

THE WHITE APOLOGETICS

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of God, the
Compassionate, the Merciful

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In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

PROLOGUE

Those who are aware of the conditions prevailing on the world of Islam know well that the Islamic “Ummah” has nowadays transformed into “ummahs”, each having its own customs and conventions. Consequently, the direction of Muslim’s lives is determined by those who see their sovereignty and survival in aggravating discords, for which they variously invest making use of any possible means.

It goes without saying that there are differences, mostly theological, among the Islamic sects. The Islamic theologians, *Mutakallimūn*, have established these differences, of which the generality of Muslims are unaware. In comparison with these differing issues, there are many more things in common. Those heading the disagreements emphasize a magnification of the differences and refuse to talk about the common points in the principles, *uṣūl*, and subsidiaries, *furū`*.

In a gathering of the “Approximation of the Islamic Sects.” I was assigned to deliver a lecture about how the Islamic sects explain the personal status (of their followers), including marriage, divorce, inheritance.... Much to the amazement of the participants, the article I presented to the conference showed that there is unanimity between the present four Sunni schools and Shiism in most of the above matters, an issue that was unbelievable to the participants before.

They (the Sunnis) are keeping aloof from realities, imagining the Shiites as a sect having been severed from other Islamic sects. Using their mass media, they talk day

and night against this history-long oppressed sect and do nothing other than serve the common enemy, all grist to the enemy's mill. I advise this misinformed group that they have a closer contact with the Shiites and the Shī'ite scholars, for it will remove the veil of misinformation and introduce the Shiites as their full blood brothers they have been in search of for ages. And this is an actualization of the Quranic verse "*Surely this Islam is your religion, one religion (only), and I am your Lord, therefore worship Me.*" 21:92.

A chronic trick the colonial rule plays among the Islamic nations has been the instillation and propagation of doubtful issues, aiming at harming the glorious Islamic Revolution. This fraudulence has variously been in circulation in the Middle East and other areas for the last centuries.

Many pilgrims to the house of God whose minds have been confused by the enemies' evil propagations against the Islamic Revolution, and who meet Iranian pilgrims during the Hajj ceremony, have raised questions for which they require answers.

To meet this requirement, Mr. Sayyid Reza Husayni, a highly esteemed scholar, has, under my supervision, collected a great number of the questions, often of religious and cultural type, in the present book. Our intention was to answer them as briefly as possible. Further elucidation and explanation should be left for another occasion.

We hope that this insignificant service will meet Imam Zamān's acceptance, may our souls be sacrificed for him.

Qum, Houzeh 'Ilmiyyeh
Ja'far Sobhani,
1994

In the Name of God

For a long time we cherished the hope of translating a book that could explain the Shī'ite treasure of learning in a simple, non-technical language, when we came upon "The Shī'ite Apologetics", which answers some of the fundamental questions in a fluent, sincere and unbiased language and in a manner that is in harmony with their primordial inclinations.

We hope that the present book that has made use of authentic *ḥadīth* sources, would answer some of the accusations made against the Shiites, making it easy for readers to see things for themselves and judge the reality.

Sayyid Iraj Razzaghi

Dr. Sayyid Muḥammad Reza Hashemi

Gholam Ḥasan Khavari

QUESTION ONE

Which one is correct, "*my itrah*", or "*my sunnah*"?

ANSWER:

The eminent narrators of the *ḥadīth* have reported it in two ways:

- a) "*Kitāballāh wa `itratī, Ahla Baytī*" _ the Book of Allah and my kindred, my household;
- b) "*Kitāballāh wa sunnatī*" _ the Book of Allah and my Sunnah.

The authentic *ḥadīth* quoted from the holy Prophet (a.s) contains the phrase: "*wa Ahla Baytī.*" The *ḥadīth* citing "sunnatī" instead of "*Ahla Baytī -my household-*" is nil and void in terms of authenticity, but the one containing "*Ahla Baytī*" is sound for the following reasons:

CHAIN OF NARRATORS OF THE *ḤADITH* CONTAINING "*WA AHLA BAYT*"

The two great Islamic narrators of the *ḥadīth* who have quoted this narration are:

- a) Muslim, who, in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, quotes Zayd ibn Arqam as saying: "Once the Messenger of God delivered a sermon at Ghadīr Khumm _ a brook between Mecca and Medina. Having praised God, he said: "O people! I am a human

being who is about to be summoned by the divine angel and who is to respond to this call. I am leaving behind two precious things (*Thaqalayn*): the first is the Book of Allah, which contains guidance and light. So take hold of the Book of Allah and act according to it.” Thus, he put great emphasis on acting according to the Holy Qur’ān. Then he added: “and *Ahla Baytī* (my household). With regard to my *Ahla Bayt* I remind you of Allah.” He repeated this sentence three times.¹

b) Dārimī has also quoted the same *ḥadīth* in his book *Sunan*.² It should be noted that both *ḥadīths* are textually as lucid as the day, with no distortion in them.

c) Tirmidhī has quoted the same narration using the phrase “*wa `itratī, Ahla Baytī*”: “I leave behind two things among you. If you take hold of them, you will not be misguided after me. One of them is greater than the other: the Book of Allah, which is a rope extended from the heaven to the earth, and *my itrah*, my household. The two will never separate until they return to me by the pond (of *Kawthar*). So, heed how to deal with them.”³

Muslim and Tirmidhī, authors of the books of *Ṣaḥīḥ* and *Sunan*, have both emphasized the phrase “*Ahla Baytī*.” This is sufficient proof advocating our view.

¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 4, p.1803, No. 2408. `Abd al-Bāqī edition.

² *Sunan al-Dārimī*, vol. 2, p. 431-2.

³ *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, vol. 5, p. 663, No. 37788.

THE TEXT CONTAINING “*WA SUNNATI*”

The narration containing the phrase “*wa sunnati*” (My Sunnah) instead of *Ahla Bayti*” _ household _ is forged and weak in its chain of narrators; moreover, it was devised by the Umayyads.

In his *Mustadrak*, Ḥākim Nayshābūrī, on the authority of `Abbās ibn Abī-Uways, on the authority of Abī-Uways, and he on the authority of Thawr ibn Zayd al-Daylamī, on the authority of `Ikrimah, on the authority of Ibn `Abbās, quotes the holy Prophet as having said, “O people, I leave two things among you, which, if you take hold of, you would not be misguided: the Book of Allah and His Prophet’s Sunnah.”¹

Mention should here be made of Abū-Uways and Ismā`il ibn Abī-Uways, the father and son respectively, as pests among the narrators of the chain of this *ḥadīth*. Not only are they unreliable but also accused of fabricating *ḥadīths*.

COMMENTS OF THE EXPERTS OF `ILM AL-RIJĀL
CONCERNING THESE TWO NARRATORS

a) Ḥāfiẓ Mazzī, a researcher of *`ilm al-rijāl* has the following points to say in his book, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*, concerning Ismā`il and his father: “Yaḥyā ibn Mu`īn, a great scholar of *`ilm al-rijāl*, says, ‘Abū-Uways and his son are weak’ He is also quoted to have said, ‘These two are used to plagiarizing *ḥadīths*.’ Ibn Mu`īn has further said about Abū-Uways’ son: ‘He can not be trusted.’”

¹ *Al-Ḥākim’s al-Mustadrak `alā al-Ṣaḥīḥayn*, vol. 1, p.93.

b) Nasā'i's comment on Abū-Uways' son: "He is weak and inauthentic."

c) Abul-Qāsim Lalka'i: "Nasā'i has said a great deal about him (Ismā'il), such as: "The *ḥadīths* he quotes are to be rejected."

d) Ibn Adī, a scholar of *`ilm al-rijāl*: "Ibn Abī-Uways has narrated strange *ḥadīths* from his uncle, which no one accepts."¹

e) In the prologue to *Fath al-Bārī*, Ibn Ḥajar has said, "The narrations Ibn Abī-Uways has cited can never be taken as a basis for argument due to the charges Nasā'i made against him."²

f) In his book, *Fath al-Mulk al-'Alī*, Ḥāfiẓ Sayyid Aḥmad ibn Ṣiddīq quotes Salamah ibn Shayb as having said, "I have heard Ismā'il ibn 'Abī-Uways saying, 'Whenever the citizens of Medina divide on an issue, I fabricate a tradition.'³

The son, Ismā'il ibn 'Abī-Uways, is thus accused of fabricating narrations in addition to being called a liar by Ibn Mu'in. Moreover, none of his *ḥadīths* have been cited in either of the Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim and Tirmidhī have written.

There is no need to quote more than what Abū-Ḥātam Rāzī wrote in his book, *al-Jarḥ wa'l-Ta'dīl*, regarding Abū-Uways, "His narrations are written down, but are not taken

¹ *Al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Mazzi's Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*, vol. 3, p.127.

² *Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī's Fath al-Bārī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, p. 391, *Dār al-Ma'ārif* Print.

³ *Al-Ḥāfiẓ Sayyid Aḥmad's Fath al-Mulk al-'Alī*, p. 15.

as a ground to base arguments on.”¹ Abū-Ḥātam has also quoted Ibn Mu‘in as having said, “Abū-Uways is unreliable.” The *ḥadīths* these two persons quote are never authentic, and are contradictory to the authentic ones. It is noteworthy that Ḥākim Nayshābūrī, the narrator, has acknowledged the *ḥadīth* as being weak and has, therefore, not bothered himself to correct them. He has, however, presented evidence in favor of the content of the *ḥadīth*, which is weak and inauthentic. This weakens the *ḥadīth* rather than strengthening it. His ill-founded document is mentioned below.

THE SECOND EVIDENCE FOR ‘WA SUNNAT’

In the following narration Ḥākim Nayshābūrī directly quotes Abū-Hurayrah as reporting the following tradition, without ascribing it to an infallible person: “I have surely left two things among you, after which you will not be misguided: the Book of Allah and my Sunnah. And these two will not separate until they return to me by the pond.”²

The chain of narrators Ḥākim mentions is: Al-Ḍabbī, on the authority of Ṣāliḥ ibn Mūsā al-Ṭalḥī, on the authority of ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Ibn Rāfi‘ on the authority of Abī-Ṣāliḥ, on the authority of Abū-Hurayrah. Like the aforementioned *ḥadīth*, this narration is forged too. In the chain of narrators of this *ḥadīth* mention has been made of Ṣāliḥ al-Ṭalḥī concerning whom the following comments have been made by the expert of *ilm ar-rijāl*:

a) Yaḥyā ibn Mu‘in: “Ṣāliḥ ibn Mūsā is undependable.”

¹ Abū-Ḥātam al-Rāzī’s *al-Jarḥ wa’l-Ta’dīl*, vol. 5, p. 92.

² Al-Ḥākim’s *al-Mustadrak ‘alā al-Ṣaḥīḥayn*, vol. 1, p. 93.

b) Abū-Ḥātam Rāzī: “The narrations he quotes are weak and repudiated. In many of his *ḥadīths* he ascribes *munkar* to the trusted ones.”

c) Nasā’i: “The *ḥadīths* he cites are not to be recorded.” Also, “His *ḥadīths* are abandoned.”¹

d) In his *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, Ibn Ḥajar writes: Ibn Ḥabbān says: “Ṣāliḥ ibn Mūsā ascribes to the trusted people words that are not the like of theirs.” Also, “The traditions he narrates are not to be taken as evidence.”

e) Abū-Na’im: “His narrations are abandoned; he constantly cites *munkar ḥadīths*.²

f) Ibn Ḥajar in *Taqrīb*: “His narrations are abandoned.”³

g) Dhahabī in *Kāshif*: “His narrations are weak.”⁴ Dhahabī discusses the aforementioned narration in his *Mizān al-I’tidāl*, and calls it *munkar*.⁵

THE THIRD DOCUMENT FOR “WA SUNNAT”

a) Ibn Abd al-Barr quotes the aforementioned narration in his book “*Tamhīd*” with the following chain of the narrators (‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Yaḥyā, on the authority of Aḥmad ibn Sa’īd, on the authority of Ḥunayn, on the authority of Kathīr ibn ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr ibn ‘Awf, on the authority of his father on the authority of his grandfather.)”⁶

¹ *Al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Mazzī’s Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*, vol. 13, p. 96.

² Ibn Ḥajar’s *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, vol. 4, p.355.

³ Ibn Ḥajar’s *Taqrīb*, (the translation, No. 2891).

⁴ Al-Dhahabī’s *al-Kāshif*, (the translation, No. 2412).

⁵ Al-Dhahabī’s *Mizān al-I’tidāl*, vol. 2, p.302.

⁶ *Al-Tamhīd*, vol. 24, p. 331.

Concerning Kathīr ibn `Abdullāh, Imam Shāfi`i says, “He is one of the pillars of falsehood.”¹ Abū-Dāwūd says: “He is among the liars.”² Ibn Ḥabbān says: “`Abdullāh ibn Kathīr quotes from his father and his grandfather narrations which are based on forgery. It is permanently unlawful to cite traditions from `Abdullāh, unless with the aim of (showing) astonishment or criticism.”³

b) Nasā'i and Dāraquṭnī: “His *ḥadīths* are abandoned.”

c) Imam Aḥmad: “He denounces (the correct) *ḥadīths*; he is not dependable.” Ibn Mu`īn is of the same opinion. How strange for Ibn Ḥajar to consider him in his *al-Taqrīb* as “weak”, and to call “lying extremists” those who accused Kathīr ibn `Abdullāh whereas it is those who are avant-gardes in knowledge that have accused him of falsehood and forgery'. Dhahabī calls his word “illusive and infirm.”

UNCITED QUOTATION

In his book, *al-Muwaṭṭa`*, Mālik calls the aforementioned narration as “one without citations, directly narrated”, and we know such narrations as worthless.”⁴ It is thus clearly proved that the narration containing “*wa sunnatī*” is one fabricated by mendacious narrators linked with the Umayyad court, aiming at having it positioned against the authentic one containing “*wa itratī*.” It is thus necessary for preachers delivering sermons in mosques and discussing

¹ Ibn Ḥajar's *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, vol. 8, p.377, printed by *Dār al-Fikr*; also *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*, vol. 24, p.138.

² Ibid.

³ Ibn Ḥabbān's *al-Majrūḥīn*, vol. 2, p. 211.

⁴ Mālik's *al-Muwaṭṭa`*, vol. 3 p.889.

religious issues to abandon the narration not handed down from the Messenger of God, and instead to familiarize people with the authentic narration, the one Muslim has narrated in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* as containing “*Ahla Baytī*” and Tirmidhī has cited the phrase “*itratī wa Ahla Baytī*.” Scholars should also reveal the difference between the authentic and other weak narrations.

In conclusion, we would repeat that by using the phrase “*Ahla Baytī*”, the holy Prophet refers to his progeny: Ḥaḍrat Fāṭimah, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, peace be upon them, as reported in Muslim’s *Ṣaḥīḥ*¹ and Tirmidhī’s *Sunan*² which have quoted `Ā’ishah as having said that the following Qur’ānic verse: “*Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O Ahla-Bayt and purify you a thorough purifying*” (33:33), was revealed to the holy Prophet (a.s) when he was in Umm Salamah’s house. Then the Messenger (a.s) summoned Fāṭimah (a.s), and Ḥasan (a.s) and Ḥusayn (a.s) and put an ‘aba on their heads, while `Alī (a.s) was behind him. Then he said, “O Allah, these are my *Ahl al-Bayt*, so remove from them uncleanness and purify them a thorough purifying.” At this time Umm Salamah said, “O Messenger of Allah, am I one of them?” He said, “You hold your own place; you are also on the good path.”³

¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1883.

² *Al-Tirmidhī*, vol. 5, p.663.

³ Ḥasan ibn Ali al-Saqqāf’s *Ṣaḥīḥ, Sifat Ṣalāt al-Nabī*, pp. 289-294.

IMPLICATIONS OF THAQALAYN HADITH

The holy Prophet's juxtaposing the *itrah* and the Qur'ān and calling both Allah's authentic authorities among Muslims, can have, at least, the following implications:

1) The words of the Prophet's *itrah* are, like the Qur'ān, God's authentic proofs in religious affairs, ideological or juridical, to which Muslims should stick, and from which they should not deviate. Although the Muslims were divided into two groups on the issue of caliphate and of the administration of the affairs of the community, each with a reason supporting their belief, they should never differ in Ahla Bayt's scholarly stand, for there is a general unanimity on the authenticity of *ḥadīth* of Thaqalayn, which considers the Qur'ān and *itrah* as the scholarly stand in matters of beliefs and religious precepts. If the Islamic ummah follows the contents of this *ḥadīth*, divisions will narrow in scope, and unity will prevail.

2) The Qur'ān is the word of God and secure against any error, therefore "*Falsehood shall not come to it from before it nor from behind*" (41:42). And so is its peer, the *itrah*, for how can an erring individual or the erring ones be taken as peers to the Qur'ān? The narration under discussion is evidence supporting their infallibility from any errors. It should be noted that inerrancy does not entail prophethood, since many a person is secured against sin who is not a prophet. The Blessed Mary is such an example whom the Qur'ān addressed: "*Allah has chosen you and purified you and ranked you above the women of the world.*" (3:42)

QUESTION TWO

What is meant by "Shī`ah"?

ANSWER:

The Arabic word Shī`ah means "follower." The Holy Qur`ān reads, "*One of his (Noah's) followers (Shī`ah) is Ibrāhīm.*" (37:83)

In the Islamic terminology Shiism refers to a sect believing that the holy Prophet (a.s), before his death and on many other occasions, including Dhu'l-Ḥijjah 18th, the twentieth year of Hijrah – known as the Day of Ghadīr – and in the presence of a large gathering, appointed `Alī (a.s) as his successor, that is as the caliph of the Muslims and the political, scientific and religious authority after him.

A word of explanation is warranted here. Concerning the Caliphate issue, the Immigrants (*Muhājirūn*) and the Helpers (*Anṣār*) divided into two groups after the death of the holy Prophet: one group believed that the holy Prophet had not neglected the issue of the leadership of the Islamic community and had appointed his successor, `Alī Ibn Abī-Ṭālib, the first person who declared his conviction in the Prophethood of Muḥammad. This group consisted of some Immigrants and Helpers, headed by the noblemen of the Banī-Hāshim clan, as well as by some of the great companions of the Prophet, such as Salmān, Abū-Dharr, al-

Miqdād, Khabbāb ibn al-Aratt and others; they were called “the Shiites” of `Alī, the Commander of the Faithful. In fact, it was the holy Prophet himself who entitled `Alī's followers as such. When appointing `Alī ibn Abī-Ṭālib, he said, “By the one in whose hands lies my life, he (`Alī) and his followers are saved on the Day of Resurrection¹ So, the Shiites are the Muslims who were organized into a group in the early days of Islam because they believed that the rank of *Wilāyah*, the leadership of the Islamic community, was divinely ordained. This sect is still faithful to following the Prophet and his family.

The position of the Shiites is thus clear, contrary to the claims of some ignorant or malicious people who maintain that Shiism was a later development, not existing in the early period of Islam. For further information, see the following books: *Aṣl al-Shī'ah wa Uṣūluhā*, *al-Murāja'āt*, and *A'yān al-Shī'ah*.

The other group maintains that Caliphate was an elective institution. So they swore allegiance to Abū-Bakr, and were later called the Sunnis. Thus, against many principles in common, the two sects were divided due to their differing views on the issue of the Prophet's successorship. Both sects were originally formed by some Immigrants (*Muhājirūn*) and Helpers (*Anṣār*).

¹ Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, in his *al-Durr al-Manthūr*, vol. 6, narrates this tradition while commenting on the Qur'ānic verse: “(And) lo! Those who believe and do good deeds are the best of the created beings.” (98:6).

QUESTION THREE

Why is `Alī (a.s), the son of Abū-Tālib, the Prophet's Successor?

ANSWER:

As regards the successorship of the holy Prophet, the Shiites firmly believe that it is an ordained position. They maintain that the position of Imamate is, in some respects, like that of Prophethood. A prophet's successor, just as the prophet himself, should be introduced by God. The biography of the Messenger of God, Muḥammad (a.s), also bears witness to this principle: the Prophet himself explicitly and implicitly appointed `Alī (a.s) as his successor in numerous occasions, three of which are mentioned here:

1) At the beginning of the prophetic mission, when the holy Prophet was commissioned by God through the verse "*and warn thy tribe of near kindred*" (26:214), he addressed them saying, "who will, from among you, help me with this matter to be my brother, my counselor, my legatee and my successor?" It was only `Alī (a.s) who replied positively to this heavenly call. Then the Prophet addressed his relatives and announced, "This person (`Alī) will be my brother, my legatee and my successor among you, so listen to him and follow him."¹

¹ *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 2 pp. 62-63; *al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh*, vol. 2, pp.

2) In the war of Tabūk, the holy Prophet asked `Alī, “Do you not want to be to me as Aaron was to Moses, save that there will not be any prophet after me?”¹ This means that just as Aaron was the immediate legatee and successor to Moses, so would `Alī be the Prophet’s successor.

3) In the 10th year after Hijra, when returning from the last pilgrimage to Mecca in a valley called Ghadīr Khumm, in the presence of a large multitude, the Prophet introduced `Alī (a.s) as Master of Muslims and Believers. At the beginning of his address, the Prophet asked people, “Do I not have authority on you more than you have on yourselves?” When all the people gathering there unanimously affirmed it, the Prophet announced: *man kuntū mawlāhu fa hādihā `Aliyyun mawlāhu* “Whomsoever I have been the master, `Alī will be his master from now on.” It is clear that what the Prophet implied by the word *mawlā* (master), was the very same authority and full superiority par excellence that he had over the believers which was established for `Alī as well.

On that day Ḥassān Ibn Thābit put the historical Ghadīr event into a poem that reads:

*Their Prophet was inviting them on the day of
Ghadīr
And a herald whispered into the messenger’s ear,
“Who is your master and prophet?” he asked.*

40-41; *Musnad Aḥmad*, vol. 1, p. 111; *Nahj al-Balāghah* Commentary by Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd, vol. 13, pp. 210-212.

¹ *Sirat Ibn Hushām*, vol. 3, p. 520; *Al-Ṣawā'iq al-Muḥriqah*, book 9, chapter 2, p. 121.

*They replied, and no ignorance they pretended:
 “Your God is our master, and you are our prophet
 forever
 And no one among us will you find opposed to the
 mastery, ever.”
 Then he called “Rise, thou ‘Alī”
 “The leader and Imam after me I agree you be.”
 “So, ‘Alī is the master of those whose master I've
 been,”
 “And I want you truthful followers of his to be
 after.”
 “O God! Be his friends’ friend Thou.”
 Then he prayed, “And be his foes’ foe.”¹*

The Ghadīr tradition is one of the successive traditions cited by not only all Shī‘ite scholars but also by about three hundred and sixty Sunni ones,² who have quoted one hundred and ten of the Prophet’s companions in the chain of the narrators of this tradition. Moreover, twenty-six great Muslim scholars have written separate books on the recording and the handing down of this tradition. For instance, the famous Muslim historian, Abū-Ja‘far Ṭabarī wrote two volumes of books on this issue. ‘Allāmah Amīnī’s encyclopedic book, *al-Ghadīr*, provides further information in this regard.

¹ Khārazmi, the Māliki, *al-Manāqib*, p. 80; Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, the Ḥanafī, *Tadhkirat al-Khawāṣṣ*, p. 20; al-Kanjī, the Shāfi‘ī, *Kifāyat al-Ṭālib*, p. 17.

² For Instance, see Ibn Ḥajar's *Al-Ṣawā‘iq al-Muḥriqah*. (Egypt) book 9, chapter. 2.

QUESTION FOUR

Who are the Imams?

ANSWER:

The holy Prophet made it clear that following him there would be twelve successors, all from the Quraysh, and that their leadership would bring glory to Islam. Jābir Ibn Samarah says, “I heard the Prophet (a.s) say, ‘Islam will always be honored under these twelve successors.’ Then he said something that I did not quite hear. I asked my father what the prophet said; he answered, ‘The prophet said that they would all come from the Quraysh.’¹

In the history of Islam, there can be found no twelve successors guarding and preserving the honor of Islam except the twelve Imams in whom the Shiites believe, because it is only the twelve successors mentioned by the prophet who were all introduced as his immediate vicegerents.

Now, let us see who these twelve Imams are. If we exclude the four caliphs immediately following the holy Prophet (whom the Sunnites call ‘the Rightly Guided Caliphs, the Rāshidūn’, the other caliphs did not bring any honor to

¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Egypt edition), Vol. 6, p. 2.

Islam, as is evident from the history of the Umayyad and the Abbasids. But the twelve Imams of the Shiites were paragons of virtue and piety in their own time, and about whose knowledge and trustworthiness historians have given clear proof were the guardians of the Sunnah of God's Prophet and were in the center of attention of the Companions and their followers as well as of the Muslims of later generations. These twelve Imams are:

`Alī Ibn Abī-Ṭālib

Ḥasan Ibn `Alī (Mujtabā)

Ḥusayn Ibn `Alī

`Alī Ibn Ḥusayn (Zayn al-`Ābidīn)

Muḥammad Ibn `Alī (Bāqir)

Ja`far Ibn Muḥammad (Ṣādiq)

Mūsā Ibn Ja`far (Kāẓim)

`Alī Ibn Mūsā (Riḍā)

Muḥammad Ibn `Alī (Taqī)

`Alī Ibn Muḥammad (Naqī)

Ḥasan Ibn `Alī (`Askarī)

Mahdī (Qā'im) about whom successive traditions have been quoted from the Prophet calling him the promised Mahdī.

To obtain further information about the biography of these great leaders, whose names have been mentioned by the Holy Prophet (a.s), see the following books:

Tadkirat al-Khawāṣṣ

Wafīyyāt al-A`yān

A`yān al-Shī`ah (the most comprehensive of all).

QUESTION FIVE

Why do Shiites include the descendants of Muḥammad when blessing him, saying, "O Lord, bless Muḥammad and his descendents"?

ANSWER:

It is obvious that the holy Prophet himself taught Muslims to bless him. When the following verse was revealed: "Surely Allah and His angels bless the Prophet; O, ye who believe! Call for (Divine) blessings on him and salute him with a (becoming) salutation." (33:50), the Muslims asked the Prophet, "How shall we salute you?"

- "Don't salute me incompletely," the Prophet answered.

- "How, then, shall we salute you?" they repeated.

- "Say," he replied, "O Lord, bless your apostle Muḥammad and his descendants."¹

¹ Ibn Ḥajar, *Al-Ṣawā'iq al-Muḥriqah*, book 11, chap. 1, p. 146; *al-Durr al-Manthūr*, vol. 5; commenting on verse 56 of Chapter *al-Aḥzāb*, the traditionists as well as the authors of *Ṣiḥāḥ* and *Masānīd* (anthologies of traditions) such as `Abd al-Razzāq, Ibn Abī-Shaybah, Aḥmad, al-Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū-Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī, al-Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Mardawayh—all quoted similar statements from Ibn `Ajjah, who himself quoted from the Holy Prophet.

Saluting Muḥammad's descendants is so important that Shāfi'ī, in his famous poem says:

*“O descendants of our holy Prophet! Loving you is a precept recommended by God in the Qur'ān. Of the importance and elevation of your position it suffices to say that whoever salutes you not, has performed no prayers.”*¹

¹ Ibn Ḥajar, *Al-Ṣawā'iq al-Muḥriqah*, book 11, p. 148; al-Shabrāwī, *al-Ithāf*, p. 29; al-Ḥamzāwī al-Mālikī, *Mashāriq al-Anwār*, p. 88; al-Zarqānī, *al-Mawāhib*, p. 119; Ṣabbān, *al-Is'āf*, p.119.

QUESTION SIX

**Why do Shiites consider the Imams
'Ma`šūm,' infallible?**

ANSWER:

There are several reasons proving that the Imams of the Shiites, all members of the household of Prophet Muḥammad (*Ahl al-Bayt*), are all infallible (i.e. protected against errors and sins). Only one of the reasons is presented here:

According to Shī`ite and Sunni scholars, the blessed Prophet, in the last days of his life, said, "I leave behind two invaluable things for you: the Book of Allah and my *Ahl al-Bayt*. They will never be separated until they meet me at the fountain of Kawthar."¹

There is no doubt that the Qur'ān is secure from any deviation and mistake. How can there possibly be any mistake in the divine revelation sent down by God, carried by Gabriel, and received by the blessed Prophet? It is as clear as daylight that all the three are free from any error.

¹ Al-Hakim's *al-Mustadrak*, part 3, p. 148; *Al-Ṣawā`iq al-Muḥriqah*, part 11, chapter one, p. 149. Similar texts are mentioned in *Kanz al-'Ummāl*, part one on *al-I'tiṣām bil-Kitāb wal-Sunnah*, p. 144; *Musnad Aḥmad*, part five, pp. 182 and 189.

Muslims maintain that the Holy Prophet is safe from any errors in receiving, guarding and conveying the revelation. With the book of Allah so truly and firmly free from any error, it is obvious that the household of the Prophet, the *Ahl al-Bayt*, are also secure from errors and mistakes, for the household have been paired with the Qur'ān in the tradition cited above. Thus, since the two have been paired up with the Qur'ān, they must be infallible in guiding and leading the people. Put another way, there is no reason why an erring person should be paired up with the Qur'ān.

