

MUHAMMED



THE GREATEST PROPHET

Written & Compiled by

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In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the most Merciful.

“Verily! Allah and His angles shower blessings on the Prophet. O you who believe! Ask blessings on him and salute him a worthy salutation”. (Qur’an 33:56)

DEDICATED

TO THE YOUTH OF THE WORLD

FOR SUCCESS IN THEIR JOURNEY

THROUGH TIME AND SPACE

Important Note: The readers are requested to say --“Sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallim” (in Arabic) OR “Peace be upon him” (in English) (PBUH) wherever they utter or read the name of the Prophet (PBUH) in this book.

THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS AND THEIR SCRIPTURES

Judaism and Christianity --- Islam --- Zoroastrianism --- Hinduism --- Sikhism --- Jainism --- Buddhism --- Confucianism --- Taoism --- Shinto --- African Traditional Religions --- Native American Religions --- South Pacific Religions --- New Religions -At this point it is worthwhile to introduce the various religions and their scriptures which are included in this anthology. We will proceed, geographically, from West to East.

Judaism and Christianity ---Judaism and Christianity are two monotheistic, ethical religions which share a part of their scriptures in common; the Bible or Tanakh of the Jews is the Old Testament of the Christians. These religions share many common beliefs: (1) there is one God, (2) mighty and (3) good, (4) the Creator, (5) who reveals His Word to man, and (6) answers prayers. Both Judaism and Christianity make (7) a positive affirmation of the world as the arena of God's activity, (8) as the place where people have an obligation to act ethically, and (9) which should be redeemed from injustice. Both believe in (10) a future life, as well as a doctrine of resurrection. Finally, both look to (11) a final consummation of history and (12) the realization of God's complete sovereignty on earth, through the coming of a Messiah or, in the case of modern forms of Judaism, a Messianic age. Besides these similarities of doctrine, Christianity is bound to pay special attention to Judaism because Jesus and his disciples were Jews. They lived as Jews; the Jewish Bible was their Bible, and they criticized Jewish beliefs and practices as reformers from within. Jesus' life and teachings are largely incomprehensible without an understanding of the Judaism of his time. Although Judaism and Christianity share many common elements in their beliefs, there are also deep differences. First, for Judaism God is one and unique; for Christianity God is one in His nature but there are three persons constituting the Holy Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Christians believe in Jesus, called Christ, the Messiah, who is the Incarnation of the second person of the Trinity: therefore adoration is not given to man but to God who became man. Salvation for mankind is entirely the gift of God, through the sacrifice of the second person of the Trinity, who became man and suffered and died in his humanity and became alive again. Christians believe in Christ and in his passion, death, and resurrection; they follow his teachings and example; and after death they expect to share in his glorious resurrection. Judaism, for its part, is no less conscious of God's grace, but it offers sanctification through membership in the Jewish people and by regarding the scriptures as teaching and enjoining a life of holiness. For Jews the Messiah has not yet come, and they still anticipate the coming of the Messiah or Messianic age. Their future hope is an earthly vision of a world of peace and justice. The Christian future hope is expressed by the doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ, when evil will finally come to an end and the spiritual blessings already accomplished in Jesus Christ will be manifested substantially in the Kingdom of Heaven. Both Judaism and Christianity no longer practice the scriptural laws of animal sacrifices. But while for Judaism the mitzvot, the ethical and ritual commandments of the Bible, remain normative, and are elaborated in the Talmud as the halakah or requirements of life, Christianity has regard only for the Bible's ethical teachings--i.e., the Ten Commandments. Christianity emphasizes faith in Jesus Christ, who gives grace, empowerment, and guidance for living the moral life.[2] Judaism teaches a life of holiness through performing mitzvot and emphasizes the importance

of adhering to the Bible's standards of social justice as laid down by the Prophets. The two religions have also diverged on the meaning of the Fall of Man; Christianity affirms a doctrine of Original Sin which is not emphasized in Judaism. These deep differences extend to the way Judaism and Christianity regard their sacred writings. Judaism regards its sacred books as the complete source for all the teachings which God requires of his people for their welfare. For Christianity, the sacred books of Judaism, called the Old Testament, are taken as a preparation for the final revelation that God would make through Christ--a revelation that is written in the books of the New Testament. Judaism's Bible or Tanakh is made up of the Law (Torah), the Prophets (Nebi'im), and the Writings (Ketuvim); its books were written over a period of more than thirteen hundred years of Jewish history, from the time of Moses until several centuries before the common era. The center of this scripture is the Torah, the Five Books of Moses. The book of Genesis contains stories of creation, the Fall of Man, and the lives of the patriarchs Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy recount the Jews' liberation from slavery in Egypt and the revealing of the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai. The Prophets include the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings recounting the history of Israel in the days when it was guided by its prophets, and Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, Hosea, Micah, Habakkuk, Jonah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, etc., which record the words of individual prophets. Among the Writings are the book of Psalms containing prayers and hymns; Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job containing wise sayings, discourses on wisdom, and meditations on the human condition; Lamentations mourning the destruction of the Temple; Song of Songs, where love poetry has long been interpreted as describing the mystical relationship between God and Israel or God and man; and Daniel with its stories of faith in the midst of persecution. In addition to the Tanakh, a tradition of Oral Torah, passed down to the rabbis of the first several centuries of the common era and codified in the Talmud, which is constituted by the Mishnah and the Gemara, is authoritative for the observant Jew. One may regard the role of Talmud and Midrash--early rabbinic interpretation of scripture--as providing the interpretative perspective for a proper understanding of the Bible. While much of the Talmud and Midrash is devoted to discussions and codifications of law, they also contain passages of universal spiritual and ethical wisdom. The best known collection of the latter is a small tractate of the Mishnah called the Abot or Sayings of the Fathers.[3] Beyond the Talmud and Midrash, Jewish tradition also hallows the books of statutory prayers. The mystical treatise called the Zohar and several other works together constitute the Kabbalah or mystical tradition which has canonical status for many Jews. A number of theological works, notably *The Guide for the Perplexed* by Moses Maimonides (1135-1204) and *Shulhan Arukh* by Joseph Caro (16th century) are also held in the highest regard. The Christian Bible includes the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament was the scripture of Jesus and his followers who were themselves Jews. It is identical to the Jewish Bible but with its books in a different order. Christians emphasize the prophetic books above all other parts of the Old Testament, for they are seen to announce the advent of Jesus Christ. Roman Catholic and Orthodox Bibles include a number of additional books, called deuterocanonical books, in the Old Testament. Notable among them are the wisdom books Sirach and the Wisdom of Solomon, the stories of Tobit and Judith, and the history of the Maccabean revolt with its stories glorifying martyrdom in I-IV Maccabees. These books circulated among Jews during the last two

centuries before Christ and were included in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the scriptures. The New Testament is written in Greek; the early Christians largely spoke Greek; and they used the Septuagint as their Old Testament. But these books were not included in the canon of Hebrew scriptures as fixed by the rabbis at Jamnia in 90 a.d. At the time of the Protestant Reformation, when the Reformers returned to the Hebrew rabbinic text as their standard, they omitted these books from their vernacular translations of the Bible--e.g., Luther's Bible and the English King James Version. They are known to Protestants as the Apocrypha. The Roman Catholic Church reaffirmed their status as holy scripture at the Council of Trent (1545-1603), and they remain part of the Orthodox scriptures as well. Most modern translations of the Bible now include them. The New Testament contains the four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The first three "synoptic gospels" have much in common, recording the life and sayings of Jesus, his death, and resurrection. The Gospel of John provides a life of Christ who is portrayed as the mystical source of salvation. The epistles by the apostles Paul, Peter, James, John, and others discuss matters of theology, doctrine, faith, and morals for the early Church of the first century. Paul was the foremost of the apostles, and his writings include the epistle to the Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon. Other letters attributed to Paul, and which certainly are indebted to his influence, include Ephesians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, and Hebrews. Acts of the Apostles is a history of the church from the first Pentecost to the evangelical tours of Peter and Paul. The Book of Revelation gives a vision of the end of the world and the Second Coming of Christ. All the books of the New Testament were written within one hundred years of Jesus' death, although the final decision about which books would be included or excluded from the New Testament canon did not come until the fourth century.

Islam ----Islam is the third great monotheistic religion which traces its roots back to Abraham, and its teachings show many continuities with the Jewish and Christian scriptures. Islam proclaims Allah, the one God, the Creator, who is sovereign and good, who answers prayers, and who works with mankind in history by calling prophets to proclaim God's word. There is a positive affirmation of the world as God's creation and the arena where people are obligated to act ethically. Islam offers only two choices for mankind: belief or unbelief, God or Satan, with the result that they will attain either Paradise or the fire of hell. For Islam, the prophets are God's intermediaries to humanity, and Muhammad (c. 570-632) is the Seal of the Prophets. The prophets: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Moses, and many others named and unnamed, delivered God's word to diverse peoples. They each had specific missions, but their messages are ultimately one: submit the self to the will of God. Jesus is one of the prophets--though titled Messiah, he has no distinctive messianic role in the sense that Christians ascribe to him, nor is he in any sense divine. His message and purpose were consistent with those of the prophets before and after him. The Qur'an, revealed to Muhammad, is the perfect and accurate record of God's message by the prophets of every age. Islam is a religion to be practiced, and five obligations are required of every Muslim--called the Five Pillars: (1) confession of faith in God and in Muhammad as God's messenger, (2) daily prayer at the five appointed times, (3) fasting during the month of Ramadan, (4) paying an alms-tax and giving charity to the poor, and (5) pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca and its sacred shrine, the

Kaaba. By fulfilling these obligations and remembering God often, the Muslim is assured of God's favor both on earth and at the judgment. Islam's basic scripture is the Qur'an, which was revealed by the angel Gabriel to the prophet Muhammad, who according to tradition was unlettered. Gabriel recited its verses to Muhammad, who in turn taught them to his followers who memorized them and wrote them down on leaves and scraps of paper. They were gathered into the definitive text of the Qur'an within a generation of the prophet's death. The Qur'an has 114 suras, arranged in order of decreasing length.[4] Several interpretations of the Qur'an are available in English, but no true translation: the Qur'an was revealed specifically in Arabic, and a translation into any other language cannot convey the holiness of the Arabic Qur'an. With regard to the authority of texts beyond the Qur'an, Islam is split into two large sects, Sunni and Shiite. The many Sufi writings, so popular in the West, are not regarded as having the authority of scripture in Islam.

Sunni Muslims revere the Sunnah, the teaching of Muhammad based upon hadith, the traditions and sayings of the prophet Muhammad as recollected and transmitted by his companions. Most of the hadith concern the specifics of Islamic law, but some concern matters of faith, morality, and eschatology. The six great classical compilers of the Sunnah are: Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud, Tirmidhi, an-Nasa'i, and Ibn Majah--with Bukhari and Muslim the most authoritative. These collections are the fruits of 'ilm al-hadith, the Science of Tradition, which established criteria for deciding the reliability of traditions, classifying them as "sound," "good," "weak," or "infirm." The compilations by Bukhari and Muslim, and several secondary collections of hadith based upon the six compilations, are available in English translation. Most notable among them is The Forty Hadith of an-Nawawi, a slim collection of traditions which continues to inspire with its concise expression of the heart of Islamic spirituality. Another authoritative tradition in Islam which has been excerpted for this anthology is the biography of Muhammad by Ibn Ishaq, the Sirat Rasul Allah, which survives only in the version edited by his disciple Ibn Hisham. The Shiite tradition in Islam has its own collections of hadith which differ only in minor details from the Sunni collections, but these do not have the authority of the Sunnah and are not quoted in this anthology. What most distinguishes Shiite Islam is its reverence for 'Ali (d. 661), the son-in-law of Muhammad, who became the fourth Caliph and ruled the Muslim peoples for seven years until his death as a martyr. 'Ali is regarded as the perfect exemplar of Islam, and his sermons and sayings are collected in the Nahjul Balagha. For Shiite Muslims the Nahjul Balagha is a sacred scripture second only to the Qur'an.

Zoroastrianism ----The prophet Zarathustra (c. 1000 b.c.) is the founder of Zoroastrianism. Once the major religion of ancient Persia, Zoroastrianism has had considerable influence on the thought of Christianity and Islam. Yet despite its historical importance, today Zoroastrianism exists only as a remnant. After suffering persecution and expulsion from Iran, the community of practicing Zoroastrians has dwindled to less than one hundred thousand Parsis, most of whom live in the vicinity of Bombay, India. Contemporary Zoroastrians are monotheistic. They worship one God, Ahura Mazda, the Lord of Wisdom, whose various aspects are personified in scripture as the archangels Good Mind, Righteousness, Devotion, Dominion, and others. He is symbolized by the fire, which is at the center of Zoroastrian

ritual. Zoroastrianism teaches an ethical dualism; there is a constant battle between a wholly good God and the powers of evil. This struggle occurs within the human breast and necessitates the choice between good and evil. The soul is immortal, and each will receive divine justice according to its deeds in life. But good and evil are not equal: God and Right will ultimately triumph at the end of history. The good life is one of purity, virtue, industry, and benevolence. The scripture of Zoroastrianism is the Avesta. Among its books, the main liturgical text is called the Yasna. At the core of the Yasna are the Gathas, hymns composed by Zarathustra and his immediate followers, which make up chapters 28-34, 43-51, and 53 of the Yasna. They are at the center of Zoroastrian worship. The other books of the Avesta include the Videvdat, a collection of purificatory laws, the Visparad, a collection of ritual litanies to all spiritual lords, and the Yasht, containing Zoroastrian epic literature. This anthology quotes selections mainly from the Gathas. In selecting suitable translations of their allusive poetry, the editor has favored translations which express their meaning for contemporary believers.

