to grant guidance; He is the Last to look after those whom He guides.

Allāh permits the rewards to reach those who earn them and the penalty to afflict those who deserve it; so, just as He was the first since time immemorial, when there was nothing with Him at all, so will He remain the Last One and nothing will be with Him at all.

Among the good manners of a believer with respect to this Attribute is that he keeps remembering it quite often so that its light may manifest itself unto his heart, and so that he should escape this vanishing abode and look forward for the lasting one; he flees from his own self seeking Allāh, the Lord of the heavens and the earth.

75. "Al-Ẓahir"

Allāh has said, "... the One Who knows the unseen! So He does not reveal His secrets to any..." (Qur'ān, 72:26).

Linguistically speaking, "*al-Ẓāhir*" is derived from "*ẓuhoor*," manifestation, appearance, sighting, etc. It means something hidden coming to appearance. It also conveys the meaning of "victor." This meaning occurs in this verse: "... and they became the uppermost" (Qur'ān, 61:14), that is, in a higher status and rank. "*Ẓahr*" also means back, the opposite of "*baṭn*," stomach or belly; so, what is *Ẓā*hir is the opposite of what is *bāṭin*. It also means: animals used to transport people and luggage on their backs, their *Ẓā*hrs, that is, beasts of burden, whether it is used as a figure of speech or literally. Something *ẓaheer* is very strong. According to *hādīth*, "There is no verse in the Holy Qur'ān except that it has an apparent meaning and a hidden one." What is apparent may be the wording, and what is hidden may is the meaning, or it may mean recitation or reading versus comprehension and learning.

The meaning of the Attribute of the Almighty "*al-Ẓāhir*" permits more than one interpretation:

1) He subdues His creation.
2) He knows everything apparent, just as the Attribute "*al-Bāṭin*" means He knows everything hidden.
3) He is *al-Ẓāhir* due to the abundance of dazzling proofs and the enlightening evidence testifying to His Glory.

Suppose someone says that if He is *al-Ẓāhir*, the Apparent or the Evident One, the One about Whom there can be no doubt entertained, well, most people seem to doubt His existence nevertheless; so, how can He still be Apparent or Evident?

Allāh is *al-Bāṭin*, the Obscure, if sought through the senses and the imagination. He is *al-Ẓāhir*, the Apparent One, if sought by the treasure of reason by way of deduction. His being obscure to many minds, despite His being so Apparent, is due to the intensity of such evidence. His being Evident is the reason why He is Obscure, and His light is the same that obscures His glow: whatever exceeds its limit turns into its own antithesis. He is Obscure if one seeks to know Him by applying his own physical senses. The senses are related to what is apparent, such as one's complexion, physique, etc.. In fact, a person

is a human being not only on account of his complexion, for even if such complexion or the rest of his parts are altered, he still remains one and the same. Actually, a person's parts at the time when he ages are not the same when he was young. They would have suffered a great deal of change due to the passage of time and were replaced by ones similar to them through food intake. His identity, nevertheless, has not changed. Such an identity is obscure from the senses, quite clear to the mind by way of deduction.

76. "Al-Bāṭin"

Allāh has said, "He is the First and the Last and the Ascendant (over all) and the One Who knows all hidden things, and He is Cognizant of all things" (Qur'ān, 57:3).

"*Al-Bāṭin*" means: the One Who is obscured from the eyes of His creatures due to the intensity of His appearance, the Hidden One due to His Essence that defies the minds and intellects.

The Messenger of Allāh has supplicated thus:

> Lord! O God of the heavens and of the great Throne! Our Lord and the Lord of everything! The One Who splits the seed and the date-stone! The one Who has revealed the Torah, the Gospel, and the Holy Qur'ān! I seek refuge with You against the evil of every being whose forelock is in Your Hands! Lord! You are the First; there is nothing before You! And You are the Last; there is nothing after You. You are the Apparent; there is nothing beyond You, and You are the Hidden One; there is nothing that can reach You! I plead to You to pay our debts on our behalf, and to save us from [the humiliation of] want.

He is *al-Ẓahir* through sufficiency, *al-Bāṭin* by objectivity, al-*Ẓāhir* due to His bounties, *al-Bāṭin* through His mercy. He is the Apparent One Who subdues everything, the Hidden One Who knows the truth about everything, the One Who is Apparent for everything by way of convincing proofs, the One Who is Hidden from any physical appearance. Glory, then, to the One Who has obscured Himself from all creation by His light, Who is Hidden from them because of the intensity of His appearance.

The Almighty has said, "... and made His favours to you complete outwardly and inwardly" (Qur'ān, 31:20). Apparent are the ones we can observe, see, witness, notice, while hidden are the things with

which we are not familiar. He has also pointed out to the fact that "And if you were to count Allāh's favours, you will not be able to count them" (Qur'ān, 16:18 and 14:34). They are apparent to the senses, defying our intellect.

Man is a manifestation of the Attribute "*al-Ẓāhir*" and, at the same time, is also a manifestation of the other Attribute "*al-Bāṭin*." Man, physically, is a manifestation of the Apparent Light, and spiritually a manifestation of the Hidden One, *al-Bāṭin*. Whenever a servant of Allāh repeats the Attribute "*al-Bāṭin*", his soul will feel submissive to its Creator, and he will realize that he on his own is really incapable of doing anything at all; so, it is then that the Truth will be Merciful unto him and will grant him purity of both body and soul.

77. "Al-Wāli"

Allāh has said, "For his sake there are angels following one another, before him and behind him, who guard him by Allāh's commandment; surely Allāh does not change the condition of people until they change their own conditions, and if Allāh intends evil to anyone, there is none to avert it, and besides Him they have no protector" (Qur'ān, 13:11).

Al-Wāli is the Owner of everything; He deals with everything as He pleases. The *mawla* is also a supporter or a helper.

Al-Wāli manages the affairs of all creation. He initiates whatever improves the condition of His creatures. In other words, He is the Absolute and undisputed Ruler. *Al-Wāli* is the One and only One Who manages all affairs, Who does everything, and there is no continuity nor existence without His permission; everything happens according to His judgment and by His command. *Al-Wāli* gives graciously by halting the advent of mishaps and calamities.

Among the characteristics of *al-Wāli* is that He manages, is capable and is the doer of whatever He pleases. Unless all these attributes are found in someone, he will not be called *wāli*, and there is no *wāli* for our affairs except Allāh. He, and only He, single-handedly manages them first and foremost and safeguards their continuity and existence. It is also possible to attach to the *wāli* the meaning of: One Who gives abundantly, Who wards off evil.

78. "Al-Mutaᶜāli"

Allāh has said, "[He is] the One Who knows the unseen and the seen, the Great, the Most High" (Qur'ān, 13:9).

The root word of *"al-Mutaᶜāli"* is *ᶜuluww*, height, sublimity, loftiness. Its verb also means one who feels proud, or even arrogant, with regard to someone else, and this usage is for humans. We have already discussed the Attribute *"al-ᶜAliyy"*, which is also derived from the same root word. *Al-Mutaᶜāli* is Exalted in His Greatness and Honours, an Exaltation which nobody reaches besides Him. His Honour is above what any of His creation can conceive or comprehend, above what His creation describe, measure, compute, or define. *Al-Mutaᶜāli* is Sublime and is above everything due to His might or perfection. He, Glory to Him, is Most High due to His Greatness. It also means He is high above deficiencies or shortcomings, or above being conceived by anyone's imagination. He is very, very High above all His creatures. He does not need any of what He creates or what He did not create; He created them out of His Munificence. His Compassionate Attribute is surely gloriously manifesting itself to all what He has created. He does not need the worship of those who worship Him; He makes His grace available to all those who strive to attain it.

Al-Mutaᶜāli is above the falsehood of the conceited, by necessity is Lofty and Sublime. His rank is the Most High; He has the authority all of it. He is Proud and Great. His Glory is too High to be comprehended or conceived by His creation.

One who keeps remembering the Attribute *"al-Mutaᶜāli"* ought to fashion his conduct according to it by his determination to worship none but Allāh. One who adorns his manners as such will then remember the persecuted and the downtrodden and does his best to help them, so their condition will hopefully improve. According to one tradition, "A wretch indeed is a servant of Allāh who fancied himself and became conceited, forgetting the Great One, *al-Mutaᶜāl*."

Our second Imām, al-ḥasan ibn ᶜAli, says that his grandfather, the Messenger of Allāh, had taught him a few supplications to recite during his *witr* prayers such as this one:

> Lord! I plead to You to guide me among those whom You have guided, to grant me good health among those whom You have granted, to befriend me among those whom You have befriended! I further implore You to bless what You have granted me, to shun

from me the evil of what You have decreed in my regard, for You decree while none can force his decree on You! Surely none can humiliate those whom You have befriended; Blessed, Lord, are You and Exalted exceedingly.

79. "Al-Bārr"

Allāh has said, "Surely He is the Benign One, the Merciful" (Qur'ān, 52:28).

Al-Bārr is one of Allāh's Attributes derived from *bārr*, the doer of goodness; *birr* means the doing of benevolent deeds. "*Al-Bārr,*" then, is an inclusive word containing all attributes of goodness, benevolence and charity. One who is *bārr* to his parents is very gracious and benevolent to them. Those who are *bārr* are those from whom deeds of goodness are expected. *Birr* also means ties, links, or connections. A person who is *bārr* regarding his kin means he maintains good ties with them. The Holy Qur'ān states this verse in Sūrat al-Mumtaḥana: "Allāh does not forbid you regarding those who have not made war against you on account of (your) religion and have not driven you out of your homes that you show them kindness and deal with them justly; surely Allāh loves the doers of justice" (Qur'ān, 60:8). And in Sūrat Āli-ʿImrān, we read, "By no means shall you attain righteousness until you spend (benevolently) out of what you love" (Qur'ān, 3:92). A pilgrimage that is blessed and free of any prohibited acts is called "*hajj mabroor*" the reward for which is no less than Paradise according to *hādīth*. *Birr* also means piety, which in turn means the doing of whatever brings one closer to Allāh, a word that combines qualities very highly commendable and praiseworthy.

The *birr* is the best of what is in the life of this world and that of the hereafter. The best of this life is whatever Allāh makes available to any of His servants such as guidance, bounties, and enjoyable things. The best of the life to come is the eternal bliss which is residence in Paradise; may Allāh enable us to enjoy both blessings by His mercy and grace, *Allāhomma āmeen*. The Messenger of Allāh has said, "Uphold telling the truth, for it shall lead you to *birr*."

Birr means goodness, a word which combines all good attributes. It implies whatever good deeds bring one closer to Allāh, the Honoured One, the Most Exalted. The well of Zamzam is called *barra* due to the abundance of its benefits and of its water.

Al-Bārr does not do anything ugly or abominable. He has been Gracious unto those who seek His pleasure by showing them the way

how to, and unto the worshippers by His Favours and the granting of success to them. *Al-Bārr* is kind unto those who seek His benevolence and His giving, unto the worshippers by beautifully rewarding them. He never ceases giving benevolently because of one's disobedience to Him.

A servant of Allāh may be described as *bārr*. A servant of Allāh can be *bārr* according to the extent of his deeds of righteousness, to his being the first and the foremost to observe the right of his parents, teachers, and mentors.

One of the ways wherein a servant of Allāh can fashion his conduct after following the light of this Attribute is to befriend the believers who are sincere in their belief, who are acquainted with the secrets of belief. When someone mentions this Attribute quite often, his conduct will then personify it, and love for all servants of Allāh will then be planted in his heart, and all people will love him with sincerity.

Allāh has combined all the aspects of *birr* in one of the verses of Sūrat al-Baqarah when He said:

> It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the east and the west, but righteousness is this: that one should believe in Allāh and the last day and the angels and the book and the prophets and give away wealth out of love for His sake to those near in kin, to the orphans, the needy, the wayfarer, the beggars, and for (the emancipation of) the slaves, and keep up prayers and pay the *zakat*, and those who fulfill their promise when they promise, and those who persevere when in distress and affliction and during the time of conflict: these are they who are true (to themselves), and these are they who guard (themselves against evil) (2:177).

One to whom Allāh is *bārr* will be protected from committing what displeases Allāh, and He, in turn, will please him with many beautiful things; He will make his path in life full of success; He will make his objectives always good. He will make him independent through Favours from Him, and He will protect him against committing anything which He deems unlawful.

80. "Al-Tawwāb"

The Glorified and Exalted One has said,

... except those who repent and amend and make (the truth) manifest: to these do I turn (mercifully), and I am the oft-Returning (to mercy), the Most Merciful. (2:160)

"*Al-Tawwāb*" is an Attribute whose root word is *tawbah*, repentance, which means: returning to Allāh. It means that He accepts His servants' repentance, that is, He resumes bestowing His grace upon them, enabling them to repent, making it easy for them to do so. *Al-Tawwāb*, then, accepts repentance. He says in the Holy Qur'ān, "... then He turned to them (mercifully) so that they might turn (to Him); surely Allāh is oft-Returning (to mercy), the Most Merciful" (Qur'ān, 9:118). It is known, hence, that if Allāh does not accept the repentance of one of His servants, the latter is not considered repentant, for the initiation of repentance in all reality is from Allāh Who concludes it with His acceptance thereof.

Al-Tawwāb facilitates repentance for His servants, time and over again, by the Signs which He manifests for them, and the warning whereby He warns them; so, when they become familiar with the penalty of their sins, they become frightened, and they return to repentance, and Allāh's favour returns to them when He accepts their repentance.

Al-Tawwāb accepts the repentance of His servants and forgives their sins. He accepts the repentance of one who disobeys Him then returns to obeying Him. And if he commits a sin then returns to Him, He welcomes him back. He forgives the one who slips from the right path then apologizes to Him and overlooks his sin. As long as the servant of Allāh seeks *tawbah*, the Lord remains Forgiving.

The light inspired by this Attribute is that one who accepts the apologies of criminals as well as friends and relatives time and over again derives his conduct from this Attribute. So that we may model our conduct after it, we ought to repent and seek His acceptance of our repentance; we should go to Him in every circumstance. Also, repetition of repentance prepares a servant of Allāh for Allāh's love for him, which is the greatest honour and status, for repentance is admission of one's deficiency and shortcoming, and the standing at the threshold of the Most Knowing most humbly. For this reason, the Messenger of Allāh used to repent quite often in order to show us the path to happiness. It is also one of the good manners of a believer who repeats this Attribute quite often to forgive those who wrong him, to be benevolent to those who mistreat him, and to accept

the apologies of others.

The Messenger of Allāh has desired very much that those who believe in him should always seek Allāh's forgiveness. He once said, "By Allāh! I seek forgiveness of Allāh, and I repent to Him, every day more than seventy times." Allāh has forgiven all the faults of our master Muḥammed, yet he seeks His forgiveness and repents to Him more than seventy times a day, nay, even a hundred times a day! So, what can we say about how often should Muslims repent to Him and seek His forgiveness?

Anas ibn Mālik has said that he had heard the Messenger of Allāh quoting his Lord saying, "O son of Adam! So long as you invoke Me and place all your hope on Me, I shall forgive you, and I do not mind. O son of Adam! Even if your sins were to pile up and reach the skies, then you seek My forgiveness, I shall forgive you. O son of Adam! If you come to Me after having committed as many sins as would fill the earth, believing in Me, associating no partners with Me, I shall grant you their equal in forgiveness."

81. "Al-Muntaqim"

Allāh, *subḥānahu wa taʿāla*, has said, "Therefore do not think Allāh (to be One) failing in His promise to His prophets; surely Allāh is Mighty, Lord of retribution" (Qur'ān, 14:47).

Al-Muntaqim, the Avenger, splits the spines of those who deviate from His path, Who increases the penalty of those who oppress in the land, after alerting them and repeatedly warning them, and after enabling them to amend, giving them a respite. It implies a much more severe penalty than merely an immediate one.

The word "*al-Muntaqim*" is derived from the noun *intiqām*, avenging or seeking revenge against someone. A penalty is not called as such unless the following conditions are met:

1) Clemency reaches the limit of extreme outrage. Allāh has said, "On the Day when We seize them with the most violent of seizing; surely We will (then) inflict retribution" (Qur'ān, 44:16).

2) A punishment is affected after a period of respite. The Glorified and Exalted One has said, "... and whoever returns to (committing) it, Allāh will inflict retribution on him, and Allāh is the Mighty, the Lord of Retribution" (Qur'ān, 5:95).

3) Such a punishment must require a sort of feeling of spiteful gratification upon seeing one being hurt, something which never

happens in the case of the Creator, but it does happen in the case of vicious and spiteful humans. The *intiqām*, revenge, of a servant of Allāh is held commendable only if it is inflicted on His foes (those who deny or disbelieve in Him). The worst of all foes of mankind are their own insinuating selves, the *nafs*, which is within each and every one of us. There is no doubt that he has to seek revenge against such *nafs*.

The Attribute "*al-Muntaqim*" manifests itself in the body: in the means for its natural defense system when a germ violates the sanctity of the body. These means will then kill the germ as a penalty for such a violation, and they will then purge the body from it. *Al-Muntaqim*, then, facilitates getting rid of what is bad, harmful, or dangerous.

The discussion of "revenge" occurs in the Holy Qur'ān: In Sūrat al-Mā'ida we read: "O you who believe! Do not kill (any) game while you are on pilgrimage, and whoever among you kills it unintentionally, the compensation (for it) is the like of what he killed from the cattle, as two just persons among you shall judge, as an offering to be brought to the Kaʿba, or the expiation (of it) is the feeding of the poor or the equivalent in fasting, so that he may taste the unwholesome result of his deed; Allāh has pardoned what is gone by, and whoever returns (to it), Allāh will inflict retribution on him, and Allāh is the Mighty, the Lord of Retribution" (Qur'ān, 5:95).

The "We" in the phrase "We inflicted retribution" is meant, of course, as a reference to Allāh Almighty. It also occurs in several other places throughout the text of the Holy Qur'ān such as the following:

> We, therefore, inflicted retribution on them and drowned them in the sea... (Qur'ān, 7:136)
>
> So We inflicted retribution on them, and they are both, indeed, on an open road (still) pursued. (Qur'ān, 15:79)
>
> ... then We punished those who were guilty, and helping the believers is ever incumbent upon Us. (Qur'ān, 30:47)
>
> So We inflicted retribution on them, then see how the end of those who rejected was. (Qur'ān, 43:25)
>
> Then when they displeased Us, We inflicted retribution on them.

(Qur'ān, 43:55)

He has revealed to you the Book with the truth, verifying what is before it, and He revealed the Torah and the Gospel aforetime, a guidance for people, and He sent the Furqan (Qur'ān). Surely those who disbelieve in the signs of Allāh shall have a severe chastisement, and Allāh is the Mighty, the Lord of retribution. (Qur'ān, 3:3-4)

... and Allāh is the Mighty, the Lord of retribution. (Qur'ān, 5:95)

Do not, therefore, think Allāh (to be) failing in His promise to His Messengers; surely Allāh is the Mighty, the Lord of Retribution. (Qur'ān, 14:47)

And whoever Allāh guides, there is none that can lead him astray; is not Allāh the Mighty, the Lord of Retribution? (Qur'ān, 39:37)

And who is more unjust than one who is reminded of the signs of his Lord then he turns away from them? Surely We will punish the guilty. (Qur'ān, 32:22)

But if We should take you away, still We shall inflict retribution on them. (Qur'ān, 43:41)

On the Day when We seize them with the most violent of seizing, surely We will (then) inflict retribution. (Qur'ān, 44:16)

Al-Muntaqim intensifies His penalty against the oppressors, causing the criminals to be subjected to His retribution. He sends His messengers supported by His signs and miracles to warn people; so, if warning does not benefit someone, He will surely then inflict His penalty and revenge against him.

Once a person comes to realize that there is nothing small nor big except that there is a penalty for it equal in size and kind, he will certainly fear his Lord and remain alert regarding his wishes and desires for fear of falling into transgression.

82. "Al-ᶜAfuww"

Allāh has said,

It may be that Allāh will pardon them, and Allāh is Pardoning, Forgiving. (Qur'ān, 4:99)

"*Al-ʿAfuww*" is derived from the root word "*ʿafuw*" and permits several meanings: When used as a verb, it means to go somewhere to receive something, to give without being asked, to increase, to wipe out something. As a noun, it means the wiping out of sins in their entirety. One may supplicate and say, "Lord! I implore You to grant me *ʿafuw* and *ʿāfiya*," that is, not to punish me for my sins, and to make me safe and secure with regard to Your torment. As an adjective, it means what is *halāl*, lawful.

Al-ʿAfuww has removed, by His Mercy, from the souls the darkness of slipping away from the right path, and of the loneliness of forgetfulness from the hearts through His Greatness. It is also said that He removes the sins from the records and replaces loneliness with beautiful things from Him.

Al-ʿAfuww wipes out the traces of sins, removing them by the winds of His forgiveness. He wipes out the sins from the records kept by His guardian angels. He even wipes them out from their (angels') memory and the memory of those who committed them. He abandons punishing the sinners, Who does not remind you of your shortcomings; He is Gracious when He forgives. He protects the heart of the doer of evil against loneliness, sparing him the feeling of shame, and He does not remind him of the evil of what he had done.

We notice that in the text of the Holy Qur'ān, the Attribute [indeed a Most Beautiful one] *al-ʿAfuww* occurs side by side with another Attribute which is *al-Ghafoor* as many as four times, and once side by side with the Attribute "*al-Qadeer*" as the following verses demonstrate:

... surely Allāh is Pardoning, Forgiving. (Qur'ān, 4:43)

It may be that Allāh will pardon them, and Allāh is Pardoning, Forgiving. (Qur'ān, 4:99)

... most surely Allāh is Pardoning, Forgiving. (Qur'ān, 22:60, 58:2)

If you do good openly or secretly or pardon an evil act, then surely Allāh is Pardoning, Powerful. (Qur'ān, 4:149)

The Messenger of Allāh has always enjoined us to wipe out our evil deeds with good ones, saying, "Fear Allāh wherever you may be, and follow your evil deed with a good one in order to wipe out the first, and treat people in the best conduct." He addressed one of his uncles once saying, "O ʿAbbās, uncle of the Messenger of Allāh! Plead to Allāh for *ʿafuw* and *ʿāfiya* in the life of this world and in the life to come."

The Commander of the Faithful Imām ʿAli ibn Abu Tālib called upon one of his slaves once but he did not respond. He repeated his call, and the slave again neglected to respond. Then he repeated it a third time, and no response was there either, so he stood up and looked for him and found him lying down. He asked him, "Did you hear me calling you?" He answered, "Yes, I did." The Imām asked him, "Then what stopped you from responding?" He answered, "My confidence in your clemency and my reliance on your forgiveness," whereupon the Imām said, "Then I set you free seeking the Pleasure of Allāh." The Imām did so on account of the firm conviction on the part of that slave.

One who wishes to receive a glimpse of the light inspired by this Attribute should first forgive those who have committed a wrong deed against him or dealt with him unjustly. One who remembers this Attribute ought to wipe out from his heart any ill feeling towards anyone who has wronged him, and to treat beautifully those who mistreated him.

83. "Al-Ra'oof"

Allāh, the Glorified and the Exalted One, has said,

> ... so that He may bring you out of utter darkness and into the light. (Qur'ān, 57:9)

Linguistically, this Attribute is derived from *ra'fa*, intense mercy or compassion which is the ultimate limit of *rahma*. When applied to the Almighty, it means His warding off all types of evil.

The Attribute "*al-Ra'oof*" refers to the One Who does not cease being kind and compassionate to the sinners by accepting their repentance, and to His friends by protecting them from committing sins. It conveys the same meaning conveyed by the Attribute "*al-Rahīm*" with an intensification of the meaning embedded in the latter. Among the manifestations of His mercy towards His servants is that

He protects them against committing what incurs His penalty. Such a protection from slipping from the right path carries a stronger sense of mercy than His forgiveness for sins already committed. He may be Merciful unto one of His servants by outwardly exposing him to hardship, but inwardly there may be a great deal of bliss and blessing hidden for him in such hardship, while he does not know it. How often has a servant of Allāh been pitied by people for the harm from which he suffers, the harm of poverty, want, and misery, while in reality he is enjoying a blessing for which the angels envy him?

The Most Exalted One has advanced the Attribute "*al-Ra'oof*" over that of "*al-Raḥīm*," preferring "*rā'fah*" over "*raḥmah*" and giving precedence to the first over the latter in the following glorious verses:

> Most surely Allāh is Affectionate, Merciful, to people. (Qur'ān, 2:143)
>
> ... and We put in the hearts of those who followed him kindness and mercy. (Qur'ān, 57:27)
>
> ... to the believers he is compassionate, merciful. (Qur'ān, 9:128)

This Attribute is derived from "mercy" and "compassion." This requires us to distinguish between both of these words. Also, whenever the Almighty uses both of these words, He mentions the Attribute "*al-Ra'oof*" before "*al-Raḥīm*;" therefore, we have to explain the difference between both of them and the reason for such a preference.

The Messenger of Allāh was travelling once as he happened to pass by a woman baking bread. Her young son was with her. She was told that the Messenger of Allāh was passing by, so she came to him and said, "O Messenger of Allāh! It has come to my knowledge that you have said, `Allāh is more Compassionate towards His servants than a mother towards her son.' Is this the correct statement which you have spoken?" He answered her in the affirmative, whereupon she said, "A mother does not hurl her son in an oven like this one." Having heard her say so, the Messenger of Allāh wept, then he said, "Allāh does not torment anyone by the fire [of hell] except one who is too arrogant to bear witness that there is no god but He."

If a servant of Allāh wishes to model his conduct after the inspiration of this Attribute, he has first to remember and mention it quite

often, hence the light of *al-Ra'oof* will manifest itself to his heart, so much so that he will become compassionate towards all people, the commoners as well as the elite, always remembering the saying of the Messenger of Allāh, "Be merciful unto the people of the earth so that the people of the heavens may be merciful to you."

84. "Mālikul-Mulk"

Allāh has said:

> Say: O Allāh, Master of the Kingdom! You give the kingdom to whomsoever You please and take the kingdom away from whomsoever You please, and You exalt whomsoever You please and abase whomsoever You please; in Your hand is goodness; surely You have power over all things. (Qur'ān, 3:26)

Mālikul-Mulk affects His will in His kingdom however He pleases, letting some live and others perish. The *mulk* in this context means the kingdom, and the *Mālik* is the Omnipotent, the Most Powerful. All things in existence are included in His kingdom, so His is one kingdom because all things in it are somehow connected to one another. Although they may be regarded as many, they constitute one entity, one kingdom.

Mālikul-Mulk fares with His kingdom as He pleases, and none can revoke His judgment, nor can anyone appeal or repeal it. All things in existence, in all their degrees and levels, constitute one kingdom owned by One: Allāh, the Most Exalted.

Mālikul-Mulk is the true King Who deals with His kingdom as He pleases, bringing things into existence in it or ending the existence of some of its beings, chastising some and accepting the repentance of others, without anyone sharing the authority with Him or prohibiting Him from doing whatever He pleases.

"*Mālikul-Mulk*" occurs in the original Arabic text of this verse: "Say: O Allāh, Master of the Kingdom!" (Qur'ān, 3:26). Another derivative is "*al-malakoot*" which exists in "Glory to the One in Whose hand is the kingdom of all things, and to Him you shall be brought back" (Qur'ān, 36:83).

> ... and a hard Day shall it be for the unbelievers. (Qur'ān, 25:26)

> To Whom does the kingdom belong this Day? To Allāh, the One,

the One Who subdues (all). (Qur'ān, 40:16)

And Allāh's is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and to Allāh is the eventual return. (Qur'ān, 24:42)

The Messenger of Allāh is quoted saying that Allāh's Greatest Name, the one because of which He will respond if thereby invoked, exists in the verse saying, "Say: O Allāh, Master of the Kingdom!" (Qur'ān, 3:26).

The Commander of the Faithful Imām ʿAli ibn Abu Tālib was asked once by Ababah ibn Rabʿi al-Asdi about "ability." The Commander of the Faithful asked Abadah, "Do you have it without Allāh or with Him?" Ababah could not answer, so he told him to say something. "What shall I say, O Commander of the Faithful?!" asked Ababah. He answered, "You should say that you have it by permission of Allāh Who has full control over it without your help. If He opts to grant it to you, then it is a boon which He gives you. And if He takes it away, it is a trial from Him. He is the real Owner of what you own, and the One Who owns what He enables you to possess. Have you not heard about seeking His help and might by saying, `Surely there is no help nor might except through Allāh'?" The man asked him, "And what does it mean, O Commander of the faithful?" He said, "It means: We do not stay away from committing acts of disobedience to Allāh except if He protects us against disobeying Him, and we have no strength to obey Him except if He grants us His help," whereupon the man leaped and kissed his hands and feet.

The kingdom of each and every servant of Allāh is his own body. If it affects his will regarding his heart and senses, he will then be the owner of his kingdom according to the extent of his control over it.

85. "Thul-Jalāli wal Ikrām"

Allāh has said:

Blessed is the name of your Lord, the Lord of Glory and Honour! (Qur'ān, 55:78)

Thul-Jalāli wal Ikrām is a glorious Attribute that combines glory and beauty, for there is an awesome Glory and Beauty of the Almighty; no servant of Allāh can achieve knowledge except if he becomes familiar with *Thul-Jalāli wal Ikrām*. This Attribute surely

combines in it anticipation, awe, hope and fear.

The Almighty monopolizes the qualities of *jalāl*, greatness, and *ikrām*, honour. All greatness is His, and honour is from Him; Glory to Him; there is no glory except that He is its fountainhead, while honour is always His. Glory has originated from Him and overwhelmed His creation, and the norms of His honouring His creation are countless, immeasurable; therefore, He, and only He, is worthy of being Glorified by His creatures. They should express their respect for His Greatness, show appreciation for His favours and grace, and recognize His signs and bounties.

"*Thul-Jalāli wal Ikrām*" means: the One Who has all Greatness. There is no distinction, nor glory, nor prominence, except if Allāh permits it; in all reality, it is His, from Him, and by Him. Glory and Exaltation are His, the One Who is the source and fountainhead of all glory, perfection, honour, dignity and greatness. There is neither greatness nor favour nor bliss nor goodness except that it springs from His ocean.

Maʿāth ibn Jabal is quoted saying that the Messenger of Allāh once passed by a man who was repeating "O One with the Glory and Honours!" so he said to him, "Your plea will be honoured; so, proceed and state it."

The Messenger of Allāh has said, "Uphold *Thul-Jalāli wal Ikrām*," that is: "follow His path and remain steadfast in doing so and repeat this Attribute of His in your supplications."

If a servant of Allāh keeps repeating this Attribute, and its light will eventually shine in his innermost, he will become highly regarded among the nations. Whoever realizes the Greatness of Allāh will become very humble before Him.

One of the signs of the good conduct of a servant of Allāh is that he seeks nearness to Him by attaching himself to Him, by becoming very humble, by expressing his humility before Allāh. He must realize that all Greatness and perfection belong to Him, and that He honours His servants by granting them His favours.

86. "Al-Muqsiṭ"

Allāh, Glory and Exaltation are due to Him, has said,

> Allāh testifies that there is no god but He, and (so do) the angels and those who have knowledge, maintaining His creation with justice. (Qur'ān, 3:18)

Meanings of variations of this Attribute's root word is *qist*, equity or fairness, are as follows: *aqsata* means implemented justice; *qasata* means became inequitable or unfair; *qasit* is an unfair or inequitable person, an oppressor; *muqsit* is one who is fair in his judgment or decision, and *qist* means share, lot, or portion of something. *Qasitoon* is plural: they are those who deviate from justice and about whom the Almighty says, "As to the deviators, they are the fuel of hell" (Qur'ān, 72:15).

Qist means the implementing of justice by taking what one unlawfully has acquired and giving it back to its lawful owner. *Iqsat* means that one is given his own lawful share which someone else has unlawfully taken [forcefully or otherwise]; it is also called *insāf*, carrying out equity. *Qasata* means someone became inequitable, and *aqsata* means that he became fair and just. *Al-Muqsit* is the Almighty Who is fair and equitable in all His decisions and decrees, Who deals with everyone according to a system. *Al-Muqsit* comes to the rescue of the oppressed and brings about justice. The perfection in His doing so is the fact that He adds to pleasing the oppressed His own pleasing of the oppressors as well, which is the ultimate end of equity, something which nobody can do other than Allāh, Glory to Him, Who has said, "... and if you judge, then judge between them with equity; surely Allāh loves those who judge equitably" (Qur'ān, 5:42).

According to a *Qudsi* tradition, while the Prophet was sitting once, he smiled to the extent that his molar teeth showed. One of his companions said to him, "May both my parents be sacrificed for your sake, O Messenger of Allāh! What has made you smile like that?!" He answered, "Two men of my nation were brought before the judgment of the Lord of Dignity. One of them said, `Lord! I plead to You to effect justice on my behalf from this man.' Allāh, the Honoured and the Great, said, `Be fair to your brother and give him what is his.' The man said, `Lord! None of my good deeds is left to effect it thereby.' The Glorified and the Honoured One said to the first man, `What are you going to do to your brother since he has none of his good deeds left with him?' The man answered, `Then, Lord, let him bear some of my own burdens.'" It was then that the eyes of the Messenger of Allāh over-flooded with tears. "That, indeed," he continued, "is a momentous Day when men will need others to bear their own burdens." After a pause, the Messenger of Allāh continued to say, "Allāh, the Honoured and the Glorified One,

said to the wronged one, `Raise your eyes and cast a look at the Gardens of Bliss.' The man said, `Lord! I see whole cities made of silver and huge houses of gold bedecked with pearls; for which *siddeeq* or martyr are they?' The Almighty said, `They are for the one who pays the price.' The man said, `Lord! Who can have their price?' He said, `You can.' `For what, Lord?' he asked the Almighty. `For forgiving your brother,' the Lord said. The man said, `Lord! I do forgive him.' The Almighty then said, `Take your brother by the hand and lead him the way to Paradise.'" Then the Messenger of Allāh said, "Fear Allāh; fear Allāh, and mend your relations, for Allāh will implement justice on the Day of Judgment among the believers."

87. "Al-Jāmi^{c}"

Allāh has said,

> Lord! Surely You are the One Who gathers men on a Day about which there is no doubt; surely Allāh will not fail His promise. (Qur'ān, 3:9)

Al-Jāmi^{c} is an Attribute of Allāh derived from *jam^{c}*, its root word, which means: to gather, assemble, horde, or combine. The Day of Gathering is the Day of Judgment. It is called so because Allāh will gather on it the early generations of His creation and the last ones, the jinns and mankind, all the residents of the heavens and the earth, each and every servant of Allāh and his deeds, every oppressor and those whom he oppressed, and every prophet and those to whom he was sent. He will also combine between the rewards of those who obeyed Him and the penalty of those who disobeyed Him.

The subject of *jam^{c}*, gathering or combining, is referred to in several verses of the Holy Qur'ān such as the following:

> Allāh: there is no god but He; He will most certainly gather you together on the Resurrection Day; there is no doubt about it. (Qur'ān, 4:87)

> He has ordained mercy on Himself; most surely He will gather you on the Day of Resurrection, there is no doubt about it. (Qur'ān, 6:12)

> And on that Day, We will leave some of them in conflict with

others, and the trumpet will be blown, so We will gather them all together. (Qur'ān, 18:99)

Say: Our Lord will gather us together, then will He judge between us with the truth, and He is the greatest Judge, the all-Knowing. (Qur'ān, 34:26)

Say: Allāh gives you life, then He causes you to die, then He will gather you to the Day of Resurrection wherein there is no doubt... (Qur'ān, 45:26)

And one of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and what He has spread forth in both of them of living beings, and when He pleases, He is all-Powerful to gather them together. (Qur'ān, 42:29)

On the Day when He gathers you for the Day of Gathering, that is the Day of loss and gain: whoever believes in Allāh and does good, He will remove from him his evil and cause him to enter gardens beneath which rivers flow to abide therein forever; that is the great achievement. (Qur'ān, 64:9)

One whose knowledge is perfected and whose conduct is good deserves to be called *jāmi'*. For this reason, a perfect person is one who does not put out the light of his piety by the light of his knowledge; so is one who combines perfect vision with foresight.

88. "Al-Ghaniyy"

Allāh has said,

O men! You are the ones who stand in need of Allāh while Allāh is self-Sufficient, Praiseworthy. (Qur'ān, 35:15)

Both "*al-Ghaniyy*" and "*al-Mughni*" are among the Attributes of Allāh.

Linguistically, *ghina*, the root word of "*al-Ghaniyy*", means: independence by virtue of having self-sufficiency. It is the opposite of *faqr*, poverty, want, indigence, need, and the like. Independence or self-sufficiency is of various types: one is the absence of need, and none is independent of needing anyone or anything other than Allāh. This meaning is implied in the verse saying, "His is whatever in the

heavens and in the earth, and most surely Allāh is the self-Sufficient, the Praised" (Qur'ān, 22:64). The other is the small or limited number of one's needs, which is pointed out in this verse: "And found you in want and made you free from want" (Qur'ān, 93:8). A third is what is mentioned by a few ignorant folks among the unbelievers who claimed that Allāh was poor while they were rich, whereupon the One Who has all the Glory and Honours responded by telling them that "Allāh has certainly heard the statement of those who said: Allāh is poor and we are rich" (Qur'ān, 3:181). They had said so upon hearing the verse saying, "Who will loan Allāh a beautiful loan...?" The Almighty answered them by saying, "O men! You are the ones who stand in need of Allāh while Allāh is self-Sufficient, Praiseworthy" (Qur'ān, 35:15). The Almighty emphasized the same fact in another verse: "... and whoever disbelieves, then surely Allāh is self-Sufficient, above any need of the worlds" (Qur'ān, 3:97).

Al-Ghaniyy has no need, within Himself or in His Attributes or deeds, for anything or anyone at all. He needs none while everything and everyone need Him. *Al-Ghaniyy* is the Perfect One due to what He has and what is with Him. Our Lord, the Most Praiseworthy, is referred to as such because need is a deficiency, and the needy person is incapable of attaining what he desires or aspires for. The one who is needed has an advantage, because of what he has, over the one who is in need of him. Deficiency is out of the question in the case of the Absolute *al-Ghaniyy*, and incapacitation cannot be attributed to Him, Praise to Him, nor can anyone do Him a favour, for everything is His own creation and invention; He formed and created it, and it is totally dependent on Him in everything. Everything is exactly what the Creator wants it to be.

Everyone else besides Allāh is needy while He, *al-Ghaniyy*, does not need anyone. The Holy Prophet is quoted saying, "Wealth is not abundance of availability; rather, it is the richness of one's own soul." The highest degree of wealth is satisfaction, contentment, with what is available with you; therefore, there is, indeed, no wealth like the feeling of contentment. A man may be very poor, yet he tries his best to look good in the eyes of the people. Notice what the Almighty says about such persons: "... the ignorant man perceives them rich on account of their abstaining (from begging)" (Qur'ān, 2:273).

The Almighty exists by virtue of the necessity for His existence, on His own merits; therefore, He needs none besides Himself. Every-

thing and everyone besides Him may exist, yet its existence comes about when He creates it; so, He, and He alone, Praise to Him, is *al-Ghaniyy*.

89. "Al-Mughni"

Allāh, *al-Mughni*, has said,

> ... and if you fear poverty, Allāh will enrich you out of His grace if He pleases; surely Allāh is Knowing, Wise. (Qur'ān, 9:28)

Al-Mughni has granted His favours to His servants abundantly and facilitated for them the achievement of their goals and objectives, and the meeting of their everyday needs. There is no independence nor self-sufficiency except that He caused it to exist. He enriches His friends from the treasures of His lights, facilitates for those who live in the universe to access the means of their livelihood and sustenance by His decree. He enriches every truth which He provides in a measure, for He, and only He, knows its secrets, what is hidden of it and what is apparent.

Allāh is the Enricher, yet a servant of His whom He has enriched cannot be thought at all as being absolutely independent. The least of his affairs proves that he needs *al-Mughni*; therefore, he is never independent; rather, he may be independent of anyone except Allāh Who provides him with what he needs while not jeopardizing the causes for his needs. The true independent person is one who does not need anyone at all. One who needs and finds what he needs is independent only by way of analogy, which is the most that can be said about anyone besides Allāh. As regarding the lack of need, this is out of the question for anyone besides Him. But if one needs none save Allāh, then he will be called *ghaniyy*. Had he had no need at all, the verse saying "... and Allāh is self-Sufficient while you have need (of Him)" (Qur'ān, 47:38) would not have been accurate. Had there been any possibility at all that Allāh could in any way be regarded as in need of anything, there would have been no need for the Almighty to be *al-Mughni*, the Enricher.

Al-Mughni makes whomsoever from among His servants self-sufficient. He grants independence and self-sufficiency to His servants, and He can be regarded as granting them self-sufficiency. And Allāh also makes some of His servants independent of others, for all needs are in reality met by Him: His creatures cannot do anything for

themselves without His help; so, how can they be thought to help others when they themselves need to be helped? He grants independence and self-sufficiency to whomsoever He pleases from among His servants according to His wisdom and will; He says the following in Sûrat Ṭāhā: "... Our Lord gave everything its creation then guided" (Qur'ān, 20:50).

About Himself, *al-Mughni* has said,

> ... if they are needy, Allāh will make them free from want by His grace. (Qur'ān, 24:32)
>
> And that He enriches and Who withholds. (Qur'ān, 53:48)
>
> And He found you in want and made you free from want. (Qur'ān, 93:8)

One of the ways to derive a code of ethics from *al-Ghaniyy* and *al-Mughni* is that one realizes that he needs Him constantly, and that he trusts in what Allāh has more than he does in what he himself has, and to be good in conducting generosity and benevolence towards other servants of Allāh. One of the norms of conduct of a believer with regard to the Attribute "*al-Mughni*" is that once he realizes Him to be the One and only One Who is Independent of any need, the One Who satisfies all the needs of His servants, he will rely on Him in everything and refer to Him in every matter.

90. "Al-Māniʿ"

Allāh, Glory and Praise are due to Him, and only to Him, has said,

> Or do they have gods who can defend them against Us? (Qur'ān, 21:43)

Al-Māniʿ is one of Allāh's Attributes and is derived from *manʿ*, the opposite of giving or granting. It also means: to protect, to stop one thing from harming another or one group of people from annihilating another. It is used to describe the defense of a house, a fortified fortress, etc, against an enemy. It means: to protect and support. It means He has the power to stop the causes of annihilation or deficiency in both creeds and bodies. He wards off evil to protect and safeguard; He stops giving to whomsoever He pleases in order to

try or to protect them. He gives life to whomsoever He loves or does not love, but He does not grant the bliss of the hereafter except to those whom He loves.

Al-Māniʿ protects and supports those who obey Him, and He stops some of His servants from doing what He does not want them to do while giving them what they want. He wards off the causes of perdition and diminution in matters related to creeds and nations due to what He creates of causes prepared for their preservation. Obstruction from the causes of annihilation, and the preservation of what is guarded against extinction, are the objectives of *manʿ* and are the ultimate goal. If *manʿ*, prohibition, is needed for the purpose of preservation, and the latter is not needed for the sake of the first, then every protector defends and protects. Not everyone who prohibits protects except that he prohibits the causes of annihilation and diminution.

Al-Māniʿ prohibits affliction from reaching His friends, or the complete abstention from giving to whomsoever He pleases. If He prohibits affliction from reaching His friends, this is due to His beautiful Grace, and if He stops giving to them, it will still be a great favour from Him.

Allāh grants the pleasures of the life in this world to those whom He loves and to those whom He does not, but He does not protect the heart of a servant of His except when the latter is one of His close friends.

Al-Māniʿ wards off the causes of annihilation and diminution of creed and body by creating the means which protect it against annihilation and diminution. So, He creates some causes and prohibits others; He gives everything what serves its interests and prohibits what causes its damage. He makes some wealthy by giving them, and He stops giving to whomsoever He pleases to try them by affliction. He enriches and impoverishes; He makes some happy and some miserable; He grants some and withholds from others; He grants some and deprives others; so, He is both *al-Muʿti*, the Giver, and *al-Māniʿ*, the One Who withholds. And He withholds giving from whomsoever He pleases, and His withholding may contain giving in disguise. He may withhold giving one of His servants abundant wealth and instead give him accomplishments and beauty. He may deprive one of His servants from enjoying good health and make him pleased with His decree. *Al-Māniʿ* is also *al-Muʿṭi*: for within the withholding

there may be giving, and within the giving there may be withholding.

The Messenger of Allāh used to say the following after finishing each of the prescribed daily prayers: "There is no god but Allāh, the One and only God; His is the Kingdom; His is the Praise, and He can do everything. Lord! None can prohibit what You grant, nor can anyone grant what You withhold, and none is capable of stopping the implementation of Your will."

91. "Al-Ḍārr"

Allāh has said,

> Say: I do not control for myself any harm, nor can I benefit myself in aught except what Allāh pleases. (Qur'ān, 10:49)

Both *al-Ḍārr* and *al-Nāfiʿ* are among the Attributes of Allāh.

Most references wherein these Attributes are discussed have combined both Attributes together. Combining both of these Attributes is better: it conveys a stronger meaning of the Almighty's Power to do whatever He wills, however He wills; none benefits nor harms others besides Him.

Language says that *darr*, harm, is the opposite of *nafʿ*, benefit or advantage. Allāh is *al-Ḍārr*, that is, the One Who can harm anyone He wants in any way He wishes; He impoverishes some of His servants or causes them to fall prey to sickness according to His wisdom; so, He determines everything, and He alone facilitates the means of harm as a trial from Him whereby He purges the sins or subjects one of His servants to a test in order to raise his status. He decrees harm to some of His servants and effects His decree through certain means. He is the Wise One in whatever He does, the most Merciful in His judgment. If He decrees some harm, it is only for the sake of the general good, and if He decrees an ailment, it is but the useful medicine in the life of this world and the life hereafter.

Allāh has said, "If Allāh touches you with affliction, there is none to remove it but He..." (Qur'ān, 6:17).

Prophet Moses once complained to his Lord about a tooth-ache, so the Almighty instructed him to apply a certain type of herb on the area of his pain, which he did, and the aching stopped. A few days later, the same pain came back to him, so he went and took the same herb and applied it, but this time his pain intensified many times more. He complained to Allāh saying, "Lord! Did You not order me

to apply this type of herb and tell me where I could find it?" The Almighty inspired him, "O Moses! I am the One Who heals and Who grants good health; I am the One Who causes harm and Who benefits. You came to Me the first time, so I removed the cause of your ailment, whereas this time you went to the plant (on their own) instead and did not come to Me."

The Messenger of Allāh has said, "Anyone who claims that Allāh commends the doing of wrong deeds and of sins tells lies about Allāh. And anyone who claims that goodness and evil are possible without the will of Allāh strips Allāh of His Authority. And anyone who claims that sins are committed without Allāh's Might tells a lie about Allāh, and whoever tells lies about Allāh, He will lodge him into the fire." In this tradition, by goodness and evil he means health and sickness respectively due to this verse: "... and We try you by evil and by good by way of probation" (Qur'ān, 21:35).

Imām al-Bāqir is quoted saying, "Allāh, the Exalted and the Great, is more compassionate towards His creation than forcing them to commit sins then penalizing them for doing so, and Allāh is more Mighty than willing to do something and it does not take place." He was asked once whether there was a distance between compulsion and destiny, and his answer was, "Yes! One more spacious than that between the heavens and the earth!" He has also said, "There should neither be compulsion nor an unrestricted freedom; the best course is a middle one." When he was asked about the middle course, he said, "Let me give you an example: You may see a man committing a sin, and you may try to stop him from doing so but he refuses to desist, whereupon you leave him to commit that sin. When he does not listen to you but insists on sinning, it does not mean that you yourself have encouraged him to commit that sin."

92. "Al-Nāfi'"

As regarding the Attribute "*al-Nāfi'*", Allāh *subhānahu wa ta'āla* has said, "Whatever benefit comes to you (O man!), it is from Allāh, and whatever misfortune befalls you, it is from your own self" (Qur'ān, 4:79).

Al-Nāfi' is the source of any benefit and goodness for the life in this world and for the creed. He alone grants good health, wealth, happiness, authority, guidance and piety. He enables all His creatures to receive the benefits He creates for them. He has facilitated the

path leading to Him for those who aspire to tread it, Who benefitted the souls through His prophets, Who nourished the bodies through food, Who warded off disease through medicine, Who kept affliction away through favours and goodness, and Who has benefitted everyone, be he an angel, a human, or a jinn.

Ibn ʿAbbās says, "I was sitting once behind the Messenger of Allāh so he said to me, `Young man! I would like to teach you a few words [of wisdom]: If you safeguard your rights towards Allāh, He will protect you. If you remain mindful of Allāh's rights on you, you will find Him looking after you. If you have a plea, then plead to Him; if you seek help, seek it from Him, and bear in mind that if all people gather to benefit you in anything, they will not be able to do so except in what He has already allotted for you, and if they all gather together to harm you in any way, they will never be able to do so except if He has already decreed it on you; the ink has dried, and the tablets have been removed.'"

Al-Ḍārr al-Nafiʿ is the One from Whom everything good or bad ensues; all is attributed to Allāh and is affected either through the angels, mankind, inanimate objects, or by other means; so, do not think that poison, for example, kills by itself, or that food by itself satisfies hunger. Angels, mankind, demons, or anything else in existence, such as planets, stars, or other things, are all under His control; they do not do anything except what He has made them do. Their totality, in addition to the eternal Power, is like a pen in the hand of the writer as conceived by an illiterate. If a ruler signs the order to penalize or reward someone, the pen whereby he signs such an order cannot tell the difference between one order and another, or between what harm it is causing or what benefit, or even the difference between one of its users and the other. This is the case with all means and causes.

Both *al-Ḍārr* and *al-Nāfiʿ* are referred to in various places in the Holy Qur'ān; among them are:

> Say: I do not control any benefit nor any harm for my own soul except as Allāh pleases; had I known the unknown, I would have had much of good and no harm would have touched me; I am only a warner and giver of glad tidings to people who believe. (Qur'ān, 7:188)

> Say: I do not control for myself any harm, nor any benefit, except whatever Allāh pleases; every nation has a term; when their term comes, they shall not remain behind for an hour, nor can they go before (their time). (Qur'ān, 10:49)

> Yet when He removes the evil from you, lo! A party from among you associates others with their Lord. (Qur'ān, 16:54)

> And when We make people taste of mercy, they rejoice in it, and if evil befalls them for what their hands have done, lo! They despair. (Qur'ān, 30:36)

The portion a servant of Allāh may obtain of the inspiration of these Attributes is that he becomes "harmful" towards the enemies of Allāh while benefitting the friends of Allāh. In Sūrat al-Mā'ida, the Almighty describes the faithful as "... lowly before the believers, mighty against the unbelievers" (Qur'ān, 5:54). Such a believer does not plead to anyone, nor does he fear anyone except his Lord; he relies wholly on Allāh. One who fully realizes that his Lord, the Most Exalted One, is the One and only Who creates and makes things available, Who alone brings new things into existence, he will then submit to Him and rely on Him regarding all his affairs; he will then live enjoying a peaceful mind; he will be secure from people, and he will provide counsel for everyone. His heart will have no room for deception nor treachery.

It is good to combine both of these Attributes, *al-Ḍārr* and *al-Nāfiʿ*, together, for at them it is said that all Attributes end; He, Glory to Him, controls the means for people's harm and benefit, and none can harm anyone nor benefit anyone besides Him; "... and suffices your Lord for a Guide and a Helper" (Qur'ān, 25:31). One who remembers both of these Attributes will submit totally to Allāh and will always feel that everything is from Him and returns to Him.

93. "Al-Noor"

The Almighty has said,

> Allāh is the light of the heavens and the earth; a likeness of His light is a niche wherein there is a lamp; the lamp is in a glass, and the glass is as if it were a brightly shining star lit from a blessed olive-tree, neither eastern nor western, the oil whereof almost emanates light though fire does not touch it: light upon light; Allāh

guides whomsoever He pleases to His light, and Allāh sets forth parables for men, and Allāh is Cognizant of all things. (Qur'ān, 24:35)

In language, *noor* is light, whatever its glow, rays, or reflection may be. It aids vision. There are two kinds of light: a light related to the life of this world, and a light related to the life hereafter. The first, let us say the secular, is also of two types: one is what the mind, the intellect, can see; it is a Divine light, the light of reason, of the Holy Qur'ān. The other is related to the physical one, that of things which emit or reflect light such as the sun and the moon. An example for the Divine light is implied in a verse such as this: "... there has come to you light and a clear Book from Allāh" (Qur'ān, 5:15). Reference to the physical light exists in the verse saying, "He it is Who made the sun a shining brightness and the moon a light (a reflection)" (Qur'ān, 10:5). Here, the sun is mentioned before the moon because its light is more commonly associated with what we can see than the moon.

Al-Noor is the Apparent One Who has manifested Himself fully. The One Who is apparent on His own and Who makes everything else apparent and visible is called *al-Noor* Who takes things out of non-existence and brings them into the world of existence. *Al-Noor*, Glory to Him, has filled our world with light and brought it into existence, Who determined it since time immemorial, Who has illuminated the apparent existence through the sun and the stars, Who illuminated the world of spirits through the Messenger of Allāh, the master of the first generations and of the last, and He illuminated the hearts through the light of His Divinely revealed Books. He illuminated those endowed with knowledge with the light of Divine manifestations. *Al-Noor* has illuminated the hearts of the truthful through His Unity, and the conscience of those who love Him by His support for them. He beautified the complexions and brought life to the souls of the pious through their adoration. He guides the hearts to prefer and opt for what is right, Who guides the innermost conscience to silently address Him.

Noor, light, then, has many meanings. One of them is the light of knowledge and scholarship, which is the dawn of the truth as seen by the heart of a knowledgeable believer. The Attribute "*al-Noor*" has been mentioned in the text of the Holy Qur'ān and is attributed to Allāh in many places the best known of which is 24:35 cited above.

Ibn ʿAbbās says that the meaning of this verse is that Allāh is the Guide of the residents of the heavens and of the earth; the similitude of His guidance in the heart of a believer is like pure oil which shines even before fire touches it; therefore, when fire does touch it, it intensifies its light, so it intensifies and adds light to its light. The Attribute "*al-Noor*" is indicative of the fact that Allāh is the Light of the heavens and the earth.

There are many other verses wherein reference to Allāh's light is made; among them are the following:

> They desire to put out the light of Allāh with their mouths, and Allāh insists on perfecting His light though the unbelievers are averse thereto. (Qur'ān, 9:32)

> What?! Is he whose heart Allāh has opened for Islam, so he is in a light from his Lord (like the hard-hearted one)? Nay! Woe unto those whose hearts are hard against the remembrance of Allāh; surely they are in clear error. (Qur'ān, 39:22)

> And the earth shall beam with the light of its Lord, and the Book shall be laid down, and the prophets and the witnesses shall be brought forth, and judgment shall be issued between them with equity, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly. (Qur'ān, 39:69)

There are more than forty references to light in the text of the Holy Qur'ān. Some scholars are of the view that the Attribute "*al-Noor*" is Allāh's Greatest Name. They say that they cannot see anything in existence without seeing the meaning of this Attribute manifested in it.

The Messenger of Allāh used to supplicate to his Lord in the morning saying, "Lord! I invoke You to create light in my heart, light in all parts of my body, light in my hearing, light in my sight, light in my hair, light in my complexion, light in my flesh, light in my blood, light in my bones, light before me, light behind me, light on my right, light on my left, light above me, light underneath me! Lord! I implore You to increase my light, to grant me light, and to create light for me."

94. "Al-Hādi"

The Most Glorified and Exalted One has said,

... and sufficient is your Lord as a Guide and a Helper. (Qur'ān, 25:31)

"*Al-Hādi*" is an Attribute derived, linguistically, from *hidāya*, guidance, which means: to attract someone to something, such as attracting the heart of a believer to *al-Hādi*, to the One Who provides such guidance. Guidance means bringing the hearts closer to the Almighty.

Guidance is the following of one's sound reason and common sense and the graceful way of bringing someone to the anticipated goal. He guides the elite from among His servants whom He has chosen to know His Essence, so much so that they see things through Him, and He guides the commoners among them to witness His creatures, so much so that they have seen them as signs of His being their Creator and Sustainer. He has guided everything He created to whatever means whereby it can satisfy its needs. He has guided the baby to suck the breast of its mother, the young birds to pick the seeds, and the bees to build their honey-combs in hexagonal shapes which are the best to suit the forms of their bodies, and such examples are quite lengthy indeed.

Al-Hādi guides the guilty to repentance, and those blessed with knowledge to the facts regarding nearness to Him. *Al-Hādi* occupies the hearts by truthfulness and equity, the bodies by life and death. *Al-Hādi* has given everything He has created its shape and characteristics, and He guides whom He creates to the goals behind His creating them, to issues related to their life in this world and to those related to their creed, in addition to everything else related to them. He guides the hearts to know Him and the souls to obey Him; He guides the guilty to the path of repentance, the sincere ones to nearness to Him after being far from it. He keeps the hearts filled with love for equity and truth; He enables them to treat people justly. *Al-Hādi* is in all reality Allāh. *Al-Hādi* has guided the elite from among His servants to wisdom and knowledge.

Whenever the Messenger of Allāh woke up during the night for prayers, he would supplicate to his Lord saying, "Lord! God of Gabriel, Michael and Israfil, Originator of the heavens and the earth, Knower of the unknown and the Witness! You judge between Your servants regarding that wherein they dispute! I plead to You to guide me to that wherein they have differed, by Your will, for You guide whomsoever You please to a straight path."

95. "Al-Badeeʿ"

Allāh, Glory and Exaltation are His, has said,

> Wonderful Originator of the heavens and the earth! When He decrees an affair, He only says to it "Be!" and it is. (Qur'ān, 2:117)

In language, to originate is to bring about something without following a model or an example. *Al-Badeeʿ* is the Unique One; there is nothing similar to Him in His essence, qualities, or whatever He does; He has manifested the wonders that He has created as the most beautiful indications of His wisdom. He has created all cosmic worlds without a prior model. He, Exalted is His Name, has said, "Wonderful Originator of the heavens and the earth! How could He have a son when He has no consort, and He (Himself) created everything, and He knows all things?" (Qur'ān, 6:101).

"*Badeeʿ*" means: originator; one who does something new, originating its existence. "*Bidʿa*" means something new, an innovation, simply because nobody before had said or advocated it. Allāh is the Originator of all things without following a prior model. He did not learn their creation from anyone else; rather, He initiated the creation of all beings, so He is their Maker, the One Who started their existence. The Almighty, *al-Badeeʿ*, has brought everything into existence without the use of a tool or any material, without being limited to time or space in order to be able to do that.

Al-Badeeʿ has manifested the wonderful things of what He has done and the extra-ordinary proofs of His wisdom. He is the Absolute One Who has no peer similar to Him in His qualities, wisdom, or anything related to Him; He, and only He, is the Absolute *al-Badeeʿ* Who has created everything without following a prior model.

Since there is none like Him in His essence, characteristics, actions, or anything related to Him, that makes Him the Absolute Originator. If such a thing is known commonly, it cannot be called *badeeʿ* at all; so, this Attribute does not fit anyone besides Allāh. None was ever like Him nor ever will; therefore, His example never existed at all and never will, and whatever exists besides Him exists because of Him; He, and He alone, is the Originator since time immemorial and forever.

Anas ibn Mālik is quoted saying that the Messenger of Allāh once heard a man supplicating thus, "Lord! I plead to You by the fact that to You is all Praise due; there is no god but You; You are the One

Who never stops giving, Who originated the heavens and the earth, the One to Whom all Glory and Honour belong! I plead to You to grant me a place in Your Paradise, and I seek refuge with You against the fire," whereupon the Prophet said, "He surely has pleaded to Allāh by His Attribute which, if one pleads to Him by it, He grants the plea and gives what He is asked."

A believer's share of this Glorious Attribute is that if he repeats it quite often, Allāh will cause the springs of wisdom to flow from his tongue; he will be wise in his intentions, for intention is the bedrock of action. A servant of Allāh who remembers and repeats this Attribute quite often, being fully aware of its meanings, will be exposed to the beauty of its light. Allāh, the Truth, Exalted and Blessed is He, will permit him to enter into the circle of invention; He will make him a master obeyed by others. One of the norms of conduct of whoever mentions this Attribute quite often is the avoiding of innovations in the creed and full adherence to the Sunnah.

96. "Al-Bāqi"

Allāh, Glory and Exaltation are His, has said, "... and Allāh is better and more abiding" (Qur'ān, 20:73).

"*Al-Bāqi*" is one of Allāh's Attributes the root word of which is *baqā'*: the opposite of extinction. It also means: obedience to Allāh and awaiting His rewards, or the lingering status of goodness.

The reality of *al-Bāqi*, Glory to Him, is in His ever-enduring existence; endurance is one of His characteristics. *Al-Bāqi*, Glory to Him, always exists and Whose existence is necessitated by virtue of His own merits. He is ever-Present, Who remains existing forever, from the beginning of any beginning and for eternity. The Absolute *al-Bāqi* is the One the duration of Whom never ends, and such a duration is described as *abadi*, perpetual, eternal, endless. The Absolute *al-Qadeem* is the One the time of Whose beginning, if there is such a thing, goes back to the very beginning of time, and such a duration is called *azali*, eternal. When you say that His existence depends on His own merits, this Attribute will then include both meanings.

What affects the determining of the "past" and the "present" are certain variables; both words describe time, and nothing measures time other than change. One Who is above change by virtue of motion is above being affected by time; therefore, neither "past" nor

"future" can apply to Him. The Truth, Exalted is He, is before time, since He Himself created time, and nothing in Him changed, and He was before time, and He remains after His creation of time just as He has always been and will always be. Those who have claimed that duration is a characteristic added to the essence of *al-Bāqi* are far from the truth, and still further from the truth than them are those who claim that time is an additional quality in as far as the Eternal One is concerned. There is no need to bother the reader with details about such confusion regarding existence, duration, and which qualities endure.

Allāh's existence stands on its own merits and is self-necessitating, that is, it does not accept extinction in any way. The duration of anything which is self-sustaining during the past and will remain so in the future as well as it did in the past is called old, and its duration in the future is called existence.

The subject of enduring and duration attributed to Allāh has been referred to in the text of the Holy Qur'ān in more than one place. Examples are the following:

> ... and the sustenance of your Lord is better and more abiding. (Qur'ān, 20:131)
>
> And there will endure forever the person of your Lord, the Lord of glory and honour. (Qur'ān, 55:27)
>
> ... what is with Allāh is better and more lasting for those who believe and rely on their Lord. (Qur'ān, 42:36)
>
> ... ever-abiding good deeds are with your Lord best in recompense and best in yielding fruit. (Qur'ān, 19:76)

The good fortune a servant of Allāh may receive if he remembers this Attribute quite often is that the Almighty will reveal to him enduring facts and will make him observe the perishing trails, so he will flee eagerly to *al-Bāqi* and decorate his conduct with the meanings its qualities and moral code suggest.

97. "Al-Wārith"

Allāh has said,

... Allāh's is the heritage of the heavens and the earth, and Allāh is aware of everything you do. (Qur'ān, 3:180)

Al-Wārith, Glory to Him, remains after the extinction of all beings. He inherits everything after the extinction of everyone and everything. He is the Heir: on the Day of Judgment, it will be loudly called out, "To whom does the kingdom belong this Day? To Allāh, the One, The Subduer (of all)" (Qur'ān, 40:16).

The root word of the Attribute "*al-Wārith*" is "*waratha*," inherited: He will inherit all beings after their extinction. He is the only One Who remains after those who used to think that they possessed wares and items, the things which He had given them, will be gone; their existence, as well as that of what He has given them, is dependent on Him, and on none else. He has said, "And most surely We bring to life, and We cause death, and We are the heirs" (Qur'ān, 15:23).

What Allāh's servants used to own will go back to Him; there is no partner with Him. *Al-Wārith* is the One to Whom all possessions will go back after the death of their "owners." He will be the One Who will call on that Day, the Day of Judgment, as in 40:16, "To whom does the kingdom belong this Day?" and He will be the One Who will answer by saying, "To Allāh, the One, The Subduer (of all)" (Qur'ān, 40:16)." Most people mistakenly think that they have possessions which are their own, but the reality of the matter will be unfolded before their eyes on that Day. This call represents a fact which will then be revealed to everyone.

Reference to the subject of heritage as applied to the Almighty occurs in some Qur'ānic verses such as the following:

And most surely We bring to life and cause death, and We are the heirs. (Qur'ān, 15:23)

Surely We inherit the earth and all those on it and to Us shall they all be returned. (Qur'ān, 19:40)

And We desired to bestow a favour upon those who were deemed weak in the land and make them the Imāms and make them the heirs. (Qur'ān, 28:5)

Lord! Do not leave me alone, and You are the best of inheritors. (Qur'ān, 21:89)

The Messenger of Allāh used to supplicate saying, "Lord! I plead to You to grant me the enjoyment of my hearing and vision, and to make them my heirs."

98. "Al-Rasheed"

Allāh *subhānahu wa taʿālā* has said,

> And when My servants ask you concerning Me, then surely I am very near: I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls on Me; therefore, they should answer My call and believe in Me so that they will be rightly guided. (Qur'ān, 2:186)

The Attribute "*al-Rasheed*" is derived from *Rushd*, its root word, which means: guidance, righteousness, and uprightness, the antithesis of straying and crookedness. Its derivation accepts two possibilities: one is *al-Rasheed*, which means the same as *al-Rāshid*, the Wise One, so Wise is He that there is nothing among His deeds that can be regarded as wasteful or wrong. The other is that it may mean the same as *al-Badeeʿ*, and Allāh's *irshād*, that is, His leading His servants to the right path, is due to His *hidāya*, guidance. *Al-Rasheed* is the One Whose management of all affairs achieves its objectives without anyone else besides Him directing or assisting it, Who is none but Allāh, Glory to Him. *Al-Rasheed* pleases whoever He wills by providing him with His guidance, making whoever He wills miserable by distancing him from His guidance. He is the One in Whose management there is no lapse, and in Whose assessment there is no fault.

Al-Rasheed is characterized by complete perfection, great wisdom, ultimate guidance. He is the One Whose management of all affairs reaches its ultimate goal and success. He guides His creatures and leads them to what is best for them. He guides them through His wisdom towards the attainment of their well-being in the life of this world and in the life to come. *Al-Rasheed* has made those with whom He is pleased happy, Who guided His friends to Him; there is no negligence in His management of the affairs nor in His assessment, and He is known for His justice and favours.

Al-Rasheed is *al-Murshid*, the One Who inspires right guidance for those who obey Him, and He has led all beings to His guidance, the One Whose rope is strong, Whose command is wise.

In Sūrat al-Kahaf, we read the following verse, "Lord! Grant us

mercy from You, and provide for us a right course in our affairs" (Qur'ān, 18:10), and, "... whomsoever He causes to err, you shall not find for him any friend to lead (him) rightly" (Qur'ān, 18:17).

If a servant of Allāh wishes to be on the right track, his guidance will be proportionate with his terse management in the attainment of his secular and religious objectives. One must deal with his Lord, *al-Rasheed*, in a way whereby he properly relies on his Lord to guide him. His Lord will then lead him to reform his own self first, to refer all his affairs to Him, and to seek refuge with Him whenever evil touches him and pray for His help whenever he is afflicted, just as Allāh has told Moses to do: "And when he (Moses) turned his face towards Midyan, he said: Maybe my Lord will guide me to a course nearer to the right path than this" (Qur'ān, 18:24). Thus ought a servant of Allāh behave: when he wakes up, he should rely on his Lord, and whatever matter faces him, he should seek Allāh's help in its regard then await what signal his heart will respond thereto. He will then help him do whatever he needs to do and will suffice him regarding all his affairs. If he does contrary to what Allāh guides him, He will then reprimānd him so that he would know that his Lord found him to be insolent, hence he abandons his self-reliance and forsakes following his own mind and trickery. A servant of Allāh ought to quite often remember the Attribute "*al-Rasheed*" and cling to its meaning so that he may be led to the commendable conduct, and Allāh will then grant him wisdom and bestow His blessings upon him.

99. "Al-Ṣaboor"

The Praised and Glorified One has said,

> ... nor did they weaken, nor did they abase themselves, and Allāh loves those who are patient. (Qur'ān, 3:146)

"*Al-Ṣaboor*" is an Attribute of Allāh linguistically derived from the noun *ṣabr* which means: withholding one's self from expressing its overwhelming grief. *Al-Ṣaboor* is most patient, Whose patience is greater than anyone else's. The month of Ramaḍān is called the month of patience and perseverance: during its days, the believer withholds himself/herself from yielding to the desires.

Al-Ṣaboor, Glory to Him, is the Clement One Who does not surprise those who disobey Him by suddenly inflicting His penalty on

them; rather, He forgives and postpones His carrying out of such a penalty. *Al-Ṣaboor* does not rush to do anything too early; rather, He manages the affairs according to a measure; He conducts them according to a well-defined plan of His; He does not delay them from reaching their destined courses out of laziness or laxation, nor does He advance their execution. Rather, He does everything exactly at its right time, in the best way, as it ought to be. All of this He does without facing hardship which may frustrate His will. *Al-Ṣaboor* gives you and is true to you even when you are rude to Him. He comes to you forgiving even when you shun Him and revolt against Him.

Al-Ṣaboor does not rush to penalize those who disobey Him or to chastise those who sin. He does not do anything except when it is most opportune due to His wisdom, honour, and sublimity. He is not harmed by those who commit sins. He takes the guilty by the forelocks. *Al-Ṣaboor* commands and respites those to whom He issues His command; He observes and does not rush, nor does He do anything prematurely. He commands and His command is according to a certain measure. He cancels the penalty even after it becomes due. *Al-Ṣaboor* inspires patience and perseverance for all His creatures. The meaning of the Attribute "*al-Ṣaboor*" is very close to that of the other Attribute "*al-Ḥaleem*". The difference between the first and the latter is that with *al-Ṣaboor*, nobody can feel safe against His penalty, as is the case with *al-Ḥaleem*.

In Sūrat Āli-ʿImrān, the Almighty says, "O you who believe! Be patient, excel in patience, and remain steadfast" (Qur'ān, 3:200), that is, be patient while obeying Allāh, make your hearts accustomed tolerating affliction in the cause of Allāh, and train your innermost conscience to be eager for Allāh. It also means: Be patient for the sake of Allāh; persevere while seeking Allāh's Pleasure; remain in Allāh's camp. Patience regarding what Allāh decrees is a trial, and patience for the sake of Allāh is a hardship, while patience *with* Allāh is loyalty [to Him]. The Messenger of Allāh has said, "None is more patient regarding the pain of what he hears than Allāh: they ascribe sons to Him even as He grants them good health and sustenance."[1]

One of the manifestations of a believer's good conduct in deriving a moral code from the inspiration of the Attribute "*al-Ṣaboor*" is that

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[1]al-Bukhāri, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Vol. 9, p. 206.

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In Sūrat Āli-ʿImrān, the Almighty says, "O you who believe! Be patient, excel in patience, and remain steadfast" (Qur'ān, 3:200), that is, be patient while obeying Allāh, make your hearts accustomed tolerating affliction in the cause of Allāh, and train your innermost conscience to be eager for Allāh. It also means: Be patient for the sake of Allāh; persevere while seeking Allāh's Pleasure; remain in Allāh's camp. Patience regarding what Allāh decrees is a trial, and patience for the sake of Allāh is a hardship, while patience *with* Allāh is loyalty [to Him]. The Messenger of Allāh has said, "None is more patient regarding the pain of what he hears than Allāh: they ascribe sons to Him even as He grants them good health and sustenance."[1]

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[1] al-Bukhāri, *Sahīh*, Vol. 9, p. 206.

PART THREE

UNITY OF GOD (*TAWḤĪD*)

Islam falls in the category of monotheistic creeds whose adherents believe in the Oneness of God. This concept is referred to in Islam as *Tawhid*, and it is so important and so vast that volumes of books have been written about it. ʿAllama al-Majlisi, for example, dedicates two entire volumes of his encyclopedic work *Biḥār al-Anwār* to this most important tenet of Islam. Tawḥīd instructs Muslims that: there is only one God, one truth, one straight line between two points: God and His servants, one family, one couple of parents, Adam and Even, one human race, one heaven, and one hell.

Since the space here is limited, we will have to be brief as much as possible. Had we been able to afford the space, we would have refuted the views of dualists and polytheists as well as those who believe in the concept of the Trinity and in God having a son, a daughter, a wife, or any close family relative!

I *TAWḤĪD* IN THE HOLY QUR'ĀN

The Holy Qur'ān is an inexhaustible source of knowledge for those who seek to discuss this subject. We have preferred here to be very brief in bringing the reader the following aspects relevant to *Tawhid* as outlined in the Holy Qur'ān. Additional interesting and useful information shedding light on *Tawhid* is included in two chapters to follow.

a) Allāh is Unique, Peerless

Qur'ānic verses testifying to the fact that Allāh, Praise to Him, is One and peerless and can never have a partner in His authority, or a similitude, nor can He have a son, a daughter, an aunt, or any kin, are numerous; here are some of them:

> (He is) the Originator of the heavens and the earth; He made mates for you from among yourselves, and mates of (and for) the cattle, too, multiplying you (humans and animals) thereby; nothing is like Him; and He is the Hearing, the Seeing. (Qur'ān, 42:11)

Say: He, Allāh, is One. Allāh is He on Whom all (beings and things) depend. He does not beget, nor is He begotten. And none is like Him. (Qur'ān, 112:1-4)

He is Allāh, the One, the Subduer (of all). (Qur'ān, 39:4)

Say: Who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth? Say: Allāh. Say: Do you then take besides Him guardians who do not control any benefit or harm for themselves? Say: Are the blind and the seeing alike? Or can the darkness and the light be equal? Or have they set up with Allāh associates who have created creation like His, so what is created became confused to them? Say: Allāh is the Creator of all, and He is the One, the Supreme. (Qur'ān, 13:16)

All these verses, and many others, testify that Allāh is the One and Only God, negating the theories of dualists or polytheists.

b) He is the Only Creator

None besides Allāh has ever created anything out of nothing. He, and only He, is the Creator, whereas everything besides Him is a creation of His. Everything in the cosmos, the stars and constellations, the earth and its mountains, oceans, rivers, vegetation, small or large beings, and the humans who live on it, are all among His creations. Verses stressing this fact abound in the Holy Qur'ān; among them are:

(See Qur'ān, 13:16 above)

Allāh is the Creator of everything and He has authority over everything. His are the treasures of the heavens and the earth; as for those who disbelieve in the communications of Allāh, they surely are the losers. (Qur'ān, 39:62-63)

Such is Allāh, your Lord, the Creator of everything; there is no God but He; whence are you then turned away? (Qur'ān, 40:62)

Such is Allāh, your Lord; there is no god but He, the Creator of all things; so, worship Him (and Him alone), and He has charge of all things. (Qur'ān, 6:102)

He is Allāh, the Creator, the Maker, the Fashioner; His are the most beautiful names; whatever in the heavens and in the earth

declares His glory, and He is the Mighty, the Wise. (Qur'ān, 59:24)

(Allāh is the) Wonderful Originator of the heavens and the earth! How could He have a son when He has no consort, and He (Himself) created everything? And He knows all things. (Qur'ān, 6:101)

O men! Call to mind the favour of Allāh on you; is there any creator besides Allāh who gives you sustenance from the heavens and the earth? There is no god but He; whence are you then turned away? (Qur'ān, 35:3)

Surely your Lord is Allāh Who created the heavens and the earth in six periods of time, and He is firm in power; He throws the veil of night over the day, which it incessantly pursues, and (He created) the sun and the moon and the stars (and) made them subservient (to you, serving you) by His command; surely His is the creation and the command; blessed is Allāh, the Lord of the worlds. (Qur'ān, 7:54)

c) The One in Godhead and in Nurturing His Beings

There is only One God for the entire cosmos. He deals with it as He pleases without having anyone to share His authority, or to help Him. He manages the affairs through many agents, the most noteworthy of whom are the angels who outnumber by many, many times, all the residents of earth, and whose duties and ranks vary a great deal. They carry out His orders most efficiently and effectively; He enabled them to do so. Consider the following verses:

Surely your Lord is Allāh Who created the heavens and the earth in six periods, and He is firm in power, regulating the affairs; there is no intercessor except with His permission. Such is Allāh, your Lord; so, worship Him; will you not then mind? (Qur'ān, 10:3)

Allāh raised the heavens without any pillars that you can see, and He is firm in power, and He made the sun and the moon subservient (to you): each pursues its course to an appointed time; He regulates the affairs, making clear the signs so that you may be certain of meeting your Lord. (Qur'ān, 13:2)

He is the Supreme above His servants, and He sends keepers over you until, when death comes to one of you, Our messengers (angels

of death) cause him to die, and they are not remiss. (Qur'ān, 6:61)

Allāh takes the souls away at the time of death (through His agents, the angels of death), and those that do not die during their sleep, He withholds those on whom He has passed the decree of death and sends the others back till an appointed term; most surely there are signs in this for people who reflect. (Qur'ān, 39:42)

And seek assistance through patience and prayer, and most surely it is hard except for the humble ones. (Qur'ān, 2:45)

Say: Allāh's is the intercession all of it; His is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, then to Him shall you all be brought back. (Qur'ān, 39:44)

And how many an angel is there in the heavens whose intercession does not avail at all except after Allāh has given permission to whom He pleases and chooses (to receive His mercy)? (Qur'ān, 53:26)

Say: None in the heavens and in the earth knows the unseen except Allāh, and they do not know when they shall be raised. (Qur'ān, 27:65)

On no account will Allāh leave the believers in the condition in which you are till He separates the evil from the good, nor is Allāh going to make you acquainted with the unseen, but Allāh chooses as His prophets whomsoever He pleases; so, believe in Allāh and in His prophets, and if you believe and guard (yourselves against evil), you shall then have a great reward. (Qur'ān, 3:179)

And when I am sick, He restores health to me. (Qur'ān, 26:80)

And We reveal of the Qur'ān that wherein there is a healing and a mercy to the believers, and it adds only perdition to the unjust ones. (Qur'ān, 17:82)

Surely Allāh bestows sustenance, the Lord of Power, the Strong One. (Qur'ān, 51:58)

... and maintain them out of (the benefits thereof), and clothe them and speak to them words of honest advice. (Qur'ān, 4:5)

Have you considered what you sow? Is it you that cause it to grow, or do We not cause its growth?! (Qur'ān, 56:63-64)

... it delights the one that sows it, so that He may enrage the unbelievers on their account; Allāh has promised those who believe and do good from among them forgiveness and a great reward. (Qur'ān, 48:29)

... Allāh writes down (through His agents, the angels) what they decide by night; therefore, turn aside from them and trust in Allāh, and Allāh suffices as the Protector. (Qur'ān, 4:81)

Aye! And Our messengers (angels) are with them writing down (whatever they say and do). (Qur'ān, 43:80)

As for those who do not believe in the hereafter, We have surely made their deeds fair-seeming to them, so they blindly wander on. (Qur'ān, 27:4)

And Satan made their deeds fair-seeming to them and said: No one can overcome you this day, and surely I am your protector. But when the two parties came in sight of each other, he turned upon his heels and said: Surely I am clear of you; surely I see what you do not see; surely I fear Allāh. And Allāh is severe in requiting (evil). (Qur'ān, 8:48)

And We have appointed form them comrades, so they have made fair-seeming to them what is before them and what is behind them. (Qur'ān, 41:25)

Say: Who gives you sustenance from the heavens and the earth? Or Who controls the hearing and the sight? And Who brings forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living? And Who regulates the affairs? They will then say: Allāh. Say: Will you not then guard (yourselves against evil)? (Qur'ān, 20:31)

Then those that regulate the affair (on behalf of and according to the instructions of Allāh)... (Qur'ān, 79:5)

... and you did not smite them when you smote (the, the enemy), but it was Allāh Who smote (them). (Qur'ān, 8:17)

Had there been in them any gods other than Allāh, they would have

both been in a state of disorder; therefore, glory to Allāh, the Lord of the dominion, above what they attribute (to Him). (Qur'ān, 21:22)

Neither did Allāh take to Himself a son, and never was there with him any (other) god; in that case, each god would certainly have taken away what he created, and some of them would certainly have overpowered others; glory to Allāh above what they describe! (Qur'ān, 23:91)

d) Allāh is the Only Source of Legislation

For the Muslims, Allāh is the only One Who legislates every rule of their lives. Such a code of legislation, i.e. the *Sharī'a*, regulates everyone's relationship with all others as well as with his/her Lord and Maker. The Holy Qur'ān clearly indicates that no man-made law or constitution is acceptable, that the only canon is the Holy Qur'ān. Verses requiring the believers to obey only Allāh are numerous; here are some of them:

You do not worship besides Him except names which you yourselves and your fathers have named; Allāh has not sent down any authority for them; judgment is only Allāh's; He has commanded that you should worship none but Him; this is the right religion, but most people do not know. (Qur'ān, 12:40)

Is it then the judgment of (the times of) ignorance (*jāhiliyya*) that they desire? And who is better than Allāh to judge for people who are sure? (Qur'ān, 5:50)

Surely We revealed the Torah in which there was guidance and light. With it, the prophets who submitted themselves (to Allāh) judged (matters) for those who were Jews, and the masters of Divine knowledge and the doctors, because they were required to guard (part) of the Book of Allāh, and they were witnesses thereof; therefore, do not fear the people but fear Me, and do not take a small price for My communications. Whoever does not judge by what Allāh has revealed, they are the unbelievers. And We prescribed to them in it that: a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a nose for a nose, an ear for an ear, a tooth for a tooth, and (that there is) reprisal in wounds; but whoever forgoes it, it shall be an expiation for him, and whoever does not judge by what Allāh revealed, those are they that are the unjust. And We sent after them

in their footsteps Jesus son of Mary testifying to what was before him of the Torah, and We gave him the Gospel wherein there was guidance and light and testifying to what was before it of the Torah, and a guidance, and an admonition for those who guard (themselves against evil). And the People of the Book should have judged by what Allāh revealed in it, and whoever does not judge by what Allāh revealed, those are they that are the transgressors. (Qur'ān, 5:44-47)

The questions that force themselves on us here are: Are Muslims really following the Islamic Sharī'a? Are they deriving their laws from the Holy Qur'ān? Do their legal, social, and economical systems adhere to the Holy Qur'ān? What about their blind imitation of the anti-Islamic Western way of life? What about their bowing down to the authority of the organization called the "United Nations" which is ruled by the non-Muslim and anti-Islamic permanent members of its Security Council? Why do they brag about following the so-called "international law" knowing that it is neither the law of the Holy Qur'ān, nor does the Islamic Sharī'a make room for any man-made code of any kind whatsoever? For how long will they keep closing their eyes to the fact that the United Nations is united only against them? Will they ever wake up? When will they ever tell the United Nations to go to hell? But they have first of all to purge their countries of corrupt rulers who fear nothing more than the Islamic Sharī'a and who derive their strength not from public support but from the enemies of the Islamic Sharī'a.

e) The Only One to Obey

Only Allāh should be obeyed. Obedience of His commandments manifests one's submission to Him. A Muslim is required to do only what pleases Allāh and what He has decreed as permissible. Anything besides that is apostasy:

Be careful of (your duty to) Allāh as much as you can, and hear and obey and spend (of what He bestows upon you); it is better for your souls (that you do so), and whoever is saved from the greediness of his soul, these it is that are the successful. (Qur'ān, 64:16)

And We did not send any prophet except that he should be obeyed by Allāh's permission. (Qur'ān, 4:64)

f) Allāh is the Only Judge

Allāh is the only Judge, the Judge of Judges, the One Whose authority is above that of anyone else's. His Word is the law, His injunctions are binding on everyone. To accept anyone else's judgment in preference to Allāh's is to commit *shirk*; we seek refuge with Him against doing so. Consider the following verses:

> (See 12:40 above)

> Say: Surely I have a manifest proof from my Lord but you call it a lie; I have not with me (to bring about) that which you hasten; judgment is only Allāh's; He relates the truth and He is the best of those who decide. (Qur'ān, 6:57)

> Then they are sent back to Allāh, their Master, the True One; surely His is the judgment, and He is the swiftest in taking account. (Qur'ān, 6:62)

> O David! Surely We have made you a ruler in the land; so judge between men with justice and do not follow (your own personal) desire lest it should lead you astray from the path of Allāh. (Qur'ān, 38:26)

g) Rewards of Testifying that "There is no god except Allāh"

To articulate the testimony of *La ilaha illa-Allāh* (There is no god except Allāh) is regarded in Islam as an act of worship for which the believer will be richly rewarded. Such rewards are recorded starting from p. 20 of *Thawāb al-Aʿmāl wa Iqāb al-Aʿmāl* by the great mentor Abu Jaʿfer Muḥammed ibn ʿAli ibn al-Husain ibn Babawayh al-Ṣadūq al-Qummi (d. 381 A.H./991 A.D.) and published in 1410 A.H./1989 A.D. by al-Aʿlami Establishment for Publications (Beirut, Lebanon). We would like to quote some of the very interesting and enlightening text on those pages for the benefit of the dear reader:

Abu Saʿīd al-Khudri[1] quotes the Messenger of Allāh saying, "Allāh, the most Exalted and Sublime, said once to Moses son of

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[1]He was Saʿd ibn Mālik ibn Sinān al-Khudri al-Ansāri al-Khazraji, Abu Saʿīd, a *ṣaḥābi* who kept the Prophet company and participated in twelve of his military campaigns. He died in 74 A.H./693 A.D.

ʿImrān (Amram), `O Moses! Had the heavens and all those who reside therein, as well as those of the seven (layers) of earth, been placed on one scale and *La ilāha illa-Allāh* on the other, the scale containing *La ilaha illa-Allāh* would surely have weighed more."

The great *sahābi* Jābir ibn Abdullāh al-Anṣāri quotes the Messenger of Allāh saying, "Two most sure things are: 1) Whoever dies testifying that There is no god except Allāh will enter Paradise and, 2) Whoever dies associating anything with Allāh will enter the fire (of hell)."

Imām Jaʿfer al-Ṣādiq quotes his great grandfather the Messenger of Allāh saying, "Teach your dying persons to say: *Lā ilāha illa-Allāh*, for it will smash their sins all of them." He was asked, "O Messenger of Allāh! What about one who says so while enjoying good health?" He said, "That is more smashing to them, more so, and still more! Indeed, *Lā ilāha illa-Allāh* is the best companion of anyone during his lifetime, when he dies, and when he is brought back to life again... Gabriel has said (to me): `O Muhammed! Were you only to see them when they are brought back to life again! Some are raised with white faces calling out: *Lā ilāha illa-Allāh! Allāhu Akbar!* And the faces of others will be black, and they will be crying out: *Ya Waylāh! Ya Thuburāh!* (O woe unto me! O what a calamity!)'"

The Messenger of Allāh has said, "Whoever says: *Lā ilāha illa-Allāh* will have a tree planted for him in Paradise of red sapphire; it is planted in white musk, is sweeter than honey and is more white than snow; its fragrance is better than musk, its fruit looks like virgins' breasts, and it opens up for seventy outfits."

Jābir ibn Yazīd al-Juʿfi quotes Imām Abu Jaʿfer al-Bāqir who quotes the Messenger of Allāh saying, "For everything there is something else equal to it except Allāh, the Exalted, the Sublime, for nothing at all equals Him, and so is *Lā ilāha illa-Allāh*: nothing equals it. Nothing can weigh heavier than one's tear shed out of fear of Allāh. If it trickles down his face, no exhaustion nor humiliation shall ever touch it (his face) thereafter."

The Commander of the Faithful Imām ʿAli ibn Abu Tālib has said, "Whenever a servant of Allāh says: *Lā ilāha illa-Allāh*, it (the statement) ascends piercing every ceiling, wiping out his sins as it passes by them till it reaches its equivalent in good deeds. It is only there that it will."

Abu Jaʿfer, Imām Muhammed al-Bāqir, has said "Nothing is

more rewardable than testifying that There is no god except Allāh, for nothing equates Allāh, the most Exalted One, nor is there any partner with him."

Abu Saʿīd al-Khudri quotes the Messenger of Allāh saying, "I have not said anything, nor has anyone else before me, like: *Lā ilāha illa-Allāh*."

Abu Abdullāh Imām Jaʿfer al-Ṣādiq has said, "The testimony of *lā ilāha illa-Allāh* is the price of Paradise."

The Messenger of Allāh is quoted saying, "Repeat *lā ilāha illa-Allāh* and *Allāhu Akbar* as often as you can, for Allāh loves nothing more than them both."

Of course the more you pronounce this short but very weighty statement, the more rewards you will earn. Imām Jaʿfer al-Sādiq has said, "Whoever repeats the testimony of *lā ilāha illa-Allāh* a hundred times is better than all other people that day except one who repeats it more often than him."

Imām al-Sādiq has also said, "If one says *Lā ilāha illa-Allāh* a hundred times prior to going to bed, Allāh builds him a mansion in Paradise, and whoever seeks Allāh's forgiveness a hundred times before going to bed, his sins will fall down as leaves fall down from the trees."

II HOW SUNNIS VIEW ALLĀH

First of all, the references cited in this part are all written by well known Sunni scholars of *hadīth*. The numbers of their books' volumes and pages reflect those of their original Arabic texts. Many of them are yet to be translated into English. The translated ones, on the other hand, are quite often edited, and the editing includes the elimination of a good deal of the original text.

Like Jews and Christians, Sunnis view Allāh as having created Adam in His own image. Reference to the Almighty creating Adam in His image exists in the Book of Genesis of the Old Testament, and some ignorant people take it literally. On p. 1481, Vol. 4, of the English translation of Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥ* (published in New Delhi, India, in 1977 by Nusrat ʿAli Nasri for Kitab Bhavan), Abu Hurayra quotes the Messenger of Allāh saying, "Allāh, the Exalted and Glorious,

created Adam in His own image with His length of sixty cubits..."[1] In Bukhāri, we read how Allāh is described as having the same physical appearance given to man. Read Bukhāri's *Saḥīḥ*, particularly the chapter on seeking permission to enter, p. 122, Vol. 2, where Sūrat al-Zumar is explained, p. 184, Vol. 6, "Kitāb al-*Tawḥīd*" (Book of the Unity of Allāh), where the verse saying, "... I created in My own hand," p. 192, Vol. 6, where the verse saying, "[Some faces] on that Day shall be pleased," in his explanation of the verse saying, "On the Day when a leg shall be uncovered" which exists in Sūrat Noon (i.e. 68:42), in his exegesis of Sūrat Qāf, in a chapter explaining the verse saying, "The mercy of Allāh is near to the doers of good" on p. 191 of Vol. 4, in his "Kitāb al-Tahajjud," in a chapter dealing with supplications and prayers at the end of the night, and elsewhere. Other references are indicated in the footnotes below.

Sunnis, as indicated above, claim that Allāh created Adam in His image[2], that He has fingers[3], legs[4], and feet[5]. As for Allāh having

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[1]The maximum length of a cubit is 21 inches; hence, they claim that Adam and the Almighty is each 15 feet tall... *Astaghfirullāh*...

[2]al-Bukhāri, *Sahīh*, "Kitāb al-Isti'thān" (Book of seeking permission to enter), in a chapter titled "Bāb Bid' al-Salām" (a chapter dealing with initiating a greeting). Muslim, *Sahīh*, "Kitāb al-Jannah wa sifāt naʿeemiha" (Book of Paradise and the description of its bliss), in a chapter titled "*Bāb yadkhul al-jannah aqwām af'idatuhum mithl af'idat al-tayr*" (a chapter about Paradise being entered by people whose hearts are like those of birds'), Vol. 28; see also Vol. 115, "Kitāb al-birr: Bab al-nahi ʿan darb al-wajh" (Book of kindness: a chapter dealing with the prohibition of striking the face." Ahmed ibn Hanbal, *Musnad*, Vol. 2, pp. 244, 251, 323, 365, 424, and 569.

[3]al-Bukhāri, *Sahīh*, Vol. 2, p. 122, where Surat al-Zumar is explained. It is also stated in Vol. 4, p. 186, where the verse "What stopped you (O Eblis) from prostrating to what I created with My own hand?" is explained. It is also stated in Vol. 4, p. 192, where the verse saying, "Some faces will on that Day be pleased" is discussed. Muslim, *Sahīh*, Vol. 19, pp. 21-22, where a description of the Day of Judgment, of Paradise, and of Hell, is given.

[4]al-Bukhāri, *Sahīh*, Vol. 4, p. 189, where verse 43 of Surat Noon is explained in "Kitāb al-Tawhīd" (Book of the Unity of God).

[5]al-Bukhāri, *Sahīh*, Vol. 4, p. 191, where Surat Qāf is explained. Al-
(continued...)

fingers, readers who are not fluent in Arabic are referred to p. 1461, Vol. 4, of the English translation of Muslim's *Sahīh* where they will be reading about Allāh's alleged fingers in the following "tradition" narrated by Abdullāh ibn Masʿūd[1], by Mansūr, and by al-Aʿmash. Both latter narrators narrate it in slightly different variations. Its unedited text is as follows:

> A Jew scholar came to Allāh's Prophet (may peace be upon him) and said: Muhammed, or Abu al-Qasim, verily, Allāh, the Exalted and Glorious, would carry the Heavens on the Day of Judgment upon one finger and earths upon one finger and the mountains and trees upon one finger and the ocean and moist earth upon one finger–in fact the whole of the creation upon one finger, and then He would stir them and say: I am your Lord, I am your Lord. Thereupon Allāh's Messenger (may peace be upon him) smiled testifying what that scholar had said.[2]

The same "tradition" is recorded in both its Arabic text and English translation on p. 113 of *The Divine Traditions*. In another "tradition" on the following page (p. 1462 of the English translation of Muslim's *Sahīh*), we are told that Allāh has hands. It is narrated by none other than Abu Hurayra who quotes the Messenger of Allāh saying, "Allāh, the Exalted and Glorious, will take in His grip the earth on the Day of Judgment and He would roll up the sky in His right hand and would say: I am the Lord; where are the sovereigns of the world?" With slightly different wording, the same "tradition" is narrated by Abdullāh ibn Omer, and it is also reported by Abu Bakr ibn Abu Shaybah and

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(...continued)
Tirmithi, *Sahīh*, Vols. 35-38, where a discussion of Hell being entered by the tyrants and Paradise by the weaklings exists.

[1]His name is Abdullāh ibn Masʿūd ibn Khāfil ibn Habīb al-Hathli, Abu Abd al-Rahmān, one of the foremost *sahāba* in Islamic history. He was the very first person in Mecca to openly recite the Holy Qur'ān. He spent years serving and accompanying the Messenger of Allāh, being one of his confidants. Ibn Masʿūd died in 32 A.H./652 A.D.

[2]This quotation is cited without any editing at all, hence its broken English! We wonder, since Allāh, according to this "tradition," has fingers, whether He also has toes!

is published in both languages on p. 114 of *The Divine Traditions*. Reference to Allāh's alleged hands exists in the following page (p. 1463 of the English translation of Muslim's *Saḥīh*); here is its unedited text:

> Abu al-Saʿīd Khudri[1] reported Allāh's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying that the earth would turn to be one single bread on the Day of Resurrection and the Almighty would turn it in His hand as one of you turns a loaf while on a journey. It would be a feast arranged in the honour of the people of Paradise. He (the narrator) further narrated that a person from among the Jews came and he said: Abu al-Qasim, may the Compassionate Lord be pleased with you! May I inform you about the feast arranged in honour of the people of Paradise on the Day of Resurrection? He said: Do it, of course. He said: The earth would become one single bread. Then Allāh's Messenger (may peace be upon him) looked towards us and laughed until his molar teeth became visible[2]. He then again said: May I inform you about that with which they would season it? He said: Do it, of course. He said: Their seasoning would be *balam* and fish. The Companions of the Holy Prophet (may peace be upon him) said: What is this *balam*? He said: Ox and fish from whose excessive livers seventy thousand people would be able to eat.

Since when did the Prophet of Allāh need the Jews to tell him about the hereafter? Could the Jews have told him better than arch-angel Gabriel? This is how Judaica crept into Islamic literature, wreaking havoc in and corrupting it, rendering it un-Islamic. Laughter is not at all dignifying. Whenever a Muslim laughs, he/she is supposed to seek Allāh's forgiveness and say, "*Allāhomma lā tamqutnī*" (O Allāh! Do not despise me!" Such is the Islamic code of conduct. Yet there are numerous references to the Prophet laughing in *aḥādīth* the authenticity of which leaves much to be desired. Whenever you laugh, you ought to remember verse 82 of Sūrat Barā'a: "So they shall laugh a little and weep much as a recompense for what they earned" (Qur'ān, 9:82). Imām Jaʿfer al-Ṣādiq quotes his fathers citing the

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[1]The correct spelling is: Abu Saʿīd al-Khudri as stated above.

[2]The Messenger of Allāh was never reported laughing; instead, he always smiled. He never audibly laughed.

Messenger of Allāh saying, "A good deal of jesting is not at all dignifying, while a good deal of laughter wipes out imān (conviction)."[1] Imām al-Sādiq has also quoted his father Imām Muhammed al-Bāqir saying, "(Prophet) David said to (his son, later Prophet) Solomon: `O son! Beware of laughing a lot, for a good deal of laughter leaves a servant of Allāh very poor on the Day of Judgment.'"[2] Abu Abdullāh, Imām Ja'fer al-Sādiq, has also said, "Three things invoke Allāh's contempt: one sleeps without having kept a vigil, laughs without having witnessed something extra-ordinary, and one who eats though his stomach is already full."[3] One of the pieces of advice given by the Messenger of Allāh to Abu Tharr al-Ghifāri was this one which is recorded in *'Uyoon Akhbār al-Rida*: "Strange how one who knows that there is the fire (of hell) and who still laughs." He has also said, "Beware of much laughter, for it causes the death of the heart."[4] The Messenger of Allāh always smiled but never laughed. As a matter of fact, to smile in the face of your Muslim brother is equivalent to paying charity, according to one *hadīth*. One day the Messenger of Allāh passed by a band of young Ansāris who were talking and laughing heartily, so he said to them, "O folks! Anyone among you who is deceived by his hopes and is short of doing good deeds should look at the graves and be admonished about the life to come. And remember death, for it shall put an end to each and every enjoyment."[5]

The readers may tolerate reading about the Prophet laughing, but what is their conclusion when they come across the claim that Allāh, too, laughs?! References to Allāh laughing exist in lengthy "traditions" narrated by Ma'āth ibn Fudālah who quotes Hishām quoting Qatādah quoting Anas ibn Mālik and is recorded on pp. 119-120 of *The Divine Traditions*. It depicts one of the scenes on the Day of Judgment. A

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[1]al-Sadūq, *Āmāli*, p. 324.

[2]al-Majlisi, *Bihār al-Anwār*, Vol. 73, p. 58, citing *Qurb al-Isnād*.

[3]*Ibid*.

[4]*Ibid*., p. 59.

[5]al-Tūsi, *Al-Āmāli*, Vol. 2, p. 136.

variation of it is narrated by Abd al-ʿAzīz ibn Abdullāh who quotes Ibrahīm ibn Saʿd quoting Ibn Shihab quoting ʿAtā ibn Yazīd al-Laythi quoting Abu Hurayra, and it is recorded by al-Bukhāri and cited on pp. 121-122 of *The Divine Traditions*. We do not think it is worth quoting here.

Sunnis also claim that Allāh occupies a certain space and travels from one place to another, building their argument not on any Qur'ānic verse but on a tradition wherein the Messenger of Allāh says, "Our Lord, before creating His creation, did not have anything with Him; underneath Him was air; above Him was air, then He created His throne on water."[1] They also quote the Messenger of Allāh saying, "His ʿArsh was over His heavens like this (then he demonstrated with his finger the shape of a dome), and He mounted it as a rider mounts over the saddle of his mount."[2] They also quote him saying, "Allāh descends at the last part of the night from the heavens to the lower earth and says, `Who is there to ask Me, so I respond to him, and who is there to ask Me, so I give him?'"[3] They also quote him saying, "Allāh descends during the night of the middle of Shaʿban to the lower heavens where He forgives..."[4] They also quote him saying the following about the Day of Judgment: "It will be said to hell: `Are you filled up?' It will say, `Is there any more?' So the Lord, Blessed and Exalted is He, will put His leg into it, whereupon it will say, `Now I am full!'" In another version of this "tradition," Prophet Muhammed is quoted saying, "As to the fire (of hell), it will not be filled up until He puts His foot in it, whereupon

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[1]Ibn Mājah, *Sunan*, Introduction. al-Tirmithi, *Sunan*, where Surat Hūd is explained. Ahmed ibn Hanbal, *Musnad*, Vol. 4, pp. 11-12.

[2]Abu Dawūd, *Sunan*, "Kitāb al-Sunnah". Ibn Mājah, *Sunan*, Introduction. Muhammed ibn Abd al-Wahhāb, *Kitāb al-Tawhīd*. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Minhāj al-Sunnah*.

[3]al-Bukhāri, *Sahīh*, Vol. 2, pp. 233-235. Ibn Mājah, *Sunan*, "Kitāb al-Salāh." Ibn Mālik, *Mawta'*, "Kitāb al-Qur'ān," Chapter 30. Ahmed ibn Hanbal, *Musnad*, Vol. 2, pp. 264, 267, 282, 419, 433, 487, 504, and 521.

[4]al-Tirmithi, *Sunan*, where he discusses the fast and the night of the middle of Shaʿbān. Ibn Mājah, *Sunan*, in a volume dealing with the prayers and with the night of the middle of Shaʿbān. Ahmed ibn Hanbal, *Musnad*, Vol. 2, p. 433.

it will say, `Now, only now, am I full!' It is then that it will be full, and each of its parts will close in on the other."[1] Similar variations of this "tradition" are narrated by Qatādah who quotes Anas ibn Mālik.

Sunnis claim that Allāh will be seen by Muḥammed, the Messenger of Allāh, who will have audience with Him, as well as by everyone else on the Day of Judgment. They quote the Messenger of Allāh saying, "The believers will come to Me foı intercession after all prophets refuse to intercede on their behalf, so I will set out and seek audience with my Lord, and I will be granted audience with Him. Once I see my Lord, I shall fall down prostrating... Then I shall seek His intercession, and He will draw a line for me, so I shall let them enter Paradise. Then I shall go back to my Lord. Once I see Him, I shall fall prostrating..., etc."[2] According to this "tradition,"[3] the Almighty is confined to a specific place where He is visited by the Messenger of Allāh who recognizes Him upon seeing Him... An entire chapter in *The Divine Traditions* is dedicated to the believers allegedly seeing their Lord. It starts on p. 157. The narrators who narrate such "traditions" include: Ubaydullah ibn Omer ibn Maysarah, Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Mahdi, Ḥammād ibn Salāmah, Thābit al-Bunāni,

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[1]Both "traditions" are narrated on the authority of the "*sahābi*" Abu Hurayra (to be discussed later in this book) when al-Bukhāri, in Vol. 3, p. 128, of his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, explains Surat Qāf. They are repeated in Vol. 4, p. 191 of the same book in "*Kitāb al-Tawhīd*." The "tradition" referring to Allāh's foot is narrated by Anas and is detailed in Vol. 4, p. 129, of the same *Ṣaḥīḥ*. To review more of such "traditions," refer to "Kitāb al-Jannah" in al-Tirmithi's *Sunan*, Vol. 10, p. 29, where the eternity of the residents of Paradise and those of hell is discussed. See also Ahmed ibn Hanbal's *Musnad*, Vol. 2, p. 396. Readers who are not well versed in Arabic may read their texts together with their English translation in *The Divine Traditions*, especially on p. 149 where the *verbatim* and unedited text reads as follows: "As for Paradise, (it will be filled with good people) because Allāh does not wrong any of His created beings, and He created for Hell whomever He will, and they will be thrown into it, and it will say thrice, `Is there any more?' Till Allāh will put His Foot over it, and it will become full and its sides will come close to each other and it will say, `Enough! Enough! Enough!' Bukhāri transmitted it."

[2]al-Bukhāri, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Vol. 4, p. 185, "Kitāb al-Tawhīd." See also Vol. 4, p. 190 of the same reference.

[3]This "tradition" is cited on pp. 115-116 of *The Divine Traditions*.

Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Abu Layla, Shuhayb, Jābir ibn Abdullāh, Saheeb, and others. They are recorded in the *hadīth* and *sunan* books of Bukhāri, Muslim, Ibn Mājah, al-Tirmithi, and al-Nisā'i. Sunnis also quote the Messenger of Allāh saying, "Allāh, Blessed and Exalted is He, will descend on the Day of Judgment to His servants in order to judge between them."[1] They claim that he said, "You shall see your God with your own eyes."[2] They claim that Muslims will see their God on the Day of Judgment just as they see the moon without suffering any pain while looking at Him.[3] They go beyond that to cite the Almighty saying, "Whoever worships something, let him follow it." So, they proceed to say, some people will follow the sun while others will follow the moon, while still others will follow the tyrants, and this nation shall stay including its hypocrites. "Allāh will then come to them not in the shape whereby they know Him, and He will say, `I am your God.' They will say, `We seek refuge with Allāh against you. We shall stay here till our God comes to us. So once our God comes to us, we shall recognize Him.' It is then that Allāh will go to them in the shape whereby they know Him, and He will say, `I am your God.' They will say, `You are our Lord,' and they shall follow Him... etc."[4] Another "tradition" states the following:

> So when nobody remains except the righteous and the libertine who worshipped Allāh, the Lord of the Worlds will come to them in the form wherein they saw Him, and He will ask them, "What are you waiting for? Each nation should follow what it used to worship." They will say, "We are waiting for our Lord Whom we worshipped." "I am your Lord," He will say. They will twice or thrice respond by saying, "We do not associate any with Allāh..." He will ask them, "Is there any mark whereby you can recognize Him?" They will say, "Yes, the leg." So He will uncover His leg, whereupon they will fall prostrating. Then they will raise their heads and see Him in the form whereby they saw Him the first time. It is then that He will

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[1]al-Tirmithi, *Sunan*, Vol. 9, p. 229, "Kitāb al-Zuhd."

[2]al-Bukhāri, *Saḥīh*, Vol. 4, p. 188, "Kitāb al-Tawḥīd."

[3]*Ibid.*, Vol. 10, pp. 18 and 20.

[4]Muslim, *Saḥīh*, Vol. 4, p. 188, "Kitāb al-Imān."

say, "I am your Lord." They will say, "You are our Lord."[1]

And Allāh speaks to His servants on the Day of Judgment and those near and far will hear His voice as we are told in the following "tradition" compiled and published in *The Divine Traditions* (Al-Ahadith al-Qudsiya); its text here exists on p. 226 and is unedited, hence its broken English:

> Jabir (RAA) narrated on the authority of Abdullāh bin Unais (RAA) who said, "Allāh will gather the people and call them with a Voice which will be heard by those who will be far away and those who will be near, by saying, `I am the King; I am the Daiyan (The one who Judges people on their deeds after calling them to account). Bukhāri transmitted it. (The Book [of] Monotheism; chapter: The statement of Allāh, "No intercession avails with Him except for him whom He permits" (Qur'ān, 34:23).

Sunnis, therefore, believe that Allāh will speak to His servants who will be permitted to enter into His Paradise as the above cited quotation implies. There is another lengthy "tradition" on pp. 160-161 of *The Divine Traditions* transmitted by Sa'īd ibn al-Musayyab who met Abu Hurayra who informed him of it. A portion of it states, as the poorly translated text reads, as follows:

> Abu Huraira told that he asked, "O Allāh's Messenger, shall we see our Lord?" To which he replied, "Yes, are you in doubt about seeing the sun and the moon on the night when it is full?" On receiving the reply that they were not, he said, "Similarly you will have no doubts about the vision of your Lord, and no man will remain in that assembly without Allāh conversing with him, till he says to one of them, `So and so son of so and so, do you remember the day you said such-and-such?' And He will remind him of one of the dishonest things he did in the world. He will say, `O my Lord, hast Thou not forgiven me?' And He will reply, `Yes; by the

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 229, "Kitāb al-Imān," in a chapter about how to see. Al-Bukhāri words this "tradition" slightly differently in Vol. 4, p. 189 in his "Kitāb al-Tawhīd." We wish those who saw their Lord and His leg would tell us all about it! They will then be doing us a great favor, indeed! *Astaghfirullah...*

widness[1] of my forgiveness you have reached this station of yours."[2]

This "tradition" is included in al-Tirmithi's *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Vol. 2, pp. 89-90. There are many such "traditions" which the reader can review in Bukhāri, Muslim, Ibn Mājah, and other "reliable" Sunni recorders of *ḥadīth*. Had we attempted to quote all of them here, this book would have become much larger than it already is. Probably the most evident of the belief of Sunnis that Allāh has the same human physical attributes is what is recorded by the "imām of imāms," namely the great *hāfiz* Muḥammed ibn Isḥāq ibn Khuzaymah (d. 311 A.H./923 A.D.) who taught *ḥadīth* to both Bukhāri and Muslim. He wrote a book with a rather lengthy title: *Al-Tawḥīd wa ithbāt ṣifāt al-rabb ʿazza wa jall allati wasafa bihā nafsah fi tanzeelih wa ʿala lisān nabiyyih* (The Unity of God and the proof about the characteristics of the Lord, the Unique and the Exalted One, whereby He described Himself in His Book and through His Prophet). This book was published in 1378 A.H./1958 A.D. by Maktabat al-Kulliyyāt al-Azhariyya (Library of al-Azhar's Colleges) at Maydān al-Azhar, Cairo. The titles of some of this book sound like a piece-by-piece list of the Almighty's alleged bodily parts: His face, His form, His eyes, His hearing, His vision, His hands, His leg..., and a chapter on how all the believers will see Allāh on the Day of Judgment and will be able to recognize Him. Another *hāfiz imām*, Othmān ibn Saʿīd al-Dārmi (d. 280 A.H./893 A.D.), wrote a book as a rebuttal to the views of the Jahmites; among its chapters are: how the Lord seats Himself on the Throne and ascends to heavens, how He is different from His creation, how He descends on the night of the middle of Shaʿbān, how He descends on the Day of ʿArafāt, how He descends on the Day of Judgment for the great trial, how He descends to the residents of Paradise, and how He is seen.

This much should suffice to demonstrate to the discreet reader how our Sunni brethren consider the Almighty as having a physical body quite like ours, how He comes and goes, ascends and descends,

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[1]This is how the text reads... The translator should have used "expanse," "spaciousness," "extent," "breadth," or the like.

[2]– The Divine Traditions, Tr. Dr. Ibrahīm al-Selek, Dar el-Fiker (Beirut, Lebanon, 1994), p. 160.

walks, talks, laughs and does I do not know what else...!

III HOW SHĪ'AS VIEW ALLĀH

The above views adopted and recorded by Sunni Muslims are not at all endorsed by Shī'a Muslims who refute them by quoting verse 103 of Sūrat al-An'ām (Qur'ān, 6:103) that states the following:

> Vision does not comprehend Him, while He comprehends all vision, and He knows all the subtleties, (He is) the Aware One.

In their view, the Almighty is not a physical form and, hence, does not occupy a space, nor does He move from one place to another, nor can He be seen by anyone. They contend that their Sunni brethren simply do not have the proper *tafsīr* (exegesis) of certain Qur'ānic verses such as the following:

> Some faces will on that Day be bright, looking to their Lord. (Qur'ān, 75:22)

"Looking to their Lord" does not mean "looking at their Lord;" it means: they are waiting in optimistic anticipation for His rewards. As regarding the Almighty seating Himself on the 'Arsh, the Throne of Authority, Imām Ja'fer al-Ṣādiq, from whose *fiqh* Ithna-'Asheri Ja'feri Shī'as derive the *aḥkām* of their creed, says the following:

> Whoever claims that Allāh sits on the 'Arsh considers Allāh as being conveyed (or mounted on something), implying that what conveys Him has to be stronger than Him (so it could carry His weight). And whoever claims that Allāh is present somewhere, or is on top of something, or there is a place where He is not there, or that He occupies a space..., would be attributing to Him characteristics which are strictly relevant to those whom He creates, whereas Allāh is the Creator of everything. He cannot be measured or compared by anything; He cannot be like people; He is not absent from anywhere, and He does not occupy a specific space.[1]

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[1]al-Kulayni, *Usool al-Kāfi*, Vol. 1, pp. 3, 7, and 9, "Kitāb al-Tawhīd." Shaikh al-Ṣadūq, *Al-Tawhīd*, pp. 9-10, p. 12. al-Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 3, p. 311, "Kitāb al-Tawhīd."

Shīʿas also refute this claim by citing Imām ʿAli ibn Abu Ṭālib saying,

> Allāh does not descend, nor does He need to descend. Such is claimed by those who attribute to Him an increase or a decrease. Everything mobile needs what mobilizes it or what means whereby it moves. Beware, then, when you discuss His characteristics lest you should imply any increase or decrease to Him, any movement or mobilization, any departure or descending, any sitting or standing.[1]

This is the view held by all other Imāms from Ahl al-Bayt; none of them contradicts the other; such is the true creed, one wherein there is no contradiction at all.

Allāh as Viewed by the Commander of the Faithful Imām ʿAli

Two narrators, Muḥammed ibn Abi Abdillāh and Muḥammed ibn Yahya, narrate a tradition related by Abu Abdullāh Imām Jaʿfer al-Ṣādiq citing the Commander of the Faithful Imām ʿAli ibn Abu Ṭālib delivering a sermon once in order to solicit people's support in his second war against Muʿāwiyah ibn Abu Sufyān. In it, the Commander of the Faithful says,

> All praise is due to Allāh, the One and Only God Who is sought by all, the Unique One Who is neither created out of anything pre-existing, nor has He created anything out of something. Through His Might does He manifest Himself, and it is through His Might that anything manifests itself. None of His attributes can be fully comprehended, nor does He have any measure whereby He is compared. The tongue in any language is too crippled to describe His attributes, and the circumlocution of His attributes leads into nowhere but a blind alley. The sharpest of intellects are too puzzled to comprehend His kingdom; all comprehensive explanations are rendered short of delving into His kingdom. Unknown curtains obstruct the understanding of the lowest levels of His hidden knowledge, and the keenest insights are totally lost in comprehending the most (seemingly) superficial of His subtleties.
>
> So Glorified is Allāh Who cannot be reached by the most ambitious of wills, nor can He be grasped by the deepest of insights.

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[1] *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 18. al-Majlisi, *Bihār al-Anwār*, Vol. 3, p. 311.

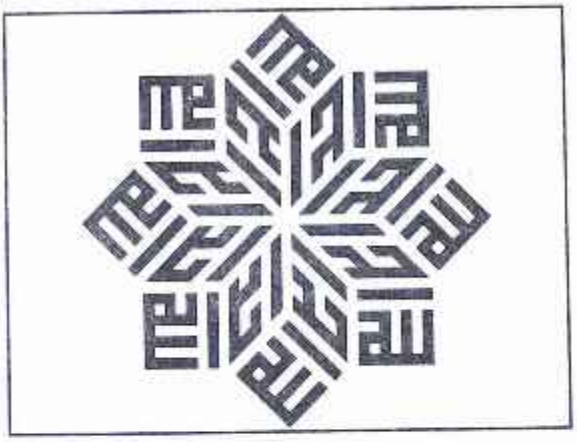
Exalted is He for Whom there is no measure of time, nor any fixed duration, nor any limited description. Praised is He Who has no beginning at all nor any end, nor any extinction. Glorified is He as He has described Himself. Those who attempt to describe Him can never do so. He delineated the boundaries of all things when He created them without having modelled them after any pre-existing models, thus distinguishing Himself from their similitude. Never has He resided in them, so it could be said that He is contained therein, nor has He been apart from them, so a place outside them could be sought for Him. Rather, He, all Praise is due to Him, encompassed them in His knowledge and perfected their design and computed them. Even things beyond the curtains of the atmosphere are never hidden from His knowledge, nor are those obscurities within the depth of the dark, nor are those in the high heavens, nor are those in the lowest layers of the earth: for each and every thing in them there is a custodian and a keeper, each one of them surrounds the others, while His knowledge encompasses them all.

He is the One and Only God upon Whom all depend for their existence and subsistence, the One Whom the passage of time never alters, nor does the creation of things tire Him. Whatever He wills, He says to it, "Be!" and it is. He created everything without following a pre-existing model or a precedent, and without encountering any fatigue or a prior planning. Whoever makes something makes it out of something else, whereas Allāh created everything out of nothing. Every scholar acquires knowledge after being ignorant, while Allāh is never ignorant, nor has He ever acquired knowledge out of what He creates. He encompasses all things in His knowledge before creating them. Nothing is added to His knowledge because of their coming into existence: His knowledge is the same before and after He brought them into existence. He never created what He created in order to enhance His control, nor out of fear of its decay or loss, nor to seek help out of it against His adversary, nor to seek the upper hand over a progressive competitor, nor seeking to be the equal of a dominating partner; all creation is nurtured by Him; everyone and everything are humbled slaves before Him.

Glorified is He Who never feels weary on account of creating what He creates, nor in nurturing whatever He creates, nor does He, out of inability or slackness, terminate what He creates. He knows what He creates and creates what He knows. Whatever He creates He creates neither out of deliberating on any new knowledge, nor does any doubt entertain Him on account of what He creates. Rather, He creates out of His inviolable decision, firm

knowledge, and exact command. He made Himself unique in His Mastership, peerless in unity, grandeur, and sublimity. He remains peerless in praise and exalted in glory. He is far above parenthood, purified from and sanctified against any cohabitation.

He is too Great and too Mighty to seek any partners. Thus, none among what He creates opposes Him, nor is there any equal peer like Him from among His possessions, nor is there any partner in His Kingdom. He is the One, the Unique, the One sought by all, the Eternal, the Everlasting, the Lord of the cosmos Who has always been and shall always be, the eternally all alone before the beginning of time and after the end of all affairs. He will never terminate nor expire. Thus do I describe my Lord; there is no god except Allāh; Great is He and how Great! Glorified is He and how Glorified! Almighty is He and how Almighty! He is far above what the unjust ones say about Him, far, far above that!



HOW TO SUPPLICATE TO ALLĀH

Before addressing the issue of how to supplicate to Allāh, we need to tackle the subject of how are we to worship Him.

After Allāh, the Glorified and the Exalted One, had created us, after we admitted His Oneness and Might, and after He had taken from us a covenant and made us bear witness against our own selves that He is our Creator, He returned us to the loins of Adam, made us in the loins of humans, each in the loins of his forefathers, then He brought us into this world whenever He willed, defining His reason for creating us, which is: to worship Him, and only Him. After having sent us prophets and messengers during various ages to warn us against worshipping anyone but Him and chosen the best of His messengers for us, namely our master Muhammed, the best of creeds, namely Islam, and the best of divine books, namely the Holy Qur'ān..., after all of that, it becomes incumbent upon us to answer questions such as: How are we to adore Allāh? What are the best means to achieve this end?

The answers to these questions are provided by the best of creation, messengers and prophets, our master Muḥammed . Having been asked once what adoration was, he answered, "Supplication is adoration," then he recited the Qur'ānic verse saying, "And your Lord says: Call upon Me, I will answer you; surely those who are too proud to worship Me shall soon enter hell abased" (Qur'ān, 40:60).

In order to emphasize the fact that supplication is the zenith of adoration as the Holy Qur'ān states, we would like to present some Qur'ānic verses that highlight this fact and underscore the significance of supplication:

> Say: My Lord would not care for you were it not for your *duʿā'* (supplication). (Qur'ān, 25:77)
>
> And who speaks better than he who calls to Allāh while he himself does good [deeds] and says: I am surely of those who submit (to Allāh in Islam)? (Qur'ān, 41:33)
>
> Those to whom they call upon, they themselves seek the means of

access to their Lord–whoever of them is nearest–and they hope for His mercy and fear His chastisement. (Qur'ān, 17:57)

And withhold yourself with those who call on their Lord morning and evening desiring His goodwill. (Qur'ān, 18:28)

Their sides draw away from their beds; they call upon their Lord in fear and in hope. (Qur'ān, 32:16)

They used to hasten, one with another, in deeds of goodness and to call upon Us, hoping and fearing. (Qur'ān, 21:90)

To this then go on inviting, and go on steadfastly on the right way as you are commanded, and do not follow their low desires. (Qur'ān, 42:15)

And I will call upon my Lord; maybe I shall not remain unblessed in calling upon my Lord. (Qur'ān, 19:48)

He is the Living, there is no god but He; therefore, call on Him, being sincere to Him in obedience. (Qur'ān, 40:65)

Praise to Allāh Who has given me despite old age Ishmael and Isāc; most surely my Lord is the Hearer of prayer. (Qur'ān, 14:39)

And when My servants ask you concerning Me, surely I am very near; I answer the prayer (supplication) of the suppliant when he calls on Me. (Qur'ān, 2:186)

These are only samples of what the Holy Qur'ān contains of verses stressing the importance of supplication for the creation, clarifying for them the status supplication enjoys with their Creator.

A SUPPLICATION CONTAINING ALLĀH'S GREATEST NAME

Imām al-Husain ibn ᶜAli ibn Abu Tālib is quoted narrating the following incident:

"We were making our *tawāf* around the Kaᶜba when we heard

someone reciting these verses of poetry:

O You Who answers the distressed and those who in the depth of the darkness utter their supplication,
O You Who removes the causes of the trials, the pain, together with the tribulation,
Around Your Sacred House are Your guests who have come from everywhere,
Supplicating while the eyes of Allāh never sleep, always aware,
I plead to You to grant me Your Forgiveness for the sins I have committed, by Your Grace,
Your creation knows You, Lord, to be Most Gracious, so I plead to You by the Light of Your Face!
If Your pardon never reaches a sinner nor bless,
Who is to be gracious unto those who transgress?

"My father ʿAli ibn Abu Ṭālib," the Imām continues, "said, `O Ḥusain! Don't you hear someone grieving about his sin, complaining to his Lord? Go and bring him here.' So I hurried till I was able to reach him. I found him to be a handsome man, his body looked free of deformity, his clothes seemed to be very clean, and I could smell the perfume he was wearing. I also noticed that his right side was paralyzed. I approached him and ordered him to present himself before the Commander of the Faithful. He came and the Commander of the Faithful asked him, `Who are you, and what is your story?' The man said, `O Commander of the Faithful! What is the case of a man who opted to do what is punishable while not performing what he is enjoined to perform?' The Imām asked him again, `What is your name?' The man answered, `Munāzil son of Lāḥiq.' He asked him, `What is your story?' He said, `I used to be quite famous among the Arabs for merry-making and sinning in my youth, without waking from my slumber. Now if I repent, my repentance will not be accepted from me, and if I try to amend my steps, I will not be able to do that either. So I prolong my transgression during the [sacred] months of Rajab and Shaʿbān. My father used to be quite affectionate and compassionate towards me. He used to warn me against the outcome of my ignorance and the terrible end awaiting the transgressors. He used to say, `O son! Allāh sometimes manifests His might when He expresses His Wrath; so, do not tread the avenues of those who will be penalized with the Fire, for how often people have

complained about you, and so have the sacred angels, and the sacred months, the nights, and the days?' Yet whenever he persisted in admonishing and reprimanding me, I persisted in beating him. One day, when my conduct pressured him too much, he said, `By Allāh I am going to fast and will not break my fast, and I shall offer prayers and will not sleep...' He fasted for one week, then he rode a lean camel and went to Mecca for the pilgrimage and said, `I shall go to the House of Allāh, and I shall plead to Allāh to side with me against you.' He reached Mecca on the day of the Great Pilgrimage, took hold of the curtains of the Kaʿba and invoked Allāh against me saying,

O One to Whom pilgrims come from far and wide,
Those who come walking, and those who ride,
Hoping to win he Grace of the One, the Dignified,
The One who Sustains, from Whom none can hide,
This Munazil never seems to cease, though I chide,
So effect retribution; Your Judgment none can override,
And do inflict pain on him and do paralyze his side,
You were never born, nor bears, but is always sanctified!

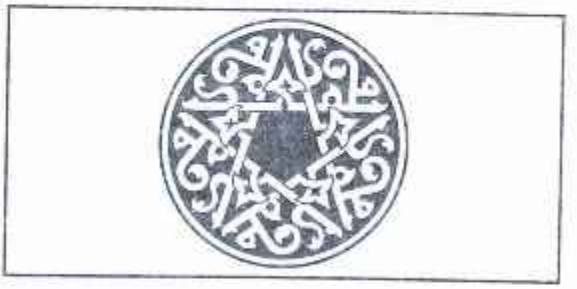
"I swear by the One Who raised the heavens and caused the water to form springs, he hardly finished his statement when my right side was completely paralyzed, and I remained like a piece of wood lying somewhere in the precincts of the Sacred House. People used to come and go and say about me, `This is a man the plea of whose father Allāh has answered.'"

Imām ʿAli asked him, "What did your father do?" He said, "O Commander ot the Faithful! I requested him to invoke Allāh on my behalf in the same way he invoked Him against me, now since he reconciled and was pleased with me. I placed him on a she-camel and we rushed till we reached the valley of Arak when a bird suddenly flew from a tree and scared the she-camel. My father fell and died on the way.' ʿAli said, "Shall I teach you certain invocations which I have learned from the Messenger of Allāh and about which he said that nobody recites them without Allāh Almighty removing his distress from him?" He said, "Yes, please do!" Imām al-Ḥusain stood up and taught him the invocation. He recited it and was healed from his ailment and his complete health returned to him. I asked the man,

"What did you do?" He said, 'When all the eyes calmed down, I recited it, then repeated it a second time, then a third, whereupon I heard someone saying, `Suffices you Allāh, for you have invoked Him by His Greatest Name which, if anyone implores Him by it, He will answer him, and if anyone requests him for something, He will grant it!' So I slept and I saw the Messenger of Allāh in my vision, and he said to me, `Truly ʿAli, my cousin, has told you the truth: it does contain Allāh's Greatest Attribute which, if one pleads to Him by it, He will oblige, and if one asks Him for something, He will grant it.' Then I saw him a second time in a vision, so I said to him, `O Messenger of Allāh! I love to hear you reciting that invocation!' He said,

> Lord! I plead to You, O One Who knows what is hidden! O One by Whose Might the heavens is erected, and the earth is spread out, and the sun and the moon through the Light of Whose Greatness illuminate and shine! O One Who approaches every believing and pure soul! O One Who removes the fear of those who are in awe of Him, those who are righteous! O One Who takes care of all the needs of His creation, Who has saved Yousuf from the bondage of slavery, Who has no doorman to be approached, nor does He have a supporter to be defeated, nor does He have a vizier to be bribed, nor is there any other god besides Him so he would be called upon, nor does He increase, despite His giving, except in giving and in open-handedness..., and surely Allāh has blessed Muhammed and his progeny! Whereupon I implore You, Lord, to grant me my quest, for You can do anything at all.

"So I woke up and I was healed." ʿAli said, "Uphold this supplication, for it is one of the treasures of Paradise."



ADAM AND EVE

To know the Almighty is to know His creation. And one of His most important creation is Adam. To discuss Adam, father of the human race and the first prophet to mankind, is, in fact, to open a huge Pandora's box. Numerous questions will inevitably have to be dealt with not only about him but also about the other beings with whom he came in contact. We have no choice except to tackle cumbersome issues relevant to his creation, his arch-enemy Eblis (or Iblis), the angels, the jinns, Paradise, heaven and hell, devils and demons, and how all this knowledge can affect our life. To avoid these questions is to surrender to the worst type of ignorance. Ignorance is one of the two deadliest of all enemies of man, the second being fear.

There was a time when there was no Adam at all, nor was there a Paradise, a *janna*, as it is called in the Holy Qur'ān, a word which means: a garden or an orchard. The earth before Adam's time was populated by species called jānn. These jānns were embroiled in fights, shedding each other's blood and causing a great deal of mischief on earth. It is to their blood that the angels referred as cited in verse 30 of Sūrat al-Baqara (Qur'ān, 2:30). The angels were busy doing what Allāh had created them to do: adoring Him, praising and glorifying Him. The Almighty removed the veils from their eyes once and permitted them to look at the earth to witness the bloodshed going on there. What they saw horrified them; it was something they had never seen before. A band from among them was chosen to go to earth to discipline those beings, to kill the mischief-makers, to banish them from their homes, and to permit them to live only on islands, seas and oceans, and in forests, and so it was. Eblis was taken captive; his life was saved on account of his age. Eblis grew up among the angels, doing what the angels were doing, so much so that they mistook him for one of them till he committed his disobedience and was cast away from the kingdom of heaven. This is his story in brief, and more light will be shed on it on the following pages.

Here is a statement by Sa'īd ibn al-Musayyab[1] which deals with

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[1]His full name is Sa'īd ibn al-Musayyab ibn Hazan ibn Abu Wahab al-Makhzūmi al-Qarashi, Abu Muhammed, one of the *tābi'īn*, and one of the (continued...)

these beings:

> Angels are neither males nor females; they do not give birth, nor do they eat or drink. The jinns give birth to males or females [and, hence, multiply as humans do]; they live and die. Satans are males and females; they multiply by birth, but they do not die: they stay alive in this world till the end of time as is the case with Eblis.[1]

The Angels

Now let us start by discussing the Angels: very energetic and intelligent beings created from light. They cannot be seen by all humans; their light is too strong for our weak eyes, it is blinding. They will be seen when the veil from our eyes is removed at the moment of death; read the following verse in testimony of this fact:

> ... now We have removed your veil from you, so your sight today is sharp. (Qur'ān, 50:22)

The "veil" referred to in this verse is the one the Almighty placed between us and other beings such as the angels and the jinns. Only prophets and messengers of Allāh and their deputies, as well as a number of ordinary people elevated by Allāh to a high spiritual

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(...continued)
seven *faqīhs* of Medina during the first Hijri century. He was born in 13 A.H./632 A.D. and died in 94 A.H./712 A.D. He was an ascetic, a traditionist, and a man of piety.

[1]Abu al-Qāsim Maḥmūd ibn Omer al-Zamakhshari, *Rabeeʿ al-Abrār wa Nuṣoos al-Akhbār*, Vol. 1, p. 308. Al-Zamakhshari, a Muʿtazilite, is one of the most famous and highly respected Sunni scholars of the fifth Islamic century. He left for the Islamic library very precious books dealing with Arabic linguistics (although he was not an Arab), exegesis, *hadīth*, and logic. He was born in Zamakhshar, a small town in Khawarizm, Iran, on a Wednesday, Rajab 27, 467 A.H./March 18, 1075 A.D. during the ʿAbbāside dynasty and died in Jurjan, Iran, on Thul-Hijjah 9, 538 A.H./June 13, 1144 A.D. May Allāh have mercy on his soul and reward him on our behalf with the best of His rewards for all the scholarly work he did, *Allāhomma Ameen*.

station, can see them when they appear in human form[1]. The angel who appeared to Virgin Mary looked as human as any man. Archangel Gabriel appeared to our Prophet and to past prophets mostly in a human form. Before the time of Noah, people used to be pious and God-fearing, so much so that angels used to come to them in human form, looking and smelling the best, to shake hands with them. A testimony to the truth of this statement lies in an incident that took place during Prophet Muhammed's lifetime. One of his renown companions was ʿImrān ibn al-Haseen[2] whom the angels used to visit and with whom they used to keep company. Then they ceased visiting him, and he sorely missed them. He; therefore, went to the Prophet and said, "O Messenger of Allāh! Men used to come to me better than whose faces I have never seen, nor have I smelled better than their fragrance. But they stopped visiting me." The Messenger of Allāh asked him, "Did you receive a wound the incident involving which you kept to yourself?" The Prophet was referring to a wound received in defense of Islam, in the line of duty of *jihād*. ʿImrān answered him by saying, "Yes; it so happened." The Messenger of Allāh then said to him, "Had you kept its story to yourself and safeguarded its secret, the angels would have kept visiting you till your death."[3] This incident demonstrates to us how much Allāh appreciates the doing of good and not talking about it. A good Muslim may be able, if he tries hard enough, to communicate with his guardian angels, those charged with protecting him from any potentially fatal incident till the time of his death with which they are familiar. Communicating with the angels is not at all impossible if you ascend a certain spiritual ladder. Here in America, communication with higher beings is a science referred to as "channeling." The world

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[1]According to some accounts, Gabriel appeared sometimes to Prophet Muhammed in the form of a bird.

[2]His full name is: ʿImrān ibn Haseen ibn ʿUbayd. He was one of the scholars of the *sahāba*. He accepted Islam in 7 A.H./629 A.D. when the Jewish fortress of Khayber in Medina was overrun by the Muslims. He was the standard bearer of the tribe of Khuzāʿah when Mecca was opened before the victorious Muslim troops. Ziyād appointed him governor of Basra where he died in 52 A.H./672 A.D.

[3]al-Zamakhshari, *Rabeeʿ al-Abrār*, Vol. 1, p. 307.

is actually full of beings, but our eyes are too weak to see them, our intellects are too feeble to understand them, and our means of transportation are still too rudimentary to reach them.

Abu Tharr al-Ghifāri[1] has quoted the Messenger of Allāh saying, "I can see what you cannot, and I can hear what you cannot. The heavens has screamed, and it is justified, for there is no space in it, even as much as a span, except that there is an angel in it standing, kneeling, or prostrating." In another version of this tradition, the Prophet is quoted saying, "There is no place in it, as much as four fingers, except that there is an angel in it prostrating to Allāh. By Allāh! Had you known what I know, you would have laughed very little and cried much, and you would not have enjoyed women in bed; you would have come out to your courtyards tearfully crying to Allāh. By Allāh, I wish I had been a tree chopped."

Individuals blessed with high spiritual knowledge will be able to identify many of the types of angels during the temporary period of the *barzakh*, that is, the life in the grave, the intermediate stage between our present life and the eternal one following the Judgment, at the time of the Great Gathering, when everyone will be tried, when each person will have to go either to heaven (Paradise) on or to hell after all disputes and claims are settled by the Supreme Judge, the Judge of judges. The denzines of hell are certainly created differently from the custodians of Paradise: fire does not affect them; they are the most ruthless of all angels.

Angels vary a great deal in ranks, but they all have a lot in common: they are very intelligent beings who are totally obedient to the Almighty. They do exactly what He commands them to do without any hesitation. Their chiefs, the arch-angels, enjoy a degree of freedom of choice as long as it does not contradict the will of the Almighty. Their greatest are: Gabriel, Michael, Israfil, and Israel. Gabriel supervises and sometimes directly gets involved in conveying the Almighty's instructions, commands, and other messages to the prophets and messengers sent to the human family. He is regarded as

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[1]His full name is Jundab ibn Junādah ibn Sufyān ibn 'Ubayd, a great *ṣaḥābi* of Prophet Muhammed. He was generous and truthful. He never treasured wealth at all, be it small or big. He lived in Damascus and undertook a mission urging the poor to demand their legitimate rights from the rich. He died in 32 A.H./653 A.D.

the angel of mercy, since these prophets and messengers are sent as a mercy from the Almighty to mankind. The status Gabriel enjoys with Allāh is quite supreme; he is the best of all angels; he is closer to and is loved by Allāh more than any other angel; he is referred to as the "peacock" of angels. Whenever he came to visit Prophet Muḥammed to convey to him a divine message from his Lord, Gabriel most often assumed a human form. Whenever the Prophet talked about Gabriel, he always referred to him as his Brother. And surely Allāh knows best.

Next to Gabriel in the rank of greatness is Michael. As his name suggests, Michael is charged with keeping track of the countless computations and measures. He balances the innumerable changes that take place in the cosmos every fraction of a second. Imagine the magnanimity of such a task! Do you have any idea about the number of stars and constellations, the orbits within which each turns, its weight, size, velocity, speed, and relationship to and distance from others? Can you imagine the drops of water, be they in the form of rain, or as oceans and rivers, wells and springs, how these waters evaporate then come down to earth in the form of rain without changing the weight of our planet? Can you imagine the air we and other earthly beings breathe, and can you imagine the task of tracing it, where it comes and where it goes, how it gets affected or contaminated by other gases, be they on the surface of the earth, above or underneath it, and all the living beings that inhale it? Can you imagine the number of the trees and their leaves, their species and interrelations? And what about the animals, the birds, the species of fish, the creatures that live in the oceans and the seas?! No mind can grasp all of that, but Michael, assisted by countless other angels, is empowered by his Creator to do a job so perfect and so complete, it baffles the mind. The credit goes to his Maker. Add to this list the responsibility of keeping track of what is done by each and every human and other living beings.

To discuss only the subject of the angels charged with protecting, praying for, and recording the deeds of each one of us is to write a good size book. And do you think that the animals are left out, that they are not being watched or supervised or kept track of?! Do you think that they are exempted from accounting for what they do? If your answer is positive, then you are dead wrong: read the following verse from Sūrat al-Takwīr which clearly tells you that animals, not

only humans, will have to account for what they do: "And when the wild animals are made to go forth (assemble)" (Qur'ān, 81:5). The original Arabic word for what is loosely and feebly translated here in this verse as "made to go forth" is *hushirat*, a past participle of the present tense *yahshur*, gathers, assembles, herds. But their judgment will be nothing compared to ours. On the Day of Judgment, most humans will wish they had been animals, plants, or even inanimate objects...

Arch-angel Israfil is known for his trumpet the first blow of which is referred to above. The second blow of the trumpet, or the horn, will signal the returning of the souls back to their newly reconstructed bodies. The time period between the first blow and the second is forty years[1]. The Almighty will have during that period of time recreated all the bodies. Needless to say, the soul is indestructible; it does not die; only the body does. The latter will this time be quite durable, quite strong, and it will look the same like our present one. The new body will not be as perishable as our present one, and nobody will need to go to the doctor, to the dentist, or to the optometrist!

What does Israfil do besides blowing the trumpet? As his name suggests, it is derived from "*israf*," extravagance, going to extremes. All those who are guilty of extravagance need someone to deal with them, be they humans or non-humans, jinns or demons. All those who rob people of their hard earned livelihood under the name of "interest" or "usury," and all those who permit themselves to kill tens of thousands of others so that they themselves will be safe, and all those who steal other people's land and make it their home, and all those who starve Muslims and strangle them economically and politically, using their United Nations as a vehicle to enforce economic sanctions on them..., and all those rulers who call themselves Muslim and yet who are the worst enemies of Islam: they hoard wealth for themselves, for their relatives and friends, depriving the rest of their people from it; and all those who agree to be beasts of burden upon whose submissive backs the enemies of the Muslims get a free ride, and the ride takes them wherever they want to go, even if that means to the detriment of the interests of their own people; and all those who build their thrones on the skulls of their subjects, who kill their

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[1]al-Jazā'iri, *Al-Noor al-Mubeen*, p 60.

scholars, who banish their intellectuals, who torture those who dare to criticize their savagery; and all those who despise others in general and Muslims in particular, and many, many such evil ones upon whom we invoke the curse of the Almighty... have to be dealt with sooner better than later. To deal with such evil humans, with their feuds and in-fights, with the mischief they create on earth, with their wars and crimes..., is a task too big to conceive. But the task of handling the devils and demons, be they from among the humans or from among the jinns, and to put an end to the mischief they cause on earth[1], with their attempts to alter the balance of nature, the perfect order the Almighty has created..., may be a greater one, indeed. Yet Israfil is qualified to head his team, to organize their activities, and to make sure that things remain under control. Whenever Allāh wishes to wipe out an ungrateful and mischief-making nation, such as one which permits men to marry men or women to marry women without feeling ashamed of it, from the face of earth, Israfil is always ready to do the job, and we wish he will do it soon. We supplicate to the Almighty to annihilate all those who bear grudge and animosity towards the Muslims of the world and to wipe them out and purge the earth from their filth, *Allāhomma Āmīn*.

Arch-angel Israel heads the team of angels charged with taking away the souls of living beings. We do not know whether these are confined to humans or whether they include others. Whenever someone's turn to die comes close, two angels are sent to him to pull life out of each and every living cell of his body, a very, very painful thought if you can only imagine it. In the words of prophet Moses, it is like skinning a live animal. Hardly any two humans die the same death. The method of each one's death will largely depend on his or her way of life, on the extent of righteousness, fear of the Almighty, and goodness to others, or on wickedness, malice, avarice, greed, the desire to acquire power at any cost, the hatred towards any other believer, the doing of the opposite of what Allāh has enjoined us to do... All these factors will be taken into consideration before the angels are assigned to do the job. If a person is one with whom Allāh is pleased, the angels of death will come to him in human form. He

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[1] I could not find any clue suggesting that the jinns live anywhere else besides the earth.

will feel very comfortable upon seeing them, and he will recognize them as the angels of death and will be respectful to them. They are faithful servants of the Almighty, and anyone who serves the Almighty faithfully deserves to be respected. But sinners will have no joy at the moment of death. Rough, ugly, demon-like angels will come to take their souls away, and they will do so in the most painful manner, beating their faces and backs (as in 8:50-51 below), as they pull life out of them. It will be most horrifying. The Holy Qur'ān describes the horrors of such soul snatching in many verses; here are some of them:

> And had you only seen when the angels cause those who disbelieve to die, smiting their faces and their backs and (saying): Taste the punishment of the burning! This is for what your own hands have committed before, and because Allāh is not in the least unjust to the servants. (Qur'ān, 8:50-51)

> Had you only seen when the unjust are in the agonies of death, (how) the angels spread forth their hands (saying): Give up your souls! Today shall you be recompensed with an ignominious chastisement because you spoke against Allāh other than the truth and (because) you showed pride against His Signs. (Qur'ān, 6:93)

> But how will it be when the angels cause them to die, smiting their backs? That is so because they follow what displeases Allāh and are averse to His pleasure; therefore, He has made their deeds null. (Qur'ān, 47:27-28)

A close look at these verses in the light of *tafsīr* will cause anyone to shudder. People who live a clean and decent life, who help others, who pray for others, who console others, who do not envy others, who disseminate knowledge and guidance to others, who suffer so that others may live happily, who sacrifice themselves and everything they have for lofty morals and objectives... will have no reason to worry when it is time for them to leave this fleeting life and start the first leg of their very, very long journey to eternity. That first step is called the *barzakh*, the waiting time that follows life as we know it and precedes resurrection and the Day of Judgment. So; this is your one and only opportunity, dear reader, to do good, to be kind to others, to benefit others, to pray for others, to earn as many good deeds as Allāh enables you to. Once you lose this opportunity, it will be too late to regret it. Do not be self-centered; instead, let self-denial be

your motto. Do not talk about yourself; whenever you mention someone's name, say something nice about him or her and supplicate to Allāh to bless and reward him or her. If there is nothing nice that can be said, say nothing! If you want to condemn someone for having done something bad, concentrate your condemnation not on that individual but on the bad deed itself, and you do not have to mention the name of its doer, for the latter may repent and regret and be given a chance to make amends. Why do you let your steps lead you to hell because of others?! Let *them* go there, not you! Best yet, talk about Allāh, about His creation, His wonders, His miracles, His angels, His Books, His Day of Judgment, His Muslim *ummah*... These and many more subjects are a lot more worthy of your discussion than what this person or that has done or is doing.

Discussing arch-angel Israel, death, and the grave, leads one to wonder how he or she can be prepared for that inevitable moment. How can the agony and the pain of death be minimized? The reader who wishes to pursue this subject is advised to read the famous book *Thawāb al-Aʿmāl wa ʿIqāb al-Aʿmāl* by the great mentor Abu Jaʿfer Muḥammed ibn ʿAli ibn al-Husain ibn Babawayh al-Qummi al-Ṣadūq (d. 381 A.H./991 A.D.) where the rewards of good deeds and the penalties for the bad ones are detailed. For the benefit of the reader who cannot read this Arabic reference book for any reason, we would like to provide him with some of the knowledge contained in it, perhaps it will lead him to earn great rewards, and perhaps he will recite Sūrat al-Fatiḥa for the soul of the father of this book's author.

In order to save some space, the *isnād* of the following text has been eliminated:

Whoever visits the grave of a believer and seven times repeats the recitation of Sūrat al-Qadr (Chapter 97 of the Holy Qur'ān) will be forgiven, and so will the believer in the grave. When the soul of a believer is taken away, both angels (who took it away) will ascend to heaven and say, "Lord! Your servant so-and-so was always swift in obeying You, slow in his disobedience of You, and we have taken his soul away; so, what do You order us now to do?" The Almighty will say, "Go down to earth and stay at the grave of My servant and praise, glorify, and unify Me there, and write down the rewards of doing so for My servant till I resurrect him from his grave." How did those angels know so much about that believer? Each one of them, as books dealing with the subject of death and the life hereafter tell

us, will enter the deceased persons' body from underneath the skin of one of his feet's thumbs to examine every part of his body and record the sins he had committed relevant to that part. Once the recording is done, a book of deeds is made and is attached to the deceased. The conclusion, whether the angels are sure he has a very good chance of going to Paradise, or whether they are sure he will not, is placed at the top of this book of deeds. This is how they determine their conclusion. Needless to say, Allāh has the privilege to over-ride their conclusion.

When a believer is resurrected from his grave, someone looking like him will also come out and will walk in front of him. Whenever the believer witnesses one of the horrors of the Day of Judgment, his like will say to him, "Do not grieve, nor should you fret; rather, receive the glad tidings of happiness and honours from Allāh, the Exalted One, the Great." He will continue to assure him of happiness and honours from Allāh, the Exalted One and the Great, till he stands before Allāh Almighty Who will try him an easy trial then order His angels to escort him to Paradise. It is then that the believer will say to his like, "May Allāh have mercy on you! How beautifully you have come out with me from my grave, and how you have kept giving me the glad tiding of happiness and honour from Allāh, the most Exalted One and the most Great, till I saw it with my own eyes! Who are you?" His like will say, "I am the pleasure which you bring your brother in the life of the world. Allāh created me so that I might convey to you such glad tidings."[1]

Even consoling a bereaved Brother or Sister in Islam is rewardable, according to *hadīth*, with an outfit on the Day of Judgment to cover one's nakedness and to give him hope for salvation.

Abān ibn Taghlib narrates a tradition wherein he cites Imām Jaʿfer al-Ṣādiq saying, "Whoever dies during the time from Thursday's sunset till the time of *zawāl* (before noon) of the next Friday will be protected by Allāh from the grave's constriction."[2] It is a good habit

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[1]al-Ṣadūq, *Thawāb al-Aʿmāl wa ʿIqāb al-Aʿmāl*, p. 238.

[2]*Ibid.*, p. 231. The grave's constriction is one of the horrors almost every deceased person will have to suffer. The deceased will

(continued...)

to learn to spend the time going to work every day reciting the Fātiha on the way to work and the Qadr on the way back home. Then, at the end of the day, offer the rewards of such recitation to the souls of all believing men and women, the living and the dead. You will be rewarded with rewards the extent of which is known only by Allāh.

Let us now go back to the subject of the angels and try to find out whether the arch-angels, the greatest of Allāh's angels, die at all, including the angel of death himself. When the verse saying, "Every soul shall taste of death" (Qur'ān, 3:185) was revealed, the angels said, "Death has been decreed for all humans." And when the verses saying "Everyone on it must pass away. And there will endure forever the person of your Lord, the Lord of glory and honour" (Qur'ān, 55:26-27) were revealed, the angels said, "Now we, too, must die." Death will come to everyone when Israfil blows his trumpet for the first time. Sound kills. This is a scientific fact. When the verse saying, "And the trumpet shall be blown, so all those that are in the heavens (the angels) and in the earth (humans and jinns) shall be stunned except such as Allāh please..." (Qur'ān, 39:68) was revealed, Anas ibn Mālik says, some people asked the Messenger of Allāh who those included in the exception referred to above ["except such as Allāh please"] were. He said, "They are Gabriel, Michael, and the angel of death (Israel). Allāh will then ask the angel of death, `O angel of death! Who remains?' and Allāh knows more than him. Israfil will say, `They are Gabriel, Michael, Israfil, and the angel of death (meaning himself).' `O angel of death!' Allāh will say, `Take the life of Michael away,' and so will it be. He will fall into the form in which Allāh created him: like a huge mountain. Then he will ask, and He knows more, `O angel of death! Who remains?' Israel will say, `Glory to You, Lord. the One with all Greatness and Honour! Gabriel remains.' And he enjoys the status which has been mentioned to you. Allāh will address Gabriel saying, `O Gabriel! One of Us will have to die,' whereupon Gabriel will fall down prostrating, flapping his wings

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(...continued)
experience such a psychological pain that is impossible to describe in any language. It is as though the corners of the grave crush his corpse and reduce it to ashes. May Allāh *Subhanahu wa Taʿāla* exempt us from having to endure it. There are numerous traditions dealing with this topic. I hope Allāh will enable me to write about it.

and saying, `Glory to You, Lord, and all the Praise! You are the Eternal One Who never dies, whereas Gabriel is the mortal and is to be annihilated by death.' It is then that Allāh takes Gabriel's life away, causing him to fall over Michael. The distinction he has over Michael is like that of a huge mountain over a very small one."[1]

In the Holy Qur'ān, we read the following:

> *He (Allāh) said, O Eblis! What prevented you from doing obeisance to one whom I created with My hands? Are you proud, or are you of the exalted ones?* (Qur'ān, 38:75)

According to Abu Sa'īd al-Khudri, as we are told by al-Sadūq in his book *Fadā'il al-Shī'a*, a man once came to the Messenger of Allāh and asked him about the verse cited above. "Who are the exalted ones referred to in this verse, O Messenger of Allāh, the ones whose status is higher even than that of the angels?" The Messenger of Allāh said, "They are: I, 'Ali, Fātima, al-Hasan, and al-Husain. We were in the pavilion of the 'Arsh making *tasbeeh* (praising the Almighty), and the angels were repeating after us, one thousand years before Allāh, the Exalted and the Almighty, created Adam. When Allāh, the Exalted and the Almighty, created Adam, He ordered the angels to prostrate to him, and He did not order us to do likewise. All the angels prostrated except Eblis. Allāh, Praised and Exalted is He, then asked Eblis, `Are you proud, or are you among the five persons whose names are inscribed in the pavilion of the 'Arsh?'"[2]

Those who do not take the time to learn about the fascinating world of the spirits, that is, the spiritual realm, will have a very hard time when they get there and see it for themselves. Those endowed with spiritual knowledge will find no difficulty identifying spirits when they see them. There will be so much personification in the life to come that it really is a must to learn about that place before you get there, and you know that nobody is exempted from getting there. Not only will there be new beings whom you had never encountered, but

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[1]al-Zamakhshari, *Rabee' al-Abrār*, Vol. 1, p. 310.

[2]Sayyid Ni'mat-Allāh al-Jazā'iri, *Al-Noor al-Mubeen fi Qasas al-Anbiyā' wal Mursaleen*, pp. 63-64.

everything which in this life is intangible will in the hereafter take a certain form and shape. Prayers, the fast, the pilgrimage, the Holy Qur'ān, the good and the bad deeds, repentance, ablution.... all will look like living beings; they will come and go; they will speak, and they will testify, and so will each of your five senses and your skin. They will testify either for or against you. If you are good, they will plead to Allāh on your behalf, and they will try their best to save your skin from the fire of hell. Each of the verses of the Holy Qur'ān will be personified and will have a certain form. Āyat al-Kursi (Qur'ān, 2:255) will be one of the mightiest of such personifications. Supplications will take a form. Hell will be a live being that speaks, screams, spits fire, curses and condemns, complains and roars. And so will be each of its flames. And those assembled for the judgment, all of them, will hear Hell speak, and most of them will not like what they will hear. One of the things Hell will say is this: "Where are those who used to go to mosques and talk about their own worldly affairs?! Where are those who used to build mosques only for show?! Where are those who used to sever their ties with their kinfolks?! Where are those who used to confiscate what belonged to the orphans?!" All this is recorded in reliable references; to go on may take us out of this book's scope.

In one of his sermons, the Commander of the Faithful Imām ʿAli ibn Abu Tālib has said the following about the angels:

> He (Allāh) split between the high heavens, filling them with many kinds of His angels: some of them are prostrating who never kneel down, some kneeling who never stand, some fixed in their positions which they will never abandon, some praising Him without ever feeling tired of doing so, and their eyes never sleep, nor their intellects ever wane, nor their bodies ever weaken, nor their memory ever lapses. Some of them are His trustees with regard to His inspiration, bearers of His message to His messengers; they wait for His decrees and commands. And some are protectors of His servants while others are the custodians of the gates of His Paradise. The feet of some of them are fixed in the lower heavens with their necks extending to the high heavens; their corners extend beyond the lands, their shoulders parallel the legs of the ʿArsh, their eyes too humble to look at it. They wrap themselves with their wings underneath it; veils separate them from the ʿArsh, veils of dignity and curtains of might. They never conceive their Lord in their imagination, nor do they apply to Him what is applied to His

creation. They do not seek Him in a specific place, nor do they compare Him to anything at all.[1]

Having learned this much about the angels, we have now to turn our attention to the jinns to find out who they are and what they do.

The Jinns

The subject of jinns is intriguing, and probably the most intriguing is the discussion of the worst of the jinns: Satan who is known as: Eblis (or Iblis), Azazel, or Lucifer. Allāh tells us in 55:15 that "He created the jinns of a flame of (smokeless) fire." There were two species of the jānn who probably could not live anywhere except on earth: one created from air and one from water[2]. Adam was created from earth, hence he lived on earth and was fed by vegetables grown on it. All jinns, with the exception of Eblis and his offspring, live and die as humans do. The discussion of Eblis, Satan, and his tribe will *Inshā-Allāh* be dealt with later.

Do you remember Sūrat al-Jinn (Chapter 72 of the Holy Qur'ān)? It narrates for us an encounter between Muhammed, the Messenger of Allāh, and the jinns who went to meet the Prophet in response to what they had heard from a group of other jinns. The latter happened to be passing by as they heard the Messenger of Allāh reciting the Holy Qur'ān. This incident is narrated by the renown *sahābi* Abdullāh ibn Masʿūd as well as by ʿAlqamah ibn Qays. Abdullāh ibn Masʿūd narrates saying, "One night, while we were in Mecca, we missed the Messenger of Allāh. We, therefore, thought that he was either killed or raised to heaven. We went out looking for him in the valleys till we met him leaving Hera cave behind him. We said to him, `O Messenger of Allāh! Where were you?!' He said, `A deputy from the jinns came to me, so I went with them to recite the Qur'ān for them.' He took us and showed us their footprints and the fires they had lit at the meeting place." More details of this encounter are available in

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[1]This text is recorded by the Muʿtazilite scholar Ibn Abu al-Hadeed in *Nahj al-Balāgha*. This exact wording exists in al-Zamakhshari's book *Rabeeʿ al-Abrār*, Vol. 1, pp. 312-313.

[2]Sayyid Niʿmat-Allāh al-Jazā'iri, *Al-Noor al-Mubeen fi Qasas al-Anbiyā wal Mursaleen*, p. 48.

the books of *tafsīr*. Those jinns were fascinated by what they had heard, so they informed their people who selected a committee representing their various nations to meet with the Prophet.

Anyone who has read the Holy Qur'ān must have come across the incident involving prophet Solomon (Sulayman) who asked those in his company who among them would bring him Balqees's throne, and an *ʿifreet* from the jinns, an audacious jinn, offered to bring it to him before his meeting was over, as we are told in verse 39 of Sūrat al-Naml (Ants, Ch. 27). But a learned human, namely Āsif ibn Barkhia, offered to (and did) bring it to him in the twinkling of an aye. This proves the power of knowledge.

Abu Hamzah al-Thumāli is quoted as having said, "I came once seeking permission to meet with (Imām) Abu Jaʿfer (Muhammed al-Bāqir), peace be upon him, and I was told that some people were already in his company, and that I would be permitted to meet him once they had left. When they did leave, I saw them, and I did not recognize any of them, nor did I feel comfortable at seeing them. Then I was permitted to enter. I said to him, `May I be your sacrifice! Is this the time of Banu Umayyah whose sword drips with blood?' He said, `O Abu Hamzah! That was a Shiʿa envoy from the jinns who have come to ask me about their creed."[1] This documented incident proves that the jinns, like the humans, are also divided in their creed to Shīʿas and Sunnis.

The jinns are intelligent beings who cannot be seen by everyone. Besides God's prophets and their deputies (*wasis*), those endowed with a high degree of supernatural power, parapsychologists, can see and talk to them. Jinns reside wherever humans do not live around: deserts, oceans, uninhabited islands, forests..., etc. Some of them are good, but most of them are bad, as is the case with our human species. Jinns are also various species; here is a brief description of some of them:

One of their species is called *shaqq*. These are bedeviled jinns who look semi-humanoid, and they love to intercept travellers and aggravate them. Three of their species are so dangerous, those who are exposed to them may lose their sanity; they are: *tābiʿ*, *qareen*, and *khābil*. Those who reside in the seas and oceans are known as *dilhāb*.

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[1] al-Majlisi, *Bihār al-Anwār*, Vol. 5, p. 433.

