



XXXIII

AL-AHZĀB

الْأَحْزَابُ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

XXXIII

AL-AHZĀB

الاحزاب

INTRODUCTION

Name

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

Period of Revelation

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

Historical Background

The Islamic army's setback in the Battle of Uḥud (A.H. 3) that resulted from the error of the archers appointed by the Holy Prophet so boosted up the morale of the Arab pagans and the Jews and the hypocrites that they started entertaining the hope that they would soon be able to exterminate Islaḡ and the Muslims completely. Their high state

of morale can be judged from the events that occurred in the first year after Uhud. Hardly two months had passed when the tribe of Banī Asad of Najd began to make preparations for a raid on Madīnah and the Holy Prophet had to despatch an expedition under Abū Salamah to counteract them. In Safar A.H. 4 some people of the tribes of 'Adal and Qārah asked the Holy Prophet to send some men to instruct them in Islam. Accordingly six of the Companions were allowed to accompany them for the purpose. But when they reached Rajī' (a place between Rābigh and Jeddah), they summoned Hudhail against them, who killed four of the Companions, and took the other two (Hadrat Khubaib bin 'Adī and Hadrat Zaid bin ad-Dathimah) to Makkah and sold them to the enemy. Then in the same month of Safar, on the request of a chief of Banī 'Āmir, the Holy Prophet sent another deputation of 40 (according to others, 70) preachers, consisting of the Ansar young men, to Najd. But they were also betrayed. The people of 'Usayyah and Ri'l and Dhakwān, tribes of Banī Sulaim, surrounded them suddenly at Bi'r Ma'ūnah and slew all of them. Meanwhile the Jewish tribe of Banī an-Nadīr of Madīnah, getting encouragement, continued to commit breaches of the treaties; so much so that in Rabi'ul Awwal, A.H. 4, they plotted against the life of the Holy Prophet himself. Then in Jamādī al-Ūlā, A.H. 4, Banī Tha'ibah and Banī Muhārib, the two tribes of Banī Ghatafān started making preparations to attack Madīnah and the Holy Prophet had to go to punish them. Thus, after their setback at Uhud, the Muslims went on encountering repercussions continuously for seven to eight months.

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

Raids preceding the Battle of the Trench

The first such step was taken immediately after the Battle of Uhud. The very next day when quite a large number of Muslims lay wounded and the martyrdom of the near and dear ones was being

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

Then as soon as the Banī Asad started making preparations for a raid on Madīnah, the Holy Prophet's secret agents gave him timely information about their intention. Thus, before they could come in force to attack Madīnah, he sent an army 150 strong, under Hadrat Abū Salamah (the first husband of Hadrat Umm Salamah) to punish them. They took Banī Asad by surprise, who fled in panic leaving all their possessions behind, which fell into the Muslim hands.

After this came the turn of the Banī an-Nadīr. The day they plotted against the life of the Holy Prophet, and the secret was disclosed, the Holy Prophet ordered them to leave Madīnah within ten days and warned that anyone who remained behind after that would be put to death. 'Abdullah bin Ubayy, the chief of the hypocrites of Madīnah, encouraged them to defy the order and refuse to leave Madīnah. He even promised to help them with 2,000 men, and assured them that the Banī

Ghatafān from Najd also would come to their aid. Accordingly, the Banī an-Naḍir sent word that they would not leave no matter what the Holy Prophet might do.

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

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

After this in Sha'bān A.H. 4, the Holy Prophet went forth to Badr to fight Abū Sufyān. At the end of the Battle of Uḥud, he had challenged the Holy Prophet and the Muslims, saying, "We shall again meet you in combat at Badr next year." In reply the Holy Prophet announced through a Companion: "All right: we accept your challenge." Accordingly, at the appointed time he reached Badr with 1,500 of the Muslims. From the other side, Abū Sufyān left Makkah with an army of 2,000 men, but could not have the courage to march beyond Marr-az-Zahrān (modern, Wādī Fāṭimah). The Holy Prophet waited for him at Badr for eight days; the Muslims during these days did profitable business with a trading party. This incident helped more than restore the image of strength of the Muslims that had been tarnished at Uḥud. It also made the whole of Arabia realize that the Quraish alone could no longer resist Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings). (Please also refer to E.N. 124 of *Āl-i-'Imrān*).

This image and position of the Muslims was further strengthened by another event. Dūmat al-Jandal (modern, Al-Jauf) was an important place at the border between Arabia and Syria. When the caravans of the Arabs, trading between 'Irāq in the south and Syria and Egypt in the

north, passed that way, they were harassed and looted by the natives. In Rabi' al-Awwal, A.H. 5, the Holy Prophet himself went to punish them with an army of 1,000 men. They could not muster up courage to come out and fight him and, therefore, fled the place. This caused the whole of northern Arabia to dread the power of Islam, and the tribes began to realize that the great power emerging from Al Madīnah was formidable and could no longer be resisted by one or a few of the tribes.

The Battle of the Trench

Such were the conditions when the Battle of the Trench took place. It was in fact a combined raid by many of the Arab tribes, who wanted to crush the power of Madīnah. It had been instigated by the leaders of the Bani an-Nadīr, who had settled in Khaiber after their banishment from Madīnah. They went round to the Quraish and Ghatafān and Hudhail and many other tribes and induced them to gather all their forces together and attack Madīnah jointly. Thus, in Shawwāl, A.H. 5, an unprecedentedly large army of the Arab tribes marched against the small city of Madīnah. From the north came Jews of Bani an-Nadīr and Bani Qainuqā', who after their banishment from Madīnah, had settled in Khaiber and Wād il-Qur'ānī. From the east advanced the tribes of Ghatafān— Bani Sulaim, Fazārah, Murrah, Ashja', Sa'd, Asad, etc. — and from the south the Quraish, along with a large force of their allies. Together they numbered from ten to twelve thousand men.

Had it been a sudden attack, it would have been disastrous. But the Holy Prophet was not unaware of this in Madīnah. His intelligence men and the sympathisers of the Islamic movement and the people influenced by it were present in every tribe, who kept him informed of the enemy's movements.¹ Even before the enemy could reach his city, he got a trench dug out on the north-west of Madīnah in six days, and having the Mount Sal'a at their back, took up a defensive position with 3,000 men in the protection of the Trench. To the south of Madīnah there were

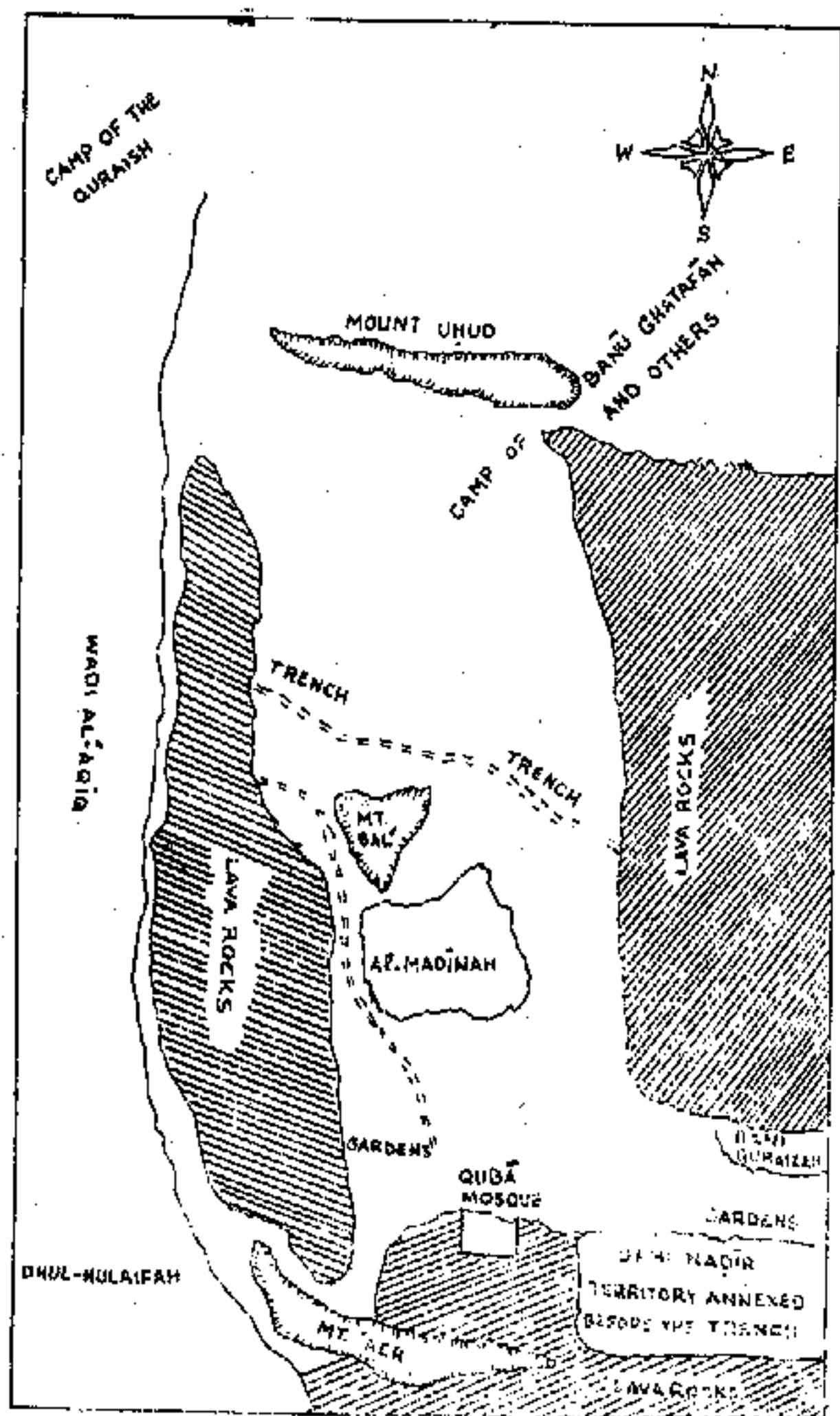
1. This is an important factor of the superiority of an ideological movement over nationalist hordes, who only rely on the support of the individuals of their own tribes and nations. An ideological movement, on the other hand, advances in every direction, and draws its supporters even from among the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

many gardens (even now there are) so that it could not be attacked from that side. To the east there are lava rocks which are impassable for a large army. The same is the case with the south-western side. The attack, therefore, could be made only from the eastern and western sides of the Uhud, which the Holy Prophet had secured by digging a trench. The disbelievers were not at all aware that they would have to counter the trench outside Madīnah. This kind of a defensive stratagem was unknown to the Arabs. Thus, they had to lay a long siege in winter for which they had not come prepared.

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

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

BATTLEFIELD OF THE TRENCH



"Adal and Qārah." That is, "The Quraizah are bent upon doing what the
" 'Adal and Qārah had done with the preachers of Islam at Rajī'."

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

The Holy Prophet at that critical moment initiated peace negotiations with the Banī Ghatafan and tried to persuade them to accept one-third of the fruit-harvest of Madīnah and withdraw. But when he asked Sa'd bin 'Ubādah and Sa'd bin Mu'ādh, chiefs of the Anṣār, for their opinion about the conditions of peace, they said, "O Messenger of Allah: Is it your personal wish that we should agree on these conditions, or is it Allah's Command that we have no option but to accept it? Or, are you giving this proposal only in order to save us from the enemy?" The Holy Prophet replied, "I am proposing this only to save you: I see that the whole of Arabia has formed a united front against you. I want to divide the enemy." At this the two chiefs protested, saying, "Sir, if you want to conclude this pact for our sake, kindly forget it. These tribes could not subdue us under tribute when we were polytheists. Now that we have the honour of believing in Allah and His Messenger, will they make us sink to this depth of ignominy? The sword now shall be the arbiter till Allah passes His judgement between them and us." With these words they tore up the draft for the treaty which had not yet been signed.

In the meantime Nu'aim bin Mas'ūd, a member of the Ashja' branch of the Ghatafān tribe, became a Muslim and came before the Holy Prophet and submitted: "No one as yet knows that I have embraced Islam: You can take from me whatever service you please." The Holy Prophet replied: "Go and sow the seeds of discord among the enemy.¹ So, first of all, Nu'aim went to the Quraizah with whom he was on friendly terms, and said to them, "The Quraish and the Ghatafān can become wearied of the siege and go back, and they will lose nothing, but you have to live here with the Muslims. Just consider what was be your position if the matter turns that way. Therefore, I would advise you not to join the enemy until the outsiders should send some of their prominent men as hostages to you." This had the desired effect upon the Banī Quraizah and they decided to demand hostages from the united front of the tribes. Then he went to the chiefs of the Quraish and the Ghatafān and said to them, "The Banī Quraizah seem to be slack and irresolute. May be they demand some men as hostage from you, and then hand them over to Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) to settle their affair with him. Therefore, be very firm and cautious in your dealing with them." This made the leaders of the united front suspicious of Banī Quraizah and they sent them a message, saying, "We are tired of the long siege; let there be a decisive battle; let us, therefore, make a general assault simultaneously from both the sides." The Banī Quraizah sent back the word, saying, "We cannot afford to join the war unless you hand over some of your prominent men to us as hostages." The leaders of the united front became convinced that what Nu'aim had said was true. They refused to send hostages. And the Banī Quraizah, on the other side, also felt that Nu'aim had given them the correct counsel. Thus, the strategy worked: it divided the enemy against itself.

The siege was prolonged for more than 25 days. It was winter. The supply of food and water and forage was becoming more and more scarce everyday and division in the camp was also a great strain on the state of morale of the besiegers. Then, suddenly one night a severe windstorm accompanied by thunder and lightning hit the camp. It added to the cold and darkness. The wind overthrew the tents and put the

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

enemy in disarray. They could not stand this severe blow of nature. They left the battleground even during the night and returned to their homes. When the Muslims awoke in the morning, there was not a single enemy soldier to be seen on the battlefield. The Holy Prophet, finding the battlefield completely empty, said: "The Quraish will never be able to attack you after this: now you will take the offensive." This was a correct assessment of the situation. Not only the Quraish but the united front of all the enemy tribes had made their final assault against Islam and had failed. Now they could no longer dare invade Madīnah; now the Muslims were on the offensive.

Raid on Banī Quraizah

When the Holy Prophet returned from the Trench, Gabriel came to him in the early afternoon with the Divine Command that the Muslims should not lay aside the arms yet but should deal with the Banī Quraizah as well. On receipt of this Command, the Holy Prophet got announced "Everyone who is steadfast in obedience should not offer his 'Asr Prayer till he reaches the locality of the Banī Quraizah." Immediately after this, he despatched Ḥaḍrat 'Alī with a contingent of soldiers as vanguard towards the Quraizah. When they reached there, the Jews climbed on to their roof tops and started hurling abuses on the Holy Prophet and the Muslims, but their invectives could not save them from the consequences of their treachery. They had committed breach of the treaty right at the most critical moment of the war, joined hands with the invaders and endangered the entire population of Madīnah. When they saw the contingent of Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, they thought that they had come only to overawe them. But when the whole Islamic army arrived under the command of the Holy Prophet himself and laid siege to their quarters, they were very frightened. They could not stand the severity of the siege for more than two or three weeks. At last, they surrendered themselves to the Holy Prophet on the condition that they would accept whatever decision Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin Mu'ādh, the chief of the Aus, would give. They had accepted Ḥaḍrat Sa'd as their judge because in the pre-Islamic days the Aus and the Quraizah had been confederates and they hoped that in view of the past ties he would help them quit Madīnah as had happened in the case of the Banī Qainuqā' and the Banī an-Naḍīr before. The people of the Aus themselves wished that Ḥaḍrat Sa'd treat their previous allies leniently. But Ḥaḍrat Sa'd had just experienced and seen

how the two Jewish tribes who had been allowed to leave Madinah previously had instigated the other tribes living around Madinah and summoned the united front of ten to twelve thousand men against the Muslims. He was also aware how treacherously this last Jewish tribe had behaved right on the occasion when the city was under attack from outside and threatened the safety of the whole of its population. Therefore, he decreed that all the male members of the Quraizah should be put to death, their women and children taken prisoners, and their properties distributed among the Muslims. The sentence was carried out duly. When the Muslims entered their strongholds they found that the treacherous people had collected 1,500 swords, 300 coats of mail, 2,000 spears and 1,500 shields in order to join the war. If Allah's succour had not reached the Muslims, all this military equipment would have been used to attack Madinah from the rear right at the time when the polytheists were making preparations for a general assault on the Muslims after crossing the Trench. After this disclosure there remained no doubt that the decision of Hadrat Sa'd concerning those people was absolutely correct.

Social Reforms

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

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

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

This concept, however, could not be rooted out by merely passing a legal order, saying, "The adopted son is not the real son." The centuries old prejudices and superstitions cannot be changed by mere word of mouth. Even if the people had accepted the command that these relations were not the real relations, they would still have looked upon marriage between the adopted mother and the adopted son, the adopted brother and the sister, the adopted father and the daughter, and the adopted father-in-law and the daughter-in-law odious and detestable. Moreover, there would still exist some freedom of mixing together freely; Therefore, it was inevitable that the custom should be eradicated practically, and through the Holy Prophet himself. For no Muslim could ever conceive that a thing done by the Holy Prophet himself, and done by him under Allah's Command, could be detestable. Therefore, a little before the Battle of the Trench, the Holy Prophet was inspired by Allah that he should marry the divorced wife of his adopted son, Zaid bin Harithah (may Allah be pleased with him), and he acted on this Command during the siege of the Banī Quraizah. (The delay probably was caused for the reason that the prescribed waiting period had not yet ended, and in the meantime the Holy Prophet had to become busy in the preparation for war).

Storm of Propaganda at the Marriage of Hadrat Zainab

As soon as the marriage was contracted, there arose a storm of propaganda against the Holy Prophet. The polytheists, the hypocrites

and the Jews, all were burning with jealousy at his triumphs which followed one after the other. The way they had been humbled within two years after Uhud, in the Battle of the Trench, and in the affair of the Quraizah, had made them sore at heart. They had also lost hope that they could ever subdue him on the battlefield. Therefore, they seized the question of this marriage as a god-send for themselves and thought they would put an end to his moral superiority, which was the real secret of his power and success. Therefore, stories were concocted that Muhammad, God forbid, had fallen in love with his daughter-in-law, and when the son had come to know of this, he divorced his wife, and the father married his daughter-in-law. The propaganda, however, was absurd on the face of it. Hadrat Zainab was the Holy Prophet's first cousin. He had known her from childhood to youth. So, there could be no question of his falling in love with her at first sight. Then he himself had arranged her marriage with Hadrat Zaid under his personal influence, although her whole family had opposed it. They did not like that a daughter of the noble Quraish should be given in marriage to a freed slave. Hadrat Zainab herself was not happy at this arrangement. But everyone had to submit to the Holy Prophet's command. The marriage was solemnized and a precedent was set in Arabia that Islam had raised a freed slave to the status of the Quraishite nobility. If the Holy Prophet had in reality any desire for Hadrat Zainab, there was no need of marrying her to Hadrat Zaid; he himself could have married her. But in spite of all this, the shameless opponents invented stories of love, spread them with great exaggeration and publicised them so vehemently that even some Muslims also began to accept them as true.

Preliminary Commandments of Purdah

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

Nur, when a slander was made on the honour of Hadrat 'Ā'ishah. (For further details, see Introduction to Sūrah An-Nūr).