Hinduism ---The Hindu religious tradition defies description by any simple list of doctrines and practices. Some branches are monistic and see divinity as pervading all reality, some are largely dualistic and posit reality as the interrelation of the divine Spirit (Purusha) and primordial material nature (prakriti), some are monotheistic and revere a personal God, and still others worship the Nameless and Formless God with many names and forms. A Hindu may worship God in the form of Krishna or Shiva, or seek unity with the impersonal Brahman, yet he will regard all these as symbols for one Ultimate Reality. Whether a Vedantist who sees Reality as impersonal or a devotee of the Goddess Durga, he finds sanction for his views in the same scriptures. As it is stated in the Rig Veda: "Truth is one, and the learned call it by many names." If one might hazard a list of common features of Hindu faith and practice, it might include: (1) Brahman or Ultimate Reality is both personal and impersonal and appears in many forms; (2) it is accessible through a variety of paths (margas): knowledge (jnana yoga), devotion (bhakti yoga), and action (karma yoga); and (3) it is realized by those sages who have attained union or communion with that Reality. (4) On the other hand, creation and the phenomena of worldly life are temporal and partial; they conceal the total Truth and its realization. (5) Hindus further hold the doctrine of karma, which says that each thought, word, and action brings appropriate recompense, thereby upholding the moral government and ultimate justice of the cosmos; and (6) the doctrine of reincarnation, understood as a dreary round of continued suffering or a continuous series of fresh opportunities to improve one's lot. Inequality of endowment and fortune is explained as the working out of karma and not as the result of some discrimination by God. Hindus also uphold (7) the authority of the Vedas; (8) the traditions of family and social life, with its four stages of student, householder, spiritual seeker, and ascetic who renounces all for the sake of spiritual progress and the welfare of all; (9) the four goals of life: righteousness (dharma), economic wealth (artha), pleasure (kama), and spiritual freedom (moksha); and (10) the validity and viability of the ideal social order and its attendant duties, which have degenerated into the caste system. The many sects of Hinduism, with few exceptions, share these features in common. Those Indian faiths which protested several of these features, such as Jainism, Sikhism, and Buddhism, soon became distinguished from the Hindu fold.

Hinduism's long tradition has produced many sacred works. The most ancient and authoritative are the revealed literature (shruti): these are the Vedas that include the Samhitas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas, and Upanishads. The four Vedas, the Rig Veda, Sama Veda, Yajur Veda, and Atharva Veda, have been transmitted orally from generation to generation for more than three thousand years. They are written in verse and contain hymns, ritual formulae, chants, and prayers. An exact method of traditional Vedic chanting has preserved most of the vedic hymns from corruption. Many of the Vedic hymns are addressed to deified powers of nature which are understood as manifestations of cosmic truth. Some refer to partaking of soma and the horse sacrifice, rituals that are rarely practiced by modern Hindus. Nevertheless, a proper understanding of the ancient Vedas shows them to contain all the essential elements of Hindu thought. It is those Vedic passages of eternal relevance that are excerpted in this anthology. The Brahmanas are prose amplifications of the Vedas. Two of them are quoted in this volume: the Sathapata Brahmana and the Tandyia Maha Brahmana. There are 108 Upanishads, composed at various times (900 b.c. to 200 b.c.); they belong to one or another recension of the Vedas or Aranyakas. Etymologically, "upanishad" means "sitting near," and the Upanishads record the philosophical and mystical teachings given by the ancient sages as they sat surrounded by their disciples. The commentaries of Shankara (d. 750 a.d.) highlighted eleven principal Upanishads: the Isha, Kena, Katha, Prasna, Mundaka, Mandukya, Aitareya, Taittiriya, Chandogya, Brihadaranyaka, and Svetasvatara. The Maitri Upanishad is also regarded as significant by many authorities. A few Upanishads such as the Svetasvatara may be interpreted in a predominantly monotheistic sense as teaching devotion to a personal God, but the general trend of the Upanishads is to identify Reality as supra-personal Brahman, who is "not this, not that"--beyond any particular description, and is one with the Atman or universal Self residing in the heart of each person. They teach that liberation is to realize the Atman within while transcending the ego-self that is identified with the psycho-physical organism, its actions and desires. The most widely known Hindu scripture is the Bhagavad Gita. Composed several centuries before the beginning of our era, it is but one book of the great epic the Mahabharata. However, the authority and influence of the Bhagavad Gita is such that it is usually raised to the status of an Upanishad. It has been called "India's favorite Bible," and with its emphasis on selfless service it was a prime source of inspiration for Mahatma Gandhi. Sharing many affinities with the older Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita sanctions several paths for realizing the highest goal of life. But it is also distinctively monotheistic, teaching that devotion (bhakti) is the supreme way to approach God and receive His grace. Other later Hindu texts are called sacred traditions (smriti), of lesser authority than the shruti. These include the great epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Episodes from these epics are familiar to every Indian school child, and they provide the themes of countless popular dramas and movies. The Ramayana recounts the story of Rama, who is an avatar or incarnation of Vishnu, and his wife Sita. It exalts the ideals of family life as superior to claims of rule and wealth. Rama obeys his father even though it means giving up his kingdom and dwelling in the forest. Then, when Sita is abducted by the evil demon-king Ravanna, Rama must go through many trials until he can mount an expedition to defeat Ravanna and regain his wife. Sita's perfect virtue is manifest as she faithfully goes into exile with Rama and later preserves her chastity during the captivity under Ravanna. The Mahabharata recounts the civil war between the clan of the Kauravas,

led by the evil Duryodhana and his cohort Karna, against the Pandavas who are championed by Arjuna and Krishna. Krishna is, like Rama, an avatar of Vishnu (the name used by Vaishnavas to designate the One God) under human conditions and limitations, but in the eleventh chapter of the Bhagavad Gita he reveals his transcendental form to Arjuna. Throughout the epic the virtues of courage, devotion to duty, and right living are extolled. Another group of smriti texts are the collections of dharma, duty or law as it relates to members of society. The Laws of Manu is the most important of these, and we also include excerpts from the collections of Narada, Vasishtha, and Apastamba. Regarding the laws in these collections, the editors have chosen to avoid those controversial matters relating to the caste system. Despite the Vedic origins of varnashrama dharma, the degenerate caste system is probably the one feature of Hinduism which is repudiated by most modern Hindu reformers and intellectuals. This is in keeping with the aim of World Scripture, to accentuate the positive features of religion. The Puranas are medieval collections of laws, stories, and philosophy which largely reflect the teachings of older scriptures but also illustrate them with concrete stories and examples. They are enormously influential in the popular religious expressions of modern India. The most well-known of these is the Srimad Bhagavatam or Bhagavata Purana, the scripture of Krishna's life and teachings, his childhood exploits, and his love of the adoring cowherd girls, which is central to the religion of Vaishnavite Hindus. Another Vaishnavite scripture, the Vishnu Purana, contains a prophecy about Kalki, a future avatar. The Shiva Purana, Skanda Purana, and Linga Purana are among the scriptures of Shaivism. The Garuda Purana and Matsya Purana contain descriptions of the afterlife and the effects of karma on a person's destiny. The Markandeya Purana contains a story of a king whose compassionate attitude closely resembles that of a bodhisattva, and a description of the victory of the Goddess Durga, a popular Hindu deity. Many other Puranas exist, and more are still being written, adding to the fascinating variety of India's religious landscape. Tantras are manuals of religious practice. Tantrism in both Hinduism and Buddhism uses yogic techniques, symbolic ritual, and the transmutation of ordinary desire in order to transcend all desires by identification with Ultimate Reality. This last feature has given Tantrism a scandalous reputation for purportedly licentious rites, but in fact all genuine Tantric practice requires as a prerequisite mastery over ordinary desires by total ascetic self-control. These texts are represented here by the Kularnava Tantra. Hindu philosophers, saints, and poets have produced a voluminous literature which is largely beyond the scope of an anthology limited to scripture. We mention the sutras, and their commentaries laying out the six orthodox philosophical systems (darshanas): Vedanta (the Brahma Sutra of Badarayana and commentaries by Shankara, Ramanuja, and Madhva), Yoga (the Yoga Sutra of Patanjali, Sankhya, Nyaya, Vaisheshika, and Purva Mimamsa. These texts delve into specialized realms of philosophy; in large measure, the religious content of these systems is already covered by the Vedas and Upanishads upon which they heavily draw. We also cannot do justice to the literature of the medieval saints who expressed their devotion to Shiva or Vishnu in dance, poems, and love songs in the vernacular languages of the many states of India. In Tamil-nadu the Nayanars adored Shiva and the Alvars sang of Vishnu: chief among them was Nammalvar who wrote of the devotee as a woman totally immersed in love with her husband Vishnu. Of Hindi poets the foremost was Kabir, whose poetry joining Hindu and Islamic Sufi concepts has become an enduring source of wisdom for all Indians; we meet some of his verses as they

have been incorporated in the Sikh scriptures. Others include Tulsidas, who wrote the Hindi version of the Ramayana, and Jayadeva, whose Gita Govinda, a poem in Sanskrit describing the love of Radha and Krishna, is widely performed in temple dances. These and countless other saints continue to express the Hindu tradition in forms that are ever new. Of these devotional movements, the Lingayats of Karnataka province in southwest India are worthy of special mention because of their distinctive beliefs and reforming spirit. The Virashaiva movement, founded by Basavanna (12th century a.d.), rejected the caste system, disputed the authority of the Vedas, opposed image-worship, and taught a personal religion of devotional monotheism that dispensed with temple and priesthood. Basavanna's reforms have justly been compared to those of Martin Luther. His Vachanas are venerated as scripture.

Sikhism ----Sikhism is a monotheistic religion with about twenty million adherents. It teaches devotion to God and denial of egoism as the basis for the good life. A relatively modern religion, it was born in the fifteenth century in the Punjab in northern India under the inspiration of Guru Nanak. He and the four Gurus who followed him sought to cut through the differences between Hindus and Muslims and among castes, teaching that inner intention and purity of devotion, not doctrine or social status, are the measure of a person before God. Each of these Gurus spoke as a reformer within his own community, as a Hindu among Hindus and a Muslim among Muslims; their intention was to reform from within, though now they speak to us as founders of an independent religion. For under the pressure of persecution, Sikhism developed under the last five Gurus into a distinct religious community with its own code of conduct and distinctive forms of dress. The writings of the first five Gurus were compiled by Guru Arjan Dev, the fifth Guru, into the Adi Granth. The tenth Guru, Gobind Singh, ended the succession of Gurus and invested the Adi Granth as the Guru Granth Sahib, the eternal living Guru. Since then, the Guru Granth has been the object of ultimate sanctity and the source of sacred inspiration; it is the highest authority for the Sikhs. The Adi Granth is a collection of verse compositions, grouped together into ragas, the musical meters according to which they are sung. The pagination is standardized in the Punjabi text, along with notation indicating which Guru authored the verse: M.1 indicates verses of Guru Nanak; M.2, those of Guru Angad; M.3, those of Guru Amar Das; M.4, those of Guru Ram Das; M.5, those of Guru Arjan Dev; and M.9, of Guru Tegh Bahadur. In line with the expansive spirit of the Gurus, the Adi Granth also contains verses from Hindu and Muslim poets of that age such as Kabir, Ravidas, Surdas, Farid, and Ramanand.

Jainism----Jainism is the religion of about ten million people in India, with its own distinctive scriptures, history, and a long philosophic tradition. Although a part of the greater Indian culture, Jainism, like Buddhism, is a non-Vedic religious tradition, rejecting the authority of the Vedas, Upanishads, and other Hindu scriptures and their deities. Noted for its rigorous asceticism, Jain thought has influenced the greater Indian culture especially through its doctrine of ahimsa, non-injury to all living beings. Jainism teaches a strict doctrine of karma, which binds a person to suffer rebirth and retribution for all evil actions. A person must therefore liberate himself or herself from the fetters of karma by taking a vow of asceticism and thenceforth avoiding all violence in deed, in word, and in thought. All passionate desire begets violence, and is itself the result of the karmas of a deluded

consciousness which must be eliminated. Jainism does not accept a creator God or personal God; instead each person has within himself or herself the potential to realize perfection and become a paramatman, a soul freed from all karmic fetters and able to reach the highest point in the universe. Mahavira, born Nataputta Vardhamana (599-527 b.c.), realized this perfection and became a Tirthankara, the Fordfinder, who discovered the Path to salvation. A near contemporary of the Buddha, he is twenty-fourth in a long succession of Tirthankaras extending back to Rishabhadeva of the Vedic period.[5] Popular Jainism venerates him to the point of worshipping him as a divine source of grace, thus adding a personal, devotional element absent from Jain philosophy. There are two branches of Jainism, divided over whether a monk may or may not wear clothing: the Shvetambaras allow clothes and the Digambaras demand total nudity, as they each believe was the practice of Mahavira. The canon of Jain scriptures (agamas) begins with the sermons of Mahavira, written down by his disciples in ancient languages of Ardhamagadhi and Shauraseni Prakrit, called Purvas. The oldest of these, however, have been lost, and thence the two Jain communities reconstructed different canons from the collections of surviving scriptures, now written in Prakrit and Sanskrit. The scriptures according to the Shvetambara Jains are composed of twelve limbs (angas) and 34 subsidiary texts (angabahya). The first limb is the Acarangasutra, which contains laws for monks and nuns and the most authoritative biography of Mahavira. The Sutrakritanga is the second limb and contains Jain doctrines expounded through disputes with other Hindu and early Buddhist teachings. Among the angabahya the best known is the Uttaradhyayana Sutra, an anthology of dialogues and teachings believed to be the last sermon of the Mahavira, and the Kalpa Sutra, containing biographies of the Jinas. Other scriptures of the Shvetambara canon include the Upasakdasanga Sutra, Dashavaikalika Sutra, and Nandi Sutra. The Digambara Jains believe that most of the original Purvas have been lost and dispute the authenticity of the Shvetambara scriptures. To the small surviving portion of the ancient Purvas they add a large number of scholastic expositions (anuyoga). These expositions constitute the scriptures of the Digambara tradition. Among them are the writings of Kundakunda (1st century a.d.): the Samayasara, Niyamasara, Pravacanasara, and Pancastikaya; the Anupreksha of Kartikeya (2nd century a.d.), and the Samadhishataka of Pujiyapada (6th century a.d.). The Tattvarthasutra of Umasvati (2nd century a.d.) is a systematization of Jain doctrine into concise aphorisms in the style of the Hindu Vedanta Sutras; its Digambara commentaries include the Sarvarthasiddhi of Pujiyapada, the Tattvartharajavartika of Akalanka (8th century a.d.), and the Tattvarthaslokavartika of Vidyanandi (9th century a.d.). The Tattvarthasutra is recognized as authoritative, with only minor differences, by both Digambara and Shvetambara sects. Another exposition which is accepted by both sects is the Sanmatitarka by Siddhasena (5th century a.d.), a treatise on logic concerned with establishing the simultaneous validity of several viewpoints on reality. Surviving fragments of the Purvas spawned commentaries such as the Gomattasara of Nemichandra (950 a.d.) and the Jayadhavala by Virasena (820 a.d.). Legends and biographies of saints are found in the Adipurana of Jinasena (9th century a.d.); their praises are sung in the Dvattrimshika of Siddhasena; while the Aptamimamsa of Samantabhadra (5th century a.d.) gives philosophical arguments for the Jina's perfection, omniscience, and purity. The Mulacara of Vattakera (2nd century a.d.) contains monastic rules comparable to those in the Acarangasutra, while the Ratnakarandasravakacara of Samantabhadra and the

Sagaradharmamrita of Ashadhara (13th century a.d.) provide ethical instruction for lay people. This listing does not nearly exhaust the selection of anuyoga cited herein. Among the extra-canonical works, we include several passages from the Nitivakyamrita of Somadeva (10th century a.d.), a Jain classic on polity.