The clearest evidence to the infallibility of the Imam is the words of the holy Prophet, who said, "These will never be separated until they meet me at the Fountain of Kawthar." Should the household of the Prophet not be protected against errors, or should they ever err, they will get separated and deviate from the error-free Qur'ān; this, nonetheless, has strongly been refuted.

Certainly "the household" cited above does not mean all the prophet's relatives, in-law or ancestral, for surely not all of them were secure against errors. Therefore, the honor is peculiar to some members of his family, the Imam, who have been beacons for the Ummah, and guardians of the prophetic Sunnah and the Shari'ah (the religion) throughout history.

Also, twenty-six Muslim scholars have written separate books on the recording and handing down of this tradition. For instance, the famous Muslim historian, Abū-Ja'far Ṭabarī wrote two volumes of books on this issue. 'Allāmah Amīnī's book *Al-Ghadīr*, provides further information in this regard.

QUESTION SEVEN

Why do you bear witness to `Alī's guardianship (Wilāyah) in the call to prayer (the Adhān), saying "I testify that `Alī is Allah's Walī?"

ANSWER:

1) All Shī'ite jurists have clearly expressed in their books of canonical law, demonstrative or otherwise, that saying the sentence "I testify that `Alī is Allah's wali" is not part of the call to prayer (the Adhān) and / or of the Iqāmah, and that no one has the right to utter that sentence as an indispensable part of the Adhān.

2) In the viewpoint of the Qur'ān, `Alī (a.s) is declared as one of God's saints. The following verse explicitly mentions him as the guardian (wali) over the believers: *"Only Allah is your wali (guardian) and his apostle and those who believe, those who keep up prayers and pay the poor-due while bowing down (in prayer)" (5:55).*

Also, certain traditions in the tradition digests collected by Sunni traditionists specify that the above verse was revealed about `Alī (a.s), who donated his ring to a poor man while bowing down in prayer.¹ When this verse was

¹ The documents on the background and condition of the revelation of this verse are too many to mention here; only a few will be cited as follows: al-Ṭabarī's Commentary (*tafsīr*), vol. 6, p. 186; *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān (tafsīr al-Jaṣṣāṣ)* vol. 2, p. 542; *Tafsīr al-Bayḍāwī*, vol. 1, p.345; *al-Durr al-Manthūr*, vol. 2, p. 293.

revealed Ḥassān ibn Thābit put the event into verse as follows:

You are the one who bestows while bowing in prayer.

May souls be sacrificed for you, the best of those who bow down before Allah.

It was thus that Allah sent you the best of the wilāyah and announced it in explicit verses.

3) The noble Prophet says, “The reality of every deed depends on one’s intention.” Thus if `Ali’s guardianship is one of the principles attested to by the Qur’ān, then why should there be any objections to announcing this fact in the Adhān along with the attestation to Muḥammad’s prophethood – if it is not announced with the intention of considering it as part of the Adhān?

If including a formula into the Adhān is disagreeable and the Shiites have, on the same ground, been criticized, what explanation is there for the following points?

a) History shows that the formula “Hurry to the best deed” (*ḥayya `alā khayr al-`amal*) was part of the Adhān in the time of the second caliph.¹ But he omitted it on the assumption that upon hearing it, people might take prayer as the best deed and not take part in the holy war (the Jihad). This has continued in the same manner.²

¹ *Kanz al-`Ummāl*, the book of *al-Ṣalāt*, vol. 4, p. 266. Al-Ṭabarānī said, “Bilāl used to call to prayers in the morning, saying ‘Hurry to the best deed (*ḥayya `alā khayr al-`amal*).’ *Sunan al-Bayhaqī*, vol. 1, p. 424-5; Mālik’s *al-Muwaṭṭa’* vol. 1, p. 93.

² *Kanz al-Irfān*, vol. 2, p. 158. Also, *al-Sirāṭ al-Mustaḳīm wa Jawāhir al-Akḥbār wa’l-Āthār*, vol. 2, p. 192; Al-Kūshchī’s *Sharḥ al-Tajrīd*, on

b) The formula “Prayer is better than sleep (*al-ṣalātu khayrun min al-nawmi*) was not part of the Adhān during the time of the Holy Prophet; it was added later on.¹ Accordingly, Shāfi`i in his book *al-Umm* says “It does not please me to say, in the Adhān, “prayer is better than sleep”, because Abū-Maḥdhūrah (one of the traditionists) has not mentioned it in his narrations.²

Imamate, p. 484: “He went up the pulpit and said, “O People, three things were practiced during the Prophet’s time but I forbid them and administer punishment if they are done. These are temporary marriage (*mut`ah*), *mut`at al-Ḥajj* and saying ‘Hurry up to the best deed.’”

¹ *Kanz al-`Ummāl*, the book of al-Ṣalāt, vol. 4, p. 270.

² Quoted from *Dalā`il al-Ṣidq*, vol. 3, part 2, p. 97.

QUESTION EIGHT

Who is Mahdī and why do Shiites expect his return?

ANSWER:

One of the issues unanimously accepted by all Divine religions is that of the Reformer who will reappear at the End of the Time. Not only Islamic societies but also Jewish and Christian societies await the one who will administer justice all over the world. This fact will be made clear by referring to the Old and New Testaments.¹ The holy Prophet of Islam also made a statement which the Islamic traditionists have quoted: “If there remains of the world only a single day, Allah will lengthen it until He has sent one from the people of my household. He will fill the world with equity and justice after it has been filled with injustice or oppression.”²

Such a Reformer is, therefore, acknowledged by prophets. There are also numerous traditions in the Sunni scholars’

¹) The Old Testament: Book of Psalms of David, 96-97; Book of Daniel, Chap. 12. The New Testament: The Gospel of Matthew, Chap. 24; The Gospel of Mark, Chap. 13; The Gospel of Luke, Chap. 21.

²) *Sunan Abī-Dāwūd*. Egypt: al-Tāziyah Press. Vol. 2, p. 207; *Yanābī’ al-Mawaddah*, Chap. 2, P. 432; *Nūr al-Abṣār*, Chap. 2, p. 154.

anthology of traditions (i.e. *Ṣaḥīḥs* and *Musnads*) concerning the Promised Mahdī. Besides, the Islamic traditionists - Sunni as well as Shī'ite scholars - have written a large number of books about him.¹ The descriptions given in all these traditions do fit the immediate son of Imam Ḥasan 'Askari² (The eleventh Imam of the Shiites), whose name is the same as the noble Prophet's.³ He is the twelfth Imam⁴ and a grandson from the line of Imam Ḥusayn, the son of 'Alī Ibn Abī-Ṭālib.⁵ The Promised Mahdī was, upon God's command, born in 255 H / 877 A.D. and now continues his life in an unknown guise.

It is necessary to mention that such a long life is inharmonious neither with science nor with the logic of revelation. Modern science is planning to lengthen man's life and believes that man has the disposition for living long, and the possibility will increase if disasters and harms are, in part, prevented.

Mention has also been made in history of those who have had long lives. For instance, the following verses of the

¹) Muḥammad Ibn Yūsuf al-Kanjī al-Shāfi'ī's *al-Bayān fī Akhbār Ṣāḥib al-Zamān*; *al-Burhān fī 'Alāmati Mahdiy Ākhir al-Zamān* by 'Alī Ibn Ḥusām al-Dīn (known as *al-Muttaqī al-Hindī*); *al-Mahdī wa'l-Mahdawīyyah* by Aḥmad Amin of Egypt. Shiite scholars have written numerous books on the subject, such as *al-Malāḥim wa'l-Fitan*.

² *Yanābī' al-Mawaddah fī al-Manāqib* by Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh al-Anṣārī.

³ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Tirmidhī*, vol. 2, p. 46, Delhi, 1342; *Musnad Aḥmad*, Vol. 1, p. 376, Egypt, 1313.

⁴ *Yanābī' al-Mawaddah*, p. 443.

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 432.

Qur'ān can be mentioned regarding the Prophets Noah and Jonah:

“So he remained among them a thousand years save fifty years.” (29:14)

“And had he not been one of those who glorify (Us), he would certainly have tarried in its (the whale’s) belly to the Day of Resurrection.” (37:144)

From the viewpoint of the Qur'ān as well as that of Muslims, Khidr, the noble Prophet, and the Noble Jesus are still alive.

QUESTION NINE

If Shiites are right, then why are they in the minority, and why have most other Muslims not recognized this religious sect?

ANSWER:

Distinguishing truth from falsehood does not depend on counting their followers. Nowadays, Muslims form one-fifth of the whole population of the world; most people who live in the Far East worship idols and bulls; some others even do not believe in the metaphysical world.

China, a country with over one billion people, is the center of communism and most Indians, apparently as many as one billion, worship bulls and idols. However, being in the majority is no sign of being right. The Holy Qur'ān often blames the majority of the people and praises some of the minority:

- *Thou wilt not find most of them thankful.* (8:18)
- *Its only protectors are the God-fearing; but most of them know not.* (8:38)
- *Few of my bondsmen are thankful.”*¹ (34:36)

¹ The full verse reads as follows: *But what have they now, that God*

So, a realistic person should not worry if the followers of the religion he believes in constitute a minority, nor should he take pride if they form the majority; he should, rather, ponder logically.

During the Battle of Jamal, a man asked Imam `Alī (a.s), “How is it possible to call your enemies, who are relatively greater in number, the followers of falsehood?” the Imam answered, “The truth and falsehood are not dependent on the number of followers. Recognize the truth, and you will know its followers; recognize the falsehood, and you will know who its followers are.”

It is thus necessary that a Muslim solve the issue scientifically and logically taking the Qur’ānic instructions as a light to guide his reason: “*And pursue not what thou hast no knowledge of.*” (17:36)

It is true that Shiites constitute only one fourth of the Muslims in the world.¹ However, it can be seen that throughout history, there are far more scientists and writers among this seemingly minor group of Muslims. Even the founders of Islamic sciences are in many cases Shiites, too. Among them mention may be made of:

- Abū’l-Aswad al-Du’alī, the founder of Arabic syntax
- Al-Khalīl Ibn Aḥmad, the founder of the science of prosody

should not chastise them, when they are barring from the Holy Mosque, not being its protectors? Its only protectors are the God-fearing.

¹ For further details, see *A`yān al-Shī`ah*, Vol. 1, p. 194.

- Mu'ādh ibn Muslim Ibn Abī-Sārah of Kūfah, the founder of the science of conjugation
- Abū-'Abdullāh Muḥammad Ibn 'Imrān Kātib of Khorasan (also called Marzbānī), a forerunner of the science of rhetoric¹

More names can be found in such books as: *al-Dharī'ah Ilā Tasānīf al-Shī'ah*, *A'yān al-Shī'ah*, and *Tārīkh al-Shī'ah*.

¹ See *Ta'sis al-Shī'ah*, by Sayyid Ḥasan al-Ṣadr.

QUESTION TEN

**What does Raj`ah mean and why
do Shiites believe in it?**

ANSWER:

Raj`ah in Arabic means, “to return” and it specifically refers to the return of a group of people to life before the Day of Resurrection - simultaneous with the global uprising of the promised Mahdī. This is a truth which is inconsistent neither with the common sense nor with the logic of Revelation: on the one hand, in view of Islam and other Divine religions, man’s essence or soul continues to live an immortal life after it departs the body; on the other, God is Omnipotent, as stated in the Qur’ān - nothing can limit His might. Thus, the issue of Raj`ah (returning of life) is logically possible, for a passing look upon the matter proves that bringing the dead to life is far easier than creating them. Thus, the Creator who created man first is undoubtedly able to bring them to life again.

Referring to instances of Raj`ah in the bygone nations, the Holy Qur’ān states: *“and when you said; O Moses, we will not believe in you until we see Allah manifestly, so the punishment overtook you while you looked on. Then We raised you up after your death that you may give thanks.”* (2:55-56). Also, the holy Qur’ān quotes Jesus Christ as saying: *“and I bring the dead to life with Allah’s permission”* (3:49)

The holy Qur'ān not only attests the possibility of Raj'ah but also confirms that a group of people will return to life before the Day of Resurrection. The following verses refer to this point:

“And when the word shall come to pass against them, We shall bring forth for them a creature from the earth that shall speak to them, because people did not believe in our revelations. And on the day when We shall gather from every nation a party from among those who rejected our revelations then they shall be formed into groups.” (27:82-83)

To prepare the ground for a discussion on the question of the return of the dead before Resurrection Day, the following points should be taken into consideration:

1) Muslim commentators believe that the above verses refer to Judgment Day. The first verse mentions one of the signs of what will happen before the Day of Resurrection. Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī in his *al-Durr al-Manthūr*, quotes Ibn Abī Shaybah who reported Ḥudhayfah as having said that the phrase *“bring forth as a creature”* points to an event that will take place before Resurrection Day.¹

2) As attested in the following verse, all men, not a chosen group from each nation, shall be brought to life on the Resurrection Day:

“That is a day when all mankind will be gathered together.” (11:103)

“And the day when We move the mountains and you will see the earth emerging, and We gather them together so as to leave not anyone of them behind.” (18:47)

¹ *Al-Durr al-Manthūr*, vol. 5, p. 177, commenting on verse 82 of Chap. 27 of the Qur'ān, ‘the Ant (*al-naml*).’

However, the verse 37:83 mentioned above clearly states that only a group of men will be brought to life.¹

Based on these introductory points, it is clear that only a particular group of people who disbelieve the signs of God (as understood from verse 37:83) will be brought to life before the Day of Judgment. This is called Raj`ah in which we believe. However, Resurrection will be inclusive of all people.

The Household of the Prophet, who are companions and commentators of the Qur`ān, have elucidated the issue. For the sake of brevity, two statements of Imam Ṣādiq are quoted in this connection:

“The days of God are three: the day of the rising of Mahdī (a.s), the day when (some of) the dead return to life (*raj`ah*), and the Day of Resurrection.” The Imam also says, “The one who has no faith in our return to life is not (to be considered as) one of us.”

The following points merit consideration:

1) PHILOSOPHY OF RAJ`AH:

A deliberation on the question of Raj`ah reveals that there are two lofty goals in it. One is to display the real glory of Islam and the shame of disbelief. The other is the rewarding of the believers and the righteous, and the punishment of disbelievers and the unjust.

¹ *Al-Durr al-Manthūr* refers to this day as Resurrection Day. (vol. 3, p. 349.)

2) RAJ`AH VS. TRANSMIGRATION:

It should be mentioned that belief in the Raj`ah never entails belief in transmigration since the latter denotes a denial of the Day of Resurrection. In the view of those who believe in transmigration, the universe is an unending circulation with periods each of which is a repetition of the one before it, and the spirit returns to the world and enters another body after it leaves the body in which it dwelt. If the spirit had done good deeds in its past life, it will then be lodged in a body that would enjoy a happy life. Otherwise, it will enter a body to lead a miserable life in its future life span. Such a return is considered a resurrection for the spirit.

Those who believe in Raj`ah, however, believe in the Day of Resurrection as prescribed in the Shari`ah of Islam and reject the idea that the spirit enters another body after its departure from a former body.¹ They believe that a group of people will return to this world before the Day of Resurrection. Then they will return to the eternal abode once the requirements of Raj`ah are fulfilled, so that they will be resurrected with all mankind. They also believe that the spirit will never return to another body once it departs the world.

¹ Rejecting the idea of transmigration, Ṣadr al-Muta'allihin states the following in his *al-Aṣfār*, vol. 9, chapter 1, p. 3, sub-section 8: "The (idea) of the spirit leaving the body and entering another one, whether this happens in the fetal stage or else, requires that one of the two (the body or the spirit) be in a state of potentiality and the other in the state of de facto. That which is in de facto must at the same time maintain its potentiality, and this is impossible because the combination of the spirit and the body is a natural unity; such a natural combination will be impossible between two things of differing states: potential and de facto."

QUESTION ELEVEN

What does intercession mean and why do Shiites believe in it?

ANSWER:

Intercession is one of the definite principles of Islam which, in compliance with the verses of the Qur'ān and the tradition, has been accepted by all Islamic sects however disagreed they may be among themselves concerning its result. What intercession really means is that an esteemed person, who enjoys proximity to God, asks Him for someone's sins to be forgiven or for a rank to be promoted. The noble Prophet said, "I have been endowed with five divine gifts... as well as (the permission) to intercede, so I saved it on for my Ummah."¹

LIMITATIONS

In the viewpoint of the Qur'ān, an absolute and unconditional intercession is rejected; however, intercession may operate

a) if the one who intercedes is close to God and has been permitted. The Qur'ān says: *"They will have no powers of intercession, save the one who has made a covenant with his Lord."* (19:87)

"On that day no intercession avails save the person unto whom the Compassionate has given leave and whose word He accepts." (20:108)

b) If the person who is interceded for, himself deserves to receive Divine grace through the interceder, i.e. neither his trust in God nor his spiritual bond with the interceder is

¹ *Musnad Aḥmad*, vol. 1, p. 301; *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 1, p. 91, Egypt.

disrupted. Thus, those disbelieving in God, and some Muslim sinners such as those who do not perform their prayers and the murderers who lack a spiritual bond with the interceder, will not be included for intercession. Referring to those who do not perform their prayers and those who deny the Day of Resurrection, the Qur'ān says:

"The mediation of no mediators will avail them then."
(74:48)

"Then the intercession of interceders shall not profit them,"
and as regards the wrongdoers, *"there will be no friend for the wrongdoers, nor any interceder who will be heard."* (40:18)

THE PHILOSOPHY OF INTERCESSION:

Like repentance, intercession is a glimpse of hope for those who can, halfway through their sinful life, repent and follow a worshipful life, obeying God. A sinner, who realizes that the conditions under which intercession is possible are limited, not uncategorical, may try to observe these limitations, and not to violate them.

RESULTS OF INTERCESSION:

Muslim commentators differ as to the eventuality of intercession; that is, whether it results in one's sins to be forgiven, or in a rank to be promoted. However, based on the holy Prophet's words who said, "My intercession on the Day of Judgment is for those of my Ummah who have committed grave sins"¹ the first assumption seems clearer.

¹ *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, vol. 2, p. 583; *Musnad Aḥmad*, vol. 3, p. 213; *Sunan Abī-Dāwūd*, vol. 2, p. 537; *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, vol. 4, p. 45.

QUESTION TWELVE

**Is it not "Shirk" (polytheism) to ask
the real interceders to intercede?**

DISCUSSION:

The argument in support of the above question holds that intercession is Allah's exclusive right, as stated in the Holy Qur'ān. *"Say Allah's is the intercession altogether"* (39:42). Therefore, asking others to intercede is not in accord with the principle of worshipping only the One God.

ANSWER:

The polytheism referred to above is certainly different from the specific ones, such as dualism and associating someone with Allah in creating the world and managing it. The above mentioned shirk or polytheism signifies worshipping something or someone other than Allah.

No doubt, what "worship" means should first be precisely defined so as to clarify the issue at hand.

1) We are not authorized to interpret any homage paid to creatures as an act of worship, nor are we allowed to consider any request made from a servant of God as such. According to the clear text of the Qur'ān, the angels prostrated before Adam: *"When I have shaped him, and breathed My spirit in him, fall you down, bowing before him."*

(38:72-73)” The prostration that was done upon God’s command had had, in reality, no connotation of worshipping Adam; otherwise, God would not have ordered it. On the other hand, Jacob’s sons and even Jacob himself prostrated before Joseph: “*And he raised his parents upon the throne and they fell down in prostration before him*” (12:100). If such humbleness that they showed could have meant worshipping Joseph, then Jacob, the noble Prophet, who had been divinely protected against error, would not have conceded to it, nor would he have agreed with his sons’ performing it, while it is obvious that prostration is unequalled by any other form of humbleness that one shows.

We should, therefore, differentiate between the issue of paying homage to someone and invoking his aid on the one hand, and worshipping him on the other.

Worshipping, in reality, signifies taking someone as God and adoring him, or taking a phenomenon – which is created by God - as having been invested with the ability of performing what is specifically God’s, such as managing the affairs of the world and forgiving the sins. However, if we humble ourselves before someone without considering him to be God or conceiving him as having been entrusted with Godly acts, then such respect or humbleness is none but similar to that rendered by the angels to Adam or that of Jacob’s sons before Joseph.

Now, concerning the above question, if we suppose that right to intercede has been entrusted upon real interceders in such a way that they can intercede uncategorically and forgive sins, such a belief can then equate polytheism or shirk because we have asked for a Godly act from someone other than God Himself.

However, if we assume that a number of pious servants of God do not possess the station of intercession but have the right to ask forgiveness for the sinners under certain conditions - the most important of which is God's permission - such an assumption, then, cannot entail polytheism, nor does it entail that God's actions are entrusted to them. Rather, it is asking someone for something which he is entitled to be asked.

During the Holy Prophet's life, sinners used to go to him, so he would ask God for their sins to be pardoned. The Noble Prophet did not call them polytheists. In his *Sunan*, Ibn Mājah quotes the Prophet as having said,

“Do you know what options God has given me tonight?”

“God and His messenger know better,” we said.

“God permitted me to choose between His admission of half of my people into Paradise and (my having) the right to intercede and I choose intercession.”

We said, “O Messenger of Allah, call on Allah that we may be worthy of enjoying intercession.”

He said, “Intercession embraces every Muslim,”¹

This narration clearly states that the holy Prophet's companions used to ask the Prophet himself for intercession by saying, “Call on Allah....” We read in the Holy Qur'ān, “... and had they, when they were unjust to themselves, come to you and asked forgiveness of Allah and

¹ *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, vol. 2, the chapter “On Mentioning Intercession” P. 586.

the Apostle (also) asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah Forgiving and Merciful.” 4:64

Elsewhere, quoting Jacob’s sons, the holy Qur’ān says “*O Our father! Ask forgiveness for our faults, as surely we are sinners*” (12:97). Prophet Jacob also promised them to ask forgiveness but never accused them of polytheism. He said, “*I will ask for your forgiveness from my Lord; surely He is Forgiving, and Merciful*” (12:98)

QUESTION THIRTEEN

Does asking for help from others than God connote polytheism?

ANSWER:

Based on wisdom and on the logic of revelation, not only all human beings but also all phenomena in the world are in need of God to give them life as they are in need of Him to give them the ability to be effective. The Holy Qur'ān says, "*O mankind! You are poor in relation to Allah, and Allah is the Absolute, the Owner of Praise.*" (35:15). In another verse, The Qur'ān attributes all victories to God and says, "*Victory comes only from Allah, the mighty, the wise*" (3:126).

It is based on this immutable principle of Islam that we Muslims say in our prayers, "*Thee do we worship and of Thee do we beg assistance.*" (1:5).

To clarify the above question, we can say that seeking others' help, but not God's, can conceivably assume two dimensions. First, if we consider one whose help we are seeking, a human being or a phenomenon, as being entirely independent in origin and as one that enjoys freedom of action and is needless of God in assisting, such an attitude is no doubt pure polytheism and is refuted in the Qur'ān which says, "*Say, who is the one who can withhold you from Allah if He intends to do you evil or desires mercy for you? They will not find for themselves besides Allah any guardian or a helper.*" (33:17). The second attitude considers the one that

is called upon as a mere creature in need of God and dependent on Him, one on whom God has bestowed power to solve some of the problems people have.

Based on the latter mentality, one whose help we seek is a medium set by God the Sublime as a “means” to fulfill some of the needs of the people. This way of seeking help is actually begging God’s assistance because it is He who has created these mediators and has bestowed upon them the power. Man’s life is principally based on the foundation of asking the means and causes for help to the extent that without their help his life would be deranged.

Now, if we take them as the means of the realization of God’s assistance and as those whose existence as well as their effectiveness come from God, then such seeking help is incompatible neither with monotheism nor with worshipping the One God.

If a monotheist farmer uses such helping factors as soil, water, air and light in planting the seed and producing fruit, he in reality pursues God’s assistance because it is He who has given the factors and instruments their potentiality and power. It is obvious that such an invocation is in full agreement with the spirit of worshipping the Unique One.

In fact, the holy Qur’ān itself orders us to seek help from such phenomena as patience and prayer when it says, “*Seek assistance through patience and prayer.*” (2:152). Although showing perseverance is clearly done by man, and we have been commanded to seek assistance from patience and prayer, this does not contradict the formula we repeat in the daily prayer, “... and from Thee do we seek assistance.”

QUESTION FOURTEEN

Does calling on others (Du`ā') necessarily mean worshipping them (`Ibādah) and is it therefore a kind of polytheism?

ANSWER:

This question has been raised because some verses of the Holy Qur`ān, such as the following ones, outwardly prohibit requesting anyone but God:

“And that the Mosques are Allah’s, therefore call not upon anyone besides Allah.” 72:18

“And do not call besides Allah on that which can neither benefit you nor harm you.” 10:106

Some people, sticking to such verses as a pretext, take calling on God’s saints-after their deaths – as polytheism.

Let us first explain the meaning of *Du`ā`* and *`Ibādah* in order to clarify the answer to the question.

There is no doubt that the word “*Du`ā`*” in Arabic means ‘invocation’ and the word *`Ibādah* means worshipping. So we can never consider these two words as synonyms; neither can we say that any kind of calling upon someone equals worshipping him for the following reasons:

a) The word “*Du`ā`*” has been used in the Holy Qur`ān in

some contexts such as Chapter 71; we can never claim that it denotes worshipping:

“He said: my Lord! I have called unto my people night and day.” 71:5

Can one claim that Noah meant he had been worshipping his people night and day? Thus, we cannot say that *Du`ā`* (calling) and *`Ibādah* (worshipping) are synonymous and that if one calls a prophet or a saint, he has necessarily worshipped them just because these words (may) entail worship.

b) The word *Du`ā`* –calling – as used in the above verses conveys the concept of worshipping because these verses actually refer to the idolaters who took their idols as gods. The humbleness the idolaters showed, the prayer they performed and the humble entreaty they made were doubtlessly all directed to the idols that they considered as the ones with the right to intercede and to forgive and with the power to act freely in the affairs which are related to this world and the next. It is self-evident that any calling upon these beings equals worshipping them. The clearest example to this assertion comes from the verse of the Qur`ān which reads: *“And their gods on whom they called besides Allah availed them naught.” 11:101*

Thus, the verses mentioned (at the beginning of the chapter) are unrelated to the topic in question, which is the issue of a servant of God requesting another one while the former considers the latter neither a god or a lord nor one who can act freely and bring about changes in the affairs of the world or of the hereafter, but believes him to be a dear and honorable servant of God chosen by Him to the

position of Prophethood and Imamate, one whose prayers God has promised to answer, as stated in the following verse:

“And if, then they wronged themselves, they had but come unto thee and asked forgiveness of Allah, and asked forgiveness of the messenger, they would have found Allah forgiving and Merciful.” 4:64

c) The verses themselves contain clear evidence of the fact that the “calling” referred to above, is not a general, ordinary request for the needs to be fulfilled; rather, it is related to worshipping. This is why the word “worship” – service – follows the word “calling” in the following verse:

“And your Lord says: Call upon me, and I will answer your prayer; surely those who are too proud for My service shall soon enter hell abased.”

This clearly means that the calling made (by polytheists) was an invocation to creatures credited with God’s attributes.

CONCLUSION:

Following the three preliminary arguments just outlined, we can safely conclude that the Qur’ān’s principal aim in these verses is to prohibit the idolaters from calling upon their idols, whom they considered as God’s partners, prudent and able to intercede. If the idolaters showed humbleness, lamented, implored and begged for intercession or prayed for what they needed, it was because they believed their idols to be small gods responsible for Godly deeds. They assumed that the Lord has transferred the responsibility for some terrestrial and celestial tasks to the idols. How can these Verses have reference to asking a

pure soul who, in the caller's opinion, has gone no further than complete devotion and is indeed a beloved and honored servant of God?

When the Qur'ān declares: "*and that the mosques are Allah's, therefore call not upon any one with Allah*", it is addressing the pagan Arabs who worshipped idols, celestial bodies, angels and the Jinn. This verse and the like speak of calling upon a person or a thing while considering him or it a deity, and no doubt, such a calling upon these creatures by someone with such beliefs is equal to worshipping them. But what do these verses have to do with asking for the help and blessings of a person when the caller does not attribute Godly position, prudence or devotion to the addressee but is just imploring a worthy and beloved servant of God?

Some may think that we can only call upon saints while they are still alive and if we do so when they are not, it is polytheism.

In answer to this problem it suffices to say that firstly we call upon the pure spirits of the righteous servants of God like our Prophet and the Imams who, according to the Holy Qur'ān are alive in the *Barzakh* – the intermediate state between death and Resurrection – in a horizon above the martyrs. We are not calling upon the bodies buried in the earth. If we call upon them at their shrines, it is because this makes us more conscious of and connected with the Saintly spirits. Furthermore, according to certain traditions, prayers are answered in these precincts. Secondly, the question of life or death of the saints can hardly be a criterion for the issue of monotheism or polytheism.

QUESTION FIFTEEN

What is Badā' and why do Shiites believe in it?