Another species, *ri'ee*, also called *ʿarrāf*, are harmless; they love to share some of their knowledge with humans, so they select the most brilliant men from among the humans for their company. Among the other harmful species of the jinns are: *ʿabqar* and *saʿlāt*, and they like to live in orchards. Another species, *ghool*, prefers to assume various forms and shapes in order to inflict harm on humans. *Mārid* is also a harmful species of the jinns, and so are the *nisnās* who look like the *shaqq* in form and shape; they have faces which look like humans but not exactly so. *Hātif* is a species of the jinns that prefer to use sound to do their mischief, preferring to be seen by humans only as forms rather than beings. *Hājis* jinns apply the method of intuition to communicate with humans, inspiring evil thoughts to them. All these species are mentioned in Vol. 1 of al-Zamakhshari's encyclopedia titled *Rabeeʿ al-Abrār*.

Evil jinns are by far less harmful than devils, descendants of Satan. Abu Sulayman[1] has said, "The evil ones from among the jinns are harder for me to deal with than the Satans bedeviling humans. Satans may cling to me and cause me to commit a sin. But if I seek refuge with Allāh against an evil jinn, he will be too frightened of the name of Allāh to come near me." Reciting Sūrat al-Falaq (Qur'ān, Ch. 113) and Sūrat al-Nās (Qur'ān, Ch. 114) will protect you from the mischief of both species of these evil beings. By the way, this man, Abu Sulayman, was always sought by people for counsel and advice due to his wisdom, knowledge, and piety. A man once came to him and complained to him about the insinuations of the devil. Abu Sulayman said to him, "Whenever you feel that Satan is near you enticing you to do something prohibitive, you should feel elated, for once you do so, he will immediately forsake you. There is nothing Satan hates more than seeing a believer feeling happy. When you feel sad, he will come to increase your grief manifold."[2]

Jinns always like to stick their nose in other people's business, especially if such people are humans whom they very much despise. Jinns live and die, marry and multiply; they have their own courts and

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[1]His name is Abd al-Rahmān ibn Ahmed ibn ʿAtiyyah al-ʿAnsi al-Mathhaji al-Darāni. He was a pious ascetic, a philosopher, and a thinker. He lived in Darya, Damscus, where he died in 215 A.H./830 A.D.

[2]al-Zamakhshari, *Rabeeʿ al-Abrār*, Vol. 1, p. 332.

system of justice, and they have ranks one higher than the other. They live much longer than humans, and they travel faster than the speed of light. They easily cross countries and penetrate walls and doors. Good jinns try to help humans in various ways. Those who do so are held in contempt by other jinns who will shun them and shut them out of their communities. Witchcraft is accomplished with their help. They can change their appearance very easily and look like humans or animals, and the mischievous among them try to share residence with humans or get them out of there. Sometimes when a jinn family likes a house, rest assured the human family living there will have to live somewhere else; not many jinns like to share. Jinns are mentioned throughout the Holy Qur'ān, and this is not the place to elaborate on them more than what is indicated here. Books have been written about them to which the reader is referred for more information. If you wish to be on your guard from their mischief, recite two Sūrats: Sūrat al-Falaq and Sūrat al-Nās as often as you can especially before you go to bed. To befriend some good jinns and to get them to do you favours is an entire science, a very interesting one.

A number of famous people have had first encounters with the jinns. A number of the most wicked persons in the Islamic history have done likewise. Read about such encounters in Vol. 1 of al-Zamakhshari's encyclopedia titled *Rabeeᶜ al-Abrār*. Among those who encountered the jinns, the *ṣaḥābi* Abdullāh ibn Masᶜūd was one. Both ᶜAlqamah[1] and Ḥarb[2] sons of Umayyah are said to have been killed by jinns. Jinns sometimes like to imitate humans; read in the reference cited above some of the poetry they composed and you will

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[1]ᶜAlqamah ibn Safwān ibn Umayyah is grandfather of Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam, seal bearer of caliph Othmān ibn ᶜAffān. During the time of *jāhiliyya*, he went out seeking to recover a debt owed to him. He met a *shaqq* jinn with whom he exchanged lines of poetry. The poetry composed by both of them, and the details of this incident, are all recorded on p. 206, Vol. 6, of *Kitāb al-Haywān* by al-Jāhiz (ᶜAmr ibn Baḥr ibn Maḥboub al-Kināni al-Laythi, Abu ᶜOthmān, d. 255 A.H./869 A.D., a Muᶜtazilite writer; he died and a book was still on his chest, a first class and a very prolific author).

[2]He was Ḥarb ibn Umayyah ibn ᶜAbd Shams, grandfather of Muᶜāwiyah ibn Abu Sufyān ibn Ḥarb who taught Quraish how to write. He died 36 years before the Hijra. To learn more about him, refer to p. 326, Vol. 3, of al-Masᶜūdi's *Murooj al-Thahab*.

find it not only similar to what other Arab poets may compose, it is even higher in quality. Another victim of the jinns is Sa'd ibn 'Abādah ibn Dulaym who was killed in 11 A.H./632 A.D. inside his bath-house. His corpse suddenly appeared before the rest of his family and a voice was heard reciting two lines of Arabic poetry saying,

> We killed the master of the Khazraj, Sa'd ibn 'Abādah:
> With two arrows did we shoot him, not missing his heart.[1]

These lines were heard but nobody was seen. Refer to a footnote on p. 4, Vol. 2, of *Al-Iṣābah* by Ibn 'Abd al-Birr for more details.

Jinns may kidnap humans for no reason other than as an act of stupid entertainment. Among documented kidnapping cases is one involving 'Amr ibn 'Adiyy al-Lakhmi[2] and another involving 'Imārah ibn al-Walīd ibn al-Mughīrah al-Makhzūmi, brother of Khālid ibn al-Walīd. A man from the tribe of 'Uthrah was once snatched by the jinns. Abdullāh ibn Fā'id wanted to know whether such an incident was someone's hallucination or imagination, so he went to see the Prophet and to ask him about it. Prophet Muhammed confirmed it.[3]

A parapsychologist friend of mine told me once that the largest concentration of jinns he had ever encountered was in the north-western part of Hijāz, Saudi Arabia, an area once inhabited by the people of 'Ād. Eblis and his tribe and his tribe never die till the Hour. Let us shed some more light on this damned being who has filled the world with mischief.

Eblis: The Arch-Deceiver Jinn

Being familiar with your enemy is the very first step in fighting him.

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[1]For their original Arabic text, refer to p. 317, Vol. 1, of al-Zamakhshari's *Rabee' al-Abrār* where more poetry composed by the jinns is recorded.

[2]His full name is 'Amr ibn 'Adiyy ibn Naṣeer ibn Rabee'ah al-Lakhmi. He was the first of the Lakhmide kings who ruled Iraq during the time of *jāhiliyya*. He became king following the death of his uncle Khuthaymah al-Abrash, and he resided at Hīra.

[3]al-Zamakhshari, *Rabee' al-Abrār*, Vol. 1, p. 318.

How Eblis works, who works for him or with him, how he approaches humans, how to deal with his temptations and insinuations..., are all topics which should be on the top of everyone's list of priorities.

Let us, first of all, explain the meaning of the word "Eblis," or "Iblis." Like "Satan," it is an Arabic word. Consulting the famous lexicon Lisān al-*ʿArab* by Abu al-Fadl Jamāl al-Dīn Muhammed ibn Mukarram ibn Manzour, we find the following on p. 29, Vol. 6 (Dār Sādir, Beirut, Lebanon, 1300 A.H./1883 A.D.):

> Root word: *balasa* or *ablasa* (both past tense verbs) from the mercy of Allāh: he lost all hope for the mercy of Allāh, and he regretted, hence Eblis, a name attached to Azazel (his original name).

Azazel is the name of Eblis in the Old Testament[1]. "Eblis" is a noun used as a descriptive adjective. Consulting a good English-English dictionary such as *The Random House College Dictionary* (Random House, Inc., New York, 1975), Azazel is described as "the scapegoat released on the [Jewish] Day of Atonement, or its destination, hell," and as one of the "fallen angels." "Satan" is an adjective used as a noun. Its Arabic origin is *shaytan*, someone irate, enraged, angry, furious, burning with the fire of wrath; *shiyāt* means burning. In Greek, his name is Phosphorus. In Latin mythology, he is referred to as Lucifer, "the light-bearing." This same Latin word also describes planet Venus, the morning star. In Isaiah 14:12, Lucifer is said to be king of Babylon. This must have been used metaphorically, for certainly most of Babylon's kings were devilish, very evil, proud, and arrogant. Moreover, there is no such name among all those who ruled not only the city capital Babylon but all of the kingdom of Babylonia. Like the Pharaohs of Egypt, for many centuries contemporaries of the kings of Babylon, these kings demanded their subjects to worship them as their gods. The story of prophet Abraham and Nemrud[2] is an

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[1]See The Old Testament, The Book of Leviticus 16:8, 10, and 21. There, Azazel is portrayed as the personification of uncleanness.

[2]The name of Nemrud son of Kush son of Ham is also spelled "Nimrod." He is described in the Old Testament, the Book of Genesis

(continued...)

example.

Azazel is mentioned in traditions transmitted by renown traditionists such as Tāwūs al-Yamāni (d. about 106 A.H./724 A.D.) and Mujāhid[1] who both say that

> Before committing his sin, Eblis used to be one of the angels named Azazel. He was one of the residents of the earth, and he belonged to a group of angels known as the jinns[2]. None among the angels was more diligent or more knowledgeable than him[3]. When he disobeyed Allāh, He cursed him and made him a Satan and named him Eblis.[4]

According to Ibn ʿAbbās and al-Masʿūdi[5], before his fall, Eblis was beautiful, ennobled and honoured, a ruler over the lower heavens and the earth, and one of the keepers of the janna, the earthly Paradise, temporary home of Adam and Eve. When he fell from grace, the Almighty cursed him, deformed him, and cast him away from His mercy. All of this is documented in al-Tabari's *Tafsīr*. All Eblis's offspring, therefore, are deformed and ugly, as a matter of fact, the ugliest of all

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(...continued)
10.8,9, and also in 1 Chronicles 1.10, as the "mighty hunter" due to his proverbial passion for hunting and haughtiness.

[1]His full name is Mujāhid ibn Jabr, Abu al-Ḥajjāj, a renown traditionist.

[2]The word "jinn," according to a number of sources, describes the angels who were charged with safeguarding the *janna*, the garden, where Adam stayed for a very short while. According to some accounts, he did not stay there for more than six hours.

[3]According to a number of sources, Satan is said to have been one of the teachers of the angels or, say, one of those who taught the angels and shared his knowledge with them.

[4]al-Ṭibrisi, *Mujmaʿ al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, Vol. 1, p. 191, where Sūrat al-Baqarah is explained.

[5]His full name is Sharīk ibn Abdullāh ibn Abu Namīr. He died in about 140 A.H./757 A.D.

jinns. Had humans only seen them, they would have wondered how they ever listened to them and obeyed them.

There is another theory as to how Eblis came to be mixed with the angels. It is recorded by Sayyid ʿAli ibn Ṭāwūs on p. 33 of his book *Saʿd al-Suʿood*. He says that in the Tablets of prophet Enoch (Idrīs), there is a record of how the jinns were multiplying and how corrupt they were; so, Eblis pleaded to Allāh to save him from them and to let him be in the company of the angels instead, and that Allāh granted him his wish.

Eblis's *kunya* is "Abu Murra." When the Meccans wanted to assassinate the Messenger of Allāh in a plot very well documented in history books, a man named al-Shaykh al-Najdi appeared to them. He, in fact, was none other than Eblis. Eblis had simply taken the form of that man and come to the plotters with the suggestion to select one man from each of the Meccan tribes for the execution of their scheme so that Muhammed's blood would be lost among them and Banu Hāshim, his clan, would simply be unable on its own to face all the other tribes combined. The *kunya* of that Najdi was "Abu Murra." Eblis, therefore, was named likewise.[1]

The jinns eat and drink, marry, and have their own social system. Some of them live for thousands of years, but there is no term set for Eblis and his offspring; he and they shall live till the Day of Judgment. Such respite granted to Eblis is referred to in verses such as these:

> *He (Eblis) said: Lord! Grant me a respite till the time when they are raised (for judgment). He (Allāh) said: So surely you are of the respited ones, till the period of the time made known.* (Qur'ān, 15:36-38)

This respite means an exemption from having to die, one that lasts till Israfil blows his trumpet for the second, not the first, time, with a time period of forty years between both blows.[2] Some scholars, however, are of the view that this respite will terminate at the "minor *qiyāma*," that is, when Imām al-Mehdi, the Awaited Savior, will reappear to put an end to all tyranny and mischief and to start a

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[1]al-Zamakhshari, *Rabeeʿ al-Abrār*, Vol. 1, p. 323.

[2]al-Ṭibrisi, *Mujmaʿ al-Bayān fi Tafsir al-Qur'ān*, Vol. 2, p. 620.

period of peace and tranquility never enjoyed before in the entire history of mankind. Naturally, such an enjoyment can never be complete without first putting an end to Eblis's mischief-making, and Allāh knows best.

What did Eblis do before committing his disobedience? Here is a tradition transmitted by Ibn ᶜAbbās that sheds light on this subject:

> The first to dwell on earth were the jinns. They caused corruption on it and shed blood, killing each other. Allāh then sent Eblis to them with an army of angels to annihilate them. They were a tribal group called jinns. Eblis and the angels with him caused a bloodbath among them and eventually banished them to the islands in the oceans and to the mountains. His success caused him to be proud and haughty. He said, "I have done something nobody has ever done before." Allāh was aware of how Eblis felt, but the other angels who were in his company were not.[1]

Jameel ibn Durrāj once asked Imām Abu Abdullāh al-Sādiq about Eblis, whether or not he was an angel. "He was not an angel," said the Imām, "... he was from the jinns, and he was in the company of the angels. The angels regarded him as one of them, but Allāh knew that he was not; so, when He ordered him to bow down to Adam, he did what he did."[2]

Eblis knew exactly what he was made of; he knew that unlike the angels who were created from light (*noor*), he, being a jinn, was created from fire: in the following Qur'ānic verse, he admits this fact:

> *He (Allāh) said: What hindered you from making obeisance when I commanded you to? He (Eblis) said: I am better than him: You have created me of fire, while him have You created of dust.* (Qur'ān, 7:12)

The Almighty Himself, Creator of everyone and everything, tells us that Eblis was one of the jinns in many verses; here is one of them:

> *And when We said to the angels: Make obeisance to Adam, they made*

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[1]al-Ṭabari, *Tafsīr*, Vol. 1, p. 155, where Sūrat al-Baqarah (Qur'ān, The Cow) is explained.

[2]al-ᶜAyyāshi, *Tafsīr*, Vol. 1, p. 34, where Sūrat al-Baqarah is explained.

obeisance but Eblis (did not). He was of the jinns, so he transgressed the commandment of his Lord. (Qur'ān, 18:50)

This verse has confused some people: On one hand, the Almighty says that He addressed the angels, and Eblis was among those addressed; so, will that not make him one of them? Not necessarily according to the way Arabs use their language. On the other hand, the very same verse very clearly states that "he (Eblis) was of the jinns."

ʿAli ibn Ibrahīm narrates a tradition traced to Imām Muḥammed al-Bāqir who quotes the Commander of the Faithful Imām ʿAli ibn Abu Tālib stating the following:

> Seven thousand years passed since two species, the jinns and the nisnās, were on earth when Allāh the Exalted wanted to create a new creation. He unveiled the curtains of the heavens and said to the angels: "Look at the residents of the earth from among My creation; look at the jinns and the nisnās." When they saw all the sins they were doing, they deemed them monstrous and said: "Lord! You are the Exalted One, the Omnipotent, and there are Your weakling creatures being sustained by Your sustenance, yet they live in disobedience to You while You do not seek revenge for Yourself." When He heard the angels say so, He said to them, "I am going to create a successor to them on earth who will be the *hujja* (argument or proof) on earth." The angels then said, "Glory to You! Are You going to permit to live on it one who will cause corruption just as the jāns have done? Make such a successor one of us, for we do not disobey You; rather, we always Praise, Glorify, and Sanctify You." The most Exalted One said, "I know what you do not; I wish to create a creation Myself and to bring out of his offspring prophets and righteous servants as well as guided Imāms whom I shall appoint as successors (of one another) over My creation and on My earth, and I shall purge My earth from the nisnās and exile the tyrant ones from among the disobedient jinns and let them reside in the air and throughout the earth, and I shall create a curtain between the jinns and My creation." The angels then said, "Lord! Do whatever You please." Allāh then distanced them from the ʿArsh as far as the distance of five hundred years. They gathered around it and pointed at it with their fingers, whereupon the Lord looked mercifully at them and set up for them the *maʿmoor* House and said to them: "Circle around it and leave the ʿArsh alone," so they circled it, and it is the House entered every day by seventy

thousand angels who never return to it. Allāh, therefore, made the *maʿmoor* House for the repentance of the residents of the heavens, then He made the Kaʿba for the repentance of the residents of the earth.[1]

Imām ʿAli has also said the following about Eblis as recorded in *Nahjul-Balāgha*:

> Conceit overcame him, so he boasted of the superiority of his origin over Adam, and he became fanatical in his bias to his own. The enemy of Allāh, therefore, is the leader of fanatics, the ancestor of the proud, the one who set the foundations of fanaticism. He argued with Allāh with regard to His destiny, wearing the outfit of arrogance, taking off the robe of humility. Do you not see how Allāh, because of his pride, humiliated him and because of his arrogance abased him? He made him in the life of this world condemned, and He prepared for him in the hereafter the fire. Had Allāh desired to create Adam of light that snatches the eye-sight and dazzle the minds, and had He made his fragrance breathtaking, He would have done just that. And had He done so, all would have submitted to him, and it would have been easier for the angels to tolerate him. But Allāh, the most Exalted One, tries His creation with a little of what they do not know in order to thus test them, in order to rid them of pride, in order to distance them from conceit; so, you should learn a moral lesson from what Allāh did to Eblis! He nullified all the good things he had done for such a very long time and all his endeavor, for he had adored Allāh for six thousand years, and we do not know whether they were years of this life's calculation or of that of the hereafter, all because of a moment's touch of pride!

ʿAli ibn Ibrahīm, the renown *mufassir*, has said,

> Pride is the very first transgression whereby Allāh was disobeyed by Eblis. Eblis said, "Lord! Exempt me from having to prostrate to Adam, and I (in return) shall worship You in such a way no angel near to You nor a sent messenger ever will." Allāh said, "I have no need for your worship. I wish to be adored as I wish, not as you."

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[1] Niʿmat-Allāh al-Jazā'iri, *Al-Noor al-Mubeen fi Qasas al-Anbiyā' wal Mursaleen*, p. 49.

But he refused to prostrate, whereupon Allāh said to him, "Get out of it, for you are accursed." Eblis said, "How so, Lord, while You are the Just One Who never oppresses? This means You will not reward me for all the good deeds I have done." Allāh said, "No, I will not, but ask me whatever you wish of the affairs of the life as rewards for your good deeds, and I shall grant it to you." The first thing Eblis asked for was to remain alive till the Day of Judgment, and Allāh, the most Exalted One, granted him his request. Then he asked Him to give him authority over Adam's offspring, and He granted him this one, too. Then he said, "Let me be as close to them as the blood in their veins," and Allāh said, "I grant you this one, too." Then Eblis said, "No son is born for them except that two are born for my service, and I shall see them while they cannot see me, and I shall appear to them in any form I wish." Allāh said, "I grant it to you." Then he said, "Lord! Grant me an increase!" Allāh said, "I have made for you and for your offspring a home in their [humans'] chests." Eblis then said, "Lord! You have given me enough!" It was then that Eblis said, as verse 82 of Sūrat Ṣād (Qur'ān, 38:82) and verse 17 of Sūrat al-Aʿrāf (Qur'ān, 7:17) tell us, "By Your Might, I will surely make them live an evil life, all of them, except Your servants from among them, the purified ones" (Qur'ān, 38:82-83), and, "As You have caused me to remain disappointed, I will certainly lie in ambush for them on Your Straight Path, then will I certainly come to them from before them, from behind them, from their right side, and from their left, and You shall not find most of them thankful" (Qur'ān, 7:16-17).[1]

On rare occasions, however, Eblis offered sound advice to a select few, knowing that he by no means could fool them. He offered advice to Noah and Moses:

When Noah invoked his Lord to condemn his people and to inflict retribution upon them, Eblis came to him and said, "O Noah! Remember me in three situations, for I am closer during them to any of the servants of Allāh: Remember me when you are angry, and remember me when you have to arbitrate between two contenders, and remember me when you sit with a woman and nobody else is

[1]al-Qummi, *Tafsir*, Vol. 1, pp. 42-43.

present with you."[1] When Noah landed from the ark after the flood was over, Eblis came to him and said, "Nobody on the face of earth has done me a bigger favour than you! You invoked Allāh against these sinners, so you relieved me from having to deal with them. Shall I, then, teach you two merits? Beware of envy, for it did to me what it did. And beware of avarice, for it did to Adam what it did."[2]

One of the pieces of advice Eblis offered prophet Moses was the following: "Whenever you contemplate upon offering charity, do it immediately, for whenever a servant of Allāh contemplates upon paying something by way of charity, I, rather than any of my fellows, will keep him company in order to desist him from doing it."[3]

Who make Eblis's job easier? As we have learned from the above, anger is on the top of the list, for when anger overtakes someone, the latter will be too weak to use common-sense, let alone wisdom. He will be rash and erratic. The Commander of the Faithful Imām ʿAli wrote a letter once to al-Ḥārith al-Hamadāni in which he said, "Beware of anger, for it is a great host of Eblis." Besides anger, women play a major role in assisting Eblis in carrying out his schemes, I mean when people are overcome by their carnal desires for women who are not lawful for them. Eblis once said to Moses, "O Moses! You should never be in the company of a woman who is not permissible for you, for no man does so except that I, rather than any of my fellows, will keep him company."[4]

Adam

Now let us discuss Adam and his descendants, having elaborated on other beings. Adam's offspring are called *nās*; a human is called *insān*; so, where have these words come from and what do they connote?

The answer lies in verse 115 of Sūrat Ṭāhā which states: "And surely We gave a commandment to Adam before, but he forgot, and We did not find in him any determination" (Qur'ān, 20:115). Due to

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[1]Muhammed Al Ray-Shehri, *Mīzān al-Hikma*, Vol. 5, p. 94.

[2]*Ibid.*, p. 94.

[3]*Ibid.*, p. 94.

[4]*Ibid.*, p. 96.

this forgetfulness, Adam's offspring are referred to as the people who are afflicted with *nisyān*, forgetfulness, hence the word *nās*. A poet once said, "Had it not been for much forgetfulness, man would not have been called *insān*."

According to Ibn Isḥāq[1], forty years passed since Allāh created Adam's body. After that, He blew the soul into him. During that period, his body hardened till it became like a pot of baked clay without fire ever touching it.[2] It is to this hardened body that Allāh refers in this verse:

He created man from dry clay like earthen vessels. (Qur'ān, 55:14)

The next verse, 55:15, refers to His creation of the jinns: "And He created the jinns of a flame of (smokeless) fire."

When Allāh Almighty decided to create Adam, He inspired to the earth, "I shall create of you a creation among whose progeny there will be some who will obey Me and some who will not. So I shall permit whoever obeys Me to enter Paradise, and whoever disobeys me I shall lodge into Hell." Then He sent Gabriel to the earth to bring Him a handful of its soil. When Gabriel came to it to take a handful of its soil, the earth said, "I seek refuge with Allāh Who has sent you to take of me something of which the fire shall have a portion." So Gabriel went back to his Lord without taking anything. Allāh Almighty sent the angel of death. He came to the earth, and it likewise sought refuge with Allāh against his taking anything of it, so he said to it, "And I, too, seek refuge with Allāh against disobeying Him in anything." So he took a handful of its soil from its four corners, from its uppermost and best quality soil, from its salty soil, from its mud, from its red clay, from its black soil, from its white soil, from its smooth soil and from its rugged terrain. Thus did the offspring of Adam come to have from among them those who are good and those who are bad, those who are righteous, and those who are rebellious, those who are beautiful, and those who are ugly. And

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[1]His name is Muḥammed ibn Isḥāq. He was born in Medina and is regarded as one of the earliest Arab historians. He resided in Baghdad where he died in 151 A.H./768 A.D.

[2]al-Zamakhshari, *Rabeeᶜ al-Abrār*, Vol. 1, p. 327.

this is why their shapes and complexions differ. Allāh Almighty has said, "And one of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your tongues and colors; most surely there are signs in this for those who know" (Qur'ān, 30:22).

The angel of death ascended after taking that handful of earth. Allāh Almighty ordered him to make it moist, then to let it ferment. He kneaded it with bitter water, sweet water, and salty water till it became moist, muddy, then he let it ferment. This is why the manners of the humans are so diverse. Then He ordered Gabriel, peace be upon him, to bring him the white handful that is in the heart of the earth the glow and illumination of which was dazzling in order to create of it Muḥammed, the Prophet and Messenger of Allāh. Accompanied by the esteemed arch-angels of Paradise and by the angels of the Highest Eminence, Gabriel descended and took hold of a handful of the earth from the place where now the grave of the Prophet stands. At that time, it was purely white, and it was kneaded in the honouring water and treated till it became like a white pearl. Then it was dipped into all the rivers of Paradise. When it was taken out, the Almighty cast a look at that pure pearl and it shook out of awe of the Almighty, and as many as one hundred and twenty-four thousand drops came out of it. The Almighty created of those drops all His prophets, and their light out of the light of Muḥammed. Then it was taken to tour the heavens and the earth, so the angels came to know Muḥammed by name even before knowing Adam. After that, it was kneaded into Adam's mold. Then it was left for forty years till it became a moist piece of mud. Then it was left for forty more years till it became like baked clay, the dry clay which would make a sound if beaten by hand. Then He made it like a body and it was placed on the pathway of the angels descending from heavens or ascending thereto. This is the meaning of the verse saying, "Has there not been over man come a long period of time when he was nothing (not even) mentioned?" (Qur'ān, 76:1). Ibn ʿAbbās has said that by "man" it is meant Adam, and the "long period of time" was forty years during which Adam was a body placed at one of the gates of Paradise.

According to al-Tirmithi's *Sahīh*, where a chain of narrators are quoted, the Messenger of Allāh had said the following in his explanation of the first verses of *Surat al-Baqarah* (The Cow, Chapter 2 of the Holy Qur'ān): "Allāh created Adam out of a handful of earth which contained specimens of what all the earth has, of its smooth

plains, rocky mountains, black, white, and red clay, so [Adam's] children came according to the colors of the earth." Abdullāh ibn Salām asked the Messenger of Allāh (pbuh) how Allāh created Adam. The Messenger of Allāh said, "Adam's head and forehead were created from the soil of the Kaʿba, his chest and back from the soil of Jerusalem, his thighs from Yemen's soil, his legs from Egypt's soil, his feet from the soil of Hijaz, his right hand from the east of the earth, and his left hand from the west of the earth. Then He placed him on the gate of Paradise. Whenever a group of angels passed by him, they were dazzled by the beauty of his form and by his height. They had never seen anything like that or even close. Eblis passed by him and saw him, so he asked, `For what purpose have you been created?' Then he struck him, but he noticed that it was hollow, so he entered inside him from his mouth and came out of the other end. Then he said to the angels, `This is a hollow creature which cannot stand, nor can it keep itself together.' Then he asked the angels, `Suppose this thing is given preference over you, what would you then do?' They said, `We will obey our Lord's command in his regard.' So Eblis said to himself, `By Allāh! If this thing is preferred over me, I will contest, but if I am preferred over it, I shall annihilate it.' To this does the Almighty refer in the verse saying, `... and I know what you manifest and what you hide'" (Qur'ān, 2:33).

Scholars have said that when Allāh wanted to breathe the soul into Adam, He ordered the soul to enter through his mouth, whereupon the soul said, "It is an entrance deep and dark." He repeated His order, and it repeated the same answer. The same happened a third time. In the fourth time, He said, "Enter into it against your wish, and come out of it likewise." Having being thus ordered, the soul entered into him through his mouth. Once the soul was breathed into him, the first place it entered was his brain, and it remained in it the equivalent of two hundred years of our counting. Then it descended to his eyes. The wisdom in that is that Allāh Almighty wanted to show Adam how his own creation started, and what his origin was, so that once blessings are heaped upon him, he would not be proud or conceited. Then it descended to his nostrils, and he sneezed. Once he finished sneezing, the soul descended to his mouth and tongue, so Allāh taught him to say, "*Alhamdu lillāhi rabbil ʿālamīn*," i.e. praise be to Allāh, Lord of the world. This is the second verse of the first chapter, the Fātiha, the Opening, of the Holy

Qur'ān. That was the first statement uttered by Adam, whereupon his Lord responded with: *"Yarḥamuka rabbuka yā Adam; lil raḥmati khalaqtuka,"* that is, "Your Lord is merciful unto you, O Adam; for the sake of effecting mercy have I created you." Allāh then said, "O Adam! You have praised Me! By My Honour and Dignity, had it not been for two of My servants whom I will create at the end of time, I would not have created you at all." Adam said, "O Lord! By their status with You, what are their names?" The Almighty said, "O Adam! Look in the direction of the ʿArsh!" There, Adam saw two lines of light. The first line read: "There is no god except Allāh! Muḥammed is the prophet of mercy; ʿAli is the key to Paradise." The second line read: "I have taken upon Myself to be Merciful upon all those who accept their *wilāya* and to torment whoever antagonizes them."[1]

Allāh has said that He is more swift to be merciful than to be wrathful. Then the soul descended to his chest and rib cartilage, so he tried to stand up but he could not. This is the interpretation of the verse saying, "... and man is ever hasty" (Qur'ān, 17:11), and also, "Man is created of haste" (Qur'ān, 21:36). When the soul reached his stomach, he craved food, and that was the first need Adam felt.

According to some accounts, when his Lord said to him, "Your Lord is merciful unto you, O Adam," Adam stretched his hand and placed it on his head and said, "Oh!" Allāh asked him what was wrong with him, so he said, "I have committed a sin..." He asked him how he came to know that. Adam answered, "Because mercy is for the sinners." It became customary for everyone of his descendants to put his hand on his head when afflicted by a calamity or when troubled. Then the soul spread to all parts of his body, and he became flesh and blood and bones and veins and muscles. Then Allāh Almighty outfitted him with nails, and he started becoming more and more beautiful every day. When he committed his sin, his outfit was changed for a skin, and the only remaining souvenirs of his days of glory were his nails so that he would remember how his life started and not forget. When Allāh completed Adam's creation and breathed the soul into him, He decorated him with ornaments and outfits from Paradise. Out of his joints, light started emanating like the rays of the

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[1]al-Rawandi, *Qaṣas al-Anbiyā'*, p. 52.

sun, or like the glow of our Prophet Muhammed. Then He had him conveyed on the angels' shoulders, instructing the angels thus: "Take him for a tour of My heavens so that he may see their wonders and what they contain, and his conviction may increase." The angels said, "Yes, here we are, ever listening to You, Lord, and always obeying!" The angels escorted him on his tour of the heavens for a hundred years till he became familiar with their wonders and miracles. Among his escorting angels were both arch-angels Gabriel and Michael. Whenever he passed by a group of angels he said, "*Assalamo alaikom ya malā'ikat-Allāh*," that is, "Peace be upon you, O angels of Allāh!" They responded by saying, "*Wa alaikomis salām wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh*," i.e. "Peace be upon you, too, and the mercy of Allāh and His blessings." Allāh Almighty said to him, "O Adam! This is the method of your greeting and the greeting of the believers from among your descendants to one another till the Day of Judgment,"[1]

Then Allāh Almighty taught Adam the names of everything. Scholars differed regarding those names. Al-Rabīᶜ ibn Anas has said that they are the names of all the angels. Abd al-Rahmān ibn Zayd ibn Aslam has said that they are the names of his descendants. Ibn ᶜAbbās and most others have said that He taught him the names of everything including the names of bowls small and big. Imām al-Hasan al-ᶜAskari, however, has stated the following in this regard:

> When Allāh Almighty created Adam, He taught him the names of everything, then He displayed them before the angels. He displayed the spirits of Muhammed, ᶜAli, Fātima, al-Hasan, and al-Husain, looking as five images in the loins of Adam. Their lights illuminated the depths of the heavens, the curtains, the *jannas*, the Kursi, and the ᶜArsh. Allāh, therefore, ordered the angels to prostrate to Adam as a sign of respect, for He had honoured him by making him the bearer of those images whose light overwhelmed the horizons. They all prostrated with the exception of Eblis who refused to humble himself to our lights, we Ahl al-Bayt, while all the angels did.[2]

The order Allāh gave to the angels is referred to in this verse: "So

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[1]al-Jazā'iri, p. 64, quoting p. 126, Vol. 1, of al-ᶜAyyashi's book *ᶜIlal al-Sharā'iᶜ*.

[2]al-Jazā'iri, *Al-Noor al-Mubeen*, p. 66.

when I have made him complete and breathed into him of My spirit, fall down making obeisance to him" (Qur'ān, 15:29). Most scholars are of the opinion that that order was given particularly to the angels who were in the company of Eblis rather than the rest of them, and that it was a token of respect and greeting, neither of supplication nor of adoration. When He ordered them to prostrate, they all prostrated except Eblis who "refused to be with those who made obeisance" (Qur'ān, 15:31), thus becoming haughty and a disbeliever.

Abu Abdullāh, Imām Jaʿfer al-Ṣādiq, has said,

> Allāh Almighty created the souls two thousand years before creating their bodies, making their most supreme and honoured of them those of Muhammed, ʿAli, Fāṭima, al-Hasan, al-Husain, and the Imāms after them, blessings of Allāh be upon them. Then He displayed them to the heavens and to the earth and to the mountains, and their light overwhelmed all of these. Allāh, Blessed and Exalted is His Name, said to the heavens and to the earth and to the mountains, "These are My *hujaj* (arguments) against My creation. For them and for those who follow them did I create My Paradise, and to those who differ from them and who antagonize them did I create My fire. So, whoever assumes their status with Me and their degree of greatness, I shall torment him with a torment the like of which I shall not torment anyone else of the worlds. And whoever submits to their *wilāya* and never shrinks from their status with Me, I shall place him with them in My gardens. Their *wilāya* is a trust among My creation. Which of you, then, shall bear it in all its weight and claim it for himself?" The heavens and the earth and the mountains refused to bear it and were fearful thereof. They were fearful of claiming their status or even be hopeful of achieving their greatness with their Lord. But when Allāh, the most Exalted and Honoured One, permitted Adam and his wife to reside in Paradise, He said to them, "Eat of it with enjoyment wherever you wish, and do not come near this tree, for you will then be among the wrongdoers." But they looked and saw the status reserved for Muḥammed, ʿAli, Fāṭima, al-Hasan, al-Husain, and the Imāms after them and found it occupying the best of all places in Paradise. They, therefore, said, "Lord! For whom have You reserved this status?" Allāh, Glory and Exaltation are His, said, "Raise your heads and look at the leg of the ʿArsh." Having raised their heads and looked there, they found the names of Muḥammed, ʿAli, Fāṭima, al-Hasan, al-Ḥusain, and the Imāms after them, blessings of Allāh be upon them, inscribed on the leg of the ʿArsh. They both said, "Lord! How

great is this status with You?" He said, "Had it not been for them, I would not have created you both; beware of looking at them enviously or wishing to reach their status with Me, for you will then enter into disobedience to Me and transgress the limits with Me." But Satan, though, insinuated to them and swore to them that he was only giving them advice, convincing them in the end to covet their status. They, therefore, looked enviously at them; thereupon, they failed the test and ate of the forbidden fruit. Once they ate of it, all the clothes and ornaments they were wearing disappeared from their bodies, leaving them naked. He (Allāh) called out to them, "Did I not forbid you from that tree and tell you that Satan is your open enemy?" They said, "Lord! We have wronged our own selves, and if You do not forgive us and have mercy on us, we will surely be among the losers." He said, "Get away from nearness to Me, for nobody comes near to Me in My Paradise if he disobeys Me." They descended from that status and started to rely on their own selves to sustain themselves. When Allāh, the Honoured and the Great One, wanted to accept their repentance, Gabriel came to them and said, "You wronged your own selves by desiring to acquire a status reserved for someone better than both of you. Your penalty is to descend from your high status with Allāh, the Honoured and the Great One, to His earth. You should plead to your Lord by the status reserved with Him for the names which you saw inscribed on the leg of the ʿArsh to accept your repentance." They, therefore, said, "Lord! We plead to You by the dearest ones to You, Muḥammed, ʿAli, Fātima, al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusain, and the Imāms, to accept our repentance and to have mercy on us." Allāh accepted their repentance. Since then, prophets of Allāh have been safeguarding this trust and informing their *wasis* and those faithful to them from among their nations not to accept to bear it, and to fear lest they should claim it for themselves... The origin of all oppression is man, hence the statement of Allāh, the Honoured and the Great One, "Surely We offered the trust to the heavens and to the earth and to the mountains, but they refused to bear it and feared it, but man bore it; surely he is unjust, ignorant" (Qur'ān, 33:72).[1]

It is in reference to such a plea by Adam to his Lord that verse 37 of

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[1]al-Shaikh al-Ṣadūq, *Maʿāni al-Akhbār*, p. 108 (second edition, Beirut, Lebanon, 1990).

Sūrat al-Baqarah refers: "Then Adam received (some) words from his Lord, so He turned to him mercifully; surely He is Oft-returning (to mercy), the most Merciful" (Qur'ān, 2:37).

The subject of how Adam pleaded to Allāh to accept his repentance is truly inspiring. Without such a repentance, there can be no hope for Paradise. Imām al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAli ibn Abu Ṭālib narrates an incident recorded in *ʿIlal al-Sharāʾiʿ* and also in *Al-Āmāli* and is briefly quoted in *Al-Noor al-Mubeen* as follows:

> A group of Jews came once to the Messenger of Allāh and asked him about a number of issues. Among them was this one: "Tell us about the five prayer periods appointed for your nation during the day and the night." The Prophet explained to them till he said, "... as for the *ʿasr* (afternoon) prayers, it is the time during which Adam ate of the (forbidden) fruit, so Allāh expelled him from Paradise. Then Allāh ordered Adam's offspring to keep performing this prayer till the Day of Judgment, and He chose it specifically for my nation, for it is the one loved most by Allāh, the Exalted and the Almighty, and He commanded me to uphold it and honour it... As regarding the *maghrib* (sunset) prayers, it is the time during which Allāh accepted Adam's repentance... Adam offered three *rekʿāt* (for the sunset prayers): one *rekʿa* for his sin, another for Eve's sin, and the third for the acceptance of his repentance. Allāh, the Exalted and the Almighty, mandated these *rekʿāt* to my nation." They then said, "Tell us now why you have to make ablution to four places of the body which are the most clean of all bodily parts." The Prophet said, "When Satan insinuated to Adam, and when Adam came near the tree and looked at it, his face lost its glow. Then he stood up, and his were the feet that were the first to walk to commit a sin, then he took with his hand (of its fruit), touched then ate of it. All the ornaments and garments with which Allāh had decorated his body disappeared. Then he wept, putting his hand on his head. When Allāh accepted his repentance, He mandated on him and on his offspring to wash these four places. And He ordered him to wash his face on account of his looking at the forbidden tree. He ordered him to wash the arms to the elbows on account of what he took of it. And He ordered him to wipe the feet on account of his walking to the place where he committed his sin." Then they said to the Prophet, "Tell us why did Allāh require your nation to fast during daytime for thirty days, whereas He had ordered Adam to fast a longer period than that?" The Prophet said, "When Adam ate of the (forbidden) fruit, what he ate remained in his stomach for

thirty days; so, Allāh required Adam's offspring to fast for thirty days in order to suffer hunger and thirst. What they eat (during the night) is out of the Favour of Allāh, the Exalted and the Sublime, unto them."[1]

Notice how Imām al-Ḥasan in the quotation above referred to Adam losing all the clothes and ornaments whereby Allāh had decorated him after his creation. It is to this loss of clothes, the nakedness, and to his and his wife's attempt to cover their nudity that Allāh refers in the Holy Qur'ān when He says, "... and they both began to cover themselves with the leaves of the garden" (Qur'ān, 7:22). When Adam came out of the garden, arch-angel Gabriel came to him and said, "O Adam! Did not Allāh create you with His own hands and permit you to reside in Paradise? Did He not permit you all of it and clearly prohibit you from eating of that tree, yet you ate of it and thus disobeyed Allāh?" Adam said, "But Eblis swore by Allāh to me that he was only offering me an advice, and I never thought that any of Allāh's creation can ever swear by Allāh to a lie."[2] Imām Muḥammed al-Bāqir has said, "Had Adam not sinned, no believer would have ever sinned. And had Allāh, the most Exalted and the Almighty, not accepted Adam's repentance, He would not have accepted it from any other sinner."[3]

Where was the Garden: in Heaven or on Earth?

Another question to tackle is: "Where was Paradise from which Adam was dismissed? Was it in heaven, or was it on earth?" In our view, this should be one of the easiest questions to answer despite the great controversy surrounding it. Adam was created from the earth; so, it is only natural that he could live on earth; in it he was buried, and from it will he be resurrected, and on it will he be tried on the Day of Judgment. Imām Ja'fer al-Ṣādiq was asked once the same question. He said, "It was one of the gardens of this world; the sun and the moon shone over it. Had it been one of the *jannāt* of eternity, he

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[1]al-Ṣadūq, *Al-Āmāli*, pp. 159-162.

[2]al-Qummi, *Tafsīr*, Vol. 1, p. 225.

[3]al-'Ayyāshi, *'Ilal al-Sharā'i'*, Vol. 1, p. 105 (first edition, 1408 A.H./1988 A.D.).

would never have been dismissed from it."[1] Had it been the abode of eternity, it would have been eternal, it would not have had room for Eblis or any devil like him. Nobody would have committed any sin in it; there is no room in it for sinning or sinners.

Another question raised is about how long Adam remained in it. Some scholars say that he stayed in it for hundreds of years. There is nothing in the Holy Qur'ān that supports this claim which is based on traditions the authenticity of which is very difficult to verify.

Al-ᶜAyyāshi quotes Abdullāh ibn Sinān saying, "Abu Abdullāh (Imām Jaᶜfer al-Ṣādiq) was asked in my presence about how long Adam and his wife remained in Paradise before they were dismissed from it. He said, `Allāh, Blessed and Glorified is His Name, blew of His spirit into Adam after the time of the *zawāl* (shortly before noon) on a Friday. Then He created his wife then ordered His angels to prostrate to him. He resided in it that same day. By Allāh! He did not stay in it except for six hours of that same day before he disobeyed Allāh Who dismissed both of them from it after sunset. They were not even permitted to stay that night there. In the morning, they noticed their nakedness. Their Lord said to them, `Did I not prohibit you from eating of that tree?' Adam felt very ashamed. He prostrated and said, `Lord! We have both done our souls injustice, and we have admitted our sins, so do forgive us.' Allāh said to them, `Get out of it to My earth, for no disobedient servant of Mine can be near Me in My Paradise, nor can he be in My heaven."[2]

Creation of Eve

There have been various views (as is always the case) with regard to the creation of Eve. There are two opinions as to how she was created. One of them is the most widely (but not necessarily accurate) concept of her creation from Adam's rib. This theory has no support

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[1]al-ᶜAyyāshi, *ᶜIlal al-Sharāᶜi*, Vol. 2, p. 325.

[2]al-ᶜAyyāshi, *Tafsīr*, Vol. 2, p. 10, where Sūrat al-Aᶜrāf is explained. Notice also the distinction the Almighty makes between "Paradise" and "heaven." The first is the earthly garden from which Adam was dismissed. The second is the eternal abode to which he will be returned to live there forever, he and the good ones from among his offspring. "Paradise," *firdaws*, is not an Arabic word. Some say it is Babylonian, and some say it is Persian.

at all in the Holy Qur'ān; rather, it crept into the Islamic literature through the Christians and the Jews with whom a number of early Muslim scholars came into contact.

Eve was Created from Adam's Rib (or Was She?!)

Some scholars of exegesis have said that when Allāh Almighty permitted Adam to live in Paradise, he used to walk in it alone, since he had nobody to keep him company or to entertain him. One day, Allāh Almighty caused him to sleep. Allāh took one of Adam's left side ribs called *al-qusairi*, the short rib, and created Eve from it without making Adam feel it or suffer any pain. Had Adam been hurt in the process, men would never have had any love for women. Then He outfitted her with the attires of Paradise and decorated her with all sorts of ornaments, then He seated her at his head. When Adam woke up, he saw her sitting at his head. In order to test him, the angels asked him, "What is this, O Adam?!" He said, "Woman." They asked, "What is her name?" He said, "*Ḥawwā*, Eve." They said, "Yes, you have spoken the truth." Then they asked him, "Why is she called *ḥawwā*?" He said, "Because she was created of something *ḥayy*, live." They asked him, "Why did Allāh create her?" He said, "So that she may incline to me and I to her." This is the meaning of the verse, "He it is Who created you from a single being and of the same (kind) did He make his mate so that he might incline to her" (Qur'ān, 7:189).

The Prophet has said, "Woman was created of a crooked rib; so, if you try to straighten her, you will break her, but if you leave her, you will enjoy her despite her crookedness." According to some accounts, when Adam saw Eve, he stretched his hand to her, whereupon the angels said, "O Adam! *Meh* [wait]!" He said, "Why should I, since Allāh has created her for me?!" The angels said, "Not before you pay her *Mehr* (dower)." He asked them, "And what is her dower?" They said, "You have to bless Muḥammed and the progeny of Muḥammed thrice." He said, "Who is Muḥammed?" They said, "The last prophet among your descendants. Had it not been for him, you yourself would not have been created at all."

But what purpose is served if He were to create Eve from one of Adam's ribs? Would that not make Adam the husband of a part of his own body?! And who says that a rib has all the ingredients needed to form a living being?! A bone is mostly calcium... Neither logic nor science supports the theory of Eve being created from a bone, from

calcium. Also, to say that Eve was created from a crooked rib is to attribute crookedness to women, our mothers, sisters, and wives. This reflects a male chauvinistic attitude far from being fair, while Allāh is fair to everyone, male and female. Another point to make here is this: In the beginning of this section, Adam supposedly tells the angels about Eve, who she is and for whom she is created, but he does not know who Muhammed is! Is this possible?! We think this is the fabrication of someone's imagination, and Allāh knows best.

Eve Was Not Created from Adam's Rib

The other view, which seems to be more logical and comes from a much more reliable source, is stated in references such as al-ʿAyyāshi's *Tafsīr* and al-Majlisi's *Bihār al-Anwār*, and in other reliable sources. Al-ʿAyyāshi quotes ʿAmr ibn al-Miqdām citing his father saying, "I asked Abu Jaʿfer (Imām Muhammed al-Bāqir): `What did Allāh create Eve from?' `What do people say she was created from?' asked the Imām in turn. `They say that Allāh created her from one of Adam's ribs,' said I. The Imām said, `They have surely lied. As if Allāh could not create her from anything other than his rib.' I said, `May I be your sacrifice, O son of the Messenger of Allāh! What did He create her from?' He informed me, quoting his fathers, that the Messenger of Allāh had said, `Allāh, Blessed and Exalted is His Name, took hold of a handful of mud and mixed it with His right hand (and both His hands are right[1]), so He created Adam from it. There was a remnant of that mud (or mold) from which He created Eve.'"[2] Since Allāh was able to create Adam from dust, He likewise was able to create Eve of the same.

Adam Marries Eve

The romantic story of how Adam and Eve got married is told by none other than Imām Jaʿfer al-Ṣādiq who never told a lie as long as he lived. It is here narrated as recorded in al-ʿAyyāshi's book *ʿIlal al-*

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[1]Allāh has neither hands nor feet. Reference to His hands made in the Holy Qur'ān is a figure of speech in order to bring a meaning closer to our comprehension.

[2]al-ʿAyyāshi, *Tafsīr*, Vol. 1, p. 216, where Sūrat al-Nisā' is explained.

Sharā'i':

> As soon as Adam saw Eve, he found her a very beautiful being, someone who looked like but not similar to him. She spoke to him, and he asked her, "Who are you?" "A creation created by Allāh as you can see," said she. Adam then addressed his Lord saying, "Lord! Who is this beautiful being whose presence and looking at whom has delighted me?" Allāh said, "She is My bondmaid Eve. Would you like her to be in your company so she would entertain you and talk to you and obey you?" Adam said, "O yes, Lord! And I shall surely thank You for that and praise You as long as I live!" Allāh said, "Then ask for her hand from Me, and she may also be good for satisfying your desire." It was then that Allāh cast into Adam the sexual desire. Before then, all he had was knowledge. Said Adam, "Lord! I do ask You to marry me to her, but what is Your pleasure in this regard?" Allāh said, "I shall be pleased with you if you would teach her the injunctions of My creed." Adam said, "You have the right to demand that of me, O Lord, and I shall do so if it pleases You." The most Exalted and Sublime One then said, "Yes, it will please Me if you do so, and I have married you to one another, so join her to yourself." It was then that Adam asked Eve to come near him. "Come," said Adam, but Eve did not. "Rather, you should come to me." Adam was puzzled and did not know exactly what to do. The Almighty interfered and ordered him to stand up and go to Eve. Had he not done so, women would have sought men for themselves in marriage[1]. Such is the story of Eve, blessings of Allāh be upon her.[2]

The First Human Family

One of the most pressing questions in as far as Adam and Eve are concerned is: "How was the first human family established? Eve gave birth to sons and daughters who were brothers and sisters of one

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[1]Islam permits women to propose to men, but they have to do it through a third party. They have to be modest and to maintain their dignity and self-respect. Remember that it was Khadīja daughter of Khuwaylid who proposed to prophet Muhammed to marry her. A word about Khadījais included in a footnote in a later part of this book.

[2]al-'Ayyashi, *'Ilal al-Sharā'i'*, Vol. 1, p. 29.

another. Did a brother marry his sister? If the answer is negative, then how else did they multiply?"

We have to underscore here the sublime and pristine and irrefutable fact that what Allāh makes permissible stays so since the beginning of creation and till the end of time; there is neither alteration nor adulteration to Allāh's canons. There is no truly revealed religion in the history of mankind that permits a brother to marry his sister. Adam was a messenger of Allāh to mankind, and he conveyed the same truth conveyed by all other prophets and messengers who descended from his loins, each and every one of them preaching the same commandments of our Lord and Creator. People played havoc with their creeds, neglecting to safeguard them, deliberately altering them in order to satisfy their own whims and desires or to serve their interests. This is why there are so many differences among the world's religions. All these differences are man-made; Allāh has nothing to do with them. His word is one and the same; He never changes it. His divine law is one and the same. His *halāl* and *harām* are as everlasting as His sun and moon and till the Day of Judgment. He could not have allowed His first prophet, our father Adam, to permit what all other prophets prohibited.

How did Adam's offspring then multiply?

Zurārah quotes Imām Jaʿfer al-Ṣādiq commenting in detail about this matter. The Imām was asked about his views with regard to Sunnis (as well as non-Muslims) claiming that there was time when it was the law of necessity to permit the brothers to marry their sisters in order to form the first human family. The Imām was quite emphatic in his denunciation of, even outraged at, such a preposterous claim. Here is the text of his statement as recorded in *ʿIlal al-Sharāʾiʿ*:

> Woe unto such people! How far are they from a matter wherein neither the scholars of Hijaz nor those of Iraq have differed in the least? Allāh, the most Exalted and Great, ordered the Pen to write on the Preserved Tablet[1] what will be till the Day of Judgment, one

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[1]This is what is known as *al-Lawh al-Mahhooz*. There is a great deal of reference to it in the Holy Qur'ān and in the Sunnah, especially in *qudsi ahādīth*. It is a record of what was and what will be of each and every (continued...)

thousand years before the creation of Adam. All the Books of Allāh, each and every one of them, were written by that Pen, and they all prohibit the sisters from marrying their brothers. This is one of the prohibitions they contain. We all read the four divinely revealed Books which are famous the world over: the Torah (Old Testament, revealed to prophet Moses), the Injil (the Bible or the New Testament, revealed to prophet Jesus Christ), the Psalms (revealed to prophet David, now part of the Old Testament), and the Furqan (the Holy Qur'ān, revealed to Prophet Muhammed). Allāh sent them down from the Preserved Tablet to His prophets, Allāh's blessings be upon all of them. They do not permit anything like that. Anyone who claims otherwise or who says something similar only supports what the Zoroastrians[1] claim... Eve gave birth to seventy twins, each time giving birth to a male and a female, till Able was killed. Adam felt very grieved about is murder to the extent that he had no desire to cohabit for five hundred years. Then he overcame his grief and cohabited with Eve, and Allāh granted him one single newborn. When Allāh wanted his progeny to be as numerous as you can see, and to effect what the Pen had written, that is, Allāh prohibiting the brothers from marrying their sisters, it was the time in the late afternoon, on a Thursday, when Allāh sent him from Paradise a *hūri* named Nazla. Allāh, the Exalted and the Great, ordered Adam to marry her to Japheth (Yafith). He married her to him. Sheth, too, was blessed with a son at the same time when Japheth was blessed with a daughter. Allāh, the Sublime and the Great, ordered Adam, when both of the newborns came of age, to marry Japheth's daughter to the son of Sheth, which he did. The

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(...continued)
matter, small or big, of Allāh's creation. It is from this record that the Holy Qur'ān came. The closest of Allāh's angels are the only ones who are acquainted with some of what is recorded in it. It is one of the unknown mysteries about which we are very much in the dark. A thorough research of the Holy Qur'ān and the Sunnah will give the researcher a better idea about this divine Tablet.

[1]Zoroastrianism is the religion preached by Zoroaster (or Zarathustra) who lived from 628 - 551 B.C. in ancient Persia. Its scripture is called *Zend Avesta*, the commentary, or the law, written in ancient Pahlavi. It falls in the category of dualistic religions, those that believe in the existence of everything in pairs. Nowadays, the Ghebers in Iran and the Parsis in India keep this "religion" alive.

result of that marriage was the choicest of prophets and messengers. We seek refuge with Allāh against what they claim that the brothers (who descended from Adam) married their sisters.[1]

The account of the first children born for Adam and Eve, and the story of Cain killing his brother Able, are both detailed in a very interesting tradition narrated by Abu Abdullāh Imām Jaʿfer al-Ṣādiq and recorded by *ʿallama* al-Majlisi in Vol. 11 of his precious 111-volume encyclopedia titled *Biḥār al-Anwār*; here is an excerpt from it for the reader:

When Adam and Eve cohabited, a daughter was born for them whom Adam named ʿAtaqa, and she was the first woman to commit sin from among the human race. Allāh, therefore, sent against her a wolf as large as an elephant and an eagle as large as a donkey that both killed her. After her Cain was born. When he attained maturity, Allāh, the Exalted and the Sublime, sent him a woman from the jinns named Jehana in a human form. As soon as he saw her, he fell in love with her, so Allāh inspired to Adam to marry Jehana to Cain. Then Able was born for Adam and Eve. When he became adult, Allāh sent Adam a *ḥūri* (from Paradise) named Nezla the *ḥūri*. When Able saw her, he fell in love with her, so Allāh inspired to Adam to marry her to Able, which he did. Nezla the *ḥūri* then became wife of Able son of Adam. Then Allāh inspired Adam to entrust the heritage of prophethood and the knowledge (relevant thereto) to Able, which he did. When Cain came to know about it, he became angry and said to his father, "Am I not older than my brother and more worthy of what you did for him?" Adam said, "Son! The affair is in the hands of Allāh, and it is Allāh Who chose him for what I did. If you do not believe me, let both of you offer a *qurbān* (a sacrificial offering). Anyone whose *qurbān* is accepted will be the one worthy of being preferred over the other." During that time, the fire used to come and consume such *qurbāns* (as the Holy Qur'ān tells us in 3:183). Able was a land tiller, so he offered a bad quality wheat, whereas Able used to tend on sheep, so he offered a fat ram. The fire consumed Able's *qurbān* only. Eblis went to Cain and said, "O Cain! Were you both to have offspring, and were you both to become numerous, his offspring would brag to yours about the favour bestowed upon him by your father and about

[1]al-ʿAyyāshi, *ʿIlal al-Sharāʾiʿ*, Vol. 1, pp. 30-31.

the fact that the fire accepted his *qurbān* and ignored yours. If you kill him, your father will have no choice except to give you what he has given him." Cain, therefore, leaped at Able and killed him. Then Eblis said, "The fire that accepted the *qurbān* is surely glorified; so, you, too, should glorify it. Build for it a house and assign people to look after it; worship it well, and look after it, so that your *qurbān* may be accepted, if this is what you want." Cain did all of that, thus becoming the first human to worship the fire and to build a fire house. Adam came to the place where Able had killed his brother and kept weeping there for forty days during which he condemned the spot that accepted his son's blood. It is the spot where the dome of Basra's (main) mosque now stands. On the day when Able was killed, his wife, Nezla the *ḥūri*, was pregnant. She later gave birth to a son whom Adam named also Able. Allāh, the most Exalted and the Almighty, granted Adam after Able another son whom he named Sheth and about whom he said, "This is *hibat-Allāh* (a gift from Allāh)!" When Sheth became adult, Allāh sent Adam another *ḥūri* named Nā'ima in a human form. As soon as he saw her, Sheth fell in love with her, so Allāh inspired Adam to marry Nā'ima to Sheth, which he did. She gave birth to a daughter whom Adam named Ḥooriyya (*ḥūri*). When she became adult, Allāh inspired Adam to marry her to Able (Able II), which he did. The humans you all now see are from that marriage. When Adam's period of prophethood came to an end, Allāh Almighty ordered him to pass on his knowledge and the relics of prophethood to Sheth and to order him to follow *taqiyya* (to be on his guard) and to keep this matter to himself and not to tell his brother about it lest the latter should kill him as Able was killed.[1]

Imām Ja'fer al-Ṣādiq was asked once about the meaning of the verse saying, "The Day when a man shall flee from his brother" (Qur'ān, 80:34). He said, "Cain shall that Day (of Judgment) flee from his brother Able." He was also asked about why Wednesday is considered a bad omen day. He stated that Cain killed Able on a Wednesday.[2]

The Status Adam Enjoys With Allāh

The Praised and the Exalted One has said the following in the Holy

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[1]al-Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 11, p. 226.

[2]al-Jazā'iri, *Al-Noor al-Mubeen*, p. 94.

Qur'ān: "Then Adam received (some) words from his Lord, so He turned to him mercifully; surely He is the oft-Returning (to mercy), the Most Merciful" (Qur'ān, 2:37).

The son of Abu Najīḥ quotes Mujāhid saying that those "words" were:

> *Lord! There is no god but You! All Glory and Praise are due to You! Lord! I have wronged my own self; so, forgive me, for You are the best of those who grant forgiveness! Lord! There is no god but You! Glory and Praise to You! ... We have been unjust to our own selves, and if You do not forgive us and have mercy on us, we shall surely be among the losers.* (Qur'ān, 7:23).

Our Sunni brethren, through transmitters of *hadīth* such as al-Ḥākim, al-Bayhaqi, and Ibn ʿAsākir, quote Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Yazīd ibn Aslam citing his father citing his grandfather quoting Omer ibn al-Khaṭṭāb saying that the Messenger of Allāh has said, "When Adam committed his sin, he invoked Allāh by saying, `Lord! I invoke You by the honour reserved with You for Muḥammed and the progeny of Muḥammed to grant me Your forgiveness!' The Almighty asked him, `How did you come to know about Muḥammed since I have not created him yet?' He answered, `Lord! When You created me and blew into me of Your soul, I raised my head and saw on the pillars of the Throne a writing saying: There is no god except Allāh; Muḥammed is the Messenger of Allāh. So I came to know that You did not add someone's name to Yours except when he is most loved by You of all Your creation.' The Almighty said, `O Adam! You have spoken the truth! He is, indeed, the dearest to Me of all My creation, and if you invoke Me by his honour, I am bound to forgive you; had it not been for Muḥammed, I would not have created you.'"

Allāh, the Exalted and the Almighty, has referred to His forgiveness of Adam in the Holy Qur'ān in verses such as these: "... and Adam disobeyed his Lord, so his life became evil (to him). Then his Lord chose him, so He turned to him and guided him" (Qur'ān, 20:121-122).

Where is Adam Buried?

Adam lived for one thousand years or, according to other accounts, one thousand and thirty years. Some of his offspring, such as Noah, lived much longer than that. Abu Abdullāh, Imām Jaʿfer al-Ṣādiq, is quoted as having said, "When Adam died, and his death brought joy

to Eblis and Cain, the latter met on earth and celebrated the occasion with some sorts of musical instruments and merry making. Any music which pleases people is the product thereof."[1] The Imām has also said the following about how and where Adam was buried:

> Allāh, Praised and Exalted is He, inspired to Noah, who was then in the ark, to circle around the House (Ka'ba) for a full week, which he did. Then Noah waded in the water to his knees as he took out a coffin containing Adam's remains. Then he came to [what is now] the gate of Kufa and reached the midst of its [present day] mosque. Those who had been with Noah in the ark dispersed, so he took the coffin and buried it in the Ghari (Najaf, Iraq).[2]

He is also quoted saying that Eve did not survive him except for one year. She fell sick for fifteen days, then she died and was buried beside Adam.[3]

The Holy Qur'ān mentions Adam twenty-five times.

ADAM'S SUPPLICATION

It is reported in the appendix to al-Kaf'ami's *Miṣbāḥ* that Adam knelt down at the Yemeni corner, offered two *rek'as* then said, "O Almighty God! I pray You for a conviction whereby You gladden my heart," up to the end of his invocation, whereupon the Almighty inspired him, "O Adam! I shall grant those among your descendants who learn this invocation whatever they like and protect them against whatever they dislike; I will remove the love of this world from their heart and fill their minds with wisdom." This invocation is recorded by Shaikh al-Ṭūsi in his *Miṣbāḥ al-Mutahajjid*. It is as follows:

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[1] *Furoo' al-Kāfi*, Vol. 6, p. 431, in a chapter dealing with singing.

[2] al-Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 11, p. 268.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 98.

O You Who is my resort during the time of affliction, my Friend during the time of hardship, my Sponsor during the time of prosperity, my Refuge during the time of need! You cover my shortcoming, You assure me when I am frightened; You bring my feet back to the right path after slipping; so, Lord, do forgive my sin! Lord! I pray You to grant me the humility of conviction before the humiliation of the Fire! O One! O Independent One Who neither begets nor is He begotten, nor can any be like Him! O You Who gives those Who ask Him out of his Kindness and starts giving (even before being asked)! You, Lord, are the best of those who are asked in Your everlasting Favours and Generosity! I pray You to send blessings unto Muḥammed and the progeny of Muḥammed, and to grant me a spacious and inclusive mercy whereby I achieve the best of this life and of the life to come! Lord! I seek Your forgiveness for whatever I committed even after my repentance, and I seek Your forgiveness for every good deed which I intended to solely achieve Your pleasure but was mixed with something which is not fit to be Yours! Lord! Send blessings unto Muḥammed and the progeny of Muḥammed and overlook my wrong-doing and sin by Your Clemency and Generosity! O Generous One Who does not disappoint anyone who pleads to Him, nor does He run out of giving, O One Who is so High that nothing is above Him and so near that nothing is nearer than Him! I pray You to send blessings unto Muḥammed and the progeny of Muḥammed and to have mercy on me! O You Who split the sea for Moses! Tonight, tonight, tonight! This hour; this hour; this hour! Lord! Purify my heart from hypocrisy, my actions from pretense, my tongue from telling lies, and my eyes from seeing what You have prohibited me from seeing, for You know when the eyes intrude and what the hearts conceal! Lord! This is the place of one who seeks help from You against the fire! This is the place of one who seeks refuge against the fire! This is the place where one flees to You from the fire! This is the place of one who admits his wrong-doing and repents and regrets his sin to his Lord! This is the place of the miserable wretch! This is the place of one frightened seeking shelter! This is the place of one who is grieved, distressed! This is the place of one who is a stranger, drowning! This is the place of one who is perturbed, frightened! This is the place of one who finds none except You to forgive his sin and remove his distress! O Allāh! O Generous One! Do not burn my face in the fire after having prostrated before You and lowered my head in humility, without doing You a favour by so doing; rather, to Your is all praise due, and yours are all the favours

and bounties! So, have mercy, O Lord (and keep repeating "O Lord!" till you are out of breath), have mercy on my weakness, my inability to help myself, the thinness of my skin, the scattering of my limbs, flesh and body, my loneliness in my grave, and my impatience regarding the small portion of this life's hardships! Lord! I ask You to cool my eyes and bring happiness to me on the Day of sighs and regrets! Lord! Brighten my face on the Day when faces are darkened! Grant me security on the Day of the Greatest Fear! I pray You for glad tidings on the Day when hearts and visions are turned upside-down, and to grant me the glad tidings when I depart from this world! Praise is all due to Allāh Whose help I seek and none else, and if I seek help of anyone other than Him, I will surely be disappointed! All praise is due to Allāh in Whom I have set my hope, and if I set my hope on anyone else, my plea will surely bring me disappointment. Praise is all due to Allāh Who is the Bountiful, the ever-Giving, the ultimate end of the desirous, the One Who fulfills every need! Lord! Send blessings unto Muḥammed and the progeny of Muḥammed and bless me with conviction and with good thoughts about You, and make my hope in You firm in my heart and do not let me set my hope on anyone other than You so that I plead to none but You and trust none but You! O You Gracious One! Be Gracious unto me in all conditions, regarding everything You like and with which You are pleased! Lord! I am too weak to tolerate the fire; so, do not torment me in it! Lord! Have mercy upon me and grant me my pleas, respond to my supplication, fear, humiliation and wretchedness; I seek help from You, and I rely on none but You! Lord! I am too weak to achieve my worldly gains, while Your Generosity is spacious; so, I pray You, Lord, by Your Might to do that and Your ability to do it, and Your lack of need to do it, and my own need for it, to bless me in this year, in this month, in this day, in this hour, with a sustenance which would make me too independent to covet what others have of Your lawful and good sustenance! Lord! To You do I pray, You do I seek, and You are worthy of all of this, and only You do I trust! O You Who is the Most Merciful of those who have mercy! I have wronged my own soul; so, forgive me and have mercy on me; grant me good health, O You Who hears every voice, Who sustains each and all, Who brings life back to the dead, Who is not overwhelmed by the darkness, nor can He ever be confused by voices, nor can anything divert Him from doing anything else! I pray You to grant Muḥammed, peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him and his progeny, the best of what he has asked You, and the best of what

You have been asked, and the best of what You are apt to give till the Day of Resurrection, and grant me good health so that You enable me to enjoy life, and conclude my life with goodness so that sins do not harm me! Lord! Make me contented with what You have allotted for me so that I do not ask anyone for anything! Lord! Send peace and blessings unto Muhammed and the progeny of Muhammed and open for me the treasures of Your mercy and have mercy on me so that You do not torment me henceforth in this life nor in the life to come and grant me, out of Your Spacious Favours, good and lawful sustenance so that You do not make me, beyond it, in need of anyone other than You, and increase my thanks to You and need and want to You and overlooking what all but You have! O You Who is ever-Giving, ever-Bountiful! You are the King, the Omnipotent! I pray You to send blessings unto Muhammed and the progeny of Muhammed and to enable me to do whatever it is important for me that I should do, and judge me with kindness, and bless me in all my affairs, and enable me to achieve all my objectives! Lord! Make easy for me what I fear to be difficult, for doing so is surely easy for You, and facilitate for me whatever hardship I dread, and remove my distress, and keep away from me whatever I shun, and spare me whatever I deem as evil, O You Who is the Most Merciful of all those who are merciful! Fill my heart with love for You, and fear of You, and belief in You, and conviction in Your Book, and awe of You, and eagerness for You! O You Who is the One With Authority and Grace! Lord! You have obligated me to do certain things, so exempt me from them as an act of charity from You towards me, and I have obligations towards people, so, carry them out for me! Lord! Every guest deserves a boon, and I am Your guest; therefore, let Paradise be Your boon unto me tonight, O You Who grants Paradise, Who often grants forgiveness, and there is no might nor power except in You!



ENOCH (PROPHET IDRĪS)

In the Holy Qur'ān, we read, "And mention Idrīs in the Book; surely he was a truthful man, a prophet, and We raised him high in heaven" (Qur'ān, 19:56-57). Idrīs is the great-grandfather of prophet Noah. He was a tailor, the first to employ this profession, and it is said that Allāh, Glory to Him, taught him astrology, mathematics, and forms, making that his miracle. He was the first prominent descendant of Adam after Sheth who was honoured with Prophethood. He was Idrīs son of Bard, or Yārid, son of Mahail son of Kenan son of Anoosh son of Sheth son of Adam. The name of his son was Akhnoo^{c}. He was called "Idrīs" due to the extent of his study of the books and tablets of both Adam and Sheth; his mother's name was Ashoot. Idrīs was the first to use the pen. Physically, he had a large belly and broad shoulders.

Wahab ibn Manbah has said, "Every day, he used to adore the Almighty as much as He was adored by all his contemporaries combined, so the angels were amazed at him, and the angel of death was eager to meet him. The latter asked permission of the Almighty to do so, and permission was granted to him. He came to Idrīs in a human form. Idrīs used to always fast. When it was time for him to break his fast at sunset, it so happened once that he invited none other than the angel of death himself to share his food, but the latter refused to eat. Angels do not eat. He kept doing so for three days till Idrīs became suspicious of him. On the third night, he asked him, "I would like to know who you are." He said, "I am the angel of death. I have sought my Lord's permission to come and visit you and keep you company, and He granted me permission to do so." Idrīs said to him, "I have a favour to ask of you." He asked him, "And what is that?" He answered, "Take my soul away." The Almighty inspired to the angel of death to take Idrīs's soul away, and so he did. Then the Almighty returned the soul back to Idrīs's body one hour later. The angel of death asked him, "What is the benefit of you asking me to take your soul away?" He answered, "So that I may taste of the tribulation of death and its agony and thus become better prepared for it." Then he said to him, "I have another favour to ask of you." He asked, "And what is it this time?!" He said, "I would like you to raise me to the heavens so that I may see it and to take me to Paradise." The Almighty granted the angel of death permission to do so. When

Idrīs came close to Paradise, he asked his escorting angel, "Is it possible that I ask you for another favour?!" He said, "And what exactly do you want?!" He said, "Ask Riḍwān to open the gates of Paradise for me so that I may see it." This, too, he was permitted to do, so he escorted Idrīs to Paradise and asked that its gates be opened, and they were opened, so Idrīs entered it. Then the angel of death ordered him to get out of it so that he would escort him back to his place, but Idrīs firmly took hold of one of its trees and said, "I shall never get out of it!" Allāh, therefore, sent an angel to arbitrate between Idrīs and the angel of death. The arbitrator asked him, "Why don't you leave?" He said, "Because Allāh Almighty has said, `Every soul shall taste of death,' and I have tasted of it already. And Allāh Almighty has said, `Each one of you shall come to it,' and I have already come to it! And the Almighty has also said, `And they shall never be taken out of it,' so I do not wish to be taken out of Paradise!'" The Almighty said to the angel of death, "Leave him! By My permission has he entered Paradise, and by My permission shall he remain therein;" so, he remains alive there till the Day of Judgment. He sometimes adores the Almighty in the fourth heavens, and sometimes he enjoys Paradise, and Allāh knows best.

Idrīs had contemplated on the greatness of the Creator and said, "These heavens and this earth, and this great creation, have to have a God Who manages their affairs and keeps them aright; I wish I know how I can adore Him as He deserves." He invited some of his people to share his views and started admonishing them, inviting them to worship the Creator of everything. One thousand from among them responded to his call from whom he hand-picked seven. He addressed everyone saying, "Let these seven men supplicate, and let the rest of you say, `Āmeen;' perhaps this great Lord will lead us to the way we are supposed to worship Him." They put their hands on the ground and kept supplicating for a long time, but nothing happened. Then they raised their hands to the heavens, and it was then that Allāh inspired to Idrīs how he and those who believed in him ought to worship Him. They kept worshipping Allāh without associating anything with Him till Allāh raised Idrīs to heaven and most of those who had followed his creed died. After that, people differed among themselves and introduced many innovations and kept

doing so till the time of Noah.[1]

Abu Ja'fer, Imām Muḥammed al-Bāqir, has said that at the beginning of Idrīs's prophethood, there was a tyrannical king who one day went out riding on an excursion. He passed by estates which were green and very pleasing to the eyes belonging to one of the believers. He liked the land very much and inquired of his viziers who exactly it belonged to. They said to him, "It belongs to one of the slaves of the king, so-and-so who rejects our form of religion." The king asked the owner to sell him his land. "My children," said the owner, "need it more than you." He kept asking him to sell him his property and the man kept refusing, so much so that the king became very angry and went back annoyed. He contemplated upon what he ought to do. His wife looked at him and saw anger painted all over on his face, so he told her about the land and about its owner. She said to him, "If you hate to kill him without a valid reason, I can spare you his headache and legally transfer the ownership of his land to you." Her folks used to follow her creed, and they regarded the killing of those who refused to share their views perfectly permissible. She invited some of them to go to meet with her. She ordered them to testify against that man in the presence of the king that he had dissociated himself from the king's creed. They testified, so the king killed the man and confiscated his land. Allāh became very angry at what happened to the man who believed in Him. It was then that Allāh inspired to Idrīs thus: "When you see this tyrant, say to him, `You killed a believer in God. As if that was not enough, you even confiscated his land and caused his family after him to be in a great deal of difficulty. God tells you that He will soon avenge his killing and take the kingdom away from you, reduce your town to rubble, and feed the dogs with the flesh of your wife. You have taken God's Clemency for granted.'"

Idrīs went to the king and conveyed his Lord's message to him. The tyrant said to Idrīs, "Get out of here, Idrīs, lest I should kill you right now!" The king's wife said to him, "Do not be frightened on account of his Lord's message, for I shall dispatch someone to him to kill him and to thus void his Lord's message." He gave her his permission to do so.

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[1]al-ʿAyyāshi, *ʿIlal al-Sharā'iʿ*, Vol. 1, pp. 40-41.

Idrīs had a number of those who believed in him and whose company he very much enjoyed. He informed these friends of his about his Lord's message to the tyrant king, so they feared lest he should be killed. The queen sent Idrīs not one but forty men from her own kinfolks to kill him. They came to his house but did not find him. Idrīs's friends saw those would-be assassins, so they went out seeking him till they found him. They said to him, "O Idrīs! You should be on your guard, for the tyrant is surely going to kill you. Get out of this town." Idrīs followed their suggestion and got out of that town accompanied by a number of his close friends.

Shortly before *fajr*, Idrīs supplicated to his Lord and complained to Him about the tyrant being bent on killing him. Allāh inspired to him saying, "Get out of his town, and let Me deal with him. By My Honour! I shall carry out what I had warned him of." Idrīs said, "Lord! I have a plea to You!" Allāh said, "Name it." He said, "I plead to You not to permit the rain to fall on this town and its surrounding areas till I ask You to do so." Allāh said to him, "The town will then decay, and its people will starve." Idrīs said, "So what if it decays and if they starve?" Allāh said, "I have granted you what you have pleaded Me for."

Idrīs informed his friends that the rain would not fall, so they got out of the town, and they were twenty men. They scattered throughout the villages, and Idrīs became a household name throughout all the village because of his plea to Allāh. Idrīs sought seclusion in a mountain cave, and Allāh assigned an angel to send him food every evening. Allāh stripped that tyrant of his authority, reduced his town to ruins, and fed the dogs with the flesh of his wife on account of His wrath because of what happened to that believer.

But another tyrant appeared in that town, an oppressive one who did not believe in God. Twenty years passed since Idrīs had left that town. During that entire period, no rain fell at all. People's condition was extremely bad, and they started begging food from other towns. They said, "What has befallen us is due to Idrīs pleading to his Lord not to permit the rain to fall till he asked Him to. We do not know where Idrīs now is, but God is more merciful to us than he is." They all decided to repent to God and to plead to Him to let the rain fall. They put ashes on their faces, put on very coarse clothes, and kept pleading to the Almighty to have mercy on them. It was then that Allāh inspired to Idrīs saying, "The people of your town have

returned to Me repentant, and I am the most Gracious, the most Merciful. I accept repentance, and I have decided to have mercy on them, and nothing stops Me from responding to their pleas with regard to the rain except My promise to you not to let it fall on them except if you ask me; so, Idrīs, do ask Me."

Idrīs said, "Lord! I do not ask You to do it!" Allāh ordered the angel who used to bring food to Idrīs not to do so any more. When the night came and Idrīs did not receive any food, he felt very sad and hungry. On the next day, no food came to him, either, so his hunger intensified. The same happened on the third night. He, therefore, addressed his Lord saying, "Lord! You have deprived me of Your sustenance even before taking my soul away!" Allāh inspired to him saying, "O Idrīs! You have lost your patience only three days and nights since I did not let any food reach you, and you did not feel sorry, nor did you show any concern about the hunger of your town's people and their pathetic condition which has lasted for twenty years! Then I informed you of their serious attempts to please Me and that I decided to be merciful to them, and that you should ask Me to let the rain fall on their land, but you did not! You were too miser to ask Me to do so; therefore, I wanted you to taste of hunger, whereupon you ran out of patience and you expressed your frustration! Get down from your place and seek your own sustenance, for I have entrusted seeking it to your own endeavor."

Idrīs had no choice except to get down from that mountain and look for food. When he entered the town, he saw smoke coming out of a house. He went in its direction and rushed to an old woman who was baking two loaves of bread. He said to her, "O lady! Please feed me, for hunger has taken its toll on me!" She said to him, "O servant of Allāh! Because of Idrīs's supplication, we have nothing beyond our means whereby we can feed anyone," and she swore to him that that was all the food she had had adding, "Ask someone else from the people of this town to feed you." He said to her, "Give me enough just to keep me alive so that my feet can carry me to where I can ask for food." She said, "I have only two loaves, one for me and one for my son. If I give you mine, I will die, and if I give you my son's, he will die." Idrīs said to her, "Half a loaf should be sufficient to sustain your son. It will keep him alive while the other half will sustain me." The woman ate her loaf and divided the other between Idrīs and her son. When her son saw Idrīs eating his loaf, he was shaken, and he

instantly died. His mother said to Idrīs, "O servant of Allāh! You have now caused my son to die on account of his fear for his food!" Idrīs said, "I shall, God willing, bring him back to life; so, do not be upset."

Idrīs took hold of the boy's arm and said, "O soul departing from the body of this boy! Return to it by the will of Allāh! I am Idrīs the prophet." The soul went back to the boy with the permission of the Almighty. Having heard Idrīs say so, and having looked and seen her son coming back to life, the old woman went out and as loud as she could kept shouting, "Good news! Idrīs has entered your town!" Idrīs left and went to the town where the first tyrant had ruled, and it was on a hilltop. The residents of the town came to him and said, "O Idrīs! Won't you have any mercy on us?! Twenty years have annihilated us! We are starved and worn out; so, do supplicate to Allāh to bring us rain from the sky." Idrīs said, "I shall not do so until your tyrant and all the people of the town come to me bare-footed and beg me to do so."

When the tyrant heard what Idrīs had said, he sent forty men to bring Idrīs to him. They came to Idrīs and said, "The king has dispatched us to you to bring you to him." Idrīs supplicated against those men, so they died instantly. When the news of their death reached the tyrant, he this time sent five hundred men to bring Idrīs to him. They said to Idrīs, "The king has sent us to you so that we may escort you to him." Idrīs said, "Look and see how I have caused those who came to me before you to perish!" They said, "O Idrīs! You have already killed us with starvation during the past twenty years, and you still threaten us with annihilation! Do you not have any mercy at all?" Idrīs said, "I shall not go to him, nor shall I plead to Allāh to let the rain fall upon you till your tyrant comes to me bare-footed and so should all the people of your town." They went back and told the king about what Idrīs had said to them, and they requested him to go out with all the people of the town and walk bare-footed to meet Idrīs. The king reluctantly agreed, and everyone came to Idrīs in submission pleading to him to pray Allāh to let the rain fall upon them. It was then that Idrīs said, "Yes, now I shall do so." He, therefore, pleaded to Allāh to permit the rain to fall upon them and upon all the surrounding areas. A cloud suddenly appeared in the sky. Thunder and lightning followed, and rain instantly started pouring on the dead land. It kept raining so hard that they thought

they would all be drowned. When they went back to their homes, water was now their problem![1]

DUʿA IDRĪS:

Invocation of Idrīs

It contains Attributes of Allāh, forty in number, as many as the days of penitence. It is included by Shaikh al-Ṭūsi in his *Misbāh al-Mutahajjid*. It is also reported by Sayyid Ibn Ṭawoos in his *Muhaj al Daʿawāt* through al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri with a minor variation. He said: "When the Almighty Allāh sent Idrīs to his people, He taught him these attributes and inspired him to articulate them silently, not to reveal them to his people so they would call Him by them. So, he invoked Allāh through them and was raised to a sublime status, then Allāh Almighty inspired them to Moses son of ʿImrān (Amram) then to Muhammed who invoked Him through their power during the war of coalitions.

Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri reports saying, "I had sought to hide myself from (the tyrant) al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yousuf al-Thaqafi[2], so I pleaded to Allāh through them and He kept his mischief away from me. Six times did he come to my house, and every time he did, I would plead to the Almighty through them, and He makes the man unable to see me. So, invoke Allāh's forgiveness from all sins through them, then state what you desire in this life or in the life to come, for your plea will by the Will of Allāh be granted."

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[1]al-Ṣadūq, *Kemāl al-Deen*, pp. 76-77.

[2]His *kunya* was "Abu Muhammed." Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān, the Umayyad king, appointed him commander of his army, so he killed the *ṣaḥābi* Abdullāh ibn al-Zubayr. Then Abd al-Malik installed him as governor of Mecca, Medina, and Ṭāif, then added to them Iraq. He remained governor for twenty years. He built the city of Wāsiṭ (located between Kufa and Baṣra) where he died in 95 A.H./714 A.D. He is proverbial in his passion for shedding blood, ridiculing the Sunnah, and deliberately violating the Islamic code of conduct.

The Attributes mentioned in this invocation are forty. They are esteemed very highly by the Almighty Who appreciates them. They have merits too many to enumerate here, and the invocation is as follows:

Praise be to You, there is no god but You, Lord and Heir of everything You have created! O Lord of "lords" highly Exalted! O Allāh, Who is praised in everything He does! You Are indeed Merciful and Compassionate to everything! You are the Everlasting while nothing alive needs to sustain Your domain! O You Sustainer of everything from Whose knowledge nothing escapes, nor keeping it tires You! O One Who remains when everything starts, then ceases to be! O You Who is Everlasting without an end, nor does Your domain ever ceases to be! O One Who is unlike any other! O You Who starts the creation of everything, Who has no peer, nor can anyone truly describe Him! O Great One! No mind can ever grasp Your greatness! O Originator of everything without a peer, Unique! O Pure and Purifier of every ill through His sanctity! O You Who suffices everyone, Who gives His creation in abundance out of His bounty! O Pure of any injustice which displeases Him, nor does injustice ever mingle with His doings! O Compassionate One Whose mercy has encompassed everything! O Giver Whose bounty has overwhelmed all His creation! O One to Whom all servants owe everything, and through Whose power all are subdued! O Creator of those in the heavens and those on earth, and to Whom all shall return! O Helper of everyone who pleads to Him, everyone in distress, everyone who needs to be helped, and the One Who can be relied upon! Lord! No tongues can ever do justice while attempting to describe the greatness and dignity of Your domain! O Originator of everything that needs to be originated, without being in need of Your creation to originate anything You please! O Knower of the unknown! Nothing that you safeguard can tire You! O You Who shall repeat the creation after its extinction, when the creation are raised again, responding to and fearing Him! O Clement One, Patient! Nothing in Your creation may be compared to You! O You Whose deeds are praised, Who is

ever-giving to His creation out of His Grace! O Gracious One Who has nothing in existence to compare to Him! O Vanquisher Whose Might is devastating, Whose revenge is unbearable! O Lofty One Who is near despite His Loftiness! O Powerful One Who makes everything easy through the might of His domain! O You, Light of Everything! Your Light dispels every darkness! O Holy and Pure One! There is nothing like You! O near One Whose nearness is nearer than everything else! O Sublime One in the heavens Whose loftiness is more sublime than anything else! O Originator of everything! You repeat the creation of things even after their extinction through Your might! O Great One Who is above everything! Justice is Your command; true is Your promise! O Glorified One Whose Glory no minds can ever conceive! O Generous One when Forgiving, Just! Your Justice has filled everything! O Great One worthy of all the best praise and glory! Your Greatness never humiliates! O Wonderful One! All tongues can never count Your Signs or utter the praise due to You! I pray You, upon Whom I rely in every distress and with Whom I seek refuge in every calamity, by the greatness of these Attributes to grant me a security against the penalties of this life and the life to come, and I ask You to shun through them everything evil and everything I dread, and to divert the eyes of those wrong-doers who wish to inflict on me the wrong which You have prohibited of the evil of what they hide and change it into the goodness which they do not have and which none has other than You! O Glorious One! Do not let me, Lord, rely on my own self so I become unable to bear it, nor on people so they might inflict harm on me! I pray You not to disappoint me while I have set my hopes on You, and do not torment me while I have invoked You! Lord! I plead to You as You have enjoined me to plead; so, answer my plea as You have promised! Fill my life-span with goodness and my fate too, and do not change the soundness of my body nor let my luck fail! I invoke You not to change my friend into a foe, and I seek refuge with You against all deadly illnesses, against poverty, humiliation, and bad company! Lord! Divert my heart from anything which does not benefit me on my journey to You, nor do I benefit

from it on the Day when I meet You, be it permissible or prohibited, and grant me the ability to shun it and despise it seeking Your pleasure in its regard! O You Who Has mercy more than all those who are merciful! Lord! Praise is due to You for all Your generous gifts, and praise is due to You for all Your successive boons whereby You shielded me against evil consequences, and my deeds did not dissuade You from forgiving me, and You protected me and endeared to me the blessings with which You have blessed me and even continued to grant me out of Your generosity and forgiven the ugly sins I have revealed to You which I have committed! Lord! I pray You in every Attribute which is Yours and which obliges You to answer the plea when invoked! I pray You in the right of everyone who has a right with You of those who are Your servants to send blessings unto Muḥammed, Your servant and Messenger, and unto his progeny, and to effect evil against anyone who plots evil schemes against me, to take away his hearing and sight from before him, from behind him, from his right side and from his left, and to keep him away from me through Your Might! O You with Whom there is no other god to call upon! O You besides Whom there is no creator to be feared! And O You besides Whom there is no other god to be feared, nor a vizier to be approached, nor a care-taker to be bribed, nor a door-man to be called upon! O You Who does not topple His generosity of giving except by giving even more, nor does He follow up His forgiveness of the sins except with more forgiveness! I pray You, Lord, to send blessings unto Muḥammed and the progeny of Muḥammed and to deal with me in a way worthy of You, for You are worthy of all piety and of forgiving. Lord! This is my plea, and from You do I seek the favour of a favourable response. This is my endeavor and upon You do I rely; and there is no power nor might except in Allāh, the Sublime, the Great.

PROPHET NOAH

Allāh tells us the following in the Holy Qur'ān:

> *We have surely sent Noah to his people, so he said: O people! Worship Allāh; you have no god other than Him; surely I fear for you the chastisement of a grievous Day. The chiefs of his people said: Most surely we see you in clear error. He said: O people! There is no error in me, but I am an apostle from the Lord of the worlds. I deliver to you the messages of my Lord, and I offer you good advice, and I know from Allāh what you do not know. What?! Do you wonder that a reminder has come to you from your Lord through a man from among you so that he may warn you, and so that you may guard (yourselves against evil), and so that mercy may be shown to you?! But they called him a liar, so We delivered him and those with him in the ark, and We drowned those who rejected Our communications; surely they were blind people.* (Qur'ān, 7:59-64)

His full name is Noah son of Lamuch son of Methulach (or Enoch, prophet Idrīs) son of Yared son of Mahalalel son of Kenan son of Anoosh son of Sheth (Seth) son of Adam, father of mankind. He was born one hundred and twenty-six years after Adam's death according to Jarīr al-Tabari and others.[1] How many sons did Noah have? They were Ham, Sam (or Shem), Japheth (Yafith), Yam (who is called by the People of the Book Canān and must not be confused with Canaan (Ken'an) the Arab whose descendants constituted a majority in Palestine[2] by the year 1177 B.C. after the outbreak of the Ma'rab

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[1]al-Majlisi, *Bihār al-Anwār*, Vol. 11, p. 287.

[2]When the Greeks invaded Palestine in 449 B.C., they gave these Cananite Arabs who dwelt along the Mediterranean coast of Syria a new name: "Phoenicians" which means "people who work in the Tyrean purple," a dye extracted from trees and used then to paint ships. Phoenicians' Arab Semitic ancestors, as we are told on p. 25 of Vol. 1 of the sixth edition of *Civilization: Past & Present* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1987 [1407 A.H.]), had migrated from Arabia early in the third millenium B.C.

Dam of Yemen),[1] and Abir. Which of these was the one who preferred to seek refuge on top of a mountain rather than respond to his father's call to join them in the ark? He was, according to most accounts, Yam. This means that Yam, or Canaan, did not leave any descendants because he drowned. Did Noah have any daughters at all? No names are provided for us by anthropologists and historians for Noah's daughters, conceding, however, that all the four daughters-in-law of Noah, including Yam's widow, were on board the ark.

If you trace the life-span of each of his ancestors, you will have an idea about the time in history during which he lived. A chronology of his ancestors is available in Volume One of Tabari's *Tārīkh*. The chronology provided in the Book of Matthew (of the Old Testament) is, in our view, quite inaccurate. For example, it suggests that Noah lived for nine hundred and fifty years, whereas the Holy Qur'ān tells us that that was only the period during which Noah was preaching to his people. It neither includes the years he lived before inviting his people to mend their ways nor those he lived after the flood.

In Arabic, Noah's name means: he wails, laments, bemoans, mourns, weeps over others. Noah wept over his people's sins for the entire period during which he was admonishing them to renounce their evil ways, abandon idol worship, and accept Allāh as their Lord, a period of nine hundred and fifty years as the Holy Qur'ān tells us in verse 14 of Surat al-ʿAnkabūt:

> *And certainly We sent Noah to his people, so he remained among them a thousand years save fifty years. And the deluge overtook them while they were unjust.* (Qur'ān, 29:14)

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[1]Mārab came later in history to be the city capital of the Second Kingdom of Saba' (Sheba) which lasted from 650 to 115 B.C. The First Kingdom of Sheba ruled about one thousand years before the birth of Christ. Balqees, or Bilqis, the Queen of Sheba, came to be the wife of prophet Solomon the Wise who, according to scholars of the Bible, ruled from 970 - 935 B.C. Balqees was an Arab, a descendant of Saba' son of Kaʿb son of Zayd son of Himyar son of Yashjub son of Yaʿrub son of Joktan (or Jochtan, as Qahtān, one of the fathers of the Arab nation, is called by Western scolars). Balqees is most often referred to as "Himyari," a descendant of Himyar. A large percentage of today's Yemenites are descendants of Himyar.

Another meaning of his name is: one who *nahḥa*, isolated, dissociated, or cleared himself from certain people; Noah cleared himself and his small band of believers from the rest of his people who disbelieved in his message. "Noah" is not his name but his attribute; it is an adjective, not a noun. What was, then, Noah's real name? A man from Syria once asked the Commander of the Faithful Imām ʿAli about Noah's name. The Imām told the inquirer that Noah's name was al-Sakan, and that he was called Noah because he wept over his people for nine hundred and fifty years.[1] Imām Jaʿfer al-Ṣādiq was asked the same question, whereupon he said, "Noah's (real) name was Abd al-Ghaffār; he was called Noah because he mourned himself."[2] The same Imām was asked the same question on a different occasion, as Saʿīd ibn Janah, one of his companions, narrated. The Imām said, "Noah's name was Abd al-Malik; he was called Noah because he wept for five hundred years."[3] On yet another occasion, the Imām was asked the same question, and it was then that he gave Noah's name as "Abd al-Aʿla". Why did the Imām thus give more than one name for Noah? Shaikh al-Ṣadûq answers this question by saying, "Narrations with regard to Noah's name agree, not disagree, with one another, and they all convey that his name meant: a servant of Allāh; so, he is the servant of al-Ghaffār (the oft-Forgiving One), of al-Malik (the King), of al-Aʿla (the most High)."[4]

According to Wahab, al-Ṣadûq has indicated that Noah was a carpenter; his tanned face was thin and long, his eyes were large, his legs were thin but his thighs were huge, and so was his body in general. He is described by al-Ṣadûq as having been quite tall with a large belly, a long beard, and broad shoulders. He was very forceful when angry or when rebuking his people. When Allāh chose him to convey His message to the people, he was eight hundred and fifty years old. After the flood, he continued to live for seven hundred years; hence, he lived a total of two thousand and five hundred years.

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[1]This is recorded on p. 435, Vol. 4, of al-Ṭibrisi's exegesis *Mujmaʿ al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*.

[2]Refer to p. 21 of *ʿIlal al-Sharāiʿ*.

[3]*Ibid.*, p. 21.

[4]*Ibid.*

ᶜAli ibn Aḥmed quotes al-Asadi quoting Sahl quoting Abd al-Azeem al-Hasani saying, as we are told by Shaikh al-Ṣadūq, "I heard (Imām) ᶜAli ibn Muḥammed al-ᶜAskari saying that Noah lived for two thousand and five hundred years."

For three hundred years, during which Noah was admonishing his people, the latter used to bring their young sons to show them Noah and to warn them against listening to him. A father would say to his son: "Son! If you survive me, do not obey this madman."

Where did Noah Live?

One thousand years, according to p. 122, Vol. 1, of Tabari's *Tarīkh*, separate the time between our father Adam and prophet Noah, a period during which all people followed one and the same creed, and all were on the right track of Islam by the token of the Qur'ānic verse saying,

> *(All) people used to be a single nation; so Allāh raised prophets as bearers of glad tidings and as warners, and He revealed with them the Book with the truth, so that it might judge between people in that in which they differed.* (Qur'ān, 2:213)

Ibn ᶜAbbās is quoted in the same reference cited above saying, "Between Noah and Adam, peace be upon them, there was a time period of ten generations during which people followed the right creed. Then they differed among themselves, so Allāh sent His prophets to them to bring them glad tidings and to warn them." He then continued to say that this is the meaning of the verse saying, "(All) people used to be a single nation..." cited above. Noah's long life-span should not surprise anybody. Abu Abdullāh Imām Jaᶜfer al-Ṣādiq is quoted by reporters of traditions and biographers as having said, "Noah's people used to live (at least) three hundred years each."[1]

Noah was the first of Ulul-ᶜAzm prophets, and the first to warn people against a sure calamity. During his time, people were committing many different types of immoralities the like of which had never been seen before. These included wine drinking, distraction

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[1]This statement and the chain of its narrators are recorded on p. 289 of *Kamāl al-Deen wa Itmām al-Niᶜma*, and it is quoted on p. 289, Vol. 11, of *Biḥār al-Anwār*.

from worshipping Allāh, debauchery, and idol worship.

Noah and Idol Worship

The names of the most renown idols worshipped by Noah's people are listed in the Holy Qur'ān in verses such as these:

> *Noah said: Lord! Surely they have disobeyed me and followed one whose wealth and children have increased only his loss. And they have planned a great plan. And they say: By no mans should you leave your gods, nor should you leave Wudd, nor Suwa, nor Yaghuth, nor Yaʿuq, nor Nasr.* (Qur'ān, 71:21-23)

In these verses, Noah complains to the Almighty against his people who preferred to disobey him and, instead, obeyed the wealthy among them. According to al-Qummi's *Tafsīr*, a number of pious and popular believers before the time of Noah died, so people grieved for them a great deal. Assuming a human form, Eblis brought them images of those popular and righteous individuals which they happily took to decorate their places of public meetings with. When winter came, they brought those images indoors. Another generation came and Eblis came again to say to them, "These are gods which your fathers used to worship," so they worshipped them, and a great number of them strayed, hence Noah's supplication to the Almighty to drown them.

Idol worship, then, dates back as far as the time of Noah, a practice which continued throughout Arabia till the advent of Islam in the sixth century A.D. According to the author of *Al-Durr al-Manthoor*, who is quoted by al-Bukhāri and is referred to by al-Ṭabatabai in his *Tafsīr al-Mīzān*,[1] Ibn ʿAbbās said, "The idols and statues which the people of Noah used to worship came to be worshipped by the Arabs thereafter." Wudd, one of those idols, came to be worshipped by Banu Kalb who were residing at Dawmat al-Jandal; Suwāʿ became the god of Banu Huthayl; Yaghūth became the god of Banu Murād then of Banu Ghateef who lived near Saba' (Sheba, Yemen). Banu Hamadān came to worship Yaʿooq, while Nasr was the god of Ḥimyar (ancestors of Queen Balqees who married prophet Solomon). These idols were drowned in the flood, and these Arab tribes carved new ones modelled after them depending on their

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[1]Refer to pp. 38-39, Vol. 20, of *Tafsir al-Mizan*.

knowledge of such idols, the knowledge which was orally transmitted from one generation to another since the time of the flood and from those who survived it.

Noah's Ark

Scholars differ with regard to the number of those who accompanied Noah in the ark. Ibn ʿAbbās says that they, including their women, were eighty in number. Imām al-Ṣādiq, Abu Abdullāh Jaʿfer ibn Muḥammed, is quoted in *Rawḍat al-Kāfi* as having said, "Noah built his ark by hand at the place where Kufa's mosque now stands. He had to bring wood from a distance till he finished it." Then the Imām turned to his left, pointed to Ibn al-Ḥakeem's house and added, "The Euphrates used to flow there." Having said so, he turned to one of his companions, al-Mufaḍḍal, and said, "O Mufaḍḍal! It was there that the idols of Noah's people were placed: Yaghūth, Yaʿooq, and Nasr."[1] This means that Noah lived in the southern part of today's Iraq. A testimony to this fact exists in the famous Sumerian epic of Gilgamesh, an ancient Babylonian version of the story of the flood written in Akkadian, the language then used in northern Babylonia. This epic was unearthed by Western archaeologists excavating at Nineveh in the library of the Assyrian king Ashurbanipal who ruled from 668 to 627 B.C. Five short poems written in Sumerian[2] (the language used in southern Babylonia) making reference to this epic were rendered by some anthropologists to the second millennium B.C. James Trager, author of *The People's Chronology*, however, places the Gilgamesh epic in the third, not the second, millennium. Gilgamesh was king of Erech (Uruk), today's town of al-Warkā'. In this epic, reference is made to one man who survived the flood. His name in Sumerian is Utnapishtim. In the *Cultural Atlas of Mesopotamia and the Ancient Near East*, we read the following:

> A later tradition made Ubar-tutu the father of Ziusudra (or Ut-

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[1]Ibid., p. 39.

[2]The Sumerians developed a cuneiform script alphabet of 600 simplified signs. Earlier, they had developed a written language using thousands of picture signs, or ideograms. The Gilgamesh legend and the new Sumerian alphabet are both based on those ideograms.

napishtim), the Babylonian Noah. Ut-napishtim, according to the Epic of Gilgamesh, built a boat on the advice of the god Enki and thus survived the deluge that had been sent by the gods to destroy humankind.[1]

Two conclusions concern us from researching the Babylonian Gilgamesh epic; they are: 1) the time of the flood must have taken place at least shortly before the third millennium B.C., that is to say, probably 3200 or 3500 B.C., although in the chronological table provided in *Cradle of Civilization* by Samuel Noah Kramer and the editors of Time-Life Books, the earliest settlements by farmers in Babylon are dated 5000 B.C. whereas the Gilgamesh epic is given the approximate date of 2600 B.C.; 2) Utnapishtim could be the Sumerian equivalent of the hero of our story: prophet Noah. Babylonian languages, according to the New Webster's Dictionary,[2] are Semitic[3]. The Babylonians were descendants of Sam son of Noah. *Cradle of Civilizations* tells us that

> From the land of Akkad came the name Akkadian given to the Semitic language that came into common use in Mesopotamia.[4]

What Language Did Noah Speak?

The answer to this question poses a very serious challenge to any researcher. One is tempted to believe that Noah spoke some type of Arabic simply because his name or, rather, characteristic, is derived from *nawh* or *niyāh* which means in Arabic: crying or mourning. Our father's name Adam is derived from the Arabic *adeem al-ard*, that is, an earthly composite. Yet if you carefully study the traditions quoted

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[1]Michael Roaf, *Cultural Atlas of Mesopotamia and the Ancient Near East* (Oxford, England: Musterlin House, 1990 [1410 A.H.]), p. 84.

[2]The edition consulted is the large Deluxe Encyclopedic Edition published in 1984 (1404 A.H.) by the Delar Publishing Company, Inc.

[3]Louis al-Ma'luf, the Lebanese Jesuit author of the Arabic-Arabic dictionary *Al-Munjid* (published in Beirut, Lebanon, in 1973 (1393 A.H.) by Dar el-Mashriq), however, classifies them as non-Semitic.

[4]Samuel Noah Kramer and The Editors of Time-Life Books, *Cradle of Civilization* (New York: Time, Inc.), pp. 38-39.

in al-Majlisi's encyclopedia titled *Bihār al-Anwār*, you will come across references to Noah speaking Syriac (eastern Aramaic). But Syriac neither existed in the fourth nor in the third millennium before Christ, nor was it spoken by the Babylonians; rather, it was the language developed by their offspring the Chaldeans (or Caldeans), also known as the neo-Babylonians. They inhabited Chaldea,[1] southern Babylonia. In the fifth century B.C., they controlled all of Babylonia, establishing the Chaldean or neo-Babylonian empire. Their most famous king, Nebuchadnezzar, who took control in 604 B.C., conquered Jerusalem after having defeated the Egyptians in Syria. He destroyed Jerusalem in 586 B.C. and carried several thousand Jews captive to Babylonia. One of the descendants of those captives was the hero of next Chapter's story: Abraham.[2] It was from Chaldea that both Arabic and Hebrew languages descended. Chaldean regions such as Bit-Yakin (Bayt al-Yaqīn) never changed their Arabic names ever since. Merodach-baladan (as he is called in the Bible) or Marduk-apla-iddina II, as he was called in Chaldean, was chief of Bit-Yakin and came to be the ruler of Babylon.[3] The language spoken by Noah could not have been Syriac. Aramaic, one of the Syriac dialects, was the language spoken by Jesus Christ, a language which still exists and is spoken even today by a small number of Syrian Christians.

Noah's Character and Conduct

No other prophet was named as such after him, and he was named so because of the extent of his grieving; he was the first of the prophets who have brought the *Shari'a*; he was the first caller sent by

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[1]This name is derived from settlers known as the Kaldu tribes. Ancient Greek and Hebrew use the name Chaldea to designate Babylonia.

[2]This should not mislead the reader into thinking that Abraham, peace be upon him, was a Jew. The descendants of Ya'qūb, Jacob, who is also called Israel, are called "Israelites," and these are classified by non-Muslims as "Jews." In Islam, all prophets of God, from Adam (as) to Muhammed (P), including, of course, Abraham (as), are considered as Muslims. Verse 67 of Surat Āli 'Imrān (Ch. 3, Family of 'Imrān) reads: "Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian but an upright man, a Muslim, and he was not one of the polytheists."

[3]Michael Roaf, *Cultural Atlas of Mesopotamia*, p. 182.

Allāh Almighty; he was the first to warn against polytheism; he was the first to be persecuted by his nation because of rejecting his call; he caused all the inhabitants of the earth to perish because of his supplication. It is said that Allāh Almighty inspired him after the flood, "I have created My creation and ordered them to obey Me, but they opted to go against My will, so My Wrath descended upon them, and I caused even those who did not disobey me to be tormented just as those who did, and I have caused all My creation to suffer because of the sins of the descendants of Adam. I have sworn by My Own Self that I shall never torment anyone among My creation in this same way [by flood], but I shall grant authority to various nations from among My servants, then I shall reward them according to their deeds when they are assembled to Me." Noah lived longer than any other prophet. He is referred to as the eldest among the prophets and the wise man among the messengers. His miracle is in his own self because he lived very long without losing a tooth or his strength weakening. No other messenger exerted as much effort in delivering the message as he had. He used to call upon his people night and day, openly and secretly, and no other prophet received from his people as much beating, chiding, and all types of harm and rudeness as he did. For these reasons, the Almighty has said, "And the people of Noah before; surely they were a transgressing people" (Qur'ān, 51:46). He is also considered next only to the Chosen One Muhammed, peace and blessings be upon him and his progeny, with regard to the covenant and the inspiration; Allāh Almighty has said, "And We took from the prophets their covenant, and from you, and from Noah" (Qur'ān, 33:7). The Almighty has also said, "Surely We have revealed to you as We revealed to Noah and to the prophets after him" (Qur'ān, 4:163).

In as far as resurrection is concerned, Noah is the first person for whom the earth shall open up on the Day of Judgment, only after Muhammed, peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him and his progeny. The Almighty had given him the ark and taught him how to make it; He protected it and its cargo and permitted him to sail over the water, and He even called him a grateful servant of His: "... the offspring of those whom We carried with Noah; surely he was a grateful servant" (Qur'ān, 17:3). The Almighty honoured him with security and bliss, saying, "O Noah! Descend with peace from Us and blessings on you and on the people from among those with you"

(Qur'ān, 11:48).

Muḥammed ibn Ka'b al-Qarzi has said, "Every believing man and woman had entered into that peace and remained therein till the Day of Judgment. Noah made his offspring the only survivors; therefore, he is the first of humans and the origin of the human race." Al-Ḥasan has quoted Samrah ibn Jandab saying that the Messenger of Allāh has said, "Three sons were born for Noah: Sam, Ham and Yafith (Japeth). Sam is the father of all Arabs, Persians, and Romans. Ham is the father of all the Black people. Yafith is the father of all the Turks, Gog and Magog."

When Noah and his offspring descended from the ark, he divided the earth among his three sons. He gave to Sam the center of the earth, where Jerusalem, the Nile, the Tigris and the Euphrates, Sehon and Jehon are, which is the area between Qaysoon up to the east of the Nile, and between the flow of the south up to the flow of the north. To Ham he gave the area west of the Nile and the lands between the flow of the southern wind and beyond it up to Sehon to the flow of the west wind. To Yafith he gave the area from Qaysoon and beyond it up to the foothills of Saba'. This is the explanation of the verse saying, "And We made his offspring the survivors, and We perpetuated to him (praise) among the later generations. Peace and salutation to Noah among the nations. Thus do We surely reward the doers of good. Surely he was of Our believing servants" (Qur'ān, 37:77-81).

Noah in the Holy Qur'ān

In addition to the verses cited above, the Holy Qur'ān records the following supplications of Noah:

> *Lord! I seek refuge in You against asking You for that of which I have no knowledge, and if You do not forgive me and have mercy on me, I will surely be among the losers.* (Qur'ān, 11:47)

> *And certainly We sent Noah to his people, and he said: O my people! Worship Allāh; you have no god other than Him; will you not then guard (yourselves against evil)? And the chiefs of those who disbelieved from among his people said: He is nothing but a mortal like yourselves who desires to have superiority over you, and had Allāh pleased, He could certainly have sent down angels. We have not heard of this among our fathers of yore: he is only a madman; so bear with him for some time. He*

said: O Lord! Help me against their calling me a liar. So We revealed to him, saying: Make the ark before Our eyes and (according to) Our revelation, and when Our command is given and the valley overflows, take into it of every kind a pair, two, and your followers, except those among them against whom the word has already gone forth, and do not speak to Me in respect of the unjust; surely they shall be drowned. And when you are firmly seated, you and those with you, in the ark, say: All praise is due to Allāh Who delivered us from the unjust people. And say: O Lord! Cause me to disembark a blessed disembarking, and You are the best to cause a disembarking. Most surely there are signs in this, and most surely We are ever trying (men). (Qur'ān, 23:23-30)

And Noah said: Lord! Do not leave upon the earth any dweller from among the unbelievers, for if You leave them, they will surely lead Your servants astray and will not beget any but immoral, ungrateful (offspring); Lord! Forgive me and my parents and whoever enters my house believing, and the believing men and women, and do not increase the unjust in aught but destruction! (Qur'ān, 71:26-28)

He said: Lord! Surely my people charge me of telling a lie! Therefore judge between me and them with a (just) judgment, and deliver me and the believers with me. So We delivered him and those with him in the laden ark, then We drowned the rest afterwards. Most surely there is a sign in this, but most of them do not believe. And most surely your Lord is the Mighty, the Merciful. (Qur'ān, 26:117-122)

What is "al-Tannoor"?

Reference to *al-tannoor* exists in 11:40 which states: "When Our command came and water came forth from the *tannoor*, We said: Carry in it two of all things, a pair, and your own family, except those against whom the word has already gone forth, and those who believe." According to most people, *al-tannoor* means the earth's surface; so, the meaning would be: "and the earth gushed out from all its parts, so much so that even the *tannoor*, the surface of the earth, gushed forth with water." Ibn Atheer, on p. 95 of his book *Qasas al-Anbiyā'*, quotes Imām ᶜAli ibn Abu Ṭālib saying, "The meaning of *al-tannor* is daybreak and the light-bringing dawn, that is, its aurora and light." The verse in question will then mean: It is then that you should carry in it two pairs of everything."

The story of Noah should teach everyone that no matter how long it takes, the end of those who do not worship the Almighty will be

truly tragic. Those who attribute a son to Him, those who remember Him maybe once a week or only on certain occasions, and those who shun Him altogether..., will all sooner or later come to realize that there is a price for being on earth, a purpose, a mission to fulfill, and that their God did not create them then forget about them. He will hold them responsible for each and every word they uttered, for each and every deed they did. And His reckoning will not be easy at all...

INVOCATION BY NOAH

These invocations are cited from the Holy Qur'ān:

Lord! I seek refuge in You against asking You for that of which I have no knowledge; and if You do not forgive me and have mercy on me, I will surely be among the losers. (Qur'ān, 11:47)

And certainly We sent Noah to his people, and he said: O my people! Worship Allāh; you have no god other than Him; will you not then guard (yourselves against evil)? And the chiefs of those who disbelieved from among his people said: He is nothing but a mortal like yourselves who desires that he may have superiority over you, and had Allāh pleased, He could certainly have sent down angels. We have not heard of this among our father of yore: he is only a madman; so bear with him for some time. He said: O my Lord! Help me against their calling me a liar. So We revealed to him, saying: Make the ark before Our eyes and (according to) Our revelation, and when Our command is given and the valley overflows, take into it of every kind a pair, two, and your followers, except those among them against whom the word has gone forth, and do not speak to Me in respect of those who are unjust; surely they shall be drowned. And when you are firmly seated, you and those with you, in the ark, say: All praise is due to Allāh Who delivered us from the unjust people. And say: O Lord! Cause me to disembark a blessed disembarking, and You are the best to cause a disembarking. Most surely there are signs in this, and most surely We are ever trying (men). (Qur'ān, 23:23-30)

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(offspring); Lord! Forgive me and my parents and whoever enters my house believing, and the believing men and women, and do not increase the unjust in aught but destruction! (Qur'ān, 71:26-28)

He said: Lord! Surely my people charge me of telling a lie! Therefore judge between me and them with a (just) judgment, and deliver me and those who are with me of the believers. So We delivered him and those with him in the laden ark, then We drowned the rest afterwards. Most surely there is a sign in this, but most of them do not believe. And most surely your Lord is the Mighty, the Merciful. (Qur'ān, 26:117-122)



PROPHET HŪD

The Almighty has said,

> *And to ᶜĀd (We sent) their brother Hūd. He said: O my people! Worship Allāh; you have no god other than Him; will you not then guard (yourselves against evil)? The chiefs of those who disbelieved from among his people said: Most surely we see you in folly, and most surely we think you are one of the liars. He said: O my people! There is no folly in me, but I am a messenger of the Lord of the worlds. I deliver to you the messages of my Lord and I am a faithful adviser to you. What?! Do you wonder that a reminder has come to you from your Lord through a man from among you so that he might warn you?! And remember when He made you successors after Noah's people and increased you in excellence of make; therefore, remember the blessings of Allāh so that you may be successful. They said: Have you come to us so that we may worship Allāh alone and give up [the worship of] what our fathers used to worship? Then bring us what you threaten us with, if you are of the truthful. He said: Indeed uncleanness and Wrath from your Lord have descended upon you! What?! Do you dispute with me about names which you and your fathers have given? Allāh has not sent any authority for them; wait, then; I, too, with you am waiting. So We delivered him and those with him by mercy from Us, and We cut off the last of those who rejected Our communications and were not believers.* (Qur'ān, 7:65-72)

Prophet Hūd is son of Arfkhshath son of Sam son of Noah. He belonged to an Arab tribe called ᶜĀd, named after ᶜĀd son of Aws son of Sam son of Noah. They inhabited the Aḥqāf (sand dunes) area separating Omān from Hadhramaut, in a land overlooking the Red sea called al-Shaḥr, and the name of their valley is Mugheeth. According to Imām Muḥammed al-Bāqir, they were very tall people; anyone of them could hit a mountain with his bare hand and chop a piece of it.[1]

According to the *Tafsīr* book of ᶜAli ibn Ibrahīm, ᶜĀd's land was in the desert, and they were growing many trees, including a good number of palms. They used to live very long. They worshipped idols, so Allāh sent them Hūd to invite them to Islam, but they refused and

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[1] al-Jazā'iri, *Al-Noor al-Mubeen*, p. 130.

subjected him to a great deal of their harm. Allāh, therefore, kept the rain from falling on their land for seven years till the drought caused a famine. Hūd was a farmer who used to water the farms.

A group of people came to his house once seeking to meet with him. A one-eyed woman whose hair was mostly gray came out to them. "Who are you?" she asked them. "We are people of such-and-such land, and our land has been hit by drought; so, we have come to Hūd to request him to supplicate to Allāh on our behalf so that rain may fall on us and hence our land may become fertile again." She said, "Had Hūd's supplication been heeded, he would have supplicated for himself! His plants have been drought burnt." "Where is he?" they asked her. She told them where they could find him, so they went there and said to him, "O prophet of Allāh! Our land has been afflicted with drought; so, ask Allāh to cause the rain to fall upon it." Hūd did, indeed, perform prayers followed by a supplication for them then said to them, "Go back, for fain has already fallen there." They said to him, "O prophet of Allāh! We have seen in your house something strange, a one-eyed woman most of whose hair is gray..," and they proceeded to inform him of the conversation between them and her. "That was my wife," said Hūd, "and I invoke Allāh to permit her to live long." They were surprised to hear such an answer from him, so they asked him why. He said, "Allāh never created a believer without creating an enemy for him to harm him. She is my enemy. Having an enemy over whom I have control is better than facing one who controls me."[1]

The people of ʿĀd were the first to worship idols after Noah's flood, and they had three idols: Sadd, Thamūd, and Hara. Reference to Hūd in the Holy Qur'ān exists in seven places, and the Almighty has revealed an entire chapter named after him which is Surat Hūd.

INVOCATION BY PROPHET HŪD

As is the case with the other invocations, this text is quoted from the Holy Qur'ān which states the following:

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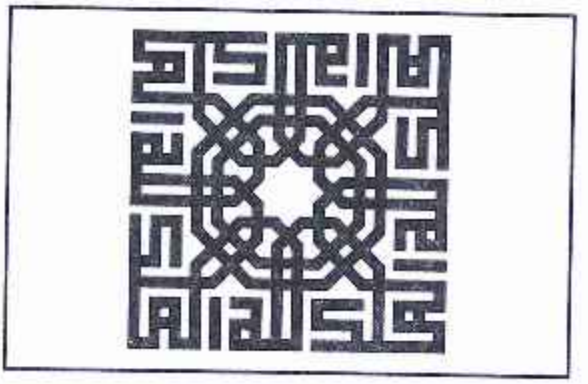
[1]*Ibid.*, pp. 131-132.

Surely I rely on Allāh, my Lord and yours; there is no living creature but He holds it by its forelock; surely my Lord is on the right path. But if you turn back, then indeed I have delivered to you the message with which I have been sent to you, and my Lord will bring another people in your place, and you cannot harm Him in the least; surely my Lord is the Preserver of all things. And when Our decree came to pass, We delivered Hūd and those who believed with him with mercy from Us, and We delivered them from a severe chastisement. (Qur'ān, 11:56-58)



ABRAHAM, THE FRIEND OF ALLĀH

His full name is Abraham son of Tarih son of Nahur son of Sarugh son of Arghu son of Faligh son of Abir son of Shalikh son of Kenan son of Arfkhshath son of Sam son of Noah. The name given to Abraham's father by the latter's father Tarih was Abraham, but when Tarih came to be the custodian over the treasures of Nemrud's gods, he was named Azar. Azar, Abraham's father, was an adherent to Nemrud's creed, idol-worship. His name is mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān in verse 74 of Surat al-Aʿām: "Abraham said to his sire Azar, `Do you take idols for gods? Surely I see you and your people in manifest error!'"

But there are those who argue saying that no prophet is born to an unbelieving father, that prophets are begotten to God-fearing parents. Based on such reasoning, there are those who say that Azar was not Abraham's father but uncle, and Allāh knows best.

Abraham was born in Babylon during the reign of Nemrud (or Nimrod) son of Kenan. The time lapse between the flood and the birth of Abraham was one thousand two hundred and sixty years, that is, three thousand and thirty-seven years after the creation of Adam, peace be upon him. Nemrud is son of Kenan son of Sinharib son of Korsh son of Ham son of Noah. According to one tradition, "The earth was ruled in its entirety by four persons: two of them were believers and the other two were disbelievers. The believers were Sulayman (Solomon) son of Dawūd (David) and Thul-Qarnain (Double-Horns). The disbelievers were Nemrud and Bukhtnazzer." Nemrud was the first to crown himself with a crown and to oppress in the land. He even ordered people to worship him. He had in his service soothsayers and star-gazers. The latter said to him once, "This year, a boy will be born in your domain who will change the creed of the inhabitants of the earth; your own annihilation and the termination of your rule will take place at his hands." It is said that they had found such a prophecy written down in the books of the prophets. Al-Suddi has said, "Nemrud saw once in a vision that a star appeared, eclipsing the light of both the sun and the moon, so much so that none of their lights remained. Nemrud was frightened very much, and he called to him the wizards, the soothsayers, and the

fortune-tellers, and he ordered them to interpret his vision. They said, "A new-born will be born in your area this year who will cause your annihilation and that of your family;" therefore, he ordered every male born in that area in that year to be killed. He also required men to be separated from their women, placing a trusted guard over each group of ten. When a woman reached her menstruation period, he would permit them to mingle if he trusted that they would not cohabit, and when she was clean, he would separate her from her man. Azar went back home to find his woman clean, and he cohabited with her while she was clean, thus Abraham was conceived.

Al-Suddi says, "Nemrud ordered the men to camp, and he separated them from their women out of fear of the new-born, and he kept doing so for some time. Then he had to return to the city for some government business, and he did not trust anyone among his people to watch over them except Azar. He called him and said to him, `I need a favour of you. I would like to ask you to do something for me. I have not asked for you except due to my trust in you. I ask you to swear that you will not come near your wife nor cohabit with her.' Azar said, `I am more zealous about my faith than that!' So he asked him to carry out some mission for him, then he sent him away. Nemrud entered the city and took care of his business. After that, Azar sought permission to go home to see how his family was doing. When he looked at Abraham's mother, he could not control himself, so he cohabited with her, and Abraham was thus conceived."

Ibn ʿAbbās has said that when Abraham's mother became pregnant, the priests told Nemrud that the boy they were warning him of was already conceived that very night, so Nemrud ordered all newborns to be slaughtered. When Abraham's mother was about to deliver, she went out fearing someone would come to know about her birth and kill her baby. Having given birth to him, she put him at the bank of a dry river, wrapping him in a piece of cloth and putting him in a thicket of reeds. Then she returned home and told her husband about her son and his whereabouts. His father went out to the place and dug up a vault near the river, placed him in it, then closed its entrance with a rock for fear of being eaten by wild beasts. His mother used to visit him there from time to time.

Ibn Isḥāq has said that Azar inquired of Abraham's mother as to what she had done about her pregnancy. She said, "I gave birth to a boy and he died." He believed her and did not press it any further. As

for Abraham, during each day that passed, his growth was equal to that of a month, and each month was equal to a year, and he did not stay in the vault for more than fifteen days before coming to his father Azar to tell him that he was his son. Azar's wife told him what she had done in his regard, and Azar was quite happy about it.

When Abraham reached his youth while still in the vault, he asked his mother, "Who is my god?" She said, "I am." He asked her, "Then who is your god?" She said, "Your father." Then he asked her, "Then who is my father's god?" She said, "Nemrud." He asked once more, "Then who is Nemrud's god?" She said, "Hold your tongue," and he did. When she went back home, she said to her husband, "Do you remember the talk about the boy who, as gossip has it, will change the religion of the inhabitants of the earth? It is your son." She told him about their dialogue, so Azar came to see him. Abraham asked him, "Who is my god, father?" He said, "Your mother." Then he asked him, "Who is my mother's god?" He said, "I am." Then he asked him, "Then who is your god?" He answered, "Nemrud." So he asked him, "Then who is Nemrud's god?" Thereupon he slapped him and told him to be silent. To this does the Almighty and the Exalted God refer when He says, "And certainly We gave Abraham his rectitude before, and We knew him fully well" (Qur'ān, 21:51). Then he asked his parents to take him out of the vault, and they did. They set out with him till sunset, so Abraham looked at the camels, cattle, and horses being brought back home and he asked his father, "What are these?" He said, "Camels, horses and cattle." He asked him, "These have got to have a god who created them."

Abraham then looked and contemplated about the creation of the heavens and the earth and said, "The One Who created me and sustained me, Who provided me with food and water, is surely my God; I have no other god but He." Then he saw Jupiter, or Zeus, and that night was the last night of the month, so he saw that star before seeing the moon. He said, "This is my god!" Reference to this incident is made in the Holy Qur'ān in these verses:

> *So when the night overshadowed him, he saw a star; said he: "This my God." But when it set, he said: "I do not love those that set." Then when he saw the moon rising, he said, "This is my God." So when it set, he said: "If my Lord does not guide me, I will certainly be of the erring people." Then, when he saw the sun rising, he said: "This is my Lord? This is the greatest." But when it (too) set, he said, "O my*

people! Surely I am clear of what you set up (with Allāh). Surely I have turned myself, being upright, wholly to Him Who originated the heavens and the earth, and I am not of the polytheists." (Qur'ān, 6:76-79)

It is said that Azar used to make idols; so, when he took Abraham into his family (to raise him), he used to make idols and give them to Abraham to sell them. Abraham used to go and call out, "Who wishes to buy something which brings him harm and which does not bring him anything good?!" Nobody, of course, would buy anything from him; therefore, when the merchandise did not sell, he would go to a river and knock off their heads and say, "Drink! Nobody wants to buy you!" He was deriding his people and the inhabitants of his village, ridiculing their misguidance and ignorance, so much so that the talk about him finding fault with them and ridiculing them became widespread among his people and the inhabitants of his village. His people, therefore, started arguing with him about his creed, and to them he said, according to the Holy Qur'ān, "Do you dispute with me regarding Allāh while He has indeed guided me?" (Qur'ān, 6:80). The argument is portrayed in the verses which follow this one and it ends with this verse, "And this was Our argument which We gave to Abraham against his people; We exalt in dignity whomsoever We please; surely your Lord is Wise, Knowing" (Qur'ān, 6:83). He finally outwitted them in his argument, then he invited Azar to embrace his creed, saying, "O father! Why do you worship what neither hears nor sees, nor does it avail you in the least?" (Qur'ān, 19:42). And the story goes on, but Azra refused to respond favourably to his invitation. Then Abraham started denouncing their form of worship publicly, making his creed known to them. He said, "Have you then considered what you have been worshipping, you and your ancient sires? Surely these are enemies to me, but not so the Lord of the world" (Qur'ān, 26:75-77). So they asked him whom he worshipped, and he said, "the Lord of the worlds." They asked him, "Do you mean Nemrud?" He said, "No; He is the One ... `Who created me, then He has shown me the way'" (Qur'ān, 26:78), up to the end of the story, thus making his call widespread among the people till the tyrant Nemrud came to know about it.

Nemrud ordered Abraham to be brought to him. Nemrud said to him, "O Abraham! Have you seen your god Who has sent you, to Whose worship you have been inviting people, Whose might you have

been revering, and to which you have been referring, claiming He is greater than everyone else? So Who is He?" Abraham said, "My Lord is the One Who brings life to the dead and Who causes the living to die." Nemrud said, "I bring life to the dead and I cause the living to die!" Abraham asked him, "How do you bring life to the dead and cause the living to die?" He said, "I take two men condemned to be killed according to my command, and I kill one of them, thus causing him to die, then I pardon the other, thus leaving him as though I brought life back to him." Abraham then said to him, "Allāh brings the sun from the east; so, cause it to come out from the west!" Nemrud was then baffled, and he could not answer him, being overtaken by his argument. To this does the Almighty and the Exalted One refer when He says, "Thus he who disbelieved was confounded" (Qur'ān, 2:258).

After that, Abraham wanted to prove the weakness of the idols which his folks used to worship rather than Allāh, and their inability to do anything, bringing his argument against them home. He was waiting for an opportunity to do so and to devise a stratagem to achieve his objective.

Al-Suddi has said, "They used to have an annual feast when they would come out and assemble. Upon returning, they would enter their temples and prostrate before their idols prior to going back home. When that feast approached, Abraham's father said to his son, `If you decide to come out with us to celebrate our feast, you will certainly like our faith,' so Abraham went out with them. Having walked for a short distance, he fell and said that he was sick and his leg hurt him, so they left him thus and passed him by. To their last ones he swore, `By Allāh! I will certainly do something to your idols after you go away, turning back!' (Qur'ān, 21:57). And they heard him say so."

Mujāhid and Qatādah have said, "Abraham was not loud when he said so, and nobody heard him except one of their men, and that man was the one who revealed his scheme." Then Abraham went back from that highway and headed in the direction of the temple which housed their gods. He found it at a river bank. Facing the river a huge idol stood next to a smaller one at the gate that faced the river. He found that they had left food before their gods with the purpose to have it blessed by their gods upon their return, and that they would then eat it. When Abraham looked at the idols and at the food before

them, he sarcastically said, "Why don't you eat?!" Since they did not answer him, he said, "What is the matter with you that you do not speak? Then he turned against them secretly, smiting them with the right hand" (Qur'ān, 37:92-93). So he kept smashing them with an axe in his hand, sparing only the largest of the idols on whose neck he hung the axe, then he went out. When the people came back from their feast, they went to the place where they had kept their idols, and when they saw them in such a condition, they said, "Who has done this to our gods? Most surely he is one of the unjust. They said: We heard a youth called Abraham speaking [ill] of them" (Qur'ān, 21:59-60), that is, "We think he is the one who did it."

The news of the incident reached Nemrud the tyrant and the dignitaries among his people. "Said they: Then bring him before the eyes of the people, perhaps they may bear witness" (Qur'ān, 21:61) that he was indeed the one who did so. It is the view of Qatādah and al-Suddi that they hated to penalize him without a clear evidence. Al-Dhaḥḥāk says that probably they wanted them to witness what type of penalty they would inflict upon him. Having brought him, they asked him, "Have you done this to our gods, O Abraham? He said: Surely (someone) has done it; the chief of them is this, so ask them, if they can speak at all!" (Qur'ān, 21:62-63). The Messenger of Allāh has said, "Abraham never told a lie except on three occasions all of which were for the sake of defending Allāh Almighty: when he said that he was sick [and his leg hurt him], when he said that it was done by the largest [of the idols], and when he told both the king who tried to harm him and Sarah that the latter was his sister." Anyway, when Abraham said the above, they admitted that they were doing that man injustice by asking him who did it while their gods were there and they should have asked them instead. His people said that they realized his point, and that they were themselves the wrongdoers in worshipping the small idols together with the big one. They lowered their heads in puzzlement, and they knew that they could neither speak nor harm anyone, so they said, "Certainly you know that they do not speak" (Qur'ān, 21:65). When the argument was clearly in favour of Abraham, he asked them, "What?! Do you then worship besides Allāh what brings you no benefit at all, nor does it harm you?! Fie upon you and upon what you worship besides Allāh! What?! Do you not then understand?!" (Qur'ān, 21:66-67). When his argument prevailed, and they were dumbfounded, they said, "Burn

him and help your gods, if you are going to do (anything at all)" (Qur'ān, 21:68).

When Nemrud and his people unanimously agreed to burn Abraham, they confined him to a house, and they built a structure like an animal shed. To this, the Almighty refers when He says, "They said: Build him a furnace, then cast him into the burning fire" (Qur'ān, 37:97).

Ibn Ishāq says, "They kept gathering fire timber for one month. Having gathered enough, they lit the fire in every corner of the timber, and the fire was so strong that if a bird happened to pass above it, it would be burnt by its extreme heat. Then they came to Abraham and took him to the top of that structure and tied him up. Then, according to the suggestion of Eblis the accursed, they used a mangonel and put him in it, with his hands thus tied. The heavens, the earth, the mountains, the angels and the creation all of it cried out in one voice and invoked Allāh saying, `Lord! After Abraham, there will be none to worship You on Your earth, O Lord! So, should he be burnt in the fire? Permit us, Lord, to help him!' The Exalted and Almighty said to them, `If he asks one of you to help him, lend him help, for I have granted you My permission to do so, but if he does not invoke anyone but Me, then I know about him more than anyone else, and I am his patron; so, I shall deal with him.' When they wanted to hurl him into the fire, the angel of water came to him and said, `If you wish, I can put out the fire for you, for all the treasures of the waters and the rain are in my hands!' The custodian of the wind, too, came to him and said, `If you wish, I can make the fire fly in the air!' Abraham said to both of them, `I have no need for either one of you.' Then he raised his head towards the heavens and said, `Lord! You are the One and Only God in the heavens and in the earth! There is none on earth who worships You besides me.'"

Al-Mu'tamir quotes Ubayy ibn Ka'b citing al-Arqam saying that having been tied up and was prepared to be hurled into the fire, Abraham said, `There is no god but You! Glory to You, Lord of the worlds! Yours is all Praise due, and Yours is all the domain; there is no partner with You!'"

Then they hurled him into the fire using the mangonel from a good distance. Gabriel visited him and said, "O Abraham! Do you need any favour at all?" He said, "From you, I do not." So Gabriel said to him, "Then invoke your Lord." Thereupon Abraham said,

"Suffices me regarding my quest is that He knows my condition; so, Allāh suffices me, and Great indeed is the One in Whom I have placed my trust.'" It is said that Abraham was saved because of saying, "Allāh suffices me, and Great indeed is the One in Whom I have placed my trust" (*Ḥasbiya-Allāh wa niʿmal wakeel*). Allāh, therefore, ordered the fire thus: "O fire! Be a comfort and peace to Abraham" (Qur'ān, 21:69).

It is also said that Abraham had been placed on the plate of the mangonel which was made for them by a Kurdish man named Hay-Zun who was the first man to make such a war machine, so Allāh caused the earth to swallow him, and he has been there screaming in shrill ever since, and he will continue to do so till the Day of Judgment. While he was being chained and tied, he kept saying, "There is no god but You! Glory to You, Lord of the world! Yours is all Praise due, and Yours is all the domain; there is no partner with You!"

When the Friend of Allāh was placed on the mangonel, chained and tied, then hurled into the fire, he said, "Allāh suffices us, and Great indeed is the One in Whom I have placed my trust!" According to al-Bukhāri, who relies on the authority of Ibn ʿAbbās, this statement (i.e. Qur'ānic verse) was first said for the first time by Abraham upon being hurled into the fire, then by Prophet Muḥammed when it was said to his companions, "Surely men have gathered against you; therefore, fear them, but this increased their faith, and they said: Allāh is sufficient for us and most excellent is the Protector. So they returned with favour from Allāh and (His) grace; no harm touched them" (Qur'ān, 3:173-174).

Al-Suddi has said, "It was Gabriel who cried it out according to the command of Allāh." According to Imām ʿAli ibn Abu Tālib and to Ibn ʿAbbās, "Had He (Allāh) not added (in His order to the fire) `and peace,' Abraham would have died because of its coolness, and each and every fire on earth would have been put out."

Al-Suddi has also said, "The angels, thereupon, took hold of Abraham's arms, and they seated him on the ground. Immediately, a spring gushed forth, and there were bushes of red roses and narcissus. It is said that Abraham remained in the fire for seven days. Al-Minhal ibn Amr has said that Abraham, the friend of Allāh, had said that he never lived more happily than during those days which he spent inside that fire."

Ibn Ishāq has said, "Allāh sent the angel of shade in Abraham's form, and he sat beside him and kept entertaining him. Gabriel brought him a silk shirt and said, `O Abraham! Your Lord says to you: Have you not come to know that the fire does not harm those whom I love?' Then he dressed him. Nemrud looked over the fire from a high tower, and he had no doubt that Abraham had perished. But he saw him sitting in a garden, and he saw the angel sitting beside him, while the fire was around him burning whatever timber they had gathered. Nemrud shouted at him, `O Abraham! Can you get out of it?!' He answered, `Yes.' He asked him again, `Are you afraid that it might harm you if you remain in it?' He answered, `No.' So Nemrud said, `Then stand up and get out of it,' whereupon Abraham walked till he was out of it. Having come out, he was asked by Nemrud, `O Abraham! Who is that man who looked just like you and whom I saw sitting beside you?' He said, `That was the angel of shade sent to me by my Lord to keep me company and to entertain me.' Nemrud said, `O Abraham! I am offering a sacrifice for your God due to what I have witnessed of His might and determination regarding dealing with you when you refused to worship anyone but Him and insisted on believing in His unity. I shall slaughter for Him four thousand cows.' Abraham said to him, `Allāh will not accept any sacrifice from you so long as you keep following your creed till you forsake it and accept my faith.' He said, `O Abraham! I cannot leave my kingdom, but I shall slaughter them for Him anyway.' So he slaughtered them and distributed their meat to the poor and abandoned all his intentions to hurt Abraham. Then he said to Abraham, `Great, indeed, is your God, O Abraham!'"

Ibn Ishāq has said, "A group of men belonging to Nemrud's people responded to Abraham after having seen how Allāh Almighty dealt with him and how He made the fire cool and peaceful to him, despite their fear of Nemrud and their own folks. Lot (Lūt), his nephew, was one of them, and he was Lot son of Haran son of Tarih. Haran was brother of Abraham. The Almighty refers to this in the following verse: "And Lot believed in Him, and he said: I am fleeing to my Lord, surely He is the Mighty, the Wise" (Qur'ān, 29:26).

When Allāh Almighty saved His Friend Abraham, some people believed in him and followed him despite the opposition of their people and their own open dissociation from their beliefs, as stated above. They said, "We dissociate ourselves from you and from what

you worship besides Allāh! We disbelieve in you, O objects worshipped besides Allāh, and enmity has become apparent between us and you and so has hatred, O you worshippers, till you believe in Allāh Alone," then Abraham went out migrating in the Cause of Allāh followed by Lot, peace be upon him. Allāh Almighty has said, "And We delivered him as well as Lot (relocating them) to the land which We had blessed for all people. And We gave him Isaac and Jacob, a son's son, and We made them all good. And We made them Imāms who guided (people) by Our command, and We revealed to them the doing of good, and the keeping up of prayer, and the giving of alms, and Us (alone) did they worship" (Qur'ān, 21:71-73).

Characteristics of Abraham, the Friend of Allāh

His name is Abraham, and his title is "the Friend of Allāh." Allāh Almighty has said, "And Allāh took Abraham for a friend" (Qur'ān, 4:125). According to the *ḥadīth*, Prophet Muhammed was addressed once by some of his companions as "master of mankind," whereupon he corrected them by telling them that "This is the title of Abraham." He is also called custodian of the guests. He never ate his lunch nor his supper except in the company of a guest, and he may have had to walk for two miles or more till he could find a guest whom he would invite to enjoy his hospitality. This hospitality is the blessed tree about which the Almighty says, "... lit from a blessed olive-tree" (Qur'ān, 24:35). It is true that he had prayed Allāh to confine prophethood to his offspring, and his prayer was answered, making it restricted to both his sons Ishmael and Isaac. Anas ibn Malik is quoted saying that the Messenger of Allāh has said, "I have been sent after eight thousand prophets: four thousand of them were from the Children of Israel." He is the one granted a truthful tongue on the Day of Judgment; so, no other prophet will be held as truthful by his entire nation, nor preferred, nor respected, as he will be. All this is due to his own invocation, "And ordain for me a goodly mention among posterity" (Qur'ān, 26:84). Abraham is the one who was tested with numerous tests and to him others bear witness regarding his trustworthiness. Allāh Almighty has said, "And when his Lord tried Abraham with certain words, he fulfilled them" (Qur'ān, 2:124), and also, "And (of) Abraham who fulfilled (the commandments)" (Qur'ān, 53;37), that is, he carried out all divine instructions faithfully. He is the "exemplar" according to the verse, "Surely Abraham was an

exemplar, obedient to Allāh, upright, and he was not one of the polytheists" (Qur'ān, 16:120). The meaning implied in this verse is that he was a role model for others in teaching them the avenues of goodness, and his personality combined all the merits of goodness and virtue.

Abraham is the first to receive full wisdom even before reaching adulthood; he is the Imām of monotheists. The Almighty provided him with a tongue pronouncing His argument, saying, "That was Our argument which We gave to Abraham" (Qur'ān, 6:83). He is the first to have been called by the Almighty *haneef*, one who is upright, as this verse indicates" "... he was an upright man, a Muslim" (Qur'ān, 3:67). The Almighty cleared him of the claims of the Jews and the Christians (that his creed was the same as theirs), testifying that he was a follower of Islam, a believer in the unity of Allāh, saying, "Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian but an upright man, a Muslim, and he was not one of the polytheists" (Qur'ān, 3:67). He was also the first to be circumcised. He is the first to grow gray hair, and when he saw it, he asked the Almighty what it was, whereupon the Almighty answered him by telling him that that was a sign of sedateness. He, therefore, invoked the Almighty to increase him in sedateness and dignity. He is the first to uphold the rituals, the ways of devotion to the Almighty: he invoked the Almighty saying, "... and show us our ways of devotion" (Qur'ān, 2:128), and the Almighty responded to his plea. He is the first person to offer a sacrifice; and he is the one whom the Almighty instructed how to locate the site of the Ancient House, saying, "And when We assigned to Abraham the place of the House..." (Qur'ān, 22:26). He is the first to be hurled into the fire because of inviting people to believe in Allāh, and the one Who made the fire cool and peaceful unto him. He is the first prophet for whom Allāh resurrected the dead due to his own request: "And when Abraham said: Lord! Show me how You give life to the dead..." (Qur'ān, 2:260).

When Abraham was travelling, and he missed Sarah and eagerly desired to see her, the Almighty lifted the veil (of distance) which separated them from one another, so he was able to see her. On the Day of Judgment, he will be outfitted with a white outfit and placed on a throne on the left side of the Almighty's ʿArsh, symbol of the divine throne of authority. The Prophet has said, "People on the Day of Resurrection will be brought back to life without clothes and

without shoes, looking like the brutes, and the first to be outfitted will be Abraham the Friend of the Most Merciful One." He migrated for the sake of Allāh; the Almighty says, "And Lot believed in Him, and he said: I am fleeing to my Lord; surely He is the Mighty, the Wise" (Qur'ān, 29:26). The place where he used to stand to preach became the *qibla* for all people; the Almighty has said, "Appoint for yourselves a place of prayer on the standing-place of Abraham" (Qur'ān, 2:125). And the Almighty made him an Imām for people, saying, "Surely I will make you an Imām of men" (Qur'ān, 2:124). The Almighty has also said in his praise, "Indeed, there is for you a good example in Abraham" (Qur'ān, 60:4). The Almighty even ordered Muḥammed, the best of His prophets, and his nation, to follow Abraham's creed, saying, "Then We revealed to you: Follow the faith of Abraham, the upright one, and he was not one of the polytheists" (Qur'ān, 16:123), and also, "Say: Nay! (We follow) the religion of Abraham, the *ḥaneef*, and he was not one of the polytheists" (Qur'ān, 2:135). He gave him the attributes of "forbearing," "tender-hearted," and "oft-returning (to Allāh)" as is clear in this verse, "Most surely Abraham was forbearing, tender-hearted, oft-returning (to Allāh)" (Qur'ān, 11:75). The first attribute means the dignitary who controls his passion when angry. The second means: the one who, because of his tender-heartedness, sighs depressingly whenever sins are mentioned. The third attribute means the person who inclines with his heart solely to his Lord.

It is narrated that Allāh Almighty inspired Abraham, "O Abraham! Because you provided your wealth for your guests, your son for sacrifice, your own self to the fire, and your heart to conviction, We have taken you for a friend."

Abraham's Demise

When Allāh Almighty decided to take the soul of Abraham to Him, he sent him the angel of death in the form of a very old man. Al-Suddi narrates a consecutively reported tradition (*mutawātir*) which states that Abraham used to feed and host people quite often. While he was busy one day feeding some people, a very old man came walking in the street, so Abraham sent him a donkey to carry him so that he could be brought to him. When he came to him, he offered food to him. The old man kept taking each morsel and trying to reach his mouth with it, but instead of stuffing it in his mouth, his hand

kept reaching his eye once and once his ear. When he finally managed to make his hand reach his mouth, and he ate the morsel, it would immediately and involuntarily come out of his other end. Abraham had prayed his Lord not to take his soul away except after he himself prayed Him to do so. Having seen the pathetic condition of that old man, he asked him why he was doing so, and the man answered him saying that that was due to old age. Abraham asked him how old he was, and the old man told him of his age. Abraham found out that he himself was only two years younger than that old man. He, therefore, asked him, "When I reach your age, am I going to act like you?" The man answered him in the affirmative, whereupon Abraham prayed the Almighty to take his life before then. So the old man stood up and took Abraham's soul away; the old man was none other than the angel of death. Abraham was two hundred years old. Some say he was one hundred and ninety-five years old. He was buried near Sarah's grave in the Jabroun farmland (in Hebron, Palestine). His name is mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān a record sixty-nine times. One of the Chapters of the Holy Qur'ān is named after him: Surat Abraham.

Abraham's Statements and Invocations

The Almighty has said,

> *And when his Lord tried Abraham with certain words, he fulfilled them. He said: Surely I will make you an Imām of men. Abraham said: And of my offspring? My covenant does not include the unjust, said He. And when We made the House a pilgrimage for men and a (place of) security, and: Appoint for yourselves a place of prayer on the standing-place of Abraham (Ibrahīm). And We enjoined Abraham and Ishmael (Ismāʿīl) saying: Purify My House for those who visit it, and those who abide in it for devotion, and those who bow down and those who prostrate. And Abraham said: Lord! Make it a secure town, and provide its people with fruits, those of them who believe in Allāh and the last Day. He said: And whoever disbelieves, I will grant him enjoyment for a short while, then I will drive him to the chastisement of the Fire, and it is an evil destination. And when Abraham and Ishmael raised the foundations of the House (they said): Lord! Accept from us; surely You are the Hearing, the Knowing. Lord! And make us both submissive to You and (raise) from our offspring a nation submitting to You, and show us our ways of devotion and turn to us (mercifully); surely You are the oft-Returning (to mercy), the Most*

Merciful. Lord! And raise up in them an prophet from among them who shall recite to them Your communications and teach them the Book and the wisdom, and purify them; surely You are the Mighty, the Wise. (Qur'ān, 2:124-129)

... Who created me, then He has shown me the way, and He Who gives me to eat and gives me to drink, and when I am sick, He restores health to me, and He Who will cause me to die then give me life, and Who, I hope, will forgive my sins on the Day of Judgment. Lord! Grant me wisdom, and join me with the good. (Qur'ān, 26:78-83)

And Abraham said: Lord! Make this city secure, and save me and my sons from worshipping idols. Lord! Surely they have led many .nen astray; then whoever follows me, he is surely of me, and whoever disobeys me, surely You are Forgiving, Merciful. Lord! Surely I have settled some of my offspring in a valley unproductive of fruit near Your Sacred House, O Lord, so that they may keep up prayer; therefore, make the hearts of some people yearn towards them and provide them with fruits, haply they will be grateful. Lord! Surely You know what we hide and what we reveal, and nothing in the earth nor in the heavens is hidden from Allāh. Praise be to Allāh Who has given me in old age Ishmael and Ishaq; most surely my Lord is the Hearer of prayer. Lord! Make me keep up prayer and from my offspring too, O Lord, and do accept my prayer. Lord! Grant me protection and my parents and the believers on the Day when the reckoning comes to pass! (Qur'ān, 14:35-41)

O People of the Book! Why do you dispute about Abraham since the Torah (Old Testament) and the Gospel (New Testament) were not revealed till after him? Do you not then understand? Behold! You are they who disputed about that of which you had knowledge; why, then, do you dispute about that of which you have no knowledge? And Allāh knows while you do not. Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian but an upright man, a Muslim, and he was not (one) of the polytheists. Most surely the nearest of people to Abraham are those who followed him and this Prophet (Muhammed) and those who believe (Muslims), and Allāh is the guardian of the believers. (Qur'ān, 3:65-68)

PROPHET JOB (AYYŪB)

Allāh Almighty has stated, "Remember Our servant Job (Ayyūb) when he called upon his Lord: Satan has afflicted me with toil and torment" (Qur'ān, 38:41).

Job was son of Amoos son of Tarih son of Room son of Ayees son of Abraham. Allāh bestowed upon him a great deal of wealth: cattle, money, and land. In addition to that, Allāh blessed him with a good number of offspring, men and women, and he used to be God-fearing, compassionate towards the poor, supportive of the widows and orphans, and generous to his guest. He used to seek travellers to help them, and he used to be quite grateful for all the blessings which Allāh had bestowed upon him, following His commandments in their regard. He proved to be a formidable foe of Eblis by not yielding to conceit, arrogance, merry-making or forgetfulness about Allāh's commandments relevant to our life on this earth as may be the case with others upon becoming wealthy. There were three persons with him who believed in him and who came to know his virtues: a man from Yemen named Eleifen, and two men from his own country: one named Malik and the other Zafir, and each one of them had reached the age of maturity and wisdom.

Gabriel enjoyed a status of being near to Allāh and of being virtuous like no other angel. Gabriel was charged with recording everyone's statements. So, when a servant of Allāh praises his Lord, what he says will be recorded first by Gabriel then by Michael and the angels around him who are near to Allāh and who surround the Throne. If that statement is propagated among the angels near to Allāh, those who reside in the heavens will be required to bless him, and when he is blessed by the angels of the heavens, Gabriel will instruct the angels of the earth to do likewise. Eblis was never prohibited from being present anywhere in the seven heavens, and he used to be wherever and whenever he pleased. This is how he was able to reach Adam and succeed in getting him dismissed from Paradise. When Allāh Almighty raised Jesus Christ to heavens, Eblis was prohibited from reaching the fourth heavens, so he used to make his mischievous schemes in the first three heavens. But when Allāh sent Muhammed as His Messenger, Eblis was then prohibited from those three, too. He and his army, therefore, are prohibited from

reaching any of the heavens till the Day of Resurrection "... except those who steal a hearing and are followed by a clear dart of lightning" (Qur'ān, 15:18).

Eblis heard how the angels were responding and blessing Job whenever Allāh mentioned him and praised him, and he was overcome with spite and jealousy, so he swiftly ascended and stood where he used to stand to petition his Maker. He said, "Lord! I have looked into the affairs of Your servant Job, and I have found him to be a servant upon whom You have bestowed Your blessings, and he expressed his gratitude for that, and You granted him good health, and he praised You for it. Then I noticed that You have not put him to test by exposing him to hardship or tribulation, while I am the foremost in my ability to do just that. If You afflict him with an affliction, he will surely disbelieve in You and forget all about You." Allāh Almighty said, "Go to him, for I have given you a free hand over his wealth." Eblis, the open enemy of Allāh and mankind, went to earth and gathered the mightiest among his devils and said to them, "What do you have of might and knowledge, for I have been given a free hand over Job's wealth? The disappearance of one's wealth is surely the worst of all calamities and the trial which men cannot withstand." One of the mighty devils said, "I have the ability to turn myself, if I wish, into a hurricane of fire that can consume everything in its way." Eblis said to him, "Then go to his camels and burn them and their shepherds as well." So that devil set out and approached the camels just as they had started grazing. People suddenly felt the earth underneath them explode into a hall of fire blown in the wind, burning everyone in its way. He kept doing that till he burnt everyone, including the shepherds.

Once that devil finished, Eblis himself assumed the form of their main shepherd and sought Job and found him standing saying his prayers. He said to him, "O Job!" He responded by saying, "At your service!" Eblis said, "Do you know what your God, the One Whom you chose and adored, has done to your camels and their shepherds?" Job said, "They are His wealth which He lent me, and He is more worthy of them than I. If He wills, He may leave such wealth [for me to enjoy], or He may take it away. I am convinced and pleased with my conviction that I and everything I own are doomed with death and extinction." Eblis said, "Your God has sent over them a fire from the sky which burnt all of them, and people remained puzzled and

bewildered about them. Some of them said, `Job did not really worship anything, and he was only conceited,' while others said, `If the God Job has been worshipping is able to do anything at all, He would have prohibited the burning of the camels that belonged to His servant.' Still others were saying, `Rather, He is the One Who has done this in order to please his enemy and sadden his friend.'" "Praise to Allāh," said Job, "Who has granted me and whenever He pleases takes it away from me. Naked did I leave my mother's womb, and naked shall I be returned to the grave, and naked shall I be returned to my Lord. You should not feel pleased when Allāh loans you a loan, nor should you despair when He takes away what He had loaned you, for He is more worthy than you regarding your own self and everything He had given you. If Allāh had known any good in you, O servant of His, He would have taken your soul away as He had taken the souls of others and made you a martyr among the martyrs, but He knew that there is evil in you, so He delayed you and rid you of tribulation just as the pure grain is separated from everything else."

Having heard all of that, Eblis went back to his followers disappointed, feeling humiliated. He said to them, "What might and knowledge is there with you, for I have not been able to cause him to be angry?" One of their mighty ones said, "I have the ability, if I wish, to let out a cry which none hears except that his soul will leave his body." Eblis said to him, "Then go to his cattle and put an end to them and to their shepherds." So the devil set out and approached the cattle till he stood in their midst. He cried out and all the cattle as well as their shepherds died instantly. Eblis then went out disguised as the caretaker of all the shepherds and came to Job who was then standing saying his prayers. He said to him as he had said before. Job answered him just as he had done before, so Eblis went back to his fellows again and said, "What might is there with you, for I have not been able to grieve Job yet?" One of their mighty ones said to him, "I have the ability, if I wish, to turn myself into a storm that can dry up everything in its way till it is reduces it to naught." Eblis said to him, "Then go to his acres and all his land and do what you can." So the devil set out and approached the land as its tillers' children played. Before they knew it, a storm blew up and dried everything in its way as if it had never been there in the first place. Eblis this time went out assuming the form of their caretaker and approached Job as

he was standing saying his prayers. He said to him something similar to what he had said the first time and Job answered him just as he had answered him the first time. Eblis kept thus ruining Job's wealth one item after another till he finished them off, all of them.

Whenever Job came to know about the destruction of one of the items of his wealth, he praised Allāh and glorified Him and demonstrated his acceptance of destiny. His determination to persevere increased till there was nothing left for him of all his fortune. Having seen that he had ruined all Job's wealth without being successful in any of his vile attempts, Eblis felt very much annoyed, so he swiftly ascended the heavens and stood where he used to stand to make a plea. He said, "Lord! Job is of the view that so long as You keep his health and his offspring, that by itself is a fortune to him; so, are You going to grant me a free hand to deal with his offspring, for it is a trial that causes people to stray, and the calamity about which men cannot be patient?" Allāh Almighty said, "Set out, for I have granted you a free hand over his offspring."

Eblis went and lifted the mansion where Job's family lived, then he turned it upside down. Then he went to Job assuming the form of the mentor who was teaching them wisdom, with his head wounded and blood running down his head. He told him about what had happened adding, "O Job! If only you could see with your own eyes how your children have been hurt, how the mansion was turned upside-down, with them being inside it, and how their heads became overturned, their blood and brains running down their nostrils and lips..., if you only saw how their stomachs were gouged, and their insides scattered around.., your heart would surely have been rent to pieces...!" He kept saying so and repeating it till Job's heart softened; he cried and took a handful of dust and put it on his head whereupon Eblis took that opportunity to swiftly ascend with the news of Job's impatience, feeling glad about seeing him finally breaking down. But it did not take Job long before he returned to himself and contemplated on his condition; so, he sought Allāh's forgiveness and thanked Him anyway. Both angels charged with accompanying him all safeguarding his life till the time for its termination were more swift than Eblis, and Allāh knows what exactly happened. Eblis stood disappointed, humiliated, and said, "Lord! What has made the importance of wealth and children insignificant in the eyes of Job is the fact that he sees that no matter how You permit him to enjoy

himself, You can always bring wealth and children back to him; so, are You going to permit me to have a free hand over his soul and body, for I can prove to You that if You try him in his body, he will forget You and disbelieve in You and renounce Your blessing upon him?" Allāh Almighty said, "Set out, for I have granted you authority over all part of his body, but you have no authority over his tongue, heart, or mind."

Allāh knew more than anyone else that He was not permitting Eblis to have a free hand over Job except so that it would be a means of mercy for him, to increase his share of rewards, and to make him a role model for all those who persevere and a remembrance for the pious whenever they are afflicted with an affliction, so that they may follow his example of perseverance in the hope of receiving their rewards. The enemy of Allāh swiftly descended and found Job prostrating. Before Job raised his head, Eblis approached him from the ground from the spot where he had placed his face, and blew into his nostrils one blow whereby he burnt his body. He was stunned, and from his head to his feet there were abscesses as huge as animal humps, all full of puss, and he was afflicted with an uncontrollable itch. He scratched his body with his nails till his nails fell off. Then he scratched with a wooden piece till he cut it, then with a brick of baked clay and rough stones. He kept scratching till his flesh fell off into pieces, changed color and started stinking. The people of the village dismissed him from their village, put him on a pile of garbage, and made a shack for him there. With the exception of his wife Rahmah daughter of Ifrathim son of Joseph son of Jacob, peace be upon them, nobody else cared about him. Despite all this calamity, Job did not cease mentioning the Name of Allāh Almighty, praising Him, and persevering regarding his affliction. So the enemy of Allāh Eblis let out one cry whereby he assembled a group of his hosts from all parts of the earth because of his frustration at seeing how patient and persevering Job was.

Having assembled around Eblis, the devils asked him, "What do you need?!" He said, "This servant of Allāh has made me run out of tricks. I had asked my Lord to grant me a free hand over his wealth and children, and I left him neither wealth nor children, yet all of that did not increase him except perseverance and praises for Allāh. Then I was granted authority over his body, and I left him looking like puss himself, thrown on a pile of garbage, and nobody cares to come near

him except his wife, and my Lord has now seen me for what I am! Now I need your help to deal with him." They said to him, "Where is your scheming? Where is your knowledge whereby you caused past generations to perish?" He said, "All of it did not work with Job; so, you tell me now what you suggest that I should do." They said, "We suggest you approach him in the same manner whereby you approached Adam when you succeeded in having him dismissed from Paradise; where did you approach him from?" He said, "From his wife." They said, "Then do likewise with Job: approach him from his wife, for he is not able to go against her will, and nobody else but she comes near him." He agreed and set out till he came to Job's wife who was begging for alms. He assumed the form of a man and said to her, "Where is your husband, O bondmaid of Allāh?" She said, "There he is scratching his abscess as the worms feast on his flesh." Having heard that answer from her, he raised his hope that that was an indication of her impatience with her husband. He insinuated to her, reminding her of the good life and of the wealth she used to enjoy. He brought her memories of the good looks and youth of Job and how much harm has now afflicted him and how his condition was hopeless. According to al-Ḥasan, she screamed, whereupon Eblis knew that she had lost all her patience, so he brought her a goat and said to her, "Let Job slaughter this goat for me, and he will heal." She came screaming and said to Job, "O Job! For how long will your God keep tormenting you and not have mercy on you?! Where is our wealth?! Where are the cattle?! Where are the children and the friends?! Where is your beautiful outfit?! Everything has changed and become like ashes..., and where is your healthy body?! It has worn out and worms are now eating it up! Slaughter this goat and rest yourself!" Job said to her, "The enemy of Allāh has approached you and blew of his breath in you, and you responded! Woe unto you! Do you see how now you cry for wealth, children, and health?! Who bestowed them upon us?" She said, "Allāh." He asked her, "For how long did He permit us to enjoy them?" She said, "For eighty years." He said, "How long has it been since Allāh tried us with this trial?" She said, "Seven years." He said, "Woe unto you then! By Allāh, you have not been fair or just to your Lord! Why can't you be patient regarding this affliction whereby He has tried us for eighty years just as we were tried with ease? By Allāh, if Allāh heals me, I will whip you one hundred lashes for telling me to slaughter something not for

the Name of Allāh, and the food and drink which you will bring me will be prohibited for me; I shall not taste anything you will bring me after having said what you have said; so, get away from me; I do not ever wish to see you again." Thus did he dismiss her.