Buddhism -----The Buddha, born Siddhartha Gautama (c. 581-501 b.c.)[6], taught in India, where Buddhism flourished for nearly fifteen hundred years and where most of its basic scriptures were written. There Buddhism evolved into many schools, of which two major branches survive: Theravada Buddhism which spread to Sri Lanka and throughout Southeast Asia, and Mahayana Buddhism which spread northward to Tibet, Mongolia, China, Korea, and Japan. Eventually Buddhism would nearly disappear from India, and these two branches thence developed independently until this present ecumenical age. Theravada Buddhism, the "teaching of the elders," claims to preserve the original teaching of the Buddha. It teaches the ideal of the arahant (Skt. arhat), one who has achieved liberation from all fetters of selfhood and craving. The goal of liberation, Nibbana (Skt. Nirvana), can be reached through self-purification and proper understanding of the Dhamma (Skt. Dharma), which is specifically the Four Noble Truths: (1) all existence is dukkha, suffering: we must inevitably live with things we dislike and separate from things we like; (2) suffering is due to grasping for existence and craving (tanha) for the pleasures of sense and mind; (3) the cessation of suffering comes with giving up all craving and grasping; and (4) the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering is the Noble Eightfold Path. This path to salvation requires constant practice and training; there is no appeal to divine grace. More important than ascetic practices, which can be counterproductive by promoting a false sense of pride, is the realization that the self has no reality; it is a mirage born of conditioning and is, like the body, impermanent. As there is no self, also there is no God in the sense of a Being with whom one could identify his Self (as in the Hindu Atman). Buddhism demotes the Hindu deities to the level of spirits, conditioned by their own past lives as human beings and hence liable at some time to be reborn; they are not yet liberated. The path of the monk, who has abandoned ties with worldly life, greatly facilitates progress towards the ultimate goal. Lay people generally pursue the more modest goal of gaining merit by ethical living and contributing to the welfare of the order of monks. Yet the Theravada tradition has its lay saints who achieved the highest meditative states and became wholly enlightened. The Theravada scriptures are written in Pali, a language formerly of northwestern India; with the advent of Buddhism Pali became the common language among the Buddhist monks of South Asia. The canon of Theravada scriptures is called the Tipitaka (Skt. Tripitaka) or Three Baskets, and they are divided as follows: the Vinaya Pitaka, collections of rules and precepts for the order of monks; the Sutta Pitaka, discourses and dialogues of the Buddha; and the Abhidhamma Pitaka, scholastic and philosophical treatises. Most of the passages selected from the Tipitaka for this anthology are taken from the books of the second basket, the Sutta Pitaka. The most well-known and widely quoted scripture among them is the Dhammapada or Verses of Righteousness. A book of pithy sayings on Buddhist practice and ethics, it has been called the Buddhist counterpart to the Bhagavad Gita, and it is a basic text for the education of school children in Theravada Buddhist countries. Another basic text is the Khuddaka Patha or the Short Section; it is layman's prayer book containing a simple catechism, precepts, and teachings. Three other

important books containing material stemming from the Buddha himself are the Sutta Nipata, the Udana, and the Itivuttaka. They contain short, often rational teachings by the Buddha about the way to the liberation on leading a life of balance and self-control, and condemnations of prejudice and traditionalism. The Theragatha and Therigatha are verses describing the experiences of early monks and nuns, and the Petavatthu is a book of stories of ghosts and spirits: these are among the 15 books comprising the division (nikaya) of the Sutta Pitaka called the Khuddaka Nikaya. The remainder of the Sutta Pitaka contains texts organized by divisions: the Digha Nikaya, long, mainly narrative discourses; the Majjhima Nikaya, medium length discourses on the application of Buddhist teaching or dhamma; the Samyutta Nikaya, prescriptions on Buddhist life connected by subject; and the Anguttara Nikaya, numerically arranged discourses. Beyond the Pali Tipitaka are semi-canonical works of wide acceptance: from the Jataka stories of Buddha's previous lives, the Visuddhimagga or Path of Purification by Buddhaghosa, and the Questions of King Milinda where the Greek King Menander (2nd century b.c.) inquires of the Buddhist sage Nagasena. We have made use of the traditional biography of the Buddha, the Buddhacarita by Ashvaghosha (c. 100). Mahayana Buddhism, the Great Vehicle, is divided into many schools, each with its own favorite scriptures. These schools concur with most of the fundamental doctrines found in Theravada Buddhism (which it calls the shravaka-vehicle), including the doctrines of no-self and the conditioned nature of worldly reality. But many Mahayana schools identify an eternal, transcendent reality, Tathata (Suchness), the Truth or Law which governs this Universe. For the enlightened, everything is considered as a manifestation of this Truth; within human beings it is present as the Buddha Nature, the pure Mind, which is realized as one develops on the path to Buddhahood. Suchness is by no means a Creator God in the sense of Western religions; from the Buddhist point of view the word "God" is too often loaded with connotations from other traditions to be helpful for understanding Buddhism. Nevertheless, we find that Mahayana Buddhism contains doctrines of Ultimate Reality and grace that are absent from the doctrines of the Theravada school. In addition, Mahayana Buddhism teaches the ideal of the bodhisattva (the "Bodhisattva-vehicle"), the man of great compassion who gives himself for the liberation of all beings. The absence of the reality of self means that all things are interrelated and indivisible, hence the salvation of the individual is inseparable from compassion for others. A third distinctive feature of Mahayana Buddhism is that certain great Bodhisattvas, which we may regard as the symbolic manifestations of the Buddha's perfections of wisdom, morality, charity, and compassion, are worshipped on the popular level as spiritual benefactors. In popular Buddhism Kuan Yin (Jap. Kannon; Skt. Avalokitesvara), Amitabha Buddha, Samantabhadra, and other Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are worshipped and entreated for grace and succor. The vast Mahayana collections of scriptures are written in Sanskrit and collected in Chinese and Tibetan Tripitakas. Each of the several Mahayana schools of Buddhism venerates certain particular canonical scriptures, supplemented by texts from the founders of the school. Yet despite the proliferation of schools, all of them share a common core of belief and practice, and hence there is much repetition in content among the various scriptures. Most Mahayanists also accept the authority of the texts in the Pali canon. Among the most beloved of Mahayana scriptures is the Lotus Sutra (Saddharma-Pundarika). It teaches the doctrine of the One Vehicle, which promises that regardless of their particular sect and way of Buddhist practice, all beings will

surely attain Buddhahood. It contains the doctrine of the eternal cosmic Buddha, whose abundant and universal grace is the source of this salvation. Furthermore, the Buddha's salvation is available to all through faith in the Sutra--the emphasis on faith has led some Christian scholars to liken the Lotus Sutra to the Gospel. This sutra is especially central to the Chinese T'ien-t'ai (Jap. Tendai) school and the several sects inspired by Nichiren (1222-1282) in Japan. Buddhists of the Pure Land schools, including in Japan the Jodo Shu founded by Honen and the Jodo Shinshu founded by Shinran, rely on the grace of Buddha Amitabha or Buddha Amitayus, the Buddha of Infinite Light, to bring them into the Western Paradise (Sukhavati). Their total reliance on grace, to the exclusion of human efforts which are condemned as a form of self-seeking, is comparable to Lutheran Protestantism. The scriptures of the Pure Land schools include the two Sukhavativyuha Sutras, which describe the vows of Buddha Amitabha to lead all people to that Pure Land, and the Meditation on Buddha Amitayus (Amitayur Dhyana Sutra). The Garland Sutra (Avatamsaka Sutra) is the scripture of the Chinese Hua-yen (Jap. Kegon) school. It is a vast collection full of rich imagery and containing a wide range of teachings. Among them: Buddha is presented as a cosmic principle and a manifestation of that principle, representing Enlightenment itself; all things, all causes, all effects, are interdependent and interpenetrating and should not be regarded from a partial viewpoint; and the career of the bodhisattva is represented as spanning ten stages of ever expanding awareness, inner peace, and compassion for all other beings. The Gandhavyuha Sutra, the thirty-ninth book of the Garland Sutra, sometimes stands on its own. It describes the journeys of a seeker who travels all over India receiving religious advice from fifty-five teachers from all walks of life and ultimately realizes the highest truth. The sutras on the perfection of wisdom (prajnaparamita) are widely studied. This literature comprises sutras of various lengths: from the short Heart Sutra (Prajnaparamita-hridaya Sutra), which takes up less than one page, to massive sutras in 18,000, 25,000 and 100,000 verses. The earliest and most formative for all the wisdom schools is the Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines (Astasahasrika Prajnaparamita Sutra), which deals with the doctrine of Emptiness (Sunyata) and the path of the bodhisattva who "courses in perfect wisdom" to realize the six perfections. Perhaps the most famous wisdom sutra is the Diamond Sutra (Vajracchedika Prajnaparamita Sutra). Its brief and paradoxical utterances which confound ordinary logic lead one to a deeper apprehension of Emptiness. Out of this tradition arose the meditation (Chin. Ch'an, Jap. Zen) schools of Buddhism, comprising those which teach a gradual enlightenment--the Japanese Soto Zen school--and those which emphasize sudden enlightenment--the Rinzai school which was popularized in the West by Suzuki Daisetsu. Ch'an was much influenced by Taoist naturalism, and this has shaped Zen practice and the Zen ethos in Japan as well. The classic Chinese expression of Ch'an is the Sutra of Hui Neng, also called the Platform Sutra, by Hui Neng the sixth Patriarch (638-713) and founder of the school of sudden enlightenment. This sutra's main teaching is the identity of each person's original mind with Buddha nature. Sudden Zen employs the koan. These are pithy and paradoxical statements which teach emptiness by confounding the intellect, forcing the student back on his own direct apprehension of Reality. The student may only gain entry into truth by intuition, never by logic, and thence he may experience insight (Jap. satori) corresponding with the Buddha's enlightenment. This anthology includes selections from the collection of koans known as the Mumonkan or Gateless Gate. It is a commentary on a group

of forty-eight koans compiled by Wu-men Hui-k'ai (Jap. Mumon Ekai) of Sung dynasty China. The Lankavatara Sutra is a philosophical source for much of Zen doctrine; it teaches that false discriminations of subject and object occur because of the seeds of defilement which accumulate in the subconscious mind; in reality all discriminated entities are empty; they are nothing but creations of our mind. A vast compendium of Buddhist teachings which is little known in the West is the Mahaparinirvana Sutra, whose main theme is the Buddha nature which is full of compassion and transcends the impermanent world of activity. Better known is the Holy Teaching of Vimalakirti, in which a lay bodhisattva shows himself superior at argument and possessed of more supernatural powers than a congregation of Buddha's greatest disciples. It teaches that one may aspire to Buddhahood while living in the midst of the world--to be in the world but not of the world. This teaching is fundamental to Nagarjuna's approach, where samsara and nirvana are equated: in other words, nirvana is not a goal in the future but can be actualized in the present. In the Surangama Sutra Buddha teaches one disciple who nearly falls into lust the way to control the mind and hence to progress towards Enlightenment. In the Lion's Roar of Queen Srimala a woman lay follower evinces deep insight as she teaches about the Original Mind which is inherently free of defilement. The Golden Light Sutra (Suvarnaprabhasottama), popular in Japan, includes teachings on political theory. The Sutra of Forty-two Sections is a popular ethical text inspired by Theravada teachings. In Tibet, the great teachers of Mahayana Buddhism: Nagarjuna, Shantideva, Aryadeva, Vasubandhu, Dharmakirti, and others, are venerated as great bodhisattvas, and among Tibetan Buddhists their writings are frequently quoted as scripture. The works of the founders of the four traditions of Tibetan Buddhism: Gyalwa Longchenpa, Sakya Pandita, Milarepa, and Lama Tsongkhapa, are also venerated. World Scripture includes excerpts from the works of the above authorities which are available wholly or partly translated into English, in particular Nagarjuna's Mulamadhyamaka Karika and Precious Garland and Shantideva's Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life (Bodhisattvacharyavatara). Nagarjuna was a formidable logician who gave the foundational philosophical expression to the doctrine of sunyata and to the identity of samsara and nirvana. Shantideva's work expresses the ethic of the aspiring bodhisattva, who lives in the world unattached to self while doing gracious deeds for the sake of others. Buddhism in Tibet includes both orthodox Mahayana doctrine and esoteric Vajrayana doctrine with its Tantric practices. Tantric practice, as in Hinduism, uses yogic techniques, symbolic ritual, and the transmutation of ordinary desire in order to transcend all desires by identification with Ultimate Reality. The Hevajra Tantra, Kalacakra Tantra, and Guhyasamaja Tantra are excerpted here; also included is the Tibetan Book of the Dead (Bardo Thodol) which contains instructions for the soul on its journey into the next life.