Domestic Affairs of the Holy Prophet

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

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

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

Subject Matter and Topics

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

A perusal of the theme and the background shows that the Sūrah is not a single discourse which was sent down in one piece but it consists of several injunctions and commandments and discourses, which were

sent down, one after the other, in connection with the important events of the time, and then were put together in one Sūrah. Its following parts stand out clearly distinguished from one another:

1. Verses 1-8 seem to have been sent down before the Battle of the Trench. Their perusal, keeping the historical background in view, shows that at the time of their revelation Hadrat Zaid had already divorced Hadrat Zainab. The Holy Prophet was feeling the necessity that the concepts and customs and superstitions of ignorance concerning the adoption of the son should be eradicated, and he was also feeling that the delicate and deep sentiments the people cherished about the adopted relations merely on emotional grounds would not be rooted out until he himself took the initiative to eradicate the custom practically. But at the same time he was hesitant and considering seriously that if he married the divorced wife of Hadrat Zaid then, the hypocrites and the Jews and the *mushriks* who were already bent on mischief would get a fresh excuse to start a propaganda campaign against Islam. This was the occasion of the revelation of vv. 1-8.
2. In verses 9-27 an appraisal has been made of the Battle of the Trench and the raid against the Banī Quraizah. This is a clear proof that these verses were sent down after these events.
3. The discourse contained in vv. 28-35 consists of two parts. In the first part Allah has given a notice to the wives of the Holy Prophet, who were being impatient of the straitened circumstances, to the effect: "Choose between the world and its adornments, and Allah, His Prophet and the Hereafter. If you seek the former, you should say so openly: you will not be kept back in hardship even for a day, but will be sent off gracefully. And if you seek the latter, you should cooperate with Allah and His Messenger and bear patiently." In the second part, initial steps were taken towards the social reforms whose need was being felt by the minds moulded in the Islamic pattern themselves. In this regard, reform was started from the house of the Holy Prophet himself and his wives were commanded to avoid behaving and conducting themselves in the ways of the pre-Islamic days of ignorance, to remain in their houses with dignity,

and to exercise great caution in their conversation with the other men. This was the beginning of the Commandments of Purdah.

4. Verses 36-48 deal with the Holy Prophet's marriage with Hadrat Zainab. In this section the opponents' objection about this marriage have been answered; the doubts that were being created in the minds of the Muslims have been removed; the Muslims have been acquainted with the Holy Prophet's position and status; and the Holy Prophet himself has been counselled to exercise patience on the false propaganda of the disbelievers and the hypocrites.
5. In verse 49 a clause of the law of divorce has been laid down. This is a unique verse which was sent down on some occasion probably in connection with the same events.
6. In verses 50-52 a special regulation of marriage has been laid down for the Holy Prophet, which points out that he is an exception to the several restrictions that have been imposed on the other Muslims in regard to marital life.
7. In verses 53-55 the second step was taken towards social reform. It consists of the following injunctions: Restriction on the other men to visit the houses of the Holy Prophet's wives; Islamic etiquette concerning visits and invitations; the law that only the near relatives could visit the holy wives in their houses; as for the other men, they could speak to or ask them a thing from behind a curtain; the injunction that the Holy Prophet's wives were forbidden for the Muslims like their mothers; and none could marry any of them after him.
8. In verses 56-57 warning was given to stop criticizing the Holy Prophet's marriage and his domestic life, and the believers instructed not to indulge in fault-finding like the enemies of Islam, but to invoke the blessings of Allah for their Prophet; moreover, they were instructed that they should avoid falsely accusing one another even among themselves, not to speak of the person of the Prophet.
9. In verse 59 the third step for social reform was taken. All the Muslim women were commanded that they should come out well

covered with the outer garments and covering their faces whenever they came out of their houses for a genuine need.

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



يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ اتَّقِ اللَّهَ وَلَا تُطِعِ الْكَافِرِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا
 حَكِيمًا ۗ وَاتَّبِعْ مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ
 خَبِيرًا ۗ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا ۗ مَا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِرَجُلٍ مِنْ
 قَلْبَيْنِ فِي جَوْفِهِ ۗ وَمَا جَعَلَ أَزْوَاجَكُمُ الْإِنِّ تَطْهِرُونَ مِنْهُنَّ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ وَمَا
 جَعَلَ أَدْعِيَاءَكُمْ أَبْنَاءَكُمْ ۚ ذَٰلِكُمْ قَوْلُكُمْ بِأَفْوَاهِكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَقُولُ الْحَقَّ وَهُوَ
 يَهْدِي السَّبِيلَ ۗ اذْعُرُّوهُ لَأَبَائِهِمْ ۗ هُوَ أَقْسَطُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ ۗ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَعْلَمُوا

XXXIII AL-AHZĀB

الاحزاب

Verses: 73

Revealed at Madinah

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

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

Allah has not put two hearts in a person's body,⁵ nor has He made those wives of yours whom you divorce by *Zihār* your mothers,⁶ 4-5

nor has made your adopted sons your real sons.⁷ These are the things which you utter from your mouths, but Allah says that which is based on the reality and He alone guides to the Right Way. Call your adopted sons after their fathers' names: this is more just in the sight of Allah.⁸ And if you do not know who their fathers are, then they are your brothers in faith and your friends.⁹ There is no blame on you if you say something unintentionally, but you will surely be to blame for what you say with the intention of your hearts.¹⁰ Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.¹¹

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

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

3. This sentence is addressed to the Holy Prophet as well as to the Muslims and the opponents of Islam. It means: "If the Prophet earns defamation by acting according to the Command of Allah, and bears patiently the attacks of the enemy on his honour, his devoted and sincere services will not remain hidden from Allah. The state of the Muslims who remain steadfast in their loyalty to the Prophet and of those who are involved in doubts and suspicions will be known to

Allah. And Allah will also not remain unaware of the attempts of the disbelievers and the hypocrites who try to defame the Prophet."

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

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

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

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

8. The first reform introduced in connection with the implementation of this Command was that Zaid, the adopted son of the Holy Prophet, began to be called Zaid bin Hārithah, after his real father, instead of Zaid bin Muḥammad. Bukharī, Muslim, Tirmidhī and Nasā'ī have related this tradition from Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar that in the beginning the people called Zaid bin Hārithah Zaid bin Muḥammad. After the revelation of this verse they began calling him Zaid bin Hārithah. Moreover, after this Revelation it was forbidden that a person should

اَبَاهُمْ فَانْحَوَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَمَوَالِيكُمْ وَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ فِيمَا أَخْطَأْتُمْ
 بِهِ وَلَكِنْ مَا تَعَمَّدَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا^{١١} الَّذِي أَوْلَى
 بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجَهُ أُمَّهَاتُهُمْ وَأُولَ الْأَرْحَامِ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلَى
 بِبَعْضٍ فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ إِلَّا أَنْ تَفْعَلُوا إِلَى أَوْلِيَائِكُمْ
 مَعْرُوفًا كَانَ ذَلِكَ فِي الْكِتَابِ مَسْطُورًا^{١٢} وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ مِيثَاقَهُمْ
 وَمِنْكَ وَمِنْ نُوحٍ وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى وَعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ وَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُمْ
 مِيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا^{١٣} لِيَتْلُوَ الصِّدِّيقِينَ عَنْ صِدْقِهِمْ وَأَعَدَّ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابًا
 أَلِيمًا^{١٤} يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذْ ذُكِرُوا بِعَمَلِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ جَاءَتْكُمْ جُنُودٌ فَأَرْسَلْنَا
 عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحًا وَجُنُودًا لَمْ تَرَوْهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرًا^{١٥} إِذْ جَاءَكُمْ
 مِنَ قُرَيْشٍ وَمِنْ آسْفَلِ مِنْكُمْ وَإِذْ زَاغَتِ الْأَبْصَارُ وَبَلَغَتِ الْقُلُوبُ
 الْحَنَاجِرَ وَتَظُنُّونَ بِاللَّهِ الظَّنُونًا^{١٦} هُنَالِكَ ابْتُلِيَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَزُلْزِلُوا زِلْزَالًا
 شَدِيدًا^{١٧} وَإِذْ يَقُولُ الْمُنْفِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ مَا وَعَدَنَا اللَّهُ
 وَرَسُولُهُ إِلَّا غُرُورًا^{١٨} وَإِذْ قَالَتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْهُمْ يَا أَهْلَ يَثْرِبَ لَا مُقَامَ لَكُمْ
 فَارْجِعُوا وَيَسْتَأْذِنُ فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمُ النَّبِيَّ يَقُولُونَ إِنَّ بُيُوتَنَا عَوْرَةٌ وَمَا هِيَ
 بِعَوْرَةٍ إِنَّ يُرِيدُونَ إِلَّا فِرَارًا^{١٩} وَكَو دُخِلَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ أَمْطَارِهَا ثَمْرٌ سِيلُوا
 الْفِتْنَةَ لَا تَوْهَا وَمَا تَلَبَّثُوا فِيهَا إِلَّا سِيرًا^{٢٠} وَلَقَدْ كَانُوا عَاهِدُوا اللَّهَ مِنْ
 قَبْلُ لَا يُولُونَ الْآدْبَارَ وَكَانَ عَهْدُ اللَّهِ مَسْئُولًا^{٢١} قُلْ لَنْ يَنْفَعَكُمْ الْفِرَارُ
 إِنْ فَرَرْتُمْ مِنَ الْمَوْتِ أَوِ الْقَتْلِ وَإِذَا لَا تُمْتَعُونَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا^{٢٢} قُلْ مَنْ ذَا
 الَّذِي يَعْصِمُكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ إِنْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ سُوءًا أَوْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ رَحْمَةً وَلَا



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

And (O Prophet,) remember the Covenant that We took from all the Prophets—from you as well as from Noah and Abraham and Moses and Jesus son of Mary. We took a solemn Covenant from all of them¹⁵ so that (their Lord) may question the truthful about their truth;¹⁶ as for the disbelievers, He has indeed reserved a painful punishment for them.¹⁷ 7-8

O people¹⁸ who have believed! Remember the bounty of Allah, which He has (just now) shown you. When the hosts came down on you, We sent against them a violent wind and the armies which you could not see.¹⁹ Allah was watching all that you were doing. When the enemies came upon you from above and from below you,²⁰ when eyes were petrified due to fear and the hearts leapt up to the throats, and you began to entertain all sorts of doubts about Allah, the believers then were thoroughly tested and severely shaken.²¹ 9-11

Remember the time when the hypocrites and all those whose hearts were diseased were openly saying that the promises Allah and His Prophet had made with them,²² were nothing but a delusion; when a party of them said, "O people of Yathrib, you have no chance to stay, so go back;"²³ when a section of them sought leave of the Prophet, saying, "Our homes are insecure,"²⁴ whereas they were not insecure;²⁵ in fact, they wished to flee (the battle front). If the enemies had made entry from all sides of the city, and these people had been urged to treachery,²⁶ they would have committed it, and would have little hesitated to become partners in it. They had indeed already made a pledge with Allah that they would not show their backs; and the pledge made with Allah had to be questioned.²⁷ 12-15

O Prophet, say to them, "If you flee from death or slaughter, your flight will avail you nothing; after that you will enjoy life but for a little while only."²⁸ Ask them, "Who can protect you from Allah if He intends harm for you? And who can prevent Him if He intends to 16-17

show you mercy?" In fact, they cannot find a protector and helper against Allah.

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assign his parentage to any other man than his own real father. Bukhārī, Muslim and Abū Da'ūd have related on the authority of Ḥadhrat Sa'd bin Abī Waqqāṣ that the Holy Prophet said: "Paradise is forbidden for the one who called himself son of another person than his own father." Other traditions bearing on the subject have been related in Aḥādīth, which have regarded this as a heinous sin.

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

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

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

12. That is, "The relationship of the Holy Prophet with the Muslims and of the Muslims with the Holy Prophet is of a superior nature, over and above all human relationships. No other relationship is in any way comparable with the relationship that exists between the Holy Prophet and the believers. The Holy Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) is more compassionate and affectionate and a greater well-wisher of the Muslims than their own parents, even their own selves. Their parents and their wives and children can harm them, can treat them in a selfish manner and mislead them, can make them commit errors and mistakes, can push them into Hell, but the Holy Prophet's case is different: he will do for them only that which results in and leads to their eternal well-being and enduring happiness. They can commit follies resulting in their own ruin and disaster, but the Holy Prophet will wish for them only that which is beneficial and useful for them. And when it is so, the Holy Prophet also has a right on the Muslims that they should regard him dearer than their own parents, their own children, even their own selves. They should love him more than anything and anybody else in the world; should prefer his judgement and opinion to their own and should submit to every command that he gives.

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

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

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

Another noteworthy point in this connection is that according to the Qur'ān, this status accrues to all the wives of the Holy Prophet among whom Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah is also included. But, when a section (of the Muslims) made Ḥaḍrat 'Alī and Fātimah (may Allah be pleased with them) and their children the centre of their Faith and made the whole system of religion revolve around them, and made Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah also, along with many other Companions, the target of curse and abuse, this verse became a hindrance for them, for according to it every person who claims to be a believer has to acknowledge her as his mother. Consequently, to overcome this difficulty a strange claim was made to the effect: The Holy Prophet had given Ḥaḍrat 'Alī the authority that after his death he could allow any of his wives he liked to retain her position of the holy wife and divorce any other on his behalf. Abū Mansūr Aḥmad bin Abū Ṭālib Ṭabrisī has written this in *Kitāb al-Iḥtjāj* and Suleman bin 'Abdullah al-Baḥrānī has related that the Holy Prophet said to Ḥaḍrat 'Alī "O Abul Ḥasan: this honour will last till the time that we remain steadfast on obedience to Allah. Therefore, you may divorce any of my wives, who after me disobeys Allah by revolting against you, and deprive her of the honour that belongs to the mothers of the faithful."

This is a false tradition even according to the principles of reporting *Ḥadīth*. But if one studies vv. 28-29 and 51-52 of this very Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb itself, one finds that this tradition goes against the Qur'ān as well. For after the revelation of the "verse of the option" (v. 29), the Holy Prophet's right of divorce

against those of his wives who chose to remain with him through every difficulty had been curtailed. For further explanation, see E.N.'s 42 and 93 below.

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

14. The verse means this: As for the Holy Prophet the nature of the Muslims' relationship with him is unique. But as far as the common Muslims are concerned, their mutual relationship will be based on the principle that the rights of the relatives on one another are given priority over the rights of others. No charity is right if a person overlooks the needs and requirements of his own parents and children and brothers and sisters, and gives away charities to others. The *Zakāt* money also will be used first of all to help one's own poor relatives and then the other needy people. The inheritance will necessarily be divided among those who are nearest in relation to the deceased. As for others, the dying person may give them a part of his wealth as a gift or by trust and will. But in no case is he allowed to deprive his rightful heirs and give away everything to others. After this Divine Command the system of "Brotherhood" that had been established between the *Muhājirīn* and the *Anṣār* after the Hijrah also became abolished, for according to it the *Muhājirīn* and the *Anṣār* became heirs to one another only on the basis of their relationship of being the brethren in faith. Allah enjoined the law that inheritance will be divided only on the basis of blood relationship; however, a person could help his brother-in-faith by making him a gift or through a will if he so liked.

15. Allah in this verse has reminded the Holy Prophet that, like all other Prophets, He has taken from him too a solemn covenant which he should abide by strictly. A study of the preceding verse shows that the Covenant implies: "The Prophet will first himself obey and follow every Command received from Allah, and then make others also to obey and follow it: he will convey Allah's Commands intact to others and will show no laxity in the struggle to enforce them practically." This Covenant has been mentioned at several other places in the Qur'ān, e.g.

- (1) "He has appointed for you the same way of life which He appointed for Noah and which (O Muḥammad,) We have now revealed to you, and

which We had already enjoined on Abraham and Moses and Jesus, stressing : 'Establish this Way and be not divided in it.' (Ash-Shūrā:13).

- (2) "And remember that Allah had made the Covenant with the people who had been given the Scripture, and enjoined: 'You shall spread the teachings of the Book among the people and shall not conceal them.' (Āl-'Imrān: 187).
- (3) "Remember that We made a solemn Covenant with the children of Israel to the effect: 'Worship (and submit to) none save Allah.' (Al-Baqarah: 83).
- (4) "Has not the Covenant of the Book been taken from them... : 'Hold fast the Book We have given you, and keep in mind what it contains: it is expected that you will refrain from wrong ways.' (Al-A'rāf: 169-171).
- (5) "Keep in mind the blessing Allah has bestowed on you and do not forget the solemn Covenant which He made with you, when you said, 'We have heard and submitted.' " (Al-Mā'idah: 7)

The reason why Allah is reminding of this Covenant in this context is that the Holy Prophet was feeling hesitant to break the custom of ignorance in respect of the adopted relations due to the apprehension that the enemies of Islam would put him to a disadvantage. He was feeling shy time and again at the thought: The question is of marrying a woman. I may take this initiative with the purest intention only for the sake of a social reform, but the enemies will certainly say that I have done so for the purpose of satisfying my sensual desires, and I am in fact trying to deceive others under the guise of a reformer. That is why Allah assures him, saying: "You are a Prophet appointed by Us. Like all other Prophets, you also are bound in the Covenant that you will carry out whatever Command We give yourself and command others to follow it. Therefore, you should not bother at all about taunts and derision by others, do not be afraid and fight shy of others, and carry out without hesitation the service that We want to take from you."

A section of the people think that this Covenant is the covenant that was taken from all the Prophets and their communities, who came before the Holy Prophet, to the effect that they would believe in the Prophet who came afterwards and cooperate with him. On the basis of this interpretation they claim that the door to Prophethood is still open after the Holy Prophet and this covenant has been taken from the Holy Prophet too, that his followers will believe in the prophet who will come after him. But the context in which the verse occurs is explicit that this interpretation is absolutely wrong. There is no occasion whatever in the context to indicate that other prophets will come also after the Holy Prophet and his

followers should believe in them. If the verse is read in this sense, it becomes irrelevant and incoherent. Moreover, there is no indication in the words of the verse to show which covenant is implied here. Therefore, to find out the nature of the covenant, we shall have to turn to other verses of the Qur'ān in which mention has been made of the covenants taken from the Prophets. Now, if only one sort of the covenants had been mentioned in the entire Qur'ān, *i.e.*, the covenant that the people shall believe in the prophets coming afterwards, it would be correct to think that here also the covenant implied the same covenant. But anyone who has studied the Qur'ān with an open mind knows that it has mentioned many covenants, which were taken from the Prophets and their followers. Therefore, only that covenant from among the different covenant would be implied here, which fitted in with the context here, and not the one which was altogether irrelevant. Such wrong interpretations reveal the mentality of the people who wish to draw no guidance from the Qur'ān but want to re-interpret it instead.

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

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

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

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

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

21. "The believers": All those who accepted the Holy Prophet as Allah's Messenger and became included among his followers, which comprised both the true believers and the hypocrites. In this paragraph Allah has made mention of the

Muslim community as a whole. In the following three paragraphs the attitude of the hypocrites has been commented upon, and the next two deal with the Holy Prophet and the true believers.

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

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

24. That is, "When the Banī Quraizah also joined the invaders, the hypocrites had a good excuse for defection and they started asking the Holy Prophet for leave to go and protect their houses and families, which, they said, had been endangered, whereas at that time the Holy Prophet was responsible for the defence and protection of all the people of Madinah. After the treachery of the Quraizah it was for the Holy Prophet to devise plans for the protection of the city and its people and not of the soldiers of the army individually."