Having seen how he dismissed his wife although he had nothing to eat nor drink, nor any friend to rely on, Job prostrated to Allāh and said, "Lord! Harm has afflicted me..." (Qur'ān, 21:83). Then he referred his affair to his Lord and submitted thus: "... and You are the most Merciful of the merciful ones" (Qur'ān, 21:83). He was ordered to raise his head since his supplication was honoured, to run where a spring gushed forth for him. He washed; none of the signs of his illness remained, and Allāh removed his ailment. Then he kicked the ground whereupon another spring gushed forth for him, and he drank of it, and all the ailments in his stomach disappeared. He stood looking very healthy, and he was given a good outfit. He kept looking right and left and he could see that Allāh Almighty had given him back twice as much as he had lost. He came out and sat in an honourable fashion as his wife kept asking herself whether she should let him die of starvation. He had not eaten or drunk anything since the time he had dismissed her. "Will he wander around and be eaten by the wild beasts?," she asked herself. "By Allāh, I shall go back to him," she said, and she did. This time she did not see that garbage nor the sight with which she had become familiar for so many years; everything seemed to have changed. She kept wandering around the place where the pile of garbage was, crying. Job was witnessing all of that. She esteemed the person wearing that outfit too much to ask him about her husband, so he sent her someone who brought her to him, and he asked her, "What do you want, O bondmaid of Allāh?" She wept and said, "I want that afflicted person who was an outcast thrown on a pile of garbage in this place... I do not know whether he wandered around or what happened to him." Job, peace be upon him, asked her, "If you see him, can you recognize him?" She said, "Can I...?! How can I not?" Then she kept looking at him while being in a state of awe... After a while she said, "Had he been enjoying his normal health, he would most certainly have looked more than any of Allāh's creation like you." He said, "Then I am Job! You required me to slaughter something for Eblis; so I obeyed Allāh and disobeyed the devil, and He has brought me back what you can see."

Job suffered for seven long years. He overcame Eblis, cursed him,

and did not enable him to have any influence over him. According to one narrative, it was then that Eblis approached Job's wife looking far more than ordinary human beings would look in physique and elegance, riding in a chariot which no human had ever seen, with all signs of pomp, power, and prestige, glowing with glory and beauty, and so did everything around him. He said to her, "Are yuo the wife of Job the afflicted?" She said, "Yes." He said, "Do you recognize me?" She said, "No." He said, "I am the god of earth, and I am the one who did to your husband what I have done because he worshipped the God of the heavens and did not worship me and thus angered me. If he prostrates only once to me, I will bring you back all what you both have lost of wealth and children, for they are all with me," then he showed her all of them in the heart of the valley where they had met. Then he said to her, "If only your husband eats food on which the Name of Allāh was not invoked, he will surely be healed from the affliction in which he finds himself," and Allāh knows best. I have read in some books that Eblis said to Rahmah, "If you wish, prostrate for me once so that I bring your children and wealth back and heal your husband," so she went back to Job and told him of what Eblis had said to her and what he had wanted. Job said, "The enemy of Allāh wanted to divert you from your creed." Then Job at that moment said, "Harm has afflicted me..." (Qur'ān, 21:83) because Eblis was ambitious to have his wife prostrate to him, and he invited both of them to be unfaithful to their Lord. Some scholars say that Allāh Almighty was Merciful unto Rahmah, Job's wife, due to her patience with him, and He wanted to lighten her burden and, at the same time, free Job from his oath; so, He said, "And take in your hand a green branch and beat her with it and do not break your oath" (Qur'ān, 38:44). She used to earn her living by working for others and thus be able to buy him food and bring it to him, so when her affliction was prolonged, people were tired of her, and nobody wanted to employ her. One day, she felt hungry and found nothing to eat all. She could not do anything except pulling a lock of her hair and selling it for one loaf which she wanted to share with her husband who noticed what had happened to her hair. Upon coming to know of what she had done, he said, "Harm has afflicted me..." (Qur'ān, 21:83).

INVOCATION BY PROPHET JOB

Allāh Almighty has said,

And Ayyūb cried to his Lord (saying): Harm has afflicted me, and You are the Most Merciful of the merciful. Therefore We responded to him and removed what harm he had had and We bestowed upon him his family and the like (of their number) with them: a mercy from Us and a reminder to the worshippers." (Qur'ān, 21:83-84)

And remember Our servant Ayyūb when he called upon his Lord: Satan has afflicted me with toil and torment. Urge with your foot; here is a cool washing-place and a drink. And We gave him his family and the like of them with them as a mercy from Us, and as a reminder for those with understanding. And take in your hand a green branch and beat her with it and do not break your oath; surely We found him patient, most excellent servant! Surely he was frequent in returning (to Allāh)." (Qur'ān, 38:41-44)



MOSES, MESSENGER AND PROPHET OF ALLĀH

Allāh has said, "And mention Moses in the Book; surely he was one of the purified, and he was a messenger, a prophet" (Qur'ān, 19:51). His name is Moses son of ʿImrān (Amram) son of Yashir son of Qahith son of Lawi son of Jacob, and his mother was Yu-Khaeel. She gave birth to Aaron and Moses. At the time of the birth of his son Moses, Moses' father was seventy years old, and he lived to be a hundred and thirty-seven.

The Almighty describes Moses in the above cited Qur'ānic verse as "purified." Abu Abdullāh Imām Jaʿfer al-Ṣādiq is quoted as saying, "Allāh inspired to Moses son of ʿImrān, `Do you know, O Moses, why I selected you from among My creation and preferred you over them to hear My word?' `No,' Moses said, `O Lord!' Allāh said, `I cast a look at the inhabitants of the earth and found none among them more humble than you.' It was then that Moses prostrated on the ground, rubbed his cheeks on the dust as a sign of humility to His Lord, the most Honoured, the most Exalted, so Allāh inspired him saying, `Raise your head, O Moses, and pass your hand over the place where you prostrated then wipe your face with it and whatever you can touch of your body, for this will be your security against any sickness or ailment, against any affliction or handicap.'"[1]

Birth

Ancient Egyptians regarded their Pharaohs as the embodiment of the "gods," the soul of the government, the ones responsible for the rise and fall of the Nile, the yield of the soil, the health of the commerce, the fortunes of the army and the maintenance of the peace. He was owner of the land and of the people who lived on it. The word "Pharaoh" means "the great one, the greatest in the land." From 3100 to 341 B.C., thirty dynasties of Pharaohs ruled Egypt. The Babylonians, who also had the king worship custom, ruled Babylonia from approximately 2000 B.C. to 1000 B.C. and, hence, they were

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[1]al-Tūsi, *Āmāli*, p. 103.

contemporaries of the first 21 of the 30 dynasties of Pharaohs.

The first Pharaoh to rule Egypt was Menes who united both upper and lower Egypt into one kingdom and built Memphis to be his capital. He is known in Arabic as al-Rayyan, and he was contemporary of prophet Joseph. Prophet Moses was contemporary of two Pharaohs: Seti I and his son Ramses II. Both ruled from 1320 to 1200 B.C. This gives the reader an idea about the time during which Moses was sent to the Israelites as a messenger of God; it was during the 19th dynasty of Pharaohs. These dates also give the reader an idea about the time lapse from prophet Joseph to prophet Moses, both having spent a good part of their life-spans in Egypt. Ramses II, whose reign of oppression lasted for 67 long years, built a temple for the gods at Thebes, the Hypostyle Hall at the Karnak, and a rock-cut temple at Abu Simbel. The historic scene or, say, the encounter between Moses and Ramses II and the magicians, according to the research I undertook, seems to have occurred at the magnificent Hypostyle Hall at the Karnak. Instead of using the name Ramses II, from now on we will refer to him only as Pharaoh.

Pharaoh was the most open enemy of Allāh and the most cruel and oppressive in speech and in action, a most hard-hearted tyrant. His reign, as indicated above, was the longest, and his treatment of the Children of Israel was indeed the very worst. He used to torture them and enslave them, and he made them servants and workers without wage in his kingdom. He classified their chores thus: some of them were to build, others were to till the land, while still others were to undertake the most menial and filthy of chores. He required those who were unable to work to pay protection tax (*jizya*) as Allāh Almighty has said, "They were treating you with the most cruel of treatment" (Qur'ān, 2:49).

Pharaoh (Seti I) had married a woman from among them called Asiya daughter of Muzāhim, may Allāh be pleased with her, who was one of few very pious women in all the history of mankind. Her full name was: Asiya daughter of Muzāhim son of Ubayd son of al-Rayyan son of al-Waleed, the Pharaoh contemporary to prophet Joseph I. She embraced Moses' faith. Muqātil ibn Ḥayyān says, "Only three Egyptians accepted the true faith: Asiya, Izekiel, and Mary daughter of Tamoosi who led Moses to Joseph's grave-site."

When Allāh wanted to save the Israelites from their misery, He sent them Moses who started his mission when Pharaoh saw in a

vision that a fire had come from the direction of Jerusalem and set all the houses in Egypt on fire, burning the homes of the Copts, but leaving those of the Children of Israel unscathed[1]. He invited all his priests, wizards, fortune tellers and star gazers and asked them about his vision. They said to him, "A boy will be born for the Children of Israel who will rob you of your kingdom and overpower you and even get you and your people out of your land and change your creed, and the time of his birth has already approached." So Pharaoh ordered each boy born for the Children of Israel killed. He gathered all midwives in his kingdom and said to them, "No boy born for the Children of Israel falls in your hands except that you should kill him, and no girl is born for them except that you should spare her life," and he assigned men to be watchdogs over them. They did as he had ordered them.

Allāh Almighty has said in the Holy Qur'ān,

> ***In the Name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.*** *Ṭā Sīn Mīm. These are the verses of the Book that makes (things) clear: We recite to you from the account of Moses and Pharaoh with the truth for people who believe. Surely Pharaoh exalted himself in the land and made its people into parties, weakening one party from among them; he slaughtered their sons and let their women live; surely he was one of the mischief-makers.* (Qur'ān, 28:1-4)

The Children of Israel, too, used to talk about confirmed traditions citing Abraham saying that a son from among his offspring would put an end to the authority of the king of Egypt, and Pharaoh came to know about these tales. Pharaoh's main concern, therefore, became the birth of such a boy, but no precaution can ever overrule destiny. What Allāh has decreed none can repeal. The boy whose birth Pharaoh dreaded and because of whom he killed seventy thousand boys was to receive his upbringing, nursing and residence inside the palace of Pharaoh himself so that Pharaoh and all other human beings might come to know that Allāh is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, and that He does exactly what He pleases.

Death overwhelmed the Children of Israel. The chiefs of the Copts rushed to meet with the Pharaoh; they said to him, "The elderly

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[1]*Ibid.*., Vol. 13, p. 75.

among the Children of Israel are dying, while you are slaughtering their children and leaving their elderly to die. Soon all tasks will have to be performed by only us..." Pharaoh, therefore, ordered to kill the sons one year and to leave them another. Aaron was born during the year during which no boys were to be killed, whereas Moses was born in the year during which they used to kill the boys. When his mother gave birth to Aaron, the news of his birth was made public,. But when the year came during which the newborn males were to be killed, she was pregnant with Moses without any signs of pregnancy appearing on her[1], and when she wanted to give birth to him, she was very sad and distressed. Allāh Almighty inspired her thus, "Nurse him, then, and when you fear for him, cast him into the river, and do not fear, nor should you grieve; surely We will bring him back to you and make him one of the prophets. And the family of Pharaoh took him up so that he might be an enemy and a grief for them; surely Pharaoh and Haman and their hosts were wrongdoers. And the wife of Pharaoh said: A refreshment of the eye to me and to you! Do not slay him! Maybe he will be useful to us, or we may take him for a son, and they did not perceive" (Qur'ān, 28:7-9).

So Moses' mother took a small coffin box made by Izekiel (or Kharbil, as he is known in Arabic), the first man to believe in Moses from Pharaoh's family. He is referred to in the Holy Qur'ān as the one who came to urge Moses to leave the town because an order had been issued to have him killed. He had already been a believer in Abraham's faith. She put in it ginned cotton, then she placed Moses in it and tied his head. Then she cast him in the Nile after having nursed him for only three months. Having done that, and after Moses had disappeared from her sight, the devil insinuated some of his evil thoughts to her. She said to herself, "Oh! What have I done with my son?! Had he been killed in my presence, and had I shrouded and buried him myself, it would have been far better for me than casting him with my own hands in the river and yielding him to its beasts!" But Allāh protected her, and the water took Moses away; its waves would raise him up and lower him down. While he was in the coffin, he was sucking his thumb which, by the will of Allāh, provided him

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[1] *Ibid..*, Vol. 13, p. 15.

with milk[1]. Finally he came among the trees in the garden belonging to Pharaoh; it was the watering place for his concubines. Near it was a large river inside the garden. Pharaoh's concubines went out to bathe and to drink, and they found the coffin. They took it away thinking it had a treasure in it. They brought the unopened coffin to Asiya. When the latter opened it and found a baby boy inside it, Allāh Almighty cast affection in her heart for him, and she loved him very much. When the men charged with killing the males of the Children of Israel came to know about it, they brought their knives and came to Asiya to kill the boy. Asiya said to them, "Go away! This boy is not going to increase the Children of Israel much. I shall go to Pharaoh and ask him to give it to me; so, if he agrees, you will have shared in a good deed, but if he orders you to kill him, then I will not blame you if you do so." She brought him to Pharaoh and said, "This is a pleasure for my eyes and yours! Do not kill him; maybe he will be of some use to us," whereupon Pharaoh said, "He may be a pleasure to your eyes; as for me, I have no need for him." The Messenger of Allāh has said, "I swear by the One in Whose Name all oaths are sworn, had Pharaoh agreed that he (Moses) would be a pleasure to his eyes as she had done, Allāh would have led him to true guidance through him just as He led his wife to true guidance, but Allāh decreed to deprive him of it." Pharaoh wanted to kill him, saying, "I fear lest this should be the boy from the Children of Israel who will bring about our destruction and the disappearance of our authority," but Asiya kept pleading to him till he agreed to grant Moses to her. When Asiya feared no more, she wanted to give him a name which fit his condition, so she called him Mo-She because, as Muqâtil ibn Sulayman tells us, he was found between water and trees. In the Coptic language, "mo" means water, and "shè" means trees[2]; then it was Arabized to Mūsa (Moses in Latin, Moshe in Hebrew).

Moses' mother said to his sister Maryam (Miriam), "Follow him till you hear that he is alive or that the beasts of the river have killed him." She had forgotten what Allāh had promised her. She saw him from a distance, and people did not know that she was his sister. Asiya, Pharaoh's wife, ordered her maids to find a nurse for Moses.

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[1]*Ibid.*, Vol. 13, p. 55.

[2]*Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

Whenever a woman took him to nurse him, he refused to suck her breast, so much so that Asiya worried he might die because of not being nursed, and she was very distressed. Then she ordered to have him taken to the market place so that people might assemble around him in the hope of finding a nurse he would accept and whose breast he would suckle, but again he did not accept the breast of any woman. To this does the Almighty and the Sublime refer when He says, "And We ordained that he refuse to suck any foster mother before" (Qur'ān, 28:12). Moses' sister, having seen how her brother persisted in refusing anyone to nurse him, said, according to the Holy Qur'ān, "Shall I point out to you the people of a house who will take care of him for you, and they will be kind to him?" (Qur'ān, 28:12). They seized her and asked her, "How do you know about their taking care of him and their kindness to him? You seem to know this boy; so, take us to his family." She said, "I do not know who they are, but I know that their desire to attain the king's rewards will entice them to take good care of him and be kind to him," so they let her go. She rushed to her mother and told her about what had happened, and his mother came to him, put him in her lap and his head on her breast, whereupon instantly her milk filled his mouth.

Bearers of glad tidings rushed to Asiya to tell her that a foster mother was found for him, so she ordered to have that woman brought to her. When she noticed how the baby was treating his mother, she said to her, "Stay with us and nurse my son, for there is nothing else I love more than him." His mother answered her saying, "I cannot leave my house and let my children wander unattended, but if it pleases you, you may give him to me and I take him to my house and children and he will be with me and I will take very good care of him; otherwise, I am not going to leave my house and my children." Moses' mother now remembered the promise Allāh had made her, and she stood firmly behind her word, feeling confident that Allāh Almighty would surely fulfill His promise to her. Soon thereafter, she went home with him.

The period from the time when Moses had parted with his mother till his return was three days. When she brought Moses to his mother, the latter almost slipped and said that he was her son, but Allāh Almighty protected her from saying so, and this is the explanation of these verses: "And the heart of the mother of Moses was free (from anxiety); she would almost have disclosed it, had We not strengthened

her heart so that she might be of the believers. And she said to his sister: Follow him up. So she watched him from a distance while they did not perceive, and We ordained that he refuse to suck any foster mother before, so she said: Shall I point out to you the people of a house who will take care of him for you, and they will be benevolent to him? So We returned him to his mother so that her eye might be refreshed, and so that she might not grieve, and so that she might know that Allāh's promise is true, but most of them do not know" (Qur'ān, 28:10-13).

When he grew up, Asiya said to Moses' mother, "I would like you to bring my son back to me," so she promised to bring him to her on a particular day. Asiya said to those close to her and to her housekeepers, "Each one of you should welcome him back with a present, for I am sending a trusted person who will take account of what each housekeeper will do." Presents and precious items started showering him as soon as he came out of his mother's house and till he entered the residence of Pharaoh's wife. When he came to her, she received him with generosity and was very glad to see him. She admired the good effect his mother had had on him. Then she said to her, "Take him to Pharaoh so that he may be gracious to him."

When Moses' mother brought him to Pharaoh, the latter took him and put him in his lap. Moses took hold of Pharaoh's beard and pulled it and some of his hair came in his little hand. It is said that Pharaoh slapped him. According to other accounts, when Moses was playing with Pharaoh, he had a small rod in his hand, and he struck Pharaoh with it on his head, whereupon Pharaoh was very angry. He saw it as a bad omen and said, "This is most definitely the enemy I have been seeking." He ordered those in charge of killing the sons of the Israelites to come and kill him. When Pharaoh's wife knew about it, she rushed to Pharaoh and said to him, "What do you have against this child whom you had granted to me?" He informed her of what Moses had done. She said, "He is only a child and he does not know what he is doing. I will prove this fact to you, and I will put ornaments of gold and sapphires in one basin and I will put burning timbers in another. If he stretches his hand to the sapphires, we will say that he does know, and you may then kill him, but if he takes the timber, you will then know that he is only a child." She took two wash basins in one of which she put gold and sapphires and in the other she put burning pieces of timber. Moses stretched his hand to take

the sapphires, but Gabriel moved his hand away from that basin, so he grabbed a piece of burning timber and put it in his mouth and it burnt his tongue, causing a permanent lisp. It is to this lisp that the Almighty refers in the Holy Qur'ān in this verse: "... and untie a knot of my tongue so that they may comprehend my speech" (Qur'ān, 20:27). Asiya, therefore, turned to Pharaoh and said, "Don't you see what he has done? He is only a child and he does not know what he is doing." Pharaoh abstained from killing him and Allāh saved him from his evil. Moses lived in honours and dignity at Pharaoh's magnificent palace, and Allāh endeared him to all people.

When Moses son of ʿImrān reached the prime of his strength, he became accustomed to riding in Pharaoh's chariots, wearing just as Pharaoh[1] used to wear, and he was called Moses son of Pharaoh. Seti I, the then Pharaoh, was much less ruthless than his son Ramses II, so the Israelites were able to save themselves a great deal of oppression and servitude, and people did not know that all of that came as the by-product of Moses being nursed at the Egyptian palace. Pharaoh one day rode and Moses was not in his company, and when Moses came, he was told that Pharaoh had already left, so Moses went out seeking to join his company. At noon he reached a city called Manaf which he entered at midday. Its markets, because of the hot weather, had closed down and there was nobody in its streets. It is the city to which the Almighty refers in this verse: "And he went into the city at a time of non-vigilance on the part of its people" (Qur'ān, 28:15). While walking in it, he saw two men fighting. One of them was an Israelite and the other was a Copt, a subject of Pharaoh, as Allāh Almighty says, "So he found therein two men fighting, one being from his party and the other from his foes" (Qur'ān, 28:15). The one who was "from his party" was a Samarian, and the one from his foes was a baker of Pharaoh called Fatūn who had bought some fire wood which he wanted the Samarian to carry for him without paying him, as was the custom, and the Samarian refused. When Moses passed by them, the Samarian sought his help against the Copt. Moses told the Copt to leave the man alone. The baker said to Moses, "Rather, I require him to do what your father would have required him to do," and he refused to let him go. Moses became

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[1]This Pharaoh was Seti I, also known as Sethos I. He reigned from 1310 to 1304 B.C.

angry and he overpowered him and released the Samarian from his grip. The Copt argued with him, so Moses struck him with his fist and unintentionally killed him according to the following verse: "So Moses struck him with his fist and killed him. He (Moses) said: This is on account of Satan's doing; surely he is an enemy, openly leading (mankind) astray" (Qur'ān, 28:15), adding, "Lord! Surely I have done myself harm, so do protect me. So He protected him; surely He is the Forgiving, the Merciful" (Qur'ān, 28:16).

Allāh Almighty inspired Moses son of Imrān: "By My Dignity and Greatness! Had the person whom you killed had recognized Me as the Sustaining Creator even for a twinkling of the eye, I would have made you taste of the torment, but I forgave you because he did not admit at any time that I am the Sustaining Creator."

When Moses killed the Copt, nobody witnessed the incident except Allāh and the Israelite. Having killed a man, he became afraid in the city expecting to hear some news. People came to Pharaoh and said that the Israelites had killed one of Pharaoh's subjects, and they wanted him to seek revenge on their behalf and not to permit them to get away with it. Pharaoh said, "Bring me the killer and a witness, for it is not fair to make a judgment without evidence, and no government can last long if it is based on iniquity; so, go and seek them." While they were looking for an evidence, Moses passed in the early morning and saw the same Israelite fighting with another subject of Pharaoh, and the Israelite once more sought his aid in fighting Pharaoh's subject. This happened while Moses was regretful on account of what had happened the day before, and he did not like what he saw and felt angry; so, he stretched his hand with the intention to overpower Pharaoh's subject and said to the Israelite, "You are most surely one erring manifestly" (Qur'ān, 28:18). The Israelite, thinking that Moses intended to strike him because of speaking rudely to him, ran away angrily. When Moses came to his rescue and stretched his hand, he thought that Moses was bent on killing him, so he said to him, "O Moses! Do you intend to kill me as you killed a person yesterday?" (Qur'ān, 28:19). In reality, Moses did not intend to kill him but to overpower Pharaoh's subject. Having thus argued, Pharaoh's subject went and testified to what he had heard the Israelite saying, adding that it was Moses who had killed that man the day before. This agrees with the axiom which says that the wise enemy is more worthy of your attention than the unwise

friend. When Pharaoh came to know about it, he ordered those charged with killing the males from among the Israelites to go and kill Moses. He said to them, "Go find him! He is a young man who cannot be brought to the right path."

Moses suddenly found himself a fugitive. All the glory of living at Pharaoh's palace had then come to an end. He, therefore, started avoiding the beaten streets. He took the main highway where he met one of his followers who had come from the farthest end of the city to warn him. His name was Izekiel who was an adherent of the original faith of Abraham. He was the first to testify to the truth brought by Moses and thus be the foremost in believing in his message.

The Messenger of Allāh is quoted saying, "The foremost of all nations who never disbelieved in Allāh even for a twinkling of the eye are three: Izekiel the believer from the people of Pharaoh, Ḥabīb the carpenter who believed in Christ, and ʿAli son of Abu Ṭālib, who is their best."

Izekiel, the believer from the people of Pharaoh, came and informed Moses of Pharaoh's order to have him killed. He had chosen a short cut in the route, thus reaching Moses before the killers could have, and he informed him of the news. It is to this meeting between both men that the Almighty refers in this verse: "And a man came running from the remotest part of the city. He said: O Moses! Surely the chiefs are consulting together to slay you; therefore, depart (at once); surely I am of those who wish you well" (Qur'ān, 28:20). Moses was confused and did not know where to go, so an angel came to him in the form of a man riding a horse and released a goat before him, ordering him to follow it, thus showing him the way to Midian (or Madyan).

Let us stop here for a moment and try to find out where this Midian is or was, and who her people were. Midian is named after the son of Abraham and Keturah. This city and its district are situated on the Red Sea south-east of Mount Sinai, on the Syria-Ḥijāz highway, about two hundred miles north of the Sinai Peninsula. Originally, it was called Midian of Abraham's son. According to p. 92, Vol. 5, of Yaqūt al-Ḥamawi's *Muʿjam al-Buldān*, Midian is also the name of an Arab tribe. Midianite tribesmen were the travellers who took prophet Joseph out of the well then sold him into slavery in Egypt. Midian the city parallels Tabūk, where one of the Prophet's

expeditions took place in about 628 A.D. Scholars of classic Arabic poetry quite often come across Midian in pre-Islamic poetry. Such poetry may be a good source of information for those who seek to know more about those Midianites. The Holy Qur'ān tells us in 711:94 that the people of Midian were wiped out from existence by an earthquake because of the way they treated prophet Shu'ayb, father-in-law of Moses and great-grandson of Abraham. This kinship to Abraham suggests that the destruction of Midian may have taken place sometime in the 18th century B.C. according to the best estimates based on anthropology and archeological finds.

Sa'īd ibn Jubayr quotes Ibn 'Abbās saying, "Moses left Egypt for Midian. The journey lasted eight nights. Some say it [his trip] is about the same distance between Kufa and Baṣra. He did not have any food other than tree leaves. When he reached it, his sandals had already been worn out, and you could have seen his stomach turning green because of the vegetation with which he had to sustain himself." Moses had left without taking any food provisions with him, without even wearing shoes, only light weight sandals.

Moses Enters Midian, Marries Shu'ayb's Daughter

After those eight days and nights were over, Moses reached Midian and sat under the shade of a tree underneath which there was a well and to which Allāh Almighty refers in this verse: "And when he came to the water of Midian, he found on it a group of men watering, and he found besides them two women keeping (their flocks) back. He said: What is the matter with you? They said: We cannot water until the shepherds take (their sheep) away from the water, and our father is a very old man" (Qur'ān, 28:23). Both women were too weak to fight the shepherds over the water. Once those shepherds had watered their herds, they would water theirs. Their father, who was a very old man, was none other than prophet Shu'ayb, one of four Arab prophets[1]. The name of the eldest daughter of Shu'ayb was Liya (or Hanuna according to some sources), and the name of his younger daughter was Safūra who became the wife of Moses. Having said so to Moses, he felt sorry for them and there was a well on top of which there was a huge rock which required a number of men to move.

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[1]The other three are: Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, and Muḥammed, peace and blessings of Allāh be upon all of them.

Moses lifted the rock and took their bucket and told them to bring their herds so that he would water them. Thus, they returned to their father quickly before others had reached their homes, while Moses was still seeking shelter under the shade of that tree, "... and said: Lord! Surely I stand in need of whatever good You may send down to me" (Qur'ān, 28:24).

Ibn ʿAbbās has said, "Moses said so because he was very hungry, so he had to pray Allāh for something to eat other than the leaves of trees which by then had filled his stomach. Had anyone had the opportunity to look at his stomach, he would have seen how green it had turned." Abu Jaʿfar Imām Muḥammed al-Bāqir has said, "He (Moses) said so because he was in need for as little as half a date." When the women returned to their father, he asked them, "You make me wonder: How quickly you have come back today!" They said, "We found a righteous man who felt sorry for us and watered our herd for us," so he told one of them to go back and invite him over. One of them came back to him looking shy and said, "Our father invites you to reward you for having watered our flocks." Moses stood up and she walked in front of him as he followed her. Wind blew and caused her robe to stick to her rump. Moses hated to see something like that, so he said to her, "Walk behind me and lead me the way. If I take the wrong way, throw a stone before me so that I may take another route, for we descendants of Jacob do not look at women's rumps." She told him the route to her father's house and walked behind him till he entered in the presence of Shuʿayb. Shuʿayb asked Moses about his condition and story, and Moses told him everything, whereupon he said to him, "Fear no more! You are secure from (the mischief of) the wrong-doing people" (Qur'ān, 28:25). He then invited him to have supper with them, whereupon Moses, despite his pangs of hunger, said, "I seek refuge with Allāh against doing that!" "Why?," Shuʿayb asked him, "are you not hungry?" Moses said, "I am, but I am afraid you will regard this supper as my compensation for having watered for them, and I am from a family that does not sell any deed intended for the hereafter even if the price were the fill of the earth with gold." Shuʿayb said to him, "No, by Allāh, O young man! This is only my custom and the custom of my forefathers: we always shelter and feed

our guests." It was then that Moses sat and ate.[1]

The woman who was sent as messenger to Moses said to her father, "O father! Employ him! Surely the best of those that you can employ is the strong man, the trustworthy" (Qur'ān, 28:26). The Messenger of Allāh has said, "The most unerring in veracity among all women are two both of whom discerned Moses and were right about him. One of them was Pharaoh's wife who said, `A pleasure of the eye for me and for you; do not slay him!' (28:9). The other was Shu'ayb's daughter who said, `O father! Employ him! Surely the best of those that you can employ is the strong man, the trustworthy!' (28:26)." The reason why she said that he was strong and trustworthy is due to the fact that he was able to remove the huge stone which only as many as forty men could move. Her father asked her, "Let us suppose that you witnessed his strength; how did you know that he is trustworthy?" She told him how Moses required her to walk behind him, so Shu'ayb became more eager to strengthen his ties with him. He said to him, "I desire to marry one of these two daughters of mine to you on condition that you work for me for eight years; but if you complete ten, it will be of your own free will, and I do not wish to be hard on you; if Allāh please, you will find me one of the righteous. He said: This shall be (an agreement) between me and you; whichever of the two terms I fulfill, there shall be no wrongdoing to me, and Allāh is Witness to what we say" (Qur'ān, 28:27-28).

The Messenger of Allāh was once asked which period Moses fulfilled. He answered, "He fulfilled the most complete of them and the best," or, according to other narrations, "He fulfilled the most lengthy of them and married the youngest."

His Staff

Scholars have differed regarding its name, benefits, and the miracles it performed by the will of Allāh. Al-Suddi says that Shu'ayb ordered his daughter to bring him a staff to give to Moses to help him while tending to his herds, so she brought him a staff which was entrusted to him by an angel in human form. Shu'ayb gave it back to her and ordered her to bring him another staff, and she kept bringing him the same one simply because whenever she put it back where it was, and

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[1] al-Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 13, p. 21.

whenever she wanted to take another, it somehow fell in her hands, and she kept doing so till Shuʿayb took it and gave it to Moses. Having given it to him, he felt regretful because it had been entrusted to him, so Shuʿayb asked him to give it back to him, but Moses refused. They disputed till they agreed to accept the judgment of the first man who would meet them. An angel in human form came to them walking, and they sought his judgment. The angel said, "Put it on the ground; anyone who can carry it will be its owner." Moses put it on the ground, and the old man tried to lift it but could not, so Moses held it in his hand and lifted it. Having seen that, Shuʿayb let him have it. Another narration says that when Moses stayed with Shuʿayb for as long as Allāh permitted him to, he then sought his permission to depart, and he granted him permission, saying, "Enter this room and take a staff that will be with you to keep wild beasts away from you and from your sheep." The staff of prophets at that time was with Shuʿayb. When Moses entered the room, the staff leaped and came to be in his hand, and he went out carrying it. Shuʿayb then said to him, "Put it back and take another." Shuʿayb had been told about that staff but did not know that Moses was actually its rightful owner. Moses put it back in the room to take another, but it again leaped and came to be in his hand, and it did that several times. Shuʿayb again reminded him to take another staff, so Moses said to him, "I returned it several times, and every time I returned it, it leaped till it somehow came to be in my hand," so Shuʿayb realized that that was something which Allāh Almighty willed; therefore, he told him to take it.

Ibn ʿAbbās has said, "The ruler of Rome wrote a letter to Muʿāwiyah once asking him about four things that were never conceived in a womb. When Muʿâwiyah read his letter, he said, `May Allāh shame him! How would I know?!' Some suggested to him to write to Ibn ʿAbbās to ask him, and so he did. I wrote him back saying, `The four that never stirred inside a womb are: Adam, Eve, the ram whereby Ishmael was ransomed, and the staff of Moses which he dropped and it became a serpent.'"

Most scholars have said that Moses' staff was taken from a tree in Paradise. Its length was ten cubits, the height of Moses himself. It was carried by Adam from Paradise to earth, so people inherited it one from another till it reached Shuʿayb who gave it to Moses, and Allāh knows best.

Moses is Addressed by Allāh, Becomes His Prophet and Messenger

"So when Moses had fulfilled the term, he journeyed with his family" (Qur'ān, 28:29), that is, he left Midian on his trip back home. The time was winter, and Moses was accompanied by his wife and cattle. His wife was big with child and she was then expecting to deliver any day or night. He set out in the Syrian desert, avoiding the major metropolises and main cities for fear of the kings who were ruling Syria then, and his main concern at that time was to see his brother Aaron and to get him out of Egypt if he could. Moses walked in the desert without being familiar with its routes till he reached the right side of the Mount of Sinai during an extremely cold night. The sky kept thundering and lightning as it rained. Add to all of this, his wife was overtaken by the pangs of child-birth, so Moses took his stick of fire drill but could not ignite it. He was perplexed, so he kept standing and sitting. He was not familiar with such sort of fire-producing gadget, and he kept discerning everything near and far, annoyed and frustrated. Then he kept listening for a long time for any sound or movement. While he was in such a condition, he was heartened to see some light on the side of the mountain, and he thought that its source was a fire. He, therefore, "... said to his family: Wait! I have seen a fire! Maybe I will bring you from it some news or a brand of fire so that you may warm yourselves!" (Qur'ān, 28:29), that is, he hoped to see someone who could lead him the way, and he had lost his way while thus wandering.

When Moses came close to the fire, he saw a great glow extending from the highest point in the sky and ending at a huge tree there. Scholars differ regarding what tree it was. Some say it was a boxthorn, while others say it was a vine. Moses was bewildered, and he was overtaken by fear when he saw a huge fire which did not have a smoke burning from the belly of a green tree that kept getting greener and greener as the fire grew more intense. When Moses came closer to it, it went back. Having seen that, he retreated in fear, then he remembered how badly he needed a fire, so he returned to it. It was then that "... a voice came from the right side of the valley in the blessed spot of the tree saying, O Moses!" (Qur'ān, 28:30). When he looked, he did not see anyone. He was addressed, "... Surely I am Allāh, the Lord of the worlds!" (Qur'ān, 28:30). Having heard that, he knew that it was his Exalted Lord. His Lord called him and ordered

him to get closer, and when he got closer to the tree and heard the call, and when he saw the divine Grandeur, his heartbeat increased and his tongue was tied; he felt extremely feeble. He became like a dead form of life, yet life lingered within him without being able to mobilize him. Allāh sent him an angel to support him and to strengthen his heart. When he fully recovered his senses, he was addressed, "... take your shoes off; surely you are in the sacred valley of Ṭuwa!" (Qur'ān, 20:12). The reason why he was ordered to take his shoes off was, as we are told by Abdullāh ibn Masʿūd who quotes the Prophet, due to the fact that they were made of donkey skin. He was required to take his shoes off so that his feet might touch the blessed earth and its blessing may thus touch him, for it had been blessed twice. Saʿeed ibn Jubayr has said, "Allāh told him so because walking bare-footed is a sign of humility and respect." He was told to tread the ground bare-footed just as the Kaʿba is thus entered by one seeking the blessing of its valley.

Let us stop here for a moment and learn from what went on between Moses and his Maker. This is not a bed-time story, nor is it written to entertain anyone but to admonish everyone.

What Allāh Said to Moses

Allāh Almighty has said, "So when Moses had fulfilled the term, and he journeyed with his family, he perceived on this side of the mountain a fire. He said to his family: Wait, I have seen a fire; perhaps I will bring you from it some news or a brand of fire so that you may warm yourselves. And when he came to it, a voice was heard from the right side of the valley in the blessed spot of the tree saying: O Moses! Surely I am Allāh, the Lord of the worlds!" (Qur'ān, 28:29-30). Allāh has said the following to His greatest prophet Muḥammed son of Abdullāh as recorded in Surat Ṭāhā of the Holy Qur'ān:

> *Has the story of Moses come to you? When he saw a fire, he said to his family: Stop, for surely I see a fire; haply I may bring you therefrom a live coal or find a guidance at the fire. So when he came to it, a voice was uttered: O Moses! Surely I am your Lord; therefore, take your shoes off; surely you are in the sacred valley of Ṭuwa, and I have chosen you, so listen to what is revealed: surely I am Allāh; there is no god but I; therefore, worship Me and keep up prayer for My remembrance: Surely the Hour is coming, I am about to make it manifest, so that every soul may be rewarded as it strives: Therefore, do*

not let any who does not believe in it and follows his own low desires turn you away from it else you should perish. And what is this in your right hand, O Moses?! He said: This is my staff: I recline on it, and I beat the leaves with it to make them fall upon my sheep, and I have other uses for it. He said: Cast it down, O Moses! So he cast it down, and Lo! It was a serpent running! He said: Take hold of it and do not be afraid; We will restore it to its former state. (20:9-21)

The reason why the Almighty asked Moses about his staff, and He knew of it better than him, ordering him to cast it down, is to calm his heart and to remove his confusion; it is as though He wanted to distract him for a short while, to calm him down, to divert his attention a little. Having cast it down, its split ends became its mouth, and its hook turned into a tail. As it shook, its fangs showed, appearing in the form in which Allāh wanted it to appear. Moses saw in it something horrible, so he ran away without looking behind him, whereupon his Exalted Lord called upon him not to run away like that but to return. He wanted him not to worry, for he was granted security, and that Allāh would return it to its former shape, i.e. a staff. It is said that the wisdom in Allāh's order to Moses to cast the staff down before going to Pharaoh was: so that he would not be frightened by it once he saw it like that in the presence of the Pharaoh of Egypt.

In his celebrated book *Al-Āmāli*, al-Sadûq quotes Imām ʿAli al-Hādi, grandfather of the Awaited Saviour, Imām al-Mehdi, saying that when prophet Moses was addressed by Allāh, the most Honoured and the most Great, Moses asked Him, "O Lord! What is the reward of one who testifies that I am Your prophet and messenger, and that You spoke to me?" The Almighty said, "O Moses! My angels shall visit him to convey to him the glad tidings that he is included among the residents of My Paradise." Moses said, "Lord! What then is the reward of one who stands before You to pray to You?" He said, "O Moses! I shall brag about him before My angels whenever he bows down, or prostrates, or stands, or sits, and anyone about whom I brag before My angels I shall not torment." Moses said, "Lord! What is the reward of one who feeds an indigent person seeking Your Pleasure?" He said, "O Moses! I shall order a caller on the Day of Judgment to call before all creation and say that so-and-so is one of those freed from the fire." Moses said, "Lord! What is the reward of one who joins his ties of kinship?" He said, "O Moses! I shall delay his death,

and I shall decrease his agony at the time of death, and the keepers of Paradise shall then call upon him saying, `Hurry and come to us, and enter from any gate you choose!'" Moses said, "Lord! What is the reward of one who mentions You by his tongue and by his heart?" He said, "O Moses! I shall shade him on the Day of Judgment under the shade of My ᶜArsh, and I shall include him in My protection." Moses again said, "Lord! What is the reward of one who recites Your moral lessons audibly and inaudibly?" He said, "O Moses! He shall pass on the Ṣirāṭ[1] as fast as lightning." Moses said, "Lord! What is the reward of one who tolerates people's harm and taunting, seeking Your Pleasure?" He said, "I shall assist him against the perils of the Day of Judgment." Moses said, "Lord! What then is the reward of one who sheds his tears out of fear of You?" He said, "O Moses! I shall protect his face from the heat of the fire, and I shall grant him security on the Day of the Greatest Consternation." Moses said, "Lord! What then is the reward of one who abandons treachery because of being shy of You?" He said, "O Moses! I shall grant him security on the Day of Judgement." Moses said, "Lord! What then is the reward of one who loves those who are obedient to You?" He said, "O Moses! I shall prohibit My fire from touching him." Moses said, "Lord! What then is the penalty of one who kills a believer deliberately?" He said, "I shall not look at him on the Day of Judgment, nor shall I bring him back to the right course." Moses said, "Lord! What is the reward of one who invites a disbeliever to Islam?" He said, "O Moses! I shall accept from him to intercede on the Day of Judgment on behalf of whoever he wants." Moses said, "Lord! What then is the reward of one who performs the prayers on time?" He said, "O Moses! I shall grant him whatever he asks for, and I shall permit him to enter My Paradise." Moses then asked his Lord again saying, "Lord! What is the reward of one who perfects his ablution fearing You?" He said, "I shall resurrect him on the Day of Judgment with light shining between his eyes." Moses said, "Lord! What is the

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[1]For a description of this *Ṣirāṭ*, that is, *al-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqeem*, refer to pp. 105 - 112 of my book *Fast of the Month of Ramaḍān: Philosophy and Aḥkām*, published by Ansariyan Publications, P.O. Box 37185/187, Qum, Islamic Republic of Iran. Most Muslims do not have the slightest idea about this *Ṣirāṭ* although they will all have to pass over it, each and every one of them, including prophets and messengers of Allāh.

reward of one who fasts during the month of Ramaḍān hopeful of Your rewards?" He said, "O Moses! I shall grant him on the Day of Judgment a status wherein no fear shall touch him." Moses then asked his Lord saying, "Lord! How will You reward one who fasts during the month of Ramaḍān seeking to show off before people?" He said, "O Moses! His reward will be similar to that of one who never fasted it at all."[1]

Citing a chain of narrators, al-Ṣadūq tells us that the Almighty said the following to Moses:

> O Moses! I created you, selected you, empowered you, and ordered you to obey Me and forbade you from being disobedient to Me; so, if you do obey Me, I shall help you when you seek to do so, but if you disobey Me, I shall not assist you in your disobedience, and the favour is Mine if you choose to obey me, while I shall have a proof against you should you opt to disobey Me."[2]

Moses asked his Lord saying, "Lord! Who shall reside in the sacred precinct?" Allāh said, "It is those whose eyes never witnessed adultery, nor did usury ever taint their wealth, nor did they ever accept bribes when they judged among the people." He also admonished Moses saying, "O Moses! Do not humiliate the indigent person, nor should you envy a rich man on account of the abundance of his wealth."[3] Al-Majlisi quotes Imām Jaʿfer al-Ṣādiq stating that the following text was among the admonishments whereby Allāh admonished Moses:

> O son of ʿImrān! Liar is one who claims that he loves Me, and when the night approaches, he sleeps without remembering Me. Is not every lover loves to spend some time of seclusion with the one he loves? Here I am, O son of ʿImrān, discerning the ones who Love me, those whom I shall distract from what they like to do when the night approaches, and I show them My torment as though they see it with their own eyes! They address me when they thus see it, and they speak to Me as if I am present with them! O son of ʿImrān!

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[1]al-Ṣadūq, *Al-Āmāli*, pp. 185-186. al-Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 13, pp. 327-328.

[2]al-Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 13, p. 329.

[3]*Ibid.*, p. 329.

Grant me of your heart submission, of your body obedience, and of your eyes their tears in the darkness of the night, and call upon Me, for you shall find Me near to you, answering your call.[1]

Abu Jaᶜfer, Imām Muḥammed ibn ᶜAli al-Bāqir, says that Moses pleaded to his Lord to admonish him. Allāh said, "I admonish you to always be mindful of Me." Moses repeated his request, whereupon the Almighty repeated the same, and this recurred thrice. Moses again pleaded to his Lord to admonish him, whereupon the Almighty said, "I admonish you with regard to your mother," and this was also repeated thrice. Then the Almighty said, "I admonish you with regard to your father." It is, hence, said that two thirds of kindness are the share of the mother, while the father's is the remaining third.[2] Abdullāh ibn Sinān[3] was one of the companions and disciples of Imām Jaᶜfer al-Ṣādiq. He quotes the Imām saying, "Among what Allāh, the most Exalted One, the most Great, inspired to Moses son of ᶜImrān was this: `O Moses! Be like an old robe, a pure heart, and be confined to your home, vigilant during the night, so that those in the heavens may be acquainted with you, while you remain obscure to those on earth. O Moses! Beware of obstinacy, and do not go to any place unless necessity takes you there, and do not laugh without having seen something out of the ordinary, and do weep over your

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[1]*Ibid.*, pp. 329-330.

[2]al-Ṣadūq, *Al-Āmāli*, pp. 305-306.

[3]His full name is: (Prince) Abu Muḥammed Abdullāh ibn Muḥammed ibn Saᶜeed ibn Yaḥya ibn al-Ḥusain ibn Maḥmūd ibn al-Rabeeᶜ, famous as Ibn Sinān al-Khafāji al-Ḥalabi (of Aleppo where he is buried) (d. 466 A.H./1074 A.D.). He was appointed *wali* (governor) of Qalᶜat Iᶜzāz by Maḥmoud ibn Sāliḥ. He was a famous poet who tried to emulate al-Sharīf al-Radī, the man who is credited with the compilation of *Nahjul Balagha*. Hundreds of lines of his poetry are compiled in Vol. 8 of *Aᶜyān al-Shīᶜah*. Ibn Sinān was a scholar, a theologian, a traditionist whose knowledge was so vast, he was called during his time "al-Majlisi II." He was also a philosopher who contemplated upon morals and wisdom. He is author of more than fifty-two books (many of which are still in manuscript form), including his *Dīwān* of poetry and *Sirr al-Faṣāḥa* which deals with literary criticism. He once started writing a book after the evening prayers and finished it by midnight.

sin, O son of 'Imrān!"[1]

During the forty days' communion between Moses and his Lord, the Almighty admonished Moses with the following beautiful admonishment:

> O Moses! Do not have high hopes about the life of this world else your heart should harden, and one whose heart is hard is distant from Me. Cause your heart to die[2] through fear of Me. Wear old clothes and a new heart so you may be unknown to the people of the earth, well known to the people of the heavens. Cry out to Me on account of the abundance of sins like one fleeing from his foe, and seek My assistance in doing so, for I am the best of those who assist. O Moses! I am Allāh above the servants, and the servants are under my control, and they shall all be gathered (to Me); so, indict your own self, and do not feel secure from your offspring with regard to your creed except when your offspring love the righteous just as much as you love them. O Moses! I admonish you like One Who is most concerned about your well-being with regard to the son of the virtuous one, Jesus son of Mary, the man who rides the she-ass, who wears the burnoose, who loves oil, olives, and the prayer place! And after him I admonish you with regard to the one who rides the red camel, the good one, the pure and the purified, for his description in your Book is a believer who fully controls all Books, who bows down, who prostrates, whose brethren are the indigent, whose supporters are those who are not his own people[3], and during his time there will be hardships, trials, tribulations, and bloodshed. His name is Aḥmed, Muḥammed, the trusted one, from the foremost remnant; he shall believe in all the Books and testify to the truth of all the messengers. His nation shall receive mercy and

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[1]al-Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 13, p. 331.

[2]This is an idiom meaning: "Do not follow your own whims and desires, and do not yield to temptation."

[3]When Prophet Muḥammed brought the message of Islam, his people, the tribe of Quraysh, were most antagonistic towards him. Non-Arabs have responded to the Islamic message better than the Arabs. Nowadays, Arab governments are among the most bitter enemies of the Islamic message, and Arab rulers are among the worst hypocrites. They have become allies of the worst enemies of Islam, the Zionist Jews, and with those who support and blindly back the latter.

blessings. They shall have fixed times during which they call for the prayers. In him should you believe, for he is your Brother! O Moses! He is My trust, and he is a truthful servant of Mine; blessed is everything he touches and so is everything he blesses; such is he in My knowledge, such is the way I created him. Through him shall I start the Hour, and through his nation shall I seal the world. Order, therefore, the oppressors from among the Children of Israel not to obliterate his name nor to betray him, and they shall do just that. Loving him I regard as good as the giving of charity, and I am with him and with his party, and he is in My party, and My party are the winners. O Moses! You are My servant, and I am your Lord! Do not look upon the insignificant poor person with humiliation, nor should you envy the rich person for the plenty that he has, and be submissive whenever My Name is mentioned. Worship Me and do not associate anything with Me. I am the Great Master; I created you from a drop of an abased water, from a piece of mud which I took from a land rubbed with humility, so you became a human. I am the One Who created it, so Blessed is My Countenance, and Sanctified is My undertaking; there is nothing like Me! I am the ever-lasting One Who never dies. Through My Torah should you bring life to the days of the world and teach My Praise to those who are ignorant thereof; remind them of My Signs and bounties, and tell them not to go to extremes in their error, for when I take someone, I take him with extreme torment.

O Moses! Should you ever be deprived of My love, none else will ever love you; so, worship Me, and stand before Me as an insignificant slave; censure your own soul, for it ought to be, and do not use My Book to seek the upper hand over the Children of Israel. This should suffice as an admonishment for your heart, and as a light, and it is the speech of the Lord of the World, Glorified and Exalted is He, O Moses!

O Moses! Whenever you call upon Me, you shall find Me, for I shall forgive what you will forgive. The heavens glorifies Me in fright, and the angels are fearful of Me. My earth glorifies Me in anticipation, and all beings praise Me even against their own will. Uphold prayers, for it enjoys a great status with Me, and it has with Me a sure covenant, and I shall join to it whatever *zakat* is offered from good wealth and food, for I accept only what is good whereby My Pleasure is sought. I shall join to it the maintaining of the ties of kinship, for I am the most Gracious, the most Merciful, and such ties I created out of My mercy so that My servants may thereby love one another, and it has with Me a special status on the Day of

Resurrection; I shall sever my ties from those who sever them and join those who join them, and thus do I do with those who suffer My commandments to loss.

O Moses! Be gracious to the beggar when he comes to you either by answering his plea in a beautiful way or by giving him generously, for there will come to you those who are neither humans nor jinns, the angels of the most Merciful One, to try you to see how you fare with regard to what I have commanded you to do, and how you safeguard the trust with which I have entrusted you. Humble yourself to Me, therefore, through pleading to Me, and weep and wail when you recite the Book, and be advised that I call upon you as a Master calls upon his slave so that he may raise his status to an honourable station, and such is My favour unto you and unto your forefathers.

O Moses! Never should you forget Me no matter what, for forgetting Me renders the hearts hard, and with the abundance of wealth comes an abundance of sins. The earth is obedient; the sky is obedient; the seas are obedient; whoever disobeys Me will be a wretch, for I am the most Merciful One at all times. I bring hardship after ease and ease after hardship, and I let kings succeed kings, while My domain stands and never disappears. Nothing is hidden from Me in the earth or in the sky, and how can anything be hidden from Me while from Me it started?! And how can you help asking Me for what I have while to Me you will inevitably return?!

O Moses! Make Me your security, and leave with Me your treasure of good deeds; be fearful of Me, and fear none but Me; surely to Me is the ultimate return.

O Moses! Never should you put off your repentance, and postpone the sin, and take your time when you stand before Me for the prayers; do not plead to anyone but to Me; make Me your protection against hardships, and the surety against hard times.

O Moses! Compete with the doers of good, for goodness is like its own name, and let evil be the concern of every afflicted one.

O Moses! Let your tongue reflect what is on your mind so you will be safe, and mention Me a great deal during the night and the day so you will be successful, and do not commit sins so you will be regretful, for the sinners are promised the fire.

O Moses! Speak beautifully to those who abandon sins, and keep them company, and take them as brethren even when they are absent from your sight, and strive hard to be with them so that they may strive hard to be with you.

O Moses! Anything intended to please Me is much though it may be little, and what is sought to please others is a little though

it may be much. The best of your days is the one ahead of you, so see what day it is and prepare for it the answer, for it shall be made to stand to testify (either for you or against you). Seek your admonishment from time and its people, for what is lengthy of time is in fact short, and what is short thereof is lengthy, and everything shall (in the end) come to naught. Act as though you see the reward of your deeds so that it will be in the hereafter even more so, there should be no doubt about it. What is left of the life of the world is like what has already passed, and every doer does according to his mind and in the following of the footsteps of someone else. Be your own guide, O son of 'Imrān, perhaps you will be a winner tomorrow when you are asked, and it is there that the followers of falsehood shall lose!

O Moses! Be satisfied with forsaking the world, and stay aloof from it, for it is not for you, nor are you for it; why should you be concerned about the abode of the oppressors except for the doing of goodness, for it will only then be a good one?

O Moses! The life of this world and its people are trials to one another. Anything decorated contains what it contains, and for the believer, it is the hereafter that is decorated: he always looks at it incessantly. His desire for it acts as a barrier between him and life's pleasures, so it carries him even during the night just as a rider is swiftly carried to his destination! He remains forlorn, and he welcomes the night grieved; so, congratulations to him; had the curtain been removed from his eyes, he would have witnessed what pleasure awaits him!

O Moses! Whenever you see riches coming your way, you should say, "A sin for which the punishment comes hastily!" And if poverty comes your way, you should say, "Welcome to the distinctive mark of the righteous!" Do not be an oppressive tyrant, nor should you be a friend of the oppressors.

O Moses! What good is there in a lengthy life-span if its end is abhorred?! And what harm should it be in what is hidden from you if its end is praiseworthy?!

O Moses! The Book has cried out to you with regard to what you are undertaking, so how can the eyes sleep despite that, or how can anyone enjoy the pleasure of life except when he goes to extremes in being heedless and in enjoying one pleasure after another, and even the foremost among the truthful could not bear much less than that?!

O Moses! Enjoin My servants to call upon Me with regard to what has already passed after recognizing Me as the most Merciful of those who are merciful. I shall then respond to the call of the

ones in need, and I shall remove evil from them. I shall then change their times and bring them ease and thank them for the little and reward them for it with much. I shall then enrich the poor, and I am the Everlasting One, the Honoured, the Omnipotent. Anyone who comes to you after having committed a sin, you should welcome him saying, "Welcome! Welcome! To the most spacious of courtyards have you come, the courtyard of the Lord of the Worlds!" And seek My forgiveness for them, and behave as though you were one of them. Do not see yourself as being better than them because of what I have bestowed upon you of My favour, and tell them to ask Me for My favour and mercy, for none has them besides Me, and I am the One with the great favour. I am the haven of the sinners, the companion of the destitute, the One Who forgives the sinners. You enjoy with Me a favourable status, so supplicate to Me with a pure heart and a truthful tongue, and be as I have commanded you: Obey My commandment; do not seek the upper hand over My servants with something the start of which is not in your hands; seek nearness to Me, for I surely am near to you. I never asked you for anything the weight of which hurts you or overburdens you; rather, I asked you to call upon Me so I may respond to you, to ask Me so I may give you, and to seek nearness to Me through that the meaning thereof you took from Me, and I am to complete its revelation.

O Moses! Look at the earth, for it shall soon be your grave; raise your eyes to the sky, for above you there is a great angel; weep over your soul as long as you are in the life of this world; beware of perdition and annihilation, and do not let the decoration of the life of this world and its beauty deceive you; do not accept injustice, and do not be unjust to others, for I lie in ambush to the oppressor till I take out of him what he had taken away from those whom he oppressed.

O Moses! A good deed earns ten times its reward, and the penalty of one sin is perdition[1]. Do not associate any with Me; it is not lawful for you to associate anything with Me. Take to moderation and watch your steps; supplicate like one hopeful for what I have, regretful about what he has committed, for the

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[1]This statement is truly awesome. One sin can dynamite all what one built through good deeds. It is much easier and faster to demolish than to build. Reflect upon this statement, dear reader, and be on your guard, perhaps Allāh will have mercy on you and not cause your feet to slip away from His path.

darkness of the night is dispelled by the light of the day, and so is the bad deed: it wipes out the good one. The darkness of the night overtakes the light of the day, and so is the sin: it overtakes the good deed and blackens it.[1]

I find it hard to imagine anyone reading these beautiful words without being impressed by them unless he has no heart at all, nor a tint of reason, nor an iota of belief in God. I cannot imagine the rich coming across such jewels of wisdom and not spending some of the wealth given to them by the Almighty to promote it, to make it available to others, to disseminate it especially here in America where every day old sins are committed and new ones invented, where the Almighty is forgotten or is associated with. I cannot imagine any reader who reads these beautiful words of wisdom without desiring to share them with someone else he loves; sharing, caring, and giving are the marks of true love. Had I had more space, I would have provided the reader with more, but book publishing is very expensive, and Muslims are the least generous of all people when it comes to publishing their precious Islamic literature. Compared to the non-Muslims, the Muslims of the world spend nothing on the promotion of their creed, the best creed ever revealed to mankind. The love for this world has taken control of them, so they prefer to spend on what will bring them nothing but loss and nothing but the wrath of the Almighty. Only a very, very small number of them are the exception to this rule. May Allāh Taʿala include us among these select few... I remember one dialogue that will take place on the Day of Judgment. Allāh will then order our father Adam to pick from among his offspring the fuel for the fire of hell. "How many, O Lord?" he will ask Him, and the answer will come, "From each hundred, ninety-nine." This is included in a documented *ḥadīth* the discussion of which will Insha-Allāh be included in another book I hope Allāh will help and enable me to write. I sincerely solicit the reader's *duʿa* to make this wish come true. A believer's supplication for another believer is always accepted, *Inshā-Allāh*.

Indeed, there are many Pharaohs these days, including many who claim to be Muslims...

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[1]al-Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 13, pp. 332-338.

How the Staff Benefitted Moses

Let us now find out what other benefits that staff had for Moses, since it was one of his prophetic miracles. It had two split ends. At the bottom of both ends there was a hook and iron spearheads. If Moses had to enter a cave at night, and there was no moon, its split ends would light for him as far as his eyes could see. And when he needed water, he used to dip it in a well; it would then extend up to the bottom of the well and its head would become like a bucket, so he would drink. If he needed food, he would strike the ground with it and food enough for one day would come out for him. If he desired to eat a particular type of fruit, he would plant it in the ground, so the branches of the tree he desired would come out and instantly provide him with that fruit. It is also said that the staff was of an almonds tree. Whenever he felt hungry, he would plant it in the ground, so it would shoot leaves and produce its fruit, and he would eat almonds from it. If he met an enemy, on both of its split ends would appear two dragons. He used to strike with it the rough terrain of a mountain, or stones and thorny bushes, and it would make a path for him. If he wanted to cross a river without a boat, he would strike it with it: it would split open and a path would appear for him. Thus did he make a path in the sea for the Israelites to pass over, while the pursuing army of Pharaoh perished. He used to drink honey out of one of its ends and milk out of the other. When he was tired of walking, he would ride it, and it would take him to wherever he wanted to go without having to run or to move. And it used to lead him to the way and fight his foes for him. If he wanted it to provide him with perfume, it would emit a fragrance, so he would perfume himself and his clothes. If the highway had fearsome robbers, the staff would speak to him and instruct him to take one route rather than the other. He used to use it to tend to his sheep, and to defend them and himself against wild beasts, harmful insects and snakes. Whenever he went on a journey, he would put it on his shoulder and hang his luggage and belongings on it, including his nosebag, slingshot, clothes, food, water, etc.

Ibn Ḥabān has said, "Shuʿayb said to Moses upon marrying him to his daughter and giving him his sheep to herd, 'Take these sheep, and when you reach a crossroad, turn to your left and not to your right even if the pasture looks greener, for there is a huge dragon there because of which I fear for your safety and that of your sheep.'

When the sheep reached the crossroad, the sheep took to their right. Moses tried very hard to make them change their direction but they did not heed him, so he had to leave them do what they willed, then he slept while they were grazing. The dragon came, and the staff fought it and killed it, then it came and lay down beside Moses stained with blood. When Moses woke up, he saw the blood-stained staff and the slain dragon. He thus came to know that it was not an ordinary staff." This is what the staff could do when it was in his hand. If he laid it down, he could see that it would turn into a snake greater than anyone can see, black in color, looking as though it had four legs. Its split ends would turn into a mouth in which there were twelve fangs. It would make a terrible noise, and fire would come out of it. Its hook would turn into a tail looking like a flame of fire; its eyes would shine like lightning emanating wind that would burn everything in its way. It would pass by a rock and swallow it as though it had been a small she-camel, and rocks would crack inside its belly[1]. It would pass by a tree and cut it with its fangs, crushing then swallowing it. Then it would look around, agitated, as though it was looking for something else to eat, and it would appear as a huge serpent, as swift as a jinn, and as smooth as a snake. To this does the Almighty refer in the Holy Qur'ān when He describes it: "... a clear serpent" (Qur'ān, 7:107), "... as if it had been a snake" (Qur'ān, 27:10), "... it was a serpent running" (Qur'ān, 20:20).

Allāh Almighty has said, "He said: Take hold of it and fear not; We will restore it to its former state. And put your hand in your side-pocket; it shall come out white without evil: another sign. Go to Pharaoh; surely he has exceeded all limits" (Qur'ān, 20:21-24). The reason why the Almighty ordered him to press his hand to his side-pocket is due to the fact that his garment had tight sleeves; when he placed his hand into his side-pocket and took it out, it was glowing with light which almost blinded the eyes of the beholder. When he put it back into it and took it out again, it came out just as it used to look before.

Time came for Moses to fulfil the mission for which Allāh created him: to warn Pharaoh and to save the Israelites from their yoke of bondage. Moses remembered that he was still a fugitive, so he said, "Lord! Surely I killed one of them; therefore, I fear lest they should

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[1] *Ibid.*, Vol. 13, p. 61.

slay me. And my brother Aaron is more eloquent than me; therefore, send him with me as an aide to testify to my truthfulness; surely I fear lest they should reject me. He said: We will strengthen your arm with your brother, and We will give you both an authority so that they shall not reach you; (go) with Our signs; you both and those who follow you shall have the upper hand" (Qur'ān, 28:33-35). Moses at that time was wearing a shirt of wool which he had pierced with pegs, and an outer garment, also of woven wool. All his clothes and head-dresses were woven of coarse wool as Allāh Almighty was speaking to him and giving him His support and commandments.

The Almighty said to him, "O Moses! Set out with My Message, and you are being observed by My vision and hearing, and My power and vision are with you. I have commissioned you to a weak being of what I have created who has underestimated My blessings on him, felt secure against My designs, worshipped others besides Me. The life of this world caused him to be so arrogant that he forgot My right and might and denied My being his Lord, claiming that he does not know Me. I swear by My Dignity and Greatness, had it not been for the argument and might which I placed between Me and My creation, I would have ruined him like a Mighty One for Whose Wrath the heavens and the earth, the oceans, the mountains, the trees, and the animals would also be terrified. Had I permitted the sky, it would have crushed him, or the earth, it would have swallowed him, or the mountains, they would have smashed him, or the oceans, they would have drowned him. But he became too insignificant in My eyes, and his affair seemed too easy (for any of that), and he dwarfed before My might, yet even My mercy included him, while I am the One Who has no need for him, nor for any, nor for all of My creation, and this is one of My own rights. I am the Creator of the rich and the poor, and there is nobody who is wealthy except one whom I have granted, nor is there anyone who is poor except one whom I have impoverished. So convey My message to him and invite him to worship Me and believe in My unity, and be sincere in worshipping Me, and warn him against My wrath and might, and remind him of My signs, and inform him that nothing at all can stand in the way of My wrath. Speak to him, even as you do so, from time to time, a kind word, maybe he will remember or fear, and respect him as you address him, and do not let the ornaments of the life of this world which I have bestowed upon him cause you to be in awe of him, for

his forelock is in My hand: he does not see, nor speak, nor breathe, except with My knowledge. Tell him that I am more swift to forgive and overlook than to be angry and inflict retribution. Tell him: Respond to your Lord, for His mercy is quite spacious, and He has granted you a respite this entire period during which you claim to be the god rather than Him, turning away from worshipping Him. Yet during this entire period, He permits the heavens to pour its rain over your land and the earth to bring forth its vegetation, while keeping you in good health so that you may not get very old nor sick nor become impoverished nor vanquished. Had He willed, He would have, a long time ago, inflicted His wrath upon you and took away everything He had given you, but He surely is Most Munificent."

The Almighty ceased addressing Moses for seven days and nights, then He ordered him to respond to what He had spoken to him, so he said, "Lord! Expand my breast for me, and make my affair easy to me, and loosen the knot from my tongue so that they may understand my speech, and give me an aide from my family, Aaron, my brother. Strengthen my back through him, and associate him (with me) in my affair, so that we should glorify You much, and remember You oft. Surely You are seeing us" (Qur'ān, 20:24-35). The response of the Almighty came thus: "You are indeed granted your petition, O Moses!" (Qur'ān, 20:36).

The Almighty thus continued his instructions to Moses, admonishing him and his brother to strive and persevere. Moses thought that Pharaoh was quite powerful with his huge army, while he himself had nobody except his brother, so the Almighty said to him: "Do not overestimate his might, for his forelock is in My hand, nor should you admire what I have permitted him to enjoy of the decoration of the life of this world and of the ornaments of the extravagant. Had I willed, I would have decorated you in such a way that if Pharaoh were to see it, he would realize his inability to attain it, but I do not want you to be like that, so I shall keep the enticements of this life away from you, and thus do I do to My friends: I keep them away from its riches as the shepherd keeps his herd away from the places of perdition."[1]

Having provided this brief narration of the story of prophet Moses, we have to stop here, since the goal is not to narrate his

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[1] *Ibid.*, Vol. 13, p. 49.

biography but to deal with his prophetic mission as conveyed by himself and his brother Aaron and the supplication whereby they both invoked the Almighty. Also, this book is becoming increasingly larger and larger, and not many publishers will be able to afford the expense of publishing it...

Abu Umer Muḥammed al-Faryāni quotes a series of narrators that ends with Ibn ʿAbbās saying, "The Messenger of Allāh has said, `When Moses was given the Tablets, he looked at them and said: `Lord! You have granted me a grace which You have not granted any other among all people.' This is what is meant by the verse saying, `He said: O Moses! Surely I have chosen you above the people with My messages and with My words, therefore take hold of what I give you and be one of the grateful ones' (7:144), that is, strongly, diligently, and consistently do so, and you shall love Muḥammed, My peace and blessings be upon him and his progeny. Moses said, `Lord! Who is Muḥammed?' He said, `He is Ahmed whose name I have inscribed on My Throne two thousand years before I created the heavens and the earth. He is My prophet, the one I have chosen for Myself, and the very best of all of My creation. He is more dear to Me than all My creation and angels.' Moses said, `Lord! If Muḥammed is more dear to You than all your creation, then have You created a nation more gracious in Your regard than mine?' Allāh Almighty said, `The favour of the nation of Muḥammed over all other nations is like My favour over all My creation.' He said, `Lord! How I wish to see him and them!' He said, `O Moses! You shall not see them, but if you desire to hear their speech, I shall let you hear it.' He said, `Lord! I do wish to hear their speech!' The Almighty said, `O nation of Muḥammed!'" The Messenger continued, "It was then that we responded to His call from the loins of our fathers and the wombs of our mothers saying, *`Labbayka Allāhomma!* Here we are, Lord, ever at Your service, Lord! All Praise is due to You, all bliss, and all authority! Yours, they are; there is no partner unto You in Your domain!' Whereupon Allāh Almighty said, `O nation of Muḥammed! My mercy has preceded My wrath, and My forgiveness has preceded My punishment! I have granted you even before you ask Me, and I have answered you even before you call upon Me, and I have forgiven you even before you transgress: whoever comes on the Day of Judgment bearing witness that There is no god except Allāh, and that Muḥammed is My servant and

messenger, shall enter Paradise even if his sins were as many as the sea's meerschaum.' This is a reference to the verse saying, `And you were not on the western side (of Mount Sinai) when We revealed to Moses the commandment, and you were not among the witnesses' (28:44) and also, `and you were not on the side of the mountain (of Sinai) when We called' (28:46)."

Demise of Moses

Imām Ja'fer al-Ṣādiq was asked by one of his disciples about how Moses died. This is what the Imām said:

> When the time for his departure drew nigh, when his term came to an end, and when his life was to terminate, the angel of death came to him and said, "*Assālamo Alaikom*, O one who spoke to Allāh!" Moses said, "*Alakomis-Salām;* who are you?" "I am the angel of death," came the answer. Moses asked him, "What brought you here?" The angel said, "I have come to take your soul away." Moses asked him, "Where are you going to take it out from?" The angel said, "From your mouth." Moses said, "How so since I spoke from it to my Lord, the Great One, the most Exalted?" The angel said, "Then from your hands." Moses said, "How so since with them did I carry the Torah?" The angel said, "Then from your feet." Moses said, "How so since they trod Mount Sinai?" "Then from your eyes," said the angel. Moses said, "How so since they have always been looking to my Lord with hope?" The angel said, "Then from your ears." Moses said, "How so since through them did I hear the words of my Lord, the Great One, the most Exalted?" It was then that Allāh inspired to the angel of death saying, "Do not take his soul away till he is the one who asks you to do so." Moses remained in this world for some time thereafter. He then called upon Joshua son of Nūn, his *wasi*, and asked him to keep the news of his death to himself. He also told him who he should choose as his own *wasi* after him. Then Moses disappeared from his people. He happened once to pass by a man digging a grave. "Shall I help you dig this grave?" Moses asked him. The man responded in the affirmative. Moses helped him dig it till the work was completed. Moses lied down in it to see how it felt to be inside a grave. It was then that the veil was removed from his eyes, and he saw his place in Paradise. "Lord!," said Moses, "Do take my soul to Yourself!" The angel of death took his soul right there and then and buried him in that same grave and healed the soil on him. The man whom Moses had helped dig the grave was the same angel of death who had

assumed a human form. Upon his death, a voice coming from heavens was heard saying, "Moses has died! Who does not?!"[1]

Some ignorant Muslims claim (through a fabricated tradition) that Moses slapped the angel of death who wanted to take his soul away, blinding one of his eyes. We think that such conduct is not typical of prophets and messengers of the Almighty, and that the angel of death is a true servant of the Creator doing His bidding; hence, he should be respected like any other angel. Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died. He is mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān by name as many as one hundred and thirty-six times. It is narrated that Joshua (Yousha') son of Nūn saw Moses once in a vision after he had died and asked him, "O prophet of Allāh! How did you find death?" "It is like the skinning of a she-camel while it is still alive," said Moses.

SUPPLICATION BY PROPHET MOSES

The following is excerpted from the Holy Qur'ān:

Moses said to his people: O my people! Remember the favour of Allāh upon you when He raised prophets from among you and made you kings and gave you what He had not given any other nation of the world. O my people! Enter the holy land which Allāh has prescribed for you and do not turn your backs, for you will then turn back losers. They said: O Moses! Surely there is a strong race in it, and we will on no account enter it until they get out of it; so, if they get out of it, surely we will then enter. Two men of those who feared, upon both of whom Allāh had bestowed a favour, said: Enter upon them by the gate, for once you have entered, you shall surely be victorious, and on Allāh should you rely if you are believers (in Him). They said: O Moses! We shall never enter it so long as they are in it; go therefore you and your Lord and you both fight; surely we will sit down here. He said: Lord! Surely I have no control (over any) but my own self and my brother; therefore, make a separation between us and the nation of transgressors. He said: So shall it be forbidden to them for forty years. They

[1] *Ibid.*, Vol. 13, pp. 365-366.

shall wander about in the land; therefore, do not grieve for the nation of transgressors.
(Qur'an, 5:20-26)

[Moses said:] "O my people! How is it that I call you to salvation while you call me to the fire? You call on me that I should disbelieve in Allāh and associate with Him that of which I have no knowledge, while I call you to the Almighty, the Most Forgiving?
(Qur'an, 40:41-42)

And when Moses came at Our appointed time and his Lord spoke to him, he said: Lord! Show me (Yourself), so that I may look at You. He said: You cannot (bear to) see Me, but look at the mountain; if it remains firm in its place, then will you see Me; but when his Lord manifested His glory to the mountain, He made it crumble and Moses fell down in a swoon; when he recovered, he said: Glory to You! I turn to You, and I am the first of the believers.
(Qur'an, 7:143)

Moses has also said, as the Holy Qur'ān records,

Lord! Surely You have given Pharaoh and his chiefs finery and riches in the life of this world, to this end, Lord, so that they may lead (people) astray from Your way. Lord! Destroy their riches and harden their hearts so that they may not believe until they see the painful punishment. He said: The prayer of you both has indeed been accepted; therefore, continue in the right way and do not follow the path of those who do not know.
(Qur'an, 10:88-89)

The Messenger of Allāh asked his companions once, "Shall I inform you of the words which Moses spoke when he crossed the sea with the Children of Israel?" They said, "O Messenger of Allāh! Please do so!" He said, "Say: Lord! All Praise is due to You; to You is our complaint, and from You do we seek help, and upon You do we rely. There is no power nor might except in Allāh, the Exalted, the Great."

PROPHET DAVID (DAWŪD)

Allāh Almighty has said,

> O David! Surely We have made you a ruler in the land. (38:26)

Prophet David is the son of Eisha son of Awfayth son of Yuʿaz son of Solomon son of Yakhshun son of Amenothab son of Hasrun son of Baris son of Yahuda son of Jacob son of Isaac son of Abraham, the Friend of Allāh, blessings of Allāh be upon all of them.

David was a servant and prophet of Allāh and His Vicegerent in Jerusalem. Allāh Almighty has said, "And Allāh gave him kingdom and wisdom" (Qur'ān, 2:251). Allāh has also said, "We gave David the Psalms" (Qur'ān, 4:163) which are now part of the Old Testament. Allāh never gave any of His creation a voice as sweet as the one which He bestowed upon David. He used to recite the Psalms in seventy different tones. Whenever he sat alone by the mountains praising Allāh, the mountains would respond with praises of their own; so did all species of animals and birds, even the wild beasts and the lions. They would all get near him and praise the Almighty with him as soon as they heard his voice. The flowing water stood still, and so did the wind. Allāh Almighty has said, "And certainly We gave David excellence from Us: O mountains! Sing praises with him, and the birds, and We made the iron pliant to him" (Qur'ān, 34:10). Allāh Almighty has also said, "Surely We made the mountains sing the glory (of Allāh) in unison
with him at the evening and at sunrise, and the birds gathered together; all joined in singing with him" (Qur'ān, 38:18-19).

The Messenger of Allāh Muḥammed has said, "The most favoured prayers to Allāh were those of David, and the most favoured of fast to Allāh was that of David: he used to sleep only half the night and stand for prayers one third of it, then sleep during its remaining sixth. He used to fast a day and break it another, and he never ran away whenever he was challenged." This tradition has been recorded by al-Bukhāri. Al-Bukhāri has also mentioned that, "Muḥammed ibn Abdullāh has quoted al-Awwam saying that he once asked Mujahid

about the prostration in Surat Ṣād (chapter 38). Mujahid said that he had asked Ibn ʿAbbās the same question, and that the latter had informed him that it was the prostration made by David in repentance and in thanksgiving."

Allāh, Praised be His Name and Exalted is He, has said, "And We made the iron pliant to him, saying: Make ample (coats of mail)" (Qur'ān, 34:10-11). When David came to rule the Children of Israel, he used to go out to the public disguised. Whenever he saw a man who did not recognize who he (David) was, he would come and ask him what he thought of David, so the man would praise him and express his satisfaction. While he was one day doing that, Allāh sent him an angel in human form. David, as usual, came and asked him what he thought of him. The angel answered, "He is a very good man had it not been for a fault in him." David asked him, "And what is that, O servant of Allāh?" He answered, "David eats and feeds his family from the government's treasury." So he realized it and invoked Allāh to help him do something whereby he would not need the treasury but would instead spend some of his earnings by way of charity. Allāh, therefore, taught him how to make coats of mail, and he was the first person to make them. Before then, they used to be pieces of tin. It is said that he used to sell each coat of mail for four hundred dirhams. He would eat and feed his family from its price then give some of it to the poor and the destitute. This is referred to in this verse: "And We taught him the making of coats of mail for you so that they might protect you in your wars" (Qur'ān, 21:80), and also, "And make the coats of mail according to a measure" (Qur'ān, 34:11), that is, neither very small, else they should stick to one's body and thus harm it, nor too big, else they should break the rings. He used to do that and he thus made a fortune.

It is narrated that Luqman the wise saw David making a coat of mail, and he was surprised at it but did not know what it exactly was. He wanted to ask him about it but he was too shy. He kept silent till David finished making it. David then stood and put it on saying, "What a shirt for the warrior!" Luqman, hence, understood what it was for, so he said, "Silence is wisdom, and few are those who uphold it."

Allāh Almighty has said, "Has there come to you the story of the litigants when they made an entry into the private chamber (of

David) by climbing over the walls? They entered upon David, and he was frightened of them" (Qur'ān, 38:21). Scholars have disputed regarding the reasons why Allāh Almighty had put His prophet David to the sin test. Some of them reason saying that he one day invoked his Lord to grant him the status which He had granted his forefathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and asked Him to test him with the same whereby He tested them, and to grant him of the honour as much as He had granted them. Both al-Suddi and al-Kalbi quote Muqatil who, in turn, quotes his mentors saying, and their statements support one another, that David divided his days into three portions: a day to arbitrate among people, a day to enjoy his women in private, and a day to worship his Lord and read. While reading, he used to quite often read about the distinction of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, peace be upon them, so he said, "Lord! I see that all goodness has gone with my fathers who came before me." Allāh inspired him that they were tried with trials whereby nobody else was ever tried, and that they remained steadfast. Abraham was tried with Nemrud's fire and with the attempted slaying of his son. Isaac was tried with the possibility of his being slain, while Jacob was so grieved because of losing Joseph that he lost his eye sight, "While you yourself were never tried with anything like that," the Almighty told him. David said, "Lord! Try me, and grant me as You granted them!" Allāh, therefore, inspired him that he would be tried on such-and-such a month, on such-and-such a day; so, "seek refuge against failing the test with perseverance," the Almighty added.

On the appointed day, David entered his private chamber and kept saying his prayers and reciting the Psalms. While he was doing that, Satan came to him in the form of a golden dove decorated with every beautiful color imaginable. It fell within his reach, so he stretched his hand to it to catch it. According to some narratives, he wanted to give it to one of his young sons. As he stretched his hand to catch it, it flew a short distance away, so he followed it. Then it flew and fell in a hole. He went to catch it, but again it flew away from the hole. David kept watching it to see where it would fall again so that he would send someone to hunt it for him. Meanwhile, he looked and, according to al-Kalbi, he saw a woman bathing in an orchard by the river. Al-Suddi says that he saw her on her house's roof-top. He found her to be the most

beautiful woman his eyes had ever seen, and he admired her beauty. Soon she turned and noticed him, so she spread her hair to cover her entire body, causing him to admire her even more. He inquired about her, and he was told that she was Sabigh (Bathsheba) daughter of Shayea and wife of Uriah son of Hanan, the Hittite. References to her story are in the Old Testament; see 2 Samuel 11; 12; 1 Kings 1; 2; and the New Testament, Matthew 1.6. Her husband was then participating in an invasion of the Balkan areas together with Job son of Soorya, a nephew of David. David wrote his nephew Job, who was commander of the troops, to send Uriah to a particular place and to advance him before the ark of covenant, sacred symbol of the Israelites[1]. Anyone who was presented before it, according to their traditions, was not permitted to retreat till Allāh enabled him to achieve either victory or martyrdom. So he sent him. Victory was on his side, and the nephew wrote David to inform him of the good news. David then sent him another letter ordering him to send Uriah to another campaign wherein the foe was mightier, but this time he was killed. When the waiting period [of grief] for his wife was over, David married her and she came to be the mother of prophet Solomon the wise, peace be upon him.

When David married Uriah's wife, he enjoyed his marriage for a short period of time before Allāh sent him two angels in the form of men. They sought audience with him. They found out that that day was the one he had scheduled, as was his habit, to adore his Maker, so the guards did not permit them to enter. But they were able to climb over his private chamber while he was saying his prayers, and he was frightened by seeing them thus entering without permission. To this does this verse refer: "Has there come to you the story of the litigants when they made an entry into the private chamber by climbing over the walls? When they entered upon David, and he was frightened of them, they said: Fear not; two litigants of whom one has acted wrongfully towards the other;

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[1]This Arc of Covenant was so sacred to the Hebrews that they regarded it as representative of God. Touching it was a desecration punishable by death. Its presence implied victory, so it was always carried into battle by poles thrust through rings on its sides. It was brought by David to Jerusalem and placed at the Temple by Solomon, then it disappeared.

therefore, decide between us with justice, and do not act unjustly, and guide us to the right way. Surely this is my brother; he has ninety-nine ewes and I have a single ewe" (Qur'ān, 38:21-23).

When one of them said that his brother had ninety-nine ewes, David asked the other, "What do you have to say?" He said, "I have ninety-nine ewes and he has one ewe, and I want to take it and complete my ewes to a hundred." He asked him, "Even against his will?" He said, "Yes." David said, "We do not permit you to do that, and if you try to do it, we will whip this and this of you," meaning the tip of his nose and the forehead. So the man said, "O David! You are more deserving than me to be whipped, since you have ninety-nine wives whereas Uriah had only one wife. Why did you expose him to death till he was killed and you married his widow?" David had passed his judgment before listening to the argument of the other opponent. Some scholars say that David then looked around and did not find anyone, so he realized what had befallen him. This is the meaning of the verse saying, "David was sure that We had tried him, so he sought the protection of his Lord, and he fell down bowing and turned time after time (to Him)" (Qur'ān, 38:24).

Zakariyya quotes Anas ibn Malik saying that he heard the Messenger of Allāh saying, "When David looked at that woman, he made a covenant to the Children of Israel and instructed the ruler of al-Balqa (the Balkans) that if the foe was there, he should present so-and-so before the Ark of Covenant. They used the Ark to seek (Divine) assistance, and anyone who was presented before it was not to return till he was either killed or caused the enemy to flee. The woman's husband was killed. Two angels came down to narrate his tale. This is how David realized what he had done, so he prostrated and remained for forty nights prostrating and weeping till vegetation grew from his tears around his head, and the ground eroded his forehead while saying, as he prostrated, `David has slipped a slip further than the east from the west. Lord! If You do not have mercy on David's weakness and forgive his sin, his sin will be the tale of the creation after him.' Gabriel came to him after forty nights and said, `O David! Allāh Almighty has forgiven the distress that has overtaken you, and now you know that Allāh is Just and does not oppress; but about so-and-so,' meaning Uriah, `when he comes on the Day of Judgment and says, `Lord! Where

is my blood which David had spilled?' Why don't you ask your Lord about that? If you wish, I can do that myself.' He said, `Yes, do it.' So Gabriel asked his Lord, and David went back to his prostration and kept prostrating as long as Allāh willed. Then Gabriel descended again and said, `O David! I have asked Allāh about the matter regarding which you had sent me, and Allāh Almighty has said: Tell David that Allāh will gather you both on the Day of Judgment and say to Uriah: Grant what David owes you to Me, and he will agree, then I will say: You may remain in Paradise as long as you wish and you will have in it whatever you want in place of your blood.'"

SUPPLICATION BY PROPHET DAVID

When Prophet David was visited by the two angels and passed a judgment which indicted his own self, the latter went back to their original form and ascended to heaven saying that the man had indicted his own self. David realized that that was a test from the Almighty, so he prostrated and kept prostrating for forty days during which he never lifted his head except for an extreme urgency or to perform the prescribed prayers. He neither ate nor drank but kept crying till grass grew around his head while he was still invoking his Lord and praying Him to accept his repentance. As he prostrated, he kept repeating the following:

> Glory to the Greatest King Who tries the creation however He pleases; Glory to the Creator of light! Glory to the One Who sets a barrier before the hearts; Lord! You permitted my enemy Eblis to have access to me, so I became unaware of his scheme when he caused my foot to slip; Glory to the Creator of Light! To Him does the mother who lost her son cry when she feels the loss, and to Him does David cry because of his sin. Glory to the Creator of light! The garment is washed, and its filth is thus removed, whereas the sin lingers and never goes away from me; Glory to the Creator of light! Lord! I did not receive admonishment from that whereby I myself admonished others; Glory to the Creator of light! Lord! You ordered me to be like a kind father to the orphan, to the widow like a compassionate husband, but I forgot the promise I made to You;

Glory to the Creator of light! Lord! You created me and in the unknown knowledge with You is what my destiny shall be; Glory to the Creator of light! Lord! Woe unto David when the curtains are removed, and it will be said, "This is David the sinner!" Glory to the Creator of light! Lord! How shall I be able to look at You on the Day of Judgment, when the wrong-doers sneak a look? Glory to the Creator of light! Lord! How shall I be able to stand before You on the Day of Judgment when the feet of wrongdoers slip because of their bad account? Glory to the Creator of light! Lord! The stars have gone by, and I used to know them by their names and their presence used to entertain me, but now they have left me while sin has not; Glory to the Creator of light! Lord! The sky has poured its rain, but it did not rain around me, and the ground has produced its vegetation but not around me because of my sin; Glory to the Creator of light! Lord! I am the one who can be frustrated by the heat of Your sun; so, how shall I be able to stand the fire of Your inferno? Glory to the Creator of light! Lord! You used to cover the sinners while You were Witness to them wherever they may be; Glory to the Creator of light! Lord! The heart is weakened and the eyes have frozen for fear of the fire burning my body; Glory to the Creator of light! Lord! The birds sing Your praise, while I am Your weak sinful servant who did not heed Your advice; Glory to the Creator of light! Lord! Woe unto David because of the great sin which has afflicted him while he did not know it; Glory to the Creator of the light! Lord! I am the one who seeks refuge with You, and You are the One Who grants refuge; so, who can the one seeking refuge invoke except the One Who has refuge? Glory to the Creator of light! Lord! I plead to You by the status reserved with You for my forefathers, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac and Jacob, to grant me my plea; Glory to the Creator of light! Lord! By Your mercy, forgive my sins and do not distance me from Your mercy because of my insignificance, for You are the Most Merciful of the merciful ones; Glory to the Creator of light! Lord! I seek refuge with You against a supplication which is not heard, a prayer which is not accepted, a sin which is not forgiven, and a torment which never ends; Glory to the Creator of light! Lord! I seek refuge with You and with the Light of Your Gracious Countenance from my sins which have dragged me into the pit! Glory to the Creator of light! Lord! I have escaped from You to You because of my sins, and I have admitted my sin; so, do not make me among the despondent and do not shame me on the Day they are raised again; Glory to the Creator of light! Lord! My passion has run out; my tears have dried, and the worms have sprung from my knee while

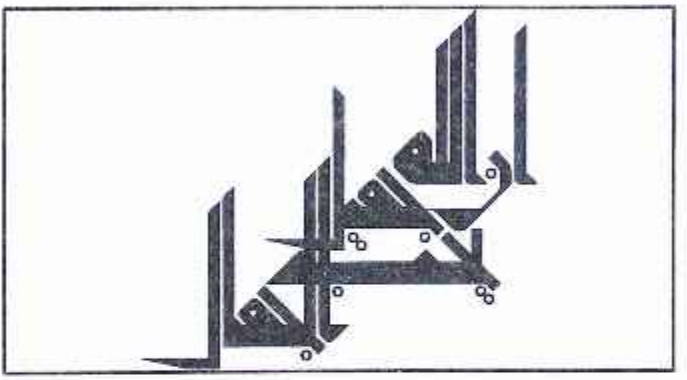
my sin is closer to me than my skin; Glory to the Creator of light!

At that time he heard a call, "Are you hungry so that you will be fed or thirsty so that you will be given water, or oppressed so that you will be redressed?" No reference was made in the call to his sin, so he let out one cry whereby everything around him was stirred in motion, then he cried out, "Lord! The sin I have committed!" He was addressed, "O David! Raise your head, for your Lord has forgiven you." But he did not raise his head, so Gabriel came to him and lifted his head up. Then David heard his Lord's call saying that He had forgiven him, so he said, "Lord! How so while You do not do injustice to anyone?" He said, "Go to Uriah's grave and call upon him, and I shall enable him to hear you, then ask him to forgive you." David went out till he came to Uriah's grave, and he had put on the most coarse of clothes and sat near his grave. Then he called upon him, "O Uriah!" Uriah answered, "Here I am! Who has interrupted my pleasure and woke me up?" David said, "I, David, have!" He said, "What brought you to me, O prophet of Allāh?" He said, "I have come asking for your forgiveness." He said, "What sin have you committed against me?" He answered, "I caused you to be killed." He said, "You exposed me to the reward of Paradise, and you are forgiven." Allāh then inspired David, "Have you not come to know that I am Just and I do not rule except equitably? Why don't you tell him that you married his wife?" So David went back again to Uriah's grave and called upon him, "O Uriah!" He answered, "Who has interrupted my pleasure?" He said, "I, David, have." He said, "O prophet of Allāh! What do you need now? Haven't I forgiven you?" He said, "Yes, but I did not do what I did to you except because of your wife, and I have married her." So Uriah remained silent, and he did not answer him. He called upon him again, and Uriah did not answer him. David stood up and healed the dust over his head and wailed thus,

> Woe and woe unto David! Glory to the Creator of light! Woe unto David, and a prolonged woe unto David! Glory to the Creator of light! Woe unto David and eternal woe unto David when the balances are set up on the Day of Judgment! Glory to the Creator of light! Woe unto David and eternal woe unto David when he will be dragged on his face with the sinners into the fire! Glory to the Creator of light! Woe unto David and eternal woe unto David when

the custodians of Hell bring him and the wrongdoers to the fire! Glory to the Creator of light!

The call from heavens came again, "O David! I have forgiven your sin and I have had mercy on you; I have pitied your prolonged stay and answered your plea and corrected your step." He said, "Lord! How do You forgive me and my fellow did not?" He said, "O David! Whether he forgives you or not, I shall grant him on the Day of Judgment what his eyes never saw nor his ears ever heard, then I shall say to him, `O servant of Mine! Are you now pleased?' He shall say, `Where did all this come from and I did not earn it myself?' I shall then say, `This is a compensation to you for the sake of My servant David,' then I shall ask him to grant your blood to Me, and he will do so." David then said, "Lord! Now I have come to realize that You have forgiven me." This is the meaning of the verse, "and most surely he had a nearness to Us and an excellent resort" (Qur'ān, 38:25).



PROPHET SOLOMON

Allāh has stated the following in the Holy Qur'ān:

> And Solomon was the heir of David. He said: O men! We have been taught the language of birds, and we have been given all things; most surely this is the manifest grace. (27:16)

Prophet Solomon enjoyed a kingdom greater than that of his father David, and he was more efficient in governing it. After his marriage with Queen Balqees al-Himyariyya of Yemen, his kingdom extended from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean, thus becoming the very largest in his contemporary world. You can say he ruled the whole world. His father David was more ascetic than him. When he was granted by Allāh kingdom and wisdom, Solomon was only thirteen years old. Ibn ʿAbbās quotes the Messenger of Allāh saying, "The world in its entirety was ruled by four: two believers and two unbelievers. The believers were Solomon and Thul-Qarnain (Double-Horns, probably Alexander the Great), and the unbelievers were Nemrud (Nimrod) and Nebuchadnezzar (604 - 561 B.C)."

Solomon invoked Allāh saying, "Lord! Do forgive me and grant me a kingdom which is not fit for (inheritance by) anyone after me" (Qur'ān, 38:35). The Almighty has said, "We made the wind subservient to him; it followed his command to run gently wherever he desired" (Qur'ān, 38:36). And He has also said, "And Solomon's hosts of the jinns and men and birds were gathered to him, and they were formed into groups" (Qur'ān, 27:17), at his service, ready to carry out his orders.

How was Solomon more efficient in government than David? Allāh Almighty tells us a story in the Holy Qur'ān which starts with this verse, "David and Solomon gave judgment concerning the field when the people's sheep pastured therein at night, and We were bearers of witness to their judgment" (Qur'ān, 21:78). Sheep raked havoc in it, grazing at night without a shepherd tending them. Two men met David in this regard. One of them was the owner of the sheep, whereas the other was the owner of the pasture, or the field. The latter said, "This man's sheep came at night into my field and did not leave anything in it." David said, "Go, for the sheep are now yours," thus making him the owner of both the field and the sheep.

Both men later on happened to pass by Solomon who asked them how his father had judged between them, and they told him of it, whereupon he sought permission to have audience with his father. His father asked him, "How would you have judged between both men, had you been the judge?" He said, "I would have given the sheep to the owner of the field for one year so that he would take their young, wool, and other benefits, while the owner of the sheep would sow the seeds in the field as though he were its owner. In the next year, when the field goes back to the way it used to be, I would give it back to its rightful owner and take the sheep back from him." David approved of the judgment of his son Solomon.

Allāh Almighty sent prophet David a book containing thirteen thousand questions. Allāh then inspired him to ask his son Solomon about them: if he proved capable of correctly answering them, he should be his successor. David invited seventy priests and tribal chiefs and seated Solomon before them. He then addressed him saying, "O son! Allāh has sent down to me a book wherein there are questions, and He ordered me to ask you about them. If you are able to answer them correctly, you are to be the king after me." He said, "Let the prophet of Allāh ask whatever he pleases." So he put forth before him a number of very complex questions, as complex as puzzles; his son answered all of them correctly. David, therefore, ascended the pulpit, praised the Almighty then said, "The Almighty has ordered me to appoint Solomon as my successor over you." The Children of Israel became angry and said, "How can a young boy be our ruler when there are among us those who are better than him and more knowledgeable?" David invited the chiefs of the tribes from among the Children of Israel a second time and said to them, "What you have said has come to my knowledge; so, let me see your staffs. If any staff becomes a tree and bears fruit, its owner shall be the one in charge after me." They agreed, and they brought their staffs after each one of them had written his name on his, then all the staffs were put in a room and the door was closed and secured with locks. The chiefs of the tribes of Israel guarded the room themselves. In the next morning, he said the congregational prayers with them, then he came and opened the door and took their staffs out, and they were just as they had left them, except Solomon's staff which had shot leaves and produced its fruit. They, therefore, submitted to David. When David saw that, he praised Allāh, conveyed Solomon behind him and went

about the residences of the Children of Israel saying, "This man shall be my successor over you after me."

Wahab ibn Manbah has said, "When David appointed his son Solomon as his successor, he admonished him saying, `O Son! Beware of jesting, for its benefit is little, while it incites enmity even among brothers. Beware of anger, for anger demeans the angry one. Uphold the fear of Allāh and obedience to Him, for they both will conquer everything. Beware of being over-jealous about your wife without a reason, for that will cause the others to be suspicious. Do not covet what people have, for this is wealth in its true meaning. Do not be greedy, for greed is an ever present poverty. Beware of things for which you will have to apologize by word or by deed. Accustom yourself and your tongue to saying the truth, and always be benevolent. If you can make your day better than the day before, then do just that. Say your prayers with tearful eyes, and do not keep company with those who concern themselves with frivolous things. Do not argue with a learned scholar, and do not make any pretense regarding your creed. If you feel angry, go somewhere else, and seek the mercy of Allāh, for it surely encompasses everything."

Solomon and the Ants

Surat al-Naml (Chapter of the Ants, Ch. 27 of the Holy Qur'ān) narrates an interesting encounter between Solomon and an ant at the valley of the ants. Some scholars say it is a valley in Taif, not far from Mecca, whereas others say it is in Syria. The latter possibility seems to be more plausible especially in the light of the fact that Solomon's capital was the ancient city of Jerusalem[1]. Syria (ancient Aram, the

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[1]One of the oldest cities in the world, Jerusalem dates back to about 1400 B.C. Prophet David, Solomon's father, made it his capital after taking it from the Jebusites, tribesmen who used to occupy it before then. In 586 B.C., it fell to the Babylonians, and the Roman emperor Titus razed its buildings in 70 A.D. Its name in Hebrew is Ur-O-Shalom, the city of peace, and in Arabic al-Quds, the sacred city. It is also known in pre-Islamic Arabic literature as Eilyā' and is discussed on pp. 348-349, Vol. 1, of *Mu'jam al-Buldān* by Yaqūt al-Hamawi (Beirut, Lebanon, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1410 A.H./1990 A.D.). According to one view, it is named after Eilyā' son of Iram son of Sam son of Noah, brother of Damascus, Hims, Jordan, and Palestine.

land of those who speak Aramaic, mother tongue of Jesus Christ and the first language wherein the gospels of the Bible were written) used to include today's Syria in addition to Jordan, Lebanon, and Palestine. In the said Chapter, we are told the following:

> And his (Solomon's) hosts of the jinns and men and birds were gathered to him, and they were formed into groups. When they came to the valley of the ants, an ant said, "O ants! Enter your homes lest Solomon and his hosts should crush you while they do not know." So he smiled, wondering at her word, and said, "Lord! Grant me that I should be grateful for Your favour which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents, and that I should do good with which You are pleased, and make me enter, by Your mercy, into (the company of) Your servants, the good ones. (27:17-19)

The name of that ant, the head of her group, was Ṭākhia. She called upon the other ants to protect themselves by seeking shelter inside their holes. Wind carried what everyone said to Solomon's ears. Solomon heard the ant's statement from the distance of three miles, so he alighted and ordered Ṭākhia brought to him, and she was. He asked her, "Why did you warn the ants? Have you not come to know that I am a fair prophet of Allāh? Why were you afraid lest I and my hosts should smash you all?" Ṭākhia said, "O prophet of Allāh! I did not mean the smashing of the bodies but the smashing of the hearts! I feared lest we should desire what you have been granted and become dazzled and thus be distracted from praising the Almighty!" Having heard her terse statement, He said to her, "Admonish me." Ṭākhia asked Solomon, "Are you greater than your father David or was he?" Solomon said, "My father David (was greater)." She said, "If so, then why is the number of letters in your name greater than those in the name of your father David?" Solomon said, "I do not know why." The ant said, "Your father had treated his wound with *wudd*, compassion, so he was called Dawūd, and I wish you, O Solomon, will join the company of your father." Then she asked him, "Do you know why has the wind been made subservient to you in particular from all other regions of the kingdom?" Solomon said, "I have no knowledge of that." The ant said, "The Almighty and the Exalted One has meant to say this to you: `Had I put all the kingdom under your control just as I have done with this wind, it will have slipped from your hands just as wind slips away.'" It was then that he smiled from her

statement. Ibn ʿAbbās is quoted saying that the Messenger of Allāh was ordered by the Almighty not to kill four types of beings: the hoopoes, the surrad birds, the bees, and the ants.

The following is narrated in a book titled *Daʿawāt al-Rawandi*:

Solomon was sitting by the sea shore once when he saw an ant carrying a grain which it took to the sea. Solomon kept watching her till she reached the water. It was then that a frog took its head out of the water then opened its mouth. The ant entered inside its mouth and the frog dived into the sea. After a long time, Solomon kept thinking about what he had witnessed. Then the frog came out of the water, opened its mouth, and the ant came out of it, and the grain was not in her mouth. Solomon called upon her and asked her what she was doing and where she had been. She said, "O prophet of Allāh! There is in the bottom of the sea before your eyes a hallow rock, and inside it there is a blind worm. Allāh, the most Exalted One, created it there, and it cannot get out of it to seek its sustenance, and Allāh assigned to me the task of carrying its food to it; so, I carry it so it may be sustain thereby. And Allāh assigned to this frog the task of carrying me, and the water does not harm me, being inside its mouth. The frog then places its mouth on the rock and I get out of it." Solomon asked her, "Did you ever hear that worm celebrating the praises of Allāh?" "Yes," the ant said, adding, "it said the following: `O One Who does not forget me, though I am in the depth of this rock, in the depth of this water, I plead to You by Your own sustenance of me not to forget Your believing servants, and to include them in Your mercy.'"[1]

Solomon's Ring

According to Imām Jaʿfer al-Sādiq, Allāh had placed Solomon's power and authority in his ring. Whenever he put it on, the jinns, the humans, the demons, the birds, and all animals would be under his power and would obey him. He would then sit on his throne and Allāh would send the wind to carry the throne and his train of demons, birds, humans, animals, horses, etc., and would go wherever Solomon wanted to. This is the meaning of verses 12 and 13 of Surat Saba' (Ch. 34) and also 21:81-82. Solomon would say his morning

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[1]al-Majlisi, *Bihār al-Anwār*, Vol. 14, p. 97-98, quoting *Daʿawāt al-Rāwandi*, a manuscript.

prayers in Syria and his noon prayers in Persia. He used to order the devils to carry building stones from Persia and sell them for him in Syria. But when he slashed the horses' necks and legs, as we are told in 38:33, Allāh deprived him of his domain. How did that happen? Here is one view, and there are many others:

Solomon was very fond of horses. He used to like them and enjoyed seeing them paraded before him from time to time. It is said that he had inherited a thousand of horses from his father. One day, the parading took too long; it lasted till sunset, causing him to forget about saying his afternoon prayers. He was very sad about that, so he supplicated to Allāh to bring the sun back so that he could say his afternoon prayers. The Almighty brought the sun back, so Solomon performed his prayers. Then he ordered the horses to be brought back to him again. He now took a sword and kept slashing their necks and legs till he killed all of them. This is the meaning of the verse saying, "Bring them back to me (said Solomon), so he kept slashing their legs and their necks" (Qur'ān, 38:33).

Whenever he went to the toilet, Solomon would give his ring to one of his servants. It so happened once, as we are told by al-Rāzi, that Solomon heard about a city on an island. He invaded it and killed its king who had a very beautiful daughter named Jarada. Solomon took her captive, and she accepted Islam; therefore, he loved her very much and married her. But she was very much grieved about her father whom she missed very much, so Solomon ordered one Satan to carve an image of her father for her, which he did. Jarada used to go to that image every morning and evening accompanied by her maids, and they would all prostrate before it. Āsif ibn Barkhia, his scribe, informed him of what was going on, so Solomon reduced that image to pieces and penalized his wife for thus worshipping it. He also blamed himself for being the cause of it in the first place and went out to the open fields feeling very forlorn and regretful. He poured ashes on his head, sat and wept over his sin, praying Allāh to accept his repentance.

Solomon had another wife named Ameena. Whenever he went to the toilet, or to visit one of his women, he entrusted her with his ring. One day, he left it with her when a sea Satan saw it. The latter assumed Solomon's form, came to Ameena and ordered her to return his ring to him. He put it on, and soon the devils, the jinns, the humans, the birds, and all animals put themselves under his

command. When Solomon went out and sought the ring, he did not find it. He, therefore, fled out and passed by the sea shore. The Children of Israel were disgusted to see how Satan assumed the form of Solomon. They first went to his mother and asked her, "Have you noticed anything about Solomon's conduct which you found to be reprehensible?" She said, "He used to be the most kind of all people towards you, and now he openly disobeys me." They went to his wives and concubines and asked them the same question. They said, "He never approached us during our menstruation, and now does so." When that Satan was afraid they would discover him, he threw the ring in the sea. Allāh sent a fish that swallowed it, and that particular Satan fled away. The Children of Israel kept looking for Solomon for forty days. This is how long Solomon's wife kept worshipping her father's image, her idol. Solomon, meanwhile, spent his time wandering by, begging people to feed him. If he happened to tell them that he was Solomon, they would throw dirt at him, insult him, and ridicule him. He felt very regretful and repented to Allāh on account of what he had done. After those forty days were over, he passed by a fisherman fishing and he asked him saying, "Shall I help you provided you give me some of your catch?" The fisherman agreed, so Solomon helped him catch some fish. The fisherman, therefore, gave Solomon a fish. Solomon took it, cut it open and went to wash it. He found the ring inside it, so he put it on. It was then that all the devils, jinns, humans, birds, and animals went back to their previous obedience to him. He sought that particular Satan who had done what he had done as well as his hosts who had assisted him. He took them all, had them tied, then confined some of them in the bottom of the sea and some in the depth of the stones, invoking on them Allāh's Attributes (*asmā Allāh al-husna*). They are, ever since, jailed there, and they shall remain confined till the Day of Judgment.[1]

Prophet Solomon had finished the reconstruction of the Jerusalem temple which was originally built by his father David and most of which was demolished after the demise of Solomon by the Babylonian king Bukhtnuzzar who looted everything of value in it. Having finished reconstructing it in 975 B.C., Solomon said, "Lord! You have granted me this kingdom out of Your favour upon me, and You have made me Your vicegerent on Your earth and blessed me thereby

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[1]al-Majlisi, *Bihār al-Anwar*, Vol. 14, pp. 99-100.

even before I was anything at all; so, all Praise is due to You. Lord! I plead to You to grant whoever enters this place of worship: that none enters it and offers even two prostrations in sincerity should come out of his sins just as his mother had first given birth to him, and nobody enters it and he is a sinner except that You accept his repentance, nor anyone enters it in fear except that You grant him security, nor anyone enters it and he is sick except that You heal him, nor anyone enters it who is impotent except that You make him fertile and You grant him wealth."

Solomon is the one who disseminated the unitarian creed and the worship of Allāh in the kingdom of Saba' (Sheba).

I wish I had enough space in this book to narrate to the reader the very interesting story of how Solomon came to marry the Queen of Sheba Balqees daughter of al-Sharḥ who belonged to the Arab tribe of Ḥimyar, Yemen, but I have no choice except to stop here in order to conserve space and paper and cut on expense. Suffices to provide the reader with a glimpse of this woman whose kingdom in southern Arabia rivalled that of Solomon in Syria and the Mediterranean. The commanders of her army troops numbered twelve thousand, each commanding one hundred thousand soldiers. The remnants of the temples she had built for the sun and the moon gods can still be seen and are a source of immeasurable interest to archaeologists and anthropologists, and very little has been published about such temples or about their builder. But I have to stop here feeling sad and wishing that there had been Muslim philanthropists who could finance the publication of a book as interesting as this one and twice or thrice as "big." The best Islamic literature is still in Arabic awaiting those who dig up its treasures then translate them into other languages, especially European languages...

LUQMAN THE WISE

The story of Luqman is that of a very wise man. Allāh Almighty has said, "Certainly We granted Luqman wisdom " (Qur'ān, 31:12). Such wisdom is evident when we read the following beautiful verses from the Holy Qur'ān wherein the Almighty quotes Luqman admonishing his son:

> Luqman said to his son while admonishing him: O son! Do not associate aught with Allāh; most surely polytheism is a grievous iniquity. And We have enjoined man regarding his parents–his mother bears him with weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years–saying: Be grateful to Me and to both your parents; to Me is the eventual return. And if they contend with you that you should associate with Me that of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them, and keep company with them in this world kindly, and follow the way of one who turns to Me, then to Me is your return, then will I inform you of what you did. O son! Surely if it is the very weight of the grain of a mustard-seed, even though it is in (the heart of) a rock, or (high above) in the heavens, or (deep down) in the earth, Allāh will bring it (to light); surely Allāh is Knower of subtleties, the Aware. O son! Keep up prayers and enjoin goodness and forbid evil, and bear patiently that which befalls you; surely these acts require courage. And do not turn your face away from people in contempt, nor go about in the land exultingly; surely Allāh does not love any self-conceited boastful. And pursue the right course in your going about, and lower your voice; surely the most hateful of voices is the braying of the asses. (31:13-19)

His name is Luqman son of Baʿoor son of Nahoor son of Tārih. The latter was father of Abraham, peace be upon him. Mujāhid has said that Luqman was a black man with huge lips and cuts on his face. He was from the Nubia[1] of Egypt, a black man with very thick

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[1]Nubia is an ancient region in northeastern Africa extending from the Nile Valley eastward to the Red Sea, southward to the Sudanese capital Khartoum, and westward to the Libyan Desert. Under the pharaohs of ancient Egypt, it was called Cush (or Kush).

lips. He is mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān by name twice, and Chapter 31 of the Holy Qur'ān, from which the quotation above is excerpted, bears his name.

Some scholars concede that he was a wise man, not a prophet, with the exception of 'Ikrimah who used to say that Luqman was a prophet. 'Ikrimah was the only one who said so. Abu Manṣoor al-Khamshawi, through a chain of narrators, has informed us that Luqman was a prophet, while other scholars have said that Luqman was given the choice between Prophethood and wisdom and that he chose wisdom.

Imām Abu Abdullāh Ja'fer al-Ṣādiq was asked once about Luqman and his wisdom mentioned by Allāh in His Book, the Holy Qur'ān. The Imām said,

> By Allāh! Luqman was not granted wisdom on account of his descent, wealth, offspring, physical prowess, or beauty. Rather, he was a man whose belief in Allāh was very strong. He was pious, quiet, silent most of the time, far-sighted, meditative, sharp in insight, wealthy with morals. He never slept during the day, nor did anyone ever see him using the toilet or even bathing due to his being extremely bashful, to his deep thinking and reservations. He never laughed at anything at all for fear of sinning, nor was he ever seen angry. He never joked with anyone. He never expressed his delight at something of this life's wares which he earned, nor did he ever grieve about anything. He married a number of women and had a number of children, but many of his children died before coming of age, yet he never wept over the death of any of them. He hardly passed by two men contending or fighting without reconciling between them, and he never left them before resolving their dispute or coming to peaceful terms. Whenever he heard someone saying something which he appreciated, he asked for its explanation and who he had learned it from. He quite often attended the meetings of *faqihs* and men of wisdom. He often visited judges, kings, and sultans, so he would pity the judges because of their trials and seek Allāh's mercy for the kings and sultans because of being deceived about Allāh and because of their taking Him for granted. He derived wisdom and taught himself that which would help him overcome his own inclinations and struggle against his own desires and seek refuge through it from Satan. He used to heal his heart with meditation and console himself with moral lessons. He never travelled to a place except for a cause that concerned him. This is

how he was granted wisdom and protection against sinning. Allāh, Blessed and Exalted is He, ordered certain groups from among the angels at midday, when most people slept[1], to go and address Luqman. He could hear but not see them. They said to him, "O Luqman! Would you like Allāh to make you a vicegerent on earth so you may judge between people with justice?" He answered, "If Allāh permits me to make a choice, I prefer good health over the affliction (of government); but if He has already decreed the matter, then I shall listen and obey, for I know that if this is His will, He will surely help me and protect me." The angels asked him why so. He said, "It is so because the ruler is in the most precarious and agonizing of all situations: pressure overwhelms him from everywhere if he is right; so I hope he can save himself. But if he is wrong, he will miss the path to Paradise. Anyone in this life is better off humiliated rather than being in a position to humiliate others. Whoever prefers the life of this world over the life to come will be rejected by life itself, and only the hereafter is the one that remains forever." The angels admired his eloquence, so he slept and was granted wisdom as he slept, making him the wisest man of his time. When he woke up, his speech was indicative of wisdom. Later on, David (prophet Dawūd) was addressed likewise, and he accepted what Luqman had rejected. Luqman used to assist him with his wisdom, so David used to say to him, "Congratulations, O Luqman! You have been granted wisdom and affliction was turned away from you!" David was granted authority, so he was tested with many trials and tribulations.[2]

The Messenger of Allāh is quoted as having said, "The truth is what I say; Luqman was not a prophet; rather, he was a servant of Allāh, and Allāh Almighty protected him against sinning. He used to meditate a great deal. His belief was very good, so Allāh loved him and bestowed the favour of wisdom upon him."

Ibn Fathawayh, through a chain of narrators, quotes Khālid al-Rabīʿ saying, "Luqman was a black Ethiopian slave who worked as a carpenter. Once his master told him to slaughter a she-camel, which he did. Then he told him to bring him two of its choicest parts. He

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[1]It is a custom in hot climate countries to take a midday nap to ward off the heat. Luqman was born and grew up in a hot country.

[2]al-Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 13, pp. 409-411.

brought him the tongue and the heart. He asked him, `Is there really anything in it more tasty than these pieces?' `No,' Luqman answered, so his master remained silent. Then he told him to slaughter another she-camel. This time he asked him to bring him the very worst parts of it, whereupon Luqman brought him the tongue and the heart. He, therefore, said to him, `I ordered you to bring me the two most tasty parts of it and you brought me the tongue and the heart, then I ordered you to bring me the very worst two pieces of it and you still brought me the tongue and the heart...!' Luqman said, `There is nothing more tasty than them if they are good, and nothing is worse than them when they are bad.'"

Abdullāh ibn Ḥāmid, through a chain of narrators, informs us that Muḥammed ibn ʿAjlān has said that Luqman the wise had said, "No wealth is better than good health, and no bliss is like good-heartedness."

A man passed by Luqman and saw how people were surrounding him. He asked him, "Are you the black slave who used to tend the sheep in such-and-such a place?" Luqman said, "Yes." He asked him again, "Then what caused you to be in this status [of prominence]?" He answered, "Speaking the truth, giving the trust back to its rightful owners, and staying away from anything which does not concern me."

Al-Ḥusain ibn Muḥammed quotes his father saying that Luqman has said, "The beating by the father [as a disciplinary act] of his son is like water for the plants." Abdullāh ibn Dīnār is quoted saying that Luqman once came back from one of his trips and was met by a boy on the highway, so he asked him, "What has my father done?" He answered, "He has died." Luqman said, "Praise be to Allāh! Now I am in charge of my own affairs." Then he asked him, "What has my wife done?" He answered, "She has died, too." He said, "Now my bed has been changed." "What has my sister done?" asked he. "She has also died." Luqman said, "My honour has been safeguarded; what has my brother done?" "He, too, has died," came the answer. To this, he answered saying, "Now truly my spine has been split..."

Al-Ḥusain ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammed, who quotes a chain of narrators ending with Shaqeeq, has said that Luqman was asked once, "Who is the most evil of all people?" He answered, "The one who is indifferent when seen erring." Someone once said to Luqman, "How ugly your face is!" He asked that person in turn, "Are you finding fault with the inscription or with the Inscriber?"

Imām Jaʿfer al-Ṣādiq has informed Ḥammād ibn ʿĪsa al-Juhni[1], one of his faithful disciples, that Luqman had said the following to his son Natan:

> O son! Ever since you came to this world, you left the life of this world behind you, turning your face in the direction of the life hereafter; so, an abode to which you are going is nearer to you than one from which you are departing. O son! The life of this world is like a deep sea in which many people have indeed drowned. Let your boat be the fear of Allāh, your ration the belief in Allāh, and its mast the reliance upon Allāh, for then you may be secured. So if you reach the haven of safety and security, it is only because of Allāh's mercy on you, but if you perish, it will be due to your own sins. O son! How can people not dread their decree while their lives are shortened every day? O son! Choose from this world its wisdom, and do not indulge in its affairs too much else you should harm your hereafter, nor should you reject it else you should become a burden on others. Fast in a way that would sever its desire, and do not fast in a way that would render your prayers void, for the prayers are greater in the sight of Allāh than the fast. O son! Do not seek knowledge just to boast of it before others, nor make a pretense of it before the fools, nor seek eminence at gatherings. And do not abandon knowledge out of underestimating its value or desiring ignorance. O son! Choose the assemblies through discerning them carefully; so, if you see people mentioning the Name of Allāh, seek their company, for if you then learn something from them, your knowledge will benefit you, and they will thus increase your share of knowledge. If you are worthy of achieving

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[1]His full name is Ḥammād ibn ʿĪsa ibn al-Ṭufayl, Abu Muḥammed, of Kufa, then of Barṣra. He was more than ninety years old when he died in 208 or 209 A.H. (824 or 825 A.D.) by drowning at Juḥfa in a valley called WadĪ Qanāt which flows from al-Shajara to Medina as he was on his way to perform the pilgrimage. He learned two hundred traditions from Imām Jaʿfer al-Ṣādiq, and he was contemporary also of Imāms al-Kāẓim, al-Riḍa, and al-Jawād, peace be upon them. He wrote about *zakat*, prayers, and a book containing maxims and morals. He is one of a very small number of Shīʿa reporters of *ḥadīth* accepted unequivocally by both Sunnis and Shīʿas alike. For more information about this great man, refer to pp. 221-223, Vol. 6, of *Aʿyān al-Shīʿah* by the renown Imām al-Sayyid Muḥsin al-Amīn (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Taʿāruf lil Maṭbūʿāt, 1406 A.H./1986 A.D.).

knowledge, they will not hesitate to teach you, and Allāh may look at them mercifully, so His mercy may then include you, too. If you see people not mentioning the Name of Allāh, do not seek their company, for if you learn from them, your knowledge will not avail you in the least, and if you do not know, they will only increase your ignorance, for Allāh may look at them angrily, and His Wrath may include you, too. O son! Do not do a favour except to someone who is worthy of it, for just as there is no truce between the lamb and the fox, there can be no friendship between the virtuous and the sinners. Whoever relishes to be praised in public will be taunted; whoever drags his feet to the avenues of mischief will be accused thereof; whoever seeks the company of the wicked will never be safe, and whoever has no control over his tongue will always regret. O son! Opt to be a slave of the righteous rather than a friend of the wicked. O son! Be trustworthy, so you will be wealthy, and do not give people the impression that you fear Allāh while in your heart you are a sinner. O son! Seek the assemblies of the scholars and crawl to them on your knees; do not argue with them else they should deprive you of speaking to you; be nice to them when you ask them else they should ignore you; and do not embarrass them else they should be bored of you. O son! Do not run away from a matter, nor should you be reluctant to face it, for that will cause you to be weak in thinking, feeble of mind. O son! If you are disciplined when young, you will benefit when old. O son! Do not enjoin people to do good deeds while forgetting it yourself else your similitude should be like a lamp that lights for people while burning its own self. O son! Do not underestimate small matters, for the small shall tomorrow become big. O son! Beware of telling lies, for telling lies will corrupt your creed and make people despise you. You will then lose your modesty, glory, and dignity; you will be subjected to insults, and nobody will care the least about what you say. There is nothing good in living like that. O son! Beware of bad manners, bickering, and impatience, for then nobody can befriend you, and everyone will avoid you. Train yourself to be gentle in all what you do, patient no matter what, and treat everyone with a good conduct, for whoever improves his conduct and smiles to others will be preferred by the good ones, loved by the righteous, and shunned by the bad ones. O son! Do not bury your mind with distress, and do not let grief occupy your heart. Beware of greed and be satisfied with your destiny and with what Allāh has allotted for you; your life will then be worry free; you will be pleased with your own self, and you will find life enjoyable! If you want all the riches of the world to be yours, do not ever covet what others have, for the prophets

and the righteous did not reach their status except after cleansing themselves of coveting what others had. O son! The wares of the life of this world are but few, and your life-span in it is short, and what remains thereof is a little of very little indeed! O son! Do favours to those who appreciate them, and do not do them for those who do not, else you should lose them in the life of this world and be deprived of their rewards in the life to come. Be frugal and do not be extravagant. Do not hold wealth as though you do not want to part with it, nor should you give it away extravagantly. O son! Uphold wisdom so that you may be dignified thereby, and esteem it so that you, too, will be held in high esteem. The best of wise manners is the religion of Allāh, the most Exalted One, the Great. O son! There are three marks of the spiteful one: he backbites his friend in his absence, flatters him in his presence, and is pleased when trouble afflicts him![1]

There is a great deal of literature available on Luqman and the pearls of his wisdom collected by the great mentor *ᶜallama* Muḥammed Bāqir al-Majlisi and incorporated in Vol. 13 of his 111-volume encyclopedia titled *Biḥār al-Anwār al-Jāmiᶜa li Durar Akhbār al-A'immah al-Athār* to which we refer the reader who seeks precious knowledge and rich wisdom. Truly Allāh has said the truth when He said, "And whoever is granted wisdom, he indeed is granted a great deal of good" (Qur'ān, 2:269). May Allāh *Taᶜāla* bestow wisdom upon all of us, *Allāhomma Āmeen.*



[1]al-Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 13, pp. 411-412.

MARY AND JESUS

Before we go into detail discussing Jesus Christ, peace be upon him and his virtuous virgin mother, let us highlight the major differences between Christianity and Islam in as far as Jesus Christ and his mother are concerned. In the next chapter, these differences will be itemized and briefly discussed.

The Church has taught that Jesus is the Messiah whom the Jews were expecting but whom they rejected, accusing him of being born of fornication: "You dishonour me. Yet I do not seek my own glory; there is One who seeks it and He will be the judge" (John 8:49-50). In 4:155-156, the Holy Qur'ān condemns and curses all those who blasphemed the honour of Mary. Islam accepts Jesus son of Mary as the *Masīh*, advocating the prophecy of Christ and recognizing his virgin birth as one of his miracles, even calling him the "Word of Allāh." It defends his mission and reproaches all those who rejected it, endorsing the original Bible[1] as a revelation from the Almighty to him. Islam does not preach that Jesus was crucified or killed but did ascend to heaven.[2] Many Christians regard Jesus as a deity and worship him as a god, addressing him as "Lord," a title fit only for the Almighty God. But they differ a great deal among themselves with regard to his deification, yet they all certainly regard him as much more than a human being. They call him "the son of God, part of the Trinity." The Unitarian Church[3] stresses the Unity of God (what

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[1]"Bible" is a Greek word meaning "books." The original Bible, which was written in Aramaic, mother tongue of Jesus Christ, was lost. John, Mark, Matthew and Luke rewrote it from memory, putting a great deal of their own personal views in it, thus altering the original pristine message brought by Jesus.

[2]Jesus is not the only one who is believed to be alive and living in heaven. Enoch (Idrīs) is also believed to be alive. Both al-Khidr and Imām al-Mehdi, peace be upon both of them, are believed to be alive and living on earth.

[3]Beliefs of the Unitarian Church are referred to as Unitarianism. This branch of Christianity began in Reformation under leaders such as Michael

(continued...)

Muslims call *Tawhīd*), and the fact that Jesus was a human being. For this reason, it is not considered "Christian" and is not a member of the Federal Council of Churches, nor is it a member of any church federation. Islam repudiates in the strongest of terms the divinity or deity of Jesus Christ and the concept of the Trinity. The Christian doctrine preaches that Jesus died voluntarily, nailed to the cross, in order to atone for mankind's sins. Jesus is believed as having offered himself as an atoning sacrifice in order that mankind might earn salvation. Islam unequivocally rejects the notion that sins can be transferred from some to others by any means, holding each and every individual accountable for his or her actions. The Almighty, Islam teaches, forgives the sinners who repent and make amends. Repentance, then, in addition to prayers, fast, and charity can atone for one's sins. God does not overburden any of us; He fully knows our weaknesses and limitations. Christianity considers Jesus as a mediator between man and God. Christians pray "in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ," appealing to God through him. Islam recognizes no mediator between man and God: everyone can be in direct contact with God and actually does so when he performs his prayers. Intercession, however, is permitted by the Almighty Who grants it to individuals whom He chooses and who will intercede, with His permission, on behalf of their friends. As a matter of fact, the Almighty's mercy will reach on the Day of Judgment the ultimate limit when God permits ordinary people with whom He is pleased or whom He forgives to intercede on behalf of others. Such is His

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[3](...continued)
Servetus (1511 - 1553 A.D.), a Spanish theologian and physician who is known in Spanish as Miguel Serveto, and Fausto Sozzini (1539 - 1604), nephew of Laelius Socinus (or Lelio Sozini), an Italian religious reformer. Both men organized this anti-Trinitarianism movement because of which they were subjected to a great deal of persecution by other Christians. In order to escape the merciless Catholic court of Inquisition, Servetus had to flee to Lyons where he edited Ptolemy's geography works, and to Paris, where he studied medicine. He was jailed by orders of the Inquisition but escaped and made for Italy where he was seized on orders issued by John Calvin, tried then burnt alive at the stake. The religious belief of this Church (or Christian sect) is based on the concept that God is one person, thus contrasting that of the one in three persons, or Trinitarianism.

mercy... There are many other Christian beliefs and practices which we cannot discuss here due to the limitation of space and which include the belief in the reincarnation, the cremation of the dead, a tradition which the Christians have learned from Hindus and Buddhists, the singing and dancing at their churches, the choir (an adaptation from the pagan chorus), the appointment of women as top church "officials," the endorsement of homosexuality and the appointment of gay and lesbian "ordained" ministers...

The Major Differences Between Islam and Christianity

Following are ten points marking the major differences between Islam and Christianity[1]:

1. Today's Christianity preaches belief in the Triune God; Islam, contrariwise, stresses the Unity of God, *Tawhīd*. Muslims everywhere declare: *Lā ilāha illa Allāh!* (There is no god except Allāh). Not to accept *Tawhīd* implies *shirk*, apostasy.

2. Christians preach that Jesus is "the only begotten son of God." Islam preaches that Jesus was a human being who received Divine inspiration and was thus empowered to perform all the miracles which he, by permission of his Creator and Maker, was able to perform. He was a prophet and a great teacher of mankind, a man of God.

3. Christians claim that Eve was the first to be deceived by Eblis in the garden of Eden, that she was responsible for tempting Adam into eating the forbidden fruit. They, therefore, place the curse of God on woman, calling her "the organ of the Devil, "The foundations of the arms of the Devil whose voice is the hissing of the serpent," "the gate of the Devil," "the road of iniquity," "the sting of the scorpion," "a daughter of falsehood, a sentinel of hell, the enemy of peace and of the wild beasts the most dangerous...,"

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[1]Here, I have to some extent utilized Fazlul-Rahman Ansari's book *Islam and Christianity in the Modern World* (The World Federation of Islamic Missions, Karachi, Pakistan, 1965 [1384 A.H.]), but most of this text is mine. This is one of the best books written by Muslims on this subject. May Allāh reward Ansari with the best of His rewards, *Allāhomma Āmīn*.

etc. These are the words of renown Christian Saints: St. Bernard, St. Anthony, St. Bonaventure, St. Cyprian, St. Jerome, St. John Damascene, and others. In Islam, Adam and Eve both were simultaneously deceived. Women, therefore, enjoy equal status with men in as far as their rights and obligations are concerned. The Almighty does not distinguish between His servants based on their sex. Christians, however, accuse Muslims of pushing women back into their *harems* and discouraging them from educating themselves and competing with men in all fields and professions. This is one of their numerous false charges which are all based on ignorance of the religion of Islam and a genuine feeling of prejudice if not sheer malice and spitefulness. Christians have been encouraging their women to bare themselves so that they would look at them, fornicate with them and beget millions of illegitimate children who are either killed by abortion or who grow up not knowing who their parents are. At the same time, they do not pay women the same wages they pay men, and they discriminate against them in all fields and professions. In fact, they enslave women.

4. The sin of Adam and Eve was not forgiven; therefore, every child is born in sin. Such is the belief held by Christians. In Islam, Adam and Eve regretted, repented, and were given the chance to be forgiven even while they were here on earth. Every child is born sinless and capable of achieving the ultimate limit of human perfection. Parents often corrupt their children, causing them to deviate from the right creed, victimizing them, thus adding their children's sins to those of their own. Sin is acquired by one's intentional desire to ignore God's laws, to surrender to temptation, and to acquire by vile means what rightfully belongs to others. Sins are committed by one's misdeeds and miscalculations; nobody inherits sin.

5. Jesus' mission was "to redeem humanity's sins through his own blood," Christians claim. In Islam, his mission was: to teach mankind the right way of leading an upright life. He was not sent to atone for humanity's alleged sin. He is regarded as one of the greatest prophets of God, and the original Bible revealed to him was surely the Word of God. He was born to Virgin Mary who is

described in Islam as one of the four most perfect of all women of mankind in each and every aspect of human perfection.

6. Christianity claims that man can attain salvation only by believing in Jesus as the only begotten son of God, and that Jesus had given his blood to wash the sins of mankind. In Islam, the essential condition for attaining salvation is to combine righteous deeds with a sound belief. Mere passive belief is meaningless. The Islamic system, which comprehends all problems of mankind and provides solutions for them, must be followed in its entirety.

7. Christians say that we cannot approach God without the mediation of a priest. In Islam, everyone, man or woman, is his or her own priest or priestess and can approach God without the mediation of anyone. God is near to everyone and the gates of His mercy are always wide open to receive those who repent and are willing to make amends. Islam strongly stresses the significance of one's dignity and self-respect. One who admits his sins to someone else will in all reality be humiliating himself before another human being. He should do so before his Maker, and only before his Maker, each and every hour of his life. Muslims seek Allāh's forgiveness every day before, during, and after their five daily prayers. Humility before God is what Islam condones, not self-humiliation before another human being, even if such a human wears a collar and is a man of the Church.

8. Ascetic life according to Christianity is a saintly one; Jesus and the saints are models in this regard, and celibacy is preferable over marriage for the attainment of spiritual eminence. Not so in Islam. Asceticism is unnatural; it clashes with our human nature and deprives us of enjoying the lawful pleasures of this life–including and especially sexual pleasures–so that we may thank the Almighty Who provides us with them. Life is to be enjoyed; it is the greatest gift of the Almighty to the living. Take His gifts and thank Him for them; do not deprive yourself of what is lawful. "I have not enjoyed of your world," says Prophet Muhammed, "except three: prayers, perfumes, and women!" Prayers bring one closer to his Maker, provide him with comfort against his worries, and pave the way for his salvation. They also

are healthy daily physical exercises. Perfume, for both men and women, is very highly commended in Islam; one who wears it and thus smells good will not be shunned by others; rather, he or she will be loved, cherished and respected not only by other people, but also by the angels and by God Himself; He surely loves those who are clean physically and spiritually. Sex is one of the blessings of the Almighty on His servants as long as it is lawful and is not followed by remorse. No pleasure is pleasing if it is followed by remorse or, worse, by AIDS...! Whenever you cohabit with your wife, the Prophet teaches us, you earn a blessing, a good deed... Such is the beauty of Islam.

9. Christianity preaches the separation of the religion from the State, from politics. Islam, contrariwise, provides a socio-political system wherein politics are mixed with religion just as water is mixed with milk; they are inseparable. Today's "Muslim" governments are mostly hypocritical because they are not trying to please Allāh but to please the enemies of Allāh: Western politicians who are Christian only by name and who wish to suck the blood of the Muslims dry, buying their natural resources, especially oil, for very cheap prices while refusing to sell them their technology[1], selling them their manufactured goods at very high prices. The mosque used to be the place where people's problems were solved and criminals punished, the place where people get their marriage blessed. It is the place where they learn their creed. Nowadays, in many Muslim countries, there are more "security" and "intelligence" agents frequenting mosques than there are

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[1]Westerners seldom acknowledge Muslims' contributions to science and technology. During my stay in the U.S., which has so far lasted about quarter of a century, I noticed that the best minds in the U.S. are not Americans, and that the latter do not work as hard as foreigners; they feel they do not have to. Why should they, especially since there are many, including heads of Arab and Muslim States, who are ready to be their obedient servants and faithful lackeys?! These servants and lackeys are the ones who facilitate for the enemies of Islam to spy on or even to attack other Muslim countries, thus becoming their accomplices and disclosing to the world and to history their ugly hypocrisy. May the Almighty condemn them and rid the world of them.

worshippers! Pro-Western hypocritical rulers of the Muslim world fear nothing more than Islam even as they lie and claim to be its adherents and defenders. This is so because they are constantly pressured by "Christian" Western politicians to keep people away from Islam, to encourage the opening of more bars and night clubs and the closing of more mosques and religious centers.

10. According to the admission of many Biblical scholars, the Bible contains "irrational beliefs, crude science and indecent tales."[1] Today's Bible is far from being the revelation that descended upon Jesus. It was not put together during the life of Jesus Christ, so it cannot be regarded as representative of the message of Christ. The Holy Qur'ān, on the other hand, was written down during 23 years under the direct supervision of Prophet Muḥammed, and not a single syllable in it has been changed. It is divinely protected against any alteration, addition, or deletion. Moreover, it essentially is rational, scientific, and modern in its spirit and shall always remain so. No other sacred scripture can ever be described as such, ever...

These are the basic differences between Islam and Christianity presented to the reader in brief. Now let us research the life of Jesus and his saintly mother, starting from the latter, then learn something about the Bible, its authors and message.

Maryam (Mary) Daughter of ʿImrān (Amram)

Allāh Almighty has said the following in the Holy Qur'ān,

> Surely Allāh favored Adam and Noah and the descendants of Abraham and the descendants of ʿImrān over the nations: offspring, one from the other, and Allāh is Hearing, Knowing. ʿImrān's woman said: Lord! Surely I vow to dedicate to You what is in my womb, to be devoted (to Your service); accept, therefore, from me; surely You are the Hearing, the Knowing. So when she gave birth to her, she said: Lord! Surely I have given birth to a female–and Allāh knew best what she had given birth to–and the male is not like the female; I have named her Maryam, and I commend her and her

[1]This is the statement of Canon Barnes.

offspring into Your protection from Satan the accursed. So her Lord accepted her with a good acceptance and made her grow up a good growth and gave her into the charge of Zakariyya (Zacharias). Whenever Zakariyya entered the sanctuary (to see her), he found with her food. He said: O Maryam! Whence comes this to you? She said: It is from Allāh. Surely Allāh bestows His grants unto whomsoever He pleases without measure. (3:33-37)

Scholars have said that Mary's mother was Hanna daughter of Faqooth, grandmother of Jesus Christ, peace be upon him. As regarding ʿImrān, Ibn ʿAbbās has said that his name is ʿImrān (Amram) son of Mathan. There is no kinship between him and ʿImrān father of Moses since one thousand and eight hundred years separate one from the other.

The descendants of Mathan were the chiefs of the Children of Israel; they were their rabbis and kings. Muḥammed ibn Isḥāq[1] has said, "He is ʿImrān son of Sahim son of ʿAmoor son of Meeshan son of Izekiel son of Aharef son of Baoom son of Izarya son of Amsiy son of Nawoos son of Nootha son of Baridh son of Yehusha Faz son of Radim son of Abiyya son of Rehobom son of Solomon son of David, peace be upon him." Zakariyya[2] (Zacharias or Zachary) son of Barkhiya and ʿImrān son of Mathan were married to sisters. One of those sisters was the wife of Zakariyya son of Barkhiya, namely Eishā (Elizabeth) daughter of Faqooth, Yaḥya's mother. The other was the wife of ʿImrān: Hanna daughter of Faqooth, Maryam's mother.

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[1]Abu Bakr Muḥammed ibn Isḥāq (d. 151 A.H./768 A.D.) is a well known scholar from Medina who was contemporary to the ʿAbbāside ruler Abu Jaʿfer Abdullāh al-Manṣūr who came to power in June 754 A.D./Thul-Hijjah 136 A.H. and who commissioned ibn Isḥāq to write the very first complete biography of Prophet Muḥammed. His work, however, which became the basis of Ibn Hishām's *Seerat*, had to be continued by Muḥammed ibn Omer al-Wāqidi (747 - 822 A.D./129 - 206 A.H.), mentor of Muḥammed al-Zuhri, better known as Ibn Saʿd, who died in 230 A.H./845 A.D. and who is a traditionist and a historian born in Baṣrah and died in Baghdad. Ibn Saʿd's most famous work is *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr*, or *Ṭabaqāt Ibn Saʿd*.

[2]Zacharias was father of John the Baptist (prophet Yahya). His name in Hebrew is Zachariah, the same as it is in Arabic. "Zakariyya" is a variation of it.

Hanna had almost lost hope of having a son when she became very old. Hers was a family upon whom Allāh had bestowed His favors and whom He held in high esteem. While she was sitting under a tree, she saw a mother bird feeding her chicks. The instinct of motherhood stirred within her, and she invoked Allāh Almighty to grant her a son. She, as the Holy Qur'ān tells us, said, "Lord! Surely I vow to dedicate to You what is in my womb to be devoted (to Your service)" (Qur'ān, 3:35), that is, that her child would be free from the bondage of this life and its entanglements, and he will dedicate his time for the worship of Allāh and for the service of His cause. It was the custom then to bring such a dedicated person to Jerusalem to worship Allāh and to serve His creed.

Always males, those dedicated servants of Jerusalem were not expected to leave the house of worship till they reached their adolescence. Once one of them reached his adolescence, he would be given the choice to either stay or go wherever he wanted. There was hardly any family among the Children of Israel that did not make such a dedication. Only boys were dedicated; girls would not be fit for such a service due to the menstruation and the inconvenience associated with it. But Maryam's mother had already made that dedication, so her husband ʿImrān said to her, "Look what you have done! Did you consider the possibility that you were big with a female, and the female is not fit for such a dedication?" He was quite distressed. ʿImrān died while his wife was pregnant with Maryam.

When she delivered, she found out that her child was a girl. She had prayed for a son. Seeking to apologize to Allāh Almighty, she said, "Lord! Surely I have given birth to a female, and the male is not like the female," that is, she is not fit for the service of the house of worship in Jerusalem due to her weakness and menstruation. She named her Maryam (Mary). In their tongue, it meant "the worshipper," the one who serves her Lord. Maryam was the most beautiful of all her contemporary ladies and her conduct was the very best.

The Messenger of Allāh is quoted saying, "Four among the women of mankind are most cherished: Maryam daughter of ʿImrān, Asiya wife of Pharaoh, Khadīja daughter of Khuwaylid[1] (wife of

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[1]Her full name is: Khadīja daughter of Khuwaylid son of Asad son of (continued...)

Prophet Muḥammed), and Fāṭima daughter of Muḥammed." She continued to implore her Lord saying that she sought refuge with Him on her behalf to forbid Satan the accursed from having any access to her progeny. The Messenger of Allāh is also quoted saying, "There is no infant born except that Satan would touch it, so it would scream because of such a touch, except Maryam and her son." It is recommended to recite the following verse at the birth of any newborn female: "... and I commend her and her offspring into Your protection from Satan the accursed" (Qur'ān, 3:36).

Shuʿayb ibn Muḥammed, according to his chain of narrators, has said, "Every human being is hit by Satan on the side at birth except Jesus and his mother, peace be upon them. A barrier was placed to protect them. Satan could not penetrate it; therefore, they were not harmed." Neither one of them committed any of the sins commonly committed by humans. Allāh Almighty has said, "So her Lord accepted her with a good acceptance and made her grow up a good growth" (Qur'ān, 3:37). The meaning of this verse is that He created her without any increase or decrease of her physique, so she was

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[1](...continued)
Abdul-ʿUzza son of Qusayy, of the clan of Banu Hāshim, of the tribe of Banu Asad. Qusayy was the ancestor of all clans belonging to Quraysh, Prophet Muḥammed's tribe. Quraysh's real name was Fahr, and he was son of Mālik son of Maḍar son of Kanānah son of Khuzaimah son of Mudrikah son of Ilyās son of Mazar son of Nazār son of Maʿād son of ʿAdnān son of prophet Ishmael son of prophet Abraham son of prophet Sam son of prophet Noah. Khadīja was born in 565 A.D. and, according to a number of historians, died in 623 A.D. at the age of 58. Her mother, a distant relative of Prophet Muḥammed, was Fāṭima daughter of Zā'idah son of al-Asam, of Banu ʿĀmir son of Luayy son of Ghālib. Her mother's date of birth is not known but historians say that she died in or around 575 A.D. Khadīja's father, Khuwaylid, belonged to the ʿAbd al-ʿUzza clan of the tribe of Quraysh. He died in 585 A.D. Needless to say, Khadīja, through both of her parents, was a distant cousin of Prophet Muḥammed who also belonged to Banu Hashim. I included my research of the life of this great lady, the events involving her marriage with Prophet Muḥammed, as well as the chronology of her past marriages and offspring, in what proved to be the most interesting and popular 11-page essay I have so far written, and I will be glad to mail it to anyone who requests a copy of it. If you wish to receive your copy, write me; my address is included in this book's Conclusion.

growing during a short period as much as an ordinary infant would grow during quite a lengthy one.

When Maryam was born, her mother Hanna carried her to the temple. The descendants of Aaron, who then numbered thirty, looked after the temple at Jerusalem in the same zeal the caretakers look after the Kaʿba. They placed her in the hands of the rabbis. She said to them, "Do look after this dedicated infant," whereupon they competed with one another in looking after her since she was the daughter of their leader. Zakariyya said to them, "I am more worthy of her than you since her aunt lives in my house." The rabbis said, "We shall not let you decide that, for if she were to be left with the person who is most worthy of her and her nearest in kin, she should have been left with her mother who gave birth to her. But we shall cast the lots about her, and she will be looked after by the one whose arrow wins." They agreed to do so.

Nineteen men came to the Jordan river. They threw their arrows, or their pens whereby they used to write the Torah, in the water. The pen or arrow belonging to Zakariyya surfaced over the water while the rest were submerged. Ibn Isḥāq and a group of other scholars, including al-Suddi, have all said that Zakariyya's pen pierced the water and stood up in it as though its water were mud, while their pens were washed away by the tide. Allāh Almighty has said, "You were not with them when they cast their pens (to decide) which of them should have Maryam in his charge" (Qur'ān, 3:44). Thus did Zakariyya, who was their high rabbi and prophet, win, and this is why Allāh Almighty has said that Zakariyya took charge of her, adopted her, looked after her.

Muḥammed ibn Isḥāq has said, "When Zakariyya took charge of her, he gave her to her aunt, Yaḥya's mother, and asked her to nurse her till she reached womanhood. It was then that he built a room for her in his mosque to be her sanctuary, placing its door in the middle." Whenever he entered to see her, he noticed that she had unseasonable fruits, that is, summer fruits were with her during the winter, and *vice versa*, so he would ask her where she had received them from, and she would say that they were from Allāh, from the fruits of Paradise.

Muḥammed ibn Isḥāq has also said that the Children of Israel were then inflicted with a famine, yet she kept receiving her sustenance thus, as Zakariyya was becoming increasingly unable to

look after her. He, therefore, went out to the Children of Israel and said, "O Children of Israel! You know, by Allāh, that I have become quite old and too weak to look after the daughter of ʿImrān; so, which one of you will look after her when I am gone?" They said, "By Allāh we, too, are worn out and are in difficulty as you can see." Each one of them would recommend to the other to be the one to look after her, and they kept doing so till they did not find anyone ready to do it. They decided to cast their lots this time too, and the arrow this time came to be that of a righteous carpenter from among the Children of Israel named Joseph son of Jacob son of Matan, and he was Maryam's cousin. So he took her. Maryam saw in his face the weight of the burden, whereupon she said to him, "O Joseph! Think well of Allāh, for He will sustain us." Joseph started receiving sustenance on account of her, and he would bring her every day of what he had earned to take care of her needs. Whenever he brought it to her and she was in the house of worship at Jerusalem, Allāh would multiply it for him and increase it. Whenever Zakariyya entered to see her, he used to see a remnant of sustenance that was more than what Joseph had brought her, hence his question to her, "O Mary! Whence comes this to you? She said: It is from Allāh. Surely Allāh gives to whomsoever He pleases without measure" (Qur'ān, 3:37).

Christians have for years been debating about Mary, whether she was the "mother of God," as some call her, or whether she was an ordinary pious lady. We do not wish to contribute to such a debate, preferring to leave them wandering forever in their wilderness as they please...

Birth of Jesus son of Mary

Allāh Almighty has said,

> *And mention Mary in the Book when she drew aside from her family to an eastern place; so she took a veil (to screen herself) from them; then We sent her Our spirit, and he appeared to her as a perfectly ordinary man. She said: Surely I seek refuge against you with the Beneficent God, if you are God-fearing. He said: I am only a messenger of your Lord to give you [the glad tiding of] a pure boy. She said: How can I have a boy and no mortal has yet touched me, nor have I been unchaste? He said: Even so; your Lord says: It is easy for*

Me, and so that We may make him a sign to men and a mercy from Us, and it is a matter already decreed. So she conceived him [Jesus], then withdrew with him to a remote place. And the throes (of childbirth) compelled her to betake herself to the trunk of a palm tree. She said: Oh, would that I had died before this and had been a thing quite forgotten! Then (the newly-born) called out to her from beneath her: Do not grieve! Surely your Lord has made a stream flow beneath you, and shake towards you the trunk of the palm tree; it will drop on you fresh ripe dates; so eat and drink and refresh the eye. Then if you see any mortal, say: Surely I have vowed a fast to the Beneficent God, so I shall not speak to any human today. And she came to her people carrying him. They said: O Mary! Surely you have done a strange thing! O sister of Aaron! Your father was not a bad man, nor was your mother unchaste! But she pointed to him. They said: How should we speak to one who is a child in the cradle? He [Jesus] said: Surely I am a servant of Allāh; He has given me the Book and made me a prophet, and He has made me blessed wherever I may be, and He has enjoined on me prayers and zakat as long as I live, and dutiful to my mother, and He has not made me insolent, unblessed. And peace be on me the day I was born, the day I die, and the day I am raised (back) to life. Such is Jesus son of Mary; (this is) the saying of truth about which they dispute.
(Qur'an, 19:16-34)

Prophets' biographers have said that when three days had passed since Mary was pregnant with Jesus, she was fifteen, or thirteen, years old. One of those dedicated for the service of the temple with her was her above-mentioned cousin Joseph the carpenter. He was a thoughtful man who used to offer charity from his earnings. Joseph and Mary used to take turns in serving the temple. When they ran out of water, each would take the pitcher and go to the cave to obtain water then return to the temple. The day that she met Gabriel was the longest and the hottest day of the year. She had run out of water, so she asked her cousin, "Shall we go together, O Joseph, to obtain water?" He said, "I have some water left which will suffice me for today." She said, "But I, by Allāh, am out of water!" She took her pitcher and went out alone till she came to the cave where she met Gabriel whom Allāh made to appear to her as an ordinary man. He told her that Allāh had sent him to grant her a pure boy. She said,

"Surely I seek refuge from you with the Beneficent God if you are God-fearing" (Qur'ān, 19:18), that is, a pious, obedient to his Lord. Imām ʿAli has said, "I have come to know that a pious person is one who has compassion for others and is merciful, and she thought that he (Gabriel) was a man, a human." ʿIkrimah has said, "Gabriel appeared to her in the form of a young beardless man with curly hair, and in perfect form." Wise men have said that Allāh Almighty sent him in human form so that Mary would be able to remain self-composed and listen to his speech. Had he appeared in his normal form, she would have been frightened by him and would have shunned him. When Mary sought refuge with Allāh against him, he said to her, "I am only a messenger of your Lord to give you (the glad tiding of) a pure boy. She said: How can I have a boy while no mortal has yet touched me, nor have I been unchaste? He said: Even so; your Lord says: It is easy for Me, and so that We may make him a sign to men and a mercy from Us, and it is a matter already decreed" (Qur'ān, 19:19-21). Having heard his statement, she submitted to Allāh's decree, whereupon Gabriel blew in the pocket of her loose outer garment. By then, she had taken it off. Once he had left, Mary filled her pitcher with water, put her outer garment on, instantly and unconsciously conceiving of Jesus, then went back to the temple.

Another story of how Mary conceived is narrated, or say suggested, by al-Suddi and ʿIkrimah who have said that Mary used to remain in the temple as long as she was clean. Once she started her period, she would go to her aunt's house till she became clean again and would then return. While Mary was bathing after her period was over, having chosen a sunny spot because it was then winter and that day was the shortest day of the year and placed a curtain between her and the rest of the house residents, arch-angel Gabriel appeared. He gave her the glad tiding of Jesus, then he blew in the pocket of her outer loose garment. Al-Hasan says that the Nazarenes had taken the east as their *qibla* because Mary had taken a place facing the east [prior to her conception]. When she was big with Jesus, her cousin Joseph the carpenter was in her company, and they were both going to the temple one day near Mount Zion. That temple was their greatest. They used to repair it, heat it, and sweep it, and nobody knew anyone more diligent or dedicated that both of them. The first person who found it objectionable that she should be pregnant was this same cousin and fellow servant of the temple, Joseph the

carpenter. When he saw what had happened to her, he thought it was monstrous and horrible, and he did not know what to do or what to say to her. Whenever he contemplated upon charging her, he remembered her uprightness, adoration, and innocence and the fact that she was never out of his sight even for one hour. If he desired to think of her as innocent, he saw the signs of her pregnancy. When he could not keep it to himself any longer, he decided to discuss it with her.

The first thing he said to her was, "I have noticed something about you to which I have found myself reacting, and I have been trying to keep it to myself, but I finally decided that discussing it with you may set my mind at ease." She said to him, "Say it nicely." He asked her, "Tell me, Mary, has there been any trees growing without seeds?" She said, "Yes!" He asked her again, "Then has there been trees growing without rain?" She said, "Yes!" Then he said, "Can there be children without parents?" She said, "Yes! Don't you know that Allāh Almighty caused all the trees to grow when He created them without first sowing their seeds, for seeds come from trees? Have you not come to know that Allāh caused the trees to grow without rain, and through His might He caused the rain to sustain the species of trees after having created each species separately? Or do you say that Allāh is not able to grow trees without the help of water and without it He could not have been able to grow them?!" Joseph said to her, "No, I do not say that, but I say that Allāh Almighty is capable of doing anything; all He has to do is to say to it, `Be!' and it is!" Mary then said, "Don't you know that Allāh created Adam and his wife without parents?" He answered in the affirmative. Her last statement convinced him that what had happened to her must have been something which Allāh Almighty had decreed, and that it was not fitting for him to ask her about it due to the secrecy she seemed to maintain in its regard. Then Joseph took charge of all the maintenance chores needed to be performed at the temple and spared her having to do anything at all.

Scholars say that when Mary came close to delivering, Allāh Almighty inspired her that the Jerusalem temple was one of His houses which was pure and was built so that His Name would be praised therein. "Go to a place where you can seek seclusion," the Almighty inspired her. Mary went to the house of her aunt, the mother of Yahya (John the Baptist). When the latter stood up to

greet her and welcome her, she found herself in need of Mary to support her to stand up. Then she asked her, "O Mary! Can you imagine me being pregnant?!" Mary said, "I, too, am pregnant!" Zakariyya's wife said, "Then I find the one in my womb prostrating to the one in yours!" To this does the Almighty refer in the verse saying, "... testifying to a Word from Allāh" (Qur'ān, 3:39). When she felt comfortable at her aunt's house, the Almighty inspired her, "If you give birth among your people, they will taunt you, charge you and kill both you and your son; so, get away from them."

Scholars have differed regarding how long it took Mary to conceive and deliver. Some say that the duration of her pregnancy was nine months like all other women, while others say it was eight, and that that was another miracle: no new-born who stayed in his mother's womb for only eight months survived except Jesus. Other scholars say it was six months, still others say it was three hours, and some even say it was only one hour. Ibn ʿAbbās has said, "It was only conception then delivery, and the time from the conception to the delivery and the seclusion she sought was only one hour, for Allāh Almighty did not mention any separation between them when He said, `So she conceived him then withdrew with him to a remote place' (19:22), that is, far away from her people." Muqātil[1] has said, "His mother conceived him in one hour; he was formed in one hour; he was delivered in one hour when the sun had just set, and she was twenty years old, having had only two menstrual periods before conceiving Jesus."

Mujāhid[2] has said, "Mary, peace be upon her, has said, `Whenever I sought seclusion, Jesus would speak to me, and I would speak to him. If a human distracted me from that, he would praise the Almighty while being in my womb, and I would hear his praising,'" and Allāh knows best.

When the pain of childbirth intensified, she sought to support

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[1]He is Abu al-Ḥasan Muqātil ibn Sulaymān al-Balkhi (d. 150 A.H./767 A.D.), a *mufassir* who moved to Baghdad then to Baṣrah where he died. His most important work is *Al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*.

[2]He is Abu Bakr Mujāhid ibn Aḥmed ibn Mousa (d. 324 A.H./936 A.D.), a *qāri*, actually the imām of *qāris* of his time, a traditionist, and a linguist from Baghdad. All the books he wrote deal with the Holy Qur'ān.

herself with the trunk of a tree, and it was a dry palm tree with neither leaves nor a live trunk but a dead stump. The angels did not like the sight of that palm tree, and they were surrounding her in rows, and that palm tree was at a village called Bethlehem[1]. When her crisis reached its zenith, she said in agony, "Oh! Would that I had died before this and had been a thing quite forgotten" (Qur'ān, 19:23), whereupon she was addressed, "Grieve not! Surely your Lord has made a stream flow beneath you, and shake towards you the trunk of the palm tree, it will drop on you fresh ripe dates" (Qur'ān, 19:24-25). The original Arabic text of the first verse, that is, "Then he called out to her from beneath her" (Qur'ān, 19:24), can be recited in two different ways: *min tahtihā*, that is, from under her, connotes a reference to the one who called upon her from the mountain side, namely Gabriel. Or it can be recited *man tahtihā*, the one who was underneath her, that is, Jesus Christ, after having emerged from his mother's womb. He addressed her by the Will of Allāh. Allāh caused a river to flow for her after she had given birth to Jesus. Its water would be sweet and cool if she wanted to drink of it, lukewarm if she wanted to wash herself with it. Ibn ʿAbbās has said, "Jesus, or Gabriel, struck the earth, whereupon water gushed forth, and the dry tree was brought back to life after its dryness. Its branches cascaded, and it brought forth its produce and excelled in it. She was told to shake the trunk of the palm tree to her so that it would cause fresh dates to fall upon her." Al-Rabeeʿ ibn Khaytham has said, "There is nothing better for a woman in her postnatal period than fresh dates, nor for any patient better than honey." Omer ibn Maymoon has said, "I cannot think of anything better for a woman having difficulty delivering than fresh dates."

Wahab has said, "When he [Jesus] was born, all idols were seen

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[1]"Bethlehem" is a Hebrew word with two meanings: 1) the house (Hebrew *beth*, Arabic *bayt*) of bread, or 2) the house of the goddess Lahmu, twin deity of Lahamu. In Mesopotamian mythology (which spread beyond the valley of the Tigris and the Euphrates), these were the first gods to be born from the chaos created by the merging of the watery deep surrounding the earth and the salt waters. They represent silt, but in some texts they seem to take the form of serpents. Bethlehem is located in south Jerusalem. In Genesis 35:16-20 and 48:7, in 1 Samuel 16:17, and in 2 Samuel 23:13-17, it is referred to as Ephrath or Ephratah.

falling on the ground headlong in each and every land, so much so that the demons were frightened and did not know why. They rushed to Eblis the accursed who was on a throne he had made for himself on the surface of a lake mocking the Almighty's Throne when it was first on the water. They came to him when six hours of the day had passed. When Eblis saw their throngs, he felt very upset and alarmed because he had never seen them assembling like that since he scattered them throughout the world to do their mischievous deeds. He used to see some of them now and then but never all of them at the same time. He asked them what had happened. They told him that something must have happened on earth that caused all the idols to be smashed without any human touching them. Nothing was more instrumental than those idols in bringing destruction to the descendants of Adam. Now this new event that has occurred caused humans to think very low of those idols, and the devils were concerned that humans were not going to worship idols any more. "Be informed," they said, "that we have not come to you here before looking for its cause throughout the world, in the seas, and everywhere else, but we did not increase but in ignorance regarding what has happened." Eblis said to them, "This must have been a momentous event; so, remain where you are."

Eblis immediately flew away for three hours during which he passed by the place where Jesus was born. When he saw the angels gazing at that spot, he realized that that was the scene of the event. He wanted to approach it from above, but the heads of the angels and their shoulders acted as a shield. He wanted to approach it from under the ground, but he noticed that the angels' feet were planted firmly in it. He then wanted to penetrate through their ranks, but they forbade him from doing so as testified to this fact by the statement of the Prophet saying, "Every human being is hit by Satan on the side upon its birth except Jesus son of Mary, peace be upon him; Allāh Almighty shielded Jesus from him, so he kept trying [unsuccessfully] to penetrate the shield."'

Having facilitated the delivery for Mary, Allāh Almighty prepared Mary to meet her people. "Eat, O Mary," the Almighty inspired her, "of the fresh dates, and drink of the sweet and cool water; cool your eyes and be contented. If you see any human, and he asks you about your son, or makes a serious charge against you in his regard, tell him that you pledged to abstain (from speaking to anyone) for the sake

of achieving the Pleasure of the Most Merciful One." The "fast" referred to in chapter 19 (*Sūrat Maryam*), verse 26, meant abstention from speaking. Fast during that period was abstention from eating, drinking, and speaking, "... so I shall not speak to any man today" (Qur'ān, 19:26), Mary was instructed to say. Another reference to abstention from speaking to people is made in the first verses of the Qur'ānic Chapter named after Mary, the same *Surat Maryam* referred to above: "He (Zakariyya) said: Lord! Give me a sign (*āya*). He said: Your sign is that you will not speak to the people for three nights though being in sound health" (Qur'ān, 19:10). Sometimes staying away from people and remaining in constant contact with the Almighty enables one to reach a very high spiritual plain. Remember how Prophet Muhammed, prior to the initiation of his historic mission, used to seek seclusion from people at the Hirā cave of Mount Thawr in order to meditate and to clear his thoughts.

Mary brought her infant Jesus to her people carrying him.