Confucianism ---The religious world of China can be described as a complex blending of many currents. The indigenous religion, characterized by reverence for ancestors and striving for harmony with the forces of nature, was elevated on the one side by the ethical ideals of Confucianism and on the other by the mystical ideals of Taoism. With the introduction of Buddhism, which after some conflict, harmonized with the older Chinese traditions, it could be said that the traditional Chinese spirit became a blend of the Three Teachings (san chiao): Confucianism in matters of education and ethics; Taoism in regard to personal enlightenment

as well as when threatened by sickness or bad fortune; and Buddhism in regard to death and the afterlife--these in addition to the traditional sacrifices offered to the departed of the family and nature spirits. Modern western influences on China, both through Christianity and Communism, have yet to be fully integrated with this rich tradition. Because China's religious traditions are so interwoven in the Chinese soul, it may be misleading to discuss Confucianism or Taoism as independent religions, though this is how they are customarily treated in the West. Confucianism is a system mainly of ethical relations, defining values of family life and the administration of the state. It also incorporated the traditional Chinese veneration of ancestors and engendered a cult of Confucius as the official patron of education and culture. Confucius (551-479 b.c.) himself was a reformer who sought to lift up the most humane elements in existing traditions of government and social life. He urged his students to pursue an ideal of conduct, which he referred to as the way of the gentleman or the superior man. The superior man is sincere, filial toward his parents, loyal to his lord, adheres to social and religious forms (li), practices reciprocity--the Golden Rule, and has a broad knowledge of culture. Most of all, he is humane (jen) towards his relations, friends, and associates. Based on the obligations of filial piety and the ethic of humaneness, society is ordered according to the Five Relations: sovereign and subject, father and son, elder brother and younger brother, husband and wife, and friend and friend. Yet it can hardly be said that China as a whole has always lived up to Confucius' teaching. The ruler especially should be endowed with the virtues of the superior man, and rule by example, rather than by force. A king who governs by raw force does not deserve the name. A government that does not have the support of the people will lose the Mandate of Heaven and will inevitably be overthrown; hence there can be justification for revolution. Confucius said little about divinity, but Confucianism has a religious side with a deep reverence for Heaven and Earth, whose powers regulate the flow of nature and influence human events. The cosmology of yin and yang predates both Confucianism and Taoism, and is incorporated into both. The ways of man should conform to the principles of the cosmos, or else they will be frustrated. Therefore the Confucianist may consult the I Ching, divining the changes in these natural forces in order to guide his life properly. There is profound respect for nature, for all the myriad things partake of Principle that is also the basis for a sincere mind. The canonical scriptures of Confucianism are the Five Classics and the Four Books. The Five Classics are, with some exceptions, the ancient sources which Confucius himself studied, from which he drew his teachings, and upon which he left his interpretive stamp. The Book of Songs (Shih Ching) contains ritual and mythic odes, love songs, and songs describing political life of China's ancient rulers from the tenth to seventh century b.c.e. The Book of History (Shu Ching) contains speeches and decrees attributed to the early Chou dynasty (1122-722 b.c.), especially surrounding the reigns of the Confucian culture heroes: Kings Wen and Wu and the Duke of Chou. The Spring and Autumn Annals (Ch'un Ch'iu) are chronicles of the state of Lu. The Book of Ritual (Li Chi) is a compilation of materials dealing with rites and proper social forms, expressing the conviction that adherence to rules of social and ritual propriety is an outward reflection of inner sincerity and uprightness. The I Ching, (Book of Changes), is canonical for both Confucianism and Taoism, but of its many ancient recensions only the version with Confucius' commentary survives as one of the Five Classics. As mentioned above, the I Ching is traditionally used for divination; but its commentaries imbue the book's oracles with Confucian values. Its yin-yang

cosmology lies at the root of a metaphysics that has been adopted by Confucianists and Taoists alike. Taoist handbooks on the I Ching emphasize its use as a manual for divination, a guide for meditation and spiritual growth, and as the foundation for systems of medicine, painting, and martial arts. The Four Books were selected by the Neo-Confucianist scholar Ch'eng I (1032-1107). Together with the commentary by Chu Hsi (1130-1200) they are the standard works of Confucian orthodoxy and the core of traditional Chinese education. They are: the Analects (Lun y), a collection of aphorisms by Confucius himself; the Great Learning (Ta hseh), a foundation text for education; the Doctrine of the Mean (Chung Yung), a philosophical exposition of Confucian thought;^[7] and the Mencius, the work of Confucius' greatest successor (372-289 b.c.). In addition to the Five Classics and the Four Books, we have included selections from the Classic on Filial Piety and some passages on the life of Confucius from the classic of Chinese historiography, the Shih Chi by Ssu-ma Ch'ien (c. 145-85 b.c.).

Taoism ---The Taoist viewpoint stands in a complementary relationship to Confucianism, emphasizing the free and easy original nature of the individual, unsullied by social convention, against Confucianism's strenuous efforts to mold society and its emphasis on social forms and ethical norms. The two traditions have coexisted in a balance, complementing each other like male and female, summer and winter, yang and yin. A Confucianist statesmen could retire to the country and find joy in the natural aesthetic fostered by Taoism. Taoism teaches that the way to a good society is not through educating man to society's norms, but through stripping them away to arrive at a state of nature. The Taoist sages seek mystical identification with the great pattern of nature, the impersonal Tao, through meditation and trance. In attaining union with nature and its Tao, the sage becomes nameless, formless, and simple, yet paradoxically gains the Tao's te, which may be translated "virtue" or "power." By doing nothing (wu-wei) he attains everything because he will spontaneously unite with nature and find his own original self. But to cling to human distinctions and to try and force a certain result is to go out of harmony with the Tao and accomplish nothing. The ideal Taoist ruler should do nothing to encourage wealth or power, for that would just lead to thievery and usurpation. Rather he should "empty people's minds and fill their bellies" in a state of primitive simplicity. The chief scripture of philosophical Taoism is the Tao Te Ching. It is attributed to the legendary Taoist founder Lao Tzu, who is traditionally believed to have lived slightly before Confucius. Written in a terse and cryptic style, it is difficult to translate, as the many divergent English translations attest. The second Taoist scripture is the Chuang-tzu, whose earliest strata date from the fourth century b.c. Its vivid imagery, in parables and metaphorical tales, contains the essence of early Taoist thought. A chief emphasis of Taoism is the pursuit of long life. In the popular mind, Taoist sages are thought to have attained longevity and to have become virtually immortal. Institutional Taoism--in contrast to the philosophical Taoism of the texts described above--promoted systems of inner hygiene that have become popular throughout the Orient: through proper diet and exercise and by regulating breathing one opens the inner channels of the body to nature's vital forces. The achievements of Chinese medicine and the various schools of martial arts are all practical outgrowths of Taoism and rely upon Taoist science and metaphysics. Taoism also includes a vast canon of mystical and ritual texts, most of them

unavailable in English. There is a pantheon of Taoist deities, immortals, and ancestors from whom people may seek favors and beseech expiation for their sins. Taoist texts often emphasize divine rewards and punishments which affect both one's lifespan and destiny in the hereafter. In this anthology, popular religious Taoism is represented by two ethical tracts: the Treatise on Response and Retribution (T'ai-Shang Kan-Ying P'ien) and the Tract of the Quiet Way (Yin Chih Wen).

Shinto ---Shinto is the indigenous religion of the Japanese people. It coexists with Confucianism and Buddhism, and the three religions are intertwined, molding Japanese culture, ethics, and attitudes towards life and death. Shinto is centered on the worship of the myriad deities called kami. The kami embody what is numinous, or spiritual. They include the spirits embodied in natural objects and phenomena--wind and thunder, sun, mountains, rivers and trees; ancestral and guardian spirits of the nation and of its clans--especially the Imperial family; and the spirits of national heroes and people who have contributed to civilization. Chief among the kami is Amaterasu, the Sun Goddess and patron deity of Japan. In spite of this polymorphism, the kami operate harmoniously for the world's benefit, and hence they are often regarded as a collective whole and may be referred to by some authors as "God." Unlike western religions, there is not a great distinction between man, nature, and the deities; man is endowed with life and spirit from the kami and his ancestors, and finally he becomes a kami. The kami may be revered anywhere, but most worship takes place in shrines, which are usually located in beautiful natural surroundings. Through devotion to the kami, one can be united with them and attain the state of having a bright, clear mind. Shinto ethics stresses makoto, literally "roundedness," which connotes inner harmony and sincerity. The good is found in sincerity of heart, good will, and cooperation. Evil is to possess an evil heart, selfish desire and hatred, and to cause social discord. Thus, ethics is not defined by a code of commandments; instead it is a matter of inner sincerity and harmonious human relations. The living Shinto faith is mediated by the shrines and the rituals performed there. Every home has its kamidana, or god-shelf, which is the focus of daily offerings and worship. The local shrine with its annual festival is the focus of the community. More important shrines are visited on special occasions: weddings, New Year's Day, and public holidays. The kagura is danced at the shrines by the miko, female attendants who are a survival of an earlier shamanistic heritage. In Shinto outstanding personages, such as the Emperor, are regarded as ikigami, living kami--meaning that the divine is already manifested in them. It is wrong, however, to equate their status with God in an absolute sense (a mistake that is sometimes made in speaking of the Emperor's "divinity"). Shinto is not a religion mediated by written scriptures. Nevertheless, certain writings are central to Shinto and embody its spirit. The classics of Shinto are the Kojiki and the Nihon Shoki, which contain the mythology of the kami, the founding of Japan and its imperial line, and the records of the early emperors. Shinto ritual texts excerpted include Engishiki on purification and the Kagura-uta, ritual dances. There are a number of oracles associated with Shinto shrines which have wide influence. The Man'yoshu is a collection of poetry from the Nara period (700-1150). Later sources of Shinto include poetry and didactic texts: One Hundred Poems about the World (Yo no naka hyaku-shu) by Moritake Arakida (c. 1525), which has been called the "Analects of the Ise Shrine" and is used in children's moral education; Divine Injunctions (Jingikun) by

Ekken Kiabara (1630-1714); Records of the Divine Wind (Shinpuki) by Mochimasa Hikita (ca. 1660); One Hundred Poems on the Way of Death (Shido hyaku-shu) by Naokata Nakanishi (1643-1709); and One Hundred Poems on the Jeweled Spear (Tamaboko Hyaku-shu) by Norinaga Motoori (1730-1801).

African Traditional Religions---There are more than one hundred million adherents of the various traditional religions of Africa, North America, South America, Asia, and the South Pacific. While many of these religions are restricted to village and tribal societies, others are vigorous in urban areas, where they offer dimensions of the sacred in the midst of an industrializing society. Some are even expanding to the status of world religions: the Yoruba religion, for example, has more than 30 million adherents and has spread from its homeland in Nigeria to Brazil and the Caribbean where its variants go by the names Candomble and Santeria. African traditional religion shows belief in a Supreme Being, a transcendent Creator, who is at the same time immanent in His or Her involvement in the lives of human beings and as the Sustainer of the universe. African names for God are built on one or another of God's attributes: as Creator he is called Nzame (Fang), Mu'umba (Swahili), Chineke (Igbo), Ngai (Gikuyu), and Imana (Ruanda-Urundi); as the Supreme Being his name is Oludumare (Yoruba), Mawu (Ewe), and Unkulu-Nkulu (Zulu). As Grandfather or Great Ancestor he is called Nana (Akan) and Ataa Naa Nyonmo (Ga); among the Kalibari she is Opu Tamuno, Great Mother. As Orise (Yoruba) he is the Source of All Being; as Yataa (Kono) and Nyinyi (Bamum) he is everywhere present; Chukwu (Igbo) means Great Providence who determines destinies; Onyame (Akan, Ashanti) means the One who Gives Fullness. As the Spirit of the universe he is Molimo (Bantu); as Heaven or the Spirit of the sky he is called Nhialic (Dinka), Kwoth (Nuer), Soko (Nupe), Olorun (Yoruba); and by the Igbo name Ama-ama-amasi-amasi he is Who is Never Fully Known. Despite the many names and representations of God which vary from one part of Africa to another, the people recognize that they all refer to one Supreme Being, whose dominion extends through the length and breadth of the universe. Below the Supreme Being, and more immediately felt as influencing human affairs, is a constellation of subordinate deities and ancestral spirits. Human beings depend upon the intercession and activity of good deities and spirits to protect them from disease and misfortunes which are often caused by malevolent powers and spirits. Prayers, offerings, rituals, and an ethical life help gain God's blessing and the assistance of good deities and ancestors. African traditional religions also place great importance on the community. Members of the same village or community are expected to help each other and share each other's burdens, as social solidarity is the norm. The community is held together by its traditions, as expressed in ritual and handed down by elders, priests, shamans, and gifted spiritual leaders.

Native American Religions-----Native American religions recognize that the natural world is pervaded by the primary generative spiritual forces. In the Native American world view, all beings are related, both physically and emotionally, and there is no sharp distinction between natural and supernatural entities. This world with its divine powers is symbolized in ritual by the six directions: North, South, East, West, the zenith, and the nadir, and by the living entities which represent them. Hence the zenith is understood as Grandfather (day) Sky,

represented by Father Sun and the Thunderbirds; the night sky, especially Grandmother Moon, is understood as female. The nadir is Mother or Grandmother Earth, including all of her aspects which give life and nourishment: Water, Corn Mother, Buffalo Mother, etc. In many modern Native American cultures, the totality of the spiritual forces may be referred to by a single term, examples being K'che Manitou in the Ojibwa language of the Algonquin and Wakan Tanka in Lakot of the Sioux. The goal of Native American religions is wholeness, to bring individuals, the community, and all their relations (Earth, plants, animals, spirits) into harmonious balance, to complete the circles of life, to walk in beauty. Native American rituals are oriented toward communal wholeness. Thus, the ritual use of tobacco, unique to the Americas, creates communion both among the participants and with the sacred beings to whom tobacco is offered in the sacred pipe. In many rituals, the participants strip themselves to their essential being in order to approach the spirits with humility and openness. Rituals of the sweat lodge, fasting, the sun dance, the vision quest, and those using psychoactive substances all serve to create the means for direct apprehension and communication with spiritual beings. Through these means, individuals develop relationships with spiritual entities that enable them to successfully live their lives for the good of their communities. Shamanism is widespread in most traditional religions. The shaman is specially gifted with the ability to communicate with the spiritual world. Since the unseen spiritual forces are recognized as in control of many phenomena on earth, a shaman may be called upon to heal physical and mental illness, to ferret out criminals, or to discover the reason for bad luck. The shaman may go into a trance for many hours, accompanied by dancing and the presentation of ritual objects. Other participants may join in the trance as well, as they try to cure the afflicted soul.