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

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

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

يَجِدُونَ لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا¹⁷ قَدْ يَعْلَمُ اللَّهُ الْمُعَوِّقِينَ
مِنْكُمْ وَالْمُعَايِلِينَ لِإِخْوَانِهِمْ هَلُمَّ إِلَيْنَا وَلَا يَأْتُونَ الْبَاسَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا¹⁸
أَشْخَعَةٌ عَلَيْهِمْ فَإِذَا جَاءَ الْخَوْفُ رَأَيْتَهُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَيْكَ تَدَاوُرَ أَعْيُنِهِمْ
كَالَّذِي يُغْشَى عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْمَوْتِ فَإِذَا ذَهَبَ الْخَوْفُ سَلَفُوا¹⁹ وَمَا يَلْتَمَسُ
جِدَادٌ أَشْخَعَةٌ عَلَى الْخَيْرِ أُولَئِكَ لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا فَأَحْبَطَ اللَّهُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ
عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا²⁰ يَحْسَبُونَ الْأَحْزَابَ لَمْ يَذْهَبُوا وَإِنْ يَأْتِ الْأَحْزَابُ يَوَدُّونَ
أَنْ يُكْفَرُوا بِهِمْ بِأَدُونٍ فِي الْأَعْرَابِ يَسْأَلُونَ عَنْ أَنْبِيَائِكُمْ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيكُمْ مَتَى
فَعَمَّاوَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا²¹ لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِمَنْ كَانَ
يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا²² وَكُنْتُمْ الرَّاسِخِينَ الْأَحْزَابُ
قَالُوا هَذَا مَا وَعَدَنَا اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَصَدَقَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَمَا زَادَهُمْ إِلَّا
إِيمَانًا وَتَسْلِيمًا²³ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ رِجَالٌ صَدَقُوا مَا عَاهَدُوا اللَّهَ عَلَيْهِ فَمِنْهُمْ
مَنْ قَتَلَ نَفْسَهُ نَجَبًا وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ قَتَلَ نَفْسَهُ وَمَا يَذُنُّهُ اللَّهُ يَجْزِي اللَّهُ
الضَّالِّينَ بِصِدْقِهِمْ وَيُعَذِّبُ الْمُلِيقِينَ إِنْ شَاءَ أَوْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنْ
كَانَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا²⁴ وَرَدَّ اللَّهُ الدِّينَ كَفَرُوا بِغَيْظِهِمْ لَمْ يَأْتُوا خَيْرًا وَكُلَّ
اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الْقِتَالَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ قَوِيًّا عَزِيزًا²⁵ وَأَنْزَلَ الدِّينَ ظَاهِرُهُمْ
مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مِنْ صَيَّاصِيمٍ وَقَدْ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الرَّجْحُ فَرِيقًا قَتَلُوا
وَتَأْسَرُونَ قَرِيبًا²⁶ وَأَوْرَثَكُمْ أَرْضَهُمْ وَدِيَارَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ وَأَرْضًا لَمْ
تَطُوتُهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرًا²⁷ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِمَ أَذْجَبُكُمْ إِنْ
كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَرِئِيئَهَا فَتَعَالَيْنَ أُمَتِّعْكُمْ وَاسْرِيحْكُمْ سَرِيحًا



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

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

Allah turned back the disbelievers: they retreated in their rage without gaining any advantage, and Allah was sufficient to fight on behalf of the believers: Allah is All-Powerful, All-Mighty. Allah brought down from their fortresses those of the people of the Book, who had joined forces with the invaders⁴⁰ and created such terror in their hearts that some of them you are slaying today and some taking as prisoners. He made you heirs of their land and their dwellings and their wealth and gave you that land which you had never trodden before. Allah is All-Powerful. 25-27

[Contd. from p. 85]

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

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

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

31. Lexically, this verse has two meanings: (1) "When you return victorious from a war, they receive you warmly, and try to impress you with a glib tongue that they too are sincere believers and they too have made their contribution to promote the cause of Islam, and therefore, they too deserve a share from the booty." (2) "If victory is attained these people show great powers of the tongue at the time of the division of the spoils and make great demands for their shares, recounting their services to the cause of Islam."

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

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

34. In view of the context in which this verse occurs, the object of presenting the Holy Prophet's conduct and way of life as a model was to teach a lesson to the people, who had been motivated by considerations of selfish interests and personal safety on the occasion of the Battle of the Trench. They are being addressed, as if to say: "You claimed to be the believers and Muslims and followers of the Holy Messenger. You should have seen how the Messenger whose followers you claimed to be conducted himself on the occasion. If the leader of a group is himself a seeker of personal security, is lazy and indolent, gives preference to personal interests to everything else, and is ever ready to flee danger, it would be reasonable to expect manifestation of such weakness from his followers. But here the case was different. The Holy Prophet endured along with others every toil and labour that he asked others to endure, and endured better than others; there was no trouble which others might have experienced and he himself did not. He was among those who dug the trench, and endured hunger and other afflictions just as the common Muslims did. He did not leave the battlefield even for a moment during the siege nor retreated an inch. After the betrayal of the Banī Qurayzah his own family had also been exposed to danger even as the families of the other Muslims were. He did not make any special arrangement for his own and his family's protection, which did not exist for others. He was always in the forefront to offer maximum sacrifices for the great objectives for which he was constantly asking others to make sacrifices. Therefore, whoever made a claim of being his follower should have followed the practical example set by the leader.

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

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

36. After drawing attention to the model of the Holy Prophet, Allah now presents the model of his Companions so that the character of the false claimants to faith and of the sincere followers of the Messenger is clearly contrasted.

Although both were alike apparently in the affirmation of the faith, both were counted as Muslims, and both attended at the Prayers, they were separated from each other as soon as the time of the trial approached, and it became clear who were loyal to Allah and His Messenger and who were Muslims only in name.

37. Here, one should keep verse 12 in view. There it was said that when the hypocrites and the people with diseased hearts found themselves surrounded by a huge force of ten to twelve thousand men from the front and by the Banī Quraizah from behind, they openly started saying: "The promises that Allah and His Messenger had made with us were nothing but a delusion. We were promised that if we believed in Allah's religion, His succour would be at our back and we would rule Arabia and the world outside and all the wealth of Caesar and Chosroes will be ours, but here we are that the whole of Arabia is bent upon exterminating us, and there is no sign yet of the armies of the angels in sight, who would save us and protect us against this grave calamity." Now they are being told: "One meaning of the promise of Allah and His Messenger was that which was understood by these false claimants to faith. The other meaning is that which is understood by the sincere and true Muslims. When they saw the storms of danger gathering, they too remembered the promises of Allah, but these promises did not mean that as soon as they affirmed the faith they would overwhelm and subdue the whole world without the slightest effort, and the angels would come to perform their coronation, but the promises actually meant that they would have to pass through severe trials, endure extreme hardships and afflictions, offer supreme sacrifices; then only will Allah bless them with His grace and they will be granted successes of the world and the Hereafter, which Allah has promised His believing servants.

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

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

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

Here, one should fully understand that faith and resignation is indeed a quality of the self which is put to trial and test at every command and demand of the Faith. At every step in life man comes across situations where the Faith either enjoins something or forbids something, or requires one to make sacrifices of life and wealth and time and desires of the self. At every such occasion the faith and conviction of the person who deviates from obedience will suffer decline and the faith and conviction of him who submits to the command and demand will be strengthened and enhanced. Although in the beginning a man becomes a believer and Muslim only by embracing the fundamental creed (*Kalimah*) of Islam, yet his state of faith does not remain static but is open to both deterioration and development. Decline in sincerity and the spirit of obedience causes it to deteriorate; so much so that constant retrogression may cause the person to reach the last limits of the faith where the slightest move backward may turn him from a believer to a hypocrite. Contrary to this, the more sincere a person is, the more perfect his obedience and the greater his devotion and dedication to the cause of the true Faith, the stronger and more sound will he grow in faith and may even attain the supreme rank of the truthful. But this increase and decrease in the faith has only the moral significance which can be judged and reckoned by none but Allah. As for the man, faith is simply the act of affirmation by which a Muslim enters Islam and is regarded as a Muslim as long as he remains steadfast to it. In this regard we cannot say that so and so is half a Muslim, or one-third a Muslim, and another one double a Muslim or triple a Muslim. Likewise, in legal rights the Muslims are equal and alike. It cannot be that one is regarded a greater believer and given more rights and another one a lesser believer and given less rights. In these aspects there can be no question of the increase and decrease in the faith, and in fact, in this very sense has Imām Abū Ḥanīfah said: "Faith in Islam neither increases nor decreases."

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

40. That is, Jews of the Banī Quraizah.

جَمِيلًا²⁸ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُرِيدُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَالذَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ أَعَدَّ
 لِلْمُحْسِنِينَ مِنْكُمْ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا²⁹ يَنْسَاءُ النَّبِيِّ مَنْ يَأْتِ مِنْكُمْ بِفَاحِشَةٍ
 مُّبِينَةٍ يُضَعَفْ لَهَا الْعَذَابُ ضِعْفَيْنِ ۖ وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا³⁰

مَنْ يَنْسَأُ النَّبِيَّ مِنْكُمْ فَبِحَدِّهِ يُضَعَفْ لَهَا الْعَذَابُ ضِعْفَيْنِ ۖ وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا

وَأَعْتَدْنَا لَهَا رِزْقًا كَرِيمًا³¹ يَنْسَاءُ النَّبِيِّ لَسْتُمْ كَأَحَدٍ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ إِنْ
 اتَّقَيْتُمْ فَلَا تَخْضَعْنَ بِالْقَوْلِ فَيَطْمَعَ الَّذِي فِي قَلْبِهِ مَرَضٌ وَقُلْنَ قَوْلًا
 مَعْرُوفًا³² وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْأُولَى وَأَقِمْنَ
 الصَّلَاةَ وَآتِينَ الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِعْنَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ
 عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا³³ وَأَذْكُرْنَ مَا يُكْتَلَى فِي
 بُيُوتِكُمْ مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَالْحِكْمَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ لَطِيفًا خَبِيرًا³⁴ إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ
 وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْقَنَاتِ وَالْقَنَاتِ وَالصَّادِقِينَ
 وَالصَّادِقَاتِ وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّابِرَاتِ وَالْخَشِيعِينَ وَالْخَشِيعَاتِ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ
 وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّابِرَاتِ وَالْحَافِظِينَ فُرُوجَهُمْ وَالْحَافِظَاتِ
 وَالذَّاكِرِينَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا³⁵
 وَمَا كَانَ لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ وَلَا الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ إِذَا قَضَى اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُمُ
 الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا مُّبِينًا³⁶
 وَإِذْ تَقُولُ لِلَّذِي أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَأَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِ أَمْسِكْ عَلَيْكَ زَوْجَكَ وَ
 اتَّقِ اللَّهَ وَتَخَفِي فِي نَفْسِكَ مَا اللَّهُ مُبْدِيهِمْ وَتَخْشَى النَّاسَ وَاللَّهُ أَحَقُّ
 أَنْ تَخْشَاهُ فَلَمَّا قَضَى زَيْدٌ مِنْهَا وَطَرًا زَوَّجْنَاكَهَا لِكَيْ لَا يَكُونَ عَلَى

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

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

Wives of the Prophet, you are not like the other women.⁴⁶ If you are Godfearing, do not talk in a soft voice lest the man of the diseased heart should cherish false hopes from you, but speak in an unaffected manner.⁴⁷ Stay in your houses,⁴⁸ and do not go about displaying your fineries as women used to do in the days of ignorance.⁴⁹ Establish the *Ṣalāt*, pay the *Zakāt*, and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah only intends to remove uncleanness from you, O people of the Prophet's household, and purify you completely.⁵⁰ Remember the Revelations of Allah and the wise sayings which are recited in your houses.⁵¹ Surely, Allah is the Knower of everything⁵² and is All-Aware. 32-34

Most surely⁵³ the men and the women who have surrendered themselves to Allah;⁵⁴ who are believing,⁵⁵ obedient,⁵⁶ truthful,⁵⁷ and patient;⁵⁸ who bow down before Allah,⁵⁹ practise charity,⁶⁰ observe the fasts,⁶¹ guard their private parts⁶² and remember Allah much:⁶³ Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a vast reward.⁶⁴ 35

It⁶⁵ does not behove a believing man and a believing woman that when Allah and His Messenger have given their decision in a matter, they should exercise an option in that matter of theirs; and whoever disobeys Allah and His Prophet, has indeed strayed into manifest error.⁶⁶ 36

O Prophet,⁶⁷ remember the time when you were saying to the man, whom Allah as well as you had favoured, "Keep your wife and fear Allah."⁶⁹ You were at that time keeping hidden in your heart that which Allah intended to reveal: you were fearing the people, whereas 37

Allah has a greater right that you should fear Him.⁷⁰ So, when Zaid had fulfilled his desire of her,⁷¹ We married (the divorced woman) to you⁷² so that there remains no hindrance for the believers in regard to the wives of their adopted sons when they have fulfilled their desire of them.⁷³ And Allah's Command had to be carried out.

Contd. from p. 91

41. The verses from here to 35 were sent down in the period contiguous to the Battle of the Trench and the raid on Bani Quraizah, whose background we have touched upon in the Introduction to this Sūrah. According to a tradition related in Muslim on the authority of Hadrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah, "One day when Hadrat Abū Bakr and Hadrat 'Umar visited the Holy Prophet, they saw that his wives were sitting around him and he was quiet. Addressing Hadrat 'Umar, he said: 'They are sitting around me as you see: they are asking for money for household expenditure'." At this both the Companions rebuked their daughters and said, "Why do you embarrass the Holy Prophet and demand from him that which he does not have." This event shows how hard pressed the Holy Prophet was economically at that time and how distressed and embarrassed he was feeling at his wives' demand for domestic expenditure during the period when a bitter conflict was going on between Islam and paganism.

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

This is termed *takhyīr*, i.e. to give the wife the option to decide for herself whether she would stay in wedlock or would separate from the husband. This was obligatory for the Holy Prophet because he had been commanded by Allah to offer such an option to his wives. If a lady from among the holy wives had opted to separate she would not have separated automatically but would have been separated by the Holy Prophet, as is clear from the words: "... I shall give you of these and send you off gracefully." But the Holy Prophet would certainly have separated her because as a Prophet it would not behove him not to honour the word. After divorce apparently the lady would have stood excluded from the category of the holy wives, and she would not be forbidden to any other Muslim;

for she would have chosen divorce from the Holy Prophet only for the sake of the world and its adornments of which she had been given the choice, and obviously the option could not be exercised in case she was forbidden to re-marry. On the other hand, the intention of the verse also seems that the Holy Prophet was not left with any authority to divorce the wives who chose Allah and His Messenger and the Hereafter in preference to the world. For *takhyir* had only two sides: if a wife opted for the world, she would be divorced; if she opted for Allah and His Messenger and the Hereafter, she would not be divorced. Obviously, if a lady chose one alternative, the other would become forbidden in her case by itself.

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

- (1) Once a husband has given this choice to a wife, he can neither withdraw it nor stop her from exercising it. However, it is not necessary that the woman must exercise it. She may choose to remain in wedlock with the husband, or may prefer to separate, or may opt nothing and let the right of divorce be annulled.
- (2) There are two conditions of this choice being transferred to the woman: (a) The husband should have given her the right of divorce in clear words, or if there was no clear mention of the divorce, he should have had the intention of giving this right; e.g. if he says, "You have the choice" or "your business is in your own hand," such indirect words will not transfer the right of divorce to the woman without the intention of the husband. If the woman claims it and the husband states on oath that he had no intention of giving the right of divorce, his statement will be admitted, unless the woman produces evidence to the effect that those words were said during a dispute, or in connection with divorce, because in that context delegation of the right would mean that the husband had the intention of giving the right of divorce. (b) The woman knows that she has been given the right of divorce. If she was absent, she should receive information of this, and if she is present, she should hear the words. Unless she hears the words, or receives the news, the right will not be transferred to her.
- (3) As to the time limit within which the wife has to exercise her right if the husband gives it her absolutely without specifying any limit, there is a difference of opinion among the jurists. Some jurists have expressed the opinion that the woman can exercise the right at the same sitting at which the husband gave it her; if she leaves the place without making a response, or turns her attention to something else which indicates that she

does not want to make a response, she forfeits the right invested in her and her choice no longer remains. This is the opinion of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān, Ḥaḍrat Ibn Mas'ūd, Ḥaḍrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah, 'Attā, Jābir bin Zaid, Mujāhid, Sha'bī, Nakha'ī, Imām Mālik, Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Imām Shāfe'ī, Imām Auzā'ī, Sufyān Thaurī and Abū Thaur. The other opinion is that her exercise of the choice is not confined to that sitting but she can exercise it even afterwards. This opinion is held by Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Basrī, Qatādah and Zuhri.

- (4) If the husband specifies a time limit and says, for instance, "You have the option for a month or a year, or your business is in your own hand for so long," the wife would enjoy the option only for that long. However, if he says, "You can exercise this option as and when you like," her option would be unlimited.
- (5) If the woman intends to obtain separation, she should express her intention clearly and definitely. Vague words which do not express the intention clearly will have no effect.
- (6) Legally, the husband can give the option to the wife in three forms: (a) He may say, "Your business is in your own hand;" or (b) he may say: "You have the option;" or (c) "You are divorced if you so please." The legal consequences of each are separate as explained below:
 - (a) If the husband has said: "Your business is in your own hand," and the woman responds clearly to the effect that she would opt for separation, it would amount to an irreversible divorce according to the Ḥanīfites. That is, after this the husband will forfeit his right to have her back as his wife. However, they can remarry if they so like after the expiry of the waiting period. And if the husband said, "Your affair is in your own hand to the extent of one divorce," this will be regarded as the first reversible divorce. That is, the husband can take her back as his wife within the waiting-period. But if the husband had the intention of all the three divorces at the time of delegating to the woman the right of divorce, or mentioned this specifically, the woman's exercise of the option in such a case would amount to divorce no matter whether she pronounces divorce thrice on herself or says only once that she has chosen separation or divorced herself.
 - (b) If the husband gives the woman the option to separate with the words: "You have the option," and the woman opts for separation in clear words, it will amount to one reversible divorce according to the Ḥanīfites even if the husband had the intention of giving option for three divorces. However, if the husband has clearly given option for three divorces, the three divorces will take place only on the woman's

exercise of the option for divorce. According to Imām Shāfi'ī, if at the time of giving the option, the husband had the intention of divorce, and the woman opts for separation, it will amount to one reversible divorce. According to Imām Mālik, it will amount to three divorces in case the wife had been enjoyed; in case she had not been enjoyed, the husband's claim to have intended only one divorce will be admitted.

- (c) In case the words "You are divorced if you so please" have been used and the woman has opted for divorce, it will be a reversible divorce and not an irreversible one.
- (7) If after the husband has given the option for separation, the woman chooses to remain in wedlock, no divorce will take place at all. This is the opinion of Ḥadīrat 'Umar, Ḥadīrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Ḥadīrat 'Ā'ishah, Ḥadīrat Abū ad-Dardā, Ibn 'Abbās and Ibn 'Umar, and the same has been adopted by majority of the jurists. When Masrūq asked Ḥadīrat 'Ā'ishah about this, she replied: "The Holy Prophet had given his wives the option and they chose to continue to live as his wives. Then, was it deemed to be a divorce?" The opinion of Ḥadīrat 'Alī and Zaid bin Thābit that has been reported in this regard is that one reversible divorce will take place. But according to another tradition these two great Companions also held the opinion that no divorce will take place at all.

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

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

45. The reason for giving a double punishment for a sin and a double reward for a good work is that those whom Allah honours with a high rank in society generally become the leaders of men and the majority of the people follow them for good or for evil. Thus, their evil does not remain their own evil but becomes the cause of a people's degeneration, and their goodness does not remain

their own goodness but becomes the cause of the true success of many other people also. Therefore, when they commit evil they are punished for their own as well as for others degeneration, and when they do good they are not only rewarded for their own good works but also for this that they guided others also to do good.

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

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

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

speaker regarded only his own child using abusive language as bad; as for others he would not mind if they used abusive language.

47. That is, "There is no harm if the other man is spoken to in case of a genuine need, but on such an occasion the woman's tone and manner of speech should be such as does not let the other man think that he could cherish any false hope from her. There should be no undue softness in her tone, no allurements in her conversation, no consciously affected mellowness in her voice, which should excite the male hearer's emotions and encourage him to make advances.

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

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

48. The word *qarna* in the original is derived from *qarar* according to some lexicographers and from *waqār* according to others. In the first sense, it will mean: "Settle down, stick firmly;" and in the second sense: "Live peacefully, sit with dignity." In both the cases the verse means to impress that the woman's real sphere of activity is her home; she should carry out her functions within that sphere peacefully, and she should come out of the house only in case of a genuine

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

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

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

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

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

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

This explanation makes it abundantly clear that what Allah forbids women is to move out of their houses showing off their physical charms and beauty. He instructs them to stay in their houses because their real sphere of activity is their home and not the world outside. However, if they have to move out of the house for an out-door duty, they should not move out as the women used to do in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance. For it does not behove the women of a Muslim society to walk out fully embellished to make their face and figure conspicuous by adornments and tight-fitting or transparent dresses, and to walk coquettishly. These are the ways of ignorance which Islam does not approve. Now everybody

can see for himself whether the culture which is being made popular in our country is the culture of Islam, according to the Qur'ān, or the culture of ignorance.