Al-Kalbi[1] has said, "Joseph the carpenter took Mary and Jesus inside a cave and kept them there for forty days till she recovered fully from the pains of childbirth, then he brought her back carrying him, being forty days old, whereupon Jesus spoke to her on the way saying, `Mother! Congratulations! I am the servant of Allāh and His Messiah!' When she came to her family with the infant, all members of her family were so grieved, they wept. It was a family of righteousness. They said to her, `O Mary! You surely have done a strange thing' (19:27), that is, `Where did you get this son from?' She beckoned to them to ask Jesus. They were now angry and said, `How can we speak to one who is a child in the cradle?' (19:29)." Wahab has said that Zakariyya came to her while she was debating with the Jews about him; he said to Jesus, `Speak up and produce your proof if you were indeed ordered to do so.' Jesus, who was then forty days old, spoke and said, `I am a servant of Allāh; He has given me the Book and made me a prophet, and He has made me blessed wherever I may be. He has enjoined on me prayer and *zakat* as long as I live, and (to be) dutiful to my mother, and He has not made me insolent,

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[1]His full name is Muḥammed ibn al-Sā'ib al-Kalbi (d. 763 A.D.), a genealogist, traditionist, linguist, and chronologist from Kufa. He fought Miṣ'ab ibn al-Zubayr then retired and dedicated his entire time to study Arabic and history. He studied in Kufa and lived for some time in Baṣra.

unblessed. And peace be on me the day I was born, the day I die, and the day I am raised to life'" (Qur'ān, 19:30-33). Thus did Jesus admit his submission to the Will of Allāh at the very beginning of his speech, belying the claim of the "Christians" and making his argument against them.

Imām Muhammed ibn ᶜAli al-Bāqir[1], is quoted saying, "When Jesus was born, in each day he grew up as much as infants would grow in a month. When he was nine months old, his mother took him by the hand and brought him to the class and seated him before the teacher. The teacher asked him to say *Bismillāhir-Rahmanir-Rahīm*, which Jesus repeated. The teacher then required him to repeat the alphabets after him, whereupon he raised his head and asked him whether he knew what the alphabets meant. The teacher raised his stick aiming to hit him, but he quickly said to him, `Do not hit me, O teacher! If you do not know, ask me, and I shall explain them to you.' The teacher asked him to explain them to him, so he stated the following,

Alif is derived from *Lā ilāha illa-Allāh* (there is no god except Allāh);
Bā is derived from *Behjatullāh* (the Splendor of Allāh);
Jeem is derived rom *Jalāl-Allāh* (the Greatness of Allāh);
Dāl is derived from *Dīn-Allāh* (the Creed of Allāh);
Hā is derived from *Hāwiya*, Hell, the pit;
Wāw is derived from *Waylun li ahlin-nār* (Woe unto the people of the Fire!);
Zā is derived from *Zafeeru-Jahannam*, the exhalation of Jahannam (or *ge hen Hinnom*[2]), Hell, the eternal Fire;

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[1]He is great grandson of Prophet Mhammed and one of the most brilliant persons who ever walked on the face of earth, with knowledge so vast, he was said to "pierce through the knowledge of prophets." He was Imām Muhammed son of Imām ᶜAli son of Imām al-Husain son of Imām ᶜAli son of Abu Tālib, peace and blessings of Allāh be upon all of them. He was born in Medina on Rajab 1, 57 A.H./May 10, 677 A.D. and was killed on Thul-Hijjah 7, 114 A.H./January 28, 733 A.D. by a poisoned saddle given to him as a present by the Umayyad tyrant Hishām ibn Abd al-Malik.

[2]"Ge hen Hinnom," Hebrew for "the valley of the son of Hinnom," the Jews believe, is a place near Jerusalem where, according to Jeremiah 19:5,

(continued...)

Hutti is derived from *Huttatil khatāyā ᶜanil mustaghfirīn* (the sins have been removed from those who seek His forgiveness);
Kilman is derived from *Kalāmullāhi ghayr makhlooq wala mubaddila li kalimātih* (the Speech of Allāh is not created, and there is no alteration to it);
Saᶜaf is derived from *Sāᶜ bi sāᶜ wal jazā bil jazā* (a measure for a measure, and a reward for each good deed);
Qirshāt is derived from *taqrushuhum hīna tahshuruhum* (it gathers them together as it inflicts its pain upon them)."[2]

The teacher said to Mary, "Woman, take your son away, for he needs no teacher."

Al-Ḥusain ibn Muḥammed ibn al-Ḥusain, a scholar of exegesis, has informed us through his chain of narrators which goes back to Abu Saᶜeed al-Khudri who quotes the Messenger of Allāh as saying, "Jesus was sent by his mother to learn, so the teacher required him to say *Bismillāh* (in the Name of Allāh), whereupon Jesus asked him what that meant. The teacher told him he did not know, so Jesus explained it to him. He said, `The B means *Bahāullāh* (the Splendor of Allāh), the *sīn* [the `s' in *bismillāh*] means *Sanāullāh* (the Majesty of Allāh), and the *mīm* [the `m' in *Bismillāh*] means *Mamlakatullāh* (the Kingdom of Allāh, the Exalted, the Sublime),'" and Allāh knows best.

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[2](...continued)
[Gentile] children were burnt in sacrifice to Baal. The latter was the fertility god of then polytheist Canaanites (Arabs, descendants of Kenᶜān, who inhabited Greater Syria. According to Vol. 1, p. 24 of *Civilization Past and Present*, "*Phoenician* is the name the Greeks gave to those Canaanites who dwelt along the Mediterranean coast of Syria, an area that is today Lebanon."). The Greeks, then, were the ones who called those Arabs Phoenicians. *Ge hen Hinnom* is Arabized as "Jahannam." Before the advent of Islam, Arabs believed neither in heaven nor in hell. They, therefore, did not have any concept of the afterlife and had no words for Paradise or hell in their very rich and extensive vocabulary. "Janna," by the way, means: a garden, an orchard, but it really does not describe Paradise fully. Paradise is a lot more than an orchard or a garden. It is a whole world by itself. Incidentally, the word "Paradise" (*firdaws*) is also a loan word, some say from Persian, others from Babylonian.

Jesus and Mary Leave for Egypt

Jesus was born forty-two years after the ascension of Augustus[1] [of the Roman empire], fifty-one years after the king of the Ashkanites[2], kings of the sects, had passed away. Today's Syria and its surrounding areas were under the authority of Caesar of Rome who had appointed Herod[3] as the king on his behalf. When Herod, who was ruling over the areas then inhabited by the Children of Israel, came to know the story of the Messiah, he wanted to kill him. The Children of Israel saw a star according to whose appearance they, utilizing their books, calculated the date of his birth. Allāh sent an angel to Joseph the carpenter to warn him against Herod and his evil scheme, ordering him to flee with the boy and his mother to Egypt and to return once Herod was dead. Joseph transported Mary and her son on a donkey till they reached a place in Egypt to which the Almighty refers in this verse: "And We made the son of Mary and his mother a sign, and We gave them a shelter on a lofty ground having meadows and springs" (Qur'ān, 23:50).

Mary and Jesus Return Home

Wahab has said that when Herod died, twelve years after the birth of

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[1]"Augustus" is his title which means: "revered." His name was Octavius or Caius Octavius, and he lived from 63 B.C. to 14 A.D. He was a contemporary of Jesus Christ and a grand nephew of Julius Caesar. He also was the first Roman emperor. (Caius) Julius Caesar (102 B.C. - 44 B.C.), who extended Rome's control to France (then land of the Gauls, original inhabitants of the France before Celtic Germanic tribes kicked them out and occupied their land in the third century B.C.) and Britain, adopted him and named him Caius Julius Caesar Octavianus. After his (Caesar's) assassination, Augustus gained power in Rome. In 31 B.C., he defeated Queen Cleopatra of Egypt (69 B.C. - 31 B.C.) at Actium, Greece, on September 2, 31 B.C. It was then that he became master of the Roman world.

[2]Or Ashkenazim, one of the two major Jewish sects; the other is the Sephardim.

[3]It was through Marc Antony (83 B.C. - 30 B.C.), a protege of Julius Caesar, that Herod (or Herod the Great) secured such a position which he maintained from 37 B.C. to 4 B.C. In his last years, he fell a victim to insanity, executing his sons Aristobulus, Alexander, and Antipater. He is the one who ordered the mass massacre of children.

Jesus[1], Allāh inspired Mary telling her of Herod's death, ordering her to return with her son Jesus and cousin Joseph the carpenter to Syria. They did, settling near the Galilee mountain at a village in north-northeast of Bethlehem (Bayt Laḥam) called Nazareth after which Christians are called "Nazarites" or "Nazarenes." Its Arabic name is al-Nāṣira. There, Jesus kept learning in one hour what others would learn in a day, and in a day what others would in a month, and in a month what others would in a year, and such is the Almighty's design with His messengers. When he became thirty years old, Allāh inspired him to come out to the public and to invite them to worship the One and Only God, Allāh, through the medium of parables, empowering him to heal the sick, to cure those afflicted with permanent handicaps, to give sight back to the blind, to heal the mentally retarded, to suppress the power of evil, to forbid people from committing misdeeds, and to subject the devils to humiliation by permitting goodness to thus prevail. He did as he was ordered, so people loved him and enjoyed his company. His followers started increasing in number. Soon he became quite famous, and at times he may have had as many as fifty thousand patients or handicapped persons to heal. Those who could walk to him did so, and those who could not he himself sought, the messenger of God that he was[2].

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[1]There is no definite date given for the birth of Jesus Christ even by Christians themselves! Most books say that he was "probably" born between 8 B.C. and 4 B.C. The angel referred to above is described in Christian books as "the heavenly host." In Islam, this may either be arch-Angel Gabriel or one of the angels working under his command. "Jesus" is a Greek name derived from the Hebrew "Joshua" which means: "saviour." "Christ" is a Greek translation of the Hebrew "Messiah" which means "anointed." In Arabic, his name is ʿĪsa. Jesus Christ is cousin of John the Baptist who is described by the People of the Book as "an ascetic preacher." In Islam, he is a prophet referred to in the Holy Qur'ān as Yahya son of Zakariyya (Zacharias). He is mentioned in 3:39 where he is described as "an honourable, chaste, a prophet from among the good ones," in 6:85 and 19:12-15 where he is described as one whom the Almighty granted wisdom even as a youth, and in 21:90 where he and his family are described as those who "used to hasten, one with another, in (the doing of) deeds of goodness."

[2]This brings back to me sour memories of the time I spent in Atlanta,
(continued...)

Those who could not reach him, he managed to reach them, and such is the mark of distinction of men of God. The only medicine he applied to the patients who had a full conviction in him and in his Lord was his supplication.

Mary's Death and the Prophethood of Jesus

According to a number of accounts, Mary conceived Jesus when she was thirteen years old. She gave birth to him at Bethlehem, a suburb of Jerusalem, fifty-one years after the beginning of the reign of the Ashkelonites (or Ashkenazim). Allāh sent the *wahi* (inspiration) to him at the age of thirty, and He raised him up from the temple at Jerusalem on Laylatul-Qadr (the Night of Power) during the month of Ramadān when he was thirty-three years old; so, his prophethood continued for only three years. His mother lived after his being raised to heavens for six years, and Allāh knows best.

The Disciples

Allāh Almighty has said, "But when Jesus perceived disbelief on their part, he said: Who will be my helpers in Allāh's way? The disciples said: We are helpers (in the way) of Allāh: We believe in Allāh and bear witness that we submit (to Him in Islam)" (Qur'ān, 3:52). The Almighty has also said, "And when I inspired the disciples saying: Believe in Me and in My messenger, they said: We believe and (you) bear witness that we are Muslims (submitters to the will of Allāh)" (Qur'ān, 5:111), that is, Allāh enabled the disciples to believe in His messenger. They were the elite from among those who believed in Jesus son of Mary and who followed him. They were his supporters and viziers, and they were twelve in number. Their names are: Simon al-Safa who is also called Peter, his brother Andrews, Jacob son of Zebedee, his brother John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew al-Ashshār (collector of the *'ushr* tax,

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[2](...continued)
Georgia, among those who called themselves "muballighs," Muslim missionaries, yet they were too arrogant to pickup the telephone receiver to call their brethren, let alone going to their homes to visit them when they were sick.

the tithe[1]), Jacob son of Halfa, Leah who is also called Thaddaeus, Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot. Biblical lists of them, however, differ from this one.

The "saints" who wrote the Gospels named after them are: John, Mark, Luke, and Matthew. Let us see what Christians tell us about them[2]:

St. Mark was a friend of Saints Peter, Paul, and Luke. He is John Mark; his mother is believed to be the owner of the house where the Last Supper (where the Table of Viands, or *al-Mā'ida*) was held. His Gospel is the shortest and simplest, the only one which stands out from among all the other three in context and in spirit. Some Biblical critics are of the view that it was the first to be composed. It narrates the life of Jesus from his baptism by John the Baptist to the passion and alleged "resurrection".

St. Luke, a man from Antioch[3], Syria, was said to be a doctor, a physician, and a friend and companion of Saints Paul and Mark. Christian tradition, however, says that he was a painter and that he

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[1]It is a tax on agricultural produce, goods, or personal items set aside as an offering to God. Very few Christians nowadays pay it. Here in the U.S., taxes collected by federal, state, social security, insurance, etc. take out about 30% of one's hard earned income, leaving him in need for charity himself!

[2]The following text material is excerpted from two sources: *The Columbia Viking Desk Encyclopedia* (The Viking Press, New York, 1968), and the *Encyclopedia Britannica III*.

[3]The city of Antioch is situated on the banks of the river al-ʿĀṣi (Orontes). It was founded about 300 B.C. by Celeucus I (Nicator) who died in 280 B.C. Celeucus I was a general of Alexander the Great. Antioch is the city where the followers of Jesus Christ were called "Christians" (rather than Nazarines) for the first time. It is the seat of a Melchite, or Maronite, and a Jacobite patriarch. It fell to the Persians in 538 A.D., to the Arabs in 637 (16 A.H.), to the Byzantians from 969 - 1084 (358 - 477 A.H.), to Seljuk Turks in 1085 (478 A.H.), to the Crusaders in 1098 (491 A.H.), to Egyptian Mamlukes in 1268 (666 A.H.), and to Ottoman Turks in 1516 (922 A.H.). It was transferred to Syria by Western powers in 1920 (1339 A.H.) but restored to Turkey in 1939 (1358 A.H.). This is why the reader sometimes sees Antioch identified as a Syrian town and sometimes as a Turkish one! What a busy little town!

died as a martyr. He is described as "a disciple of the apostles"[1] which clearly means he learned not directly from Jesus but from his twelve apostles. His Gospel provides an account of the birth of Jesus, tells of his ministry and ends with the passion and alleged "resurrection". He is author of a twelve-volume literary work, the Gospel and the Acts, and is the most literary of the New Testament writers. The approximate date of his death or "martyrdom" is given as 66 A.D.

St. Matthew, also named Levi, is said to be a publican (tax collector) of Capernaum, a city in northeast Palestine on the Sea of Galilee. He was employed as a tax collector by Herod Antipas, tetrach of Galilee. He is described as one of the twelve disciples of Jesus Christ. He is author of the first synoptic Gospel which, like the rest, gives an account of the birth of Jesus, tells of his ministry, and ends with the passion and alleged "resurrection". The Bible offers scanty and uncertain information about him. Everything about his character, conduct, conviction, and life is subject to debate and is never ascertained... He wrote his Gospel, the first of the four, in Hebrew. His Gospel is also attributed to Matthew who is said to be one of the twelve apostles.

St. John is the son of Zebedee, a fisherman from the Galilee, and Salome. He is the younger brother of St. James the Greater, also one of the twelve disciples of Jesus. Jesus Christ, we are told, also had a brother named James...! Ancient Christian tradition claims that John is the author of all the four Gospels comprising the Bible..., in addition to three epistles and the Book of Revelation. Is he really?! This is the subject of debate among Christians; so, let us leave them debating and arguing till the Day of Judgment! He is described in Christian books as a "divine," theologian, and as an Evangelist, a writer of the four Gospels. No date of his birth or death is available, and even the place where he died is not known for sure. Some writers admit that what is written about him is more of a legend than a fact.

One is tempted to ask: "Why is there four Gospels instead of one? Why is there so much duplication and difference between one Gospel and another? Whose Gospel is the right or the more reliable one? Since they cannot all be right, which one is right? If those Gospels were all written by St. John, as stated above, why, then, are they divided into four with each one of them bearing the name of an

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[1]*Encyclopedia Britannica* III (Macropedia), Vol. 11, p. 178.

apostle? Had they all be written by St John, why was not the Bible called the Book of John?"

Saint Barnabas

According to the Gospel of Matthew, and to be exact Ch. 10, verse 4, the list of the twelve disciples of Jesus Christ is as follows: Simon (or Peter), Andrew (Peter's brother), James (son of Zebedee), John (James' brother), Philip, Batholomew, Thomas, Matthew (the tax collector), James (son of Alphaeus), Thaddaeus, another Simon who is said to be "a member of `The Zealots,' a subversive political party," and Judas Iscariot. Why is the name of Saint Barnabas not among them, and how did he come to write his own Gospel, the only one accepted by Muslims as the true Bible? With all their prejudices, speculations, sectarian motivations, it is unwise to accept what today's or yesterday's Christians tell us about Saint Barnabas and his Bible, or about the other disciples. *The Encyclopedia Britannica III*, for example, describes those who believed that Christ was human and not divine as heretics, and so do many Christian writers and theologians. An independent research, therefore, will yield better results, that's for sure. One such research has been undertaken by M.A. Yusseff who published his findings in a very interesting book titled *The Dead Sea Scrolls, the Gospel of Barnabas, and the New Testament* which was published in 1405 A.H./1985 A.D. by the American Trust Publications of Indianapolis, Indiana.[1] Saint Barnabas was originally called Joseph the Levite or Joses the Levite and is better known as Matthai or Matthias. In the Christian document known as *Recognitions*, Matthias is identified as another name for Apostle Barnabas, which is correct. In another document known as *Homilies*, Barnabas is said to be a personal Apostle of Jesus, "a strict servant of the Law," and, hence, one of the original twelve Disciples (or Apostles) of Jesus Christ. The Jews, too, list his name among not twelve but five apostles, the remaining four being: Naki, Nester, Buni, and Todah. But we find the name "Lebbacus" among these disciples in Matthew 10:13, that of "Judas son of James" in Luke 6:16 and Acts 1:13, both contradicting other Biblical accounts; so, which one is correct and which one is

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[1]For the benefit of our reader, the full address of the said Publisher is: ATP, 10900 W. Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46231. This book should be in every personal and public library.

not?!

Saint Barnabas was born in Cyprus in the first century A.D. Other references to him are recorded in the Bible in Acts 11:19 and 15:41. He is said as having joined the Jerusalem church "after the alleged crucifixion of Jesus[1]," which is not true, sold his property, and gave the proceeds as a donation to his community. He founded the church in Antioch (Turkish Antakya), where he preached. Inviting Paul of Tarsus (Turkey) to be his assistant, he undertook missionary activity and then went to Jerusalem. Shortly after 48 A.D., a conflict separated both men, and Barnabas sailed home to Cyprus. Where did he write his Gospel and when? Nobody seems to know. How did he die? Nobody seems to know, yet he is called a martyr... We are also told that he knew St. Mark. In 488 A.D., his grave was discovered near the Monastery of St. Barnabas in the Cypriot city of Salamis. A copy of his Gospel was found buried with him[2]. The accurate list of the twelve disciples of Jesus exists in the Gospel of St. Barnabas himself who records the following:

> Jesus, having returned to the region of Jerusalem, was found again of the people with exceedingly great joy, and they implored him to abide with them, for his words were not as those of the scribes, but were with power; for they touched the heart.
>
> Jesus, seeing that great was the multitude of them that returned to their heart for to walk in the law of God, went up into the mountain, and abode all night in prayer. When the day came he descended from the mountain and chose twelve whom he called apostles, among whom is Judas, who was slain upon the cross[3]. Their names are: Andrew and Peter his brother, fishermen;

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[1]This misleading statement exists in Vol. One of the world renown Encyclopedia Britannica III. How many other errors exist in this Encyclopedia?

[2]That copy was later deposited at the Imperial Library at Vienna. It was at a much later date translated into English and edited by Lonsdale and Laura Ragg.

[3]This statement, among many others in the Gospel of St. Barnabas, agrees with what we, Muslims, have in the Holy Qur'ān. Jesus Christ was not crucified.

> Barnabas, who wrote this, with Matthew the publican, who sat at the receipt of custom; John and James, son of Zebedee; Thaddaeus and Judas[1]; Bartholomew and Philip; James, and Judas Iscariot the traitor. To these he always revealed the divine secrets. He made Iscariot Judas his dispenser of that which was given in alms, but he stole the tenth part of everything. (The Gospel of Barnabas 14)

The Gospel of St. Barnabas is the one that contains the true teachings of Jesus Christ; it will be discussed later how it refers to Prophet Muḥammed as the "Paraclete," a Greek word meaning "Messenger" and "Comforter," in Arabic *al-Amīn*... Even if you set aside the Gospel of St. Barnabas, a good Greek translation of the original of John 14:16 will be: "And I will Pray the *Patera*, and he shall give you another *Paraclete*, that he may abide with you forever." The Greek word *Patera* is erroneously translated into "the Father," a reference to the Almighty, in a "modern" version of the Bible which gives the following text for John 14:16-17: "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever–the Spirit of Truth."[2] No man of righteousness has earned the title of "the Spirit of Truth" (in Arabic al-Ṣādiq) more than Prophet Muḥammed. A good scholar of Greek will do better than that; he will translate *Patera* into "Nourisher" or "Sustainer," and *Paraclete* into "Comforter," *al-Amīn* in Arabic, a title given to Prophet Muḥammed even before he had started his mission. The translation of what John has in 14:16-17 should instead run as follows:

> And I will request the Nourisher (God) to send you another Messenger, so that he may be (your) guide always, the inspired, the Truthful, whom the world at large will not welcome because it will not comprehend or appreciate him, but you (believers) will recognize him. He will dwell with you and (his message) will find a place in your hearts.

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[1]The reader can easily see that there were two men among the disciples of Jesus named Judas; one of them was crucified, so he was rewarded in heaven, and the other was not, so he was rewarded by the Romans for his treachery. The latter is Judas Iscariot.

[2]*The Great News: The New Testament* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: International Bible Society, 1984).

A testimony to the truth of the statement saying "... and (his message) will find a place in your hearts" is that most converts to Islam used to follow one sect of Christianity or another. Upon acceptance of Islam, such converts do not abandon Christ; they simply rediscover him and get to know the real Christ whose message has been and is still being distorted. The best Christians in the world are the Muslims. Muslims wholeheartedly honour Jesus Christ and his true and pristine message presented by Prophet Muḥammed; read the following verses of the Holy Qur'ān and see for yourself how such message is described:

> *Allāh said: O Jesus! I am going to terminate the period of your stay (on earth) and cause you to ascend unto Me and purify you of those who disbelieve and make those who follow you above those who disbelieve to the Day of Resurrection...*
> (Qur'an, 3:55)

Carefully examine the above verse especially this portion: "... and make those who follow you above those who disbelieve to the Day of Resurrection" and see how the Almighty raises the status of those who follow Jesus above those who disbelieve in him till the Day of Judgment. Those who believe in Jesus Christ and who follow his pristine message are none other than the Muslims, whereas the rest may be divided into two groups: 1) those who have distorted the message of Jesus Christ and lied about it one generation after another and are still doing so, and 2) the Jews who disbelieved in him and in his message and disbelieved in his virgin birth. Although the Jews now are the masters of the world, thanks to the West in general and to the U.S. in particular, but such power they will not keep forever. They will eventually weaken because the promise of the Almighty is true and irreversible; they will be exposed for what they really are: the anti-Christ, the *Dajjāl*, the disseminator of falsehood through their absolute control over the news and information media.

Let us go back to the argument about the *Paraclete*. This is not the first time such an argument is raised. *'Allama*[1] al-Majlisi records

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[1]Please refer to the Glossary for the meanings of all Arabic terms used in this book. As a matter of fact, this Glossary contains more such words than actually used in this book.

an incident narrated by al-Hasan ibn Muhammed al-Nawfali involving Imām ʿAli ibn Mousa al-Rida debating with a Catholic about the authenticity of the existing four Gospels comprising the Bible. It went on as follows:

The Imām asked the Catholic, "O Christian! Are you familiar with a statement in the Bible wherein Jesus says, `I am going to my Lord and your Lord, and the *Paraclete* is coming who shall testify to my truth just as I testified for him, and he shall explain everything to you, and he shall be the one to expose all the sins of nations, and he shall be the one to smash the pillar of apostasy'?"[1] The Catholic said, "We admit all what you have just quoted of the Bible." The Imām asked him, "Do you testify that such a statement is actually fixed in the Bible?" "Yes," said the Catholic. Imām al-Rida said, "O Catholic! Could you tell me about the first Bible, how you lost it then found it, and who put your existing Bible together?" The Catholic said, "We did not lose the Bible except for one single day then we found it fresh; John and Matthew brought it back to us." Imām al-Rida said, "How little your knowledge of the Bible and its scholars is! If such is your claim, then why do you dispute with one another about the Bible? Rather, controversy has always revolved around the Bible which is in your hands today. Had it been the same as the first one was, you would not have thus disputed (with one another) about it, but I shall inform you of such controversy myself."

The Imām went on to state the following:

"Be informed that when the first Bible was lost, the Christians gathered around their scholars and said to them, `Jesus son of Mary has been killed, and we do not know where the Bible is. You are the scholars; so, what do you have with you?' Luke and Mark said to them, `We have learned the Bible by heart; so, do not grieve in its regard, and do not forsake the churches, for we shall recite to you one Gospel after another on each Sunday till we put it all together.' Luke, Mark, John and Matthew sat together, and they put this Bible

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[1]This is a rough translation of the original Arabic text. A thorough research of the Bible may yield better results and reveal the exact Biblical verse the Imām was referring to. Unfortunately, the Imām did not specify which of the four Gospels he was quoting. Consulting a Bible in Arabic may also produce the same anticipated result: the number of the exact verse and the name of the Gospel the Imām had in mind.

of yours for you after you had lost the first (original) one. These four men were students of the early disciples; are you aware of that?!" The Catholic answered, "This I did not know and now I do. It is also now clear to me how much you know about the Bible, and I have heard from you things with which I was familiar and to which my heart testifies to be the truth. I have, therefore, gained a better understanding." Imām al-Rida then said to him, "How do you, then, find the testimony of these men?" "Accurate," said the Catholic, "since they are the scholars of the Bible, and everything to which they testified is the truth." Imām al-Rida then turned to al-Mamoon and his company and said, "Bear witness to what he has just said." They said, "We testify." Then the Imām turned to the Catholic and said, "I challenge you to swear by the son and his mother whether you know if Matthew had said, `The Messiah is David son of Abraham son of Isaac son of Jacob son of Yehuda son of Khadrun', and that Mark said about the lineage of Jesus son of Mary that he was `The word of God which He placed in the human body, so it became human', and that Luke said, `Jesus son of Mary and his mother were humans of flesh and blood, so the Holy Spirit entered into them'. Then you testify that Jesus had himself said the following about his creation, `I tell you the truth: None ascends the heavens except that he descends therefrom except the man who rides the camel, the seal of the prophets, for he shall ascend to the heavens then shall he descend;' so, what do you say about that?" The Catholic said, "This is the speech of Jesus, and we do not deny it." Imām al-Rida said, "If so, what do you say about the testimony of Luke, Mark, and Matthew with regard to Jesus and what they had attributed to him?" The Catholic said, "They lied about Jesus..." Imām al-Rida turned to the audience and said, "O people! Has he not (a moment ago) testified to their truthfulness and said that they were the scholars of the Bible and what they said is the truth?!" The Catholic said to the Imām, "O scholar of the Muslims! I would like you to excuse me from discussing these men." After a while the Imām turned to that Catholic, who was an arch-bishop, and said, "In the Bible, it is written: `The son of the virtuous woman is departing, and the *Paraclete* is coming after him, and he shall lighten the burdens and explain everything to you, and he shall testify for me as I have testified to you. I have brought you the parables, and he shall bring you the interpretation.' Do you believe that such a text exists in the Bible?" The Catholic answered

in the affirmative.[1]

The Holy Qur'ān, moreover, tells us in Surat al-Saff (Ch. 61) that "Jesus son of Mary said: O Children of Israel! I am the prophet of Allāh to you testifying to that which is before me of the Torah and giving the glad tidings of a Prophet who will come after me; his name is Ahmed; but when he came to them with clear arguments, they said: This is clear magic" (Qur'ān, 61:6). Compare this Qur'ānic verse with the following text in the Gospel of St. Barnabas:

> Thereupon said the disciples, "O master, it is thus written in the book of Moses, that in Isaac was the promise made."
>
> Jesus answered with a groan, "It is so written, but Moses wrote it not, nor Joshua, but rather our rabbins, who fear not God. Verily, I say to you that if you consider the words of the angel Gabriel, you shall discover the malice of our scribes and doctors. For the angel said: `Abraham, all the world shall know how God loves you, but how shall the world know the love that you bear to God? Assuredly it is necessary that you do something for the love of God.' Abraham answered, `Behold the servant of God, ready to do all that which God shall will.'
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> "Then spoke God, saying to Abraham, `Take your son, your firstborn Ishmael, and come up the mountain to sacrifice him.' How is Isaac firstborn, if when Isaac was born Ishmael was seven years old?"
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> Then answered Jesus, "Verily I say to you that Satan ever seeks to annul the laws of God. Therefore he with his followers, hypocrites and evildoers, the former with false doctrine, the latter with lewd living, today have contaminated almost all things, so that scarcely is the truth found. Woe to the hypocrites, for the praises of this world shall turn for them into insults and torments in hell.
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> "I therefore say to you that the messenger of God is a splendor that shall give gladness to nearly all that God has made, for he is adorned with the spirit of understanding and of counsel, the spirit

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[1]al-Majlisi, *Bihār al-Anwār*, Vol. 14, pp. 331-333. Again, since this text is my translation from the Arabic original, the Imām's quotations may not be exact. Consulting a Bible written in Arabic will be worthwhile and will provide the numbers of the chapters and verses to which the Imām here refers. Unfortunately, I do not have a copy of the Bible in Arabic.

of wisdom and might, the spirit of fear and love (of God), the spirit of prudence and temperance. He is adorned with the spirit of charity and mercy, the spirit of justice and piety, the spirit of gentleness and patience, which he has received from God three times more than He has given to all his creatures. O blessed time, when he shall come to the world. Believe me that I have seen him and have done him reverence, even as every prophet has seen him. Seeing that of his spirit God gives to them prophecy. And when I saw him my soul was filled with consolation, saying, O Muhammed, God be with you, and may he make me worthy to untie your shoe latchet, for obtaining this I shall be a great prophet and holy one of God." (The Gospel of Barnabas 44)

"... unworthy to untie your latchet" above brings to memory what St. Mark said in 1:7: "And this was his message: `After me will come one more powerful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie." The speaker is undoubtedly Jesus and the one whose coming he is predicting is none other than Prophet Muhammed. But people look at things and make them appear as they would like them to. Such is the truth which all other disciples, with the exception of Barnabas, had deliberately hidden.

The reader is encouraged to obtain a copy of the Gospel of Saint Barnabas[1] and compare it with other existing Bibles, be they those accepted by the Catholics or those endorsed by the Protestants and judge for himself as to how much distortion the message of Christ has suffered and is still suffering...

Al-Dahhak has said that the disciples (in Arabic *hawāriyyūn*) were called so due to their pure hearts. Apparently he gave them more credit than they deserve, seeing how much distortion they inflicted on the message of Jesus even as early as the very first century. As a matter of fact, one very famous Christian writer, George Bernard Shaw, described these disciples very well when he said the following on p. 72 of *The Adventures of a Black Girl in Her Search for God*: "Jesus could be reproached for having chosen his disciples very unwisely if we could believe that he had any real choice. There are

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[1]Since there is no copyright on The Gospel of Barnabas, the copy of it consulted for this book does not contain the Publisher's name nor the place nor the date of publication.

moments when one is tempted to say that there was not one Christian among them and that Judas was the only one who showed any gleams of common sense." Imagine! Abdullāh ibn al-Mubārak has said that they were called so because their faces were shining with the mark of adoration, its glow and whiteness. The Arabic root word, *ḥūr*, means: intense whiteness. Al-Ḥasan has said that it means "supporters" or "helpers," while Qatādah thinks that it means "the ones most fit to be successors of their master."

Did those disciples or apostles deserve all these compliments? Let us examine how they dealt with their master:

The night preceding the "imprisonment" of Jesus Christ was truly a testing night for the faith of those disciples. On that night, those disciples joined him in his concealment. Jesus knew perfectly well what they were; so, he recommended them to devote themselves to prayer so that they might not fail the test. On that occasion, they made a great profession of faith and integrity. One said, "I will shed my blood where a drop of your perspiration falls." Another said, "I will die before anyone hurts a hair of your body." Despite all these protests and professions, they could not keep even the night's vigil along with Jesus. Jesus said to them, "Stay here with me keeping the night's vigil along with me..." Then he came to the disciples and saw them fallen asleep. He then said to Peter, "Can you not keep even a moment's vigil with me? Keep vigil and keep yourself engaged in prayers lest you should fail the test..." Then, coming out again, he saw them sleeping the second time, and their eyes were heavy with sleep..., and he saw them the third time sleeping. If you have a copy of *The New Testament in Today's English Version* (third edition, New York), turn to p. 73 and see for yourself.

Ibn ʿAbbās has said that they were fishermen. Some of them were. Jesus passed by them once and asked them what they were doing. "Fishing," said they. He asked them, "Would you like to come with me so we may fish for people?" They asked him, "How can that be?!" He said, "We invite them to the way of Allāh." They asked him who he was, and he answered them that he was Jesus son of Mary, a servant and messenger of Allāh. "Is there any other prophet whose status is higher than yours?" they asked him. "Yes," he answered, "the Arabian Prophet," so they followed him, believed in him, and joined his march. This is what we, Muslims, would like to think of these disciples, but how do Christians look at us? Contrary to what we, Muslims, are

taught by our Islamic code of ethics, Christians do not recognize our religion or any other religion besides theirs. To them, anyone who does not recognize Jesus as the "son of God," His "only begotten son," and who is not baptized, can have no place in heaven. Such is their wishful thinking. Compare this attitude with the tolerance Islam demonstrates in the following verse of Surat al-Baqara and judge for yourself:

> *Surely those who believe (Muslims), and those who are Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabeans*[1] *(Sabians), whoever believes in God and in the Last Day and does good, they shall have their reward from their Lord, and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve.*
> (Qur'an, 2:62)

Such is the tolerance of Islam, and such is the perfect code of Islamic ethics.

The Holy Spirit

Among the signs of the prophethood of Jesus is that he was assisted by the Holy Spirit. The Almighty has said, "We gave Jesus son of Mary clear arguments and strengthened him with the holy spirit" (Qur'ān, 2:87); "Allāh will say: O Jesus son of Mary! Remember My favor on you and on your mother when I strengthened you with the Holy Spirit" (Qur'ān, 5:110).

Scholars have differed regarding the Holy Spirit (*al rūh al qudus*). Al-Rabee' ibn Anas has said that it is the spirit that blew the breath of life into him, and that Allāh attached it to His own Name as an act of honoring. The *qudus* is Allāh Almighty according to the verse, "... and a spirit from Him" (Qur'ān, 4:171), and also, "... so We breathed into her of Our *rūh*" (Qur'ān, 21:91). Other scholars have said that

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[1]Some Arab writers say that the Sabeans were a certain sect of unbelievers who worshipped the stars secretly and openly professed to be Christians. According to others, they are followers of the religion of Sābi' son of Seth son of Adam, which is more accurate, for the Holy Qur'ān includes them in the above quoted verse among the believers. Other writers say that their religion is pretty much what Christianity teaches except that their *qibla* was towards the south. Still others say that they followed the religion of prophet Noah, and surely Allāh knows best.

what is meant by the *qudus* is purity, hence *al rūḥ al qudus* means "the pure spirit." Jesus is also called *rūḥ* for the simple reason that he was not carried in men's loins, nor was he carried by the wombs of married women; rather, he was an order decreed by the Almighty. Al-Suddi says that *al rūḥ al qudus*, the Holy Spirit, is Gabriel, and that this phrase means: "supporting Jesus through Gabriel," peace be upon both of them, since he was his companion, friend, and guard, walking with him wherever he walked till he ascended to heavens. Saʿeed ibn Jubayr and ʿUbayd ibn ʿUmayr say that it is Allāh's Greatest Name, and through it did he (Jesus) bring the dead back to life and perform those miracles to people.

Miracles of Jesus

Al-Suddi has said that when Jesus was at his class, he used to tell his fellows what their parents were doing. He would tell one of them, "Go home and see that your family has eaten such-and-such food," or "they have left such-and-such for you," so he would go home and ask his parents to let him have it. The family would in turn ask him how he came to know about it, and he would say that Jesus had told him. For this reason, the parents prohibited their children from having anything to do with Jesus, telling them that he was a sorcerer. They once gathered them all together at a house, and Jesus came and wanted to see them. When he asked who were confined inside the house, it was maliciously said to him, "Pigs." He said, "So shall they be," whereupon the door of the house was opened and indeed pigs came out of the house, and the news of the incident became widespread.

The Children of Israel felt fed up with Jesus. They wanted to get rid of him. When his mother sensed the danger, she conveyed him on a donkey and went out to Egypt[1].

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[1]The discreet reader realizes that reference to Egypt does not mean today's Egypt. We are talking not about now but about two thousand years ago. At that time, Egypt was a "superpower" that had extended its domination to a large part of the then world. This statement means: "Mary conveyed Jesus on a donkey and went out to the lands under Egypt's control." Mary was avoiding the brutality of the Romans and those who worked for them. Some parts of Palestine at that time fell under Egypt's

(continued...)

When Jesus and his mother, peace be upon both of them, came out wandering about in the land, they left the Children of Israel behind them and came to a villager who hosted them and was very kind to them. The king during that time was a stubborn oppressor, so their host one day came back home looking very depressed. He entered his house while Mary was in his wife's company. Mary asked his wife why her husband looked so depressed, whereupon she said to her, "Our king compels every man to take care of feeding him and his soldiers and serve them wine; anyone who refused would be penalized. Today is our turn to host him, and we are not able to handle such a burden." Mary asked her to tell her husband not to worry, since he was kind to her and to her son, and that she would ask her son to invoke Allāh on his behalf, and that his invocation would alone be sufficient. Then Mary told Jesus of it, whereupon he said that if he were to do so, there would be some mischief [due to wine drinking]. "It does not matter," Mary said, "for he has surely been very kind to us." Then Jesus told his host to have his pots and containers filled with water, then to inform him once they were all full. The man did so, whereupon Jesus invoked his Lord and the water in the pots turned into meat and gravy, while the water in the containers turned into wine[1]. People had never tasted anything like it before. When the king came, he and his men ate, and when he drank of that wine, he asked his host where he had obtained it from. When the man told the king where he had obtained it from, the king said to him, "The wine I am served at my palace is brought to me from that land, and it surely does not taste like this one." The host had to change his story, but the king pressured him to tell him the truth. The man gave up and said, "The truth is that there is, at my house, a child who is granted by Allāh the answer to any of his pleas, and he is the one who invoked Him to turn the water into wine."

It so happened that that king had a son whom he very much

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[1](...continued)
control.

[1]This incident can be found in the Bible. Some Christians find no harm in wine drinking, basing their argument on Jesus turning water into wine, but little do they consider the fact that Jesus never drank that wine nor any other wine.

wished to succeed him as monarch, but that son had died only a few days ago. He loved him more than anyone else. The king said, "A man who invokes Allāh to turn water into wine and Allāh answers his plea is surely capable of bringing my son back to life." Jesus was brought to him, and he discussed the matter with him. Jesus said to him, "Do not do that, for if he is brought back to life, a great deal of evil shall take place." The king said, "I am not concerned about that after seeing him again." Jesus asked him, "If I bring him back to life, are you all going to leave me and my mother go wherever we want?" The king said, "Yes." Jesus, therefore, invoked Allāh Who did, indeed, bring that son back to life. When the king's subjects saw him, they rushed to grab their weapons and said, "This king has plundered our wealth and now wants to appoint his son as his successor over us so that he, too, will do what his father has been doing..." They fought among themselves. Jesus and his mother left them and continued their journey.

Another of his miracles is that he created out of clay birds, as Allāh Almighty tells us in the Holy Qur'ān, 3:49: "... I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, that I determine for you out of mud like the form of a bird, then I breathe into it and it becomes a bird with Allāh's permission," and in 5:110: "... and when you determined out of mud a thing like the form of a bird by My permission, then you breathed into it and it became a bird by My permission."

Among his other miracles was his curing the leprous and those born blind, as Allāh Almighty has said, "... and you healed the [born] blind and the leprous by My permission" (Qur'ān, 5:110). The reason why these two ailments were particularly mentioned is due to the fact that nobody among the physicians of the time could find any cure for them. Jesus lived during a time when medicine was considered the most prominent branch of knowledge, so he was able to demonstrate to them miracles in it which nobody else could.

Still another of his miracles was his bringing the dead back to life by the Permission of Allāh Who says, "... and when you brought forth the dead [back to life] by My permission" (Qur'ān, 5:110). Among the dead whom he brought back to life was Lazarus (as he is called in Latin, a word which means "one helped by God," or Eleazar in Hebrew), a friend of his. He, his sisters Martha and Mary were friends of Jesus. His sister Mary sent Jesus a message saying that her brother had died three days ago. Some people suggested to her to

escort them to his grave. She did, and it was inside a closed vault. Jesus supplicated to his Lord saying, "Lord! Creator of the seven heavens and the seven earths! You have sent me to the Children of Israel to invite them to Your creed, and I have told them that I can bring the dead back to life with Your permission; therefore, do bring Eleazar back to life, O Lord!" Lazarus came back to life and got out of his grave on his own. He lived and even fathered a number of children. References to this incident exist in three of modern day's versions of the Gospels[1]: Matthew, John, and Luke.

The son of an old woman was another. This story says that while touring the land in the company of his disciples, Jesus passed by a city and said, "This city has a treasure; who among you would like to go and take it out?" They said, "O *Ruḥullāh* (spirit of Allāh)! No stranger enters this town without being murdered by its people." Jesus said, "Stay here, all of you, till I come back." He went and entered it. He came to the door of a house and said, "*Assalāmo ʿAlaikum*, O residents of the house! This is a stranger asking you to feed him!" An old woman said to him, "Are you not satisfied with the fact that I do not go to the governor and tell him about you, yet you have the courage to ask for food?!" While Jesus was thus standing at the door, her young son joined them. Jesus said to him, "Please do host me tonight!" The young man repeated what his old mother had said. Jesus then said to him, "But if you do host me, I will enable you to marry the king's daughter." The young man said, "You must be either a mad man or Jesus son of Mary!" Jesus said, "I am Jesus," whereupon he agreed to host him. He offered to let him stay there for the night. The next morning, he said to his host, "Go to the king's

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[1]These Gospels have continuously been undergoing changes, editings, distortions, etc. due to mistranslation, sectarian biases and prejudices and other factors. The only Gospel accepted by Muslims as accurate is that of St. Barnabas, a Cypriot companion of St. Paul (originally Saul), which was not canonized by the Council of Nicaea of 325 A.D. That Council was called for by the Byzantine emperor Constantine I (288 - 337 A.D.), or Constantine the Great, who built the Turkish city Constantinople in 330 A.D. to dedicate it to Jesus' mother, Virgin Mary. Constantine's objective was to settle the disputes among various Christian sects as to what constituted Christianity, but the said Conference created more problems than it solved. It was also boycotted by a number of Christian sects who did not endorse its decisions.

palace and tell him that you had come to ask for his daughter's hand. He will order to have you beaten and kicked out." The youth stood before the king and told him that he wished to ask him for his daughter's hand. The king ordered him to be beaten; he was beaten and kicked out.

The youth came back and told Jesus what had happened, whereupon Jesus said to him, "Tomorrow, go back and ask for his daughter's hand; what will happen to you will be different from what has happened to you today." The youth did as he was told, and he was given a beating worse than the one he had received the day before. He told Jesus about what had happened to him, and Jesus said to him, "Go one more time back to him, for he will tell you that he will marry her to you on his own terms, and that his terms will be a gold and silver mansion with everything in it made of gold, silver and chrysolite. Tell him that you will do that. If he sends someone with you, you will find your quest, and do not talk to him anything about it." The youth entered the king's palace for the third time and again approached the king regarding his marriage to his daughter. The king asked him, "Do you accept to pay her dowry if I decide it?" He asked him what the dowry was, and the king told him what Jesus had already told him to expect. He said, "Yes, I do; so send someone to see it." The king sent a number of men with him, and he did, indeed, show them what he had promised to, and people were quite impressed. The king married him to his daughter, and the youth found it hard to believe that he finally married into the royal family. He said to Jesus , "O *Rūḥullāh*! How can you do all of this while you yourself look in such a (shabby) condition?!" Jesus said, "I have preferred what will last to what will perish." The youth said to him, "I, too, am willing to abandon what perishes, and I desire to accompany you." He actually renounced this vanishing world and became a follower of Jesus who took him by the hand and introduced him to his disciples. "This," said Jesus, "is the treasure I had told you about!" The son of that old woman remained in the company of Jesus till he died. Jesus passed by and saw his corpse lying in state on a bed, so he invoked Allāh and the dead man came back to life and sat on the edge of the bed. He was carried by other men from the bed and given clothes to wear. He put the carrier on his shoulders then went back home. He remained with his family and fathered a number of children.

Another miracle of Jesus: He brought Sam son of Noah back to life. Jesus was once describing the ark of Noah to his disciples when the latter asked him, "Is it possible that you bring to life one of those who were aboard it so that he may describe it for us?" Jesus stood up and went to a hill, took a handful of its soil and said, "This is the grave of Sam son of Noah. If you wish, I can bring him back to life for you." They welcomed the idea, so he invoked Allāh by His Greatest Name, struck the hill with his staff then said, "Come back to life by the Will of Allāh," whereupon Sam came out of his grave with half of his hair looking gray. Immediately Sam asked, "Has the Day of Judgment come?" Jesus said, "No, but I have called upon you in Allāh's Greatest Name." During the time of Noah, old age never changed the color of people's hair; only during the time of Abraham did all of that start to change. Sam lived five hundred years maintaining his youthful look. He told them about the story of the ark. After that Jesus ordered him to die, and Sam responded with, "On one condition! That Allāh spares me the agony of death!" Jesus invoked Allāh and included Sam's wish in his invocation, and Allāh responded favorably to his plea.

Another of the miracles of Jesus was his walking on water. Jesus once went out on one of his trips accompanied by a short and faithful follower of his. When Jesus reached the sea[1], he said, "*Bismillāh*, in health, and in conviction," then he started walking on the water. The man was quite amazed and said to himself, "This is Jesus, the spirit of Allāh, walking on the water's surface!" Having inaudibly said so, he fell into the water. Fearing drowning, he sought help from Jesus who took hold of him and pulled him out. Jesus said to him, "O Shortie![2] What did you say to yourself?!" He told him about it, whereupon Jesus said, "You placed yourself in a position in which Allāh did not place you; therefore, Allāh despised you for having said what you said; so, do regret and repent." The man regretted and repented, so

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[1]Most likely, this is the Sea of Galilee, or Tiberias (in Arabic *Bahr Ṭabariyyah*) in northeast Palestine. During the lifetime of Jesus Christ, nine cities were flourishing on its shores. Some of his disciples, the fishermen, were from that area.

[2]Jesus Christ had a most beautiful and attractive conduct and a brilliant sense of humour. This quotation testifies to this fact.

he went back to the status with which Allāh had blessed him. Thus did Jesus provide us with a lesson in piety and admonish us not to envy one another.

Another tale says that Jesus passed once by a man who used to sit quite often by a grave. He saw him doing so quite often; therefore, he decided to find out why. Jesus came to him and said, "O servant of Allāh! I see that you spend a lot of time sitting by this grave." The man said, "O *Ruḥullāh*! This grave contains my wife's corpse, a woman of beauty and affinity, and I have a trust with her." He asked him, "Do you like that I pray Allāh and He brings her back to life for you?" The man warmly welcomed the suggestion. Jesus made his ablution, offered two prostrations, then invoked Allāh Almighty to bring the person inside that grave back to life. A coal-black man came out of the grave looking like a burnt stump of a tree. He asked him who he was, so he answered him by saying, "O *Ruḥullāh*! I am a man being tormented for the past forty years, and at this hour, it was said to me to respond to your call, so I did," adding, "O messenger of Allāh! I have seen so much torment that if Allāh ever returned me to this world, I would grant Him my covenant that I shall never disobey Him in anything; so, please do pray Allāh on my behalf." Jesus felt sorry for him, and he invoked Allāh Almighty on his behalf, then he told him to go away, and he did. The man who used to frequently sit by the grave then said, "O messenger of Allāh! I have made a mistake about identifying this grave! Her grave is over there!" Jesus invoked Allāh again, and a very beautiful young woman came out of the grave. Jesus asked him, "Do you know her?" "Do I know her?!" the man retorted adding, "Of course I do! She is my wife." Jesus invoked Allāh to reunite her with her husband, and the latter took her by the hand till they came to a tree under which he slept, putting his head on her lap. The son of the king happened to pass by, and he looked at her and she looked at him, and they instantly admired each other. He beckoned to her, so she moved her husband's head away from her lap and followed the prince. Later, her husband woke up. He looked for her and could not find her, so he went out looking for her till he was able to get hold of her. He held her and said that she was his wife, while the prince kept saying that she was his bondmaid. As they argued thus, Jesus happened to pass by. The husband said to the prince that that man was Jesus. Having heard the husband tell his story, Jesus asked the woman, "What do you have to say?" She said,

"I am the bondmaid of this man, and I do not know the other." Jesus said to her, "Give us back what we have given you." She said, "I have done so," falling dead. Jesus retorted, "Have you seen anything more strange than this?! A man whom Allāh caused to die as a disbeliever is brought back to life to believe, and a woman whom Allāh caused to die as a believer, then He brought life back to her, chose to disbelieve!"

The Table of Viands

Allāh Almighty has said,

> *The disciples said: O Jesus son of Mary! Will your Lord consent to send down to us food from heavens? He said: Be careful of (your duty to) Allāh if you are believers.*
> (Qur'an, 5:112)

What was that table all about? How was it sent down and what did it contain? These questions are answered differently by different people, each according to the extent of his knowledge or depth of his imagination! Qatādah has quoted Jābir quoting ʿAmmār ibn Yāsir citing the Messenger of Allāh saying, "The table was sent down with bread and meat on it because they had asked Jesus for food to eat, and that it would not be exhausted. He said to them, `I shall do so, and it shall always come to you as long as you do not become malicious or betray (me), for in the latter case, you will be tormented.' It was only one day after its descent upon them that they became malicious, and they betrayed (Jesus)."

ʿAtā ibn Abu Rabāḥ[1] is quoted citing Salmān al-Fārisi (the Persian) saying that Jesus never committed any wrong deed, nor did he rebuke an orphan, nor did he burst laughing, nor did he drive flies away from his face[2]... When the disciples asked him to bring them tables of viands, he said, "Lord! Do send down to us food from heavens to be for us an ever-recurring happiness, to the first of us

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[1]Atā ibn Abu Rabāḥ (d. 114 A.H./732 A.D.) was a renown *tabiʿi* who learned from the *ṣaḥāba* and reported *ḥadīth* from them. He was once the *mufti* of Mecca.

[2]This is an expression meaning: "He never hurt anyone."

and to the last, and a sign from You, and grant us means of subsistence, and You are the best of Providers" (Qur'ān, 5:114). A red table between two clouds, one above it and one underneath it, came descending upon them as they looked at it till it settled on the ground before them. Jesus wept and said, "Lord! I implore You to count me among those who are grateful to You! Lord! Make it a sign of mercy from You rather than a sign of penalty!" When they saw it, they found it something which they had never seen before, and similar to its fragrance they had never inhaled. Jesus said to them, "Whoever is most righteous in deeds among you should uncover it and mention the Name of Allāh over it then eat of it." Shemon (Simon) al-Safa said, "You are more fit to do so than any of us." Jesus stood up, made his ablution, offered lengthy prayers and kept weeping for quite some time. Then he removed the sheet that had covered it saying, *Bismillāh* (in the Name of Allāh), the best of sustainers." It was a roasted fish the scales and the bones of which had already been removed. So fat it was that it seemed as if it was floating over oil. At its head there was salt, and at its tail there was vinegar, and it was surrounded by many types of vegetables with the exception of leek. There were five loaves of bread on it. On the first of them there were olives. On the second there was honey. On the third there was oil, and on the fourth there was jerked meat. On the fifth there was cheese.

Simon said, "O *Rūḥullāh!* Is this earthly, or is it from the food of the afterlife?" Jesus said, "What you see is neither the food of the life of this world nor of that of the Hereafter, but it is something which Allāh has innovated through His overwhelming Might; so, eat of what you have asked for, and He will provide you with an increase of His favors." They said, "O *Rūḥullāh!* Could you please show us a miracle derived from this one?" Jesus said, "O fish! Come back to life by the permission of Allāh!" The fish shook and its scales and bones came back to it, whereupon the disciples were frightened of it. Jesus asked them, "What is the matter with you that you ask for things which, when granted, you dislike?" Then he added, "How worried I am about you that you should ever be chastised! O fish! Go back to your former state by the permission of Allāh!" The fish resumed its former state, a roasted fish, just as they had seen it before. They said, "O *Ruūḥullāh!* Be the first to eat of it, then we will eat after you." Jesus said, "God forbid that I should eat of it; rather, those who asked for it shall eat of it." But they were apprehensive of eating of it; so, Jesus

invited the indigent, the sick, the leprous, and those afflicted with other ailments to come and eat of it. He said to them, "Eat of the sustenance of your Lord! Yours shall be the joy, and affliction shall be the lot of others!" So they ate of it, and as many as one thousand and three hundred men and women from among the poor, the sick, the handicapped, and those afflicted with ailments ate of it to their fill. Then Jesus looked at the fish, and it appeared just as it had come the first time from the heavens.

The table after that ascended as they looked on and disappeared. All those who were sick and ate of it were healed, and so were all those with permanent handicaps, and Allāh enriched of His favor the poor who partook of it till their death. The disciples regretted having missed the opportunity to eat of it, and so did those who could not. Whenever it descended, the young and the old, the men and the women, would crowd around it. It kept coming to them for forty days in the late morning and before noon. It would remain with them till they all had enough, then it would fly away before their very eyes. It used to come one day and skip another, just as the she-camel of the people of Thamūd. Allāh Almighty inspired Jesus to "Make My table and sustenance for the benefit of the poor rather than the rich," so the rich were very displeased about that, so much so that they complained about it and they started casting doubt about the table, saying, "Do you believe that a table can really come down from the heavens?!" Jesus said to them, "Prepare yourselves, then, to receive the penalty of Allāh."

Allāh Almighty inspired Jesus: "I have made two provisions regarding those who belie it. Those who disbelieve after I have sent it down will be tormented a torment with which I will not torment anyone else from among the people of the world." Jesus, thereupon, said, as the Holy Qur'ān tells us, "If You chastise them, surely they are Your servants, and if You forgive them, surely You are the Mighty, the Wise" (Qur'ān, 5:118). He, therefore, turned three hundred men from among them, who had spent their night in bed with their wives, into pigs running in the alleys and frequenting the places where garbage is collected, eating filth. When people saw that, they were alarmed, and they came to Jesus son of Mary horrified. They wept over those of their families who were turned into pigs. When the pigs saw Jesus, they wept and kept turning around him. Jesus called them by their names, and they came, one by one, crying

and nodding with their heads as he called out their names, unable to speak. They lived for three days, then they perished.

The Almighty Admonishes Jesus

Abu Busayr quotes Abu Abdullāh, Imām Ja'fer al-Ṣādiq, saying that the Almighty, Glory and Exaltation are His, admonished Jesus son of Mary thus:

> O Jesus! You are the Messiah by My command; you bring the dead back to life by My Word, so let your desire be My Pleasure, and be fearful of Me, for you shall find no refuge from Me except to Me. O Jesus! I admonish you as one Who is Compassionate to you: Seek My mercy though I granted you authority, and seek whatever pleases Me, for blessed you are as a grown-up, and blessed you are as a child, wherever you may be. I testify that you are My servant and the son of My bondmaid. O Jesus! Let My status with you be your ultimate concern, and remember Me so that such remembrance will be treasured when you return to Me. Seek nearness to Me through optional (*nafl*) acts of worship; rely upon Me so that I may make you independent of others; do not rely on others else My Wrath should overtake you.
>
> O Jesus! Be patient when tried, and be satisfied with your lot. Be as I would like you to be, and I would like to be pleased with you, for My pleasure is that I am obeyed and never disobeyed. O Jesus! Let your tongue ever mention My Name, and let your heart ever be filled with love for Me. O Jesus! Be aware in the times of heedlessness, and judge with beautiful wisdom seeking My Pleasure. O Jesus! Desire My Pleasure, fear My wrath, and kill your heart with fear of Me. O Jesus! Observe the night as means to seeking My Pleasure, and deprive yourself of water during your day seeking to treasure it for the Day when you will very much be in need of Me. O Jesus! Compete with others in the paths of goodness as much as you can so that you will be identified with goodness wherever you go. O Jesus! Judge among My servants as I have advised you, and effect My justice among them, for I have revealed to you that which heals the hearts from Satan's ailments. O Jesus! Do not sit with one who is tried with tribulations. O Jesus! What I say is the truth: No creature truly believes in Me except that he humbles himself to Me, and no creature feels awe of Me except that he is hopeful of My

rewards. I, therefore, testify to you that such a person is secure against My punishment so long as you do not alter My way. O Jesus son of the righteous Virgin! Weep over your soul like one who bids his family farewell, who has no desire for this life, who leaves life for those who seek it, desiring only what is with Alläh.

O Jesus! Be, moreover, kind in speech, disseminating the greeting, awake when the eyes of the doers of good are asleep, being apprehensive of the Hereafter, of the tremendous quakes, of the horrors of the Day of Judgment when no family nor offspring nor wealth will be of any avail. O Jesus! Beautify your eyes with grief when the idle ones laugh. O Jesus! Be submissive and persevering, for congratulations to you when you obtain what those who persevere shall receive. O Jesus! Live your life day by day, and taste what lost its taste, for the truth is what I say: You have only your hour and your moment, so derive lessons from the passage of time, and let what is coarse (of clothes) and what is most simple (of food) suffice you, for you have seen what your final destiny shall be, and that whatever you take and whatever you consume is already preordained. O Jesus! You shall be questioned, so have mercy on the weak just as I have been Merciful unto you, and do not cause any grief to the orphan.

O Jesus! Mourn your own soul when you perform your prayers, and let your feet take you to the places where prayers are held, and let Me hear the sweetness of your mentioning My Name, for I have treated you beautifully. O Jesus! How many nation have I caused to perish on account of a sin from which I protected you? O Jesus! Be kind to the weak, and raise your exhausted eyes to the sky and supplicate to Me, for I am near to you, and do not supplicate to Me except when you are pleading to Me, having one and only concern, for whenever you thus call upon Me, so shall I answer your call. O Jesus! I never wanted the life in this world to be the reward of those who preceded you nor a penalty to those against whom I sought revenge. O Jesus! You shall perish, whereas I shall always remain; from Me comes your sustenance, and with Me is the time of your death, and to Me is your return, and upon Me is your judgment; so, plead to Me and to none else so that your plea may be good, and so that I will be the One to answer it.

O Jesus! How numerous are people, yet how few are those who persevere! Trees are many, yet those that bear tasty fruit from

among them are few; so do not let the beauty of a tree allure you till you taste of its fruit. O Jesus! Do not be allured by one who is rebellious against My wish; he eats My sustenance while worshipping someone else other than Me, then he calls upon Me at the moment of affliction, and I still respond to his call, then he goes back to what he used to do! Is it against Me that he rebels, or is he challenging My wrath? By My own Self do I swear that I shall take him in a way from which he shall have no recourse, nor shall he have any refuge. Where shall he flee? From My sky, or from My earth?! O Jesus! Tell the unjust ones from among the Children of Israel: Do not supplicate to Me as long as you harbour usury and the idols are at your homes, for I have sworn never to answer the prayer of anyone who thus prays to Me, and that I shall make My answer to their prayers a curse upon them till they disperse. O Jesus! How beautiful is My patience and how beautiful is what I seek, yet people are heedless, returning not to Me! Words come out of their mouths without their hearts comprehending them till they become the object of My contempt, and till they try to please the believers seeking My pleasure.

O Jesus! Be merciful seeking mercy for others, and treat the servants as you wish them to treat you, and quite often remember death and separation from the family. Do not be distracted, for distraction corrupts, and do not be heedless, for the heedless are distant from Me, and remember Me with good deeds so that I may likewise remember you.

O Jesus! Seek My forgiveness after you commit any sin, and remind those who often return to Me of Me. Believe in Me, and seek nearness to Me by being near to those who believe in Me. Enjoin them to join you in supplicating to Me, and beware of the supplication of the oppressed one, for I took upon Myself to open for it a gate in the heavens, and that I shall answer his call even if it may be after a while. O Jesus! Be informed that the wrongdoer entices others, and that befriending the evildoer hurls one into the pit; so, know who your friend is before you befriend him, and choose for your own company brethren from among the believers. O Jesus! Repent to Me, for there is no sin too great for My forgiveness, and I am the most Merciful of those who have mercy. O Jesus! Perform acts of righteousness for your soul as long as you live and before time comes when none else can do so on your

behalf, and worship Me for the sake of a Day as lengthy as a thousand years of your own calculation, for I reward a good deed with ten-fold, and the sin stains the sinner. Compete with others in the doing of good deeds, for how many meeting adjourned with a safeguard from the fire!

O Jesus! Keep away from that which shall perish and cease to be, and visit the ruins of those who were before you: call upon them and ask them to respond to you; can you feel the presence of any of them at all? So seek wisdom from them, and be informed that you shall soon join their company together with those who soon will.

O Jesus! Tell whoever rebels and revolts and deceives to await My punishment and to expect My annihilation; he shall be burnt among those who shall perish. Congratulations to you, O son of Mary, and many congratulations if you emulate the manners of your Lord Who, out of His Mercy, is Compassionate unto you, Who starts the giving out of His generosity, Who is always there for you during your each and every calamity. Do not disobey Him, O Jesus, for it is not lawful for you to disobey Him. I have taken a covenant from you just as I had taken it from those before you, and I am for that a Witness.

O Jesus! I have never granted My creation anything better than My religion, nor have I blessed them with anything better than My Mercy! O Jesus! Wash with water that which appears of your parts, and heal with good deeds those that do not, for to Me you shall surely return. O Jesus! I have granted you of My blessings an abundance without dreariness, and I have sought of you a loan for the goodness of your own soul, but you were too miser to do so, hence you may be one of those who perish. O Jesus! Decorate yourself with the decoration of faith, with love for the needy, and walk on earth gently, and perform your prayers on all the tracts of the earth, for they are all clean.

O Jesus! Be prepared, for whatever comes is near, and recite My Book when you are pure, and let Me hear you reciting it in a somber voice. O Jesus! There is no good in a pleasure which does not last, nor in life that will depart. O son of Mary! Had your eyes only seen what I have prepared for My good friends, your heart will dissolve and your soul will come out of your body out of anxiety for it, for there is no home like the Hereafter where the righteous are neighbours of one another; angels near to Me visit them, and they

are secure from the horrors of the Day of Judgment, a home wherein happiness never changes, nor does it ever depart from its people. O son of Mary! Compete for its sake with those who compete, for it is the desire of those who have a desire; it pleases those who see it. Congratulation to you, O son of Mary, if you are among those who work for it from among those who do so in the company of your fathers: Adam and Abraham, in the Gardens and felicity with which you do not wish to trade anything else at all and from which you never desire to be diverted; thus do I deal with the pious. O Jesus! Flee to Me with those who flee from a fire with flames, a fire with chains and torment; no rest shall there ever enter it, nor any of its torments shall be diminished; it is as though it were pieces of pitched darkness. Whoever is saved from it is a winner, and none will be spared from it if he is written down as those who shall perish; it is the abode of the tyrants and oppressors and everyone who is rude and haughty, conceited and arrogant. O Jesus! Evil is the abode of those who feel comfortable with it, and evil, indeed, is the abode of the wrongdoers. I warn you against your own soul; so, take admonishment from Me.

O Jesus! Wherever you may be, you should be on your guard concerning Me, and testify that I created you, and you are My servant; I shaped you and to the earth sent you. O Jesus! No mouth can have two tongues, nor one chest can have two hearts, and such are the minds, too. O Jesus! Do not wake up in disobedience, and do not come to your senses finding yourself heedless, and wean yourself from desires that cause you to sin. Any desire that distances you from Me you should abandon, and be informed that you are to Me as a trusted messenger; so, be forewarned of Me, and be informed that your life shall in the end bring you to Me, and that I shall take you with My knowledge, and be humble whenever My Name is mentioned, submissive of heart whenever you yourself mention Me, awake when the heedless sleep. O Jesus! This is My advice to you and My admonishment; so, take it from Me, for I am the Lord of the Worlds.[1]

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[1]al-Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 14, pp. 289-293. There is a lot more text of the same, but the lack of space does not allow me to provide the reader with more.

If you discern these exhortations, and if you compare them with what the Almighty admonished His prophet and messenger Moses or His Prophet and Messenger Muḥammed, or any of His prophets and messengers, you will find a great deal of similarity between them. The Almighty is One and the same, and so is His Wisdom and Creed. Very few, however, realize this simple and pristine fact.

Invocations by Jesus

Muḥammed, the Messenger of Allāh, is quoted saying that Jesus son of Mary was the first person to speak as an infant. He glorified Allāh a good deal in a way no ear had ever heard before, leaving no sun, nor moon, nor mountain, nor spring, without including it in his glorification. He said,

> You are the One Who is near despite Your Sublimity, High in nearness, Above everything You have created. You are the One Who created seven [heavens] in the space by Your Words in complete level formations; in awe of You did they respond to Your call even when they were mere smoke, so they came in obedience to Your Command. In them are angels glorifying Your Holiness. And You made in them a light despite the blackness of the dark, and a light from the light of the sun during daytime. You made in them the thunder that glorifies Your praise; so, it is through Your Might that it came to shatter the darkness which You created. You made in them [stars as] lanterns whereby one seeks guidance when puzzled and lost. So Blessed be You, Lord, in the way You have raised the heavens, in the way You spread the earth, causing it to float above the water, holding it against the torrent of overwhelming sea waves, bringing all things to submit to You as they appeared. Their stiffness became softened through submission to You; their affairs submitted to Your Command; their waves surrendered to Your Greatness. You caused rivers following seas to gush forth, then You made small rivulets succeeded by brimful springs, then You brought out of the rivers and the trees fruits, then You placed on the surface of the earth the mountains as pegs even above the water, and their stones and rocks submitted to You. So blessed be You, Lord! Who can ever be called as You are called, or who can ever reach Your status? You spread the clouds, free those in bondage, and effect equity, and You are the best of those who

judge. There is no god but You; You ordered us to seek Your forgiveness for each and every sin of ours; there is no god but You; You have veiled the heavens from the (vision of the) people; there is no god but You; the wise among Your servants are the ones who fear You; we bear witness that You are not a god whom we invented, nor one whose worship comes to an end, nor is there any partner with You to call upon while forsaking You, nor to help You in creating anyone so that we might suspect Your having created us. We testify that You are the One and Only One, on Whom all depend, the One Who does not beget, nor is He begotten, and none at all is like Him.

Supplication by Jesus Whereby he Brought the Dead Back to Life

As regarding his supplication whereby he used to cure the sick and bring the dead back to life, it was as follows:

Lord! You are the Lord of those in the heavens and those on earth; there is no god in them except You. You are the Omnipotent in the heavens and the Omnipotent on earth; there is no Omnipotent in them except You. You are the King of those in the heavens and the King of those on earth; there is no king in them except You. You are the Judge of those in the heavens and the Judge of those on earth; there is no judge in them except You. Your Might on earth is the same as it is in the heavens; Your Authority on earth is the same as it is in the heavens; I plead to You by Your Glorious Attributes, for You can do anything at all.

And here is another supplication of his for the kind reader:

Lord! I have dawned unable to avoid what I hate to face; I do not have the benefit of what I wish to have, and the decision is out of my hands. I have become pawned by my deeds, so none is more needy than I am. Lord! I invoke You not to make my foe feel pleased at my own expense, nor a friend of mine to think ill of me, and do not cause me to undergo a catastrophe related to my creed, and do not make the life of this world the greatest of my concerns, and do not place me at the mercy of one who will have no mercy on me, O ever-Living One, O self-Sustaining!

Was Jesus Crucified?

Sa'eed ibn Jubayr is quoted citing Ibn 'Abbās saying that when Allāh wanted to raise Jesus to heaven, Jesus went out to meet his followers at a house where all his twelve disciples assembled. He went out to them from a well in the house and his hair was dripping with water. He said, "Among you are those who will disbelieve in me twelve times even after having believed in me." Then he added, "Which one of you agrees to look like me and be killed in my place and enjoy the status reserved for me with my Lord?" Their youngest stood up, but Jesus told him to sit down. He repeated the question to them, and the same young man stood up again, whereupon Jesus said, "Then you shall be the one." He immediately was made to look just like Jesus, then Jesus was raised to heaven. The Jews[1] came and took the disciple who looked just like Jesus, killed him, then crucified him; thus, some of them disbelieved in him twelve times after having believed in him, and they were divided into three sects: One of the sects said that God was among them, then He ascended to heaven. These are the Jacobites[2]. The other sect said that "the son of God" stayed with them

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[1]According to the distorted story of Jesus, soldiers of the Roman empire (which then dominated Palestine) crucified Jesus. Muslims believe that: 1) the Jews, not the Romans, crucified a man thinking that he was Jesus, that the plot against him was not politically but religiously motivated; 2) the real Jesus was not crucified but was raised to heaven and is still alive. He will come back near the end of the life on this planet to fight those who distorted his message. There are millions of Christians who believe in this second coming of Jesus, but they, as usual, differ among themselves as to how it will be. Some claim that Jesus will not come back in person but there will be a revival of his faith...

[2]Named after Jacob Baradaeus, this sect of Christianity spread in the 6th. century throughout Syria, Iraq, and India. Its views sharply contradict those held by Roman Catholics and by Orthodox. Its head is the patriarch of Antioch (at Syrian Homs), and it uses Syriac as its sacred language. Christ spoke (Northwest Semitic) Aramaic. Syriac is an Aramaic language, a dialect of the Semitic subfamily of Afro-Asiatic languages. Some Syrian Christians still speak Aramaic even today. The first and authentic Bible was written in Jesus' mother tongue, Aramaic, but it was lost... Greater Syria, by the way, used to be called the land of Aram, hence Aramaic means "the language

(continued...)

as long as God willed, then God raised him up to Him, and they are called the Nestorians[1]. The third sect said that "the servant of Allāh[2] and His messenger" remained among them for as long as Allāh willed, then Allāh raised him up to Him, and these are the Muslims. Both previous sects collaborated against the Muslim one, wiping the latter out. Islam, hence, remained hidden, obscure, forgotten, till Allāh sent Prophet Muḥammed to revive it.

Allāh Almighty has said, "Such is Jesus son of Mary; (this is) the saying of truth about which they dispute[3]. It does not befit Allāh to take to Himself a son; Glory to Him; when He decrees a matter, He only says to it: `Be!' and it is. And surely Allāh is my Lord and your Lord; therefore; worship Him; this is the right path. But parties from among them disagreed with one another, so woe unto those who disbelieve because of their presence on a great Day" (Qur'ān, 19:34-37).

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[2](...continued)
Damascus is one of the most ancient cities in the world. It dates back to three thousand B.C., hence it is now about four thousand years old.

[1]Named after Nestorius, 5th century patriarch of Constantinople. Followers of this Church reject calling Virgin Mary, mother of Christ, "the Mother of God," saying that she bore Jesus as a man. It flourished in Syria and ancient Persia, and one of its adherents, Nestor, met young Prophet Muḥammed when he was in the company of his uncle Abu Ṭālib who was on a business trip. Salmān al-Fārisi, one of Prophet Muḥammed's early disciples and traditionists, had converted from Zoroastrianism to Nestorianism then to Islam.

[2]Notice that I did not use the word "Allāh" for the previous sects. This is due to the fact that those sects did not have the correct concept of the Almighty. The word "Allāh" here refers to the complete and perfect concept of God.

[3]Christians have been disputing with one another about Jesus Christ and will continue doing so till the end of time. Some of them went as far in their apostasy as charging him of being homosexual..., *Astaghfirullāh* (I seek forgiveness of Allāh). Some Christian "churches" here in America have been solemnizing "marriages" wherein men marry men or women marry women...

Abu Ṣāliḥ Shuʿayb ibn Muḥammed al-Bayhaqi, through his chain of narrators, has informed us that the Messenger of Allāh had said, "Prophets are brothers of one another: their mothers may be different, but their creed is one (and the same). I am the most worthy of Jesus son of Mary, peace be upon them, because there is no prophet separating me from him. The son of Mary is about to be sent to you as a just judge, and he shall come to my nation and be my *khalīfa* over them; so, if you see him, you will find him square of face, his complexion is reddish white, his hair is straight as though it drips although it is not wet. He shall come down between two scepters to smash the cross, kill the pig, enforce the *jizya* (protection tax), receive the funds (religious taxes) and make the pilgrimage or the *ʿumra* or both, and he will fight people in the defense of Islam, so much so that all creeds will be vanquished except Islam, and everyone will prostrate to Allāh, the Lord of the World, and Allāh will annihilate during his time the lying anti-Christ. Security shall prevail over the earth to the extent that lambs will graze side by side with lions, tigers with cattle, and wolves with sheep. Children will play with snakes, and neither one will harm the other. After that, he shall remain on earth for forty years. He shall marry and have children, then he shall die and the Muslims shall perform the funeral prayers for him and bury him in Medina."

Al-Husain ibn Ahmed ibn Muḥammed ibn ʿAli, through his chain of narrators, quotes Ibn ʿAbbās citing the Messenger of Allāh saying, "How shall Allāh annihilate a nation in whose vanguard is myself, and among whose last generation is Jesus, while al-Mehdi is in its midst?"

After Jesus: The "Son of God" and "The Trinity"

Jesus Christ never claimed to be the "son of God," nor did he ever say that he was God. The concept of the Trinity (God the father, God the son, and the Holy Spirit) was foreign to Christianity for about three hundred years. Anyone who conducts a research to find out how this concept crept into the Christian faith will conclude that it is one of several Pagan concepts that somehow found their way to Christianity, the faith not of Christ but of his disciples barring St. Barnabas. A small number of Biblical scholars testify to this fact. Let us read what one of them says:

> There is ample evidence in the Bible that the Israelites had always regarded Yahweh (Jahovah) as the Creator of all. Another original characteristic of the Israelite God was that He stood alone, without any family connections, whether consort, son or daughter.[1]

Such "Israelites" include Jesus' apostles. Another scholar, Col. J. Garnier, clearly points out to the fact that Pagan gods have incorporated three deities in one god. So is the concept of the Trinity.

> It is of importance to notice first that all the various gods and goddesses of the ancients, though known by many names and different characteristics, can yet all be resolved into one of the persons of a Trinity composed of a father, mother and son; and that this fact was well known to the initiated. It should also be observed that the father and the son constantly melt into one; the reason being that there was also a fabled incarnation of the son who, although identified with him, was yet to be his own son by the goddess.[2]

We will not discuss the Trinity here but will instead concentrate on the concept of Jesus as the "son of God," a concept more emphasized by St. John than any other disciple, that is to say, if we regard these authors of the Gospels as disciples of Jesus Christ. St. John's Gospel has since the dawn of Christianity been the subject of controversy, debate, and discussion, and it still stands out as quite different from all other Gospels. The lack of credibility of what St. John wrote in his Gospel is doubted by numerous scholars of the Bible in the past and in the present:

> I do not think the writer [St. John] distinguished in his own consciousness between what he remembered (or had derived from the reminiscences of others) and what he felt must have

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[1]William F. Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity*, Doubleday & Co., Inc., Garden City, New York, 1957, p. 261.

[2]Col. J. Garnier, *The Worship of the Dead*, Chapman & Hall, Ltd., 1904, p. 12.

been true, and I greatly doubt whether we can distinguish often in that Gospel what is derived from tradition and what is derived from imagination.[1]

In the Pagan theology of the fertility cult, that is, of agricultural propagation, the god is said to be incarnated as his own son to walk upon the earth in human form and be slain and resurrected as the personification of the harvest and plant life. This same Pagan theme occurs in John 1:14 where we read the following: "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the father), full of grace and truth." This clearly reflects the fact that St. John was fully knowledgeable of Pagan doctrines to the extent that he sometimes borrowed his themes from them. We can go on and on highlighting the sharp differences between the Gospel of St. John and those of the other Saints, but this will be an undertaking that will surely be laborious and exhaustive. Let us, instead, read the following from the only true though "unofficial" Gospel:

Jesus departed from Jerusalem after the passover, and entered into the borders of Caesarea Philippi[2]. There the angel Gabriel having told him of the sedition which was beginning among the common people, he asked his disciples, saying, "What do men say of me?" They said, "Some say you are Elijah, others Jeremiah, and others one of the old prophets."

Jesus asked, "And you, what do you say that I am?"

Peter answered, "You are Messiah, Son of God." Then Jesus was angry and rebuked him, saying, "Begone and depart from me, because you are the Devil and seek to cause me offence!"

And he threatened the eleven, saying, "Woe to you if you believe this, for I have won from God a great curse against those who believe this."

And he was ready to cast away Peter, but the eleven besought

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[1]*History of Christianity in the Light of modern Knowledge, A Collective Work*, p. 209.

[2]Caesarea Philippi is an area in north Palestine at the foot of Mt. Hermon built by Philip the Tetrarch.

Jesus for him, who did not cast him away, but again rebuked him, saying, Beware that you never again say such words, because God would reprobate you."

Peter wept and said, "Sir, I have spoken foolishly. Beseech God that He pardons me."

Then said Jesus, "If our God willed not to show himself to Moses His servant, nor to Elijah whom he also loved, nor to any prophet, do you think that God should show Himself to this faithless generation? But know you not that God has created all things of nothing with one single word, and all men have had their origin out of a piece of clay? Now, how shall God have a likeness to man? Woe to those who suffer themselves to be deceived of Satan!"

And having said this, Jesus besought God for Peter, the eleven and Peter weeping, and saying, "So be it. O blessed Lord our God."

Afterward Jesus departed and went into Galilee in order that this vain opinion which the common folk began to hold concerning him might be extinguished. (The Gospel of Barnabas 70)

This agrees with what we, Muslims, have in our Holy Qur'ān where Christ will on the Day of Judgment deny having required people to worship him and his mother besides the One and Only God:

Allāh will say (on the Day of Judgment): O Jesus son of Mary! Did you say to men: Take me and my mother for two gods besides God? He will say: Glory to You! It did not befit me to say what I had no right to say; had I said it, You would indeed have known it; You know what is in my mind, and I do not know what is in Your mind; surely You are the great One Who knows the unseen. (Qur'ān, 5:116)

In fact, the Holy Qur'ān strongly condemns those who attribute godhead to Jesus or call him "the son of God," labelling them as apostates, disbelievers in Him:

Certainly they disbelieve those who say: Surely God is the Messiah son of Mary, and the Messiah (himself) said: O Children of Israel! I worship God, my Lord and your Lord. Surely whoever associates others) with God, then God has forbidden him from (entering) the garden, and his abode is the fire, and there shall be no helpers for the

unjust. Certainly they disbelieve those who say: Surely God is the third (person) of the three[1]*; and there is no god but the One God, and if they do not desist from what they say, a painful chastisement shall befall those among them who disbelieve. Will they not then turn to God and His forgiveness? And God is Forgiving, Merciful. The Messiah son of Mary is but a prophet; prophets before him have indeed passed away, and his mother was a truthful woman; they both used to eat food*[2]*. See how We make the Signs clear to them, then behold how they are turned away!* (Qur'ān, 5:72-75)

Allāh Almighty has also said the following Qur'ānic verses in this regard:

The Jews say: Uzair[3] *is the son of Allah, and the Christians say: The Messiah is the son of Allāh; these are the words of their mouths; they imitate the saying of those who disbelieved before; may Allāh destroy them; how they are turned away!* (Qur'ān, 9:30)

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[1]This is the Almighty's reference to the concept of the Trinity. Advocates of the Trinity claim that the God exists in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

[2]Reference to Jesus Christ and to his pious mother eating food, as we read in al-Qummi's *Tafsīr*, is also reference to their using the toilet, that is, to defecate. No "god" or "son of god" can be imagined as being unable to avoid having to defecate! This is only to underscore their being physically created as human as anyone else.

[3]Uzair is Arabic for Hebrew Ezra. This is the only verse in the Holy Qur'ān where such a reference is made. Who is this alleged Jewish "son of God"? After the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem at the hands of Nebuchadnessar, the Torah was lost. Since there was none who remembered the law when the Jews returned from captivity, God raised up Ezra from the dead a hundred years after his death. When the Jews saw him thus raised from the dead, they said he must be the son of God. This is the contested view of some scholars. This raising from the dead is confused with another incident which actually took place to someone else and which is narrated in the Holy Qur'ān in 2:261. It involves Bal'am (Balām) ibn Ba'ūr, a learned Israelite, who passed by a dead town (some say Antioch or one of its suburbs) and wondered how God would bring it back to life. The Almighty caused him to die then raised him back to life to see for himself that He can do anything at all.

O People of the Book! Do not exceed the limits in your religion, and do not speak (lies) against Allāh, but (speak) the truth; the Messiah son of Mary is only a prophet of Allāh and His Word which He communicated to Mary and a spirit from Him; believe, therefore, in Allāh and in His prophets, and do not say Three. Desist, it is better for you; Allāh is only One God: far be it from His Glory that He should have a son; whatever in the heavens and in the earth is His, and Allāh is sufficient for a Protector. The Messiah does by no means disdain that he should be a servant of Allāh, nor do the angels who are near to Him, and whoever disdains His service and is proud, He will gather them all together to Him. As for those who believe and do good deeds, He will pay them fully their rewards and give them more out of His Grace; as for those who disdain and are proud, He will chastise them with a painful chastisement. And they shall not find for themselves besides Allāh a guardian or a helper. (Qur'ān, 4:171-173)

Surely the likeness of Jesus is with Allāh as the likeness of Adam: He created him from dust then said to him: Be! and he was. (Qur'ān, 3:59)

All praise is due to Allāh Who revealed the Book to His servant (Muhammed) and did not make in it any crookedness, rightly directing, so that he might give warning of a severe punishment from Him and give glad tidings to the believers who do good deeds that they shall have a goodly reward (Paradise), staying in it forever. And warn those who say: Allāh has taken a son. They have no knowledge of it, nor had their fathers; a grievous word it is that comes out of their mouths; they speak nothing but a lie. (Qur'ān, 18:1-5)

They say: Allāh has taken a son! Glory to Him; He is the self-Sufficient; His is whatever in the heavens and in the earth; you have no authority for this; do you say against Allāh what you do not know? Say: Those who forge a lie against Allāh shall not be successful. (It is only) a provision in this world, then to Us shall be their return, then shall We make them taste a severe punishment because they disbelieved. (Qur'ān, 10:68-70)

And they planned and Allāh (also) planned, and Allāh is surely the best of planners. And Allāh said: O Jesus! I am going to terminate the period of your stay (on earth) and cause you to ascend unto Me and purify you of (the charges of) those who disbelieve and make those who follow you above those who disbelieve till the Day of Resurrection; then

to Me shall be your return, so I shall decide between you concerning that in which you differed. (Qur'ān, 3:54-55)

In the following verses, the Almighty starts by chastising the Jews then the Christians:

Therefore, for the breaking of their covenant and their disbelief in the Signs of Allāh and their killing the prophets wrongfully and their saying: Our hearts are covered. Nay! Allāh set a seal upon them because of their disbelief, so they shall not believe except a few. And for their disbelief, and for their having uttered against Mary a grievous calumny. And (for) their saying: Surely we have killed the Messiah Jesus son of Mary, the prophet of Allāh, and they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him, but it appeared to them so, and most surely those who differ therein are only in a doubt about it; they have no knowledge in its regard but only follow conjecture, and surely they did not kill him at all. Nay! Allāh took him up to Him, and Allāh is Mighty, Wise. And there is not one of the People of the Book but most certainly believes in this before his death, and on the Day of Resurrection he (Jesus) shall be a witness against them. (Qur'ān, 4:155-159)

When Qur'ānic texts such as these agree with what St. Barnabas had written in his Gospel, the truth will shine, but how many sincere seekers of the truth are there in our world?

Finally, is it Christianity or Paganism?

Is Today's form of Christianity really the creed revealed by the Almighty to Jesus son of Mary, or is it a revival of ancient Paganism? This question may raise some eyebrows, and it may wake up a drowsy reader, but it is a question quite valid and relevant. If one traces pagan doctrines, he will be struck with similarities between what the pagans used to practice (and some still do) and what today's Christians practice at their churches. The traces of paganism in Christianity can be seen in: 1) the concept of Christ as the "son of God," 2) the Trinity, 3) the Incarnate Saviour, 4) the Second Advent, 4) the Virgin Birth, 5) the Sacraments, and 6) the Communion of Saints. You can also add to this list the organized order of saints, the choir (an offspring of the pagan chorus), the singing and dancing..., etc. All these are very well known practices of paganism in various parts of the world and by various cultures. Were we to discuss each one of them, we would need not one but many volumes; so, let us be

contented with discussing the most important of all of them: the concept of Jesus Christ as the "son of God."

This concept is directly linked to the pagan "sun god," or god of the sun, hence Sunday[1], the day when the sun god, in his various names and attributes, is worshipped. If we study these sun gods, we will see the link between their worship and the concept of Jesus Christ as the "son of God."[2]

When Jesus Christ came to this world, sun worship was a religion that prevailed throughout the world. Well known sun gods whose worship had been popular throughout the Mediterranean countries at one time or another are: Attis of Phrygia (central Asia Minor), Adonis of Syria, Dionysius or Bacchus of Greece, Bel (or Baal) of Babylon, Osiris and Horus of Egypt, and Ithras or Mithra of Persia. Here is a brief account of these sun gods, one from which the reader can see the link between these "sun gods" and the "son of God" concept introduced into the Christian faith and officially endorsed at the Nicaea Conference referred to above:

Attis

He was born of a virgin named Nana and was regarded as the "only begotten son" and "saviour". He was bled to death on March 24th at the foot of a pine tree and his votaries believed that his blood had renewed the fertility of the earth and thus brought a new life to humanity. He, however, rose from the dead, and his resurrection along with his death was celebrated by his votaries. Every year on the 24th day of March, they would first fasten his image to a pine tree and then lay it in a tomb with wailing mourning. On the next day, they would find the tomb empty and celebrate the resurrection with great rejoicing. Sacramental meal and baptism of blood were special

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[1]According to *The Columbia Viking Desk Encyclopedia*, early Christians observed the first day of the week (Monday) as their Sabbath "in commemoration of the Resurrection." Some sects, such as Seventh-Day Baptists, have reverted to Saturday. "Monday," by the way, was the Babylonian day when the moon–hence moon-day, Monday–was worshipped. Saturday was "Saturn's day," the day when Saturn, god of the harvest, was to be worshipped. This is another proof of the pagan roots in Christianity.

[2]In the text to follow, I have benefitted from Fazlul-Rahman Ansari's book *Islam and Christianity in the Modern World*.

features of his "church."

Adonis or Tammuz

Adonis was a young man loved by the goddess Aphrodite. When he was killed by a wild boar, goes on the legend, Aphrodite persuaded the gods to let him live for six months of each year. His death and resurrection, hence, were celebrated in midsummer festival in Adonia, Greece, symbolizing yearly growth and decay. He was the virgin-born "saviour" of Syria. He suffered death for the redemption of mankind but rose again in the Spring. His resurrection was commemorated by a great annual festival. The Old Testament, in Izekiel, viii:14, refers to the weeping and wailing of women over his idol. On p. 113, Vol. 2, of *Mythology of the Aryan Nations*, Rev. Sir G.W. Cox calls him the crucified Tao (that is, divine love personified). In his *Hebrew Lexicon*, Dr. Parkhust remarks: "I find myself obliged to refer Tammuz to that class of idols which were originally designed to represent the promised Saviour [meaning Jesus], the desire of all nations."

Dionysius or Bacchus

God of wine, he was the "only begotten son" of Jupiter and was born of a virgin named Demeter (or Semele) on December 25th... Christians celebrate Christmas, the supposed birth of Christ, on December 25th. He was a "redeemer, liberator and saviour." "It is I," says Bacchus to mankind, "who guide you; it is I who protect you and who save you; I am Alpha and Omega."[1] Wine had an important place in the festivals of his cult. It is today in the Christian theology, representing "the blood of Jesus." Imagine one drinking the blood of...! He was slain for redeeming humanity and was called "the slain one," "the sin-bearer," "the redeemer." Notice the striking similarity between these words and what Christians preach. Is it a coincident? We do not think so. Bacchus's passion play was celebrated every year representing his death, descent into hell and resurrection. Passion plays used to be part of the Christian festivals during the Middle Ages. The main surviving Passion Play is that of Oberammergau, Bavaria.

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[1]Godfrey Higgins, *Anacalypsis*, Vol. 1, p. 322.

Osiris

God of the underworld, he was born on December 29th of a virgin called by the Egyptians the "virgin of the world." He preached the gospel of gentleness and peace. Wine and corn were regarded as his celebrated discoveries. He was betrayed by Typhen, slain and dismembered. He was interred but came again to life after remaining in hell for two or three days and three nights. After his death, it was the custom of his votaries to keep his image in a box and bring out the image at the time of worship with the cries of "Osiris is risen!"

"The sufferings and death of Osiris," says Rawlingson in a footnote on p. 260, Vol. 3, of *Herodotus*, "were the great mystery of the Egyptian religion. His being the divine goodness, and the abstract idea of `good', his manifestation upon earth (like an Indian god), his death and resurrection, and his office as judge of the dead in a future life, look like the early revelation of a future manifestation of the deity converted into a mythological fable." Needless to say, "the early revelation of a future manifestation of the deity" in this quotation is a reference to the alleged incarnation of God in Jesus.

"Belief in the god-man in the form of Osiris," says Sir Richard Gregory on p. 54 of his book *Religion in Science and Civilisation*, "became the chief element in Egyptian religion, and remained for thousands of years the faith of the people through the tangled skein of religious life in Egypt until Osiris passed into the form of the god-man Jesus Christ."

Mithras or Mithra

His name in ancient Persian means "friend," and he was an ancient cultic god of Persia and India who became in the 5th century B.C. the chief Persian god. His cult extended into Mesopotamia and Armenia, thus becoming a world-wide religion. He was the virgin-born sun god of the Persians, the perfect prototype of Jesus Christ and the founder of an international Church, Mithraism, in which Christmas and Easter were two most important festivals. "This divine saviour came into the world as an infant. His first worshippers were shepherds; and the day of his nativity was December 25th. His followers preached a severe and rigid morality, chief among their virtues being temperance, chastity, renunciation and self-control. They kept the seventh day holy, and the middle day of each month was a special feast of Mithra, which symbolised this function of Mediator. They had seven

sacraments of which the most important were baptism, confirmation, and Eucharistic supper, at which the communicants partook of the divine nature of Mithra under the species of bread and wine."[1]

Bel or Baal: Striking Similarities Between the Babylonian and the Christian Passion Plays

Bel (or Baal) in the Old Testament is a term used for god or gods of Canaan. He is symbolized by the sun, and he was gradually promoted to become the chief deity, the source of life and fertility. His worship extended beyond Babylon; Baalbek (the city of Baal, Lebanon) was devoted to his worship, hence it is called in Greek Heliopolis, the city of the sun, or of the sun god. The story of his life is extremely astonishing: his passion play has a very close resemblance with the Christian passion story even in details. The Jews had passed a long time in captivity in Babylon during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, and this accounts for the close resemblance. Here is the proof for such striking similarities:[2]

Modern archaeological researches have brought to light very bewildering facts which go to prove that Babylonian mythology played a very important role in the early stages of Christianity. In 1903-4, German excavators at Kala Shergat (the site of Assur, the ancient Assyrian city whose surrounding areas are also called Nimrud and is located in today's Iraq) discovered two cuneiform documents. When deciphered, they were found to contain the narrative of the Passion Play of Baal. An English journal, namely *The Adventures of a Black Girl in Her Search for God*, published its translation along with the story of the Christian Passion Play. In its text, he is referred to as Bel; so, henceforth we will keep referring to him as such. On the next two pages is an exact reproduction of what page 72 of that journal had included; this is not our text but that of the said journal:

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[1]*The Nineteenth Century*, September 1905, p. 496.

[2]In the following text, I have utilized Fazlul Rahman Ansari's excellent book *Islam and Christianity in the Modern World*, pp. 70-72.

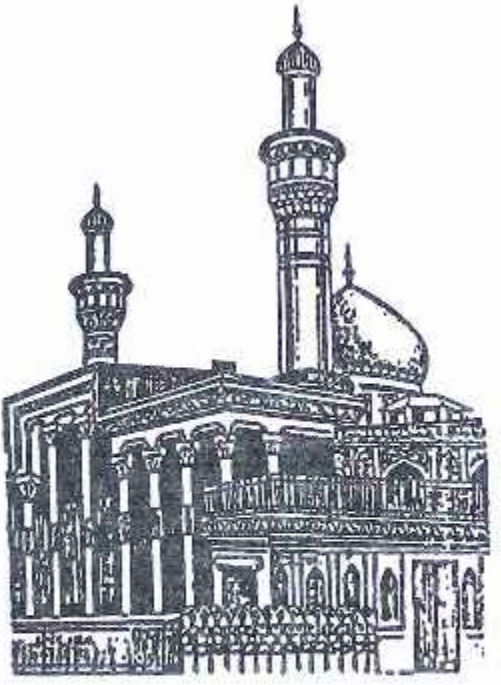
The Babylonian Passion Play	The Christian Passion Play
1. Bel is taken prisoner.	1. Jesus is taken prisoner.
2. Bel is tried in the House on the Mount (the Hall of Justice).	2. Jesus is tried in the House of the High Priest and the Hall of Pilate.
3. Bel is smitten (wounded).	3. Jesus is scourged.
4. Bel is led away to the Mount.	4. Jesus is led away to crucifixion in Golgotha.
5. Together with Bel a malefactor is led away and put to death. Another, who is also charged as a malefactor, is let go, thus not taken away with Bel.	5. Together with Jesus two malefactors are led away water and blood (John). Mary Magdalene and and put to death. Another (Barabas) is released to the people, and thus not taken away with Jesus.
6. After Bel had gone to the Mount, the city breaks out into tumult, and fighting takes place in it.	6. At the death of Jesus the veil in the temple is rent (Synopt.), the rocks are rent asunder, the graves are opened and the dead come forth into the holy city. (Matthew)
7. Bel's clothes are carried away.	7. Jesus' robe is divided among the soldiers. (Synopt., John Cp. Ps. XXII, 18).
8. A woman wipes away the heart's blood of Bel flowing from a drawn-out weapon.	8. The lance-thrust in Jesus' side and outflow of two other women busy themselves with the (washing and) embalming of the body. (Mark, Luke).
9. Bel goes down into the Mount away from sun and light, disappears from life, and is held fast in the Mount as in a prison.	9. Jesus, in the grave, in the rock tomb (Synopt.), goes down into the realm of the dead (1 Pet. III, XII, 40; Acts, II, 24; Rom. X, 17)

The Babylonian Passion Play	The Christian Passion Play
	"descent into hell" dogma).
10. Guards watch Bel imprisoned in the stronghold of the Mount.	10. Guards are set over the tomb of Jesus (Matthew)
11. A goddess sits with Bel; she comes to tend him.	11. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary sit before the tomb. (Matt., Mark).
12. They seek for Bel where he is held fast. In particular a weeping woman seeks for him at the "Gate of Burial." When he is being carried away, the same lamented: "O my brother! O my brother!"	12. Women, in particular Mary Magdalene, come to the tomb to seek Jesus where he is behind the door of the tomb. Mary stands weeping before the empty tomb because they have taken her Lord away (John).
13. Bel is again brought back to life (as the sun of spring); he comes again out of the Mount.	13. Jesus' restoration to life, his rising from the grave (on a Sunday morning).
14. His chief feast, the Babylonian New Year's festival in March at the spring equinox, is celebrated also as his triumph over the powers of darkness.	14. His festival approximately at the spring equinox is also celebrated as his triumph over the powers of darkness (Cp., e.g., Col. II, 15).

Having stated all the above, it really leaves no room for doubt that Christianity has suffered so much distortion and alteration, it definitely is no longer the faith of Jesus Christ. Even if you set aside all the theological controversies with which the Church is rife, a look at the conduct of average Christians today, especially here in the West, will make one wonder whether Jesus Christ can ever be proud of those who claim to be his followers. Fornication and adultery—boyfriend and girl-friend, common law "marriages"—are the practice of the day, abortions take place daily and, thus, thousands of babies are being killed, promoters of homosexuality are not ashamed but are "proud" of their abnormality and are vocal in demanding "their rights"... Family ties are very loose,

children hardly respect their parents, wives hardly respect their husbands, students hardly respect their teachers, those who have money can do anything at all, including buying themselves government offices, the "legal system" is bought, sold, and traded, the news media creates demons and angels, pornography is so widespread, it is sickening... All these immoralities and injustices are quite common and widespread, yet the Church "officials" stand spectators and, much worse, sometimes get themselves involved in many of them. Is this the product of a healthy creed? We do not think so. Is this the faith Jesus Christ introduced to the world? Certainly not. True and authentic Christianity or Judaism is nothing but Islam, rest assured.

Jesus son of Mary is mentioned by name in the Holy Qur'ān thirty-six times; twenty-five of which as Jesus, and eleven times as the Messiah, the *Maseeh*, the anointed one. The name of his mother occurs in the Holy Qur'ān thirty four times, and surely Allāh knows best.



PART FOUR

SELECTED SUPPLICATIONS

DUʿA' AL-JAWSHAN AL-KABEER

This invocation is quoted by al-Kafʿami in *Al Balad al Ameen* and in *Al-Misbāḥ*, and it is reported through the authority of Imām Zainul ʿĀbidīn who quotes the Prophet saying that he had learned it from Gabriel during some of his *ghazawāt*. He was wearing a shield the weight of which hurt him; so, Gabriel descended upon him and said: "O Muḥammed! The Most High greets you and tells you to take off this shield and recite this *duʿā'*, for it is a security for you." He has also told him that it has many virtues one of which is that whoever writes it down on his coffin, Allāh will be too shy to expose him to pain, and that it is very highly recommended to recite it at the beginning of the month of Ramaḍān, and whoever recites it thrice daily during the month of Ramaḍān, Allāh will forbid the fire from reaching his body and will admit him into Paradise. He also indicated that the Commander of the Faithful had instructed his son al-Hassan to learn it by heart, to write it down on his coffin, and to teach it to his family. He recommended that they should all recite it. It falls into one hundred parts, and you are to say at the conclusion of each one of them, "Praise be to You! There is no god but You! O You Who is the Best of those who provide comfort, save us from the fire, O Lord!"

1. O Allāh! I beseech You in Your name, O Allāh, O Most Beneficent, O Most Merciful, O Most Generous, O self-Subsisting, O Great One, O Eternal, O all-Knowing, O Clement, O Most Wise!

2. O Chief of chiefs! You answer the prayers, raise ranks, bestow bounties, forgive sins, grant pleas, accept repentance, hear every voice, know the mysteries, and remove misfortunes!

3. O Lord! You are the best of those who grant forgiveness, of those who subdue, of those who help, of those who judge, of

those who sustain, the best of heirs, the best to praise, to remember others, to provide, to patronize!

4. Lord! Yours is Glory and Beauty, Authority and Perfection, the Kingdom and the Majesty! O You Who is Omnipotent and Supreme! You raise the heavy clouds. You are firm in Your Domain, Swift in reckoning, Severe in retribution! With You are the most excellent of rewards, and with You is the Mother of the Book [*Ummul Kitāb*]!

5. O Allāh! I beseech You in Your Name, O Most Kind, Most Benevolent! You, Lord, are the One Who requites, and You are the Clear Sign, the Sovereign, the One Who gratifies, the oft-Forgiving, the Praiseworthy, the One called upon for help, the Master of destiny and manifestation!

6. I beseech You, Lord, for You are the One before Whom everything is humbled, before Whose greatness everything surrenders, before Whose Might everything is humiliated, to Whose authority everything submits, to Whose Majesty everything yields, by Whose fear everything abides, to Whose awe the mountains are rent asunder, by Whose Command the heavens have stood still, by Whose leave the earth has settled down, by Whose praise the thunder blasts! O You Who never antagonizes His subjects!

7. O Lord! You are the One Who pardons the sins and dispenses the afflictions! You are the Ultimate goal of the hopeful! You are, Lord, most generous when You give, most liberal when You reward! You are the One Who sustains each and all; You decide the fates; You listen to complaints; You bring the dead back to life; You set the captives free!

8. O You Who is the focus of all praise and adoration, pride and eminence, dignity and sublimity! You are the One Who is true to His Word, Who fulfills His promise, Who pardons and pleases, Who is the Benefactor and the Giver! You are, Lord, the One Who is Most Kind and Just in His Judgement! Yours is Glory and Eternity, Munificence and Generosity, Wonders and Bounties!

9. O Allāh! I beseech You in Your Name! You are the One Who withholds, Who disperses, Who brings the dead back to life, Who creates, Who is the Benefactor, the Listener, the Gatherer, the Granter of Intercession, the Enricher, the Expander!

10. O You Who is the Maker of everything that is made, the Creator of everything that is created, the Provider of everything that receives provision, the Master of all servants, the One Who dispels the agony of everyone agonizing, the Reliever of the grief of everyone grieved, the One Who is Merciful to everyone who ever received mercy, the Helper of everyone who was ever forsaken, the Concealer of all defects, the Refuge of the outcast!

11. O my Support during my hardship, my Hope during my misfortune, my Entertainer in my loneliness, my Companion on my journey, my Ally in my happiness, my Supporter in my distress, my Guide in my confusion, my Benefactor in my bliss, my Enricher in my want, my Securer in my despair, my Helper in my hour of peril!

12. O Knower of the unknown! You forgive the sins, conceal the shortcomings, dispel the distress, change the feelings in the hearts, heal the ailments of the hearts, bring light into the hearts, console the hearts, remove the worries, disperse the grief!

13. O Allāh! I beseech You in Your Name, O Magnificent, Elegant, Protector, Sustainer, Guide, Guarantor, Enricher, Favourer, Acquitter, Vivifier!

14. O Guide of the bewildered, Helper of those who seek Your help! You answer the pleas of those who plead to You! You protect those who seek Your protection! You grant asylum for those who are frightened! You, Lord, are the Escort of the faithful, the Provider for the poor, the Hope of the disobedient, the Pardoner of the sinners! Lord! Surely You answer the call of the helpless!

15. O Lord of generosity and open-handedness, of abundance and

favours, of peace and security, of purity and glory, of wisdom and evidence, of mercy and approval, of argument and proof, of grandeur and sovereignty, of sublimity and support, of amnesty and forgiveness!

16. O God of everything, Creator of everything, Maker of everything! You are the One Who preceded everything, Who remains after everything is no more, Who is over and above everything, Who knows everything, Who is Dominant over everything, Who is ever-Living while everything else dies!
17. O Allāh! I beseech You in Your Name, O Believer, O Guardian, O the One Who Shapes, O the One Who Addresses the dead, O Revealer, O Gentle One, O Enabler, O Beautifier, O Proclaimer, O Distributor of sustenance!
18. O He Who is ever-Abiding in His boundless domain, Who is forever powerful in His absolute Might, Who is Great in His Majesty, Who is Merciful unto His servants, Who is fully aware of all things, Who is Forbearing towards the disobedient, Who is Generous to whoever requests Him, Who is Wise in His act of creating, who is Subtle in His judgement, Who is evermore Benign in His benevolence!
19. O He from Whom nothing but favour is expected, nothing but pardon is obtained, nothing but good is anticipated, nothing is feared more than Whose justice, nothing but Whose Kingdom is eternal, nothing but Whose Sovereignty prevails! He Whose Mercy encompasses everything, Whose compassion supersedes His wrath, Whose knowledge includes everything, Who has no peer!
20. O Remover of worry, Mitigator of sorrow, Forgiver of sins, Acceptor of repentance, Creator of the creation, Sincere fulfiller of His promise, Accomplisher of covenants, Knower of the secrets! O One Who splits the seed, Who sustains mankind!
21. O Allāh! I beseech You in Your Name, O Most High, for You are indeed true to Your word! O Rich, Independent, Hidden, Pleased, Pure, Foremost, Mighty, Guardian of all!

22. O He Who reveals beauty and conceals ugliness, Who does not call to account for transgression, Who does not withdraw His protection! Great You are, Lord, in forgiveness, Fair in treatment, Boundless in forgiveness! You disseminate unlimited mercy, O Sharer of mutual secrets! You are, Lord, the Last Resort of all those who have grievances!

23. O Master of abundant bounty, of spacious mercy, of incomparable kindness, of ultimate wisdom, of overwhelming power, of conclusive argument, of evident eminence, of everlasting dignity, of powerful might, of impregnable greatness!

24. O Creator of the heavens! You cause the darkness, You pity the tearful, You bring the steps of those who slipped from the right track back to the right path, You conceal ignominy, You bring the dead back to life, You reveal Your signs, You multiply every virtue, You obliterate every vice! You are, Lord, Severe in retribution!

25. O Allāh! I beseech You in Your Name, O Fashioner, O One Who preordains, O Sovereign, Purifier, Illuminator, Remover of obstacles! O Warners, O Foremost, O One Who postpones destiny by His will!

26. O Lord of the Sacred House, of the sacred month, of the sacred city, of the *Rukn* and *Maqām*, of the *al-Mashᶜar al-Harām*, of the Holy Mosque, of what is lawful and what is unlawful, of light and darkness, of life and peace, of Might over the beings You created!

27. O Most Wise of all rulers, Most Equitable of all judges, Most True of all those who are true in word and in deed! You are, Lord, the Most Pure of pure ones, the best of all creators, the Most Swift of all those who reckon, the best of all those who hear, the best of all those who observe, the best of all those who intercede, the most noble of all those who are noble!

28. O Supporter of everyone who has no support, the Surety of everyone who has nothing to lean upon, the Repository of everyone who has no provision at all, the Protector of

everyone who has no provision at all, the Protector of everyone who has no protector, the Securer of everyone who has been forsaken, the pride of everyone who has nothing to be proud of, the Glory of everyone who has no distinction, the Helper of the helpless, the Companion of the lonely, the Refuge of everyone who has no refuge!

29. O Allāh! I beseech You in Your Name, O Defender, O ever-Lasting, O ever-Living, O Merciful, O Secure One, O Ruler, O Knower, O Scatterer, O Seizer, O Expansive One!

30. Lord! You are the Defender of everyone who seeks Your aid, the Merciful One unto whoever seeks Your mercy! You pardon everyone who seeks Your pardon! You are, Lord, the Helper of everyone who seeks Your help, the Protector of everyone who seeks Your protection, the Generous One unto whoever seeks Your favour, the Leader of everyone who seeks Your guidance, the Securer of everyone who seeks Your succor, the Helper of everyone who seeks Your help, the Supporter of everyone who seeks Your support!

31. O Great One Who is never humbled, O Subtle One Who is imperceptible, O Everlasting One Who never slumbers, O Eternal One Who is indestructible, O Immortal One Who has no end, O Master Who never loses His authority, O Eternal One Who never ceased to exist nor ever will, O Knower from Whose knowledge nothing escapes, O Enduring One Who needs no sustenance, O Mighty One Whose Might is never undermined!

32. O Allāh! I beseech You in Your Name, O Unique, O One, O Witness, O Praised One, O Glorified One, O Guide! You bring the dead back to life, You inherit everything, You punish (the wrong-doers), You grant bounties (to the doers of good); indeed You are the Benefactor!

33. O Greater than everyone who is great, O More Generous than all those who are generous, O More Merciful than all those who are merciful, O More Learned than all those who know, O More Wise than all those who have wisdom! You

are, Lord, the Foremost among all those who are first, the Greatest among all those who are great, the Most Subtle among all those who are refined, the Most Sublime among all those who are magnificent, the Mightiest among all those who are powerful!

34. O Generous Pardoner, O Great Benefactor, O Abounding Effector of goodness, O Foremost in His abundance, O ever Kind One, O Subtle Maker! Lord! You remove the distress of those in distress, You curtail the harm, O Lord of the realm! You are the most just of all judges!

35. O He Who is sincere to His word, Who is Strong in sincerity, Who is Sublime in might, Who is Near in loftiness, Who is Subtle in nearness, Who is Noble in Subtlety, Who is Mighty in nobility, Who is Great in power, Who is Glorious in greatness, Who is praiseworthy in glory!

36. O Allāh! I beseech You in Your Name! You give sufficiently, O Curer, O Fulfiller! You are true to Your word, O Healer! You guide to the right path, You summon, You affect Your judgment, You are ever-Pleasing, O High, O Eternal One!

37. O He to Whom all things yield, to Whom all things submit, to Whom all things return, for Whom all things exist, to Whom all things turn! You are the One of Whose Wrath all things are frightened, because of Whom all things endure, towards Whom all things draw near, Whom all things glorify, save Whom all things die!

38. O He aside from Whom there is no asylum, nor any refuge, nor any destination, nor any place of escape, nor can anyone else be sought! He alone and no one else has power and might! He alone and no one else is called upon for help! He alone and no one else is looked upon with hope! He alone and no one else is adored!

39. O the Best of those to fear, of those who are held dear, of those who are sought, of those who are besought, of those

who are longed for, of those who are remembered, of those who are acknowledged with thanks, of those who are adored, of those who are called upon, of those who are befriended!

40. O Allāh! I beseech You in Your Name, for You Pardon our sins and cover our faults! O Omnipotent! O Victor! O Maker! O Wrecker! O Assembler! O Relater! O the One Who grants respite, the One Who grants succor!

41. O He Who created and arranged (the creation) systematically, Who made the laws and (thus) showed the right path, Who disperses the calamities, Who hears the whispering of those who whisper, Who comes to the rescue of those who have been overwhelmed, Who saves whomsoever He pleases from annihilation, Who cures the sick, Who causes laughter and tears, Who puts to death and brings to life, Who creates pairs, males and females!

42. O He Who has means and ways on the land and in the sea, Whose Signs are all over the universe to see, Whose Signs are clear arguments, Who controls through mortality, Who makes the graves heed His warning, Who is the Master of the Day of Resurrection, Who overawes on the Day of Reckoning, Who passes judgement after weighing (good and bad deeds), Who rewards with Paradise, Who condemns with Hell!

43. O He towards Whom the frightened ones run, towards Whom the sinners flee, towards Whom the repentant ones move, to Whom the ascetics turn! You, Lord, are the One with Whom the confused take refuge, with Whom the devotees become familiar, of Whom the lovers are proud, Whose forgiveness the transgressors covet, in Whom the believers find peace, upon Whom the believers rely!

44. O Allāh! I beseech You in Your Name, O Friend, O Healer, O Near, O ever-Watchful One, O Reckoner, O awe-Inspiring, O Requiter, O Hearer of prayers, O all-Knowing, O all-Seeing!

45. O the Nearest of all those near, the dearest of all those dear, the most discerning of all discerning ones, the most knowledgeable of all those who have knowledge, the most noble of all noble ones, the most exalted of all exalted ones, the mightiest of all powerful ones, the most independent of all independent ones, the most generous of all bountiful ones, the most compassionate of all those who have compassion!

46. O Conqueror Who is never conquered, O Maker Who is never made, O Creator Who is never created, O Owner Who is never made so, O One Who subdues and is never subdued, O Raiser Who is never raised, O Guardian Who is never guarded, O Helper Who is never helped, O Present One Who is never absent, O Near One Who is never distant!

47. O Light of light, Illuminator of light, Creator of light, organizer of light, Architect of light, light of every light, light prior to every light, light beyond every light, light superior to every light, light the like of which there is no other light!

48. O He Whose gifts are excellent, Whose actions are subtle, Whose kindness is lasting, Whose beneficence is eternal, Whose word is true, Whose promise is sincere, Whose pardon is complete, Whose punishment is just, Whose remembrance is pleasant, Whose bounties are for one and all!

49. O Allāh! I beseech You in Your Name, O Remover of obstacles, O Separator! You alter Your creation, You reveal Your Signs, You tame the wild, You are Hospitable, You bestow Your gifts, You distribute Your bounties with generosity, You determine every fate, You grant respite, You gather everyone for Your Judgment!

50. O He Who sees but is not seen, Who creates but is not created, Who guides but needs no guidance, Who brings to life but is not brought to life, Who is ever requested but never requests, Who feeds but is not fed, Who protects but needs no protection, Who judges but is not judged, Who rules bu is not ruled, Who neither begets nor was He begotten, a

there is none like Him!

51. O Excellent Reckoner, Healer, ever-Watchful One, Neighbor! You, Lord, accept the plea! You are the Loved One, the Assurer, the Advocate, the Master, the Helper!

52. O Joy of those who know you, Goal of those who love you, Companion of those devoted to You, Friend of those who repent to You, Provider of those who have none to provide for them, Hope of those who transgress Your bounds, Apple of the eyes of those who worship You, Outlet of those who suffer in Your Cause, Comfort of the distressed, God of the first and God of the last!

53. O Allāh! I beseech You in Your Name, O our Lord, our God, our Protector, our Master, our Helper, our Guardian, our Guide, our Securer, our Friend, our Healer!

54. O Lord of the prophets and the pious, of the truthful and the righteous, of Paradise and of Hell, of the insignificant and the significant, of the grains and the fruits, of the rivers and the trees, of the sierras and the woods, of the plains and the mains, of the nights and the days, of the apparent and the concealed!

55. Oh He Whose Command controls everything, Whose Knowledge encompasses everything, Whose omni-Potence overcomes everything, Whose Bounties cannot be counted by His servants, Whom the creatures cannot fully thank as much as He is worthy of, Whose Glory no intellect can grasp, Whose Essence no imagination can conceive, Whose Cloak is Majesty and Greatness, Whose Decree the servants cannot comprehend, Who alone and no one else has the Kingdom, Who alone and no one else bestows His bounties!

56. He to Whom belong the highest examples, to Whom belong the noblest qualities, to Whom belong the life of this world and the life hereafter, to Whom belong the abodes of Paradise, to Whom belong the great Signs, to whom belong

the beautiful Names, to Whom belong the Command and the Judgment, to Whom belong the atmosphere and the space, to Whom belong the Throne and the earth, to Whom belong the high heavens!

57. O Allāh! I beseech You in Your Name! You Spare (some Your wrath), You Remit (Your Favours without count), O Patient One, O Thankful, Compassionate, Affectionate One! You are the One Who is ever sought, loved, glorified, sanctified!

58. O He Whose Greatness overwhelms all the heavens, Whose Signs are visible all over the cosmos, Whose arguments demonstrate themselves through all objects, Whose wonders abound in every river and ocean, Whose treasures are found in every mountain, Who starts then repeats the creation, to Whom all affairs are reverted, Whose Favours are evident in everything, Who well makes whatever He creates, Who manages His creation with authority!

59. O Friend of the friendless, Curer of those who have no physician! You listen to everyone who has none to hear his complaint, You are the Patron of everyone who has none to sympathize with him, the Companion of everyone who has none to keep him company, the Helper of everyone who is helpless, the Guide of everyone who has no guide, the Companion of everyone who has no companion, the Sympathizer of everyone who has none to pity, the Escort of everyone who has no colleague!

60. Lord! You suffice everyone who seeks Your sufficiency, You are the Guide of everyone who seeks Your guidance, the One Who sustains whoever pleads to Him for sustenance, the Custodian of everyone who seeks His custody, the One Who cures everyone who seeks His cure, the Judge of everyone who submits to His arbitration, the Enricher of everyone who seeks His abundance, the Fulfillment of everyone who calls for His attention, the One Who strengthens everyone who solicits His tenacity, the Patron of everyone who seeks His

favours!

61. O Allāh! I beseech You in Your Name, O Creator, Sustainer, Wise, Truthful! You are, Lord, the One Who splits the seed, Who distinguishes between right and wrong! O Separator, Restorer, Foremost, Sublime!

62. O He Who interchanges night and day, Who created light and darkness, Who provides shade and warmth, Who regulates the movements of the sun and the moon, Who takes account of good and evil, Who brings to life and takes life away, to Whom belong the creation and the Command! O One Who does not take up wife nor child, Who shares with none in the exercise of His authority, Who does not befriend the vulgar!

63. O You Who is aware of the desire of the hopeful, Who is aware of the mind of the silent, Who hears the groaning of the weak, Who takes notice of the crying of the frightened, Who responds to the pleas of the needy, Who accepts the excuse of the repentant, Who does not improve the ways of the mischievous, Who does not waste the reward of the righteous, Who is not far away from the hearts of those who know, Who is the Most Generous of all generous ones!

64. Lord! You are the ever-Lasting One, the One Who listens to invocations, Who gives generously, Who forgives the transgressors, Who establishes the heavens, Who skillfully tests and tries, Who praises excellently, Who is eternally Sublime, Who fulfills His Promise liberally, Who rewards with nobility!

65. O Allāh! I beseech You in Your Name, O Most Forgiving One! You are the One Who covers the sins, Who wields power, Who enforces His laws, Who is ever-Patient, Who ever does good, Who exercises free will, Who ever opens the gates of His mercy, Who stirs the winds, Who provides comfort!

66. O He Who created me and shaped me well, Who gave me sustenance and put me in good order, Who fed me and

provided water for me, Who kept me near and gave me intelligence, Who preserved me and defended me, Who protected me and kept me safe, Who paid attention to me and made me well-to-do, Who perfected me and showed me the right path, Who became familiar with me and received me gladly, Who causes me to die then He brings me back to life!

67. O He Who confirms truth by His word, Who responds to the repentance of His servants, Who intervenes between man and his heart, Who does not take notice of any intercession save by His leave, Who is well aware of everyone who abandons the right path and strays, Whose command none can criticize, Whose proclamation none can revoke, Whose directions everyone follows, Whose control overwhelms the skies high above, Who sends winds as harbingers of glad tidings through His mercy!

68. O He Who has made the earth a resting place, Who has made the sun like a chandelier, Who has lit up the moon like a luminary, Who has created the night as a covering, Who has created the day so we earn a living, Who has appointed sleep for rest, Who has established the sky like an arch, Who has created pairs of all kinds, Who has made Hell as a trap (for the infidels)!

69. O Allāh! I beseech You in Your Name! You are the One Who hears, Who accepts intercession, Who bestows ranks, Who prohibits, Who is swift (in reckoning), Who originates, Who is powerful, Who is Omnipotent, Who is well-Informed, Who gives support!

70. O Living One before life ever was, O eternally Alive when all life is no more, O ever-Living One the like of Whom there is none at all, O ever-Living One with Whom no partner is ever associated, O ever-Living One Who needs no other living being at all, O ever-Living One Who causes every living being to die, O ever-Living One Who did not receive life from any being at all, O ever-Living One Who sustains all living beings, Who has kept death operative! O ever-Living One, ever-

Lasting God Whom neither slumber overtakes nor sleep!

71. O He Whose Name is never forgotten, Whose Light is never extinguished, Whose bounties can never be counted, Whose kingdom never withers away, Whose praise knows no bounds, Whose power never diminishes, the extent of Whose perfection is imperceptible, Whose Decree is irrevocable, Whose Attributes suffer no alteration!

72. O Lord of the worlds, Master of the Day of Judgement, the Last Resort of those who persevere, the Support of those who seek refuge, the Seizer of fugitives, the One Who loves those who endure patiently, Who loves those who repent, Who loves those who purify themselves, Who loves the righteous, Who best knows those who are on the right path!

73. O Allāh! I beseech You in Your Name, O Solicitous, Kind Friend, Protector, the One Whose knowledge encompasses everything, Who sustains, Who helps, Who confers honour, Who subdues, Who begins, Who brings back!

74. O He Who is single without a counterpart, Who is One without a rival, Who is free from want without a defect, Who is one and only without a peer, Who settles matters without oppression, Who rules without an assistant, Who is glorious without humiliation, Who is self-Sufficient without privation, Who is the King Whom none can dethrone, Whose attributes are described without ascribing similarities!

75. O One the remembrance of Whom gives distinction to those who remember, the thankfulness unto Whom renders the grateful ones successful, the praise of Whom gives honour to those who praise, the obedience to Whom delivers the pious, Whose door is ever open for those who beseech Him, Whose path is evident for those who turn to Him, Whose signs are arguments for those who contemplate, Whose Book (Qur'ān) is the talk of the pious, Who sustains those who do not obey as well as those who do, Whose mercy is ever near at hand to the virtuous!

76. O He Whose Name brings blessings in abundance, Whose nobility is praiseworthy! O He besides Whom there is no other god, Whose praise is glorious, Whose Names are holy, Whose duration is ever-Lasting, Whose brilliance is extensive, Whose pride is His cloak, the summing up of Whose Signs is not possible, Whose bounties are countless!

77. O Allāh! I beseech You in Your Name! You are the One Who lends a hand, Who is Trustworthy, Distinct, Persevering, permanently established, Who well guides, Who is praiseworthy, Who is celebrated, Who is Mighty, Who witnesses everything!

78. O Lord of the glorious throne, of the truthful words, of the deeds and the guidance! O One Whose retribution is severe! You are the Lord of hope and fear Who is the praiseworthy friend, Who does whatever He pleases, Who is near, not far, Who witnesses all things, Who does not oppress His servants!

79. O He Who does not share anything with a partner, Who does not take up an assistant, to Whom there is neither likeness nor analogy! O Creator of the sun and the bright moon Who enriches the listless poor, Who feeds the still born babe, Who is merciful unto the old man, Who mends the broken bones, Who keeps Watchful over the frightened petitioners, Who is all-Knowing and all-Seeing towards His servants, Who wields absolute power over all things!

80. O Lord of plenty and comfort, of abundance and generosity! O Creator of the Scroll and the Pen Who created the dust and the humans! O Lord of power and retribution Who inspires the Arabs and the non-Arabs, Who removes hardships and sorrows, Who Knows the secrets and the intentions, the Lord of the House and the Sacred Precinct! You are the One Who created existence out of non-existence!

81. O Allāh! I beseech You in Your Name, O Executor of whatever You please, Doer of whatever You will, Receiver of Your servants, Perfect in Your creation, Benevolent, Joiner,

Just, Victor! You are the One Who demands, Who grants bounties!

82. O He Who grants long-lasting rewards, Who is abundantly generous, Who is effectually kind, Who confers honour with authority, Who ordains with wisdom, Who arbitrates with discretion, Who directs through knowledge, Who is near in spite of His Loftiness, Who is High notwithstanding His nearness!

83. O He Who creates whatever He pleases, Who does whatever He pleases, Who guides whomsoever He pleases, Who permits whomsoever He pleases to stray, Who punishes whomsoever He condemns, Who forgives whomsoever He favours, Who elevates whomsoever He pleases, Who humiliates whomsoever He wills, Who shapes His creation in the wombs however He pleases, Who elects for His mercy whomsoever He favours!

84. O He Who did not take a wife nor did He beget a son, Who ordained a measure for each and everyone, Who does not share His Command with anyone, Who selected angels as His messengers, Who appointed stations in the heavens, Who rendered the earth stable and steady, Who creates man from the sperm, Who determines limits for all things, Who is aware of everything through knowledge, Who determines the calculation of everything!

85. O Allāh! I beseech You in Your Name! You are the First, the Last, the Hidden, the Evident, the Just, the Truthful, the Real, the Single, the Independent, the ever-Lasting!

86. O You Who is the best of anyone known, Who is fully acknowledged! O Most Excellent One to adore, devotedly worshipped! O Most Illustrious praiseworthy One, gratefully thanked! O Dearest One in memory, sincerely remembered! O Highest Praiseworthy One, thankfully praised! O Foremost Supreme Being, eagerly beseeched! O Most Elated with Attributes, distinctly described! O the Greatest of all

objectives, eagerly striven for! O Most Generous One, anxiously requested! O Noblest Beloved One, ardently recognized!

87. O Friend of the grief-stricken, O Firm Supporter of those who rely upon Him, O Guide of the wayward, Guardian of the faithful, Companion of those who remember Him, Refuge of the distressed, Savior of the truthful, the Most Powerful of all powerful ones, the best of knowers, the God of all creation!

88. O He Who is so High He overpowers! O He Who is the Master, so He preordains! O He Who penetrates the hearts, so He is aware! O He Who is worshipped, so He acknowledges! O He Who is disobeyed yet He forgives! O He Whom no intellect can grasp, nor can the sight reach, and from Whose investigation nothing at all can be kept secret! O Sustainer of man! You, Lord, ordain destiny!

89. O Allāh! I beseech You in Your Name, O Guardian, Creator, Multiplier, Proud, Reliever, Conqueror! You unveil what is hidden! You are the Guarantor, the Sovereign, the One Who prohibits!

90. O He Who alone, and none else, knows the unknown, Who alone and none else drives evil away, Who alone and none else creates the creation, Who alone and none else forgives the sins, Who alone and none else effects bounties, Who alone and none else makes the hearts turn to Him, Who alone and none else directs administration, Who alone and none else sends down abundant rain, Who alone and none else liberally distributes sustenance, Who alone and none else brings the dead back to life!

91. O Supporter of the weak, Companion of the strangers, Helper of His friends, the One Who subdues His enemies, Raiser of the sky, Comrade of those sincerely attached to Him, Friend of the pious, Enricher of the indigent, God of the rich, Most Honourable of all generous ones!

92. O One Who is Able to do all things, Lasting beyond all things, like Whom there is nothing at all, to Whose kingdom nothing can be added, from Whom nothing is hidden, Whose treasure never diminishes, compared to Whom there is none at all, from Whose knowledge nothing is missing, Who is Aware of all things, Whose mercy encompasses everything!

93. O Allāh! I beseech You in Your Name! You are the One who grants bounties, Who feeds the hungry, Who bestows bounties, Who awards rewards, Who enriches, Who pleases, Who annihilates, Who brings the dead back to life, Who provides happiness, Who saves!

94. O beginning and end of all things, God and King of all things, Lord and Maker of all things, Creator of all things, Seizer and Spreader of all things, the One Who resurrects all things, the Maker and the One Who preordains all things, the One Who establishes and abolishes all things, Who brings everything to life and Who puts everything to death, Originator and Heir of all things!

95. You, Lord, are the One who remembers excellently and is likewise remembered, Who expresses appreciation excellently and is likewise appreciated, Who praises excellently and is likewise praised, Who bears testimony excellently and is likewise testified, Who calls up excellently and is likewise called upon, Who responds excellently and is likewise responded to, O Excellent Sympathizer and Consoler, O Excellent Companion and Comrade, O Goal and Aim, Excellent Lover of all, the One loved by all!

96. O He Who answers everyone who calls out, Who is the ally of everyone who obeys, Who is near to everyone who loves Him, Who is ever-Watchful over whoever asks for His protection, Who is Generous to whoever invokes Him, Who is Indulgent towards whoever disobeys Him, Who in His Greatness is Merciful, Who in Whose Wisdom is Great and in Whose Benevolence is Foremost, Who is aware of everyone who seeks Him!

97. O Aliāh! I beseech You in Your Name, O Prime Cause Who inspires the desires, Who adjusts, Who punishes, Who arranges, Who instills fear, Who issues warnings, Who reminds, Who subdues, Who transforms!

98. O He Who ever has a prior knowledge of everything, Whose promise is true, Whose kindness is evident, Whose command is prevalent, Whose Book is Perfect, Whose decision is implemented, Whose Qur'ān is glorious, Whose kingdom is eternal, Whose favour is all-Embracing, Whose throne is Great!

99. O He Whom one plea does not keep away from hearing another, Whom one action does not divert from another, Whom one address does not prevent from another, Whom one question does not draw apart from another, for Whom one object does not obstruct from another, Whom the importunity of those who intimidate does not make ill-tempered, Who is the Last Resort of the wishes of the devotees, Who is the ultimate goal of the aspirations of the intelligent, Who is the ultimate means of fulfillment of those who beseech Him, from Whom not even the most minute unit of matter is hidden!

100. O Forbearing One Who does not make haste! O Liberal One Who bestows without ever being miser! O Truthful One Who never turns away! O Giver who never tires of giving! O Dominant One Who is never overpowered! O Great One Who cannot be described! O Just One who does not oppress! O Rich One Who cannot be impoverished! O Great One Whose Greatness cannot be reduced! O Guardian Who never neglects!

Praise be to You! There is no god but You! O You Who is the best to provide comfort, do save us from the fire, I implore You, O Lord!

O Allāh! Send blessings unto Muhammed and the progeny of Muhammed...!

ANGELS' SUPPLICATION

Imām Ja'fer al-Ṣādiq is quoted narrating this Invocation which falls in ten parts as follows:

1. All Glory is due to Allāh Who created and formed mankind, created all pairs! All Glory is due to Allāh Who made the darkness and the light! All Glory is due to Allāh Who splits the seeds and the date-stones! All Glory is due to Allāh, Creator of everything! All Glory is due to Allāh, Creator of what can be seen and what cannot be seen! All Glory is due to Allāh to the extent of His Attributes! All Glory is due to Allāh, Lord of the worlds! All Glory is due to Allāh, the ever-Hearing; none can hear more than Him; He hears from above His Throne what is underneath seven layers of the earth, and He hears what is in the depths of the plains and the mains, and He hears the moaning and the complaint, and He hears the silent whispering and anything even more silent than that! He hears what is in the breasts, and no voice obstructs any other from His hearing!

2. All Glory is due to Allāh Who created and formed mankind, created all pairs! All Glory is due to Allāh Who made the darkness and the light! All Glory is due to Allāh Who splits the seeds and the date-stones! All Glory is due to Allāh, Creator of everything! All Glory is due to Allāh, Creator of what can be seen and what cannot be seen! All Glory is due to Allāh to the extent of His Attributes! All Glory is due to Allāh, Lord of the worlds! All Glory is due to Allāh, the ever-Seeing, the Kind, the all-Knowing! No darkness can ever overwhelm His vision, nor can anything obstruct itself from Him or hide behind a wall, nor can anyone hide from His vision in a desert or an ocean, nor can any mountain hide within it anything from Him, nor can any heart hide from Him what it contains, nor can anything small or big hide due to its minute size, nor can anything in the earth or in the heavens hide itself from Him, and "He shapes you in the wombs however He pleases, and He is the Invincible, the Wise One" (Qur'ān, 3:6).

3. All Glory is due to Allāh Who created and formed mankind, created all pairs! All Glory is due to Allāh Who made the darkness and the light! All Glory is due to Allāh Who splits the seeds and the date-stones! All Glory is due to Allāh, Creator of everything! All Glory is due to Allāh, Creator of what can be seen and what cannot be seen! All Glory is due to Allāh to the extent of His Attributes! All Glory is due to Allāh, Lord of the worlds! All Glory is due to Allāh Who raises the heavy clouds, and thunder glorifies His Praise and so do the angels for fear of Him, and He sends forth lightning upon whomsoever He pleases, and He sends winds as harbingers of glad tidings of His mercy, and He brings down rain from the skies by His Word and causes thereby vegetation to grow by His Might, and the leaves fall down with His knowledge! All Glory is due to Allāh from Whose Knowledge nothing escapes, be it the weight of an atom in the earth or in the heavens, or even smaller or greater than that; everything is recorded in a Glorious Book!

4. All Glory is due to Allāh Who created and formed mankind, created all pairs! All Glory is due to Allāh Who made the darkness and the light! All Glory is due to Allāh Who splits the seeds and the date-stones! All Glory is due to Allāh, Creator of everything! All Glory is due to Allāh, Creator of what can be seen and what cannot be seen! All Glory is due to Allāh to the extent of His Attributes! All Glory is due to Allāh, Lord of the worlds! All Glory is due to Allāh Who "knows what every female bears, and that of which the wombs fall short of completion and that in which they increase, and there is a measure with Him of everything. He knows the unseen and the seen, the Great, the Most High. Alike (to Him) among you is he who conceals his words and he who speaks them openly, and he who hides by night and he who goes forth by day. For his sake there are angels following one another, before him and behind him, who guard him by Allāh's commandment" (Qur'ān, 13:8-11). All Glory is due to Allāh Who brings the dead to life and causes the living to die, and He knows what the earth diminishes of them, and He permits whatever He pleases to rest in the wombs till a known term.

5. All Glory is due to Allāh Who created and formed mankind,

created all pairs! All Glory is due to Allāh Who made the darkness and the light! All Glory is due to Allāh Who splits the seeds and the date-stones! All Glory is due to Allāh, Creator of everything! All Glory is due to Allāh, Creator of what can be seen and what cannot be seen! All Glory is due to Allāh to the extent of His Attributes! All Glory is due to Allāh, Lord of the worlds! All Glory is due to Allāh, King of the domains! You, Lord, grant authority to whomsoever You please and take it away from whomsoever You please; You grant dignity to whomsoever You please and You humiliate whomsoever You please! All goodness is in Your hands; You are capable of doing whatever You please; You make the night pass into the day and the day pass into the night, and You bring forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living, and You give sustenance to whomsoever You please without measure!

6. All Glory is due to Allāh Who created and formed mankind, created all pairs! All Glory is due to Allāh Who made the darkness and the light! All Glory is due to Allāh Who splits the seeds and the date-stones! All Glory is due to Allāh, Creator of everything! All Glory is due to Allāh, Creator of what can be seen and what cannot be seen! All Glory is due to Allāh to the extent of His Attributes! All Glory is due to Allāh, Lord of the worlds! All Glory to Allāh! He holds the keys to the unknown; none knows them except He, and He knows whatever there is in the land and in the sea! No leaf falls down except with His knowledge, nor is there a seed in the depth of the earth, nor anything wet or dry, except that it is recorded in a Glorious Book!

7. All Glory is due to Allāh Who created and formed mankind, created all pairs! All Glory is due to Allāh Who made the darkness and the light! All Glory is due to Allāh Who splits the seeds and the date-stones! All Glory is due to Allāh, Creator of everything! All Glory is due to Allāh, Creator of what can be seen and what cannot be seen! All Glory is due to Allāh to the extent of His Attributes! All Glory is due to Allāh, Lord of the worlds! All Glory is due to Allāh Whose full Praise cannot be attained by the praise of those gifted with the gift of eloquent speech, nor can He ever be thanked enough for His Signs by all those who thank

and adore Him! He is as He has said and above what others say! Allāh! Glory is all His just as He has glorified Himself, and "they cannot comprehend any of His knowledge except whatever He pleases; His knowledge extends over the heavens and the earth, and the preservation of them both never tires Him, and He is the Most High, the Great!" (Qur'ān, 2:255).

8. All Glory is due to Allāh Who created and formed mankind, created all pairs! All Glory is due to Allāh Who made the darkness and the light! All Glory is due to Allāh Who splits the seeds and the date-stones! All Glory is due to Allāh, Creator of everything! All Glory is due to Allāh, Creator of what can be seen and what cannot be seen! All Glory is due to Allāh to the extent of His Attributes! All Glory is due to Allāh, Lord of the worlds! All Glory is due to Allāh "Who knows that which goes down into the earth and that which comes out of it, and that which comes down from the heavens and that which goes up to it" (Qur'ān, 34:2), and He is not diverted by that which goes down into the earth and that which comes out of it from that which comes down from the heavens or that which goes up to it, nor does the knowledge of any one thing divert Him from knowing another, nor does His creation of a thing divert Him from creating another, nor does His safeguarding of one thing divert Him from safeguarding another, nor is there anything equal to Him or akin to Him or similar to Him, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing!

9. All Glory is due to Allāh Who created and formed mankind, created all pairs! All Glory is due to Allāh Who made the darkness and the light! All Glory is due to Allāh Who splits the seeds and the date-stones! All Glory is due to Allāh, Creator of everything! All Glory is due to Allāh, Creator of what can be seen and what cannot be seen! All Glory is due to Allāh to the extent of His Attributes! All Glory is due to Allāh, Lord of the worlds! All Glory is due to Allāh, "Originator of the heavens and the earth, Maker of the angels messengers flying on wings, two, and three, and four; He increases in creation whatever He pleases; surely Allāh has power over all things. Whatever Allāh grants to men of His mercy, there is none to withhold it, and whatever He withholds there is none to send it forth after that, and He is the

Mighty, the Wise!" (Qur'ān, 35:1-2).

10. All Glory is due to Allāh Who created and formed mankind, created all pairs! All Glory is due to Allāh Who made the darkness and the light! All Glory is due to Allāh Who splits the seeds and the date-stones! All Glory is due to Allāh, Creator of everything! All Glory is due to Allāh, Creator of what can be seen and what cannot be seen! All Glory is due to Allāh to the extent of His Attributes! All Glory is due to Allāh, Lord of the worlds! All Glory is due to Allāh Who knows everything in the heavens and the earth; "Nowhere is there a secret counsel between three persons except that He is the fourth of them, nor between five except that He is the sixth of them, nor less than that nor more except that He is with them wherever they are; then will He inform them of what they did on the Day of Resurrection: surely Allāh is Cognizant of all things" (Qur'ān, 28:7)!

You should thereafter invoke Allāh's blessings unto the Prophet, then say:

Surely Allāh and His angels send blessings unto the Prophet; O you who believe! Send blessings unto him and salute him with a becoming salutation!" (Qur'ān, 33:56). I answer Your Call, Lord, and I seek Your Pleasure! All Glory is due to You, God; so, send blessings unto Muḥammed and the progeny of Muḥammed, bless Muḥammed and the progeny of Muḥammed just as You blessed Abraham and the progeny of Abraham; indeed, You are Praiseworthy, Glorified! O Almighty God! Be merciful unto Muḥammed and the progeny of Muḥammed just as You were merciful unto Abraham and the progeny of Abraham; surely You are Praiseworthy, Glorified! O Almighty God! Send Muḥammed just as You sent greetings unto Noah among the nations! Lord! Be Bountiful unto Muḥammed and the progeny of Muḥammed just as you were Bountiful unto Moses and Aaron! O Almighty God! Send blessings unto Muḥammed and the progeny of Muḥammed just as You have guided us through him! O Almighty God! Send blessings unto Muḥammed and the progeny of Muḥammed just as You have granted us honour through him! O Almighty God! Send blessings unto Muḥammed and the progeny of Muḥammed and grant him a praiseworthy status for which he will be envied by the early generations and the last ones!

DUʿĀ AL-MASHLŪL

(Supplication of the Paralyzed Man)

By HADRAT IMĀM ʿAli IBN ABU ṬĀLIB

In the Name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

1. O God! I plead to You in Your Name, In the Name of Allāh, Most Gracious, Most Merciful,

2. Possessor of majesty and splendor!

3. Everlasting, Self-Subsistent!

4. There is no god but You!

5. O He Whom none knows what He is, nor how He is, nor where He is, nor in what state He is, but He!

6. O Possessor of the dominion and the kingdom, of might and invincibility!

7. O Sovereign, Holy, Peace, Faithful, Preserver, Almighty, Compeller, Sublime!

8. O Creator, Maker, Shaper, Beneficent, Disposer of Affairs, Powerful One!

9. O One who Originates creation, Who repeats it, Who destroys, Who is Compassionate, Praiseworthy, Adored!

10. O Distant One, Near One, One Who Responds to the pleas, Who is ever-Watchful, Who reckons, Who innovates, Who exalts!

11. O Inaccessible, Hearing, Knowing, Clement, Generous, Wise, Eternal!

12. O Sublime One, Great, Compassionate, Gracious, Benefactor, the One sought for help!

13. O Majestic, Beautiful, Guardian, Surety, Annuler, Obtainer, Noble, Guide!

14. O You Who offers guidance, Who is Apparent, Who is the First and the Last, the Evident, and the Hidden!

15. O Eternal, Everlasting, Knower, Decision-Maker, Judge, Just One, Separator, Joiner!

16. O Pure, Purifier, Omnipotent, Able, Great, Proud!

17. O One, Unique, Everlasting, Refuge! O He Who neither begets, nor is He begotten, and there is none equal to Him (112:3-4), Who has no consort (6:101), nor is there any vizier with Him,

19. Nor has He taken any advisor,

20. Nor does He need any assistant, nor is there any god with Him,

21. There is no god but You; so, exalted are You above what the evil-doers say, a great deal of exaltation!

22. O Lofty, Sublime, Generous, Opener (of the gates of His mercy), Diffuser, Restful, Bestower of relief, Helper!

23. O Victorious One, Understanding, Destroyer, Avenger, Uplifter, Inheritor!

24. O Seeker, Vanquisher from Whom no fugitive can escape!

25. O One Who accepts the repentance of the penitent, Who often returns to His servants mercifully, Who causes the causation, Who opens the gates (of His mercy)!

26. O He Who answers wherever He is called upon!

27. O Pure One, Grateful, Forgiving! O the Light of light itself, Who manages all affairs!

28. O Subtle One, Aware, Protector, Illuminator, Seeing, Supporter, Great One!

29. O One and only God, the Solitary, the Eternal without an end! O Supporter, Everlasting Refuge, Independent, Sustainer, Healer, Who Fulfills His promise, Who cures!

30. O Kind One, Gracious, Benevolent, Bountiful, Beneficent, Unique!

31. O He Who is exalted so He dominates, Who is Master so He exercises His power, Who is Inward so He knows the intentions!

32. O He Who is worshipped and is Grateful, Who is disobeyed and is forgiving, Whom the minds cannot conceive,

33. Nor is He perceived by vision and from Whose knowledge nothing remains hidden! O Sustainer of mankind!

34. O You Who determines every lot, Who is Lofty, Firm!

35. O You Who transforms time, Who accepts sacrifices! O Gracious and Benevolent One!

36. O Lord of might and force! O Compassionate, Merciful One!

37. O He Who is "every day upon some task!" (Qur'ān, 55:29).

38. O He Who is not distracted by one task from another! O Tremendous in rank!

39. O He Who is in every place, Who hears all sounds!

40. O He Who answers all supplications, fulfills all entreaties, satisfies all needs!

41. O He Who sends down blessings, Who has mercy upon the tearful!

42. O He Who guides the steps of those who slip away (from the right path), Who removes troubles, Who promotes goodness!

43. O He Who is Exalted in rank, Who answers the pleas, Who brings the dead back to life!

44. O He Who gathers what scatters, Who is Aware of all intentions, Who brings back what has passed away!

45. O He for Whom sounds are never indistinct, Whom no pleas can ever annoy,

46. Nor is He overwhelmed by darkness! O Light of the earth and the heavens!

47. O Ample in blessings, Repeller of adversities, Creator of mankind!

48. O He who gathers all nations together (for judgement), Who heals all illnesses, Who is the Creator of light and darkness!

49. O Possessor of munificence and generosity upon Whose throne no foot treads!

50. O Most Generous of the generous ones, Most Giving of those who give!

51. O Most Hearing of those who hear, Most Seeing of those who see! O Protector of those who seek His protection!

52. O Sanctuary of the fearful, Asylum of the refugees, Patron of the believers!

53. O Helper of those who seek His aid, Goal of those who seek Him!

54. O Companion of every stranger, Entertainer of everyone lonely, Refuge of every outcast!

55. O Shelter of every fugitive, Protector of everyone who strays!

56. O He Who is Merciful unto the old man, Who provides for the small child!

57. O He Who mends broken bones, Who releases every prisoner!

58. O He Who enriches the destitute!

59. O He Who safeguards the fearful seeker of His protection, Who arranges and determines!

60. O He for whom everything is simple and easy while for us it is hard, Who needs no explanation!

61. O He "Who has power over everything!" (Qur'ān, 5:120).

62. O He Who sees everything, Who sends the winds!

63. O He Who Cleaves the dawn, Who Dispatches the spirits, Who possesses munificence and forbearance!

64. O He in Whose hand is every key, Who hears every sound, Who takes precedence over everything that passes away!

65. O He Who gives life to every soul after death! O Provision in my hardship!

66. O my Maintainer in my exile, my Intimate in my loneliness, the Patron of my sustenance!

67. O my Refuge when the ways make me weary, when relatives abandon me,

68. And when every companion forsakes me! O the One Who Supports everyone who has no support!

69. O the Aid of everyone who has no aid, the Recourse of everyone who has no recourse!

70. O Sanctuary of everyone who has no sanctuary, Shelter of everyone who has no shelter!

71. O Treasure of everyone who has no treasure, the Pillar of everyone

who has no pillar!

72. O Helper of the helpless, Neighbor of everyone who has no neighbor!

73. O my adjacent Neighbor, my sturdy Pillar, my God in truth!

74. O Lord of the Ancient House, O all-Affectionate One! O Friend!

75. Deliver me from the chains of strictures, turn away from me every worry, grief and distress,

76. Protect me from the evil of that which I cannot bear, and help me in whatever I am unable to bear!

77. O He Who returned Joseph to Jacob, Who removed the affliction of Job!

78. O He Who forgave David's sin!

79. O He Who caused Jesus son of Mary to ascend and delivered him from the hands of the Jews!

80. O He Who answered Jonah's call in the darkness, Who chose Moses by spoken words!

81. O He Who forgave Adam his slip and raised Enoch (Idris) to a high place through His mercy!

82. O He Who saved Noah from drowning!

83. O He Who "destroyed ʿĀd, the ancient, and Thamūd, and did not spare them,

84. "And the people of Noah before—certainly they were more unjust and more rebellious—

85. "And *al-Mu'tafika* He also overthrew" (Qur'ān, 53:50-53). O He Who destroyed the people of Lot—

86. And crushed the people of Shuʿayb! O He Who "took Abraham for a friend!" (Qur'ān, 4:125).

87. O He Who addressed Moses directly!

88. And Who took Muḥammed, peace of Allāh be upon him and his progeny, for a beloved one!

89. O He Who gave Luqman wisdom –

90. And bestowed upon Solomon "a kingdom such as may not befit anyone after" (Qur'ān, 38:35) him!

91. O He who gave Thul-Qarnain victory over the tyrannical kings!

92. O he Who gave al-Khiḍir [long] life

93. And returned the sun for Joshua son of Noon after its setting!

94. O He Who strengthened the heart of the mother of Moses–

95. And guarded the modesty of Mary daughter of ʿImrān!

96. O He Who fortified John son of Zacharias (Zakariyya) against sinning –

97. And calmed the anger of Moses! O He Who gave Zacharias the glad tidings of John!

98. O He Who ransomed Ishmael "with a mighty sacrifice!" (Qur'ān, 37:107).

99. O He Who accepted the sacrifice of Abel

100. And placed a curse upon Cain!

101. O He Who routed the parties for Muhammed, blessings of Allāh be upon him and his progeny,

102. Lord! Bless Muhammed, the progeny of Muhammed, all the messengers,

103. Your angels who are near to You, and all those who obey You!

104. I invoke You by every plea with which all those that have pleaded to You have asked You,

105. For which You have decreed compliance. O God! O God! O God!

106. O all-Merciful, all-Merciful, all-Merciful, all-Compassionate, all-Compassionate, all-Compassionate!

107. O Possessor of majesty and splendor! O Possessor of majesty and splendor! O Possessor of majesty and splendor!

108. By Him, by Him, by Him, by Him, by Him, by Him, by Him!

109. I plead to You by every Name with which You have named Yourself or which You have sent down in one of Your scriptures or kept for Yourself in the knowledge of the Unseen with You,

110. By the junctures of might for Your Throne, by the utmost limit of mercy from Your Book,

111. And by the fact that "had all the trees on earth been pens and the sea, with seven more seas to replenish it, yet the words of God would not have been exhausted. Allāh is Almighty, all-Wise" (Qur'ān, 31:27)!

112. And I invoke You by the most beautiful Attributes whereby You have described Yourself in Your Book,

113. For You have said, "To Allāh belong the most beautiful Names, so call Him by them" (Qur'ān, 7:180)!

114. And You have said, "Call upon Me and I will answer you" (Qur'ān, 40:60). And You have said, "And when My servants ask you about Me, verily I am near; I respond to the call of the caller

when He calls upon Me" (Qur'ān, 2:186).

115. And You have said, "O my people who have been prodigal against their own selves! –

116. "Do not despair of Allāh's mercy; surely Allāh forgives all sins; surely He is the all-Forgiving, the all-Compassionate" (Qur'ān, 39:53).

117. And I plead to You, God; I call upon You, Lord; I have hope in You, Master,

118. And I desire for You to respond to me, my Protector, just as You have promised me,

119. For I have called upon You just as You have commanded me.

120. So deal with me however is worthy of You, O all-Generous One!

121. Praise belongs to Allāh, the Lord of the worlds!

122. And Allāh's blessings be upon Muhammed and his progeny.

DUᶜĀ AL MATHKHŪR

(The Treasured Supplication)

By Imām ᶜAli ibn Abu Ṭālib

There is no god except Allāh, then There is no god except Allāh, then There is no god except Allāh, as Allāh has acclaimed His own Self.
There is no god except Allāh, as His creation has acclaimed Him.
God is Great, as His creatures have magnified Him.
Glory is due to Allāh, as He has been Glorified by His creation.
Praise is due to Allāh, as His Throne and all those underneath it have praised Him.

There is no god except Allāh, as His Throne and those underneath it have acclaimed Him.

Allāh is Great, as He has been Magnified by His Throne and all those underneath it.

All Praise is due to Allāh as He has been praised by His heavens, earth, and everyone in them.

There is no god except Allāh as His heavens, earth, and those in them have acclaimed Him.

There is no god except Allāh as He has been acclaimed by His angels.

Allāh is Great as He has been Magnified by His angels.

All Praise is due to Allāh as He has been Praised by His Throne.

Allāh is Great as He has been Magnified by His Throne and everything His knowledge encompasses.

All Praise is due to Allāh as He has been praised by His seas and everything in them.

There is no god except Allāh as He has been acclaimed by His seas and everything in them.

Allāh is Great as He has been magnified by His seas and everything in them.

All Praise is due to Allāh as He has been praised in the Hereafter and in the life of this world and by everything in them.

There is no god except Allāh as He has been acclaimed by the Hereafter and in the life of this world and everything in them.

Allāh is Great as He has been magnified by the Hereafter, by the life of this world, and by everything in them.

All Glory is due to Allāh as He has been glorified by the Hereafter, by the life of this world, and by everything in them.

All Praise is due to Allāh to the extent of His Pleasure, as much as the weight of His Throne, and to the ultimate end of His Pleasure.

Allāh is Great to the extent of His Pleasure, as much as the weight of His Throne, and the ultimate end of His Pleasure.

All Glory is due to Allāh to the extent of His Pleasure, as much as the weight of His Throne, and the ultimate end of His Pleasure.

All Praise is due to Allāh before everything, with everything, and as many times as there are things.

All Glory is due to Allāh before everything, with everything, and as many times as there are things.

All Praise is due to Allāh as many times as His Signs and Attributes,

as the capacity of His Heaven and Hell.

Allāh is Great as many times as His Signs and Attributes, as the capacity of His Heaven and Hell.

There is no god except Allāh as many times as His Signs and Attributes, the capacity of His Heaven and Hell.

All Praise is due to Allāh, a Praise that cannot be represented by a figure, nor a power, nor a computation.

All Glory is to Allāh, a Glory that cannot be represented by a figure, nor a power, nor a computation.

Allāh is Great, a Greatness that cannot be represented by a figure, nor a power, nor a computation.

All Praise is due to Allāh, as many times as there are stars, drops of water, and trees.

There is no god except Allāh, as many times as there are stars, drops of water, and trees.

All Praise is due to Allāh, as many times as there are stones, seeds, particles of dust, jinns and humans.

Allāh is Great, as many times as there are stones, seeds, particles of dust, jinns and humans.

All Glory is due to Allāh, as many times as there are stones, seeds, particles of dust, jinns and humans.

All Praise is due to Allāh, a Praise beyond which, according to His Knowledge, there can be none.

There is no god except Allāh, an acclamation beyond which, according to His Knowledge, there can be none.

Allāh is Great, a Greatness beyond which, according to His Knowledge, there can be none.

All Glory is due to Allāh, a Glory beyond which, according to His Knowledge, there can be none.

All Praise is due to Allāh the span of eternity, before eternity, and beyond eternity.

Allāh is Great the span of eternity, before eternity, and beyond eternity.

All Praise is due to Allāh as much as all of this, and many times that much, and it still is short of praising Him sufficiently.

Allāh is Great as much as all of this, and many times that much, and it still is short of magnifying His Greatness sufficiently.

There is no might nor power except by Allāh's leave as much as all of this, and many times that much, and it still is short of describing

His Might sufficiently.

And Allāh sends blessings unto Muhammed as much as all of this.

And I seek forgiveness of Allāh Who is the One and Only God, the Eternal, the Sustainer, as much as all of this combined. And I repent to Him for every wrongdoing I am guilty of, for every sin I have committed, and for every indecency I have done as much as all of this.

O Allāh! O Believer, Creator, Great, Invincible, Mighty, Proud One! Glory is to Allāh because of what they attribute to Him.

O Allāh, the Great, the Beautiful! O Allāh, the Generous Lord!

O Allāh Who begins creation, and the One Who repeats it! O Allāh, the Overwhelming, the Knowing!

O Allāh, the Compassionate, the ever-Giving! O Allāh, the Knowing, the ever-Watchful!

O Allāh, the Great, the Generous One! O Allāh, the Kind, the Knowing!

O Allāh, the Great, the Mighty! O Allāh, the Powerful, the Omnipotent!

O Allāh, the Rich, the Praiseworthy, the Near, the One Who answers the plea!

O Allāh, the Independent, the Wise, the Clement, the Generous!

O Allāh, the Compassionate, the Merciful, the ever-Giving, the Generous!

O Allāh Who conceals ugliness, Who gives generously!

O Allāh Who forgives the great sin!

O Allāh Who does whatever He pleases!

O Allāh, the Great, the Mighty, the Magnanimous, the Proud One!

O Allāh, the Great One, the Glorified, the High, the Lofty!

O Allāh, the Sustainer, the Eternal, the Omnipotent!

O Allāh, the Vanquisher, the Healer!

O Allāh, the One and Only, the Unique, the Independent!

O Allāh Who withholds, Who gives!

O Allāh, the Creator, the Sustainer, the Bountiful, the One Who starts the giving!

O Allāh, the Most Merciful of those who are merciful, the ultimate Goal of those who cry out for help!

O Allāh Who gives those who ask Him, the One Who removes the distress of those in distress!

O Allāh Who removes the great distress!

O Most Merciful One! I plead to You by Your countless and revealing

Attributes!

O Allāh, Most Merciful One! I plead to You by Your Unique and Glorious Attributes!

O Allāh, Most Merciful One! I plead to You by Your Attributes that please You, the Honourable and Lofty Ones!

O Allāh, O Most Merciful One! I plead to You by Your hidden, treasured, complete and Glorious Attributes!

O Allāh, O Most Merciful One! I plead to You to send blessings unto Muḥammed and the progeny of Muḥammed, blessings which none except You can count!

O Allāh, O Most Merciful One! I plead to You to grant me my needs for the good of this life and that of the life to come!

Allāh has sent blessings unto the best of His creation, Muḥammed the master of all prophets, and unto his good progeny and a great salutation.

Lord! Choose Muḥammed, peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him and his progeny, for the praised mention, the Witness and Fountain-head, and the coveted Pool!

Lord! Grant Muḥammed, Allāh's peace and blessings be upon him and his progeny, the means, the lofty status, and the unique virtue, and love him as You would those whom You select, and grant him his status in the heights of high ones, and grant him his due honour among the ones You hold as close to You!

Lord! Grant Muḥammed, Your peace and blessings be upon him and his progeny, the best of Your bounties, the most spacious of Your gifts, the most generous of Your gifts, the most plentiful of Your boons, the best of each portion, so much so that none among Your creation will be closer to You in status, nor higher with You in mention or station, nor greater of right unto You, nor closer in means to You than Muḥammed, Your peace and blessings be upon him and his progeny.

Lord! We bear witness that he has conveyed the Message, discharged the trust and the advice, exerted himself for the benefit of the nation, and harmed while serving Your Cause, and he adored You till the time of his departure!

So, Allāh sends His peace and blessings unto him and the righteous from among his progeny.