ANSWER:

Badā' in Arabic means to become manifest. In Shī'ite terminology, it denotes a change in the course of one's fate due to his good deeds. It is a lofty point in the Shī'ite dynamic school derived from the logic of Revelation and the exploration of reason.

As the Qur'ān views the affairs, man is not such as to be invariably helpless before his fate, but he may change the course of his fate by returning to the Truth and by doing worthy deeds, this being a universal and lasting principle, asserted by the Qur'ān *"Allah does not change the conditions of a people until they change their own conditions."* 13:11. Also, *"And if the people of the cities had believed and guarded (against evil), We would certainly have opened up for them the blessings from the heaven and the earth. 7:96."* Such states the Qur'ān concerning a change in Prophet Yūnus' (Jonah) lot: *"But had it not been that he was of those who glorify (Us), he would certainly have tarried in its (i.e. the whale's) belly until the Resurrection Day."* 37:143-4.

The above verse indicates that Prophet Yūnus was apparently to remain in this special jail until the Day of Resurrection, but his good deed (his glorifying God) changed his lot and saved him. This is a fact recognized by Islamic narrations (*ḥadīths*), concerning which the holy Prophet (a.s) said, “One’s sins do deprive one from one’s destined provision and nothing but supplications can change it; one can also lengthen one’s life only by performing good deeds.”¹

This tradition and similar ones prove if man commits sins, he will be deprived of the provisions he should receive; nevertheless, he can change his fate and prolong his life when he supplicates to God and does good deeds.

CONCLUSION

As understood from the Qur’ān and the Prophet’s words, it is quite probable for one to be doomed to a certain painful end due to the natural sequence of cause and effect, stemming from his everyday behavior; he may be warned by a saint such as the Prophet or an Imam, of such a consequence if he continues misbehaving. Such an end may, however, change its direction and lead to happiness if one corrects his deeds. This fact, derived from the logic of revelation, the Prophet’s Sunnah and the explorations of the reason is, in Shī’ite terminology, called *Badā*”.

It is worth mentioning here that “*Badā*” “is not specifically a Shī’ite application; it can be traced in the Sunnite

¹ *Musnad Aḥmad* vol. 5, p. 277; Also *Al-Ḥākim’s al-Mustadrak ‘alā al-Ṣaḥīḥayn*, vol. 1, p. 493, and similar others in *al-Tajol Jam’*, vol. 5, p. 111.

writings concerning the words of the holy Prophet, (a.s), such as the following example: “*It appeared good to God to afflict them (with trouble.)*”¹

It should also be mentioned that *Badā'* never implies a change in God's knowledge, for He knows, from the very beginning, the natural course man's actions will move in, as well as the influence of the factors that can change this process and cause *Badā'*, as He has said in the Qur'ān: “*He blots out and He establishes whatever he wills, and with Him is the essence (mother) of the Book*” 13:39

This means that at the time when *Badā'* occurs, God actually clarifies for us what has been a clear fact to Him since eternity. This is why Imam Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, says, “*In no event did God consider (the occurrence of) Badā' but He knew it before it took place.*”²

THE PHILOSOPHY OF *BADĀ'*

If man feels he has a free hand in changing his fate, he will no doubt try to make himself a better future, and will endeavor more energetically to improve his life. In other words, just as repentance, *Tawbah*, and intercession save him from hopelessness and a bleak life, *Badā'* will fill him with happiness, giving him hope for a bright future, for it is in the light of such an insight that man knows that he can, as ordained by God, change his lot and move on to a better future and a brighter end.

¹ *Al-Nihāyah fī Gharīb al-ḥAdīth wa al-Athar*, by Madj al-Dīn al-Mubārak ibn Muḥammad al-Jazrī, vol. 1, p. 109.

² *Uṣūl a- Kāfī*, The Book *al-Tawḥīd*, chapter on *Badā'*, tradition 9.

QUESTION SIXTEEN

**Do the Shiites believe that the
Qur'ān has been distorted?**

ANSWER:

The renowned Shī'ite scholars unanimously maintain that no distortion whatsoever has entered into the sacred precinct of the Qur'ān: nothing has been added to it nor anything has been dropped from it, and that the Qur'ān we have with us today is the same divine Scripture which was revealed to the noble Prophet. To this regard, a few elucidatory points are presented below:

1. The Lord of the worlds Himself has guaranteed the protection of the Qur'ān by saying “*Surely, We have revealed the reminder and We will most surely be its guardian*” 15:9. It is evident that the Shiites, giving the Qur'ān their widest attention in making their decisions and taking actions, value this holy Qur'ānic verse and do believe in the message it conveys.
2. The great leader of the Shiites, 'Alī (a.s), a constant company of the noble Prophet and a scribe of the Revelation, has, in various circumstances, invited people to the same Qur'ān in common use. Quoted below are some of his words in this regard:

“And know that this Qur’ān is an advisor that never deceives and a guide that never misleads.”¹

“Verily, Allah, the Glorified, has never advised anyone as He has done through the Qur’ān; therefore, it is His strong rope and His plain medium.”²

“Then He sent upon him (Muḥammad - peace be upon him and his descendants) a book which can be likened to a light whose flame can not be put out, a dazzling lamp whose gleam does not die, a path that never leads its traveler astray, and a separator of good from evil whose arguments will never weaken.”³

The lofty words of the great Imam of the Shiites imply that the glorious Qur’ān is similar to a beacon that gives light, illuminating the way for the travelers and will remain so forever. No distortion will ever enter into it, distortion of the kind that may extinguish its light or lead the people astray.

3. The Shī'ite scholars of religion unanimously hold that the holy Prophet (a.s) has said, “I leave behind two precious things among you: the Book of Allah (The Qur’ān) and my Ahl al- Bayt, my *Itrah*; You will never go astray so long as you adhere to them.”

This is an Islamic tradition with unbroken chain of narrators, frequently quoted by both Shiites and Sunnis, confirming the Shiites' belief that no alteration will ever

¹ Ṣubḥī al-Ṣāliḥ's *Nahj al-Balāghah*, sermon 176.

² Ibid, sermon 176

³ Ibid sermon 198

happen to the Quran; otherwise, the Quran would be unable to guide or prevent misguidance, which is incompatible with the clear content of the tradition narrated above.

4. The fact that the Qur'ān is a criterion to distinguish truth from falsehood, and good from evil has been expressed by the Imams of the Shiites, whose words all our scholars have narrated. (The Imams have said) "Any statement, even the traditions attributed to us, should be verified by the Qur'ān. If they are compatible with the Quranic verses, they are true; otherwise they are invalid and are false."

The Shī'ite books of jurisprudence and traditions abound with narrations (i.e. *ḥadīths*), a few of which are mentioned below:

Imam Ṣādiq (a.s) has said, "Any tradition not in conformity with the Qur'ān is baseless."¹ This tradition clearly shows that no alteration will take place in the Qur'ān; therefore, this holy Book can remain an eternal criterion for distinguishing truth from falsehood.

5. The great Shī'ite scholars of religion, the forerunners of the Islamic and Shī'ite culture, have admitted the fact that the Qur'ān will remain intact forever. Some of these people, too many to enumerate here, are as follows:

a) Abū-Ja'far Muḥammad Ibn 'Alī ibn Ḥusayn Bābawayh of Qum, known as "Ṣadūq" (d.381 A.H.) says, "It is our belief that this Qur'ān is the word of God, the Revelation, into which falsehood finds no way; it has been sent down

¹ *Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, vol. 1, the chapter on superiority of knowledge, *Bāb al-Akhḍh bil-Sunnah wa Shawāhid al-Kitāb*, tradition 4.

from God, the Wise; and it is He Who has sent it down and it is He Who safeguards it.¹

b) Sayyid Murtaḍā `Alī ibn Ḥusayn Mūsawī Alawī, known as *`Alam al-Hudā* (d. 436 A.H.) has said, “Some companions of the Prophet (a.s), such as `Abdullāh ibn Mas`ūd and Ubayy ibn Ka`b often recited the whole Qur`ān to the Prophet (a.s). This shows that the Qur`ān had already been collected and well ordered, without lacking anything.”²

c) Abū-Ja`far Muḥammad Ibn Ḥasan Ṭūsī, known as *Shaykh al-Ṭā`ifāh* (d.460 A.H.), has said, “The issue concerning anything being added to or deleted from the Qur`ān does not befit this book, for Muslims unanimously hold that nothing has been added to the Qur`ān. As regards any deletion, the appearance of the Muslims’ canon law, the Shari`ah, proves it to be otherwise. This statement (that nothing has been added to the Qur`ān) is more befitting to our law school, Shiism. This is what Sayyid Murtaḍā has accepted and confirmed, (and is) a fact also proved by the appearance of the *ḥadīths*.

(Only) a scanty number of people have made reference to some traditions handed down from the Shi`ite and the Sunnis, pointing to the Qur`ānic verses that are missing or transposed. But such traditions are of the kind that bring no sound knowledge, nor do they impel one to act upon them; it is better to shun them away.”³

¹ *Al-I`tiqādāt*, p.93

² *Majma` al-Bayān*, vol. 1, p. 10, quoted from Sayyid Murtaḍā's *al-Masā'il al-Ṭarābulsiyyah*.

³ *Al-Tibyān*, vol. 1, p. 3.

d) Abū-`Alī Ṭabṛasī, the author of *Majma` al-Bayān Exegesis* has said, “As regards (the issue of) anything being added to the Qur’ān, the Islamic community, as a whole, believes it to be a baseless idea. A handful of our people and a small group from the Ḥashawīyyah sect, however, have narrated words from the Sunnis in regard to verses having being deleted. But what is generally accepted in our *Sharī`ah*, which is correct, counters it.”¹

e) `Alī Ibn Ṭāwūs Ḥillī, known as “Sayyid Ibn Ṭāwūs” (d. 664 A.H.) has said, “It is the Shiites conviction that no alteration can happen to the Qur’ān.”²

f) Commenting on the Quranic verse “*Surely We have revealed the Reminder and We will most surely be its guardian*”, Shaykh Zayn al-Dīn al-`Āmilī (d. 877 A.H.) has said, “This verse means We will safeguard the Qur’ān against any change and alteration.”³

g) The author of *Iḥqāq al-Ḥaqq*, Qāḍī Sayyid Nūr al-Dīn Tustarī (d. 1019 A.H.) has said, “The accusation laid against the Twelver Shiites for claiming that they believe the Qur’ān has been altered is not accepted by all the Shiites. Only a few of them, whom Shiites disregard, believe so.”⁴

h) Muḥammad Ibn Ḥusayn, known as Bahā’ al-Dīn `Āmilī (d.1030 A.H.) has said, “It is a truth that the Glorious

¹ *Majma` al-Bayān*, vol. 1, p.10.

² *Sa`d al-Su`ūd*, p.144.

³ *Izhār al-Ḥaqq*, vol. 2, p.130.

⁴ *Ālā' al-Raḥmān*, p. 25.

Qur'ān is secure against any addition or deletion. The claim that the name of the Commander of the Faithful (a.s) has been deleted from the Qur'ān is unacceptable to the scholars of religion. Anyone who probes into history and traditions knows that the Qur'ān is unalterable and it has been compiled during the time of the Prophet (a.s). Successive traditions (we have at hand) and the statements made by thousands of the companions of the Prophet prove this point.¹

i) Having quoted such verses as “*Surely, We have revealed the Reminder and We will safeguard it*”, the author of *al-Wāfi*, Fayḍ Kāshānī, (d.1091 A.H.) has said, “How can distortion and alteration ever occur to the Qur'ān? Such traditions stand in opposition to the Book of God; they should, therefore, be considered baseless.”²

j) The renowned scholar in religion, Kāshif al-Ghiṭā', has the following statement in his *Kashf al-Ghiṭā'*, “The Qur'ān is, no doubt, secure against any distortion because God has promised to protect it; to this the Qur'ān itself testifies, and so do all the scholars, just as they have done throughout the ages. The differing idea of some people, too few, should not be heeded.”

h) The ex-leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Imam Khomeini, also has made the following comment, another clear proof in this respect: “Anyone who knows how devoted Muslims have been in collecting, preserving, and reciting of the Qur'ān will testify that the idea of the

¹ Ibid.

² *Tafsīr al-Ṣāfi*, vol. 1, p. 51.

alteration of the Qur'ān is baseless and implausible. The narrations handed down in this one respect are either weak (so they can not be taken as evidence) or fabricated (with marks of forgery evident in them) or are narrations the subject matter of which is *ta'wil*, the esoteric meaning and some interpretation of the Qur'ān, or similar issues for the explanation of which a comprehensive book should be written. Were it not for the fear of deviation from our discussion, we would go through the history of the Qur'ān and prove that the glorious Qur'ān is in reality the book we have at hand and that the theoretical difference we see among the reciters of the Qur'ān is a new issue that has nothing to do with what Gabriel, the Faithful Spirit, revealed to the pure heart of the noble Prophet.”¹

CONCLUSION

Muslims, both the Shiites and the Sunnis, maintain that the Qur'ān in use is the very Divine Book that was sent down to the Prophet (a.s), and is secure against any distortion, either addition or deletion. Thus, the accusation made against the Shiites is proved to be unfair. If the weak narrations are referred to as evidence for the discussion, we will answer that these narrations are not restricted to the Shī'ite sources, for a group of the Sunni interpreters of the Qur'ān, named below, have also narrated the same weak traditions.

1. In his commentary of the Qur'ān, Abū-'Abdullāh Muḥammad Ibn Aḥmad Anṣārī of Cordova, quotes Abū-

¹ Imam Khomeini's *Tahdhīb al-Uṣūl*, vol. 2, p. 96 (compiled by Ayatollah Subḥānī).

Bakr Anbāzī to have said, on the authority of Ubay ibn Ka'b, "During the time of the Prophet the *Aḥzāb* chapter of the Qur'ān, which contains seventy three verses, was as long as the *Baqara* chapter, which has two hundred and eighty six verses. The verse on "stoning" was also a part of the former chapter"¹ whereas such a verse does not exist in the *Aḥzāb* chapter now. The author of the same book quotes 'Ā'ishah to have said, "During the lifetime of the Prophet, the *Aḥzāb* chapter contained two hundred verses, but when the Muṣḥaf (the Qur'ān) was collected into one volume, no more verses were found than are now at hand."²

2. The author of *Al-Itqān* has related that there were one hundred and sixteen Sūrahs, in the Muṣḥaf that Ubay had compiled, for it contained two other chapters: *Hafd* and *Khal'*³. We know, however, that there are only one hundred and fourteen chapters in the Glorious Qur'ān, without any trace of alleged chapters: *Hafd* and *Khal'*.

3. In his *al-Nāsikh wa'l-Mansūkh*, Hibatullāh Ibn Salamah relates from Mālik ibn Anas as having said, "During the time of the Prophet, we used to recite a Sūrah that was as long as chapter *Repentance*, of which I have memorized only one verse: "If the son of Adam were in possession of two valleys full of gold, he would long for a third one; were he given the third one, he would long for the fourth. Nothing but dust will fill his inner side; God forgives whoever repents."

¹ *Tafsīr Al-Qurṭubī*, part 14, p. 113; Chapter al-Aḥzāb, the Holy Qur'ān.

² Ibid.

³ *Al-Itqān*, vol. 1, p. 67.

We know that such a verse does not exist in the Qur'ān, nor does it follow eloquence of the Qur'ān.

4. In his *al-Durr al-Manthūr* Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī quotes 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb as having said, "The Aḥzāb chapter was as long as Baqara chapter and it contained the verse on "stoning."¹

We can thus conclude that a small number of both Shiites and Sunnis have related basically weak traditions in regard to alterations in the Qur'ān. The vast majority of Shiites and Sunnis, however, have not accepted these traditions; moreover, the text of the Qur'ānic verses and the traditions of absolute authority as well as thousands of the Prophet's companions and consensus of the Muslims all over the world show that no distortion, alteration, addition or deletion has befallen the Qur'ān nor will such a thing ever happen.

¹ *Al-Durr al-Manthūr*, vol. 5, p. 180.

QUESTION SEVENTEEN

How do Shiites regard the Companions?

ANSWER:

The Shiites believe that those who had the honor of meeting the Prophet and the privilege of being his companions are divided into several groups. Before going into details, it would be appropriate to see what is meant by Companion.

1. According to Sa`īd ibn al-Musayyab, a Companion is one “who was with the Prophet for a couple of years and fought at his side in one or two battles.”¹

According to Wāqidī, “The scholars believe that whoever met the Prophet and accepted Islam, pondered on the issue of religion and accepted it, is among the Prophet’s Companions, even if he met the Prophet just for one hour.”²

According to Muḥammad ibn Ismā`il al-Bukhārī, “Any Muslim who associated with the Prophet or met him, is considered the Prophet’s Companion.”³

¹ *Usd al-Ghābah*, vol. 1, p. 11-12.

² *Ibid*, p. 11-12.

³ *Ibid*.

Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal says, “Any one who associated with the Prophet for a month, a day or even an hour, or (even) saw him is among his companions.”¹

Sunni scholars believe that anyone who associated with the Prophet is just; this is a categorical principle to them.²

We shall now proceed to discuss the Shī'ite's viewpoint, sprung from the doctrine of Revelation and the enlightening verses of the Qur'ān.

History has recorded the names of more than twelve thousand people as the Companions of the Prophet (a.s). There were various personalities among the companions. No doubt, being the Prophet's company was a great honor for a group whom the Muslim nation always respects, because they were the pioneers of Islam, the ones who erected the flag of Islamic glory for the first time. The holy Qur'ān praises the pioneer standard-bearers and declares:

“Not equal among you are those who spent (freely) and fought before the victory, (with those who did so later). They are higher in rank than those who spent (freely) and fought afterwards.” (57:10).

Nevertheless, it has to be admitted that the Prophet's companionship was not an elixir to have metamorphosed people's nature, insured them all for the rest of their lives and put them among the just. To clarify the matter and settle the issue, it is worth appealing to the Divine Book, the Qur'ān, which is accepted by all Muslims.

¹ Ibid.

² *Al-Istī'āb fī Asmā' al-Aṣḥab*, vol. 1, p. 2; *Usd al-Ghābah*, vol. 1, p. 3 quoting Ibn al-Athīr.

THE QUR'ĀN AND THE COMPANIONS:

According to the doctrine of Revelation, those who had the privilege of being the Companions of the Prophet are divided into two groups. The first group includes those whom the Quran praises, mentioning them as the founders of the glorious palace of Islam. The following are Qur'ānic passages concerning this group.

1. THE VANGUARD:

“The vanguard (of Islam) -- the first of those who forsook (their homes) and of those who gave them aid, and (also) those who follow them in (all) good deeds -- well pleased is God with them, as are they with Him: for them He has prepared gardens under which rivers flow, to dwell therein forever. That is the supreme felicity.” (9:100)

2. THOSE WHO SWORE ALLEGIANCE (UNDER THE TREE)

“Allah was well-pleased when they swore allegiance unto thee beneath the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, and He sent down peace of reassurance on them and has rewarded them with a near victory.” (48:18)

3. THE MUHAJIRŪN (THE IMMIGRANTS):

“(Some part is due) to the indigent Immigrants, those who were expelled from their homes and their property, while seeking grace from God and (His) good pleasure, and aiding God and His apostle: such are indeed the sincere ones.” (49:8)

4. COMPANIONS IN THE CONQUEST (OF MECCA):

“Muḥammad is the messenger of God; and those with him are hard against disbelievers and merciful amongst themselves. (O Muḥammad!) See them bowing and falling prostrate (in worship), seeking bounty from Allah and (His)

acceptance. On their faces are their marks (being) traces of their prostration.” (48:29)

The second group of the Prophet's Companions consisted of black-hearted hypocrites whose true identity was revealed by the Holy Qur'ān and the Prophet was warned against them. They are referred to in the following Qur'ānic passages:

1) THE UNDISGUISED HYPOCRITES:

“when the Hypocrites come unto you (O Muḥammad), they say, “We bear witness that you are indeed Allah's messenger and Allah knows that you are indeed His messenger, and God bears witness that the hypocrites are speaking falsely.” (63:1)

2) THE DISGUISED HYPOCRITES:

“Certain of the desert Arabs round about you are hypocrites as well as (desert Arabs) among the folk of Medina; they are obstinate in hypocrisy: you know them not; We know them.” (9:101)

3. THE DISEASED-HEARTED:

“When the hypocrites and those in whose hearts is a disease said: Allah and His Messenger promised us naught but delusions!” (23:12)

4) THE WRONGDOERS:

“Others (are those who) have acknowledged their wrong doings: they have mixed an act that was good with another that was evil. Perhaps God will turn unto them (in mercy); for God is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful. (9:102)

Besides the Qur'ānic verses, there are numerous traditions from Prophet Muḥammad disproving some of the

Companions. Two examples are mentioned here.

1. Abū-Ḥāzim relates that according to Sahl ibn Sa'd, the Prophet said:

“I send you to the Fountain of Kawthar; whoever arrives at it drinks from it and whoever drinks from it shall never be thirsty again. Some people come to me; I know them and they know me; then we are separated from each other.”¹

“While I was narrating this tradition,” says Abū-Ḥāzim, “Nu'mān ibn Abī-'Ayyāsh heard it and asked, 'Did you hear Sahl say it in this way?' I said, 'Yes.' He said, 'I bear witness that according to Abū-Sa'id Khidri this same tradition ends as follows:

“They are with me. Then I am told ‘You are not aware of what they did after you.’ Then I reply, 'Far from (Allah's) mercy are those who changed (the precepts) after me.’

The phrases “I know them and they know me” and “who changed after me” clearly refer to the Companions who were with the Prophet for some time. (Bukhārī and Muslim have reported this tradition, too)

2. Bukhārī and Muslim quote the Prophet to have said:

“On the Day of Resurrection, a group of my Companions – or my people – come to me; they are then taken away from the Fountain (of Kawthar); (They are prevented from coming to or nearing the Fountain). I say, ‘O Lord, these are my Companions.’ And the Lord replies, ‘You know not

¹ *Jāmi' al-Uṣūl* of Ibn al-Athīr, the book *al-Ḥawẓ fī wurūd al-Nāss; 'Alayhi*; p. 20 (Tradition No. 7972).

of what they did after you; they returned on their heels (to the Age of Ignorance).¹

CONCLUSION:

Based on Qur'ānic verses and Prophetic traditions cited above, it becomes clear that the Companions and those who met the Prophet were not of the same rank. One group included the pure individuals of the highest merit whose valuable services facilitated the growth of the young tree of Islam. The other group included people who were, right from the beginning, hypocrites, double dealers, black-hearted or sinful. Thus, the Shiites' view - the same view as in God's Book and in the Sunnah - concerning the Companions of the Prophet becomes clear.

¹ *Jāmi' al-Uṣūl*, vol. 11, p. 120 (Tradition No. 7973).

QUESTION EIGHTEEN

What is meant by *mut`ah* (i.e. temporary marriage) and why is it allowed by Shiism?

ANSWER:

Marriage is a bond between a man and a woman; it may be either permanent, with no time specified when it is contracted, or temporary and limited in time. However, they are characteristically the same, and are both legitimate, the only difference being that one is “permanent” and the other one “temporary.” They share the other conditions as specified below.

1. There should be no religiously-defined barriers either of blood relation or relationship through marriage; otherwise, their marriage will be invalid.
2. The dowry they both agree upon should be specified in the contract.
3. The marriage duration must already be decided upon.
4. The marriage contract must be religiously concluded.
5. The children born to them are legitimate and lawful; both religiously and officially, just like the children born through permanent marriage.

6. Such children must be financially supported by the father; they inherit from both parents.

7. When the marriage period terminates, the wife must observe the waiting period the Shari`ah has determined if she has not reached menopause. If she is pregnant, she should not remarry until she has given birth to her child. Other regulations pertaining to permanent marriage must also be observed in temporary marriage. An important difference being that the husband does not have to financially support the wife, for the temporary marriage has been laid down to satisfy the (casual) needs. Another difference is that the wife does not inherit from the husband unless it has been specified in the marriage contract that she will. It is evident that these two differences do not have any effect on the nature of marriage.

It is generally believed that Islam is an ever-lasting and final religion that satisfies all human needs. Now, a young man who has to stay abroad for several years in order to follow up his studies, and cannot enter into a permanent marriage relationship because of his limited possibilities will have to choose one of the following three ways:

- a. to remain a bachelor,
- b. to indulge into indecent relationship
- c. to marry a woman temporarily, based on the aforementioned regulations.

The first choice is doomed to failure because although there are a few people who can tolerate a celibate life, this is not possible for all.

Those who choose the second option will end up in corruption and distress; moreover, Islam considers such a

procedure unlawful. Only an ill mind and perverted thought may recommend it under the pretext of the necessity.

The third solution, suggested by Islam and frequently practiced during the lifetime of the Prophet (a.s), will be the only way to follow. This kind of marriage was later on questioned.

Those who fear the *mut`ah* marriage and consider it illegitimate should remember that the Islamic jurists have all allowed for a similar thing to happen in a permanent marriage: the couple may conclude a permanent marriage contract but actually have the intention of separating after a year or so. This kind of marriage, permanent in appearance, is temporary in actuality. It differs from *mut`ah* in that *mut`ah* marriage is temporary and limited both outwardly and inwardly, whereas this particular kind of marriage is apparently permanent but limited in nature.

Now, why should those who support this kind of permanent marriage, sanctioned by all Islamic jurists, be afraid of temporary marriage?

Now that we have been acquainted with temporary marriage, it is time to become more familiar with the reasons for its sanctioning. Two points are worth mentioning:

- 1) *Mut`ah* was lawful in the earliest period of Islam.
- 2) It was not abrogated so long as the Prophet was alive.

As for the legitimacy of *mut`ah*, the holy Qur`ān states, “Give them (the women) their marriage portion for the enjoyment you have had of them as a duty.” 4:24. The

words in the verse are clear proof that this verse has been revealed in regard to temporary marriage for the following reasons:

a) The word *istimtā`* (enjoyment) literally refers to temporary marriage; were it not so, there would be other contextual clues in the verse.

b) The word *ujūrahunna* (their marriage dowry) is another lucid proof referring to *mut`ah* since other expressions as *ṣadāq* and *mahr* (dowry) are used for permanent marriage.

c) Shī'ite and Sunni commentators of the Qur'ān both hold that the above verse has been revealed in regard to *mut`ah* marriage. For example, in his *al-Durr al-Manthūr*, Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī quotes Ibn Jarīr and Saddī to have said that the above verse concerns *mut`ah* marriage.¹ Abū-Ja`far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr Ṭabarī on the authority of Saddī, Mujāhid, and Ibn `Abbās also says that this verse is related to temporary marriage.²

d) The authors of *Ṣiḥāḥ* and *Masanīd* as well as *ḥadīth* collections are of the same opinion. For example, in his own *Ṣaḥīḥ* Muslim ibn Ḥajjāj quotes Jābir ibn `Abdullāh and Salamah ibn Akwa` to have said, "A herald came to us from the Prophet (a.s) and said 'The Messenger of Allah has permitted you to have enjoyment of women.' This means he has permitted *mut`ah* marriage."³

¹ *Al-Durr al-Manthūr*, vol. 2, p.140, commentary on the Qur'ānic verse mentioned above.

² *Jāmi` al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, part 5, p. 9.

³ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, part 4, p. 130, printed in Egypt.

The *ḥadīths* related in the books of *Ṣaḥīḥ* and *Musnad* are too many to be cited here. These are sufficient evidence that *mut`ah* marriage was a law during the time of the holy Prophet (a.s)¹, admitted by the commentators and scholars of Islam.

A question may be raised as to whether the content of the *mut`ah* verse has been abrogated.

There may be few people who doubt that *mut`ah* marriage was allowed in the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah (a.s). There may be doubt concerning its maintenance and its not having been abrogated.

Ḥadīths and the history of Islam indicate that *mut`ah*, a command of the Divine, was frequently practiced by Muslims up to the time of the second caliph, who prohibited it for certain considerations. In his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Muslim Ibn Ḥajjāj quotes (the event of) a debate between Ibn `Abbās and Ibn al-Zubayr in regard to *mut`at al-nisā'* and *mut`at al-ḥajj*. Jābir ibn `Abdullāh said, "We, together with the Prophet, practiced both types of *mut`ah*; `Umar prohibited us from both; and we no longer practiced them."²

¹ A sample list of the documents includes: *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, the chapter on *Tamattu'*; *Musnad Aḥmad*, vol. 4, p. 436, & vol. 3, pp. 3 & 356; Mālik's *al-Muwatta'*, vol. 2, pp. 4 & 30; *Sunan al-Bayhaqī*, vol. 7, pp. 5 & 306; *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī* vol. 5, pp. 6 & 9; Ibn al-Athīr's *al-Nihāyah*, vol. 2, pp. 7 & 249; *Tafsīr al-Rāzī*, vol. 3, pp. 8 & 201; *Tārīkh Ibn Khillakān*, vol. 1, pp. 9 & 359; *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, vol. 2, pp. 10 & 178; al-Rāghib's *al-Muḥādḥarāt*, vol. 2, pp. 11 & 94; al-Suyūṭī's *al-Jāmi' al-Kabīr*, vol. 8, pp. 12 & 293; Ibn Ḥajar's *Fath al-Bārī*, vol. 9, p.141.