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

But if somebody says that the word *ahl al-bait* has been used only for the wives and none else can be included in it, it will also be wrong. Not only this that the word "household" includes all the members of a man's family, but the Holy Prophet has himself explained that this includes even himself. According to Ibn Abī Hātim, once when Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah was asked about Ḥaḍrat 'Ali, she said, "Do you ask me about the person who was among the most loved ones of the Holy Prophet and whose wife was the Holy Prophet's daughter and most beloved to him?" Then she related the event when the Holy Prophet had called Ḥaḍrat 'Ali and Fāṭimah and Ḥasan and Ḥusain (may Allah be pleased with them all) and covered them all with a sheet of cloth and prayed: "O Allah, these are my household, remove uncleanness from them and make them pure." Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah says, "I said: I also am included among your household (i.e. I may also be covered under the sheet and prayed for)." Thereupon the Holy Prophet replied:

"You stay out. you, of course, are already included." A great many Aḥādīth bearing on this subject have been related by traditionists like Muslim, Tirmidhī, Aḥmad, Ibn Jarīr, Ḥākim, Baihaqī, etc. on the authority of Abū Sa'īd Khudrī, Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, Ḥaḍrat Anas, Ḥaḍrat Umm Salamah, Ḥaḍrat Wāthilah bin Aqṣā' and some other Companions, which show that the Holy Prophet declared Ḥaḍrat 'Ali and Fāṭimah and their two sons as his *ahl al-bait*. Therefore, the view of those who exclude them from the *ahl al-bait* is not correct.

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

A section of the people have not only misconstrued this verse to the extent that they have made the word *ahl al-bait* exclusively applicable to Ḥaḍrat 'Ali and Fāṭimah and their children to the exclusion of the holy wives, but have gone even further and concluded wrongly from its words "Allah only intends to remove uncleanness from you and purify you completely", that Ḥaḍrat 'Ali and Fāṭimah and their children are infallable like the Prophets of Allah. They say that "uncleanliness" implies error and sin, and, as Allah says, these *ahl al-bait* have been purified of this, whereas the words of the verse do not say that uncleanness has been removed from them and they have been purified. But the words are to the effect: "Allah intends to remove uncleanness from you and purify you completely." The context also does not tell that the object here is to mention the virtues and excellences of the Holy Prophet's household. On the contrary, they have been advised here what they should do and what they should not, because Allah intends to purify them. In other words, they have been told that if they adopted such and such an attitude and way of life, they will be blessed with cleanliness, otherwise not. However, if the words "Allah intends to remove uncleanness from you . . ." are taken to mean that Allah has made them infallable, there is no reason why all the Muslims who perform their ablutions before offering the Prayer are not held as infallable, because about them also

Allah says: "But Allah wills to purify you and complete His blessings upon you."
(Al-Mā'idah: 6)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

58. That is, "They patiently and steadfastly bear and face all the obstacles, dangers, difficulties and losses that they might have to encounter in following the right way taught by Allah and His Messenger and in establishing

Allah's Religion in the world; no fear and no temptation and no lust of the self can succeed in diverting them from the right way."

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

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

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

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

63. "Remember Allah much" means that one should mention Allah's name in one way or other at all times in every business of life. Man cannot develop such a state of the mind unless the thought of God becomes deeply embedded in his heart. When this idea has passed beyond his conscious mind and settled deep in his subconscious and unconscious mind, then only he will remember and mention God's name in whatever he does and in whatever he says. He will begin with *bismillah* when he eats and say *al-hamdu lillah* when he finishes; he will remember Allah when he goes to bed, and mention Allah's name when he gets up. In his conversation also he will again and again pronounce *bismillah*, *al-hamdu-lillah*, *inshā-Allah*, *mā shā Allah*, etc. and ask for Allah's help in every matter, and thank Him for every blessing. He will seek His mercy in every affliction, and turn to Him in every trouble. He will fear Him on encountering every evil, and ask for His forgiveness when he happens to have committed an error and will pray to Him for fulfilment of every need. In short, in every state and in every business of life his function will be to remember Allah.

This, in fact, is the essence of the Islamic life. For all other acts of worship there is a prescribed time when they are performed, and one is free when one has performed them. But this is the worship which has no special time; it has to be performed constantly so that it links up the man's life with Allah and His service permanently. The other worships and religious acts themselves also become meaningful only when the heart of man remains inclined to Allah not only at the time when the act is actually being carried out but at all times when the tongue is uttering Allah's name constantly. In such a state as this worship and religious acts develop and flourish in a man's life precisely in the same manner as a plant grows in a congenial climate and environment. Contrary to this, the example of the religious services and worships which are carried out only on special times and occasions in the life which is devoid of this constant remembrance of Allah is of the plant which has been planted in an un-congenial climate, and which is growing only due to the special attention and care of the gardener. This very thing has been explained by the Holy Prophet in a *Hadīth*, thus:

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

64. This verse plainly tells what qualities and characteristics are of real worth in the sight of Allah. These are the basic values of Islam which have been compressed into one sentence. As regards these, there is no difference between the man and woman. However, as for their life-activity, the two sexes have separate spheres to function. The males have to function in some particular spheres and the females in some others. But if they possess these qualities and characteristics equally, Allah will raise them to equal ranks and bless them with equal rewards. It will in no way affect their rank and reward if one carried out household chores and the other performed the duties of caliphate and enforced the *Shari'ah* injunctions; one reared children in the house and the other went to the battlefield and fought for the sake of Allah and His religion.

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

66. Ibn 'Abbās, Qatādaḥ, 'Ikrimah and Muqātil bin Ḥayyān say that this verse was sent down at the time when the Holy Prophet proposed *Ḥaḍrat Zainab* for *Ḥaḍrat Zaid*, and *Zainab* and her relatives did not agree. According to Ibn

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

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

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

Muslims as well as the Holy Prophet himself how they should conduct themselves under the circumstances.

68. It refers to Ḥadrat Zaid as has been mentioned clearly below. In order to understand how Allah had favoured him and how the Holy Prophet, it is necessary here to relate his story briefly. He was the son of Ḥārithah bin Shurahbil, a person of the Kalb tribe, and his mother, Su'dā bint Tha'labah, was from the Banī Ma'n, a branch of the Tay tribe. When he was eight years old, she took him along to her parents. There the people of Banī Qain bin Jasn raided their camp, plundered their goods and took some men prisoners, Ḥadrat Zaid included. Then they sold Zaid at the fair of 'Ukāz near Tā'if. His buyer was Ḥākīm bin Ḥizām, a nephew of Ḥadrat Khadijah. Ḥākīm brought him to Makkah and presented him to his paternal aunt. When the Holy Prophet married Ḥadrat Khadijah he found Zaid in her service and was so impressed by his good manners and conduct that he asked him of her. Thus, this fortunate boy entered the service of the best of men, whom Allah, after a few years, was going to appoint a Prophet. Ḥadrat Zaid at that time was 15 years old. Afterwards when his father and uncle came to know that their child was at Makkah, they came to the Holy Prophet and requested him to return him in exchange for ransom. The Holy Prophet said, "I shall call the boy and leave it to him whether he would like to go with you or stay with me. If he chose to go, I would take no ransom but would let him go with you. However, if he chose to stay back, I am not the one who would turn out a person who would like to stay with me." They said, "This is perfectly right and just. Please ask the boy." The Holy Prophet called Zaid and asked him, "Do you know these two gentlemen?" He said, "Yes sir, this is my father and this my uncle." The Holy Prophet then said, "Well, you know them as well as me. You have the choice to go with them, or stay with me if you so desire." He said, "I have no wish to leave you and go with anyone else." His father and uncle said, "Zaid, will you prefer slavery to freedom, and choose to stay with others in preference to your parents and family?" He replied, "After what I have seen of this person I cannot now prefer anything else of the world to him." Hearing the reply the father and uncle of Zaid were reconciled to his remaining with the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet set Zaid free immediately and proclaimed before a gathering of the Quraish in the Ka'bah, "Bear witness that hence-forth Zaid is my son: he will receive inheritance from me and I from him." Thereafter, he began to be called Zaid bin Muhammad by the people. All this happened before the Holy Prophet's advent as a Prophet. Then, when he was blessed with Prophethood by Allah, there were four persons who accepted his claim to it without a moment's hesitation as soon as they heard of it from him. They were Ḥadrat Khadijah, Ḥadrat Zaid, Ḥadrat 'Alī and Ḥadrat Abū Bakr. Ḥadrat Zaid was 30 years old then, and had already spent 15 years in the Holy Prophet's service. In the fourth year after Hijrah, the Holy Prophet married him to his first cousin Ḥadrat Zainab.

[Contd. on p. 112]

الْمُؤْمِنِينَ حَرَجٌ فِي أَزْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ عِيَالِهِمْ إِذَا قَضَوْا مِنْهُنَّ وَطَرًا وَكَانَ أَمْرٌ
 بِاللَّهِ مَفْعُولًا³⁷ مَا كَانَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ مِنْ حَرَجٍ فِيمَا فَرَضَ اللَّهُ لَهُ سُنَّةَ اللَّهِ
 فِي الدِّينِ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ قَدَرًا مَقْدُورًا³⁸ الَّذِينَ يُبَلِّغُونَ
 رِسَالَاتِ اللَّهِ وَيَخْشَوْنَهُ وَلَا يَخْشَوْنَ أَحَدًا إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ حَسِيبًا³⁹
 مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَا أَحَدٍ مِنْ رِجَالِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ⁴⁰ وَ
 كَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا⁴¹ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا⁴²
 وَسَبِّحُوهُ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا⁴³ هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَلِّيْ عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَلَائِكَتُهُ لِيُخْرِجَكُمْ مِنَ
 الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَكَانَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَحِيمًا⁴⁴ تَجِيئَتُهُمْ يَوْمَ بَلْقُونَهُ سَلَامٌ
 وَآمَنَ لَهُمْ آخِرًا كَرِيمًا⁴⁵ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَاهِدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَ
 نَذِيرًا⁴⁶ وَدَاعِيًا إِلَى اللَّهِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَسِرَاجًا مُنِيرًا⁴⁷ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَا أَيُّهَا
 اللَّهُمَّ مِنْ فَضْلِكَ كَثِيرًا⁴⁸ وَلَا تُطِعِ الْكَافِرِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ وَدَعْ أَذْهَبَهُمْ
 وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا⁴⁹ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا تَكَرَّمْتُمْ
 الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ لَمْ تَطْلُقْتَهُنَّ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَسْأَلُوهُنَّ فَمَا لَكُمْ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ عَدُوَّةٍ
 تَعْتَدُونَهَا فَمَنْ عَوْهُنَّ وَسَرَخُوهُنَّ سَرَاحًا جَبِيلًا⁵⁰ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِنَّا أَحْلَلْنَا
 لَكَ أَزْوَاجَكَ الَّتِي آتَيْتَ أَجُورَهُنَّ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ يَمِينُكَ وَمِمَّا أَفَاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ وَ
 بَنَاتِ عَمِكَ وَبَنَاتِ عَمَّتِكَ وَبَنَاتِ خَالَكَ وَبَنَاتِ خَالَتِكَ الَّتِي هَاجَرْنَ مَعَكَ
 وَامْرَأَةً مُؤْمِنَةً إِنْ وَهَبَتْ نَفْسَهَا لِلنَّبِيِّ إِنْ أَرَادَ النَّبِيُّ أَنْ يَسْتَنْكِحَهَا
 خَالِصَةً لَكَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ قَدْ عَلِمْنَا مَا فَرَضْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ فِي أَزْوَاجِهِمْ
 وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ لِكَيْلَا يَكُونَ عَلَيْكَ حَرَجٌ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا⁵¹

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

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

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

O Prophet,⁸¹ We have sent you as a witness,⁸² a bearer of good news and a warner,⁸³ an inviter to Allah by His leave⁸⁴ and a luminous lamp. Give good news to those who have believed (in you) that there are great bounties in store for them from Allah, so do not yield to the disbelievers and the hypocrites, disregard their persecution and put your trust in Allah: for Allah is sufficient for being entrusted with all one's affairs. 45-48

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

O Prophet, We have made lawful to you those of your wives, whose dowers you have paid,⁸⁷ and those women who come into your possession out of the slavegirls granted by Allah, and the daughters of your paternal uncles and aunts, and of your maternal uncles and aunts, who have migrated with you, and the believing woman who gives herself to the Prophet if the Prophet may desire to marry her.⁸⁸ This privilege is for you only, not for the other believers.⁸⁹ We know what restrictions We have imposed on the other believers concerning their 50

wives and slavegirls. (You have been made an exception) so that there may be no hindrance to you;⁹⁰ and Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Merciful.

Contd. from p. 109]

paid her dower on his behalf and provided them with necessary articles for setting up the house.

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

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

70. Some people have misconstrued this sentence to mean this: The Holy Prophet desired to marry Ḥadrat Zainab and wanted that Zaid should divorce her. But when Zaid came to the Holy Prophet and said that he wanted to divorce his wife, the Holy Prophet stopped him from this only half-heartedly. At this Allah said: "You were keeping hidden in your heart that which Allah intended to reveal." The real meaning, however, is contrary to this. If this the sentence is read with verses 1, 2, 3 and 7 of this Sūrah, one can clearly see that in the very days when bitterness was increasing between Ḥadrat Zaid and his wife, Allah had hinted to His Prophet that when Zaid had divorced his wife, he would have to marry the divorced lady. But since the Holy Prophet knew what it meant to marry the divorced wife of the adopted son in the contemporary Arab society, and that too at a time when apart from a handful of the Muslims the entire country had become jealous of him, he was hesitant to take any step in that direction. That is why when Ḥadrat Zaid expressed his intention to divorce his wife, the Holy Prophet said to him, "Fear Allah and do not divorce your wife." What he meant by this was that Zaid should not divorce his wife so that he was saved from facing the trial, otherwise in case the divorce was pronounced he would have to comply with the command, and thus provoke a severe storm of criticism and vilification against himself. But when the Holy Prophet deliberately forbade Zaid to divorce his wife so that he himself might be saved from what he feared would cause him defamation, Allah found this below the high position that He wanted His Prophet

to enjoy, whereas Allah intended to effect a great reform through this marriage of the Prophet. The words "You were fearing the people, whereas Allah has a greater right that you should fear Him," clearly point to the same theme.

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

'Allāma Ālūsī also in his *Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī* has given the same meaning of it. He says, "This is an expression of displeasure on abandoning the better course, which was that the Holy Prophet should have kept quiet, or should have told Zaid to do as he liked. The displeasure amounted to this: 'Why did you tell Zaid to keep his wife, whereas I had informed you beforehand that Zainab would be included among your wives?'"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Their first objection was that he had married his own daughter-in-law, whereas according to his own law the son's wife is forbidden for the father. This was answered by saying: "Muhammad is not the father of any of your men." That is, Zaid was not his real son, and so it was not unlawful to marry his divorced wife.

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

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

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

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

78. This is meant to instruct the Muslims to the effect: When the Messenger of Allah is being showered with taunts and abuses by the enemies and his person being made the target of a propaganda campaign to frustrate his mission, the believers should neither listen to these absurd things unconcerned nor should become themselves also involved in the doubts and suspicions spread by the enemies nor should resort to abusive language in retaliation, but they should turn to Allah and remember Him more than usual as a special measure. The meaning of "remembering Allah much" has been explained in E.N. 63 above. "To glorify Allah morning and evening" means to glorify Him constantly, to express His holiness and purity by word of mouth and not merely by counting beads on the rosary.

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

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

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

Yûnus:10, thus: "Therein their prayer will be 'Glory to Thee, O Lord,' and their greeting: 'Peace be to you,' and the burden of their hymn: 'Praise is for Allah alone, Lord of the universe.'"

81. After admonishing the Muslims, Allah now addresses a few words of consolation to His Prophet, as if to say: "We have blessed you with such and such a high rank and raised you to an exalted place of honour. Your opponents will not be able to harm you in any way by their propaganda campaign of slander and calumny. Therefore, you should not take their mischief to heart, nor give any weight to their propaganda. You should continue doing the duties of your mission, and let them utter whatever nonsense they like." Along with this, incidentally, the other people, both the believers and the unbelievers, also have been told that the person they have to deal with is not an ordinary man but a great personality, whom Allah has raised to the highest ranks of honour and glory.

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

- (1) *Verbal evidence*, i.e. the Prophet should bear out the truth of the realities and principles on which Allah's Religion is based and tell the world plainly that they are the truth and all that is opposed to them is falsehood. He should rise to proclaim without hesitation and fear the Being of Allah and His Unity, the existence of the angels, the coming down of Revelation, the occurrence of life-after-death, the Hell and Heaven, all are realities, even if they appear strange to the world, and the people mock the one presenting them, or call him a madman. Likewise, the Prophet should openly present before the people the concepts, values, principles and rules pertaining to morality and civilization and social life that God has revealed to him, and reject as wrong all the concepts and ways which are prevalent and are opposed to them, even if the whole world rejects them as wrong and violates them in practice. Similarly, the Prophet should proclaim as lawful what is lawful in Allah's Law even if the whole world regards it as unlawful, and should proclaim as unlawful whatever is unlawful in Allah's Law even if the world regards it as lawful and pure.
- (2) *Practical evidence*: That is, the Prophet in his own life should practically demonstrate all that he has been commissioned to present before the world. His life should be free from every shade of that which he calls evil, and his own character should clearly reflect that which he calls good; he should be the foremost in carrying out what he regards as obligatory, and most cautious in refraining from what he calls sinful. He should exert his utmost to enforce the code of life which he calls Divine. His own character and conduct should bear out how sincere and truthful he is in his

invitation; and his own self should be such a model of his teaching that anyone who sees him should know what kind of a man he wants to produce by the Faith to which he invites the world, what kind of a character he wants to instil in him and what system of life he wants to be established through him in the world.

- (3) *Evidence in the Hereafter:* That is, when the Court of Allah is established in the Hereafter, the Prophet should give evidence to prove that he had conveyed to the people the whole message, without making any alteration or change in it, that had been entrusted to him, and that he had shown no slackness in making the truth manifest before them, by word and by deed. On the basis of this evidence it will be determined what reward the believers deserve and what punishment the disbelievers deserve.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

83. One should note that a person's giving the good news of a good end for belief and righteous acts and the warning of an evil end for disbelief and evil acts, in his personal capacity, is a different thing, and another's being appointed by Allah as a bearer of the good news and a warner is quite another thing. The one who is appointed to this office by Allah necessarily possesses an authority to give the good news and administer the warnings due to which his good news and his warnings are invested with legality. His giving a good news for an act has the meaning that the Greatest of all Judges, Who has sent him, approves of the act and holds it worthy of a reward; so, it is certainly imperative or obligatory or commendable in nature, and its doer will surely get a reward. On the other hand, his giving a warning of an evil end for an act has the meaning that the Sovereign forbids that act; so, it is certainly sinful and unlawful, and its doer will surely be punished. The good news and warnings of the one who is not divinely appointed cannot ever be invested with such an authority.

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

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

this meaning only chaste words have been used in every language of the world and not obscene words.

As far as the Qur'ān and *Sunnah* are concerned, *nikāh* is a term, which either implies only contract of marriage, or intercourse after the contract of marriage; but it has nowhere been used for intercourse outside marriage. This kind of intercourse has been called *zinā* (adultery) by the Qur'ān and *Sunnah* and not *nikāh*.