DUᶜĀ AL-KHIḌR

(Duᶜā Kumayl[1])

O Allāh! I plead to You by Your mercy which "embraces all things" (Qur'ān, 7:156), by Your Strength through which You dominate all things, towards which all things are humbled, and before which all things are lowly! I plead to You by Your Invincibility through which You overwhelm all things, by Your Might which nothing can resist, by Your Greatness which overwhelms all things, by Your force which towers over all things, by Your face which remains after all things are no more, by Your Attributes which have filled the foundations of all things, by Your knowledge which encompasses all things, and by the light of Your Countenance through which all things are illuminated! O Light, O all-Holy, O First of those who are first and Last of those who are last! O Allāh! Forgive my sins that tear safeguards apart! O Allāh! forgive my sins that draw down adversities! O Allāh! Forgive my sins that alter blessings! O Allāh! Forgive my sins that withhold supplications! O Allāh! Forgive my sins that sever hope! O Allāh! Forgive my sins that cause tribulation! O

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[1]His full name is: Kumayl ibn Ziyād ibn Naheek ibn Haytham al-Nakhᶜi (date of birth unknown), a close friend of the Commander of the Faithful Imām ᶜAli ibn Abu Ṭālib. He fought during the Battle of Ṣiffīn (which started on Ṣafar 11, 37 A.H./August 1, 657 A.H.) on the side of Imām ᶜAli. He was a poet and a man of dignity, piety, and asceticism, and he quotes a number of the Prophet's *aḥādīth*. He was one of those who attended *bayᶜat al-ghadīr* (appointment by Prophet Muḥammed of Imām ᶜAli as his successor, an incident which took place at Ghadīr Khumm by the Mecca-Medina highway on Thul-Hijjah 18, 10 A.H./March 19, 632 A.D., shortly before the Prophet's demise) and who composed many poems immortalizing that incident and lauding ᶜAli and his offspring. The renown tyrant al-Hajjāj ibn Yousuf al-Thaqafi executed him in 83 A.H./702 A.D.

Allāh! Forgive every sin I have committed and every mistake I have made! O Allāh! Verily I seek nearness to You through remembering You; I seek intercession from You through Yourself, and I plead to You through Your Munificence to bring me close to You, to make me grateful to You, and to inspire me to always remember You. O Allāh! Verily I plead to You with the asking of a submissive, abased and lowly person so You may show me forbearance, to have mercy on me, and to make me satisfied and contented with what You have allotted for me, and to make me humble in every circumstance. O Allāh! I plead to You as one whose indigence is extreme, who has stated to You in difficulties his need, and whose desire for what is with You has become great. O Allāh! Your Might is great; Your status is most lofty; Your plan is imperceivable; Your command is manifest; Your domination is overwhelming; Your power is unhindered, and fleeing from Your authority is impossible. O Allāh! I find none to forgive my sins, nor to conceal my ugly deeds, nor to transform any of my ugly deeds into good ones but You. There is no god but You! Glory to You, and to You is all praise due! I have wronged myself; I have been audacious in my ignorance, and I have depended upon Your old remembrance of me and Your favour unto me. O Allāh! O my Protector! How many (of my) ugly things You have concealed! How many burdensome tribulations You have abolished! How many troubles You have prevented from reaching me! How many ordeals You have repelled! And how much praise for which I was unworthy You have disseminated! O Allāh! My tribulation is tremendous; my bad state is excessive; my deeds are inadequate; my fetters have tied me down; my hopes have held me back from my gain, and so has this world with its delusions, my own soul with its offenses, and my delay have all deceived me! O Master! I plead to You by Your Might not to let my evil deeds hinder my supplication from reaching You, nor to disgrace me through the hidden things which You know of my secrets, and not to hasten upon me the punishment for what I have done in private: my evil deeds in secrecy, my misdeeds, my continuous negligence, my ignorance, my manifold passions, and my forgetfulness! And by Your might, O Allāh, be kind to me in all states and gracious to me in all affairs! My God and Lord! Have I any but You from

whom to ask for the removal of my affliction and to regard my affairs? My Allāh and Protector! You put into effect through me a decree in which I followed the caprice of my own soul and did not remain wary of adorning my enemy; so he deluded me through my soul's caprice and therein destiny favoured him. So in what was put into effect through me, in that situation, did I transgress some of Your statues and disobey some of Your commands. So Yours is the argument against me in all of that, and I have no argument in what Your destiny put into effect through me therein, nor in what Your decree and tribulation imposed upon me. Now I have come to You, O Allāh, despite my shortcomings and immoderation towards my own self, producing my excuse, regretful, broken-hearted, apologizing, asking forgiveness, repenting, acknowledging, submissive, confessing. I find no place to flee from what happened to me, nor any place of escape to which I may turn in my affairs other than Your acceptance of my excuse, and Your entering me into the scope of Your mercy. O Allāh! Accept my excuse, have mercy upon the severity of my affliction, and release me from my fetters. Lord! Have mercy upon the weakness of my body, the thinness of my skin, and the frailty of my bones. O You Who gave rise to my creation! O You Who always remembered me, nurtured me, and have been good to me! O You Who has nourished, bestowed upon me (blessings) generously, and (I recognize all) Your past acts of goodness to me! O my God, Master and Lord! Can You see Yourself tormenting me with Your fire after I have admitted Your Unity, after the knowledge of You which my heart has embraced, after the remembrance of You which my tongue has constantly uttered, and after the love of You to which my mind has clung, after the sincerity of my confession and supplication, humbling myself before You, O Lord? Far it is from You (to be like that)! You are more generous than thus rendering to waste one whom You have nurtured, or banishing one whom You have brought nigh, or driving away one whom You have sheltered, or submitting to tribulation one whom You have spared and shown mercy to. Would that I knew, O Master, God and Protector, whether You will give the Fire dominion over faces that have prostrated before Your Greatness, tongues that have sincerely voiced the admission of Your Unity and given thanks to You in

praise, hearts that have acknowledged Your Divinity through verification, minds that have encompassed knowledge of You until they have become humble, and bodily part that have rushed to the places of Your worship in obedience to You, pleading for Your forgiveness submissively! No such opinion is held about You! Nor has such been reported, thanks to Your bounty, concerning You, O Generous One! O Lord! You know my weakness with regard to a little of this world's tribulations and punishments, and with regard to the ordeals which befall its inhabitants, even though such is a tribulation and an ordeal the duration of which is short, the subsistence of which is little, and the time of which is fleeting. So how can I endure the tribulation of the next life and the great ordeals that occur therein? For it is a tribulation whose period is long, whose station endures, and those who suffer therein are given no respite, since it only occurs as a result of Your wrath, vengeance and anger, and these cannot be withstood by the heavens and the earth. My Master, so what about me? For I am Your weak, lowly, base, wretched and miserable servant. O my God, Lord, Master, Protector! For which things should I complain to You, and for which of them should I lament and weep? For the pain and severity of chastisement? Or for the length and duration of tribulation? So if You punish me with Your enemies, or gather me with the people of Your tribulation, or separate me from Your friends and saints, then suppose, my God, Master, Protector and Lord, that I am able to endure Your chastisement, how can I endure separation from You? And suppose that I can endure the heat of Your fire, how can I endure not looking forward to Your generosity? Or how can I dwell in the Fire while my hope is Your pardon? So by Your might, my Master and Protector, I swear sincerely, that if You permit me to speak, I will lament to You from the midst of the Fire's inhabitants with the lamentation of the hopeful; I will cry to You like one crying for help; I will weep to You with the weeping of the bereft, and I will call unto You, "Where are You, O Patron of the believers, O Goal of the aspirations of those who know You, O Aid of those who seek assistance, O Friend of the hearts of the sincere, and O God of all the world's inhabitants!" Can You see Yourself, Glory to You, O Allāh, and Yours is the praise, hearing within the Fire the voice of a servant who

submitted to You, who is imprisoned there because of his violations, who is tasting its torment because of his disobedience and who is confined within its levels because of his sin and crime, while he laments to You with the lamentation of one hopeful of Your mercy, calling upon You with the tongue of those who admit Your Unity and entreat You by Your Lordship? My Protector, so how should he sustain the chastisement while he has hope for Your clemency? Or how should the Fire cause him pain while he expects Your bounty and mercy? Or how should its flames burn him while You hear his voice and see his place? Or how would its groaning encompass him while You know his weakness? Or how should he be engulfed between its levels while You know his sincerity? Or how should its keepers torture him while he calls out to You, "O Lord!"? Or how should he have hope for Your bounty in freeing him from it while You abandon him within it? Far be it from You! That is not what is expected of You, nor what is well-known of Your bounty, nor is it similar to the goodness and kindness You have shown to those who believe in Your Unity. So I declare with certainty that were it not for what You have decreed concerning the chastisement of those who deny You and what You have preordained concerning the everlasting abode of those who stubbornly resist, You would make the Fire, all of it, coolness and safety, and no one would have a place of stay or abode within it. But You—holy are Your Names—have sworn that You will fill it with the unbelievers, of both jinns and men, and that You will place therein those who stubbornly resist You forever. And You—majestic is Your Grandeur—said at the beginning and were gracious through kindness as a favour: *What? Is he who has been a believer like him who has been ungodly? They are not equal* (32:18). My God and Master! So I plead to You by the power which You have apportioned and the decision which You have determined and imposed and through which You have overcome all any toward whom it has been put into effect, to forgive tonight, at this hour, every offence I have committed, every sin I have performed, every ugly thing I have concealed, every folly I have enacted—whether I have hidden it or declared it, whether I have concealed it or manifested it—and every evil act which You have commanded the noble Scribes to record, those whom You have

appointed to watch over what I do and whom You have made, along with my bodily members, witnesses against me. And *You were Yourself the Watcher* (5:117) over me from behind them, and the Witness of what is hidden from them: through Your mercy have You concealed it, and through Your bounty have You veiled it. [And I plead to You] to bestow upon me an abundant share of every good You send down, every kindness You confer, every goodness You unfold, every provision You spread out, every sin You forgive or error You cover. Lord! Lord! Lord! God! Master! Protector! Owner of my bondage! O He in Whose hand is my forelock! O He Who knows my affliction and misery! O He Who is aware of my poverty and indigence! My Lord! My Lord! My Lord! I plead to You by Your Truth, Your Holiness, and by the greatest of Your Attributes and Names, to make my times in the night and the day inhabited by Your remembrance and joined by Your service, and my words acceptable to You, so that my deeds and litanies may all be a single litany, and so that my time with be in Your service everlasting. My Master! O He upon Whom I depend! O He to Whom I complain about my condition! My Lord! My Lord! My Lord! Strengthen my bodily parts (and employ them) in Your service, fortify my ribs in determination, and bestow upon me earnestness in fearing You and continuity in my being joined to Your service, so that I may move easily towards You in the battlefields of the foremost, hurry to You among the prominent, desire fervently Your proximity among the fervently desirous, move near to You with the nearness of the sincere, fear You with the fear of those who have certitude and gather with the believers in Your vicinity. O Allāh! Whoever desires evil for me, desire it for him! And whoever deceives me, deceive him! And make me one of the most excellent of Your servants who are near to You; (make me) the nearest of them in station to You, and the most elite of them in proximity to You. For that cannot be attained except by Your bounty. Grant me generously through Your munificence, incline towards me with Your splendor and protect me with Your mercy! Make my tongue remember You incessantly and my heart enthralled by Your love! Be gracious to me by answering me favourably; nullify my slips and forgive my lapses! For You have decreed Your worship to Your servants,

commanding them to supplicate to You and assuring them that they will be answered. So towards You, Lord, have I turned my face, and towards You, Lord, have I extended my hand. So by Your might, comply with my supplication and make me attain my desires! Do not, if it pleases You, sever my hopes, and spare me the evil of my enemies from among the jinns and men! O He Whose pleasure is quickly achieved! Forgive one who has nothing but supplication, for You do whatever You please. O He Whose Name is a remedy, Whose remembrance is a cure, and Whose obedience is a fortune! Have mercy upon one whose capital is hope, and whose weapon is tears! O Ample in blessings! O Repeller of adversities! O Light of those who are lonely in the darkness! O Knower Who was never taught! Bless Muḥammed and the family of Muḥammed and treat me as is worthy of You! And Allāh blesses His Messenger and the holy Imāms of his family and gives them abundant peace!

DUᶜĀ LAILAT ᶜARAFA

(Invocation On The Eve of ᶜArafa)

By The Holy Prophet

This *duᶜā'*, which is recommended to be recited on the eve of ᶜArafa, is attributed to the greatest Prophet Muḥammed ibn Abdullāh. It is reported that whoever recites it on the eve of ᶜArafa or the night before Friday, will receive Allāh's forgiveness. It is as follows:

O Almighty God Who witnesses every silent plea and pinpoints the place of every complaint and knows everything concealed, and He is the Ultimate end of every need! O You Who initiates the granting of His bounties upon His servants! O You Who is generous in granting His amnesty, Gracious in overlooking faults! O You Who is not obstructed by the pitched darkness of the night, nor the tumultuous waves of the ocean, nor the heavens with lofty towers, nor the darkness upon darkness that would even cause a tremor! O You to Whom darkness is light! I plead to You by the light of Your glorious countenance whereby You manifested Yourself to the mountain and rendered it a pile of

rubble and caused Moses thereby to be stunned! And I plead to You by Your Attribute whereby You raised the heavens without pillars and spread the earth over the surface of frozen water, and by Your Attribute which is treasured, hidden, written and is pure, the one which, if You are invoked by it, would oblige You to respond, and to give if You are requested! And I plead to You by Your Attribute whereby You are Glorified and Exalted and which is the Proof that is the light of every light and the light derived from a light from which every light is lit and which, if it reaches the earth, it would split it, and if it reaches the heavens, it would open their gates, and if it reaches the Throne, the Throne would tremble! And I plead to You by Your Attribute from which angels tremble in fright, and I plead to You by Gabriel, Michael and Israfil, and by the right of Muḥammed the chosen one, Allāh's blessings and peace be upon him and his progeny and upon all the prophets and angels, and by Your Attribute whereby al-Khidir was able to walk over the surface of the water just as he walked over the paths of earth! And I plead to You by Your Attribute whereby You rendered the sea dry and drowned Pharaoh and his people and saved Moses son of Amram (ʿImrān) and his followers! And I plead to You by Your Attribute whereby Moses addressed you from the right side (of Mount Sinai) and You responded to him and turned lovingly to him! And I plead to You by Your Attribute whereby Jesus son of Mary brought the dead back to life and spoke even as a babe in his cradle and healed those who were born blind and the leprous by Your permission! And I plead to You by Your Attribute whereby You were addressed by those who bear Your Throne and by Gabriel, Michael, Israfil and Your beloved one Muḥammed, Allāh's blessings and peace be upon him and his progeny, and by Your favoured angels, prophets, messengers, and righteous servants from among the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth! And I plead to You by Your Attribute whereby You were addressed by "Thul-Noon when he departed angrily: he imagined that We had no power over him, but he cried out through the depths of the darkness, `There is no god but You! Glory to You! I was indeed wrong!' So We listened to him and delivered him from distress; thus do We deliver those who believe" (Qur'ān, 21:87-88). And I plead to You by Your Great Attribute whereby David addressed You and prostrated, so You forgave his sin, and by Your Attribute whereby You were addressed by Asiya wife of Pharaoh who said, "Lord! Build me a home in Your Paradise and save me from Pharaoh and his evil deeds and save

me from the wrong-doing people" (Qur'ān, 66:11), so You answered her call! And I plead to You by Your Attribute whereby Job called upon You when affliction touched him, so You healed him and gave him his family back and the like of them with them as a blessing from You and a reminder for the servants! And I plead to You by Your Attribute whereby Jacob beseeched You and You brought his sight back to him and cooled his eyes through Joseph and brought his family back together! And I plead to You by Your Attribute whereby Solomon invoked You and You granted him a kingdom that fit none after him, for You indeed are the oft-Giving! And I plead to You by Your Attribute whereby You provided the Buraq for Muḥammed, Allāh's blessings and peace be upon him and his progeny, for the Almighty has said, "Glory to the One (God) Who took His servant for a journey by night from the sacred mosque to the farthest mosque whose precincts We blessed so that We might show him some of Our signs, for He hears and sees (all things)" (Qur'ān, 17:1), and His saying, "Glory to the One (God) Who has facilitated this for us, and we were not able to do it (on our own); we shall surely return to our Lord." And I plead to You by Your Attribute whereby Gabriel descended unto Muḥammed, Allāh's peace and blessings be upon him and his progeny, and by Your Attribute whereby You were addressed by Adam and You forgave his sin and permitted him to live in Your Paradise! And I plead to You by the favour with You of the Great Qur'ān and of Muḥammed, the seal of prophets, and by Abraham, and by Your final Decree on the Day of Judgment, and by the Scales when installed and the Books when laid open, by the pen and what it wrote down and the scroll and what it computed, by the Attribute which You wrote down on the Throne's canopy a thousand years before creating creation, the earth, the sun and the moon. And I bear witness that there is no god except Allāh, the One and Only God, without a partner with Him, and that Muḥammed is His servant and Messenger! And I plead to You by Your Attribute which is treasured in Your treasures which You preferred to be kept in the knowledge of the unseen with You while nobody among Your creation ever came to be familiar with it even if he may be a favoured angel, a prophet, a messenger, or a chosen servant! And I plead to You by Your Attribute whereby You split the oceans, raised the mountains, distinguished the night from the day, and by the Seven oft-Repeated Verses (the Fātiha) and the Great Qur'ān and the honoured scribes, by Tāhā and Yasīn, by Kāf Hā Yā ʿAyn Sād and Hā Meem ʿAyn Seen Qāf,

by the Torah of Moses, the Gospel of Jesus, the Psalms of David, and the Qur'ān of Muḥammed, Allāh's peace and blessings be upon him and his progeny and upon all the messengers! Lord! I plead to You by the secret discourse between You and Moses son of 'Imrān on Mount Sinai, by Your Attribute whereby You taught the angel of death how to take the souls away, by Your Attribute which was written down on the leaves of olive trees and caused the fire to succumb to it, so You said, "O Fire! Be cool and peace [unto Abraham]!" (Qur'ān, 21:69). And I plead to You by Your Attribute which You wrote down on the pavilion of glory and dignity, O You Who is not tired by a pleading person nor does His domain decrease by giving, Who is sought for help by those who seek help and refuge! I plead to You by the knots of dignity in Your Throne, by the ultimate end of mercy in Your Book, and by Your greatest Attribute and Most Sublime Endeavor and by the Most Complete Words of Yours! Lord! God of the winds and whatever seeds they carry, of the heavens and whatever cover they provide, of the earth and whatever inhabitants it shelters, of the devils and whatever creatures they mislead, of the oceans and whatever their torrents carry! I plead to You by every right which is a right unto You, by the angels who are close to You, by all the ascetics and arch-angels who incessantly glorify You at night and day, by the right of Your friend Abraham, by the right of every true servant of Yours who calls upon You between the *Safā* and *Marwa* and to whom You grant the answer! O You Who answers the pleas! I plead to You by all these Attributes and invocations to forgive our past and future sins, the secret ones and the open, and whatever You know more about our sins than we ourselves do, for You can surely do whatever You please, by Your mercy, O Most Merciful One! O Protector of every stranger, entertainer of everyone lonesome, Supporter of the weak, Helper of the wronged, Sustainer of the deprived, Bringer of happiness to everyone who is frightened! O Companion of every traveller, Helper of everyone present! O One Who offers forgiveness for each and every sin and fault! O Refuge of those seeking refuge, the ultimate hope of those who cry out for help, the One Who removes the distress of those in distress, the One Who removes the agony of those who are agonized, Creator of the heavens and the earth, the ultimate end of those who have a plea! You are the One Who answers the plea of those who plead! I plead to You to have mercy unto me, O Most Merciful One, O Lord of the Worlds, Judge of the Day of Judgment, most generous One, Most Bountiful, Most hearing of those

who hear, most seeing of those who see, most capable of those who are capable! I plead to You to forgive my sins that change the blessings, the sins that cause regret, the sins that bring ailments, the sins that shatter safeguards, the sins that void the invocation, the sins that obstruct the rain, the sins that hasten death, the sins that bring misery, the sins that pollute the air, the sins that remove the covering, and the sins that none can forgive save You! O Allāh! Bear on my behalf every burden I have to bear towards any of Your creatures; find an outlet and an easy way out for me, fill my chest with conviction regarding You and with hope in You, so that I may plead to none except to You! O Almighty God! Protect me, grant me good health and be my Companion during the night and the day, before me, behind me, on my right side and on my left, above and underneath me, and help me find the right path, enable me to make the right decision, do not abandon me to tackle a difficult situation, and be my Guide, for You indeed are the best Guide, and do not let me rely on myself in all matters; bring me happiness and take me back successful, pleased, now and in the future, for You are capable of doing everything! Lord! Grant me of Your favours and grant me generously of the good things with which You provide Your servants, employ me in Your obedience, protect me from Your torment and Fire, and when You take my soul away at death, take me into Your Paradise by Your mercy! Lord! I seek refuge with You against the departure of Your blessing and against the change in the good health You grant me, against Your Wrath and retribution! I seek refuge with You, Lord, from the exhaustion of Your trials and tribulations, from the pain of misery, from bad destiny, from satisfying and pleasing my foes, from the evil things that descend from the heavens, and from the evil from which I am warned in the Revealed Book! Lord! Do not count me among the evil ones or the companions of the fire, do not deprive me of the company of good friends, permit me to live a good life, take my soul away at death in a good manner that would enable it to join the company of the good ones, and bless me with the company of the prophets in the seating of righteousness near the Omnipotent King! Lord! To You belongs the Glory for all the beautiful things You have created and done; to You belongs the Praise for granting us Islam and the Sunnah! Lord! Just as You have led our hearts to the right guidance of Your religion and taught them Your Book, guide us and likewise teach us! To You belongs all the Glory for the beautiful things You have created and done to me and for me just as You created me and

perfected my creation, taught me and did so excellently, and guided me rightly; so, to You belongs all the Praise for the bounties which You have lavished upon me in the past and in the present, for often have you, Lord, removed my distress and dispelled my agony, removed the causes of my suffering, and concealed my shortcomings! So all Praise is Yours in every circumstance, place and time, for every state and condition, for this condition of mine and for every condition! Lord! Make me one of the best recipients of the bounties on this day that You distribute to Your servants, or the harm that You remove from Your servants, or the evil that You divert from Your servants, or the good or bounty that You grant Your servants, or the good health that You bestow upon Your servants, for You are capable of doing everything You please, and in Your hands are the treasures of the heavens and the earth, and You are the Generous One Who gives and Who does not reject, nor does He disappoint those who plead to Him, nor does His domain diminish because of His excessive giving, kindness and generosity, and bestow upon me, Lord, of Your treasures which never diminish and Your mercy which is spacious, for You never withhold Your grants, and You are capable of doing whatever You please by Your mercy, O Most Merciful of those who have mercy!

SUPPLICATION FOR EXCELLENCE OF CONDUCT

By Imām ᶜAli ibn al-Ḥusain "Zainul-ᶜĀbidīn"

It is most appropriate to recite the following invocation during the nights of Lailatul-Qadr (the Night of Destiny) during which, according to traditions, the life-span, sustenance and all what a person will receive in the entire following year is determined. It is as follows:

Lord! I invoke You to bless Muḥammed and his progeny and to advance my conviction to the greatest pinnacle of perfection, to make my belief the most excellent. Lord! Cause my intentions to be the best and my conduct, too; grant prosperity to my good resolutions, correct my belief in You and reform, with Your Might, whatever has become corrupted in me. Lord! Bless Muḥammed and his progeny and spare me from whatever causes me to be deeply concerned. Enable me, Lord, to perform those deeds concerning which You will question me tomorrow,

and let my days be spent in performing whatever tasks for which You have created me. Cause me to perform those deeds concerning which You will question me tomorrow, let my days be spent in that for which You have created me; make me independent and provide for me amply with Your sustenance. Lord! Do not let me be tempted by arrogance; grant me dignity; cause me to adore You as You ought to be adored, and do not let my adoration be spoiled with conceit. Lord! Enable me to cause people to do good deeds and do not permit it to be undone by my own reminding them thereof. Lord! Grant me excellent morals and save me from boasting. Lord! Bless Muhammed and his progeny and do not exalt me to any rank among men unless You have lowered me to an equal degree in my own eyes, and do not create for me any outward glory unless You cause me to feel equally humbled inwardly in spirit. Lord! Bless Muhammed and his progeny and permit me to enjoy right guidance for which I desire no substitute whatever, and a right path from which I do not ever stray, and a well-guided intention which I do not ever doubt, and permit me to live as long as my life is used in adoring You. So when my life becomes a pasture for Satan, be pleased to call me back to You before Your Wrath approaches me or Your anger takes control of me. Lord! Leave in me no culpable habit without reforming it, nor any blame-worthy blemish without mending it, nor any imperfect excellence without bringing it to perfection. Lord! Bless Muhammed and his progeny and substitute for me love in place of the hatred of my enemies, friendship in place of the envy of the mischief-makers, confidence in place of the distrust of the virtuous, kindness in place of the hatred of the near ones, benevolence to kindred in place of their disappointment, assistance in place of the desertion of those near in kin. Lord! Permit me to reward with the sincerity of regard for the love of the polite and tolerant ones, and with good behavior for the betrayal of associates, and with the sweetness of security for the bitterness of the fear of tyrants.

Lord! Bless Muhammed and his progeny and grant me the upper hand over whoever oppresses me, the convincing argument against whoever disputes with me, and victory over whoever harbors an ill-will towards me. Lord! Grant me an artifice against whoever deceived me, and power over whoever overpowered me, and prove the falsehood of the charge of whoever impeached me. Lord! Spare me the mischief of whoever threatened me, grant me grace to obey whoever guided me to the Right Path and follow whoever led me thereto. Lord! Bless Muhammed and his progeny and grant me grace so that I may behave with sincere good-will to whoever proved insincere to me, and reward with goodness whoever forsakes me, and repay with bounty whoever

disappointed me, and compensate with reunion whoever forsook me, and adopt an opposite attitude of that who spoke ill of me by speaking well of him, and to reciprocate appreciation and overlook malice. Lord! Bless Muḥammed and his progeny and adorn me with the qualities of the righteous, clothe me with the outfit of the pious, enable me to disseminate justice and restrain my anger, quell the fire of ill-will and reunite those separated, make reconciliation among men, publicize goodness, hide out imperfections and promote lenience of temper, bend my knee of humility, beautify my conduct with the calmness of disposition and amiability of social conduct, and advance me towards excellence! Lord! Enable me to adopt generosity and to tolerate rebuke and show kindness to those unworthy of it, to speak the truth though difficult, to underestimate my personal virtue however great, be it in words or in deeds, and to overestimate personal evil however small, be it a statement or a deed, Lord! Grant the fulfillment of these wishes along with continual worship of You and attachment to the community of the faithful and let me withdraw from those who invoke You yet act upon self-invented judgment. Lord! Bless Muḥammed and his progeny and confer on me Your most abundant sustenance when I grow old and infuse in me Your most righteous strength when I am fatigued. Lord! Do not permit me to grow lazy so as to keep away from worshipping You, do not let me become unable to see Your path nor allow me to indulge in what is contrary to that which achieves Your love, nor join the company of anyone who has separated himself from You, nor let me keep aloof from whoever joined others in obeying You. Lord! Let me derive my strength from You in necessity and appeal to You when in need and humbly entreat You when in poverty; do not let me be tempted to ask help of anyone other than You when I am afflicted, nor to humbly entreat anyone other than You when in need, nor to supplicate to anyone other than You when in fear, lest I should deserve thereby to be forsaken, rejected and despised by You, O Most Merciful One!

Lord! Let what Satan introduces into my heart of desires of suspicion and envy be a cause for remembrance of Your greatness, contemplation upon Your power, and become plans against Your enemy! Lord! Let what he causes my tongue to utter of indecent words, nonsense, raving abuse, false evidence, backbiting of a true absent believer, or reviling one who is present, and anything else similar to these..., be, instead, a speech in praise of You, an utterance of a eulogy to You, an absorption in Your glory, an expression of thanksgiving for Your favour, an acknowledgment of Your goodness, an enumeration of Your blessings! Lord! Bless Muḥammed and his progeny and do not let me be

oppressed while You have power to ward off trouble from me, nor let me oppress others while You have authority to restrain me, nor permit me to go astray while it is possible for You to guide me, nor grow poor while You have power to make me prosperous, nor grow rebellious while my independence is from You. Lord! Seeking Your forgiveness have I come, at Your pardon do I aim, Your forbearance do I long for, in Your kindness do I trust. I have nothing with me that would entitle me to achieve Your forgiveness, nor is there in my actions what would make me deserve Your pardon; I have nothing save Your grace when I pass judgment upon myself; therefore, bless Muhammed and his progeny and be kind to me. Lord! Make me speak what is right, inspire me with piety, give me grace for what is most pure, employ me in doing what is more praiseworthy. Lord! Make me walk the most exemplary path, let me live and die believing in You. Lord! Bless Muhammed and his progeny and bless me with frugality, and let me be among the people of righteousness, and one of those who guide others to virtue, and one of the pious servants, and grant me salvation on the Day of Resurrection and safety on the expected Day of Doom. Lord! Exact for Yourself from my soul that which purifies it, and preserve those motives for my soul that may perfect it, for verily my soul is liable to come to ruin unless You preserve it! Lord! You are my shelter if I grow sad, my resource if I am in need, and unto You do I cry for help when deeply afflicted, and with You is recompense for what is lost, and reformation for what is corrupt, and alteration for what You disapprove! Favour me, Lord, with security before calamity, with bounty before begging for it, with the right direction before error, and do spare me from bearing the unpleasant deeds of Your creatures, grant me peace on the Day of Resurrection, and favour me with handsome guidance. Lord! Bless Muhammed and his progeny and ward off evil from me with Your grace, nourish me with Your blessing, reform me with Your Grace, cure me with Your goodness, hide me in the shelter of Your mercy, clothe me with Your approbation, help me when matters grow difficult before me to choose the most righteous of them and when actions become dubious to select the purest of them, and when Your creeds conflict to adopt the most praiseworthy of them. Lord! Bless Muhammed and his progeny and crown me with self-sufficiency, adorn me with the grace of Your love, grant me true guidance and do not try me with prosperity. Confer on me the beauty of comfort, do not make my life a succession of trials, do not reject my prayer with repulsion for I do not recognize any as Your rival and I do not call any as Your peer. Lord! Bless Muhammed and his progeny and restrain me from extravagance, preserve my subsistence from waste, increase my possessions by blessing them, let me walk along the path of

benevolence in whatever I spend my wealth for. Lord! Bless Muḥammed and his progeny and spare me the pain of earning, provide me with livelihood without measure so that seeking it may not have to bear the evil consequences of earning wealth by unfair means. Lord! Bless Muḥammed and his progeny, guard my honour with prosperity, do not disgrace my dignity with poverty lest I should beg of those who receive their living from You, and ask favour of the wicked, and be tempted thereby to praise whoever gives me, and fall into disparaging whoever denies me, while You are above all of them the Master of Bounty and Denial. Lord! Bless Muḥammed and his progeny and give me accuracy in worship, happiness in piety, knowledge in practice, and chastity in beneficence. Lord! Let my term of existence end with Your pardon, verify my conduct in expecting Your mercy, make it easy for me to win Your approbation and let my deeds in all circumstances be good. Lord! Bless Muḥammed and his progeny, and remind me to adore You in times of neglect, employ me in serving You in the days of leisure, show me an easy path to Your love so that I may obtain the good of this life and that of the life hereafter. Lord! Bless Muḥammed and his progeny more than You blessed any of Your creation before him, and more than You will ever bless anyone after him, and grant us that which is good in the life of this world and in the life to come, graciously protect me from the torment of the Fire.

SUPPLICATION FOR REPENTANCE

By Imām ᶜAli son of al-Ḥusain "Zainul-ᶜĀbidīn"

This supplication is recommended to be recited during the nights of Lailatul-Qadr (the Night of Destiny), on all occasions, when one is bound to plead to for forgiveness for his sins and request the fulfillment of his worldly needs from his Lord. It is as follows:

Allāh! He (it is) Whom the depiction of those who describe fails to describe! He beyond Whom there is no hope for the hopeful! O He with Whom the reward of the doers of good is not wasted! O He Who is the Ultimate object of the fear of the worshippers! O He Who is the utmost limit of the fear of the God-fearing! This is the station of one whose sins have passed from hand to hand. The reins of offenses have led him on, Satan has gained the upper hand over him, he fell short of attaining what You have commanded through his negligence, pursuing what You have prohibited in delusion, ignorant of Your power over him, or like

one who denies the bounty of Your Beneficence towards him, until, when the eye of guidance was opened for him and the clouds of blindness were dispelled, he reckoned that through which he had wronged his own self and reflected upon that in which he had opposed his Lord. He saw his vast disobedience as such and his great opposition as great. So he turned to You, hoping in You and feeling ashamed before You; he directed his plea to You, having trust in You. He repaired to You in his longing with certitude and he went straight to You in fear with sincerity. His longing was devoid of every object of longing but You, his fright departed from every object of fear but You. So he stood before You pleading, his eyes turned towards the ground in humbleness, his head bowed before Your Might in lowliness; he revealed to You in meekness those secrets of his which You know better than him; he numbered for You in humility those sins of his which You count better than him; he sought help from You before the dreadful pit into which he has fallen which You know, and the ugliness which has disgraced him in Your judgment: the sins whose pleasures have fled, and whose evil consequences have lingered and struck fast. He will not deny Your justice, Lord, if You punish him, nor will he consider Your pardon too much for You to carry out, so have mercy on him, Lord, for You are the Generous Lord for Whom the forgiveness of great sins is not great!

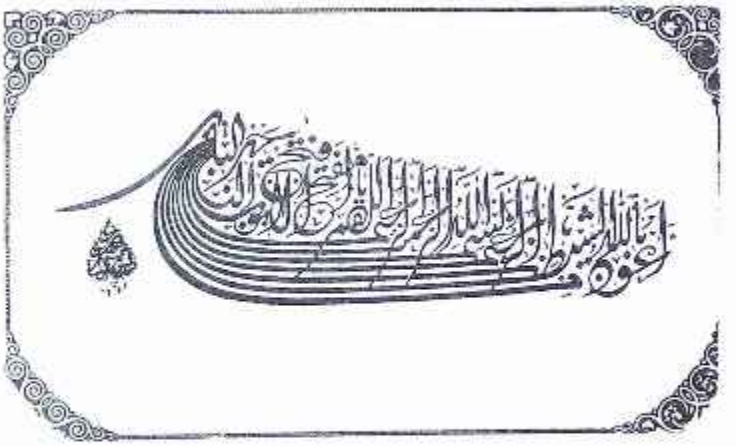
Allāh, so here I am; I have come to You obeying Your command (for You have enjoined us to supplicate to You), asking the fulfillment of Your Promise, (for You have promised to oblige): You have said, "Invoke Me, and I shall respond to you" (Qur'ān, 40:60). O Allāh! Bless Muḥammed and his progeny, meet me with Your forgiveness just as I have met You with my confession, lift me up from the fatal infirmities of sins just as I have lowered myself before You, cover me with Your covering just as You have shown no haste to take vengeance on me!

Allāh! Firm my intention to obey You, strengthen my insight in worshipping You, enable me to do the deeds which will wash away the defilement of offenses, take my soul away, when You do so, as an adherent to the creed of Your Prophet Muḥammed. Allāh! I repent to You from my sins, big and small, my evil deeds, inward and outward, my lapses, past and present, with the repentance of one who does not tell himself that he might disobey or secretly think that he might return to an offense. You have said, God, in the fixed text of Your Book, that You accept repentance from Your servants, that You pardon evil deeds, that You love those who repent; so, I plead to You to accept my repentance as You have promised, pardon my evil deeds as You have

guaranteed, make obligatory towards me Your love as You have stipulated! To You, Lord, belongs my stipulation that I will not return to what is disliked by You, my pledge that I will not go back to what You blame, my covenant to You that I will stay away from acts of disobedience to You. Allāh! You know better what I have done, so forgive me what You know and turn me by Your Might towards what You love! Allāh! Counted against me are claims that linger in my memory and claims that I have forgotten, while all of them remain in Your eye that does not sleep and Your knowledge that does not forget! So compensate their owners, lighten their weight upon me, lift their burden from me, preserve me from approaching their like! Allāh, but I cannot be faithful to my repentance without Your protection, nor can I refrain from offenses without Your strength, so strengthen me sufficiently and attend to me with a defending preservation! Allāh! If any servant repents to You, while You know in the Unseen that he will break his repentance and return to his sin and offense, I seek refuge with You lest I should be like that! So make my repentance a repentance after which I will need no further repentance, a repentance which will obligate the erasing of what has gone by and bring safety in what remains! Allāh! I ask pardon from You for my ignorance, and I ask You to disregard my evil deeds! So join me to the shelter of Your mercy by Your Grace and cover me with the covering of Your well-being through Your Bounty! Allāh! I repent to You from everything opposed to Your will or distant from Your love, the thoughts of my heart, the glances of my eyes, the tales of my tongue, with a repentance through which each of my bodily parts will by itself stay safe from ill consequences with You and remains secure from Your painful penalties feared by transgressors! Allāh! So have mercy on me being alone before You, with my heart pounding in fear of You, my limbs trembling in awe of You! My sins, Lord, have stood me in the station of degradation in Your courtyard. If I remain silent, none will speak for me; if I seek an intercessor, I am not worthy of intercession. Allāh! Bless Muhammed and his progeny, make Your generosity intercede for my offenses, follow up my evil deeds with Your pardon, do not repay me with the punishment that is my proper repayment, spread over me Your grace, wrap me in Your covering, do unto me what is done by a Mighty One when a lowly servant pleads to Him and He shows him mercy, or a rich man when a poor slave lowers himself and he raises him to riches! Allāh! I have no protector against You, so let Your Might be my protector! I have no intercessor with You, so let Your bounty be my intercessor! My offenses have set me trembling, so let Your pardon provide me with security! Not all that I have said rises up from ignorance of my evil footsteps or forgetfulness of my blameworthy acts

in the past, but in order that Your heavens and those within it and Your earth and those upon it may hear the remorse which I have declared to You and the repentance through which I have sought asylum with You. Then perhaps one of them, through Your mercy, shows mercy upon my evil situation or be seized by pity for my evil state. There may come from him for my sake a supplication to which You pay attention more than You might to mine, or an intercession surer with You than my intercession through which I may be delivered from Your Wrath and attain Your Pleasure!

O Allāh! If remorse is an expression of repentance towards You, then I am most remorseful! If refraining from disobedience is turning back to You, then I am the first of those who turn back! If praying for forgiveness alleviates sins, then surely I am one of those who pray for Your forgiveness! Allāh! As You have commanded repentance and guaranteed acceptance, as You have urged supplication and promised to respond, so also bless Muḥammed and his progeny, accept my repentance, do not turn me disappointed in Your Mercy! Surely You are ever-Turning to the sinners, all-Compassionate towards the offenders who turn back to You! Allāh! Bless Muḥammed and his progeny just as You have guided us by him! Bless Muḥammed and his household just as You have saved us through him! Bless Muḥammed and his progeny with a blessing that will intercede for us on the Day of Resurrection, the Day of need to You! You have power over everything; so, surely that is easy for You!



PART FIVE

MUḤAMMED: The Prophet and Messenger of Allāh[1]

To know Allāh is to know His creation, as much as possible, and the very best of His creation, barring none, is Muḥammed, Prophet and Messenger of Allāh, peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him and his progeny, the one loved most by Allāh. To love Muḥammed is to love Allāh, and to love Allāh is to love Muḥammed. Whoever loves Muḥammed is loved by Allāh; one who is loved by Allāh has nothing to worry about, nor shall he grieve. And how can anyone *not* love Muḥammed unless he is sick in the heart and in the mind, sick with prejudice and arrogance, with ignorance, intolerance, and conceit?! Such are the characteristics of all non-Muslim writers who have attacked the greatest man who ever walked on the face of earth.

One who objectively studies the life, conduct and accomplishments of this great personality will inevitably come to realize why Muḥammed is so much loved by the Almighty, why he is so holy, so pure, so refined. Such knowledge, it is hoped, will benefit the non-Muslims as well ast the Muslims. The first party has been brainwashed by the pens of a host of prejudiced and narrow-minded writes who are for one reason or another hostile towards Muḥammed, his followers and creed. This book, it is hoped, will shed a light on the falsehood of such writers and will expose their blind bias. As for the Muslims, those who wish to follow in his footsteps and be gathered in his company on the Day of Judgment, it is hoped that this book will be like a beacon of light for them, so that they may emulate their Prophet and be worthy of being called his followers. May Allāh count us and yourself among them, *Allāhomma Āmeen.*

HIS GENEALOGY

He is Muḥammed ibn (son of) ᶜAbdullāh ibn ᶜAbdul-Muṭṭalib ibn Hāshim ibn ᶜAbd Munāf ibn Quṣayy ibn Kilāb ibn Murrah ibn Kaᶜb ibn Ghālib

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[1]In writing this chapter, I utilized both S. Saeed Akhtar Rizvi's book *The Holy Prophet* (which I edited for publication by Tahrike-Tarsile-Qur'an of New York), and Sayyid Safdar Husayn's book *The Early History of Islam*, in addition to a good number of other Arabic and English references.

ibn Fahr ibn Mālik ibn Nadar ibn Kinānah ibn Khuzāymah ibn Mudrikah ibn Ilyās ibn Mazar ibn Nazār ibn Maʿad ibn ʿAdnān ibn Ismaʿeel (Ishmael) ibn Ibrāhīm (Abraham), peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him, his progeny and ancestors, especially his great grandfathers Ismaʿeel and Ibrāhīm.

Many of these names are actually adjectives, not nouns. Following is information published on pp. 104-105, Vol. 15, of al-Majlisi's *Biḥār al-Anwār*:

The real name of Hāshim is ʿAmr ibn ʿAbd Munāf. He was called "Hāshim" because he purchased dried bread in Syria and broke it into gravy whereby he fed his starving people during famine time[1]. The real name of ʿAbd Munāf is actually al-Mughīrah ibn Qusayy. He was given the title "ʿAbd Munāf" because of his eminence and loftiness of status among his people. Qusayy's real name is Zayd. He was called "Qusayy" because he remained for some time among the tribesmen of Azd away from his people. He is also called "al-Mujammiʿ" because he gathered the various clans comprising Quraish together after being scattered in mountainous areas and throughout the valleys, allocating houses for them and settling them therein for good. The real name of Quraish is Nadar which also is an adjective meaning: one upon whom Allāh cast a look, choosing him from among others to serve His cause. He is son of Khazīmah. "Khazīmah" is an adjective meaning: He was named so because, his folks believed, the Almighty placed in him the *noor* of his forefathers. He is father of Mudrikah who was called so because his people, during his time, had attained a prestigious status. His father was called "Tābikhah" because he used to cook his father's hunted game. He is son of prophet Ilyas (Elias), peace be upon him, who was called so because he was born after his mother had lost hope of having a son. He is son of Mudar who was named so because he captivated people's hearts; whoever saw him loved him. He is father of Nazār whose real name was ʿAmr. He was called "Nazār" because Maʿad witnessed the light of Prophet Muhammed upon his countenance, so he offered a great sacrifice for the Almighty as a token of his appreciation, telling his son, "I still think that this sacrifice is not great enough; rather, it is very little (*nazar*)." Some people think that that name was not Arabic. Maʿad, his father, was called so because he used to assault the Jews time and over

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[1]More details about this incident will be stated in a later chapter of this book *Inshā-Allāh*.

again, always winning a victory over them. The name of his father is ᶜAdnān. He was named so because all the eyes of his kinsfolk were always fixed at him. There is a tradition wherein the Messenger of Allāh is quoted saying, "If my lineage reaches ᶜAdnān, you should stop;" so let us stop here. The reason why the Prophet said so is due to the great disagreement among genealogists with regard to Muhammed's ancestors before ᶜAdnān.

WHAT DOES "MUḤAMMED" MEAN?

According to the great traditionist Jābir ibn ᶜAbdullāh al-Anṣāri, may Allāh be pleased with him, the Messenger of Allāh has said, "I more than anyone else look like Adam, peace be upon him, while Ibrāhīm, more than anyone else, looks like me and deals with people as I do. Allāh, from His *ᶜArsh*, gave me ten names and conveyed the glad tidings of my advent to every messenger whom He sent to his respective people. In the Torah and in the Gospel (Bible), He included my name and taught me to speak divinely; He raised me in His heavens and derived a name for me from one of His Own, calling me `Muḥammed,' while He Himself is the `Maḥmood.' And He extracted my seed out of the best from among my *umma*, making my name in the Torah `Aheed,' for it is through *tawhīd* that He has forbidden the bodies of my *umma* from entering the fire. In the Gospel, He called me `Ahmed,' for I am more praised by the people of the heavens (than by those on earth), making the members of my *umma* the *ḥāmidīn* (those who laud me). In the Psalms, He made my name `Maḥi,' for Allāh, the Most Exalted, the Most Sublime, wiped out through me idol-worship. And in the Qur'ān, He made my name `Muḥammed,' for I am praised by everyone on the Day of Judgment when decrees will be issued, and none besides me will receive such praise. On the Day of Resurrection, He will call me `Hāshir,' for people will be gathered together from underneath my feet. And on the Day of Standing, He will call me `al-Mawqif,' for I will make all people stand before Him for judgment. And He called me `al-ᶜĀqib,' for I am the last of His prophets; none shall succeed me as such. And He made me the Messenger of mercy and repentance, the Imam of all those who stand before others and lead them in the prayers, since it was I who led all the prophets for congregational prayers. Moreover, I am also al-Qayyim, al-Kāmil, and al-Jāmiᶜ.'"

FIRST, IT WAS THE LIGHT OF MUḤAMMED

When Allāh intended to create the living beings, He first created the *noor* (light) of Muḥammed. Refer to al-Qasṭalāni's *Al-Mawāhib al-Ladunniyah*, Vol. 1, pp. 5, 9, and 10, where he quotes the Prophet's traditions to this effect as transmitted by Jābir ibn ᶜAbdullāh al-Anṣāri[1] and ᶜAli ibn Abū Ṭālib. In his *Murūju al-Thahab*, the well-known historian al-Masᶜūdi[2] quotes a lengthy tradition from ᶜAli to the effect that when Allāh created, first of all, the Light of Muḥammed, He said to it: "You are My chosen one and the Trustee of My Light and Guidance. It is because of you that I am going to create the earth and the skies, lay down reward and punishment, and bring into being the Garden and the Fire." Then the tradition goes on to speak about the family of the Prophet, about the creation of angels, the souls, the cosmos, the covenant taken from the souls which combined the belief in the One God with acceptance of Muḥammed's Prophethood. This is why Ibn ᶜAbbās narrates saying that the Prophet said: "I was Prophet when Adam was between soul and body (i.e. when Adam's creation was in its preliminary stages)" (see at-Ṭabrāni's book *Al-Muᶜjam al-Kabīr*, and Vol. 1, p. 4, of *Al-Khasā'is al-Kubra*).

Muḥammed's Light adorned the ᶜArsh (Throne) of God. Aeons later, Adam was created. That Light was then placed in his forehead. It continued its journey, generation after generation, through numerous prophets and their successors till it came to Prophet Ibrāhīm. From Ibrāhīm (Abraham), it came to his eldest son, Prophet Ismaᶜil (Ishmael).

The Prophet said: "Verily Allāh chose Ismaᶜil from the progeny of Ibrāhīm, and chose Banū Kināna from the progeny of Ismaᶜil, and chose

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[1]Jābir ibn ᶜAbdullāh al-Anṣāri is one of the greatest *sahābis* of Prophet Muḥammed, a first-class traditionist and a most zealous supporter of Imām ᶜAli ibn Abū Ṭālib. According to *Al-Istiᶜāb*, he died at the age of 94 in 74 A.H./693 A.D. (some say in 77 A.H./696 A.D. and others in 78 A.H./697 A.D.), and his funeral prayers were led by Abān ibn ᶜOthmān, then governor of Medīna. He was the very last to die from among the Prophet's close *sahābah*.

[2]He is ᶜAbd al-Rehmān ibn ᶜAbdullāh al-Masᶜūdi. He died in 165 A.H./781 A.D. His descendant, Yahya ibn Muḥammed ibn Abi ᶜObaydah ibn Maᶜn was one of the major *isnād* authorities upon whom Abū Jaᶜfer Muḥammed ibn Jarīr al-Tabari (839 - 923 A.D.) relied in writing his famous work *Tārīkh al-rusul wal mulūk* (history of the Messengers and the kings).

Quraish from Banū Kinānah, and chose Banū Hāshim from Quraish, and chose me from Banū Hāshim." At-Tirmithi has narrated this tradition from *Wasīlat ibn al-Asqa'* and has said that this tradition is *ṣaḥīḥ* (correct, authentic).

Abū al-Fida' quotes in his *Tārīkh* (book of history) a tradition wherein the Prophet says: "Gabriel said to me: `I looked at the earth from the east to the west, but I did not find anyone superior to Muḥammed, and I looked at the Earth from the east to the west but did not find any progeny superior to the progeny of Hāshim."

PROPHECIES PREDICTING HIS ADVENT

The advent of Prophet Muḥammed was prophecized in the sacred scriptures of many creeds; here are proofs:

1) Prophecy in Hindu Sanskrit Scriptures:

Here is the original Sanskrit text:

॥ अथर्ववेदे २० । १२७ ॥

॥ अथ कुन्तापसूक्तानि ॥

इदं जना उप श्रुत नाराशंस स्तविष्यते । ॥१२७
षष्टिं सहस्रा नवतिं च कौरम ष्टा रुशमेषु दद्महे ॥ १ ॥

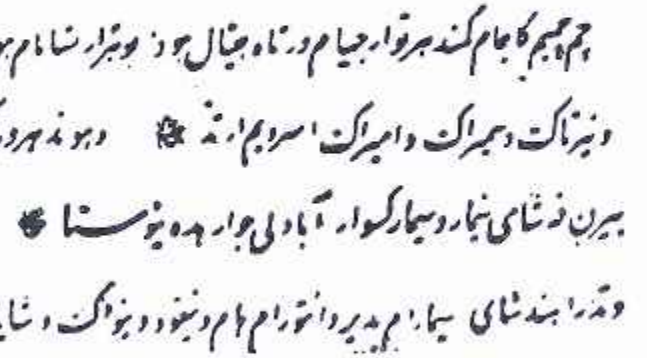
उष्ट्रा यस्य प्रवाहिणो वधूमन्तो द्विर्दश ।
वर्ष्मा रथस्य नि जिहीषते दिव ईषमाण उपस्पृशः ॥ २ ॥
एष ऋषये मामहे शतं निष्कान्दश स्रजः ।
त्रीणि शतान्यर्वतां सहस्रा दश गोनाम् ॥ ३ ॥ (१)

... and here is its translation:

> O people! Listen to this emphatically! The Man of Praise (Muḥammed) will be raised among the people. We take the emigrant in our shelter from sixty thousand and ninety enemies whose conveyances are twenty camels and she-camels, whose loftiness of position touches the heavens and lowers it.

2) Prophecy in the Parsi Scritpure:

Here is the original text written in ancient Pahlavi[1]:



... and here is its translation;

> When the Persians should sink so low in morality, a man will be born in Arabia whose followers will upset their throne, religion, and everything. The mighty stiff-necked ones of Persia will be over-powered. The house which was built (referring to Abraham rebuilding the Ka°ba) and in which many idols have been placed will be purged of idols, and people will say their prayers facing towards it. His followers will capture the towns of the Parsis and Taus and Balkh and other big places round about. People will embroil with one another. The wise men of Persia and others will join his followers.

3) Prophecy in the Bible:

Following is the text on pp. 225-227 of the Gospel of Saint Barnabas[2], edited and translated from the Italian manuscript at the Imperial Library at Vienna by Lonsdale and Laura Ragg:

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[1]Pahlavi was the Persian language of the Zoroastrian literature from the 3rd to the 10th centuries, and it is derived from the Aramaic alphabet.

[2]Reference to Saint Barnabas and his Gospel is made in the chapter of this book dealing with Jesus Christ.

Then said the priest, "How shall the Messiah be called, and what sign shall reveal his coming?" Jesus answered: "The name of the Messiah is Amirable, for God Himself gave him the name when He had created his soul and placed it in celestial splendour. God said: `Wait, Muhammed, for thy sake I will create Paradise, the world, and a great multitude of creatures, whereas I make thee a present, in so much that whoso shall bless thee shall be blessed, and whoso shall curse thee shall be cursed. When I shall send thee into the world, I shall send thee as My Messenger of salvation, and thy world shall be true insomuch that the heavens and the earth shall fail but thy faith shall never fail.' Muhammed is his blessed name.

Then the crowd raised their voices saying, "O God! Send us Thy Messenger! O Muhammed! Come quickly for the salvation of the world!"

THE SETTING: ḤIJĀZ

Most of the incidents narrated in this part take place in Hijāz, the northern part of today's Saudi Arabia. Hijāz is the region along the mountainous Red Sea coast of the Arabian Peninsula from Jordan on the north to the region of ᶜAsīr on the south. Its northern part was occupied as early as the 6th century B.C. when the Chaldean kings of Babylon kept Taym (or Taymā') as its summer capital. Later, Hijāz became part of the Nabataean kingdom which lasted for three hundred years: from 100 B.C. to 200 A.D.; its center was Madā'in Sālih[1]; this is the place where the Arabian prophet Sālih and his people had lived. The province was again placed under Baghdad's control till 1258 A.D. when it fell to the Egyptians and, in 1517, to Ottoman Turks. The most important cities in Hijāz are: Mecca, Medīna, Jiddah, and Ṭā'if.

THE CHILDREN OF ISMĀᶜĪL (ISHMAEL)

Prophet Ibrāhīm (Abraham) had brought his eldest son Ismaᶜil with his mother Hājira (Hagar) from Kenᶜān to the barren valley of Mecca. He used to visit them once a year. When Ismaᶜil was old enough to help him, Prophet Ibrāhīm built the House of Allāh known as the Kaᶜba.

There was no water in the land when Ismaᶜil and Hājira were left there. The well of Zamzam miraculously appeared for Ismaᶜil. Read how this miraculous event is portrayed in the Bible:

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[1]The reader will come across Madā'in Sālih when we discuss Khadīja.

And God heard the voice of the lad [Ishmael]; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven and said to her: What aileth thee, Hagar? Fear not, for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise and lift up the lad and hold him in thy hand, for I will make him a great nation. And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water.
Genesis, 21:17-20

Finding the well, the tribe of Jurham sought the permission of Hājira to settle there. During Prophet Ibrāhīm's annual visit, permission was given to them, and ultimately Ishmael married in the same tribe. He begot twelve sons; the eldest was called Qidar (Cedar).

The Ishmaelites increased in number, thus fulfilling the promise of Allāh to Ibrāhīm to multiply Ishmael exceedingly, as we read in Genesis.

The Ishmaelites, by and by, spread all over Hijāz. They were not organized and consequently had no power. About 200 years before Christ, ᶜAdnān from the children of Qidar arose to some fame. The genealogy of ᶜAdnān up to Qidar is not agreed upon. The Arabs have narrated various genealogies. The Prophet, in order to emphasize the Islamic ideology that personal qualities, rather than genealogy, was the criterion of excellence, and with a view not to entangle himself in such unnecessary and useless arguments, ordered the Muslims thus: "When my genealogy reaches ᶜAdnān, stop."

In the third century of the Christian Era (CE), there arose a leader named Fahr in that family. He was son of Mālik, son of Nadar, son of Kinānah, son of Khuzaymah, son of Mudrikah, son of Ilyās, son of Mazar, son of Nazār, son of Maᶜd, son of ᶜAdnān.

Some people think that this Fahr was called Quraish, and that is why his children came to be known as Quraish.

In the fifth generation after Fahr, in the fifth century of the Christian era, a very powerful personality appeared on the scene. He was Qusayy, son of Kilāb, son of Murrah, son of Lu'ayy, son of Ghālib, son of Fahr.

Many people say that it was not Fahr but Qusayy who was called Quraish. The famous Muslim scholar Shibli al-Nuᶜmān, writes: "Qusayy became so famous and achieved such a high prestige that some people say that he was the first man to be called Quraish, as Ibn ᶜAbdi Rabbih has written in his book *Al-ᶜIqd al-Farīd*, clearly saying that as Qusayy gathered all the children of Ismāᶜīl from far and wide and made them leave the nomadic way of life, settling them around the Kaᶜba, he was called Quraish (the gatherer)." Al-Ṭabari quotes ᶜAbdul-Malik ibn Marwān as saying that Qusayy was Quraish, and that nobody was given

this name before him.

When Qusayy came of age, a man from the tribe of Khuzā'ah named Hulail was the trustee of the Ka'ba. Qusayy married his daughter and, according to Hulail's will, got the trusteeship of the Ka'ba after Hulail. Qusayy established many new institutions:

It was Qusayy who established Dār al-Nadwa (Assembly House). It was there that discussions were held to settle important matters like war and peace. Caravans assembled there before going out, and marriages and other ceremonies were conducted.

It was Qusayy who established the system of *siqāya* (making arrangements to supply water to the pilgrims during the *hajj* days) and rifada (to feed the pilgrims during those days).

It appears from al-Tabari that this system was followed in Islam up to his time, i.e. 500 years after Qusayy.

It was Qusayy who made arrangements for the pilgrims to stay at al-Mash'arul al-Harām at night. He used to illuminate the valley with lamps, making their stay comfortable.

It was Qusayy who rebuilt the Ka'ba and who dug the first well at Mecca. Zamzam was filled up long ago and nobody knew of its actual location.

Arab historians unanimously say that he was generous, brave, and sympathetic; his ideas were pure, his thinking clean, and his manners very refined. His word was followed like a religion during his lifetime and even after his death. People used to visit his grave at Hajūn (present day Jannatul Ma'alla). No wonder that he was the undisputed chief of the tribe which owed its strength and power to his leadership. To him had converged all the responsibilities and privileges of the tribe: He was the trustee of the Ka'ba (*ḥijāba*), he was the chairman of Dār al-Nadwa which he himself had established; he fed the pilgrims (*rifāda*); he arranged to provide them with drinking water (*siqāya*); he was the standard-bearer of Quraish in wartime (*liwā'*), and he was the commander of the army (*qiyāda*).

These were the six privileges which were looked upon with great respect and before which all of Arabia bowed down. The most wonderful aspect of his life is his selflessness. In all the accounts of his life, there never appears any hint that by being the undisputed leader of the tribe, he had gained anything for himself.

Qusayy had five sons and a daughter: 'Abduddār was the eldest, then Mughīrah (known as 'Abd Munāf). Qusayy loved his eldest son very

much, and at the time of his death, he entrusted him with all the six responsibilities mentioned above.

But ᶜAbduddār was not a very able man, whereas ᶜAbd Munāf was acknowledged as a wise leader even during the life of his father, and his words were dutifully obeyed by the whole tribe. Because of his nobility and benevolence, he was commonly known as "generous." Thus, it came to pass that ᶜAbduddār shared all his responsibilities with ᶜAbd Munāf. ᶜAbd Munāf even became the paramount chief of Quraish.

ᶜAbd Munāf had six sons: Hāshim, Muttalib, ᶜAbdush-Shams, and Nawfal were the most famous among them.

There was no trouble while ᶜAbduddār and ᶜAbd Munāf were alive. After their death, a dispute started between their children concerning the distribution of the six responsibilities. A war had almost started before it was agreed upon that *siqāya*, *rifāda*, and *qiyāda* should go to the children of ᶜAbdu Munāf, and *liwā'* and *hijāba* should remain with the children of ᶜAbduddār, while the chairmanship of Dār al-Nadwa should be shared by both families.

HĀSHIM

Hāshim's name will always shine in the history of Arabia and Islam not only because he was the great grandfather of the Prophet, but in his own right due to his tremendous achievements.

He may well be compared with any great leader of his time. He was the most generous, the most prestigious, and the most respected leader of Quraish. He used to feed the pilgrims during *hajj* with royal open-handedness. But the best testimonial to his benevolence is his title "Hāshim" whereby he came to be known. Once, there was a great famine in Mecca. Hāshim could not look silently at the sorry plight of the Meccans. He took all his wealth, went to Syria, purchased flour and dried bread, brought it to Mecca and daily slaughtered his camels for gravy; the bread was broken into the gravy and the whole tribe was invited to partake of it. This continued till the famine was averted and all lives were saved. It was this extraordinary feat that earned him the name "Hāshim," the one who breaks (the bread). Hāshim's real name, as indicated earlier, was ᶜAmr.

Hāshim was the founder of the trade caravans of Quraish. He obtained an edict from the Byzantine emperor which exempted Quraish from all kinds of duties or taxes when entering or leaving the countries under his domain. He obtained the same concession from the emperor of

Ethiopia. Thus, Quraishites started taking their trade caravans in the winter to Yemen (which was at the time under the Ethiopian rule) and in the summer to Syria and beyond up to Ankara (under Byzantine rule). But the trade routes were not safe; therefore, Hāshim visited all the dominant tribes between Yemen and Ankara and entered into agreements with them. They agreed that they would not attack the trade caravans of Quraish, and Hāshim undertook on behalf of Quraish that their trade caravans would bring all their necessities to their places of abode and would buy and sell at reasonable prices. Thus, in spite of all the looting and plundering that prevailed in Arabia then, the trade caravans of Quraish were always safe.

It is to this achievement of Hāshim that Allāh refers in the Qur'ān, counting it as a great bounty of God upon Quraish:

> ***In the Name of Allāh, the most Gracious, the most Merciful***
> *For the security and safeguard enjoyed by Quraish, their safety during (their) journeys by winter and by summer, let them worship the Lord of this House Who provides them with food against hunger and with security against fear.*
> (Qur'ān, 106:1-4)

There was a pathetically pessimistic tradition in Quraish known as *ihtifād*. When a poor family could not feed itself, it would go out to the desert and, entering a tent, remain there till death claimed all of its members one by one. They thought that nobody would know of their plight and, by thus starving to death, they would protect their honour.

It was Hāshim who persuaded Quraish to actively combat the poverty instead of succumbing to it. His scheme: He joined one rich person with a poor one, provided that their dependents were equal in number. That poor person was to help the rich one during the trade journey. Whatever increase of capital accrued by way of profit would be shared equally by both. Thus, there would be no need for *ihtifād*.

This scheme was wholeheartedly accepted and implemented by the tribe. This wise suggestion not only removed poverty from Quraish but also created a feeling of brotherhood and unity among them.

These achievements were enough to justify a very long life. But our wonder knows no bounds when we learn that Hāshim was only 25 years old when death overtook him at Gaza, Palestine, in approximately 488 A.D. His grave is preserved, and Gaza is also called "Ghazzat Hāshim," i.e. Hāshim's Gaza.

Hāshim was very handsome, and because of his looks and prestige, many chiefs and even rulers wanted him to marry their daughters. But he married Selma daughter of ʿAmr (from the tribe of ʿAdi Banū Najjār) of Yathrib. She was the mother of Shaybatul-Hamd who was an infant when Hāshim died. ʿAbdul-Muttalib is also known as "Shaybatul-hamd." "Shayba" means: gray hair; it is said that when he was born, one gray hair was found on his head, hence his name.

ʿABDUL-MUṬṬALIB

Hāshim had five sons: ʿAbdul-Muṭṭalib, Asad, Nadlah, Saifi and Abū Saifi. But the last three had no children; Asad had only a daughter, Fatima bint Asad, mother of ʿAli ibn Abū Tālib. Thus, it was only through ʿAbdul-Muttalib that the progeny of Hāshim survived.

ʿAbdul-Muttalib was born in Yathrib in his maternal grandfather's house, and he was only a few months old when Hāshim died in Gaza, Palestine. After Hāshim, his brother Muṭṭalib succeeded him in all the privileges mentioned earlier. After some time, Muṭṭalib went to Yathrib and brought his nephew to Mecca. When Muṭṭalib entered Mecca with his nephew behind him on his camel, some people said: "This is the slave of Muṭṭalib!" Muṭṭalib said: "No! He is my nephew and son of my deceased brother Hāshim." But the name stuck, and nowadays few people know that the real name of ʿAbdul-Muṭṭalib was Shaybatul-Hamd as indicated above. He was the most prominent personality in Mecca, and a bedstead used to be installed for him at the Kaʿba where people used to go to him to arbitrate between them and to solve their disputes.

Muṭṭalib loved ʿAbdul-Muttalib and looked after him very well. But ʿAbdush-Shams and Nawfal were hostile towards him. At the death of Muṭṭalib, ʿAbdul-Muttalib succeeded him in the two privileges held by him, i.e. *siqāya* and *rifāda*.

In spite of the enmity of his own uncles, his personal virtues and qualities of leadership earned him in later days the title of "Sayyidul-Baṭḥā'" (the Chief of Mecca). He lived to the ripe age of 82. A carpet was put for him before the Kaʿba and nobody else dared to put his foot on it. In later days, this rule was broken only by the orphaned son of ʿAbdullāh (i.e. the Prophet) who used to sit there and ʿAbdul-Muttalib forbade Quraish from interfering with the child because, he told them, "This child of mine is to have a special dignity."

It was ʿAbdul-Muṭṭalib who had forbidden his children from using intoxicants. It was he who used to enter the cave of Hirā' during the

month of Ramaḍān to spend the month in remembrance of Allāh and in feeding the poor. Like his father and uncle, he used to feed and provide water for the pilgrims during the *ḥajj* season. During the whole year, even the beasts and birds were fed from his house and, accordingly, he was called "Muṭ'imuṭ-ṭayr" (feeder of the birds).

Some of the systems originated by ʿAbdul-Muṭṭalib were later adopted in Islam. He was the first person to make *nathr* and to fulfill it, to give one fifth (*khums*) of the treasure in the way of Allāh, to forbid marriage between prohibited degrees, to cut a thief's hand, to make intoxicants unlawful, to forbid fornication and adultery, to discourage the system of killing the daughters, to discourage the *ṭawāf* around the Kaʿba without clothes, and to fix the compensation of manslaughter (killing someone by mistake or unintentionally) at 100 camels. All these systems were adopted by Islam. It is not possible to give the whole history of ʿAbdul-Muṭṭalib in this short chapter, but two important events must be mentioned: the recovery of Zamzam and the attempted attack on the Kaʿba by Abraha, governor of Yemen on behalf of the Ethiopian Negus[1].

ZAMZAM

Hundreds of years ago before the birth of Prophet Muḥammed, Zamzam was filled up and nobody knew where it was. One day, ʿAbdul-Muṭṭalib was sleeping in Ḥātim of the Kaʿba. Someone told him in a dream to dig the Taybah and to get water. He asked where Taybah was, but the vision vanished without any reply. The same vision was repeated the second and the third day, but the names were changed every time. On the fourth day, he was told to dig Zamzam. ʿAbdul-Muṭṭalib asked where Zamzam was. He was given the signs. ʿAbdul-Muṭṭalib, with his eldest (and at that time the only) son, al-Ḥārith, dug the place where Zamzam is nowadays. On the fourth day, the wall of the well appeared, and after some more digging, the water level was reached. Inside the well there was a treasure of two gold deer, swords and shields.

At this success, ʿAbdul-Muṭṭalib cried: "*Allāhu Akbar!*" and said: "This is the well of Ismāʿīl!" The Quraishites gathered around him and started arguing that since the original well was the property of Ismāʿīl, the recovered well, too, belonged to the whole tribe. ʿAbdul-Muṭṭalib rejected their claim, saying that it was given especially to him by Allāh.

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[1]"Negus" means "king" in the Amheric language, title of the supreme ruler of Abyssinia (Ethiopia).

Quraishites wanted to fight and fill up the well then dig it up again.

At last, they agreed to put their case before the wise woman of the tribe of Sa'd in Syria. Every clan sent one man to represent it. 'Abdul-Muttalib, with his son and a few companions, were in the same caravan, but he had his separate arrangements. In the middle of the desert, the water which 'Abdul-Muttalib had was depleted. The whole group was suffering from acute thirst. The leaders of the other party refused to give them any water. They were near their death. 'Abdul-Muttalib advised his group to dig some graves so that when anybody died, others would bury him. Thus, only one person, the last to die, would remain unburied. They dug up their own graves. The opposite party was enjoying the scene.

On the second day, 'Abdul-Muttalib exhorted his companions that it was cowardice to succumb to death like that without making a last ditch effort. Thus, he rode his camel, and the camel arose. In doing so, its foot hit the earth and Lo! A stream of cool sweet water appeared! 'Abdul-Muttalib cried: "*Allāhu Akbar!*" His companions, too, cried "Allāhu Akbar!" They quenched their thirst, filled their water-skins, and then 'Abdul-Muttalib invited the opposite group to fill their water-skins from that fountain. His own companions objected, but he said, "If we do the same as they had done, there would be no difference between us and them."

The whole caravan gathered around that fountain. They drank and filled their water-skins. Then they said: "O 'Abdul-Muttalib! By Allāh! Allāh has decided between you and us. He has given you victory. By Allāh, we will never dispute with you about Zamzam. The same God Who has created this fountain here in this desert for you has given Zamzam to you."

Zamzam became the personal property of 'Abdul-Muttalib.

THE YEAR OF THE ELEPHANT (570 A.D.)

The above-mentioned episode had happened when 'Abdul-Muttalib was young. Now we come to the most important event of his life. It took place just eight years before his death. By then, he was the patriarch of the tribe.

By the second millennium B.C., the Minaeans[1] of South Arabia had

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[1]Minaeans are Arabs of Ma'īn who ruled parts of southern Arabia which now includes both Yemen and Saudi Arabia from 1200 - 650 B.C. (continued...)

already extended their trade far into the north of the Arabian Peninsula. After them, the Sabeans created a kingdom which prevented the emergence of any strong central power. They were succeeded by the Himyarites (to whom Queen Balqees of Sheba [Saba'], wife of prophet Solomon, belonged) were lucky enough to escape the domination of the Roman empire after Aelius Gallus's attempt to subject them to the dominion of Augustus had misfired. These Himyarites had once extended their kingdom to Abyssinia (Ethiopia) to the west of the Red Sea, but the tide of politics shifted. In 530 A.D., the Christian Abyssinian governor over Yemen and Southern Arabia, Abraha ibn al-Ṣabāh al-Ashram, conquered South Arabia and pressed forward for an attack on Persia in the north but failed to advance beyond Mecca when his army was attacked, as we are told in the Holy Qur'ān, by a heavenly host of tiny birds called Ababeel. It was on August 29th of that year, the Year of the Elephant, that the last Messenger of God, Muhammed, was born.

After his conquest of Yemen and Nejrān, Abraha became the region's vicegerent on behalf of the Ethiopian Negus. He built a magnificent cathedral in Ṣanᶜā', Yemen, in the hope that it would supersede Mecca as the great place of pilgrimage for all Arabia. He had marble brought to it from one of the palaces of Balqees the Queen of Sheba, and he set up crosses in it of gold and silver. Its pulpits were made of ivory and ebony. He wrote the Negus saying, "I have built thee a church, O King, the like of which was never built for any king before thee, and I shall not rest until I have diverted unto it the pilgrimage of the Arabs." He did not keep that thought to himself, and the tribes throughout Hijāz and Nejd were very angry. A man of Kinānah, a branch of Quraish, went to Ṣanᶜā' for the deliberate purpose of defiling the church which he did one night then returned safely to his people.

When Abraha heard of it, he vowed that in revenge he would raze the Kaᶜba to the ground. Having made his preparations, he set off for Mecca with a large army in van of which he placed an elephant. Some Arab tribes of north Ṣanᶜā' tried to stop him, but the Abyssinians overpowered them and captured their leader, Nufayl of Khathᶜam. By way of ransom for his life, Nufayl offered to act as Abraha's road guide. When Abraha's army reached Tā'if, the men of Thaqīf came out to meet him, being afraid

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[1](...continued)
Excavations have revealed inscriptions of their language that date back to about the 8th century before Christ. They may be Yemen's first settlers.

that he might destroy the temple they had built for their goddess al-Lat[1] in mistake for the Kaʿba. They pointed out to him that he had not yet reached his destination, offering him a road guide of their own for the remainder of the trip. Although Nufyal was already with him, Abraha accepted their offer, but the Thaqīf guide died on the way, about two miles from Mecca, at a place called al-Mughammis where he was buried. The Arabs took to stoning his grave which is still being stoned to this day.

Abraha halted at al-Mughammis and sent a detachment of horsemen to Mecca's outskirts. They plundered whatever they could find on the way and sent it back to Abraha including two hundred camels which were the property of ʿAbdul-Muṭṭalib, Muḥammed's grandfather. Quraish and other neighbouring tribes held a war council and decided that it was useless to try to resist the enemy. Meanwhile, Abraha sent a messenger to Mecca to ask for their chief. He was to tell him that Abraha had not come to fight but only to destroy the Kaʿba, and if he wished to avoid bloodshed, he must come to the Abyssinian camp. ʿAbdul-Muṭṭalib, therefore, had no choice except to meet Abraha. When the latter saw him entering his tent, he was so impressed by him that he rose from his royal seat to greet him and to seat him beside himself on the carpet. Abraha did not speak Arabic; Amheric was his tongue, so he had to communicate with ʿAbdul-Muṭṭalib through an interpreter whom he told to inquire if ʿAbdul-Muṭṭalib had a favour to ask. ʿAbdul-Muṭṭalib replied that the army had taken two hundred of his camels and he asked that they should be returned to him. Abraha was surprised at this request and said that he was disappointed in him because he was thinking of his camels rather than his religion which was being attacked. ʿAbdul-Muṭṭalib replied, "I am the lord of the camels, and the Kaʿba likewise has a Lord Who will defend it."

ʿAbdul-Muṭṭalib returned with his camels to Quraish whom he advised to withdraw to the hills above the town. Accompanied by his family and others, he went to the Sanctuary, stood beside it then prayed the Almighty for His help against Abraha and his army. He took hold of the door of the Kaʿba and, crying to Allāh, prayed in the following words (of poetry):

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[1]al-Lāt was a square statue (a bust?!) installed near the Jews' market in Yathrib, and it was worshipped by Quraish and all other Arab tribes. The caretakers and servants of its temple belonged to Banū Muʿtib of Thaqīf.

O Allāh! Surely a man defends his own home, therefore, Thou shouldst protect Thy Own House. Their cross and their wrath can never overcome Thy wrath. O Allāh, help Thy Own people against the fellows of the cross and its worshippers.

ᶜAbdul-Muttalib's light covered the Kaᶜba, so much so that the Meccans asked him about it. "Go home! By Allāh, never did my forehead's light overwhelm anything except that I won victory, and now it has done just that!" Then he, too, went to the summit of the hill, Abū Qubays. The next morning, Abraha prepared to march into the town with the intention to destroy the Kaᶜba and then return to Ṣanᶜā'. His elephant, richly decorated, was led into the front of the army which was already drawn up. When the huge animal reached its position, his keeper Unays turned him the same way as the troops were turned, that is, towards Mecca, but instead of marching, the elephant knelt down and refused to move. Even beating him about the head with iron bars and sticking iron hooks into his belly did not stir him to move; he remained like a solid rock. Once the whole army turned in the direction opposite of that of Mecca, the elephant then voluntarily rose to its feet, turned around and followed. When they turned round about again in the direction of Mecca, the elephant knelt down as if it was prostrating in humility.

Earlier that same day, ᶜAbdul-Muttalib had an encounter with the elephant. He asked the animal, "Do you know why they had brought you here?" The animal beckoned with his head that he did not. "They brought you here so that you may demolish the House of your Lord. Are you going to do that?" The elephant shook his head as a signal negating that he would[1]. Then ᶜAbdul-Muttalib withdrew.

Suddenly the sky grew dark and a strange sound was heard. Soon a great wave of darkness swept upon the army from the direction of the sea, and the air above their heads, as high as they could see, was full of birds called Ababeel. Those few who survived said that each bird had three pebbles the size of dried peas, one in its beak and one between the claws of each foot. They kept pelting Abraha's army with those pebbles which were very hard and launched with such velocity that they pierced even coats of mail. Every stone found its mark and killed its man. As soon as a body was struck, its flesh began to rot, some more gradually

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[1]al-Majlisi, *Bihār al-Anwār*, Vol. 15, p. 145.

than others. Among the survivors were Unays and the elephant, but all were terror-stricken. A few survivors remained in Ḥijāz and worked as shepherds or did other work, but the main part of the army returned in disorder to Ṣanᶜā'. Many died by the wayside and many others, including Abraha, died soon after their return. After that day, Quraish were called "the people of God," earning more respect than ever before because God had answered their prayers and saved the Kaᶜba from destruction.

It is to this important event that Allāh refers in Chapter 105:

> *In the Name of Allāh, the most Gracious, the most Merciful*
> *Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the fellows of the Elephant? Did He not make their treacherous plan go astray? And He sent against them birds in flocks, striking them with stones of baked clay, so He rendered them like straw eaten up.*
> (Qur'ān, 105:1-5)

Some historians have tried to minimize the impact of the Divine intervention by suggesting that the army perished because of an epidemic of smallpox. But that explanation creates more puzzles than it solves. How was it that the whole army was seized by that epidemic just when it was advancing on the Kaᶜba? How was it that not a single soldier survived that epidemic? Why no Meccan caught that contagious epidemic? And, if there was no epidemic in Mecca before or after that sudden burst of the plague, where did that epidemic come from?

This epoch-making episode happened in 570 A.D. It was on August 29th of this same year that the Prophet of Islam was born ᶜAbdullāh and Āmina daughter of Wahab ibn ᶜAbd Munāf ibn Zuhayr ibn Kilāb ibn Murrah ibn Kaᶜb ibn Lu'ayy ibn Ghālib[1]. His father ᶜAbdullāh was ibn (son of) ᶜAbdul-Muttalib ibn Hāshim ibn ᶜAbd Munāf ibn Qusayy ibn Kilāb ibn Murrah ibn Kaᶜb ibn ibn Ghālib ibn Fahr ibn Mālik ibn Naḍar ibn Kināna ibn Khuzaymah ibn Mudrikah ibn Ilyās ibn Mazar ibn Nazār ibn Maᶜad ibn ᶜAdnān ibn Ismaᶜeel (Ishmael) ibn Ibrāhīm (Abraham), peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him, his progeny, and righteous ancestors, especially his great grandfathers Ismaᶜeel and Ibrāhīm.

ᶜAbdullāh, Muhammed's father, was not in Mecca to witness that miracle. He had gone to trade in Palestine and Syria with one of the

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[1] *Ibid.*, Vol. 15, p. 369.

caravans. On his way home, he had lodged with his grandmother's family in Yathrib. It was there and then that he fell ill and shortly thereafter died at the youthful age of 25 before the birth of his holy son. To his wife Āmina, the news was a death blow which she could not survive. Mecca was overtaken with grief at the news of ʿAbdullāh's son. ʿAbdullāh was greatly cherished, loved and respected as his father, the chief of Mecca.

Āmina daughter of Wahab ibn ʿAbd Munāf, his wife and mother of our holy prophet Muhammed, never felt any heaviness on account of her pregnancy and, therefore, for quite some time could not tell for sure that she was pregnant. She was conscious of a light within her. One day it shone forth from her so intensely that she could see the castles of Bostra (or Busra) in Greater Syria (in Trans-Jordan, to be exact). Even when she gave birth to him, she did not see, as she herself said, what other women would see at that time, that is, any bleeding. She is reported to have said,

> When I conceived him, I saw in a vision someone approaching me and saying to me: "You have conceived the best person among all mankind." In every month of that year, I used to hear someone calling from somewhere in the heavens: "Glad tidings! Time has come for the blessed one to come out to earth!" When birth-pangs overtook me, I saw women as tall as palm-trees who gazed at me, whereupon a light emanated from me at the very moment when Muhammad emerged into the world, and I saw him prostrating in the direction of the Kabʿa, so much so that I was able, through that light, to see everything as far as the castles of Bostra. It was then that I heard a voice saying: "Name him Muhammed, for I am the Praised One, and this is the one who will always be praised, and whose name I derived even from My own!" I also saw three persons looking as though the sun rises from their faces and who were carrying a silver can and a wash bowl of green chrysolite. They washed him and marked the back area between his shoulders, then they wrapped him in silk and said to him: "Glad tidings to you, O one loved by Allāh! You are the master of all the descendants of Adam, the dignity of life on earth, and the honour of the life hereafter! Congratulations to whoever accepts your call and loves you and upholds your *wasi* after you and the Imams from among your descendants, the *wasis* who will be pleased!"

The voice also told her "... When he is born, say: `I place him under the protection of the One God from the evil of every envier', then name him Muḥammed." She was frightened and did not know what to make of that voice. In order to repel its effects, she was advised to wear iron lockers till her delivery. Indeed, what Āmina heard had a precedent. In Genesis XVII:19, we read: "And God said (to Abraham): Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed, and thou shalt call his name Isaac." Also in Matthew I:21: "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus."

At the time of Muḥammed's birth, Āmina was at her uncle's home, and she sent word to ᶜAbdul-Muṭṭalib asking him to come to see his grandson. ᶜAbdul-Muṭṭalib hastened joyfully to see the infant, took him in his arms and went to the Kaᶜba. There, he offered thanks to God for the gift and named him "Muḥammed" which means "the praised." Then he took him back to his mother. On the way, he showed him to his own family. He himself was shortly to have another son by Āmina's cousin Hāla. At the moment his youngest son, ᶜAbbās, who was three years old. He met him ᶜAbbās the door of his house. "This is your brother! Kiss him," said he. And Abbās kissed him.

Āmina's grief for the loss of her young husband was so intense, it dried the milk in her breasts, and she could not nurse Muḥammed. For this reason, he had to be entrusted to Thuwayba, a maid servant of Abū Lahab (whose name was ᶜAbd al-ᶜUzza ibn ᶜAbd al-Muṭṭalib), one of Muḥammed's uncles, for a short period of time. She had also breast-fed her son Masrūḥ as well as Muḥammed's uncle Ḥamzah; hence, Ḥamzah was both uncle and foster-brother of Muḥammed. Some tribes in Mecca were famous for nursing and rearing children, and one of them was that Banū Saᶜd ibn Bakr, a branch of Hawāzin, whose territory lay to the north-east of Mecca, the hills south of Tā'if, to be exact. Āmina was in favour of entrusting her son to the care of a woman of this tribe. And so it was: Ḥalīma daughter of Abū Thu'ayb of Banū Saᶜd, wife of Ḥārith, became Muḥammed's nurse. According to both al-Wāqidi and al-Majlisi, she was Ḥalīma daughter of Abū Thu'ayb ibn ᶜAbdullāh ibn al-Ḥārith ibn Shajnah ibn Nāṣir ibn Saᶜd ibn Bakr ibn Zuhr ibn Manṣour ibn ᶜIkrimah ibn Qays ibn ᶜAylān ibn Muḍar ibn Nazār ibn Maᶜd ibn ᶜAdnān ibn Adad ibn Yashkhub ibn Yaᶜrub ibn Nabt ibn Ishamel ibn Abraham, Friend of

the most Merciful One[1].

Halīma kept Muhammed with her for about five years. He was now grown up and no longer needed his foster mother's care. Halīma reluctantly gave him back to his mother Āmina. But Muhammed's mother did not enjoy the company of her first-born for any length of time: in 575 A.D., she proceeded to Medīna accompanied by Umm Ayman to visit the grave of her late husband and to show her son to his father's maternal relatives. Umm Ayman was the bondmaid of ʿAbdullāh, Muhammed's father. After no longer than a month of staying at Medīna, Āmina felt that her heart was failing, and she eventually died at Abwā', which lies midway between Medīna and Mecca, twenty-three miles from Juhfa, where she was buried. Umm Ayman brought Muhammed, who was now six years old, back to Mecca where he was placed in the charge of his grandfather ʿAbdul-Muttalib who had already reached the patriarchal age of four scores. Umm Ayman remained his nurse. ʿAbdul-Muttalib took charge of raising young Muhammed thereafter for no more than two years following which he died in 578 A.D., leaving an 8-year old orphan. Muhammed very bitterly felt the loss of his grandfather, and he followed his bier weeping. On his death-bed, ʿAbdul-Muttalib embraced Muhammed for the last time and entrusted him to the care of his son Abū Tālib, brother of ʿAbdullāh, Muhammed's father, by both parents, enjoining him to treat the orphan as he would his own son. Abū Tālib very affectionately promised his father to do so, and he lived up to his promise. He loved Muhammed very much, let him sleep by his own bed-side and took him whenever he went. He continued doing so till Muhammed was about twelve years old.

FAITH OF THE PROPHET'S ANCESTORS

It is the accepted belief of the Shīʿa Ithna-ʿAsheris, the Hanafis, and the Shafiʿis, that the ancestors of the Prophet from ʿAbdullāh to Qidar ibn Ismāʿīl, and from there right up to Adam, were true believers. They believed in the One and Only God and faithfully followed the Divine religion of their times. From Qidar to ʿAbdullāh, all of them followed the *Sharīʿa* of Prophet Ibrāhīm which was the religion prescribed for them by God.

Imām Jalaluddin al-Sayyūti has written nine books on this subject and

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[1]*Ibid.*, Vol. 15, p. 343.

has proven beyond doubt that all the ancestors of the Prophet were true believers. Shaykh ᶜAbdul-Haqq Muḥaddith Dehlawi has written the following: "All the ancestors of the Prophet from Adam up to ᶜAbdullāh were pure and clean from the uncleanness of disbelief and paganism. It was not possible for Allāh to put that Holy Light (of the Prophet) into dark and dirty places, i.e. the loin of a pagan man or the womb of a pagan woman. Also, how could it be possible for Allāh to punish the ancestors of the Prophet on the Day of Judgement and thus humiliate him in the eyes of the world?"

The Prophet himself has said: "I was always being transferred from the loins of the clean ones to the wombs of the clean ones."

ᶜAllāmah al-Majlisi[1] has written that it is the unanimous belief of Shīᶜa scholars that the father, mother and all ancestors of the Prophet followed the true religion, and that his Light never entered into the loin of any pagan man or the womb of any pagan woman. Also, the accepted traditions say that all his ancestors were "Ṣiddiqūn" (truthful ones): They were either prophets or successors of prophets (*waṣis*).

After Ismāᶜīl, all his ancestors were successors of Ismāᶜīl. Other traditions specify that ᶜAbdul-Muṭṭalib was a *ḥujjat* (Proof) of Allāh and that Abū Ṭālib was his successor.

The Commander of the Faithful ᶜAli ibn Abū Ṭālib said: "By Allāh, neither my father ever worshipped the idols, nor my grandfather ᶜAbdul-Muṭṭalib, nor his father Hāshim, nor his father ᶜAbd Munāf. They prayed facing towards the Kaᶜba and followed the religion of Ibrāhīm."

If you look again at the preceding life-sketches of some of the ancestors of the Prophet, you will find that many traditions established by them are now included into the tenets of Islam. Qusayy started the night-stay at al-Mashᶜar al-Ḥarām during the *ḥajj*, and Allāh kept that system in Islam. Can anybody think that Allāh would confirm a religious rite established by a pagan?!

Likewise, you have seen how the customs established by ᶜAbdul-

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[1]al-Majlisi's full name is Muḥammed Bāqir ibn Muḥammed Taqi al-Majlisi. He was born in 1037 A.H./1628 A.D. and died in Isfahan, Iran, in 1111 A.H./1699 A.D. He is the greatest writer in the 11th Hijri century, author of 25 titles in Arabic and 53 in Persian, his mother tongue. Many of these titles are in several volumes each. For example, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, one of the references of this book, is in 111 volumes. His proficiency and prolific pen are truly baffling, unsurpassed.

Muttalib were adopted in Islam. Could Allāh glorify ᶜAbdul-Muttalib if he had been a pagan?!

Also, read again the events of the discovery of Zamzam and the appearance of the well in the desert. Read again the events of ᶜĀmul-Fīl, and see the firm conviction that Allāh would surely save His House. That statement, repeated several times, shows that ᶜAbdul-Muttalib knew before hand what was going to happen. Why was he so sure? There can only be one explanation: He was informed by Allāh. And this, in turn, proves the earlier statement that he was a "Ḥujjat" of Allāh.

In all these events and narrations, he is always seen praying to Allāh, and there is no hint from any quarter that he ever prayed to the idols of Quraish (to Hubal[1], Lat or ᶜUzza[2]). When he finds Zamzam, he exclaims: "*Allāhu Akbar!*" When he emphasizes anything, he swears by the Name of Allāh. When he stakes his claim, he says that it was given to him by Allāh. What further proof is needed to show that it was a family of true believers?

The Prophet said: "Jibrā'īl (Gabriel) said to me: `I searched the east and the west of the earth, but I did not find anyone superior to Muḥammed; and I searched the east and the west of the earth, but I did not find the children of any father better than the children of Hāshim.'"

Also, the Prophet said: "Verily, Allāh chose Kinānah from the children of Ismāᶜīl, and He selected Quraish from Kinānah, chose the children of Hāshim from Quraish, and selected me from the children of Hāshim."

ᶜABDULLĀH, MUḤAMMED'S FATHER (542 - 567 A.D.)

When, at the discovery of Zamzam, ᶜAbdul-Muttalib encountered the enmity of Quraish, he was quite worried because he had only one son to help him. He, therefore, prayed to Allāh, making a *nathr* (vow, pledge or covenant) that if Allāh gave him ten sons to help him against his

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[1]Hubal was the first idol to be worshipped in Mecca. It was given by the Moabites of Syria as a gift to ᶜAmr ibn Laḥa

[2]The ᶜUzza was one of the greatest idols of the Arabs installed at a place called Hirād in the valley known as the "Syrian palm tree" (Wadi al-Nakhla al-Shamiyya) neighbouring Khaybar, Yathrib. Banū Kinānah used to visit her temple and offer sacrifices on her altar. Her caretakers and servants of her temple belonged to Banū Shayban, allies of Banū Hāshim.

enemies, he would sacrifice one of them to please Allāh. His prayer was answered, and Allāh gave him not ten but twelve sons, out of whom 5 are famous in the Islamic history: ʿAbdullāh (the Prophet's father), Abū Ṭālib (ʿAli's father), Ḥamzah, ʿAbbās and Abū Lahab. The other seven were: al-Ḥārith (already mentioned), Zubayr, Ghaydāq, al-Muqawwim, Dharār, Quthām, and Ḥijl (or Mughīrah). He had six daughters: ʿĀtika, Umayma, Baydā', Barra, Ṣafiyya, and Arwi.

When ten sons were born, ʿAbdul-Muṭṭalib decided to sacrifice one of them according to his *nathr*. Lot was cast and ʿAbdullāh's name came out. ʿAbdullāh was the dearest to him, but he did not flinch from the decision of the fate. He took ʿAbdullāh's hands and started towards the place where sacrifices were offered. His daughters started crying, begging him to sacrifice ten camels in place of ʿAbdullāh. At first, ʿAbdul-Muṭṭalib refused. But when the pressure of the whole family and, in fact, the whole tribe, mounted, he agreed to cast lot between ʿAbdullāh and ten camels. Again the name of ʿAbdullāh came out. On the suggestion of the people, the number of the camels was increased to twenty; again, the same result. Repeatedly, the number was increased to thirty, forty, fifty, sixty, seventy, eighty and ninety. But the result was always the same. At last the lot was cast between 100 camels and ʿAbdullāh. Now the lot came out for the camels. The family was jubilant, but ʿAbdul-Muṭṭalib was not satisfied. He said: "Ten times the name of ʿAbdullāh has come out. It is not fair to ignore those lots just for one lot." Three times more, he repeated the lot between ʿAbdullāh and 100 camels, and every time the lot came out for the camels. Then he sacrificed the camels, and the life of ʿAbdullāh was saved.

It was to this incident that the Prophet referred when once he said: "I am the son of the two sacrifices," meaning the sacrifices of Ismāʿīl and ʿAbdullāh.

The name of the mother of ʿAbdullāh (and grandmother of the Prophet) was Fāṭima daughter of ʿAmr ibn ʿAith ibn ʿAmr ibn Makhzūm. She was also the mother of Abū Ṭālib, Zubayr, Baydā', Umayma, Barra and ʿĀtika.

A year before "the year of the elephant," ʿAbdullāh was married to Āminah daughter of Wahab ibn ʿAbd Munāf ibn Zuhrah ibn Kilāb. In that very gathering, ʿAbdul-Muṭṭalib married Hāla, daughter of Wuhayb, a cousin of Āmina. Hāla gave birth to Ḥamzah, and Thuwayba, bondmaid of Abu-Lahab, breast-fed him for a short period of time. Thuwayba, according to al-Ṭabari, died in 7 A.H./628 A.D. as a Muslim; her son

Masrūḥ had died before then. Ḥamzah, then, was the uncle of the Prophet and also his cousin as well as foster brother.

Various traditions put the age of ʿAbdullāh at the time of his marriage at 17, 24 or 27 years. According to the best accounts, he was 24 when he got married in 564 A.D. and 25 when he died.

ʿAbdullāh, like many other Meccan businessmen, used to go with the trade caravans to Syria. While returning, he fell ill and stayed at Yathrib. When ʿAbdul-Muṭṭalib sent al-Hārith to look after him and bring him back, he had already passed away. According to al-Ṭabari, ʿAbdullāh was buried in Yathrib in the house of al-Nābighah al-Thubyāni[1]. His grave was walled up by the Wahhabis and nobody was allowed to visit it. Then, in the 1970s, the Wahhabis dug up his body together with those of seven companions of the Prophet and buried them somewhere else. It was done on the pretext of extending the Mosque.

ʿAbdullāh had left some camels, goats, and a bondmaid, Umm Ayman. The Prophet got them all as his inheritance.

THE PROPHET IS BORN (570 A.D.)

Muhammed was born in such a family at the dawn of a Friday, on the 17th of Rabīʿul-Awwal, in the first year of ʿĀmul-Fīl (corresponding to August 29, 570 A.D.), 55 days after the incident of the Fellows of the Elephant, to bring the Message of God to the world. In Sunni circles, the 12th of Rabīʿul-Awwal is more famous. He was born at the house which was later bought by Muhammed ibn Yousuf and was located in the Shiʿb of Abū Ṭālib during the reign of the Sassanian emperor Chosroes (Khosru) Noshirwan son of Qabad (d. 579 A.D.) who ruled Persia from 531 - 579 A.D.

Thus, the prayer of Ibrāhīm while constructing the Kaʿba was granted: "Lord! And raise a Messenger from among them who shall recite to them Thy verses, and teach them the Book and the wisdom, and purify them, indeed Thou art the Mighty, the Wise" (Qurʾān, 2:129).

And the tidings of Christ came true:-

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[1]al-Nābighah al-Thubyāni, who died in about 604 A.D., was one of the most famous and talented poets of pre-Islamic Arabia. He was a Christian who believed in the Unity of God. He was for some time the palace's poet at Hīra, Iraq, particularly during the reign of King al-Nuʿmān ibn al-Munthir. Al-Nābighah al-Thubyāni belonged to Bani ʿAdi ibn al-Najjār to whom Abdullāh's wife Āmina belonged.

O Children of Israel! Surely I am the messenger of Allāh to you, verifying that which is before me of the Torah and giving the good news of a Messenger who will come after me whose name will be Ahmed.
(Qur'ān, 61:6)

At his birth, an earthquake shook Noshirwan's palace at Ctesiphon (also called Tusbun, Taysafun, or Taq Kisra), on the Tigris river, causing fourteen of its turrets to crumble. Also, all fires at Persian fire houses were suddenly and miraculously extinguished; they had not been extinguished for a thousand years. Moreover, Lake Sawah[1] sank, and all the idols in Mecca were seen fallen face down.

Did this great Persian emperor remain silent at such momentous events without doing anything at all? Could he see the fire houses without their fires, the lake without its water, and his palace, which was one of the wonders of the world, suffer such a catastrophe without inquiring about the causes?! What kind of emperor would remain idle at seeing such supernatural events, all taking place at the same time, on the same day?!

But before we answer these questions, let us begin from the beginning and introduce the reader to the world of wizardry and witchcraft in sixth century Arabia, and we will eventually return to emperor Noshirwan.

MUḤAMMED'S BIRTH, WIZARDRY AND WITCHCRAFT IN A.D. 6TH CENTURY ARABIA

Within the borders of Nejd, between the mountains of western Saudi Arabia and the Red Sea and immediately north of Yemen, lies a plain about 40 miles in width in the coastal region of 'Asīr, 17°30' north, 42°15' east. This area is known as Tihāma (or Tihāmah), and it is there that two of the most famous of 6th century Arabia wizards lived. They were

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[1]Sawah was a flourishing city in today's Iran between Ray (modern day Tehran) and Hamadan. Its houses were demolished to the ground by the Tatars in 617 A.H./1220 A.D. Lake Sawah was seventy-seven and a half by thirty-five degrees. Among famous personalities of the city of Sawah before it was reduced to rubble at the hands of the Tatars were: Abū Ya'qūb ibn Yousuf ibn Isma'īl ibn Yousuf al-Sawi, and Abū Ṭāhir 'Abdul-Raḥmān ibn Ahmed ibn 'Ilk al-Sawi (a famous Shāfi'i Imām).

Rabī'ah of Banū Ghassān, better known as Sateeh, and Shaqq ibn Bāhilah al-Yamāni. The first was the most famous. He was one of the star gazers who slept very little during the night, observing the movements of the stars. Kings used to invite him to their palaces to listen to his predictions and to tell them what their breasts were hiding. Whenever he articulated his predictions, he used to remain motionless, moving nothing but his eyes and tongue.

One night, as he was gazing at the sky, he noticed something quite unusual. A beam of light emanated from the direction of Ḥijāz, in the neighborhood of Mecca, that filled the heavens. Then he saw sparks emanating from the stars that seemed to collide with one another till they looked as though they sank into the earth. Sateeh was puzzled at the sight, and he was convinced that destruction was imminent. He remained speechless for one whole day. The next day he ordered his slaves to carry him to one of the highest mountains of ʿAsīr, not far from where he used to live. He kept looking right and left. Soon light emanated and overwhelmed all other lights and extended over all lands. "Take me down," said he to his slaves, "for I am puzzled on account of these lights. I have seen something momentous, and there is no doubt that I shall be departing from this world very soon." When he was asked to explain what he meant, he said, "Woe unto you! I have seen lights descending from the heavens to the earth and planets falling to the ground racing with one another! I think that the man from Hāshim is about to appear. If so, I bid the land good-bye till the end of time."

His slaves were puzzled by his statement. They took him down. He could not sleep that night at all and received the morning looking very upset. Finally, he gathered his tribesmen and addressed them thus: "I have seen something momentous, and I predict a great calamity the exact nature of which I do not comprehend. I, therefore, shall send messages to my brethren wizards to ask them about it." He wrote all the wizards he knew including Shaqq. The latter answered him saying, "I have seen some of what you have described, and the light that you described shall prevail, but I do not know anything about it." Having received Shaqq's letter, Sateeh wrote another very famous sorcerer, a woman known as "Zarqaa' al-Yamāmah," the blue-eyed woman of Yamāmah. Yamāmah is located to the south-east of Medīna within the region of Hijāz. The real name of this famous witch was Hathām daughter of Mirhil, and she was quite famous for her eye-sight; she could see from three days' walking distance. Since she is better known as Zarqā' al-Yamāmah, we shall keep

referring to her as such.

Sateeh's letter to Zarqā' al-Yamāmah stated the following:

> In Your Name, O God. From Sateeh, the articulate, to the lady of Yamāmah, the one known for her gallantry. From Sateeh of Banū Ghassān who in his time is without a peer. I am writing you this letter feeling extremely agonized, and you may know what death and destruction will take place when the man from Tihāmah, the offspring of Hāshim, the one to be born in Mecca... I have seen light in the sky and planets sparkling, and I think this is one of the signs of his advent, and I do not doubt that such an advent is near. I have written you only because I know the extent of your knowledge, and that there is no woman in our time like you at all. Once my messenger brings you this letter, send me your answer with him and your suggestion, for I find no rest in the night or in the day, and I find no other explanation for all these signs, and peace be with you.

He called his slave Sabeeh and ordered him to carry his letter to Zarqā' al-Yamāmah and to bring her answer back to him. At the distance of three days' march, Zarqā' al-Yamāmah saw him and saw the letter folded inside his Yemeni styled turban. After three days, she opened her house door for him. Having read the letter he delivered her, she said, "You have brought me an ugly piece of news from Sateeh, the wizard of Yemen, who inquires about a sparkling light. By the Lord of the Ka`ba, this is nothing but a sign of temples ruined and children orphaned. From among `Abd Munāf, there is no question about it, Muhammed the Prophet shall appear." She wrote Sateeh her answer as follows:

> In the Name of Allāh. From al-Zarqā', from whom nothing remains hidden, to the master of Ghassan and the best of wizards, the outspoken Sateeh. I received your letter and messenger. You are referring to a great event that has disturbed your heart and confused your mind. As for the planets descending, it is a sign that the advent of the man from Banū Hāshim has come close. Once you read my letter, you should remain vigilant; beware of forgetfulness and negligence. Rather, you should immediately make preparations so that we may both meet in Mecca, for I am going there in order to ascertain the truth of this matter. Perhaps

we both can join hands to put an end to the newborn and to put out his light before it shines.

Having read her letter, Sateeh wept profusely then composed a poem lamenting his weakness and old age and expressing his determination never to stay at home but to depart and live somewhere else. Then he instantly made preparations to travel to Mecca. "I am travelling to a fire that has been lit," said he to his family, "so if I am able to put it out, I shall return to you; otherwise, I now bid you farewell, for I shall go to Syria to live till death."

When he reached Mecca, where he was very well known, the men of Quraish came to welcome him. Among them were Abū Jahl and his brother Abul-Bukhturi, Shaybah, ʿUtbah ibn Abū Muʿeet, and al-ʿĀs ibn Wā'il. They said to him, "O Sateeh! Surely you must have come here on account of a very serious issue. Is there anything we can do for you?" He said, "May you be blessed; there is nothing that I need you to do for me." Then they offered to host him, but he said, "I rather be hosted by those whom I came here to see. You all know my merits, and I have come here to narrate to you news of the past and of the future from what Allāh inspired me in truth. Where are those who are the foremost to be praised and revered? I have sought the best of Quraish, the descendants of Banū ʿAbd Munāf, for I am the bearer of glad tidings to them about the one who shall bear good news and who shall warn, the shining moon whose advent is quite near."

The descendants of Banū ʿAbd Munāf heard about this statement; therefore, Abū Tālib gathered his brothers ʿAbdullāh, al-ʿAbbās, Hamzah and ʿAbd al-ʿUzza and said to them, "The man seeking to meet you is the wizard of Yemen and its master. He had in the past come to your father and divulged the news of an offspring from his loins who would be blessed in his lifetime, who would rule the lands and call people to worship the King, the Great." All these men expressed their desire to meet him. Abū Tālib advised them not to reveal their real identity and lineage to Sateeh. Accompanying his brothers, Abū Tālib came to meet Sateeh under the shade of the Kaʿba where he was sitting surrounded by people. When saw the newcomers, he looked at them with delight. Abū Tālib gave his sword and lance to his slave, ordering him to take them to Sateeh as a gift. But before Abū Tālib's slave had a chance to give Sateeh the sword and the lance, Abū Tālib advanced and greeted Sateeh thus: "You are greeted with honour, and may you forever remain in bliss.

We have come to visit you, fully recognizing your merits." Sateeh responded by saying, "You are greeted with peace and presented with honours. To which Arab tribe do you belong?" Abū Ṭālib wanted to test the extent of Sateeh's knowledge, so he said to him, "We are from Banū Jamḥ." Sateeh said to Abū Ṭālib, "Come closer to me and put your hand on my face, for I have a reason for asking you to do so." Abū Ṭālib put his hand on Sateeh's face, whereupon the latter said, "I swear by the One Who knows all the secrets, Who can never be seen, Who forgives the sins, and Who removes the affliction that you are the one with the lofty lineage and the pleasing conduct, and you are the one who gave my slave a present comprised of a straight lance and an Indian sword! I further swear that you are the greatest of all the people of the world and that yours and your brother's are the very best offspring, and that you and those whom you brought with you here belong to the good lineage of Hāshim. There is no doubt that you are the uncle of the chosen Prophet, the one described in the Books; so, do not hide your lineage, for I know your lineage very well."

Abū Ṭālib was amazed at this statement and said to him, "O Shaikh! You have said the truth and well described the merits, so we would like you to tell us what will happen during our time and what will happen to us." Sateeh said, "I swear by the Everlasting, the One Who raises the heavens without pillars, the One and Only God, the Independent One upon Whom all depend, from this man (and he pointed to ʿAbdullāh) very shortly a Prophet will be raised to guide people to worship Allāh, the One and Only God. He will be assisted in his mission by his cousin who will be his closest friend and confidant, the one who will perform great feats of valour and courage; his [ʿAlī's] father, there is no doubt at all, is this man (and he pointed to Abū Ṭālib)."

Sateeh was now requested to describe the Prophet he was talking about, whereupon he said, "A man from among you will very soon be born, a virtuous man who will be the Messenger of the Greatest King. Sateeh's tongue is incapable of praising him enough. He will be neither short nor very tall. His body will be good, his head round, and there will be a mark [of Prophethood] between his shoulders. He will wear the turban and will be praised till the Day of Judgment. This, by Allāh, shall be the master of Tihāma. His face shall shine in the dark. When he smiles, the earth will be lit. He shall be the best man who ever walks on the face of earth and the one born in the very best of family. His speech will be sweet, and he will be articulate, pure, ascetic, submissive to his

Lord when adoring Him. He will be neither tyrannical nor arrogant. Whenever he speaks, he shall say the truth, and whenever he is asked, he shall give the answer. His birth is pure, and he will be free of corruption: a mercy to the servants. Light shall surround him, and he will be most compassionate towards the believers, most affectionate towards his companions. His name in the Torah and in the Gospel is very well known. He shall assist those in dire need of assistance, and he will be identified with honours. His name in the heavens is Ahmed and on earth Muhammed."

Abū Ṭālib then spoke. He said, "O Sateeh! Tell us about the person who will assist him and who will be one of his kinsmen; do describe him for us." Sateeh said, "He is self-determined, as brave as a lion, a daring leader, a man who incessantly avenges, serving the cup of death to his foes, greatly praised by people. He shall be for Muhammed a vizier, and after Muhammed's death an *amīr*. His name in the Torah is Ba'iya and in the Gospel 'Eilya and among his people ʿAli." Then Sateeh stopped, sinking deeply in thought even as people kept looking at him waiting to see what he would say or do. After a while, he turned to Abū Ṭālib and said, "O master! Do put your hand again on my face." Abū Ṭālib put his hand on Sateeh's face for the second time. When Sateeh felt Abū Ṭālib's hand, he felt very relieved and said, "O Abū Ṭālib! Take the hand of your brother ʿAbdullāh, for the signs of your happiness have appeared; so, receive the glad tidings of your lofty glory. Both branches are from your tree! Muhammed shall be born for your brother, and for you ʿAli shall be born." Abū Ṭālib was perplexed after having heard this statement.

Sateeh's predictions became the talk of the people of Quraish. This time the cursed Abū Jahl called upon Quraish thus: "O people of Quraish! This is not the first calamity to befall upon us from the offspring of Hāshim, for you have just heard from Sateeh how this man will appear to ruin our creed, and you have heard that his partner shall be a son of Abū Ṭālib..." Just as Abū Jahl was stirring hostile sentiments against Abū Ṭālib in particular and Banū Hāshim in general, Abū Ṭālib stood in the midst of the gathering and shouted as loudly as he could saying: "O people of Quraish! Cast away foolishness from your hearts and do not find what you heard to be strange, for we are the most worthy of being in the vanguard. Zamzam was discovered by us! By Allāh! Sateeh is not a liar; rather, he is right in what he has said: Whenever he said something, it proved to be quite accurate. Soon what he has predicted will come to pass despite those who oppose it." Abū Ṭālib ordered Sateeh

to be transported to his house where he showered him with his generosity, giving him money and outfits. Night fell upon Mecca, yet there were many who traversed its alleys to discuss the momentous event.

In the morning, Abū Jahl was the first to be seen in Mecca's valley where people used to assemble around the Kaʿba. He sent his slaves to call the dignitaries of Quraish to meet him there. When the sun rose higher in the sky, there was hardly room for more people in that spacious valley. Abū Jahl stood up and shouted: "O descendants of Ghālib! O descendants of Ṭālib! O people of lofty status and prestige! Do you agree to be afflicted by calamities as Abū Ṭālib himself stated?! This truly is odd! To move the rocks of the Safa to the farthest sea is easier than what Saṭeeḥ said: From among Banū ʿAbd Munāf a Prophet will soon appear who will cause us a great deal of loss and annihilation. Woe unto you if you accept what he has stated, realizing the implications! If you, indeed, accept it, then let me right now bid you all farewell, for I shall depart from your land; surely to be a neighbour of the thorns is better than staying among you." Having said so, he walked away. There was a great deal of noise among the huge crowd assembled there; the valley looked like a sea of people. They went after him and said to him, "O father of al-Ḥakam! You are the master among us, and our view is yours, and we submit to your will." He said, "It is my view that you should go to Abū Ṭālib's house to discuss what this wizard has just said so that it may not become a cause of enmity between us and himself; so, he will either have to hand Saṭeeḥ over to us or get him to leave our land. If he refused, the sword will be more sharp, and death will be the best arbiter." Then he composed verses of poetry expressing his preference to die rather than to accept the prediction of this renown wizard.

When Abū Ṭālib came to know what Abū Jahl had said, he gathered his brothers and kinsfolk and said to them, "Carry your weapons and get ready to fight. I see blood boiling and ends nearing." Then he went to the valley where all eyes were fixed on him. Every tongue was mute. Those who were sitting before his arrival stood up out of respect for him. He made his way among the tribesmen till he became in the middle. Raising his voice, he said, "O residents of Zamzam and the Ṣafa, of Abū Qubays and Ḥira! Who among you dares to kill Abū Ṭālib's son?! Let me, then, remind you of such day: It is then that heads will be severed from their bodies, and lives will be in our hands. I say to you that by the God of the Ḥaram, by the One Who causes the breeze, I know that after a short time, the one described in the Torah and in the Gospel as the honourable and

the preferred, the one peerless in his time, the one tales tell about him that he will rise in these times, the Messenger of the Great Lord, the one crowned with light, shall be born." Then he went to the Kaʿba and all people, with the exception of Abū Jahl, followed him to see what he was going to do. Abū Jahl was suffering from the humiliation to which he was thus subjected. When Abū Ṭālib stood near the Kaʿba, he said, "O Lord of this glorious Kaʿba, of the expanded earth, and of the fixed mountains! If You had already decreed to increase our honour and prestige through the Prophet whose intercession You will accept, the one whose glad tiding has been foretold by Saṭeeḥ, O Lord, do make his advent prevail, and hasten his proof, and shun away from us the schemes of the opponents, O Most Merciful of those who are merciful!"

Having thus supplicated, Abū Ṭālib sat down surrounded by people. Munabbih ibn al-Hajjāj, who was quite daring, stood up to say something. People looked at him eagerly to hear what he had to say. His voice was loud and clear as he said, "O Abū Ṭālib! Surely your honour is obvious for all to see, and your countenance is surely emanating with light! You are crowned with prestige and eminence, and your tribal chieftains as well as all those endowed with wisdom and virtues know that you are worthy of lofty honour, and you are a master whose command is obeyed and binding. But a man such as yourself ought not listen to what a wizard says, and you know that wizards are the bastian of the devil; they lie and they falsify. Perhaps you should bring him to our meeting place so that he may prove some of what he has told us, for Prophethood has evidences and indications which cannot be overlooked by any wise person." Hearing this statement, Abū Ṭālib ordered Saṭeeḥ to be brought there and then. Saṭeeḥ was brought and placed on the ground. And he spoke first. Said he, "O people of Quraish! You have prolonged your dispute, and your hearts are doubtful. You have dared to badmouth the descendants of ʿAbd Munāf, belying Abū Ṭālib when he spoke, blaming him even as he said the truth. Then you sent for me to ask me about the present and about the pure prophet, the one who has the Proof, who shall ruin the idols and humiliate the sorcerers. By Allāh! We [wizards] are not happy on account of the news of his advent, for wizardry at the time of his birth will disappear. But I tell you that if such is the case, Saṭeeḥ is not interested in life and indeed desires death, for such an event is quite near. Bring me, then, your mothers and your wives so that I may show you wonders which you cannot belie, so that I may acquaint you with who exactly is bearing him in her womb." They asked him, "Do you

know the unknown?!" "No," said Sateeh, "but I have a friend from among the jinns who informs me and who listens to others."

Those present now dispersed and went home. They came back, bringing their pregnant women. Abū Ṭālib went to his brother ʿAbdullāh and said, "Keep your wife at home, and do not let her go there." He himself kept his wife Fāṭima, may Allāh be pleased with her, at home. Sateeh looked at the women then ordered them to be separated from men. Then he ordered the women to come close to him. He kept looking carefully at each and every one of them without saying a word. They asked him, "Your tongue now is speechless, and your view is now proven wrong!" He said, "By Allāh, my view is not wrong." Looking at the sky, he said, "By both holy places[1], you have kept two of your women at home; one of them is pregnant with the child who shall invite to the path of guidance, Muḥammed, and the other shall bear a child later on, a trusted son who will be called 'The Commander of the Faithful,' the master of *wasis*, the heir of the knowledge of the prophets and the messengers." When the Meccans heard Sateeh speak these words, they were both surprised and disappointed. Abū Ṭālib went to his house in the company of his brothers and brought his wife Fāṭima daughter of Asad and well Āmina, wife of his brother ʿAbdullāh. When both women stood in front of the crowd of women and Sateeh had a chance to look at them, he wept as he shouted as loudly as he could: "O people of prestige! This woman, by Allāh, is the one bearing the chosen prophet, the Messenger of Allāh!" When Āmina came closer to him, he asked her, "Are you pregnant?" She answered in the affirmative. It was then that he turned to the Quraishites and said, "Now I am certain, and my [jinn] friend has told me the truth! This is the leading lady of all the Arabs and the non-Arabs, and she is the one who is bearing the very best of mankind, the one who will crush each and every idol and statute! Woe unto the Arabs from him! His advent is surely near; it is as though I see anyone who opposes him killed. Congratulations to whoever from among you believes in his Prophethood and in his message! He shall rule the land and let security reign in the east and in the west." Then Sateeh turned to Fāṭima, cried and gasped, falling into a swoon without uttering a word. Once he recovered, the wailed and wept then loudly said: "This, by Allāh, is

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[1]I could not find out which two holy places Sateeh is swearing by... All I could find out was the fact that he was a Christian monotheist; he strongly believed in the Unity of God, unlike most of his contemporaries.

Fāṭima daughter of Asad, the mother of the one who will smash the idols, the wise *amīr* and the killer of brave warriors, the courageous knight, the lion-hearted, the one called Ameerul-Mo'mineen ʿAli, cousin of the Prophet, the best of blessings and peace be upon both of them." After a short while, he resumed his statement saying, "Oh! It is as though I see with my own eyes many heroes fallen to him, many warriors taken captive!"

Quraish had by now heard more than enough from Saṭeeḥ. They were so enraged by him that a number of them actually leaped with their sword to kill him, but Banū Hāshim and others stood in front of him to protect him. Abū Jahl, may Allāh curse him, shouted, "Let me reach this sorcerer! I have to kill him so that we may rest, and if you stand between me and him, I shall cause your destruction and make you taste of death!" Abū Ṭālib turned to him and said, "Woe unto you, O the most mean of all Arabs and the most lowly! I see how you love the tribe to be divided upon itself! Are you the one to talk like that, the wretch that you are?!" Saying so, Abū Ṭālib struck him with his sword; some men tried to protect Abū Jahl by pushing Abū Ṭālib's sword away from him but not before Abū Ṭālib had already wounded him in the face. As his face bled, Abū Jahl called out saying, "O people present here! O heads of the tribes! Do you agree to bear the burden of shame?! Kill Saṭeeḥ! Kill Āmina! Kill Fāṭima daughter of Asad! And kill all Banū Hāshim and put out their fire and put an end to their evil!"

Quraish in their entirety now attacked Saṭeeḥ, and Banū Hāshim realized that they could not protect him, being outnumbered. The frightened women rushed to the Kaʿba for cover. Cries of war were heard everywhere, and the earth shook under the feet of the Quraishites.

What saved Sateeh from such an awful onslaught? He as well and Banū Hāshim were outnumbered, over-powered; so, how did he survive?

Āmina, mother of Prophet Muhammed, narrates saying, "When I saw the swords all around me, I was so confused, I did not know what to do. I knew that there were many who wanted to kill me. As I stood confused, the foetus in my womb stirred, and I heard something like moaning. Suddenly a cry came out of the sky, stunning everyone. Men and women fell down on their faces and looked as though they had all died. I raised my eyes to the sky, to the source of the cry, and I saw as if the gates of the heavens were opened and a knight came out carrying a spear of fire and saying, `You shall have no access to the Messenger of the Great Lord, and I am his Brother Gabriel!' It was then that I felt at ease and

recovered my full consciousness. I realized that my son Muḥammed was surely the Messenger of Allāh. Then we all went back home. Abū Ṭālib took his brother ᶜAbdullāh by the hand and went to the Kaᶜba's courtyard where they congratulated each other on the distinction and the victory vested upon them by the Almighty. The rest of the people were still stunned, motionless. They remained so for three hours. Then they gradually stood up looking as if they were intoxicated."

Munabbih ibn al-Ḥajjāj stood beside Abū Ṭālib and said, "You have always been lofty in status, victorious over your opponents, but we would like you to get Saṭeeḥ away from us. If what he has said is true, we will be more worthy than all others of assisting you." Then he composed verses of poetry wherein he congratulated Abū Ṭālib, promising to support him and Banū Hāshim if one of their offspring were to become the Messenger of Allāh, passionately pleading to him to let Saṭeeḥ go away. His plea was earnest and genuine. The reader will come to know, however, that Munabbih did not fulfill his promise, that both he and his brother Nabeeh were among the party that sought to kill Muḥammed immediately before he undertook the *hijra* to Medīna. But his son Wahab, the reader will come to review in a later part of this book, embraced Islam and contributed to its promotion. Anyway, Abū Ṭālib was moved by those verses and said, "Well, I shall do as you please and dismiss him, since you seem to dislike him, but you will come to know how accurate what he has told you is."

Abū Ṭālib ordered Saṭeeḥ to be brought to him. When the latter was present, Abū Ṭālib asked him, "Do you know why I brought you here?" "Yes," said Saṭeeḥ, "in order to ask me to depart from your company and to be exiled from your land, and I have decided to do just that." After a while, he added, "If the one who will bring you glad tidings and warnings appears among you, convey my greeting to him and tell him that Saṭeeḥ had already informed you of his advent, but you disbelieved him and kicked him out. A woman who knows more than me will soon come to you to bring you the same glad tiding, and I do not doubt that she had already entered your country and will soon be present right here."

Saṭeeḥ was mounted on a camel as he was surrounded by Banū Hāshim who wanted to bid him farewell. Immediately before Saṭeeḥ could start his trip, everyone saw someone coming in their direction. The newcomer was surrounded by a number of slaves; the company was speeding and a cloud of dust was flying. The first person to identify the newcomer was a man named ᶜAmr ibn ᶜĀmir who said, "O masters of

Mecca! The most shrewd of all women, the genius of all women, Zarqā' al-Yamāma, the daughter of Mirhil, the witch of Yemen is coming to meet you!" Only a few minutes passed before she was in the midst of the crowd.

As soon as Zarqā' al-Yamāma arrived at Mecca, she shouted saying, "O people of Quraish! Plentitude greets you! May your presence decorate your homes! I have left my family behind me, leaving my country, seeking to meet you in order to inform you of events which are about to take place. The most wonderful of wonders will soon take place among you; so, if you permit me to alight, I shall do so, but if you refuse, I shall depart." Then she recited eight lines of poetry describing the advent of the Messenger of Allāh, calling him by his name Muhammed, detailing how he would smash the idols and ignite the fire of strife in Mecca. She also hinted in the last line to ʿAli, one of his kinsmen, who would assist him and protect both him and his creed. When the Quraishites heard her poetry, they not only permitted her to alight, they ordered her to do so. They asked each other, "Is she going to say the same things Saṭeeḥ has already said?" The first person who spoke to her was ʿUtbah ibn Rabeeʿah[1]; he asked her, "What has alarmed the lady of Yemen?! Have you come here seeking a favour of us so we would oblige you?" She said, "I am not a poor women, nor is my fortune small, nor do I need you to give me anything at all. Rather, I am bringing you good news and a warning. The good news does not please me personally at all; rather, it augurs a bad omen for me." ʿUtbah asked her, "O Zarqā'! What kind of talk is this?! You seem to promise yourself and ourselves with death and destruction!" She said, "O father of al-Walīd! I swear by the One Who ever-watches over us, a prophet shall come out of this valley to invite to guidance and to prohibit corruption. He will kill his foes and be the cause of a great deal of bloodshed. His light shall always renew itself, whereas the light of his foes shall he forever put out. His light shall be visible in his face. His name shall be Muhammed, peace and blessings be upon him. It seems to me that it is very soon that he will be born. He will be assisted in his mission by a man from among his kinsmen, a courageous warrior who will subdue brave men, a brave lion, a sword that splits, a man very brave during the times of hardship; his arm is strong, his heart

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[1]He is grandfather of the famous military commander Khālid ibn al-Walīd. The reader will later come to know how his son al-Walīd was condemned in the Holy Qur'ān.

is daring, and his title shall be *Ameer al-Mu'mineen* ʿAli." Then she added, "O woe unto me the day I meet him! O what a great calamity and what a most strange tale shall people tell about me then! Woe unto me! Trials and tribulations! If I opt to safeguard my life, I have no choice except to abide by his bidding and abandon scheming against him, but I find riding the seas and being exposed to fire easier for me than such abjection and humiliation! I shall not trade my prestige for humiliation, nor shall I turn ignorant after having received so much knowledge." Then she recited six more lines of poetry using a different rhyme congratulating certain clans of Quraish of the birth of the awaited prophet and saying that her end was coming and most likely she would not see such an advent. The clans she congratulated in her verses are: Banū Hāshim (Muhammed's immediate clansmen), Banū ʿAbd al-Muttalib (Muhammed's cousins), ʿAbd Shams, Banū Nawfal, Banū Asad, and Banū Zuhrah (kinsmen of the Prophet from his mother's side). The reader will *Insha-Allāh* become acquainted with these clans throughout the text of this book. Then the famous witch added, "Alas! There is no sense to fret about what shall come to pass. By the Creator of the sun and the moon, by the One Who holds in His hand the destiny of mankind, Sateeh told you the truth."

When people heard her statement, they were confused and did not know how to respond. She looked at Abū Tālib and his brother ʿAbdullāh and immediately recognized the latter. You see, Zarqā' al-Yamāma had had an encounter with ʿAbdullāh before that day. Let us digress for a short while to narrate to you the details of that encounter before we resume our main story.

Yamāma, where this witch lived, is a province in Nejd to the east of Hijāz[1]. Travellers who go to Yemen to trade had to pass through it, and it is actually not far from Mecca. A horse rider could cross the distance from Yamāma to Mecca in less than two days. ʿAbdullāh, Muhammed's father, used to sometimes accompany his father ʿAbdul-Muttalib on his trade trips to Yemen and Iraq during the winter, and to Syria and Palestine during the summer. Zarqā' al-Yamāma, like Sateeh, was a star

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[1]Hijāz is the upper part of today's Saudi Arabia where both Mecca and Medina are located. In 1926, Ibn Saʿud, the sultan of Nejd, installed himself as the king of Hijāz after his Wahhabi invastion of Hijāz succeeded in putting an end to the rule of Sharīf Husayn ibn ʿAli. In 1932, he united both Nejd and Hijāz into the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

gazer. Her high mansion served as a watchtower due to her gift of extra-ordinary strong eyesight. She was once on her mansion's rooftop when she saw a light beaming from another mansion nearby. People in those days used to rent their houses to businessmen for a few days or a few weeks. Merchants would unload their merchandise, rest and hire animals to transport them and their wares once they resumed their journey. She knew that that light was not natural. ʿAbdullāh was still single, and the light of Muhammed was on his forehead. His father, ʿAbdul-Muṭṭalib, had gone out for an errand, leaving him by himself. Zarqā' al-Yamāma came down, went to that mansion with a bag of silver dirhams. "Young man," she addressed ʿAbdullāh, "may Allāh greet you with peace and crown you with bounties! To which Arab tribe do you belong, for I have never seen none looking better than you?!" "I am ʿAbdullāh son of ʿAbdul-Muṭṭalib son of Hāshim son of ʿAbd Munāf, the master of honourable men, the feeder of those who visit the Sanctuary (the Kaʿba). We are the care-takers of the Sanctuary, the ones deeply rooted in lineage." Zarqā' al-Yamāma knew who he was; she only pretended not to. Then she offered him this tempting proposal: "Shall I, master, offer you two swift occasions of happiness?!" "What are they?" ʿAbdullāh inquired. She said, "That you go to bed with me this minute and you take these dirhams, and I shall present you with one hundred camels laden with bagged dates, unripe dates, and cooking oil." ʿAbdullāh said, "Get away from me! How ugly you are! Woe unto you! Do not you know that we are people who do not commit sins?! Begone!" Saying so, he unsheathed his sword, causing the witch to run away frightened and disappointed. His father came in and saw him holding his unsheathed sword and repeating two lines of poetry extolling his lineage and their virtues and honours and how they shun sins and unbecoming deeds. ʿAbdul-Muṭṭalib asked his son what was going on, and ʿAbdullāh narrated the details of the incident to him. "O son!," said ʿAbdul-Muṭṭalib, "she surely looked at the light on your face and realized that it is a sign of distinction and unending prestige, so she wanted to rob you of it. Praise be to Allāh Who protected you from her." Then his father took him to Mecca where he engaged Āmina daughter of Wahab to be his wife.

Now let us go back to our main story. When Zarqā' al-Yamāma saw ʿAbdullāh and came to know that he had already gotten married, she asked him, "Are you not the one who met me in Yamāma on such-and-such date?" He answered in the affirmative adding, "You are not welcome here, O daughter of the stinking woman! You are not welcome here at

all." She asked him, "Where is the light that used to emanate from your forehead?" He said, "It is in the womb of my wife Āmina daughter of Wahab." She said, "Undoubtedly, she is worthy of it." Then she spoke loudly so that everybody could hear her. Said she, "O people of status, eminence and loftiness! The time is nearing, the matter is imminent; none can shun it. Disperse from me, for the night is approaching, and tomorrow morning you will hear many tales from you, and I shall acquaint you with the truth of the matter." They dispersed.

Sateeh left Mecca on the same day. Zarqā' al-Yamāma waited till midnight before riding one of her swiftest horses and catching up with him. "What do you see, O Sateeh?" she asked him. "Wonders," said he, "and their advent is quite near." Then he narrated to her what had taken place between him and the people of Quraish before her arrival. "What do you advise me to do?" she asked the old wizard. "As far as I am concerned," he responded, "I am now a very old man. Had it not been for the stigma, I would have ordered someone to put an end to me and relieve me of the burden of life. But I am on my way to Syria where I shall reside till death overtakes me. I am unable to do anything about it. He is divinely protected, and anyone who opposes him shall be vanquished." But the witch did not like what she heard, so she asked him, "O Sateeh! Where are your (jinn) assistants?! Why don't they help you to carry out this matter and help you in killing Āmina before he comes out of her womb?" He said, "O Zarqā'! Can anyone at all harm Āmina?! Anyone who tries to hurt her is surely to perish swiftly. The One Who knows everything shall cause him to perish. As for me and my assistants, we are not going to even try to harm her, and I advise you not to try it either. Her Protector is the Lord of the heavens and the earth; but if you do not accept my advice, leave me alone, perhaps I will die tonight or tomorrow night." Having heard him speak thus, Zarqā' al-Yamāma left him alone and went back to Mecca spending her night contemplating, weighing her options.

In the morning, she went to the quarters of Banū Hāshim and said, "May Allāh bring you blessings with the advent of this morning, for you have honoured the meeting places with your presence, and may success be your companion! Among you is soon to appear the one described in the Torah and in the Gospel, in the Psalms and in the Furqān. Woe unto whoever antagonizes him, and congratulations to whoever follows him!" Each and every Hashemite was very glad to hear this glad tiding, and they promised to reward her for it. She said, "I do not want you to give

me anything at all, for I am a woman of wealth and means, and I did not cross this distance except to acquaint you with the news." Abū Ṭālib said, "It is mandatory upon us to reward you; so, can we do anything at all for you? Do you need anything at all?" She said, "Yes. I wish to meet Āmina in order to verify what I have been telling you." They agreed to arrange a meeting between herself and Āmina. When the witch saw Āmina, she noticed the light on her countenance, and she saw how beautiful she looked, so she envied her but was strong enough not to let it show. Food was brought to her, but she did not eat. She said, "Your newborn will show you wonders; the idols shall fall down, the temples shall crumble, destruction shall befall those who worship at them and they shall be annihilated." Then Zarqā' al-Yamāma went out contemplating on a way to kill Āmina. She kept going to Sateeh in the night as he was on his way to Syria seeking his advice, but he did not pay her any attention.

Zarqā' al-Yamāma went to visit a woman named Tukna belonging to the tribe of al-Khazraj; she was the hair-dresser of wealthy Meccan ladies including Āmina. In one night, Tukna woke up in the dead of the night and saw someone standing at the head of Zarqā' al-Yamāma reciting two verses of poetry the gist of which was: "Yamāma's witch came to Tihāma and will soon regret on account of what she shall receive from the turbaned man." When the witch heard it, she stood up and addressed that person saying, "Where have you been all this time? You used to always be faithful to me, so what has kept you away from me all this time? I have been suffering from one agony after another, from one tribulation following another." That person said to her, "Woe unto you, O Zarqā'! We[1] have been greatly afflicted. We used to ascend to the seventh heavens to listen, but during these past few days, we have been kicked out of the heavens and we heard a voice calling out in the heavens saying, 'Allāh has willed that it is time now for the advent of the person who will smash the idols and make the worship of the most Merciful One prevail.' The hosts of Satans were prohibited from being present in the heavens. Angels descended upon us with flames of fire; we fell like old palm trunks, and I have come to warn you." Having heard him speak

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[1]The reader can easily assume that the person speaking to Zarqā' al-Yamāma was the jinn who used to help her, answer her questions, and bring her news. He is now telling her of what has just afflicted his fellow jinns. Refer to what I have written about the jinns in the earlier chapters of this book.

thus, Zarqā' al-Yamāma said to him, "Get away from me! I have to exert my utmost to kill this newborn." The jinn departed from her as he recited five lines of poetry wherein he reiterated his advice to her to stay away from such an evil attempt, telling her that nobody could harm someone supported by the Almighty, not even a skilled witch like herself. He concluded his advice by telling her to go back to Yamāma and to be aware of an awful day soon to come.

Tukna al-Khazraji narrated all the above. In the morning, Tukna met Zarqā' al-Yamāma and asked her, "Why do you look so upset?" Zarqā' al-Yamāma said, "O sister! I am upset on account of leaving my country and going elsewhere, my roaming here and there and my being separated from my friends." "Why so?," Tukna asked her. "Beware of a woman bearing a child who will call for the worship of the most Glorified One, who will smash the idols, humiliate the wizards and the sorcerers, wreak destruction on the land and leave no wise person in Mecca alone. You know that sitting on the fire is easier than abjection and humiliation. So, if I find anyone who helps me to kill Āmina, I shall give him whatever he desires and make him rich." Then she took out a bag of money which she emptied before Tukna. It was quite a fortune. When Tukna saw the money, it worked its effect on her mind. She said to Zarqā' al-Yamāma, "What you have said is surely a matter of great concern to me, something which is not easy to achieve. I comb the hair of Āmina and of other ladies of Banū Hāshim, and no strange woman besides myself ever gets to see them. But I shall think of what you have just mentioned. How can I have courage to do what you bid me?" Zarqā' al-Yamāma said, "If you go to see Āmina and sit with her, you should hold her braids then stab her with this dagger, for it is poisoned. Once its poison is mixed with the blood, it is sure death. If you are accused of the crime, and if you are required to pay the blood money, I shall come to your rescue and pay as much as ten times the blood money on your behalf, not counting what I am paying you right now; so, what do you say?" Tukna said, "I agree to do it, but I need your cunning to distract Banū Hāshim from me." Al-Zarqā' said, "I shall this hour order my slaves to slaughter animals and to prepare wines. When they eat and drink, you will have carried out your mission." Tukna said, "Now everything is taken care of; so, do what you have suggested."

The slaves of al-Zarqā' shouted throughout Mecca's streets and alleys inviting everyone to her feast, and everyone came. Once they have eaten and drunk, and when wine started having its effects on them, the witch

sprinkled more poison on the dagger, went to Tukna and ordered her to go to Āmina to carry out the plan.

Āmina received Tukna with kindness saying, "O Tukna! You have not neglected us by now without visiting us; so, what has kept you away from us?" Tukna said, "I have been distracted by grief and worry, and had it not been for your generosity, I would have been in the worst of condition, and there is nobody dearer to me than yourself. Come on, and let me embellish you." Āmina sat before Tukna to get her hair done. The latter took out the dagger to stab her, but she immediately felt as though someone hit her hand, causing the dagger to fall on the ground, and she felt she could not see anything for a while. She screamed, "O grief!" Having heard her, Āmina asked her what was wrong. Noticing the dagger on the ground, Āmina screamed. The women in the house rushed to Āmina and asked her what was going on. "Do not you see what has Tukna done?! She almost killed me!" The woman now turned to Tukna and asked her, "What happened to you, O Tukna?! What do you want to kill Āmina for?" Tukna said, "Yes, indeed, I sought to kill Āmina, but praise to Allāh Who saved her life." The women said to Tukna, "Praise to Allāh who saved her from your mischievous scheme, O Tukna! What caused you to do that?" She said, "Do not blame me; what caused me to do that is love for this fleeting life." Then she told them the whole plot. Tukna shouted, "Go and kill al-Zarqā' before she has a chance to flee!" Having said so, she gasped and fell dead. The women screamed and were heard by their kinsfolk from among Banū Hāshim who rushed to Āmina's house to find Tukna lying on the ground, dead. Āmina's light could be seen filling the house. They also saw the dagger and were told the entire incident.

Abū Ṭālib went out shouting, "Go catch al-Zarqā'!" The latter had by then come to know that her plot had failed, so she fled away. Banū Hāshim and others went out after her, but they could not catch her. When Abū Jahl heard about it, he said, "How I wish she had killed Āmina, but death turned away from her. I wish Saṭeeḥ would do better than al-Zarqā'." When Saṭeeḥ came to know about what had happened to al-Zarqā', he ordered his slaves to help him mount his she-camel. He went to Syria.

Now let us go back to the story of Khosru (Chosroes) I Noshirwan, the just ruler.

On the same day when Muḥammed was born, all the idols fell headlong, all the fires at fire temples were extinguished, and an

earthquake shook Noshirwan's palace, causing fourteen of its turrets to crumble. Lake Sawah, as indicated above, dried up. The Zoroastrian high priest saw a terrible dream. In the morning, Noshirwan called to his presence all his ministers and asked them whether they had any knowledge of what had happened in the land. The Zoroastrian high priest narrated to the emperor what he had seen in a vision last night. "O great King!," said he, "I saw in a dream last night camels being led by thorough-bred Arabian horses that traversed the valley and spread throughout the land, and this is due to a momentous event." As they were thus discussing Noshirwan's dream, news came to them that all the fires at the fire houses have been suddenly extinguished. Then another news came about the drying up of the Lake Sawah as narrated above. The high priest suggested to Noshirwan to write a letter to al-Nuᶜmān ibn al-Munthir[1], perhaps he knew someone who could explain these supernatural phenomena.

Noshirwan wrote a letter to al-Nuᶜmān ibn al-Munthir who, in response, sent him a Christian named ᶜAbd al-Maseeḥ (slave of Christ), the son of Sateeḥ's sister. When ᶜAbd al-Maseeḥ stood before Noshirwan, the latter asked him, "Do you know what I am going to ask you about?" "No," ᶜAbd al-Maseeḥ answered, "but I have an uncle named Sateeḥ who now lives in the outskirts of Syria and who knows what is destined to happen to you." Noshirwan said, "Go to him and ask him about what I want to inquire of you. If he has an answer, bring it to me, and I shall reward you generously."

ᶜAbd al-Maseeḥ went out of his partially damaged palace at Ctesephon and immediately started his trip westward to Syria. After only a few days, he reached his destination, finding Sateeḥ about to expire. ᶜAbd al-Maseeḥ greeted his uncle, but the latter did not answer the greeting. After an hour, Sateeḥ opened his eyes and said the following to his nephew:

ᶜAbd al-Maseeḥ has come in a hurry as a messenger from Kisra

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[1]al-Nuᶜmān ibn al-Munthir was the last and the most famous Lakhmide king of Ḥīra appointed by the Persian emperor. He ruled from 580 - 602 A.D. and was deposed by Noshirwan's grandson Khosru II Parviz (d. 628 A.D.) who imprisoned him in Madā'in. Reference to this Khosru II will be made in this book later on where Khadija, Prophet Muḥammed's first wife, is discussed.

(Khosru I) Noshirwan who sent him to Sateeh, master of Banū Ghassān, to inquire about the earthquake that shook the palace, about why the fires have been extinguished, and about the Zoroastrian high priest seeing in a vision camels being led by thorough-bred Arabian horses that traversed the valley and spread throughout the land. These, by Allāh, are signs which we have been expecting and which are indicative of the advent of the one who will spread his domain far and wide. O ᶜAbd al-Maseeh! Let me tell you the truth: If the Samawa[1] Valley overflows, and if Lake Sawah dries up, Syria will no longer be the same for Sateeh. Signs will appear; (Persian) kings will rule them as many as the turrets that fell, and whatever will be will be, and the only ease for Sateeh will be in death.[2]

Sateeh then screamed and died. Any history student who researches 6th century Persian history will find out that from the year when Prophet Muhammed was born, that is, 570 A.D., and the Battle of Qadisiyya[3] of 635 A.D. (or, according to other accounts, 637 A.D.), fourteen Persian emperors ruled one after another, ten for no more than four months each, before the Persians were conquered by the Muslim military leader Saᶜd ibn Abu-Waqqās.

According to Abul-Hasan al-Bakri, when Āmina was seven months pregnant, ᶜAbdul-Muttalib said to his son ᶜAbdullāh, "O son! Āmina is about to give birth, and we would like to make a big feast, but we do not have enough food for it; so, go to Yathrib and buy what we need." ᶜAbdullāh went to Yathrib for that errand, but he suddenly fell sick there and died. This, of course, is only one version of the story of his death in Yathrib, and other scholars indicate other theories which may be more accurate than this one, and surely Allāh knows best.

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[1]According to p. 278, Vol. 3, of Yaqut al-Hamawi's *Mᶜjam al-Buldān*, the Samawa valley is located (in Iraq) between Kūfa and Syria. This particular miracle, however, is recorded by some, not all, historians as being among the signs of the birth of Prophet Muhammed, and surely Allāh knows best.

[2]al-Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 15, p. 324.

[3]al-Qadisiyya is located in western Iraq, not far from Kufa, in the city of Diwaniyya (in the territory now named al-Qadisiyya). The Battle of al-Qadisiyya took place in 16 A.H./637 A.D. during the reign of caliph ᶜOmer ibn al-Khaṭṭāb. The Muslim army was led by Saᶜd ibn Abū Waqqās who actually did not participate in the battle (which lasted for four days) at all!

The reader may wonder why there is no reference to ᶜAbdul-Muṭṭalib in the rather lengthy story involving Saṭeeḥ and Zarqā' al-Yamāma. ᶜAbdul-Muṭṭalib during that time was in Medīna in order to convey the good news of Muḥammed's birth to the newborn's maternal uncles who belong to Banū al-Najjār. He returned shortly after both of them had left Mecca.

ᶜAbdul-Muṭṭalib narrates saying,

> At the time when the Messenger of Allāh was born, I was circling the Kaᶜba. I suddenly saw all the idols falling; the greatest idol (Hubal) fell headlong, and I heard a voice saying that Āmina had just given birth to the Messenger of Allāh. When I saw what happened to those idols, I was speechless and confused. My heartbeat was so high that I could not say one word. I hurried out seeking to exit from the Gate of Banū Shaybah, and I saw both al-Ṣafa and al-Marwa as if they were racing with joy, being overwhelmed by a celestial light. I kept running till I reached Āmina's house. I noticed a white cloud covering her house. When I came near the door, I could smell the fragrance of musk, amber and other fragrant plants overwhelming the whole place including myself. I entered the house and I saw Āmina sitting without showing any signs of childbirth. I asked her, "Where is your newborn child?! I want to see him!" She said, "He has been taken away from me; I heard a voice saying, `Do not fear for your newborn, and he will be returned to you after three days.'" ᶜAbdul-Muṭṭalib unsheathed his sword and said, "Get my son out right this minute, or else I shall strike you with this sword!" Pointing to a room, Āmina said, "They took him and entered that room." I went there bent upon entering the room, but someone came out of it, and he looked as tall as the tallest palm tree. He was carrying a sword. Never in all my life did I ever feel frightened of anyone as I was frightened of him. He said to me, "Go back, for neither you nor anyone else can see him till the angels finish visiting him first." I came out frightened of what I had seen.[1]

After three days, ᶜAbdul-Muṭṭalib came back to see him. Taking Muḥammed in his hands, he kissed him and said, "Praise be to Allāh Who fulfilled His promise and sent you to us! After today, I do not care

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[1]al-Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 15, p. 328.

whether I live or die!" According to al-Wāqidi[1], the Prophet was born nine thousand and nine hundred years and four months and seven days after the death of our father Adam[2].

When Muḥammed was two months old, his grandfather Wahab, father of his mother Āmina, died. ʿAbdul-Muṭṭalib and a number of men of Quraish washed his corpse, embalmed and shrouded it then buried it at the foot of the Ṣafa[3].

When Muḥammed was about six years old (in 575 A.D.), he lost his mother as well; so, the doubly-orphaned child was brought up by ʿAbdul-Muṭṭalib with the most tender care. Umm Ayman was now his governess. It was the will of God that Muḥammed should undergo all the sufferings, pains and privations incidental to human life in order that he would bear them with becoming fortitude and raise his stature in human perfection. Not two years had passed before ʿAbdul-Muṭṭalib also expired.

ʿAbdul-Muṭṭalib died in 578 A.D. at the age of 82, leaving the care and custody of the orphaned Muḥammed to Abū Ṭālib. Abū Ṭālib and his wife, Fāṭima bint Asad, loved Muḥammed more than their own children. As the Prophet himself said, Fāṭima bint Asad was his "mother" who kept her own children waiting while she fed the Prophet, kept her own children cold while she gave him warm clothes. Abū Ṭālib always kept the child with him day and night.

Abū Ṭālib had succeeded ʿAbdul-Muṭṭalib in *siqāya* and *rifāda* and was an active participant in the trade caravans. When Muḥammed was 12 years old (now we are in 582 A.D.), or 4 according to some accounts, Abū Ṭālib bade farewell to his family to go to Syria. Muḥammed clung to him and cried. "Who are you leaving me with, O uncle," asked him

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[1]Al-Wāqidi's full name is: Abū ʿAbdullāh Muḥammed ibn ʿOmar al-Wāqidi. He was born at Medīna in 130 A.H./747 A.D. and died in 207 A.H./822 A.D., leaving a library of six hundred boxes full of books. He was one of the earliest Muslim historians and one of the most famous of Medīna's judges. Among his works are: *Al-Maghāzi* (the Prophet's military campaigns), *Fatḥ Afrīqya* (The Conquest of Africa), *Fatḥ al-ʿAjam* (The Conquest of Persia), *Fath Misr wal Iskandariyya* (The Conquest of Egypt and Alexandria), and *Futooḥ al-Shām* (The Conquests of Syria). He is quoted mostly by his famous student Ibn Saʿd, author of the *Ṭabaqāt*.

[2]*Ibid.*, Vol. 15, p. 387.

[3]al-Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 15, p. 293.

Muḥammed, "with my mother, or with my father?" Both his parents had by then died. Abū Ṭālib was so moved that he took the child with him. The caravan reached Buṣra (or Bostra) on the highway to the ancient city of Damascus, Syria. Abū Ṭālib's trade caravan stayed near the monastery of a Nestorian[1] monk, Buhayrah, whose Christian name was Sergius (or Georgius) and whose small Nestorian church or monastery was on the highway to Bostra. Buhayrah noticed something unusual about the caravan with which Abū Ṭālib and Muḥammed travelled: A piece of cloud was shadowing Muḥammed from the merciless heat of the sun, going with him wherever he went. When he came and sat under a tree there, the tree branches bowed down as if they were paying him homage. All this was noticed by Buḥayrah (or Baḥrah) the monk who sent word to the caravan to go to his church cell to eat. That cell contained, among other few items, some old manuscripts among which was one that contained the prediction of the coming of a Prophet to the Arabs. Buḥayrah was quite familiar with the contents of that book. He felt that the coming of the prophet would soon take place, and during his own lifetime. This feeling was shared by another Christian monk who was living in Mecca, and his name was Waraqah ibn Nawfal. He was first

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[1]Nestorians are Christians of Asia Minor and Syria who refused to accept the condemnations of Nestorius and his teachings by the councils of Ephesus (an ancient Ionian Greek city in today's Turkey, site of the ancient temple of Artemis, or Diana) of 431 A.D. and Chalcedon (modern day Kadikoy, ancient maritime town of Bithynia opposite Istanbul, Turkey) of 451 A.D. Most of present day Nestorians live in Iraq, Syria and Iran. Nestorius, founder of this sect, had been anathematized at Ephesus (in 431 A.D.) for denouncing the use of the title Theotokos ("God-bearer") for Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus Christ, insisting that this compromised the reality of Christ as a human being. Those who refused to accept Nestorius' condemnation formed a center of resistance at the renowned theological school of Edessa (chief city of Greek Macedonia on a steep valley of the Loudhias Potamos river). When the school was closed by imperial order in 489 A.D., a small yet vigorous Nestorian remnant migrated to Persia. Nestorius was born in late 4th century A.D. and died in modern day Maras, Turkey, in 451 A.D. He was once banished to the Libyan desert where he was confined from 436 - 437 A.D.

cousin of Khadīja daughter of Khuwaylid, wife of the Prophet[1]. Buḥayrah knew that such a sign was of great significance. "Could it be that he had at last come and was among those travellers?," He asked himself. "Men of Quraish! I have prepared food for you," he addressed them, "And I would like you to come to me, every one of you, young and old, bondman and freeman." They came to his cell. Muḥammed was left to look after their camels and belongings. As they approached, Buḥayrah examined them carefully, one by one, but he could not see anything corresponding to the description in his book, nor did anyone among them seem to be adequately great enough to warrant two miracles which he himself had just witnessed. Perhaps they had not all come to him, so he asked them: "Men of Quraish! Let none of you stay behind." "There is none that has been left behind," they said, "save a boy, the youngest among us." "Treat him not so," said Buḥayrah, "but call him to come, and let him be present with us at this meal." Abū Ṭālib and the others realized their thoughtlessness and blamed themselves, saying, "Ibn (the son of) ᶜAbd-Allāh should not have been left behind," and one of them went back to him, hugged him, and brought him to sit with everyone there. The very first glance that Buḥayrah cast at young Muḥammed was sufficient to explain the miracles which he had just witnessed. He looked at him attentively the whole time, examining each movement he made and every word he uttered. When they had finished eating, Buḥayrah went to his youngest guest and asked him a few questions about how he lived and slept, and about his general affairs. Muḥammed unhesitatingly informed him of these things, for he looked to him as a venerable man, and his questions were courteous. He did not even hesitate to draw off his cloak when finally the monk asked him if he could see his back, his shoulders. Buḥayrah was now convinced beyond the shadow of doubt that he saw the new Arabian Messenger of Allāh when the latter's shoulders were exposed to the examining eyes of Buḥayrah the monk: the mark of the seal of Prophethood was there, just as it was described in his ancient book, and in the exact place. He turned to Abū Ṭālib and said: "What kinship hath this boy with thee?" "He is my son," Abū Ṭālib said. "He is *not* thy son," the monk emphatically responded, adding, "it cannot be that this boy's father is alive." "He is my brother's son," said Abū Ṭālib. "Then what of his father?" asked the monk. "He died," said Abū Ṭālib,

[1]According to other accounts, he was Khadīja's uncle.

"when the boy was still in his mother's womb." "That is the truth," said Buḥayrah. "Take thy brother's son back to his country, and guard him against the Jews, for by God, if they see him and know of him that which I know, they will contrive evil against him. Great things are in store for this nephew of thine. He shall be the Prophet of this nation[1]."

This encounter is recorded in several English references, but we would like to introduce to the reader another testimonial which he most likely has not read yet; it is an English translation from a major Arabic source:

Ibn ʿAbbās, the Prophet's uncle, quotes his father ʿAbbās who in turn quotes ʿAbdul-Muṭṭalib quoting Abū Ṭālib saying:

> Eight years had passed since the birth of the Messenger of Allāh when I went out to Syria in a trade caravan. It was extremely hot. When I decided to start the trip, some of my people said to me, "What will you do with Muḥammed? And to whose charge are you going to leave him?" I said, "I shall not leave him with anyone; he will be with me." They said, "Are you going to take a child out in such extremely hot weather?! Do you really take such person out with you?!" I said, "By Allāh! He shall never part with me wherever I go, and I shall have a low conveyance for him." Muḥammed and the camel he was riding were in front of me, and he was always ahead of everyone else, always in the vanguard. Whenever the heat intensified, a white cloud like a piece of snow would greet him then stand over his head and would never leave him. The cloud may even sometimes rain upon us different kinds of fruit as it followed us. We were short of water once to the extent that we could not buy a water-bag for less than two dinars, but whenever and wherever we alighted, lakes would be filled, water would become plentiful, and the ground would turn green with grass. We were enjoying fertility and goodness. The camels of some among us would refuse to advance, so Muḥammed would rub his hands on them, and they would then instantly move on.
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> When we came near to Bostra, some priests advanced towards us as fast as beasts of burden. And the cloud never parted with the Messenger of Allāh. A priest from among them did not pay any attention to the caravan or to any of its merchants, nor did he speak to anyone at all. He looked at Muḥammed and immediately recognized him. I heard him saying, "If there is anyone at all, it has to be you!" We alighted under

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[1]al-Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 15, p. 201.

a huge tree having only a few branches near the monk's monastery. It was not a fruit tree. Caravans used to sit in its shade. When the Messenger of Allāh alighted under that tree, it shook and spread its branches over the Messenger of Allāh, instantly bearing three kinds of fruit: two of them grow in the summer and one in the winter. Each and every one of us was extremely surprised. When Buḥayrah, the monk, saw that, he took sufficient food for the Messenger of Allāh, then he came to us and asked us, "Who is in charge of this child?" I said, "I am." He asked me, "What kinship are you to him?" "His uncle," I said. He said, "Man, he has many uncles; which one of them are you?" I said, "I am the brother of his father by the same mother." He said, "I testify that it is he or else I am not Buḥayrah at all!" Then he asked me,"Do you permit me to serve him this food so he may eat of it?" I turned to the Prophet and said, "Son! There is a man here who would like to be generous to you; so, you may eat of his food." Muḥammed asked me, "Is it food for just myself rather than for any of my companions?" Buḥayrah answered, "Yes, it is specifically for you." The Prophet said, "I shall not eat any food so long as these men do not." Buḥayrah said, "But I do not have food more than this much." He now asked Buḥayrah, "O Buḥayrah! Do you permit them to eat with me?" Buḥayrah answered in the affirmative. He said, "*Bismillāh*," then ate, and we ate with him. By Allāh! We were one hundred and seventy men, and each one of us ate to his fill, so much so that we even belched! Buḥayrah, meanwhile, was standing next to the Prophet, keeping insects away from him. He was puzzled to see how many men ate of that very little food. From time to time, Buḥayrah would kneel down to kiss Muḥammed's head and cheeks. Whenever he kissed him, he said, "It is he! It is he! I swear by the Lord of Jesus!" People did not understand what he was talking about. One man from our caravan said to Buḥayrah, "You surely must have something in mind! We used to pass by you before, and you never offered us anything (to eat) at all!" Buḥayrah said, "By Allāh I do have something in mind and something else, too, and I see what you do not see, and I know what you know not. Under this tree there is a child had you only come to know about him what I know, you would have carried him on your necks till you reach his land. By Allāh! I have not been generous to you except for his own sake! I have seen how light came in front of him extending from the heavens to the earth. By Allāh! I have seen men carrying fans of emeralds and sapphire fanning him and others scattering all kinds of fruit over him. Then I saw this cloud that never parts with him. Even my cell ran to him just as a beast of runs. Then I saw how this tree had had very few branches then suddenly its branches became many, then

it shook up and produced three different types of fruit: two typical of summer fruit and one typical of winter fruit. Then I saw how these lakes had lost all their water since the Israelites became corrupted and since the disciples came to drink of them, so we found in the book of Simon of Safa that he had cursed them, so their water dried up. Then he (Simon) added saying that whenever those lakes become full of water, you should know that it is for the sake of a Prophet who will appear in the land of Tihāma and who will migrate to Medīna. His name among his people is al-Ameen and in the heavens Ahmed, and he is from the progeny of Ishmael son of Abraham. By Allāh! He is the one!" Then Buḥayrah added saying, "O child! I would like to ask you about three merits by the Lat and the ʿUzza!..." Hearing the names of the Lāt and the ʿUzza, the Messenger of Allāh became angry and said, "Do not ask me anything in their name, for by Allāh, I hate nothing more than them. They are idols my people have carved." Buhayra exultingly said, "This is one (Sign)!" Then he said, "By Allāh, would you tell me..." Muḥammed said, "Ask me whatever you wish, for you have asked me in the Name of my Lord and yours Who has no peer at all." Buhayrah asked him about his sleep and his awakening, and Muḥammed answered his questions. Then Buḥayrah asked him about other matters, and Muḥammed answered him, too. Now Buḥayrah knelt down and kissed Muḥammed's feet as he said, "O son! How sweet your smell is! O one whose followers will be more numerous than those who follow any other prophet! O one whose light is the source of the light of the whole world! O one through whose name the mosques shall be populated! It is as though I see you leading the troops, those on foot and those on horseback, and Arabs and non-Arabs shall follow you willingly or unwillingly. It is as though I can see you smashing the Lat and the ʿUzza, and I see the Kaʿba controlled by none other than you; you shall put its keys wherever you please. How many a hero from Quraish and from the other Arab tribes shall you subdue? With you are the keys of the Garden and of the Fire, and the destruction of the idols shall take place at your hands. The Hour shall not come to pass except after all kings embrace your creed even against their will!" He kept kissing his hands once and his feet another as he said, "If I live to see your advent, I shall strike with the sword just as an arm strikes another! You are the master of all the offspring of Adam, the master of the messengers, the Imām of the pious, the seal of the prophets! By Allāh! The earth smiled on the day you were born, and it shall remain so till the Day of Judgment, happy on your account! By Allāh! The synagogues and the idols wept and so did the devils, so they shall remain weeping till the Day of Judgment! You are the fulfillment of

Abraham's plea to his Lord, the glad tidings of Jesus, the holy, the purified from the impurities of *jāhiliyya*!" Then he turned to Abū Ṭālib and said, "What kinship do you have with this child, for I see that you never part with him?" Abū Ṭālib said, "He is my son." Buḥayrah said, "He is not thy son, for the son of this child cannot be living, nor can his mother." Abū Ṭālib said, "He is the son of my brother, and his father died when his mother was pregnant, then his mother died when he was six years old." Buḥayrah said, "You have said the truth; such is he, but I think you ought to take him back to his land on this account, for there is no Jew nor a Christian nor anyone having a divine Book without having come to know about the birth of this child. If they see him and come to know about him just what I have come to know, they shall desire to harm him, and those who desire so most of all are the Jews." Abū Ṭālib asked him, "Why so?" Buḥayrah said, "It is so because the son of your brother shall be both a Messenger and a Prophet, and the Great Spirit (Gabriel) shall visit him just as he used to visit Moses and Jesus." Abū Ṭālib said to him, "No, God willing, Allāh shall never neglect him." Then we left for Syria. When we came close to Syria, by Allāh, I saw all the mansions of Syria as if they were shaking and a great streak of the sun was emanating from them. When we were in the middle of Syria, we could not traverse the Syrian market because of the stampede of people who were looking at the Messenger of Allāh. And the news spread to all parts of Syria, so much so that not a single rabbi or priest remained without coming to meet him.