² *Sunan al-Bayhaqī*, vol. 7, p. 206; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 1, p. 395.

In his commentary on the Qur'ān, Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī has quoted 'Abd al-Razzāq, Abū-Dāwūd and Ibn Jarīr to have asked Ḥakam if *mut'ah* marriage has been abrogated; he answered "No."

"'Alī (a.s) has said, "If 'Umar had not prohibited *mut'ah*, no one would have committed adultery except for the wicked people."¹

'Alī ibn Muḥammad Qūshchi also says, "'Umar went up the pulpit and said, "O people, there were three things practiced during the Prophet's lifetime, which I forbid and I will punish anyone who performs them. They are *mut'at al-nisā'*, *mut'at al-ḥajj* and saying *ḥayya 'alā khayri al'amali* in adhān."² The narrations concerning this point are too many to be mentioned here.³

It should be noted that *mut'ah* is a kind of marriage, and marriage is divided into two kinds: permanent and temporary marriage. The woman with whom the temporary marriage contract is concluded is considered one's wife, and the other

¹ *Al-Durr al-Manthūr*, vol. 2, p.140; exposition under the Qur'ānic verse on *mut'ah*.

² An exposition of al-Qūshchi's *al-Tajrīd*, the Discussion on Imamate, p. 484.

³ For further information, see the following documents: *Musnad Aḥmad*, vol. 3, pp 2, 356 & 363; al-Jāḥiẓ's *al-Bayān wa'l-Tabayīn*, vol. 2, pp. 3 & 223; al-Jaṣṣāṣ's *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, vol. 1, pp. 4 & 344; *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, vol. 2, pp. 5 & 375; al-Sarakhsī al-Ḥanafī's *al-Mabsūṭ*, the book on Ḥajj, Bāb al-Qur'ān; Ibn Qayyim's *Zād al-Ma'ād*, vol. 1, pp. 7 & 447; *Kanz al-'Ummāl*, vol. 8, pp. 8 & 298; *Musnad Abī-Dāwūd*, pp. 9 & 247; *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5, pp. 10 & 32; al-Ṭabarī's *al-Mustabīn*; *Tafsīr al-Rāzī*, vol. 3, pp. 12, 200 & 202; *Tafsīr Abī-Ḥayyān*, vol. 3, p.218.

party of the contract is regarded as her lawful husband. Such a marriage has been taken into consideration by the Qur'ānic verses revealed in regard to marriage, an example of which is as follows: *“and those who guard their private parts, except for their wives or their slave-girls.”* 23:5-6.

Thus, when a woman marries a man based on the aforementioned conditions, she will be an exclusive example of those to whom the phrase for *“except for their mates”* refers, i.e. a wife.

The verse quoted above permits sexual intercourse with two groups of women: one's wife and his slave-girl; this means that the woman married to under the temporary contract will be included within the first group, (i.e. the wives).

It is surprising that some people have considered the above verse as abrogating the *mut`ah* verse in al-Nisā' chapter. We know that the abrogating verse should come after the one it abrogates. The Qur'ān proves the reverse (of their claim), for al-Mu'minūn Chapter, assumed to be the abrogator, is in reality a Meccan chapter (revealed before the Prophet (a.s) immigrated to Medina), whereas Nisā' Chapter of the Qur'ān containing permission for *mut`ah* was revealed in Medina (that is, after the Prophet's emigration to Medina). Now, how can a Meccan verse abrogate one that was revealed in Medina?

Another argument in support of the fact that *Mut`ah* verse was not abrogated during the Prophet's time is the numerous traditions denying the abrogation of *mut`ah* verse during the time of the Messenger of Allah (a.s), an example

of which is the tradition narrated by Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī quoted above.¹

In conclusion, we would like to say that the Imams descended from the Household of the Prophet of Allah (a.s), who according to Thaqalayn tradition are peers to Qur'ān and inseparable from it, have made it clear that *mut'ah* marriage is lawful and has not been abrogated.² Moreover, the reality that Islam is able to solve man's problems at any time, confirms that the temporary marriage, if the relevant stipulations are satisfied, is a legitimate contract, which nowadays can be one of the ways to save the youth from immorality and corruption.

¹ *al-Durr al-Manthūr*, vol. 2, pp. 140-1; exposition of the verse on *mut'ah*.

² *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*, vol. 14, *Kitāb al-Nikāḥ*, Bāb 1, on *mut'ah*, p. 436.

QUESTION NINETEEN

Why do Shiites prostrate on Turbah?

ANSWER:

Some people think that prostrating on the ground while praying, or on martyrs' tombs is a sign of worshipping the ground or of the martyrs, and is therefore a kind of polytheism.

In answer the above question, it should be noted that there is an undisputable difference between "prostration for God *"alsujūdu lillāhi"* and "prostration on the ground *"alsujūdu 'alā al-arḍ"* The above objection has been raised because the distinction between the two phrases has not been made out. The former definitely means, "Prostration is done exclusively for God", but the latter means "prostration on the ground." In other words, when we prostrate on the ground, we do so exclusively for God. Muslims all over the world prostrate on something for God and so do all pilgrims to the sacred House (the Ka`bah) who prostrate on the stone of the sacred House for Allah.

It is thus clear that prostration on the earth, on the plants and on similar objects never denotes worshipping them; rather it is a prostration dedicated to God, manifested in utmost humbleness, as low as the earth. It is also clear that prostration on *turbah* differs from prostration for *turbah*. The holy Qur`ān say, "*And onto Allah falleth prostrate whosoever is in the heavens and the earth.* 13:15." Also,

the holy Prophet said, “For me has the earth been made a place of worship and pure.”¹ Thus, “prostrating for God” and” prostrating on the earth, *Turbah*, are not the least in opposition. They are harmonious because to prostrate on the earth and on the plant signifies the utmost humbleness before One God.

Now, to further elucidate the Shiites’ view, the following citation, words of Imam Ṣādiq, the sixth Imam, peace be upon him, is worth mentioning: “Hushām ibn al-Ḥakam says, ‘I asked Imam Ṣādiq (a.s) about what prostration is permissible on and what is not.’ The Imam responded: ‘It is not permissible to prostrate on anything except on the ground or on what grows from it unless these products are used as food or for dress...’ I said ‘May I be your sacrifice! What is the rationale behind it?’ The Imam answered, ‘Prostration means being humble and obedient exclusively towards God, and it is not proper to prostrate upon what could be eaten or used as cloth. Moreover, those whose hearts are filled with the love of the world are the slaves of food and dress. As man is in a state of worshipping God while he is in prostration, it is not worthy for him to put his forehead upon what is an object of worship for those stubborn worshippers of material things who bow in respect before the material representations. Prostration on the earth is, thus, preferable since it is in greater harmony with the state of humbleness towards God.’”²

These words are a clear proof to the fact that prostrating on the earth is done exclusively because it is more in harmony with being humble before God, the Exalted.

¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, The Book of Prayers, *al-Ṣalāt*, p. 91.

² *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol. 85, p. 147 quoting ‘*Ilal al-Sharā’i*’.

The next question asks why Shiites prostrate on the earth and on some plants, but not on all things. The answer is that just as an act of worship must be legalized by Islam, so should the manner and details of performing the act be taken from the words and deeds of its law-maker, the holy Prophet (a.s), who is in the language of the Qur'ān, an excellent exemplar for all the pious.

Below are some canonical Islamic traditions which describe the Prophet's Sunnah and which indicate that the Prophet, (a.s) used to prostrate on the earth as well as on what grows from the earth, such as straw mat; this is exactly in the same manner as the Shiites believe in:

1) A group of Muslim traditionists have, in their *ṣiḥāḥ* and *masanīd*, quoted the Prophet as having said "For me has the earth been made a place of worship and pure."¹

The word "Ja'al" (to make) has a legislative connotation making it clear that it is a divine command issued to the followers of Islam, thus proving it to be lawful to prostrate on the earth, stone and other particles which constitute the earth's crust.

2) Other traditions specify that the Noble Prophet used to order Muslims to put their foreheads on the ground while in prostration. Umm Salamah, the Prophet's wife, has quoted the Prophet as having said: "*tarrib wajhaka lillāh*"² – "put

¹ *Sunan al-Bayhaqī*, vol. 1, p. 212, the chapter on "Having recourse to wholesome dust"; *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, the book of prayers, p. 91; also Ibn Taymiyah's *Iqtidā' al-Sirāt al-Mustaqīm*, p. 332.

² *Kanz al-'Ummāl*, vol. 7 printed in Damascus, p. 465, tradition no. 19809, The Book of Prayers and Prostration and what belongs to it.

your face on the dust for the sake of Allah.” The word *Tarrib* comes from the word *turāb*, meaning dust.

There are two implications in the word “*Tarrib*” used by the Prophet: first, one should put his forehead on “*Turāb*”, the dust, and second it is an order which must be carried out, since the word “*Tarrib*” is derived from “*turāb*”, meaning dust, and is used imperatively.

3) The Noble Prophet’s deeds are clear proofs and bright lights showing the way to the Muslims. Wā’il ibn Ḥajar says, “Whenever he was in prostration, the Prophet (a.s) put his forehead and nose on the ground.”¹ Anas ibn Mālīk, Ibn-`Abbās, some of the Prophet’s wives such as `Ā’ishah and Umm Salamah, as well as many of the narrators of the Prophetic traditions have narrated the following: “The Prophet, (a.s), used to prostrate on *khumrah*,² (a mat made from palm fibers).” Also, Abū-Sa`īd, a companion of the Prophet says, “I went to the Prophet (a.s), and saw him performing prayers on a straw mat.”³ This is further clear evidence in support of the Shiites’ view who maintain that it is permissible to prostrate on what grows from the ground, provided that it is not used as food, and that it could not be used as some kind of dress material.

¹ *Aḥkām al-Qur’ān*, vol. 3, p. 209, printed in Beirut, the chapter on Prostration.

² *Sunan al-Bayhaqī*, vol. 2 p. 421, The Book of performing Prayers, on *Khumrah* (clay).

³ *Sunan al-Bayhaqī*, vol. 2 p. 421. The Book of performing prayers on *Ḥaṣīr*.

4) The words and deeds of the companions of the Prophet and those of the second generation of the narrators of traditions, *tābi`ūn*, are also clear indications to the Noble Prophet's Sunnah. Jābir ibn `Abdullāh Anṣārī says, "I used to perform the noon prayers together with the holy Prophet (a.s). I would take a handful of pebbles to keep them in my hand to allow the pebbles to get cool; I put my forehead on them. This was because the weather was very warm"¹ The narrator (of the tradition) then adds, "Prostration on the dress he had on, if permitted, would have been easier than taking and keeping the pebbles."

Ibn Sa'd (d. 209 A.H.) says, in his *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, "Masrūq ibn al-Ajda' used to take a piece of clay brick along to prostrate on whenever he made a sea voyage."²

Masrūq ibn al-Ajda' was a member of the *tābi`ūn* group, who was also an associate of Ibn Mas'ūd, whom Ibn Sa'd considers among the first generation of narrators after the companions of the Prophet, and the one who has directly quoted traditions from Abū-Bakr, `Umar, `Uthmān, `Alī (a.s) and `Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd.

This lucid statement is a proof against the baseless expressions of those who claim it to be polytheism and an innovation in religion if one carries along a piece of the *turbah* clay. Also, it discloses the fact that the vanguard in

¹ *Sunan al-Bayhaqī*, vol. 1 p. 439. The Book of al-Ṣalāt, the chapter on 'What has been narrated concerning how to perform the prayers quickly when the weather is warm.'

² *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol. 6, p.79, printed in Beirut on the biography of Masrūq ibn al-`Ajwā'.

the history of Islam themselves used to do the same.¹ For example, Nāfi' says, "ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUmar used to take his turban off to bare his forehead when he wanted to prostrate."² Razīn says, "ʿAlī ibn ʿAbdullāh, son of ʿAbbās, wrote and said, 'Send me a piece of stone from al-Marwah mountain so I will prostrate on it.'"³

5). Muslim transmitters of *ḥadīths* have also narrated cases when the holy Prophet prohibited men from putting a part of their turban on their foreheads when they were prostrating. Ṣāliḥ al-Sabāʾī says, "Once the holy Prophet saw that a man who was in prostration had covered his forehead with his turban. The Prophet (a.s) bared the man's forehead."⁴

ʿAyyād ibn ʿAbdullāh of the Quraysh says, "The holy Prophet (a.s) saw that a man had prostrated on a part of his turban. Pointing to the man's forehead, the Prophet told him to take it off."⁵

It is clearly understood from these traditions that prostrating on the ground was an uncategorical necessity at the time of the holy Prophet so much so that if a Muslim put a part of his turban on the ground to prostrate on, the Messenger of God would prohibit him from doing so.

¹ For further information, refer to the book *Sīratuna* by ʿAllāmah al-Amīnī.

² *Sunan al-Bayhaqī*, vol. 2 p. 105; the book of *al-Ṣalāt*; *Bāb al-Kashf ʿan al-Sajdah fī al-Sojūd*.

³ Al-Azraqī, *Akḥbār Makkah*, vol. 3, p. 151.

⁴ *Sunan al-Bayhaqī*, vol. 2, p. 105.

⁵ *Sunan al-Bayhaqī*, vol. 2, p. 105.

6) The Shiites infallible leaders, who are according to the *Ḥadīth Thaḡalayn*, peers of, and inseparable from the Quran, and are also the household of the Prophet, have clearly expressed this fact: Imam Ṣādiq (a.s) says, “Prostrating on the ground is an obligatory duty, and on straw floor covering, the *khumrah*, is a Sunnah.”¹ Elsewhere he says, “It is not permissible to prostrate on anything except on the ground or on what grows from it, unless these products are used as food or for dress.”²

CONCLUSION

All the proofs stated above are clear evidence to the fact that not only the traditions quoted from the household of the Prophet, but also the Sunnah of the Messenger of God, and the deeds of his companions, and of the first generation of the narrators after the companion, all emphasize the necessity of prostrating on the ground and on what grows from it unless these products are used for food or for dress. Also, there is no doubt that it is permissible to prostrate on the things that have been specified, whereas there is doubt and uncertainty as to whether it is permissible to prostrate on other things. Therefore, to observe prudence that leads to salvation, it is befitting to prostrate only on the things that have been mentioned.

In conclusion, it should be reminded that the question raised here is a juridical issue; lots of differences of

¹ *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*, vol. 3, p. 593, The Book of *al-Ṣalāt*, chapter: *mā yusjadu 'alayh*, tradition No 7.

² *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*, vol. 3, p. 591, The Book of *al-Ṣalāt*, chapter: *mā yusjadu 'alayh*, tradition No 1.

opinion can be seen among Muslim jurists concerning similar subsidiary questions which should, however, not be a cause for anxiety since similar juridical differences also abound the four Sunni Schools. As an example, the Mālikiyyah say that it is a recommended deed to put one's nose on the ground when one is in prostration while the Ḥanbaliyyah consider it an obligatory duty and say that such an action nullifies the prayer if it is not observed.¹

¹ *Al-Fiqh 'Alā al-Madhāhib al-Arba'ah*; Vol. 1, p. 161, printed in Egypt; The Book of *al-Ṣalāt*, *al-Sujūd*.

QUESTION TWENTY

**Why do the Shiites kiss the doors
and the walls of the shrines and
seek blessings thereof?**

ANSWER

Seeking blessing from what reminds one of the saints is not something that has just appeared among Muslims; rather, it is a practice with deep roots in the history of the Prophet's life and of his companions.

Not only our honorable Prophet and his companions, but also the earlier Prophets used to seek blessings. Below are examples taken from the Quran and from the Prophet's Sunnah regarding the legitimacy of seeking blessings from what the saints had touched.

1. The Qur'ān says that when the truthful Joseph introduced himself to his brothers and forgave them, he said: *"Go with this shirt of mine and lay it on my father's face, he will again be able to see."*(12:93). Also, *"When the bearer of good news came he cast it on his face, so forthwith he regained his sight."*(12:96)

This clear expression of the Qur'ān is a manifest proof showing that Jacob, the Messenger of God, sought blessings from the shirt of another Messenger of God, Joseph; it also says that the shirt restored Prophet Jacob's eyesight to him.

Can anyone claim that what these two honorable prophets did was something beyond the scope of monotheism and of worshipping the one God?

2. There is no doubt that the holy Prophet (a.s) rubbed his hand over the *al-Ḥajar al-Aswad* (asking God's favor) when circumambulating the house of God, Ka'bah.

In his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Bukhārī says; "Someone asked `Abdullāh ibn `Umar about (the permissibility of) touching the *al-Ḥajar al-Aswad*, and he answered: "I saw the Prophet lovingly touching and kissing the *al-Ḥajar al-Aswad*."¹ If the touching and kissing of a stone ever had had the implication of associating someone or something to God, the Prophet, the harbinger of monotheism, would never have attempted at it.

3) The Sunnis' *ṣiḥāḥ* and *Masanīd*, history and *Sunnah* books contain a large number of narrations on the Prophet's companions' seeking blessings from the things the Prophet had touched: his dress, the water he had used to make ritual ablution with, the jug he had drunk water out of, etc. These examples leave no doubt at all that it is legitimate and lawfully favorable to seek blessings. Although the narrations that have been handed down are too many to mention here, a few examples will be quoted below.

a) In a lengthy discussion on some characteristics of the Prophet and of his companions, Bukhārī reports the following: "Whenever the Prophet made the ritual ablution,

¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, part 2, the book of *al-Ḥajj*; sub-section: *Taqbīl al-Ḥajar*, p. 151-2, printed in Egypt.

the Muslims (who were there) almost killed each other (over obtaining some of the water).¹

b) Ibn Ḥajar reports: “Children were brought to the Prophet, to be blessed, and he prayed for them.”²

c) Muḥammad Ṭāhir Makkī reports: “Umm Thābit is quoted to have said ' The Messenger of God, peace be upon him and his descendents came to me. He drank water out of a suspending water-pouch while he was standing. (When he had finished) I cut off the outlet of the pouch (to keep it as something blessed).” Makkī then adds: “this narration has been cited by Tirmidhī, who called it sound and *ḥasan*.” The commentator of this tradition says, in *Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn*, “Umm Thābit cut the outlet of the pouch off to save it as a reminder of where the Prophet's lips had touched while he was drinking water, and as something to seek blessings thereof. Those who accompanied the Prophet also used to drink water out of what the Prophet had drunk.”³

d) Those who had (volunteered) to serve in Medina used to carry pots of water to the Prophet before the morning prayers. The holy Prophet dipped his hand in the pots one by one; he still dipped his hand in water even if they came to him in a cold morning.”⁴

¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 3, chapter: *mā yajūzu min al-shurūṭi fī l-ilsām*; sub-section: *al-shurūṭu fī l-jihādi wa l-muṣālaḥah*, p. 195.

² *Al-Iṣābah*, vol. 1, the prelude, p. 7, printed in Egypt.

³ Muḥammad Ṭāhir al-Makkī's *Tabarruk al-Ṣaḥābah*, chapter 1, p. 29, translated by Anṣārī.

⁴ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, section 7, *Kitāb al-Faḍā'il*, chapter: *Qurbu al-Nabī min al-Nās wa Tabarrukuhum*, p. 79. For further information see:

These are clear permits to seeking blessings from what the Prophets have been in contact with. Thus, those who accuse the Shiites of polytheism and dualism (because the Shiites believe in this issue) have misconceived or misinterpreted monotheism and polytheism, because polytheism means worshipping someone else beside God, or ascribing Godly affairs to someone else, and taking him to be principally independent and needless of God in existence and influencing (on others) . The Shiites, however, maintain that God's saints and their relics are all created (beings) and are dependent on the Unique God both for their existence and for any influence they may have on other things. It is only out of respect and sincere love toward their Imams and those foremost in God's religion that the Shiites seek blessings from these saints. It is because of their love towards their Prophet and his descendents that the Shiites kiss the grave or the doors and the walls of the shrines on visiting these sanctuaries. This is an innate feeling deep in the heart of any devoted person, of which the following poem is an excellent manifestation:

*Passing by Salim area
I do kiss the walls,
this and that, not because I love the walls
but I do love the one residing therein.*

Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Ashribah; Mālik's al-Muwaṭṭa', vol. 1, p. 138, on Saluting the Prophet; Usd al-Ghābah, vol. 5, p. 90; Musnad Aḥmad, vol. 4, p. 32; al-Isī'āb, commenting on al-Iṣābah, vol. 3, p. 631; Faṭḥ al-Bārī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, p. 1, pp. 281-2.

QUESTION TWENTY-ONE

**Does Islam not consider religion
and politics separate?**

ANSWER:

To clarify the relationship between religion and politics, it is right to define “politics” first. There are two probable definitions for it:

- 1) Politics may be taken to mean deception and fraud as well as using any possible means to attain the goal: the aim justifies the means. Surely, this is not what the word really means, because it reduces politics to mere deceit and fraudulence, which are inconsistent with religion.
- 2) It may be understood as managing various affairs of the society on the basis of the correct Islamic principles. When taken it to mean so, politics means managing of the Muslims’ affairs in the light of the Qur’ān and the Sunnah; it is thus an integral part of religion.

Below are some reasons why religion and politics go together, and why there is a need to establish the government.

The clearest evidence comes from the way the holy Prophet acted in the turbulent years of his Mission. A study of the holy Prophet’s words and deeds clearly reveals that he had, from the beginning of his call, intended to establish a

powerful government with belief in God and the ability to draw up the Islamic plans.

The following points are some evidence of the holy Prophet's aspiration:

THE PROPHET, THE FOUNDER OF THE ISLAMIC GOVERNMENT

1) Having been missioned to announce his call, the holy Prophet began to form nuclei to fight, guide and gather Muslim forces. To this end, he often met with groups of people that came on pilgrimage to Mecca, and invited them to embrace Islam. He talked with two of such groups of Madinan people at Aqabah. These men took it on themselves to invite the Prophet to their town, and protect him¹. Thus, the first steps were taken in establishing an Islamic government.

2) After the holy Prophet had emigrated to Medina, he took measures to form a mighty army. This army gained glorious victories in eighty-two battles during the Prophet's lifetime and was able to clear the path of forming the Islamic government.

After the Islamic government was established in Median, the holy Prophet dispatched envoys and sent historic letters to politically and socially powerful poles of his time, and concluded economical, political or military agreements with many of the heads of the tribes.

¹ *Sirat Ibn Hushām*, vol. 1, p. 431, on *al-'Aqabah al-Ūlā*, 2nd edition, printed in Egypt.

The Prophet's biographers have kept records of the letters the holy Prophet (a.s) sent to Khosrow, the emperor of Iran, Caesar, the emperor of the Byzantine, Muqawqas, the king of Egypt, and Najāshī, the Abyssinian king as well as to many other rulers of the time. Certain scholars have collected most of the letters in their books.¹

4) To further the Islamic aims and to solidify the foundations of the Islamic government, the holy Prophet appointed heads and rulers for most of the clans and towns, an example of which is the following letter:

a) The Noble Prophet appointed Rafā`ah ibn Zayd as his representative to the tribe he belonged to and instructed him as follows: "In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. This is a letter from Muḥammad, the Messenger of Allah, to Rafā`ah Zayd. I am sending him (as my representative) to his own tribe and those joining (the tribe) in order to invite them to Allah and His Messenger. Then, whoever accepts (the call), he will be among the partisan of Allah and of His Messenger, and whoever turns away, he will be allowed only a two-month grace period."²

Such measures taken by the Prophet leave no room for anyone to doubt that he was, from the very beginning, pondering the formation of a powerful government as a channel through which the universal precepts of Islam could penetrate the nooks of the human community. Can concluding agreements with the influential clans, laying the foundations of a mighty

¹ Muḥammad Ḥamidullāh's *al-Wathā'iq al-Siyāsiyyah*; `Alī Aḥmad's *Makātib al-Rasūl*.

² *Makātib al-Rasūl*, vol. 1, p.144.

army, dispatching of the envoys to various countries, warning the kings and the rulers, writing them letters and dispatching governors to towns and regions of far and near be called anything except “politics” – in the sense of managing the social affairs?

Besides the Prophet's deeds and words, there is evidence for Muslims in what the Rāshidūn Caliphs did, and for Shiites and Sunnis in what the Commander of the Faithful `Alī ibn Abī-Ṭālib (a.s) did at the time of his reign. These all testify the “concomitance of religion and politics.”

Scholars of both of the Islamic sects have presented extensive proofs from the Book of Allah and the Prophet's Sunnah concerning the need for the establishment of a government and the running of the social affairs. Some of these are as follows:

In his *al-Aḥkām al-Sulṭāniyyah*, Abū'l-Ḥasan al-Māwardī says: “Imamate and government have been decreed to serve as a succession to Prophethood, a protection for the religion and a planning of the affairs of the world; it is an obligation unanimously considered to be a duty of the one who can establish it.”¹ This Muslim scholar, who is a distinguished Sunni man of learning, presents two proofs in support of his statement: rational and religious.

a) The rational proof: “for it is a disposition of the wise to follow a leader, one that may debar them from doing each other injustice, and keep them at a distance when they quarrel. Were it not for the leaders, the people would disperse and fall into confusion thus losing their efficiency.”²

¹ *al-Māwardī's al-Aḥkām al-Sulṭāniyyah*, chapter 1, p. 5, 1st ed. Egypt.

² *al-Māwardī's al-Aḥkām al-Sulṭāniyyah*, chapter 1, p. 5, 1st ed. Egypt.

b) The religious proof: “And as for the religious proof in support of vesting the authority in religion with the affairs, Allah the Majestic, the Glorified, has said,’ *O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Apostle and those in authority from among you.*’ 4:59. Thus, God has made it incumbent on us to obey those in authority; they are our leaders and commanders.”¹

Shaykh Ṣadūq, on the authority of al-Faḍl ibn Shādhān quotes Imam `Alī ibn Mūsā al-Riḍā (a.s) as having delivered a detailed sermon on the need for a government, part of which is as follows: ‘We find no nation that can survive without a guardian and a leader, one to whom the issues, religious or otherwise, must inevitably be referred. It is thus improbable that the Wise God should leave unsettled the question that people are in need of and without which they cannot be consistent. It is upon the order of their leaders, then, that the nations fight off their enemies, divide the war spoils, hold their Friday and congregational prayers; and it is the ruler who keeps the oppressors away from the oppressed.’²

It is impossible to analyze, in such a limited span as this, all the statements of the Muslim jurists in regard to this issue, for it requires a separate book. However, a survey of the extensive Islamic jurisprudence shows that unless there is a powerful government, most of the Islamic rules will not be put in practice.

¹ Ibid.

² *ʿIlal al-Sharāʿi*, sub-section 182, tradition No. 9, p. 253.

Islam invites us to the holy war, to defend and protect the oppressed, to implement *ḥudūd*, and *ta`zīrāt* punishments, to extensively enjoin good and forbid evil, to set up a financial system, and to guard the unity of the Islamic community. It is clear that these aims cannot be actualized without a powerful regime and an integrated government. There must be a well- organized army to defend the holy religion of Islam and its precinct. To organize such a powerful army, there must be a mighty government based on Islamic values. The implementation of *ḥudūd* and *ta`zīrāt* aimed at actualization of religious duties and prohibition of sins, the claiming of the right of the oppressed from the oppressors, and similar matters cannot be done without a systematic and harmonious organization, otherwise chaos will result

These are not the only reasons for the establishment of a government in Islam, but they make it clear that religion and politics are not two separate things. Rather, it is an inevitable necessity, a duty of the Islamic community all over the world, to establish a government on the basis of the values that the most Shining Religion has set.

QUESTION TWENTY-TWO

**Why Do the Shiites say that Imam
`Alī's sons, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn are
the Prophet's sons?**

ANSWER:

A survey of the Qur'ān commentaries, history books and narrations makes it clear that the belief referred to above is not held just by the Shiites, but that it is unanimously agreed upon by all scholars of all Islamic sects, a fact for which there is plenty of evidence in the Book and the Prophet's Sunnah.

Basing the discussion on the Glorious Qur'ān, the narrations and the comments made by the distinguished exgesists, we will here deal with the clear evidence:

The Qur'ān considers one's consanguineous children descended from one's sons or daughters as his offspring.

1. In the following verse Prophet Jesus is called a son of Ibrāhīm whereas Jesus is Mary's son, linked to Prophet Ibrāhīm through his maternal line: *"And We bestowed upon him Isaac and Jacob, each of whom We guided and Noah did We guide aforetime, and of his seed (We guided) David and Solomon and Joseph and Moses and Aaron. Thus do We reward the good, and Zachariah and John and Jesus."*
64:84-5

Muslim scholars, as exemplified below, have taken the above verse as clear evidence for the fact the Imam Ḥasan and Imam Ḥusayn (Peace be upon them) are the Prophet's offspring.