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

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

- (1) Although the word "believing women" has been used, which apparently may give the impression that the law enunciated in this verse is not applicable to the women of the people of the Book, yet all scholars are agreed that this very injunction is applicable to them also. That is, in case a Muslim has married such a woman, all the injunctions relating to her divorce, dower, waiting-period (*'iddat*) and provision at divorce are the same as of marriage with a believing woman. The scholars are also agreed that Allah's mentioning the believing women here in particular is actually meant to tell the Muslims that only the believing women are suitable for them. That is, although it is permissible for them to marry Jewish and Christian women, it is not proper and commendable. In other words, the Qur'ān seems to impress that Allah expects that the believers would marry only the believing women.
- (2) The word *mas* (to touch) here has been used for intercourse by implication. Thus, the verse apparently implies that if the husband has not had intercourse with the woman, even though he has had seclusion with her and has even touched her with the hand, she will not have to observe the waiting-term (*'iddat*) in case of divorce. But the jurists, for the sake of precaution, have decreed that if they have had seclusion proper (i.e. seclusion during which intercourse could be possible), waiting-period will have to be observed if divorce is pronounced after it, and the waiting-period would be annulled only in case divorce was pronounced before they have had the seclusion.
- (3) The annulment of the waiting-period in case of divorce before the event of seclusion means that in this case the man forfeits his right to take the woman back as his wife, and the woman becomes entitled to marry anyone she likes immediately after the divorce. But it should be borne in

mind that this applies only to the divorce which is pronounced before the event of the seclusion. If a woman's husband dies before having had seclusion, the waiting-period that has to be observed after death will not be annulled, but she will have to pass the same waiting-period of four months and ten days as is obligatory for a married woman in normal conditions. (*Iddat* is the waiting-period before the expiry of which a divorced woman or a widow is forbidden to remarry).

- (4) The words "they do not have to fulfil a waiting-period for you", show that the waiting-period is a right of the man on the woman. But it does not mean that this is only the man's right. It, in fact, includes two other rights as well: the right of the children, and the right of Allah or of the Law. The man's right is on the ground that he has the right to take the woman back as his wife during the period, and also on the ground that the proof of the parentage of his children, which depends on the woman's being pregnant or otherwise, becomes established in the waiting-period. The reason for including the right of the children is that the proof of a child's parentage is necessary for the establishment of his legal rights and his moral status also depends on this that his parentage should not be doubtful. The reason for including the right of Allah (or the right of the Law) is that even if the people and their children become heedless of their rights, the Divine Law requires that their rights should be protected. That is why even if a man gives a warrant to a woman that after his death or after obtaining divorce from him, there will be no waiting-period binding on her from him, the Divine Law will in no case annul it.
- (5) "Provide them with something and send them away with kindness"; The intention of this injunction would be fulfilled by acting in either of the two ways: If the dower had been fixed at the time of marriage, and then divorce pronounced before the event of seclusion proper, payment of half of the dower will be obligatory, as enjoined in Al-Baqarah: 237. To give more than what is obligatory is not binding but certainly commendable. For instance, it is commendable that besides paying half of the dower the man should let the woman retain the bridal garments, or any other articles that he had sent her for the occasion of marriage. But if no dower had been fixed at the time of marriage, it is obligatory to pay her something before sending her away, and this "something" should be according to the status and financial means of the man, as has been enjoined in Al-Baqarah: 236. One section of the scholars hold that something in any case has to be paid in case of divorce as an obligation whether dower has been fixed or not.
- (6) "Sending off gracefully" does not only mean that the woman should be provided with something on divorce but this also that separation should be

adopted in a gentlemanly way, without any kind of vilification. If a man does not happen to like a woman, or there has been some other cause of complaint due to which he does not want to keep the woman, he should divorce her like a gentleman and send her away. He should not start mentioning her faults and relating his complaints against her before the people so as to also prejudice them against her. This instruction of the Qur'ān clearly shows that annexing the enforcement of divorce to the permission of a local council or court is wholly against the wisdom and spirit of the Divine Law, for in that case there remains no chance of "sending her away gracefully", but defamation, revilement and vilification do inevitably result even if the man does not so will. Moreover, the words of the verse also do not admit that the power of the man to divorce should be bound up with the permission of a local council or court. The verse is clearly giving the married man the power of divorce and placing on him alone the responsibility that if he wants to release the woman before touching her he must pay her half the dower as an obligation, or something else according to his means. From this the object of the verse clearly seems to be that in order to prevent divorce from being taken lightly the man should be placed under the burden of a financial responsibility so that he himself uses his power of divorce with sense, and there is no chance of an external interference in the internal affairs of the two families.

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

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

divorce will fall on her. The jurists who hold the view have further differed as to the extent this kind of divorce will have effect.

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

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

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

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

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

About this answer also one should note that it was not meant to satisfy the disbelievers and the hypocrites but those Muslims to whom the opponents of Islam

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

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

- (1) The woman who came into his possession from among the slave-girls granted by Allah. According to this the Holy Prophet selected for himself *Ḥaḍrat Raihānah* from among the prisoners of war taken at the raid against the *Banī Quraizah*, *Ḥaḍrat Juwalriyah* from among the prisoners of war taken at the raid against the *Banī al-Mustaliq*, *Ḥaḍrat Safiyyah* out of the prisoners of war captured at *Khaiber*, and *Ḥaḍrat Māriah* the Copt, who was presented by *Maqauqis* of Egypt. Out of these he set three of them free and married them, but had conjugal relations with *Māriah* on the ground of her being his slave-girl. In her case there is no proof that the Holy Prophet set her free and married her.
- (2) The ladies from among his first cousins, who emigrated along with him. The words "who emigrated with you" do not mean that they accompanied the Holy Prophet in his migration journey but this that they also had migrated in the way of Allah for the sake of Islam. The Holy Prophet was given the choice to marry any one of them he liked. Accordingly, in A.H. 7 he married *Ḥaḍrat Umm Ḥabībah*. (Incidentally, in this verse it has been elucidated that the daughters of one's paternal and maternal uncles and aunts are lawful for a Muslim. In this regard the Islamic Law is different both from the Christian Law and from the Jewish Law. Among the Christians one cannot marry a woman whose line of descent joins one's own anywhere in the last seven generations, and among the Jews it is permissible even to marry one's real niece, i.e. daughter of one's brother or sister).
- (3) The believing woman who gives herself to the Prophet, i.e. who is prepared to give herself in marriage to the Prophet without a dower, and he may like to marry her. On account of this permission the Holy Prophet took *Ḥaḍrat Maimūnah* as his wife in *Shawwāl*, A.H. 7, but he did not think he should have conjugal relations with her without paying her the dower. Therefore, he paid her the dower even though she did not demand or desire it. Some commentators say that the Holy Prophet did not have any wife who had offered herself to him; but this in fact means that he did not keep any wife without paying her the dower although she offered herself to him.

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

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

The task entrusted to the Holy Prophet was that he should mould and chisel by all-round education and training an uncouth, uncultured nation which was not uncivilized only from the Islamic point of view but from a general viewpoint as well, into a highly civilized, refined and virtuous nation. For this purpose it was

تُرْجَى مِنْ تَشَاءُ مِنْهُنَّ وَتُكْفَى إِلَيْكَ مَنْ تَشَاءُ مِنْ ابْتِغَايَتِ مَنْ عَزَلْتَ
 فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكَ ذَلِكَ أَدْنَىٰ أَنْ تَقْرَءَ عَيْنُهُنَّ وَلَا يَحْزَنَ وَيَرْضَيْنَ بِمَا
 آتَيْتَهُنَّ كُلَّهِنَّ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَلِيمًا ۙ لَا
 يَحِلُّ لَكَ الْإِنْسَاءُ مِنْ بَعْدُ ۗ وَلَا أَنْ تَبَدَّلَ بِهِنَّ مِنْ أَنْوَابٍ ۚ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكَ
 حُسْنُهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا مَلَكَتْ يَمِينُكَ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ رَقِيبًا ۙ أَيُّهَا
 الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتَ النَّبِيِّ إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ إِلَىٰ طَعَامٍ غَيْرِ
 نَظِيرِينَ إِنَّهُ ۗ وَلَكِنْ إِذَا دُعِيتُمْ فَادْخُلُوا فَإِذَا طَعِمْتُمْ فَانْتَشِرُوا ۗ وَلَا
 مُتَسَاءِفِينَ لِحَدِيثٍ ۙ إِنْ ذَلِكُمْ كَانَ يُؤْذِي النَّبِيَّ فَيَسْتَجِ بِكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ
 لَا يَسْتَجِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ ۗ وَإِذَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُنَّ مَتَاعًا فَسَلُّوهُنَّ مِنْ قَرَابٍ حَبَابٍ
 ذَلِكُمْ أَطْهَرُ لِقُلُوبِكُمْ وَقُلُوبِهِنَّ ۗ وَمَا كَانَ لَكُمْ أَنْ تُؤْذُوا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَلَا
 أَنْ تُنْكِحُوا زَوَاجَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ ۙ إِنْ ذَلِكُمْ كَانَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمًا ۙ
 إِنْ تَبَدُّوا شَيْئًا أَوْ تَخَلَّوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا ۙ لَا جُنَاحَ
 عَلَيْهِنَّ فِي آبَائِهِنَّ وَلَا أَبْنَائِهِنَّ وَلَا إِخْوَانِهِنَّ وَلَا أَبْنَاءَ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ وَ
 لَا أَبْنَاءَ أَخَوَاتِهِنَّ وَلَا نِسَائِهِنَّ ۗ وَلَا مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُنَّ ۗ وَاتَّقِينَ اللَّهَ ۗ
 إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدًا ۙ إِنْ اللَّهُ ۙ وَمَلَائِكَتُهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى
 النَّبِيِّ ۙ أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا ۙ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ
 اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا مُهِينًا ۙ
 وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ بِغَيْرِ مَا اكْتَسَبُوا فَقَدِ احْتَمَلُوا
 بُهْتَانًا وَإِثْمًا مُبِينًا ۙ أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِلزَّوْجِكَ وَبَنَاتِكَ وَنِسَاءِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ



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

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

There is no blame on the wives of the Prophet that they are visited in their houses by their fathers, their sons, their brothers, their brothers' sons, their sisters' sons,¹⁰² their familiar women¹⁰³ and their slaves.¹⁰⁴ (O women,) you should avoid the disobedience of Allah, for Allah observes everything.¹⁰⁵ 55

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

Allah has cursed in this world and in the Hereafter those who cause trouble to Allah and His Messenger, and has prepared for them a disgraceful punishment.¹⁰⁸ And those who cause trouble to the believing men and women for no fault of theirs, have indeed born on their head the burden of a grave slander¹⁰⁹ and a manifest sin. 57-58

Contd. from p. 125]

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

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

Moreover, the Holy Prophet had also been appointed to abolish the system of life of the pre-Islamic days of ignorance and replace it with the Islamic system of life practically. For the accomplishment of this task a conflict was inevitable with those who upheld the system of ignorance, and this conflict was being encountered in a country where the tribal system of life was prevalent with all its peculiar customs and traditions. Under these conditions, besides other devices, it was also necessary that the Holy Prophet should marry in different families and clans in order to cement many ties of friendship and put an end to enmities. Thus, the selection of the ladies whom he married was to some extent determined by this object besides their personal qualities. By taking Hadrat 'Ā'ishah and Hadrat Ḥafsah to wife he further strengthened and deepened the relations with Hadrat Abū Bakr and Ḥadrat 'Umar. Ḥadrat Umm Salamah was the daughter of the family to which Abū Jahl and Khālid bin Walīd belonged, and Umm Ḥabībah was the daughter of Abū Sufyān. These marriages neutralized the enmity of these families to a large extent, so much so that after Umm Ḥabībah's marriage Abū Sufyān never confronted the Holy Prophet on the battlefield. Ḥadrat Safiyyah, Ḥadrat Juwairiah and Raiḥānah belonged to Jewish families. When the Holy Prophet married them, after setting them free, the hostile Jewish activities against him subsided. For according to the Arab traditions when the daughter of a clan or tribe was married to a person, he was regarded as the son-in-law of not only the girl's family but of the entire tribe, and it was disgraceful to fight the son-in-law.

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

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

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

91. This verse was meant to relieve the Holy Prophet of the domestic worries and anxieties so that he could carry out his duties with full peace of mind. When Allah clearly gave him the power and the authority to treat any of his wives as he liked, there remained no chance that those believing ladies would trouble him in any way, or would create complications for him by their mutual rivalries and domestic squabbles. But in spite of having this authority from Allah the Holy Prophet meted out full justice to his wives. He did not prefer one to the other and would visit each of them regularly by turns. Only Abū Razīn from among the traditionists has said that the Holy Prophet visited only four of his wives (Hadrat 'Ā'ishah, Hadrat Hafṣah, Hadrat Zainab and Hadrat Umm Salamah) by turns and no turn had been fixed for the other wives. But all other traditionists and commentators contradict this and prove by authentic traditions that even after having this authority the Holy Prophet visited all his wives in turn and treated them alike. Bukhārī, Muslim, Nasā'ī, Abū Da'ūd and others have reported on the authority of Hadrat 'Ā'ishah that even after the revelation of this verse the Holy

Prophet's practice was that whenever he wanted to visit any of us, his wives, on the turn of another wife, he would first ask her permission for it. Abū Bakr al-Jassās relates from 'Urwah bin Zubair that Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah told him, "As to our turns the Holy Prophet never preferred any of us to the other, although it seldom happened that he did not visit all his wives on the same day, but he never touched a wife unless it was her day by turn." And this also is a tradition from Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah that during his last illness when it became difficult for him to move about he asked for his other wives' permission to stay with her, and only on their approval he passed his last days in her apartment. Ibn Abi Ḥātim has cited this from Imām Zuhri that the Holy Prophet is not known to have deprived any of his wives of her turn. To this Ḥaḍrat Saudah only was an exception, who on account of her advanced age had willingly surrendered her turn in favour of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah.

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

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

93. This has two meanings: (1) "No other woman except those made lawful to you in verse 50 above, is any more lawful to you"; and (2) "when your

wives have become pleased and ready to stay with you through every kind of hardship and have rejected the world in preference to the Hereafter, and are satisfied that you may treat them as you please, it is no longer lawful for you that you should divorce any of them and take another wife instead."

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

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

requirements for the convenience of men. If these have been made a means of sexual enjoyment and luxury by the rich, it is they who are to blame for this and not the *Shari'ah*.

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

96. This is the second command in this connection. An uncivilized practice prevalent among the Arabs was that the visitors would call on a friend or acquaintance right at the time of the meals, or would come and prolong their stay till the meals time approached. This would often cause the master of the house great embarrassment. He could neither be so discourteous as to tell the visitors to leave because it was his meals time, nor could feed so many unexpected guests together. For it is not always possible for a person to arrange meals immediately for as many visitors as happened to call on him at a time. Allah disapproved of this practice and commanded that the visitors should go for meals to a house only when invited. This Command did not in particular apply to the Holy Prophet's house only but the rules were in the beginning enforced in that model household so that they become general rules of etiquette in the houses of the other Muslims as well.

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

practices. According to Ḥadīrat Anas these verses were sent down on this occasion. (Muslim, *Nasā'i* Ibn Jarīr).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

105. It means this: "After the coming down of this absolute Command no person outside the circle of the relatives, who have been made an exception, should be allowed to enter the houses without purdah being observed from them." Another meaning is: "The woman should never adopt the attitude that they should observe purdah when the husband is present, but should appear without purdah before the other men, when he is away. Such a conduct may remain hidden from the husband but not from Allah.

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

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

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

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

When this Command was sent down, several of the Companions said to the Holy Prophet, "O Messenger of Allah, you have taught us the method of pronouncing *ṣalām* (i.e. of saying *as-salāmu 'alaika ayyuhannabiyyu wa raḥmatullahi wa barakāt-u-hū* in the Prayer, and *as-salāmu 'alaika yā Rasūl-Allah* as a greeting, but what is the method of sending *Ṣalāt* on you?" In response to

thus, the methods of pronouncing *ṣalāt* and *darūd* that the Holy Prophet taught to many people on different occasions are as follows:

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

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

Abū Humaid Ṣā'idī: *Allahumma ṣalli 'alā Muḥammad-in wa azwāji-hi wa dhurriyāti-hi kamā ṣallaita 'alā Ibrāhīma wa 'alā āl-i Ibrāhīma wa bārik 'alā Muḥammad-in wa azwāji-hi wa dhurriyāt-hi kamā bārakta 'alā āl-i Ibrāhīma innaka Ḥamīd-um-Majīd.* (Mālik, Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, Nasā'ī, Abū Dā'ūd, Ibn Mājah).

Abū Mas'ūd Badrī: *Allahumma ṣalli 'alā Muḥammad-in wa 'alā āl-i Muḥammad-in kamā ṣallaita 'alā Ibrāhīma wa 'alā āl-i Ibrāhīma wa bārik 'alā Muḥammad-in wa 'alā āl-i Muḥammad-in kamā bārakta 'alā Ibrāhīma fil-'ālamīn innaka Ḥamīd-um-Majīd* (Mālik, Muslim, Abū Dā'ūd, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī, Aḥmad, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Habbān, Ḥākim).

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

Buraidah al-Khuza'i: *Allahumma-aj'al Ṣalātaka wa rahmataka wa barakāti-ka 'alā Muḥammad-in wa 'alā āl-i Muḥammad-in kamā ja'altahā 'alā Ibrāhīma innaka Ḥamīd-um-Majīd.* (Aḥmad, 'Abd bin Humaid, Ibn Mardūyah).

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

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

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

First, in all these the Holy Prophet tells the Muslims that the best way of sending *darūd* and *Ṣalāt* on him is that they should pray to Allah, saying, "O God: send *darūd* on Muhammad." Ignorant people who do not possess full understanding of the meaning immediately raise the objection: "How strange that Allah commands us to send *darūd* on His Prophet, but we, in return, implore Allah that He should send it." The fact, however, is that the Holy Prophet has instructed the people, as if to say, "You cannot do full justice to sending of *darūd* and *Ṣalāt* on me even if you want to. Therefore, pray only to Allah to bless me with *Ṣalāt*." Evidently, the Muslims cannot raise the ranks of the Holy Prophet, Allah only can raise them; the Muslims cannot repay the Holy Prophet for his favours and kindness, Allah only can adequately reward him for this; the Muslims cannot attain any success in exalting the Holy Prophet's name and promoting the cause of religion unless Allah favours them with His help and succour. So much so that the Holy Prophet's love can be impressed in our hearts only by Allah's help; otherwise Satan can turn us away from him by every kind of evil suggestion and suspicions. May Allah protect us from this! Therefore, there is no other way of doing full justice to sending of *darūd* and *ṣalāt* on the Holy Prophet than that we should supplicate Allah to send *ṣalāt* on him. The person who says: *Allahumma ṣalli 'alā Muḥammad-in*, in fact, admits his helplessness before Allah, and says: "O God: it is not in my power to send *ṣalāt* on Your Prophet as it should be sent. I, therefore, implore You to send it on my behalf and take from me whatever service You will in this regard."

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

nousehold who are related to him by blood and are also his followers are most worthy to be regarded as *āl-Muhammad*.

Thirdly, the same thing found in all the *darūds* taught by the Holy Prophet is that he may be blessed with the same kindness with which Abraham and the followers of Abraham have been blessed. The people have found it difficult to understand this. The scholars have given different interpretations of it but none of them is appealing. In my opinion the correct interpretation is this (though the real knowledge is with Allah): Allah blessed the Prophet Abraham in particular with something with which He has blessed no one else in the world, and it is this: All those human beings who regard the Prophethood and the Revelation and the Book as the source of guidance are agreed on the leadership of the Prophet Abraham, whether they are Muslims or Christians or Jews. Therefore, what the Holy Prophet means to say is this: "O Allah, just as You have made the Prophet Abraham the refuge of the followers of all the Prophets, so You make me also the refuge, so that no one who is a believer in Prophethood, may remain deprived of the grace of believing in my Prophethood."

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

Imām Shāfe'ī holds the view that it is obligatory to recite *salāt* on the Prophet during *tashahhud* in the final sitting of the Prayer, for without it the Prayer would be void. Hadrat Ibn Mas'ūd, Abū-Mas'ūd Ansārī, Ibn 'Umar and Jābir bin 'Abdullah from among the Companions, Sha'bi, Imām Muhammad bin Bāqir, Muhammad bin Ka'b al-Qurzi and Muqātil bin Hayyān from among the immediate followers of the Companions, and Ishāq bin Rahwayah from among the jurists also held the same opinion, and Imām Ahmad bin Hanbal also had adopted the same in the end.