There are other eye witnesses who reported the same. They were some of the merchants who had participated in Abū Ṭālib's trade caravan. Let us review some of these accounts:

Ya'li, the famous Arab genealogist, narrates the following:

Khālid ibn Aseed ibn Abul-'Ās and Ṭaleeq ibn Abū Sufyān ibn Umayyah went out in the same trade caravan wherein the Messenger of Allāh participated. They were with him, and they narrated saying that they observed him as he walked or rode or did anything to the animals or to the birds. They narrate saying: When he was in our midst as we reached Bostra's market, we came across a group of Christian priests. As soon as the priests saw us, the colour of their faces changed into yellow, as if saffron had painted their faces, looking as though they were struck by lightning. They said to us, "You have to come to meet our most senior; he is nearby at the grand church." We asked them, "Why should we? What do you have to do with us?" They said, "You

will not be harmed in the least, and we may shower you with our generosity." They thought that one of us was Muhammed. We went with them and entered the huge building of the church. Their most senior priest sat in the middle, and his students were all around him. He had opened a book in his hands and kept looking once at us and once at the book. Then he said to his students (who had brought us to him), "You have not done anything at all. You did not bring me the person I seek although he is here (in town)." Then he asked us who we were, and we told him that we belonged to Quraish. "Which (clan) of Quraish do you belong to?" he asked. "To ʿAbd Shams," we answered. "Is there someone else besides you?," he asked again. We said, "Yes, a child from Banū Hāshim whom we call the orphan of ʿAbdul-Muttalib." By Allāh, the moment he heard that, he gasped in a way that we thought he was going to faint. Then he leaped as he said, "Woe unto us! The Christians, by Christ, have surely perished!" Then he stood up and used one of his crosses as a cane to lean on, and he was very deeply indulged in his thoughts. As many as eighty patriarchs and a number of students were around him. He asked us, "Is it easy for you to let me see him?" We answered him in the affirmative then he accompanied us and saw Muhammed standing at Bostra's market. By Allāh, it was as if we never saw his face before, for it was shining like the moon, and he had bought a good deal of merchandise and earned a good deal of profit and also bought a good deal. We were about to tell the high priest that that was him, but he was faster than us. "This is he! I have recognized him, by Christ!," said he. He came close to Muhammed, kissed his head then said, "You are the holy one!" Then he kept asking him about his marks of Prophethood, and the Prophet kept answering him. We heard the high priest saying this to him: "If I ever live till your time (of Prophethood) comes, I shall do justice to the sword." Then he said to us, "Do you know what is with him? life and death are with him. Whoever clings to him shall live for a long time, and whoever departs from him dies a death after which there shall be no life at all. He is the one with whom the greatest victory is," then he kissed his face and returned.[1]

The major Christian sects during Muhammed's lifetime were: the Copts, the Syrian (Chaldean) Nestorian (to whom Buhayrah belonged), and the

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[1]al-Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 15, pp. 201-202. This text also exists on p. 111 of *Kamāl al-Deen wa Itmām al-Niʿma*.

Armenian Christians from the main churches of Antioch (Antakiya), Rome, and Egyptian Alexandria.

Abū Ṭālib, acting on Buḥayrah's advice, sold all his merchandise for cheaper prices then and there, returning at once to Mecca.

SACRILEGIOUS WAR (Ḥarb al-Fijār) (585 A.D.) AND LEAGUE OF THE VIRTUOUS (Ḥilful-Fuḍūl) (595 A.D.)

At a market-place known as ʿOkāz, a great annual fair used to be held in the month of Thul-Qiʿdah during which war and bloodshed were forbidden. At the time of the fair, ʿOkāz presented a scene of pleasure and abandonment with its dancing girls, gaming tables, drunken orgies, poetic contests and shows of prowess ending frequently in brawls and bloodshed. Twice at least during Muḥammed's lifetime was the sanctity of the sacred months violated, hence there are two major conflicts recorded in the books of history and labelled as "Ḥarb al-Fijār," the sacrilegious war. The earliest took place in 580 A.D., when Muḥammed was only ten years old, and the other in 585 A.D. (or 590 A.D. according to some accounts).

It was at one of those fairs, then, that a war broke out between Quraish and Banū Kinānah (the parent tribe) on one side and the Qais ʿAylān on the other. It happened during the sacred months (during which Arabs were supposed to stop all wars and feuds); this is why it was dubbed "sacrilegious." This war continued for 9 years with a considerable loss of life and varying fortunes. This is referred to by historians as Ḥarb al-Fijār or the "Sacrilegious War." Muḥammed was 14 or 15 years old when he was obligated to take part twice to help his uncle Zubayr. His height was average, and so was his strength, yet he had a marked aptitude for archery and gave every promise of being an excellent bowman like his great ancestors Abraham and Ishmael. A powerful wartime asset of his lay in the strength of his eyesight: he was reputed to be able to count no less than twelve of the stars of the constellation of the Pleiades.

The lewd scenes, drunken affrays and the horrors of the war must have created a deep impression on the sensitive mind of young Muḥammed whose heart bled as he witnessed the detestation that war had brought and for those who fell victim to it. Quraish were ultimately victorious. A league was formed, on the suggestion of Zubayr, Muḥammed's uncle, to prevent disturbances of the peace, to help the victims of oppression, and to protect travellers. It was founded at the house of ʿAbdullāh ibn Juʿdān. Muḥammed took a very active interest in

the functioning of this league which came into being as a result of a settlement known as Ḥilf al-Fuḍūl between Banū Hāshim, Banū Taym, Banū Asad, Banū Zuhrah and Banū Muṭṭalib.

He, despite his young age, diligently worked to improve people's morals and ethics and to cultivate in their hearts the fear of the Almighty God. At the age of twenty, Muḥammed proposed certain measures to contain if not end the violence and the injustice of the time. At this instance, Zubayr, the oldest surviving sons of ʿAbdul-Muṭṭalib, formed a league whose members would explain to the main tribes comprising Quraish to bind themselves by an oath to secure justice to the helpless. The Hāshimites, the Banū Zohra, and the Banū Ṭaym took part in the league and swore that they would stand up as the champions of the injured and would see that injustices did not remain unpunished and that the claims of the oppressed were fully satisfied. This oath is known as "Ḥilf al-Fuḍūl," League of the Virtuous. It proved its usefulness both in preventing violence and as a means to enforce restitution. In his later years, Muḥammed expressed his pleasure at having taken the initiative in that league which was formed at the house of ʿAbdullāh ibn Jodʿān. It continued to function for half a century following the inception of Islam.

MUḤAMMED MARRIES KHADĪJA (595 A.D.)

Now, Muḥammed was old enough to go with the trade caravans. But Abū Ṭālib's financial position had become very weak because of the expenses of *rifāda* and *siqāya*, and it was no longer possible for him to equip Muḥammed with merchandise on his own. He, therefore, advised him to act as agent for a noble lady, Khadīja bint Khuwaylid, who was the wealthiest person in Quraish.

Her genealogy joins with that of the Prophet at Quṣayy. She was Khadīja daughter of Khuwaylid ibn Asad ibn ʿAbdul-ʿUzza ibn Quṣayy. She, hence, was a distant cousin of Muḥammed.

The reputation which Muḥammed enjoyed for his honesty and integrity led Khadīja to willingly entrust her mercantile goods to him for sale in Syria. She sent him word through his friend Khazīmah ibn Ḥākim, a relative of hers, offering him twice the commission she used to pay her agents to trade on her behalf. Muḥammed, with the consent of his uncle Abū Ṭālib, accepted her offer.

Most references consulted for this book make a casual mention of Khadīja. This probably reflects a male chauvinistic attitude which does a great deal of injustice to this great lady, the mother of the faithful

whose wealth contributed so much to the dissemination of Islam. It is not out of place at all that we should learn a little bit more about this great lady.

If you wish to research the life of this great lady, the best references are: al-Sayyūti's *Tārīkh al Khulafā,* Abul-Faraj al-Iṣfahāni's *Aghāni,* Ibn Hishām's *Seera,* Muḥammed ibn Isḥāq's *Seerat Rasool-Allāh,* and *Tārīkh al-rusul wal mulūk* by Abū Jaᶜfar Muḥammed ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabari (839-923 A.D.). Of all these books, only al-Tabari's *Tārīkh* is being translated (by more than one translator and in several volumes) into English. One publisher of Ṭabari's English *Tārīkh* is the press of the State University of New York (SUNY).

"Islam did not rise except through ᶜAli's sword and Khadīja's wealth," a saying goes. Khadīja al-Kubra daughter of Khuwaylid ibn (son of) Asad ibn ᶜAbdul-ᶜUzza ibn Qusayy belonged to the clan of Banū Hāshim of the tribe of Banū Asad. According to some historians, Quraish's real name was Fahr, and he was son of Mālik son of Maḍar son of Kinānah son of Khuzāimah son of Mudrikah son of Ilyās son of Maẓar son of Nazār son of Maᶜād son of Adnān son of Ismaᶜeel (Ishamel) son of Ibrāhīm (Abraham) son of Sam son of Noah, peace and blessings of Allāh be upon the prophets from among his ancestors. According to a number of sources, Khadīja was born in 565 A.D. and died in 620 A.D. at the age of 55, but some historians say that she died ten years later. Khadīja's mother, who, according to some sources, died around 575 A.D., was Fāṭima daughter of Zā'ida ibn al-Asam of Banū ᶜĀmir ibn Ghālib, also a distant relative of Prophet Muḥammed. Khadīja's father, who died around 585 A.D., belonged to the ᶜAbd al-ᶜUzza clan of the tribe of Quraish and, like many other Quraishis, was a merchant, a successful businessman whose vast wealth and business talents were inherited by Khadīja and whom the latter succeeded in faring with the family's vast wealth. It is said that when Quraish's trade caravans gathered to embark upon their lengthy and arduous journey either to Syria during the summer or to Yemen during the winter, Khadīja's caravan equalled the caravans of all other traders of Quraish put together.

Although the society in which Khadīja was born was terribly male chauvinistic, Khadīja earned two titles: *Ameerat-Quraish,* Princess of Quraish, and *al-Ṭāhira,* the Pure One, due to her impeccable personality and virtuous character, not to mention her honourable descent. She used to feed and clothe the poor, assist her relatives financially, and even provide for the marriage of those of her kin who could not otherwise

have had means to marry.

By 585 A.D., Khadīja was left an orphan. Despite that, and after having married twice—and twice lost her husband to the ravaging wars with which Arabia was afflicted—, she had no mind to marry a third time though she was sought for marriage by many honourable and highly respected men of the Arabian peninsula throughout which she was quite famous due to her business dealings. She simply hated the thought of being widowed for a third time. Her first husband was Abū (father of) Hālah Hind ibn Zarʿah who belonged to Banū ʿAdiyy, and the second was Ateeq ibn ʿĀʾith. Both men belonged to Banū Makhzūm. By her first husband, she gave birth to a son who was named after his father Hind and who came to be one of the greatest *sahābis* of the Prophet. He participated in both battles of Badr and Uhud, and he is also famous for describing the Prophet's physique; he was martyred during the Battle of the Camel in which he fought on the side of Imām ʿAli ibn Abū Ṭālib, although some historians say that he died in Basra. All biography accounts describe Hind as an outspoken orator, a man of righteousness and generosity, and one who took extreme caution while quoting the Messenger of Allāh. Besides him, Khadīja gave birth by Abū Hālah to two other sons: al-Ṭāhir, and, of course, Hālah, who is not very well known to historians despite the fact that his father is nicknamed after him.

Who were Khadīja's children by her second husband? This is another controversy that revolves round the other daughters or step-daughters of the Prophet besides Fatima. These daughters, chronologically arranged, are: Zainab, Ruqayya, and Umm Kulthoom. Some historians say that these were Khadīja's daughters by her second husband, whereas others insist they were her daughters by Muḥammed. The first view is held by Sayyid Safdar Husayn in his book *The Early History of Islam* wherein he bases his conclusion on the contents of al-Sayyūṭi's famous work *Tārīkh al-khulafā wal mulūk* (history of the caliphs and the kings). Here is a brief account of Khadīja's daughters:

Zainab, their oldest, was born before the prophetic mission and was married to Abul-ʿAs ibn al-Rabeeʿ. She had accepted Islam before her husband did and participated in the migration from Mecca to Medīna. She died early in 8 A.H./629 A.D. and was buried in Jannatul Baqeeʿ where her grave can still be seen defying the passage of time. Ruqayya and Umm Kulthoom married two of Abū Lahab's sons. Abū Lahab, one of the Prophet's uncles, stubbornly and openly rejected his nephew's preaching;

therefore, he was condemned in the Mecci Chapter 111 of the Holy Qur'ān, a chapter named after him. Having come to know about such a condemnation, he became furious and said to his sons, "There shall be no kinship between you and me unless you part with these daughters of Muḥammed," whereupon they divorced them instantly. Ruqayya married the third caliph ᶜOthmān ibn ᶜAffān and migrated with him to Ethiopia in 615 A.D., five years after the inception of the prophetic mission, accompanied by no more than nine others. That was the first of two such migrations. After coming back home, she died in Medīna in 2 A.H./623 A.D. and was buried at Jannatul Baqeeᶜ. ᶜOthman then married her sister Umm Kulthoom in Rabiᶜ al-Awwal of the next (third) Hijri year. Umm Kulthoom lived with her husband for about six years before dying in 9 A.H./630 A.D., leaving no children.

One particular quality in Khadīja was quite interesting, probably more so than any of her other qualities mentioned above: she, unlike her people, never believed in nor worshipped idols. There was a very small number of Christians and Jews in Mecca, and a fairly large number of Jews in Medīna. What brought those Jews to Mecca and Medīna? Some of them had migrated from Nejrān, Yemen, after being massacred by a fanatical Christian governor ruling on behalf of the Ethiopian Negus. The date of the massacre is 523 A.D., and its details are outside the scope of this book. Others had come from Greater Syria (including Jerusalem, Palestine) either escaping the persecution of the Romans or driven by curiosity and the desire to meet a new prophet of God whose advent was predicted in their books. The Holy Qur'ān tells us that Jewish scriptures make a reference to Prophet Muḥammed, and here are proofs testifying to this fact not from the Holy Qur'ān but from the Jews themselves:

ᶜAbdullāh ibn Salām, a Jewish rabbi who later on accepted Islam when the Prophet was in Medīna, was asked once by ᶜOmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb," Do you have any reference to Muḥammed in your books?" "Yes, by Allāh," said ᶜAbdullāh, "we can identify him by the description whereby Allāh described him if we see him among you just as one of us identifies his son once he sees him in the company of other children."[1] According to the reference titled *Dalā'il al-Nubuwwah*, Ḥassān ibn Thābit, the renown poet, is quoted by a chain of narrators saying, "By Allāh! I was a young child of 7 or 8, yet I could very well understand

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[1]al-Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 15, p. 180.

whatever I heard. One day I heard a Jew on the summit of a hill shouting as loudly as he could for other Jews to go to him. `Woe unto you,' said they, `what is the matter with you?!' He said, `The star that signals the birth of Ahmed the prophet did, indeed, appear last night!'"[1]

Imām al-Ḥasan, the oldest son of Imām ʿAli ibn Abū Ṭālib, is quoted in a lengthy statement saying,

> A group of Jews came to the Messenger of Allāh. The most knowledgeable person among them asked him about certain things, and he, peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him and his progeny, answered them for him. He, therefore, accepted Islam then took out a white sheet of *riqq* (papyrus) wherein he recorded the statements of the Prophet and said to him, "O Messenger of Allāh! I swear by the One Who sent you a Prophet in truth that I have not copied this except from tablets which Allāh, the most Exalted and the most Sublime, had dictated to Moses son of Amram (ʿImran). I have also read in the Torah so many of your merits that I even doubted them. For forty years, I have been wiping out any reference to you in the Torah, yet whenever I wiped it out, I saw it fixed again therein. I have read in the Torah that nobody can answer these questions (which I have just asked you) except you, and during the time wherein you answer them, Gabriel would be on your right, Michael on your left, and your *waṣi* in front of you." The Messenger of Allāh said, "You have surely said the truth. Here is Gabriel on my right and Michael on my left and my *waṣi* ʿAli ibn Abū Ṭālib in front of me." The Jew believed and proved that his conviction was sound.[2]

Waraqah ibn Nawfal was one of Khadīja's cousins (or one of her uncles). He had embraced Christianity and was a pious priest who believed in the Unity of the Almighty, just as early Christians did, that is, before the concept of the Trinity crept into the Christian faith, widening the theological differences among the believers in Christ. He was one of those who testified to the Prophethood of Muhammed but did not convert to Islam. He reportedly had translated the Bible from Hebrew

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[1]*Ibid.*, pp. 180-181. Also see *Faraj al-Mahmoom*, p. 29.

[2]al-Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 15, p. 181. This text also exists in Vol. 2, p. 9 of *Al-Khisāl*.

into Arabic. His likes could be counted on the fingers of one hand during those days in the entire populous metropolis of Mecca, or Becca, or Ummul-Qura (the mother town), a major commercial center at the crossroads of trade caravans linking Arabia with India, Persia, China, and Byzantium, a city that had its own Red Sea port at Shuᶜayba. Most importantly, Mecca houses the Kaᶜba, the cubic "House of God" which has always been sought for pilgrimage and which used to be circled by naked polytheist "pilgrims" who kept their idols, numbering 360 small and big, male and female, inside it and on its roof-top. Among those idols was one for Abraham and another for Ishmael, each carrying divine arrows in his hands. Hubal, a huge idol in the shape of a man, was the first idol worshipped in Mecca. It was given as a gift by the Moabites of Syria to ᶜAmr ibn Laha of the tribe of Khuzāᶜah, and it was Mecca's chief idol. Two other idols of significance were those of the Lāt, a grey granite image which was the deity of Thaqīf in nearby Tā'if, and the ᶜUzza, also a block of granite about twenty feet high. These were regarded as the wives of the Almighty... Each tribe had its own idol, and the wealthy bought and kept a number of idols at home. The institute of pilgrimage was already there; it simply was not being observed properly, and so was the belief in Allāh Whom the Arabs regarded as their Supreme deity. Besides Paganism, other "religions" in Arabia included star worship and fetishism.

The Jews of Medīna had migrated from Palestine and Yemen and settled there waiting for the coming of a new Prophet from the seed of Abraham in whom they said they intended to believe and to be the foremost in following, something which unfortunately did not materialize; on the contrary, they joined ranks with the Pagans to fight the spread of Islam as the reader will come to know later in this book. Only a handful of them embraced Islam, including one man who was a neighbour of Muḥammed; he lived in the same alley in Mecca where Khadīja's house stood; his wife, also Jewish, used to collect dry thorny bushes from the desert just to throw them in the Prophet's way.

Since Khadīja did not travel with her trade caravans, she had always had to rely on someone else to act as her agent to trade on her behalf and to receive an agreed upon commission in return. In 595 A.D., Khadīja needed an agent to trade in her merchandise going to Syria, and it was then that a number of agents whom she knew before and trusted, as well as some of her own relatives, particularly Abū Ṭālib, suggested to her to employ her distant cousin Muhammed ibn ᶜAbdullāh who, by then, had

earned the honouring titles of *al-Ṣādiq*, the truthful, and *al-Amīn*, the trustworthy. Muḥammed did not have any practical business experience, but he had twice accompanied his uncle Abū Ṭālib on his trade trips and keenly observed how he traded, bartered, bought and sold and conducted business; after all, the people of Quraish were famous for their involvement in trade more than in any other profession. It was not uncommon to hire an agent who did not have a prior experience; so, Khadīja decided to give Muḥammed a chance. He was only 25 years old. Khadīja sent Muḥammed word through Khazīmah ibn Ḥākim, one of her relatives, offering him twice as much commission as she usually offered her agents to trade on her behalf. She also gave him one of her servants, Maysarah, who was young, brilliant, and talented, to assist him and be his bookkeeper. She also trusted Maysarah's account regarding her new employee's conduct, an account which was most glaring, indeed one which encouraged her to abandon her insistence never to marry again.

Before embarking upon his first trip as a businessman representing Khadīja, Muḥammed met with his uncles for last minute briefings and consultations, then he set out on the desert road passing through Wadi al-Qura, Midian, and Diyār Thamūd, places with which he was familiar because of having been there at the age of twelve in the company of his uncle Abū Ṭālib. He continued the lengthy journey till he reached Buṣra (or Bostra) on the highway to Damascus after about a month, about sixty miles to the east of the river Jordan. Bostra was the principal Byzantine fortress east of the Jordan River, a central resort for the grain trade. The city of Busra was also the capital of Ḥawran, one of the southeastern portions of the province of Damascus situated north of the Balqā'. To scholars of classic literature, Ḥawrān is known by its Greek name Auranitis, and it is described in detail by Yaqūt al-Ḥamawi, Abul-Faraj al-Isfahāni, and others. Arab trade caravans used to go there quite often and even beyond it to Damascus and Gaza, and few made it all the way to the Mediterranean shores to unload their precious cargoes of Chinese paper and silk textiles bound for Europe. It was at Buṣra that Muḥammed had met Buḥayrah the monk when he was a child. Buḥayrah had died and was succeeded in the monastery by Nestor.

What items did Muḥammed carry with him to Buṣra, and what items did he buy from there? Meccans were not known to be skilled craftsmen, nor did they excel in any profession besides trade, but young Muḥammed might have carried with him a cargo of hides, raisins, perfumes, dried dates, light weight woven items, probably silver bars, and most likely

some herbs. He bought what he was instructed by his employer to buy: these items may have included manufactured goods, clothes, a few luxury items to sell to wealthy Meccans, and maybe some household goods. Gold and silver currency accepted in Mecca included Roman, Persian, and Indian coins, for Arabs during those times, including those who were much more sophisticated than the ones among whom Muḥammed grew up such as the Arabs of the southern part of Arabia (Yemen, Hadramout, etc.), did not have a currency of their own; so, barter was more common than cash. The first Arab Islamic currency, by the way, was struck in Damascus by the Umayyad ruler ʿAbd al-Mālik ibn Marwān (697-698 A.D.) in 78 A.H./697 A.D., 36 years after the establishment of the Umayyad dynasty (661-750).

The time Muḥammed stayed in Busra was no more than a couple of months during which he met many Christians and Jews and noticed the theological differences among the major Christian sects that led to the disassociation of the Copts, the Syrian (Chaldean) Nestorian, and the Armenian Christians from the main churches of Antioch (Antakiya), Rome, and Egyptian Alexandria. Such dissensions and differences of theological viewpoints provided Muḥammed with plenty of food for thought; he contemplated upon them a great deal.

There is another testimonial to the cloud that shaded young Muḥammed; it comes from the holy and pure offspring of Muḥammed. Imām al-Ḥasan al-ʿAskari[1] has narrated saying that he once asked his father (Imām) ʿAli ibn Muḥammed, peace be upon them, about the miracles performed by the Messenger of Allāh, peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him and his progeny, in Medīna and Mecca. Here is what Imām al-ʿAskari said to his son:

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[1]One of the offspring of Prophet Muḥammed, Abū Muḥammed Imām Ḥasan al-ʿAskari was the son of Imām ʿAli al-Naqi and the father of the Awaited Imām, the Mehdi, peace and blessings of the Almighty be upon all of them. He was born in Medīna on Rabiʿ II 10, 232 A.H./December 4, 846 A.D. and was martyred in Samarrā, Iraq, on Rabiʿ I 8, 260 A.H./January 1, 874 A.D. poisoned by the ʿAbbāside ruler al-Muʿtamid. If the reader wishes to learn more about him and about the other Infallible Fourteen, I strongly recommend the book titled *Biographies of Leaders of Islam* by his eminence Sayyed ʿAli Naqi Naqwi which I edited. It is available from Imām Hussain Foundation, P.O. Box 25-114, Beirut, Lebanon.

O son! As for the cloud (that used to shade the Prophet), when the Messenger of Allāh travelled to Syria to trade on behalf of Khadīja daughter of Khuwaylid, and the distance from Mecca to Jerusalem was one month on foot, they used to suffer from the extreme heat of the sun in those open plains. The wind would blow at them and would pour on them sands and dust. During those times, Allāh Almighty used to send a cloud to His Messenger in order to shade him. It would stop whenever he stopped and resume whenever he did. If he advanced, it would advance, and if he lagged behind, it would do the same. If he went to the right, it, too, would go to the right, and if he went to the left, it would go there, too. It used to protect him from the heat of the sun from above. The wind that used to stir the sands and the dust would do so in the faces of the Quraishites and their camels, but when it came close to Muḥammed, it would become calm and quiet, and it would not carry neither sands nor dust. Instead, an easy and cool breeze would blow on him, so much so that Quraish used to say, "Muhammed's company is better than a tent!" They used to seek refuge with him and try to earn his friendship. Comfort was theirs whenever they were near him even when the cloud was actually intended only for him. When strangers intermingled with their (the Quraishites") caravans, the cloud would distance itself from them. They would then inquire, "Whom is this cloud serving?! Whoever it serves is surely honoured and revered." The cloud would then address those in the caravan saying, "Look at the cloud, and you will see that it is written on it: `There is no god except Allāh, Muḥammed is the Messenger of Allāh; I support him through ʿAli, the master of *wasis*, and distinguished him through his Progeny who are loyal to him, and to ʿAli, and to their friends, who are the enemies of his opponents." All this would be readable and comprehensible to those who knew and were skilled in reading and writing as well as to those who did not.[1]

While in Syria, a monk named Nestor observed some signs of Prophethood about Muḥammed, so he asked Maysarah, "Is there a glow, a slight redness, around his eyes that never parts with him?" Nestor asked Maysarah. When the latter answered in the affirmative, Nestor said, "He most surely is the very last Prophet; congratulations to whoever believes

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[1]al-Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 17, pp. 307-311. The pages following these ones narrate numerous other miracles of the Prophet.

in him." And Nestor very much desired to see Muḥammed. The rest of the story is narrated by ʿAbbās, Muḥammed's uncle, who quotes ʿAbdul-Muṭṭalib quoting Abū Ṭālib saying,

> We once took Muḥammed on a (business) trip to Syria. When we were in the marketplace, a high priest named Nestor came and sat in front of him, looking at him without saying anything. He kept doing so for three consecutive days. He then could no longer do so without going to him and coming behind him, as if he was requesting him for something. I said to him, "O monk! Do you want anything from him?" "Yes," Nestor said, "I do want something from him. What is his name?" "Muḥammed son of ʿAbdullāh," said I. By Allāh, his face changed colour, then he said, "Could you please ask him to agree to uncover his back so that I may look at it?" Muḥammed drew his garment from his back, and when Nestor saw the mark of Prophethood on it, he kept kissing him and crying. Then he said, "O man! Hurry and take this child back to the place where he was born, for if you only know how many his enemies in our land are, you will not even think much of the reason because of which you came here." Nestor kept looking after him every day, carrying food for him. When we departed from Syria, Nestor brought Muḥammed a shirt and said to him, "Could you please wear this shirt so that you may remember me thereby?" But Muḥammed did not accept it, and I noticed how he did not like the idea, so I took the shirt myself so that his feelings would not be hurt and said to him, "I shall wear it." Then I hurried and took Muḥammed back to Mecca. By Allāh, not a single woman or man, young or old, stayed without eagerly welcoming him back with the exception of Abū Jahl, may Allāh curse him, for he then had drunk so much wine that he was completely drunk."[1]

Here is another testimonial to that incident:

> Bakr ibn ʿAbdullāh al-Ashjāʿi quotes his forefathers saying that in the same year when the Messenger of Allāh went to Syria, ʿAbd Manāt ibn Kinānah, Nawfal ibn Muʿāwiyah ibn ʿOrwah ibn Sakhr ibn Nuʿmān ibn ʿAdiyy also went out as businessmen. When Abū al-Muwayhib, the monk, met them, he asked them, "Who are you?" "Merchants from the people of the sanctuary, from Quraish." "From which (clan of) Quraish are you?" He asked them again. They answered his question, whereupon he asked them, "Is there anyone else from Quraish in your company?"

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[1] *Ibid.*, Vol. 15, pp. 193-198.

They said, "Yes, a young man from Banū Hāshim named Muḥammed." Abū al-Muwayhib then said, "He, by Allāh, is the one I am seeking!" They said to him, "By Allāh, there is none among the Quraishites more obscure than him, and they refer to him only as the orphan of Quraish. He is hired by one of our women named Khadīja; so, what do you want with him?" He kept moving his head as he said, "He is the one! He is the one!" Then he requested them to take him to meet Muḥammed. "We left him (trading) at Bostra's market." Just as they were talking thus, the Messenger of Allāh came. The monk immediately said, "This is the one!" He spent an hour in a dialogue talking to him, then he kissed his forehead and took out something from his pocket which we could not tell what it was. He kept asking Muḥammed to take it from him as a gift, and Muḥammed kept refusing. Once he left him, he said to us, "Do you accept my advice? This, by Allāh, is the last Prophet! By Allāh, he will soon invite people to testify that: *La ilaha illa Allāh, Muḥammedun Rasūl-Allāh*; so, when he does so, you should follow him." Then he asked us, "Does his uncle Abū Tālib have a son named ᶜAli?" We answered him by saying, "No." "He must have either been born, or he will be born this year[1]. He will be the first to believe in him. We know him, and we have a description of him as the *waṣi* just as we have Muḥammed described as the Prophet. He shall be the master and the scholars of the Arabs among whom he will be like Thul-Qarnain. He will be the most prominent among all creation on the Day of Judgment next only to the prophets. Angels call him "the victorious hero;" wherever he goes, victory shall go with him. By Allāh, he is more known in the heavens than the shining sun."[2]

Muḥammed also visited Aleppo and Damascus. One of his observations when he was in Syria was the historical fact that a feud was brewing between the Persian and Roman empires, each vying for hegemony over Arabia's fertile crescent. Indeed, such an observation was quite accurate, for after only a few years, a war broke out between the then mightiest nations on earth that ended with the Romans losing it, as the Holy Qur'ān tells us in Chapter 30 (The Romans), which was revealed in 7 A.H./615-16 A.D., only a few months after the fall of Jerusalem to the Persians, just to win in a successive one. Only four years prior to that date, the Persians had scored a sweeping victory over the Christians,

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[1]Actually, ᶜAli was born in 600 A.D., five years later.

[2]*Ibid.*, pp. 202-204.

spreading their control over Aleppo, Antioch, and even Damascus. Muḥammed was concerned about either of these two empires extending its control over the land inhabited by Muḥammed's fiercely independent Pagan people. The loss of Jerusalem, birthplace of Christ Jesus son of Mary, was a heavy blow to the prestige of Christianity. Most Persians were then following Zoroastrianism, a creed introduced in the 6th century before Christ by Zoroaster (628-551 B.C.), also known as Zarathustra, whose adherents are described as worshippers of the "pyre," the holy fire. "Persia," hence, meant "the land of the worshippers of the pyre, the sacred fire." Modern day Iran used to be known as "Aryana," land of the Aryan nations and tribes. Not only Iranians, but also Kurds, and even Germans, prided in being Aryans who are Caucasian Nordics or speakers of an Indo-European dialect. Some Persians had converted to Christianity as we know from Salmān al-Fārisi who was one such adherent till he fell in captivity, sold in Mecca and freed to be one of the most renown and cherished *ṣaḥābis* and narrators of *ḥadīth* in Islamic history, so much so that the Prophet of Islam said, "Salmān is one of us, we Ahl al-Bayt (People of the Household of Prophethood)."

The war referred to above was between the then Byzantine (Eastern Roman) emperor Heraclius (575 - 641 A.D.) and the Persian king Khusrau (Khosrow) Parwiz (Parviz) or Chosroes II (d. 628 A.D.). It was one of many wars in which those mighty nations were embroiled and which continued for many centuries. Yet the hands of Divine Providence were already busy paving the path for Islam: the collision between both empires paved the way for the ultimate destruction of the ancient Persian empire and in Islam setting root in that important part of the world. Moreover, Muḥammed's (and, naturally, Khadīja's) offspring came to marry ladies who were born and raised at Persian as well as Roman palaces. Imām Ḥusain ibn ʿAli ibn Abū Ṭālib, Muḥammed's grandson and our Third Holy Imām, married the daughter of the last Persian emperor Jazdagird (Yazdegerd) III son of Shahryar and grandson of this same Khusrau II. Jazdagerd ruled Persia from 632-651 A.D. and lost the Battle of Qadisiyyah to the Muslim forces in 636, thus ending the rule of the Sassanians. Having been defeated, he fled for Media in northwestern Iran, homeland of Persian Mede tribesmen, and from there to Merv, an ancient Central Asian city near modern day Mary in Turkmenistan (until very recently one of the republics of the Soviet Union), where he was killed by a miller.

The profits Khadīja reaped from that trip were twice as much as she

had anticipated. Maysarah was more fascinated by Muhammed than by anything related to the trip. Muhammed, on the other hand, brought back his impressions about what he had seen and heard, impressions which he related to his employer. You see, those trade caravans were the only links contemporary Arabs had with their outside world: they brought them the news of what was going on beyond their drought-ridden and famine-stricken desert and sand dunes.

Waraqah ibn Nawfal, like Buhayrah, the monk who had met and spoken to young Muhammed, adhered to the Nestorian Christian sect. He heard the accounts about the personality and conduct of young Muhammed from both his cousin Khadīja and her servant Maysarah, an account which caused him to meditate for a good while and think about what he had heard. Raising his head, he said to Khadīja, "Such manners are fit only for the messengers of God. Who knows? Maybe this young man is destined to be one of them." This statement was confirmed a few years later, and Waraqah was the very first man who recognized Muhammed as the Messenger of Allāh immediately after Muhammed received the first revelation at Hira cave.

The trip's measure of success encouraged Khadīja to employ Muhammed again on the winter trip to southern Arabia, i.e. Yemen, the land that introduced the coffee beans to the rest of the world, the land where the renown Ma'rib irrigation dam was engineered, the land of Saba' and the renown Balqees, the Arabian Queen of Sheba (Saba') of Himyar, who married prophet Solomon (Sulayman the wise, peace be upon him), in 975 B.C. (after the completion of the construction of the famous Solomon's Temple[1]), the land of natives skilled in gold, silver and other

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[1]This temple was built by Solomon (Prophet Sulayman) to express his gratitude for what the Almighty had granted him. Solomon had in advance obtained his Lord's permission to erect it. A glimpse of its grandeur is described in the Holy Qur'ān in 27:44: "It was said to her (to Balqees, the Queen of Sheba): Enter the palace; but when she saw it, she deemed it to be a great expanse of water," that is, its marble floors shone like glass, reflecting her image as water does. This temple was later ordered by Solomon to be demolished in its entirety, and the claim of the Jews that the al-Aqsa mosque is built on its very foundations is nothing but a lie. The Jews plot to demolish the al-Aqsa mosque in order to

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metal handicrafts, not to mention their ingenuity in the textile industry and domestic furniture..., and it may even be the land that gave Arabic its written script as we know it which, as some believe, was modelled after written Amheric, then the official language in Ethiopia and its colonies. Yemen, at that time, was being ruled by an Ethiopian regent. This time Khadīja offered Muhammed three times the usual commission. Unfortunately, historians do not tell us much about this second trip except that it was equally profitable to both employer and employee. Some historians do not mention this trip at all.

Khadīja was by then convinced that she had finally found a man who was worthy of her, so much so that she initiated the marriage proposal herself. Muhammed sat to detail all the business transactions in which he became involved on her behalf, but the wealthy and beautiful lady of Quraish was thinking more about her distant cousin than about those transactions. She simply fell in love with Muhammed just as the daughter of the Arabian prophet Shuʿayb had fallen in love with then fugitive prophet Moses. Muhammed was of medium stature, inclined to slimness, with a large head, broad shoulders and the rest of his body perfectly proportioned. His hair and beard were thick and black, not altogether straight but slightly curled. His hair reached midway between the lobes of his ears and shoulders, and his beard was of a length to match. He had a noble breadth of forehead and the ovals of his large eyes were wide, with exceptionally long lashes and extensive brows, slightly arched but not joined. His eyes were said to have been black, but other accounts say that they were brown, or light brown. His nose was aquiline and his mouth was finely shaped. Although he let his beard grow, he never allowed the hair of his moustache to protrude over his upper lip. His skin was white but tanned by the sun. And there was a light on his face, a glow, the same light that had shone from his father, but it was more,

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(...continued)
rebuild Solomon's Temple. They intend to do so at the right time, when they realize that the Muslims of the world, because of the weakness and hypocrisy of most of their rulers, are too weak to stand in their way, and when the "Christian" West will be ready, more so than now, to help them achieve their objectives. The West has been supporting the Jews against the Muslims, and it seems that there will be no reversal to this trend... *We are Allāh's, and to Him shall we return...*

much more powerful, and it was especially apparent on his broad forehead and in his eyes which were remarkably luminous.

By the time he was gone, Khadīja sought the advice of a friend of hers named Nufaysa daughter of Umayyah. The latter offered to approach him on her behalf and, if possible, arrange a marriage between them. Nufaysa came to Muḥammed and asked him why he had not married yet. "I have no means to marry," he answered. "But if you were given the means," she said, "and if you were bidden to an alliance where there is beauty and wealth and nobility and abundance, would you not then consent?" "Who is she?!" he excitedly inquired. "Khadīja," said Nufaysa. "And how could such a marriage be mine?!" he asked. "Leave that to me!" was her answer. "For my part," he said, "I am willing." Nufaysa returned with these glad tidings to Khadīja who then sent word to Muḥammed asking him to come to her. When he came, she said to him:

> O son of my uncle! I love you for your kinship with me, and for that you are ever in the center, not being a partisan among the people for this or for that. And I love you for your trustworthiness, and for the beauty of your character and the truth of your speech.

Then she offered herself in marriage to him, and they agreed that he should speak to his uncles and she would speak to her uncle ᶜAmr son of Asad, since her father had died. It was Ḥamzah, despite being relatively young, whom the Hashemites delegated to represent them on this marriage occasion, since he was most closely related to them through the clan of Asad; his sister Ṣafiyya had just married Khadīja's brother ᶜAwwām.

It was Abū Ṭālib, Muḥammed's uncle, who delivered the marriage sermon saying,

> All praise is due to Allāh Who has made us the progeny of Ibrāhīm (Abraham), the seed of Ismaᶜeel (Ishmael), the descendants of Maᶜād, the substance of Mudar, and Who made us the custodians of His House and the servants of its sacred precincts, making for us a House sought for pilgrimage and a shrine of security, and He also gave us authority over the people. This nephew of mine Muḥammed cannot be compared with any other man: if you compare his wealth with that of others, you will not find him a man of wealth, for wealth is a vanishing shadow and a fickle thing. Muḥammed is a man whose lineage you all know, and he has sought Khadīja daughter of Khuwaylid for marriage, offering her

such-and-such of the dower of my own wealth.

Nawfal then stood up and said,

> All praise is due to Allāh Who has made us just as you have mentioned and preferred us over those whom you have indicated, for we, indeed, are the masters of Arabs and their leaders, and you all are worthy of this (bond of marriage). The tribe (Quraish) does not deny any of your merits, nor does anyone else dispute your lofty status and prestige. And we, furthermore, wish to be joined to your rope; so, bear witness to my words, O people of Quraish! I have given Khadīja daughter of Khuwaylid in marriage to Muḥammed ibn ʿAbdullāh for the dower of four hundred dinars.

Then Nawfal paused, whereupon Abū Ṭālib said to him, "I wished her uncle had joined you (in making a statement)." Hearing that, Khadīja's uncle stood up and said, "Bear witness, O men of Quraish, that I have given Khadīja daughter of Khuwaylid in marriage to Muḥammed ibn ʿAbdullāh."

All this took place in the same year: 595 A.D. These details and more are recorded in Ibn Hishām's *Seera*. After his marriage, Muḥammed moved from his uncle's house to live with his wife in her house which stood at the smiths" market, an alley branching out of metropolitan Mecca's long main bazaar, behind the *masʿa*, the place where the pilgrims perform the seven circles during the *hajj* or *ʿumra*. In that house Fāṭima was born and the revelation descended upon the Messenger of Allāh many times. This house, as well as the one in which the Prophet of Islam was born (which stood approximately 50 meters northwards), were both demolished by the ignorant and fanatical Wahhabi rulers of Saudi Arabia in 1413 A.H./1993 A.D. and turned into public bathrooms... The grave sites of many family members and companions of the Prophet had already been demolished by the same Wahhabis in 1343 A.H./1924 A.D. against the wish and despite the denunciation of the adherents of all other Muslim sects and schools of thought world-wide.

The marriage was a very happy one, and it produced a lady who was one of the four perfect women in all the history of mankind: Fatima daughter of Muḥammed. Before her, Qāsim and ʿAbdullāh were born, but they both died at infancy.

By the time Khadīja got married, she was quite a wealthy lady, so wealthy that she felt no need to keep trading and increasing her wealth;

instead, she decided to retire and enjoy a comfortable life with her husband who, on his part, preferred an ascetic life to that of money making.

The Messenger of Allāh had no desire to accumulate wealth; that was not the purpose for which he, peace and blessings of Allāh upon him and his progeny, was created. He was created to be the savior of mankind from the darkness of ignorance, idol worship, polytheism, misery, poverty, injustice, oppression, and immorality. He very much loved to meditate, though his meditation deepened his grief at seeing his society sunk so low in immorality, lawlessness, and the absence of any sort of protection for those who were weak and oppressed. Khadīja's period of happiness lasted no more than 15 years after which her husband started his mission to invite people to the Oneness of God, to equality between men and women, and to an end to the evils of the day.

ᶜALI IS BORN (600 A.D.)

Having seen how Muḥammed lost both his sons Qāsim and ᶜAbdullāh, Fāṭima bint Asad, Abū Ṭālib's wife who raised Muḥammed for a number of years and who was pregnant when Muḥammed's second son ᶜAbdullāh died, felt very sorry for Muḥammed and told him that her child, be it male or female, would be his. Fāṭima bint Asad felt how her unborn baby compelled her to stand up in order to express her respect for Muḥammed whenever he came to visit them and never allowed her to turn her face from his as long as he was there. Ordinarily, it should have been the other way around because Fāṭima was Muḥammed's aunt and senior in age; he, not she, would have been the one to stand up for her... Her offer proved to be a divine decree because when she delivered, the newborn was none other than ᶜAli who was destined to be Muḥammed's right hand.

Ali was born in 600 A.D. inside the precincts of the Kaᶜba, the holiest of holy places, where no other human being besides him was ever born. Muḥammed was then thirty years old. ᶜAli first opened his eyes on the sacred face of Muḥammed who lovingly took him in his arms and gave him his first bath. That was a prediction that this same baby would give Muḥammed his very last bath, his funeral bath, one's favour reciprocated by the other. For several days after his birth, ᶜAli accepted no milk but the moisture of Muḥammed's tongue which he sucked and whereby he was nourished. ᶜAli felt comfortable in Muḥammed's lap and slept often by his side in the same bed, enjoying the warmth of his

cousin's body and inhaling the sacred fragrance of his breath. When he grew up, ʿAli followed Muḥammed like his shadow and on many occasions offered his life as a sacrifice for his own.

RECONSTRUCTION OF THE KAʿBA (605 A.D.)

Five years later, that is, in about 605 A.D., when the Prophet was 35 years old, a flood swept Mecca and the building structure of the Kaʿba was badly damaged. Quraish decided to rebuild it. Due to the fact that the Kaʿba did not have a roof, some thieves had clambered over the walls and stolen some of its precious relics which were, however, recovered. It was decided to raise the walls to a greater height (in order to make them inaccessible to thieves) and to cover the Kaʿba with a roof. Eastern Roman (Byzantine) emperor Phocas, who ruled Byzantium from 602 - 610 A.D. (when he was succeeded by his son Heraclius whom Prophet Muḥammed invited in 628 A.D. to accept Islam as the reader will come to know later in this book), had commissioned a Greek ship to carry construction materials and building equipment to Ethiopia to build a church, but the ship was wrecked on the shores of the Red Sea near Shuʿayba, Mecca's ancient harbour. Its captain, Baqum, however, was among the survivors. Al-Walīd ibn al-Mughīrah purchased the timber of the wrecked ship and commissioned Baqum, who was also a skilled architect, to assist in the reconstruction of the Kaʿba.

When the walls reached a certain height, a dispute arose between various clans as to whom should the honour of placing the Black Stone (al-Ḥajar al-Aswad) in its place go. This dispute threatened to assume serious proportions. At last, Abū Umayyah, who belonged to Banū Makhzūm, and who was brother of the above-mentioned al-Walīd, father of the renown military commander Khālid ibn al-Walīd, being the oldest, suggested that anyone who happened to enter the sacred precincts of the Kaʿba through the gate of Banū Shaybah should be chosen to arbitrate in the dispute or he himself would place the Black Stone.

As luck would have it, that first person was none but Muḥammed. Quraish were pleased with the turn of the events because the Prophet was well-recognized as the Truthful and Trustworthy.

Muḥammed took two steps in order to solve the dispute:

First, he divided the numerous clans comprising Quraish into four bodies. These were: 1) Banū ʿAbd Munāf, including the descendants of Hāshim, ʿAbd Shams, and Banū Zuhra; 2) Banū Asad and ʿAbd al-Dār; 3) Banū Makhzūm and Banū Taym; and 4) Banū Sahm, ʿAdi and ʿAmr

ibn Lu'ay. **Second**, he put his own mantle on the ground and put the Black Stone on it, telling the disputing clans to send one representative each to hold the corners of the mantle and to raise it. When the mantle was raised to the required level, he took hold of the Stone and put it in its place. This was a judgement which settled the dispute to the satisfaction of all parties concerned.

At this time, he had occasion to enter into several business partnerships and always acted with great integrity in his dealings with his business partners. ʿAbdullāh, son of Abū Ḥamzah, narrates that he had entered into a transaction with Muḥammed. Its details had yet to be finalized when he had suddenly to leave promising that he would return soon. After three days, when he went again to the spot, he found Muḥammed waiting for him. Muḥammed did not remonstrate with him. He just said that he had been there for all those three days waiting for him. Saib and Qays, who also had business transactions with him, testify to his exemplary dealings. People were very impressed by his uprightness and integrity, by the purity of his life, his unflinching fidelity, and his strict sense of duty.

ARABIA'S *JĀHILIYYA*

It was an age of ignorance (*Ayyamul-Jaāiliyyah*) in which, generally speaking, moral rectitude and the spiritual code had long been forgotten. The tenets of the Divine religion had been replaced by superstitious rites and dogmas.

Only a few Quraishites (the forefathers of the Prophet) and a handful of others remained followers of the religion of Ibrāhīm, but they were an exception and were not able to exert any influence on others who were deeply submerged in pagan rites and beliefs.

There were those who did not believe in God at all and thought that life was just a natural phenomenon. It is about these people that the Qur'ān says:

> *And they say: There is nothing but our life of this world; we live and die and nothing but time annihilates us.*
> (Qur'ān, 45:24)

Some believed in God but not in the Day of Resurrection and reward and punishment. It is against their belief that the Qur'ān says:

Say: He will give life to them Who brought them into existence at first.
(Qur'ān, 36:79)

While a few believed in God as well as in the reward and punishment in the life hereafter, they did not believe in Prophethood. It is about them that the Qur'ān has said:

And they say: What sort of prophet is he that eats and goes about in the market?
(Qur'ān, 25:7)

But, by and large, the Arabs were idolaters. They did not, however, recognize idols as God but only as intermediaries to God. As the Qur'ān has pointed out, they said:

We do not worship them save so that they may bring us nearer to Allāh.
(Qur'ān, 39:3)

Some tribes worshipped the sun, others the moon. But the great majority, while indulging in idolatry, believed that there was a Supreme Being, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, Whom they called "Allāh." The Qur'ān says:

And if you ask them: Who has created the heavens and the earth and made the sun and the moon subservient?, they will cry out 'Allāh'. Then whither are they going?!
(Qur'ān, 29:61)

And when they sail in boats, they sincerely solicit the aid of Allāh, but when He brings them safely to the land, behold! They ascribe others (to Him).
(Qur'ān, 29:65)

Christianity and Judaism, in the hands of their then followers in Arabia, had lost their appeal. As Sir William Muir writes, "Christianity had now and then feebly rippled the surface of Arabia and the sterner influences of Judaism had been occasionally visible in a deeper and more troubled current, but the tide of indigenous idolatry and superstition, setting out from every quarter with an unbroken and unebbing surge towards the Kaʿba, gave ample evidence that the faith and worship of the

Ka'ba held the Arab mind in thraldom, vigorous and undisputed. After five centuries of Christian evangelization, it could only claim a sprinkling of disciples among the tribes, and as a converting agent was no longer operative."

MUḤAMMED RECEIVES REVELATION (610 A.D.)

Muḥammed was forty years old when the first verses of the Holy Qur'ān were revealed to him. They were the first verses of Sūrat al-'Alaq (chapter 96), and they were revealed during the month of Ramadan 13 years before the Hijra, at the cave of Ḥira, his favourite place for isolation and meditation, a place which is now visited by many pilgrims. Muḥammed went back home heavy-hearted, profoundly perplexed, deeply impressed by the sight of arch-angel Gabriel and by the depth of meaning implied in these beautiful words:

> ***In the Name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful***
> *Proclaim (or read)! In the Name of your Lord and Cherisher Who created (everything). (He) created man of a (mere) clot of congealed blood. Proclaim! And your Lord is the Most Bountiful Who taught (the use of) the pen, Who taught man that which he knew not...*
> (Qur'ān, 96:1-5)

He felt feverish, so he asked to be wrapped and, once he felt better, he narrated what he had seen and heard to his faithful and supportive wife. "By Allāh," Khadīja said, "Allāh shall never subject you to any indignity..., for you always maintain your ties with those of your kin, and you are always generous in giving; you are diligent, and you seek what others regard as unattainable; you cool the eyes of your guest, and you lend your support to those who seek justice and redress. Stay firm, O cousin, for by Allāh I know that He will not deal with you except most beautifully, and I testify that you are the awaited Prophet in this nation, and your time, if Allāh wills, has come." After a short while, Khadīja told her husband about the prediction of the Syrian monk Buḥayrah regarding Muḥammed's Prophethood, and about her dialogue with her servant Maysarah who had informed her of what Buḥayrah had said.

It was only natural for Khadīja to receive her share of the harassment meted to him by none other than those who, not long ago, used to call him *al-Ṣādiq, al-Amīn*. Khadīja did not hesitate at all to embrace Islam.

Yaḥya ibn 'Afeef is quoted saying that he once came, during the period of *jāhiliyya* (before the advent of Islam), to Mecca to be hosted by

al-ᶜAbbās ibn ᶜAbdul-Muṭṭalib, one of the Prophet's uncles mentioned above. "When the sun started rising," says he, "I saw a man who came out of a place not far from us, faced the Kaᶜba and started performing his prayers. He hardly started before being joined by a young boy who stood on his right side, then by a woman who stood behind them. When he bowed down, the young boy and the woman bowed, and when he stood up straight, they, too, did likewise. When he prostrated, they, too, prostrated." Then he expressed his amazement at that, saying to al-ᶜAbbās: "This is quite strange, O ᶜAbbās!" "Is it, really?" retorted al-ᶜAbbās. "Do you know who he is?" al-ᶜAbbās asked his guest who answered in the negative. "He is Muḥammed ibn ᶜAbdullāh, my nephew. Do you know who the young boy is?" asked he again. "No, indeed," answered the guest. "He is ᶜAli son of Abū Ṭālib. Do you know who the woman is?" The answer came again in the negative, to which al-ᶜAbbās said, "She is Khadīja daughter of Khuwaylid, my nephew's wife." This incident is included in the books of both Imām Aḥmed and al-Tirmithi, each detailing it in his own *Ṣaḥīḥ*. And she bore patiently in the face of persecution to which her revered husband and his small band of believers were exposed at the hands of the polytheists and aristocrats of Quraish, sacrificing her vast wealth to promote Islam, seeking Allāh's Pleasure.

Among Khadīja's merits was her being one of the four most perfect of all women of mankind, the other three being: Fāṭima daughter of Muḥammed, Maryam bint ᶜImrān (Mary daughter of Amram), mother of Christ and niece of prophet Zakariyya, and ᶜAsiya daughter of Muzāḥim, wife of Pharaoh. Prophet Zakariyya, as the reader knows, was the father of Yahya (John the Baptist), the latter being only a few months older than prophet Jesus. The Prophet of Islam used to talk about Khadīja quite often after her demise, so much so that his youngest wife, ᶜĀyisha daughter of Abū Bakr, felt extremely jealous and said to him once, "... But she was only an old woman with red eyes, and Allāh has compensated you with a better and younger wife (meaning herself)." This caused him to be very annoyed, and he said, "No, indeed; He has not compensated me with anyone better than her. She believed in me when all others disbelieved; she held me truthful when others called me a liar; she sheltered me when others abandoned me; she comforted me when others shunned me; and Allāh granted me children by her while depriving me of children by other women." Imām Ahmed ibn Hanbal, Abū Hatim, al-Dulābi, al-Ṭabari, and many others, all quote ᶜĀyisha saying: "One day, the Messenger of Allāh mentioned Khadīja affectionately, so I was

carried away by jealousy and said about her what I should *not* have said. It was then that his face changed colour in a way I never saw it change except when he was receiving revelation, so I realized what I had done and felt overwhelmed by regret to the extent that I could not help uttering these words: "O Lord! If You remove the anger of Your Messenger right now, I pledge not to ever speak ill of her as long as I live.' Having seen that, he forgave me and narrated to me some of her merits." Both Muslim and Bukhāri indicate in their respective *sahīh* books that among Khadīja's merits was the fact that the Lord of Dignity ordered Jibrā'īl (Gabriel), peace be upon him, to convey His regards to her. Gabriel said to Muhammed : "O Muhammed! Khadīja is bringing you a bowl of food; when she comes to you, tell her that her Lord greets her, and convey my greeting, too, to her." When he did so, she said: "Allāh is the Peace, and He is the source of all peace, and upon Gabriel be peace."

Khadīja died of an attack of fever on the tenth or eleventh day of the month of Ramadān, ten years after the start of the Prophetic mission (in the year 620 A.D.), 24 years after her marriage with Muhammed, and she was buried at Hajūn in the outskirts of Mecca. The Messenger of Allāh dug her grave and buried her... Funeral prayers (*salāt al janāza*) had not yet been mandated in Islam. It is reported that by the time she died, her entire wealth had already been spent to promote Islam; she left neither a single gold dinar nor a single silver dirham, nor anything more or less...

> *O soul that are at rest! Return to your Lord, well-pleased (with Him), well-pleasing (Him), so enter among My servants, and enter into My garden.*
> (Qur'ān, 89:27-30)

THE DAWN OF PROPHETHOOD (610 A.D.)

It was a man from among themselves who was to lift the Arabs from their slough of ignorance and depravity into the light of faith: devotion to one God.

Because of its geographical position and connection by land and sea routes with the continents of Asia, Africa and Europe, Arabia had been powerfully influenced by the superstitious beliefs and evil ways prevailing in many parts of these continents. But once it forsook disbelief and unbecoming practices, it could, as a result of the same geographical position, easily become the center of enlightenment, radiating guidance and knowledge to the entire world.

When Muhammed was 38 years old, he spent most of his time in

meditation and solitude. The cave of Hira, which overlooks the Ka'ba from a distance of about three miles north of Mecca, was his favourite place. It is there that he used to retire with food and water and spend days and weeks in remembrance of Allāh. Nobody was allowed to go there except Khadīja and 'Ali. He used to spend the whole month of Ramaḍān therein.

The period of waiting had come to a close. His forty years of life had varied experiences, and from the world's point of view, he had developed a maturity of mind and judgement, although in reality he was the embodiment of perfection from the very beginning. He has said: "I was a prophet when Adam was between water and clay." His heart was overflowing with profound compassion for mankind and a pressing urge to eradicate wrong beliefs, social evils, cruelty and injustice.

It was in the month of Ramaḍān of the year of the elephant (610 A.D.), 13 years before the Hijra, that revelation descended upon Muhammed for the first time. This event will always be immortalized in the history of the human species. It changed the history of mankind for all time to come. Nobody has ever influenced the events on our planet more than Muhammed. Nobody ever will. The flow of the Divine message which continued for the next twenty-three years had begun with that date, and the Prophet had arisen to proclaim the Unity of God and the unity of mankind, of the human family, to demolish the edifice of superstition, ignorance, and disbelief, to set up a noble concept of life, and to lead mankind to the light of faith and celestial bliss. Revelation was received in different ways: sometimes the Almighty inspired him to do something or say something, sometimes through visions, sometimes Gabriel came to him in human form and sometimes in his angelic appearance...

THE MISSION COMMENCES (610 A.D.)

The task was stupendous. The Prophet, therefore, started his mission cautiously, confining it initially to his own close relatives and friends. He was met with immediate success. His wife Khadīja testified to his truth as soon as she heard the news of the revelation from God. Then his cousin 'Ali, and his liberated slave and adopted son Zayd ibn Hārithah of Banū 'Uthrah, readily accepted the new faith, Islam, "submission to the Will of God." The fourth was Abū Bakr, and his conversion's story is excerpted here from *Al-Seera al-Halabiyya, Usud al-Ghāba*, and *Tārīkh al-Khamīs*:

Abū Bakr ibn Abū Quḥāfah was thirty-eight years old when he made a trip to Yemen where he met an old and learned sage of the Azd tribe who predicted that a prophet was to appear in the near future in Mecca. Upon his return from the trip, he paid a visit to his friend Muḥammed who invited him to accept his religion, Islam, declaring himself the Prophet. Abū Bakr asked Muḥammed to prove his Prophethood, and Muḥammed at once related to Abū Bakr the prediction which Abū Bakr had heard when he was in Yemen. Muḥammed was not there to witness the incident which involved only Abū Bakr and the sage of the Azd tribe. He was at Mecca during the entire period while Abū Bakr was in Yemen. Abū Bakr accepted Islam.

Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalāni in his book *Al-Iṣābah*, and ʿAbdul Mālik ibn Hishām in his book *As-Sifāh* have written that ʿAli was the first male to accept Islam and pray (offer *ṣalāt*), and that he accepted whatever was revealed to the Messenger by the Lord. At that time, ʿAli was only ten years old and Muḥammed forty. After ʿAli, Zayd ibn Hārithah accepted the Islamic creed and prayed and then Abū Bakr embraced Islam as stated above. The companions of the Prophet, Muḥammed ibn Kaʿb al-Qarzi, Salmān the Persian, Abū Tharr al-Ghifāri, al-Miqdād ibn al-Aswad al-Kindi, Khabbāb ibn ʿArrāt, Abū Saʿeed al-Khudri and Zayd ibn al-Arqam testify that ʿAli was the first to proclaim Islam. These celebrated companions have given ʿAli preference over others.

Justice Ameer ʿAli writes the following in his *Spirit of Islam*:

> It is a noble feature in the history of the Prophet of Arabia, and one which strongly attests the sincerity of his character, the purity of his teachings and the intensity of his faith in God, that his nearest relations, his wife, beloved cousin and intimate friends, were most thoroughly imbued with the truth of his mission and convinced of his inspiration. Those who knew him best, closest relations and dearest friends, people who lived with him and noted all his movements, were his sincere and most devoted followers."

John Davenport writes the following:

> It is strongly corroborative of Mohammed's sincerity that the earliest converts to Islam were his bosom friends and the people of his household, who, all intimately acquainted with his private life, could not fail to have detected those discrepancies which more or less invariably exist between the pretensions of the hypocritical deceiver and his

actions at home.

Slowly the message spread. During the first three years, he gained only thirty followers. In spite of the caution and care exercised, Quraish were well posted with what was going on. At first they did not make much note and only jeered at the Prophet and the plight of his followers. They doubted his sanity and thought he was possessed. But the time had come for proclaiming the will of God in public.

CALLING THE NEAR ONES (613 A.D.)

After three years, the call from Allāh came thus: "And warn thy near relations" (Qur'ān, 26:214). This āyat (verse) ended the period of secret preaching and heralded the open proclamation of Islam.

Abū Muhammed Husain al-Baghawi, in his *Tafsīr Maʿalim al-Tensile*, Shaikh ʿAla'uddīn ʿAli ibn Muhammed al-Baghdādi, known as Khāzin al-Baghdādi, in his *Lubābut-Ta'wīl*, best known as *Tafsīr Khāzin*, Abū Bakr Ahmed ibn Husain al-Bayhaqi (in his *Dalā'ilun-Nubuwwah*), Jalaluddīn al-Sayyūti (in his *Jamʿul Jawamiʿ*), ʿAla'uddīn ʿAli Muttaqi (in *Kanzul-ʿUmmal*), Abū Jaʿfer Muhammed ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabari (in *Tārīkh al-Rusul wal Mulūk*), Abū Saʿādat Mubarak ibn Athīr al-Jazari (in *Tārīkhul-Kāmil*) and Ismāʿīl Abul-Fidā' (in his history work *Kitābul-Mukhtaṣar fī Akhbāril-Bashar*) have quoted ʿAli as saying:

"When the verse *Wa anthir ʿashiratakal-aqrabīn* was revealed, the noble Messenger called me and ordered me, `O ʿAli! The Creator of the world has commanded me to warn my people about their doom, but in view of the condition of the people and knowing that when I give them the words of Allāh, they will misbehave, I felt depressed and weakened and, therefore, I kept quiet until Gabriel came again and informed me that there should be no more delay. Therefore, O ʿAli, take a measure of food grain, a leg of a goat and a big bowl of milk and arrange for a feast, then call the sons of ʿAbdul-Muttalib unto me, so that I may deliver to them the words of Allāh.' I did what the Prophet had told me and the sons of ʿAbdul-Muttalib, who were about forty in number, gathered together. Among them were the uncles of the Prophet: Abū Ṭālib, Hamzah, ʿAbbās and Abū Lahab. When the food was brought, the Prophet lifted a piece of meat and tore it into small pieces which he scattered on the tray and said, `Start eating in the Name of Allāh.' All people present there had the food to their fill although the milk and the food were just sufficient for one man. Then he intended to speak to them, but Abū Lahab interferred

and said, "Verily, your comrade has bewitched you!" Having heard this, all of them dispersed and the Messenger did not get a chance to speak to them.

"On the next day, the Messenger of the Lord again said to me: `O ᶜAli! Make arrangements again for a feast as you had done yesterday, and invite the sons of ᶜAbdul-Muttalib.' I arranged for the feast and gathered the guests as I was asked to do by the Prophet. Once they had finished eating, the Messenger addressed them thus: `O sons of ᶜAbdul- Muttalib, I have brought you the best blessings of this world and of the next, and I am appointed by the Lord to call you unto Him. Therefore, who amongst you will help me in this cause so that he may be my brother, vizier, and successor?' Nobody responded. But I, although the youngest of the congregation, said, `O Messenger of Allāh, I am here to be your helper in this task.' The Prophet then patted my neck very kindly and said, `O my people! This ᶜAli is my brother, my vizier and my successor amongst you. Listen to him and obey him.' Having heard it from the Prophet, they all burst laughing and said to Abū Ṭālib, `Hearken! You are ordered to obey and follow your own son!'"

This event has also been recorded by Thomas Carlyle in *Heroes and Hero Worship*, by Gibbon in *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, by Davenport in *Apology for Muḥammed and The Koran* and by Washington Irving in *Muḥammed And His Successors*, with all its details.

PERSECUTION BEGINS

Then one after another came the Divine commands:

> *Disclose what has been ordained to thee.*
> (Qur'ān, 15:94)

> *O thou wrapped (in thy mantle)! Arise and warn, and thy Lord do magnify. And thy raiment do purify. And uncleanness do shun. And show not favour seeking gain! And for the sake of thy Lord be patient.*
> (Qur'ān, 74:1-7)

The method to be employed was:

> *Call to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and dispute with them in the best way.*
> (Qur'ān, 16:125)

The Prophet proclaimed the Oneness of God in the Kaʿba. Quraish were aghast. Their reaction was sharp and violent. They mobbed the Prophet. Al-Hārith son of Abū Hālah tried to protect him but was slashed to death. It was the first martyrdom in the cause of Islam. Till then, Quraish had held the Prophet and his followers in contemptuous disdain, but now they were genuinely alarmed. The new movement amounted to a denunciation of their forefathers. It meant the termination of their authority and privilege as the guardians of the Kaʿba.

Quraish retaliated violently. A life and death struggle for Islam ensued. The Prophet was not allowed to worship in the Kaʿba, thorns were strewn in his way, dirt and filth were thrown at him while he was engaged in prayers, and street urchins were incited to follow him, shouting and clapping their hands in derision. When he prayed, they made loud cries, hooted or sang wild songs in order to drown his voice. To their great disappointment, they could not prevent him or discourage him. Such is the mark of great men. Such are men of God; nobody and nothing stands in their way. He and his followers were subjected to all types of calumnies and humiliation. His followers were taunted and insulted. Oppression and relentless persecution were let loose. In an effort to force the believers to renounce the new faith and to go back to the older cults, they were subjected to extremes of physical torture. They were mercilessly beaten, made to lie on burning sand while heavy blocks of stones were placed on their chests. Nooses were put around their necks and their bodies were dragged. One of the faithful, Yāsir[1] by name, succumbed to toture and, when his wife Sumayya, an African, protested, her legs were tied to two camels, and the animals were driven to opposite directions, tearing her body in halves. The believers, under the inspiration of their great Teacher, were, however, fired with holy zeal. They braved all persecution and danger and bore up against all agonies and torture.

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[1]Yāsir's son ʿAmmār is very well known in the history of Islam. His full name is Abul-Yaqzān ʿAmmār ibn Yāsir al-ʿAnsi, one of the foremost to accept Islam at the house of al-Arqam ibn Abū al-Arqam al-Makhzūmi, "the house of Islam" where those who wished to embrace Islam would then go. ʿAmmar was martyred during the Battle of Siffeen at the age of 94 after having participated in both migrations to Ethiopia. He also participated with great courage in the Battle of Badr and was one of those who took part in "Bayʿat al-Ridwān" to be discussed later in this book.

TWO HIJRAS TO ABYSSINIA (615 A.D.)

In around 615 A.D., when endurance was reaching its limits and persecution became unbearable, the Prophet advised a group of his followers to migrate to Abyssinia (Ethiopia) where a benign Christian king reigned. This group set out from Mecca's ancient sea port at Shuʿayb. Finding two vessels about to sail, they hastily embarked and were conveyed to Abyssinia. This was the first *hijra* (migration) in Islam and fifteen people, eleven men and four women, including ʿOthman ibn ʿAffān and his wife Ruqayya, took part in it:

> *And those who become fugitives for Allāh's sake being oppressed, verily We shall give them good abode in the world and surely the reward of the Hereafter is greater, if they only knew.*
> (Qur'ān, 16:41)

And all this tyranny and persecution for what? Just for believing in one God and for leading a chaste and pious life! Further migration of some people led to intensified persecution of those left behind. The Prophet advised a second Hijra to Abyssinia. Thirty men and eighteen women left Mecca individually or in small groups fleeing to Abyssinia. Jaʿfer ibn Abū Ṭālib, the elder brother of ʿAli, followed them with fifty more; thus, one hundred and sixteen refugees reached Abyssinia safely. Quraish sent a deputation headed by ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀ and ʿAmmara ibn Rabīʿah to the Negus (Nijashi), king, of Abyssinia, to demand the deportation of the emigrants back to Mecca to be punished by death. Having won the favour of the clergy, the deputations tried to prejudice the king against the fugitives. Asked to explain the position of the Muslims, Jaʿfer delivered a speech which is a brilliant summary of the fundamentals of Islam and all that it stands for:

> O king! We were plunged into the depth of ignorance and barbarism; we adored idols; we lived in unchastity; we ate dead animals, and we spoke abomination. We disregarded every feeling of humanity, and the duties of hospitality and neighbourhood. We knew no law but that of the strong. At that time, God raised from among us a man of whose birth, truthfulness, honesty and purity we were aware, and he called us to the Unity of God and taught us not to associate anything with Him. He forbade us from worshipping idols and enjoined us to speak the truth, to be faithful to our trusts, to be merciful, and to regard the rights of neighbours. He forbade us from speaking ill of women and from

eating the subsistence of orphans. He ordered us to flee from vices, to abstain from evil, to offer prayers, to render alms, and to observe the fast. We have believed in him; we have accepted his teachings and injunctions to worship God, and not to associate anything with Him. For this reason, our people have risen against us and persecuted us in order to make us forego the worship of God and return to the worship of idols of wood and stone and other abominations. They have tortured us and injured us. Having found no safety among them, we have come to thy country and hope thou wilt protect us from their oppression.

The king refused to oblige the deputations, and the latter had to return disappointed. Muslim traditions indicate that the king later on secretly converted to Islam.

Some European critics, with the objective of assigning some ulterior motives for the migration, go to the length of saying that persecution was only slight and at worst confined to slaves and the poorer people who could find no clans to protect them. There is a mass of historical data recorded in original sources about the names and numbers of persons put to physical torture, the names of their tormentors and the manner of their physical torture and persecution. Although these critics admit that even Abū Bakr had to undergo the indignity of being bound to a clansman and to solicit the protection of a nomadic chief, they would still suggest that the persecution was limited to persons who had no clans to support them. Such people received, no doubt, the worst treatment, but when people of a clan were oppressing their fellow clansmen for accepting Islam, clan protection could not help the victims. What protection could be expected from the clan when a father chained his son, a brother tortured his sister, or a husband injured his wife? Furthermore, the slaves and the poor people constituted the bulk of the disciples at that stage. A Western historian surmises that the migration was caused either by a rift in the Muslim ranks, as some Muslims might not have liked the attitude of the Prophet towards the Meccan opposition, or was undertaken with the goal of making Abyssinia a base of attacking Meccan trade or to solicit military help to enable the Prophet to seize control of Mecca. If such fantastic conjectures can be made when the Muslims were yet a handful and survival was the only consideration before them, when all along they stood solidly behind the Prophet, when no Meccan caravan was ever attacked from Abyssinia, when that country never provided any military help to the Muslims, and when the Prophet did not seize control of Mecca even when it lay at his feet, what fairness in exposition and

presentation can be expected from such historians?

THE PROPHET AT THE HOUSE OF AL-ARQAM

Following the migration of such a number of his loyal followers, the Prophet realized how precarious his position in Mecca had become. Having felt insulted at the mere fact that their deputation to the Negus had failed in its mission, Quraish now is even more than ever bent on avenging their wounded pride. They intensified their persistence in opposing his preachings. The Prophet, therefore, after years of his struggle to disseminate the Islamic faith, sought refuge at the house of al-Arqam al-Makhzūmi, a highly respected Meccan dignitary. The house was near the sanctuary of the Kaʿba.

One day, Muhammed was sitting outside the house as Abū Jahl happened to pass by. Abū Jahl blasted his nephew with a barrage of abusive language. Muhammed felt it very sorely but could not utter a single word. A slave gird of ʿAbdullāh ibn Juʿdān, who lived nearby, was very much moved by such uncalled for insults. A short while later, she narrated the incident to Hamzah, Muhammed's other uncle, who was passing by her house on his way home from a sporting excursion. Hamzah was famous among the Arabs for his great valour and chivalry, and he felt deeply resentful of Abū Jahl's behaviour; so, he proceeded straight to Abū Jahl's house. Remonstrating with him, Hamzah hit him with his bow, striking a blow on his head. Abū Jahl's men stood up to avenge Abū Jahl who stopped them. Trying to pacify Hamzah, Abū Jahl told him that he had abused Muhammed only because he vilified their gods. Hamzah, thereupon, boldly declared that he, too, despised the stony gods and challenged Abū Jahl to do anything at all about it. Hamzah loudly recited the Islamic declaration of faith: "There is no god but the One and only God, and Muhammed is the prophet and messenger of God," thus publicly announcing his acceptance of the Islamic creed. Ever since then, Hamzah proved to be a staunch follower of Islam till the last moment of his life. When he was martyred at Uhud, which will be discussed later, he was given the title of *sayyid al-shuhadā'*, "Master of the Martyrs," a title which remained his till the martyrdom of Muhammed's younger grandson Husain...

Hamzah's conversion was surely a great victory for the Prophet in particular and for the small band of Muslim believers in general especially at that very juncture when they so badly needed a valiant supporter to defend them and to rally their cause. Following the

conversion of Ḥamzah, the Prophet, accompanied by some of his followers, ventured twice to offer his prayers at the Kaʿba publicly. There was also no need any longer (at least for the time being) to conduct secret meetings at the house of al-Arqam.

ʿOMER ATTEMPTS TO KILL MUḤAMMED (615 A.D.)

Now we have reached the sixth year after the Declaration of Prophethood (615/616 A.D.). In spite of the persecution and exodus of some people, the Prophet was laboring quietly but incessantly to wean his people from the worship of idols.

Once, on the suggestion of Abū Bakr, the Prophet came into al-Masjid al-Harām and Abū Bakr started a lecture. Quraish violently stopped him and the Prophet had to once more take refuge in the house of al-Arqam near the hill of Ṣafa. (Now, that house has been included into the extension of Al-Masjid al-Harām). ʿOmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb accepted Islam in those days. How did ʿOmar accept Islam?

Abū Jahl set a reward for one hundred camels or one thousand ounces of gold for anyone who brought him the head of his nephew Muḥammed. Abū Jahl was the maternal uncle of ʿOmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb who aspired to win this coveted prize. ʿOmar was 33 years old. Armed with a sword, he went to the house of al-Arqam where Muḥammed and the Muslims used to meet. On his way, he met Saʿd ibn Abul-Waqqāṣ to whom he confided that he intended to kill Muḥammed, not knowing that Saʿd had already accepted Islam! Saʿd first warned ʿOmar against committing such a heinous crime, reminding him that he would do better taking care of his sister and her husband who had both embraced Islam. ʿOmar now decided to go after his sister and brother-in-law instead of pursuing his attempt to kill Muḥammed. Having reached his sister's house, he over-heard a recitation of the Holy Qur'ān by Khabbāb ibn ʿArrāt who was then teaching the Holy Qur'ān to Āmina, ʿOmar's sister, and to Saʿeed ibn Zayd, her husband. ʿOmar abruptly entered the house and proceeded directly to Saʿeed with whom he wrestled, throwing him down on his back and sitting on his chest with the intention to kill him. It was then that Āmina interceded and was slapped so hard that she bled, yet she, in a fit of anger, cried out, "O son of al-Khaṭṭāb! Do what you sought to do, for verily I (too) have changed my faith!" She admitted that both she and her husband were adherents to the Islamic faith.

Feeling ashamed of having driven his sister to such impudence, ʿOmar stood aside and asked her to recite to him what she was learning.

She recited the first 14 verses of Sūrat Ṭāha (Chapter 20) with such solemnity that the very core of ʿOmar's heart was moved. Here are the first verses of that Chapter:

> ***In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.***
> *Ṭā Hā. We have not revealed the Qur'an to you so that you may suffer hardship. Nay, it is a reminder to whoever fears (Allāh): A revelation from the One Who created the earth and the high heavens. The Beneficent God is firm in power. His is whatever in the heavens and the in earth, and what is between them both, and what is beneath the ground. And if you utter a word aloud (or otherwise), surely He knows the secret and what is yet more hidden. Allah—there is no god but He; His are the very best Names. Has the story of Mūsa (Moses) come to you? When he saw a fire, he said to his family: Stop, for surely I see a fire, perhaps I may bring you therefrom a torch or find guidance at the fire. So when he came to it, a voice was heard: O Mūsa! Surely I am your Lord, therefore take your shoes off; surely you are in the sacred valley, Ṭuwa, and I have chosen you, so listen to what is revealed: Surely I am Allāh, there is no god but I; therefore, worship Me and keep up prayer for My remembrance: Surely the hour is coming—I am about to make it manifest—so that every soul may be rewarded as it strives: Therefore do not let one who does not believe and follows his own desires turn you away from it lest you should perish.*
> (Quran, 20:1-16)

ʿOmar was quite amazed at and impressed by the excellence and beauty of the language which had such a supernatural effect on him, one which he could no longer resist. Finally, he asked both of them to take him and introduce him to Muhammed. Khabbāb ibn ʿArrāt, the teacher who had hidden upon seeing ʿOmar approaching, now came out. The whole group went to the house of al-Arqam.

ʿOmar met Hamzah at the door. ʿOmar was brough into the presence of the Prophet. ʿOmar was so over-awed that he could not help shuddering as he stood before the Prophet. The kind and gentle Prophet caught ʿOmar by the hand and said to him, "Will you not cease, O ʿOmar, till God sends upon you a calamity and a chastisement such as the one He sent upon al-Walīd ibn al-Mughīrah?!" He invited ʿOmar to accept

Islam, which he did. ʿOmar's conversion to Islam took place only three days after Hamzah had embraced the Islamic creed; six years had passed since the inception of the Prophet's historic mission.

THE STORY OF AL-WALĪD IBN AL-MUGHĪRAH

What calamity was the Prophet referring to above and what chastisement? Let us digress for a moment to answer this question.

Al-Walīd ibn al-Mughīrah, father of the famous military leader Khālid ibn al-Walīd, was a man of experience and cunning, a senior among Arab seniors of his time, a man of great wealth according to the testimony of the Holy Qur'ān as we read in Sūrat al-Muddaththir (Chapter 74). All the clans of Quraish used to collectively share the expense of the covering sheet of the Kaʿba one year, and in the next year, al-Walīd would pay the entire expense all by himself. In Mecca alone, he had ten sons and ten slaves, and each one of his slaves used to trade in a merchandise valued at one thousand dinars, each dinar weighing one *qinṭār*, talent, of gold (equivalent to four thousand dinars). He used to always ridicule Prophet Muḥammed. The Prophet used quite often to recite the Holy Qur'ān (and sometimes he would ask others to recite it in his presence). The Quraishis assembled at the house of al-Walīd ibn al-Mughīrah once and said to him, "O ʿAbd al-Shams! What is this that Muḥammed is saying? Is it poetry, sorcery, or oratory?!" "Let me hear it myself," said he, going close to where Muḥammed was as he recited the Qur'ān. "O Muḥammed!" said al-Walīd, "Recite to me some of your poetry." The Prophet said, "It is not poetry; it is the speech of Allāh with which He blessed His angels and prophets." "Recite some of it for me," said al-Walīd. The Messenger of Allāh recited these verses of Sūrat Hā-Meem al-Sajda (Chapter 41 of the Holy Qur'ān):

> ***In the Name of Allāh, the most Beneficent, the most Merciful.***
> *Ḥā Meem. (This is) a revelation from the most Beneficent, the most Merciful, God: a Book of which the verses are made plain, an Arabic Qur'ān for a people who know: a herald of glad tidings and a warner, but most of them turn aside, so they hear not. And they say: Our hearts are under coverings from that to which you call us, and there is a heaviness in our ears, and a veil hangs between us and you, so do (whatever you please), we, too, are doing (whatever pleases us). Say: I am only a mortal like you; it is revealed to me that your God is one God; therefore, follow the right way to Him and ask His forgiveness, and woe unto the polytheists, those who do not give* zakāt, *and they do*

not believe in the hereafter. (As for) those who believe and do good deeds, they shall surely have a reward never to be curtailed. Say: What?! Do you indeed disbelieve in Him Who created the earth in two periods, and do you set up equals with Him?! That is the Lord of the Worlds. And He made in it mountains above its surface, and He blessed therein and made therein its foods, in four perioods, alike for the seekers. Then He directed Himself (His attention) to the heavens and it is a vapor, so He said to it and to the earth: Come both willingly or unwillingly. They both said: We come willingly. So He ordained them seven heavens in two periods, and revealed in every heavens its affairs, and We adorned the lower heavens with brilliant stars and (made it) to guard; that is the decree of the Mighty, the Knowing. But if they turn aside, then say: I have warned you of a scourge like the scourge of (the people of) ʿĀd and (the people of) Thamūd.
(Qur'ān, 41:1-13)

When the Prophet finished reciting the last verse quoted above, al-Walīd shuddered and his hair stood up. He went home without giving Quraish an answer.

Quraish, therefore, went to Abū Jahl and said, "O Abū al-Hakam! ʿAbd al-Shams is inclined towards Muhammed's creed; have you seen how he did not come to us with a follow-up?" Abū Jahl went to him and said, "O uncle! You have caused our heads to stoop down in humiliation and have exposed us and made our enemies happy on our account by you inclining towards Muhammed's creed." Al-Walīd said, "I have not inclined to his creed, but I heard something he said which is quite weighty, a speech because of which the skin shudders." "Is it an address that he delivered?" asked Abū Jahl. Al-Walīd said, "No, it is not, for an address is a continuous speech, and this is prose some parts of which are not similar to others." "Is it poetry?" asked Abū Jahl. "No," al-Walīd answered, "for I have heard all types of the Arabs' poetry; it is not poetry." "Then what is it?" asked Abū Jahl. "Let me think about it," answered al-Walīd. On the next day, he was asked again, "O ʿAbd al-Shams! What do you say about our query?" He said, "Tell people that it is sorcery, for this will affect people's hearts better." It is then that the Almighty revealed the following verses to express His Wrath at what al-Walīd had attributed to Him and to His Prophet:

Leave Me and him whom I created alone and gave him vast riches, and sons dwelling in his presence, and I adjusted affairs for him adjustably; and yet he desires that I should add more! By no means! Surely he

opposes Our Signs. I will make a distressing punishment overtake him. Surely he reflected and guessed, but may he be cursed how he guessed! Again, may he be cursed how he guessed! Then he looked, then he frowned and scowled, then he turned back and was big with pride, then he said: This is naught but sorcery narrated (from others); this is naught but the word of a mortal. I will cast him into hell. And what will make you realize what hell is? It leaves naught, nor does it spare aught. It scorches the mortal. Over it are nineteen (keepers).
(Qur'ān, 74:11-30)

MUḤAMMED FRUSTRATES QURAISH

Because of the prestige Abū Ṭālib, Muḥammed's protector, enjoyed, Quraish did not dare to kill the Prophet. But they were making him suffer as much affliction as possible. No less was the heartache caused to him by the suffering of helpless Muslims. He himself said: "No prophet was ever made to suffer such afflictions as I was."

All along, Islam was gaining adherents not only from Quraish but also from the neighbouring tribes. The oligarchy of Mecca was now desperately trying to stem the movement.

The forbearance of the Prophet was making Quraish wonder as to why a man should put himself in such a precarious situation. Their outlook was materialistic, their ideals were: wealth, beauty and power. They, naturally, ascribed the same motives to the Prophet.

ᶜOtbah ibn Rabīᶜah, father-in-law of Abū Sufyān, was sent to him to convey the message of Quraish: "Muḥammed! If you want power and prestige, we will make you the overlord of Mecca. Or do you want marriage in a big family? You may have the hand of the fairest maiden in the land. Do you want hoards of silver and gold? We can provide you with all these and even more. But you should forsake your nefarious preaching which implies that our forefathers, who were worshipping these deities of ours, were fools."

Quraish were almost certain that Muḥammed would respond favourably to this offer. But the Prophet recited Sūra 41 in reply which, *inter alia*, contained the following warning: "But if they turn away, then say: I have warned you of a thunderbolt like the thunderbolt of the people of ᶜĀd and of the Thamūd" (Qur'ān, 41:13).

ᶜOtbah was overwhelmed with this ringing warning. He did not accept Islam (till death overtook him) but advised Quraish to leave Muḥammed alone and to see how he would fare with other tribes. Quraish said that he, too, was bewitched by Muḥammed.

Then a deputation was sent to Abū Ṭālib. They demanded that Abū Ṭālib should either persuade his nephew to desist from his mission or hand him over to suffer the extreme penalty or be prepared to fight the whole tribe. Finding the odds too heavy against him, Abū Ṭālib said to the Prophet: "O son! Do not put such a burden on my shoulders which I am unable to bear." The Prophet's reply to his uncle gives an indication of his indomitable will, profound trust in God, and confidence in his Mission. Said he:

> O uncle! If they placed the sun on my right hand and the moon on my left to persuade me to renounce my work, verily I would not desist therefrom till God makes manifest His cause or I perish in the attempt.

Saying this, he was overwhelmed with grief. Abū Ṭālib was moved by this reply and said: "By Allāh, Quraish can never reach thee in spite of their great number till I am buried in the earth. Therefore, pronounce what order thou hast; nobody can do any harm to thee; be happy with this (promise) and keep thy eyes cool (i.e. be consoled)."

In their final attempt, they took a young man, ʿAmmārah ibn al-Walīd, to Abū Ṭālib, offering to exchange him with Muḥammed. They said to him: "This young man is a well-known poet of the tribe; he is also very handsome and wise. You better exchange Muḥammed with him. You may adopt him as your son: he will be a good helper to you. And give us your Muḥammed; we will kill him. Thus, you will not suffer any loss because you will have ʿAmmārah in place of Muḥammed, and by eliminating Muḥammed, all this strife and friction in the tribe will come to an end."

Abū Ṭālib was extremely furious on hearing this outrageous proposal. His voice was raised in wrath as he said: "What a worst bargain you have proposed! Why, you want me to give you my son, so that you may kill him, and are giving me your son so that I should feed him and look after him?! Go away! This bargain is nothing if not foolishness."

WEST-STYLED SANCTIONS AGAINST THE CLANS OF HĀSHIM AND MUṬṬALIB (616 A.D.)

Frustrated, the idolaters decided to ostracize the whole clans of Hāshim and Muttalib and thus destroy them completely. Urged by Abū Sufyān, the heads of the different opposing families decided to form a league in order to sever all ties with Muḥammed, his followers, and Banū Hāshim altogether. An agreement, therefore, was signed seven years after the

inception of the Prophet's mission (in about 616 A.D.) to implement a boycott[1]. It was written by Mansūr ibn ʿIkrimah, signed by forty of Quraish's chieftains then sealed. In order to give it an air of solemnity, it was hung on the Kaʿba. One of he Meccan dignitaries, namely Mutʿim ibn ʿAdiyy ibn Nawfal ibn ʿAbdul-Muttalib ibn ʿAbd Munāf, refused to sign it, saying that it was unjust. The Prophet was now 47 years old. The agreement said that they would neither take the daughters of these two clans nor will they give them their daughters in marriage; they would neither sell anything to them nor buy anything from them. Not only that, they would not have any contact with them nor even allow any food or drink to reach them.

"This boycott would continue till these clans agree to hand over Muhammed to Quraish," it stated.

Abū Ṭālib had no alternative but to take these two clans (who had always stood together) into the valley called Shiʿb Abū Ṭālib. All members of Banū Hāshim, with the exception of Abū Lahab and his family, were now lodged there. It was a place in Mount Ḥajūn which belonged to Abū Ṭālib. There were 40 adults in the clans. For three long years, they were beleaguered. It had begun in Muharram, 7th year of Biʿthat (Declaration of Prophethood) and continued up to the beginning of the 10th year. They were made to undergo the most acute hardships and privations, so much so that at times they had nothing but tree leaves to sustain them. Only twice a year did they dare to come out: in the months of Rajab and Thul-Hijjah, when every type of violence was taboo according to the Arabian custom. If any relative sent them any food, and the news leaked out, that relative was publicly insulted and put to shame. Quraishites used to express their pleasure on hearing the cries of the hungry children.

During the entire time, however, Muhammed did not stop his mission. He used to go out during the pilgrimage season to meet with

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[1]This boycott reminds me of the suffering of my people in Iraq at the hands of "Muslims" and non-Muslims who joined ranks in their satanic effort to starve and kill our people. I invoke the Almighty in the Holiest of His Names to incur His wrath upon all those who brought about the economic sanctions against my people and who in any way help enforce them or refrain from denouncing them, *Allāhomma Āmeen*. In my view, they are not better than pagan Meccans no matter what creed they profess to follow. For sure they have no faith at all...

Arab tribesmen and to say to them, "Let me recite for you from the Book of your Lord, and your reward shall be Paradise." But Abū Lahab was always behind him. "Do not agree to listen to him," Abū Lahab would then tell those tribesmen, "He is nephew, and he is a lying sorcerer[1]."

Abul-ʿĀṣ ibn al-Rabeeʿ, husband of Zainab daughter of Khadīja (by a former husband) and Muḥammed's step-daughter, used to bring his camels laden with wheat and dates to the entrance of the Shiʿb at night, telling them to proceed. They would enter the Shiʿb, and Banū Hāshim would unload them[1].

SOME MIRACLES OF THE PROPHET (618 A.D.)

Books have already been written detailing the miracles performed by Prophet Muḥammed. One of the best references detailing the Prophet's miracles is no doubt *Biḥār al-Anwār* by *ʿallama* al-Majlisi. As many as two hundred and four pages, that is, from page 225 to page 421, Vol. 15, narrate numerous incidents involving the Prophet performing miracles. Surely there is no room here to quote all or even some of them, yet reference to the Prophet's miracles has been made throughout this book: The early childhood of the Prophet and his trips to Syria, the Prophet at the cave of Mount Thawr, the story of Umm Maʿbad, the incidents of the physicians who tried to "cure" the Prophet of his alleged "madness," and, most importantly, the miracle of the Holy Qur'ān, his very greatest miracle, which concludes this Chapter and this book as a whole. Here is one more for the kind readedr:

Among the earliest converts to Islam were some princes or heads of tribes. The latter's conversion spurred that of their tribesmen. Here is the summary of the story of one of those princes who accepted Islam which can be reviewed on pp. 57-60 of Washington Irving's book *Life of Muḥammed*:

Ḥabīb ibn Mālik, surnamed "the wise" on account of his vast knowledge and erudition, was one such convert. He was deeply versed in magic and the sciences and acquainted with all religions to their very foundations, having read all that had been written about them and acquired practical information about them. He had belonged to them all

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[1]al-Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 19, p. 2. According to this reference, the boycott continued not for three but for four years.

[1]*Ibid.*, p. 3.

by turn: First he was a Jew, then Christian, then a Magi[1]. When he died, he had reached the age of 140 years. He came to Mecca in 618 A.D. as head of a powerful host of twenty thousand men, bringing with him his young daughter Saṭiha for whom he was praying at the Kaʿba. She had been struck dumb, deaf, blind and paralyzed in her limbs. Abū Sufyān and Abū Jahl thought that the presence of this very powerful, wise and, most importantly, idolatrous prince, being the head of such a formidable host, was a favourable opportunity to effect the ruin of Muhammed and his creed. They accordingly informed Habīb the wise of the "heresies" of the "pretender prophet" and prevailed upon him to summon him into his presence at his camp in the Valley of Flints and challenge him to defend his doctrines. They hoped that his insistence upon error would draw upon him either banishment or death.

The men of Quraish arrayed themselves in splendid formations on horseback and on foot, having put on their best, led by Abū Sufyān and Abū Jahl. Habīb the wise was seated in pomp and splendor under a tent of crimson on a throne of ebony inlaid with ivory and sandal-wood and covered with plates of gold.

When summoned to attend this formidable tribunal, Muhammed was at home with his wife Khadīja (and the date was two years before her death which took place in 620 A.D.). Khadīja was alarmed, and so were her daughters, who were visiting her. They hung about Muhammed's neck weeping and lamenting, thinking that he was going to a certain death. But he gently calmed their fears and bade them place their trust in Allāh, their Protector and his.

Unlike Abū Sufyān and Abū Jahl, he approached the scene of trial in simple guise clad in a white garment with a black turban and a mantle which had belonged to his grandfather ʿAbdul-Muttalib and which had been woven in ʿAden, southern Arabia. His hair floated on his shoulders, the mysterious light of prophecy beamed from his countenance. Although he had not anointed his beard, nor did he use any perfume at the moment[2] except a little musk and camphor for his moustache, yet

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[1]A Magi is a Zoroastrian priest, a possessor of magic powers.

[2]Prophet Muhammed was legendary for his passion for perfume! He would prefer to buy perform when he went to the marketplace rather than food, opting to fast instead. Once he said, "I have enjoyed of your life only

(continued...)

wherever he passed, a bland of sweet smell diffused itself all around him, being the fragrant emanation from his own holy person.

A silent awe fell upon the vast assembly as the Prophet approached. Not a murmur, not even a whisper could be heard; even the very brute animals were charmed to silence. The neighing of the steed, the bellowing of the camel, and the braying of the ass were all mute.

The venerable Ḥabīb received him graciously. His first question was direct and to the point: "They say that you pretend to be a prophet sent by God. Is it so?" "Even so," replied Muḥammed. "Allāh has sent me to proclaim the veritable faith," he continued. "Good!," rejoiced the sage, "but every prophet has produced a proof of his mission by signs and miracles. Noah had his rainbow, Solomon his mysterious ring, Abraham the fire of the furnace that became cool at his command[1], Isaac the ram which was sacrificed in his stead, Moses his wonder-working rod, and Jesus brought the dead to life and appeased the tempests with a word. If, then, you are really a prophet, show us a miracle in proof."

Muḥammed's followers trembled for him when they heard this request, while Abū Jahl clapped his hands and extolled the sagacity of Ḥabīb the wise. But the Prophet rebuked Abū Jahl with scorn. "Peace! Dog of your race!" exclaimed Muḥammed, "Disgrace of your kindred and of your tribe!" He then calmly proceeded to carry out Ḥabīb's wish.

The first miracle demanded of Muḥammed was to reveal what Ḥabīb had inside his tent, and why he had brought it to Mecca. Muḥammed bent towards the earth and traced figures upon the sand. Then he raised his head and replied, "O Ḥabīb! You have brought here your daughter Satiha, deaf and dumb, lame and blind, in the hope of obtaining relief of Heaven. Go to your tent; speak to her, and hear her reply, and come to know that God is All-Powerful."

The aged prince hastened to his tent. His daughter met him with light step and extended arms, pefect in all her faculties! Her eyes were beaming with joy, her face clothed with smiles, and she was more

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[2](...continued)
three (pleasures): prayers, perfume, and women!"

[1]Actually, it did not become cool at his (Abraham's) command; rather, the Almighty ordered it, as the Holy Qur'ān tells us, "We [Allāh] said: O fire! Be a comfort and peace to Abraham" (Qur'ān, 21:69). Ḥabīb did not know any better!

beautiful than the moon in an unclouded night!

The second miracle demanded by Habīb was that the Prophet should cover the noontid heavens with supernatural darkness and cause the moon to appear upon the top of the Kaʿba. The Prophet prayed. Instantly, complete darkness covered the daylight and the glorious orb of the moon shone above the sanctuary. The Prophet made a sign with his finger and the orb was divided into two halves so that Mount Abū Qubays stood between them. After a while, he again made a sign and both halves were reunited. More details can be reviewed in the famous work titled *Al-Mawāhib al-Laduniyya* which includes names of eyewitnesses. As a matter of fact, the Prophet caused the moon to be rent asunder into two halves in response to his command on two different occasions. The list of eyewitnesses who saw such miracles includes: Ibn Masʿud al-Aswad, Anas ibn Mālik, Ibn ʿAbbās, ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿOmar ibn al-Khattāb, Huthyafah al-Yemani, Jubayr ibn Mutʿim, ʿAli ibn Abū Ṭālib, and Abū Huthayfah al-Arḥabi.

The prince, four hundred and seventy of his followers, and a number of Meccans, all embraced the Islamic creed there and then to the outrage of both Abū Jahl and Abū Sufyān and the infidels who rallied behind them. This incident took place five years before the Hijra, that is, in 618 A.D., two years before the death of Abū Ṭālib, Muhammed's uncle and protector.

Imām ʿAli son of Muḥammed has said,

> Al-Ḥārith ibn Kildah al-Thaqafi was the most skilled physician of the Thaqīf tribe. He came once to the Messenger of Allāh and said, "O Muḥammed! I have come to heal you from your madness, for I have treatted many madmen and healed them all." The Messenger of Allāh said to him, "You yourself are doing what madmen do, yet you attribute madness to me!" Al-Ḥārith asked him, "What madness have I done ?" "Your own attributing madness to me," the Prophet answered, "without first examining me or putting me to the test, and without looking into my truth or falsehood." Al-Ḥārith said, "Have I not come to know about your madness from the claim you have put forth to prophethood of which you are not capable?" The Messenger of Allāh said, "And your own claim that I am incapable of it is another act typical of madmen! This is so because you did not ask me why I put forth such a claim, nor did you demand any proof so that you would conclude that in the lack of proof, I am incapable of it." Al-Ḥārith said, "You have said the truth; I should test you by a miracle I require you to produce; so, if you are truly a Prophet, call that tree (and it was a huge one very deeply rooted)

to come forth. If it comes to you, I will conclude that you are, indeed, the Messenger of Allāh, and I shall testify to you to the same. Otherwise, you are the same mad person about whom I have been informed." The Messenger of Allāh raised his hands to that tree and beckoned to it to come forward. The tree was uprooted at once, and it came to him boring a huge hole in the ground like a river canal till it came near the Messenger of Allāh and spoke in an articulate voice saying, "Here I am, O Messenger of Allāh! What do you order me to do?" The Messenger of Allāh said to it, "I order you to testify to my Prophethood after testifying to the Unity of Allāh and then to testify to this ʿAli as the Imām, and that he is the one upon whom I depend, my supporter and helper, my pride and dignity, and that had it not been for him, Allāh, the most Exalted and the most Sublime, would not have created anything at all." The tree spoke out thus: "I testify that there is no god except Allāh, the One Who has no partner at all, and I further testify that you, Muhammed, are His Servant and Messenger; He sent you in truth as a bearer of glad tidings and a warner and a caller to Allāh by His permission and a lantern of light. And I testify that ʿAli, your cousin, is your Brother in creed and the one who is the most informed of Allāh's creation of the creed and the one whose portion of promoting Islam is the very greatest, that he is your supporter and helper, the one who subdues your foes and helps your friends, the gate of your knowledge in your nation. And I further testify that your friends, those who befriend him and who are antagonistic towards his enemies, are the stuff of Paradise, and that his enemies who befriend his foes and who are antagonistic towards his friends, are the stuff of the Fire." The Messenger of Allāh at that juncture looked at al-Ḥārith ibn Kildah and said, "O Ḥārith! Is anyone who produces such a miracle regarded as a madman?!" Al-Ḥārith ibn Kildah said, "No, by Allāh, O Messenger of Allāh! But I do testify that you are the Messenger of Allāh and the master of all creation." His conviction proved to be firm[1].

Here is another testimony by Imām al-Ḥasan al-ʿAskari:

As for the mountains, the rocks, and the stones saluting him, when the Messenger of Allāh, peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him and his progeny, abandoned trading in Syria, spending all his earnings by way of charity, all what Allāh Almighty bestowed upon him of wealth from those trade trips, he used to go daily to the Hira cave. He would ascend

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[1]al-Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 17, pp. 316-317.

it and look from its height at the Signs of the Mercy of Allāh and the norms of the wonders of His Mercy and the beauty of His wisdom. He would look at the heavens and the countries of the earth and of the seas, at the deserts and the valleys. So he would derive wisdom from those norms and would remember his Lord through those Signs and worship Allāh as He should be worshipped. When he became fully forty years old, Allāh looked at his heart and found it the best of hearts, the most honourable, the most submissive to Him the most obedient. So He opened the gates of the heavens, and Muḥammed kept looking at them. He permitted the angels to desced as Muḥammed looked on. And He ordered Mercy to descend upon him from the leg of the ʿArsh to Muḥammed's head, overwhelming it. He looked at Gabriel, the trusted spirit, the one circled by light, the peacock of angels, who descended to him, and he held him and shook him saying, "O Muḥammed! Read (or Recite)!" He said, "What should I read?!" He said, "O Muḥammed! Read (or Recite) in the Name of your Lord Who created..." Then he inspired him whatever His Lord, the Sublime, the most Exalted One, wanted to inspire him. Then he (Gabriel) ascended. Fever overtook him and he was greatly upset that Quraish would call him a liar and would attribute madness to him, and that the demons possessed him although he was, from the very beginning, the most wise of Allāh's creation, the most honoured of His beings, and the most hated thing to him were: Satan and the deeds and statements of mad people. Allāh, the most Exalted and the most Sublime, therefore, wanted to please him and to encourage him, so He permitted the mountains, the rocks, and the rain to speak to him. Whenever he reached any of them, it would say to him, "As-Salāmo ʿAlaikom, O Muḥammed! As-Salāmo ʿAlaikom, O friend of Allāh! As-Salāmo ʿAlaikom, O Messenger of Allāh! Good news to you! Allāh, the most Exalted and the most Great, favoured you, beautified you, showered you with His honours, and preferred you over all His creation, the first and the last! Let not Quraish's accusation of your being mad and deviated from their creed grieve you, for virtuous is the one who is favoured by the Lord of the Worlds, and honourable is the one who is honoured by the Creator of all creation! Do not be grieved when Quraish and the arrogant ones from among the Arabs belie you, for your Lord will bestow upon you the ultimate of all favours, and He will raise you to the most lofty of stations, and He will bring bliss and happiness to your friends and will appoint ʿAli ibn Abū Tālib as your *waṣi* who will disseminate your knowledge among the servants and throughout the lands, through your key and the gate of your knowledge ʿAli ibn Abū Tālib! He will cool your eyes through your daughter Fātima, and out of her and of ʿAli He will bring into the

world al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusain, the masters of the youths of Paradise! He will disseminate your creed throughout the land and will best honour those who love you and who love your brother, and He will place in your hand the standard of praise, so you will place it in the hand of your brother ʿAli, so much so that each and every prophet, testifier to the truth, and martyr will be in a status lower than his. He shall be their leader, all of them, into the Gardens of bliss!" The Prophet used to wonder, "Lord! Who is this ʿAli ibn Abū Ṭālib whom you have promised me? (ʿAli was then a child) Is he the same as my cousin?" When ʿAli moved a little, he asked again, "Is he this one?!" Whenever he thus inquired, the Scales of greatness would descend upon him, so Muḥammed and ʿAli would be weighed in one of them and all his nation in the other, and their scale would weigh heavier. The Messeger of Allāh then knew exactly who he was and what his attribute was. And Muḥammed was addressed within thus: "O Muḥammed! This ʿAli ibn Abū Ṭālib is the one whom I chose to support this religion (Islam), and he weighs heavier than all members of your nation with the exception only of your own self."

This is how Allāh expanded the Prophet's breast in order to carry out the Message, thus making the burnden of struggling with the nation lighter, facilitating for him to combat the arrogant ones and the tyrants of Quraish.[1]

THE BOYCOTT ENDS (619 A.D.)

For three long years, from 616 to 619 A.D., Muḥammed, his small band of followers, and Banū Hāshim, tasted the bitterness of the boycott enforced by Quraish. During all those years of sufferings, Abū Ṭālib had only one concern: how to keep the Prophet out of harm's way. Historians unanimously say that it was the habit of Abū Ṭālib to awaken the Prophet after all people had gone to sleep and to take him to another place and order one of his own sons or brothers to sleep in the Prophet's bed instead. This was done so that if an enemy had seen where Muḥammed was sleeping, and if an attack was made on him at night, his own son or brother would be killed while the Prophet would be saved. History is unable to produce another example of such devotion and loyalty. And imagine that this continued not for one or two days or weeks, but for three long years.

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[1]al-Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 17, pp. 307-311. The pages following these ones narrate numerous other miracles of the Prophet.

One day the Prophet said to Abū Ṭālib: "I have been informed by Allāh that the agreement of Quraish has been eaten up by insects, and no writing has been left therein except the Name of Allāh."

And Abū Ṭālib never had any doubt about anything Muḥammed said.

Thus he came out of his place at once and went to Al-Masjid al-Ḥarām where Quraish had gathered. As luck would have it, the subject of discussion was the same boycott. Hishām, son of ᶜAmr, Zubayr, and a few others who were related to Khadīja and the clans of Hāshim and Muṭṭalib and whose houses were near the Shiᶜb of Abū Ṭālib used to hear the cries of the children day and night. So did Mutᶜim ibn ᶜAdiy, Zamᶜah ibn Aswad, Abul Bakhtari, and a number of other Quraishites. These had decided to persuade Quraish to abrogate the infamous agreement. The arguments became very heated and reached a climax when they saw Abū Ṭālib approaching. Abū Jahl and others who opposed the idea of abrogating the boycott said: "Abu Ṭālib is coming! It seems that now he is tired and wants to hand over Muḥammed to us. Thus, the boycott would end to the satisfaction of us all. Let us keep silent and hear what he wants to say." But Abū Ṭālib had not gone there to surrender but to challenge them. He stood before the gathering and said: "My son says that the agreement which you had written has been eaten up by insects, and that nothing remains therein except the Name of Allāh. Now look at that paper. If the news given by my son is correct, then you must end your injustice and high-handedness; and if the news is wrong, then we will admit that you were right and we were wrong."

The agreement was taken out and opened, and lo! There was nothing left of it except the Name of Allāh in one place!

Now Abū Ṭālib's voice thundered on as he condemned them for their tyranny. Those who wanted that boycott ended said that now there was no agreement at all to adhere to. Abū Jahl and others tried to outwit them but failed, so the boycott ended with a total moral victory for Islam over the infidels.

ABŪ ṬĀLIB AND KHADĪJA DIE (620 A.D.)

The sufferings and privations of those three years took their toll. Within nine months, Abū Ṭālib (533 - 620 A.D.) died at the age of 87 in the middle of Shawwāl or Thul-Qiᶜdah, ten years after the *biᶜthat*. Shortly

after him[1] Khadīja (465 - 620 A.D.) also left this world. Muḥammed wept bitterly at Khadīja's and Abū Ṭālib's graves and put on black clothes as is the custom of the Arabs. He was so grieved that he called that year "ᶜĀmul-Ḥuzn" (The Year of Sorrow).

With the disappearance of their protecting influence, the Meccans had a free-hand and redoubled their persecution. These two deaths, at a time when the Prophet was in dire need of both, left a very deep impression on him. How valuable their support was may be judged from the fact that Allāh has counted them as two of His highest Graces and Favours upon the Prophet. He says in Sūrat 93:

> *Did He not find thee an orphan and give thee shelter, and He found thee lost (in thy tribe) and guided (them towards thee), and found thee in need and made thee free from want?* (Qur'ān, 93:6-8)

All the commentators of the Qur'ān say that the first āyat means: "Did He not find you an orphan and give you shelter with Abū Ṭālib?", and the last āyat means: "He found you poor and made you rich through Khadīja." If we think about the early history of Islam, without the prestigious influence of Abū Ṭālib, we cannot see how the life of the Prophet could have been saved. And if we were to take out the wealth of Khadīja, we cannot think how the poor Muslims could have been sustained, and how the two *hijras* to Abyssinia could have been financed.

It is not the place here to fully explain the share of Abū Ṭālib in the foundation of Islam. The best tribute, therefore, would be to quote some of his poetry lines which overflow with love for, and devotion to, Muḥammed. Abū Ṭālib has said these poetic lines:

> And you have called me and I know that you are truthful, and, in fact, you were truthful and trustworthy from the beginning. And I certainly know that the religion of Muḥammed is the best of all the religions of the world... Did you not know that we have found Muḥammed the Messenger of Allāh the same as was Musa (Moses)? It is so written in the scriptures.

Compare this poetry with this āyat of the Qur'ān:

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[1]According to some other accounts, Khadīja died a few weeks before, not after, Abū Ṭālib.

Verily, We have sent you a Messenger to be a witness over you as We had sent a Messenger to Pharaoh. (Qur'ān, 73:15)

Somewhere else Abū Ṭālib says these poetic lines:

> And the Lord of the world has strengthened him with His help, so he proclaimed the religion which is true, not false. Do not they know that our son is not doubted by us and that we do not care about the false sayings (of his foes)?

Abū al-Fida', in *Kitābul-Mukhtasar fī Akhbaril-Bashar,* states that some of the poetic verses composed by Abū Ṭālib prove the fact that he had accepted the Prophethood of the Prophet from the core of his heart. A translation of a few poetic verses of his is given here:

> You have called me (to Islam) and I believe that you are truthful, straightforward and trustworthy. And there is no doubt in my belief that the religion of Muhammed is the best of all the religions of the world. By God! As long as I am alive, not a single person from among Quraish can harm you.

Once Abū Ṭālib asked his son ᶜAli: "What is this religion which you are following?" ᶜAli said: "I believe in Allāh and in His Messenger, and I pray with him." Abū Ṭālib said: "Surely Muhammed will not call us but to a good thing. Never leave Muḥammed; follow him faithfully."

Once he saw the Prophet praying, with Khadīja and ᶜAli behind him. Jaᶜfer was with Abū Tālib. Abū Ṭālib told Jaᶜfer to go ahead and to join them in their prayer service.

When Ḥamzah accepted Islam in the sixth year of *biᶜthat* (inception of the Prophetic mission), Abū Ṭālib was over-joyed and said these poetic lines:

> Be patient, O Abū Yaᶜli (Ḥamzah), on account of the religion of Aḥmed. And proclaim the religion with courage, may Allāh help you. I was glad when you said that you were a *mu'min* (believer). So help the Messenger of Allāh in the cause of Allāh. And announce to Quraish your decision, and tell them that Ahmed was never a sorcerer.

If any reader wishes to examine these poetry lines, one of the references is al-Majlisi's *Biḥār al-Anwār.*

It was Abū Ṭālib's policy to keep Quraish guessing and in suspense

about his true belief: Had he announced that he had accepted the religion of Muhammed, his position as a respected leader of the tribe would have been undermined, and then he could not extend his protection to the Prophet. Thus, while always declaring his firm belief that Muhammed could not tell anything but the truth, exhorting his children and brothers to follow Muhammed's religion, he assiduously refrained from declaring in so many words that he himself was a Muslim. Thus, he maintained his position with the hierarchy of Quraish, protecting the Prophet through his influence.

Even on his death-bed, while there was still a chance that he might recover, he very diplomatically announced his faith in such a way that Quraish could not understand what he meant. When they asked him on which religion he was dying, he replied: "On the religion of my forefathers." As it has already been explained before, ᶜAbdul-Muttalib and all his ancestors were followers of the Divine religion; hence, one cannot but admire Abū Ṭālib's prudence and wisdom in that difficult situation.

During the last moments of his life, the Prophet advised him to recite the *kalima* loudly (as is the custom of the Muslims). ᶜAbbās, who had not accepted Islam yet, saw Abū Ṭālib's lips moving. He put his ears near Abū Ṭālib then said to the Prophet: "O nephew! Abū Ṭālib is saying what you wanted him to say!"

ᶜAllamah ibn Abil-Ḥadīd, the Muᶜtazilite scholar, has said the following poetic lines:

> If it were not for Abū Ṭālib and his son (ᶜAli), the religion of Islam could not take any shape, nor could it find its feet. Thus, Abū Ṭālib in Mecca gave shelter and protected (him), and ᶜAli in Medīna rubbed shoulders with death.

Imām Jaᶜfer al-Ṣādiq said: "The ancestors of the Prophet will be in Paradise and ᶜAbdul-Muttalib will enter Paradise having upon him the light of the Prophets and the dignity of kings, and Abū Ṭālib will be in the same group."

There are some ignorant writers the extent of whose knowledge is very limited ("Little knowledge is a dangerous thing[1]") and who cast doubt about Abū Ṭālib's faith, citing a mass of fabricated *aḥādīth*. Abū Ṭālib certainly did not do anything for them to warrant such vicious and

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[1]Alexander Pope, *Essay on Man*.

uncalled for publicity; so, in my view, their real target is not Abū Tālib but his son ʿAli who exposed their hypocrisy to the world. Such writers are the remnant of the followers of Abū Sufyān, Muʿawiyah, and Yazīd, bitter enemies of Ahl al-Bayt, the Prophet's pure and holy family. Unfortunately, there are many of them living among us even today, and most likely they will always remain so...

As for Khadīja, she was respected so much that the Meccans called her *ṭāhira* (the pure one). All the children of the Prophet were born by Khadīja except Ibrāhīm who was the son of Muḥammed and Maria (Mary) the Copt[1]. Khadīja was the first person to testify to the truth of the Prophet. She spent all her wealth in the cause of Islam. And she was a source of comfort and consolation to the Prophet.

The Prophet said: "Four women are the supreme-most among the women of Paradise: Maryam mother of ʿIsa (May mother of Jesus), Asiya wife of Pharaoh, Khadīja bint Khuwaylid, and Fāṭima bint Muḥammed."

ʿĀyisha said: "I never envied any woman as much as I envied Khadīja. The Prophet always remembered her. Whenever any sheep or goat was slaughtered, the choicest parts were sent to Khadīja's relatives and friends. I used to say, `It appears that Khadīja was the only woman in the world.' Hearing this, the Prophet was very much annoyed and said: "Khadīja had many virtues which others do not have."

She also said: "Once the Prophet remembered her and I said, `How long will you go on remembering a woman so old that she had no teeth in her mouth? Allāh has given you a woman better than her (meaning herself).' The Prophet was so crossed that the hair of his head was raised. He said: "By Allāh, I do not have better than Khadīja. She believed in me when others were steeped into infidelity. She testified to my truth when others rejected my claim. She helped me with her wealth when others deprived me. And Allāh gave me children by her." ʿĀyisha says that from then on she decided not to say any unkind word about Khadīja, as we are told in Vol. 3 of al-Bukhāri's *Ṣaḥīḥ*.

Khadīja was buried at Ḥajūn. Her grave was demolished by the Wahhabi rulers of Saudi Arabia in 1925 like those of ʿAbdul-Muttalib,

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[1]Mary the Copt was one of two Christian bondmaids, the other being her sister Shīrīn (in some references Sīrīn), presented to Muḥammed by the Roman governor of Egypt who had received a letter from Muḥammed inviting him to accept Islam. Prophet Muḥammed freed Mary then married her, giving Shīrin to the great poet Ḥassān ibn Thābit who did likewise.

Abū Ṭālib and others.

MUḤAMMED VISITS TĀ'IF (620 A.D.)

After the death of Abū Ṭālib and Khadīja, finding that the Meccans had turned a deaf ear to his preaching, the Prophet decided to go to Tā'if, a town sixty miles east of Mecca, accompanied by Zayd ibn Hārithah, perhaps its people would be more responsive. But a big disappointment was in store for him. Located about seventy miles east of Mecca, Tā'if was a stronghold of idolatry where the stony statue of al-Lat goddess, whom the pagans regarded as God's wife, covered with gems and jewels, was believed to be inspired with life. Muḥammed spent a month in Tā'if only to be scoffed and ridiculed. When he persisted in his preaching, the people of Tā'if drove him out of their city pelting him with stones for more than two miles incessantly across the sandy plain, inflicting him with wounds. In this desperate situation, as his wounds kept bleeding, he earnestly prayed to God thus:

> O Allāh! I make my complaint to You regarding the feebleness of my strength, the insignificance of my devices, and my humiliation in the sight of people. O Most Merciful One! You are the Lord of the oppressed, You are my Lord. To whom would You entrust my affairs? To a stranger who would scowl at me? Or to an enemy who would control me? If you are not displeased with me, then I do not care (about any hardship), but an ease bestowed by You will be more accommodating to me. I seek refuge in the light of Your countenance (by which all darkness is dispersed and all affairs of this world and of the hereafter are kept straight) from pouncing Your anger or the coming of Your wrath. I seek your pardon in order that you may be pleased with me. There is no power nor strength except in You.

Grief-stricken, the Prophet returned to Mecca.

A GROUP OF JINNS ACCEPT ISLAM (620 A.D.)

Jinns are surely hidden from human eyes, but not from the eyes of prophets and friends of God, and certainly not from the eyes of the master of the prophets of God, Muḥammed. We have written about the jinns earlier in this book.

On his way back home, Muḥammed halted one night at a grove at Nakhla, where he recited some verses of the Holy Qur'ān after having finished his prayers, as was his habit. A party of seven or nine jinns

happened to pass by as they were en route to Yemen. They were deeply impressed by the melodious tone of the Prophet, the excellence of the language of the recitaiton, and the depth of the meaning in those verses. Appearing before the Prophet, they accepted his doctrines, and when they reached their destination, they disseminated them among their folks who also embraced Islam. Let us shed more light on this incident by referring to the books of exegesis (*tafsīr*) of the Holy Qur'ān where we read the following in *Tafsīr al-Qummi*:

> The Messenger of Allāh was reciting the Qur'ān in the depth of the night when a group of jinns happened to be passing by. When they heard the recitation by the Messenger of Allāh, peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him and his progeny, they listened to it attentively. Having seen that he finished his recitation, they came to the Messenger of Allāh, accepted Islam, believing in him. The Messenger of Allāh taught them Islam's legislative code (the *Sharī'a*), whereupon the entire Chapter (titled "al-Jinn," the jinns) was revealed. They used to always return to the Messenger of Allāh from time to time; therefore, the Messenger of Allāh ordered the Commander of the Faithful ('Ali) to teach them and to explain everything to them[1].

DA'WAH REACHES BEYOND MECCA

After his return from Tā'if, Muhammed reached the cave of Hira where he stopped, sending Zayd to negotiate with a number of sympathetic Meccans for protection. He could not venture to enter the city where he knew fully well that his pagan opponents would not welcome his return. After prolonged negotiations, Zayd successfully secured the help of Mut'im ibn 'Adiy, one of those who had sided with Abū Ṭālib in demanding an end to the sanctions against the Hāshemites. He personally went to Muhammed, offered him security and escorted him to his house in Mecca. Now the Prophet could appear in public only during the months of Rajab and Thul-Ḥijjah to preach the doctrines of Islam to the pilgrims and to the stubborn Meccans.

Yet despite all these disappointments and persecutions, Islam was spreading in other tribes too, although very slowly and not on a grand

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[1]Abul-Ḥasan 'Ali ibn Ibrāhīm al-Qummi, *Tafsīr al-Qummi,* Vol. 2, pp. 274-275 (Beirut, Lebanon: Al-A'lami Foundation for Publications, 1412 A.H./1991 A.D.). The original text is, of course, written in Arabic.

scale. Its simplicity and rationality were such that it only needed to reach the ears of the people to stir their souls. For thirteen years, Quraish did their very best to stifle the new religion, but their opposition itself provided the necessary publicity. Tribes from all corners of Arabia flocked to Medīna during the time of the annual pilgrimage. Lest they should be influenced by Muḥammed's message, Quraish, particularly Abū Lahab and Abū Jahl, used to post themselves outside the city to warn the pilgrims that: "An infidel has been born in our city who dishonours our idols; he even speaks ill of Lāt and ʿUzza; do not listen to him." People naturally became curious and wanted to know more about this man. A disciple of the Prophet, recalling his earlier days, stated: "When I was young, I used to hear from the people going to Mecca that a person claiming Prophethood had been born there." When the news spread, most people laughed and jeered at Muḥammed, yet there were a few seekers of the truth who listened to his message and were influenced by it. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar, in his book *Al-Iṣābah*, mentions the names of several companions who had come from Yemen and other distant places and, after secretly accepting Islam, had gone back to work among their tribes. The clan of Abū Mūsa al-Ashʿari of Yemen accepted Islam in this manner.

Ṭufail ibn ʿAmr, of the tribe of Daws, was a famous poet who could by his poetic fervor sway the feelings and attitudes of the Arabs. He had come into contact with the Prophet and was so enthralled by the marvelous diction of the Qur'ān recited to him that he accepted Islam instantly. He was able to win some converts in his tribe, but in general the tribe did not listen to him. He came back to the Prophet and requested him to curse the Daws, but the Prophet prayed thus: "O God! Guide the Daws and send them to me (as Muslims)!" It was not long before the entire tribe had accepted Islam.

Dhamad ibn Thaʿlabah was a chief of the Azd tribe and a childhood friend of the Prophet. He came to Mecca and was told that Muḥammed had gone mad. He approached the Prophet and said that he could cure him. The Prophet replied, "All praise be to God; I praise Him and seek His forgiveness. If God were to guide anyone, he cannot go astray, and if He leaves anyone to stray, none can guide him. I declare that there is no god but Allāh. He is one and has no partner, and further (I declare) that Muḥammed is His Servant and Messenger." It is almost impossible to reproduce the vibrating force and captivating charm of the Arabic text which so much impressed Dhamad that he accepted Islam immediately

and through him his entire tribe submitted to it. Another physician, namely al-Hārith ibn Kildah al-Thaqafi, the most skilled physician of the Thaqīf tribe, attempted to likewise "cure" the Prophet of his alleged madness. The reader will come across what went on between him and the Prophet later in this book *Insha-Allāh*.

Abū Tharr of the tribe of Ghifār was one of those who were disgusted with idol-worship. When he heard about the Prophet, he went to Mecca and incidentally met ᶜAli with whom he stayed for three days. ᶜAli introduced him to the Prophet and Abū Tharr accepted Islam. The Prophet advised him to go back home, but in his zeal he publicly announced in the Kaᶜba: "There is no god but Allāh and Muḥammed is His Prophet." He was given a sound thrashing by Quraish and was rescued by ᶜAbbās who reminded Quraish that their trade caravans passed through routes under the control of Abū Tharr's tribe. Returning to his tribe, he invited it to accept Islam. About half of his tribesmen accepted Islam and the rest followed suit after the Prophet's migration to Medīna. Since the Ghifārs were on very friendly terms with the tribe of Aslam, the latter were influenced by the former and also accepted Islam.

Quite a number of persons had incidentally heard the Qur'ān being recited and were captivated by it. Jubayr ibn Mutᶜim had come to Medīna to pay ransom for the prisoners of the Battle of Badr. He happened to hear the Prophet reciting the following verses:

> *Or were they created out of naught? Or are they the creators? Or did they create the heavens and the Earth? Nay, but they have no certainty.* (Qur'ān, 52:35-36)

Jubayr later stated that when he heard these verses, he felt that his heart was about to soar.

ᶜĀYISHA IS ENGAGED TO MUḤAMMED (621 A.D.)

Abū Bakr could sense the impact of the great loss the Prophet suffered at the death of his first loving and supportive wife Khadīja. He noticed how his friend Muḥammed looked forlon, and he was awaiting an opportunity to cheer him up and to cement their friendship. Abū Bakr, therefore, offered to marry his daughter ᶜĀyisha, who was born in 613 A.D., to Muḥammed, an offer which Muḥammed first politely declined. But Abū Bakr was not to give up easily. He kept persuading him till he consented on the condition that the wedding should be postponed for the

time being. ʿĀyisha was thus formally engaged to Muḥammed in 621 A.D. and the wedding took place two to three years later in 2 A.H./623 A.D. Having seen how his friend Abū Bakr succeeded in marrying his daughter to Muḥammed, ʿOmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb now expressed his desire that the Prophet should marry his daughter Ḥafṣa, a desire which was fulfilled a few years later: in 624 A.D. to be exact, as it will be discussed later.

The news that a Prophet had arisen was spreading. A deputation of about twenty Christians from Nazareth, birthplace of Jesus, came to meet him and embraced Islam. In the same year, that is, 621 A.D., when the Prophet was preaching at Aqaba, a mountain pass between Mina and ʿArafat, six men belonging to the tribe of al-Khazraj and residing in Yathrib happened to come to Mecca to perform the pilgrimage. They were: Abū Umāmah Asʿad ibn Zurārah, ʿUqbah ibn ʿĀmir ibn Nābi, Quṭnah ibn ʿAmir, ʿAwn ibn al-Ḥārith, Rāfiʿ ibn Mālik, and Jābir ibn ʿAbdullāh. They listened to him attentively. Hearing the fundamental principles of his faith and discerning his own sentiments, they were captivated by the truth of his words and immediately embraced Islam. Upon their return to Yathrib, they disseminated the doctrines of Islam among their people and announced their conversion to the Islamic creed, praising Muḥammed greatly for his truth, character, affectionate nature, high moral conduct and attractive personality.

FIRST PLEDGE OF ʿAQABA (622 A.D.)

Similarly, in the next year (622 A.D.), at the time of the annual pilgrimage, twelve Yathribites, who were drawn by curiosity at the reports given by those six Yathribite converts came to meet the Prophet along with five of the same six Yathribites and undertook a pledge known as the First Pledge of ʿAqaba (mountain-pass), so named because it was done in an out of the way mountain-pass outside Mecca. The pledge was: "We will not associate anything with God; we will neither steal nor commit adultery nor fornication; we will not kill our children; we will abstain from calumny and slander; we will obey the Prophet in everything, and we will be faithful to him in weal and sorrow." This was followed by the Second Pledge of ʿAqaba; this time seventy men and two women made the same pledge. The Prophet selected twelve from among them to be his ambassadors to take charge to disseminate the call among their people. Those twelve men were: 1) Jābir ibn ʿAbdullāh (later al-Anṣāri, one of the greatest personalities in the Islamic history), 2) al-Barā'

ibn Maʿrūr, 3) ʿAbbādah ibn al-Ṣāmit, 4) ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAmr ibn Ḥizām, 5) Abū Sāʿidah Saʿd ibn ʿAbādah[1], 6) al-Munthir ibn ʿAmr, 7) ʿAbdullāh ibn Ruwāḥah, 8) Saʿd ibn al-Rabeeʿ, 9) Rāfiʿ ibn Mālik al-ʿAjlan, 10) Abū ʿAbd al-Ashhal Aseed ibn Ḥaḍeer, 11) Abul-Haytham ibn al-Tayhan (an ally of Banū ʿAmr ibn ʿAwf), and 12) Saʿd ibn Khathʿamah. The foremost to swear the oath of allegiance was al-Barā' ibn Maʿrūr[2].

When they returned to Yathrib, two of the Prophet's disciples, namely Musʿab ibn ʿOmayr, a grandson of Hāshim, and ʿAbdullāh ibn Umm Maktūm, were sent along with them to teach them the Qur'ān and the fundamentals of Islam. These men were required to inform the Prophet of their success in their efforts at the same place in the following pilgrimage season. It is worth mentioning here that before accepting Islam, Musʿab ibn ʿOmayr used to enjoy a life of luxury with his family, being the favourite of his parents. But when he accepted Islam, his parents and the rest of his family severed all ties with him, rendering him in all reality without a family. This is a typical case of most of the early converts to Islam. They were disowned by their families and tribes and deprived of the most basic needs from the latter who treated them as though they were now enemies.

On the same day after having accepted Islam at the hands of Musʿab ibn ʿOmayr, Saʿd ibn Muʿāth, a Meccan dignitary, went to the quarters inhabited by the offspring of ʿAmr ibn ʿAwf and shouted as loudly as he could: "O Banū ʿAmr! O Banū ʿAwf! Let no man or woman or a virgin or a married woman or an old man or a young one stay without coming out! This day is not the day of a veil or a curtain! Come out!" When they all came out of their houses to see what he had to say, he asked their crowd the following question: "What is my status among you?!" They said, "You are our master and the one whose word is obeyed among us; we shall never disobey you; so, order us whatever you please." Saʿd ibn Muʿāth then said, "I shall never speak one word to your men or women or children unless you testify that: There is no god except Allāh, and that Muhammed is the Messenger of Allāh. Praise be to Allāh Who has bestowed upon us such a blessing. It is a blessing about which the Jews used to talk to us." Not a single person in the crowd hesitated to

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[1]The reader may remember Saʿd ibn ʿAbādah from the chapter of this book dealing with the jinns.

[2]al-Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 15, p. 370.

pronounce this sacred testimony, becoming Muslims, each and every one of them. Holding and turning Musᶜab ibn ᶜOmayr to face him, he said to him, "Do manifest your affair, and invite people to Islam publicly."[1]

The period between the First and the Second Pledges was one of anxious waiting. The Meccans were sternly adamant, the people of Ṭā'if had rejected Muḥammed, and the mission was making a slow progress. Yet hope had been engendered by its diffusion to the distant city of Yathrib and the conviction was very much there that the truth would ultimately prevail.

Describing this period, Muir says:

"Mahomet, thus holding his people at bay, waiting, in the still expectation of victory, to outward appearance defenseless, and with his little band, as it were, in the lion's mouth, yet trusting in his Almighty's power whose messenger he believed himself to be, resolute and unmoved, presents a spectacle of sublimity paralleled only in the sacred records by such scenes as that of the prophet of Israel, when he complained to his Master, `I, even I only, am left."

MIᶜRĀJ: ASCENSION OF THE PROPHET (622 A.D.)

The date is the 27th of Rajab, twelve years after the inception of the Prophetic mission. It was then that God Almighty, in His infinite Mercy and Benevolence, bestowed upon the Prophet the unique distinction of being lifted to the furthest limit of heaven and of being shown the gorgeous splendor of the heavens and the universe:

> *Glory to (Him) Who took His servant for a journey by night from the Sacred Mosque (Kaᶜba) to the Furthest Mosque (Jerusalem) whose precincts We have blessed, in order that We might show him some of Our signs, for He is the Hearer and the Seer."*
> (Qur'ān, 17:1)

There has been a good deal of controversy over the question whether the ascension (*miᶜrāj*) was only a vision or an actual bodily journey. The majority of the traditionists agree that it was a real physical journey, much like the bodily ascension of Jesus to heaven and the descent of Adam to earth.

The fact is that this controversy was created by Banū Umayyah

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[1] *Ibid*, Vol. 19, p. 11.

whose interest in Islam was based not on faith but on politics and who did not like the idea of any miracle of the Prophet gaining ground in the Muslims' minds. Their department of forgery obliged them in this respect also. Both Abū Bakr and his daughter ᶜĀyisha did not believe in the Prophet's bodily ascent to heavens, and the Umayyads' department of fabrication coined *aḥādīth* casting doubt about such a physical ascension. The cadre of this department of fabrication forgot that ᶜĀyisha was not married to the Prophet when the ascension took place; she was still living with her family; the Prophet did not marry her except two years later.

Two "traditions" from that department are repeatedly cited by the Christians, the Ahmedis, and a group of Sunnis; these are:

1. ᶜĀyisha is supposed to have said that during the whole night of the Ascension, the body of the Prophet was on the bed.

2. Muᶜāwiyah said that the *miᶜrāj* was a "true dream."

Now the fact is that the *miᶜrāj* (whatever its interpretation) took place in Mecca before the Hijra.

ᶜĀyisha did not enter the house of the Prophet till one year after the *hijra*. How could she say that she did not miss the body of the Prophet at that time?!

There is only one possible explanation: This "tradition" was forged by someone who did not know the chronology of Islamic history. Otherwise, he could not have attributed this "tradition" to ᶜĀyisha.

Muᶜāwiyah was such an enemy of the Prophet that 8 years after the *hijra* (Latin Hegira), Mecca was conquered without bloodshed and Abū Sufyān, his father, seeing no alternative, pretended to accept Islam. Muᶜāwiyah fled to Bahrain and wrote a nasty letter to his father condemning him for his acceptance of Islam. It was not till the 9th year of Hijra that Muᶜāwiyah brought himself to profess Islam, yet his deeds belied his words. And the *miᶜrāj* took place several years before then. How could he know what the facts of the *Miᶜrāj* were?! He does not mention his source of information, and the inference is that there was no such source.

If you want to witness how politics controlled the version of Islam professed by the Umayyads, read one more 'tradition' invented in their laboratory:

The king on the throne of Damascus is ᶜAbdul-Malik ibn Marwān.

Iraq and Hijaz are in the hands of ᶜAbdullāh ibn Zubayr. ᶜAbdul-Mālik does not like the idea of the pilgrims of his domain being obliged to go to Mecca (which is in the enemy's hands); so, he wants to enhance the prestige of Baitul Maqdis (Jerusalem), which lies within his domain and plans to establish "hajj" to Baitul Maqdis. As part of that plan, all previous declarations that the *Miᶜrāj* was a dream are forgotten, and a tradition is forged that the final destination of the journey of *the miᶜrāj* was Baitul Maqdis.

Soon thereafter, ᶜAbdullāh ibn al-Zubayr is defeated and Hijāz comes under Syrian control; otherwise, we would surely have seen two centers of *ḥajj* in the Muslim world!

The footprint of the Prophet is still visible on the stone of a rock at Jerusalem where the Prophet ascended to heaven. A mosque was built by caliph ᶜOmar to preserve the memory of the footprint on the stone which still stands at the same place.

THE SECOND PLEDGE OF ᶜAQABA (622/623 A.D.)

On their return to Yathrib, the converts to the faith spread the doctrines of Islam and a large number of Yathribites became adherents to the faith. In the following year, seventy-three men and two women from among the converts of Yathrib's Aws and Khazraj tribes, including the twelve who took the first pledge, accompanied Musᶜab ibn ᶜOmayr[1] to the Prophet together with a Jewish caravan of three to five hundred men headed by Ibn Ubay in order to accept Islam and to invite the Prophet to their city. They all swore allegiance to him. This pledge is known as the Second Pledge of ᶜAqaba. The Prophet took with him his uncle ᶜAbbās, now the head of the family and formally his protector, although not a Muslim yet. ᶜAbbās exhorted the Yathribites to protect the Prophet.

In the Spring of the same year, 13 years after the inception of the Prophetic mission, an exodus of the believers to Yathrib had already started. This immigration went on quietly. Within two months, about one

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[1]Musᶜab ibn ᶜOmayr was one of the earliest converts to Islam. He participated in the first migration to Ethiopia. In Medīna, where he was deputied by the Prophet to preach, he became guest of Asᶜad ibn Zurārah, and his efforts were largely successful for the conversion to Islam of a large number of people. He was after the Prophet the first person to lead congregational prayers; those who prayed behind him numbered no more than twelve men who had assembled at the house of Saᶜd ibn Khathᶜamah.

hundred and fifty Meccan Muslims succeeded in reaching Yathrib. Finally, the open departure of ʿOmar ibn al-Khattāb in the company of twenty other converts alarmed Quraish a great deal. Fearing none in Mecca, ʿOmar departed in broad daylight. Both ʿAli and Abū Bakr, however, remained with the Prophet in Mecca to keep him company.

A PLAN TO ASSASSINATE THE PROPHET

When the Meccans realized how Islam had struck roots in Yathrib and was fast spreading there, their animosity knew no bounds. Their chiefs, such as Abū Jahl, Abū Lahab, Abū Sufyān, and ʿOtbah, gathered at Dār al-Nadwa and, after rejecting suggestions to imprison or banish Muḥammed, they planned to assassinate him.

> *And remember when the unbelievers plotted against you to imprison you, or to kill you, or to drive you out, they plotted and planned and Allāh, too, planned.*
> (Qur'ān, 8:30)

In order to escape the vendetta of Banū Hāshim, it was decided that every clan should provide one man, and that they should collectively assault the Prophet as soon as he came out of his house. But God had apprised His Prophet of this plan well in advance through archangel Gabriel who revealed to him these verses:

> *And when those who disbelieved devised plans against you that they might confine you or slay you or drive you out (of their city), and they devised plans and Allāh, too, had arranged a plan, and Allāh is the best of planners.*
> (Qur'ān, 8:30)

Gabriel conveyed the Almighty's order to Muḥammed to leave Mecca and to go to Yathrib where the Almighty, as the verse above implies, had already had a plan for him; surely Allāh is the best of planners. Muḥammed informed ʿAli of this divine command, ordering him to sleep in his (Prophet's) bed. When ʿAli heard that his life was to be the ransom for the Prophet's, he at once prostrated before Allāh to thank Him for this unique honour. It was the first *sajda* of "shukr" (prostration of gratitude) in Islam. The Prophet covered ʿAli with his own green sheet. Thus, ʿAli slept soundly on the Prophet's bed as the Prophet walked out of the house under the infidels' very noses.

The moment Muhammed stood at his house door, he heard the infidels saying, "Muhammed claims that if you swear the oath of allegiance to him, you will rule the Arabs and the non-Arabs. Then, after your death, you will be resurrected to reside in gardens like the earthly gardens. And if you do not swear it, you will be slaughtered, then, after your death, you will be resurrected where there will be a fire for you to burn you!" The Prophet responded by saying, "Yes, I say so," but they did not hear him, being busy chatting with each other. Then he took hold of a handful of dust as he recited the first eight verses of Sūrat Yā-Sīn. He threw the dust over their heads. None of the enemies saw him going out. The verses he recited are:

> ***In the Name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful***
> *Yā-Sīn. I swear by the Qur'ān (which is) full of wisdom, (that) most surely you are one of the prophets, on a right course. (This is) a revelation of the Mighty, the most Merciful. So that you may warn a people whose fathers were not warned, so they are heedles. Certainly the word has proved true of most of them, so they do not believe. Surely We have placed chains on their necks, and these reach up to their chins, so they have their heads raised aloft.*
> (Qur'ān, 36:1-8)

Muhammed had also ordered ᶜAli to return the things which people had entrusted to him for safe keeping (since burglaries were quite common) to their respective owners.

The polytheists of Quraishite clans all the time thought that it was the Prophet who was sleeping and were anxiously waiting to kill him.

According to *Usudul Ghābah* of Ibn Athīr al-Jazri, *Ihyā' ul ᶜOloom* (of al-Ghazāli) and *Tārīkhul Khamīs* of *qadi* Husain al-Diyārbakri, when ᶜAli slept in Muhammed's bed, God said to arch-angels Gabriel and Michael, "I establish brotherhood between you two and increase the life of one of you over that of the other. Having done so, I ask which of you is prepared to sacrifice his life for his brother?" Both Gabriel and Michael heard this address from the Lord but each held his life dearer than the other's and was not prepared to help his brother by sacrificing his own life. God then addressed them again, "Can you not be like ᶜAli ibn Abū Tālib? See, I created brotherhood between Muhammed and ᶜAli, and now ᶜAli is sleeping in Muhammed's bed determined to sacrifice his own life for his brother. Now you both go to earth and guard ᶜAli from the

mischief of the enemies." Then the two nearest-to-God angels came down and took their positions near the head and the feet of ʿAli. Gabriel said: "Hail to thee! Hail to thee! Who can be like thee, O son of Abū Tālib, so that the Lord is proud of thee and exalts thy virtue before the angels?!" And so it happened. When the Prophet was on his way to Yathrib, God revealed to him the following verse in praise of ʿAli:

> *And amongst men there is one who sells his life seeking the pleasure of Allāh. And Allāh is most benevolent to His slaves.*
> (Qurʾān, 2:207)

The Prophet went to the mountain of Thawr in the dead of night accompanied by Abū Bakr, Abū Bakr's slave ʿĀmir ibn Fahr, and their road guide ʿAbdullāh ibn Urayqiṭ and hid in a cave near its summit. This place is about 5 miles from Mecca.

There are two versions as to how Abū Bakr came to accompany the Prophet. One narrative says that the Prophet himself went to the house of Abū Bakr and told him to accompany him.

The other narrative says that when the Prophet went away, Abū Bakr came there and asked ʿAli as to where the Prophet was. ʿAli told him that he had already left for Yathrib. Abū Bakr went out looking for the Prophet. The night was dark; therefore, when he came nearer, the Prophet thought that an infidel was pursuing him. He started going faster and faster, till his shoe-lace was broken and his toes were badly wounded. Then Abū Bakr called him. Recognizing his voice, the Prophet stopped. Abū Bakr caught up with him and asked permission to accompany him. Thus, they went together till they reached Thawr.

At dawn, the infidels, including Meccan dignitaries such as Abū Jahl, al-Hakam ibn Abul-ʿĀs, ʿOqbah ibn Muʿeet, al-Nadīr ibn al-Hārith, Umayyah ibn Khalaf, Ibn al-Ghayṭalah, Zamʿah ibn al-Aswad, Tuʿmah ibn ʿAdiy, Abū Lahab, Ubayy ibn Khalaf, and both Nabeeh and Munbih sons of al-Ḥajjaj, broke into the Prophet's house. They were flabbergasted upon finding ʿAli in the bed instead of the Prophet. "Where is Muḥammed?" they asked ʿAli who told them that he did not know. It is said that they beat and confined ʿAli for about an hour then released him. At once they started looking for Muḥammed, tracking him right up to the mouth of the cave. The searching party was headed by one Surāqah ibn Mālik who was motivated by greed rather than by zeal for paganism and its man-made gods.

Still, they never thought of looking into the cave. Why?

As soon as the fugitives entered the cave, a spider wove cobweb at the entrance and a pair of pigeons built their nest at the mouth of the very cave in the darkness of the night and laid eggs at once. It was that cobweb and the nest with the eggs that made the blood-thirsty enemies believe that Muhammed could not be in that cave; otherwise, the cobweb would have been destroyed and the nest and the eggs broken! It was at this moment that they got so near to the cave that Abū Bakr started weeping, being afraid of the possible discovery. But the Prophet consoled him saying, "Grieve not; surely Allāh is with us" (Qur'ān, 9:40).

Having seen how the pigeons and the spider helped save his life, the Messenger of God supplicated to the Almighty for them, praying that He reward them on his behalf. As a token of his appreciation, Muhammed prohibited Muslims ever since from killing spiders or pigeons.

Both men[1] left Mecca on the first night of Rabī'ul-Awwal, reaching the cave of Thawr before dawn and remaining therein up to the 4th of Rabī'ul-Awwal. On the 5th, they started their journey to Yathrib. 'Abdullāh ibn 'Urayqit al-Daylami was hired to show them the way. Abū Bakr offered one of his she-camels to the Prophet for the journey. The Prophet accepted it on the condition that Abū Bakr accepted its price. Thus, Abū Bakr sold one she-camel (which had cost him 200 dirhams) to the Prophet for 900 dirhams.

Seeing how they missed the opportunity to kill Muhammed, Abū Jahl announced a prize of one hundred camels for anyone who brought Muhammed to them alive or dead. He hired a crier to cry out throughout the city saying, "O Meccans! Whoever brings Muhammed or leads us to his hiding place will receive one hundred camels! And whoever brings us the son of Abū Quhāfah (Abu Bakr) or leads us to his hiding place will receive one hundred camels!"

Lured by the promise of such a generous reward, "Abu Sahl" Buraydah ibn al-Hasib al-Aslami rode in command of seventy of his tribesmen seeking to capture Muhammed. Having left the cave a short while ago, Muhammed found himself face-to-face with Buraydah! "Who are you?" asked Muhammed. "I am Buraydah," the man answered without asking about the identity of the inquirer. Muhammed turned to Abū Bakr

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[1]According to al-Majlisi, they were not two but four men: The Prophet, Abū Bakr, the latter's slave 'Āmir ibn Faheerah, and their road guide 'Abdullāh ibn al-'Urayqit.

and said, "Our affair is made easy (*barada*[1]) and is amended!" Then the Prophet asked Buraydah, "Who do you belong to?" Buraydah said, "From Aslam (Banū Aslam, the offspring of Aslam[2])." The Messenger of Allāh then said, "We sure are now safe (*salimnā*)!" "From whom?" asked Buraydah. "From Banū Sahm! Your arrow (*sahm*) is now out[3]!" "And who are you?!" asked Buraydah. "I am Muḥammed son of ʿAbdullāh, the Messenger of Allāh," answered the Prophet. "I testify," responded Buraydah, "that there is no god except Allāh and that Muḥammed is His Servant and Messenger." All those who were in Buraydah's company embraced Islam there and then, having been impressed and captivated by the Messenger of Allāh. In the morning, Buraydah advised the Prophet thus: "Do not enter Yathrib without carrying a standard." Buraydah took off his own turban, tied it to a post and carried it in front of the Prophet. Since they were still in the outskirts of Mecca, Buraydah asked the Prophet, "O Prophet of Allāh! Would you like to be my guest?" Muḥammed said, "My she-camel receives her own orders [as to where the Prophet should spend the night]." Buraydah said, "Praise be to Allāh! Banū Sahm have submitted to the will of Allāh willingly, not unwillingly!"[4]

During the first day of the trip to Yathrib, the Prophet halted for a short while at a place called Qadīd where he and his companions met a virtuous lady named Umm Maʿbad of the tribe of Khuzāʿah. Her tribe is actually an ally of Quraish. The men asked her as she sat in the shade of her tent to sell them some dates and meat, but she did not have any. The Messenger of Allāh saw a she-camel tied next to the tent. "What is this she-camel, O Umm Maʿbad?" asked the Prophet. She told him that that was a worn-out she-camel that could not produce any milk. "Do you

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[1]The name "Buraydah" spurred the Prophet to be optimistic. Literally, it means "easy" or "cool." It is a noun derived from the verb *barada* (past), *yabradu* (present); *barid*, easy, cool or cold, is the adjective. The reader can easily sense the Prophet's confidence in his Maker's protection as well as his courage and sense of humor even in the most critical of situations.

[2]The word "aslama" means "became Muslim."

[3]This is a figure of speech in Arabic meaning: "You have now won."

[4]These details and many more can be reviewed on p. 40, Vol. 19, of al-Majlisi's voluminous book *Biḥār al-Anwār*.

permit me to milk her?" was the Prophet's next question. The old woman told Muhammed that he was welcome to milk the she-camel only if he could find any milk in her udders at all. Muhammed supplicated to his Lord then passed his holy hands on the she-camel's udders. He asked for the largest container with which the woman could provide him. He milked the she-camel till the container was completely full. First he let the old woman drink of that milk, then he let Abū Bakr and his slave drink, then the road guide. He was the last to drink of it... Such humbleness is typical only of the prophets of God. Before leaving, he milked the she-camel again and left the container full with the old woman.

When Abū Maᶜbad, the old woman's husband, came back from the pasture with his animals suddenly fattened, another miracle, he listened to his wife describing the person of the Prophet, whereupon he was very excited and wished he had been at home to pay him homage. He then spontaneously composed verses of poetry describing both miracles: the milking of the she-camel that had no milk at all before Muhammed touched her udders, and that of his own herd suddenly becoming healthy and fat. These poetic verses can be reviewed on pp. 42-43 of Vol. 19 of al-Majlisi's work *Biḥār al-Anwār*. As a matter of fact, when the great poet Hassān ibn Thābit came to know about these miracles and the poetry composed by Abū Maᶜbad, he was inspired to compose poetry of his own on the same theme, using the same rhyme and meter employed by Abū Maᶜbad. His poetic lines are cited on the same page...

When the Prophet got up to resume his journey, he performed the ablution in preparation for his afternoon prayers, throwing some water over a plant near the tent. The plant was found the next day to have miracuously grown into a tree laden with fruits. Its leaves were larger than they had ever been. People who tasted its fruit found it very delicious and aromatic. The tree was henceforth considered blessed, and soon the sick from various parts of Arabia went there to be cured by its fruit and leaves. It soon acquired fame all over the Arabian peninsula. People from distant places thronged around it. Exactly ten years later (in 11 A.H./632 A.D.), it suddenly shed all its fruit. The incident coincided with the day when the Messenger of Allāh died. About thirty years later (42 A.H./662 A.D.), on the day of Imām ᶜAli's martyrdom in Kūfa, Iraq, the fruits of the tree again fell down all at once. It never produced any fruit ever since, yet people kept going there in order to be cured by its leaves. Finally, on the day of the martyrdom of Imām Husain, grandson

of the Prophet, in Kerbalā', Iraq, a red fluid was found flowing profusely from its trunk and the tree dried up. Reference to this tree and to its miraculous benefits is recorded in al-Ḥākim's book titled *Al-Āmāli* and also on p. 41, Vol. 18, of al-Majlisi's work *Biḥār al-Anwār*. As a matter of fact, a voluminous book can be written about the miracles performed by the Prophet of Islam, and there are books already written about this subject. If the reader wishes that I write one such book, then I request him/her to supplicate to Allāh to enable me to do so; his/her supplication will *Inshā-Allāh* be answered. If you thus supplicate, I plead to the Almighty to grant you a handsome share of the rewards of writing it, one that will last as long as you live and beyond that till the Day of Judgment; He is the most Generous of the generous ones; nobody can ever surpass Him in His generosity; He surely can do anything at all; He hears the supplication, and He responds...

On the second day of the trip to Yathrib undertaken by Muḥammed, Abū Bakr and the two other men, and just when they thought that they were out of danger, they saw in the distance behind them a man in hot pursuit of them. It was Sūrāqah ibn Mālik who was tempted by the one hundred camels prize; he had not yet given up the search. At the sight, Abū Bakr again began to tremble for fear of being captured. "We are lost!" he cried out. Muḥammed comforted him again by repeating what he had said to him when they were inside the cave: "Do not be afraid; Allāh is with us." Saying so, the Prophet prayed God for protection. As the pursuer advanced, his charger reared and sank motionless in the sands. Both the rider and his mount were now helpless. Bewildered and astounded, Sūrāqah became convinced of the interference of Divine Providence on behalf of Muḥammed, so he entreated the forgiveness of the Messenger of God, promising never to betray him again. The Prophet prayed for him, and his charger got up. He rode back home to Mecca, and Muḥammed was once again free to pursue his course along the sea coast.

Journeying by unfrequented routes, the men, namely the Prophet, Abū Bakr, Abū Bakr's slave ᶜĀmir ibn Fahr, and their road guide ᶜAbdullāh ibn Urayqiṭ, proceeded to Yathrib shortly before noon. They safely reached Qubā' (2 miles south of Yathrib) one week later, on a Monday, the 12th of Rabīᶜul-Awwal, 1 A.H. (September 27, 622 A.D.). The Prophet's she-camel Qaswā' sat down on its own at the place called Al-Taqwa where the Prophet alighted and was hosted by Saᶜd ibn Khathᶜamah. Abū Bakr proceeded to Yathrib and became the guest of

Zayd ibn Kharj who lived at Sonḥ, a suburb of Yathrib.

There, the Prophet, now 53 years old, halted at Qubā' for four days waiting for his right hand ᶜAli to join him before proceeding to Yathrib. He did not want to triumphantly enter the city without ᶜAli, his main supporter and confidant. There, he laid the foundations of the first mosque in Islam, the mosque of Qubā' which has been mentioned in the Qur'ān as "the Mosque founded on piety (*taqwa*)," hence it is also referred to as "Masjid al-Taqwa." After four days, ᶜAli joined the Prophet and his party at Qubā' after having journeyed, all by himself and on foot, travelling at night and hiding during daytime, the entire distance of about 250 miles. His feet were sorely lacerated and bleeding. Upon his arrival, the Prophet expressed his thrill to see him, received him with open arms and, finding him tired, exhausted and his feet bleeding, he shed tears out of his affection for him. Muhammed subsequently applied the moisture of his mouth to ᶜAli's wounds and prayed for him. That was sufficeint to bring him an instant relief by the power of God.

Then the Prophet and his band of faithfuls, entering it on Friday the 16th of Rabīᶜul-Awwal corresponding to October 1, 622 A.D. with a group of followers who had come from Yathrib to welcome the Prophet. This was the Hijra from which dates the Islamic (*hijrī*) calendar. At Yathrib, the Prophet was hosted by the great *ṣahābi* Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣāri for one week. The Prophet performed there and then the very first public Friday sermon (*salāt al-jumᶜa*) in Islamic history, and those who attended it are said to be between 80 and 100 men.

> Whoever obeys the Prophet surely obeys Allāh."
> (Qur'ān, 4:80))

WHY THE PERSECUTION?

Let us stop here for a minute to analyze the reasons behind the persecution to which Prophet Muhammed and his followers were exposed.

The Prophet of Islam and his devoted band of followers had patiently endured untold hardships, tyranny and oppression for thirteen years and ultimately had to abandon their hearths and homes, sacrificing whatever worldly possessions they had. They did not pursue any worldly gains, nor had they aspired for any position of worldly eminence or share in any authority. The Prophet had unequivocally told the Meccans, "I desire neither riches nor eminence nor dominion. I am sent by God Who has

ordered me to announce glad tidings to you. I convey to you the words of my Lord. I admonish you. If you accept the message I bring you, God will be favourable to you both in this world and in the next. If you reject my admonition, I shall be patient and leave God to judge between you and me."

The early Muslims were harassed and persecuted simply because they believed in One and the Only God, the Lord of the universe, and worshipped Him without ascribing to Him any partner or colleague. They had not exercised any compulsion, for the Qur'ān had said:

> *There is no compulsion in religion; truly the right way has become clearly distinct from error; therefore, whoever disbelieves in the rebels (false deities) and believes in Allāh, he indeed has laid hold of the strongest handle which shall not break off.*
> (Qur'ān, 2:256)

The Qur'ān only appealed to the inner consciousness of man, to his reason and intellect. Nevertheless, the new religion was in sharp contrast with the cults practiced by Quraish which ages of observance and belief had sanctified for them. The Prophet preached the equality of man and stressed that in righteousness alone lay the superiority of one over the other. Quraish saw in this leveling of distinctions the end of their authority and privileges as the guardians of the Kaʿba, of their political and social hegemony, and of their vested interests at large.

Islam placed restraints upon the promiscuous and unbridled license wherein the society indulged. It heralded the end of licentious ways, of sensual pleasures and drunken orgies to which Quraish were, by and large, espoused. It imposed spiritual discipline in the form of prayers, fasting and charity and frowned upon avarice, greed, slander, falsehood, indecency and other vices with which the society was permeated. In short, it meant the giving up of old ways and the taking to a new life of austere piety and chastity. The opposition of the Meccans was, therefore, sharp and violent. They relentlessly persecuted the followers of the new faith and made life so difficult for them that ultimately the Prophet and his followers had to abandon their hearths and homes for more congenial surroundings. The Prophet did not even invoke the wrath of God on

them. When once he was requested by Khabbāb son of ʿArrāt[1] to curse Quraish, the Prophet pulled him up saying, "People have gone by who were sawn and torn to pieces in the cause of God, but they did not desist from their duties. God will accomplish His plan till a rider will go from Sinai to Hadramaut fearing none except God." What a true prophecy!

THE PROPHET IN MEDĪNA (622 A.D.)

Living in contact with the Jews, the Aws and the Khazraj tribes were not foreign to the idea of the unity of God. They had heard from the Jews that a Prophet was to come. Some of their people had come into contact with the Prophet at Mecca and had been deeply impressed by Him. The deputation (of three to five hundred referred to above) which they had sent to Mecca had returned entirely satisfied. The disciples who had preceded the Prophet were spreading the message of Islam throughout Yathrib. Unlike the Meccans, the Yathribites had no vested interest standing in the way of their accepting the new religion. Islam had already taken roots in Yathrib thus before the Prophet arrived there on the invitation of the people of Aws and Khazraj. No wonder they gave the Prophet a tumultuous welcome at Yathrib.

The name of the city was then changed to "Medīnat al-Nabi", the City of the Prophet, and we will from now on refer to it as such. Islam effaced the age-long enmity between the tribes of Aws and Khazraj[2] and they were given the honourific designation of "Ansārs" (helpers or supporters). The immigrants, forty-five in number, were called "Muhājirūn."

The next task was to build a mosque in Medīna like the one built in Qubā'. The place where Muḥammed's she-camel had stopped was an open

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[1]The reader remembers Khabbāb from the incident detailing the conversion of ʿOmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb. His nickname is Abū ʿAbdullāh, and he was one of those who were persecuted by Quraish for accepting Islam. He participated in the Battle of Badr then went to reside in Kūfa where he died in 37 A.H./657 A.D. (some say in 39 A.H./659 A.D.). The Commander of the Faithful ʿAli ibn Abū Tālib praised him at the time of his death saying, "May Allāh have mercy upon Khabbāb; he willingly accepted Islam, obediently migrated, lived as a *mujahid*, and supported Islam with his might. Surely Allāh rewards the doers of good."

[2]Both tribes had migrated during the 4th century A.D. from Yemen to Medīna in pursuit of religious freedom and better economic conditions.

courtyard with some palm trees growing over it, and it belonged to two orphan brothers named Sahl and Suhayl. When they came to know that the Prophet wanted to build a mosque on their property, they were elated and offered the property as a present to the Prophet. But the Prophet kindly declined their offer, paying them instead two *mithqāls*[1] in gold, the price settled for the plot. The plot was cleared of the trees, and a mosque 54 yards in width and 60 yards in length was built over it with clay bricks and mud. It was roofed with palm-wood rafters covered with palm branches, leaves and clay. Actually, it was not sufficiently solid to keep rain out. The trunks of palm trees were used as pillars to support the roof. The construction of this mosque, "Masjid al-Nabi," (mosque of the Prophet), was distributed among the converts. The Prophet, too, had his share of the work, but he was seldom allowed to work as ᶜAmmār ibn Yāsir[2], a faithful companion of the Prophet, used to accomplish the Prophet's share of work in addition to his own. ᶜAmmār was the very first person to begin digging the mosque's foundation. Soon, a simple, unostentatious mosque was completed. Close to one side of the mosque, rooms were constructed for the Prophet and his family. On the other side, rooms were provided for the poor adherents who had no house of their

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[1]It is an Arab measure of weight equalling, according to Richardson, a dram (one-eighth of an ounce) and three-seventh of a dram.

[2]ᶜAmmār ibn Yāsir belonged to the family whose name is associated with Quraish torturing indigent Muslim converts. His father, Yāsir ibn ᶜĀmir, and his mother, Sumayya (the first woman to be martyred in Islam), an African, received the lion's share of persecution at the hands of pagan Quraish. He was one of the foremost to accept Islam and to undergo untold persecution from Quraish. He participated in Bayᶜat al-Ridwān and in the Battle of Badr. He turned a portion of his house into a prayer area where he, his family and relatives used to perform their prayers secretly. When Quraish discovered it, ᶜAmmār's share of persecution was increased manifold. He was killed in 657 A.D. during the Battle of Siffīn by one of those who opted to be in the camp of Muᶜāwiyah ibn Abu Sufyān who was fighting the newly elected caliph ᶜAli ibn Abū Tālib for power. Muᶜāwiyah never actually accepted Islam wholeheartedly nor did any of those who followed him or who nowaday defend his un-Islamic conduct and that of his playboy son Yazīd. Anyone who impartially studies their history will come to this conclusion. They all belong to the "oppressive gang" predicted by the Prophet to be behind ᶜAmmār's death.

own. The latter numbered about seventy at the time and later gradually increased to four hundred. The rooms of the poor faithfuls who had no house of their own to live in were called "Suffa," and it was in one of them that a famous *muḥaddith*, narrator of traditions, named Abū Hurayra used to live. He will *Inshā-Allāh* be discussed later in this book. On the completion of these rooms, the Prophet, who meanwhile was living with Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣāri, whose full name is Khālid ibn Zayd ibn Kulayb, moved permanently into one of them. Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣāri was head of the Banū al-Najjār clan to whom Selma, mother of ʿAbdul-Muṭṭalib, Muḥammed's grandfather, belonged. Abū Ayyūb, hence, was actually a distant relative of the Messenger of Allāh, a maternal cousin according to Arab tradition.