1) Jalāl-u-Din Suyūṭī reports: “Ḥajjāj summoned Yaḥyā b. Ya`mur and (when he came), told him ‘I have been told that you consider Ḥasan and Ḥusayn as the holy Prophet's offspring, and that you have found this in the Book of Allah, whereas I have studied through the Qur`ān but have not been able to find it.” Yaḥyā b. Ya`mur said “‘ Have you not studied the chapter al-An`ām wherein is the verse ‘*And from his offspring (came) David, Solomon, John and Jesus?*’ Ḥajjāj answered, ‘I have.’ Yaḥyā asked, ‘Is Prophet Jesus not an offspring of Ibrāhīm, while we know he (Jesus) had no father (and was linked to Ibrāhīm through his maternal line)?’ Ḥajjāj answered ‘You are right.’¹

It is clearly understood from this Qur`ānic verse and from the interpretations the exegesists have given that not just the Shiites but all Muslim scholars consider Imam Ḥasan and Imam Ḥusayn the offspring of the Prophet of God.

2) One of the clear verses of the Qur`ān supporting the above truth is the *mubāhalah* verse mentioned in Āli-`Imrān chapter “*And whoso disputeth with thee concerning it (the Divine Revelation) after the knowledge hath come unto thee, say (unto him): Come! We will summon our sons and your sons, and our women and your women, and our souls and your souls, then we will pray humbly (to our Lord) and (solemnly) invoke the curse of Allah upon those who lie.*” 3:61

¹ *Al-Durr al-Manthūr*, vol. 3, p. 28, printed in Egypt, notes on Chapter al-An`ām.

The exegetes assert that the above verse, known as the *mubāhalah*, was sent down after the Prophet had argued with the heads of Najrān Christians and they still persisted in their views. Then upon God's command the Prophet, accompanied by `Alī ibn Abī-Ṭālib, the Prophet's daughter, Fāṭimah, Imam Ḥasan and Imam Ḥusayn (a.s) advanced towards the Christians to invoke the Curse of Allah. The Christian leaders, having observed the Prophet's conduct and that of his household, were filled with terror for their lives, and requested the messenger of God to abandon the invocation of curse. The holy Prophet agreed, and the issue was settled after an agreement had been concluded. The Shi'ite and the Sunnite scholars unanimously agree that the Commander of the Faithful, Fāṭimah, Imam Ḥasan and Imam Ḥusayn (a.s) did accompany the holy Prophet on the day of Mubāhalah. It thus becomes clear that the phrase "our sons" uttered by the messenger of God, signifies Imam Ḥasan and Imam Ḥusayn, and that Ḥasan and Ḥusayn (a.s), mentioned in the above verse, are considered as the Prophet's children.

Having mentioned many a narration as comments on the Qur'ānic verse in question, the commentators have clearly testified our above assumption. Some of them are as follows:

a) Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī quotes Ḥākim, and Ibn Mardawayh and Abū-Na'im on the authority of Jābir Ibn `Abdullāh as saying "by *our souls*, i.e. *anfusanā* is meant the messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his descendents) and `Alī; "by *our son*," Ḥasan and Ḥusayn "by *our women*," Fāṭimah."¹

¹ *Al-Durr al-Manthūr*, vol. 2, p. 39, printed in Beirut.

b) Fakhr Rāzī, after quoting the above narration, says in his exegesis, “Know that this narration is recognized as valid by the exegesists and by those conversed with traditions”;¹ then he adds, “The above mentioned verse (i.e. mubāhalah verse) is a proof that Ḥasan and Ḥusayn (a.s) are the Prophet’s sons, for He (the Prophet) had promised to summon his sons, so he called Ḥasan and Ḥusayn.”²

c) Abū-`Abdullāh Qurṭubī, too, says in his book of exegesis that (the phrase) “*our sons*” as stated in the Quran is a proof that one's daughter's children are also considered one's offspring.”³

3) The holy Prophet’s statements (two of which are mentioned below) are the strongest proof that Imam Ḥasan and Imam Ḥusayn (a.s) are the Prophet’s sons: “These two are my children; whoever loves them loves me.”⁴

While pointing to Ḥasan and Ḥusayn (a.s), the Prophet said, “These two sons of mine are my sweet smelling flowers in this world.”⁵

¹ *Maḥāṭib al-Ghayb, tafsīr*; vol. 2, p. 488; printed in Egypt in 1308 A.H.

² Ibid.

³ *Al-Jāmi` li-Aḥkām al-Qur`ān*, vol., 4, p. 104, Printed in Beirut.

⁴ Ibn `Asākir’s *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq*, on Imam al-Ḥusayn’s biography.

⁵ Ibid. p. 62; tradition 112.

QUESTION TWENTY –THREE

Why do the Shiites consider that the successorship to the Prophet is decided by God's command and introduced by the Prophet himself?

Answer:

It is clear that the holy religion of Islam is a universal and eternal religion, that the Holy Prophet leads the people while he is alive and that after his demise the position of leadership should be entrusted to the worthiest person in the community of Muslims.

In regard to the issue as to whether the leader after the Holy Prophet, may God bless him and his descendants, is appointed by God and introduced by the Prophet or whether he should be elected by the people, the Shiites believe the Prophet's successor is appointed by God, whereas the Sunnis believe that people should elect the leader to manage the affairs of the community.

SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS PROVE THE NEED FOR THE DIVINE NOMINATION

The Shi'ite scholars have, in their books of creed, stated many reasons to support the belief that the successor to the Prophet should be appointed by God's command. What is important is that an analysis of the social circumstances in

the time of the Prophet clearly bears witness to the soundness of the Shiites view.

The foreign and domestic political status of the Islamic community at the time of the Holy Prophet required that the successor to the Prophet, may God bless him and his descendants, be, through the Prophet himself, appointed by God, because the Islamic community was regularly threatened with destruction by a dangerous trio consisting of the Roman Empire, the Persian monarchy, and the domestic Hypocrites. It was also necessary that for the people's interest, the Prophet appoint the political leader in order to unite the people against the foreign enemies and stop the enemies' infiltration and domination, which the interior disputes, would strengthen.

FURTHER EXPLANATIONS

The Roman emperor, a dangerous side of the trio, about which the Prophet was preoccupied to the last days of his life, was located in the North of the Arabian Peninsula.

The first military encounter between Muslims and Christian army took place in Palestine in 8th year after Hijrah. In that war three of the Muslim army commanders: Ja`far al-Ṭayyār, Zayd Ibn Ḥārithah, and `Abdullāh ibn Rawāḥ were killed and the war ended in a bitter defeat of the Islamic army. The Islamic army's retreat made Caesar's army impudent, and there was the fear that they would attack the Islamic capital any moment. So in the 9th year after Hijrah, the holy Prophet, commanding a large and equipped army, headed for the border of Damascus. In this hard and painful expedition, the Islamic army managed to recover its prestige and to renew its political life.

A few days before his fatal illness, the Prophet, may God bless him and his descendants, not being not fully contented with this partial victory, dispatched Usāmah, the commander, and the Islamic army, to the borders of Damascus.

The second of the trio was Khosrow Parviz, the Iranian king, who, having received the Prophet's letter got so angry that he contemptuously tore it to pieces, insolently dispelled the Prophet's messenger and wrote a letter to his governor general in Yemen to arrest the Prophet and kill him if he refuses to surrender.

Although Khosrow Parviz died while the Prophet, may God bless him and his descendants, was still alive, the question of the independence of Yemen, a colony of Iran for years, was a concern of the rulers of Iran, and the Iranian politicians could never, out of conceit and pride, bear the existence of a power in their neighborhood.

The third danger was that of the Hypocrites, who acted as the fifth column among Muslims, always committing crimes and sowing the seeds of discord to the extent that once they decided to assassinate the Prophet on his way from Tabūk to Medina. Some of them cherished the hope that after the Prophet's death, the Islamic movement would come to an end and that they would all be relieved.¹

The hypocrites' destructive power was so great that the Holy Qur'ān speaks about it in the following chapters: Āl-'Imrān, al-Nisā', al-Mā'idah, al-Anfāl, al-Tawbah, al-

¹ Derived from Āyatullāh Subḥānī's *Forūq-e-Abadiyyat*.

`Ankabūt, al-Aḥzāb, Muḥammad (a.s), al-Fath, al-Mujādilah, al-Ḥadīd, al-Munāfiqūn, and al-Ḥashr.

With so many powerful enemies in ambush, would it have been right for the Prophet of Islam if he had not appointed a successor to the religious and political leadership of the newly-established community? The social calculations demanded that the Prophet appoint a leader to prevent any kind of discord after him and to ensure the Islamic unity by creating a firm, strong and defensive front. It is not possible to prevent unpleasant happenings unless a leader is appointed (by the Prophet) so that no one after the Prophet's death could say that the Caliph should be one of them.

These social considerations lead us to confirm that the idea of the Prophet's appointing the leader to succeed him was correct.

TEXTUAL EVIDENCE ON THE PROPHET'S CLEAR EXPRESSION

It was because of this social background and other considerations that the holy Prophet, may God bless him and his descendants, now and then set forth the issue of successorship from the very first days of his Prophetic mission to the last days of his noble life. He appointed his successor both at the beginning of his mission - in an assembly he had formed of his relatives to reveal his Prophecy to them - and towards the end of his life at Ghadīr Khum when he was returning from the farewell pilgrimage, as well as other instances throughout his life. Three examples of the supporting texts as well as the source books of the Islamic scholars and the traditionists concerning the matter have been mentioned in chapter two of the present book.

With view of the afore-mentioned social conditions in the early days of Islam, and considering the Prophetic texts in regard to introducing and appointing `Alī (a.s), the Commander of the Faithful, as his successor, it becomes evident that the issue of appointing the Caliph by the Prophet is necessary and unavoidable.

QUESTION TWENTY-FOUR

**Does swearing by other than God
imply polytheism?**

ANSWER:

The actual meanings of the words monotheism and polytheism should be searched for in the Qur'ān and in the Prophet's tradition, for these are the most valuable criteria for distinguishing between truth and falsehood, as well as between monotheism and polytheism. Thus, any thought and deed should be presented to the value judgment recognized by the logic of Revelation and the criteria available in the Holy Prophet's life.

Below are cases regarded by the Qur'ān and the Sunnah indicative of permissions to swear by beings other than God:

1) In its enduring verses, the Holy Qur'ān has sworn by such lofty created entities as "the Prophet's life", "man's life", "the pen" – symbol of writing – "the sun", "the moon", "the stars", "the day and the night", "the heaven and the earth", "time", "the mountains", and "the sea":

a) *"By your life! They are blindly wandering in their intoxication"* 15:1

b) *"I swear by the sun and its heat; and the day when it shows; and the night when it draws a veil over it; and the*

heaven and Him who made it; and the earth and Him who extended it; and the soul and Him who made it perfect. Then he gave it the inspiration to understand what is right and wrong for it.” 91:1-7

c) *“By the star as it sets.” 53:1*

d) *“Nun. By the pen and whatever they record.” 68:1*

e) *“By eventide.” 103: 1*

f) *“By the daybreak, and the ten nights.” 89:1*

g) *“I swear by Mount Tur, and the Book written on an outstretched fine parchment; and the oft-visited House (Ka`bah); and the elevated arch; and the tidal sea.” 59:1-6*

The following Qur’ānic chapters, too, contain instances of swearing by some phenomena of the world of creation: al-Nāzi`āt, al-Mursalāt, al-Burūj, al-Ṭāriq, al-Balad, al-Tīn, and al-Ḍuḥā.

No doubt, were swearing by beings other than God a cause of polytheism, the Qur’ān, which is the single enactment of monotheism, would never do so, and if such an act were peculiar of ‘God, it would have been explained in the Qur’ān so as to prevent from misunderstanding.

2) The Holy Prophet is an example for all Muslims, who view his life and deeds as criteria to differentiate between truth and falsehood. Muslim scholars and the authors of the *ṣiḥāḥ* and *masanīd* have also cited many cases in which the holy Prophet had sworn by other than God:

In his *Musnad*, Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal – the leader of the Ḥanbaliyyah School of law – quotes the Messenger of God as having said, “I swear by my life that enjoining to do

good and prohibiting from evil is much better than remaining silent.”¹

In his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, one of the six authentic books of the Sunnis, Muslim Ibn Ḥajjāj quotes the following: “A man came to the Prophet – peace be upon him and his descendants – and asked him, “Which gift of charity deserves the greatest reward”? The Prophet said: ‘By your father’s life, you will surely know it: the one that you give while you are sound in body, desiring (to withhold your money), fearful of becoming poor, and hopeful of living to be old.”²

There are, however, some people who disregard the Prophet’s manifest deed referred to above, and baselessly accuse the majority of Muslims of being polytheists, just because the latter consider swearing by other than God as permissible.

3) In addition to the Book of God, and the Prophet’s Sunnah manifest proof concerning this matter can also be found in the life and manners of his close associates:

‘Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, (a.s) swore by his own life: “I swear by my own life that your affliction will multiply after me.”³ Also, “I swear by my life that if you do not give up your wrong ways and wicked acts, you will surely know those who are seeking you.”⁴

¹ *Musnad Aḥmad*, vol. 5, pp. 224-5, Bashīr b. Khasasiyyah al-Sundūsī’s tradition.

² *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, part 3, printed in Egypt; the book *al-Zakāt*; sub-section *Bayān Inna Afḍal al-Ṣadaqa al-Ṣaḥīḥ al-Shaḥīḥ*, pp. 93-4

³ Muḥammad ‘Abduh’s *Nahj al-Balāghah*, sermon 161.

⁴ *Ibid.* Letter No. 9; See also sermons 168, 182, 187, and letters number 6 and 54.

With so many narrations and texts available, it is clear that no verdict or opinion can ever pose a threat, nor can any other justifications mar God's standing mentioned in the Qur'ān, or that of the Prophet's close companions such as the Commander of the Faithful, and accuse them of polytheism.

CONCLUSION

The above reasons clearly prove that it is a legal principle to swear by other than God. From the Book of God, the Prophet's Sunnah, and the believers' way of life, it is understood that such an act is compatible with monotheism. Should there be a narration apparently opposing the established principle, it should be interpreted in such a manner as to correspond with this Qur'ānic and narrative principle. Below are an ambiguous narration and the answer given to it:

“The holy Prophet heard `Umar saying, ‘I swear by my father.’ The Prophet said, “God has forbidden you to swear by your father; anyone who is to swear should from now on either swear by God, or remain silent.” This tradition cannot withstand the Qur'ānic challenge and those narrations which permit swearing by other than God. However, it should be said that the reason why the Prophet prohibited `Umar and others from swearing by their fathers was that their fathers were idolaters and polytheists. A disbeliever and idolater are quite unworthy to be sworn by.

QUESTION TWENTY-FIVE

Does Resorting to Saints imply associating others with God and is it a source of innovation?

ANSWER:

The defining element of “resorting to saints to seek nearness to God - *tawassul* - refers to having a person well-esteemed in Allah’s eyes act as an intermediary for one to attain nearness to God. *Lisān al-`Arab*, a lexicon by Ibn Manẓūr, gives the following defining example for the word *tawassul*:

“He made entreaties to someone means he approached someone through the position of anything that might attract his attention.”¹

The Glorious Qur’ān says, “*O believers, fear God and seek the means to approach Him, and struggle in His way so that you may achieve salvation.*” 5:34

Jawāhirī in his *ṣiḥāḥ al-Lughah* gives the following definition for *wasīlah* (the intermediary): “*Wasīlah* is something by which we aspire to approach someone.” Hence the intermediary that we resort to can be either be

¹ *Lisān al-`Arab*, vol. 11, p. 724.

our own worthy deeds and sincere worship rendered to God or a meritorious person who enjoys a high standing in the eyes of God, both having the capability to serve as intermediaries to make us closer to the Lord of the universe.

FORMS OF TAWASSUL

1. Our Worthy Deeds:

In his commentary he has made on the Qur'ānic verse: "... *and seek the means to come to Him*", Suyūṭī has quoted Qutādah as having interpreted it to mean: "Approach Allah through obeying Him and doing things that please Him."¹

2. Resorting to Honorable People's Prayers:

Relating the story of Prophet Yūsuf, the Holy Qur'ān quotes his brothers in this way "They said: O our father, ask forgiveness of our faults for us; surely we were sinners" Jacob said, "... *I will ask for you forgiveness from my Lord; surely He is the Forgiving, the Merciful.*" 12: 97-8. This verse clearly shows that Yūsuf's brothers beseeched their father to pray, considering it a means of forgiveness. Their father, not reprimanding them (for such an appeal), answered their request.

3. Persons Highly Honored by God:

This kind of *tawassul* has been acknowledged by the Companions of the Prophets (a.s) and the distinguished Muslims of the early days of Islam as following narrations indicate:

¹ *Al-Durr al-Manthūr*, vol. 2, p. 280, printed in Egypt.

1. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal in his *Musnad* quotes `Uthmān ibn Ḥunayf as having said, “A blind man came to the Prophet (a.s) and said, ‘Supplicate God to restore my eyesight’. The Prophet (a.s) said, ‘I can supplicate if you desire, or I can put it off until later, which is better.’ The man asked the Prophet to supplicate. The holy Prophet ordered him to make a ritual ablution, *wuḍū’*, taking care in doing it, perform a prayer of two rak`ah and invoke God in the following manner: “O God, I implore thee, and turn to thee through thy Prophet Muḥammad, the Prophet of mercy; O Muḥammad, I turn to my Lord through you for my request to be granted. O God, let him be my intercessor.”¹

This tradition has been generally confirmed by the traditionists as Ḥākim Nayshābūrī, who having narrated it in his *Mustadrak*, calls it sound.

Quoting Abū-Ishāq, Ibn Mājah says, “This tradition is sound.” In his *Abwāb al-Ad`iyah* (The Gates of Supplication), Tirmidhī confirms that this tradition is sound. Also, Muḥammad Nasīb al-Rifā`ī, in his *al-Tawaṣṣul ilā al-Ḥaqīqah*, says “No doubt this tradition is sound and known (to all), one in which it is proved that the blind man’s eyesight was restored to him through the supplication of the Prophet (a.s).”²

¹ *Musnad Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal*, vol. 4, p. 138, On narrations quoted from `Uthmān Ibn Ḥunayf; *Al-Ḥākim’s al-Mustadrak `alā al-Ṣaḥīḥayn*, vol. 1, the book on *Ṣalāt al-Taṭawwu’*, p. 313, printed in Beirut; *Sunan Ibn Mājah*; vol. p.441; printed by *Dār Iḥyā’ al-Kutub al-`Arabiyyah*; *al-Tāj*, vol. 1, p. 286; al-Suyūṭī’s *al-Jāmi` al-Ṣaghīr*, p. 59; Ibn Taymiyyah’s *al-Tawassul wa’l-Wasīlah*, p. 98, printed in Beirut.

² *Al-Tawwaṣṣul ilā al-Ḥaqīqah*, p. 158, printed in Beirut.

It is clearly understood from this tradition that it is permissible to resort to the holy Prophet, asking him to serve as an intermediary for the needs to be granted. What is more the Messenger of God himself ordered the blind man to supplicate in that particular manner and implore God through the intermediary of the Prophet. This is what resorting to the saints, *tawassul*, really means.

2. Abū-`Abdullāh Bukhārī has mentioned the following in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* “Whenever there was a drought, `Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb went to Ibn `Abbās, the Prophet’s uncle, and said, ‘O God, when the Prophet was alive we implored for rain through Thy Prophet, and Thou sent us rain. Now, we turn to Thee by resorting to the uncle of our Prophet. So, give us rain water”, and rain was given them.”¹

3. So popular was the issue of resorting to the saints that the early Muslims wrote poems in which the Prophet was referred to as the intermediary between the Muslims and God.

a) Sawād Ibn Qarīb wrote an ode concerning the holy Prophet, a part of which is as follows:

*“I witness that there is no god but Allah,
That thou art entrusted with all Divine secrets,
And that thou, the son of the honored, the pure,
are the closest intermediary among the prophets.”*²

The Prophet listened to the poem but did not prevent (Sawād) from reading it, nor did he accuse him of

¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, part 2, the book of *Al-Jam`, Bāb al-Istisqā'*, p. 27, printed in Egypt.

¹ Zaynī Daḥlān’s *al-Durar al-Saniyyah*, p. 29, as quoted by al-Ṭabarī.

polytheism and innovation in religion

b) In the following quatrain Shāfi'ī also points to the same fact discussed above:¹

*The Prophet's descendents are means for me;
They are my intermediaries towards Him.
I hope that for their sake tomorrow I will be given
my book onto my right hand.*

Although the number of the traditions handed down concerning the permissibility of *tawassul* is very great, the issue is thus made clear in the light of the above narrations and the references that have been made to Prophet's Sunnah, the behavior of the Companions and of the great Islamic scholars, with no need to go into further details. All these prove that claims of those who consider resorting to the saints as polytheism and an innovation in religion are baseless.

¹ Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī's *al-Şawā'iq al-Muḥriqahh*, p.178, printed in Cairo.

QUESTION TWENTY-SIX

**Isn't commemorating the birthday
of the saints an innovation in
religion and polytheism?**

ANSWER:

The necessity of commemorating people who are worthy in the eyes of God - such as celebrating their birthday - is clear to men of vision. However, the following arguments can help removing doubt in this regard.

1. CELEBRATION: A SIGN OF LOVE

The holy Qur'ān invites Muslims to love the Prophet and his Ahl al-Bayt, saying, *"I do not ask of you any reward for it but love for my near relatives."* (42:23). Commemorating the saints is, no doubt, a manifestation of people's love to them sanctioned by the Qur'ān.

2. CELEBRATION: PAYING HOMAGE TO THE PROPHET

The Qur'ān introduces two criteria to attain salvation and happiness: helping the Prophet and revering his position: *"(as for) those who believe him and honor him and help him, and follow the light which has been sent down with him, these it is who are the successful. (7:157)."* This verse clearly shows that Islam considers it good to commemorate the Messenger of God, and that God is pleased with ceremonies that keep the Prophet's memory alive and honor

him. According to the verses cited successful people have the following characteristics:

- a. belief: “those who believe in him
- b. follow the light: and follow the light which has been sent down with him
- c. help the Prophet: *and help him*
- d. revere the Prophet's rank: *and honor him*

3. HOLDING CEREMONIES IS OBEYING GOD

God praises the Prophet in the Qur'ān and says: and “*We exalted Thy name.*” It is thus understood that God desires to have the Prophet's celebrity spread universally, and He Himself has glorified the Prophet in different parts of the Qur'ān. To show that we also follow the Lord of the worlds and our divine book, we do institute dignified ceremonies to honor the Prophet as the apex of perfection and moral excellence. What the Muslims intend to achieve through such ceremonies is nothing but exalting the holy Prophet.

4. DIVINE REVELATION IS NOT INFERIOR TO THE HEAVENLY FOOD

Said Jesus son of Mary, “*God, our Lord, send down to us food from heaven so that it may be a recurring feast for us, both for the first of us and the last of us, and a sign from Thee. And provide us; Thou art the best of providers.*” (5:114).

Prophet Jesus had asked God for heavenly food so that they might celebrate the day; the food is, nevertheless, material and an enjoyment for the body. Now, can the ceremonies the Muslims hold on the day the Qur'ān was revealed or on the birthday of the Prophet be considered as a sign of “polytheism”, or an innovation in religion?

5. MUSLIM'S LIFE STYLE

Muslims have for long been holding celebrations in the memory of the Prophet of Islam. *Tārīkh al-Khamīs*, a history book written by Ḥusayn ibn. Muḥammad Diyārbakrī, mentions that Muslims all over the world celebrate the month in which the Prophet was born. "During the days they arrange banquets and at nights they pay the poor their dues, express their joy, do good deeds of different kinds, and read poems written on the occasion. They are showered in manifest blessing because of the Prophet's birthday." ¹

The above statements convey the general verdict derived from the Qur'ān and the Muslims way of life concerning the permissibility of holding celebrations in memory of the saints. Thus, what comes to light is the baselessness of the claim of those who consider it an innovation in religion to hold celebrations for God's saints. Innovation in religion virtually means a behavior unsupported by the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, whereas the general verdict for the question raised at the beginning can be derived from the Qur'ān and the permanent life style of the Muslims. The celebrations under discussion are held specifically in honor and praise of those who are meritorious servants of God and are believed to be in need of the Lord of the world. This is in conformity with the principle of Oneness of God.

The claim of those who consider the commemorating of saints of God a cause for polytheism and duality is thus proved to be baseless.

¹ *Tārīkh al-Khamīs* by Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-Diyārbakrī, vol. 1, p. 223, Beirut Ed.

QUESTION TWENTY-SEVEN

Why do Shiites perform ritual prayers (Ṣalāt) three times a day instead of five?**ANSWER:**

At the beginning, it is necessary to review some juridical points:

1. All Islamic sects hold that it is permissible to perform the noon and the afternoon prayers successively on the day of Arafat. This is true with evening (*Maghrib*) and '*Ishā'*' prayers at Muzdalifah.
2. The Ḥanafites believe that performing the noon and afternoon prayers successively and *maghrib* and '*ishā'*' successively is restricted to 'Arafah and Muzdalifah and not inclusive of any other circumstances.
3. The Ḥanbalis, the Mālikis and the Shāfi'is say, "In addition to above circumstance one can also perform the noon and afternoon prayers, or *maghrib* and '*ishā'*' prayers successively when one is on a trip." Certain law schools from among the above consider it permissible to say the prayers successively in time of emergency: when one is caught in the rain, or he is ill or he fears the attack of the enemy."¹

¹ Extracted from *al-Fiqh 'alā al-Madhāhib al-Arba'ah*, the book of *al-*

4. The Shiites believe that there is, as follows, a specifically valued time for each of the prayers: for the noon and afternoon, evening and `ishā' prayers. There is also a shared time.

a. The time that is specifically valued for the noon prayer is the canonical time, long enough to recite a four unit (*rak'ah*) prayer, allocated to performing the noon prayer only.

b. The specific time for the afternoon prayer is the time one has left, long enough to perform only the afternoon prayer before the evening dusk sets in.

c. The shared time for the noon and afternoon prayers begins with the termination of the noon-prayer specific time, and lasts until the time is due for the afternoon prayer to begin.

The Shiites claim that the noon and the afternoon prayers can be performed successively within this shared time span.

The Sunnis, however, maintain that the noon-specific praying time begins as the religion has specified it, and terminates at the time when the shadow an object casts is as long as the object itself. It is forbidden to perform the afternoon prayer during this time limit. Then comes the specific time for the afternoon prayer to begin, and extends so long as the evening dusk, *maghrib* time, has not set in.

The noon prayer cannot be performed within this time allowance.

d. The specific time for the evening prayer, *maghrib*, begins as canonically decided, and terminates when the evening prayer which is a three unit (Rak'ah) finishes. Only *maghrib* prayer can be performed within this limited time span.

e. '*Ishā*' specific time is an interval ending in ritual midnight, an interval just long enough to perform '*ishā*' prayer. Only '*ishā*' prayer can be performed within this time span.

f. The shared time for the performance of the evening (*maghrib*) and '*ishā*' prayers begins with the time allowed for the evening prayer (*maghrib*), and extends up to the time specifically valued for '*ishā*' prayer.

According to the Shiites, the evening and '*ishā*' prayers can be performed successively within this shared time limit

The Sunnis, however, believe that the time specifically valued for *maghrib* prayer begins when the dusk sets in. and terminates just as the evening steps in. During this interval reciting '*ishā*' prayer is forbidden. When the evening dusk overshadows, it is time for '*ishā*' prayer that extends up to the midnight ritually determined. *Maghrib* prayer cannot be performed within this time span.

CONCLUSION:

A: The Shiites' Viewpoint:

The noon prayer can be performed when the canonical noon begins, followed by the afternoon prayer without leaving an interval in between.

We may, if we wish, postpone the noon prayer until we are close, in time, to the moments specified for the afternoon

prayer, in such a manner that the noon prayer will end a bit before it is the right time for the afternoon prayer, then we go on to recite the afternoon prayer. This means that both prayers will be performed successively, although it is recommended to begin the noon prayer at the canonical time, and do the afternoon prayer at the time when the shadow an object casts is as tall as the object itself.

The same procedure applies to evening (*maghrib*) and '*ishā*' prayers, that is, we can perform *maghrib* prayer at the canonical time, followed by '*ishā*' prayer without an interval in between. We may also postpone *maghrib* prayer until it is about the time for the '*ishā*' prayer in such a manner that *maghrib* prayer will end before it is time for '*ishā*' prayer, then we go on to recite '*ishā*' prayer. This means that *maghrib* prayer and '*ishā*' prayers will be performed successively, although it is recommended to perform *maghrib* prayer after the canonical *maghrib* time sets in and do '*ishā*' prayer when the evening dusk has overshadowed. This is the Shiites' view.

The Sunnis do not announce an uncategorical concession for the noon/afternoon prayers and *maghrib* and '*ishā*' prayers to be performed successively anywhere and at any time in the same manner that they are performed at 'Arafah and Muzdalifah. So, the question still remains to be further delved on.

5. Muslims unanimously agree that the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him and his descendants) used to perform his prayers successively. However, this behavior of his has been interpreted in two different manners:

a. The Shiites have interpreted it to mean that it is allowed

to perform the afternoon prayer immediately subsequent to the termination of the noon prayer. The same is true of the *'ishā'* prayer that can be performed soon after *maghrib* prayer, and this is not restricted to any specific time, place or condition; it is applicable to all places at all times.