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

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

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

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

As to whether it is permissible to use the words *Allahunna salli 'alā* so-and-so, or *sallallahu 'alāhi wa sallam*, or similar other words for others than the Holy Prophet, it is disputed. One group of the scholars of whom Qādī 'Iyād is most prominent holds it as absolutely permissible. Their argument is this: Allah Himself has used the word *salāt* in respect of those who were not prophets at several places in the Qur'an, e.g. in Al-Baqarah; 157, At-Taubah: 103, Al-Ahzāb;

يَدِينِينَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ جَلَابِيذِهِمْ ذَلِكَ آدَىٰ أَنْ يَعْرِفَنَ فَلَا يُؤْذِينَ ۗ وَ
كَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ٥٩ لَمْ يَنْتَهُ الْمُتَفِئُونَ وَالَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ
مَرَضٌ وَالْمُرْجِفُونَ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ لَنُغْرِبَنَّكَ بِهِمْ ثُمَّ لَا يُجَاوِرُونَكَ فِيهَا
إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ٦٠ مَلْعُونِينَ أَيْنَمَا تُقِفُوا أُخِذُوا وَقُتِلُوا تَقْتِيلًا ٦١ سُنَّةَ اللَّهِ فِي
الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ ۗ وَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ اللَّهِ تَبْدِيلًا ٦٢ يَسْأَلُ النَّاسُ عَنِ
السَّاعَةِ قُلْ إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَمَا يُدِيرُكَ لَعَلَّ السَّاعَةَ تَكُونُ قَرِيبًا ٦٣
إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَعَنَ الْكٰفِرِينَ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ سَعِيرًا ٦٤ خٰلِدِينَ فِيهَا أَلَا يَجِدُونَ
وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا ٦٥ يَوْمَ تُقَلَّبُ وُجُوهُهُمْ فِي النَّارِ يَقُولُونَ لِيَلَيْتَنَا أَطَعْنَا
اللَّهَ وَ أَطَعْنَا الرَّسُولَ ٦٦ وَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّا أَطَعْنَا سَادَتَنَا وَ كِبْرَاءَنَا فَأَضَلُّونَا
السَّبِيلَ ٦٧ رَبَّنَا إِنهُمْ ضَعُفَيْنِ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ وَالْعَنَهُمُ لَعْنَا كَبِيرًا ٦٨ يَا أَيُّهَا
الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ آذَوْا مُوسَىٰ فَبَرَأَهُ اللَّهُ مِمَّا قَالُوا وَكَانَ
عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَجِيهًا ٦٩ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَ قُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا ٧٠
يُصَلِّحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ ۗ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ
فَازَ قَوْزًا عَظِيمًا ٧١ إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَوَاتِ وَ الْأَرْضِ وَ الْجِبَالِ
فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَ أَسْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَ حَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ ۗ إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُومًا
جَهُولًا ٧٢ لِيُعَذِّبَ اللَّهُ الْمُتَفِئِينَ وَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ وَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ وَ
يَتُوبَ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ ۗ وَ كَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ٧٣

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

If the hypocrites and those whose hearts are diseased¹¹³ and the scandal-mongers in Madīnah¹¹⁴ do not desist, We shall stir you up to take action against them; then they will hardly be able to live in this city as your neighbors. They will be cursed from every side and will be seized wherever they are found and killed mercilessly. This has been the Way of Allah with regard to such people before, and you will never find any change in the Way of Allah.¹¹⁵ 60-62

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

O you who have believed,¹¹⁸ do not be like those who had maligned Moses; then Allah cleared him of what they said of him, and he was honourable in the sight of Allah¹¹⁹. O believers fear Allah and say the right thing: Allah will adorn your deeds and will overlook your errors. Whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, has indeed attained a great success. 69-71

We offered this trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains but they refused to bear it and were afraid of it, the but man undertook to bear it. Indeed, he is unjust and ignorant.¹²⁰ (The inevitable result of bearing the burden of the trust is) that Allah should punish the hypocritical men and women and *mushrik* men and women, and accept the repentance of the believing men and women: Allah is indeed Forgiving and Merciful. 72-73

[Contd. from p. 139]

43. Similarly, the Holy Prophet also prayed for those who were not prophets using the word *salāt* on several occasions. For example, he prayed for a Companion, thus: *Allahumma salli 'alā āl Abī Aufā*; on the request of Ḥaḍrat Jabir bin 'Abdullah's wife, he said: *Sallallahu 'alaiki wa 'ala zaujki*. Then concerning those who came with the *Zakāt* money, he would say: *Allahumma salli 'alaihim*. Praying for Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin 'Ubādah he said: *Allahumma aj'al salātaka wa rahmataka 'ala āl-i Sa'd bin 'Ubādah*. And about the soul of the believer the Holy Prophet gave the news that the angels prayed for him, thus: *Sallallahu 'alaka wa 'ala jasadika*. However, the majority of the Muslim scholars opine that it was correct for Allah and His Messenger but not so for the Ummah. They say that it has become a convention with the Muslims to use *salāt-o-salām* exclusively for the Prophets. Therefore, it should not be used for those who are not prophets. On this very basis Ḥaḍrat 'Umar bin 'Abdul 'Aziz once wrote to one of his governors, saying: "I hear that some preachers have started using the word *salāt* in respect of their patrons and supporters in the manner of *salāt 'alan-Nabī*. As soon as you receive this letter, stop them from this practice and command them to use *Salāt* exclusively for the Prophets and remain content with the prayer for the other Muslims." (*Ruh al-Ma'ānī*). Most scholars also hold that using the words *sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam* for any other Prophet than the Holy Prophet is not correct.

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

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

110. *Jilbāb* is a large sheet and *idnā'* is to draw close and wrap up, but when this word is used with the associating particle *'alā*, it gives the meaning of

letting something down from above. Some modern translators, under the influence of the West, have translated this word "to wrap up" so as to avoid somehow the Command about covering of the face. But if Allah had meant what these gentlemen want to construe, He would have said: *yudhina ilai-hinna* and not *yudhina 'alai-hinna*. Anyone who knows Arabic knows that *yudhina 'alai-hinna* cannot merely mean "wrapping up." Moreover, the words *min jalābīb-i hanna* also do not permit of this meaning. It is obvious that the preposition *min* here signifies a part of the sheet, and also that wrapping up is done by means of a whole sheet and not merely by a part of it. The verse, therefore, clearly means: The women should wrap themselves up well in their sheets, and should draw and let down a part of the sheet in front of the face.

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

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

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

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

'Allāma Nizāmuddīn Nishāpūrī says: "That is, they should let down a part of the sheet over them; in this verse, the women have been commanded to cover the head and face." (*Gharā'ib al-Qur'ān*, vol. XXII, p. 32).

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

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

The famous genealogist, Hāshim bin Muhammad bin as-Sā'ib al-Kalbi, states: "The first born child to the Messenger of Allah before his call to Prophethood was Qāsim; then Zainab was born to him, then Ruqayyah, then Umm Kulthūm." (*Tabaqāt Ibn Sa'd*, vol. I, p. 133). Ibn Hazam writes in *Jawāmi' as-Sīrah* that from Hadrat Khadijah the Holy Prophet had four daughters, the eldest being Zainab, then Ruqayyah, then Fātimah and then Umm Kulthūm (pp. 38-39). Tabari, Ibn Sa'd, Abū Ja'far Muhammad bin Habib (author of *Kitāb al-Muḥabbar*) and Ibn 'Abd al-Barr (author of *Kitāb al-Istī'āb*) state on the strength of authentic sources that before her marriage with the Holy Prophet Hadrat Khadijah had two husbands, Abū Hālah Tamīmī by whom she had a son named Hind bin Abū Hālah, and 'Atiq bin 'Ā'idh Makhzūmī, by whom she had a daughter named Hind. Then she was married to the Holy Prophet and all the genealogists agree

that from his loins she had the four daughters as stated above. (See Tabari, vol. II, p. 411; *tabaqāt Ibn Sa'd*, vol. VIII, pp. 14-16; *Kitāb al-Muḥabbar*, pp. 78, 79, 452; *Al-Istī'āb*, vol. II, p. 718). All these statements are authenticated by the Qur'ānic declaration that the Holy Prophet had not one but several daughters.

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

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

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

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

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

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

114. This implies the people who, in order to cause panic among the Muslims and to lower their morale, used to spread rumours in Madinah to the effect that the Muslims had suffered such and such serious setback, that a huge army was gathering together against them at such and such a place, that Madinah was under threat of a sudden attack, etc. Besides this, they had another pastime. they would concoct and spread imaginary stories about the domestic life of the Holy Prophet's household and of other Muslims so as to produce suspicions among the common people and destroy the moral influence of the Muslims.

115. That is, "This is a permanent law of Allah's *Sharī'ah* that in an Islamic society and state such mischief-mongers are never given an opportunity to

flourish and prosper. Whenever the system of society and state is established on Divine Law, such people will be warned to mend their ways and if they still persisted in their evil ways they would be severely dealt with and exterminated."

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

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

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

119. In other words, it means: "O Muslims, do not behave like the Jews. You should not behave towards your Prophet as the children of Israel behaved towards the Prophet Moses." The Israelites themselves admit that the Prophet Moses was their greatest benefactor. Whatever they achieved as a nation was only due to him; otherwise in Egypt they would have been doomed to a worse fate than that of the Shudras in India. But how the Israelites treated the greatest benefactor of theirs can be judged by a cursory glance at the following places of the Bible: Exodus, 5: 20-21, 14: 12, 16: 2-3, 17: 3-4. Numbers, 11:1-15, 14:1-10, 16 (the whole chapter), 20: 1-5.

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

This same thing was said by Holy Prophet himself on several occasions. Once he was dividing some goods among the Muslims. When the people

dispersed, a man said: "Muhammad in this division has shown no regard for Allah and the Hereafter." Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud heard this remark and told the Holy Prophet what had been said concerning him that day. He replied, "May Allah show mercy to Moses: he was maligned even more severely, but he showed patience." (Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Abū Dā'ūd).

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

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

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

The presentation of the trust before the earth and the heavens and their refusal to bear it and their being afraid of it may be true literally, or it may have been said so metaphorically. We can neither know nor can comprehend Allah's relationship with His creations. The earth and the sun and the moon and the mountains are dumb, deaf and lifeless for us but they may not be so also for Allah. Allah can speak to each of His creations and it can respond to Him, though its nature is incomprehensible for us. Therefore, it is just possible that Allah, in fact, might have presented this heavy trust before them, and they might have shuddered to see it, and they might have made this submission before their Master and Creator:

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

who might have made a wrong estimate of his mental and intellectual powers and capabilities, can think of regarding it as impossible.

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

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

Hearing this discourse a hush might have prevailed for a while all through the universe. Then one huge creation after the other might have bowed down and submitted that it should be excused from the severe test. Then, at last, this frail creation might have risen and submitted: "O my Lord, I am ready to undergo this test. I shall brave all the dangers inherent in the freedom and independence only in the hope that I shall be blessed with the highest office in Your Kingdom if I pass the test."

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

APPENDIX

THE FINALITY OF PROPHETHOOD

(IN CONTINUATION OF E.N. 77)

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

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

Another interpretation given by these people is that "*khātam an-Nabiyyīn*" means "*afdal an-Nabiyyīn*" (the best of the Prophets). That is, the door to new prophethoods is open, though the perfections of prophethood have been exhausted with the advent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). But this meaning too suffers from the same drawback as we have indicated above. It also has no

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

hypocrites could very well say, "Sir, even if minor ones, prophets in any case will continue to come after you. Therefore, it was not necessary that you only should have abolished this custom."

Lexical Meaning of Khātam an-Nabiyyīn

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

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

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

Traditions of the Holy Prophet Concerning Finality of Prophethood

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

- (1) The Holy Prophet said: The children of Israel were guided by the Prophets. When a prophet died, another succeeded him. However, there will be no prophet after me; there will be only caliphs. (Bukhārī: *kitāb al-Manāqib*).
- (2) The Holy Prophet said: "My position in relation to the Prophets who came before me can be understood by a parable: A person

that the most perfect man of the tribe had come, but that the entire tribe had come, and its last man had also arrived.

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

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

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

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

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

- (3) The Holy Prophet said: "I have been distinguished from the other Prophets in six things: (1) I have been endowed with the eloquent speech, (2) I have been succoured with awe, (3) Booty has been made lawful for me, (4) the earth has been made a mosque for me as well as a means of obtaining purity (i.e. In my *Sharī'ah* the Prayer can be offered anywhere on the surface of the earth and not only in specific houses of worship, and *tayammum* (purification through dust) can be resorted to for ablutions in case water is not available, (5) I have been appointed a Messenger for the entire world, and (6) with me the office of Prophethood has been closed. (Muslim, Tirmidhi, Ibn Mājah)."
- (4) The Holy Prophet said: "The line of Prophethood and Apostleship has come to an end: after me there will neither be a prophet nor an apostle." (Tirmidhi)

- (5) The Holy Prophet said: "I am Muḥammad, I am Aḥmad, I am the effacer: disbelief will be effaced through me. I am the assembler: after me the people will be assembled in the Plain of Resurrection. (That is, after me now only Resurrection is to take place). And I am the Last: after me there is no prophet." (Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī, Mu'wattā, Al-Mustadrak).
- (6) The Holy Prophet said: "Allah has sent no Prophet who did not warn his people of the coming of the *Dajjāl* (the Antichrist, but he did not come in their times). Now I am the last of the Prophets and you are the last Community. Therefore, he is about to appear among you now." (Ibn Mājah).
- (7) 'Abdur Rahmān bin Jubair says: "I heard 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin 'Ās say that the Holy Prophet one day came out to us in a manner as though he were taking his leave. He said: I am Muḥammad, the un-lettered Prophet, thrice; then said: and no prophet will come after me." (Musnad Aḥmad: Traditions from 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin 'Ās).
- (8) The Holy Prophet said: "There is no prophethood after me; there are only harbingers of good news. It was asked, "What are the harbingers of good news, O Messenger of Allah?" He replied: "A true vision," or said, "A righteous vision." (That is, there is no possibility of Divine Revelation now. At the most a person may receive an inspiration, which will be in the form of a true vision.) (Musnad Aḥmad, Nasā'ī, Abū Dā'ūd).
- (9) The Holy Prophet said: "If there were a prophet after me, it would have been 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb." (Tirmidhī).
- (10) The Holy Prophet said to Ḥaḍrat 'Ali: "You are to me as Aaron was to Moses, but there is no prophet after me." (Bukhārī, Muslim)

Bukhārī and Muslim have related this *Ḥadīth* in connection with the Tabūk Expedition. Two *Aḥādīth* on this subject have been related in Musnad Aḥmad on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Ṣa'd bin Abī Waqqās, the last sentence of one of which is to the effect: "But there is no prophethood after me." The detailed traditions related in this connection by Abū Dā'ūd Tayālisī, Imām Aḥmad and Muḥammad bin Ishāq show that on

the eve of his departure on the Tabūk Expedition the Holy Prophet had decided to leave Ḥaḍrat 'Ali behind in the defense and protection of Madīnah. The hypocrites thereupon had an opportunity to pass discourteous remarks about him. He went to the Holy Prophet and asked him: "O Messenger of Allah, are you leaving me behind among the women and children?" On this occasion the Holy Prophet consoled him, saying: "You are to me as Aaron was to Moses." That is, "Just as the Prophet Moses, on his departure for Mount Ṭūr, had left the Prophet Aaron behind to look after the children of Israel, so am I leaving you behind for the defence of Madīnah." But at the same time, apprehending lest Ḥaḍrat 'Ali's comparison with the Prophet Aaron might cause mischief later, the Holy Prophet immediately added: "But there will be no prophet after me."

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

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

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

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

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

- (14) The Holy Prophet said: "I am the last Prophet and my Mosque is the last Mosque (i.e. the Prophet's Mosque at Madinah)."³
(Muslim: *Kitāb al-Hajj*).

These *Aḥādīth* have been reported by a large number of the Companions and related by many Traditionists with many strong chains of authorities. A study of these shows that the Holy Prophet has on different occasions in different ways and in different words affirmed that he is the last of the Prophets, that no prophet will come after him, that prophethood has been finalised in him, and that the people who claim to be messengers and prophets after him would be impostors⁴. There can

3. The deniers of the Finality of Prophethood have argued thus, from this Ḥadīth: "Just as the Holy Prophet has called his Mosque the last Mosque, whereas it is not the last mosque, but countless other mosques have been built after it in the world, so when he said that he is the last Prophet, it also meant that other prophets would continue to appear after him in the world; however, with regard to excellence and perfection he is the last Prophet and his Mosque the last Mosque." But interpretations such as these are, in fact, a proof that these people have lost the faculty of understanding the true meaning of the words of Allah and His Messenger. If a person has a glance through all the *Aḥādīth* on this subject as related in Muslim, he will understand precisely in what sense has the Holy Prophet called his Mosque the last Mosque. The Traditions related by Imām Muslim in this connection on the authority of Ḥadīrat Abū Hurairah, Ḥadīrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar and Ḥadīrat Maimūnah (wife of the Prophet) are explicit that there are three such Mosques in the world, which are superior to all other mosques in the sense that offering the Prayer in them carries a thousand times greater spiritual rewards than offering it in other mosques. On that very basis, to undertake a journey for the purpose of offering the Prayer in these three Mosques only is permissible. No other mosque has the right and merit that one should make a journey especially to it for offering the Prayer in it, apart from the other mosques. The first of these is the *masjid al-Haram*, which was built by the Prophet Abraham; the second is the *Masjid al-Aqsā* which was built by the Prophet Solomon; and the third is the Prophet's Mosque at Madinah, which was founded by the Holy Prophet himself. What the Holy Prophet meant was this: "Since no other prophet will come after me, no fourth mosque will be built in the world, offering the Prayer in which might carry greater rewards than offering it in other mosques and making a journey to which especially for the purpose of offering the Prayer in it might be lawful."

4. As against all these sayings of the Holy Prophet, the deniers of the Finality of Prophethood cite a saying of Ḥadīrat 'Ā'ishah to the effect: "Do say

be no more authentic and reliable and conclusive explanations of the Qur'ānic word *Khātam an-Nabiyyīn* than this. The Holy Prophet's statement by itself is authoritative and decisive. But when it explains a text of the Qur'ān, it becomes all the more authenticated and conclusive. The question is: Who can be better qualified to understand and explain the Qur'ān than the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) himself? Thus, if a person gives a different meaning to *Khātam Nubuwwat* (Finality of Prophethood), how can we hold it worthy of any attention or consideration, much less accept it as correct?

Consensus of the Companions

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

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

"From Musailimah, the messenger of Allah, to Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah: Peace be on you: You should know that I have been made an associate with you in the work of prophethood." (Tabari, vol. II, p. 399. Egyptian Edition).