The doors of the houses of some of the companions opened into the mosque. The Prophet ordered the doors of all of them except that of ʿAli closed. The companions raised some objections against this order. The Prophet, thereupon, stood up and addressed them. Having praised Allāh, he said, "In accordance with the decree of Allāh, I ordered you to close the doors and ʿAli to keep his open. Your wrangling is undesirable. Neither did I open nor close any door of my own accord. I only acted as I was ordered by Allāh."

The Muhājirūn needed some meaningful relief. To ensure their economic security and also to establish brotherly ties between them and the Anṣār, the Prophet joined each Muhājir with an Anṣār in a tie of "Brotherhood" that became even more precious and enduring than the bond of blood relationship. The Anṣār volunteered to share half and half with other contractual brothers everything they earned or possessed. It is to this unification of interests that the Qur'ān refers in the following verses:

> *Surely those (Muhājirūn) who believed and migrated and strived hard in the way of Allāh with their property and souls, and those (Anṣār) who sheltered and helped them, these are indeed friends (and protectors) of one another.*
> (Qur'ān, 8:72)

The Muhājirūn were anxious not to remain a burden on their brothers. Soon, many of them settled down to trade and do business. In the course of time, they were rehabilitated, and within a few years, they were no longer in need of any financial support. It was then that the following verse was revealed:

And the possessors of relationships are nearer to each other.
(Qur'ān, 8:75)

In Medīna, Islam had at first to face serious challenges. Danger threatened it from all sides, and it had to fight against great odds for mere survival. Some of the battles forced on it were inspired by political motives, others were the result of direct opposition to the new faith and the desperate efforts which its enemies exerted to quell it before it firmly established itself. Other difficulties were added by the predatory and warlike habits of the nomadic tribes roaming around the city and the insecurity and lawlessness prevailing in the country at large. It may be a good idea, therefore, to analyze and understand the political conditions of Arabia of the time.

PRE-ISLAMIC ARABIA REVISITED

The Arabs belonged to one ethnic race, but history does not record that they were ever united as one nation. They were divided into tribes and clans, each having its own chief or chieftain. They, no doubt, spoke the same language, but each tribe followed a different dialect. Indeed, even religion was not a binding force. Almost every house had its own god; tribes had their own supreme deities. In the south were the small principalities of Himyar, Awzāᶜ and Aqyāl. In the middle and northern Arabia lived the tribes of Bakr, Taghlib, Shaibān, Azd, Quzaᶜah, Kandaf, Lakhm, Juzām, Banū Ḥanīfa, Ṭay, Asad, Hawāzin, Ghatfān, and Aws. Khazraj, Thaqīf, Quraish and others were frequently engaged in intensive warfare. The Aws and the Khazraj belonged to Banū Qayla. Shortly before Muḥammed's arrival, the Battle of Buᶜāth, which broke out in 617 A.D., that is, during the seventh year of the Prophet's mission, between these two clans, had shattered the power of the Khazraj who were now considering making Ibn Ubay, namely ᶜAbdullāh ibn Ubay Sallūl, king of Medīna. They hoped, by doing so, that they would be guided by him in consolidating their power, especially since they were more nOmarous than the other clan. But the appearance of the Prophet and the conversion of the majority of the Aws to Islam turned the tide in favour of the Prophet. He proved himself to be the right man who came to the right place at the right time to put an end to the senseless bloodshed. Bakr and Taghlib, too, had been fighting each other for forty years. Blood engagements had ruined many a tribe of Hadaramaut. And the Battle of

Fijār between Banū Qais and Quraish had not yet ended. If any member of a tribe was killed, the tribe considered itself duty bound to seek revenge not merely upon the murderer but also on the tribe to which he belonged. Since there was no effective machinery to settle such disputes, this invariably touched off furious wars which lasted for generations. Tribal might, dash and alacrity, were the only guarantee of a precarious security. The desert and the hills were home to fierce nomadic tribes that lived largely on plunder and depredation, but trade was also a major source of livelihood. Only a few months of the year were regarded as sacred. It was only then that bloodshed was stopped in order to facilitate the performance of the annual pilgrimage to Mecca or to trade at ʿOkāz. But even this convention was at times relaxed to suit the convenience of individual tribes. Only the precincts of the Kaʿba were considered sacred and were free from bloodshed. It is to this state of affairs that the Qur'ān has drawn attention:

> *Do they not see that we have made a sacred territory secure for them, while men are carried off by force all around them?*
> (Qur'ān, 29:67)

The conditions in the country were so insecure that till 5 A.H./626 A.D., the powerful tribe of ʿAbdul-Qais of Bahrain could not think of going to Hijāz outside the sacred months. Even the caravans going to or returning from Syria were sometimes plundered in open daylight.

Muslims' pasture lands were at times raided. Although conditions had considerably improved by then, the route to Mecca from Medīna was not altogether safe till the fall of Mecca in 630 A.D.

While the country was so strife-ridden internally, dangers from outside were no less. The Roman and Persian empires had extended their domain to the fertile provinces of Yemen, Omān and Bahrain, extending their sovereignty to their land. The Romans had occupied Syria. Ghassān and some other Arab tribes, who had embraced Christianity, had been set up as the latter's feudatories. The Romans had expelled the Jews from Syria and Palestine in the second Century B.C. These Jews had migrated to Medīna and its suburbs and built strong fortresses at Medīna, Khaibar, Taima, Fadak and other places. Prospering themselves, the Jews were extremely jealous of prosperity in other races and strongly resented rivalry in trade business. They believed themselves to be God's "chosen people," and their conduct has always been characterized by pride and arrogance. Such an attitude was intensified by the feeling of being secure

inside their formidable fortresses. Only a few of them, including ᶜAbdullāh ibn Salām, one of their rabbis, embraced Islam. The majority did not believe in Muhammed, the prophet prophecized in their Scriptures, because they expected the Promised One to be one of the Israelites, one who would rise in Syria, not in Arabia, with Hebrew as his langauge.

It was during such times that the Prophet started his great mission. For preparing the ground and the proper climate, the first step that he took was to unite the Anṣār and the Muhājirūn.

ESTABLISHING BROTHERHOOD (623 A.D.)

In the next year, the 13th after the inception of the historic Prophetic mission, the Prophet established brotherhood between each couple of his followers, one from the Anṣār and one from the Muhājirūn. Thus, Abū Bakr and ᶜOmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb were joined as brothers; so were Hamzah and Zayd ibn al-Hārithah, ᶜOthmān ibn ᶜAffān and ᶜAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ᶜAwf, al-Zubayr ibn al-ᶜAwwām and Ibn Masᶜud, ᶜObaydah ibn al-Hārith and Bilāl ibn Rabāh the Ethiopian, Talhah and Saᶜid ibn Zayd, Musᶜab ibn ᶜOmayr and Saᶜd ibn Abū al-Waqqās, Abū ᶜObaydah and Sālim...., etc. The Prophet established brotherhood between himself and ᶜAli ibn Abū Ṭālib, telling him, as we are told by al-Sayyūti, "You are my brother in the life of this world and in that of the hereafter."

DAILY PRAYERS AND FAST MANDATED (623 A.D.)

Bilāl ibn Rabāh was an Ethiopian intellectual who had embraced Nestorian Christianity then came to Arabia hoping to meet the new prophet. He fell in captivity then sold in Mecca as a slave of the Umayyads, bought by ᶜOthmān and freed to be one of the early converts to Islam and the very first *mu'aththin*, caller to prayers. He started calling the *athān* publicly this very year (623 A.D.). The following verses of Sūrat al-Baqara (Chapter of the Cow) were revealed ordering the faithful to direct their faces towards Mecca as their *qibla*:

> *Indeed, We see the turning of our face to the heavens; so, We shall surely turn you to a* qibla *which you shall like; turn then your face towards the Sacred Mosque, and wherever you are, turn your faces towards it, and those who have been given the Book most surely know that it is the truth from their Lord, and Allāh is not at all heedless of what they do. And even if you bring those who have been given the Book every Sign, they shall not follow your qibla, nor can you be a*

follower of their qibla, *nor are they the followers of each other's* qibla, *and if you follow their desires after the knowledge that has come to you, then you shall most surely be among the unjust.*
(Qur'ān, 2:144-145)

Before then, they used to direct their faces towards Jerusalem, something because of which the Jews of Medīna taunted them; idols still littered the Kaʿba in Mecca. And the fast of the month of Ramadān was also mandated in the same year in response to verses 179 - 181 of the same Chapter referred to above.

ʿALI MARRIES FĀṬIMA (624 A.D.)

On the 15th of Rajab of the next year (2 A.H.), corresponding to January 15, 624 A.D., Fāṭima, the only surviving offspring of the Prophet, was married to ʿAli. All that ʿAli could offer by way of *mahr* (dower) was his coat of mail, and all that the Prophet could give to his daughter as a wedding gift were: an ordinary cot, a mattress stuffed with palm leaves, a water bag, two grinding stones, and two earthen pitchers. Yet some writers insinuate that the Prophet and his party were ambushing and plundering trade caravans! If these writers, who profess to be unbiased, are to be believed, what had happened to the booty and the riches?! What is most dangerous about such "historians" is that they dutifully cite a mass of historical data and in the same breath utter some falsehoods so that those lies may also pass on as historically true.

A PACT WITH THE JEWS (624 A.D.)

Having thus welded the Anṣār and the Muhājirūn into one Brotherhood, the Prophet now set himself to the task of establishing a stable society, a commonwealth based on equality of rights and on the concept of universal humanity. Granting equality of status and rights as well as full freedom of religion and of conscience to the Jews, he invited them to enter into a pact with the Muslims. He drew up a charter which has been reproduced by the historian Ibn Hāshim thus:

In the Name of the Most Merciful and Compassionate God. Granted by Mohammed, the Prophet, to the Believers, whether of Quraish or of Yathrib, and all individuals of whatever origin who have made common cause with them, all these shall constitute one nation.

Then, after regulating the payment of the *diyya* (blood money) by the

various clans and fixing some wise rules regarding the private duties of Muslims among themselves, the document proceeds thus:

> The state of peace and war shall be common to all Muslims; none among them shall have the right of concluding peace with, or declaring war against, the enemies of his co-religionists. The Jews who enter into this covenant shall be protected from all insults and vexations; they shall have an equal right with our own people to our assistance and good offices. The Jews of the various branches of ʿAwf, Najjār, al-Ḥārith, Jashm, Thaʿlabah, Aws, and all others domiciled in Yathrib shall form with the Muslims one composite nation. They shall practice their religion as freely as the Muslims. The clients and allies of the Jews shall enjoy the same security and freedom. The guilty shall be pursued and punished. The Jews shall join the Muslims in defending Yathrib against all enemies. The interior of Yathrib shall be a sacred place for all those who accept this Charter. The clients and allies of the Muslims and of the Jews shall be as respected as the principals. All Muslims shall hold in abhorrence anyone found guilty of a crime, injustice, or disorder. None shall uphold the culpable, even if he may be his nearest in kinship.

Then, after some other provisions regarding the internal management of the State, this extraordinary document concluded thus:

> All future disputes between those who accept this Charter shall be finally referred, after God, to the Prophet.

The Jews of Medīna accepted this Pact. After some time, the neighbouring Jewish tribes of Banū Naḍīr and Banū Qurayẓah signed it, too. But, as later events proved, it was only expediency that had dictated this course of action to the Jews. There was no change of heart on their part and they secretly nursed the same hostile feelings against the Aws and the Khazraj as before and viewed the growing confederation of the Muslims with grave concern and animosity. In the course of time, they started taunting and abusing the Muslims, frequently quarrelling with them and resorting to treachery and sedition. They were assisted by some people of the Aws and the Khazraj who had become lukewarm converts: the *munafiqūn* (hypocrites). These were headed by ʿAbdullāh ibn Ubay who had his own designs to become the king of Medīna and, together with the Jews, they became a constant source of danger to the newborn religion and to its adherents.

The Jews, who had thriving business deals with Quraish of Mecca, conspired with them to eradicate the infant religion before it assumed formidable proportions. As the head of the religion, and a general in a time of almost continuous warfare, Muhammed was the guardian of the lives and liberty of the people. The very existence of the nascent religion was in serious peril. Islam preaches the brotherhood of mankind; it insists upon toleration of all religions and creeds; it enjoins kindness and compassion, but it does not permit its followers to submit to the forces of disintegration.

Being in league with the Jews and the *munafiqūn*, the Meccans started harassing the Muslims. Under the leadership of Qarz ibn Jābir al-Fahri, they started raiding up to the very outskirts of Medīna, destroying fruit-bearing trees and carrying away flocks. News began pouring into Medīna that the Meccans were allying with other tribes to launch a massive attack against the Muslims. Muhammed sent out small ambassadorial missions to these tribes to contract alliances and treaties. One of those missions entered into a treaty with Banū Zamra. The terms of the treaty were as follows:

> This is the document of Muhammed, Messenger of God, for Banū Zamra. Their lives and property are safe. If they are attacked by anyone, they will be assisted except when they themselves fight against the religion (Islam). In return, they will come to the help of the Prophet when called upon by him.

A similar pact was made with Banū Madlaj at Thul-ʿAshīra. Quraish had sent a threatening letter to ʿAbdullāh ibn Ubay who was the chief of his tribe prior to the arrival of the Prophet: "You have given shelter to our man (Muhammed). You should either kill him or turn him out of Medīna or else we swear that we will attack you and, killing all the males, we will capture and enjoy your women."

The attack was considered so imminent, and the small band of Muslims was in such peril, that the Prophet used to remain awake throughout the night. Al-Dārmi and al-Hākim have recorded that "When the Prophet and his companions came to Medīna and the Anṣār sheltered them, the Arabs decided to attack them. The Prophet's companions used to sleep holding to their weapons."

MILITARY RECONNAISSANCE

Quraishites were extremely furious about Muhammed slipping away from their hands, having made all preparations to kill him. The news that Islam was rapidly gaining hold in Medīna did nothing to pacify their rage and animosity. Several times news reached Medīna that they were planning to attack the Muslims. As a result, the Prophet had to send out reconnoitering parties now and then to find out the designs and movements of Quraish and to watch the routes and highways to prevent any sudden attack.

Once, thirty Muslims (under the command of Ḥamzah, the Prophet's uncle) met a party of 300 riders (under the command of Abū Jahl) at Saiful-Baḥr. The Meccans were eager to massacre the small group of thirty, but Majdi ibn ʿAmr al-Juhni (who had a covenant with both groups) prevailed upon both sides and convinced them to go back to their respective places. Thus, a battle was averted.

Some time later, a patrolling party of 60 to 80 Muslims, under the command of ʿObaydah ibn al-Ḥārith (a cousin of the Prophet) reached Rabigh and found 200 riders of Quraish under the command of ʿIkrimah ibn Abū Jahl. Quraishites started the battle with their bows and arrows. Then, someone thought that the Muslims could not come with such a small force to face a group of warriors so superior in number unless they had a great army hidden somewhere. This idea spread, and they fled away.

A small party of twelve persons under the command of ʿAbdullāh ibn Jahsh (also a cousin of the Prophet[1]) was dispatched to Nakhlah, an area between Tā'if and Mecca, with sealed orders to be opened after two days' journey—a precaution against espionage which was rife. The letter, as quoted by al-Tabari on page 1275 of his *Tārīkh*, stated: "Stay at Nakhlah; gather information about the designs of Quraish and communicate."

It was only coincidentally that the party met some Meccan traders and that one of them, ʿAmr ibn al-Ḥadrami, a highly distinguished man of nobility, was killed at the hands of ʿAbdullāh. One man escaped, and two others were brought to the Prophet as prisoners. The date of the incident was mistaken by the party as the last day of Jumada II, but the Meccans claimed that it was the first of the holy month of Rajab during which no aggression was permitted. The action was thus interpreted as a

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[1]Remember that Prophet Muhammed's uncles numbered ten; so, he had quite a few cousins.

deliberate encroachment on the sanctity of the holy month. ʿAbdullāh had apparently acted beyond his instructions, and this incident aggravated the situation. Except for this isolated incident, in none of the numerous expeditions listed by Arab historians as *sarāyā* was there any skirmish or a question of looting and plundering. They were sent out either to make alliances with neighbouring tribes, or they were reconnaissance patrols; news was reaching Medīna that the Meccans might strike any day.

BADR: THE FIRST BATTLE IN ISLAM (624 A.D.)

Quraish had began grand-scale preparations to attack Medīna. The trade caravan which had gone to Syria that year headed by Abū Sufyān was extraordinarily equipped. Every Quraishite put all his savings in that caravan, and it was decided that the profit accrued that year would be given to the traders to spend on arms, horses, and other items of war to battle the Muslims of Medīna.

This news did cause a great deal of anxiety in Medīna. As Abū Sufyān was returning from Syria, he feared that the Muslims might intercept his trade caravan. He sent a messenger well in advance to inform the leaders of Quraish of his fears. Upon receiving the message, a well-equipped army of one thousand Meccans marched towards Medīna under the command of Abū Jahl.

They had reached Badr (200 miles from Mecca and 80 miles from Medīna) when news came that the trade caravan was passing just three miles on the seaside from the Quraishites' camp, and that it had not encountered any attack from the Muslims yet. But since the Meccans were so eager to battle Muḥammed and his followers, they decided to proceed towards Medīna anyway. After all, was not the objective of sending such a trade caravan this very battle?! So, why should they go back to Mecca when they had one thousand well-equipped warriors among them who were sufficient to teach the Muslims a lesson?! They camped at the stream of Badr.

Now let us see what was happening in Medīna. When news came that the trade caravan was coming from Syria (on the north side) and that the Meccan army was marching towards Medīna (from the south), the Muslims thought that they would be crushed between these two enemy groups.

Now, there were two options before the Muslims in Medīna: to either save themselves from being overwhelmed by the Meccans with all their resources from the rich Syrian trade, or choose another alternative (one

which had the least danger for the time being and which also promised a rich booty): fall upon the Quraishi caravan returning from Syria richly laden and led by Abū Sufyān with only 40 not so well-armed men. From a worldly point of view, this latter course was the safest and the most lucrative, and many Muslims preferred it. The other alternative, which was actually adopted on the recommendation of the Prophet as guided by God, was to leave the booty alone and to march out boldly against the well-armed and well-equipped Quraishite army of 1,000 men coming from Mecca.

The Prophet, as usual, consulted with his companions in this regard. Abū Bakr said, "The Prophet knows better, but it has come to my knowledge that Quarish are fast approaching. They are only two stages from us." ʿOmar ibn al-Khattāb added, "O Messenger of Allāh! The prestige of Quraish is involved in this affair. They have never bent their haughty necks to servitude. Since becoming infidels, they have never turned believers. They are sure to set themselves stubbornly against you. You should, therefore, have adequate equipment of war to meet them." ʿOmar's statements did not rest well with the Prophet at all, and signs of displeasure were visible on his face. Al-Miqdād ibn ʿAmr[1] then addressed the Prophet thus: "We should not repeat what the Children of Israel had said to Moses, that is, 'Go, you and your Lord, to fight while we sit here waiting.' Rather, by God Who sent you to guide us, we should say: 'Go you and your Lord to fight and we shall fight your foe on your right and on your left, in front of you and behind you, till the Lord grants you victory." Hearing this speech of Miqdād, the Prophet smiled and blessed him. Now the Prophet turned to the Anṣār to see what they had to say. They formed the majority of his fighting force. He was apprehensive lest they should say that they had pledged to assist him only in repulsing any

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[1]Al-Miqdād ibn ʿAmr is very well known in history as al-Miqdād ibn al-Aswad al-Kindi (of Banū Kindah). His date of birth is unknown, but he died in 33 A.H./653 A.D. He was one of the earliest converts to Islam who received a great deal of persecution and torture at the hands of pagan Meccans. He is so famous that writers use only his first name when they write about him. He participated in the battles of Badr, Uhud, al-Khandaq (moat), and in all expeditions. He is one of those who boycotted the "election" of Abū Bakr as the successor to the Prophet, knowing that ʿAli had already been appointed by the Prophet for the job.

attack against their city, Medīna. But Sa'd ibn Mu'ath[1] stood up on behalf of the Anṣār and said to him that they had received him as the Prophet of God and had sworn allegiance to him, promising to obey him. They, therefore, were all ready to follow him, to do whatever pleased him, though it were to throw themselves into the sea. The Prophet appreciated this statement and made it known to everyone that he had decided to face the Meccan forces, assuring them of victory. And the date when the Muslims met the pagans at Badr was March 15, 624 A.D.

This situation is described in the following *ayāts* of the Qur'ān:

> *Just as your Lord caused you (O Muhammed!) to go forth from your house with the truth, though a party of the believers were averse thereto; they disputed with you about the truth after it had become clear, (and they went forth) as if they were being driven to death while*

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[1]He is one of the greatest figures in early Islamic history, one of the pillars upon which Islam was erected although he was in the company of the Prophet for a short period of time (only 5 years). An entire volume can be written about his merits. His full name is Abū 'Amr Sa'd ibn Mu'āth ibn Imri'ul-Qays (the famous poet) ibn Zayd ibn 'Abdul-Ashhal ibn Jasham ibn al-Hārith ibn al-Khazraj ibn al-Thubayt. The full name of his last ancestor (al-Thubayt) is: 'Amr ibn Mālik ibn al-Aws al-Ansāri al-Awsi al-Ashhal. His mother's name was Kabsha daughter of Rafi'. She was one of the companions of the Prophet. The date of his birth is unknown, but he died in 5 A.H./626 A.D. He is one of the dignitaries of Medīna who participated in the Battle of Badr, and he is famous for his love for the Prophet's Progeny (Ahl al-Bayt), so much so that even Imām Hasan al-'Askari praises him. He accepted Islam at the hands of the great *sahābi* Mus'ab ibn 'Omayr after the first Pledge of Aqaba, that is, in 622 A.D. The Prophet loved him so much that he cursed his murderer, Haban ibn al-'Arqa (al-'Arqa being the name of his mother; his father's name is unknown), who shot him with an arrow during the Battle of the Khandaq. He died one month after being shot under the weight of his wound. He is the one who arbitrated the Muslims' conflict with Banū Qurayzah, the Jews of Medīna. The Prophet once said about him after his death, "Each mourner lies save one that mourns Sa'd ibn Mu'ath." This is recorded in *Al-Isti'āb* where we are told that the Prophet ordered a tent erected for Sa'd inside the Medina mosque after his receiving the injury from the arrow so that he would visit him every day. Surely Sa'd deserves more space in this book, but we pray the Almighty to forgive us for our shortcomings and to reward Sa'd on our behalf with the best of His rewards, *Allāhomma Āmeen.*

they looked (at it). And when Allāh promised you one of the two parties that it shall be yours, and you loved that the one not armed should be yours, and Allāh desired to manifest the truth of what was true by His words and to cut off the root of the unbelievers, so that He may manifest the truth of what was true and show the falsehood of what was false, even though the guilty ones disliked it.
(Qur'ān, 8:5-8)

These verses clearly show that the Meccan army was already on its way long before the Muslims came out of Medīna to defend themselves. Also, they clearly show that although some Muslims desired to avoid the Meccan army and to attack the trade caravan, that idea was not accepted, and that the decided aim and objective of their march was to fight the Meccan army which was already on its way.

This clearly belies the vicious and mischievous propaganda of some Western writers who claim that the Prophet had intended to attack the trade caravan of Quraish and that Quraish had come out only to protect it. The verses of the Qur'ān provide an authentic contemporary record of the events of Badr. If there is any writing by anyone which goes against this Divine account, it must be thrown out of the window.

You may wonder why the enemies of Islam labour so much to present this battle of Badr as one in which the Quraishites (poor souls!) were aiming at only protecting their trade caravan. The reason is this: It was the first battle between the pagan Quraishites and the Muslims, and if the responsibility of this first battle is laid on the heads of the Muslims, then all subsequent battles could be portrayed as being the continuation of this battle and, thus, the Prophet could be presented as a warrior prophet who by his plundering designs compelled the "peace-loving" Meccans to fight!

Anyhow, let us go back to our narrative. The Meccan army was in control of the stream of Badr, and the ground of their campsite was of firm clay. Contrarily, the Muslims were far from the stream and thus experienced difficulty in finding water. To make matters worse, many Muslims had nocturnal discharge while asleep and became "unclean" (*najis*). And the ground under them was sandy which was likely to prevent fast running during the battle.

God helped them by sending rain which provided them with water enough for their needs and made the sandy ground firm for them, while the firm clay of the Meccans' side became muddy and slippery, making their stand and maneuvers difficult.

Referring to this, Allāh says in the Qur'ān:

(Remember) when He caused drowsiness to fall on you as a security from Him and sent down upon you water from the cloud so that He might thereby purify you and take away from you the uncleanness of Satan, so that He might fortify your hearts and keep (your) footsteps thereby firm.
(Qur'ān, 8:11)

In this background, look at the insinuation of some Western "scholars" who have written that the Prophet had taken control of the stream of Badr and by refusing water to the Meccans, reduced them to defeat!

Anyhow, the facts of the actual battle are, in short, as follows:

With an ill-equipped body of three hundred and thirteen persons, 61 from the Aws and 170 from the Khazraj, having among them only two horses and seventy camels (which they rode by turn), the Prophet proceeded to Badr, about eighty miles from Medīna, to meet the Meccan army. Young ʿAli was the standard-bearer. The forces met on Friday, the 17th of the month of Ramadān, 2 A.H. (March 16, 624 A.D.). According to the customs of the Arabs, three Quraishite warriors challenged their opponents to individual duels. They were ʿOtbah, Abū Sufyān's father-in-law and father of Hind who had the corpse of Ḥamzah, the Prophet's uncle, mutilated and tried to chew his liver, as the reader will come to know later, al-Walīd, ʿOtbah's son, and Shaybah, brother of ʿOtbah, all Umayyads. They enjoyed a great deal of influence in their tribe. Three Anṣār stepped forward accepting their challenge, but the Quraishites refused to accept them as their equals and instead invited the "Meccan renegades," as they called them, to come out to meet them on the battlefield. ʿAli and ʿObaydah, both cousins of the Prophet, as well as Hamzah the valiant, his uncle, all Hashemites, responded to the challenge, and the fight between these six men broke out. It was a fierce and prolonged contest. ʿAli and Ḥamzah succeeded in the end in overpowering their opponents, al-Walīd and Shaybah respectively, whom they slew. Then they went to aid ʿObaydah who was severely wounded and nearly overpowered by ʿOtbah. They killed ʿOtbah and captured ʿObaydah who died of his wounds four days later.

After these individual duels, a pitched battle ensued. The stakes were high. Both forces fought valiantly but the Muslims were animated by holy zeal. In the thick of the battle, the Prophet was watching the progress of

the battle intensely; he prayed to God, earnestly beseeching Him thus:

"O Lord, forget not Thy promise of assistance! O Lord! If this small band were to perish, there will be none to worship Thee." Coming out of his canopy, he cast a handful of gravel into the air towards the enemy saying, "Confusion seize their faces!" He called out to his men saying, "Courage, my children! Close your ranks! Discharge your arrows, and the day is yours!" According to Abū al-Fida', both armies heard his voice. The pagans imagined that they saw angelic warriors; the Quraishi line wavered, and a number of their most brave and distinguished men fell.

Allāh describes this battle in the following verses:

> *(Remember) when you sought aid from your Lord, so He answered you: I will assist you with a thousand angels following one another. And Allāh only gave it as a good news and so that your hearts might thereby be at ease, and victory is only from Allāh; surely Allāh is Mighty, Wise.* (Qur'ān, 8:9-10)

The Muslims got the upper hand. Their leader, the Prophet, sat under a canopy thatched with palm branches which was erected and closely guarded by Sa'd ibn Mu'āth. Abū Bakr did not join the ranks of the fighters but sat by the Prophet's side. The Meccan pagans took to flight in a shameful manner. In their haste, they threw their armour away, abandoning their transport animals with all their camping gear and equipment. They suffered a miserable defeat.They were driven back, leaving seventy dead, including a number of their notable chiefs and the most brave of their men. The Muslims dug up a deep pit wherein they threw the corpses of the slain Meccan pagans, including those of 'Otbah, Shaybah, al-Walīd (Khālid's father; read above his story and how Allāh condemned him), Umayyah, and Abū Jahl. The Prophet addressed them thus: "O 'Otbah! O Shaybah! O Walīd! O Umayyah! O Abū Jahl! Alas! Have you found what your gods promised you to be the truth?! What my Lord promised me I have found to be true! Woe unto you! You rejected me, your Prophet! You cast me forth while others gave me refuge; you fought me while others came to my help!" "O Prophet!" said 'Omar ibn al-Khattāb, who was standing by his side, "Do you really speak to the dead?!" "Yes," the Prophet replied, "for they realize what I spoke to them better than you." All this is recorded in *Madārij al-Nubuwwah* and *Rawdat al-Ahbāb*.

Half of these seventy were killed by 'Ali ibn Abū Tālib alone. It was his first war. Seventy others were taken prisoners. The Muslim force had

lost only fourteen men, six from the Muhājirūn and eight from the Anṣār.

The prisoners were treated with exceptional kindness with the exception of a couple who were most notorious; these were ʿOqbah ibn Abū Muʿeet and al-Nathr ibn al-Ḥārith, who had to be beheaded. Even the hostile critic Muir says: "In pursuance of Mahomet's commands, the citizens of Medīna and such of the refugees as possessed houses received the prisoners and treated them with much consideration. `Blessings be on the men of Medīna', said one of these prisoners in later days, `they made us ride while they themselves walked; they gave us wheaten bread to eat when there was little of it, contenting themselves with dates.'" The more affluent prisoners paid ransom and were set free. The others were asked to teach ten persons each to read and write and this teaching was to count as their ransom. After all, in these times of progress and enlightenment, with all the charters and agreements on the treatment of prisoners of war, history does not record another instance even remotely as generous and as humane as the Muslims' treatment of the prisoners taken in their very first encounter about fourteen hundred years ago.

Among the captives were ʿAbbās, an uncle of the Prophet, Nawfal ibn al-Ḥārith, and ʿAqīl ibn Abū Tālib, both cousins of the Prophet, and Abul-ʿĀs ibn al-Rabeeʿ, husband of Zainab daughter of Khadīja and Muḥammed's step-daughter. ʿAbbās was stoutly built; he was a man of tall stature. He was captured by Abul Yasār, a man relatively thin, lean, and short! When asked how a man so small could overpower him, ʿAbbās said that his captor looked to him at the time like a giant.

> *Indeed, there was a Sign (of Divine interference) for you in the two hosts (that) met together in the (Badr) encounter: one party fighting in the way of Allāh and the other unbelieving, whom they saw twice as many (or as big) as themselves with the sight of the eye, and Allāh strengthens with His aid whomsoever He pleases; most surely there is a lesson in this for those who have sight.*
> (Qur'ān, 4:13)

ʿAbbās saw the size of Abul Yasār appearing to him twice as big as he actually was, and he was not big at all... ʿAbbās was asked to pay ransom for himself and for his nephews Nawfal and ʿAqīl. He replied that if he paid up the ransom, he would be reduced to begging alms of Quraish for the rest of his life. But to his great astonishment, the Prophet revealed to him the secret of the gold which he had entrusted to his wife at midnight before departing with the Meccan army! Then he recited the following

verse of Sūrat al-Anfāl:

> O Prophet! Say to the captives in your hands: If Allāh knows of anything good in your hearts, He will give you beter than what has been taken away from you and will forgive you, and Allāh is most Forgiving, most Merciful.
> (Qur'ān, 8:70)

ᶜAbbās was now convinced beyond the shadow of doubt that his nephew was neither a pretender nor an ordinary man; how else did he know about what went on between him and his wife in the depth of the night? He admitted that nobody could know of that incident except God, so he readily embraced Islam, and so did his nephews. A few years later, when he found himself a man of considerable wealth, he reflected on the verse cited above and admitted that the prophecy was fulfilled.

In order to secure the release of Abul ᶜĀs, his wife Zainab sent some of her jewelry, including a necklace given to her by her mother Khadīja, wife of the Prophet, as a wedding gift. The Prophet identified the necklace as soon as he saw it. Sadly reflecting upon Khadīja, he returned it to Abul ᶜĀs, asking him to give it back to Zainab. He released him without any ransom on one condition: that he bring Zainab to him. Zayd ibn Hārithah escorted Abul ᶜĀs back to Mecca, and after a few days, both men came back together with Zainab, the Prophet's step-daughter. Zainab, now a Muslim, refused to go back to her pagan husband unless he accepted Islam. He embraced Islam six years later in 630 A.D. after the conquest of Mecca by the Muslims and after appearing before the Prophet as a prisoner of war for the second time.

Quraish's defeat at Badr was the death blow to Abū Lahab, the only Hashemite who was a bitter opponent of the Prophet, and he died of grief one week after the battle at the loss of his friends and relatives, especially al-Walīd, Shaybah and ᶜOtbah.

THE BATTLE, THE AFTERMATH

The battle of Badr was remarkable in more ways than one. It demonstrated the great devotion of the disciples to their cause and their complete faith in the Prophet and his mission. Stood before them in the Meccan ranks were many of their close relatives, sons, fathers, or uncles. Thus, the Prophet's uncle ᶜAbbās, ᶜAli's brother ᶜAqīl, Abū Bakr's son, Huthaifah's father and ᶜOmar's maternal uncle, to name a few, figured in the Meccan army. Yet the disciples never faltered. Personal feelings and

sentiments were subordinated to the supreme cause. Such was the material from which Islam arose. The battle also proved that mere numerical superiority and matching valour are of no avail if the cause is not righteous. God helps those who make sacrifices in His cause.

The battle of Badr had far-reaching consequences. Till then, the Muslims were a harassed band avoiding any major conflict. This victory gave them confidence in their physical power. They could now meet force with force[1]. They were soon recognized as a power to be reckoned with and smaller tribes were cautioned against joining forces against them. This victory dealt a severe blow to the prestige of Quraish. A number of their chiefs, such as Abū Jahl, ʿOtbah, Shaibah, Zamʿah, ʿĀs ibn Hishām, and Umayyah ibn Khalaf had been killed and, consequently, Abū Sufyān became their undisputed chieftain. ʿAbdullāh ibn Ubay and his oscillating followers professed Islam, though in name only, and as *munafiqūn* (hypocrites), they were always a source of danger. The Jews of Medīna and its vicinity were alarmed at the new power that had emerged. Their enmity towards the Muslims, however, did not abate, and a Jewish tribe, Banū Qinaqāʿ, had to be punished not long after Badr as will be discussed later. The ignominy of the defeat made the Meccans more bitter and furious and the cry of "Revenge!" was on all lips.

GHAZWAT AL-SUWAIQ (624 A.D.)

Abū Sufyān had sworn vengeance. He took a vow that he would not touch his wives nor comb his hair till he had avenged that defeat. In order to fulfill this vow and to show that all was not lost for the Meccans, he set out towards Medīna in the month of Thul-Hijjah, 2 A.H. (June 624 A.D.), leading two hundred horsemen. Salām ibn Mashkam, chief of the Jewish tribe of Banū Nadīr, treated them to a feast and

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[1]The Muslims of today, with rare exceptions, are helpless, spineless, and toothless because they abandoned their creed and became the friends, servants, stooges and allies of their enemies. This is why they cannot face force with force. This is why when our Muslim sisters in Bosnia were raped and their children and men massacred, the reaction of the Muslim world was almost totally muted; Muslims are toothless; they are Muslims only in name. It is only when Muslims are able to meet force with force that they will earn the respect of the world community. There is no room for weaklings except in the cemetery. Might is still right; it has always been so, and it will always remain so...

divulged to them the weak points of Medīna's fortifications. On the next day, Abū Sufyān raided a Medīna pasture, killing an Anṣār named Sa'ad ibn 'Amr and burning a number of houses. When this news reached the Prophet, he hotly pursued the raiders who fled, abandoning their rations. This gave the raid its name, "the battle of meal bags, *suwaiq*.[1]" Abū Sufyān was now planning for a much larger campaign.

GHAZWAT GHATFĀN (625 A.D.)

In 3 A.H./625 A.D., the tribes of Banū Tha'labah and Banū Miḥrāb sent a force of five hundred and forty horsemen under the command of Da'thūr ibn Muḥārib to raid Medīna. They gave up the idea when the Prophet marched with his companions out of Medīna to meet them. Da'thūr, however, got an opportunity to launch a surprise attack on the Prophet who was resting alone under a tree. "O Muhammed," cried he with a drawn sword in his hand, "who is there now to save thee?!" "Allāh", replied the Prophet. This dauntless composure and complete faith in God awed the wild bedouin whose sword now fell from his hand... Seizing it, the Prophet asked him in turn, "Who is there now to save thee, O Da'thūr?!" "Alas, none," replied the bedouin, and I testify that there is no god except Allāh, and that Muhammed is the Messenger of Allāh. By Allāh! I shall never raise any army against you." "Then learn from me to be merciful," said the Prophet as he returned the sword to him. Da'thūr was so impressed that he asked the Prophet for forgiveness.

THE BATTLE OF UḤUD (625 A.D.)

Ghazwat al-Suwaiq was only a prelude to the big battle that was to follow. The chagrin and fury of Abū Sufyān and his Quraishite supporters at their defeat at Badr knew no bounds. Their whole energy was aroused and they commenced preparations for another attack on the Muslims. Abū Sufyān rallied behind him the coastal tribes of Banū Kinānah and Banū Tihāmah. Their united forces numbered three thousand well equipped soldiers, seven hundred of whom were armed with coats of mail and two hundred were mounted on horseback, besides one thousand camels, all under the command of Abū Sufyān. The army's right wing was under the command of Khālid ibn al-Walīd and the left under that of 'Ikrimah son

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[1]"Suwaiq" suggests the meaning of "a small marketplace." Most likely, the abandoned rations were scattered all over the would-be battlefield, looking to the looters like a small market out for grabs!

of the ill-famed Abū Jahl. Women played their role to provide the men with moral support. They were led by Abū Sufyān's wife Hind who brought with her fifteen Meccan matrons. They took their place in the rear of the army, beating their drums and chanting poetry to animate the troops, magnifying the greatness of Hubal, the most popular deity in Mecca. On their way to Medīna, having reached Abwā', Hind wanted to dig out the grave containing the remains of Āmina bint Wahab, Muhammed's mother, who lay there buried for more than fifty years, but Divine Providence interferred, so she could not carry out her wicked scheme. Finally, the army reached Thul Ḥulaifa, a village about five Arabian miles to the north-east of Medīna, in the green corn fields of Mount Uḥud, on Wednesday, Shawwal 4, 3 A.H. (March 23, 625 A.D.).

Muḥammed was in Qubā' when he was informed by his uncle ᶜAbbās, who was still living in Mecca, of Quraish's expedition, so he hurried back to Medīna. He consulted his followers whether to wait for the enemy's attack on the city and to defend it from within, or to meet the enemy outside the city. He was inclined to the former plan because he did not want the city's residents to be exposed to the perils of wars. Many of his close companions were of the same view, but the majority urged him to meet the enemy outside the city, and this view was finally adopted. But when the Prophet was ready to march out, they changed their mind again and spoke about it to the Prophet, but he nevertheless marched out with only a thousand men headed by ᶜAli. This number included the forces raised by ᶜAbdullāh ibn Ubay who brought with him three hundred of his followers, the *munafiqūn*, hypocrites, including a small number of his Jewish allies, but the Prophet refused to enlist the service of the Jews unless they accepted Islam, which they, of course, did not. Thus, he and all his 300 men were turned back, reducing the number of Muhammed's army to seven hundred. Only a hundred of them had coats of mail, and between them they had only two horses. Their zeal was, however, so great that when some boys, who were considered too young to participate in the battle, were asked to go back, they departed very reluctantly and two of them, Rāfiᶜ ibn Khadīj and Samrah, managed to remain with the army anyway.

The Prophet reached Uhud in the morning of Saturday, Shawwāl 7, 3 A.H. (March 26, 625 A.D.) and took up his position below the mountain. The army was arrayed in fighting formations and fifty archers were posted, under the command of ᶜAbdullāh ibn Jubayr, at a pass between the hills surrounding Mount Uḥud to guard the army from any

rear attack. They had strict orders from the Prophet never to leave their post, whatever the outcome of the battle might be, till they received further instructions. The standard was in the hands of Musʿab ibn ʿOmayr. Zubayr was in command of the mailed section and Ḥamzah in command of the rest. On the side of the Meccans, Ṭalḥah held the standard and the various regiments were under the charge of Khālid ibn al-Walīd (who commanded the cavalry), ʿIkrimah ibn Abū Jahl, Ṣafwān ibn Umayyah and his brother ʿAbdullāh. According to some references consulted for this book, the Meccan pagans enlisted in their army a number of their black slaves to fight with them.

Ṭalḥah, the pagans' standard-bearer, challenged the Muslims to individual combat. The challenge was accepted by ʿAli ibn Abū Ṭālib who soon cut off one of his legs with a single blow then killed him with another. It took only a few seconds. Ṭalḥah's dead body lay on the ground. The standard was taken by his brother ʿOthmān who was slashed to death by Ḥamzah. The third standard-bearer was killed by ʿAli. This continued till nine (or some historians say ten) standard-bearers were killed one after the other. These historians include Ibn al-Athīr, Ibn Hishām, and al-Ṭabari. Abū ʿĀmir, a veteran Meccan hero, stepped forward with his fifty archers and showered the Muslims with arrows. The Muslims responded with as thick and as prompt shower of arrows of their own. Thus did the battle begin with the Quraishites advancing in the form of a crescent. ʿAli, Ḥamzah and Abū Dajjānah demonstrated heroic valour.

An Abyssinian slave, Waḥshi, had been commissioned by Hind, wife of Abū Sufyān, to kill either Muḥammed, ʿAli, or Ḥamzah (in order to avenge the death of her father ʿOtbah ibn Rabīʿah, her brother al-Walīd as well as that of Ḥanẓalah son of Abū Sufyān at Badr at their hands). He was lurking behind a rock when he singled Ḥamzah out and, seeing him engaged in a duel with Saba' ibn ʿAbd al-ʿUzza, a Meccan hero, threw a spear at him which pierced his ʿAbdomen, killing him instantly. At that juncture, ʿAli assigned the command of the various regiments of the army to Abū Dajjānah, Musʿab ibn ʿOmayr, and Sahl ibn Ḥunayf. They collectively launched an attack against the Meccan army, breaking its center. The Meccans now wavered, and ʿAli and his heroes gained the enemy's camp. The Meccans were seen turning to their heels, leaving their camp to the Muslims who proceeded to overrun it.

The Meccans were now losing heart till one of their women, ʿOmra daughter of ʿAlqamah, took up the standard herself. The Meccans again

rallied behind her but they were crushed by the Muslims. The Meccans, having paid a heavy toll, fell back in disarray and the Muslims started gathering the booty. Their eagerness for spoil, however, turned the tide of victory which was almost already at hand. Thinking that the battle was over, most of the archers who were guarding the passage in the hill left their posts lured by the spoils even against the orders of their leader ʿAbdullāh ibn Jubayr. Khālid ibn al-Walīd was fleeing when he saw such an opportunity and, gathering a group of men, he killed the few remaining defenders of the pass. Then he launched a furious attack from the rear. The Muslims were taken so much by surprise that they did not know what to do. In the general melee, their ranks became disorganized. The retreating Meccan forces rallied again and launched a fresh onslaught from the front. The Muslim standard-bearer, Mūsʿab ibn ʿOmayr, who bore a great facial resemblance to the Prophet, was killed. Up went Ibn Sūraqah's cry that Muḥammed had been killed. This threw the Muslims into further confusion and utter dismay with some saying that had Muḥammed been a true prophet, he would not have been killed, as is recorded in *Tārīkh al-Khamīs*. Others were talking of going to Abū Sufyān and apologyzing to him, trying to win his amnesty. Even many of their famous personalities lost heart. ʿOmar ibn al-Khattāb threw his sword away saying that there was no use fighting since the Prophet was no more. He fled towards the mountain and, in his own words, he was jumping from one boulder to another like hill goats. Anas ibn Nazar, uncle of the renown *ṣaḥābi* Anas ibn Mālik, saw how ʿOmar ibn al-Khattāb and Talhah ibn ʿObaydullāh were sitting leisurely along with others, so he asked them what they were doing. "We have nothing to do," they replied, "since Muḥammed has been slain." "But my friends!," said Anas, "Even if Muḥammed were killed, certainly Muḥammed's Lord lives and never dies; therefore, do not value your lives only because the Prophet is dead. Rather, you should fight for the cause for which he fought." Then he cried out, "O God! I am excused before You and acquitted in Your sight of what they say!" Drawing his sword, he fought valiantly. It was in reference to this incident of how some people deserted the Prophet and how others fought beside him to the last that the following verses of the Holy Qur'ān were revealed there and then:

> *And Muḥammed is no more than a Prophet; prophets have already passed away before him; if then he dies or is killed, will you turn back upon your heels? And whoever turns back upon his heel will by no means harm Allāh in the least, and Allāh will reward the grateful. And*

a soul will not die except with the permission of Allāh; the term is (already) fixed, and whoever desires the reward of this world, I shall give him of it, and whoever desires the reward of the hereafter, I shall give him of it, and I will reward the grateful. And how many a prophet has fought (and) with whom were (present) many worshippers of the Lord? So they did not become weak-hearted on account of what befell them in Allāh's way, nor did they weaken, nor did they abase themselves, and Allāh loves those who are patient.
(Qur'ān, 3:144-146)

Abū ᶜObaydah, Abū Bakr, and ᶜOthmān also fled, the latter returning to Medīna after three days.

Many valiant soldiers, renouncing all discretion, entered the thick of the Meccan ranks determined to fight to the end. This went on till Kaᶜb ibn Mālik (or some say Anas ibn Nazār) saw the Prophet and shouted at the top of his voice that the Prophet was still alive. The spirit of the Muslims revived, but the Prophet now became the chief target of the Meccan forces. ᶜAbdullāh ibn Qām advanced towards the Prophet and struck a sword on his head with such force that two links of his helmet penetrated the Prophet's face. ᶜOtbah ibn Abū Waqqāṣ threw a stone at the Prophet, further injuring his face and dislodging his two upper teeth. The Prophet now had fallen in a pit where ᶜAli ibn Abū Tālib found him and protected him against the continuous furious onslaughts of the Meccans. When the Prophet saw this sacrificing spirit of ᶜAli, he asked him as to why he, too, did not flee like the others. ᶜAli replied: "Should I become a *kāfir* after having accepted Islam?" Anas ibn Nazār continued fighting till he was martyred. And when ᶜAli's sword broke down, the Prophet gave him his own sword, Thul-Fiqār. It was then that a voice was heard from above saying, "There is no brave man except ᶜAli. There is no sword except Thul-Fiqār."

At the same time, arch-angel Gabriel told the Prophet that it was the height of loyalty and bravery which ᶜAli was demonstrating to the Prophet. The Prophet said: "Why not? ᶜAli is from me and I am from ᶜAli." Gabriel said: "And I am from you both."

Later, some Muslims like Saᶜd, Zubayr, Ṭalḥah, Abū Dajjānah and Ziyād, gathered around the Prophet. Faithful companions, including the brave lady Umm ᶜAmmārah, prevented others from getting too close to the Prophet. With their bodies did they shield him against the rain of arrows. Standing in such a great peril, the Prophet cried to God: "O God! Forgive my people, for they know not!" There was no rancor, no

bitterness, no ill-will in his heart against his mortal enemies even in such a precarious situation. An overwhelming compassion for the people and a burning desire to lead them to the right path actuated all his deeds and sayings. Then some other Muslims arrived where the Prophet was being defended at fearful odds by the small band of his companions. After some furious fighting, they managed to retreat to the security of the heights of Uḥud.

Meanwhile, the word had reached Medīna that the Prophet was killed. The Prophet's daughter, Fāṭima al-Zahrā, surrounded by a group of Muslim women, hurried to Uḥud. To her great relief, Fāṭima found her father alive but his forehead and face were covered with his own blood. ᶜAli brought water in his shield and Fāṭima cleansed and dressed the wounds.

The Meccan forces had turned the tables but they were too exhausted to drive their advantage home either by attacking Medīna or by driving the Muslims from the heights of the mountain. They satiated their desire for vengeance by committing ghastly brutalities upon the slain and the injured, cutting off their ears and noses and mutilating their bodies. The brave Ḥamzah was amongst the slain. His heart was torn out by Hind, wife of Abū Sufyān, who also cut off his ears and nose and took out his heart and liver. She tried to chew the liver but Allāh made it so hard that she could not do so... She had to throw it out. The horrible scene was so revolting that the Prophet forbade forever the practice of mutilation.

With victory almost within their grasp, the Muslims had suffered a heavy blow. They were shaken in body and in spirit. But the Prophet preached to them fortitude and endurance.

In this battle, seventy Muslims were martyred and an equal number wounded. ᶜAli received sixteen serious sword wounds. On the list of martyrs were: Musᶜab ibn ᶜOmayr, Saᶜd ibn al-Rabīᶜ, ᶜAmmārah ibn Ziyād, and Ḥanẓala son of Abū ᶜĀmir, the first archer to defend Muslim lines. The Meccans lost 30 (or 22) warriors twelve of whom at the hands of ᶜAli.

For those who laid their lives in the way of Allāh, the following glad tiding had been revealed:

> *And reckon not those who are killed in Allāh's way as dead; nay, they are alive (and) are sustained by their Lord.*
> (Qur'ān, 3:169)

Having finished his engagements at Uḥud in five or six days, the

Prophet returned to Medīna where he heard the wailing of the women of Banū ᶜAbd al-Ashhal for their dead. He expressed his regret that Ḥamzah the valiant had none to mourn him in the city. Saᶜd ibn Muᶜāth felt the same, so he went at once to his women and brought them to the Prophet's house so that they would mourn the death of Ḥamzah, and the Prophet blessed them for it. Their example was followed by all the women of the Anṣār. This is recorded by al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Athīr.

THE BATTLE'S AFTERMATH

While retreating to Mecca, Abū Sufyān had bribed a traveller going towards Medīna to inform the Prophet that the Meccans were again assembling a great force to attack Medīna. Hearing the news, ᶜAlī said: "Allāh is sufficient for us and most excellent Protector is He."

The Prophet went out at once, taking with him only those seventy warriors who were wounded in Uḥud, to pursue the Meccan forces. He stayed for three days at a place called Ḥamrā'ul-Asad but did not find any trace of the Meccans, so he returned. The Qur'ān mentions this episode in the following āyāt:

> *Those who responded to the call of Allāh and the Messenger even after the wound had afflicted them, those among them who do good and guard (themselves against evil) shall have a great reward. Those to whom the people said: Surely men have gathered against you; therefore, fear them, but this only increased their faith, and they said: Allāh is sufficient for us and most excellent Protector is He. So they returned with favour from Allāh and (His) grace; no evil touched them, and they followed the pleasure of Allāh, and Allāh is the Lord of mighty grace.* (Qur'ān, 3:172-174)

The defeat at Uḥud did, indeed, create serious problems for the Muslims. It emboldened the nomadic tribes on the one hand to make forays upon Medīna and, on the other hand, encouraged the Jews of Medīna to foment further trouble. Yet it was not disastrous for the Muslims. While a defeat at Badr, when the Muslims were yet a handful, would have wiped them out and rang the death knell of the Prophetic mission, a defeat here and there after Islam had gained strength only put the Muslims in the testing crucible so that they might emerge more determined and cured of any complacency and vanity to which they might have otherwise fallen prey.

The Meccans were determined to annihilate the Muslims. This objective they could not achieve. Their infantry had suffered such losses

that they could not even drive home the advantage they gained in the last stages of the battle. They had thought they were the masters of all western Arabia, but they could do nothing more than hold their own against the Muslims. It is not surprising, therefore, that they marched back to Mecca frustrated and discouraged.

The Meccans realized that on their own they could not crush the Islamic movement. They now started instigating other tribes to make common cause with them. Most of the tribes were already inimical to Islam. They practiced idolatry while Islam forbade it and enjoined worship of one God. Raiding and plundering were the general means of their livelihood while Islam dictated an orderly society, forbidding oppression, exploitation, and foul play. It enjoined its followers to seek honest means of livelihood. The influence of Quraish extended far and wide and all the tribes came into contact with them at the time of the annual pilgrimage. The Jews were also constantly instigating the tribes against the Muslims. The victory of the Muslims over Quraish at Badr had overawed nomadic tribes but their defeat at Uhud emboldened them to show their hands and a number of skirmishes followed.

MUḤAMMED MARRIES ḤAFṢA

As mentioned earlier, ʿOmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb was trying for some time to get the Prophet to marry his daughter Ḥafṣa (607 - 667 A.D.). It was in the month of Shaʿbān of the same year, 3 A.H., corresponding to January 625 A.D., that such marriage finally took place. She was widow of Jaish ibn Ḥuthaifah al-Sahmi[1] who had died in Medīna shortly after the Battle of Badr wherein he had participated. ʿOmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb had first offered her to Abū Bakr to marry her, then to ʿOthmān ibn ʿAffān, but she was rejected by both. ʿOmar mentioned such rejection to the Prophet once by way of a complaint, so he, in order to oblige him, accepted her as his wife. She was, however, divorced by the Prophet on account of her temper at a later time then, on the entreaties of her father, the Prophet took her back. She died in the month of Shaʿbān, 45 A.H. (November 665 A.D.) at the age of 60.

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[1]According to a number of references, including the history books by al-Maqrīzi, al-Yaʿqūbi and Ibn Hishām, the Prophet sent ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀs al-Sahmi as his ambassador carrying his letters to invite two brothers then ruling ʿOman: Jayfer and ʿIyāth sons of al-Jalandi al-Azdi to accept Islam.

HASAN SON OF ʿAli IS BORN (625 A.D.)

In the month of Ramadan of the same year (February 625 A.D.), Ḥasan was born to ʿAli and Fāṭima, Muḥammed's only daughter. In the next year (4 A.H./626 A.D.), his borther Ḥusain (which means: "junior Ḥasan") was born. Both were named after Shabar and Shubayr, sons of Āron, brother of prophet Moses.

SĀRIYAT ABU SALMAH (625 A.D.)

Ṭalḥah and Khālid instigated their tribe, Banū Asad, to attack Medīna on the first of Muḥarram of 4 A.H./June 16, 625 A.D. The Prophet dispatched a force of one hundred and fifty men to intercept them. The invaders dispersed on seeing this force and there was no engagement.

SĀRIYAT IBN ANĪS

In the same month (4 A.H.), Sufyān ibn Khālid of the Banū Lahyān prepared to attack Medīna. The Prophet sent ʿAbdullāh ibn Anīs with a force to meet him. ʿAbdullāh was killed. Hostile critics say that the Prophet got the chiefs of some tribes killed to overawe them. They quote Arab historians like al-Wāqidi, Ibn Hishām and Ibn al-Athīr in recounting the names of the persons killed, but they very conveniently omit the details and circumstances given by the same authorities regarding the raids they were committing or the preparations they were making to assault Medīna. The Prophet could not ignore the danger that surrounded the Muslims; he would not allow them to be exterminated.

TREACHERY AT BI'R MAʿUNAH

The tribes were not only repeatedly raiding Medīna but also employing treacherous methods to deplete the Muslim's ranks and resources. In Safar of 4 A.H./July of 625 A.D., Abū Bara' ʿĀmir ibn Mālik ibn Jaʿfer, chief of Banū ʿĀmir ibn Saʿsāʿah, came to Medīna and offered a present to the Mesenger of Allāh who declined to accept it. "I do not accept a present from a polyetheist," Muḥammed said to him, "therefore, accept Islam so that I may accept your present." Then the prophet recited for him some Qur'ānic verses, but the man neither accepted Islam nor went away. Instead, he said, "O Muḥammed! What you are inviting to is beautiful and good; so, if you send some of your men to the people of Nejd to invite them to accept it, I hope that they will." "I fear for them what the people of Nejd may do to them," said the Prophet. ʿĀmir ibn Mālik said,

"I guarantee their safety; so, send them away so that they may invite people as you invite them." The Prophet sent al-Munthir ibn ʿAmr of Banū Sāʿidah with seventy of the best Muslims including al-Hārith ibn al-Sammah, Ḥarām ibn Milḥān, ʿOrwah ibn Asmā ibn al-Ṣalt al-Salāmi, Nafiʿ ibn Budayl ibn Warqāʾ al-Khuzāʿi, ʿĀmir ibn Fuhayrah, slave of Abū Bakr, in the month of Ṣafar, four months after the Battle of Uḥud. With the exception of one person, namely Kaʿb ibn Zayd, the entire party was put to death when it reached Bi'r Maʿunah. They were killed by the tribesmen of Banū ʿAsiyyah, Banū Raʿla, and Banū Thakwan. Having been injured, Kaʿb ibn Zayd lay down pretending to be dead. He survived to take part in the Battle of Khandaq wherein he received the honour of martyrdom[1].

THE FOUL PLAY AT RAJĪʿ

Likewise, the tribes of Adhʿal and al-Deesh sent a deputation to the Prophet headed by one Murthid ibn Abū Murthid al-Ghanawi to inform him that they had accepted Islam and needed some instructors. He sent ten disciples with them. On reaching Rajiʿ, the deputation was attacked by men of Banū Lahyān, a branch of the Huthayl tribe. Seven of the disciples were killed and the rest were captured. The Muslims defended themselves, killing seven of their attackers, by they were soon overwhelmed by a much larger number of foes. The captives were sold in Mecca and those who purchased them put them to death. One of the captives was Zayd ibn al-Dathnah. A crowd, including Abū Sufyān, assembled to see him being slaughtered. Abū Sufyān inquired of him if he would not have considered himself lucky had Muhammed been there to be slaughtered in his place. The devoted attachment of Zayd to the Prophet can be gauged from the reply he gave. He said: "By God, I do not value my life even this much that in its place a thorn may pierce the sole of the Prophet's foot." He was thereupon slashed to death. Abū Sufyān could not help saying, "By Allāh! Never have I found people loving their fellow more than the people who follow Muhammed."[2]

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[1]al-Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 20, p. 148.

[2]*Ibid.*, Vol. 20, p. 152.

THE ATTITUDE OF THE JEWS

For a long time, the Jews were masters of Medīna. The tribes of Aws and Khazraj (the Ansār) had settled there later. Gradually, these tribes gathered strength and equalled the Jews in power and prestige. The internecine war of the Bu^{c}āth, however, weakened them, and the Jews again assumed ascendancy. The Jews were a prosperous people and money lending at exorbitant rates of interest was one of their main occupations. With the deterioration in the economic situation of the tribes of Aws and Khazraj, many of them became heavily in debt to the Jews. The position of authority and eminence, which their material superiority and strength gave to the Jews, received a big setback when Islam started spreading in Medīna. The expansion of Islam was, therefore, viewed by them with great indignation and apprehension. This has always been their attitude and will always remain so.

> *Certainly you will find the most violent of all people in enmity for those who believe (Muslims) to be the Jews and those who are polytheists, and you will certainly find the nearest in friendship to those who believe to be those who say: We are Christians. This is so because there are priests and monks among them and because they are not arrogant.*
> (Qur'ān, 5:82)

In this verse, the Muslims are told by the Almighty that their most bitter enemies are the Jews, and that their best friends may be from among the Christians who, unlike the Jews, are not characterized by arrogance. Despite this verse, we see many leaders of Muslim countries vying with each other to lick the Jews' shoes when they are supposed to be guarding themselves against their mischief.

Expediency had actuated the Jews to enter into a pact with the Muslims, but soon they began plotting against Islam. They would distort the words and verses of the Qur'ān and mock and jeer at the Muslims. But the Prophet was bidden to bear it patiently:

> *.... And you shall certainly hear from those who have been given the Book before you and from those who are polytheists much annoying talk, and if you are patient and guard (yourself against evil), surely this is one of the matters of great resolve.*
> (Qur'ān, 3:186)

The Prophet tried his best to maintain friendly ties with the Jews. He

even prayed for one of them (who had lended him some money) once that the Almighty would safeguard his beauty. Till his heath at the age of 80, that Jew's hair never turned gray. Read this incident on p. 15, Vol. 18, of *Biḥār al-Anwār*. It is also recorded in the classic reference titled *Al-Kharā'ij*. The Qur'ān stressed the fundamental unity between both religions, Islam and Judaism, and asked the Jews to come to terms with the Muslims:

> *Say: O people of the Book! Come to a word common between us and you: That we shall not worship any but Allāh and (that) we shall associate nothing with Him, and (that) some of us shall not take others for lords besides Allāh, but if they turn back, then say: Bear witness that we are Muslims.* (Qur'ān, 3:64)

Neither kindness nor fair dealing on the part of the Prophet could, however, conciliate the Jews. They tried to revive the rift between the tribes of Aws and Khazraj. Some Jews would accept Islam one day and renounce it the next in order to show that there was nothing significant in Islam.

> *And a party of the people of the Book say: Profess faith in that which has been revealed to those who believe in the first part of the day and disbelieve therein at the end of it, perhaps they will go back on their religion.*
> (Qur'ān, 3:72)

They conspired with the *munafiqūn* and sent emissaries to the enemies of Islam. Apprehension and envy at the growing power of the Muslims following their victory at Badr rankled in their hearts, and they redoubled their efforts to exterminate the new religion. Quraish were further instigating them to do so, sending a threatening epistle to them: "You possess arms and fortresses. You should fight our enemy (Muḥammed); otherwise, we will attack you and nothing will prevent us from grabbing the arms of your women."

Ka'b ibn Ashraf, Jewish chieftain of Banū Nadīr, was a poet of considerable fame and fortune. Like so many others, he was bitterly hostile to Islam. With his fiery poems, he began to incite the people to rise up against the Muslims. After the battle of Badr, he composed a number of eulogies mourning the Meccan chiefs slain in the battle. He used to recite them at every gathering. He contacted Abū Sufyān with a

view to making a combined effort to wipe out the Muslims. He openly recited a number of poems derogatory to the Prophet. As poetry had a high place in the life of the Arabs and could deepen influence and sway feelings, Kaʿb ibn Ashraf had become not only a nuisance but a serious menace. We have it on the authority of al-Yaʿqubi and *ḥāfiz* Ibn Ḥajar that Kaʿb plotted to kill the Prophet. When this plot became known to the Prophet, he consulted his companions and it was decided that Kaʿb should be silenced forever. Muhammed ibn Maslamahh undertook to carry out the job and, on getting an opportunity, he killed Kaʿb ibn Ashraf on Ṣafar 14, 3 A.H./August 9, 624 A.D.

Banū Qinaqāʿ, the most powerful Jewish tribe, were the first to resile from the alliance with the Muslims. Says Ibn Saʿd, "The Jews attempted sedition during the battle of Badr and were envious of the Muslims, retracting from their pact with them."

An incident in 2 A.H./623 A.D. led to a flare-up. A veiled Muslim lady had gone to the shop of a Jew. She was pestered and her clothes thrown up. A Muslim standing nearby was unable to tolerate this indecent behaviour, so he killed the Jew. The Jews, thereupon, killed the Muslim. The Prophet remonstrated with them but they defiantly replied that they were not (as weak as) Quraish (who were defeated in Badr) and would show him what battle was. Within the security of their fortress, they started making preparations for war. The fortress was besieged by the Muslims for fifteen days and the Jews had to sue for peace, promising that they would accept the Prophet's decision. The Prophet decided to kick them out of Medīna for good, giving them ten days to depart to Greater Syria on the pain of death, allowing them to take all their movable possessions except their arms. First they paid no heed to his order and were resolved to resist. They were besieged within the walls of their fortresses for fifteen days following which they surrendered and were expelled in the Summer of 4 A.H./625 A.D. Most of them proceeded to Khaybar, a fertile area situated about six days' march to the north-east of Medīna, where they had possessed landed property; some of them marched to Syria and Palestine. Their immoveable property was confiscated. Houses were distributed among the Muhājirs who still had no homes of their own in Medīna since the date of their migration from Mecca. Some Anṣār who also had no dwellings of their own were provided with the dwellings. Some of them did not like the idea of leaving their houses to be occupied by the Muslims, so, they demolished them. The Qur'ān refers to the various aspects of this expulsion in Sūrat

al-Ḥashr:

> *He (Allāh) it is Who caused those (Jews) who disbelieved (in Muḥammed) from among the People of the Book (Torah) to get out of their homes in the first banishment; you did not think that they would get out, while they were certain that their fortresses would defend them against Allāh, but Allāh came to them from where they did not expect and cast terror into their hearts; they demolished their houses with their own hands and the hands of the believers; therefore, take a lesson, O you who have eyes! And had it not been that Allāh had decreed for them the exile, He would certainly have punished them in this world, and in the hereafter they shall have the chastisement of the Fire. This is so because they opposed Allāh and His Prophet (Muḥammed), and whoever opposes Allāh, then surely Allāh is severe in retributing (evil).*
> (Qur'ān, 59:2-4)

Some European critics see only the immediate cause, that is, the indecent behaviour with the Muslim lady and, ascribing it to boyish prank, they try to minimize it. In their view, therefore, the punishment was too harsh, but they fail to take notice of the constant efforts of the Jews to undermine the Islamic movement. It was not one incident but a series of events that had brought on the final clash.

EXPULSION OF BANU NADĪR (625 A.D.)

Encouraged by the Meccans and by ʿAbdullāh ibn Ubay, the Jews plotted to kill the Prophet. Once the Prophet, together with some companions, were there to seek their help in arranging the payment of blood-money of two persons from the tribe of ʿĀmir. The Jews asked the Prophet to come inside their fortress, but the Prophet did not like the idea. Instead, he sat outside the wall of the fortress. They sent one man to climb the wall from inside the fortress and to kill the Prophet by throwing a big boulder on his head.

The Prophet, through divine revelation, came to know of this treacherous scheme in nick of time and immediately left the place.

Then he sent Banū Nadīr an ultimatum with Muḥammed ibn Maslamah that, since they had broken their treaty, they should leave Medīna within ten days. They wanted to migrate when ʿAbdullāh ibn Ubay encouraged them not to leave Medīna, promising them help with 2000 warriors. The Jews then refused to leave Medīna. The following āyāt refer to this promise of help:

Have you not seen those who have become hypocrites? They say to those of their brethren who disbelieve from among the people of the Book: If you are driven forth, we shall certainly go forth with you, and we will never obey anyone concerning you; and if you are fought, we will certainly help you, and Allāh bears witness that they are most surely liars. Certainly, if these are driven forth, they will not go forth with them, and if they are fought, they will not help them, and even if they help them, they will certainly turn (their) backs, then they shall not be helped.
(Qur'ān, 59:11-12)

Their fortress was besieged, and ᶜAbdullāh ibn Ubay did nothing to help them as predicted in the Qur'ānic verses cited above. After 15 days, they agreed to leave Medīna. They were allowed to take away all their movables which they could take except weapons of war.

They passed through Medīna's market singing and beating drums to show that they were not disheartened by that banishment and that they would soon avenge this defeat. Some of them went to Syria while others settled with the Jews of Khaybar.

Since there was no war, according to the command of Allāh (see Sūra 59, verses 6 to 10), all the wealth left by them became the personal property of the Prophet who, having consulted with the Anṣār, distributed all movable property to poor Muhājirūn and three poor companions from the Anṣār: Sahl ibn Hāni, Abū Dajjānah and Zayd. He gave the immovable property to ᶜAli ibn Abū Tālib who made it *waqf* (trust) for the descendants of Fāṭima.

The 59th Chapter of the Qur'ān (The Banishment) describes various aspects of Banū Nadīr's expulsion as quoted above.

THE BATTLE OF KHANDAQ (627 A.D.)

Upon settling down at Khaybar, Banū Nadīr decided to seek revenge against the Muslims. They contacted the Meccans, and 20 leaders from the Jews and 50 from Quraish made a covenant in the Kaᶜba that as long as they lived, they would fight Muḥammed. Then the Jews and Quraish contacted their allies and sent emissaries to a number of tribes. Banū Ghatfān, Banū Asad, Banū Aslam, Banū Ashjaᶜ, Banū Kinānah and Banū Fizārah readily responded. The Meccans, four thousand strong, including three hundred cavaliers and fifteen hundred camels, were joined by six thousand allies from among the Jews and the bedouin tribes. The three armies set out, ten thousand strong, under the command of Abū Sufyān

in the beginning of the month of Shawwāl, 5 A.H. (the end of February 627 A.D.) to attack Medīna.

When news of these preparations reached Medīna, the Prophet consulted his companions, as he always did during such situations. There was hardly sufficient time to make preparations for the war. He decided this time to remain within the city and fight back. The stone houses of the city were built adjacent to one another so as to make a high and continuous strong wall for a long distance except in the north-west where a wide open space could afford the enemy an easy entry. At this place, with the suggestion of Salmān al-Fārisi, who was familiar with the mode of defending cities in other countries such as his (Persia), a trench, fifteen feet in width and fifteen feet in depth, was dug. Muslims were divided into parties of 10 each, and each party was allotted 10 yards to dig. The Prophet himself participated in this task, carrying the excavated earth away. The *khandaq* (moat) was completed in nick of time: just 3 days before the host of the enemies reached Medīna. The houses outside the city were evacuated, and the women and children were accommodated for safety on the tops of the double-storied houses at the entrenchment. Muslims could muster only three thousand men to face this huge army, and they immediately took cover behind the ditch. The Propeht camped in the center of the entrenchment in a tent of red leather on a space shaped like a crescent. The camp had the rising ground of Silāʿ on its rear and the trench in the front.

Huyaiy ibn Akhtab, head of Banū Naḍīr and the most antagonistic Jew, met secretly with Kaʿb ibn Asad, head of Banū Qurayẓah, a Jewish tribe still in Medīna. Banū Qurayẓah, on his instigation, tore down the treaty which they had concluded with the Muslims. The Jews decided that they would assist the pagan Quraishites after ten days' preparations and would attack the rear of Muḥammed's army from the north-western side of the city that lay on the south-east side of their fortress and which was easily accessible to them.

Rumours reached the Prophet about the Jews' schemes, so he sent two chiefs, one from the Aws and one from the Khazraj, namely Saʿd ibn Muʿāth and Saʿd ibn ʿAbadah[1] respectively to ascertain the truth. Both men proceeded to meet the Jews. Having made searching inquiries and some scouting of their own, they returned to report to the Prophet that the

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[1]The reader may remember this same Saʿd ibn ʿAbadah in the earlier chapter of this book discussing the jinns.

temper of the Jews was even worse than had been feared. This news alarmed the Prophet. It was then necessary to take precautions against any surprise attack or treachery from the side of the Jews. The north-western part of the city, which lay on the side of the Jewish stronghold, was the weakest of all defences. In order to protect the families of his followers throughout the city, the Prophet, as a meager measure of safeguard, had no choice except to send a considerable number of his men from his already small army of three thousand to afford them such a protection. His men's supplies were hardly adequate due to the length of the entrenchment that formed his defense line. Still, he had no choice except to detach two parties, one of three hundred men under the command of Zayd ibn Hārithah, his freed slave and adopted son, and another of two hundred men under the command of a chieftain from Medīna. Their job was to patrol the streets and the alleys of the city night and day.

This treachery and danger from inside Medīna, when Muslims were surrounded by the combined armies of pagans and Jews of all of Arabia on the outside, had a telling effect on the Muslims. The enemy was astonished to see the moat because it was a novel military tactic for the Arabs. They camped on the outside for 27 (or 24) days. Their number increased day by day, and many Muslims were extremely terrified, as the Qur'ān portrays for us. Sūrat al-Aḥzāb describes various aspects of this siege. For example, read the following verses:

> *When they came upon you from above you and from below you, and when the eyes turned dull, and the hearts rose up to the throats, you began to think diverse thoughts about Allāh. There, the believers were tried, and they wee shaken a tremendous shaking.*
> (Qur'ān, 33:10-11)

At that time, many hypocrites, and even some Muslims, asked permission to leave the ranks of the Muslims and to go home:

> *And when a party of them said: O people of Yathrib! There is no place for you to stand, and a party of them asked permission of the Prophet saying: Verily our houses are exposed, and they were not exposed; they only described to flee away.*
> (Qur'ān, 33:13)

The bulk of the army, however, steadfastly withstood the hardship of inclement weather and rapidly depleting provisions. The coalition's army

hurled arrows and stones at the Muslims.

Finally, a few of Quraish's more valiant warriors, ʿAmr ibn ʿAbdwadd, Nawfal ibn ʿAbdullāh ibn Mughīrah, Dhirār ibn Khaṭṭāb, Hubairah ibn Abū Wahab, ʿIkrimah ibn Abū Jahl and Mirdās al-Fahri, succeeded in crossing the moat.

ʿAmr called for battle; nobody responded; he was considered equal to one thousand warriors. History accounts state that all the Muslims were as though birds were sitting on their heads: they were too afraid to raise their heads.

Three times did the Prophet exhort the Muslims to battle ʿAmr. Three times it was only ʿAli who stood up. In the third time, the Prophet allowed ʿAli to go. When ʿAli was going to the battlefield, the Prophet said: "The whole faith is going to fight the whole infidelity; the embodiment of the former bounds is to crush the entirety of the latter." The Prophet put his own turban on ʿAli's head, his own coat of mail over ʿAli's body, and he armed ʿAli with his own sword, Thul-Fiqār, then he sent him to meet his opponent. Then the Prophet raised his hands to supplicate thus: "O Allāh! ʿObaydah, my cousin, was taken away from me in the Battle of Badr, Hamzah, my uncle, in Uḥud. Be Merciful, O Lord, not to leave me alone and undefended. Spare ʿAli to defend me. You are the best of defenders."

ʿAli invited ʿAmr to accept Islam or to return to Mecca, or to come down from his horse since ʿAli had no horse and was on foot.

"Nephew," said ʿAmr to ʿAli, being a friend of ʿAli's father Abū Tālib, "By God I do not like to kill you." ʿAli replied, "By God, I am here to kill you!" ʿAmr, now enraged at this reply, alighted from his horse. Having hamstrung his horse, a token of his resolve never to run away from the battlefield but either to conquer or to perish, he advanced towards ʿAli. They were immediately engaged in a duel, turning the ground underneath them into a cloud of dust, so much so that for a good while, only the strokes of their swords could be heard while they themseles could not be seen. Once ʿAmr succeeded in inflicting a serious cut on ʿAli's head. At last, ʿAli's voice was heard shouting, "*Allāhu Akbar! Allāhu Akbar!*" That was his cry of victory. It always is Muslims' cry of victory. Seeing how the most brave among them has been killed by ʿAli, the other pagans who crossed the moat now took to their heels with the exception of Nawfal whose horse failed to leap; it fell into the moat. As the Muslims showered him with a hail of stones, he cried out thus: "I rather die by the sword than by the stones!" Hearing this, ʿAli

leaped into the moat and fulfilled his last wish, dispatching him to hell!

ᶜAli, contrary to the Arab custom then, did not, however, strip either men from their armour or clothes. When ᶜAmr's sister came to her brother's corpse, she was struck with admiration at the noble behaviour of her slain brother's adversary and, finding out who he was, she felt proud of her brother having met his fate at the hands of the person who was known as the unique champion of spotless character. She said, as recorded in *Tārīkh al-Khamīs*, "Had his conqueror been someone else other than the one who killed him, I would have mourned ᶜAmr for the rest of my life. But his opponent was the unique spotless champion."

ᶜAli, the "Lion of God," thus distinguished himself as on previous occasions: in the battles of Badr and of Uḥud. About this battle, the Prophet said:

> Verily, one attack of ᶜAli in the Battle of Khandaq is better than the worship of all human beings and jinns up to the Day of Resurrection.

No further activity was attempted by the enemy that day, but great preparations were undertaken during the night. Khālid ibn al-Walīd, with a party of cavaliers, attempted during the night to clear the ditch for crossing the next day. The next morning, the Muslims found the entire enemy force arrayed in fighting formations along their line of entrenchment. The enemies tried to overrun the Muslim side of the trench but were repelled at every point. The ditch served its purpose; it could not be crossed. During the entire military campaign, by the way, only five Muslims were martyred. The Muslims' vigilance paralyzed the enemies despite their numeric superiority. Nemeric superiority is not always a prerequisite for victory. The Almighty grants victory to whosoever He pleases.

But the Muslims were running out of provisions. The Prophet had to tie a stone on his stomach in order to minimize the pangs of hunger. Abū Saᶜeed al-Khudri said: "Our hearts had reached our throats in fear and in desperation." On the other hand, the besieging army was getting restive, too; it could not put up any further with the rain and cold; its horses were perishing daily and provisions nearing depletion. The Prophet went to the place where the Mosque of Victory (Masjidul-Fath) now stands and prayed to Allāh. Said the Prophet, "O Lord! Revealer of the Sacred Book, the One Who is swift in taking account, turn the confederate host away! Turn them to flight, O Lord, and make the earth underndeath them

quake!"

A fierce storm raged, uprooting the tents of the enemies; their pots and belongings went flying in all directions; it blew dust in their faces, extinguished their fires, and their horses were running around as though they were possessed. An unbearable terror was cast in their hearts. In the fourth night, after having finished his prayers, Muḥammed asked Abū Bakr if he would go to the enemy's camp to discern and report their activities. He replied saying, "I ask pardon of Allāh and of His Messenger." The Prophet promised Paradise to be the reward of anyone who would venture out for that purpose, then asked ʿOmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb if he would do it. ʿOmar's answer was similar to that of Abū Bakr. The Prophet's request is actually an order, a divine one, since it is coming from one who does not say anything or do anything without the Will of the Almighty. These facts are recorded in *Tafsīr al-Durr al-Manthūr, Al-Sīra al-Muḥammediyya, Al-Sīra al-Ḥalabiyya, Tārīkh al-Khamīs,* and *Rawḍat al-Aḥbāb* for all to review. The third person the Prophet asked was Ḥuthayfah al-Yemāni who readily responded to the request and proceeded to the enemy camp in the darkness of the night where he saw the devestation wrought by the storm. He saw Abū Sufyān looking very depressed. When he came back to his camp and reported in detail to the Prophet what he had seen, the Prophet was delighted to find out that his plea to Allāh was answered.

Either feeling the pain of the severity of the weather or struck with terror at that storm which was interpreted as a manifestation of the Divine Wrath, Abū Sufyān decided to lift the siege and to march back at once. Summoning the chiefs of his allies, he announced his decision to them, issuing orders to dismantle the camp. He and all the Meccans with him, as well as the pagan tribes that allied themselves under his command, fled away. The first to flee was Abū Sufyān himself who was so upset that he tried to ride his camel without first untying its rope. Khālid ibn al-Walīd guarded the rear of the armies with two hundred cavaliers against a pursuit. The Ghatfān tribesmen and the bedouin allies returned to their desert lodges; not a single person remained on the battlefield in the morning. It was with great joy that in the morning the Muslims discovered the sudden disappearance of the enemy, finding themselves unexpectedly relieved. The siege lasted for twenty-four long days ending in March of 627 A.D.

This episode is referred to in the Qur'ān in this āyat:

O ye who believe! Remember the bounty of Allāh unto you when came upon you the hosts, so We sent against them a strong wind and hosts that ye saw not, and Allāh sees all what you do.
(Qur'ān, 33:9)

And also in āyat 25 which says:

And God turned back the unbelievers in their rage; they did not achieve any advantage, and Allāh sufficed for the believers in fighting, and Allāh is Strong, Mighty.
(Qur'ān, 33:25)

ᶜAbdullāh ibn Masᶜud was interpreting this thus: "And God sufficed the believers (through ᶜAli ibn Abū Ṭālib) in their fight," as we read in *Tafsīr al-Durr al-Manthūr*.

As a direct result of this defeat of the infidels' combined forces in the Battle of Khandaq (moat, or the Battle of Ahzāb, coalitions), Quraish's influence waned, and those tribes who were till then hesitating to accept Islam out of fear of Quraish began to send deputations to the Prophet. The first deputation came from the tribe of Māzinah, and it consisted of four hundred persons. They not only accepted Islam but were ready to settle down in Medīna. The Prophet, however, advised them to return to their homes.

Likewise, a deputation of a hundred persons came from the Ashjāᶜ and embraced Islam. The tribe of Juhainah lived near them, so they were influenced by their conversion. One thousand of the latter's men came to Medīna to join the fraternity.

BANU QURAYẒAH JEWS ELIMINATED (627 A.D.)

According to the terms of the treaty which Banū Qurayẓah had contracted with the Muslims, they were bound to assist the Muslims against outside aggression. But, not to speak of assisting the Muslims or even remaining neutral, they had sided with the Meccans and joined the besieging foe. What was worse, they had tried to attack the fortress where Muslim women and children had been lodged for safety. Living in such a close proximity to Medīna, they had become a serious menace.

Having put aside his armour after his return from the site of the Battle of Khandaq, the Prophet, on the same day when the battle had come to a close, was washing his hands and face at the house of his beloved daughter Fāṭima whom he used to visit before proceeding to his

own house and whenever he returned from an expedition or an expedition. It was then and there that arch-angel Gabriel brought him the divine command to proceed immediately against the Jews of Qurayẓah. He instantly sent ʿAli with his standard, then he followed in person with his army and laid the siege of their fortress, a siege which the enemy had not expected, thinking that the Muslims were already worn out following one of their most exhausting battles.

First, Qurayẓah Jews resisted, but the siege of twenty-five days sufficed to bring them to their knees and prepare them to pay for their treachery. They ultimately opened the gates of their fortresses on the condition that their fate should be decided by Saʿd ibn Muʿāth, chief of the Aws, a long time friend and ally of the Jews. Saʿd had been wounded during the battle of the moat and was still under treatment when he was brought to decide the fate of Banū Qurayẓah. He came riding a mule and looking quite weak. He could not walk, so he was supported by some of his friends. He was surrounded by men of his tribe who were all urging him to be lenient towards Jewish prisoners, reminding him of their services to the Aws when the war of Buʿāth was raging. Basing his judgement upon the verses of the Old Testament itself, Saʿd ruled that the fighting men, six (or seven) hundred in number according to some accounts, should be killed, the women and children be taken captive, and their possessions be confiscated and divided among the besieging troops. The sentence was carried out.

Ibn ʿAbbās narrates the following with reference to the Prophet's conquest over Banū Qurayẓah:

> When the Messenger of Allāh called Kaʿb ibn Asad so that he would be beheaded, he said to him, "O Kaʿb! Did you avail yourself of the advice of Ibn Ḥawash who came from Syria? He (Ibn Ḥawash) said, "I have left wine and all intoxicants and came to misery and dates for the same of a Prophet to be delegated. His advent will be in Mecca, and this (Medīna) is the place to which he will migrate. He is the one who smiles quite often, and who quite often kills. A bit of bread and a few dates suffice him. He rides the donkey without a saddle. In his eyes there is redness. He puts the sword on his shoulder and does not care who faces him. His domain will reach so far that nobody can go beyond it.'" Kaʿb said, "Yes, all of this is true, O Muhammed! Had the Jews not taunted me of being too coward to fight you, I would have believed in you and followed you, but I am a follower of Judaism; a Jew do I live, and a Jew shall I die." The Messenger of Allāh then said, "Bring him

forward and strike his neck," and so it was[1].

It was in reference to this conquest that the following *ayats* were *revealed:*

> And He drove down those of the people of the Book who backed them from their fortresses, and He cast awe into their hearts: some you killed and some you took captive. And He made you inherit their land and their dwellings and their possessions, and (to) a land which ye have not yet trodden, and God has power over all things. *(Qur'ān, 33:26-27)*

Some critics had described this punishment as harsh. But what other punishment could be meted out to them? They had violated the pact and, instead of helping the Muslims, they joined the forces of their enemies and had actually besieged the Muslims. There were no prisons where prisoners of war could be detained nor any concentration camps where they could be put to forced labor, and the capture of women and children, though allaying to the notions of the present age, was probably the only method known in those days to provide sustenance to them when the earning members of their families had lost their lives. At any rate, this was the customary aftermath of a war.

One of the greatest losses suffered by the Muslims in the Battle of Khandaq (Moat) is the death of Saᶜd ibn Muᶜāth one month after the end of the battle under the weight of his wounds. That was in 5 A.H./626 A.D. Ubayy has narrated saying that Saᶜd ibn ᶜAbdullāh quotes Ibrāhīm ibn Hāshim quoting al-Ḥusain ibn Yazīd al-Nawfali quoting Ziyād al-Sukūni quoting Imām Jaᶜfer ibn Muḥammed al-Sādiq who in turn quotes his father Imām Muḥammed al-Bāqir saying that the Prophet performed the funeral prayers for Saᶜd ibn Muᶜāth then said,

> *Ninety thousand angels, including Gabriel, have attended the funeral of* Saᶜd ibn Muᶜāth today to bless him and to pray for him. I asked Gabriel, "What did he do to deserve your prayers, all of you, today?!" Gabriel said, "He used to recite Sūrat al-Ikhlās (Ch. 112 of the Holy Qurān) standing, sitting, riding, walking, going or coming."[2]

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[1]al-Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 15, p. 206.

[2]Shaikh Abū Jaᶜfer Muḥammed ibn ᶜAli ibn al-Ḥusain ibn Babawayh al-
(continued...)

May Allāh have mercy on Saᶜd ibn Muᶜāth.

THE BANU MOSṬALIQ JEWS (627 A.D.)

The Jews of Banū Mosṭaliq were neighbours of Banū Qurayẓah. Although they saw what had happened to the latter, they did not learn a lesson from it and started making preparations to invade the part of Medīna where the Muslims were residing. Having come to know of their designs, Prophet Muḥammed sent them Buraydah ibn al-Ḥāsib in order to verify the reports that had reached him. Upon his return, Buraydah confirmed the truth of what the Prophet had heard. A pre-emptive war was imminent. With ᶜAli as the standard bearer, the Prophet led his troops on Shaᶜbān 2, 5 A.H./December 30, 626 A.D. to battle the Banū Mosṭaliq Jews. The fighting broke out, and ten Jews were killed, including the leader of Banū Mostaliq, namely al-Ḥārith ibn Abū Zarār. Having seen their leader being killed, the Jews took to flight but not before the Muslims captured two hundred of them along with one thousand camels and five hundred sheep. Juwayriyya, daughter of the slain Jewish chief, was among the captives. Before the fight began, her father had already pleaded to the Prophet not to sell her in the slave market as was usually done in those days. Captives who could not buy their ransom or get someone to pay it on their behalf used to be auctioned at the slave market. Juwayriyya embraced Islam and was married to the Prophet who safeguarded her dignity and treated her like a queen. In order to please her even more, Muhammed set all her relatives free. She died in 677 A.D., forty-five years after the Prophet's demise.

THE TREATY OF ḤUDAYBIYA (627 A.D.)

On the first day of the month of Thul-Qiᶜdah, of the same year, 5 A.H./March 27, 627 A.D., a month in which no fighting was to take place according to the ancient Arabian custom, the Prophet saw in a dream that he and his followers were circling the Kaᶜba and performing all the rituals of the pilgrimage. The next morning, he communicated his dream to his followers who were very glad to have such good news. Particularly happy were the Muhājirūn who had not forgotten about their families and relatives whom they had left behind in Mecca and whom they very much longed to see. Almost six years had passed since they

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[2](...continued)
Qummi al-Ṣadūq, *Al-Āmāli* (or *Al-Majālis*), pp. 323-324.

had seen the Kaʿba and their families, relatives and friends.

The Prophet decided to perform the *ʿumra* (the lesser pilgrimage) to the Kaʿba which had been till then denied to the Muslims due to the hostility of the Meccans. About fourteen hundred Muhājirūn and Anṣār expressed their readiness to go with him. Lest there should be any misgivings in any quarter about his intentions, he directed the Muslims not to carry any arms other than travellers' sheathed swords, and he himself put on the robes of *iḥrām* and took his wife Umm Salamah with him. He also took seventy camels to sacrifice. On the way, they halted at Thul Ḥolayfa. Then the Muslims reached Ḥudaybiya, ten miles from Mecca, where the Prophet's she-camel Qaswā' stopped on her own, knelt down and refused to go any further. Some people said that she was exhasuted, but the Prophet interpreted it as a Divine sign that he should not proceed any further. He, therefore, camped at Ḥudaybiya.

There was no water available in the place where they had camped. There were some wells there, but they were all filled up with sands. Taking an arrow from his quiver, the Prophet planted it in one of those wells. Immediately water came out to the great relief of everybody.

An envoy was sent to the Meccans to obtain their permission to visit the Kaʿba but it was rejected. Instead, the Meccans collected a force of 200 cavaliers under the command of Khālid ibn al-Walīd and ʿIkrimah son of the infamous Abū Jahl to prevent the Muslims from entering Mecca. Soon the Prophet and his companions were face to face with this force. The Quraishites sent Budayl ibn Warqa' al-Khuzāʿi with a number of men from his tribe Khuzāʿah to tell the Prophet that he was not allowed to visit the Kaʿba. "I have left behind me," said Budayl, "Kaʿb ibn Luʾay and ʿĀmir ibn Luʾay, accompanied by a powerful host, and they shall fight you and prohibit you from reaching the sanctuary." The Prophet said, "We did not come here to fight anyone; rather, we came to perform the *ʿumra*. War has exhausted and harmed Quraish. If they wish, we can agree on a period of truce so that they may leave me and the people alone. If they wish to embrace what other people have embraced, they may do so; otherwise, I swear by the One Who holds my life in His grip, I shall fight them in defence of my mission till I perish or Allāh carries out His command." Budayl said, "I shall convey to them what you have just said."

Quraish deputed ʿUrwah ibn Masʿūd al-Thaqafi to have a talk with the Prophet, but nothing came out of it. The Prophet then sent Karrāsh ibn Umayyah to Quraish to assure them that they had no hostile

intentions at all, only to perform the *ʿumra*. He rode his own camel Thaʿlab, but he was mistreated and his camel maimed, and it was only with difficulty that he was able to escape with his life. He could have been killed had no Ethiopians interferred and assisted his escape. At that juncture, the Prophet thought that the best person to speak to the haughty Quraishites would be ʿOmar ibn al-Khattāb, so he asked him to be his emissary to those who used to be his bosom friends, but ʿOmar asked to be excused saying that he was not on good terms with Quraish and suggested that his friend ʿOthmān ibn ʿAffān would be a more suitable envoy. ʿOthmān, who belonged to the same clan to which Abū Sufyān belonged, was sent to persuade Quraish to allow the Muslims to visit the Kaʿba. He told the riders that Muhammed had come only to visit the sacred sanctuary and that after slaying the sacrificial camels, he and his followers would all return. But the Quraishites replied that they had sworn not to allow Muhammed to enter the city that year and that if he, ʿOthmān, wished to visit the Kaʿba himself, he could do so. ʿOthmān declined their offer saying that he could not do so without the Prophet first performing the rites of the lesser pilgrimage. He then returned to the camp. Since it took so long for ʿOthmān to return, rumour was in the Muslim camp that he had been murdered by the Meccans, and the Prophet was quite upset.

The vanguard of Quraish, only eight in number, but some accounts say forty, attacked the Muslims from the direction of the Tanʿeem mountain with the intention to massacre them as they were performing the early morning prayers, but the attackers were captured. The Prophet demonstrated great clemency and generosity, setting them all free. The Muslims took a pledge on the hands of the Prophet, known as "Bayʿat al-Ridwān", to stand by him to the last. Referring to this pledge, the Qur'ān says:

> *Indeed God was well pleased with the believers when they swore allegiance to thee under the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down tranquility on them and rewarded them with a near victory.*
> (Qur'ān, 48:18)

Those who study the Islamic history impartially will conclude that there were many who swore the pledge of "Bayʿat al-Ridwān" and who forgot it or claimed to have forgotten it as soon as the Prophet died...

Surely these will be called to account before the Almighty on the Day of Judgment and to answer to the deviation they caused in the march of Islam, reverting to the *jāhiliyya*, the pre-Islamic era, following their own inclinations and seeking their own vested interests rather than implementing the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh... ʿAbdullāh ibn Mughaffal, an eye witness to Bayʿat al-Ridwān, said that the Prophet took a pledge from them not to flee from the battle again, since some of them had done just that before, leaving him an easy target to the mischief of his foes and the foes of his Lord.

It came to be known later that the news of ʿOthmān's murder was not true. After considerable difficulty, a treaty was ultimately signed with Suhayl ibn ʿAmr, Quraish's envoy, on the following terms reproduced in almost all the Arab Chronicles:

(1) The Muslims should return to Medīna that year without performing the pilgrimage.

(2) They could return the next year but their stay should not exceed three days.

(3) The Muslims should not bring any arms with them except travellers' sheathed swords.

(4) There would be no war between Quraish and the Muslims for ten years.

(5) Muslims residing in Mecca would not be allowed to migrate to Medīna, but if any Muslim wanted to settle in Mecca, he should not be prevented from doing so.

(6) Any idolater or Meccan Muslim migrating to Medīna without the permission of his clan will be sent back to Mecca, but a Muslim of Medīna going back to Mecca without permission will not be allowed to return.

(7) Any tribe in Arabia will be free to join any of the parties to the pact, and the allies also will be bound by this treaty.

Although these terms were apparently disadvantageous to the Muslims, the Prophet accepted them.

ʿAli wrote the peace treaty himself, and it was witnessed by a number of the most prominent companions of the Prophet (*ṣaḥābah*) despite the fact that they had their own reservations in its regard, considering it a most unfavourable and humiliating one.

Some Muslims were unhappy about this treaty. ʿOmar ibn al-Khattāb

talked very rudely to the Prophet. "Are you not a true Prophet of Allāh?," ʿOmar asked the Prophet. "I am, no doubt," answered the Prophet. "Are we not right and the adversaries are wrong?" he asked the Prophet again. Muḥammed answered him in the affirmative, whereupon he went on to ask one more time, "Why should we, then, obliterate our faith and bear the brunt of humiliation?" The Prophet answered, "I am only a messenger of Allāh, and I can do nothing against His will; He will help me." ʿOmar, however, was not satisfied with the Prophet's answers. Ibn Hishām, the renown historian, goes on to record the dialogue between ʿOmar and his friend Abū Bakr wherein the former exclaimed: "Is not Muḥammed the Messenger of Allāh? Are we not Muslims? Are they not infidels? Why, then, should our divine religion be thus humiliated?" Al-Wāqidi, who also researched this topic, cites ʿOmar adding, "Had these terms been fixed by anyone other than Muḥammed himself, even by a commander whom I appoint, I would have scorned to listen to them." Afterwards, he used to say: "Never did I have doubt (about the truth of Islam) since my acceptance of Islam except on that day (of Ḥudaybiya)." A copy of the agreement was given to Suhail, whereas the original remained with the Prophet.

No sooner had the terms been agreed upon than a critical occasion arose. Abū Jundal son of Suhail had been imprisoned by his father for having accepted Islam and was being severely mistreated. He managed to escape and, with his fetters on, reached Ḥudaybiya just before the treaty was signed. His father, Suhail ibn ʿAmr, the emissary of the Meccans, demanded his return according to the terms of the treaty. The Muslims said that the treaty had by then not signed yet. Suhail said that if his son was not returned to him, there would be no treaty at all. Abū Jundal pleaded with the Muslims in the name of mercy not to throw him back to the tyranny of the Meccans and showed them the injuries they had inflicted on him. The Muslims were moved to plead his cause and ʿOmar made an impassioned appeal, but the Prophet silenced them by declaring that he could not break a treaty. He consoled Abū Jundal by saying that God would create some way for his deliverance. ʿOmar Leaped to comfort the young man thus: "These infidels' blood is no better than the dogs' blood," encouraging him to kill his father so that the whole peace treaty would amount to nothing... Abū Jundal, however, did not consent to undo what the Messenger of Allāh had just done; the peace treaty has to be respected.

Having concluded the Ḥudaybiya peace treaty, the Prophet wanted to

perform as many of the rituals relevant to the lesser pilgrimage as possible. He ordered his *sahābah* to slaughter their sacrificial animals and to shave their heads, but he was sorely grieved to see that nobody paid heed to his command. It grieved him so much that he mentioned it to his wife Umm Salamah. But when he sacrificed his animals and shaved his head, removing the robes of *ihrām*, they, too, did likewise, though reluctantly.

After three days' stay at Hudaybiya, the Muslims returned to Medīna. On the way back, Sūra 48 titled "Victory" was revealed describing the treaty as an open victory for the Muslims. Later events confirmed that it was really a great victory for them. The first six of its 29 verses are:

> *In the Name of Allāh, the most Beneficent, the most Merciful*
> *Surely We have bestowed upon you a clear victory so that Allāh may forgive your past faults and those to follow and complete His favour upon you and keep you on a right course. And so that Allāh may help you with a mighty victory. He it is Who sent down tranquility into the hearts of the believers so that they may have more faith added to their faith, and Allāh's are the hosts of the heavens and the earth, and Allāh is Knowing, Wise, so that He may cause the believing men and the believing women to enter gardens beneath which rivers flow to abide therein (forever) and to wipe out their sins, and that is a grand achievement with Allāh. And so that He may punish the hypocritical men and the hypocritical women, and the polytheistic men and the polytheistic women, those who entertain evil thoughts about Allāh. On them is the evil turned, and Allāh condemns them and has cursed them and prepared hell for them, and evil is its resort.*
> (Qur'ān, 1-6)

There were, unfortunately, a number of hypocritical men with the Prophet at Hudaybiya, those opportunists who pretended to be more zealous about Islam than they really were, and their future actions proved so.

Till then, idolaters and Muslims had not been mixing with each other. By virtue of this treaty, they started doing so freely. Muslims, now more than ever before, openly declared their faith and invited others to embrace it. The enemies of Islam were silenced; they could not freely persecute the Muslims. On account of their family ties and trade connections, the Meccans started visiting Medīna, and many of them stayed there for months. Peace became a reality, and both parties started enjoying its fruits. Non-Muslims were getting acquainted with the teachings of Islam and were deeply impressed by the righteous conduct and moral integrity

of the Muslims. The Muslims of Medīna who were visiting Mecca left behind them similar impressions. The result was that the Meccans were themselves attracted to Islam and many of them embraced the new religion. It is recorded that during two years after this treaty, more people accepted Islam than all those who did so during the nineteen years since the inception of the mission put together. A clear proof is found in the fact that while only 1,400 Muslims had accompanied the Prophet for the lesser pilgrimage when the treaty of Ḥudaybiya was concluded, two years later, that is, when Mecca fell in the hands of the Muslims, he was accompanied by at least 10,000 Muslims.

Immediately after the signing of the treaty, Banū Khuzā'ah, who for a long time were inclined to the new faith, openly embraced it, entering further into an alliance with the Prophet in 629 A.D. This, in fact, was the first practical benefit of the treaty.

INVITING RULERS OF NEIGHBORING STATES (628 A.D.)

The tranquility afforded by the Hudaybiya peace treaty gave an opportunity to the Prophet to propagate Islam throughout Arabia and to enable Islam to embark upon its attempt to embrace all humanity. He sent ambassadors with his letters to Heraclius, the Byzantine emperor, to Khosrow Parviz II, the Kisra of Persia[1], to the kings of Egypt and Abyssinia, and to the chiefs of Yemen and Syria. These letters have been preserved and reproduced by Arab chroniclers.

The Byzantine emperor Heraclius (575 - 641 A.D.), who ruled Byzantium from 610 - 641 A.D., woke up one day looking very distressed. His patriarchs immediately knew what was wrong with him. They said to him, "Yes! Last night, you saw in a vision that the King of the circumcized people has now attained power and authority. But we do not know any nation that circumcizes its sons other than the Jews, and they are already under your authority. Perhaps you should kill them all

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[1]He was the late Sassanian king of Persia under whom the empire achieved its greatest expansion. He ascended the throne in 590 A.D. following the assassination of his father Hormizd IV and remained the emperor till his death in 628 A.D. His wife was an Armenian Christian named Shīrīn. He received Prophet Muhammed's letter shortly before his death.

and set your mind to ease." As they were thus involved in their discussion, the emperor's governor over Bostra brought to the court an Arab. "This man, O King," said the governor, "is an Arab who is telling a very serious tale." Through an interpreter, Heraclius ordered the man to narrate the tale of what has happened in Arabia. The Arab said, "A man from among us has put forth a claim to Prophethood. Some people have followed him and some have not, and wars have been raging between both parties. Thus did I leave them behind." Heraclius ordered the man to be stripped. Once they stripped him, they found him circumcized. "This, by God, is what I saw in my vision," said Heraclius who ordered them to give him his clothes back. Then he called into his presence the chief of his police force and said to him, "Look everywhere throughout Syria and find me one of the people (Quraishites) of this man (meaning Muhammed)."[1]

Abū Sufyān narrates saying that he had come out in a trade caravan when they were intercepted by the chief of police of Heraclius who asked his group, "Are you from the people of Muḥammed?" The answer came in the affirmative. Abū Sufyān and his men were taken to the court of Heraclius who had already received a letter from the Prophet inviting him to accept Islam.

That letter to Heraclius[2] was carried by Duḥayyah ibn Khalīfah al-Kalbi, a famous Meccan businessman who had already accepted Islam, and it read as follows:

> **In the Name of Allāh, the most Beneficent, the most Merciful.** From Muḥammed, the slave and Messenger of Allāh, to Heraclius, the emperor of Rome. Peace be on him who follows the guidance. After this, I invite you to accept Islam. Accept Islam and you will prosper

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[1]al-Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 20, p. 384.

[2]Heraclius is the Eastern Roman emperor who laid the foundations of the medieval Byzantine state. He lived from 575 to 641 A.D. When Prophet Muhammed's letter reached him, his seat of government was at Constantinople; before that, he was at (now Turkish) Cappadocia. From 622 to 627, his army was fighting the Persians. He was defeated at the hands of the Muslims in 636 A.D. Thus, he lost both Egypt and Syria to the Muslims. His victory over the Persians in 627 then his defeat at the hands of the Muslims in 636 are referred to in Chapter 30 of the Holy Qur'ān (*Al-Room*, The Romans), that is, Byzantine (Eastern) Romans ruled by this Heraclius.

and Allāh will give you double rewards. But if you refuse, the sin of your people also will fall on your shoulders. O People of the Book! Come to a word common between us and you: that we shall not worship anything save Allāh, and that we shall not associate anything with Him, nor shall some of us take others for lords besides Allāh. But if they turn back, then say: Bear witness that we are Muslims.

Duḥayyah has said, "As soon as I delivered the Prophet's letter to (emperor) Heraclius, he ordered the patriarch of his empire to be brought to him. When the patriarch came, Heraclius showed him the Prophet's letter. Having read it, the patriarch said, `This is the Prophet whose advent we have been expecting! Jesus son of Mary had given us the glad tidings about him.' Then the patriarch added saying, `As far as I am concerned, I believe in him, and I follow him.' Heraclius said, `As far as I am concerned, if I do the same, I shall lose my kingdom.' After a while, Heraclius said, `Find me some of his own people who are here so that I may ask them about him.' Abū Sufyān and a group of businessmen from Quraish happened to be in Greater Syria at the time. Those businessmen were brought to Heraclius who said to them, `Let the one closest in kinship to him come forward to talk to me.' Abū Sufyān came forward."

Let us stop here for a minute to introduce the kind reader to this great man, Duḥayyah ibn Khalīfah al-Kalbi.

Duḥayyah was a successful businessman. Before accepting Islam, he came one day, as usual, to Medīna's bazaar (near the Prophet's Mosque) and beat his drum to announce his arrival and the presence of his merchandise for prospective buyers as was the custom in those days. Soon a large number of people surrounded him. He asked them where they had been and was told that they were at the mosque praying with Muḥammed, the Messenger of God. "Do you mean to tell me that you came here to buy something, leaving your Prophet behind?!" When their answer came in the affirmative, Duḥayyah rebuked them thus:, "Fie upon you, folks! Do you have any sense of shame at all for doing that?! Get away from me! I am not selling you a thing." He immediately packed his wares and left the bazaar. The Almighty appreciated what Duḥayyah had done out of respect for His Prophet notwithstanding the fact that Duhyyah had not yet believed in Muḥammed and in his message. Duḥayyah later accepted Islam. As a token of appreciation from the Almighty to him, the arach-angel of revelation, Gabriel, used to go to Prophet Muḥammed looking like Duḥayyah who was one of the most handsome businessmen in Mecca and Medīna. Here is a proof testifying to Gabriel impersonating

Duḥayyah:

Ibn ᶜAbbās narrates in a consecutively narrated tradition transmitted by a chain of reliable narrators saying that the Messenger of Allāh used to love to see ᶜAli as the first person to visit him every day in the late morning. The Prophet was in his house's courtyard one morning, resting his head on the lap of Duḥayyah ibn Khalīfah al-Kalbi, napping, when Ali arrived. He addressed Duḥayyah thus, "*As-Salāmo Alaik!* How is the Messenger of Allāh doing?" Duḥayyah said, "Very well, O Brother of the Messenger of Allāh!" Ali said, "May Allāh reward you on our behalf, we Ahl al-Bayt, with good rewards." Duḥayyah responded to this by saying, "I love you, and I would like to express a compliment to you as a gift from me to you. Here it is: You are the Commander of the Faithful (*Ameerul-Mo'mineen*), leader of the victorious hosts, and the master of all the descendants of Adam on the Day of Judgment with the exception of the prophets and the messengers. The standard of praise shall be in your hand on the Day of Judgment. You shall be escorted, you and your supporters (Shīᶜas), in the company of Muḥammed and his party to the Gardens. Successful is he who accepts you as his *wali*; a disappointed loser is he who abandons you. Due to Muḥammed's love for you did they love you, hating whatever Muḥammed hated. Those who hate you shall never receive any intercession from Muḥammed. Those who love you are the choicest of Allāh's people." Then Duḥayyah tried to adjust the Prophet's head in his lap when the Prophet woke up and inquired about that whispering. ᶜAli told the Prophet that he was talking with Duḥayyah, whereupon the Prophet said, "That was not Duḥayyah! That was Gabriel! Gabriel called you by the name whereby Allāh, the most Ealted One, calls you, and it is He Who cast love for you in the hearts of the *mu'mins*, casting fear of you in the hearts of the *kāfirs*."[1]

Now let us return to what went on between Heraclius and Abū Sufyān.

The conversation that took place between Heraclius and Abū Sufyān is preserved in the books of traditions thus:

Heraclius: Is the family of the person claiming prophethood a noble one?

Abū Sufyān: It is a noble family.

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[1]al-Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 18, pp. 267-268.

Heraclius: Has anyone else in this family claimed prophethood?

Abū Sufyān: No.

Heraclius: Has there been any king in this family?

Abū Sufyān: No.

Heraclius: Are the people who have accepted this religion weak or influential?

Abū Sufyān: They are weak people.

Heraclius: Are his followers increasing in number or decreasing?

Abū Sufyān: Their number is on the increase.

Heraclius: Have you ever known him to tell lies?

Abū Sufyān: No.

Heraclius: Does he ever commit a breach of any pact?

Abū Sufyān: He has not done it so far, but we would like to see if he keeps up a new peace treaty that we have recently negotiated with him.

Heraclius: Have you ever fought against him?

Abū Sufyān: Yes.

Heraclius: What was the result?

Abū Sufyān: Sometimes we won and sometimes he.

Heraclius: What does he teach?

Abū Sufyān: He bids people to worship one God and not to associate any partners with Him, to offer prayers, to be truthful and chaste, and to bestow alms.

Heraclius then summed up the conversation thus:

You say that this man belongs to a noble family. Prophets always come from noble families. You say that no one else in the family ever before claimed prophethood. Had it been so, I would have thought that he was influenced by family traditions. You say that none of his predecessors was a king. Had it been so, I would have thought that he was aspiring to attain kingship. You admit that he never tells lies. A person who does not tell a lie to a man cannot tell a lie about God. You say that poor people are the adherents of his creed. The first followers of prophets always come from this class. You say that his religion is expanding. This is characteristic of a true religion. You say that he does not deceive. Prophets do not deceive anyone. You say that he bids you to offer prayers and to observe purity and chastity. If all this is true, his realm will come right up to my domain. I had thought that a prophet might be coming, but I did not think that he would be born in Arabia.

If I could go there, I would have paid homage to him.

Abū Sufyān used to say that he had to give true answers to the emperor, as he was afraid of being contradicted by one or more caravan companion if he gave any false reply.

Heraclius wanted to know more about Muḥammed's religion. He, therefore, sent a man from the tribe of Ghassān with these instructions: "Report to me three observations: 1) see on what he sits; 2) see who sits on his right side; and 3) if possible, try to find out what his seal says." The man came to the Prophet and found him sitting on the ground treating his feet with warm water. ᶜAli was sitting on his right side. "Who is this man?," he asked. "ᶜAli, the Prophet's cousin," he was told. He wrote down his observations, forgetting the third instruction. The Messenger, seeing how the man was trying to remember what he had forgotten, instantly said to him, "Come and take a look at what your fellow (Heraclius) had instructed you to try to see," showing him his seal. The man returned to Heraclius and reported to him all what he had seen. "This is the one foretold by Jesus son of Mary! He rides the camel; so, you should follow him and believe in him." Then he said to his messenger, "Go and invite my brother (to Islam), for he is my partner in the kingdom." The messenger went back to report to Heraclius that his brother was not receptive to the idea at all, fearing the loss of his kingdom.[1]

The letter Muḥammed sent to Khosrow (Khusro) II Parviz son of Hormizd IV, the Sassanian Kisra of Persia, was carried by ᶜAbdullāh ibn Ḥuthafah. It stated the following as recorded by the historian al-Yaᶜqūbi:

> **In the Name of Allāh, the most Gracious, the most Merciful**
> From Muḥammed the Messenger of Allāh to Khosrow son of Hormizd. Accept Islam, so you will be safe (from Allāh's wrath); otherwise, be forewarned of a war from Allāh and His Messenger, and peace be with whoever follows the right guidance.

Khosrow Parviz was enraged at the very idea of an "ordinary" person addressing him, the great Kisra that he was, on terms of equality, and even starting with his own name before that of his; so, he tore the letter

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[1]al-Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 20, p. 378.

to pieces[1]. In his rage, he said, "Who is this person who invites me to accept his religion and starts his letter with his name before mine?!" As a token of his ridicule, Khosrow Parviz sent the Prophet some of his country's soil. When the Prophet was informed that Khosrow had torn his letter to pieces, he said, "May Allāh tear his domain to pieces just as he tore my letter. For sure, his domain shall be torn apart. He sent me soil... For sure, you will come to possess his land." And so it was.

Khosrow Parviz, further directed his governor over Yemen Firoz al-Daylami, nicknamed "Abu Mahran," who used to be one of the ministers of Sayf ibn Thee Yazun[2], to arrest the person claiming to be a prophet and to send him to his court. The governor's messengers arrived at Medīna and asked the prophet to comply with Kisra's orders on pain of his country's destruction, giving him one night to do so. The Prophet replied, "My God informed me that your lord was killed last night; God sent upon him his son Sheroe[3] after seven hours of the night had passed; so, wait till this news reaches you."[4]

All the above took place in 628 A.D. In order to verify the accuracy of the date of death of Khosrow Parviz, I consulted the Micropedia of the Encylopedia Britannica III, and I found this same date, 628 A.D., recorded as the date of death of this Persian Kisra on p. 793 of Vol. 5.

It also gives me pleasure to assure the discreet reader that I went to

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[1]Students of Islamic history recall that one of this arrogant emperor's granddaughters later on condemned him for tearing the Prophet's letter and for refusing to accept Islam. Her father, the last Sassanian emperor Yazdegerd (Jazdagird) III, was the son of Shahryar and grandson of this same Khusrow II. Yazdegerd III lost the Battle of Qadisiyyah to the Muslim forces in 636, thus ending the rule of the Sassanians for good. Having been defeated, he fled for Media in northwestern Persia, and from there to Merv, where he was killed by a miller. Please refer to the chapter on Khadīja in this book for more details.

[2]Sayf ibn Thee Yazun (or Thee Yazin) (d. 574 A.D.) was one of Himyar's kings who kicked the Ethiopians out of Yemen assisted by the just Sassanian Persian emperor Kisra Anushirwan, better known as Khosrow I (d. 579 A.D.). Sayf is praised in a poem by Umayyah ibn Abū al-Salt.

[3]Sheroe is also known in Persian history as Qobad II. He was Khosrow's eldest son. He assassinated his father in Khorasan.

[4]al-Majlisi, *Bihār al-Anwār*, Vol. 20, p. 382.

extremes verifying the dates (Hijri and Gregorian) contained in this book, spending a great deal of time comparing one reference with another, consulting both Arabic and English references so that each and every date is accurate. Only Allāh knows the extent and the pain of my frustration whenever I came across so many discrepencies relevant to historical data in print. Having verified all these dates in classic books, I further consulted a computer program for final verification. The reader can now rely on these dates as much I, the author, can, and surely Allāh knows best.

It is interesting to state here that Prophet Muḥammed used a seal for the very first time in this same year after being told that the monarchs ruling the domains beyond Arabia would not honour any letter unless it was sealed.

The Prophet's letter to al-Hārith ibn Abū Shimr al-Ghassāni, chief of the Ghassān[1] tribe ruling western Syria, was carried by Shujāᶜ ibn Wahab, who was put to death by al-Hārith. This eventually became the cause of a conflict with the Christians (then the dominant power over Syria) which resulted in the Battle of Mu'tah in 629 A.D. and the Expedition of Tabūk in 630 A.D.

The Prophet sent an epistle to al-Munthir ibn Sawa, the then King of Bahrain appointed by the Persian emperor, was delivered by al-ᶜAlā ibn al-Ḥadrami. It read as follows:

> In the Name of Allāh, the most Beneficent, the most Merciful. From Muḥammed the Messenger of Allāh to al-Munthir son of Sawa. Peace on him. Praise be to Allāh besides Whom there is no other god. And I bear witness that there is no god except Allāh and that Muḥammed is His servant and messenger. And now I remind you of Allāh, the Mighty and the Glorious. Whoever receives admonition receives it for his own good, and whoever obeys my envoys and follows their instructions obeys me. Whoever is sincere to them is sincere to me. My envoys have spoken well of you. I have accepted your intercession on behalf of the people of Bahrain. Leave to the Muslims all they owned before accepting Islam. While I hereby grant indemnity to the wrongdoers, you should also forgive them. You shall not be deposed so long as you conduct yourself well. And whosoever continues following his (religion of) Judaism shall be liable to pay the *jizya* (protection tax).

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[1]The Ghassān tribe was an Arab tribe that inhabited the Western side of the Syrian desert during the Prophet's time.

The letter sent earlier to Negus, the king of Abyssinia, which was carried by ʿAmr ibn Umayyah al-Dāmri, stated the following:

> In the Name of Allāh, the most Beneficent, the most Merciful. From Muḥammed the Messenger of Allāh to Negus, the king of Abyssinia. Peace be on him who follows the path of Guidance. Praise be to Allāh besides Whom there is no other god, the Sovereign, the Holy One, the Preserver of Peace, the Keeper of the Faithful, the Guardian. I bear witness that Jesus son of Mary is indeed a spirit of God and His word which He conveyed unto the chaste Virgin Mary. He created Jesus through His word just as he created Adam with His hands. And now I call you to Allāh Who is One and has no partner, and to friendship in His obedience. Follow me and believe in what has been revealed to me, for I am the Messenger of Allāh. I invite you and your people to Allāh, the Mighty, the Glorious. I have conveyed the message, and it is up to you to accept it. Once again, peace on him who follows the path of guidance.

Another epistle sent to Jarīh ibn Matta, who was bearing the title of "Muqawqis", Roman Viceroy over Egypt, was carried by Ḥatib ibn Balta'ah and it said:

> In the Name of Allāh, the most Beneficent, the most Merciful. From Muḥammed, the servant and Messenger of Allāh to Muqawqis, Chief of the Copts. Peace be on him who follows the path of guidance. I invite you to accept the message of Islam. Accept it and you shall prosper. But if you turn away, then upon you shall also fall the sin (of misleading by your example) the Copts. O people of the Book! Come to a word common between us and you: that we shall worship none but Allāh and that we shall ascribe no partners to Him and that none of us shall regard anyone as lord besides God. And if they turn away, then say: Bear witness that we are Muslims.

According to a number of books of history, the Prophet also sent Ṣaleeṭ ibn ʿAmr al-ʿĀmiri with two of his letters to both kings ruling Yemen then: Thumāl ibn Athal and Ḥawthah ibn ʿAli who belonged to the tribe of Banū Ḥaneef. I very much wished to research the text of those letters and the response to them, but I could not do so due to the deadline which I had to meet before sending this book's manuscript to the press. I seek forgiveness of Allāh, of His Prophet, and of the kind reader. Deadlines are one of the inconveniences writers have to tolerate.

THE BATTLE OF KHAYBAR (628 A.D.)

The banishment of the Jewish tribes of Banū Nadīr and Qinaqāᶜ from Medīna had intensified the animosity of the Jews towards the Muslims. These tribes were instigating other tribes, Jewish and pagan, to join them in a conclusive assault upon the Muslims. Two years earlier, they instigated a number of powerful bedouin tribes, with whom they entered into alliances, as well as the Quraishites of Mecca, to raid and besiege Medīna, but they failed in their attempts. Their chief, Kinānah ibn Abul-Ḥaqīq, who enjoyed security at his fort, Qamus, instigated the tribe of Banū Fizarah and other bedouins to raid Medīna. In fact, the Battle of Ahzab, or of Khandaq (moat), was the first attempt in which the Jews had actually participated in besieging the Muslims. Ibn Abul-Haqīq in particular had played an active role in that siege.

These Jewish tribes had settled down in Khaybar at a distance of about 80 miles (or 96 Arabian miles or 8 stages) north-east of Medīna. "Khay-Bar" means: "fortified place". The valley of Khaybar was studded with fortresses strongly situated on rocky hills numbering ten. The more fortified ones were seven: Nāim, Qamus (on a hill bearing the same name), Katiba, Shiqu, Natat, Watih and Sulalim, of which Qamus was the most fortified, proving to be a formidable challenge to the Muslims.

Past reverses they suffered did not deter them. ᶜOsayr ibn Zarim, another prominent Jew of Khaybar, rallied behind him all the Jewish tribes then solicited the aid of Ghatfān for a final showdown. To demonstrate their strength, Ghatfān sent a posse headed by none other than ᶜOyaynah, chief of the tribe of Banū Fizārah, that captured twenty camels belonging to the Prophet after killing their herdsman and capturing his wife. This incident took place in Rabīᶜ I of that year 7 A.H./July 628 A.D. In the next month (Rabīᶜ II), the Banū Ghatfān tribe, an ally of the Jews, with the instigation of the latter, made a similar attempt, sending Muḥammed ibn Maslamah with ten men. All those ten men were killed by the Muslims, and the leader of the scheme was seriously wounded. He was mistaken as having been killed, so his body was put together with the corpses of the other ten men. Finding an opportunity, however, he fled. In the same year, ᶜOyaynah died and was succeeded by ᶜOsayr ibn Zarim who renewed his attempts to hatch plots against the Muslims with the tribe of Banū Ghatfān. News reached the Prophet of their schemes.

The news of the preparation of the Jews was reaching the Prophet in Medīna frequently. At last, the Prophet decided to crush them once and

for all before they could destroy the Muslims. It was the "near victory" foretold in the Sūra of "Victory" revealed just after the truce of Hudaybiya:

> *Indeed God was well-pleased with the Believers when they swore allegiance to thee under the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down tranquility on them and rewarded them with a near victory.*
> (Qur'ān, 48:18)

By the middle of Muḥarram, 7 A.H./May 28, 628 A.D., the Prophet marched on Khaybar with 1,400 (or 1600 according to some accounts) strong. In order to surprise the enemy, the Prophet's troops marched during the night and halted during the day. A road guide had to be hired to show the army the way. The Jews had made a maze of roads surrounding their fortresses.

In about seven days, six of the Jewish fortresses were overrun by the Muslims. Then Qamus was besieged. As the Muslims were busy for one month attacking less fortified fortresses, the Jews were equally busy laying waste the country surrounding them with the intention to starve the Muslims. They destroyed even their own date trees growing around their fortresses. They successfully repulsed every attempt of the Muslims to advance.

Abul-Fida' says the following in his *Tārīkh*, book of history:

> In those days, the Prophet sometimes used to suffer from partial headaches. As a matter of chance, on the day he reached Khaybar, he suffered from the same. Abū Bakr, therefore, took the standard and went out to fight but returned unsuccessful. Then ʿOmar took the standard and fought hard, more than his predecessor, but returned equally unsuccessful. When the Prophet came to know of these reversals, he said, "By Allāh, tomorrow I will give the standard to a man who loves Allāh and His Messenger and whom Allāh and His Messenger love, one who is constant in onslaught and does not flee, one who will stand firm and will not return till victory is achieved." Having heard this, both the Immigrants and the Helpers aspired for the flag. When the day dawned, having said the morning prayer, the Prophet came and stood among his companions. Then he called for the standard. At that moment, every companion was engrossed in the hope and desire of getting the flag, while the Prophet called for ʿAli who was suffering from sore eyes. The Prophet took some of his own saliva on his finger

and applied it to ʿAli's eyes. The eyes were at once cured and the Prophet handed over the standard to him.

Madarijun-Nubuwwah proceeds to state the following: "Then ʿAli started with the flag in his hand and, reaching under the fort of Qamus, planted the standard on a rock. A rabbi, who was watching from the fort, asked, 'O standard-bearer! Who are you?' ʿAli replied, 'I am ʿAli son of Abū Ṭālib.' The rabbi shouted to his people, 'By the Torah, you will be defeated! This man will not go back without winning the battle.'" Shaikh ʿAbdul-Ḥaqq, the Dehlavi *muḥaddith* (traditionist), author of *Madarijun-Nubuwwah*, states the following: "Perhaps that Jew was well informed of ʿAli's valour and had seen his praises in the Torah."

He further states the following in his afore-mentioned book:

Al-Ḥārith, brother of Marḥab (the most courageous Jewish warrior), first sallied forth from the fort with a huge spear whose point weighed about 3 mounds[1]. In his immediate attack, he killed a number of Muslim veterans. Then ʿAli proceeded towards him and killed him in one stroke. When Marḥab was informed of his brother's plight, he rushed out of the fort accompanied by some of the bravest soldiers from the Khaybar garrison to avenge his brother's death. It is said that Marḥab was the strongest, tallest, and the most fierce among the warriors of Khaybar and that none equalled him in his might. That day, he was armed twice over, wearing double armour with two swords dangling by his sides. He was also wearing two turbans with a helmet over and above. He marched ahead in the battlefield singing about his own valour. Nobody among the Muslims dared to fight him in the battlefield. ʿAli, therefore, darted out, reciting about his own valiance in response to Marḥab's. Taking the initiative, Marḥab attacked ʿAli with his sword. But ʿAli avoided the blow and rendered with Thul-Fiqār such a forceful blow on Marḥab's head that it cut through the latter's helmet, the double turban, the head, till it reached the man's throat. According to some narratives, Marḥab was cut up to his thigh, in others that it tore him into two parts upon the saddle. Marḥab took his way to the hereafter in two pieces. Then the Muslims under the command of ʿAli began fighting the Jews. ʿAli himself killed seven generals of the Jewish forces everyone of whom was considered to be most valiant. After these had been killed, the remnants of the Jewish troops ran helter-skelter towards their fort.

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[1]A mound is a measure of weight varying from a few pounds to 84 pounds according to the custom of the area.

ᶜAli followed them in hot pursuit. In this rush, one Jew delivered a blow to ᶜAli's hand wherein he carried his shield. The shield fell down. Another Jew picked it up and made good with his booty. This infuriated ᶜAli and who was now strengthened with such a spiritual force and divine strength that he jumped across the moat and came straight to the door of the iron gate. He dislodged it from its hinges, held it up as a shield and resumed fighting.

According to Ibn Hishām's *Sīrat*, and according to *Al-Tārīkh al-Kāmil* and Abul-Fida's *Tārīkh*, Abū Rāfiᶜ is cited saying, "When the Prophet gave the flag to ᶜAli and bade him fight the forces of Khaybar, we, too, accompanied him. When ᶜAli was a short distance from the fort, fighting all along, a Jew struck a blow on his hand with such a force that the shield ᶜAli was holding fell down. ᶜAli at once pulled out a part of the gate of Khaybar, held it up as a shield and fought till Allāh granted him a clear victory. Once the fighting was over, he threw it away. It was so heavy that eight men from among us could hardly turn it over from one side to the other."

An agreement was reached with the Jews of Khaybar. Their lands and movable property were left in their hands. They were allowed to practice their religion freely. In return for the protection they would receive, they were required to pay the Muslims half the produce of their lands. The Prophet maintained the right to turn them out of their lands whenever he so decided. The battle of Khaybar is important as it put an end to the Jewish resistance and, for the first time, a non-Muslim people were made "Protected Persons" of the Muslim commonwealth.

On the same day, Jaᶜfer ibn Abū Ṭālib returned from Ethiopia. The Prophet said: "I do not know on which blessing of Allāh I should thank Him more: on the victory of Khaybar or on the return of Jaᶜfer?!"

ṢAFIYYA

Ṣafiyya daughter of Ḥuyay ibn al-Akhtab, the Jewish arch-enemy of the Prophet of Islam, was the wife of Kinānah ibn al-Rabeeᶜ ibn Abul-Haqīq, a Jewish tribal chief. She embraced Islam during those days. She had seen in a vision the moon falling from the heavens into her lap. Her husband, having listened to her narrate her vision, violently slapped her, hurting her eye. He taunted her of having desired the domain of Ḥijāz under Muḥammed's control. When she fell in captivity, she managed to reach the Prophet. She was wearing the mark of a bruise on her eyelid caused by Kinānah striking her only on account of narrating that dream

to her. Muḥammed welcomed her into the folds of his nation and offered to marry her. She welcomed his offer and the marriage was soon solemnized.

A JEWESS TRIES TO POISON MUḤAMMED

While the Prophet was still in Khayber, a Jewess presented him with a dressed and grilled lamb just when he was about to be served his dinner. Expressing his gratitude for the present, the Prophet took the shoulder, his favourite part, to eat, giving the man sitting next to him, namely Bishr ibn Maʿrūr, a Khazrajite Anṣār who had courageously participated in the battles at Badr and Uḥud, another piece and passing pieces to other *ṣaḥābah* who were present there and then as was always his habit. As soon as the Prophet tasted the lamb, he realized that it did not taste right. Rather than swallowing it, he spat it out. Meanwhile, Bishr had already swallowed some of the meat. He collapsed and died instantly. Conducting an intensive inquiry, the companions of the Prophet came to know that that lamb had been prepared by a Jewish captive who was summoned and interrogated. She defended herself by saying that that was her revenge for the loss of her father, brother, husband and other relatives, for the devestation wrought by the Muslims on her people and "country." She added saying that if Muḥammed were a true Prophet, he would discover the mischief before any harm afflicted him; but if he were a pretender, he would fall a victim to her scheme and the Jews would be saved from his tyranny.

There are two different stories as to what happened to that Jewess. One says that she was put to death there and then. Another tells quite a different story. Following is the narration of the same incident by a descendant of the Prophet, namely Imām ʿAli ibn Muḥammed, peace and blessings of the Almighty be upon him and all the Progeny of Prophet Muḥammed:

> When the Messenger of Allāh returned from Khaybar to Medīna, after having won a great victory (over the Jews), a Jewess who had pretended to have accepted Islam took a lamb's shoulder and cooked it. Putting it before the Prophet, she said, "O Messenger of Allāh! May both my parents be sacrificed for your sake! I was very much concerned about you when you came out to meet the hosts at Khayber, for I know that they are very tough people. I know that the shoulder is your favourite, and grilling is your favourite method of cooking, so I made a vow (*nathr*) that if Allāh saved you from them, I would slaughter a lamb for

you and feed you from its grilled shoulder. Now Allāh has saved you from them and granted you victory over them, I have brought you my *nathr*." In the company of the Prophet there were men such as al-Barā' ibn Maʿrūr and ʿAli ibn Abū Ṭālib. The Messenger of Allāh said, "Bring me some bread." Once the bread was brought, al-Barā' stretched his hand and took a morsel of the meat and put it in his mouth. ʿAli ibn Abū Ṭālib, peace be upon him, said to him, "O Barā'! You should not do anything ahead of the Prophet." Al-Barā' was a bedouin. He said to ʿAli, "O ʿAli! It seems as if you are calling the Messenger of Allāh miser!" ʿAli said, "I never make such an implication about the Messenger of Allāh; on the contrary, I respect and revere him. Neither I, nor you, nor any of Allāh's creation should say something or do something or eat or drink before the Messenger of Allāh does so." "I never imply that the Messenger of Allāh is miser, either," said Maʿrūr. ʿAli said, "This is not why I said what I said. But this woman who used to be Jewish has come here and we do not know her very well. If you eat of it according to the order of the Messenger of Allāh, peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him and his progeny, he will be the one to guarantee your safety. But if you eat it without an order from the Messenger of Allāh, peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him and his progeny, you will be on your own." ʿAli continues to narrate this story saying that meanwhile, al-Barā' was chewing his morsel. It is then that the shoulder spoke out and said, "O Messenger of Allāh! Do not eat of me, for I am poisoned!" Al-Barā' fell a victim to the swoon of death. He was not lifted from the ground except to be buried. The Messenger of Allāh said, "Bring me that woman." She was brought to him. "What made you do what you did?," the Prophet asked her. She said, "You have caused me a great disaster, indeed. You have killed my father, my uncle, my husband, my brother, and my son, so I did what I did saying to myself, `If he were a king, I would seek revenge against him, but if he were a prophet, as he claims, having promised to conquer Mecca and to bring victory, Allāh will protect him from it (from the poison), and it will not harm him." The Messenger of Allāh said, "O woman, you have said the truth." Then he added, "Do not be fooled by the death of al-Barā', for Allāh caused him to fall into a trial and tribulation on account of his doing something before the Messenger of Allāh. Had he eaten of it with the permission of the Messenger of Allāh, it would not have harmed him nor poisoned him." Then the Prophet ordered a number of his companions to be brought to him including Salmān, Miqdād, Abū Tharr, ʿAmmār, Suhayb, Bilāl, and other *ṣaḥābah* totalling ten in number, in addition to ʿAli. Once they were all present, the Prophet told them to sit down around the food like a circle. Then the

Prophet put his hand on the poisoned shoulder, blew of his breath over it, then said, "In the Name of Allāh *al-Shāfi*, the Healer; in the Name of Allāh *al-Muʿāfi*, the One Who grants good health; nothing at all can harm when His Name is invoked, nor any ailment, not in the earth, nor in the heavens, and He is the Hearing, the Knowing." Then he added, "Eat in the Name of Allāh." The Messenger of Allāh, peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him and his progeny, ate of it, and they, too, ate of it to their fill. Then they drank water. The Prophet ordered the Jewess to be imprisoned.

On the next day, he ordered her brought to him. "Did you not see with your own eyes how these men ate of that poisoned food? Did you not see how Allāh protected His Messenger and His Messenger's *ṣaḥābah*?" The woman said, "Yes, I have, O Messenger of Allāh! Before now, I had entertained serious doubts about you being a Prophet, but now I am certain that you are, indeed, the Messenger of Allāh; therefore, I testify that: There is no god except Allāh, the One and Only God Who has no partner, and that you are His servant and Messenger." Her actions testified to the soundness of her conviction.[1]

The name of that Jewess is given in al-Majlisi's *Biḥār al-Anwār* as Zainab daughter of al-Hārith ibn Salām ibn Mashkam, niece of the same Marhab referred to above.

Then it was time to bury al-Barā' ibn Maʿrūr. The Prophet inquired about ʿAli and was told that he had gone for an errand for one of the Muslims. The Prophet, hearing that, sat down. The *ṣaḥābah* asked him as to why he sat down instead of proceeding with the funeral rituals. He said, "Allāh, the most Exalted and the most Great, ordered me to postpone the performance of the prayers for al-Barā' till ʿAli returns so that he would forgive him for what he had said in the presence of the Prophet, so that He may consider his death by this poison an atonement for his sins." Some of those who were present during the entire incident said to the Prophet, "O Messenger of Allāh! He was only jesting! He was simply teasing ʿAli! He was not serious at all; so, how can Allāh take him so seriously?" The Prophet said, "Had he been serious, Allāh would have wiped out all his good deeds even if he had spent what is between the earth and the ʿArsh by way of charity in gold and silver, but he was, indeed, jesting, so he is excused. But the Messenger of Allāh does not desire any of you to think that ʿAli was angry with him. He, therefore,

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[1]al-Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 17, pp. 318-319.

will renew in your presence his sentiments towards him, and so that he may seek Allāh's forgivenes for him. Allāh will then bring him (Barā') closer to Him and grant him a loftier status in His Paradise." Shortly thereafter ᶜAli returned and stood before the coffin to say: "O Barā'! May Allāh have mercy on you. You used to fast and to stand for the prayers, and you have died in the way of Allāh." The Messenger of Allāh then said, "Had any deceased person not needed the Messenger of Allāh to perform his funeral prayers, your fellow here (meaning Barā') would have found such a supplication from ᶜAli sufficient." Then he stood up, performed the funeral prayers for Barā' ibn Maᶜrūr and had him buried. He went thereafter to attend the Fātiha *majlis* for him."[1]

By the way, "Zainab" was a common name before the advent of Islam. One of the most famous women who carried this name was the last pagan Arab queen of Tadmur, Palmyra, kingdom of Nabatean Arabs, till Roman emperor Aurelianus (Aurelian), who ruled Rome from 270 to 275 A.D., destroyed her kingdom in 273 A.D. She is known as Queen Zaynab or Zenobia, a bedouin corruption of "Zainab."

FADAK

The Prophet then sent an expedition with ᶜAli ibn Abū Ṭālib to the Jewish tribe living in Fadak, Wadi al-Qura, and Tannah on the confines of Syria. Without any battle, they agreed to the same terms as the people of Khaybar had.

The income from Khaybar was for all Muslims in general, whereas the income from Fadak was exclusively for the Prophet because it was taken without any use of force. Jalaluddin al-Sayyūti states in *Ad-Durr al-Manthūr* on the authority of Bazaar, Abū Yaᶜli and Ibn Abū Hātim who have learned the tradition from Abū Saᶜeed al-Khudri that when the verse: *Wa āti thal-qurba ḥaqqahu* ("And give thy kinsfolk their dues") (Qur'ān, Chap. 17, V. 26) was revealed, the Prophet gave the property of Fadak as a gift to Fāṭima. Also, Ibn ᶜAbbās has narrated that when the verse "And give thy kinsfolk their dues" was revealed, the Prophet assigned the Fadak property to Fāṭima."

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[1]al-Majlisi, *Bihār al-Anwār*, Vol. 17, pp. 319-320.

ABU HURAYRA AND THE FALSIFICATION OF *HADĪTH*

In the same year (7 A.H./629 A.D.), a young and very poor man from the Daws tribe of southern Arabia (Yemen), met the Prophet immediately after the battle of Khaybar and embraced Islam. He is well known in history as "Abu Hurayra," the fellow of the kitten, after a kitten to which he was very much attached. His name shone neither during the lifetime of the Prophet nor of the four "righteous caliphs" but during the un-Islamic reign of terror of the Umayyads which lasted from 661 to 750 A.D. It was then that the Islamic world witnessed an astronomical number of "traditions" which were attributed, through this same Abū Hurayra, to the Prophet of Islam. Since these traditions, known collectively as *ḥadīth*, constitute one of the two sources of the Islamic legislative system, the *Sharī'a*, it is very important to shed a light on the life and character of this man even if some readers may consider this chapter as a digression from the main topic.

It is of utmost importance to expose the facts relevant to Abū Hurayra so that Muslims may be cautious whenever they come across a tradition narrated by him or attributed to him which, all in all, reached the astronomical figure of 5,374[1] "traditions," although he spent no more than three years in the company of the Prophet, a fact supported by the renown compiler al-Bukhāri, whenever such company did not involve any danger to his life, and despite the fact that Abū Hurayra did not know how to read and write... The reader can easily conclude that this figure is unrealistic when he comes to know that Abū Bakr, friend of the Prophet and one of the earliest converts to Islam, narrated no more than 142 traditions. ᶜOmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, the story of whose conversion to Islam is narrated earlier in this book, narrated no more than 537 traditions. ᶜOthmān ibn ᶜAffān narrated no more than 146 traditions. And ᶜAli, the man who was raised by the Prophet and who was always with

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[1]Out of this huge number, only 326 *aḥādīth* have been quoted (without endorsement) by al-Bukhāri and Muslim who are referred to in the books of *ḥadīth* as the "two shaikhs." Out of these 326, al-Bukhāri endorsed only 93, whereas Muslim endorsed only 89 according to *Suwar min Seeyar al-Saḥābah* by ᶜAbdul-Hamīd ibn ᶜAbdul-Raḥmān al-Suḥaybāni (published in Riyad, Saudi Arabia, in 1413 A.H./1992 A.D.). Abu Hurayrah is quoted by as many as 800 other traditionists, hence the wide publicity he and his "traditions" received and are still receiving...!

him, following him like his shadow, and whose memory and integrity nobody at all can question, narrated no more than 586 traditions. All these men, especially ᶜAli and Abū Bakr, spent many years of their lives in the company of the Prophet and did not hide when their lives were in jeopardy, as is the case with Abū Hurayrah, yet they did not narrate except a tiny fraction of the number of "traditions," many of which cannot be accepted by logic and commonsense, narrated by or attributed to Abū Hurayra. This is why it is so important to discuss this man and expose the factories of falsification of *hadīth* established by his benefactors, the Umayyads, descendants and supporters of Abū Sufyān, then his son Muᶜawiyah, then his son Yazid, all of whom were outrightly hypocrites and had absolutely nothing to do with Islam.

Abū Hurayra's name is recorded in some references as ᶜOmayr ibn ᶜĀmir ibn ᶜAbd Thish-Sharī ibn Ṭareef. In others, he is said to be ᶜAbdul-Raḥmān ibn Sakhr. He belonged to the Yemenite tribe of Daws ibn ᶜAdnān[1]. His mother's name is Umaima daughter of Safeeh ibn al-Hārith ibn Shabi ibn Abū Saᶜb, also of the Daws tribe. His date of birth is unknown, but he is said to have died in 57, 58, or 59 A.H. (677, 678, or 679 A.D. respectively), and that he had lived to be 78. This would put the date of his birth at 677, 678 or 679 A.D. The year 59 A.H. seems to be the most probable year of his death.

When he came to the Prophet, he was a little more than thirty years old, young and healthy and, hence, capable of enlisting in the Prophet's army. But he preferred to be lodged together with the Muslim destitutes at the Ṣuffa referred to above. Most of the time which Abū Hurayra spent with the Prophet was during the lunches or dinners the Prophet hosted for those destitutes. Abū Hurayra himself admitted more than once that he remained close to the Prophet so that he could get a free meal to eat.

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[1]According to *Al-Munjid fil lugha wal aᶜlam*, however, Abū Hurayra's name is recorded as ᶜAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Sakhr al-Azdi, and that he died in 59 A.H./678 A.D. The same reference indicates that this man spent "a long time in the company of the Prophet," which is not true at all; he accompanied the Prophet from time to time for only 3 years. The Publisher of this *Munjid*, namely Dār al-Mashriq of Beirut, Lebanon, is sponsored by the Catholic Press of Beirut. Undoubtedly, the information about Abū Hurayra in this Arabic-Arabic dictionary must have been furnished by some Sunnis who try their best to elevate the status of Abū Hurayra even at the risk of sacrificing historical facts and data.

Another person who used to shower the destitutes of the Ṣuffa with his generosity was Jaᶜfer ibn Abū Ṭālib (588 - 629 A.D.), the Prophet's cousin and a brother of ᶜAli ibn Abū Ṭālib. He was, for this reason, called "Abul Masakeen," father of the destitutes. This is why, Abū Hurayra used to regard Jaᶜfer as the most generous person next only to the Prophet. When the Prophet mandated military service for all able men in the Mu'ta expedition, Jaᶜfer ibn Abū Ṭālib did not hesitate from responding to the Prophet's call, but Abū Hurayra, who considered Jaᶜfer as his patron, preferred not to participate, thus violating the order of the Prophet. History records the names of those who did likewise.

In 21 A.H./642 A.D., during the caliphate of ᶜOmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, Abū Hurayra was made governor of Bahrain. After two years, he was deposed because of a scandal. The details of that scandal are recorded in the books of Ibn ᶜAbd Rabbih, the Muᶜtazilite writer, and in Ibn al-Athīr's famous classic book *Al-ᶜIqd al-Farīd*. A summary of that incident runs as follows:

When Abū Hurayra was brought to him, ᶜOmar said to him: "I have come to know that when I made you governor of Bahrain, you did not even have shoes to wear, but I am now told that you have purchased horses for one thousand and six hundred dinars." Abū Hurayra said, "I had horses which have multiplied, and I received some as gifts." ᶜOmar then said, "I would give you only your salary. This (amount) is a lot more than that (more than your salary for both years). Pay the balance back (to *baytul-māl*, the Muslim state treasury)!" Abū Hurayra said, "This money is not yours." ᶜOmar said, "By Allāh! I would bruise your back!" Saying this, ᶜOmar whipped Abū Hurayra till he bled. Then he thundered: "Now bring the money back!" Abū Hurayra replied: "I am to account for it before Allāh." ᶜOmar said, "This could be so only if you had taken it rightfully and had paid it back obediently. I shall throw you back to your mother as though you were dung so that she would use you to graze donkeys."

According to the sequence employed by Ibn Saᶜd in his *Ṭabaqāt*, Abū Hurayra ranks in the ninth or tenth class. He came to the Messenger of Allāh near the end of the seventh Hijri year. Hence, historians say that he accompanied the Prophet no more than three years[1] according to the best estimates, while other historians say it was no more than two years if we

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[1]Al-Bukhāri, *Sahih*, Vol. 4, p. 175, where the author quotes Abū Hurayra talking about himself in a chapter dealing with the characteristics of Prophethood.

take into consideration the fact that the Prophet sent him to accompany Ibn al-Ḥaḍrami to Baḥrain, then the Messenger of Allāh died while he was still in Baḥrain.[1]

Abū Hurayra was not known for his *jihād* or valour, nor was he among those who were regarded as brilliant thinkers, nor among the jurists who knew the Qur'ān by heart, nor did he even know how to read and write... He came to the Messenger of Allāh in order to satisfy his hunger as he himself said, and as the Prophet came to understand from him, so he lodged him among the people of the Ṣuffa to whom the Prophet used to send some food.

Yet he became famous for the abundance of *aḥādīth* which he used to narrate about the Messenger of Allāh. This fact attracted the attention of verifiers of *ḥadīth* especially since he had not remained in the company of the Prophet for any length of time and to the fact that he narrated traditions regarding battles which he had never attended.

Some verifiers of *ḥadīth* gathered all what was narrated by the "righteous caliphs" as well as by the ten men given the glad tidings of going to Paradise in addition to what the mothers of the faithful and the purified Ahl al-Bayt, and they did not total one tenth of what Abū Hurayra had narrated all alone. This came despite the fact that among the latter was ᶜAli ibn Abū Ṭālib who remained in the company of the Prophet for thirty years.

Then fingers were pointed to Abū Hurayra charging him with telling lies and with fabricating ***and forging ḥadīth***. Some went as far as labelling him as the first narrator in the history of Islam thus charged. Yet he is called by some people "Islam's narrator" and is surrounded with a great deal of respect. They totally rely on him, even go as far as saying "*Radiya Allāhu ᶜanhu*," Allāh be pleased with him, whenever they mention his name. Some of them may even regard him as being more knowledgeable than ᶜAli!

It is also narrated that ᶜAli ibn Abū Ṭālib has said, "Among all the living, the person who has told the most lies about the Messenger of

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[1]This section is excerpted from my translation of Dr. Muḥammed al-Tijani al-Samawi's book *Shīᶜas are the Ahl al-Sunnah* (New York: Vantage Press, 1996), pp. 207-215.

Allāh is Abū Hurayra al-Dawsi."[1] Mother of the faithful °Āyisha, too, testified to his being a liar several times in reference to many *aḥādīth* which he used to attribute to the Messenger of Allāh. For example, she resented something which he had once said so she asked him, "When did you hear the Messenger of Allāh say so?" He said to her, "The mirror, the kohl, and the dyestuff have all diverted you from the *ḥadīth* of the Messenger of Allāh," but when she insisted that he was lying and scandalized him, Marwan ibn al-Hakam interfered and took upon himself to verify the authenticity of the *ḥadīth* in question. It was then that Abū Hurayra admitted, "I did not hear it from the Messenger of Allāh; rather, I heard it from al-Fadl ibn al-ᶜAbbās."[2] It is because of this particular narration that Ibn Qutaybah charged him with lying saying, "Abu Hurayra claimed that al-Fadl ibn al-ᶜAbbās, who had by then died, testified to the authenticity of that tradition which he attributed to him in order to mislead people into thinking that he had heard it from him."[3] In his book *Ta'weel al-Aḥādīth*, Ibn Qutaybah says, "Abu Hurayra used to say: `The Messenger of Allāh said such-and-such, but I heard it from someone else." In his book *Aᶜlām al-Nubalā*, al-Thahbi says that Yazīd ibn Ibrāhīm once cited Shuᶜbah ibn al-Ḥajjāj saying that Abū Hurayra used to commit forgery.

In his book *Al-Bidaya wal Nihaya*, Ibn Katheer states that Yazīd ibn Haroun heard Shuᶜbah ibn al-Ḥajjāj accusing him of the same, that is, that he forges *ḥadīth*, and that he used to narrate what he used to hear from Kaᶜb al-Aḥbār as well as from the Messenger of Allāh without distinguishing one from the other.

Jaᶜfer al-Iskāfi has said, "Abu Hurayra is doubted by our mentors; his narrations are not acceptable."[4]

During his lifetime, Abū Hurayra was famous among the *ṣaḥābah* of lying and forgery and of narrating too many fabricated *aḥādīth* to the extent that some of the *ṣaḥābah* used to deride him and ask him to

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[1]Ibn Abul-Ḥadeed, *Sharḥ Nahjul-Balāgha*, Vol. 4, p. 28.

[2]Al-Bukhāri, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Vol. 2, p. 232, in a chapter dealing with a fasting person who wakes up finding himself in the state of *janāba*. Mālik, *Mawṭa'*, Vol. 1, p. 272.

[3]This is stated in al-Thahbi's book *Siyar Aᶜlām al-Nubalā'*.

[4]Ibn Abul-Ḥadeed, *Sharḥ Nahjul-Balāgha*, Vol. 4, p. 68.

fabricate *aḥādīth* agreeable with their own taste.

For example, a man belonging to Quraish put on once a new *jubbah* (a long outer garment) and started showing off. He passed by Abū Hurayra and [sarcastically] said to him, "O Abū Hurayra! You narrate quite a few traditions about the Messenger of Allāh; so, did you hear him say anything about my *jubbah*?!" Abū Hurayra said, "I have heard the father of al-Qāsim saying, `A man before your time was showing off his outfit when Allāh caused the earth to cave in over him; so he has been rattling in it and will continue to do so till the Hour.' By Allāh! I do not know whether he was one of your people or not."[1]

How can people help doubting Abū Hurayra's traditions since they are so self-contradictory? He narrates one "ḥadīth" then he narrates its antithesis, and if he is opposed or his previously narrated traditions are used against him, he becomes angry or starts babbling in the Ethiopian language.[2]

How could they help accusing him of telling lies and of forgery after he himself had admitted that he got traditions out of his own pouch then attributed them to the Prophet?

Al-Bukhāri, in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, states the following:

> Abū Hurayra said once, "The Prophet said, `The best charity is willingly given; the higher hand is better than the lower one, and start with your own dependents. A woman says: `Either feed me or divorce me.' A slave says, `Feed me and use me.' A son says, `Feed me for the woman who will forsake me.'" He was asked, "O Abū Hurayra! Did you really hear the Messenger of Allāh say so?" He said, "No, this one is from Abū Hurayra's pouch."[3]

Notice how he starts this "tradition" by saying, "The Prophet said," then when they refuse to believe what he tells them, he admits by saying, "...This one is from Abū Hurayra's pouch"! So congratulations to Abū Hurayra for possessing this pouch which is full of lies and myths, and for which Muᶜāwiyah and Banū Umayyah provided a great deal of publicity,

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[1]Ibn Katheer, *Al-Bidāya wal Nihāya*, Vol. 8, p. 108..

[2]Al-Bukhāri, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Vol. 7, p. 31.

[3]Al-Bukhāri, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Vol. 6, p. 190, in a chapter dealing with spending on the wife and children.

and because of which he acquired position, authority, wealth, and mansions. Muʿāwiyah made him the governor of Medīna and built him the Aqeeq mansion then married him off to a woman of honourable descent for whom he used to work as a servant...

Since Abū Hurayra was the close vizier of Muʿāwiyah, it is not due to his own merits, honour, or knowledge; rather, it is because Abū Hurayra used to provide him with whatever traditions he needed to circulate. If some *sahābah* used to hesitate in cursing "Abū Turāb," finding doing that embarrassing, Abū Hurayra cursed ʿAli in his own house and even as ʿAli's Shīʿas saw and heard:

Ibn Abul-Hadeed says,

> When Abū Hurayra came to Iraq in the company of Muʿāwiyah in the Year of the Jamāʿa, he came to Kūfa's mosque. Having seen the huge number of those who welcomed him, he knelt down then beat his bald head and said, "O people of Iraq! Do you claim that I tell lies about the Messenger of Allāh and thus burn myself in the fire?! By Allāh! I heard the Messenger of Allāh saying, `Each prophet has a sanctuary, and my sanctuary is in Medīna from Eer to [the mountain of] Thawr; so, anyone who makes it unclean will be cursed by Allāh, the angels, and all people, and I bear witness that ʿAli had done so." When Muʿāwiyah came to hear this statement, he gave him a present, showered him with his generosity, and made him the governor of Medīna.[1]

Suffices us to point out to the fact that he was created governor of Medīna by none other than Muʿāwiyah. There is no doubt that verifiers and researchers who are free from prejudice will doubt anyone who befriended the enemy of Allāh and His Messenger and who was antagonistic towards the friends of Allāh and of His Messenger...

There is no doubt that Abū Hurayra did not reach that lofty position of authority, namely the governor of Medīna, the then capital of the Islamic domains, except by virtue of the services which he had rendered to Muʿāwiyah and other authoritative Umayyads. Praise to the One Who changes the conditions! Abū Hurayra had come to Medīna with nothing to cover his private parts other than a tiny striped piece of cloth, begging passers-by to feed him. Then he suddenly became ruler of the sacred precincts of Medīna, residing in the Aqeeq mansion, enjoying wealth,

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[1]Ibn Abul-Hadeed, *Sharh Nahjul-Balāgha*, Vol. 4, p. 67.

servants and slaves, and nobody could say a word without his permission. All of this was from the blessings of his pouch!

Do not forget, nor should you be amazed, that nowadays we see the same plays being repeatedly enacted, and history certainly repeats itself. How many ignorant indigent persons sought nearness to a ruler and joined his party till they became feared masters who do and undo, issuing orders as they please, having a direct access to wealth without being accounted for it, riding in automobiles without being watched, eating foods not sold on the market...? One such person may not even know how to speak his own language, nor does he know a meaning for life except satisfying his stomach and sexual appetite. The whole matter is simply his having a pouch like the one Abū Hurayra used to have with some exception, of course, yet the aim is one and the same: pleasing the ruler and publicizing for him in order to strengthen his authority, firm his throne, and finish his foes.

Abū Hurayra loved the Umayyads and they loved him since the days of ᶜOthmān ibn ᶜAffān, their leader. His view with regard to ᶜOthmān was contrary to that of all the *ṣaḥābah* who belonged to the Muhājirūn and the Anṣār; he regarded all the *ṣaḥābah* who participated in or encouraged the killing of ᶜOthmān as apostates.

Undoubtedly, Abū Hurayra used to accuse ᶜAli ibn Abū Ṭālib of killing ᶜOthmān. We can derive this conclusion from the statement he made at Kūfa's mosque and his saying that ᶜAli made Medīna unclean and that he, therefore, was cursed by the Prophet, the angels, and everyone else. For this reason, Ibn Saᶜd indicates in his *Ṭabaqāt* that when Abū Hurayra died in 59 A.H./679 A.D., ᶜOthmān's descendants carried his coffin and brought it to the Baqeeᶜ to bury it as an expression of their appreciation of his having had high regards for ᶜOthmān.[1]

Surely Allāh has his own wisdom in faring with His creation. ᶜOthmān ibn ᶜAffān, the chief of Quraish, was killed although he was the Muslims' caliph bearing the title of "Thul-Noorayn" and of whom, according to their claim, the angels feel shy. His corpse did not receive the ceremonial burial bath nor was it shrouded; moreover, it was not buried for full three days after which it was buried at Medīna's then Jewish cemetery. Yet Abū Hurayra died after having enjoyed pomp and power. He was an indigent man whose lineage and tribal origins were not

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[1]Ibn Saᶜd, *Ṭabaqāt*, Vol. 2, p. 63.

known to anybody. He had no kinship to Quraish. Despite all of this, the caliph's sons, who were in charge of running the affairs during Muᶜāwiyah's reign, took to bearing his corpse and to burying it at the Baqeeᶜ where the Messenger of Allāh was buried...! But let us go back to Abū Hurayra to examine his attitude towards the Prophet's Sunnah.

In his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, al-Bukhāri quotes Abū Hurayra saying, "I learned the fill of two receptacles [of *aḥādīth*] from the Messenger of Allāh: I have disseminated only one of them; as for the other, if I disseminate it, this throat will be slit."[1]

Here is Abū Hurayra revealing what erstwhile is hidden, admitting that the only traditions he quoted were the ones that pleased the ruling authorities. Building upon this premise, Abū Hurayra used to have two pouches, or two receptacles, as he called them. He used to disseminate the contents of one of them, the one which we have discussed here that contains whatever the rulers desired. As for the other, which Abū Hurayra kept to himself and whose *aḥādīth* he did not narrate for fear his throat would be slit, it is the one containing the authentic traditions of the Prophet. Had Abū Hurayra been a reliable authority, he would have never hidden true *aḥādīth* while disseminating illusions and lies only to support the oppressor, knowing that Allāh curses whoever hides the clear evidence.

Al-Bukhāri quotes him saying once, "People say that Abū Hurayra narrates too many *aḥādīth*. Had it not been for two [particular] verses in the Book of Allāh, I would not have narrated a single *ḥadīth*: `Those who conceal what We have revealed of clear proofs and the guidance, after Our having clarified [everything] for people in the Book, these it is whom Allāh shall curse, and those who curse shall curse them, too' (Qur'ān, 2:159). Our brethren from the Muhājirūn used to be busy consigning transactions at the market-place, while our brethren from the Anṣār used to be busy doing business with their own money, while Abū Hurayra kept in the shadow of the Prophet in order to satisfy his hunger, attending what they did not attend, learning what they did not learn."[2]

How can Abū Hurayra say that had it not been for a couple of verses in the Book of Allāh, he would not have narrated a single *ḥadīth*, then he says, "I learned two receptacles [of *aḥādīth*] from the Messenger of

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[1]Al-Bukhāri, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Vol. 1, p. 38, in a chapter dealing with learning.

[2]*Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 37.

Allāh: I have disseminated one of them; as for the other, if I disseminate it, this throat will be slit"?! Is this not his admission of having concealed the truth despite both verses in the Book of Allāh?!

Had the Prophet not said to his companions, "Go back to your people and teach them"?[1] Had he not also said, "One who conveys is more aware than one who hears"? Al-Bukhāri states that the Prophet urged the deputation of ʿAbd Qays to learn belief and scholarship "... then convey what you learn to those whom you have left behind."[2] Can we help wondering: Why should the throat of a *ṣaḥābi* be slit if he quotes the Prophet ?! There must be a secret here which the caliphs do not wish others to know. Here, we would like to briefly say that "the people of the remembrance" was [a phrase in] a Qur'ānic verse revealed to refer to ʿAli's successorship of the Prophet.

Abū Hurayra is not to blame; he knew his own worth and testified against his own soul that Allāh cursed him, and so did those who curse, for having hidden the Prophet's *hadīth*. But the blame is on those who call Abū Hurayra the narrator of the Sunnah while he himself testifies that he hid it then testifies that he fabricated it and told lies in its regard, then he further goes on to testify that it became confused for him, so he could not tell which one was the statement of the Prophet and which one was made by others. All of these *aḥādīth* and correct admissions are recorded in al-Bukhāri's *Ṣaḥīḥ* and in other authentic books of *hadīth*.

How can anyone feel comfortable about a man whose justice was doubted by the Commander of the Faithful ʿAli ibn Abū Tālib who charged him with lying, saying that among the living, nobody told more lies about the Prophet than Abū Hurayra?! ʿOmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, too, charged him of the same; he beat him and threatened to expel him. ʿĀyisha doubted his integrity and many times called him a liar, and many other *ṣaḥābah* cast doubts about his accuracy and rejected his contradictory *aḥādīth*, so he would once admit his error and would sometimes prattle in Ethiopian.[3] A large number of Muslim scholars refuted his

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[1]Al-Bukhāri, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Vol. 1, p. 30.