B: Others' Point of View

The implication of the narration concerning the Prophet's manner of performing the prayers is that it is allowed to perform the noon prayer towards the end of the time due for it; however, the afternoon prayer should be done on time. The same procedure applies to *maghrib* and *'ishā'* prayers, with the former to be performed towards the end of the time allowed for it. However, *'ishā'* prayer should be done on time.

We will now go to discuss the narrations in order to prove the Shiites' point of view on the permissibility of performing prayers successively at the time allowed for one of them, not as the Sunnis hold: performing one towards the end of the time due for it, and performing the other exactly at the beginning of the time set for it.

The Narrations

1. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, the leader of the Ḥanbaliyyah school of jurisprudence reports on the authority of Jābir Ibn Zayd who said: "I heard Ibn 'Abbās saying: 'I was with the holy Prophet (a.s). We performed the prayers consisting of eight units (Rak'ahs) (the noon and the afternoon prayers) successively, and (when the time came) we did the seven units (Rak'ah) prayers *Maghrib* and *'ishā'* in the same manner. I told Abū'l-Sha'thā', 'I suppose the Messenger of God deferred the noon prayers and (on the other hand) performed the afternoon prayer a bit sooner; also, he

postponed *maghrib* prayer a bit, and performed *'ishā'* prayer a little sooner, too. Abū'l-Sha'thā' said, 'I suppose so, too'."¹

This narration expresses the holy Prophet's performing the noon, afternoon, *maghrib* and *'ishā'* prayers successively, without leaving an interval between each set.

2. Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal quotes the following on the authority of 'Abdullāh Ibn Shaqīq: "Having finished the afternoon prayer, Ibn 'Abbās began preaching which lasted until sunset and when the stars appeared. (At this time) the people there announced that it was time to pray. A man from Banī-Tamīm tribe who was among the crowd repeatedly said, 'It is time to pray.' Ibn 'Abbās was furious and said, "Do you want to teach me the practice of the Prophet? I witnessed the holy Prophet performing the noon and the afternoon prayers successively, and *maghrib* and *'ishā'* prayers without an interval in between." 'Abdullāh continued: "Being perplexed (about Ibn 'Abbās' statement) I consulted Abū-Hurayrah; he confirmed Ibn 'Abbās."²

In the above narration, two of the companions: 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās, and Abū-Hurayrah report that the prophet performed the noon, and afternoon, and *maghrib* and *'ishā'* prayers successively, and Ibn 'Abbās followed him.

3. Mālik Ibn Anas, the leader of Māliki School of Jurisprudence says in his book, *Muwatta'*, "The holy Prophet (a.s) performed the noon and the afternoon prayers, and frequently did the evening and *'ishā'* prayers successively at a time when there was no fear of the enemy, nor was he on a trip."³

¹ *Musnad Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal*, vol. 1, p.221.

² *Ibid.* p. 251.

³ *Muwatta' Mālik, Kitāb al-Ṣalāt*. 3rd ed. (Beirut), p.125, narration 178;

4. Mālik, quotes the following on the authority of Mu'ādh Ibn Jabal, "The holy Prophet (a.s) used to perform the noon and the afternoon (and later on) *maghrib* and '*ishā*' prayers successively."¹

5. Mālik quotes the following on the authority of Nāfi', who himself cited 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar as having said, 'The holy Prophet (a.s) used to perform *maghrib* and '*ishā*' prayers successively whenever he was in a hurry to go somewhere."²

6. Mālik Ibn Anas quotes the following on the authority of Abū-Hurayrah: "On the way to Tabūk, the holy Prophet (a.s) performed the noon and the afternoon prayers successively."³

7. Mālik reports the following in *Muwatta'*, on the authority of Nāfi': "Whenever it was raining and the men of eminence performed *maghrib* and '*ishā*' prayers successively, 'Abdullāh 'Umar also joined them (and did the same)."⁴

8. Mālik ibn Anas quotes Imam 'Alī ibn Ḥusayn (a.s) as follows: "Whenever the holy Prophet (a.s) went on a trip during the day, he recited the noon and the afternoon prayers successively and whenever he went on a trip at night, he did *maghrib* and '*ishā*' prayers successively, too."⁵

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, vol. 2, p.151, Beirut, the section on reciting the prayers successively while at home.

¹ Ibid. p. 134, narration 176, Beirut ed. 1403 AH; also *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Egypt Ed. Section 2, p. 152.

² *Muwatta' Mālik*, the book of prayers, 3rd edition (Beirut) p. 125, narration 177.

³ *Muwatta' Mālik*, the book of prayers, p. 124. narration 175.

⁴ Ibid, p. 125, narration 179.

⁵ Ibid, p. 125, narration 181.

9. In the comment he has made on *Muwatta'*, Muḥammad Zarqānī, on the authority of Abū'l-Sha'thā', says, "In the city of Basra, 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās performed the noon and the afternoon prayers without leaving an interval in between (and when the time came) he performed *maghrib* and *'ishā'* prayers successively, too."¹

10. Zarqānī reported on the authority of Ṭabarānī, on the authority of Ibn Mas'ūd: "When the holy Prophet (a.s) had performed the noon and the afternoon prayers successively, he was asked about (the reason). He (the Prophet) said, "I did it to make things easier for my people."²

11. Moslem Ibn Ḥajjāj, reported on the authority of Abū-Zubayr, on the authority of Sa'id ibn Jubayr, on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās: "The holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his descendents) performed the noon and the afternoon prayers successively when he was in Medina, not on a trip, and when there was no fear of the enemy's attack."³

Commenting on the Prophet's decision, Ibn 'Abbās maintains that the Prophet did so because he did not want to put any one of his people in trouble.⁴

12. In his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Muslim reports on the authority of Sa'id Ibn Jubayr (and he) on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās: "The

¹ *Sharḥ al-Zarqānī 'alā Muwatta'* Mālik, section one on reciting the prayers successively while at home and on trip. Narration 294

² Ibid, p. 294.

³ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Egypt ed. P. 151, "On reciting the prayers on trip.

⁴ Ibid.

holy Prophet (a.s) performed the noon and the afternoon prayers, (and later on) the *maghrib* and *'ishā'* prayers successively in Medina when there was no fear of anything nor was it raining.¹

Sa'id Ibn Jubayr continues: I asked Ibn `Abbās: “Why did the Prophet act this way?” He said, “Because the Prophet did not want to cause any inconvenience for his people.”²

13. Abū-`Abdullāh Bukhārī has a special chapter in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* on “deferring the noon prayers until it is time for the afternoon prayer”³. This itself is the most eloquent evidence that the noon prayers can be postponed a little to be duly performed with the afternoon prayer when it is time for the afternoon prayer. He mentions, “The holy Prophet (a.s) performed, in Medina, seven units (Rak`ah) of prayers (*maghrib* and *'ishā'*) and (before that) the eight units (Rak`ah), the noon and the afternoon prayers, successively.”⁴

This narration not only clearly says that the noon prayer can be deferred to be performed together with the afternoon prayer; it contextually implies that, in imitating the holy Prophet (a.s), *maghrib* prayer can, be postponed until it is time for *'ishā'* prayer, so that both are performed then.

¹ Ibid, p. 152

² Ibid, a discussion on the above narration.

³ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, section 1, p. 110, the book of prayers, the chapter on deferring the noon prayer until the afternoon prayer time.

⁴ Ibid.

14. Elsewhere Bukhārī says, “‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar, Abū-Ayyūb and Ibn ‘Abbās have reported that the holy Prophet (a.s) performed *maghrib* and ‘*ishā*’ prayers successively.”¹

Reporting the above, Bukhārī intends to say that the holy Prophet performed *maghrib* and the ‘*ishā*’ prayers successively, since it is self evident that the Prophet always performed prayers.

15. Muslim quotes the following in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*: “Someone addressed Ibn ‘Abbās and said, “Prayer,” He (Ibn ‘Abbās) did not reply. Again, the man said, “prayer.” Again Ibn ‘Abbās did not reply. For the fourth time he repeated “Prayer.” This time Ibn ‘Abbās said, “May you be deprived of your mother. Do you want to teach us something about prayers? We used to perform prayers successively at the time of the holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his descendents).”²

16. Muslim report: “Surely the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him and his descendants) performed the noon and afternoon, and (later on) *maghrib* and ‘*ishā*’ prayers successively when he was on expedition to the Tabūk war.” Sa‘īd ibn Jubayr said: “I asked Ibn ‘Abbās for the Prophet’s decision.” He said, “The holy Prophet meant not to inconvenience his people.”³

¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, section 1, “On prayers”, p. 113, printed in Egypt in 1314 H.

² *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, section 2, p. 153.

³ *Ibid*, 151.

17. Muslim Ibn Ḥajjāj quotes Mu'ādh having said, "During the Tabūk war, the holy Prophet left (to pray) and so did I. The Prophet performed the noon and the afternoon prayers and (later on) *maghrib* and *'ishā'* ones successively."¹

18. Mālik ibn Anas reports in *Muwatta'*: "Ibn Shihāb asked Sālim ibn 'Abdullāh: "Can the noon and the afternoon prayers be performed successively?" He answered, "Yes, no problem. Have you not observed it performed in this way on the day of 'Arafah in the 'Arafah valley?"²

Ṣāliḥ ibn 'Abdullāh meant to say that it is permissible to perform the prayers successively elsewhere, just as it is permissible to perform them on the day of 'Arafah in the 'Arafah valley.

It is necessary to mention that Muslims consider it permissible to perform the noon and afternoon prayers successively on the day of 'Arafah at the time set for the non-prayer. By the above, Salem means to say that just as it is permissible to perform the two prayers successively at 'Arafah, they can do the same at other times, too.

19. The following traditions come from Muttaqī Hindī's book, *Kanz al-'Ummāl*.

"'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar said, "The holy Prophet, peace be upon him and his descendants, performed the noon and the afternoon prayers successively while he was at home, not on a trip. "Someone asked Ibn 'Umar: 'Why did the Prophet act this way?' he answered: "So as not to

¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, section 2, p. 152, printed in Egypt.

² *Muwatta' Mālik*, 3rd ed., Beirut, p. 125, narration 180.

inconvenience his people. One may perform the prayers successively of he wishes.¹

20. Jābir reports: “The holy Prophet (a.s) performed the noon and afternoon prayers successively, the *adhān* having been chanted once and the *Iqama* two times.”² (One for each of the prayers.)

Kanz al-`Ummāl also reports the following narration:

21. Jābir reports: “The holy Prophet (a.s) was in Mecca and the sun had set. He performed *maghrib* and *ishā*’ prayers successively after he had arrived at Sarf region” nine miles from Mecca. In *Kanz al-Ummāl*, Ibn `Abbās is reported to have said: “The holy Prophet performed the noon and afternoon prayers, and *maghrib* and *ishā*’ prayers when he was in Medina and not on a trip and when it was not raining.” The transmitter of this narration says: “I asked Ibn `Abbās, “Why did the Prophet perform two prayers successively?” Ibn `Abbās replied: “Because the Prophet desired to expand the affairs of his people.”³

CONCLUSION

The clear reasons that support the Shiites’ sound understanding of the issue are summed up as follows:

¹ *Kanz al-`Ummāl*, the book of al-Ṣalāt, chapter four on Travelers’ ritual prayers, the section on successive performance, vol. 8, p. 246 (1st ed. In Aleppo, 1391 H).

² *Kanz al-`Ummāl*, the book of al-Ṣalāt, chapter four on traveler’s ritual prayer, the section on successive performance, vol. 8, p. 247, 1st Edition, Aleppo.

³ *Kanz al-`Ummāl*, the book of al-Ṣalāt, chapter four on, vol. 8.

Performing two prayers successively at one praying time is a means of making things easier.

Many reports testify the fact that it would have been difficult for Muslims if the noon and afternoon prayers or *maghrib* and *'ishā'* had not been permitted to be performed at one praying time successively. That is why the Holy Prophet allowed the successive performing of the prayers to introduce some kind of facilitation on Muslims' affairs. (See points sixteen, nineteen, and twenty-two as well.)

If the narrations mentioned before are taken to mean that the noon prayers can be deferred until the due time is about to finish- in Sunnis' belief when the shadow an object casts is as tall as the object itself- but the afternoon prayer ought to be performed on time, that is both prayers ought to be done within their specific time span, it will not only cause no ease, but will create greater difficulties. Performing the prayers one after another is meant to facilitate things for Muslims.

It is thus clear that the two prayers constituting a set may be performed within their shared time span: either at the beginning or about the end of the time range rather than to begin one about the end of the appointed time, and to perform the other on time.

Successive Performance of Prayers at Arafah: A Model

All Islamic denominations take it as permissible to perform the noon/afternoon prayers successively at Arafah;¹ There are, however, narrations supporting the permissibility of the

¹ *Al-Fiqh 'alā al-Madhāhib al-Arba'ah*, the book of al-Ṣalāt, *al-Jam' bayn al-ṣalātayn taqadduman wa ta'akhhuran*.

same procedure at other places, too. This implies that there is no difference between Arafah and other places and times. (See discussion eighteen above). Thus just as all Muslims unanimously agree on the permissibility of performing prayers successively at Arafah, it is allowed to perform the noon/afternoon prayers successively elsewhere.

PRAYERS PERFORMED ON A TRIP, ANOTHER EXAMPLE

Ḥanbaliyyah, Māliki and Shāfiʿī jurists allow sets of prayers to be performed successively when one is on a trip. The narrations mentioned above specify that in performing prayers there is no difference between the time when one is on a trip or at home. The holy Prophet (Peace be upon him and his descendants) performed his prayers successively under both circumstances. on trip and at home (See narrations mentioned in items three, eleven, thirteen, nineteen and twenty-two above.)

Based on the above points, just as it is allowed to perform one's prayers successively when one is not on a trip (as the Shiites believe in), it is allowed to do the same when one is not on a trip.

SUCCESSIVE PERFORMANCE OF PRAYERS IN TIME OF EMERGENCY: AN EXAMPLE SHOWING ONE'S CHOICE.

A large number of the narrations cited in Sunnis' anthologies of narrations testify the fact that the holy Prophet and his companions performed their prayers successively – just as the Shiites say - at one praying time in emergency situations such as the time when it was raining, or when they feared the enemy's attack, or when they were ill. This is why many jurists of various Islamic sects have issued verdicts (fatwas) on its permissibility in

some emergency circumstances.

However, the narrations mentioned above say it clearly that as far as successive performance of prayers is concerned, there is no difference between emergency and non-emergency conditions, for the holy Prophet (a.s) performed his prayers successively in circumstances when it was not raining, nor was there a fear of the enemy's attack. (See narrations three, eleven, twelve and twenty-two).

THE COMPANIONS OF THE PROPHETS' BEHAVIOR

In the traditions quoted above, we can see that many of the Prophet's companions performed their prayers successively at one praying time, as in the case of `Abdullāh ibn `Abbās who disregarded the people's objections and deferred *maghrib* prayer until it was dark and the stars had appeared in the sky. He then performed *maghrib* and *'ishā'* prayers together. In answer to the objections, people had raised, he replied: "I witnessed the holy Prophet performing his prayer in this way." His words were confirmed by Abū-Hurayrah. (See points two, seven, nine and fifteen).

In the light of these traditions, it is sure that Ibn `Abbās had performed his prayers in the same manner that the Shiites believe in: he had performed two prayers together at one praying time.

THE PROPHET'S MANNER, AN INDICATION OF PERFORMING THE PRAYERS SUCCESSIVELY

Narration twenty- one mentioned above has made it clear that when he was still in Mecca, the holy Prophet (a.s) deferred the *maghrib* prayer until he arrived at Sarf, a region nine miles from Mecca. There, he performed the *maghrib* and *'ishā'* prayers successively at one praying time.

With the slow-moving means of transportation of the past, it is natural for the Prophet to have arrived at Sarf long after *maghrib* praying time even if he had left Mecca when the sun had just sat. So, the Prophet performed both prayers at one praying time.

When taken together, the narrations from authoritative *ḥadīth* sources of the Sunnis (i.e. *ṣiḥāḥ* and *Masanīd*) prove the Shiites' sound view that it is permissible to perform the noon and afternoon prayers, or *maghrib* and *'ishā'* prayers successively at one praying time, and this can be extended to all situations and all times.

QUESTION TWENTY-EIGHT

**What are the sources for the
Shī`ite Jurisprudence?**

ANSWER:

In compliance with the Book of God and the Prophet's Sunnah, the Shiites base their understanding of the Islamic law (the Shari`ah) on the following four basic sources:

*the Book of God**the Prophet's Sunnah**consensus**reason*

The Book of God and the Prophet's Sunnah, concerning which a summary discussion will be given below, are the most basic ones.

THE BOOK OF ALLAH (THE QUR'ĀN)

Those following the Shiites school of law have taken the Book of Allah as the most unwavering and normative source of jurisprudential issues and of religious tenets. Their religious leaders, the Imams, have announced it to be the loftiest source from which to derive juridical precepts, i.e. all views and statements should be accepted only after they are matched with and verified by the content of the Qur'ān; if there is no correspondence, they should be

rejected. The sixth leader of the Shiites, Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (a.s) says, "Any statement not in conformity with the Qur'ān is baseless."¹ Imam Ṣādiq (a.s) also quotes the Noble Prophet as having said, "O people, if I am quoted as having said something that agrees with the Book of Allah, it is my words; if it contradicts the Book of Allah, then I have not said it."²

These two traditions clearly show that the Book of Allah is, according to the Shī'ite Imams, the firmest source to derive religious precepts from.

THE PROPHET'S SUNNAH

The Prophet's Sunnah, i.e. the words, the deeds and whatever the Messenger of God (a.s) has approved of, is the second clearest fountainhead of the Shī'ite jurisprudence. The Imams from the household of the Prophet (a.s) are believed to be the carriers of his Sunnah and the treasure - house of his knowledge. The words of the Prophet are also accepted even if they are handed down through other reliable sources. The following discussions are deemed necessary here:

Why Should the Prophet's Sunnah be Resorted to?

The Imams of the Shiites have advised their followers not only to study the Qur'ān but also to follow the Prophet's Sunnah, thus praising both the Book of God and the Prophet's Sunnah. Imam Ṣādiq (a.s) says, "Accept a *ḥadīth*

¹ *Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, chapter: Superiority of Knowledge; subdivision: *al-Akhḍ bi'l-Sunnah wa Shawāhid al-Kitāb*, *ḥadīth* 3.

² *Ibid*, *ḥadīth* 5.

only after you have found evidence for it in the Book of Allah or in the statements made by the Messenger of God; otherwise, the *ḥadīth* is good only for the person who has narrated it.”¹ Imam Baqir (a.s) maintains that observing the Prophet’s Sunnah is obligatory for the jurisprudent: “The true jurisprudent is one who leads an austere life, is desirous of the Hereafter and resorts to the Prophet’s Sunnah.”² The Imams of the Shiites esteem the Qur’ān and the Prophet’s Sunnah so highly that any opposition to it is considered a cause of disbelief. Imam Ṣādiq, (a.s) has said,” One who opposes the Book of Allah and the Prophet’s Sunnah is certainly a disbeliever.”³

This lucid statement shows that more than any other Islamic sect, it is the Shiism that values the Prophet’s Sunnah, and this proves how baseless are the words of those who accuse the Shiites of being alienated from the Prophet’s Sunnah.

Why is it necessary to stick to the traditions of Ahl al-Bayt?

To clarify the Shiites’ view in regard to the traditions of the household of the Prophet, Ahl al-Bayt (a.s) it is necessary first to deal with the following two points: (a) the nature of the words of the infallible Imams, (b) the reasons for the authenticity of Ahl al- Bay and the necessity to follow them.

¹ *Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, chapter: Superiority of Knowledge, subdivision: *al-Akhd bi’l-Sunnah wa Shawāhid al-Kitāb*, *ḥadīth* 2.

² Ibid, *ḥadīth* 8.

³ Ibid *ḥadīth* 6.

NATURE OF THE WORDS OF THE PROPHET'S ITRAH

The Shiites maintain that only God has the right to codify rules for mankind, and it is only He Who propagates the Divine Law through His Messenger, who is merely an intermediary between God and mankind in respect to the Revelation. Thus, the Shiites' acceptance of the traditions of the household of the Prophet as one of the sources of jurisprudence does not imply that these *ḥadīths* maintain an authenticity independent of the Prophet's Sunnah; they are considered authentic only because they represent the Messenger of God's Sunnah. This means that the infallible Imams of the Shiites have nothing of their own to convey. What they say is nothing but the Prophet's Sunnah. Below are cited a few of the *ḥadīths* from the Prophet's itrah to clarify the matter.

1) In answer to a question someone had asked, Imam Ṣādiq (a.s) said, "Any answer I gave you has come from God's Messenger (a.s); we do not utter things of our own will."¹ On another occasion, the same Imam said, "My words are those of my father's, and what my father has said has come from my grandfather; the words of my grandfathers are those of al-Ḥusayn, and his words and the latter's words are those of al-Ḥasan; Al-Ḥasan's words are those of the Commander of the Faithful, and what the Commander of the Faithful has said is what the Messenger of Allah (a.s) has said, and the words of the Messenger of God are the words of God Himself, may He be exalted."²

¹ *Jāmi' Aḥādīth al-Shī'ah*, vol. 1, p. 129.

² *Ibid*, p. 127.

2) Imam Baqir, (a.s) tells Jābir the following: “My father quoted traditions from the Messenger of God and he from Gabriel, and Gabriel from the Exalted God; this is the chain of the narrations I have narrated.”¹

Thus, the nature of the statements the Imams of the Shiites have made is clearly understood to be that of the Prophet's Sunnah.

REASONS FOR THE AUTHENTICITY OF AHL AL-BAYT AND THE NECESSITY TO FOLLOW THEM

Both Shī'ite and Sunni traditionists maintain that the Messenger of God left two precious things behind invited all Muslims to follow them and made Muslims prosperity dependent upon following these two: The Book of Allah and his household, Ahl al-Bayt. Below are a few sample traditions in this respect:

a) In his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Tirmidhī has narrated the following *ḥadīth* from Jābir ibn `Abdullāh Anṣārī, on the authority of the Messenger of God: “O people, I leave two things among you: The Book of Allah and my *itrah*, my household; if you stick to them, you shall never be misguided.”²

b) Tirmidhī has also narrated the following *ḥadīth* in the same book: “The Messenger of Allah (a.s) said ‘ I leave behind two things among you; if you stick to them, you will never be misguided after me; one of them is greater than the other: One of them is The Book of Allah, which is a

¹ Ibid, p.128.

² *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Tirmidhī*, the book of *al-Manāqib*, chapter: *Manāqib Ahl Bayt al-Nabī*, vol. 5 pp 662 and 3786, printed in Beirut.

rope extended from the heaven to the earth, and the other one is my *itrah*, my household; these two will never separate until they return to me by the pond (of Kawthar). So heed how you will deal with them.”¹

c) In his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Muslim ibn Ḥajjāj quotes the Holy Prophet (a.s) as having said: “O people! I am a human being who is about to be summoned by the divine angel and who is to respond to this call. I am leaving behind two precious things (*thaqalayn*) among you: The first is the Book of Allah, which contains guidance and light. So stick to the Book of Allah.” Then he persuaded people to follow it. Then he added, “The second is my household. I remind you of Allah about Ahl al-Bayt (my household); again I remind you of Allah about Ahl al-Bayt (my household); and again I remind you of Allah about Ahl al-Bayt (my household).”²

d) A group of traditionists have quoted the blessed Prophet as having said, “I am leaving behind among you two precious things: the Book of Allah and Ahl al-Bayt (my household); the two will never separate until they return to me by the pond (of Kawthar).”³

Relevant *ḥadīths* are too many to be mentioned here, for only the chain of the transmitters of the *ḥadīth* has

¹ Ibid, p. 66; *ḥadīth* 3788.

² *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, part 7, chapter: On the Excellence of ‘Alī Ibn Abī-Ṭālib, pp. 122, 123, printed in Egypt.

³ *Al-Ḥākim’s al-Mustadrak ‘alā al-Ṣaḥīḥayn*, part 3, p. 148; *al-Ṣawā’iq al-Muḥriqah*, book 11, chapter 1, p. 149. See also: *Musnad Aḥmad*, part 5 pp. 182 and 189; *Kanz al-‘Ummāl*, part one: *al-I’tisām bil-Kitāb wa’l-Sunnah*, p. 44.

occupied a six-volume book, *`Abaqāt al-Anwār*, compiled by the eminent scholar, Sayyid Mir Ḥāmid Ḥusayn.

The *ḥadīths* mentioned above clearly show that requisite for one's faith in Islam are sticking to the Ahl al-Bayt of the Prophet (a.s) and following them as well as the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Blessed Prophet, and that going astray will be the result of not following Ahl al-Bayt. Now, the question that arises is: "Who are the *itrah* of the Prophet whose following the Blessed Prophet has made obligatory on us?" Below is an explanation of the term *itrah* as is understood from the *ḥadīths*.

WHO ARE *ITRAH* OF THE PROPHET (A.S)?

The *ḥadīths* properly show that the Blessed Prophet (a.s) by clearly saying that "The Qur'ān and *itrah* will never separate" juxtaposed his *itrah*, his household, with the book of God, called on all Muslims to obey his *itrah* and declared them as the authorities after his departure. The household of the Prophet (a.s) based upon the Prophet's statement are introduced as the peers of the Qur'ān, i.e. infallible, and well versed in pure Islamic knowledge; were it otherwise, they would separate from the Qur'ān; this, however, is impossible since the Prophet announced: "The Qur'ān and the *itrah* will never separate until they return to me by the pond of Kawthar." It is thus proved a necessity to recognize Ahl al-Bayt and, their characteristics – which correspond to the Shī'ite Imams.

Below is a presentation of our proofs based on the traditions the great Islamic traditionists have narrated:

1. Having narrated *the ḥadīth of thaqalayn*, Muslim Ibn Ḥajjāj says, "Yazīd Ibn Ḥayyān asked Zayd Ibn Arqam,

“Who are Ahl al-Bayt of the Blessed Prophet (a.s)? Are they the Prophet’s wives?” Zayd Ibn Arqam replied, “No (such is not the case); by God, a wife lives with her husband only for some time, and then the husband divorces her; then she will return to her parents and relatives. Ahl al-Bayt of the Blessed Prophet (a.s) are of the same descent as he himself, they are his close relatives, who are forbidden to receive alms after (the demise of) the Prophet.”¹

This tradition clearly testifies the fact that “the Prophet’s itrah,” the following of whom has, like the Qur’ān, been made a duty, are not the Prophet’s wives, but they are the people who in addition to coming from the same stock and besides being spiritually related to him, are so particularly merited as to be called the Muslims’ authorities, the same as the Book of Allah.

2. The Noble Prophet not only described the “attributes” of the Ahl al-Bayt, but also specified their “number” as being twelve. Muslim ibn Ḥajjāj quotes Jābir ibn Samarah as having said, “I heard the Prophet (a.s) say, ‘Islam will always be dignified under twelve successors. ‘Then he said something I hardly heard. I asked my father ‘What did the Prophet say?’ He answered, ‘The Prophet said that they would all come from the Quraysh.’”²

Muslim Ibn Ḥajjāj also quotes the Prophet (a.s) as having said, “So long as these twelve men rule, the people’s affairs

¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, part 7, book: Superiority of `Alī Ibn Abī-Ṭālib, p. 123, printed in Egypt.

² *Ibid.* vol. 6, p. 3.

will run appropriately.”¹ The above two narrations are lucid proof to the Shiites’ claim that “The twelve Imams of the Shiites are the people’s true leaders after the Prophet (a.s).” In Islam, there are no other immediate vicegerents of the Prophet, twelve in number, who brought honor and glory to Islam except the twelve Imams from the *itrah* of the Prophet. If we exclude the four Rashidūn Caliphs, other caliphs from the Umayyad, and the ‘Abbāsids brought Islam shame and blemishes by their deeds, to which history testifies.

Thus, the “Ahl al-Bayt” that the holy Prophet has introduced to the totality of Muslims throughout the world are the twelve leaders from his household, who are protectors of the Prophet’s Sunnah and bearers of his knowledge.

3. The Commander of the Faithful, ‘Alī (a.s), also maintains that the Imams of the Muslims come from Banī-Hāshim clan; this is another clear proof for the Shiites’ claim that they know who Ahl al-Bayt really are. ‘Alī (a.s) says: “The Imams stem from Banī-Hāshim clan; no one else is worthy (of ruling) over Muslims. The others’ rule is baseless.”²

¹ Ibid.

² *Ṣubḥī al-Ṣāliḥ’s Nahj al-Balāghah*, sermon 144.