Furthermore, the historian Ṭabari has related that in the call to the prayer that was pronounced under Musailimah, the words: *Ash-hadu*

that the Holy Prophet is the last of the Prophets, but do not say that no prophet will come after him." But, in the first place, to cite a saying of Ḥadīrat 'Ā'ishah as against the authentic statements of the Holy Prophet is highly derogatory; besides, the tradition in which this saying has been ascribed to Ḥadīrat 'Ā'ishah is in itself un-authentic. No traditionist worthy of any mention has related it in any reliable *Ḥadīth* Collection. It is only traced to *Durr-i Manthūr*, a commentary of the Qur'ān, and *Takmilah Majma' al-Bihar*, a dictionary of *Ḥadīth*, but without any reference to its chain of transmitters. How then can such a weak tradition containing a saying of a Companion be cited to contradict the sayings of the Holy Prophet, which have been related by all the eminent traditionists with strong and authentic chains of the transmitters?

anna Muḥammad ar-Rasūl Allah were also included. In spite of this clear affirmation of the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet by him, he was declared a *kāfir*, excommunicated and fought against. History also proves that the Banū Ḥanīfah had believed in him in good faith, and they had been made to understand that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) himself had made him an associate in his Prophethood. Moreover, the verses of the Qur'an had been presented before them in a way as if they had been sent down to Musailmah, by a person who had received instruction in the Qur'an at Madīnah. (*Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah*, vol. V, p. 51). But, in spite of this, the Companions did not accept them as Muslims and sent an army to fight them. Then, it cannot also be claimed that the Companions had fought against them not on account of apostasy but for the crime of rebellion. According to the law of Islam, in case war is fought against rebellious Muslims, their prisoners of war cannot be made slaves. Not to speak of Muslims, even the rebellious *dhimmīs* cannot be made the slaves in case they are captured in war. But when invasion was made on Musailmah and his followers, Hadrat Abū Bakr declared that their women and children would be made slaves; and when they were taken prisoners they were actually made slaves. Thus, it was from among them that a slave-girl was assigned to Hadrat 'Alī of whom Muḥammad bin Ḥanafīah⁵, so well-known to the history of Islam, was born. (*Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah*, vol. VI, pp. 316, 325). Thus, evidently, it was not the crime of rebellion for which the Companions fought them but the crime was that a person had claimed to be a prophet after the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and others had believed in his prophethood. This action was taken immediately after the death of the Holy Prophet, under the leadership of Abū Bakr, and the full consensus of all the Companions. Perhaps there does not exist a more explicit example than this of a perfect consensus of the Companions.

Consensus of Religious Scholars

After the consensus of the Holy Prophet's Companions the next place with regard to authority is accorded to the consensus of the religious scholars who lived after the period of the Companions. A study of their verdicts shows that right from the first century after Hijrah till

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

the present day the religious scholars of every country of the entire Muslim world have held the unanimous belief that there can be no prophet after the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), and this also that anyone who lays a claim to this office after him, or accepts such a claim, is a *kāfir* and must be excommunicated from Islam. Some of these verdicts are given below:

- (1) A man in the time of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah (80-150 A.H.) claimed to be a prophet, and said, "Allow me to present proofs of my prophethood." The Imām ruled: "Anyone who demands a proof of prophethood from him, will also turn a disbeliever, for the Messenger of Allah has said: 'There is no prophet after me'." (*Manāqib al-Imām al-A'zam Abī Ḥanīfah*, Ibn Ahmad al-Makki, vol. I, p. 161, Hyderabad Ed. 1321 A.H.)
- (2) 'Allāma Ibn Jarīr Ṭabari (224-310 A.H.) in his well-known commentary of the Qur'ān, has explained the meaning of this verse, thus: "He brought the Prophethood to a close and sealed it: Now this door will not open for anyone till Resurrection." (*Tafsīr Ibn Jarīr*, vol. XXII, p 12).
- (3) Imām Ṭahāvi (239-321 A.H.) writes in his '*Aqidah Salfiyah*, in connection with the beliefs of the righteous, especially of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Imām Abū Yūsuf and Imām Muḥammad (may Allah show mercy to all of them), in respect of Prophethood, "And that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) is a chosen servant of Allah, His Prophet and favourite Apostle; and he is the last of the Prophets, the leader of the righteous, the chief of the Apostles, and beloved of the Lord of the worlds. Any claim to prophethood after him is deviation and worship of the lusts of the self." (*Sharḥ at-Ṭahaviyah*, Dār al-Ma'ārif, Egypt, pp. 15, 87, 96, 97, 100, 102).
- (4) 'Allāma Ibn Ḥazm Andalusī (384-456 A.H.) writes: "Most certainly the coming down of the Revelation after the death of the Holy Prophet has ceased, the reason being that the Revelation comes down to none but a Prophet, and Allah Himself has stated: Muḥammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the last of the Prophets." (*Al-Muḥallā*, vol. I, p. 26).

- (5) Imām Ghazzālī (450-505 A.H.) says: "There is complete consensus among the Muslim Ummah that there is no prophet after the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) . . . The whole Ummah is unanimous that the Holy Prophet by his words *La nabiyya ba'dī* meant nothing but that after him there will neither be a prophet nor an apostle. Anyone who interprets this saying in any other way, falls outside the pale of Islam; his interpretation would be nonsensical and his writing heretical. Besides, the Ummah is also unanimous that there is no scope whatever for any other interpretation than this; the one who denies it, denies the consensus of the *Ummah*" (*Al-Iqtisād fil I'tiqād*, Egypt, p. 114).
- (6) Muḥy-is-Sunnah Baghavi (d. 510 A.H.) writes in his Commentary *Ma'ālim at-Tanzīl*: "Allah closed the Prophethood through the Holy Prophet; thus, he is the last of the Prophets. . . . And Ibn 'Abbās says that Allah Almighty (in this verse) has decreed that after him there will be no prophet." (Vol. III, p. 158).
- (7) 'Allāma Zamakhsharī (467-538 A.H.) writes in his Commentary *Al-Kashshāf*: "If you ask: How can the Holy Prophet be the last of the Prophets when there is the belief that the Prophet Jesus will come down in the last days before Resurrection? I shall say: The Holy Prophet is the last of the Prophets in the sense that no other person will be raised as a prophet after him. As for the Prophet Jesus, he is one of those who had been made the Prophets before the advent of the Holy Prophet. And when he comes again, he will come as a follower of the *Sharī'ah* of Muḥammad (peace be upon him) and will offer the Prayer with his face towards his *qiblah* (the Ka'bah) like any other member of his Ummah." (Vol. II, p. 215).
- (8) Qāḍī 'Iyād (d. 544 A.H.) writes: "He who lays a claim to prophethood for himself, or holds that one can acquire it and can attain the rank of prophethood through the purification of the heart, as some philosophers and so-called *sūfīs* assert, and likewise he who does not claim to be a prophet but claims that he receives Revelation . . . all such people are disbelievers and

deniers of the Holy Prophet, for he has informed us that he is the last of the Prophets and that no prophet is to come after him. And he has conveyed this news from Allah that he has closed the Prophethood and that he has been sent to all mankind; and the whole Ummah is unanimous that these words have no other but the apparent meaning. There is no room for a different interpretation or special meaning. Therefore, there can be absolutely no doubt about such people's being *kāfir* both according to the consensus and the Traditions." (*Shifā'*, vol. II, pp. 270, 271).

- (9) 'Allāma Shehrastāni (d. 548 A.H.) writes in his famous *Al-Milal wan-Nihal*: "And likewise the one who says . . . that another prophet (except for the Prophet Jesus) will be raised after the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), is a *Kāfir* and there is no difference of opinion about this even between two men." (Vol. III, p. 249).
- (10) Imām Rāzī (543-606 A. H.), explaining the verse of *Khātam-an-Nabiyyīn* says in his *Tafsīr Kabīr*: "In this context, the reason for saying *wa Khātam-an-Nabiyyīn* is this: If a prophet after whom another prophet is to be raised, leaves the work of admonition and explanation of injunctions somewhat incomplete, the one coming after him can complete it. But the Prophet after whom no other prophet is to be raised, is by far more compassionate to his people (Ummah) and gives them explicit guidance, for he is like the father who knows that after him his son has no guardian and patron to look after him." (Vol. VI, p. 581).
- (11) 'Allāma Baiḍāwī (d. 685 A.H.) writes in his Commentary *Anwār at-Tanzīl*: "That is, the Holy Prophet is the last of the Prophets, who closed their line, or through whom the line of the Prophets was sealed. And the Prophet Jesus' second advent does not contradict the Holy Prophet's being the last Prophet, for when he comes, he will be a follower of his *Shari'ah*." (Vol. IV, p. 164).
- (12) 'Allāma Ḥāfiz ad-Dīn Nasafī (d. 710 A.H.) writes in his Commentary *Madārik at-Tanzīl*: "And the Holy Prophet is *Khātam an-Nabiyyīn*, i.e. the last of the Prophets: After him no other person will be appointed a prophet. As for the Prophet

Jesus, he is one of those who had been appointed Prophets before him, and when he comes the second time, he will come as a follower of the Law of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), and as a member of his own Ummah." (p. 471).

- (13) 'Allāma 'Alā' ad-Dīn Baghdādī (d. 725 A.H.) writes in his Commentary *Khāzin*: "*Wa Khātarn an-Nabīyyīn*, i.e. Allah closed the line of the Prophethood in the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be His peace). Now there is neither any Prophethood after him nor any associate with him in this.... *wa kān-Allah-u bi-kulli shai'in 'Alīmā*: Allah has the knowledge that there is no prophet after him." (pp. 471-472).
- (14) 'Allāma Ibn Kathīr (d. 774 A.H.) writes in his well-known Commentary: "Thus, this verse is an express injunction in this regard that after the Holy Prophet there is no prophet; and when there is no prophet after him, there can be no apostle either, for apostleship is specific and prophethood general: every apostle is a prophet but every prophet is not an apostle. ... Anyone who lays a claim to this office after the Holy Prophet, is a liar and impostor and deviator and unbeliever, no matter what supernatural and magical spells and charms and sorcery he practises. . . . The same is the position of every such person who lays a claim to this office till Resurrection." (Vol. III, pp. 493, 494)
- (15) 'Allāma Jalāl ad-Dīn Suyūṭī (d. 911 A.H.) writes in *Jalālayn*: "*Wa kān-Allah-u bi-kulli shai'in 'Alīmā*: Allah knows that there is no prophet after the Holy Prophet; and when the prophet Jesus comes down, he will be a follower of the Holy Prophet's *Sharī'ah*." (p. 768).
- (16) 'Allāma Ibn Nujaim (d. 970 A.H.) writes in his *Kitāb al-Ashbāh wan-Nazā'ir*, the famous work on the principles of jurisprudence: "If a person disbelieves that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is the last of the Prophets, he is not a Muslim, for this is one of those fundamental things knowing and believing which is a basic requirement of the faith." (p. 179).
- (17) Mullā 'Alī Qārī (d. 1016 A.H.) writes in *Sharh Fiḥ Akbar*: "There is complete consensus of the Ummah that laying claim to

prophethood after the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is *kufr* (heresy)." (p. 202).

- (18) Shaikh Ismā'īl Ḥaqqī (d. 1137 A.H.), explaining this verse in his Commentary *Rūḥ al-Bayān*, writes: "Aṣim has read the word as *Khātām*, which is the sealing instrument with which things are sealed. It implies that the Holy Prophet came at the end and in him the line of the Prophets was closed and sealed. ... Some people have read it as *Khātim*, which means the one who puts a seal. Thus, *Khātim* also is a synonym of *Khātām* . . . Henceforth the scholars of his Ummah will only inherit him in *Walāyat* (spiritual eminence, saintliness), the inheritance of the Prophethood having been brought to a close in him. And the second coming of the Prophet Jesus does not affect the Holy Prophet's being the last of the Prophets, for *Khātām an-Nabiyyīn* means that no other prophet will be raised after him. . . . And Jesus had been raised as a Prophet before him. When he comes the second time, he will come as a follower of the *Shari'ah* of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). He will offer the Prayer with his face towards his *qiblah*, like any other man belonging to his Ummah. He will neither receive revelation nor issue new commands, but he will be a Caliph of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). . . . And the followers of the *Sunnah* believe that there is no prophet after our Holy Prophet, for Allah has said: "But he is the Messenger of Allah and the last of the Prophets," and the Holy Prophet has declared: "There is no prophet after me." Now whoever says that there is a prophet after our Holy Prophet, will be declared a *kāfir*, for he has denied a fundamental article of the faith; likewise, the one who doubts it, will also be declared a *kāfir*, for the Truth has been made distinct from falsehood. And the claim of the one who claims to be a prophet after the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) can be nothing but imposture." (Vol. XXII, p. 188).
- (19) According to *Fatāwā 'Ālamgīrī*, a compilation of the 12th century after Hijrah, compiled by a board of eminent scholars under orders of Aurangzeb 'Ālamgir: "If a person disbelieves that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is the last of the

Prophets, he is not a Muslim; and if he claims that he is Allah's messenger or prophet, he will be declared a *kāfir*." (Vol. II, p. 263).

- (20) 'Allāma Shaukāni (d. 1255 A.H.) writes in his Commentary *Fath al-Qadīr*: "The majority of the scholars have read the word as *Khātim* and 'Āsim as *Khātam*. According to the first reading, it would mean this: "The Holy Prophet closed the line of the Prophets, i.e. he came at the end of them," and according to the second reading this: "He was like a seal for them, with which their line was sealed, and with whose inclusion their group was embellished." (Vol. IV, p. 275).
- (21) 'Allāma Ālūsī (d. 1270 A.H.) writes in his Commentary *Rūḥ al-Ma'āni*: "The word *Nabī* (Prophet) is general and *Rasūl* (Apostle) specific. Therefore, the Holy Prophet's being *Khātam an-Nabiyyīn* by itself requires that he should also be *Khātam al-Mursalīn*; and his being the last of the Prophets and Apostles implies that after his being blessed by Allah with the Prophethood in this world, the office of Prophethood for any jinn or human being has been abolished." (Vol. XXII, p. 32). "Whoever after him claims to be the recipient of revelation of prophethood, will be declared a *kāfir* and there is no difference of opinion among the Muslims in this regard." (Vol. XXII, p. 38). The Holy Prophet's being the last of the Prophets has been explicitly stated by the Book of Allah, clearly enunciated by the *Sunnah* and fully agreed upon by the entire Ummah. Therefore, whoever claims something contrary to it, will be declared a *kāfir*." (Vol. XXII, p. 39).

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

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

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

Three other things also merit consideration in this regard:

Is Allah the Enemy of Our Faith?

In the first place, Prophethood is a delicate matter. According to the Qur'ān, it is one of those fundamental articles of the faith whose acceptance or rejection determines whether a person is a believer or a non-believer. If a person is a prophet and one does not believe in him, one will be a *kāfir*; and if the person is an impostor and one believes in him, one will again be a *kāfir*. Concerning a delicate matter like this, Allah certainly could not be expected to have made any mistake. If a prophet were to be raised after the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), Allah would have clearly stated this in the Qur'ān, would have had it openly proclaimed through His Prophet, and the Holy Prophet would not have left the world until he had forewarned

his followers in unequivocal terms that other prophets would come after him and that they must believe in them. After all, what enmity could Allah and His Prophet have against our faith and belief that although the door to prophethood had been open and another prophet had to come without believing in whom we could not be Muslims, yet not only should we have been kept uninformed, but, on the contrary, both Allah and His Messenger should have made such statements as would involve the whole Ummah, throughout 1,300 years, and even today, in the misunderstanding that no other prophet was to be raised after the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may Allah's peace be upon him)?

Now, supposing the door to prophethood is still open and another prophet has also appeared, we will deny him straight way without any hesitation. The only risk could be of our accountability before Allah. If Allah were to question us on the Day of Resurrection, we could produce the whole evidence in His Court to establish that, God forbid, we had been involved in disbelief and deviation only by Allah's own Book and the *Sunnah* of His own Prophet. We do not at all apprehend that Allah will still punish us in spite of the evidence for not having believed in the new prophet. But if, on the contrary, the door to propethood is really closed, and no new prophet is to be raised, and in spite of that someone believes in the prophethood of an impostor, he should well consider what evidence he will produce in God's Court to escape the punishment for disbelief and deviation. Before the time comes for him to be produced in Allah's Court, he should examine his defence material here, and by comparison with the arguments presented above, should see and judge for himself whether a sensible person could run the risk of the punishment for disbelief by placing reliance on the kind of the defence pleas that he has at his disposal.

Is there Need for a New Prophet?

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

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

- (1) A particular nation stood in need of a prophet because no prophet had come to it before, nor had the message of a prophet sent to another nation reached it.
- (2) The appointment of a prophet became necessary because the teaching of the former prophet had been forgotten, or tampered with, and it was no longer possible to know and follow his message in practical life.
- (3) The people might not have received the full message and guidance through the former prophet and more prophets were needed to supplement his teaching.
- (4) A prophet might have needed another prophet to help and support him in carrying out his mission.

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

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

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

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

Now we should be told what is that fifth kind of need for which a prophet may have to be raised after the Holy Prophet. If it is argued that the community has degenerated, and a prophet was needed for its reformation, we shall say that no prophet ever had been raised only for the sake of reformation in the world. A prophet is appointed so that Divine Revelation is sent to him, and Divine Revelation is needed either to convey a new message, or to supplement a former message, or to cleanse it of impurities and corruption. Now when the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) are safe and intact and the Religion has been perfected and completed, there remains no need for a new Divine Revelation. Now for the sake of the reformation only reformers will be needed and not any prophets.

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

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

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

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

The Reality about the "Promised Messiah"

The inviters to the new prophethood usually tell the ignorant Muslims that the traditions of the Holy Prophet have foretold the coming of a "promised Messiah", and the Messiah (Jesus Christ) was a prophet, and therefore, his second coming does not contradict the doctrine of the Finality of Prophethood. Thus, the doctrine of the Finality of Prophethood is true and, at the same time, the advent of the "promised Messiah" is also true.

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

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

Traditions Relating to the Second Advent of Jesus Son of Mary

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

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

Tradition, there is the word *jizyah* instead of *harb* (war), meaning that he will abolish *jizyah* ;⁷ then there will be such abundance of wealth that nobody will like to accept it, and (conditions will be such that) performing of one *sajdah* (prostration) before Allah will be considered better than the world and what it contains." (Bukhāri: *Kitāb Aḥādīth al-Anbiyā'*, *hāb Nuzūl 'Isā Ibn Maryam*; Muslim: *bāb Nuzūl 'Isā*; Tirmidhi: *Abwāb al-Fitan*, *Bāb fī Nuzūl 'Isā*; Musnad Aḥmad: *Marwiyāt Abū Hurairah*).

- (2) Another Tradition from Hadrat Abū Hurairah is to the effect: "Resurrection will not take place until Jesus son of Mary has descended..." (This is followed by the same theme as reported in the above cited Tradition). (Bukhāri: *Kitāb al-Mazālim*, *Bāb Kaṣr as-Salīb*; Ibn Mājah: *Kitāb al-Fitan*).
- (3) Hadrat Abū Hurairah reports that the Holy Prophet said: "How will you be when the son of Mary will descend among you, and your Imām at that time will be from among yourselves?"⁸ (Bukhāri: *Kitāb Aḥādīth Anbiyā'*, *Bāb Nuzūl 'Isā*; Muslim: *Nuzūl 'Isā*; Musnad Aḥmad).
- (4) Hadrat Abū Hurairah has reported that the Holy Prophet said: "Jesus son of Mary shall descend; then he will kill the swine and destroy the Cross; and a congregation will be held for him for the Prayer; and he will distribute so much wealth that people will be satiated with it; and he will abolish the tribute; and he will encamp at Rauhā',⁹ and from there will go to perform Hajj or

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

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

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

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

'Umrah, or both.'¹⁰ (The reporter is in doubt as to what exactly the Holy Prophet said) . . . (Musnad Ahmad: *Marwiyāt Abū Hurairah*; Muslim: *Kitāb al-Hajj*).

- (5) Hadrat Abū Hurairah reports that the Holy Prophet (after making mention of the appearance of the *Dajjāl*) said: "In the meantime, when the Muslims will be making preparations to fight him, will be lining up (for the Prayer) and the *Iqāmah* will have been pronounced, Jesus son of Mary shall descend and lead them in the Prayer; and the enemy of Allah (i.e. the *Dajjāl*) on seeing him shall start dissolving like salt in water. If Jesus were to leave him alone, he would melt to death anyway, but Allah will have him killed at his hand, and he will show his blood on his spear to the Muslims." (Mishkāt: *Kitāb al-Fitan*, with reference to Muslim).
- (6) Abū Hurairah reports that the Holy Prophet said: "There is no prophet between me and him (i.e. Jesus Christ), and he shall descend. So, recognize him when you see him. He is a man of medium height, of ruddy and fair complexion; he will be dressed in two yellow garments; the hair of his head will appear as though water was going to trickle down from it, whereas it will not be wet. He will fight people in the cause of Islam, will break the Cross and kill the swine and will abolish *jizyah*; and Allah will put an end to all communities in his time except Islam; and he will slay the Antichrist (*Dajjāl*); and he will stay in the world for 40 years; then will die and the Muslims will offer the funeral Prayer for him." (Abū Da'ūd: *Kitāb al-Malāhim*; Musnad Ahmad: *Marwiyāt Abū Hurairah*).
- (7) Hadrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah says that he heard the Holy Prophet say: " . . . then Jesus son of Mary will descend. The leader of the Muslims will say to him, 'Come, lead us in the Prayer', but he will say, 'No: you yourselves are leaders over one another.'¹¹ This he will say in view of the honour that Allah has bestowed on

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

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

this Community." (Muslim: *Bayān Nuzūl 'Isā Ibn Maryam*, Musnad Ahmad: *Marwiyāt Jābir bin 'Abdullah*).