[2]*Ibid.*

[3]Abū Hurayra was bi-lingual. He spoke Arabic (his mother tongue) and Amharic. Historically speaking, during Abū Hurayra's time, Amheric was the language of "aristocrats" due to the fact that the Ethiopians had for many (continued...)

traditions and charged him with lying, fabricating, and throwing himself at Muʿāwiyah's dinner tables, at his coffers of gold and silver.

Is it right, then, for Abū Hurayra to become "Islam's narrator" from whom the religion's injunctions are learned?

Judaica and Jewish doctrines have filled the books of *hadīth*. Kaʿb al-Aḥbār, a Jew, may have succeeded in getting such doctrines and beliefs included into the books of *hadīth*, hence we find traditions likening or personifying Allāh, as well as the theory of incarnation, in addition to many abominable statements about the prophets and messengers of Allāh: all of these are cited through Abū Hurayra.

AFTER KHAYBAR, WĀDI AL-QURA AND TAIMA

(629 A.D.)

Following the conquest of Khaybar, the Prophet proceeded to besiege the Jews residing in Wādi al-Qurā. These Jews resisted for only two days during which eleven of their men were killed. After their capitulation, the Jews of Taima surrendered, too. Thus, the Prophet extended his control to all the Jews who resided north of Medīna and who remained for years a constant threat to Islam and to the Muslims.

On his return to Medīna, the Prophet, in the month of Jumadi II, 7 A.H./October 628 A.D., married Umm Ḥabība daughter of his arch-enemy Abū Sufyān. She had been for some time an adherent to the Islamic faith and had participated in the migration to Ethiopia. While she was there, the Prophet wrote Ethiopia's Negus a letter requesting him to contract his marriage with Umm Ḥabība for the dower of four hundred dinars, which he did. She was then more than thirty years old. The reader will come across her again in this book, *Inshā-Allāh*.

THE PROPHET VISITS MECCA (629 A.D.)

Having returned to Medīna from Khayber and the other Jewish strongholds victoriously, the Prophet spent four or five months in Medīna. According to the terms of the treaty with the Meccans, the Muslims could now visit Mecca. In the month of Thul-Qiʿda, towards the end of the seventh year of Hijra and the beginning of the eighth (March 629 A.D.) the Prophet, accompanied by about two thousand Muslims, proceeded to

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[3](...continued)
years colonized Yemen till they were kicked out of it at the hands of Sayf ibn Thi Yazun (or Yazin), Himyar's king who died in 574 A.D.

Mecca to make the lesser pilgrimage (the *ʿumra*). Quraish left their houses and watched the Muslims from their tents pitched on the heights of the surrounding hills.

The Prophet ordered Bilāl ibn Rabāḥ, the Ethiopian caller to prayers, to ascend the holy place to call the believers to midday prayers. That was the very first time such call was ever made, and that was the very first time the Muslims congregated publicly in such a large number around the Kaʿba to perform the prayers led by the Messenger of Allāh. Surely that was history making, a milestone.

The Prophet and his companions remained in Mecca for three days. After these three days' sojourn, the Muslims retired strictly in accordance with the terms of the treaty. During those days, Maymuna daughter of al-Ḥārith al-Hilāli (578 - 671 A.D.), a widow 51 years old, was married to the Prophet according to the suggestion of ʿAbbās, the Prophet's uncle. She was living with her sister Umm al-Fadl, wife of ʿAbbās. Another sister of hers, Asmā' daughter of ʿOmays, was married to Jaʿfer ibn Abū Ṭālib, ʿAli's brother. A third sister named Selma had already been married to Ḥamzah, another uncle of the Prophet, as the reader recalls. Three sisters were married into the same family!

On the fourth day, the Prophet left Mecca and halted at Sarif, about eight miles from Mecca, for the evening. It was there that the wedding actually took place.

KHĀLID IBN AL-WALĪD AND ʿOMAR IBN AL-ʿĀS ACCEPT ISLAM (629 A.D.)

Another sister of Maimuna, now wife of the Prophet, was married to al-Walīd ibn al-Mughīrah, father of Khālid ibn al-Walīd and the wealthy Meccan who was condemned in the Holy Qur'ān in Sūrat al-Muddathir (Chapter 74), as narrated above. His son, Khālid, was a cousin of this same Mimuna, and he accepted Islam in 8 A.H (629 A.D.), and so did ʿOmar ibn al-ʿĀs. The latter was a poet who used to employ his poetry in attacking the Prophet of Islam and ridiculing his creed, instigating the pagans to fight him. Both of these men played important roles in Islamic history following their conversion.

In the same year, the Prophet, and for the first time, had a three-step pulpit to sit on in order to preach to the faithful. He was growing old (now 61), yet he never asked anyone to make a pulpit for him, but when a Muslim carpenter suggested to him to do so, he welcomed the idea.

THE BATTLE OF MU'TA (629 A.D.)

It has already been mentioned that the envoy sent by Muḥammed to the Ghassānid governor of Bostra (Buṣra) on behalf of the Byzantine emperor Heraclius inviting him to Islam had been killed en route at the hands of Shurahbil, a feudatory of Heraclius. Shurhabil was the chief of the Moabites[1]. In order to exact reparations, the Prophet, on his return to Medīna from Sarif after marrying Maimuna, sent a force of 3,000 men with an order to march to the place where the envoy (Ḥārithah ibn ᶜOmayr al-Azdi) had been killed.

The Prophet gave to the slain envoy's son Zayd ibn Ḥārithah, his freed slave and once adopted son, the command of the army, saying to the troops, "If Zayd is killed, then Jaᶜfer ibn Abū Ṭālib will be the commander, and if he, too, is killed, then ᶜAbdullāh ibn Rawāḥah will command the army. And if he is killed, then the Muslims should select someone as their commander."

Hearing it, a Jew said: "If he is a true Prophet, none of these three will remain alive."

Before dispatching this expedition, he instructed them as follows:

(1) Many servants of God will be busy worshipping Him in their places of worship (churches). Do not touch them.
(2) Do not lift your hand against any woman (to strike her).
(3) Do not kill any child or minor.
(4) Do not kill any old person.
(5) Do not destroy any green tree.

These instructions imparted in an age when hardly any scruples were exercised during bloody engagements indicate the depth of the Prophet's compassion and the efforts he was exerting to effect reforms in all walks of life.

The Muslim force marched under the command of Zayd ibn Ḥārithah to Mu'ta in Syria. In order to meet it, the Syrians had raised a huge army.

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[1]These Moabites are the ones who were then residing in and ruling Moab, which is known in Arabic as "Mu'ta," located in a hilly region east of the Dead Sea. They are Arab tribesmen who carved Hubal then gave it to the Khuzāᶜah tribesmen as a gift. It became Mecca's chief idol. They were also famous for making excellent swords known as the Mashrafis.

Although far outnumbered, the Muslim force gave a heroic account of its valour, but the disparity in number was too great. When its commander, Zayd, was slain, the command was taken over by Jaʿfer ibn Abū Ṭālib, a cousin of the Prophet. He, too, was killed and ʿAbdullāh ibn Rawāḥah al-Anṣāri took the command. When, as prophesied by the Prophet, he, too, was martyred, the command went to Khālid ibn al-Walīd who was able to bring about a successful retreat. It is said that Khālid was then given the title of "the lion of Allāh." As the retreating army came close to Medīna, its people came out to meet them reproachfully, crying out, "You runaways! You fled away from the enemy while fighting for Allāh!" Umm Salamah, wife of the Prophet, once asked the wife of Salamah ibn Hāshim ibn al-Mughīrah, one of those runaways, as to why her husband never came out to offer his prayers in the company of the Prophet. She replied that the people used to taunt him as a runaway from Mu'ta; so, he abstained from going out of his house.

The Prophet was much grieved by the death of Zayd and Jaʿfer. About Jaʿfer, whose hands were both severed before he fell down at the age of only 41, the Prophet said that Allāh had given him two wings of emerald in place of his arms whereby he flies in the Garden with the angels. That is why Jaʿfer is known as at-Ṭayyar (the flyer). When the news came of his martyrdom, the Prophet went to Jaʿfer's house and, calling his children by their names, he embraced them as he burst into tears. Asmā', Jaʿfer's wife, realized what had happened, so she loudly cried, whereupon her neighbours' women came to express their grief at the sad news. The Prophet then went home and asked his family to send food to the family of his cousin Jaʿfer because, he said, no food would be cooked there since they were grieving for the loss of Jaʿfer. Then the Prophet proceeded to the house of Zaid ibn Hārithah and took Zaid's little girl into his arms and wept profusely. A bystander could not understand why the Prophet wept so much. "It is the fond yearning in the heart of a friend for his friend," said the Prophet to him.

THE PEACE TREATY VIOLATED (629 A.D.)

In November of the same year (8 A.H./629 A.D.), Banū Bakr, who had signed the Hudaybiya treaty, killed a man from the Khuzāʿah tribe one night. The Khuzāʿites sent a deputation of forty men to the Propeht asking him to punish the treacherous murderes, but he resented any infirngement on the treaty, promising that he would take up their cause personally.

When Quraish knew of this deputation, they were very alarmed and sent Abū Sufyān to Medīna to reconcile the Muslims. Upon reaching Medīna, Abū Sufyān went straight to the house of his daughter Umm Habība, wife of the Prophet. He was about to sit down when Umm Habība pulled the rug from underneath him saying, "This is a bed of the Messenger of Allāh and is too sacred to be polluted by an impure idolator." Abū Sufyān felt the humiliation and left the place cursing her. Appearing before the Prophet, he wanted to explain that he and Quraish wished to renew the peace pact, but the Prophet would not waste his time listening to him. He, therefore, sought the mediation of ᶜAli and Abū Bakr, but both men declined to interfere. Then he sought the favour of Fāṭima daughter of the Prophet, begging her to let her oldest son be his protector. Fāṭima replied that Ḥasan was too young to take anyone under his protection, being only six years old, adding that no protection can avail anyone against the will of the Prophet which is also the will of the Almighty.

Seeing how all doors were closed in his face, Abū Sufyān went one more time to ᶜAli and asked him what he suggested he should do. ᶜAli suggested that Abū Sufyān should do nothing more than proclaiming on behalf of Quraish the friendly ties which they wished to maintain and the continuation of his own protection as the head of Quraish. Standing in the courtyrad of the Prophet's mosque in Medīna, Abū Sufyān announced what ᶜAli had suggested, but he also noticed that nobody paid him any attention at all. He was ignored by everybody. When he reported what had happened to him in Medīna to Quraish, the latter told him that all what he had done was simply to make a fool of himself. "I know that," said Abū Sufyān, "but what else could I have done?"

PREPARATIONS TO INVADE MECCA (630 A.D.)

Abū Sufyān's failure to safeguard the Hudaybiya treaty confirmed the apprehensions of the Khuzāᶜites who blamed it all on Quraish. You see, the Quraishites were allies of Banū Bakr, the culprits in this incident. Had they been sincere in their peaceful intentions, they should have taken up the issue with Banū Bakr themselves first and foremost, but they did not.

Since the infringement on the peace treaty has been confirmed, the Prophet decided to take over Mecca by surprise. He immediately summoned all his allies from all quarters to meet him in Medīna, his headquarters. He did not give them any hint regarding the meeting's agenda. One day, Abū Bakr happened to enter the house of his daughter

ᶜĀyisha, wife of the Prophet, and he was somehow surprised to see her busy preparing the Prophet's war outfits and battle gear. He asked her about the reason, but she only said that a military expedition was soon to take place. She did not say where the army would be marching or even in any direction at all. All the roads leading to Mecca were blockaded in order to prevent any intelligence from reaching the Meccans.

Just while all the arrangements were being made for the campaign, the Prophet ordered his followers in Medīna to be ready and to take utmost secrecy so that no hint of any kind should leak out to Mecca. In spite of all these precautions, the secret preparations almost succeeded in reaching the Meccans. Ḥātib ibn Balta^{c}ah, one of the Muhājirūn and a trusted companion of the Prophet, wrote his family in Mecca saying, "From Ḥātib ibn Balta^{c}ah to the Meccans. Health! The Messenger of Allāh is preparing to attack you while you are unaware of it. To arms!" The carrier of the letter was a woman named Sarah. The Prophet was informed of it by revelation, so he immediately dispatched ᶜAli and al-Zubayr with other men on horseback to intercept the woman. The Muslims found her and carefully searched her, finding no letter with her. They almost gave up when ᶜAli decided to make a last ditch effort, knowing that the Messenger of Allāh could not have been mistaken. Drawing his sword, ᶜAli brandished it before her eyes as he demanded that she should either produce the letter or be killed. The woman trembled as she drew out a letter from the long tresses of her hair where she had hidden it. When the letter was brought to the Prophet, he ordered its writer to be brought to him. Ḥātib was brought before the Prophet to whom he pleaded for clemency, saying that he was a true believer, that he was concerned about his unprotected family in Mecca, and that he wrote the letter in order to save his family. The Prophet contemplated on Ḥātib's previous services of the creed, accepted his plea and pardoned him. The first nine verses of Sūrat al-Mumtaḥana (Chapter 60 of the Holy Qur'ān) were revealed in reference to this incident; they were:

> ***In the Name of Allāh, the most Beneficent, the most Merciful***
> *O you who believe! Do not take My enemy and yours as friends: would you offer them love while they deny what has come to you of the truth, driving out the Messenger and yourselves because you believe in Allāh, your Lord? If you go forth struggling hard in My path and seeking My pleasure, would you manifest love for them? And I know what you conceal and what you manifest, and whoever of you does this, he indeed has gone astray from the straight path. If they find you, they will be*

your enemies, and they will assault you with their hands and tongues in an evil manner, and they ardently desire that you will disbelieve. Your relationship would not benefit you, nor your children, on the Day of Resurrection; He will decide between you, and Allāh sees what you do. Indeed, there is for you a good example in Abraham and those with him when they said to their people: Surely we are clear of you and of what you worship besides Allāh; we declare ourselves clear of you, and enmity and hatred have appeared between us and you forever until you believe in Allāh alone, but not in what Ibrāhīm said to his father: I would certainly ask forgiveness for you, and I do not control for you aught from Allāh. Lord! On Thee do we rely, and to Thee do we turn, and to Thee is the eventual resort. Lord! Do not make us a trial for those who disbelieve, and forgive us, Lord! Surely You are the Mighty, the Wise. Certainly there is for you in them a good example for him who fears Allāh and the Last Day, and whoever turns back, surely Allāh is the Self-sufficient, the Praised One. It may be that Allāh will bring about friendship between you and those whom you hold to be your enemies from among them, and Allāh is Powerful, and Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful. Allāh does not forbid you regarding those who have not made war against you on account of (your) religion, and have not driven you forth from your homes that you show them kindness and deal with them justly; surely Allāh loves the doers of justice. Allāh only forbids you regarding those who fought you on account of (your) religion and drove you out of your homes and supported (others) in your expulsion that you make friends with them, and whoever makes friends with them, these are the unjust.
(Qur'ān, 60:1-9)

THE CONQUEST OF MECCA (630 A.D.)

One of the conditions of the Treaty of Ḥudaybiya was that Quraish would not fight against any ally of the Muslims, nor should the Muslims fight against any ally of Quraish. In simple language, the clause of 10-years' cease-fire included the allies as well as the principals.

During the month of Ramaḍān of 8 A.H./December 629/January 630 A.D., following the incident of Banū Khuzā'ah being attacked by Banū Bakr and their allies, the Quraishites, as explained above, the Prophet sent an emissary to Quraish to persuade them to accept any of the following terms:

(1) Reparations should be paid for those killed of Banū Khuzāʿah, or
(2) Quraish should break their alliance with Banū Bakr, or
(3) The Ḥudaybiya treaty should be abrogated.

Quraish accepted the last alternative. The time had come to free the citadel of Islam from idolatry and to end the reign of oppression in Mecca. The Prophet marched with ten thousand men on the 10th of the month of Ramaḍān, 8 A.H., corresponding to January 4, 630 A.D. and camped a short distance from Mecca. He was riding his she-camel Qaswā' that had transported him almost eight years ago from Mecca to Yathrib on his historic *hijra*. The Meccans sent a few scouts, including Abū Sufyān, Ḥākim ibn Ḥizām, a nephew of Khadīja, and a chief from Khuzāʿah named Budayl ibn Warqā' (mentioned earlier in this book), to assess the strength of the Muslim army. Abū Sufyān was seen by ʿAbbās, uncle of the Prophet, who took him to the Prophet.

The Prophet, in honour of the recommendation made by his uncle, offered protection to Abū Sufyān. Then the Prophet said, "Isn't it time for you to know the creed: *La Ilāha illa-Allāh*?!" Abū Sufyān replied, "Why not?" Then the Prophet further asked him, "And is it not the time for you to confirm that I am the Messenger of Allāh?!" Abū Sufyān said, "I have still some doubt about it." At this response, ʿAbbās rebuked Abū Sufyān thus: "Fie upon you, fellow! Confirm his prophethood or you will be killed!" So Abū Sufyān recited both declarations of the creeds of confirmation, and with him Ḥākim ibn Ḥizām and Budayl ibn Warqā' also accepted the Islamic creed. Later conduct of Abū Sufyān proved that he had accepted Islam only by tongue, never by heart. The same can be said about his son Muʿāwiyah and grandson Yazīd. They were both Muslims only by name, and there are many Muslims like them.

Abū al-Fidā' writes the following in his *Tārīkh*: "Then the Prophet asked ʿAbbās to take Abū Sufyān on a tour around the Mazeeq Valley and to show him the army of Islam. ʿAbbās said, `O Messenger of Allāh! Abū Sufyān is a boaster! Perhaps you should give him a distinctive order of some sort so that he may have a chance to boast about it among Quraish.' The Prophet said, `Well, then, whoever seeks refuge in Abū Sufyān's house shall be given protection. And also he who seeks refuge in the Sacred Mosque and in the house of Ḥākim ibn Ḥizām or shuts the door of his house shall be given protection'. ʿAbbās further says, `Then I took Abū Sufyān for a review of the Islamic army. At Abū Sufyān's

request, I pointed out to the eminent people from every clan who were present in the Islamic regiments. In the meantime, the Prophet passed by his army which was clad in green uniforms. Abū Sufyān cried out, 'O ʿAbbās! Verily your nephew has acquired quite a kingdom!' ʿAbbās said to him, 'Woe unto thee! This is no kingship! It is prophethood!'"

Asides from a slight resistance offered by ʿIkrimah and Safwān, Muḥammed entered Mecca almost unopposed. It took place on a Friday, the 20th of the month of Ramaḍān, 8 A.H., corresponding to January 14, 630 A.D.

The city which had scoffed and jeered at Muḥammed's prophetic mission, ruthlessly persecuted him and his disciples and ultimately driven his disciples away, had created all types of obstacles in the way of the propagation of the faith and had waged war after war on the Muslims, this same city now lay at his feet. At this moment of triumph, he could have done anything he wished with the city and its citizens, but he had not come to the world to cause misery or bloodshed but as a benefactor of mankind, to proclaim the message of God and to guide erring humanity to the righteous course: to the worship of the One and Only God.

ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd says: "Entering al-Masjid al-Harām, the Prophet started breaking and demolishing the idols. There were three hundred and sixty idols fixed in the walls and on the roof of the Kaʿba with lead or tin. Any idol near which the Prophet went and towards which he pointed his cane as he said: 'Right has come and falsehood has vanished; verily falsehood is destined to vanish' (Qur'ān, 17:81) fell headlong on the ground without anyone touching it. Lastly, there remained Hubal, an idol of Banū Khuzāʿah on the rooftop of the Kaʿba. It was a huge one made of polished brass. The Prophet ordered ʿAli to climb on his shoulders, which ʿAli did, throwing that last idol down which shattered into pieces on impact." Muḥammed also sent small detachments of troops to destroy the temples erected for al-ʿUzza by the Banū Ghatfān used to worship, and also the temples of Suwāʿ, and Manāt[1], the latter being the idol of Banū Huthayl and Banū Khuzāʿah. These were the three famous idol temples of the neighbouring tribes.

Then he ordered Bilāl, the Ethiopian, to climb on the rooftop of the

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[1]Suwaʿ was a statue in the form of a woman; Manat, also in the form of a woman, was worshipped by the tribes of Huthayl and Khuzaʿah. Both were regarded as the wives of the Almighty.

Kaʿba to call the *athān*. The wordings of the *athān*, coupled with the fact that it was called by a freed black slave, caused much heartache among the Quraishites. After clearing the Kaʿba, the first House of God, the sanctuary rebuilt by Abraham and Ishmael, of all the symbols of idolatry, he assembled Quraish and delivered the following sermon to them:

> There is no god but Allāh. He has no partners. He has fulfilled His promise and helped His slave and defeated all coalitions (allied) against him. All authority, revenge and blood reparations are under my feet. The guardianship of the Kaʿba and the arrangements for the supply of water to pilgrims are exempt. O! You Quraish! The arrogance of the heathen days and all pride of ancestry God has wiped out. All mankind descended from Adam, and Adam was made of clay.

He then recited the following verse of the Qur'ān:

> *O people! Surely We have created you of a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes so that you may get to know one another. Surely the most honourable of you with Allāh is the one among you who is most pious; surely Allāh is Knowing, Aware.*
> (Qur'ān, 49:13)

Having dwelt upon the equality and brotherhood of mankind and preached the Unity and the Omnipotence of God, he inquired from Quraish: "Descendants of Quraish! How do you think I should act towards you?" "With kindness and pity, gracious brother and nephew," beseeched they. The Prophet magnanimously declared: "I shall speak to you as Joseph (Yousuf) spoke unto his brothers: `There is no reproach against you today; God will forgive you. He is the most Merciful and the most Compassionate (Qur'ān, 12:31).'"

Then he added: "Go; you are free!"

Mecca lay conquered but not a single house was plundered, nor any woman insulted. Cruelties, insults and oppression perpetrated during a long period of twenty-one years were now forgiven. The Muhājirūn were asked even to forego their houses and properties which on their migration to Medīna had been occupied by the Meccans. Through all the annals of history, there have seldom been any conquest like this.

The result of this magnanimity and compassion was that those very die-hards who had relentlessly opposed the Prophet and refused to listen to the Divine message converged around him in their multitudes and

accepted Islam. The glad tidings given by God about the peace of Hudaybiyah came true and His injunction had been obeyed:

> ***In the Name of Allāh, the most Gracious, the most Merciful***
> *When there comes assistance from Allāh and victory, and when you see men entering the religion of Allāh in groups, then celebrate the praise of your Lord, and implore His forgiveness; surely He is oft-returning (to mercy).*
> (Qur'ān, 110:1-3)

Once the Meccans submitted to the faith, disciples were sent out to all neighbouring tribes to invite them, with peace and good will, to embrace Islam. Many tribes responded positively to the call. However, there was one tragic incident which must be mentioned. Khālid ibn al-Walīd (who had accepted Islam a few months before the fall of Mecca) was sent to Banū Khuzāimah who had already accepted Islam. When they learned of Khālid's arrival, they came out cautiously armed. Khālid asked them who they were and in reply he was informed: "They are Muslims following the teaching of Muhammed; they pray in the recognized form of prayer, have built a mosque, recite the *athān* and the *iqāma* and gather together on Fridays for prayers." Khālid then asked them why they had come out to meet him armed. They said that they were on hostile terms with a fellow Arab clan and mistook Khālid's men for their enemies. But Khālid did not accept their explanation and asked them to surrender their arms. They at once surrendered. Khālid then ordered his companions to tie their hands behind their shoulders, then he placed them in the custody of his comrades. Early next morning, he ordered that the custodian of each of the prisoners should himself kill that prisoner. Thus, these innocent Muslims were all killed.

Another version of this incident says that when Banū Khuzāimah submitted their arms at Khālid's orders, he himself unsheathed his sword and killed one hundred men of that clan. Someone from Banū Khuzaimah informed the Prophet about this tyranny. The Prophet was angered and in dismay thrice repeated, "O Lord! I deplore Khālid's action!" In order to repair the damage thus caused by Khālid, the Prophet, who was very grieved at what had happened at the hands of Khālid, sent ᶜAli on a mission to do damage control by distributing a sum of money which he gave him to compensate the families of those wrongfully killed. ᶜAli paid each and every person who was affected by that massacre more than what he had demanded, as the Prophet had instructed him, thus pleasing

everyone. When all the blood money was paid, and there was still some money left, he distributed the remnant to the poor there and then.

But the memory of that massacre lingered in people's minds. Arab tribes who had not yet accepted Islam, such as those of Banū Hawāzin, Banū Thaqīf, Banū Sa'd and many others had been for some time contemplating to oppose the growing power of Islam. This massacre now fueled their desire to take the offensive rather than wait to be attacked and massacred. Under the leadership of Mālik bin 'Awf, Banū Thaqīf and Banū Hawāzin, together with other tribes, assembled four thousand fighting men at the Awtas valley between Mecca and Tā'if. These men would check any movement of the Muslim forces that wanted to march in their direction. They even brought with them their familes and herds. Duraid, an elderly wise man, protested against that measure, but youthful Mālik did not heed his words, thinking that in the presence of their families, these men would never turn their backs to their enemy but would risk their own life fighting like men till victory.

The news of this newly assembled army in the Awtās valley caused the Prophet to cut his stay in Mecca short and return to Medīna on Shawwāl 6, 8 A.H./January 30, 630 A.D. with his ten thousand followers in addition to two thousand more from Mecca who accepted Islam during those few days. When the sight of 12,000 troops led by 'Ali paraded before the Prophet before leaving Medīna, Abū Bakr was very impressed and said, "We shall not this day be harmed on account of our numbers!"

THE BATTLE OF ḤUNAIN (630 A.D.)

On the 6th of Shawwāl, 8 A.H./January 30, 630 A.D., a pitched battle was fought at Ḥunain, about ten miles from Mecca, between the Muslims and the men of Hawāzin and Thaqīf who had already taken up vantage positions. They almost took the Muslims by surprise, attacking them in the early hours of the morning, fighting in a spirit of desperation. The Muslims first lost ground and their defeat seemed imminent. The Prophet was riding his white mule Duldul (which had been given to him as a gift by the Coptic ruler of Egypt) as he was watching the progress of the battle from the rear of the army.

At that time, a cousin of the Prophet named Abū Sufyān ibn al-Hārith was holding the bridle of the Prophet's mule. The vanguard of the army was made up of the men of Banū Sulaim who were led by Khālid ibn al-Walīd. They were leisurely advancing up the steep and narrow pass when suddenly Banū Hawāzin attacked them, concentrating their ambush

against Khālid's column. Khālid could not withstand the attack and his column staggered under the weight of the onslaught, breaking and falling back. One column after another reacted likewise. All turned to flight. Panic seized the entire army. Those who proved to be firm in the battle of Ḥunain and who did not flee away included: ʿAbbās, his oldest son Faḍl, ʿAli ibn Abū Ṭālib, Abū Sufyān ibn al-Ḥārith, his brother Rabīʿah, ʿAqīl ibn Abū Ṭālib, ʿAbdullāh ibn al-Zubayr, Zubayr ibn al-ʿAwwām, and Usāmah ibn Zayd. Al-Ḥalabi remarks in *Al-Sīra al-Ḥalabiyya* that only four persons remained with the Prophet, three of whom were Hāshimites, i.e., ʿAli ibn Abū Ṭālib, ʿAbbās and Abū Sufyān ibn al-Ḥārith, and one non-Hāshimite, i.e., ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd. Abū al-Fidā' makes another point. He says, "When the Muslims fled, the secret malice which the people of Mecca entertained against the Muslims was exposed. Abū Sufyān ibn Ḥarb gleefully cried out, 'They will not stop until they reach the sea shore! Muḥammed's magic spell is now broken!'" Shaybah ibn ʿOthmān ibn Abū Ṭalḥah, whose father was killed at Uḥud, vowed that he would now slay Muḥammed. Chaos and confusion among the Muslims' army were increasing.

As the Prophet was witnessing his fighting men fleeing, he called out to them, "Where are you running off to?!" But nobody was paying him any attention. The Prophet then told his uncle ʿAbbās to call the Muslims back. ʿAbbās wondered as to how his voice would reach those fleeing. The Prophet said that Allāh would cause his voice to reach them, no matter how far they might have gone. ʿAbbās called them in these words as the Prophet had instructed him: "O Anṣār! O people of the tree of Samrah![1] O people of Sūrat al-Baqarah!"

After the call of ʿAbbās, at last the deserters returned and ultimately the Hawāzin and Thaqīf were routed. About a hundred Muslims, all from the Anṣār, succeeded in regaining the narrow pass and checking the advance of the enemy's army. The standard bearer of the Banū Hawāzin tribe, namely ʿOthmān (or Abū Jarwal), a man of extra-ordinary height, stoutly built, came forward and challenged the Muslims to single combat. ʿAli stepped forward and engaged him in a duel. In the meantime, the Muslim army gradually rallied around the Prophet, protecting him from the infidels. ʿAli succeeded in slaying his opponent and both parties closed in on each other; a fist fight broke out, and the conflict, by any

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[1]This is a reference to the tree under which the Bayʿat al-Riḍwān had taken place at Ḥudaibiyah two years earlier.

standard, was horrifying. The Prophet cast a handful of gravel into the air towards the enemy saying, "Confusion seize their faces!" The reader may remember that the Messenger of Allāh had done the same during the Battle of Badr. After a short while, the enemies wavered then fled away as the Muslims were in hot pursuit of them. It is to this battle that these verses of the Holy Qur'ān refer:

> *Certainly Allāh helped you in many battlefields and on the Day of Hunanin, when your great numbers made you vain, but they availed you nothing and the earth became strait to you notwithstanding its spaciousness, then you turned back retreating. Then Allāh sent down His tranquility upon His Messenger and upon the believers and sent down hosts (of angels) which you did not see and chastised those who disbelieved, and that is the reward of the unbelievers. Then will Allāh after this turn (mercifully) to whomsoever He pleases, and Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful.* (Qur'ān, 9:25-27)

The men of Thaqīf took refuge in the city of Tā'if but the families of the Hawāzin, with all their flocks and herds, fell into the hands of the Muslims. Tā'if was besieged. Expecting this siege, the tribesmen of Hawāzin and their allies had already undertaken defensive measures. The siege was prolonged for over twenty days without producing any result. On account of a dream he saw, the Propeht concluded that the military operations would not be successful and decided to lift the siege, but his army, upon receiving orders to withdraw, began to murmur in frustration. The idea of retreating did not appeal to them. The Prophet, coming to know about their attitude, permitted them to make a general assault the next day. The assault was undertaken but was repulsed, and the Muslim army suffered losses. ᶜAbdullāh, son of later caliph Abū Bakr, received a wound that day which eventually led to his martyrdom a few years later. May Allāh reward ᶜAbdullāh ibn Abū Bakr with the best of His rewards for his services to the cause of Islam. Has there been enough room in this already too big a book, the feats and merits of this great *ṣaḥābi* would have filled many pages. May Allāh forgive our shortcomings, *Allāhomma Āmeen*. Abū Sufyān, the Meccan chief, lost one of his eyes to an arrow. At last, the Muslim army marched back to Jeᶜrāna where the booty was kept pending distribution.

The men of Hawāzin approached the Prophet and beseeched him to restore their families to them. The Prophet answered them that he could not compel his army to forego all the fruits of victory and that if they

wanted their families back, they would have to forego their worldly goods. To this, the Hawāzin consented. On the next day, acting on the advice of the Prophet, they approached the Prophet and repeated their request. The Prophet replied, "My own share of the captives, and that of the children of ʿAbdul-Muṭṭalib, I give back to you at once." The army followed suit, and six thousand captives were set free. The Hawāzin were so overwhelmed by this generosity that many of them accepted Islam there and then.

The spoils of the war, which consisted of 24,000 camels, 40,000 goats, and a considerable quantity of silver, were distributed among the army. In making the distribution, the newly converted Muslims as well as many non-Muslims of Mecca (known in history as "al-muʿallafatul qulūbuhum" (those who were helped in order to win their hearts) were given disproportionately larger shares. Some Anṣār considered this as an act of partiality, and their discontent was reported to the Prophet. It was also reported that the Anṣār feared that now that Mecca was conquered, the Prophet would return to it and migrate from Medīna. The Prophet delivered a lecture to them wherein he said to them:

"O Anṣār! I have learned about your discourse. When I came to you, you were wandering in the dark, and the Lord gave you the right direction. You were suffering, and He made you happy. You were enemies of one another, and He filled your hearts with brotherly love and concord. Was it not so, tell me?"

"Indeed, it is even as you say," was the reply: "to the Lord and to His Prophet belong the benevolence and the grace."

"Nay, by the Lord," continued the Prophet, "but you might have answered, and answered truly, for I would have testified to its truth myself: 'You came to us rejected as an impostor, and we believed in you; you came as a helpless fugitive and we assisted you; you were poor and outcast, and we gave you asylum, comfortless and we solaced you.' O Anṣār! Why do you disturb your hearts because of the things of this life? Are you not satisfied that others should return with the flocks and the camels, while you go back to your homes with me in your midst? By Him Who holds my life in His hands, I shall never abandon you. If all mankind went one way and the Anṣār went another, surely I would join the Anṣār. The Lord be favourable to them, and bless them, and their children, and their children's children!"

At these words, say the chroniclers, they all wept till tears ran down their beards. They all cried with one voice, "Yes, O Prophet of Allāh! We

are well satisfied with our share" (meaning the presence of the Prophet in Medīna). They, thereupon, felt happy and contented and went back home. Muhammed soon thereafter returned to Medīna.

ISLAM SPREADS

The fall of Mecca was the signal for an unprecedented rush to accept Islam. As ᶜAmr ibn Salāmah, a companion of the Pophet, stated, "The Arabs were waiting for Quraish to accept Islam. They used to say: `Muhammed must be left to his people. If he would emerges victorious over them, he is undoubtedly a true prophet.' When Mecca was conquered, all the tribes hastened to accept Islam."

Zakāt collectors were sent into the territories under the Muslims' control. These officials not only demonstrated great fairness in collecting the *zakāt* and *jizya*, but also preached effectively to the people, for most of them were pious and God-fearing people. After the fall of Mecca, teachers were sent in all directions to bring people to God's way, and they met with so much success that hordes upon hordes flocked to the Prophet. It is about such mass conversions that the Qur'ān has stated:

> *When there comes assistance from Allāh and victory, and you see men entering the religion of Allāh in groups.....*
> (Qur'ān, 110:1-2)

After an order was issued prohibiting the polytheists from entering the Sacred Mosque of the Kaᶜba, the entire Hijaz was Muslim.

By the 10th of Hijra/632 A.D., Islam's influence had reached Yemen, Bahrain, Yamāma, Iraq, and Syria. The Chief of the Daws, a tribe in Yemen, had accepted Islam even before the migration. In 8 A.H./630 A.D., Khālid ibn al-Walīd was sent to Yemen to preach Islam but did not have much success. Then ᶜAli went there and read the epistle of the Prophet; the entire tribe of Hamdan accepted Islam. In 10 A.H./632 A.D., Wabr was deputed to contact the leaders of the Persians residing in Yemen. Firoz al-Daylami, Markabood and Wahab ibn Munabbih accepted Islam through him. Maᶜāth ibn Jabal and Abū Mūsa al-Ashᶜari were also sent to Yemen with the following instructions: "Be polite, not harsh; give glad tidings to the people and condemn them not. Work together. When you meet people who already follow some (other) religion, preach to them about the Oneness of God and (my) Messengership; if they accept, tell them that God has enjoined prayers five times day and night. If they agree to do so, tell them that *zakāt* is also obligatory upon those who can

afford it in order to help the poor. If they give *zakāt*, do not pick out only items of a better quality. Beware of the curse and the supplication of victims, for they reach straight to God." Their efforts met with considerable success. Meanwhile, Khālid was inviting people to the faith in Najrān and the tribe of ᶜAbdul-Madan came forward to accept it.

In 8 A.H./630 A.D., Munqir ibn Ḥabān of the tribe of ᶜAbdul-Qais of Baḥrain visited Medīna and accepted Islam. Through his efforts and those of his father, their tribe entered the Islamic fold and sent a deputation of fourteen persons to the Prophet. In the same year, ᶜAla al-Ḥadrami was sent to Baḥrain to preach to the people. He succeeded in converting its governor, Munthir ibn Sawa, and the public followed suit.

Similarly, Abū Zayd al-Anṣāri and ᶜAmr ibn al-ᶜĀs were sent to ᶜOmān in the same year (8 A.H./630 A.D.) with letters from the Prophet to its chieftains ᶜObayd and Jaifar as stated above. When the chieftains accepted Islam, the whole tribe of Azd responded favourably to the invitation.

By 9 A.H./631 A.D., Islam was gaining a number of adherents in Syria. Its governor, Farwah, became a Muslim. When the Roman emperor learned about it, Farwah was guillotined. He died with a couplet on his lips saying: "Convey my message to the Muslim leaders that I sacrifice my body and honour in the way of God." In the same year, intoxicants were prohibited. Islam was preparing the believers for this prohibition for the past 5 years: It was in 4 A.H./625 - 626 A.D. that the verse "They ask you (O Muhammed!) concerning wine and games of cahnce. Say: In both there is great sin and benefit to men, but their sin is greater than their benefit" (Qur'ān, 2:219) was revealed.

As Islam started spreading to the farthest corners of Arabia, a large number of deputations from different tribes began pouring into Medīna. Ibn Isḥāq has given details of fifteen of them. Ibn Saᶜd describes seventy deputations, and the same number is mentioned by al-Dimyati, al-Mughaltai and Zainuddin al-Iraqi. *Ḥāfiz* Ibn Qaiyyim al-Jawzi and al-Qasṭalāni have critically verified the accounts of these deputations and have themselves given details of thirty-four others.

It was thus, and thus alone, that Islam gradually spread. During a short period of time, it blazed in radiant splendor over the continents.

TABŪK EXPEDITION (630 A.D.)

In Rajab of the 9th Hijri year, corresponding to November of 630 A.D.,

Ali was appointed by the Prophet governor of Medīna. The Nabateans[1] who came from Syria to the markets of Medīna spread the rumour that the indecisive battle at Mu'ta had stirred a considerable chagrin to the Roman emperor Heraclius. Elated by his victories over the Persians and apprehensive of the growing power of the Muslims, he directed his feudatories to collect a huge force to invade Arabia. The tribes of Lakhm, Ḥutham, ᶜĀmila and Ghassān gathered to help the Roman army. When news of this preparation reached Medīna through a trade caravan, it caused a great deal of anxiety among the Muslims. How alarmed they were can be judged from one incident: A neighbour of ᶜOmar knocked at his door in the night. When ᶜOmar came out and inquired what the matter was, the visitor said a calamity had befallen. ᶜOmar asked whether the Ghassānids had come. The visitor was perturbed over another matter but the attack of the Ghassānids was considered so imminent that ᶜOmar's first thought went to it. In order to meet this danger, the Prophet hastily collected a force of 30,000 volunteers with 10,000 horses among them. It also included a number of the *munafiqūn*, hypocrites, led by their man ᶜAbdullāh ibn Ubayy.

In spite of the severe famine that had overtaken Najd and Ḥijāz and the intense heat of the weather, the Prophet's followers rallied behind him. Those who were in a position to do so generously donated large sums of money to meet the expenses of the expedition and to buy weapons and armour to those who could not afford to buy them. This was the first occasion when an appeal for public donations was made, and many Muslims responded generously.

An old and very poor woman brought a small quantity of dates as her contribution. Some hypocrites ridiculed her, but the Prophet said that her contribution was more precious in the sight of Allāh than that of many people who had contributed only to show off.

The Prophet left ᶜAli as his deputy in and governor of Medīna as stated above. ᶜAli exclaimed with dismay, "Are you leaving me behind, O Messenger of Allāh?" The Prophet said, "ᶜAli! Are you not satisfied that you have the same position in relation to me as Āron had with Moses, except that there is no prophet after me?" The Prophet thereby meant that as Moses had left Āron behind to look after his people when

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[1]Nabatea was an Arabian kingdom in present day Jordan. It flourished from the 4th century B.C. till the Roman occupation in 106 A.D. Its capital was Petra.

he went to receive the Commandments, he was likewise leaving ʿAli behind as his deputy to look after the affairs of the Muslims during his absence.

The Prophet marched at the head of this force to Tabūk, a place situated midway between Medīna and Damascus. There, they came to know, to their relief, that the news of the Ghassānids' attack was incorrect. ʿAbdullāh ibn Ubayy and his men camped separately in the rear of the army, and when they had a chance, they left for Medīna where this man claimed that the Prophet had placed him in charge of Medīna. Ali did not believe it, so he had to ask the Prophet about it. The Prophet's answer came loud and clear: "These men are liars. They are the party of hypocrites who would not hesitate to foster sedition in Medīna. I left you there to keep an eye on them and to protect our families (from their mischief)." This is recorded by al-Ṭabari, Abul al-Fidā' and Ibn Athīr.

Having stayed for twenty-four days at Tabūk, the Muslim army returned to Medīna.

The Prophet had marched to Tabūk in order to forestall the Ghassānids and the Byzantines, but a certain Western historian has surmised that the aim of this expedition was expansion, *viz.* to capture the trade routes leading to the more prosperous cities of Syria. Had this been so, there was no sense in returning to Medīna without even attempting to fulfill that objective after having taken all the trouble and the expenditure to raise an expedition of that size during the most inconvenient time of the year. But these detractors have their own mission to fulfill.

On his trip back to Medīna, and when he was about an hour from reaching there, the Prophet received a deputation from some men of Qubā' who had built a mosque and who wished he would bless it by praying there. Those same men had made a similar request to the Prophet who asked them to postpone it till he had dealt with the immediate danger in Syria. But instead of going to their mosque to pray, the Prophet ordered it to be demolished. Here is why:

It was the Banū ʿAmr who had the lion's share in the construction of the Qubā' Mosque, the first ever built in the Islamic history. There was a Christian living in their town known as Abū ʿĀmir belonging to Banū Ghunm ibn ʿAwf who was well versed in the Scriptures and who knew that a Prophet was about to rise. Instead of recognizing Muḥammed as the promised Prophet, he denied him and even became jealous of his increasing influence and power in Medīna and jealous of those who had established the Qubā' Mosque. He, therefore, fled to Mecca after the

Prohet's victory at Badr where he joined Meccan pagans against the Prophet and participated in the Battle of Uḥud on their side. When the Meccans retreated, he fled towards north-western Arabia which was under the Roman ontrol. Some men from Qubā', his likes, who were said to number no more than fifteen, contacted him and invited him to return to his home town. Once Abū ᶜĀmir was back there, he suggested that they should build a mosque that would rival the Qubā' mosque, the first built in Islam, so that they would meet and hatch plots against Muḥammed and his followers. Among those who invited him, some hypocrites who professed to follow Islam, included Thaᶜlabah ibn Ḥāṭib, Muᶜattib ibn Qushayr, and Nabtāl ibn al-Ḥārith. They were the ones who built the new mosque. This is why they invited the Prophet to bless their mosque: they wanted him to legitimize what they were trying to do.

Abū ᶜĀmir once said to his followers, "Get ready. Build a mosque. I will be going to meet the Kaiser and bring an army from him so that we would kick Muḥammed out of Medīna[1]."

Muḥammed received their deputation for the second time led by ᶜĀṣim ibn Awf al-ᶜAjlāni and Mālik ibn al-Dukhsham of Banū ᶜAmr ibn ᶜAwf. As soon as he received them, the Prophet also received the following verses with reference to their mosque built for ulterior motives:

> *And there are those who have built a mosque for a mischievous purpose, and for (propagating) infidelity and to cause division among the faithful, and to ambush whoever fought in the cause of Allāh and His Messenger. Yet they swear that they intend nothing but good, but Allāh bears witness that they are surely liars.*
> (Qur'ān, 9:107)

This is why the Prophet ordered their "Ẓirar Mosque" to be demolished to the ground. Its roof and columns were built with palm leaves and trunks, so it was first burnt then demolished.

YEAR OF THE DEPUTATIONS (630 A.D.)

During the ninth year of the Hijra, a large number of deputations from far-flung pagan Muslim tribes came to the Prophet to accept Islam. Among them were Banū Thaqīf and Banū Hawāzin of Tā'if who were

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[1]al-Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 21, p. 253.

urged by Mālik ibn ʿAwf that it was time now to enter the Islamic fold. These were the same people who had once driven the Prophet out of their city and whose siege after the battle of Ḥunain had been lifted by the Muslims. They had been impressed by the record of those who were accepting the Islamic creed, by the exemplary conduct of Mālik and the other Muslims of his tribe, and the news of Muḥammed being a true prophet was fast spreading among them.

In order to preach the doctrines of Islam, teachers were sent to different provinces. They were directed by the Prophet to "deal gently with the people, and not to be harsh. Give them glad tidings and do not condemn them. And you will meet with many People of the Book who will question you: `What is the key to heaven?' Tell them that it is to testify to the Unity of God, and to do good deeds."

The tribe of Ṭay was, however, was creating some problems for the Muslims. ʿAli was marched with a small force to discipline them. The chief of the tribe, ʿAdi son of Ḥātim, fled but his sister and some of his principal clansmen fell into ʿAli's hands. Having had regard for the great benevolence and generosity of her father, Ḥātim, the Prophet set the daughter free, along with all the captives, giving them many gifts. They were so touched by this generous treatment that the entire tribe, including its chief ʿAdi, accepted Islam.

After the expedition of Tabūk, the Prophet sent a portion of the withdrawing army under the command of Khālid ibn al-Walīd to Dumat[1] al-Jandal, an area located seven stages between Medīna and Damascus, which was inhabited by Banū Kinānah and was ruled by Ukaydar al-Kindi, then Christian, to invite the latter to Islam. Ukaydar (or Ukaidar) accepted Islam, whereas John, Christine prince of nearby Ailah, preferred to maintain his faith and pay a tribute.

PAGANS FORBIDDEN FROM ENTERING THE VICINITY OF THE KAʿBA (630 A.D.)

Towards the end of the year, an order was issued prohibiting non-believers from entering the Kaʿba or performing idolatrous rites and degrading ceremonies of their cults within its sacred precincts.

It is recorded that first Abū Bakr was sent with Chapter Al-Baraʿāh

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[1]According to Yaqūt al-Ḥamawi's *Muʿjam al-Buldān*, it was named so after Dumah son of Ishmael son of Abraham. See p. 554, Vol. 2 of *Muʿjam al-Buldān* for more details.

to proclaim it before the Pagans. But Gabriel said to the Prophet, "Except for the person who is from your own family, nobody can ably preach it." So he called ᶜAli and charged him with the duty of preaching the relevant *āyāt* of Al-Barā'ah. Abū Bakr, therefore, returned to the Prophet and asked him, "O Messenger of Allāh! Did you receive any decree from Allāh against me?" The Prophet replied by saying, "No, but the Lord ordered that either I or someone from my own house should preach it."

In the month of Thul-Qiᶜda of he same year, ᶜAbdullāh ibn Ubayy, head of the hypocrites died.

In the next month, Thul-Ḥijjah, the time of the pilgrimage, the following proclamation was read out by ᶜAli: "No idolater shall after this year perform the pilgrimage; no one shall circle (the Kaᶜba) naked. Whoever has a treaty with the Prophet, it shall continue to be binding till its termination. As for all others, four months are allowed to everyone to return to his territory. Thereafter, there will be no obligation on the Prophet except towards those with whom treaties have been concluded."

MUBAHILAH (630 A.D.)

There is no room here to trace how Christianity was disseminated in Nejrān; suffices to say that the Ethiopian invasion of southern Arabia introduced Christianity there for the first time. The incident of Abraha and his elephant demonstrates the fact that they were quite fanatical in their religious fervor.

In 630 A.D., prophet Muḥammed sent a letter to Nejrān's bishop the contents of which are narrated by the grandson of its recipient, namely Salāmah ibn ᶜAbd Yashūᶜ ("slave of Jesus"), as follows:

> In the Name of Allāh, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, from Muḥammed, the Messenger of Allāh, to the Bishop of Nejrān and to the people of Nejrān: If you accept Islam, I shall praise on your behalf the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I invite you to worship Allāh rather than to worship the servants of Allāh, and I invite you to accept the authority of Allāh rather than the authority of His servants. But if you refuse, you will have to pay the *jizya*. And if you refuse to pay the *jizya*, then I warn you of war. *Was-Salām.*[1]

Having read this letter, the bishop was terrified. He called a man of

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[1]al-Ṭabaṭabā'i, *Al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, Vol. 3, pp. 269-270.

Nejrān named Shurhabil ibn Wadaᶜah to his presence, passed the Prophet's letter on to him to read, then asked him what he had to suggest. Shurhabil said, "Do you know of the promise which Allāh had made to Abraham with regard to the offspring of Ishmael, that they will have a prophet rising from among them, so could this man be he? I cannot pass a judgment about Prophethood, but if you ask me about anything relevant to life's matters, I can make suggestions to you." The bishop then solicited the suggestion of one man from Nejrān after another, and the answer was the same. Finally, they decided collectively to send Shurhabil ibn Wadaᶜah, Abdullāh ibn Shrhabil, and Jabbār ibn Fayz to meet the Prophet and to report to them their impressions of him. These are the same men known as the ᶜĀqib, Sayyid, and al-Ahtam, namely Abul-Hārith.

They were considered to be leaders in all affairs, and the were joined by eleven more, making their total number fourteen. When the deputations reached Medīna, they dressed themselves in silk garments, put on gold rings then went to the mosque. All of them greeted the Prophet traditionally, but the Prophet did not respond, turning his face away from them. They left the mosque and approached ᶜOthmān and ᶜAbdul-Rahmān ibn ᶜAwf complaining thus: "Your Prophet wrote us inviting us here, but when we came to him and greeted him, he neither reciprocated our greeting nor said a word to us. Now what do you advise us to do? Should we go back or wait here?" ᶜOthmān and ᶜAbdul-Rahmān ibn ᶜAwf sought ᶜAli's advice. ᶜAli said, "These people should first remove the silk clothes and gold rings. Then they should go and see the Prophet." When they did as they were advised, the Prophet responded to their greetings and said, "By the Lord Who has appointed me as His own Messenger, when they first came to me, they were accompanied by Satan." Thereafter, the Prophet preached to them and invited them to accept Islam. They asked him: "What is your opinion about Jesus?" The Prophet said, "You may rest today in this city and, after being refreshed, you will receive the reply to all your questions from me."

On the next day, the Prophet recited to them these Qur'ānic verses:

> *Surely the likeness of ᶜIsa (Jesus) is with Allāh as the likeness of Adam: He created him from dust then said to him, `Be', and he was. The truth is from your Lord, so you should not be of those who doubt (it).*
> (Qur'ān, 3:59-60)

They did not accept the words of the Lord and insisted on their own

belief. Then the following verse was revealed:

> *But whoever disputes with you in this matter after what has come to you of the knowledge, say: Come! Let us call our sons and your sons, and your women and our women, and ourselves and yourselves, then let us pray earnestly and bring about the curse of Allāh on the liars.*
> (Qur'ān, 3:61)

They sought a day's respite and privately solicited ᶜAqab's advice. He said, "By God! You know that Muḥammed is the Messenger of the Lord and that he has given a clear and appreciable verdict. Do not enter into a maledictory trial with him or else you should be destroyed. If you wish to remain adhering to your religion, accept to pay the *jizya* and make a pact." On the next day, therefore, they came out on one side and on the other the Prophet came out of his house carrying Husain in his arms as Ḥasan was walking by his side holding his finger. Behind him was Fāṭima and behind her ᶜAli. Praised be to Allāh! What a time it was! What an atmosphere! How good a witness and how glorious the witnessed!

In short, the Prophet confronted the Christian delegates and said to Ḥasan, Husain, Fāṭima and ᶜAli: "When I curse them, you say 'Āmeen' together." When the Christians saw the five holy Purified ones, they were awe-stricken. Abul-Hārith, who was their wisest, said, "My people! At this moment, we are looking at such personalities that if they pray to God, they can move mountains. Abstain from this maledictory conflict (*Mubāhilah*[1]) or else you should be destroyed and no Christian will remain on the face of the earth." They pleaded to the Prophet thus: "O Abul-Qāsim! We shall not have a malediction with you." The Prophet invited them to accept Islam. They declined again and said that they were prepared for a treaty that they would present every year two thousand pieces of garments costing 40 dirhams each. According to another account, it is said that they also agreed to give 30 horses, 30 camels, 30 coats of mail and 30 spears every year. Thus, a settlement was made.

When the Christians of Najrān declined to resort to a maledictory conflict against the Prophet, Muḥammed said, "By the Lord Who has appointed me His Messenger in truth, had they chosen the malediction,

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[1]The word "mubāhilah" means: a challenge to testify with the invocation (*ibtihāl*) that the Almighty curse the liar.

there would have been a shower of fire upon them in this very field." Says Jābir, "The verse (Chap. 3, verse 61) was revealed in reference to this contest. In this verse, the word "selves" refers to the Prophet and ᶜAli; the word "sons" refers to Ḥasan and Ḥusain, and the word "women" refers to Fātima."

In Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh*, it is stated that during the 10th year of Hijra, the Prophet sent ᶜAli to Yemen. Prior to that, he had sent Khālid ibn al-Walīd in order to call the people of Yemen to Islam, but nobody accepted Islam. Then the Prophet sent ᶜAli and authorized him that he might, if he so desired, dismiss Khālid or anyone else from his party. So, ᶜAli went to Yemen and read the Prophet's statement to the people there. As a result, in one day, all members of the clan of Hamadān were converted to Islam. ᶜAli informed the Prophet of this success whereupon the Prophet said, "Peace be upon the Hamdānites!" Thereafter, all Yemenites entered into the folds of Islam. ᶜAli again informed the Prophet of the progress which he had made. The Prophet was so overjoyed, he offered an *sajda* (prostration) to thank Allāh.

During this year, the Prophet deputed ᶜAli to go to receive the *jizya* from the Najrānites. ᶜAli obeyed the orders and joined the Prophet only during the Farewell Pilgrimage. It was on the 25th of Thul-Qiᶜdah/February 25, 632 A.D. that the Prophet left Medīna for *ḥajj*.

THE FAREWELL PILGRIMAGE (631 A.D.)

In this year (10 A.H./632 A.D.), the Prophet performed his last pilgrimage. During his journey back, he stopped at Ghadīr Khum.

Al-Nasā'ī in *Kitābul Khasā'is* narrates a tradition from Zayd ibn al-Arqam on the authority of Abū al-Ṭufail which runs thus: "Returning from the Farewell Pilgrimage, the Prophet camped at Ghadīr Khum. He ordered a pulpit to be made for him. Once the pulpit had been constructed, he graced it and said, "I have been called back by the Lord, and I have submitted to His orders. Now I leave among you two valuable things, one of them is the Qur'ān and the other is my progeny. These shall not separate from each other till they meet me together at the Pool of Kawthar in Heaven; therefore, be careful and guard yourselves in your dealings with the Qur'ān and with my progeny after me." Then the Prophet added, "Hearken! Allāh is my Master, and I am the master of the believers." Then he raised ᶜAli's hand and said, "ᶜAli is the Master of whoever accepts me as his master. O Lord! Befriend whoever befriends ᶜAli and alienate Yourself from whoever alienates ᶜAli!" Abū al-Ṭufail

says, "When I heard this tradition, I inquired from Zayd ibn al-Arqam: `Did you hear the Prophet saying these words?' Zayd ibn al-Arqam said, `Not only did I but all those who surrounded the pulpit (did so). They had seen with their own eyes that the Prophet was speaking those words, and they heard them with their own ears."

According to another tradition quoted by al-Nasā'i, the Prophet stood up and, having praised the Lord and enumerated His bounties, he asked the gathering, "My people! Do you not know that I have more authority over you than you yourselves have?" All of them replied, "Yes, we bear witness to the fact that you have more authority over us than we have ourselves." Then the Prophet held ᶜAli by the hand and said, "ᶜAli is the Master of anyone whose master I am." This incident took place on the 18th of Thul-Ḥijjah, 10 A.H./March 19, 632 A.D.

Skeptics who have any doubt about this momentous event in the Islamic history are advised to review *Al-Ghadīr*, an eleven-volume Arabic encyclopedia compiled by Ḥasan al-Amīn which is dedicated in its entirety to documenting all the details of this incident. It contains the names of a large number of eye witnesses from among the *ṣaḥābah* who had witnessed the event and what happened to those who did not honour their pledge, which they swore in the presence of the Prophet, to accept ᶜAli as the successor to the Prophet. It also contains thousands of poetry lines composed on the occasion, including a poem composed there and then by the Prophet's poet Ḥassān ibn Thābit. Needless to say, the text of this encyclopedia is in Arabic. Only Shīᶜa Muslims now celebrate ᶜĪd al-Ghadīr every year in memory of that incident... They have been doing so since 12 A.H./633 A.H.

PROPHET'S ILLNESS AND USĀMAH'S EXPEDITION (632 A.D.)

In the *Tārīkh* book of Abū al-Fidā', it is stated that "After his return from the Farewell Pilgrimage, the Prophet resided in Medīna till the close of the 10th year of Hijra. In Muḥarram of 11 A.H./April 632 A.D., the Prophet fell ill. Then he called all his wives at the residence of Maimūna, Mother of the Faithful, where he was staying at that time, requesting them to permit him to remain at the residence of any one particular wife from among them. All of them allowed him to stay during the period of his illness at ᶜĀyisha's."

Ibn al-Wardi writes in his history work that during his illness, the Prophet commissioned an army to be led by Usāmah son of the late Zayd

ibn Hārithah to march to Mu'ta in order to avenge the death of his father. The Prophet insisted upon its immediate departure.

On the next day, in spite of his serious condition, the Prophet personally prepared a flag and handed it over to Usāmah saying, "Go in the Name of Allāh and fight the infidels in His Name." Usāmah went out and handed over the standard to Buraidah ibn al-Khusaib whom he appointed as the army's standard-bearer. Having left Medīna, he stopped at a village named Jurf which is close to Medīna and the army gathered there. The Prophet had also ordered that barring ʿAli, all other principal Immigrants and Helpers, including Abū Bakr, ʿOmar, ʿOthmān, Saʿd ibn Abū Waqqāṣ, Abū ʿObaydah ibn al-Jarrāh and others, should accompany Usāmah. Some companions felt insulted at the Prophet's appointing a son of a freed slave to lead the senior Immigrants and Helpers, so they started grumbling and criticizing. When the news reached the Prophet, he felt dismayed. Despite his pain of fever and headache, he angrily came out of his residence, mounted the pulpit and declared:

> O people! What is this you are saying on Usāmah's appointment as the commander of the army? You talked in a similar manner when Usāmah's father was commissioned to lead the army in the battle of Mu'ta. By Allāh, Usāmah deserves to be a commander and his father also deserved the leadership of the army.

Shahristāni, in his book *Kitābul Milal wan Niḥal,* and Nawwāb Siddīq Ḥasan Khan in his book *Ḥujajul Karāmah,* state that the Prophet ordered his companions thus: "Make haste in joining Usāmah's legion. May Allāh curse whoever lags behind Usāmah's army."

In *Madārijun-Nubuwwah,* the following is stated: "Then, in accordance with the orders of the Prophet, Usāmah went to the camp and ordered the army to march. When he was about to mount his steed, his mother informed him that the Prophet was in the agony of death. Receiving this news, Usāmah and other companions went back. Abū Bakr and ʿOmar were still in Medīna; they did not join the army..."

DEATH AND BURIAL (632 A.D.)

In Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥ*, there is a famous tradition narrated by Ibn ʿAbbās saying:

> Three days before the Prophet's death, ʿOmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb and other companions were present by his side. The Prophet said, "Now let me

write something for you whereby you shall not go astray after me." ᶜOmar said, "The Prophet is overcome by illness; you have the Qur'ān, the Book of Allāh, which is sufficient for us." ᶜOmar's statement caused a furor among those present. Some were saying that the Prophet's command should be obeyed so that he might write whatever he desired to write for their guidance. Others sided with ᶜOmar. When the tension and uproar intensified, the Prophet said, "Get away from me!" Therefore, Ibn ᶜAbbās used to say, "It was a calamity, an absolutely great calamity, that the conflict of opinion and noise made by the people came in the way of the Prophet's writing a will and, because of it, the Prophet could not leave behind what he wanted to put on paper."

Saᶜeed ibn Jubayr's narrative is thus recorded in Bukhāri's *Ṣaḥīḥ*:

Ibn ᶜAbbās said, "What a miserable day it was that Thursday!," and he wept so bitterly that the pebbles lying there became wet with his tears. Then he continued, "On a Thursday, the Prophet's sickness intensified. He said, `Get me the things to write with so that I may write something by which you may never be misguided after me.' People differed and quarreled over the matter, although quarreling in the presence of the Prophet was unseemly. People said that the Prophet was talking in delirium. The Prophet cried out, `Go away from me! I am more sound than you are.'"

It is stated in *Rawḍatul-aḥbāb* that the Prophet said to Fāṭima, "Bring your sons to me." Fāṭima brought Ḥasan and Ḥusain to the Prophet. Both of them greeted the Prophet, sat by his side and wept at witnessing the agony of the Prophet in such a manner that the people who saw them weeping could not hold their tears. Ḥasan rested his face upon the Prophet's face and Ḥusain rested his head upon the Prophet's chest. The Prophet opened his eyes and kissed his grandsons lovingly, enjoining the people to love and respect them." In another tradition, it is stated that the companions who were present there, having seen Ḥasan and Ḥusain weep, wept so loudly that the Prophet himself could not hold his tears at their grief. Then he said, "Call my beloved brother ᶜAli to me." ᶜAli came in and sat near the head of the Prophet. When the Prophet raised his head, ᶜAli moved to the side and, holding the Prophet's head, he rested it on his own lap. The Prophet then said, "O ᶜAli! I have taken a certain amount from so-and-so Jew for the expenditure on Usāmah's army. See that you repay it. And, O ᶜAli! You will be the first person to reach me at the heavenly reservoir of al-Kawthar. You will also be given a lot of trouble

after my death. You should bear it patiently, and when you see that the people prefer the lust of this world, you should prefer the hereafter."

The following is quoted in *Khaṣā'is* of Nasā'i from Umm Salamah: "By Allāh, the closest person [to the Prophet] at the time of the Prophet's death was ᶜAlī. Early on the morning of the day when he was going to die, the Prophet called ᶜAli who had been sent out on an errand. He asked for ᶜAli three times before his return. ᶜAli, however, came before sunrise. So, thinking that the Prophet needed some privacy with ᶜAli, we came out. I was the last to be out; therefore, I sat closer to the door than the other women. I saw that ᶜAli lowered his head towards the Prophet and the Prophet kept whispering into his ears (for sometime). ᶜAli, therefore, is the only person who was near the Prophet till the last."

Al-Ḥākim, moreover, remarks in his *Mustadrak* that the Prophet kept confiding in ᶜAli till the time of his death. Then he breathed his last."

Ibn al-Wardi points out that the persons who were responsible for giving the Prophet his funeral bath were: ᶜAli, ᶜAbbās, Fadl, Quthām, Usāmah and Shaqrān. ᶜAbbās, Fadl and Quthām turned the body. Usāmah and Shaqrān poured water, and ᶜAli washed the body.

Tārīkh al-Khamīs adds the following: "ᶜAbbās, Fadl and Quthām turned the body from one side to the other as Usāmah and Shaqrān poured water over it. All of them were blind-folded."

Ibn Saᶜd narrates the following in his *Ṭabaqāt:* "ᶜAli narrated that the Prophet had so enjoined that if anyone except himself (ᶜAli) had given him the funeral bath, he would have gone blind."

ᶜAbdul-Barr, in his book *Al-Istiᶜāb,* quotes ᶜAbdullāh ibn ᶜAbbās as saying, "ᶜAli had four exceptional honours to his credit which none of us had: 1) Of all the Arabs and non-Arabs, he was the first to have the distinction of saying prayers with the Prophet. 2) In all the battles in which he participated, he alone held the Prophet's banner in his hand. 3) When people fled from the battle-fields (at Uḥud), leaving the Prophet alone, ᶜAli ibn Abū Ṭālib stood firmly by the Prophet's side. 4) ᶜAli is the only person who gave the Prophet his funeral bath and lowered him in his grave."

Both Abū al-Fidā" and Ibn al-Wardi indicate that the Prophet died on Monday and was buried the next day, i.e. Tuesday. And in one tradition, it is said that he was buried in the night between Tuesday and Wednesday. This appears to be more factual. But according to some others, he was not buried for three days after his death.

In *Tārīkh-al-Khamīs*, however, it is mentioned that Muḥammed ibn

Ishaq stated the following: "The Prophet died on Monday and was buried on the night of Wednesday."

Estimating his age, Abū al-Fidā" writes: "Although there is a difference of opinion about the Prophet's age, yet calculated from famous traditions, he appears to have lived for 63 years."

The Prophet departed from this world on the 28th of Safar, 11 A.H./May 28, 632 A.D.

Thus ended the life of the Final Prophet sent "As a witness and a bringer of glad tidings, a warner and a summoner to Allāh by His permission, and a lamp that gives light" (Qur'ān, 33:45-46), the one who was sent "As a mercy and blessing to mankind" (Qur'ān, 21:10).

He left the temporal world, but the message he brought to mankind is eternal.

> *Now has come to you light from Allāh and a clear book whereby Allāh guides him who seeks His pleasure to the paths of peace. He brings them out of the darkness into the light by His decree and guides them to a straight path.* (Qur'ān, 5:16)

> *A Book which We have revealed to you (O Muhammed!) so that you may thereby bring forth mankind from darkness to the light, by the permission of their Lord, to the path of Him, the One Exalted in power, the One worthy of all praise.*
> (Qur'ān, 14:2)

> *O people! There has come to you an admonition from your Lord which is a healing for what is in the breasts, and a guidance and mercy for the believers.*
> (Qur'ān, 10:57)

> *Accept what the Messenger gives you and stay away from whatever he forbids you.*
> (Qur'ān, 59:7)

MARRIAGES OF THE PROPHET

When the Prophet passed away, he left nine wives behind. This has become a main target of spiteful Christian and Jewish writers, especially the latter and those influenced by them. They say that plurality of marriages (polygamy) in itself points to avidity and to yielding to lust and desire, and the Prophet was not content with four wives which had been allowed to his *umma* but exceeded even that limit and married nine

instead.

It is necessary to point out that this is not such a simple matter to be dismissed by one saying that he was inordinately fond of women, so much so that he married nine wives. The fact is that he had married each one of his wives for some particular reason due to particular circumstances.

His first marriage was with Khadīja. He lived with her alone for twenty-five years. It was the prime time of his youth and constitutes two-thirds of his marriage life. We have written about her on the preceding pages.

Then he married Sawdah bint Zamᶜah whose husband had expired during the second migration to Abyssinia. Sawdah was a believing lady who had migrated on account of her faith. Her father and brother were among the most bitter enemies of Islam. If she were left to return to them, they would have tortured her, as they were doing with other believing men and women, oppressing and killing them, forcing them to renounce their faith.

At the same time, he married ᶜĀyisha bint Abū Bakr, who was then a six-year[1] old child. She came to the Prophet's house some time after the migration to Medīna.

He married Zainab bint Khuzāymah whose husband ᶜAbdullāh ibn Jaḥsh was killed during the Battle of Uḥud. She was a very virtuous woman even during the time of *jāhiliyya*. She used to be called "ummul-masākīn," mother of the destitutes, due to her generosity to the indigent and the poor. Seeing that by losing her husband she had none to provide for her, the Prophet married her in order to safeguard her dignity.

When he migrated to Medīna, the Prophet began spreading the word of Allāh. Thereafter, he married women who were all either widows or divorcees, old or middle-aged. He married Ṣafiyya daughter of Ḥuyayy ibn al-Akhṭab, as indicated above, who was killed during the Battle of Khaybar. Her brother was also killed in the same battle. She was a lady of high status and prestige, and when the Prophet saw that she was about to be sold as a slave, he proposed to her, as a way to save her from the degradation of slavery, and she accepted his marriage proposal. Her story is almost similar to that of Juwayriyya, whose real name was Barra

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[1]This is some people's viewpoint which is contested by many others who say that she was much older than that. In sunny Arabia, maturity age may be as early as 8.

daughter of al-Hārith, head of Banū al-Mustaliq, narrated below.

This continued for about eight years, that is, till 8 A.H./629 A.D. It was only then that he was prohibited by the Almighty from marrying any woman besides those whom he had already married. Obviously, these marriages cannot be explained by his love for women because both his early life and the later period contradict such an assumption.

Just look at a man with a passion for women who is infatuated with a casual desire, enamored by female companionship, with a sensual lust for them. You will find him attracted to their adornment, spending his time in pursuit of beauty, infatuated with youth, tender age, and fresh complexion. But these qualities are conspicuously absent in the Prophet's marriage life. He married widows after having married a virgin, old-aged ladies after having married young ladies. Then he offered his wives a choice to give them a good provision and allow them to depart gracefully, that is, divorce them if they desired this world and its adornment. Alternatively, they should renounce the world and abstain from adornments and embellishments if they desired Allāh and His Prophet and the everlasting abode. Look at this verse of the Qur'ān:

> *O Prophet! Say to your wives: If you desire this world's life and its adornment, then come, I will give you a provision and allow you to depart a graceful departure. And if you desire Allāh and His Messenger and the latter abode, then surely Allāh has prepared for the doers of good from among you a mighty reward.*
> (Qur'ān, 33:28-29)

Is this the attitude of a man infatuated with lust and desire?! The fact is that we will have to look for reasons other than lust and avidity for his plurality of wives:

(a) He had married many of them in order to give them protection and safeguard their dignity. It was hoped that the Muslims would follow his example and provide protection to aged women, widows and their orphaned children.

Sawdah bint Zamᶜah's marriage comes into this category.

Zainab bint Khuzāymah's husband, ᶜAbdullāh ibn Jahsh (a cousin of the Prophet), was martyred during the battle of Uhud (as stated above). This was the second time she became a widow with many orphans. She was one of the most generous ladies even in the era of ignorance, so much so that she was called *ummul-masākīn*, "mother of the destitute." Now she was facing hard times. The Prophet, by marrying her, preserved

her prestige and dignity. She passed away during the Prophet's life-time. Year of marriage: 3 A.H./625 A.D.

The Prophet married Umm Salamah, Hind, who was wife of ʿAbdullāh Abū Salamah (father of Salamah), son of the Prophet's aunt as well as his foster brother. She and her husband were among the first to migrate to Ethiopia, an ascetic and virtuous lady, a very pious one. She had renounced worldly pleasures and was highly distinguished for her wisdom. Her husband died, leaving her an old widow with many orphans for whom she could not provide; so, the Prophet married her in order to maintain her prestige and look after her orphans who were, of course, his own relatives. Year of marriage: 4 A.H./626 A.D.

Hafsah daughter of ʿOmar ibn al-Khattāb was married to him after her husband Khunays ibn Huthayfah was martyred during the battle of Badr. Year of marriage: 4 A.H./626 A.D.

(b) To emancipate slaves: His marriage with Juwayriyya, whose name was Barra daughter of al-Hārith (chief of the Jewish tribe of Banū al-Mustaliq) was performed in 5 A.H./626 - 627 A.D. after the battle of Banū al-Mustaliq. The Muslims had arrested two hundred of their families. Juwayriyya was a Jewish widow, a lady of prestige, and the Prophet married her after emancipating[1] her. The Muslims said: These are now the relatives of the Messenger of Allāh by marriage; they should not be held captive. So they freed all of them. Impressed by this nobility, the whole tribe of Banū al-Mustaliq entered into the folds of Islam. It was a very large tribe, and this generosity of the Muslims as well as the conversion of that tribe had a great impact throughout Arabia.

(c) To forge friendly relations: Some marriages were contracted in the hope of establishing friendly ties with some tribes in order to blunt their enmity towards Islam.

Umm Habībah, namely Ramla daughter of Abū Sufyān, was married to ʿObaydullāh ibn Jahsh and had migrated to Abyssinia in the second migration. While there, ʿObaydullāh converted to Christianity, but she remained steadfastly on Islam and separated from him. Her father, Abū Sufyān, was in those days raising one army after another in order to annihilate the Muslims. The Prophet married her and afforded protection to her although the hope of any change in Abū Sufyān's attitude did not

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[1]Captives were regarded in those days as slaves. They were either ransomed or sold in the slave market. Their captors had the right to kill them if they so desired.

materialize.

Ṣafiyyah was the daughter of Ḥuyaiy ibn Akhtab, (Jewish) chief of Banū an-Naḍīr. Her husband was killed in the battle of Khaybar, and her father sided with Banū Qurayẓah against the Prophet. She was among the captives of Khaybar. The Prophet chose her for himself and married her after emancipating her in 7 A.H./628 A.D. This marriage protected her from humiliation and established a friendly link with the Jews.

(d) To establish and implement important laws: The case of Zainab bint Jaḥsh is the only example. She was a cousin of the Prophet (daughter of his paternal aunt, and sister of ᶜAbdullāh ibn Jaḥsh, the first husband of Zainab bint Khuzāymah). She was a widow. Islam had annulled class differences, declaring that a family's tribe, wealth, or social status are not the criteria of distinction. Every Muslim is equal. While announcing it, the Prophet, in the same gathering, gave his three relative ladies in marriage to persons of "low" birth or status. It was done in order to practically demonstrate that up to that moment, this concept of equality was only theoretical. Among them, Zainab bint Jahsh was given in marriage to Zayd ibn Ḥārithah, an Arab slave whom the Prophet had freed and adopted as a son. People called him Zayd ibn Muhammed. This marriage soon turned sour. Zainab could not overlook that she was a granddaughter of ᶜAbdul-Muttalib, and that Zayd was an ex-slave. No matter how much the Prophet advised them, she did not change her behaviour, so finally Zayd divorced her.

In the midst of the continuing social reforms, the Qur'ān had declared that adoption was not recognized in Islam, that the sons should be affiliated to their biological fathers. Allāh says:

> *Allāh has not made for any man two hearts in his breast, nor has He made your wives whom you declare (to be your mothers) as your (real) mothers, nor has He made those whom you call (as your sons) your (real) sons. These are (mere) words of your mouths, and Allāh speaks the truth and He guides to the (right) way. Call them after their fathers; this is more just with Allāh, but if you do not know their fathers, then they are your brethren in faith and your friends.*
> (Qur'ān, 33:4-5)

After this admonition, people started calling him "Zayd ibn Ḥārithah". But there was a need to put this new system in effect in such a way that would leave no room for doubt or ambiguity. Allāh, therefore, ordered the Prophet to marry Zainab bint Jaḥsh, the divorcee of Zayd ibn Ḥārithah.

The Qur'ān explains:

> *.... But when Zayd had concluded his concern with her (i.e. divorced her) We joined her in wedlock as your wife so that there should be no difficulty for the believers concerning the wives of their adopted sons when they have concluded their concerns with them, and the command of Allāh shall be carried out.*
> (Qur'ān, 33:37)

In this manner, both marriages of Zainab bint Jaḥsh served to enforce two very important social ethics. Some non-Muslim writers have claimed that the Prophet had fallen in love with Zainab's beauty and that this is why Zayd divorced her. Such writers are blind to the fact that Zainab at that time was in her fifties. Why did not Muhammed fall in love with her when she was still a maiden and he himself was young?! Consider this question especially in view of the fact that Zainab was a close relative of the Prophet, and that there was no system of *ḥijāb* at that time, and, in any case, relatives usually know about each other's beauty or ugliness.

One of his wives was Maymūna, whose real name was Barra bint al-Hārith al-Hilaliyyah. When her second husband died in 7 A.H./628 A.D., she came to the Prophet and "gifted" herself to him if he would accept her. She only desired the honour of being called the wife of the Prophet. The Prophet waited for the divine guidance in her regard. Permission was granted to him from his Lord as we read in verse 33:50 of the Holy Qur'ān which, *inter alia*, says:

> *O Prophet! Certainly we have made lawful to you... a believing woman if she gifts herself to the Prophet; if the Prophet desires to marry her, (it is) especially for thee (O Prophet!) rather than for the rest of the believers.*

Thus do we see that each of these marriages had some solid reasons behind it; passion and lust were not among them.

Surely the Prophet married more than four wives, whereas all other Muslims are not permitted to do so, simply because he was not an ordinary person; he was above being ordinary. His share of responsibility was certainly greater than anyone else's, so his priviliges and prerogatives were likewise greater than anyone else's. Try to learn about a type of fast which was solely observed by prophet Muhammed rather than by anyone else; it is called *ṣawm al-wiṣāl*, so that you know that what applies to him

does not apply to any other believer. How many wives did prophet Solomon marry?! This question is directed to the same prejudiced writers who assault the Prophet of Islam. May the Almighty strengthen the Muslim *umma* so that it can raise the banner of Islam high in this century and in every century, *Allāhomma Āmeen*. Most of those who attack Islam and besmear its holy name, in fact, are those who call themselves Jews as well as those who are brainwashed by their Zionist propaganda. Most of these reside in the West, especially here in the U.S.

QUR'ĀN: THE GREATEST MIRACLE

Linguistically, a "miracle" is the inability, incapability, or inimitability. One who is capable of effecting something which nobody else can effect is the doer of a miracle. None other than Allāh Almighty is capable of doing so. He, and only He, is the One Who decrees, Who manifests His might over others, including, of course, the natural phenomena and the cosmos at large. A miracle, hence, is something which others deem as extra-ordinary and it challenges them to duplicate it, to imitate it. A miracle is something that challenges what is already established, proving what is out of the ordinary, violating the rules of normalcy.

Consider the miracles of the *isrā'* (the night journey from Mecca to Jerusalem) and *mi'rāj* (ascension to the heavens). It is one of the most glorious of all miracles, one which only Muhammed enoyed, becoming the only human being ever to be raised so high. Even arch-angel Gabriel, upon reaching the farthest lote-tree, could not advance when Muhammed asked him to. "If I advance, I will be burnt [*ahtariq*]; if you advance, you will be able to penetrate [*takhtariq*, pierce through] where nobody else has ever gone." The light of the Almighty, Praised be His Name and Glorified, in that spot was so intense that even the greatest of His angels, namely Gabriel, could not withstand it. How could the Messenger of Allāh travel, all alone and during part of the evening, the lengthy distance from Mecca to Jerusalem without any means of transportation? How could he, moreover, traverse the domain of the heavens and physically go through all these barriers and distances, leaving the earth without a plane, a spaceship, or a rocket? Rather, how can this Messenger describe in minute detail all what he saw in the seven heavens in one single night, his observations, and the places he reached? Is there any human being who can refute his description or contest his statements, or falsify what he brought? Actually, even the spaceship launched nowadays to relatively limited distances, compared to the distance the Messenger of Allāh had

reached when he went through the seven heavenly strata, are liable to develop technical malfunctions which sometimes force them to postpone their launch.

The Holy Qur'ān remains the eternal miracle of our prophet Muḥammed, one whereby he challenged the jinns and mankind to produce a book like it, or a chapter, or even ten fabricated "verses." This happened when just about everyone was a genius in mastering the language. Yet none was able to face this challenge; so, the Arabs resorted to fighting the prophet once, and once to offering him position and wealth.

The Holy Qur'ān is a miracle in the full sense of the word:

> *And they say: Why are no Signs (miracles) sent down upon him from His Lord? Say: The Signs are only With Allāh, and I am only a plain warner. Is it not enough for them that We have revealed to you the Book which is recited to them? Most surely there is mercy in this and a reminder for people who believe.*
> (Qur'ān, 29:50-51)

The Holy Qur'ān was the evident miracle which sufficed all mankind as proof testifying to the truth of the message brought by Muḥammed. Every syllable in it is a miracle by itself: "Say: If men and jinns should join (forces) together in order to bring the like of this Qur'ān, they will never be able to bring the like thereof, even if some of them were to aid the others. And certainly We have explained for men in this Qur'ān every kind of similitude, but most men do not consent to aught but denying" (Qur'ān, 17:88-89).

No human being can ever be acquainted with all the knowledge embedded in the Holy Qur'ān, for it is the speech of the Almighty, the Praised and the Glorified One, Who has said, "Say: If the sea were ink for the words of my Lord, the sea would surely be consumed before the words of my Lord are exhausted even if We were to bring the like of it and add thereto" (Qur'ān, 18:109).

There are miracles in the Holy Qur'ān which are continuous, perpetual, eternal, ever present, impressing one generation after another: each generation will by itself discover the miracles of this Book and may come to know that the miracles of the Holy Qur'ān never end, nor will its wonders.

All the miracles which violated the laws of nature and whereby Allāh strengthened His messengers and prophets had taken place within the

sphere of the earth, and they are now no more. But the Almighty revealed to this messenger, Muhammed, the most enduring of all miracles, one that will always shine through each and ever age and time, thus granting him the very uppermost kingdom of the heavens. Other heavenly books have been distorted, altered, tampered with, yet nobody can ever attribute the same to the Holy Qur'ān. This by itself is indeed a miracle.

Allāh Almighty has said in the Holy Qur'ān, "We will soon show them Our Signs in the universe and in their own selves till it becomes quite clear to them that it is the truth" (Qur'ān, 41:53). Its challenge, and the fact that it tears down the veil separating us from the future, is another difficult front which the enemies of Allāh have to face. Its knowledge of the future may be divided into two time periods: 1) the present and the near future, which is not distant from the time when the Holy Qur'ān was revealed, and 2) the distant future.

Let us deal with these stages in a little more detail.

1) The Present and the Near Future

The Holy Qur'ān states,

> *Aleef, Lām, Meem. The Romans have been vanquished, in a near land, and they, after being vanquished, shall be the vanquishers, within a few years. Allāh's is the command before and after, and on that day the believes shall rejoice, with the help of Allāh; He helps whomsoever He pleases, and He is the Mighty, the Merciful.*
> (Qur'ān, 30:1-5)

Could prophet Muhammed predict the result of a war that would be waged between two giant nations of that period of time, namely the Romans and the Persians, after a few years, and can the leader predict the fate of a war and guarantee the victory of one army over another? Let us suppose that the Romans had lost the war after a few years, and that the Persians were the victors; what would the fate of the Holy Qur'ān then be? In that case, the Holy Qur'ān would have committed a grievous error if the Romans had been defeated; so, how can the Messenger of Allāh, Muhammed, put all the creed of Islam and the fate of the truthfulness of the Holy Qur'ān in jeopardy just like that, making statements like these and asserting that the Romans will defeat the Persians? But he is not the one who is doing that; it is the Almighty Who is saying so. The reader has already come across the reference to this incident in chapter dealing with Khadīja.

2) A Challenge During the Time of the Prophet

The nature of this type of challenge is that it confronted the unbelievers, including Abū Lahab, may Allāh condemn him, who disbelieved and ferociously fought the Islamic call. The Almighty, because of that, revealed the following verses about Abū Lahab:

> *Perdition overtake both the hands of Abū Lahab, and he will perish. His wealth and what he earns will not avail him. He shall soon burn in a fire that flames, and his wife (too), the bearer of (fire) fuel, upon her neck (there shall be) a halter of a strongly twisted rope.*
> (Qur'ān, 111:1-5)

When these verses were revealed, Abū Lahab was still alive, and he never retreated from his disbelief; so, what stopped him from retreating and claiming to embrace the faith? What could the consequences of a mistake like that have been? But these verses are not statements made by Prophet Muhammed; rather, they express the speech of Muhammed's Lord which suffers no alteration. The Qur'ān's facts can never be changed simply because it challenges all times till the Day of Judgment.

There is another fiery challenge which puts an end to any confusion, forcing the unbelievers to recognize the fact that there is no doubt in this speech, the speech of Allāh, the One and Only God, and that it is capable of facing the unknown regarding the past, the present, and the future. This additional challenge is embedded in the verses saying,

> *You will most certainly ride in a stratum (of sphere) over a stratum.*
> (Qur'ān, 84:19)

This statement was made more than one thousand and four hundred and fifty years ago when there were no planes, rockets, space ships, nor attempts to probe the earth's outer sphere, and when means of transportation were confined to riding the backs of animals. Allāh, Glory and Praise are His, has included in His miracle called the Holy Qur'ān many cosmic mysteries in order to give the Holy Qur'ān the chance for a continuous output till the time of the Hour, and so that each generation may derive such an output from the Holy Qur'ān. This is a cosmic verse, and "till it becomes clear to them that it is the truth" means till they realize that the Holy Qur'ān is the truth revealed by Him. Thus can we indicate that cosmic wonders will come in harmony with the verses of the Holy Qur'ān. The statement: "We will soon show them Our Signs [or miracles,

āyāt]" conveys the meaning that Allāh Almighty will reveal to us the wonders and mysteries of the universe, and these can be demonstrated to both believers and non-believers alike "till it becomes clear to them that it is the truth." This "truth" has shattered the veils of the future, testifying to the truth of the Holy Qur'ān and to its being the speech of the Lord of the Worlds.

Thus were the verses of Sūrat al Inshiqāq come to state: "By the moon when it grows full, you will most certainly ride one stratum (of sphere) after stratum. But what is the matter with them that they do not believe, and when the Qur'ān is recited to them, they do not prostrate? Nay! Those who disbelieve belie he truth. And Allāh knows best what they hide; so announce to them a painful punishment, except those who believe and do good deeds; for them there is a reward that shall never be cut off" (Qur'ān, 84:18-25).

The Almighty and the Praised One promised the humans that they would "ride one stratum (of sphere) after stratum," that is, that they would be able to traverse the universe and move from one spheric orbit to another. This is quoted from the *tafsīr* (exegesis) of Ibn Abbās in his book *Al Miqyās li Ibn Abbās*... Clearly it refers to space exploration; so, where did Prophet Muhammed obtain this knowledge from?! Airplanes have now become a reality, and they are traversing the air layers, moving humans from one layer to another, while space crafts are now moving them from one sphere, orbit stratum or pathway, to another.

Let us bring a Qur'ānic challenge, a miracle in the breach of the veils separating us from the future. This challenge speaks to those who profess knowledge. In it, the Holy Qur'ān proves to them that they do not know anything except what Allāh has enabled them to know, that none has taught them other than Allāh Almighty, the One Who knows the unknown, and that the Holy Qur'ān is His speech which falsehood cannot approach at all. In Sūrat al Dukhkhan we read,

> *Hā, Meem. I swear by the Book that makes (the truth) manifest. Surely we revealed it on a blessed night; surely We are ever warning; therein every wise affair is made distinct. A command from Us; surely We are the senders (of apostles), a mercy from your Lord; He is the Hearing, the Knowing, the Lord of the heavens and the earth and what is between them, if you believe. There is no god but He; He gives life and causes death, your Lord and the Lord of your fathers of yore. Nay! They are in doubt; they sport. Keep waiting, therefore, for the day when the heavens brings an evident smoke that shall overtake men; this is a painful punishment. Lord! Remove from us*

the punishment; surely we are believers. How shall they be reminded, and there came to them an Messenger making (the truth) clear, yet they turned their backs on him and said: One taught (by others), a madman? Surely We will remove the punishment a little (but) you will surely return (to evil). On the day when We seize (them) with a most violent seizing, surely We will then inflict retribution.
(Qur'ān, 44:1-16)

Allāh Almighty is saying here that the Holy Qur'ān is the speech of the Creator, Allāh, Glory to Him and all Praise, which He revealed to His Messenger Muḥammed in a blessed night in order to warn all people, and so that He may determine in it every decree of what will come to pass. To the skeptics who doubted the truth in the Message revealed to Muḥammed does the Lord of Dignity and Honor, the Praised One, say, through His servant and Messenger our master Muḥammed, "Keep waiting, therefore, for the day when the heavens brings an evident smoke that shall overtake men" (Qur'ān, 44:10-11). The Prophet, in a tradition dealing with the signs denoting the approach of the Day of Judgment, is quoted saying, "The first of such signs is the smoke [referred to in these verses]." He was asked what smoke it would be. He said, "It will cover the east of the earth and the west; it will remain for forty days and nights. It will affect the believer just as a cold [catarrh] affects him. As to the unbeliever, he will feel as though he is intoxicated; it [smoke] will come out of his nostrils, ears and rear ends." Imām Jʿfer al-Sādiq is quoted saying, "There will be smoke that will overwhelm both ends of the earth, causing the death of two thirds of the world population." This smoke is now said to be caused by the explosion of nuclear and hydrogen bombs and poison gases. The word "evident" in this verse means it can be easily seen and identified. It will cover all people and fill the earth. It will be, as the verse describes it, "a painful punishment." How it will punish people is explained above by the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet, that is, it will come out of the nostrils, ears and rear ends of the unbelievers, and they [two thirds of the world population] will all perish.

Just as it defied the past and the future, the Holy Qur'ān defied the present as well, putting the creation in a state of puzzlement, giving them the choice either to submit and recognize the Power of Allāh Almighty and the admission that His speech which He revealed to His servant and Messenger Muḥammed is the truth from Allāh, or to remain in their stubbornness and disbelief and renunciation of the truth and thus continue straying; the truth is veiled from their visions and hearts.

Is there another example which we can bring about the Holy Qur'ān defying the present? Yes, there is. There are many examples for these challenges in the Holy Qur'ān, challenges of our present time; this one is a challenge regarding the creation of humans. Allāh Almighty says in the Holy Qur'ān, "So let man consider what he is created of. He is created of water pouring forth, coming from between the back and the ribs. Most surely He is able to return him (to life) (Qur'ān, 86:5-8)," and He also said, "We certainly created man of an extract of clay, then We made him a small seed in a firm resting-place, then We made the seed a clot, then We made the clot a lump of flesh, then We made in the lump of flesh bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh, then We caused it to grow into another creation; so, blessed be Allāh, the best of creators (Qur'ān, 23:12-15)." Is there any description of our creation more eloquent than this one? Is there any among the creation of Allāh who can alter this sequence in our creation? Is there anyone who can change the way humans are born, and is there any human who can escape these stages? If anyone is capable of doing so, then we will say that the above is the speech of humans. But if all human beings are unable to come into this world in any way other than the one stated in these verses, then it is the speech of the Almighty, the Creator of creation, the Lord of the Worlds. So Praise be to Allāh and Exalted is He above what they describe.

Let us now quote these verses: "Every soul shall taste of death" (Qur'ān, 3:185), "Wherever you may be, death will overtake you, though you may be in lofty towers" (Qur'ān, 4:78). This by itself is a challenge Allāh Almighty includes in the Holy Qur'ān, He Who decreed death to His creation, for who among the humans can run away from death? Are these verses the speech of humans? Does this challenge end at any period of time?

Now it is time to delve into the heart of the major topic in order to prove that the Holy Qur'ān is the miracle of miracles. The above is only an introduction.

The majority of Muslim scholars are of the view that the Holy Qur'ān, in its entirety, in the rules and regulations it contains, and in its order and organization, wisdom, eloquence and clarity, and because of the legislation it contains, the news of the unseen, and due to other considerations, is, indeed, a miracle the like of which mankind is unable to produce. There are many proofs in and aspects of the miraculous nature of the Holy Qur'ān embedded in the Book itself. One such miraculous aspect is its logic and eloquence; it tells about the unseen, its

legislative miracle, its scientific miracles in their various forms such as the medical, cosmic, geographical, physical, numerical, informative and many other aspects.

Among the miraculous aspects of the Holy Qur'ān is the fact that no other book, religious or secular, has ever received as much attention as the Holy Qur'ān. Since its revelation, Muslims learned its verses and chapters by heart, taking time and effort to explain them and record what the Messenger of Allāh has commented in their regard and what other scholars of exegesis have. As time passed by, a new class of scholars of exegesis was created, and books were written by commentators. There are now books dealing with verses with a fixed meaning, and with verses whose meaning is similar, and other studies dealing with the causes of revelation, and other classifications dividing the Qur'ānic chapters into either Mecci or Medeni, and studies dealing with the arts of its recitation, and books in the methods of its reading, and others in its miraculous aspect. Books have been authored dealing with the grammar of the language of the Holy Qur'ān, others with its imagery, and yet others computing its verses and dividing its chapters and *hizbs*, the half and the quarter of the latter, in addition to books classifying which verses abrogate others and which verses are abrogated. There are linguistic studies confined to the study of the Holy Qur'ān, to its eloquence, organization, clarity of argument and the meanings of words and diction, the tribal accents in its recitation, and the virtues of its chapters and the rewards of reciting it, and the etiquette of such recitation. The attention paid to the Holy Qur'ān reached the degree that its words and letters were computed and the ratio between these words and letters, verses, and chapters, was determined. In Medīna, there is a manuscript the date of whose writing dates in the first Hijri century. It quotes a group of scholars explaining how they were computing the letters of the Holy Qur'ān using barley grains and recording their statistics in a small dissertation placed among old containers preserved till the present time. The dissertation contains the total number of the verses and letters, and the total number of characters in the Holy Qur'ān, in addition to other statistics.

All this proves the care past generations have paid the text of the Holy Qur'ān, and this is what al-Qurtubi has said, quoting Salām Abū Muḥammed al-Hamāni saying, "Scholars and those who knew the Holy Qur'ān by heart assembled, and I was among them, so we computed, and we were of the consensus that the Holy Qur'ān contains three hundred

and forty thousand, seven hundred and forty letters (340,740). Where do we reach if we divide this figure by half? We found out that half the text of the Holy Qur'ān will be marked at the word *fal yatalaṭṭaf* in chapter of the Cave, *al-Kahaf*, Chapter 18. Then we wondered where we would reach if we were to divide the text to three equal parts. We found out that the beginning of the first third ends at the end of one hundred verses of Chapter Barā'a (or Tawbah, Chapter 9), the second third of it is marked at the end of one hundred and one verses of the Poets Chapter, *al Shuʿarā'*, Chapter 26, and the last third comprises the rest of the Holy Qur'ān. Then we divided it to seven parts according to the total number of its characters, and we found out the following:

1) The first is marked by the *dāl* in "So of them is he who believes in him and of them is he who turns away...[*sadd*]" (Qur'ān, 4:55);
2) The second is marked by the *tā* in "... their deeds are null [*habiṭat*]" (Qur'ān, 7:147);
3) The third is marked by the *aleef* in "its food [*ukuluha*] and shades are perpetual" (Qur'ān, 13:35);
4) The fourth is marked by the *aleef* in "And for every nation We appointed acts of devotion [*mansakan*]" (Qur'ān, 22:34);
5) The fifth is marked by the *hā* in "And it does not behove a believing man nor a believing woman... [*mu'minah*]" (Qur'ān, 33:36);
6) The sixth is marked by the *wāw* in "... those who entertain evil thoughts about Allāh" (Qur'ān, 48:6);
7) The seventh is the remnant of the Holy Qur'ān.

The first of its quarter is the conclusion of Chapter al Anʿām, the second is in chapter al-Kahaf, the third is at the conclusion of Chapter al-Zumar, and the last is the remnant of the Holy Qur'ān.

A review of the past fourteen centuries or more during which Islam was fought with various norms of wars in which different nations on earth participated, using every possible weapon with the exception of accepting the challenge, proves that all those opponents proved their inability to face the challenge of the Holy Qur'ān. The only perfect definition of the Holy Qur'ān can be found only in the Holy Qur'ān itself, and nobody can attain such knowledge except those who are endowed with knowledge and whose breasts Allāh Almighty has expanded for such a task, enabling them to comprehend and absorb such knowledge.

The Holy Qur'ān is a miracle in everything it contains. Each of its

meanings is a miracle by itself. The venues of its meanings, that is, its expressions, are miracles, too. Its meaning when combined with the expression will provide the meaning of its diction. The diction of the Holy Qur'ān, in the way it is arranged, is a miracle among other miracles that make it the greatest miracle of all. Its words give us clear and shining details about its being a miracle. The number of times Qur'ānic words are repeated throughout the Holy Qur'ān is a miracle, too. The number of times these words are repeated harmonizes with the number of times other words, which either agree with or oppose, contrast or contradict them, are repeated. The number of times its words are repeated carries a miracle by itself. Also, the characters of the Holy Qur'ān, when repeated a certain number of times, contains a dazzling miracle, making its miracle not only by its sacred verses and the miraculous meanings they contain, the principles and bases of equity they carry, and the knowledge of the unknown, but the very number of times by itself. The number of times a particular character is repeated is also miraculous.

The phenomenon of numerical inimitability of the Holy Qur'ān is not something newly discovered; rather, it carries a historical extension. Researchers studying the knowledge of the Holy Qur'ān had already been keen to it. They observed the fact that when certain characters or words are repeated a certain number of times, they will then carry a particular message. They also tried to discover the secret of the relationship between those numbers and the meanings of words, for the posterity had already noticed the single characters at the beginning of some chapters and came to know that their repetition carried certain meanings.

Among the aspects of the miracle of numeric inimitability of the words of the Holy Qur'ān is that it contains 51,900 words, and most words start with the *hamza*, totalling 8,310, that is, 16% of its total, almost one sixth of the Holy Qur'ān. Next to it are those that start with the "qāf," numbering 4,086, that is, 8.3% of the total. Following that are words that start with the "kāf," totalling 3,878, that is, 7.5% of the total, followed by those that start with "ʿayn," numbering 3,788, that is, 7.3%. After that come those that start with the "rā," numbering 3,293, that is 6.3% of the total, followed by those that start with the "noon," totalling 2,936, that is, 5.7% of the total. Other characters follow in that order and they all end with the "thā." If we were to count all the words that start with the first of the latter characters, we would find their total to be 26,021. This means that more than half the words in the Holy Qur'ān start with one such character.

This represents a humble amount of information to help the reader to realize the knowledge which Allāh Almighty has embedded within the Holy Qur'ān, the knowledge which neither scholar nor *faqeeh*, no matter who he may be, and no matter in what period of time he lived or lives, can be familiar in all the wonders and miracles of the Holy Qur'ān. The Qur'ān's miracles shall never cease to manifest themselves till the Day of Judgment. This is not according to the decision of a human but is due to the Might of the Almighty Who has pledged saying, "We will show them Our Signs in the universe and in their own selves [and continue to do so] till it becomes quite clear to them that it is the truth" (Qur'ān, 41:53). This is the command of Allāh Almighty, and nobody can argue about His command; so, let us try to familiarize ourselves with a portion of the miracles contained in the Holy Qur'ān as much as Allāh wishes to make us acquainted.

The word "Iblīs," the one Allāh has condemned, is repeated in the text of the Holy Qur'ān eleven times; reference to seeking refuge with Allāh against him is also repeated eleven times.

The word *muṣeeba*, catastrophe, calamity, or tragedy, and its derivatives are all repeated 75 times, while the word *shukr*, thanks-giving [that is, thanking the Almighty], is repeated also 75 times. The word *dunya*, the life in this world, is repeated 115 times, while the word *ākhira*, the life hereafter, is repeated also 115 times. The word *isrāf*, extravagance, and its derivatives are all repeated 23 times, so are the words *surʿa*, haste, and its derivatives. The word *malā'ika*, angels, is repeated 88 times, so is the word *shayateen*, devils, and its derivatives. The word *sulṭān*, ruler, and its derivatives are repeated 37 times, so is the word *nifāq*, hypocrisy. The word *ḥarr*, heat, is repeated four times, so is the word *bard*, coolness or chill.

The word *ḥarb*, war, and its derivatives are all repeated six times, so is the word *asra*, captives, and its derivatives. The word *ḥayāt* and its derivatives are repeated 145 times, so is the word *mawt*, death, and its derivatives.

The verb *qālo*, they said, referring to people, is repeated 332 times, whereas the order *qul*, say, coming from the Almighty, is repeated a likewise number of times. The word *sayyi'āt*, wrong deeds, is repeated 180 times, so is the word *salihāt*, good deeds. The word *rahbah*, awe or fear, and its derivatives are all repeated eight times, so is he word *raghbah*, desire or will. The word *naf'*, profit or gain, is repeated 50 times, so is the word *fasād*, corruption. The word *nās*, people, is repeated

368 times, so is the word *rusūl*, messengers. The word *asbāt*, chiefs, is repeated 5 times, so is the word *ḥawariyyūn*, disciples.

The word *jahr*, declaration, and its derivatives are all repeated sixteen times, so is the word *ʿālaniyah*, openly, and its derivatives. The word *jazā'*, reward, and its derivatives are all repeated 117 times; the number of times the word *maghfira*, forgiveness, and its derivatives is twice that many, 234. The word *ẓalālah*, misguidance, and its derivatives are all repeated 191 times; the number of times the word *ayāt*, Signs or miracles, is 382, twice that many.

The miracles and wonders of the Holy Qur'ān are yet to be exhausted, if at all. They, in fact, shall never be exhausted till the Day of Judgment. The year, for example, is comprised of 365 days; therefore, the word *yawm*, day, is repeated exactly 365 times, while the word *shahr*, month, is repeated twelve times, and the word *saʿa*, hour, is repeated twenty-four times, signifying the total number of hours in the day.

The word *sabʿ* (seven) is connected to the word *samawāt* (heavens) either before or after it, and is repeated in the Holy Qur'ān seven times: the days of the week are seven, and so is the number of the heavens.

The verb *sajada*, as used for humans, in various tense forms, has occurred 34 times throughout the Holy Qur'ān. This number equals the number of prostrations (*sajdas*) in the five daily prayers the total number of whose *rekʿāt* is 17, and there are two *rekʿāt* per each prostration, hence the total number is 34 prostrations. References to them are as follows:

1. "And We said to the angels: prostrate (make *sajda*) to Adam...." (Qur'ān, 2:34). The number of this verse, as you see, is 34; it is the first verse of the Holy Qur'ān which makes a reference to prostrating, and its number is the same number of the total daily prostrations.
2. "Then We said to the angels: prostrate to Adam...." (Qur'ān, 7:11).
3. "When We said to the angels: prostrate...." (Qur'ān, 17:61).
4. "When We said to the angels: prostrate to Adam...." (Qur'ān, 18:50).
5. "When We said to the angels: prostrate to Adam...." (Qur'ān, 20:116).
6. "O you who believe! Bow down (make *rek'a*) and *prostrate* (make *sajda*) and adore your Lord." (Qur'ān, 22:77).
7. "And when it is said to them: prostrate to the Most Merciful, they said: And what is the Most Merciful?" (Qur'ān, 25:60).
8. "Do not prostrate to the sun nor to the moon" (Qur'ān, 41:37).
9. "So prostrate to Allāh and adore (Him)" (Qur'ān, 53:62).
10. "O Maryam! Keep obedience to your Lord and prostrate (to Him) and

bow down with those who bow" (Qur'ān, 3:43).

11. "So the angels, all of them, prostrated..." (Qur'ān, 15:30).
12. "... the angels, all of them, prostrated..." (Qur'ān, 38:73).
13. "When We said to the angels: prostrate to Adam, they prostrated, except Iblīs; he refused (to prostrate)" (Qur'ān, 2:34).
14. "So when they prostrate, let them take their position behind you" (Qur'ān, 4:102).
15. "Then We said to the angels: Prostrate to Adam, and they prostrated except Iblīs" (Qur'ān, 17:61).
16. "And when We said to the angels: Prostrate to Adam, they prostrated, except Iblīs" (Qur'ān, 17:61).
17. "And when We said to the angels: Prostrate to Adam, they prostrated except Iblīs; he was one of the jinns" (Qur'ān, 18:50).
18. "And when We said to the angels: Prostrate to Adam, they prostrated except Iblīs; he refused" (Qur'ān, 20:116).
19. "He said: I am not to prostrate to a mortal whom You have created of the essence of black mud fashioned in shape" (Qur'ān, 15:33).
20. "... except Iblīs; he said: Shall I prostrate to one whom You created out of mud?" (Qur'ān, 17:61).
21. "He said: What prohibited you from prostrating as I ordered you?" (Qur'ān, 7:12).
22. "He said: O Iblīs! What prohibits you from prostrating to what I have created with My hand?" (Qur'ān, 38:75).
23. "Do not prostrate to the sun nor to the moon, but prostrate to Allāh Who created both of them..." (Qur'ān, 41:37).
24. "They said: And what is the Most Merciful? Are we to prostrate as you order us?" (Qur'ān, 25:60).
25. "To Allāh do all those in the heavens and the earth prostrate willingly or unwillingly" (Qur'ān, 13:15).
26. "To Allāh do all those in the heavens and on earth prostrate" (Qur'ān, 16:49).
27. "Have you not seen that to Allāh do all those in the heavens and the earth prostrate?" (Qur'ān, 22:18).
28. "... that they do not prostrate to Allāh Who brings forth what is hidden in the heavens and the earth..." (Qur'ān, 27:25).
29. "They recite the Signs of Allāh during the night, and they prostrate (to Him)" (Qur'ān, 3:113).
30. "Those who are with your Lord are not too proud to worship Him, and they glorify Him, and they prostrate to Him" (Qur'ān, 7:206).

31. "I found her and her people prostrating to the sun rather than to Allāh" (Qur'ān, 27:24).
32. "And when the Qur'ān is recited to them, they do not prostrate" (Qur'ān, 84:21).
33. "And during part of the night adore Him and prostrate to Him a long (part of the) night" (Qur'ān, 76:26).
34. "Nay! Do not obey him, and prostrate, and seek nearness (to Allāh)" (Qur'ān, 96:19).

Only one single time does the verb "prostrate" apply to a non-human; it occurs in this verse: "And the stars and the trees do prostrate too" (Qur'ān, 55:6). Other than that lone verse, all verses wherein the verb "prostrate" occurs, the total number of which is 34, are applied to man.

The noun *ṣalawat* (plural of *ṣalat*) is repeated throughout the Holy Qur'ān five times only, equalling the total number of daily prayers performed at: morning, noon, after-noon, sunset, and evening. These five references are as follows:

1. "Upon those are *ṣalawāt* from your Lord and (His) Mercy" (Qur'ān, 2:157).
2. "Uphold the *ṣalawāt* and (particularly) the middle *ṣalāt*" (Qur'ān, 2:238).
3. "And he regards what he spends by way of charity as means to achieve nearness to Allāh and the *ṣalawat* of the Prophet" (Qur'ān, 9:99).
4. "Had not Allāh repelled some people through others, there would certainly have been the destruction of synagogues and churches and *ṣalawāt* [at mosques] in which the name of Allāh is remembered a great deal" (Qur'ān, 22:40).
5. "And those who safeguard their *ṣalawāt*...." (Qur'ān, 23:9).

The singular *ṣalāt* (prayers) and its derivatives combined with *qiyām* (standing up) and its derivatives are repeated 51 times. This figure equals the total number of *rekʿāt* (bowing down) in the obligatory daily prayers, seventeen all in all, plus the recommended (*nafl*) prayers, 34 all in all, as indicated above. The total number of *nafl* morning prayers is two, of the noon prayers is eight, of the after-noon prayers is eight, of the sunset prayers is four, and of the evening prayers is one. The *nafl* of the evening totals eleven *rekʿāt*. The total comes to 34 *rekʿāt* for the *nafl*; add to them

the 17 for the obligatory daily prayers, and you will come to the figure 51. These occurrences are in the following verses:

1. "And do not pray for any of them when he dies, nor should you stand by his grave" (Qur'ān, 9:84).
2. "So the angels called upon him while he was standing for his prayers at the sanctuary" (Qur'ān, 3:39).
3. "... who believe in the unseen and who stand for the prayers" (Qur'ān, 2:3).
4. "And stand for the prayers, pay *zakāt* and bow down with those who bow" (Qur'ān, 2:43).
5. "And say to the people a beautiful word, and stand for the prayers, and pay *zakāt*" (Qur'ān, 2:83).
6. "And stand for the prayers, and pay *zakāt*" (Qur'ān, 2:110).
7. "... and the beggars and for the (emancipation of) the slaves, and stand for the prayers and pay *zakāt*..." (Qur'ān, 2:177).
8. "And they stand for the prayers and they pay *zakāt*, they shall have their reward with their Lord" (Qur'ān, 2:277).
9. "Have you not seen those to whom it was said: Withhold your hands and stand for the prayers and pay *zakāt*...?" (Qur'ān, 4:77).
10. "And when you are with them and you stand for the prayers, let a group from among them stand with you too..." (Qur'ān, 4:102).
11. "And when you have finished the prayers, mention Allāh standing, sitting, and lying down on your sides" (Qur'ān, 3:103).
12. "And once you feel secure (from danger), stand for the prayers" (Qur'ān, 4:103).
13. "And when they stand for the prayers, they stand sluggishly..." (Qur'ān, 4:142).
14. "They believe in what has been revealed to you and what was revealed before you, and they stand for the prayers" (Qur'ān, 4:162).
15. "O you who believe! Once you have stood for the prayers, wash your faces..." (Qur'ān, 5:6).
16. "And if you stand for the prayers, pay *zakāt*, and believe in My messengers..." (Qur'ān, 5:12).
17. "... who stand for the prayers and pay *zakāt* even as they prostrate..." (Qur'ān, 5:55).
18. "... and stand for the prayers and fear Him; to Him, indeed, will you all be gathered" (Qur'ān, 6:72).
19. "(As for) those who hold fast by the Book and stand for the prayers,

surely We do not waste the reward of the doers of righteousness" (Qur'ān, 7:170).

20. "... who stand for the prayers, and who spend of what We provide them with..." (Qur'ān, 8:3).
21. "So if they repent and stand for the prayers and pay *zakāt*, do then release them" (Qur'ān, 9:5).
22. "If they repent and stand for the prayers and pay *zakāt*, they surely become your brethren in faith" (Qur'ān, 9:11).
23. "... and whoever believes in Allāh and in the Last Day and stands for the prayers and pays *zakāt*..." (Qur'ān, 9:18).
24. "And they stand for the prayers and pay *zakāt* and obey Allāh and His Messenger..." (Qur'ān, 9:18).
25. "And make your homes places of worship, and stand for the prayers, and give glad tidings to the believers" (Qur'ān, 10:87).
26. "And stand for the prayers in both parts of the day and in the first hours of the night..." (Qur'ān, 11:114).
27. "And those who persevered, seeking the pleasure of their Lord, and they stood for the prayers..." (Qur'ān, 13:22).
28. "Tell My servants who have believed that they should stand for the prayers..." (Qur'ān, 14:31).
29. "... Lord, so that they may stand for the prayers; therefore, make the hearts of some people yearn towards them..." (Qur'ān, 14:37).
30. "Lord! Make me (able to) stand for the prayers and my offspring too" (Qur'ān, 14:40).
31. "Stand for the prayers from the declining of the sun till the darkness of the night" (Qur'ān, 17:78).
32. "Surely I am Allāh; there is no god but I; therefore, worship Me and stand for the prayers for My remembrance" (Qur'ān, 20:14).
33. "And We revealed to them the doing of good deeds and the standing for the prayers" (Qur'ān, 21:73).
34. "And those who, when afflicted, persevere, and who stand for the prayers..." (Qur'ān, 22:35).
35. "And those who, when We establish them in the land, stand for the prayers and pay *zakāt*...." (Qur'ān, 22:41).
36. "... and stand for the prayers, and pay *zakāt*, and hold fast to Allāh; surely He is your Guardian" (Qur'ān, 22:78).
37. "... men whom neither trade nor sale distract from mentioning Allāh and the standing for the prayers...." (Qur'ān, 24:37).
38. "And stand for the prayers, and pay *zakāt*, and obey the Messenger..."

(Qur'ān, 24:56).

39. "... those who stand for the prayers and pay *zakāt*..." (Qur'ān, 27:3).
40. "Recite what has been revealed to you of the Book, and stand for the prayers" (Qur'ān, 29:45).
41. "Turning to Him, and be careful regarding (your duty to) Him, and stand for the prayers and do not be of the polytheists" (Qur'ān, 30:31).
42. "... who stand for the prayers and pay *zakāt*..." (Qur'ān, 31:4).
43. "O son! Stand for the prayers and enjoin the doing of good, and forbid the doing of evil...." (Qur'ān, 31:17).
44. "... and they stood for the prayers and paid *zakāt* and obeyed Allāh and His Messenger...." (Qur'ān, 33:33).
45. "You only warn those who fear their Lord in the unknown and who stand for the prayers" (Qur'ān, 35:18).
46. "Those who recite the Book of Allāh and who stand for the prayers..." (Qur'ān, 35:29).
47. "... and those who answered the call of their Lord and stood for the prayers..." (Qur'ān, 42:38).
48. "So when you do not do it while Allāh has turned to you (mercifully), then stand for the prayers and pay *zakāt*..." (Qur'ān, 58:13).
49. "And stand for the prayers and pay *zakāt* and lend Allāh a beautiful loan" (Qur'ān, 73:2).
50. "... being sincere to Him in obedience, upright, and they stand for the prayers" (Qur'ān, 98:5).
51. "... and take Abraham's standing place as a place for your prayers" (Qur'ān, 2:125).

All of this, by the Grace of Allāh, proves the superiority of the juristic school of thought which upholds this number of *nafl* prayers, the 34 *rekʿāt* every day and night.

Each imperative predicate *aqim* (stand for) applied to the singular, and *aqeemu* applied to the plural, has occurred in conjunction with the prayers (*ṣalat*, hence *aqim al ṣalāt* for the singular, or *aqeemu al salāt* for the plural) has occurred 17 times throughout the entire text of the Holy Qur'ān. This equals the total number of the *rekʿāt* (times of bowing down) of the daily prayers, that is, 17 *rekʿāt*. What underlines this fact is that the noun *farḍ* (obligation) and its derivatives has also occurred 17 times, equal to the total number of the *rekʿāt* of the daily prayers. The Qur'ānic verses in which reference to the prayers is made in conjunction with the

imperative predicate *aqim* or *aqeemu* are:

1. "And stand for the prayers and pay *zakāt* and bow down with those who bow down" (Qur'ān, 2:43).
2. "And say to people a beautiful saying, and stand for the prayers and pay *zakāt*" (Qur'ān, 2:83).
3. "... and stand for the prayers and pay *zakāt*" (Qur'ān, 2:110).
4. "Have you not seen those to whom it was said: Withhold your hands and stand for the prayers and pay *zakāt*...?" (Qur'ān, 4:77).
5. "... so once you feel secure (from danger), stand for the prayers" (Qur'ān, 4:103).
6. "And that you should stand for the prayers and fear Him, and He it is to Whom you shall be gathered" (Qur'ān, 6:72).
7. "... and make your homes places of worship and stand for the prayers and give glad tidings to those who believe" (Qur'ān, 10:87).
8. "And stand for the prayers in both parts of the day and in the first hours of the night..." (Qur'ān, 11:114).
9. "Stand for the prayers from the declining of the sun till the darkness of the night" (Qur'ān, 17:78).
10. "Surely I am Allāh; there is no god but I; therefore, worship Me and stand for the prayers for My remembrance" (Qur'ān, 20:14).
11. "... and stand for the prayers, and pay *zakāt*, and hold fast to Allāh; surely He is your Guardian" (Qur'ān, 22:78).
12. "And stand for the prayers, and pay *zakāt*, and obey the Messenger..." (Qur'ān, 24:56).
13. "Recite what has been revealed to you of the Book, and stand for the prayers" (Qur'ān, 29:45).
14. "Turning to Him, and be careful regarding (your duty to) Him, and stand for the prayers and do not be of the polytheists" (Qur'ān, 30:31).
15. "O son! Stand for the prayers and enjoin the doing of good, and forbid the doing of evil..." (Qur'ān, 31:17).
16. "So when you do not do it and Allāh has turned to you (mercifully), then stand for the prayers and pay *zakāt*..." (Qur'ān, 58:13).
17. "And stand for the prayers and pay *zakāt* and loan Allāh a beautiful loan" (Qur'ān, 73:2).

The word *fard* (obligation or obligatory) and its derivatives has occurred conveying the meaning of "a must" 17 times throughout the

Holy Qur'ān, equalling the number of the *rekʿāt* of the obligatory daily prayers. These are as follows:

1. "... so whoever determines the performance of the pilgrimage therein, there shall be neither intercourse nor fornication" (Qur'ān, 2:197).
2. "Most surely He Who has made the Qur'ān binding on you will bring you back to the destination" (Qur'ān, 28:85).
3. "There is no harm in the Prophet doing what Allāh has ordained for him" (Qur'ān, 33:38).
4. "Allāh has indeed sanctioned for you the expiation of your oaths, and Allāh is your Protector" (Qur'ān, 66:2).
5. "And if you divorce them before touching them and you have (already) appointed for them a portion, ..." (Qur'ān, 2:237).
6. "... then (pay them) half of what you have appointed, unless they relinquish it..." (Qur'ān, 2:237).
7. "We know what We have ordained for them concerning their wives and those whom their right hands possess..." (Qur'ān, 33:50).
8. "(This is) a chapter which We have revealed and made obligatory..." (Qur'ān, 24:1).
9. There is no blame on you if you divorce women when you have not touched them nor appointed for them a portion..." (Qur'ān, 2:236).
10. "... if you have not touched them nor appointed for them a portion..." (Qur'ān, 2:236).
11. "And if you divorce them before touching them and you have appointed for them a portion..." (Qur'ān, 2:237).
12. "... Your parents and your children, you do not know which of them is nearer to you in benefit..." (Qur'ān, 4:11).
13. "Then as to those whom you marry for enjoyment (in *mut'a*), give them their dowries as appointed..." (Qur'ān, 4:24).
14. "... and there is no blame on you about what you mutually agree upon after what is already appointed..." (Qur'ān, 4:24).
15. "... and in the way of Allāh and the wayfarer, an ordinance from Allāh, and Allāh is Knowing, Wise" (Qur'ān, 9:60).
16. "... whether there is little or plenty thereof..." (Qur'ān, 4:7).
17. "... Most certainly I will take of Your servants an appointed portion" (Qur'ān, 4:118).

The word *qaṣr* (to shorten) and its derivatives have occurred 11 times. This number equals the number of *rekʿāt* of the daily prayers when one

is embarked on a journey, the total number of which is 11. In *Lisān al ʿArab*, it is written that, "The *qaṣr* and qiṣr in something is the opposite of its being long. When something *qaṣr*s, it is *qaṣeer*, short, the opposite of long. One who makes qaṣr to the prayers is one who shortens them. *Qaṣeer* is the antithesis of *ṭaweel*, long (or tall). The verb *taqāṣara* means demonstrated shortness. When someone makes something *qaṣeer*, he shortens it. Short hair is the opposite of long hair. One who *qaṣr*s his hair, he cuts it short. In the Divine Revelation, we read, `... (some) having their heads shaved and (others) having their hair cut (*muqaṣṣireen*)' (Qur'ān, 48:27), the noun thereof is *qiṣar*. One who cuts his hair is one who eliminates a part thereof without shaving it off completely. The *qaṣr* of a building is a well known part thereof, and it is called so because prohibitives in it are made *qaṣr*, confined. Its plural is *quṣoor*. In the Divine Revelation, we read, `... and He will give you therein palaces (*quṣūr*) (Qur'ān, 25:10).' The *maqṣūra* is a spacious fortified house. `Surely it sends up sparks like *qaṣr*s' (Qur'ān, 77:32); that is, as long as a *qaṣr*, and the *qaṣr* in this verse means the tallest of date-palms or trees or buildings. One who *qaṣr*s his prayers is one who makes them short during his journey. Allāh Almighty has said, `And when you journey in the earth, there is no blame on you if you shorten (*taqṣuru*) the prayers' (Qur'ān, 4:101), that is, by praying two *rekʿāt* for each of the noon, afternoon, and evening prayers. A woman who shortens her gaze is one who does not look at anyone except her husband."

Among the matters related to daily prayers is ablution. It includes the *ghusul* and the rubbing with wet hands. The word *ghusul* with water, i.e. bathing, and its derivatives exist in the Holy Qur'ān thrice. The *ghusul* which Allāh Almighty has commanded us to repeat thrice includes: 1) washing the face, 2) washing the right hand, and 3) washing the left hand. To this do these verses refer:

1. "... wash your faces and hands as far as the elbows..." (Qur'ān, 5:6).
2. "... when you are under an obligation, perform a bath till you have washed..." (Qur'ān, 4:43).
3. "Urge with your foot; here is a cool washing-place and a drink" (Qur'ān, 38:42).

The word *mash*, to wipe or rub, occurs in three verses. This number equals the compulsory number of times of wiping during the performance of the ablution; these are: 1) wiping the head, 2) wiping the right foot,

and 3) wiping the left foot. The said verses are as follows:

1. "... betake yourselves to pure earth, then wipe your faces and hands..." (Qur'ān, 4:43).
2. "... and wipe your heads and feet to the ankles..." (Qur'ān, 5:6).
3. "... betake yourselves to pure earth and wipe your faces and hands therewith..." (Qur'ān, 5:6).

The word *mashan* (a derivative of *mash*) has occurred in this verse: "... so he began to slash their legs and necks" (Qur'ān, 38:33). The connotation of this word, however, is explained on page 4197, Vol. 6, of *Lisān al ʿArab* which states: "One who makes *mashan* is one who slashes or strikes, and it is also said that it is one who cuts. The verse that says, `... so he began to slash their legs and necks (Qur'ān, 38:33)' explains all such connotations."

Muslims agree that the number of *ulul-ʿazm* among the messengers of Allāh are five. They are: Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, peace be upon them, and of course our Prophet and beloved one Muhammed, peace and blessings of the Almighty be upon him and his holy progeny. The term *ulul-ʿazm* has occurred throughout the Holy Qur'ān five times, that is, as many times as the total number of the *ulul-ʿazm* among the messengers of Allāh. These verses are:

1. "... and if you persevere and guard yourselves (against evil), surely it is an indication of your firmness of determination" (Qur'ān, 3:186).
2. "... and bear patiently regarding that which befalls you; surely these acts require courage (and determination)" (Qur'ān, 31:17).
3. "And whoever is patient and forgiving, these most surely are acts of courage (and determination)" (Qur'ān, 42:43).
4. "Bear up, therefore, patiently as did the apostles endowed with constancy, and do not seek to hasten for them (Qur'ān, their doom)" (Qur'ān, 46:35).
5. "And certainly We gave Adam a commandment before, but he forgot, and We did not find in him any determination" (Qur'ān, 20:115).

References to *ṭawāf* and its derivatives, which is commended in the life of this world, have all occurred seven times throughout the text of the Holy Qur'ān. This number equals the number of times of making *ṭawāf* around the sacred precincts [of the Kaʿba] and the number of the rounds

of *sa'i* (running) between the *safā* and *marwa* as these verses demonstrate:

1. "And We enjoined Abraham and Ishmael saying: Purify My House for those who visit it and those who abide in it for devotion and who bow down and prostrate" (Qur'ān, 2:125).
2. "We assigned to Abraham the place of the House saying: Do not associate anything with Me and purify My House for those who make the circuit and stand to prayers and bow and prostrate" (Qur'ān, 22:26).
3. "Then there encompassed it..." (Qur'ān, 68:19).
4. "... a visitation from your Lord while they were asleep..." (Qur'ān, 68:19).
5. "... so whoever makes a pilgrimage to the House or pays a visit (to it), there is no blame on him if he goes round them both" (Qur'ān, 2:158).
6. "What has turned them from their *qibla* which they had?" (Qur'ān, 2:142).
7. "... some of you must go round about (waiting) upon others" (Qur'ān, 24:58).

The word *qibla* has occurred seven times throughout the text of the Holy Qur'ān. This figure is equivalent to the number of the times of *tawāf* round the sacred *qibla*, that is, the holy precincts of the Ka'ba, as the following verses demonstrate:

1. "We did not make that which you would have to be the *qibla* but in order that We might distinguish one who follows the Messenger..." (Qur'ān, 2:143).
2. "Indeed We see the turning of your face to heavens, so We shall surely turn you to a *qibla* which you will..." (Qur'ān, 2:144).
3. "... nor are they followers of each other's *qibla*" (Qur'ān, 2:145).
4. "... and make your homes places of worship and keep up prayer" (Qur'ān, 10:87).
5. "And even if you were to bring those who have been given the Book every sign, they would not follow your *qibla*" (Qur'ān, 2:145).
6. "What has turned them from their *qibla* which they had?" (Qur'ān, 2:142).
7. "... they would not follow your *qibla*, nor can you follow their *qibla*"

(Qur'ān, 2:145).

The predicate *ʿaraja* [root word of the noun *miʿrāj*] and its derivatives conveying the meaning of "ascending to heavens" are repeated seven times, the number equivalent to the seven heavens. Bear in mind that the Holy Qur'ān applies this word to describe the passage in the space away from the earth's gravitation. Modern science has discovered that such movement is accomplished by a curving path [*munʿarajat* or *munʿatafāt*], whereas the Holy Qur'ān applies the word *yasʿad* or *yassaʿʿad*, or the like, to describe flying within the earth's sphere. These verses are as follows:

1. "To Him ascend the angels and the spirit..." (Qur'ān, 70:4).
2. "... then shall it ascend to Him in a day the measure of which is a thousand years of what you count" (Qur'ān, 32:5).
3. "He knows that which goes down into the earth and that which comes out of it, and that which comes down from the heavens, and that which goes up thereto, and He is the Merciful, the Forgiving" (Qur'ān, 34:2).
4. "He knows that which goes deep down into the earth and that which comes out of it, and that which comes down from the heavens, and that which goes up into it, and He is with you wherever you are" (Qur'ān, 57:4).
5. "And even if We open to them a gateway to heavens so that they (would be able to) ascend into it all the while..." (Qur'ān, 15:14).
6. "... We would certainly have then assigned to those who disbelieve in the Beneficent God (to make) the roofs of their houses of silver and the stairs whereby they ascend" (Qur'ān, 43:33).
7. "One (inquirer) inquired about the chastisement which must befall the unbelievers; there is none to avert it, from Allāh, the Lord of the ways of ascent" (Qur'ān, 70:1-3).

This much should suffice the discreet reader who is advised that this is only a drop in the bucket of the miracles contained in the Holy Qur'ān, a humble specimen. Those who look for the truth will find it though it may be after a while. Knowledge is never served on a golden platter. Seekers of knowledge exert a great deal of their time and effort in order to reach it. May the Almighty enable us to seek it, find it, and abide by it, *Allāhomma Āmeen*.

CONCLUSION

It is sincerely hoped that the discreet reader has learned and benefitted from this book, and that it has brought him closer to His Maker, the One Who created him for one and only reason: to worship Him, and only Him. To be sure, whoever bases his belief in the Almighty on solid foundations will be the winner in this life and in the life to come, and the most solid of all foundations is one built on knowledge and conviction, not on ignorance, nor on taking things for granted.

One authentic *hadīth* says, "For everything there is a *zakāt*, and the *zakāt* of knowledge is its dissemination." The reader who reads this book ought not keep what he/she has learned to himself/herself but share it with others, believers or non-believers. It will then enhance the conviction of the believers and plant the seed of *imān* in the hearts of the unbelievers. Who knows? Maybe one day that seed will grow. It is the Almighty Who permits its growth, and He does so at the right time, the time which He chooses. Pass this book on to a relative or a friend. Translate it into another language. Let on-line computer services benefit from it. Make photocopies of some of its contents and distribute them to others. Write a dissertation or a thesis utilizing its text material. Extract excerpts from it for inclusion in your newsletter or magazine, book or booklet. Or write one like it or better. All these options are yours; so, do not sit idle. Move to action, and let the Almighty use you as His tool for disseminating useful knowledge.

Do you, dear reader, think that you have a choice whether to disseminate the knowledge included in this book with others or not? If you think that you do, read the following statement made by one of the great grandsons of the Messenger of Allāh, namely Imām Mousa ibn Ja'fer, who quotes his forefathers citing the Messenger of Allāh saying,

> One who reneges from his oath of allegiance, or who promotes what misleads people, or who hides some knowledge with him, or who confines some wealth with him unjustly, or who knowingly aids an oppressor in committing oppression while being fully aware of his oppression, is outside the folds of Islam.

This tradition is recorded on p. 67, Vol. 2, of al-Majlisi's *Bihār al-Anwār*. It clearly demonstrates that one who hides knowledge is on the same level with one who deliberately assists oppressors and tyrants. We, therefore, should spare no means to share what we know with others,

with those who listen and who follow the best of what they listen to. Earn rewards by bringing the servants of Allāh closer to their Creator Who made and sustained them, Who will try them and place them either in His Paradise or in His hell. If acts of worship are based on shallow conviction, they are as good as nothing. Strengthen your brethren's conviction through this book. They will surely appreciate it and, above all, Allāh, too, will.

If the reader appreciates the time and effort exerted in writing this book, I, the author, kindly request him/her to recite Sūrat al-Fātiha for the soul of my father, the late *qāri* al-Hājj Ṭu'ma 'Abbās al-Jibouri who died in 1991 of diabetes and for the souls of all believing men and women, the living and the dead. If you do so, rest assured that your rewards will be the Most Generous of all those who reward, with Allāh Almighty Who appreciates even the smallest of good deeds. Why do I request the kind reader to recite Sūrat al-Fātiha for my father? Well, this is the least a son can do for his deceased father who worked very hard to raise him as a good Muslim. My father was a *qāri* of the Holy Qur'ān who refused to read any other book besides the Qur'ān as long as he lived, a man who never intentionally hurt anyone all his life. Not only will my father receive blessings when you recite Sūrat al-Fātiha for his soul, but you, too, dear reader, will get your rewards as well. How will you be rewarded? Well, read on! Here is a glimpse of what you will *Inshā-Allāh* receive:

On p. 88, Vol. 1, of *Mujma' al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, al-Ṭibrisi cites a tradition through a chain of narrator wherein the Prophet of Islam is quoted saying, "Whoever recites Sūrat al-Fātiha will be rewarded as though he had read two thirds of the Holy Qur'ān and will be (in addition to that) given rewards as though he gave charity to each and every believing man and woman." Just imagine how generous the Almighty is! Ubayy ibn Ka'b is cited in the same reference saying, "I once recited Sūrat al-Fātiha in the presence of the Messenger of Allāh, peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him and his progeny, who said to me, `I swear by the One Who controls my life, Allāh never revealed any chapter in the Torah, the Gospel, the Psalms, or (even) in the Qur'ān like it. It is the mother of the Book, and it is the seven oft-repeated verses. It is divided between Allāh and His servant, and His servant will get whatever he asks Him for.'" The Messenger of Allāh said once to Jābir ibn Abdullāh al-Anṣāri, one of his greatest *ṣaḥābah*, may Allāh be pleased with all his good *ṣaḥābah*, "O Jābir! Shall I teach you the merits of a

Sūra which Allāh revealed in His Book?" Jābir said, "Yes, O Messenger of Allāh! May both my parents be sacrificed for your sake! Please do!" The Messenger of Allāh taught him Sūrat al-Ḥamd, the "Mother of the Book," then said to him, "Shall I tell you something about it?" "Yes, O Messenger of Allāh," Jābir responded, "may my father and mother be sacrificed for your sake!" The Messenger of Allāh said, "It cures everything except death." Imām Jaʿfer al-Ṣādiq is quoted on the same page as saying, "Anyone who is not cured by the Book's Fātiḥa cannot be cured by anything else." The Commander of the Faithful Imām ʿAli ibn Abū Ṭālib has said,

> The Messenger of Allāh has said, "Allāh, the Exalted One, the Sublime, *said to me: `(O Muḥammed!) We have bestowed upon you seven oft-repeated verses and the Great Qur'ān (verse 87 of Sūrat al-Ḥijr); so, express your appreciation for it by reciting the Book's Fātiḥa,' thus comparing it to the entire Qur'ān." Sūrat al-Fātiḥa is the most precious of the treasures of the* ʿArsh. *Allāh specifically chose Muḥammed to be honoured by it without having done so to any of His prophets with the exception of prophet Sulaymān (Solomon) who was granted (only this verse) of it:* Bismillāhir-Raḥmānir-Raḥīm *(verse 30 of Chapter 27, Sūrat al-Naml); don't you see how He narrates about Balqees*[1] *saying, "O*

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[1]Balqees Queen of Saba' (Sheba) belonged to the Arab tribe of Himyar which for centuries has been residing in Yemen. Her people used to worship the sun and the moon and other stars, and some of the ruins of the temples she had built for them can still be seen in Saba'. Sulayman, on the other hand, was headquartered in Jerusalem (Ur-O-Shalom, the city of peace, as it is called in Hebrew; the Arabs used to refer to it as Eilyā'). The place where Balqees met Sulayman, that is to say, his palace, had been built in the 10th century B.C. Reference to the grandeur of this palace exists in the Holy Qur'ān in 27:44: its glass-covered floor was so smooth, Balqees thought she was in front of a lake. Damascus, a very ancient city not far from Jerusalem, had by then established a reputation for its glass industry. Damascus, in 940 B.C. (around the same period of time when Sulayman was ruling in Jerusalem) was the city capital of the Aramaeans, the nations that spoke Aramaic, mother-tongue of prophet Jesus Christ. This is why Syria used to be called the land of Aram, the

(continued...)

Chiefs (of Yemen's tribes)! Surely an honourable letter has been delivered to me; it is from Solomon, and it is: In the Name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful..." (27:29-30)? So whoever recites it sincerely believing that he/she is following in the footsteps of Muḥammed and his progeny, abiding by its injunctions, believing in its apparent as well as hidden meanings, Allāh will give him for each of its letters a good deed better than all this world and everything in it of wealth and good things. And whoever listens to someone reciting it will receive a third of the rewards the reciter receives; so, let each one of you accumulate of such available goodness, for it surely is a great gain. Do not let it pass you by, for then you will have a great sigh in your heart about it."[1]

Rewards of reciting Sūrat al-Fātiha are also recorded on p. 132 of Thawāb al-Aʿmāl wa Iqāb al-Aʿmāl *cited above. Abū Abdullāh Imām Jaʿfer al-Ṣādiq has said, "Whoever recites Sūrat al-Baqara and Sūrat al-Fātiha, they will both shade him like two clouds on the Day of Judgment. And if the reader wishes to read more about the merits of the* Basmala *(*Bismillāhir-Raḥmanir-Rahīm*), he is referred to pp. 70-71 of my book* Fast of the Month of Ramaḍān: Philosophy and Aḥkām *published by Ansāriyan (P.O. Box 37185/187, Qum, Islamic Republic of Iran). As for the merits of Surat al-Fātiha, I would like to quote for you here what is published on pp. 71-73 of the same book:*

Al-Ṭibrisi, in his exegesis Mujmaʿul-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, *provides nine names for the first chapter of the Holy Qur'ān, namely Surat al-Fātiha: 1)* al-Fātiha, *the one that opens, for it is like a gate: when opened, it leads one to the Book of Allāh; 2)* al-Ḥamd, *the praise, for its verses are clearly praising the Almighty; 3)* Ummul-Kitāb, *the mother of the Book, for its status is superior to all other chapters of the Holy Qur'ān, or like the war standard: it is always in the forefront; 4)* al-Sabʿ, *the seven verses, for it is comprised of seven verses and the only one whose verses are seven, and there is no room here to elaborate on the merits of the number 7 especially since most readers of this book are*

(...continued)
land of the Aramaeans. Aramaic is still spoken in some part of Syria even today.

[1]al-Ṭabari, *Tārīkh*, Vol. 1, p. 88.

already aware of such merits; 5) *al-Mathānī*, the oft-repeated Chapter, for no other Chapter of the Holy Qur'ān is repeated as often as this one; 6) *al-Kāfiya*, the chapter that suffices and that has no substitute; you simply cannot replace its recitation with that of any other chapter of the Holy Qur'ān in the first two *rekʿāts* of the prayers, whereas it can substitute others; 7) *al-Asās*, the basis or foundation or bed-rock, a connotation of its being the foundation upon which the Holy Qur'ān stands just as the Basmala ("Bismillāhir-Rahmānir-Rahīm") is the foundation of the Fātiha; 8) *al-Shifā'*, the healing, due to the fact that the Messenger of Allāh has said that the Fātiha heals from all ailments except death, and 9) *al-Salāt*, the prayers, or the basic requirement of the daily prayers, one without the recitation of which no prayer can be accepted. The Prophet has quoted the Almighty saying, "The prayers have been divided between Me and My servant: one half for Me, and one for him;" so when one recites it and says, "Alḥamdu lillāhi Rabbil-ʿĀlamīn," the Almighty says, "My servant has praised Me." And when he says, "Arraḥmānir-Raḥīm," the Almighty says, "My servant has praised Me." And when he says, "Māliki Yawmid-Dīn," Allāh says, "My servant has exalted Me." And when he says, "Iyyāka Naʿbudu wa iyyāka nastaʿīn," Allāh will say, "This is a covenant between Me and My servant, and My servant shall be granted the fulfillment of his pleas." Then if he finishes reciting the Fātiha to the end, Allāh will again confirm His promise by saying, "This is for [the benefit of] My servant, and My servant will be granted the answer to his wishes."

The Messenger of Allāh is quoted by Abū ʿAli al-Fadl ibn al-Ḥassān ibn al-Fadl al-Ṭibrisi, may Allāh have mercy on his soul, saying that one who recites al-Fātiha will be regarded by the Almighty as though he recited two-thirds of the Holy Qur'ān and as though he gave by way of charity to each and every believing man and woman. "By the One in Whose hand my soul is," the Prophet continues, "Allāh Almighty did not reveal in the Torah, the Gospel, or the Psalms any chapter like it; it is the Mother of the Book and al-Sabʿ al-Mathāni (the oft-repeated seven verses), and it is divided between Allāh and His servant, and His servant shall get whatever he asks; it is the best Sūra in the Book of the most Exalted One, and it is a healing from every ailment except poison, which is death." He is also quoted by al-Kafʿami as saying, "He (Allāh) bestowed it upon me as His blessing, making it equivalent to the Holy Qur'ān, saying, 'And We have granted you al-Sabʿ al-Mathāni and the Great Qur'ān (Sūrat al-Hijr, verse 87).' It is the most precious among the

treasures of the ʿArsh." Indeed, Allāh, the most Sublime, has chosen Muḥammed alone to be honoured by it without doing so to any other Prophet or Messenger of His with the exception of Solomon (Solomon) who was granted the *Basmala*. One who recites it, being fully convinced of his following in the footsteps of Muḥammed and his Progeny, adhering to its injunctions, believing in its outward and inward meanings, will be granted by Allāh for each of its letters a blessing better than what all there is in the world of wealth and good things, and whoever listens to someone reciting it will receive one third of the rewards due to its reciter.

I also request the reader to write me on the following address to let me know what he/she thinks of this book: Yasin T. al-Jibouri, P.O. Box 5132, Falls Church, VA 22044, U.S.A. Do not write me to ask me for a free copy of it unless you are incarcerated! I do not like to receive letters from anyone who are too miser to buy a copy of my book! You, the reader, is the best judge of this book, and I hereby solicit your comments and suggestions with regard to this book as well as to my three other books: my autobiography titled *Memoirs of a Shīʿa Missionary in America: Two Decades of Daʿwah*, *Fast of the Month of Ramadān: Philosophy and Ahkam*, and *Mary and Jesus in Islam*. Many readers of my *Memoirs* wrote me saying that they thought that their text ought to be turned into a documentary film! As for my book on the fast, I have been overwhelmed by the flood of letters from readers all over the world expressing appreciation of the effort invested in writing this book which is quite different from any other dealing with the same subject-matter. It is hoped that their response to this book will not be any less. Rest assured, dear reader, that *Insha-Allāh* I will personally answer your letter despite my terribly busy schedule. Your views count.

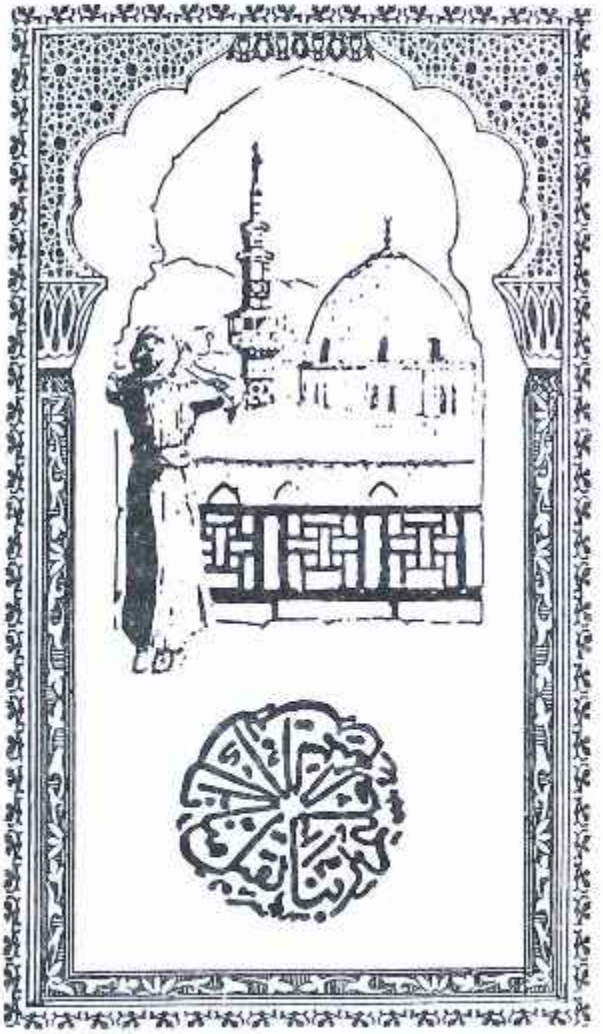
There is no doubt that you, dear reader, know that it is very costly to print books, and philanthropists in the Muslim world are rare species. Once you find one, you will find out that he is willing to spend money on anything except a book! This is very sad, very tragic, very shameful. Islam spread through a Book, the Holy Qurʾān. That was all the early generations of Muslims needed besides the presence of the Messenger of Allāh is very costly to print books, and philanthropists in the Muslim world are rare species. Once you find one, you will find out that he is willing to spend money on anything except a book! This is very sad, very tragic, very shameful. Islam spread through a Book, the Holy Qurʾān. That was all the early generations of Muslims needed besides the presence of the Messenger of Allāh. But times have changed; we do not

have the presence of the Messenger of Allāh in our midst to ask him whenever we need to know, and his Sunnah has suffered acutely of alteration, addition, deletion, custom-designing and tailoring to fit the needs of the powerful politicians of the times, so much so that it is now very hard to find the pristine truth among all the numerous different views and interpretations. This is why the reader has to spend more effort to get to know the truth; nobody is going to hand it to you on a golden platter. You have to work hard to acquire it. "Easy come, easy go." Yet readers who would like to earn a place in Paradise through their dissemination of Islamic knowledge, such as the knowledge included in this book, are very much needed and are advised in earnest to send their contributions to the Publisher of this book in order to help him print more copies of it and make them available to those who cannot afford to purchase them. Some readers erroneously surmise that book publishers are wealthy people who make a lot of money selling books, but, alas, this applies ONLY to non-Muslim publishers. After all, Allāh will judge our actions according to our intentions, and if you help promote a book seeking the Pleasure of Allāh, rest assured that you will be richly rewarded. It remains to see how strong you are against the temptations of Satan who will try his best, and his worst, to dissuade you from doing so. He very well knows that nothing in the world stands between him and corrupting the minds of Muslims more than accurate knowledge about Allāh and the men of Allāh. May Allāh Taʿāla include us among the latter, *Allāhomma Āmeen.*

Times have changed since the dawn of Islam; we do not have the presence of the Messenger of Allāh in our midst to ask him whenever we need to know, and his Sunnah has suffered acutely of alteration, addition, deletion, custom-designing and tailoring to fit the needs of the powerful politicians of the times, so much so that it is now very hard to find the pristine truth among all the numerous different views and interpretations. This is why the reader has to spend more effort to get to know the truth; nobody is going to hand it to you on a golden platter. You have to work hard to acquire it. "Easy come, easy go." Yet readers who would like to earn a place in Paradise through their dissemination of Islamic knowledge, such as the knowledge included in this book, are very much needed and are advised in earnest to send their contributions to the Publisher of this book in order to help him print more copies of it and make them available to those who cannot afford to purchase them. Some readers erroneously surmise that book publishers are wealthy people who

make a lot of money selling books, but, alas, this applies ONLY to non-Muslim publishers. After all, Allāh will judge our actions according to our intentions, and if you help promote a book seeking the Pleasure of Allāh, rest assured that you will be richly rewarded. It remains to see how strong you are against the temptations of Satan who will try his best, and his worst, to dissuade you from doing so. He very well knows that nothing in the world stands between him and corrupting the minds of Muslims more than accurate knowledge about Allāh and the men of Allāh. May Allāh Taᶜāla include us among the latter, *Allāhomma Āmeen.*

May Allāh Taᶜāla accept our humble effort; may He forgive our sins and shortcomings; may He take our hands and guide us to what He loves and prefers, *Allāhomma Āmeen, Wassālamo Alaikom wa Rahmatullāhi wa Barakātuh.*



GLOSSARY

ʿĀdil: fair, just

ʿAdl: the concept of the justice of God

Aḥādīth: singular of *ḥadīth*, a statement (usually attributed either to the Prophet [pbuh] or to one of the members of his Progeny or companions)

Ahilla: plural of hilal, crescent

ʿĀlim: scholar, theologian, a highly knowledgeable person

Aʿmāl: highly recommended acts of adoration

ʿArsh: literally: throne, symbol of the Almighty's Authority

Ashār: plural of *sahar*, the time immediately preceding daybreak

'Athān: the call for prayers; *mu'aththin* is one who performs *'athān*.

Āyat: verse (from a sacred scripture); plura: *āyāt*

Barzakh: the place and time wherein the souls of the dead live till the Day of Judgment; see the Holy Qur'ān, 23:100.

Basmala: the uttering of: *"Bismillāhir-Raḥmānir-Raḥīm"* (In the Name of Allāh, the most Gracious, the most Merciful)

Beed: plural of *abyad*, white

Dahr: time, age, eternity

Dinar: an Islamic (now Arab) gold currency varying in weight

Dirham: an Islamic silver currency weighing approx. 3.12 grams

Diyya: blood money, monetary compensation for manslaughter or intentional murder

Duᶜā': supplication, invocation

ᶜĪid: an Islamic feast, a joyous celebration, a merry occasion

Fā'izeen: (or *Fā'izūn*) winners

Fajr: daybreak

Faqīh: jurist, one who is knowledgeable in Islamic jurisprudence

Farāsikh: plural of *farsakh*, parasang (a loan Persian word), a measure of length (distance). According to *Lisan al-ᶜArab*, it may be three to six miles. "It is called so," the author of *Lisan al-ᶜArab* goes on, "because one who walks one *farsakh* will have to sit to rest," suggesting that the original meaning of the word is: to halt, to come to a stand still, to rest.

Fatāwa: plural of *fatwā*, a religious edict or decision

Fiqh: the science of Islamic jurisprudence

Firdaws: Paradise

Fitra: the amount (in cash or kind) paid to the needy at the end of the month of Ramadan; see text for more details

Ghazwa: a military campaign, an invasion

Ghusul: ceremonial bath

Hadi: sacrificial animals offered at Mecca's holy precincts

Hadīth: (singular:) tradition, a statement made by Prophet Muhammed; plural: *ahādīth*

Ḥāfiẓ: one who has learned the entire text of the Holy Qur'ān by heart; plural: *ḥuffāz*

Ḥajj: Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca during the prescribed period

Ḥalāl: Islamically permissible, admissible, allowed

Ḥarām: Islamically prohibitive, inadmissible, forbidden

Ḥijāb: veil, curtain

Hilāl: crescent, singular of *ahilla*

ḥizb: literally, it means: party (plural: *aḥzāb*); another meaning: the 60th part of the Holy Qur'ān

Ḥujja: proof, argument, authority

Ḥūri: heavenly wife with large lovely eyes married to the male residents of Paradise

Iḥrām: pilgrimage garb, white unwoven cotten shroud worn by pilgrims

Iftār: the time or the meal to break the fast

Ijtihād: the degree one reaches in order to be qualified as a *mujtahid*, one who is capable of deriving religious decisions on his own

'Illiyeen: the highest pinnacle of Paradise; see Holy Qur'an, 83:18.

Imām: leader of an *ummah*, a group of people (small or big); he may be the one who leads others in congregational prayers, or a supreme relgious authority, or one of the Twelve Infallible Imams (as)

Imān: faith, conviction

Iqāmah: the prouncement of certain statements in preparation for the performing of the prayers, usually following the athan

ʿIshā': nighttime, evening

Isnād: the method whereby one *hadīth* is traced and in the end attributed to a *muhaddith*, traditionist, one who transmitted it the first time

Isrā': night journey; usually a reference to the Prophet's night journey from Mecca to Jerusalem

I'tikāf: the act of remaining most of the time at a mosque for prayers and supplications

Jahannam: hell

Jāhiliyya: pre-Islamic period of ignorance

Jāmiʿa: inclusive, universal, university

Janābah: uncleanness caused by seminal discharge

Jannat: heaven, Paradise, garden, singular of *jannāt*

Jihād: a struggle, an effort exerted, or a war waged in defense of Islam

Jizya: protection tax paid to Muslims by non-Muslims residing in areas under Islamic control whereby the Muslims protect their lives and property and extempt them from the military service

Kaffāra: atonement from sin

Kāfir: infidel, apostate, atheist, one who does not believe in the existence of the Creator; noun: *kufr*

Kalima: synonymous to "*shahāda*," it is a Muslim's declaration of faith (that is, to testify that there is no god except Allāh, and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh), and it is always pronounced in Arabic

Kantar: in Arabic: *qintār*, avarying weight of 100 *raṭls* (rotls); a *raṭl* in Syria is roughly 3.202 kg., whereas in England it is 449.28 grams, and in Lebanon it is 2.566 kg.

Khums: one-fifth of one's savings (usually paid by Shī'a Muslims) set aside from annual income

Khuṭba: lecture, sermon; a speech delivered on a specific occasion

Kufr: apostacy, infidelity, disbelief

Kursi: literally: chair, symbol of the Almighty's Seat of Judgment and Authority; see Holy Qur'an, 2:255

Labbayk: an exclamation conveying the meaning of "At your service!" or "Here I am!"

Ma'ād: the Return: a reference to the returning of the souls to their new bodies after the period of *barzakh* (see above), and their ultimate returning to their Maker for judgment; generally, it is used to refer to death and the life hereafter.

Mahr: dowry paid by the groom to the bride (or *vice versa* as is the case in some cultures)

Majālis: meetings or gatherings held to commemmorate certain religious occasion, mostly applied to those held during the month of Muharram or to recite the *Fātiha* for a deceased person; singular of *majlis*, a place where people sit

Marji' taqlīd: the highest theological authority-referee followed

Mash^{c}ar: a place where certain rites are to be conducted, a sacred area or place or precinct

Mawla: depending on its usage, it may mean either "master" or "slave," or it may mean one who is most fit for a specific position of honor and prestige. Derived from the adjective *awla* (one who is best qualified), it means: the person who is best suited to be the religious and temporal leader of all Muslims.

Mi^{c}rāj: ascension to heaven

Mithqāl: a weight equivalent to 24 karats or 4.68 grams

Mu'aththin: caller to prayers (usually at a mosque)

Mufassir: a theologian who is well-versed in the exegesis of the Holy Qur'an

Muḥaddith: traditionist, one who quotes statements of Prophet Muḥammed

Mujāhid: one who practices *jihād* (se *jihād* above)

Mujtahid: one who acquires the degree of *ijtihād* and thus becomes capable of deriving religious decisions on his own

Mu'min: believer, one who has *imān*, conviction, true belief

Munafiqūn: hypocrites

Musnad: a compilation of traditions (*aḥādīth*) which are consecutively and chronologically traced to their transmitters

Mutawātir: consecutively reported, traced by a perfect chronological chain of ascertained narrators of *hadīth*

Nafl: optional, non-compulsory, supererotatory, highly recommended act of worship; plural: *nawāfil*

Najāsa: uncleanness, impurity; adjective: *najis*

Nathr: One's pledge to do something very good to show appreciation for the Almighty's favorable response to his supplication and the attainment of his worldly wish

Noor: divine or celestial light

Nubuwwah: prophethood, the belief in prophets and their messages

Qaniteen: those who are constantly supplicating

Qaza: compensatory, making up for a missed rite

Qibla: direction towards the Kaʿba, Mecca

Qiyām: standing

Qudsi: divine, related to the Almighty

Qunoot: supplication during prayers

Rekʿat: prostration (during prayer or a ritual)

Rukooʿ: kneeling

Sabeel: path, way, avenue

Sadaqa: (singular:) charity offered voluntarily; its plural is: *sadaqaāt*

Ṣadeed: pus collected from bleeding wounds to be served to the sinners in hell when they ask for water to quench their thirst

Ṣaḥāba: companions of the Holy Prophet Muḥammed; its plural is: *ṣaḥābi*

Ṣaheefa: tablet, scroll, parchment, a written document

Sahīh: literally: authentic, correct, accurate; it is generally used to refer to the collection, group of collections, or book, of verified and authenticated *ahādīth* of Prophet Muhammed

Sajda: prostration

Salāt: Islamic prayers, optional or mandatory; plural: *salawāt*

Sāraya: (plural) military campagins personally ordered by Prophet Muhammed; singular: *sāriya*

Shahāda: martyrdom; it also means: testimony

Shahr: month

Shaikh: also *syakh*, an honoring title with many meanings; literally, it means an old man; in Islamic theology and philosophy, however, it is used to denote a mentor, professor, or scholar of a high calibre

Sharī'a: Islam's legislative system

Shirk: polytheism, the belief in the existence of partners with God

Shubha: (singular) doubt, suspicion; its plural is: *shubuhāt*

Shūra: the principle of mutual consultation, Islam's form of democracy

Siddeeq: one who testifies to the truthfulness of a prophet

Sirāt: path, highway; same as *Sabeel*

Siyām: Islam's norm of fast

Suhoor: time or meal taken before daybreak in preparation to fast during the day

Sultān: ruler who rules in the name of Islam, a Muslim monarch

Sunan: plural of *sunnah*: a highly commended act of worship or way whereby a Muslim seeks nearness to Allāh

Sūra: (also *Sūrah*) a chapter of the Holy Qur'an

Tabiᶜeen: plural of *tabiᶜ*, one who accompanied for a good period of time, learned from and afollowed a *ṣahābi*, a companion of the Holy Prophet Muḥammed; its plural is: *tabiᶜeen*

Tafsïr: (singular) exegesis or explanation of Qur'anic verses; its plural is: *tafasïr*

Tahajjud: night devotions; a *mutahajjid* is one who keeps religious vigilance, spending the night in prayer

Tahāra: purification, the act of removing *najāsa*, uncleanness or impurity

Takbeer: the act of glorifying Allāh by declaring in an audible voice: "Allāho Akbar!" Allāh is Great!

Taqiyya: one's way of exerting precaution in order to save his life when it is in jeopardy, Shīᶜas' way of trying to survive against the presence of sure perils

Taqleed: the concept of following a *mujtahid* or an authority recognized as the *aᶜalam*, the most knowledgeable in Islamics

Tarwiyah: The Day of Tarwiyah is the 8th of Thul-Hijjah when the pilgrims fill their water bags and prepare to go to Mina.

Tashahhud: the testimony regarding Allāh being the Lord and Muḥammad being His Servant and Messenger; it is the uttering of "*Ashhadu an la ilaha illa-Allāh, wa anna Muḥammed abdoho wa rasooloh*"

Tashreeq: the cutting and sun-drying of sacrificed meat

Ṭawāf: circling around a certain sacred site

Tawātur: consecutive reporting, the tracing of one particular *ḥadīth* to its respective chronological chain of narrators

Tawhīd: the concept of the absolute Unity of God, the belief that God is One and indivisible, One—and Only One—God

Tawwabeen: the penitent ones, those who repented their reluctance to go to the rescue of Imam Ḥusain when he was confronted with Yazīd's armies and who enlisted under the military command of al-Mukhtār and pursued those who massacred Imam Ḥussain ibn ᶜAli ibn Abū Ṭālib and killed them

Thakireen: those who often mention the Name of the Almighty and Glorify Him

Thayyib: a deflowered woman, a widow or divorcee

Thireed: pieces of bread cut and dipped in stew

ᶜUlemā': plural of *ᶜālim*, scholar-theologian

Ummah: nation, group of people

ᶜUmra: the pilgrimage to Mecca during any time other than the prescribed (first ten) days of the month of Thul-Hijjah

Uṣool: the basics of jurisprudence

Wājib: compulsory, obligatory, binding

Wāli: person to whom *wilāyat* is obligatory; a *wāli*, however, is a governor appointed by a Muslim ruler of a higher authority (such as a caliph, a ṣultan, etc.)

Waqf: a trust, property dedicated to serve any specific good cause, an endowment

Wasi: successor to a prophet

Wilāyat: supreme authority that combines both temporal and religious authority

Wisāl: fasting the last day of every lunar calendar month

Wudu: ablution

Zakāt: Literally, it means "purification;" it is a compulsory 2.5% tax on one of three categories of wealth: 1) metal coins (gold, silver, etc.), 2) grain crops (barley, wheat, grain, rice, etc.), and 3) animals raised for food consumption. *Zakat* is somehow a complicated issue, and for details, readers are advised to consult books dealing with *fiqh*. Among its types are: *zakat al-mal* (taxable wealth accumulated during one full year), and *zakat al-fitr* (a tax to be paid by the head of a household at the end of the fast of the month of Ramadān).

Zihār: the making of a similitude between the back of one's wife with that of his mother; i.e. saying that his wife's back looks similar to his mother's

And surely Allāh knows best...

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اللّٰه

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