CONCLUSION:

A survey of the traditions cited above indicate that:

- 1) It is a religious duty to stick to and follow the Ahl al-Bayt of the Prophet, (a.s) parallel to obeying the Qur'ān.
- 2) The Ahl al-Bayt of the Messenger of Allah, introduced as the “peers of the Qur'ān”, have the following characteristics:
 - a) They are all from the Quraysh tribe and Banī-Hāshim clan
 - b) They are so closely related to the Messenger of Allah that it is forbidden to pay them alms (*ṣadaqah*).
 - c) They are all infallible; otherwise, they would be separated from the Qur'ān. But the Holy Prophet has said, “They will never separate from the Qur'ān until they come to me by the pond of Kawthar.”
 - d) They are twelve in number, and one after another succeed the Messenger of God as *walis* and leaders of Muslims.
 - e) These twelve vicegerents of the Prophet (a.s) bring increasing glory and honor to Islam.

The descriptions given in the traditions make it crystal clear that the Ahl al-Bayt that the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him and his descendants, had mind, and whose obedience he charged Muslims with are none but the twelve Imams from the household of the Holy Prophet, the ones the Shiites take pride in following and whose instructions the Shiites stick to in recognizing their juridical code of belief.

QUESTION TWENTY-NINE

Why do you pay visits to Abū-Tālib's grave, and did he die a Muslim?

ANSWER:

Abū-Talib, the son of `Abd al-Muṭṭalib, and the distinguished father of the Commander of the faithful, `Alī (a.s), and the honorable uncle of holy Prophet (a.s), is in the Shiites' view a man who had firm belief in the mission of the Messenger of God. He was a help and a support to the Prophet in all circumstances of peril Islam faced in its early days of advent.

THE FAMILY:

Abū-Talib was born to a family headed by `Abd al-Muṭṭalib – grandfather of the Prophet (a.s) and the hero amongst the adherents to the faith of Ibrāhīm, the True friend of God.

A little investigation into the history of the Arabian Peninsula will make it clear that `Abd al-Muṭṭalib never renounced the worshipping of God, nor did he falter in his supporting the monotheistic religion.

Having gathered a large troop, all elephant riders, Abraha was on his way to Mecca to destroy Ka`bah (The House of God). He took possession of some of `Abd al-Muṭṭalib's

camels and was astonished when `Abd al-Muṭṭalib came to demand naught but his camels. In response to the question as to why `Abd al-Muṭṭalib only wanted his camels back but did not request Abrahah to give up attacking the Ka`bah, `Abd al-Muṭṭalib, filled with belief and trust in God, answered, "I am the master of the camels, and the House has a master to care for it."¹ He then set out for the Ka`bah, where he took the circular doorknocker in his hand and beseechingly said:

*O Lord, I implore none but thee;
O Lord, stop, then, thy enemies.
Surely, the enemies of the House
Are thy enemies. Stop them
From destroying the House.*²

These and similar eloquent statements are clear evidence for `Abd al-Muṭṭalib's firm belief in God and worshipping Him. Ya`qūbī, the historian, has the following words to say concerning `Abd al-Muṭṭalib: "He denounced worshipping the idols, and worshipped the one God."³

Now, let us see what this monotheist father says concerning his son, Abū-Talib.

ABŪ-TALIB FROM THE VIEW POINT OF `ABD AL-MUṬṬALIB

History shows that some clairvoyants had informed `Abd al-Muṭṭalib of the bright future awaiting his grandson, the holy Prophet, and of his divine mission.

¹ *Al-Kāmil fī l-Tārīkh* by Ibn al-Athīr, vol. 1, p. 261, printed in Egypt, 1348 A.H.

² Ibid.

³ *Tārīkh al-Ya`qūbī*, vol. 2, p. 7, printed in Egypt.

After Sayf ibn Dhī-Yazan was appointed the governor of Abyssinia, `Abd al-Muṭṭalib, heading an expedition, went to him and delivered a talk (customary in such circumstances). When he finished his eloquent speech, the ruler gave him the glad tidings that an honorable Prophet had come into existence in `Abd al-Muṭṭalib's House and said, "His name is Muḥammad (a.s); his father and mother will die, and his grandfather and his paternal uncle will be patronizing him respectively."¹ He, Muḥammad, worships the one God, expels Satan, and smothers all the fires (of idolatry) and destroys the idols. His words are the separators of truth from falsehood; he decrees in justice, enjoins to doing good and he himself does good. He prohibits people from evil, and nullifies it. No doubt you, `Abd al-Muṭṭalib, are his grandfather.²

Having heard this life-inspiring news, `Abd al-Muṭṭalib, to thank God, fell in prostration and then narrated the following episode: "I had a son, a very dear one, for whom I chose a stately lady to be his wife, i.e. Āminah, the daughter of Wahab ibn `Abd-Manāf. She gave birth to a son, whom I named Muḥammad. His parents soon died. My brother Abū-Talib and I took charge of his training."³

It is inferred from the above question that `Abd al-Muṭṭalib, having known of the bright future that awaited the orphan, decided that his dearest son, Abū-Talib, should be

¹ *Al-Sirah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, vol. 1, pp. 136-7, Egypt; also Beirut ed. p. 114-115.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid. vol. 1, p. 137, Egypt ed.

Muḥammad's guardian; thus others were deprived of such felicity and honor.

It is thus evident that Abū-Talib was in the eyes of his faithful and monotheist father, a person of such a deep faith and piety that he was considered the only one worthy of being charged with the responsibility of patronizing the holy Prophet.¹

EVIDENCE IN SUPPORT OF ABŪ-ṬĀLIB'S FAITH

1) *His Poems:*

A survey of the eloquent odes that Muslim scholars have quoted from Abū-Talib reveals his true faith. The following extracts are just a few examples from among the many:

*a. The noble should know that verily Muḥammad is
a Prophet
Like Moses and Jesus, the son of Mary.
He was given the same light they were given
They all guide and protect as God has ordered them
to.*²

*b. Do you know that we
Found Muḥammad to be Prophet
Like Moses mentioned in the earlier books?
And surely in people's hearts is his love;
One whom God has chosen should never be treated
unjustly.*³

¹ See *Al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, vol. 1, p. 134, Egypt; *Sīrat Ibn Husham*, Beirut ed. Vol. 1, p. 189; Abū-Ṭālib, the Believer of Quraysh, p. 109; *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol. 1, p. 117, Beirut ed.

² *al-Ḥujjah*, p. 57; similarly quoted in al-Ḥākim's *al-Mustadrak*, vol. 2, p. 623, Beirut ed.

³ *Tārīkh Ibn Kathīr*, vol. 1, p. 41; *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah* by Ibn

*c. Surely God honored His Prophet, Muḥammad
The best one created among people is Aḥmad,
A name derived from His own to glorify him;
Then the Owner of the Throne is Maḥmūd,
And this, Muḥammad.¹*

*d. O Prophet, I swear by God:
Never will your enemies get you,
Not before I am buried.
Then, fear not, and do your duty
What thou hast been inspired to do,
And given the new goods,
And bring light to our eyes.
You called me and I know that you wish me well.
You called and I know you have been truthful
I have surely learnt that Muḥammad's religion is
the best
Of religions the world over.²*

*e. O thou who art Allah's witness on me,
Bear witness that I am an adherent
Of the religion of the Prophet, the most praised one.
Whoever goes astray, (I will not)
I am the guided (one)³*

Abī'l-Ḥadīd, vol. 2, p. 72, second ed.

¹ *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah* by Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd, vol. 14, p. 78, second ed. Beirut; *Tārīkh Ibn 'Asākir*, vol. 1m p. 276; *Tārīkh Ibn Kathīr*, vol. 1, p. 266; *Tārīkh al-Khamīs*, vol. 1, p. 254.

² *Khuzānat al-Adab* by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, vol. 1, p. 261; *Tārīkh Ibn Kathīr*, vol. 3, p. 42; *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah* by Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd, vol. 14, p. 55, second ed; *Faṭḥ al-Bārī*, vol. 7, pp 153-157; *al-Iṣābah*, vol. 4, p. 116, Egypt, 1358 A.H.; *Dīwān Abī-Ṭālib*, p. 12.

³ *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah* by Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd, vol., 14, p. 78, second ed; *Dīwān Abī-Ṭālib*, p. 75;

In the last days of his fruitful life, Abū-Talib advised the noblemen of the Quraysh to support the Prophet in full. The following verses illustrate this point:

*f. I advise four people:
My son `Alī; the Shaykh of the tribe: `Abbās;
Ḥamzah, the real supporter, the lion-hearted,
And Ja`far
To help the Prophet.
May my mother and children be sacrificed for you,
Be like shields in your guarding Aḥmad,
Guarding him against his foes.*¹

Such a wealth of eloquent words, clearly manifestations of Abū-Ṭālib's strong belief in God and his faith in the mission of the holy Prophet (a.s) leads anyone of fair judgment and of unprejudiced mind to discern the Shiites' point of view in regard to Abū-Ṭālib's true faith. He will, then, regret the baseless, politically motivated accusations some writers have made against Abū-Talib, the Faithful of the Quraysh, the Prophet's uncle and Islam's great guard in times of peril.

Abū-Ṭālib's Behavior towards the Prophet: a Sign of His Faith

Famous Muslim historians have narrated a multitude of events clearly indicating Abū-Ṭālib's singularly sacrifice in defending the holy Prophet, all showing his unwavering belief.

a. To support Islam and guard the holy Prophet (a.s), Abū-

¹ *Mutashābihāt al-Qur'ān* by Ibn Shahr'Āshūb al-Māzandarānī: An exegesis of Chapter al-Ḥajj, verse: "And surely Allah will help him who helps His cause." 22:40.

Talib chose to remain with the Prophet at “Shi`b Abū-Talib” rather than heading the Quraysh. There, he remained and endured all the difficulties until the economic sanction came to an end.¹

b. In addition, Abū-Talib has bid his dear son, `Alī, to support the Messenger of God in full, and to accompany him in all the difficulties Islam faced in its early days.

c. In his commentary on Nahj al-Balāghah, Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd quotes the following words Abū-Ṭālib had told his son, `Alī (a.s): “The Messenger of God invites you to what is good, so follow him.”²

All these valuable services Abū-Ṭālib has rendered the holy Prophet (a.s), as well as the sincere sacrifices he had made in safeguarding the holy cause of Islam are the clearest proofs to his faith. Accordingly Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd, the great Muslim scholar writes the following poem depicting the vital role Abū-Talib played in defending the holy Prophet and his religion:

*Had it not been for Abū-Talib and his son,
Islam would've never gotten into shape.
His home in Mecca, a shelter to the Prophet;
His son in Yathrib, drowned in the whirlpool of
death*

¹ *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, vol. 1, p. 134; (b) *Tārīkh al-Khamīs*, vol. 1, p. 253-254, Beirut ed; *Sīrat Ibn Hushām*, vol. 1, p., 189, Beirut; *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah* by Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd, vol. 14, p. 52, second ed.; *Tārīkh al-Ya`qūbī*, vol. 2, p. 6, printed in Najaf. *Al-Iṣābah*, vol. 4, p. 115, 7th ed.; *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol. 1, p. 119, Beirut ed. 1380 A.H.

² *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah* by Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd, vol. 14, p. 53, second ed.

*Never can Abū-Ṭālib's glory be marred,
Neither by idle talkers, nor by those knowing
But pretending ignorance.¹*

3. Abū-Ṭālib's Last Testament: a Clear Proof to His Faith

The famous historians of the world of Islam: Ḥalabī the Shāfi'ī in his *Sīrah*, and Muḥammad Diyārbakrī, in his *Tārīkh al-Khamīs*, have quoted Abū-Ṭālib's final words, given below, in which he had called his tribe to help the Messenger of God:

*'O, you the Qurayshites, be friends and followers
of the Prophet,
And follow his party (Islam). I swear by God that he
who
follows his path of light will prosper.
Were I to stay alive longer, I would surely fan away
His troubles. "
These he said and passed away.²*

4. The Prophet's Admiration: Evidence to Abū-Ṭālib's Faith

The Messenger of God (a.s) admired Abū-Talib in various circumstances, two of which will be mentioned below:

a) A number of historians have quoted the holy prophet as having told 'Aqīl, Abū-Ṭālib's son, the following: "I like you for two reasons: firstly, because you are a relative of mine; secondly, because I know that my paternal uncle, Abū-Talib loved you."³

¹ Ibid.

² *Tārīkh al-Khamīs*, vol. 1, pp. 300 and 301; Beirut ed. *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, vol. 1, p. 391, printed in Egypt.

³ *Tārīkh al-Khamīs*, vol. 1, p. 163, Beirut ed.; *al-Istī'āb*, vol. 2, p. 509

b) In his *Sīrah*, Ḥalabī quotes the Messenger of God admiring his uncle, Abū-Talib in the following manner: “The Quraysh disbelievers could do me no harm so long as Abū-Talib was alive.”¹ The holy Prophet’s statements are no doubt lucid proof of Abū-Ṭālib’s belief, for the Qur’ān says that the Prophet loves believers only: “*Muḥammad is the Apostle of Allah, and those with him are firm of heart against the unbelievers, compassionate among themselves.*” 48:29. Also, “*You shall not find a people who believe in Allah and the hereafter befriending those who act in opposition to Allah and his Apostle even though they were their (own) fathers, or their sons, or their brothers, or their kinsfolk; They are those into whose hearts He has impressed faith.*” 58:22²

The Qur’ānic verses and the Prophet’s attachment to and his admiration of Abū-Talib displayed in various circumstances leave no room for anyone to hesitate that Abū-Talib had an unwavering belief in the Messenger of God.

5. The Prophet’s Companions’ Testimony

The following are some of the testimonies the companions of the holy Prophet (a.s) have made concerning Abū-Ṭālib’s genuine faith:

a. An ill-informed person’s unfair accusations once made against Abū-Talib in the presence of the Commander of the faithful, ‘Alī (a.s) made the latter angry; he said “Silence.

¹ *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, vol. 1, p. 291, Egypt ed.

² Further Qur’ānic verses conveying the same point are: *al-Mumtaḥanah* 1, *Barā’ah*, 23, and *al-Mā’idah* 54-81.

May God break your mouth! I swear by Him who raised Muḥammad to Prophethood with truth that if my father Abū-Ṭalib desires to intercede for any sinner on the day of resurrection, God will grant him the permission to do so.”¹

Elsewhere `Alī (a.s) says “I swear by God that Abū-Ṭalib, `Abd-Manāf, the son of `Abd al-Muṭṭalib, was a believing Muslim who hid his faith from the Quraysh unbelievers lest they might harbor a grudge against Banī-Hāshim.”²

The above statements made by `Alī (a.s) not only confirm Abū-Ṭalib’s strong faith, but raise him to the status of a saint who can, with God’s permission, intercede.

b. In this respect Abū-Dharr says, “By Allah, the One, Abū-Ṭalib, may God be pleased with him, did not die before he had surrendered to Islam.”³

c. Both `Abbās, the son of `Abd al-Muṭṭalib, and Abū-Bark, the son of Abū-Quḥāfah, are quoted by different narrators as having said, “Surely, Abū-Ṭalib did not die before he said, “There is no God except Allah, Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah.”⁴

6. Abū-Ṭalib from the Point of View of the Prophet’s Household

The Imams from the household of the Prophet have all emphasized Abū-Ṭalib’s unwavering faith, and have, in

¹ *Al-Ḥujjah*, p. 24.

² *Al-Ḥujjah*, p. 24.

³ *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah* by Ibn Abī’l-Ḥadīd, p. 14, p. 71, 2nd ed.

⁴ *Al-Ghadir*, vol. 7, p. 398, 3rd ed., Beirut, 1389 A.H., on the authority of Wakī’s Exegesis of the Qur’ān.

different circumstances exemplified below, defended this devoted advocate of the Prophet.

a. Imam Baqir (a.s) said, "Should Abū-Ṭālib's faith be placed on one scale pan and the belief of these people on the other, Abū-Ṭālib's faith will surpass (in weight)." ¹

b. Imam Ṣādiq (a.s) said, "The Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, *Aṣḥāb al-Kahf*, did conceal their belief and pretended disbelief instead. So God gave them a twofold reward; Abū-Talib acted in the same manner concealing his faith and pretending to be a polytheist. Therefore, God gave him a twofold reward in the same way." ²

The above evidence clearly manifests, as the sunlight does, that Abū-Talib enjoyed the following privileges:

- 1) He had a strong belief in God and in the mission of the holy Prophet.
- 2) He was sincere and devoted both to the Prophet and Islam.
- 3) The Prophet expressed his unique love for him.
- 4) He has been given the rank of an intercessor.

It is thus clear that the unfair accusations levied against Abū-Talib are baseless. Two realities are thus made known:

a) Abū-Ṭālib's faith has been acknowledge by the holy Prophet (a.s), the Commander of the faithful and the Imams from the household of the Prophet.

¹ *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah* by Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd, vol. 14, p. 68, 2nd ed, Beirut; *Al-Ḥujjah*, p. 18.

² Ibid. p. 70; *Al-Ḥujjah*, pp. 17 and 115.

b) The unfair and baseless accusations levied against him were politically oriented and were initiated at the instigation of some Umayyad and `Abbāsīd kings, who were constantly in conflict with the Household of the Prophet and Abū-Ṭālib's offspring.

It is now appropriate to go through the apparently clearest pretext used in terrorizing the personality of Abū-Ṭālib's, the time-honored advocate of the Prophet and to put forward to the reader the Quranic verses, the words of the Prophet, the intuition of the common sense and reason to judge for himself how groundless the Zohzah narration is.

On the authority of such narrators of Hadith as: Sufyān Ibn Sa'īd Thawrī, `Abd al-Malik Ibn `Umayr, `Abd al-`Azīz Ibn Muḥammad Dārawardī and Layth Ibn Sa'd, Muslim and Bukhārī have ascribed the following words to the holy Prophet (a.s):

- a. "I found him (Abū-Ṭālib) in a mountain of fire; then I carried him to Zohzah (the water cistern)."
- b. "On the Day of Judgment, he may benefit from my intercession; he will, then, be put in a cistern of fire up to his ankles while his brain will be boiling."¹

Although the narrations and the evidence cited previously do emphasize Abū-Ṭālib's belief and reject the baseless Zohzah narration, the following two points: unauthenticity of the chain of narrators of the *ḥadīth*, as well as the conflict between this narration, the Qur'ān and the Prophet's Sunnah will be dealt with below.

¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 5, the book of *al-Manāqib*, chapter: the story of Abī-Ṭālib, p. 52, Egypt; also the same source, vol. 8, book: *al-Adab*, chapter: the Polytheists' nickname, p. 46.

Unauthenticity of the Chain of Narrators of Zohzah Narration

Those who have narrated Zohzah *ḥadīth* are Sufyān ibn Sa'īd Thawri, 'Abd al-Malik Ibn 'Umayr, 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Muḥammad Dārawardī and Layth Ibn Sa'd, whose capabilities we will now go through, basing our investigation on the words and comments of Sunni scholars skilled in the science of the narrators, *'ilm al-rijāl*.

Sufyān ibn Sa'īd Thawri

Abū-'Abdullāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn 'Uthmān Dhahabī, the famous scholar in *'ilm al-rijāl*, has the following to say concerning Sa'īd Thawri: "He used to quote weak narrations."¹ This comment is a clear proof to his deceitfulness, and his narrating from the weak or the unknown narrators, thus invalidating his words.

'Abd al-Malik Ibn 'Umayr

Dhahabī introduces him this way, "He lived long and as a result had a weak memory." Abū-Ḥātam says, "He ('Umayr) was unable to memorize *ḥadīths*, because his memory had weakened. Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal also says, "'Umayr was weak and confused (meaning that he used to cite baseless and forged *ḥadīths*). Ibn Mu'īn says, "The traditions he quotes are incorrect or confused." Ibn Kha'rash says, "Shu'bah (another scholar) was displeased with him." Kawsaj quotes Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal as having said, "He is weak, indeed."²

¹ Al-Dhahabī's *Mizān al-I'tidāl*, vol. 2, p. 169; Beirut, 1382 A.H.

² *Mizān al-I'tidāl*;, vol. 2, p. 660, Beirut Ed.

These statements disclose `Abd al-Malik ibn `Umayr's characteristics as follows:

1. He had a weak memory and was a forgetful person.
2. He was weak (a term used in *`ilm al-rijāl*; that is, one cannot trust the traditions (*ḥadīths*) he narrates.
- 3) There are a lot of errors in what he narrates.
4. He blends the correct and incorrect narrations.

Each one of the above points will suffice to repudiate the *ḥadīths* `Umayr narrates.

`Abd al-`Azīz Ibn Muḥammad Dārawardī

The Sunni experts in traditions have all considered him a neglectful person whose *ḥadīths* cannot be relied on.

- a) Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal says, "In quoting *ḥadīths* by heart, he (`Umayr) is used to saying groundless and unrelated things."¹
- b. Abū-Ḥātam says, "What he says can not be taken as proof."²
- c. Abū-Zara`ah, too, considers him a person of "ill memory."³

Layth Ibn Sa`d

A survey of the Sunni books on *`ilm al-rijāl* shows that all the narrators of the *ḥadīth* named Layth were unknown or weak, whose *ḥadīths* cannot be trusted. Layth Ibn Sa`d was

¹ *Mizān al-ʿItidāl*, vol. 2, p. 634, Beirut; 1st print.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid. p. 634.

one of such weak and careless narrators of *ḥadīths*.¹

Yaḥyā ibn Mu'in says, "He was careless in treating those from whom he quoted and of the *ḥadīths* he heard."²

Nabaṭī, too, considers him among those who are weak (in relating *ḥadīth*) and has recorded his name among such people in his book "*Al-Tadhil 'Alā al-Kāmil*."³

Taking the above into consideration, it is thus clear that the original narrators of Zohzah *ḥadīth* are themselves totally weak, so their *ḥadīths* cannot be trusted.

The Text of Zohzah Hadith is Incompatible with Book and Sunnah

This tradition, ascribed to the holy Prophet, says that the Prophet saved Abū-Talib from a mountain of fire and took him to a cistern, thus minimizing his chastisement. It also says that the Prophet desired to intercede for him on the Day of Judgment, whereas a decrease in punishment and the provision of intercession, as accepted by the Qur'ān and the Prophet's Sunnah are only for the believers and the Muslims. Had the matter been as claimed in the *ḥadīth*, it would mean that Abū-Talib was not a believer, so he could not have been included among those who might enjoy a decrease in punishment or benefit from the Prophet's intercession.

It thus becomes evident that Zohzah narration, and the words of those who called Abū-Talib a disbeliever are baseless.

¹ *Mizān al-I'tidāl*, vol. 3, p. 420 – 423, 1st ed. Beirut.

² Ibid. p. 423.

³ *Shaykh al-Abtuḥ*, p. 75; *Mizān al-I'tidāl*, vol. 3, p. 423.

Let's now review the issue in the light of the Qur'ān and the Prophet (a.s)'s Sunnah.

The Quran:

“And (as for) those who disbelieve, for them is the fire of hell; it shall not be finished with them entirely so that they should die, nor shall the chastisement thereof be lightened to them; even thus do We retribute every ungrateful one.”

35:36

The Prophet's Sunnah

The Prophet's Sunnah repudiates disbelievers to be among those who benefit from the Prophet's intercession. Abū-Dharr Ghifārī quotes the holy Messenger of God (a.s) as having said, “I have been given permission to intercede for those who do not disbelieve in Allah.”

The text of Zohzah *ḥadīth* and the words of those who consider Abū-Talib faithless are in contradiction with the Book of God and the Prophetic Sunnah.

CONCLUSION

Taking the above into consideration, it becomes evident that the text of Zohzah narration is worthless and cannot be taken as a basis to build arguments on. The strongest fortress that had been taken as sanctuary by those who desired to mar Abū-Ṭālib's faith thus falls down and the bright face of the Quraysh man of faith and the time-honored help to the Prophet (a.s) continues shedding light.

QUESTION THIRTY

**Do the Shiites believe that Angel
Gabriel acted treacherously in
Fulfilling his mission, delivering the
Divine Message to the Prophet
instead of delivering it to `Alī ibn
Abī-Ṭālib?**

ANSWER

Before proving that this accusation levied on the Shiites by some ignorant or malicious people is baseless, we had better search for the sources which it has sprung from.

THE ORIGIN OF THE ACCUSATION

From certain Qur'ānic verses and the pertinent traditions it is clearly understood that the Jews held that Gabriel had acted treacherously, for God had ordered him to deliver the Divine Message to the family of Israel, but contrary to God's command, he had delivered it to the family of Ismā'il. So they took Gabriel a foe¹ and proclaimed, "The trustworthy Gabriel acted treacherously." To prove how baseless their statement is, the Qur'ān criticizes them and calls Gabriel "The Trustworthy Spirit": "*The trustworthy Spirit brought it (the Qur'ān) down upon your heart that*

¹ *Tafsīr al-Fakhr al-Rāzi*, vol. 1, pp. 436-7, printed in Egypt, 1308 A.H.

you might be of the warners.” 26:194. Also, “*Say: Whoever is the enemy of Jibrīl – for surely he revealed it to your heart by Allah’s command.*” 2:97.

A survey of the above verses and the pertinent interpretations indicates that, for some reasons, the Jews considered Gabriel an enemy and called him “the Angel of Chastisement”, accusing him of acting treacherously in delivering the Divine Message.

Thus, the slogan “the Trustworthy Gabriel acted treacherously” has its origin in superstitions of the Jews chewed at by some ignorant writers who cherish long-standing animosity against Shiites and thus unjustly accusing Shiites of holding such a belief.

PROPHETHOOD AS VIEWED BY SHIITES

Following the Book, the Prophetic Sunnah and the unambiguous traditions of the household of the Prophet, Shiites recognize Muḥammad ibn `Abdullāh, peace be upon him and his household, not only as the rightful Prophet who has been raised to Prophethood upon God’s command, but also as the Seal of the Prophets and the highest of God’s ambassadors in rank, as evidenced by `Alī ibn Abī-Ṭālib, (a.s), the great Imam of the Shiites: “I witness that there is no god except Allah, the One, Who has no partner, and that Muḥammad is His servant and messenger, the Seal of the Prophets, and His proof to the two worlds.”¹

¹ *Nahj al-Sa`ādah*, vol. 1, p. 188, Beirut ed.; *Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, vol. 8, p. 67, 2nd ed. Tehran, 1389 A.H.

Imam Ṣādiq (a.s) also says, “Allah, the Glorified, raised only five prophets from among the Arabs: Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Ismā‘īl, Shu‘ayb and Muḥammad, the Seal of the Prophets (a.s).¹ This tradition clearly disproves the baseless accusation levied on the Shiites, and confirms that only Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdullāh (a.s) is the final Messenger of God.²

All over the world the Shiites thus believe that angel Gabriel has acted faithfully in delivering the divine mission, that Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdullāh (a.s) is the rightful Prophet, and the Final Messenger of Allah, and that ‘Alī ibn Abī-Ṭālib (a.s), is the Prophet’s administrator, his legatee.

The following narration, known as *ḥadīth al-manzilah*” is recognized by both Shiites and Sunnis in which the holy Prophet (a.s), having announced himself as the last Prophet introduces ‘Alī (a.s) as his administrator and caliph after him: “Will you not be pleased to be to me as Aaron was to Moses, save that there will be no Prophet after me”³

¹ *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 11, p. 42, second ed. Beirut, 1403 A.H.

² See Subḥānī’s *Mafahīm al-Qur’ān* for further familiarity with a multitude of traditions handed down concerning the Shiites view on the Final Prophet’s mission.

³ Some of the numerous documents concerning the above tradition are: *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 6, p. 3. Egypt, chapter: Tabūk War; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 7, P.120, Egypt, chapter: ‘Alī’s virtues; *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, vol. 1, p. 55, 1st ed. Egypt, chapter: virtues of the Prophet’s companions; *Al-Ḥākim’s al-Mustadrak ‘alā al-Ṣaḥīḥayn*, vol. 3, p. 109, Beirut; *Musnad Aḥmad*, vol. 1. pp. 170, 177, 179, 182, 184, and 185; also vol. 3, p. 32; *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Tirmidhī*, vol. 5, p. 21, Beirut, chapter: ‘Alī’s excellence; Ibn al-Maghāzili’s *al-Manāqib*, p. 27,

The great Islamic traditionists, the Shiites and the Sunnis alike, confirm the chain of the tradition of the above *ḥadīth* and this is a clear proof confirming the truth of the Shiites statement in regard to the following points:

a) Muḥammad ibn `Abdullāh (a.s) is the dearest Prophet of God, and the Seal of the Prophets, who has been raised to Prophethood upon God's command; there will be no other Prophet after him.

`Alī Ibn Abī-Ṭālib (a.s) is the Prophet's legatee and successor.

Beirut, 1403 A.H.; *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 37, p. 254, 2nd ed, Beirut, 1430 A.H.; Shaykh al-Ṣadūq's *Ma`ānī al-Akḥbār*, p. 74, Beirut, 1399 A.H.; *Kanz al-Fawā'id*, vol. 2, p. 168, Beirut, 1405 A.H.

QUESTION THIRTY-ONE

What criterion is there for Dissimulation?

ANSWER:

Taqiyyah, i.e. dissimulation which means keeping one's heart felt belief in secret has the Qur'ān as its source and is a religious duty of every Muslim to employ it in order to prevent the adversaries from causing physical, spiritual and religious harms.