- (8) Jābir bin 'Abdullah reports (in connection with the story of Ibn Sayyād): "Then, 'Umar bin al-Khattāb submitted: O 'Messenger of Allah, permit me to kill him. The Messenger of Allah replied: If he is the same person (i.e. the *Dajjāl*), then you will not kill him, but he will be killed by Jesus-son of Mary. And if he is not he (i.e. the *Dajjal*), then you have no right to kill a man from among the *dhimms*." (Mishkāt: *Kitāb al-Fitan*).
- (9) Jābir bin 'Abdullah reports that the Holy Prophet (while relating the story of the *Dajjal*) said: "At that time suddenly Jesus son of Mary (on whom be peace) shall appear among the Muslims. Then the people will stand up for the Prayer, and he will be asked, 'Step forward, O Spirit of Allah (and lead us in the Prayer); but he will say, 'No: your own leader should step forward and lead the Prayer.' Then, after offering the Morning Prayer, the Muslims shall go forth to fight the *Dajjal*.' He said, 'When the liar will see Jesus, he will start dissolving like the salt in water. Then Jesus will advance towards him and will slay him; and it will so happen that the trees and the stones will cry out: 'O Spirit of Allah, here is a Jew hiding behind me.' None will be left from among the followers of the *Dajjal*, whom he (i.e. Jesus) will not kill." (Musnad Ahmad: *Rawāyāt Jābir bin 'Abdullah*).
- (10) Ḥaḍrat Nawwās bin Sam'ān Kilābī reports (in connection with the story of the *Dajjal*): In the mean time when the *Dajjal* will be busy doing this and this, Allah will send down Messiah son of Mary, and he will descend in the eastern part of Damascus, near the white tower, dressed in the two yellow garments with his hands resting on the arms of two angels. When he will bend down his head, waterdrops will appear trickling down, and when he will raise it, it will appear as though pearl-like drops are rolling down. Any disbeliever whom the air of his breath reaches—and it will reach up to the last limit of his sight—will fall dead. Then the son of Mary will go in pursuit of the *Dajjāl*,

and will overtake him at the gate of Lod,¹² and will kill him." (Muslim: *Dhikr ad-Dajjal*; Abū Da'ūd: *Kitāb al-Malāhim*; Tirmidhi: *Abwāb al-Fitan*; Ibn Mājah: *Kitāb al-Fitan*).

- (11) 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin 'Āṣ reports that the Holy Prophet said: "The *Dajjāl* will appear in my Ummah, and will live for forty (I do not know whether he said 40 days, or 40 months or 40 years). Then Allah will send Jesus son of Mary. He will closely resemble 'Urwah bin Mas'ūd (a Companion). He will pursue him and kill him. Then for seven years the people will live in such a state that no ill-will and enmity will exist between any two of them." (Muslim: *Dhikr ad-Dajjāl*).
- (12) Hudhaifah bin Asid al-Ghifari says: Once the Holy Prophet joined our company and we were engaged in mutual talk. He asked, "What are you talking about?" The people said, "We were talking about Resurrection." He said, "Resurrection will not take place until ten Signs have appeared." He then pointed out the ten Signs: (1) Smoke, (2) the *Dajjāl*, (3) *Dābbat al-Ard*, (4) Rising of the sun in the west, (5) Descent of Jesus son of Mary, (6) Gog and Magog, (7) Three big landslides: one in the east, (8) the second in the west, (9) the third in the Arabian peninsula, and (10) a fire which will arise from the Yaman and will drive mankind towards the plain of Resurrection." (Muslim: *Kitāb al-Fitan*; Abū Da'ūd: *Kitāb al-Malāhim*).
- (13) Thaubān, the freedman of the Holy Prophet, reports that the Holy Prophet said: "Allah has saved from the fire of Hell two armies of my Ummah: the army which will invade India, and the army which will be with Jesus son of Mary." (Nasā'i: *Kitāb al-jihād*; Musnad Ahmad: *Rawāyāt Thaubān*).
- (14) Mujammi' bin Jāriah Ansari says: "I have heard the Holy Prophet say that the son of Mary will slay the *Dajjāl* at the gate of Lod." (Musnad Ahmad; Tirmidhi: *Abwāb al-Fitan*).

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

- (15) Abū Umāmah Bāheli (while mentioning the *Dajjāl* in a lengthy *Ḥadīth*) reports: Exactly at the time when the Imām of the Muslims will have stepped forward to lead them in the Morning Prayer, Jesus son of Mary shall descend upon them. The Imām will step back so that Jesus may step forward (to lead the Prayer), but Jesus, placing his hand between his two shoulders, will say, "No, you should lead, for the congregation has assembled to follow you." So, the Imām will lead the Prayer. After the salutation, Jesus will say, "Open the gate;" so the gate will be opened. Outside there will be the *Dajjāl* along with 70,000 of the armed Jews. As soon as he will look at Jesus (upon whom be peace) he will start melting like the salt in water, and will flee. Jesus will say, "I shall strike you a blow which will not let you live." And he will overtake him at the eastern gate of Lod, and Allah will cause the Jews to be defeated. ... And the earth will be so filled with the Muslims as a vessel is filled with water. The entire world shall recite and follow one and the same *Kalimah* and none shall be worshipped except Allah." (Ibn Mājah: *Kitāb al-Fitan*).
- (16) 'Uthmān bin Abī al-'Āṣ says: I have heard the Holy Prophet say: ".....and Jesus son of Mary (peace be upon him) shall descend at the time of the Morning Prayer. The Imām of the Muslims will say: O Spirit of Allah, lead us in the Prayer. He will reply: The people of this Ummah are themselves leaders one over the other. Then the *Imām* will step forward and lead the Prayer. After the Prayer, Jesus will hold his weapon and advance towards the *Dajjāl*. On seeing Jesus he will start melting like lead. Jesus will kill him with his weapon and his followers will flee, routed and vanquished, but will find no place to hide; so much so that the trees will call out: "O believer, here is a Jew behind me," and the stones will call out "O believer, here is a Jew behind me." (Musnad Ahmad, Tabarāni, Ḥākim).
- (17) Samurah bin Jundub (in a lengthy *Ḥadīth*) has reported that the Holy Prophet said: Then in the morning Jesus son of Mary will join the Muslims, and Allah will cause the *Dajjāl* and his hosts to be routed, until the walls and the roots of the trees will cry out:

- "O believer, here is a disbeliever hidden behind me: come and kill him." (Musnad Ahmad, Hākim).
- (18) 'Imrān bin Hasān reports that the Holy Prophet said: There will always be in my Ummah a group who will remain steadfast on the Truth, and will overwhelm the opponents, till Allah's Decree comes to pass and Jesus son of Mary. (on whom be peace) descends. (Musnad Ahmad)
- (19) Ḥadrat 'Ā'ishah has reported (in connection with the story of the *Dajjāl*): Then Jesus shall descend and kill the *Dajjāl*. After this Jesus will stay on the earth for forty years as a just leader and an equitable ruler. (Musnad Ahmad)
- (20) Safinah, freed slave of the Holy Prophet, reports (in connection with the story of the *Dajjāl*): Then Jesus (on whom be peace) will descend, and Allah will cause the *Dajjāl* to be killed near the mountain pass of Afīq.¹³ (Musnad Ahmad)
- (21) Ḥadrat Hudhaifah bin Yamān reports (with reference to the *Dajjāl*): Then, when the Muslims will stand up to offer the Prayer, Jesus son of Mary will descend just in front of them, and he will lead the Muslims in the Prayer. Then after the salutation, he will tell the Muslims to go away from between him and the enemy of Allah.... And Allah will make the Muslims to dominate over the followers of the *Dajjāl*, and they will inflict heavy casualties on them; so much so that the trees and the stones will cry out: "O 'Abdullah, O 'Abdur Raḥmān, O Muslim, here is a Jew, kill him." Thus, Allah will annihilate them, and the Muslims will be dominant; they will break the Cross, kill the swine and abolish the *ʾIzyah*. (Mustadrak Hākim. A brief version of this Tradition has also been reported in Muslim, and Ḥāfiz Ibn

13. Afīq (mod. Fīq) is the last Syrian city on the border between Syria and Israel. A little further on towards west at a few miles is the Lake Tiberias (Sea of Galilee), the source of River Jordan. Towards the south-west in the mountains is a low pass, which descends about 2,000 feet to the point from where River Jordan comes out from Lake Tiberias. This same mountain path is called 'Aqabah Afīq, the pass of Afīq.

Hajar in his *Fath al-Bārī* (vol. VI, p. 450) has declared it to be authentic).

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

What do these Traditions Prove?

Anyone who goes through these Traditions will see for himself that they do not contain any mention whatever of the advent of a "promised Messiah", or "a man like the Messiah", or a "projection of the Messiah", nor do they admit that somebody in this age having been born from the womb of any mother and by the sperm of any father, should put forward the claim that he is the Messiah whose coming has been foretold by the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). All these Traditions clearly and explicitly give the news of the advent of the same Jesus Christ (upon whom be peace) who was born of the Virgin Mary two thousand years ago. It would be useless to debate here the point whether Jesus has died or is still living somewhere in the universe. Even if he is dead, Allah has the power to raise him back to life;¹⁴ otherwise also it is not beyond the power of Allah that He should keep a servant of His alive for thousands of years somewhere in His universe, and then bring him back into the world whenever He wills. In any case if a person believes in *Hadīth*, he will have to admit that the one whose advent has been foretold will be Jesus son of Mary; and if he does not believe in *Hadīth*, he cannot be a believer in the advent of anyone whatever, for the doctrine of the Advent is based on *Hadīth* and on nothing else. But this is strange logic that the people should adopt the doctrine of the Advent from *Hadīth* and then should discard the particularities given in the same *Hadīth*, which clearly state that the one

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

whose advent has been foretold will be Jesus son of Mary, and not a "man who is spiritually like unto the Messiah."

Another thing which becomes equally evident from these Traditions is that the advent of the Prophet Jesus will not be in the capacity of a new Prophet: he will neither receive Revelation nor bring a new message or new injunctions from God, nor make any change or alteration in the *Shari'ah* of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), nor will he be raised in the world for the revival of Islam, nor will invite the people to believe in his prophethood, nor make a separate community of those who follow him.¹⁵ He will be sent for a specific task, which will be to crush the mischief created by the *Dajjāl*. For this purpose he will descend in a manner that the Muslims among whom he descends will have no doubt at all that he is Jesus son of Mary, who has appeared at the right time, as foretold by the Holy Prophet. He will

15. The Islamic scholars have explained this in great detail. 'Allāma Taftāzānī (722-792 A.H.) writes in *Sharḥ 'Aqā'id Nasafī*: "This is an established fact that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is the Last Prophet If it is said that after him the coming of the Prophet Jesus has been mentioned in *Ḥadīth*, we shall say: yes, this thing has been mentioned, but he will come as a follower of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), for his *Shari'ah* stands abrogated; therefore he will neither receive Revelation nor enjoin new injunctions, but will only work as a representative of the Holy Prophet." (Egyptian Ed. p. 135).

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

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

immediately join the congregation of the Muslims, will offer his Prayer behind the Imam of the Muslims present at the time,¹⁶ and will follow the leader of the Muslims as such so that there remains no room for anyone to entertain the doubt that he has come back to the world again to perform his prophetic duties in his previous capacity as a Prophet. Evidently, when a Prophet of God is present in a community, no one else can act as an Imām or a leader. Thus, when he will join the Muslims' Community as an individual, it will by itself be a declaration that he has not come as a prophet. On this basis therefore there will be no question whatever of the violation of the sanctity of the seal of prophethood on his advent.

It may be said (without making any real comparison) that his advent will be like the visit of a former head of a state in the time of the ruling head of a state and his rendering some service to the state under him. Even a person of ordinary common sense can understand that the mere visit and arrival of a former head of the state in the time of a ruling head of the state does not affect the constitution at all. The constitution, however, would be violated in two cases: First, that the former head of the state should, on his return, try to resume the office of the head of state, second, that somebody should challenge his former position of the head of state, for this would be tantamount to challenging the validity of all the works that had been accomplished during his past tenure of office. If neither case exists, the former head of the state's arrival by itself does not effect any change in the constitutional position of the country. The same will be the case with the Prophet Jesus' second coming. His mere advent does not affect the Finality of Prophethood. However, if he resumes the office of Prophethood on his advent and starts performing the duties and functions of Prophethood, or somebody repudiates and disowns his being a former Prophet also, this would certainly violate the sanctity of Allah's Law of raising Prophets in the

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

world. The Traditions have clearly ruled out the possibility of both. On the one hand, they explain that no other prophet will be raised after the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), and on the other, they give the news that Jesus son of Mary will come for the second time. This clearly shows that this second coming of Jesus will not be for the purpose of performing the duties of the office of Prophethood.

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

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

the millenium as described in the Talmud and the rabbinical literature and living by the hope that the Promised Messiah would be a great military and political leader, who would restore to them the whole land between the river Nile and the river Euphrates (which the Jews regard as their heritage), and will gather the Jews together from every part of the world and assemble them once again in this country.

Now if a person looks at the affairs of the Middle East and studies them in the light of the background of the Holy Prophet's prophecies, he will at once perceive that the stage is fully set for the emergence of the great *Dajjāl*, who would arise as the "promised Messiah" of the Jews as foretold by the Holy Prophet. The Muslims have been expelled from the major part of Palestine and a Jewish state of Israel has been established there. The Jews from all over the world are being drawn to it. The U.S.A., Britain and France have turned it into a great military power. The Jewish scientists and experts are developing it with the massive aid of the Jewish capital and its power has become a great danger for the Muslim nations of the region. The leaders of Israel have never made a secret of their desire that they want to have the "land of their heritage". The map of the Jewish empire of the future which they have been openly publicising since long is given on the opposite page. This shows that they want to take the whole of Syria, the whole of Lebanon, the whole of Jordan and almost the entire Iraq in addition to Iskenderun from Turkey, Sinai and the Delta area from Egypt and the upper Hejāz and Najd from Saudi Arabia, which also includes Madīnah. From this one can clearly perceive that taking advantage of the confusion and chaos created by the prospect of some future world war, they will try to occupy these territories. Right on that occasion the great *Dajjāl* will arise as their Promised Messiah. The Holy Prophet has not only given the news of his coming but has also foretold that the Muslims will suffer colossal hardships in those days; so much so that one day will appear as long as a year. That is why not only did the Holy Prophet himself ask for Allah's refuge from the great mischief of the *Dajjāl* but also exhorted his followers to implore Allah for protection against him.

To counter and fight this Antichrist Allah will not send a "man like the Messiah" but the real Messiah, whom the Jews had declined to acknowledge as such two thousand years ago, and whom they thought they had disposed of by putting him on the Cross. The place where the

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

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

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

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

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

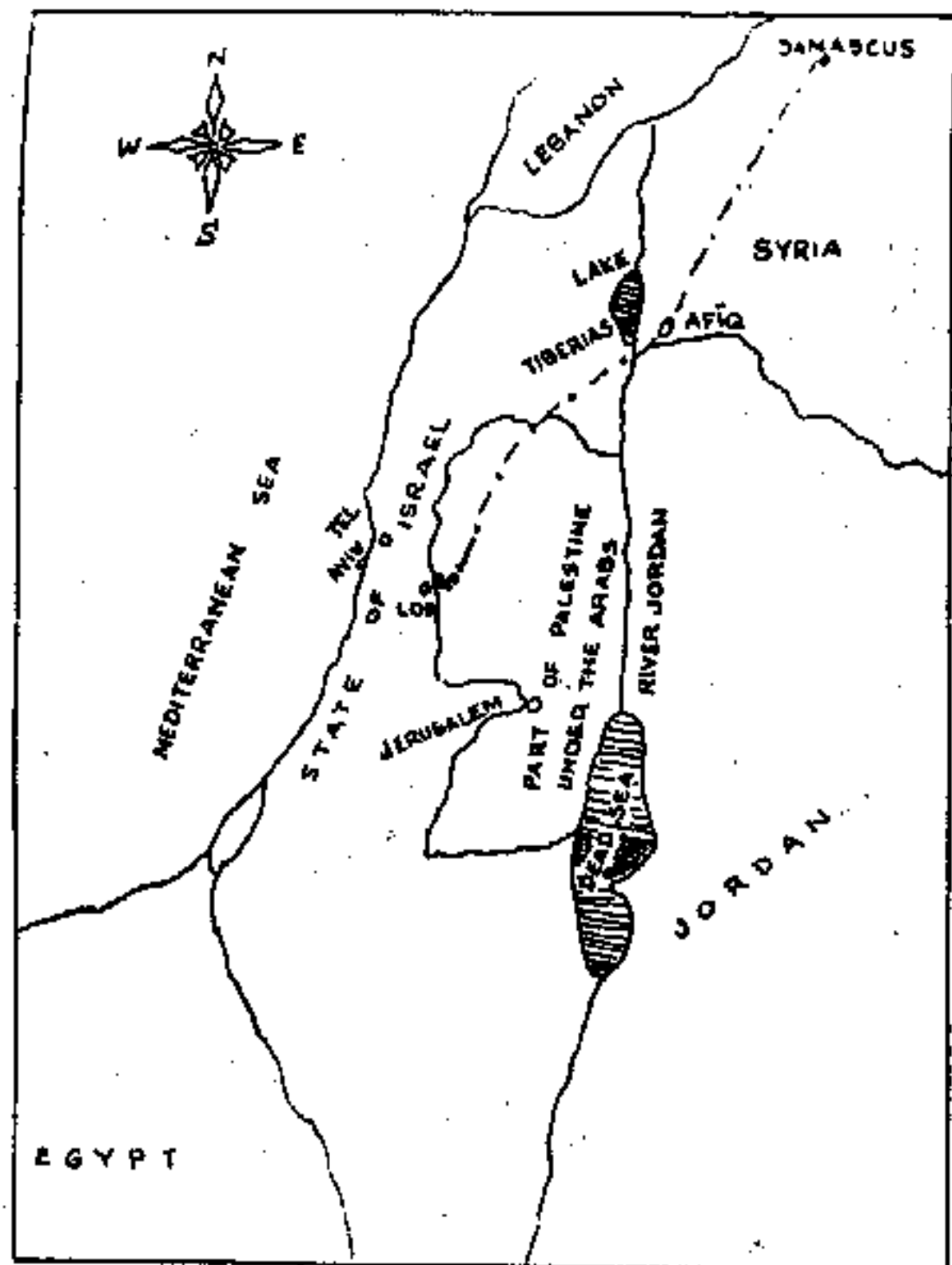
"Let it be known that in respect of the interpretations of the word *Damishq* (Damascus) it has been explained to me through revelation by Allah that in this place the name Damascus has been given to a town whose inhabitants possess the characteristics of Yazīd and follow the ways and notions of the unclean Yazīd.... This town of Qādiān, for the reason that most of its inhabitants possess the qualities and characteristics of Yazīd, bears a resemblance and similarity with Damascus." (Footnote, *Izāla-i Auhām*, pp. 63 to 73).

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

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

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

THE PLACE WHERE THE REAL MESSIAH WILL DESCEND



THE JEWISH STATE OF WHICH THE ISRAELI LEADERS ARE DREAMING