South Pacific Religions ---The traditional religions of the South Pacific are represented by a tradition from Tahiti and a legend of the Maori of New Zealand. Maori and Polynesian legends celebrate the prowess of those ancestors who bested the elements, explored and settled new islands, and won preeminence over their brethren. These heroes sometimes attained their goals through clever ruses, sometimes were adept at magic, and sometimes showed bravery in war. Some emerged as heroes despite low social status; some were impetuous and had to atone for their own mistakes; many had to deal with strife within their own families. Yet underneath is a deep longing for peace and harmony, even though it is rarely attained.

New Religions ----The new religions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with an aggregate membership of over 130 million people, comprise the fastest growing segment of the religious life on this planet. They demonstrate the continued vitality and freedom of the spirit, which ever seeks to break out of conventional institutional forms. Most of the new religions may be regarded as offshoots of older religious traditions. Although they are often grouped together on sociological grounds, from the viewpoint of their religious content they resemble their parent religions far more than they resemble each other. Some new religions have been accepted by their parent communities as expressions of orthodoxy: for example the Hare Krishna movement is accepted by many Hindus and some of the African independent churches have been reconciled with the leaders of mainline Christianity. Others, like the

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Jehovah's Witnesses, and the followers of Yogi Bajan, claim that they are continuous with an established world religion despite conflict with its leaders and institutions. We have alluded previously to the problems of defining scriptures for these new religions. In some cases the founder is still alive and giving messages which have yet to be digested into scripture. Many religions which regard themselves as continuous with their parent tradition utilize the parent tradition's scripture in teaching their doctrines. A few have distinctive texts suitable for inclusion in World Scripture--be they official scripture, an interpretation of an older scripture, the informal record of new revelations, or a collection of the founder's speeches. First, there are new sects and movements in Hinduism both in India and the West, for example, the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, the Theosophical Society, Arya Samaj, Brahmo Samaj, Ananda Marga, Transcendental Meditation, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (Hare Krishna), and movements centering on Meher Baba, Sathya Sai Baba, Bhagwan Rajneesh, and others. Some of these movements are eclectic and controversial in relation to their orthodox traditions, yet to a large extent their teachings are founded upon traditional scriptures which are well represented in World Scripture. For example, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness is a sect of Vaishnavite Hinduism which relies upon the Bhagavad Gita and the Srimad Bhagavatam. The same consideration applies to the western missions of Buddhists (Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, Hsuan Hua), Sikhs (Yogi Bajan, Kirpal Singh), and Taoists (George Ohsawa, Macrobiotics). The rapid industrialization of Japan in the last century brought with it the rise of a number of new religions, many of which have missionary presences around the world. Several Buddhist lay movements are offshoots of the branch of Japanese Buddhism founded by Nichiren (1222-1282) and rely upon the Lotus Sutra as their scripture. These include Rissh-o K-osei Kai, whose leader, Nikky-o Niwano, has been much involved in international peace movements, and S-oka Gakkai, founded by J-ozaburo Makiguchi, whose political wing, the Komeito party, is a strong force in the Japanese Diet. Another new religion with Buddhist roots is Agon-shu, which uses the Dhammapada and other Theravada sutras as scripture combined with esoteric Shingon Buddhist practices. The new religions with Shinto roots have unique scriptures of their own. First among the new religions of Japan was Tenrikyo. Founded by Miki Nakayama (1798-1887), its central scriptures are three collections of her revelations: Mikagura-uta, Ofudesaki, and K-oki. They teach that God, Tsukihi, is the divine Parent who longs for people to purify their minds from defiling "dust" and receive healing power and grace. Tsukihi means Sun and Moon, indicating the union of yin and yang, male and female. The main sanctuary at Tenri is believed to be at the place of the creation of the world, and in the ritual ten couples dance around the central column of this shrine which symbolizes the central pillar of the earth. The millennium is coming when heavenly dew will descend on the shrine at Tenri and enter the planet's omphalos. Tenriky-o encourages voluntary charitable activity and loving deeds to remove the dust that accumulates on one's character. Other new religions have combined Shinto with ideas from Christianity, Buddhism, and Shamanism. -Omoto Kyo, The Great Foundation, was founded by Nao Deguchi in 1892. Internationalist from the beginning (i.e., advocating the use of Esperanto), and for a time suppressed by the government, it teaches that God is the all-pervading Spirit, demanding that people work for unity and universal brotherhood. We include excerpts from its scripture Michi-no-Shiori. Sekai Kyusei Kyo, The

Church of World Messianity, was founded by Mokichi Okada (1882-1955), a former staff member of Omoto Kyo who in 1926 received revelations and was empowered to be a channel of God's Healing Light (jorei) to remove illness, poverty, and strife from the world and inaugurate a new messianic age. Okada's teaching is represented by the scripture Johrei, which has been edited and translated by the Society of Johrei, an offshoot of Okada's movement. The founder of Mahikari, Yoshikazu Okada (1901-1974), was a member of Sekai Kyusei Kyo before receiving his own revelations in 1959 which have been collected into a scripture called Goseigen. The two sects Mahikari and Sukyo Mahikari both practice a nearly identical form of healing called okiyome, in which God's Light (jorei) is focused through a pendant worn by the practitioner called the omitama. The doctrines of Seicho-no-Ie, that mind is the sole reality and that the body can be healed through faith and mental purification, bear a marked resemblance to those of Christian Science. The teachings of its founder Masaharu Taniguchi, who had also been a member of Omoto Kyo, are represented by the Nectarean Shower of Holy Doctrines, Song of the Angel, and Holy Sutra for Spiritual Healing. Perfect Liberty Kyodan, founded by Miki Tokuharu in 1926, combines elements of Shinto and Buddhism. It worships "the Supreme Spirit of the universe" but also stresses the role of ancestral spirits as part of one's karma. In stressing Life is Art, Perfect Liberty Kyodan draws upon the Buddhist teaching of non-self, by which what is truly authentic in a person comes to spontaneous expression.

Korea, since the 1960s, has seen the emergence of religious movements seeking to rediscover the indigenous Korean religion, that ancient religion which is believed to have prevailed prior to the importation of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Christianity. These movements include the Tan Goon Church, named after Tan Goon, the ancestor of the Korean people; the Tae Jong Church, the Han Il Church, the Chun Do Church, and countless small groups of folk religionists. The ancient thought of Korea has been preserved in several scriptures, the most important being the Chun Boo Kyung. This scripture is a chart of 81 Chinese characters, arranged in a square of nine rows and nine columns. The chart is quite cryptic, and its characters can be read in every possible combination of rows, columns, and diagonals. Yet it has yielded extensive interpretations revealing the principle of Heaven which governs man and the cosmos and by which life can prosper. This natural law is expressed by the significant numbers one to ten.

The Baha'i Faith grew out of nineteenth century Islam, and much of its teaching is congruent with traditional Islamic, and especially Sufi, ideas of man's mystic love for and union with God. It departs from Islam, however, with the proclamation that humanity has entered a new age of world unity and that the spiritual impulse for the new age has been given by God's new messenger and messiah, Baha'u'llah. The Baha'i scriptures have been gleaned and assembled from the many letters of Baha'u'llah, his forerunner the Bab, and his first disciples. We have included selections from *Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah*, the *Book of Certitude* (*Kitab-i-Iqan*), the *Hidden Words of Baha'u'llah*, and *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*. Now more than five million strong, there are Baha'i communities in most nations of the world. Among the Christian-based sects and new religions, many retain the Bible as their scripture, although it is given distinctive interpretation through the revelations to their founders. Among

them are the Seventh-Day Adventists and the Jehovah's Witnesses, sects born out of nineteenth century American Protestant millennialism which have large missionary presences throughout the world. In the twentieth century, new Christian groups tend to be more charismatic. They include the independent churches in Africa such as the Kimbanguists in Zaire and the Brotherhood of the Cross and Star in Nigeria. The Rastafarians are prominent in the Caribbean. Other new religions in the Christian family supplement the Bible with their own distinctive scriptural texts. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, with a membership exceeding seven million, has three revealed scriptures: the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price. The Book of Mormon is a translation from golden plates received by Joseph Smith after the visitation of the angel Moroni.[8] It tells the story of God's dealings with ancient inhabitants of the Americas and Jesus' appearances among them. Doctrine and Covenants contains revelations, prophecies, and decrees by Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and other early Latter-day Saint leaders by which the church was constituted. The Pearl of Great Price is a selection of revelations and translations, including translations of certain Egyptian papyri containing writings purported to be by Abraham and Moses and an autobiographical account of Joseph Smith's call. These scriptures teach distinctive doctrines concerning the nature of God, salvation, and the hereafter, and instruct on rituals such as the baptism of the dead and eternal Temple marriages. The Church of Christ, Scientist relies on Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures by Mary Baker Eddy. It contains her spiritualized interpretations of biblical texts, where she meditated especially on the healing miracles of Jesus. Christian Science teaches that mind is the sole reality, while belief in the reality of matter is an illusion. Disease and death, being properties of matter, are also illusory, and hence disease can be healed through mental power alone. Other new religions take their inspiration from sources outside of the major world religions. These sources include the traditions of Hermetic philosophy, alchemy, witchcraft, nature religions, spiritualism, astrology, and psychology. In the West there has been a proliferation of New Age and human potential groups, and as a representative of this group, we have chosen passages from the texts of the Church of Scientology, founded by L. Ron Hubbard. His writings describe a systematic psychological technique for purifying the mind from negative influences embedded in the subconscious mind in order to realize a state of "clear" and spiritual freedom.

Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) in Various Scripts

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in Hindu Scriptures

Before commencing creation, Allah gathered the souls of Prophets He would send down to earth and told them that He gave them scripture and wisdom; after all of them an Apostle (i.e. Muhammad will come and confirm their scriptures and that they must believe in him and help him. [Al Imran 3:81] As they evidently could not be his contemporaries, they helped him only by saying and writing about his advent, such that their posterity could have an introduction of him and so trust him. Prophet Muhammad was commanded by God to inform that he was not the only Messenger of God to the world [Al Qur'an 46:9]. Scholars say that there had been some 124,000 Prophet sent to the world who preached in the language of the respective people [A Qur'an 14:4]. The true religion they preached and their scriptures got corrupted with passage of time (with the exception of Al Qur'an). However, the message on the last and greatest Prophet Muhammad is retained till date in the scriptures of all major world religions. We are presenting here some interesting information from these Books so that adherents to these religions (as also Muslims) come to know that Messenger is not alien to them, get rid of unfounded prejudices against Islam and the Messenger and that they may take interest in the scripture and religion he brought. The reason is that Islam as given to him is the true religion of the world brought to ultimate perfection [Al Qur'an 5:3] These scriptures identify the greatest Prophet to come mentioning details of his birth, events of his life, his followers, etc. Some even give his Arabic name or its equivalents! This article will help creating right belief (Iman) in other religionists. Further, it will help Muslims appreciate yet another facet of greatness of Prophet and deepen their Iman. We will see here only a sample of the overwhelming evidences!

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in Hindu scriptures

There is no doubt that God sent Prophets to people of India . There is no mention of any Indian Prophet or scripture in Holy Qur'an. But Bukhari records Prophet Muhammad as saying he was enjoying breeze wafting from India laden with fragrance of Tawhid (unity of God). The four Vedas (scriptures) of Hindus and their epics are said to be 5000-10,000 years old. They contain a great deal of monotheistic ideas, and of course, prophecies on h Muhammad.

(1) Atharva Veda:-A chapter called Kuntapa Sukt of Atharva Veda is said to be very obscure in meaning and its theme, inscrutable. But it readily makes sense if looked at with history of Prophet . One verse as translated from Sanskrit language reads; Hear O people! Narashans will be praised. O Kaurama! We got 60,090 people from our enemies. The word Narashans means the 'Praised one' and the sentence 'praised one will be praised' is peculiar. Here Narashans is a proper noun, Muhammad in Arabic! Kaurama means emigrant muhajir that Prophet was. It also means spreader of peace - peace in Arabic is being salam or Islam! 60,000+ was the population of Makkah who eventually embraced Islam. The first line of the next verse is translated as; O Chanter (or Praiser)! Enjoy like a bird on a tree full of fruits. Praiser in Arabic is Ahmad, the other name of Prophet . The verse compares beautifully with the Qur'anic verses 14:24,25 describing Kalima Tayyiba ("There is no god but Allah") as a tree firmly rooted (in the earth), with branches reaching to heavens, capable of bearing fruit in all seasons (i.e. the world and the hereafter). The Veda talks about a great sage named Mamaha that means; honoured or famed Muhammad, again. The Veda mentions a mysterious set of numbers are associated with objects that the sage would possess. They are simply incomprehensible. These are; 100 gold coins 10 garlands, 300 horses and 10,000 cows. They can very well be approximate references respectively to the first batch of Mekkan emigrants to Abyssinia; 10 companions who were designated by Prophet as sure entrants to paradise; 313 companions of Battle of Badr and 10,000 companions at the invasion on Makkah.

(2) Bhavishya Puran:-This is a Sanskrit work of prophecies. The title means 'Book of the Future'. Since Hinduism is based in India it was, and still is, taken for granted that its sages will be born in India itself. Contrary to this belief the Book says that a great master will appear in a foreign country (mlechcha acharya) and live in a sandy region (marusthal). His name will be Mahaaamad. Within a short span of 18 couplets Mahaamad is mentioned five times. One couplet enumerates the main identification points of Mahaamad's followers; They will be circumcised (unknown in India); cut hair of their heads short (as against the Indian practice of long uncut hair knotted into a bun), keep beards call out at top voice (for prayers - Azan) and will be omnivorous (i.e. eat vegetarian as well as meat). The class of Hindu religious masters are strict vegetarians). They will be known as Musalay! These details will completely dispel any suspicions of coincidence in the matters between Mahaamad and Muhammad! There is an interesting information in Bhavishya Purana that Mahaamad would appear to Bhoj, ruler of Dhar, and say that he would establish the religion of meat eaters, by the command of Ishwar i.e. God. There is a tradition that long afterwards, Bhoj got terrified on seeing the full moon split into two. Learned men consulted holy books and told him that it was one of the signs of the Universal Master to be born in a country to the West. Bhoj sent his

minister to Prophet in Arabia , who named the king Abdullah. The Tomb of Abdullah is still there at Dhar. (Refer Fig.1)

(3) Mahabharat:-This is a Hindu epic describing the struggle and triumph of good against evil. It was written by sage Vyas who also authored Bhavishya Purana. Mahabharata says that in the last eon called Kali Yug (in which we now live) a great sage will appear with name Mahaamad. He would preach about unity of God. He will be driven away from his native place by his own folk. By him the world would get peace. (Islam means peace). Mahabharat further says that cloud will provide him shade. It is recorded in history that Buhaira, the Christian priest of Syria observed this sign with Muhammad e in his boyhood and identified him as the last Prophet anticipated for millennia.