DISSIMULATION AS VIEWED BY THE QUR'ĀN

The Qur'ān contains various verses in regard to dissimulation, two of which are as follows:

“Let not the believers take the unbelievers for friends - rather than the believers – for whoso does that belongs not to God in anything – unless you have a fear of them.” 3:28

“Whoso disbelieves in God, after he has believed – excepting him who has been compelled and his heart is still at rest in his belief – but whosoever's breast is expanded in unbelief, upon them shall rest anger from God, and there awaits them a mighty chastisement.” 16:106

The exegesists mention the following occasion as the foreground for the revelation of the above verse: “The infidels who had arrested `Ammār ibn Yāsir and his parents demanded that they deny their faith and pronounce

disbelief. `Ammār's companions pronounced their faith in God and in the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet; some of them were, as a result, killed. Contrary to his heartfelt conviction, `Ammār, did not disclose his belief, but outwardly uttered what the pagans had told him to and was set free.

Deeply worried and unhappy about what he had said, `Ammār returned to the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him and his descendants, who comforted him. The above verse was then revealed on this occasion.¹

This sacred verse and the interpretations that the exegesists have made reveal the fact that dissimulation was recognized at the time of the Prophet and was practiced to prevent physical and spiritual harms.

DISSIMULATION AS THE SHIITES VIEW IT

Due to the history-long animosity the despotic Umayyad and `Abbāsīd rulers showed against the Shiites and the attempts they made in massacring the Shiites,² the latter group concealed their true faith as the Qur'ān had ordered them to and were thus able to survive those difficult conditions.

It is clear that in such a suffocating and oppressive atmosphere as the one mentioned above no other solution could be conceived of to save the Shiites from the devastating hurricane of the tyranny that threatened to

¹ *Al-Durr al-Manthūr*, vol. 4, p. 131.

² For detailed information, see Abū'l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī's *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*; Aḥmad Amin's *Shuhadā' al-Faḍīlah*; Muḥammad Jawād Mughniyah's *al-Shī'ah wa'l-Ḥakimūn*.

uproot them. If the despotic rulers and their puppets had not made it their aims to turn against the Shiites and mercilessly kill them, there would have been no reason for the Shiites to practice dissimulation.

It should be noted that dissimulation is practiced not only by the Shiites but also by other Islamic sects when they face the bloodthirsty enemies of Islam whom they are unable to avert – such as the Khawārij and any other brutal enemies of Islam who commit unlawful acts).

Accordingly, if all Islamic nations come to an understanding and live in harmony, there will be no grounds for the application of *taqiyyah*.

CONCLUSION

From what has been discussed above, we can reach the following conclusion:

1. *Taqiyyah* originates from the Qur'ān. The behavior of the Prophet's Companions and the Prophet's approval are clear evidence that dissimulation was allowed and practiced in the early days of Islam.
2. The Shiites' intention of practicing dissimulation was to put a stop to being mercilessly massacred, and to prevent the hurricanes of cruelty that threatened to annihilate them.
3. Dissimulation is not a practice employed only by the Shiites only; it is in practice by other Muslims too.
4. *Taqiyyah* suggests not only being on the alert against the infidels and keeping one's Islamic faith in secret from the idolaters, but is also a necessity at the time when Muslims' lives are being threatened by any cruel opponent against whom there is no possibility of fighting.
5. There will be no grounds for dissimulation in case members of the Islamic community reach an understanding.

QUESTION THIRTY-TWO

**Why is the Ja`farī faith considered
the official religion in the
Constitution of the Islamic Republic
of Iran?**

ANSWER:

There is no doubt that the Islamic Republic's Constitution treats all branches of the Islamic faith (madhahib) with deference and there is no doubt that the Islamic faiths (such as: the Ja`farī, the Mālikī, the Shāfi`ī, the Ḥanbali and the Ḥanafī) are not equal and harmonious in their expression of the individual and social duties of people; there are many great differences among them in this regard.

However, in order to legislate and draw up regulations for a society, it is felt that there is a dire need for the rules and regulations to be harmonious. Hence, in any country, only one of the Islamic faiths can be taken as the source to draw social rules from, for in the case of there being a variety of legislative sources, never can a set of harmonious rules be drawn up.

It is thus befitting to single out – on the right criterion – from among the Islamic faiths, one as the source of the social laws and regulations in order to avoid any kind of disturbance and disorder in the laws of the country and to

pave the way for the legislation of a series of coherent and harmonized rules in legal and social fields.

THE CRITERION FOR CHOOSING THE JA'FARĪ FAITH

Another question is “By what criterion is the Ja'farī faith chosen, from among other Islamic faiths, as the source from which to draw up laws and regulations of Iran?” The answer to this question is clear: the majority of Iranians are the Muslims who have pronounced the Ja'farī faith as the basis of their belief and as the expression of their individual and social duties. Thus, it goes without saying that choosing the Ja'farī faith as the official religion of the country in the Islamic Republic's Constitution is a natural phenomenon which is in agreement with all logical and legal criteria.

THE STATUS OF OTHER ISLAMIC FAITHS

Although the Ja'farī faith has been taken as the official religion in the Islamic Republic's Constitution, the other Islamic faiths (madhahib) such as the Shāfi'ī, the Ḥanbali, the Ḥanafī, the Māliki and the Zaydi have been recognized as well. Moreover, the followers of these faiths can, in the following cases, act as they have been instructed by their own religions:

1. Performance of religious rites
2. Religious education or upbringing
3. Individual duties
4. Specific religious procedures such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, framing of wills, etc.

Furthermore, in a region in which any one of the mentioned

Schools has the majority of followers, the execution of the local regulations is observed, within the authorities invested on the local councils, in accordance with the beliefs of the majority, while the rights of other religious followers are also respected.

Now, in order to further clarify the matter, we will quote the twelfth article of the first chapter of the Islamic Republic's Constitution, which deals with this matter:

“The official religion of Iran is Islam of the Twelver Jaʿfari School and this article is inalterable in perpetuity. The other sects of Islam, including the Ḥanafī, the Shāfiʿī, the Mālikī, the Ḥanbalī and the Zaydī, are regarded with full respect and the followers of these sects enjoy complete freedom in performing their religious rituals according to their own jurisprudence and with respect to their religious instructions, personal status (including marriage, divorce, inheritance and framing of wills) and the causes relating thereto are considered to be official in courts of law. In every region where the followers of any of these sects enjoy a majority of the particular sect, the local regulations will be formulated according to the precepts of jurisdiction of the councils of that region with the assurance that the rights of the followers of other sects will be respected.

QUESTION THIRTY-THREE

**Do the Shiites consider *witr* prayer
a religious duty?**

ANSWER:

Witr prayer is one of the supererogatory prayers of night, *nāfilah*, which are not obligatory on the followers of the Prophet (a.s) but which are obligatory on the Noble Prophet (a.s), according to the Shi'ite jurists.

In his book *Tadhkirat al-Fuqahā'*, 'Allāmah Ḥillī, the jurist, enumerates almost seventy such things and says, "Things which are obligatory on the Prophet, but not only his followers are: brushing the teeth, performing *witr* prayer, and sacrificing." (1) The noble Prophet (a.s) is quoted as having said, "Three things have been prescribed on me, but not on you; these are: brushing my teeth, performing *witr* prayer and sacrificing." *Witr* prayer, a duty of the Prophet, is thus a recommended action for the Muslims.¹

¹ *Tadhkirat al-Fuqahā'*, vol. 2, the book of *al-Nikāḥ*, the fourth introduction.

QUESTION THIRTY-FOUR

**Is belief in the invisible power of
God's Saints a source of Polytheism?**

ANSWER:

You may ask someone to do something because you evidently consider him able to do it. This ability is of two kinds:

- 1) The ability confined within the corporeal, natural forces as when you ask someone for a glass of water.
- 2) The ability beyond the natural forces, a hidden power as you believe that a righteous servant of God, such as Jesus Christ, possessed the power to heal incurable diseases through his Messianic breath.

The belief in such an ability is no doubt similar to the belief in (the existence of) a natural force if this ability is dependent upon God's Will; Such a conviction will not lead to polytheism, for God who has given people their corporeal and natural ability can also give some of His righteous servants a hidden ability.

The belief in the invisible power of God's saints can be conceived of in two ways:

- 1) We may take the person who has the hidden power as one who is independent in his will, one from whom the

power originates and whom we may attribute a Godly job to. The belief in such a power, independent of God, undoubtedly brings about polytheism because we have considered someone besides God as the source of independent and genuine power, to whom we have attributed a Godly job, whereas the Lord of the universe is sole source of all powers.

2) We may believe in the hidden power of some righteous servants of God, and maintain that this ability has originated from God's eternal power, and that God's Saints are simply the instruments for this power to be manifested; they have no independence of their own, but are dependent upon God, the Exalted, both in their existence and in exercising the hidden power.

Such a belief undoubtedly carries no implication of considering the saints as God, nor does it imply that a Godly job is attributed to them because it is only with God's permission and His inevitable Will that they manifest their God-given authority, never desiring disobedience. The holy Qur'ān says "*and it is not in (the power of) an apostle to bring a sign except by Allah's permission*" 13:38. It is thus clear that such a belief is no cause for polytheism, but is in complete agreement with the principle of monotheism.

THE SAINTS' HIDDEN AUTHORITY AS VIEWED IN THE QUR'ĀN

Below are some of the unambiguous statements of Islam's divine Book, the Quran, mentioning a group of the upright slaves of God who, upon His permission, had this great power.

a) Prophet Moses' Hidden Power

The Almighty God ordered his Prophet, Moses, to strike a rock with his staff in order for springs to gush forth: "And when Moses requested drink for his people, We said: Strike the rock with your staff. So there gushed from it twelve springs." 1:60

b) Jesus Christ's Hidden Authority

Jesus Christ's hidden authority has been referred to in several chapters of the Qur'ān, one of which is as follows: "I shall create for you something out of dust in the shape of a bird, then I breathe into it and it will become a bird with Allah's permission, and I shall heal the blind and the leprous and bring the dead to life with Allah's permission." 3:49

c) Prophet Solomon's Hidden Power

The Qur'ān says, "*And Sulaymān was Dāwūd's heir, and he said: O men! We have been taught the language of birds, and we have been given of everything; most surely, this is a manifest grace.* 27:16"

Such things as making water gush forth from the rock that Moses had touched with his staff, creating a real bird out of the dust, healing the incurable ailments, restoring the dead to life, which Jesus Christ had performed, and Solomon's ability to understand the language of the birds are doubtlessly all extraordinary affairs and a kind of exercising the hidden power.

Can our belief in such manifest Qur'ānic verses be considered as polytheism when the Glorious Qur'ān itself has discussed the saints' hidden authority in the above verses and in many others?

This discussion clearly shows that the belief in the hidden authority of the righteous servants of God does not imply that they are being considered as God or as those to whom Godly affairs are attributed. If such a belief were taken concomitant with considering these saints as divinities, then Moses, Jesus Christ, and Solomon are deities in The Qur'ān's view, whereas all Muslims know that the holy Qur'ān considers the saints as God's upright servants.

It is thus proved that the belief in the hidden authority of those who are honored with God does not bring about dualism as long as this power is considered subordinate to God's, and as long as the saints are believed to be the intermediates for the manifestation of God's rule. Such a belief is in complete agreement with the principle of monotheism because it is a criterion of monotheism to believe in God as the source of all forces and authorities.

QUESTION THIRTY-FIVE

**Why is Imamate considered higher
in rank than Prophethood?**

ANSWER:

It would first be necessary to clarify the three concepts of “Prophethood”, “Divine Mission” and “Imamate” as expressed in the Qur’ān and the narrations so as to answer the question and find out why Imamate is considered superior to the other two ranks.

1) THE RANK OF PROPHETHOOD

The word “*nabī* – Prophet” is derived from ‘*naba*’ – prophecy”, literary: giving important tiding; so “the Prophet” means the herald of significant news or one who brings news of an event. In the Qur’ānic culture, it refers to someone who receives the divine revelation in various manners, a reporter who, as God’s representative, “reports from God, without the mediation of a human being.”¹ A Prophet’s duty is thus limited to receiving the Revelation and conveying it to people. In the words of the Qur’ān: “*So Allah raised Prophets as bearers of good news and as warners.*” 2: 213

¹ *Al-Rasā'il al-`Asharah* by Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, p. 11.

2) THE DIVINE MISSION

“The Messenger”, as understood within the context of the Divine Revelation, refers to those Prophets who, in addition to receiving the Revelation and reporting in the capacity of God’s representatives, are given the responsibility of propagating the Mission they have been charged with. The holy Qur’ān says: “*but if you turn back, then know that a clear deliverance of the message is (incumbent) on Our apostle.*” 5:92. Therefore, the Divine Mission – *risālah* – is a position endowed onto a *nabī*, a Prophet. That is, “Prophethood, *nubuwwat*” and “Divine Mission, *risālah*” are two concepts signifying the particularities of the Prophets who have received the Divine Revelation, are bearers of news, and therefore are *nabīs*, and at the same time “Messengers, *rasūls*” since they have the duty to propagate it.

When we take the above explanations together, we can conclude that as long as they function within the bounds set by *nubuwwah* and *risālah*, the Prophets are mere guides who announce what is lawful and what is not, introduce to people the paths leading to prosperity, and have no responsibility other than conveying the news they have received from God, or propagating the mission they have been charged with.

3) THE STATUS OF IMAMATE

The Qur’ān views the Divine Leadership, the Imamate, something different from the other two positions: Imamate is a position with a wider range of authority for managing the society and leading the people. Below are evidence derived from the illuminating verses of the Qur’ān to support our view:

a) As regards bestowing Imamate onto a dear Prophet, Abraham, the true friend of God, the Qur'ān says, "*When his Lord tested Abraham by means (of certain) words, and he fulfilled them, He said: "I am going to make you into a leader for mankind."* He said: "*What about my offspring?*"

This verse clearly distinguishes the status of Imamate from those of Prophecy and the Divine Mission. Abraham had years before been appointed a Prophet, and, as the following two evidence indicate, tested in such circumstances as the time when he had to make the demanding decision to sacrifice his son, Ismā'il.

a) The Almighty God had bestowed Abraham two sons Ismā'il and Ishāq at the time when Abraham had grown old. The Glorious Qur'ān says, "*Praise be to Allah, Who has given me in old age Ismā'il and Ishāq.*" 14:39 The decision to sacrifice Ismā'il, a divine trial, followed by still the more difficult ones, preceded God's raising Abraham to the position of Imamate towards the end of his life, although the Divine Revelation – a sign of the Prophethood – had descended upon him years before, far ahead of the time he had the offspring.¹

b) Still more proof for the superiority of the position of the divine Imamate – leadership of the society and of the Ummah – over those of Prophethood and the Divine Mission is conveyed in this Qur'ānic verse: "*And when his Lord tried Ibrāhīm with certain ...*" which refers to the intolerable tests Abraham had to pass successfully before

¹ See verses 99-102 of Chapter al-Şāffāt, verses 53-54 of Chapter al-Hijr, and verses 70-71 of Chapter Hūd.

the position of Imamate could be bestowed on him, although he had already attained Prophethood and *risālah*. The reason is clear: The divine leadership, Imamate, includes receiving of the revelation and propagating it as well as managing of the society that leads to Ummah's perfection and happiness. It is natural for such a rank to be particularly sensitive and great, the attaining of which requires success in intolerable and successive tests.

The above verse reveals that the Almighty God bestowed the position of Imamate and leadership of the society onto Ibrāhīm after He had tried him with difficult tests.

Further to Ibrāhīm's request, God accepted his pray and having raised him to the rank of Prophethood, allowed for his righteous offspring the leadership of the Ummah and the ruling over the society, as is mentioned in the glorious Qur'ān *"But indeed We have given to Ibrāhīm's children the Book and the wisdom, and We have given them a grand kingdom."* 4:55.

It is thus understood that Imamate and the leading of the community is a rank different from Prophethood; it is a rank the Almighty God gave His prophet, Ibrāhīm, after he succeeded in the difficult tests test by Him. It was then that Ibrāhīm requested God for the rule and leadership to continue in his righteous offspring, which was accepted.

Besides the divine Book and wisdom, allusions to Prophethood and *risālah*, they were granted a grand kingdom and leadership, the realization of Ibrāhīm's pray. This is why some of Ibrāhīm's offspring such as Joseph, David, and Solomon were both Prophets and leaders of the community.

It is thus clear that the rank of “Imamate” is something different from both “*Nubuwwah*, Prophethood, and *risālah*, the Divine Mission. Also, due to the wider scope of authority and responsibility, Imamate is worthier and occupies a superior position.

SUPERIORITY OF THE POSITION OF IMAMATE

The preceding discussion showed that since “the Prophet” and “the Messenger” are bearers of the news and the message, their activities are limited to warning and illuminating of the direction (to God). If a Prophet, however, attains the position of Imamate, he will have to shoulder greater responsibilities in actualizing the divine scheme and implementing the commands of the holy religion to establish an exemplary prosperous community and to lead his people in such a way as to secure their happiness in this world and in the next.

Such an important responsibility, the execution of which requires a constant confrontation with hardships and battling with desires, is evidently in dire need of an enormous spiritual power, of burning for God, and of greater tolerance of difficulties, a responsibility which will not actualize if it is not accompanied with God’s love and self annihilation in the way of acquiring His satisfaction. This is why the Almighty God granted Ibrāhīm the position of Imamate after he had passed a chain of intolerable tests and was in the final link of life. So, it is the most meritorious of His servants, like the Blessed Prophet of Islam, who receive the position of imamate, the leadership of the people and the rule over the society.

IS CONCOMITANCY OF PROPHETHOOD AND IMAMATE A NECESSITY?

A further question may ask if the two ranks are concomitant, that is, if a Prophet should necessarily be an Imam, or if it is necessary for an Imam to be a Prophet, too. The answer to both questions is, as the logic of Revelation views it, negative.

A study of the Qur'ānic verses concerning "Saul" and his fighting the oppressor Goliath (*Jālūt*) indicates that after the demise of the Prophet Moses, God raised "Ishmooil" to prophethood, but gave Ṭālūt the position of Imamate, the leadership and the rule. Preceding this event, a number of the Israelites (*Banī-Isrā'īl*) had requested the prophet of the time to choose a leader so they could fight in the way of God. The glorious Qur'ān says *"Surely Allah has raised Ṭālūt to be a king over you. They said: How can he hold kingship over us while we have a greater right to kingship than he, and he has not been granted an abundance of wealth? He said: Surely Allah has chosen him in preference to you, and He has increased him abundantly in knowledge and physique, and Allah grants His kingdom to whom He pleases, and Allah is Ample-giving, knowing."*

The above verse denotes the following points:

Necessities may demand a separation of "Prophethood" from "Imamate", with simultaneous assignment of prophethood to one individual and Imamate to another, each qualified for the duty assigned to him. The Israelites had no objection to such a division in essence and did not claim their prophet to be superior, but did, instead, say, *"We have a greater right to kingship than he."*

It is God who had given Ṭālūt the rank, “Surely Allah has raised Ṭālūt to be a king” Also, “Surely Allah has chosen him in preference to you.”

He was not merely an army commander, but a “king” who was to lead The Israelites in the holy war they want to wage in the way of Allah. His God-given position, however, gave him further authority in the state of affairs. The Qur’ān says, “*Allah grants His kingdom to whom He pleases.*”

The foremost requisite in leading the society and the people are sample knowledge along with physical and spiritual capabilities, particularly because in those days the leaders had to accompany the army.¹

It is thus becomes evident that there is no need for Prophethood and Imamate to go together, nor should there necessarily be a division between the two ranks. One may be chosen only a nabī, a Prophet, but not an Imam, whose duty it is to lead people. Similarly, God may choose someone an Imam to lead the society, but he may not be a Prophet. There may also be a time when someone qualified is granted both responsibilities. The Quran states, “*So they put them to flight by Allah’s permission. And Dāwūd slew Jālūt, and Allah gave him kingdom and wisdom, and taught him of what he pleased.*” 2:251

¹ from Ayatollah Subhānī's *Manshūr Jāviden Qur'an*.

QUESTION THIRTY-SIX

What criterion distinguishes monotheism from polytheism?

ANSWER:

What is of great importance in discussing monotheism and polytheism concerns the criterion to distinguish the two. So long as the issue is not basically solved, no answer can be found to the debate. The following is, therefore, a condense discussion studying the issue multi-dimensionally.

1) UNITY OF THE DIVINE ESSENCE

The argument concerning the Unity of the Divine Essence proceeds in two manners:

a) God (the Necessary Being, as theologians refer to Him) is unique, and there is nothing like Him, this being the Unity referred to in the Qur'ān: *"Like Him there is naught."* 42:11. Also *"and equal to Him is not any one."* 112:4. A layman sometimes interprets this Unity in terms of numbers: God is one and not two. It goes without saying that such an interpretation does not befit God's divine stance.

b) Divine Essence is simple; it is not composite; for compositeness whether of subjective or non-subjective elements, signifies the need for the constituents; "need" itself is a sign of "possibility"; possibility is in need of cause; these are incompatible with the Necessary Being's rank.

2) DIVINE ONENESS IN CREATION

Divine Oneness in Creation, a plane within the order of the Divine Unity, is acknowledged by both reason as well as the Qur'ān and traditions.

Reason: Anything other than Allah is a system of possibility lacking any perfection and beauty whatsoever. All created objects have received whatever they have from the fountainhead of blessing, Who is essentially Rich. So all manifestations of perfection and beauty observed in the world come from Him.

The Qur'ān contains many verses specifying the Divine Oneness in Creation. For example, *“Say: Allah is the Creator of everything and He is the One, the Omnipotent.”* 14:16. the issue of Oneness in Creation is a point not generally disputed over by the theologians. There are, however, two different interpretations referred to below:

Any system of cause and effect existing among creatures ultimately ends in the Cause of all causes. In fact, it is God who is the Independent and Original Creator. If anything other than God can exert an influence on others, it is because of His permission and Will. This, a notion also evidenced by science, admits the existence of a system of cause and effect that belongs to God, but at the same time all the system belongs to Allah. It is He who has brought this system into existence and has given instrumentality to the instrument, causality to the cause and effectiveness to what which affects.

There is only one creator for the world, i.e. God. Within the chain of cause and effect, things can of themselves exert no influence on other things. God is the immediate creator of

all natural phenomena. Even man's power has no effect on His action. Thus, there is only one Cause in the world. He has occupied the seat of what science names as natural causes.

Such an interpretation is favored by some Ash'arite scholars whereas a number of other Ash'arite scholars such as Imam al-Ḥaramayn (1), and Shaykh Muḥammad `Abduh (in his treatise: *Tawḥīd*) have denounced it, adopting the first interpretation.

3) ONENESS IN REGULATING THE AFFAIRS

Since creation is particularly God's, His is the regulation of the affairs of the universe. There is only one who does it. This is proved by the same argument that establishes the Divine oneness in creation. In many verses the Holy Qur'ān introduces Allah as the sole Regulator: *Say: What! Shall I seek a Lord other than Allah? He is the Lord of all things.*" 6:164. The two interpretations, (a) and (b) cover this issue, too. The Divine Unity raised here means that it is God who is totally free in His decision. The ability of the beings within the system of the creation, to regulate the affairs, as stated in the Qur'ān: "*Then those who regulate some affairs,*" 79:5 is subordinate to His Will.

4) ONENESS IN SOVEREIGNTY

This unity means that sovereignty is solely Allah's incessant right. It is He who rules over all individuals, as the Qur'ān states: "*The decision rests with Allah only.*" 12:40. So anyone else's rule must be as He wills: pious people must rule society to lead people to prosperity and perfection, as exemplified by the Qur'ān: "*O Dāwūd! Surely We have made you a ruler in the land; so judge between men with justice.*" 38:26

5) MONOTHEISM IN OBEDIENCE

This means that it is God Who essentially deserves to be obeyed. Obeying others such as the Prophet, the Imam, the jurisprudent, the father and the mother, is made possible because He has ordered it.

6) ONENESS IN LEGISLATION

Oneness in legislation means that it is only God who can make laws. This is why our holy book, the Qur'ān considers it a source of unbelief, transgression and injustice for a law to be made outside the divine framework. The Qur'ān states: *“and whoever does not judge by what Allah revealed, those are they that are the unbelievers.”* 5:44. Also, *“And whoever does not judge by what Allah revealed, those are they that are the transgressors.”* Elsewhere: *“And whoever does not judge by what Allah revealed, those are they that are the unjust.”* 5:45

7) UNITY IN WORSHIP

The most significant issue in regard to the unity in worship deals with what “worship” signifies, for all Muslims unanimously agree that worship is solely due to Allah, and no one else should be invoked. The Glorious Qur'ān states: *“Thee do we serve and Thee do we beseech for help.”* 1:4. The Holy Qur'ān declares that worshipping Allah has been a general principle that all prophets and Divine Emissaries have been missioned to invited people to: *“And certainly We raised in every nation an apostle saying: Serve Allah and shun the Shaitan.”* 16:40. It is thus an undoubted principle that all worship is due to Allah and no one else should be worshipped. No one is considered a monotheist unless he accepts this principle.

The basic question concerns the criteria to distinguish “worship” from non-worship. Does the kissing of the hand of, say, the teacher, the parents, the learned or bowing in respect before those to whom we are indebted mean worshipping them? There is in fact a certain element which, if not actualized, renders no respect whatsoever into worship, even though it is to the extent of prostration. We will now examine the element that changes respect into worship; this is a very important discussion.

WORSHIP, MISINTERPRETED

A number of authors have taken “worship” as equal to humbleness, whether usual or excessive in form. These people have failed to grasp the meaning in a chain of the Qur’ānic verses such as: “*And We said to the angels, ‘Bow yourselves to Adam,’*” 2:24. This was an action similar in manner to the way the angels had bowed themselves before God; the former a representation of humbleness, and the latter a sign of worshipping, a prostration similar in form but different in essence. Elsewhere, the Qur’ān states: “*And he lifted his father and mother upon the throne; and the others fell down, prostrating before him. ‘See, father,’ he said, ‘this is the interpretation of my vision of long ago, my Lord has made it true.’*” 12:100. This refers back to Prophet Joseph’s past vision: eleven stars, the sun and the moon bowing before him, as mentioned in the Qur’ān: “*I saw eleven stars and the sun and the moon bowing down before me.*” 12:4. Prophet Joseph interprets the stars, the sun and the moon as referring to his brothers and his parents, who evidently prostrated before him. Again, why is this kind of prostration not referred to as worship?

A STRANGE ALIBI

The answer given by the aforementioned authors to the above question (simply) is that because such a prostration had been ordered by God, it is not polytheism; a naive answer, for God will never enjoin any thing that connotes polytheism: *“Say: surely Allah does not enjoin indecency; do you say against Allah what you do not know?”* 7:28. God’s command does not change the nature of things. If being humble before someone is an action ordered by God, it does in consequence denote worshipping Him.

SOLUTION: WHAT WORSHIP MEANS

So far, it has been ascertained that monotheists unanimously hold that it is forbidden to worship any being other than God. It is also certain that the angels’ prostration before Adam and that of Jacob’s sons before Joseph do not mean that Adam and Joseph were worshipped. Now, we will have to re-examine the element that determines which action is worship and which is not, though both may look alike.

The Glorious Qur’ān makes it clear that worship “*Ibādah*” means being humble before a being that we consider God, or one to whom we ascribe the ability to do godly deeds. It follows that considering a being as god and the belief in his ability to do godly deeds are the elements which can render humbleness into worship. The disbelievers, the once residents of the Arabian Peninsula and elsewhere, used to bow in prostration before the beings that they considered God’s creatures partially entrusted with the ability to take over some of God’s acts: forgiving sins and intercession being two low rights from among them.

The Babylonian pagans worshipped celestial bodies as their “Lords” not as their creators, and maintained that these had been entrusted with the responsibility of managing the affairs

of the world and of man. This is exemplified in the story of Prophet Ibrāhīm and his confrontation with the pagans. In presenting the dispute between Ibrāhīm and the polytheists, the Qur'ān, too, stresses the word "Lord." This word is used in Arabic in various collocations such as "the lord of the house", and "the lord of the farmyard", for they manage the affairs of the house and of the fields.

The Glorious Qur'ān introduces Allah as the only being who runs the affairs of the world and men. It thus challenges the pagans and calls them to the One God: *"Surely Allah is my Lord and your Lord, therefore serve Him; this is the right path."* 3:51. Also *"That is Allah, your Lord, there is no god but He; the Creator of all things, therefore serve Him, and He has charge of all things."* 5:10 *"There is no god But He; He gives life and causes death, your Lord and the Lord of your fathers of yore."* 44:8 *"and the Messiah said: O Children of Israel! Serve Allah, my Lord and your Lord."* 5:72

It is thus clearly known that the due respect offered to one without considering him a god, and without ascribing godly affairs to him cannot be counted as "worship" even if this humbleness mounts to the highest degree. So the respect that the children show to their parents, or that the Muslims offer to the Holy Prophet (a.s) is not equal to worshipping them, for it lacks the element we have been discussing. On the basis of this discussion, seeking blessing from the relics of the Imams, kissing their shrines, asking them to intercede before God, invoking the saints, and holding ceremonies on the occasions of their birthday or their death, which some ignorant people call polytheism, are not so.