Kalki Puran:-This is a holy book of Hindus describing the advent of the last, the tenth Avtar to come. An Avatar is considered an incarnation of God, who appears on earth whenever religion declines and evil abounds, and corrects the situation. He is of high character and miraculous powers but subject to predestination and morality. If the term ‘human representative of God’ is substituted for ‘incarnation of God’ this description will fit the Islamic concept of Prophet. The signs and events of the final Avatar Kalki point out to final Prophet Muhammad. They fit those of Muhammad neatly and perfectly. They are as follows;

- * Kalki will appear in the last on Kali Yug and will be the guide for the entire world.
- * He will be born on the 12th day of the month. Prophet as born on 12th Of Rabiyyul Awwal).
- * His parents will be : Vishnu Bhagat and Soomati meaning servant of God (the Cherisher) and peace. (Messenger’s father’s name was Abdullah, God’s servant and mother was Amina refuge giver which includes the idea of ‘peace’.)
- * He will be with a beauty par-excellence. His body will be fragrant.
- * He will get wisdom on a mountain. (Messenger was conferred Prophethood on Mt.Hira)*
- * He will receive a horse from God, which will be faster than lightning. Riding it he will go around the earth and seven skies. (During Mi’raj Prophet got Buraq meaning lightning and toured the entire universe.)

Kalki will split the moon. Like Bhoj, Cheraman (Zamorin) Perumal the ruler of Indian kingdom of Kerala , witnessed splitting of the moon performed by Prophet . After gathering the facts he sailed to Arabia and became Muslim at Prophet’s hand. His Tomb is near the city of Salala in Oman

Part Two Buddhist Scriptures :-Buddhism is older than Christianity. It originated in India but is prevalent in entire South Asia and far East. Gautama Buddha, its founder is supposed to be an agnostic but this is disputed. The word Buddha means enlightened. Scriptures of Buddhism are available in Sanskrit, Pali, Sinhalese, Burmese, Chinese, Tibetan and Japanese languages. We could get the following information collectively from them; At his death bed his grief-stricken disciples asked him who will provide them guidance after him. The Buddha consoled them by saying; “Do not think I am the only Buddha. There had been many before me and will be many after me. (Compare this with the Qur’anic Verse 26:9 “say (O Muhammad): I am no new thing among Messengers (of Allah....). At appropriate time a great Buddha will come.” * He will be born in a country to west (and not in India). Remember that Arabia is in the west of India . * He will migrate from his homeland. * He will look at the Universe face to face. (Compare this with Mi’raj). * His countrymen cannot be reformed until his advent. * He will preach the same religion as mine but its perfection and success will

reach peak stage only in his time (Compare this with the Qur'anic Verse 5:3 "..... I have perfected your religion for you.. . and have chosen Al Islam for you as religion... "). * While my disciples are in hundreds, his will be in thousands. The Chief disciple Ananda asked him how to identify the great Buddha when he eventually comes. Gautama told them, * "His name will be Maitreya." The word maitreya means love, kindness, compassion, mercy, and so on. The Arabic for mercy is rahmat. Rahmat is title given to the Sayyidul Mursaleen e Leader of Prophets, by Allah in Qur'an ! He refers to him as; Rahmatan lil Alameen Mercy unto the worlds (21:07) Rahshatun lilladeena amanu minkum Mercy unto the believers (9:61) Rahmatan min Rabbika Mercy from thy Lord (28:46)

We can see that the Indian scriptures refer to the Ultimate Prophet ultimate both in time and greatness in clear, direct terms. No stretch of imagination, playing with words and linguistic nuances or involved, artificial interpretations are needed to grasp the point. No complicated inductive or deductive logic is required for drawing the conclusion. On the other hand, the facts are recorded in a straightforward manner and are available for all to verify. No hearsay need be believed uncomfortably. The plain truth is inescapably evident that it is Hadhrat Muhammad, the chosen one (Mustafa) to be the greatest of Prophets for all people of the world and awaited by all of them since time immemorial.

Prophet Foretold in Parsi Scriptures:-Parsi religion or Magianism was established in Persia in ancient times by Prophet Zoroaster and hence also known as Zoroastrianism. The suggestion by some that he was a Prophet of Islam cannot be ascertained or denied for lack of direct evidence in Qur'an and Hadeeth. Their scripture Avezda is in Zend (old Persian) language and foretells of the advent of Prophet Muhammad . The Parsi religion at Rasoolullah's time suffered, and still does, from two main deviations Tawheed (monotheism). (1) It divided good and evil between two gods - god of evil was not worshipped, though (2) Parsis worship fire as God's manifestation. Besides Avezda, Dasatir is also a holy book of Parsis. These two give the details of the appearance of Prophet of Arabia in the following terms; A great sage will appear in a sandy region to the west. (Refer Fig.1) His name will be Astvat-ereta or Soeshyant. Astvat-ereta means the Praised one Muhammad in Arabic. Soeshyant means mercy to the worlds, Rahmat lil Alameen in Arabic. At his time the Parsis will abandon fire worship and will turn towards a temple which will be purified by removal of idols. On conquering Makkah, Prophet went straight to the Ka'abah, the oldest ever Mosque on earth, and eradicated the 360 idols, reciting the Qur'anic Verse; "Truth has come and falsehood vanished. Falsehood is ever bound to vanish" (Al Qur'an 17:81). Despite clear prophecies when Prophet Muhammad appeared these three great communities of the world missed him for various reasons; (1) Hindus because scriptural knowledge was not disseminated but kept confined to the priestly class; (2) Buddhists because of information barriers due to geographical distances and (3) Parsis because of jealousy and prejudices even though Prophet and his followers were in touch with Persia. However, Persians eventually embraced Islam, the Prophet's religion except for a minuscule minority. 20 to 25% of people of Indian subcontinent converted to Prophet's faith. Conversions of Buddhists of Asia to Islam is to a much lesser degree. But due to today's information and communication revolutions and current economic prominence of the Arab land the message of Prophet is

reaching the Asians, and also all other peoples of the world on a much wider scale. But this phenomenon is almost totally independent of the prophecies. They are therefore joining the faith he preached in a fresh series of waves.

Allahu A'lam. God alone knows the truth of everything, including the above mentioned prophecies in the three major faiths.

PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PEACE BE UPON HIM) IN MAJOR WORLD RELIGIONS

Muslims accept the Qur'an, as the word of God revealed to His last and final prophet, Mohammed (peace be upon him). Islam states that Allah sent messengers and prophets throughout the ages with the message of Unity of God, and accountability in the Hereafter. Islam thus makes it an article of faith to believe in all the earlier prophets, starting with Adam, and continuing with Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, John, Jesus amongst many others (may peace be on them all) and the last and final messenger prophet MUHAMMAD (peace be upon him) Let's see what other scriptures say about prophet MUHAMMAD (pbuh) Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in Hindu scriptures

I. Muhammad (pbuh) prophesised in Bhavishya Purana:-According to Bhavishya Purana in the Prati Sarag Parv III Khand 3 Adhay 3 Shloka 5 to 8."A malecha (belonging to a foreign country and speaking a foreign language) spiritual teacher will appear with his companions. His name will be Mohammad. Raja (Bhoj) after giving this Maha Dev Arab (of angelic disposition) a bath in the Panchgavya and the Ganga water (i.e. purifying him of all sins) offered him the present of his sincere devotion and showing him all reverence said, "I make obeisance to thee. O ye! The pride of mankind, the dweller in Arabia, Ye have collected a great force to kill the Devil and you yourself have been protected from the malecha

opponents." The Prophecy clearly states: 1.The name of the Prophet as Mohammad. 2.He will belong to Arabia. 3.The Sanskrit word Marusthal means a sandy track of land or a desert. 4.He is referred as the pride of mankind (Parbati's son). The Glorious Qur'an reconfirms this "And thou (standest) on an exalted standard of character" [Al-Qur'an 68:4] "Ye have indeed in the Messenger of Allah, a beautiful pattern (of conduct)". [Al-Qur'an 33:21] He will kill the devil, i.e. abolish idol worship and all sorts of vices. The Prophet will be given protection against his enemy. According to Bhavishya Purana in the Pratisarag Parv III Khand 3 Adhay 3 Shloka 10 to 27 Maharishi Vyas has prophesised: The Prophecy states that: The evil doers have corrupted the Arab land. Arya Dharma is not found in that land. The Indian Raja need not go the Arab land since his purification will take place in India after the musalmaan will arrive in India. The coming Prophet will attest the truth of the Aryan faith, i.e. Monotheism and will reform the misguided people. The Prophet's followers will be circumcised. They will be without a tail on the head and bear a beard and will create a great revolution. They will announce the Aadhaan, i.e. 'the Muslim call for prayer'. He will only eat lawful things and animals but will not eat pork. The Qur'an confirms this in no less than 4 different places: In Surah Al-Baqarah chapter 2 verse 173 In Surah Al-Maidah chapter 5 verse 3 In Surah Al-Anam chapter 6 verse 145 In Surah Al-Nahl chapter 16 verse 115 -"Forbidden to you for food are dead meat, blood, flesh of swine, and that on which hath been invoked the name of other than Allah". They will not purify with grass like the Hindus but by means of sword they will fight their irreligious people. They will be called musalmaan. They will be a meat-eating nation.

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) Prophesised in Atharvaveda:- In the 20th book of Atharvaveda Hymn 127 Some Suktas (chapters) are known as Kuntap Sukta. Kuntap means the consumer of misery and troubles. Thus meaning the message of peace and safety and if translated in Arabic means Islam. The main points mentioned in the Kuntap Suktas i.e. in Atharvaveda book 20 Hymn 127 verses 1-13 are: Mantra 1 He is Narashansah or the praised one (Muhammad). He is Kaurama: the prince of peace or the emigrant, who is safe, even amongst a host of 60,090 enemies. Mantra 2 He is a camel-riding Rishi, whose chariot touches the heaven. Mantra 3 He is Mamah Rishi who is given a hundred gold coins, ten chaplets (necklaces), three hundred good steeds and ten thousand cows. Mantra 4 Vachyesv rebh. 'Oh! ye who glorifies'. The Sanskrit word Narashansah means 'the praised one', which is the literal translation Muhammad (pbuh) prophesised in the Rigveda Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is prophesised in Rigveda Book I, Hymn 53 verse 9: The Sanskrit word used is Sushrama, which means praiseworthy or well praised which in Arabic means Muhammad (pbuh). of the Arabic word Muhammad (pbuh). Muhummad (pbuh) is also prophesised in the Samveda Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is also prophesised in the Samveda Book II Hymn 6 verse 8: "Ahmed acquired from his Lord the knowledge of eternal law. I received light from him just as from the sun." The Prophecy confirms: The name of the Prophet as Ahmed (which is another name of prophet muhammad (pbuh) since Ahmed is an Arabic name The Qur'an says in Surah Saba chapter 34 verse 28 "We have not sent thee but as a universal (Messenger) to men, giving them glad tidings and warning them (against sin), but most men understand not." [Al-Qur'an 34:28]

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in BIBLE: the Old Testament:-The Qur'an mentions in Surah Al-Araf chapter 7 verse 157: "Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, whom they find mentioned in their own (scriptures) in the law and the Gospel"..

MUHAMMAD (PBUH) PROPHESED IN THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY:-

Almighty God speaks to Moses in Book of Deuteronomy chapter 18 verse 18: "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and I will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him." The Christians say that this prophecy refers to Jesus (pbuh) because Jesus (pbuh) was like Moses (pbuh). Moses (pbuh) was a Jew, as well as Jesus (pbuh) was a Jew. Moses (pbuh) was a Prophet and Jesus (pbuh) was also a Prophet. If these two are the only criteria for this prophecy to be fulfilled, then all the Prophets of the Bible who came after Moses (pbuh) such as Solomon, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Malachi, John the Baptist, etc. (pbuh) will fulfill this prophecy since all were Jews as well as prophets. However, it is Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) who is like Moses (pbuh): Both had a father and a mother, while Jesus (pbuh) was born miraculously without any male in ii) Both were married and had children. Jesus (pbuh) according to the Bible did not marry nor had children. iii) Both died natural deaths. Jesus (pbuh) has been raised up alive. (4:157-158) Words in the mouth: Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was unlettered and whatever revelations he received from Almighty God he repeated them verbatim. "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him." [Deuteronomy 18:18] . Muhammad (pbuh) is prophesied in the book of Isaiah: It is mentioned in the book of Isaiah chapter 29 verse 12: "And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned." When Archangel Gabriel commanded Muhammad (pbuh) by saying Iqra - "Read", he replied, "I am not learned".

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in the New Testament:-Al-Qur'an Chapter 61 Verse 6:-"And remember, Jesus, the son of Mary, said, 'O Children of Israel! I am the messenger of Allah (sent) to you, confirming the Law (which came) before me and giving glad tidings of a messenger to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmed.' But when he came to them with clear signs, they said, 'This is evident sorcery!' " All the prophecies mentioned in the Old Testament regarding Muhammad (pbuh) besides applying to the Jews also hold good for the Christians. John chapter 14 verse 16: "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever." . Gospel of John chapter 16 verse 7:-"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you". "Ahmed" or "Muhammad" meaning "the one who praises" or "the praised one" is almost the translation of the Greek word Periclytos. In the Gospel of John 14:16, 15:26, and 16:7. The word 'Comforter' is used in the English translation for the Greek word Paracletos which means advocate or a kind friend rather than a comforter. Paracletos is the warped reading for Periclytos. Jesus (pbuh) actually prophesied Ahmed by name. Even the Greek word Paraclete refers to the Prophet (pbuh) who is a mercy for all creatures Gospel of John chapter 16 verse 12-14:-"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you unto all truth: for he shall not

speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me". The Sprit of Truth, spoken about in this prophecy referes to none other than Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)

PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PBUH) IN BUDDHIST SCRIPTURES:-1. Buddha prophesized the advent of a Maitreya: -A) Almost all Buddhist books contain this prophecy. It is in Chakkavatti Sinhnad Suttanta D. III, 76:-"There will arise in the world a Buddha named Maitreya (the benevolent one) a holy one, a supreme one, an enlightened one, endowed with wisdom in conduct, auspicious, knowing the universe:-"What he has realized by his own supernatural knowledge he will publish to this universe. He will preach his religion, glorious in its origin, glorious at its climax, glorious at the goal, in the spirit and the letter. He will proclaim a religious life, wholly perfect and thoroughly pure; even as I now preach my religion and a like life do proclaim. He will keep up the society of monks numbering many thousands, even as now I keep up a society of monks numbering many hundreds". Ananda said, 'How shall we know him?' The Blessed one replied, 'He will be known as Maitreya'."The Sanskrit word 'Maitreya' or its equivalent in Pali 'Metteyya' means loving, compassionate, merciful and benevolent. It also means kindness and friendliness, sympathy, etc. One Arabic word which is equivalent to all these words is 'Rahmat'. In Surah Al-Anbiya:"We sent thee not, but as a mercy for all creatures." [Al-Qur'an 21:107]

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was called the merciful, which is 'Maitri'.

The words Mercy and Merciful are mentioned in the Holy Qur'an no less than 409 times. The Word Muhammad is also spelt as 'Mahamet' or 'Mahomet' and in various other ways in different languages. The word 'Maho' or 'Maha' in Pali and Sanskrit mean Great and Illustrious and 'Metta' means mercy. Therefore 'Mahomet' means 'Great Mercy'. The Word Muhammad is also spelt as 'Mahamet' or 'Mahomet' and in various other ways in different languages. The word 'Maho' or 'Maha' in Pali and Sanskrit mean Great and Illustrious and 'Metta' means mercy. Therefore 'Mahomet' means 'Great Mercy'.. Six Criteria for Identifying Buddha: According to the Gospel of Buddha by Carus pg. 214:"The Blessed one said, 'There are two occasions on which a Tathagata's appearance becomes clear and exceedingly bright. In the night Ananda, in which a Tathagata attains to the supreme and perfect insight, and in the night in which he) Muhammad (pbuh) attained supreme insight and Prophethood at night-time. In which he passes finally away in that ultra passing which leaves nothing whatever of his earthly existence to remain.' " According to Gautam Buddha, following are the six criteria for identifying a Buddha.i) A Buddha attains supreme and perfect insight at night-time. ii) On the occasion of his complete enlightenment he looks exceedingly bright iii) A Buddha dies a natural death. iv) He dies at night-time. v) He looks exceedingly bright before his death. vi) After his death a Buddha ceases to exist on earth.i) Muhammad (pbuh) attained supreme insight and Prophethood at night-time.According to Surah Dukhan:"By the books that makes thing clear – We sent it down during a blessed night." [Al-Qur'an 44:2-3]According to Surah Al-Qadar:"We have indeed revealed this (message) in the night of power."[Al-Qur'an 97:1]ii) Muhammad (pbuh) instantly felt his understanding illumined with celestial light. iii) Muhammad (pbuh) died a natural death.iv) According to Ayesha (r.a.), Muhammad (pbuh) expired at night-time. When

he was dying there was no oil in the lamp and his wife Ayesha (r.a.) had to borrow oil for the lamp. v) According to Anas (r.a.), Muhammad (pbuh) looked exceedingly bright in the night of his death. vi) After the burial of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) he was never seen again in his bodily form on this earth. Identification of Maitreya by Buddha: According to Dhammapada, Mattaya Sutta, 151: "The promised one will be: i) Compassionate for the whole creation ii) A messenger of peace, a peace-maker iii) The most successful in the world. The Maitreya as a Preacher of morals will be: i) Truthful ii) Self-respecting iii) Gentle and noble iv) Not proud v) As a king to creatures vi) An example to others in deeds and in words". Which fits none other than prophet MUHAMMAD (peace be upon him)

SO WE REALISED THAT MUHAMMAD (PBUH) IS LAST AND FINAL MESSENGER AND THIS IS MENTIONED IN MAJOR WORLD RELIGIOUS SCRIPTURES.....SO THE ONE WHO SPEAKS AGAINST PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PBUH) AND CALLING HIM A LIAR ..ARE BASICALLY PROVING THEIR own SCRIPTURES WRONG and are going against nothing but their own scriptures.....

Introduction

The Holy Qur-an is the Word of Allah (God). It was revealed to the last Messenger of Allah (God), Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم in Arabic language. Although it is Guidance to entire mankind, only sincere and God fearing people are able to benefit from its Guidance. **لَئِكَ الْكِتَابُ** --This is the Book (the Quran), whereof there is no doubt, a guidance to those who are Al-Muttaqun [the pious and righteous persons who fear Allah much (abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds which He has forbidden) and love Allah much (perform all kinds of good deeds which He has ordained)]. Surah (Chapter) al-Baqarah (The Cow) Qur-an 2:2----The Quran is the final version of the same Message that Allah (God) had sent earlier to mankind through many of His Rusul (Messengers). The Holy Quran is the source of all Islamic religious beliefs and practices. It is the most read and the most quoted book in the world. This is the only Book, which has been memorized by millions of people by heart since its revelation. The Quran was revealed in small portions over a period of 23 years. There are 114 Chapters in the Qur-an. Each chapter of Quran is called a Surah. Each Surah (Chapter) is divided into various Ayat (Verses). Some Suwar (Chapters-Plural of Surah) contain more

verses while others less. Surah al-Baqarah, the second chapter of the Quran, is the biggest of all. It contains 286 Ayat (Verses). The shortest Surah of the Quran is Surah al-Kauthar (A river in Paradise). It contains only three Ayat (Verses). Though there are other Surah (Chapters-Plural of Surah) that also contain only three Ayat (Verses) but they contain more words and lengthy sentences. The other Suwar (Chapters-Plural of Surah) which contain only three Ayat (Verses) are Surah al-'Asr (The Time) and Surah an-Nasr (The Help). The Quran is also divided into thirty almost equal portions. Each of these portions is called a Juz in Arabic. The Quran was revealed to the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم in small portions. Some portions of the Quran were revealed in Makkah while other portions of it were revealed in Madinah. The Suwar (Chapters) that were revealed in Makkah, are known as Makki Suwarh. The Suwarh (Chapters) revealed in Madinah after Hijrah (Migration), are known as Madani Suwarh. The Makkan period of revelation was from 610 AD to 622 CE. The Madani period was from 622 CE to 632 CE. Eighty-six (86) Surah's (Chapters) were revealed in Makkah, and twenty-eight (28) Surah's (Chapters) were revealed in Madinah. Makki Sura contain 4417 Ayat (Verses), Madani Sura contain 1819 Ayat (Verses). The total number of Ayat (Verses) in the Holy Qur-an is six thousand two hundred thirty six (6,236). The Messenger of Allah, Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم received the first Wahi (Message from Allah) in 610 CE, in the small cave in the mountain of Hira. That mountain is now known as Jabl Nur (Mountain of Radiance). It is located about two and a half miles (Four Kilometers) away from the Ka'bah in the city of Makkah. In the first Wahi (Message from Allah), the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم received the following first five Ayat (Verses) of Surah (Chapter) al-'Alaq (The Clot). "Iqra" بِسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ Khalaqal "insana min 'alaq. Created man from a clot. 'Iqra" وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ wa Rabbukal Akram. Read, for your Lord is most generous, عِلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ Allazi 'allama bil qalam. Who teaches by means of the pen, عِلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ 'Allamal insana ma lam ya'lam. Teaches man what he does not know. Surah (Chapter) al-'Alaq (The Clot) Qur-an 96:1-5

The last revelation of the Quran was the two hundred eighty-first Ayah (Verse) of Surah (Chapter) al-Baqarah (The Cow). وَأَنْتُمْ يَوْمًا تُرْجَعُونَ فِيهِ إِلَى اللَّهِ ثُمَّ تُمْقَ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ And be afraid of the Day when you shall be brought back to Allah. Then every person shall be paid what he earned, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly. Surah (Chapter) al-Baqarah (The Cow) Qur-an 2:281--Surah al-Fatihah (The Opening Chapter), the first Surah (Chapter) of the Quran was the first complete chapter to be revealed and Surah an-Nasr (The Help) was the last. When the Quran was being revealed, the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم used to recite the revealed verses to his Sahabah (Companions). They used to learn these verses by heart. Some of the companions used to write them on palm leaves, animal hides, stone tablets and any other available media. The Suwar (Chapters) and Ayat (Verses) of the Qur-an are not arranged in their chronological order of revelation. The Messenger of Allah, Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم used to set the place of various Suwar (Chapters) and Ayat (Verses) himself. There were several designated Katib Al-Wahi (Writer of Messages from Allah) who used to write down the divine revelations whenever the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم received them. After the demise of the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم, many newly converted tribes revolted. Most of them decided to

follow most principles of Islam, except the institution of Zakah (Poor Due Charity). One cannot pick and choose beliefs in Islam. There is no compromise with the basic Islamic beliefs. Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه, a prominent Sahabi (Companion of Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) became the first Khalifah (Caliph) of Muslims. Soon after assuming this responsibility, he had to face severe challenges in the form of several revolts. He also had to face challenges from several claims of false Prophethood from several apostates. He decided to firmly deal with them. He sent Muslim armies to suppress the rebellion. As a result, many of those Huffaz (Those who had memorized Qur-an by heart) died. ‘Umar bin Khattab رضي الله عنه, another prominent Sahabi (Companion of Muhammad S) pondered upon the situation. He felt an urgent need to compile the scattered portions of the Quran into one volume. He suggested it to Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه, who was initially reluctant to undertake such a task. His reasoning was that since the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم did not make any such compilation during his lifetime, so how could he? But after thinking over the matter, he agreed to ‘Umar bin Khattab رضي الله عنه’s suggestion. Subsequently, a committee was set up for compiling the Qur-an. It was headed by Zayd bin Thabit رضي الله عنه, the secretary of the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم, who also was the main Katib Wahi (Writer of Messages from Allah). This team compiled the Holy Qur-an in one volume. This copy of the Qur-an was verified by all Sahabah (Companions of Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) who used to memorize each Ayah (Verse) and Surah (Chapter) of the Qur-an as it was revealed to the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم. This copy of the Quran was kept in the custody of Hafsa bint ‘Umar رضي الله عنها, a widow of the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم. After Abu Bakr, ‘Umar bin Khattab رضي الله عنه became the second Khalifah (Caliph) of Muslims, but he, for some reason, did not publish the compiled version of the Qur-an. It was during the tenure of the third Khalifah (Caliph) of Muslims, ‘Uthman bin ‘Affan رضي الله عنه, a standardized version of the Qur-an was made from the available document and its copies were sent to all other towns and cities. The Quran which we read today is the exact copy of the one published by the third Khalifah (Caliph) of Muslims, ‘Uthman bin ‘Affan رضي الله عنه. There are three main themes of the Qur-an, Wahdah (Oneness of Allah), Risalah (Allah’s Messengers and the finality of Messengers) and Akhirah (Day of Judgment and life after death). The main emphasis of the Qur-an is Tawhid i.e. the Oneness of God, and the finality of the Messengership of Allah, Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم. Besides, it contains the stories of previous Messengers, moral teachings and the injunctions of Shari’ah. It also informs us about other revealed books, about angels, about the Last Day of Judgment and Paradise and Hell. The Qur-an is the most comprehensive book of law. It deals with each and every aspect of human life. Its rules are easy and simple. It does not unnecessarily stress mankind. It does not lead to asceticism. It clearly states:.... يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ.....God desires ease for you while you desire hardship... Surah (Chapter) al-Baqarah (The Cow) Qur-an 2:185 S: Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam R: Radiallahu Anhu

Prophethood-----Acquaintance with the School of the Prophets

In the world where our existence unfolds, we have never heard of or seen an organization or administration that is left to its own devices without a supervisor being responsible for it. Human reason and intelligence cannot accept that social institutions to be without a leader or

ruler, and no thinker will approve of an organizational formula that lacks a responsible leader. Given that reason and logic emphasize the necessity of a responsible leader for even the smallest social unit, how can humanity as a whole attain the basic goals to which it aspires or acquire the lofty values of which it is worthy, without a leader and chief? Now the Creator, within the system of creation, has not withheld anything that may be needed for any being to advance and attain a fitting degree of perfection; He has placed the necessary means and tools at the disposal of all things, and given to each part of every animate being and plant exactly what it needs. How then can it be believed that in the system of legislating for the human being He should overlook the sending of Prophets who play such a sensitive and multifaceted role in the evolution of the human being, or that He should remain indifferent to this fundamental pillar? Furthermore, can any intelligent person accept that the vast scheme of being, with all the wonder-inducing manifestations of life, should be based on aimlessness and purposelessness? Is it possible to attribute such an irrational act to the sublime Creator?

The question of reward and punishment, in a precise and calculated form, is involved here. It is an indubitable scientific principle that purposiveness is the concomitant of all life, thought and will. It is not possible that a wise being should consciously undertake an action in which no goal or purpose resides. Apart from the fact that the human being instinctively regards an aimless act as incompatible with wisdom and intelligence, he can clearly perceive that all the atoms in the world of being are ruled by order and calculation. So just as the orderliness of life springs from the knowledge and wisdom of the Creator, the same may be said of the purposiveness of the whole scheme of being, including the existence of the human being. Is God indifferent to the fate of humans? Has He abandoned them to their own devices, so they may shed each other's blood, commit any crime they like, and transform the world into a fiery hell? God Who holds back nothing in order for every creature to attain its perfection cannot possibly be indifferent to the human being's attaining the degree of perfection suitable to him. On the contrary, just as He guides the human being to material perfection by means of his instincts, He guides him to his true perfection both by means of the innate guidance of his nature and by means of legislative guidance, for innate guidance needs help when confronting the instincts. The Quran says: "We will give help to both groups, those who worship the world and those who seek the hereafter, so that none should remain deprived of the favor and generosity of their Lord."(17:18) If the human being were left alone in the world with his own hopes, everyone would judge on the basis of his own temperament and taste. He would do whatever he found pleasing and conformable to his inclinations. Every individual would follow his own path in order to secure his interests, and the result would be a clash of desires and interests, leading to the severance of individual and social relations and unending corruption and anarchy. The French scholar, Emile Dermenghem, writes in his book "The Life of Muhammad(S.A)" : The Prophets are just as necessary for the world as the beneficial and wondrous forces of nature, such as the sun, rainfall, winter storms, which shake and cleave open dry and infertile land, covering them with freshness and verdure. The grandeur and legitimacy of such events can be deduced from their results: inward capacities that have received strength and confidence, hearts that have been given tranquility, wills that have been strengthened, tumults that have been quietened, moral diseases that have been cured, and finally, the supplications that have mounted upto heaven.[1] It can be deduced from the Quran

that one of the missions of the Prophets is ending differences among human beings and purifying them. The Quran says: Human beings were one community. God sent Messengers to give glad tidings to the good and a warning to the bad. He sent the Book in truth so they might judge justly in their disputes." (2:213) " It is He Who sent a great Messenger among the unlettered Arabs, one from among them, who might recite to them the verses of God's revelation, purify them from the filth of ignorance and evil characteristics, and teach them the Law contained in His Book, whereas previously they had been in the abyss of ignorance and misguidance." (62:2) "O Lord, make our offspring worthy of Your raising Messengers from among them who will recite Your verses to human beings, who will teach them the knowledge of the Book and wisdom, and cleans and purifies their souls from all ignorance and ugliness." (2:128)

The Prophets came in order to convey to human beings Divine knowledge, free of all forms of illusion and error. They came to proclaim to the human being a series of truths which a person would never have attained unaided, such as matters lying beyond the natural realm like death, the intermediate realm, and resurrection. In Divine schools of thought, the mode of thought that underlies both belief and action, the knowledge of the material and spiritual dimensions of human existence, lies within the bounds of the human being's capacity to perceive. For the human being approaches the true happiness, and his growth and ascent become possible, only when his constant and fundamental needs are recognized, preserved and satisfied in a balanced fashion. One of the most fundamental missions of the Prophets, is, then, to bring the excesses of that which causes the human being trouble and torment in his rebellious spirit, under control and reduce them to order, so as to pacify its rebellious tendencies. Thus we see that in the school of the Prophets, pleasures are not negated nor is their value and essentiality denied. The supreme ideal of the Prophets, who are the source of virtue and the gushing springs of human ethics, is to cure and nurture the human spirit in such a way that it reaches a higher truth and ascends toward ethical values. Through the realistic and perceptive training the human being receives from the Prophets, he advances on a path that leads to infinity and he distances himself from alienation. It is natural that those who establish such a program of action should have been chosen at the threshold of heavenly power, the power of One Who is aware of all the mysteries of the human being's creation and the needs of his soul. The selection that takes place with respect to the Prophets is based on the ascertainment of an individual's being as a complete model of the powers and faculties of the human being. In order to ascend existentially, to cure their souls and to attain the heavenly rank of fruition, human beings must enter the sphere of the teachings of the Prophets; it is only then that their humanity can be fully realized. The valuable element that the human being represents in this world has not been abandoned or left to its own devices, nor has God wished to entrust the destiny of the human being to capricious oppressors who sinking their poisonous claws into the spirit and mind of the human being begin their exploitation of humanity by exploiting its mind. For then mankind would be held back from true advancement and be impelled in the direction of false and valueless aims. Since intellectual and creedal criteria have always played a determining role and constitute an extremely effective factor in the shaping of life, the Prophets have always commenced their mission in precisely this area. Because the intellectual criteria of society are generally tainted by the

ignorance of Divine guidance, they have abolished those criteria and presented new, positive and fruitful criteria to replace them.

The Prophets are, then, the true revolutionaries of history.

Shining forth in the darkness, they have come forth to struggle against the sources of corrupt belief and misguidance, and to guide the most sacred and beautiful manifestation of the human spirit to its true and proper course. They rescue the human being from shameful forms of worship that are not worthy of his lofty station, and hold him back from all forms of erroneous thought and deviance that arise in his search for God and inflict harm on him. They conduct him from the confines of ignorance to the region of light and perception, because all the paths of true happiness and salvation lead to the assertion of God's oneness. At the same time, the Prophets guarantee the freedom of the human being in accepting belief; he is free to exercise his will by accepting either unbelief or belief. The Quran says: "O Prophet, say: the religion of truth is that which has come unto you from your Lord. So let whoever wishes believe, and whoever wishes, be an unbeliever." (18:29) The Quran explicitly rejects the imposition of belief by saying: "There is no coercion or compulsion in the acceptance of religion." (2:256) If we examine deeply the content of the teachings to the Prophets, which determine the method to be followed by all true movements of reform and liberation, we will see that their sole aim was guiding human beings to felicity. Because God looks upon His servants with favor, He chooses as Prophets the most perfect of human beings, who first enter the arena of human thought and belief, creating there a vast outpouring of energy, and then enter the sphere of action and ethics, in order to draw human beings' attention away from the natural realm to that which lies beyond nature. Thereby they liberate the human being from the scandalous and demeaning multiplicity of gods and from infatuation with the world and material phenomena. They cleanse their minds and their hearts and attach them to a source of hope and mercy that bestows tranquility on their souls. Once the human being recognizes the origin of his creation and believes in the unseen forces of the world that lies beyond the natural realm, he learns a program of advancement toward perfection from the guides on the path to truth, the chosen ones of the Divine threshold. For it is they who demonstrate to human society its origin and the goal of perfection toward which it must strive. The human being, then, begins his efforts to reach God, for it is this that is the lofty goal of all being, and he addresses his Lord as follows: "We have heard Your command and obey it, O Lord; we seek your forgiveness and know that our movement is toward You." (2:285) The Commander of the Faithful, Ali, upon whom be peace, says: "God sent the Prophets to remove the veils covering the human being's innate nature and to bring forth the treasures of thought hidden within him." [2] He also says in the first Sermon of the Nahj al-Balaghah: "God Almighty raised Prophets from among the sons of Adam and took from them a covenant that they would propagate His message. This was after most human beings had perverted the Divine covenant, becoming ignorant of God, the supreme truth, and assigning likenesses to Him, and after Satan had turned them away from the course of innate nature and disposition, preventing them from worshipping God. "It was then that the Creator sent them a succession of Prophets, to remind them of the bounties that they had forgotten and to demand of them that they fulfill their primordial covenant with God, and to make manifest the hidden treasures and

resplendent signs that the hand of Divine power and destiny had placed within them. " The school of thought established by the Prophets contains a specific view of the world and society which sets human thought on a distinctive course. Without doubt, the human being's interpretation of the world and the realities of life is a factor which determines a broad area of his efforts and activities.

The first lesson taught by heavenly religions and their most fundamental pillar consists of the Divine unity. At the beginning of their missions, the Prophets raised the cry of Divine unity, seeking thereby to liberate human thought from the bondage of illusion and humiliating subjection to false and mendacious divinities. Within a short period, they conveyed their Divine message to all classes of society in their age - human beings and women, the old and the young, the rulers and the powerful. They strove to sever the bonds of servitude and to rend the veils of ignorance that were obscuring the mind and intellect of the human being. Through monotheism, they sought to advance society and cleanse the spirit of all peoples from the contamination of everything other than God. Unlike the philosophers, the Messengers of God did not content themselves with training human beings' minds. Their efforts to convey the message of God's unity also penetrated human beings' hearts, and after cleansing their intellects, they filled the dwelling of the heart with that true love which is a necessary consequence of the human being's spiritual ascent. It is this veritable love which impels human beings towards dynamic and passionate motion, and makes of them vibrant and creative personalities. Passionate love for the infinite source of existence is like the motor for human life; if it be taken away from the human being, he becomes a lifeless and motionless form. The principle of Divine unity distinguishes the structure of the society in which it prevails from all other societies, with respect to both its internal and its external relationships; it creates a profound structural change in whatever society accepts it, to such a degree that in its ability to reform both the individual and society, no other movement in human history can be compared with it. In addition to the fact that it clarifies the relationship of the human being with the source of being, through restricting all worship to the Creator of the world Who is the absolute ruler and owner of all things, it also determines economic, political and legal relationships among human beings. The word "mission" (ba'that) is used in Islamic texts to designate the function of the Prophets, a word that contains the sense of an outpouring of energy, swiftness in action, and unrelenting effort. No better or more precise word could be found to designate the profound and fundamental movement that is that of the Prophets.

The unity of sovereignty derives from the oneness of the Creator, because the sole authority for the fashioning of laws and the issuing of commands is His unique essence. It is the exclusive right of the Creator of being to command and prohibit, and for this reason the doctrine of Divine unity necessarily implies that none other than God has the right to exercise sovereign power or promulgate laws. A full understanding of Divine unity goes beyond the recognition that the world has only one Creator; we must also recognize that it has only one sovereign and only one legislator, and that precisely this concept brings to an end the tyranny of oppressive and arbitrary rulers. Whoever claims to possess sovereignty and the powers that flow from it has, in reality, claimed divinity, for one of the indications of polytheism is for the

human being to imagine that he possesses sovereignty and an unconditional right to legislate. This contradicts the Divine unity and the fundamental beliefs of religion. It is a basic mission and concern of heavenly religions that they propagate the true meaning of the Divine unity in order to deliver the masses of humanity and save them, by their belief in the oneness of God, from slavery to unjust and arbitrary rule. If it were not for the remarkable profundity and comprehensiveness exhibited by the contents of religion, and if it were not for the purposive movement of the Prophets, and their summons to awareness and perception, the conditions of human societies would never have changed. Today there would be no trace of humanity left, and we would have no path to convey us to the station of true love. In the course of human history, it is only religion with its comprehensiveness and all-inclusive scope that has been able to come to the aid of human beings, to lead the masses by the hand, and play the most crucial of roles in guiding them toward ascent and advancement. No dimension of human existence has remained untouched by the positive effect of the Prophets, and their influence even on the formation and growth of human knowledge has been very extensive. If we examine the history of the missions of the Prophets and the swift, remarkable and unparalleled growth of their movements, we will see that more than anyone else, they have served as sources of profound intellectual change and transformation in the society. It is they who have breathed into the form of humanity the spirit of brotherhood, love and philanthropy, and who have taught human beings the culture of justice, peace and unity. God has attributed to Himself the reconciliation of hearts and the establishment of solidarity that occurred as a result of Islam and the efforts of the Noble Prophet: "He is the God Who has reinforced you with His own aid and the assistance of the believers, and joined their hearts together. Were you to spend all the riches in the world thus to unite and reconcile them, you would be unable to do so. Rather, it is God Who has joined their hearts together for He is empowered over all things and all-knowing of the mysteries and benefits contained in all things." (8:66)

The Prophet David was able to establish the most just of all conceivable judicial and political structures on the basis of the Divine message he had received. The Quran says: "O David, We have bestowed rule on earth upon you, so rule justly among human beings. Never follow your own inclinations, for this will lead you away from God's path. Those who stray from God's path will be chastised with a great punishment, for they have forgotten the day of reckoning." (38:26) The celebrated historian, Will Durant, says: "Religion bestows a profound and masterly power and capacity on both society and the state. The rites and practices of religion give tranquility to the spirit, link the generations together, and bind individuals to each other, thus strengthening the fabric of society." [3] If such a Divine movement had not taken place in human history, mankind would have been eternally entangled in the swamp of misguidance and humiliation and could never have entered the realm of virtue and perfection. Even those individuals who deny the Prophets have benefited in some way from the blessed legacy of those human beings of God, from the great cultural achievements they brought about which wrought transformations and fashioned history. Furthermore, there is a profound and absolute link between the movement of the Prophets and knowledge in the absolute sense. Those periods in which historical movements were led by human beings of God were among the most brilliant epochs of human history with respect to scientific advancement. The authentic teachings of Divine schools of thought, together with the foundations and principles they

expounded, laid both a theoretical and a practical groundwork for appropriate social relations that permit the sciences to advance. Numerous are those philosophers and scientists throughout the world whose profound insights have been inspired in them by the Prophets, those guides to Divine unity.

To whom does the right to legislate belong?

Consider the thinking element within the human being and the relatively high degree of intellectual power it has gradually come to attain since the beginning of the human being's existence on earth. Examine, too, his capacities and his incapacities, and the problems and hardships with which he is faced. Despite all his faculties and properties, has he ever been able, or is he now able, to advance on a straight path of perfection merely by relying on his own mind? Can he preserve himself from all deviation and decline, or put an end to the disorders that plague his existence? Can he plant the sapling of virtue and piety in the soil of his own being, alone and without drawing on the guidance of the teachers sent by heaven? Can he, unaided, bring to fruition the talents and capacities that are latent within him? If until now he has been unable to do any of these things, to implement any of these ideals, it is certain that he will be unable to do so in the future either. Although some of his capacities may increase in the future, we must also accept that the difficulties and problems with which he is faced will also increase and grow more complex, just as his present problems are greater than those that confronted him in the past. Apart from this, the scope of the intellect's ability to perceive and to judge is a limited area which is illuminated only by the light of knowledge and learning. What lies beyond reason is enveloped in veils of obscurity and darkness and lies beyond the grasp of our minds. By contrast, a considerable part of the teachings of God's Messengers relates precisely to the realities of which we are ignorant and unaware; it consists of the exposition of truths that are not contained within the sphere of our external perception. In order to become acquainted as much as possible with the origin of all beings, with the duties of the human being and other realities, we need a teacher and a guide sent by God, who will guide us toward perfection and the aim of creation with teachings that are both clear and comprehensive. This is possible only by means of revelation and the teachings of Prophets who have a direct relationship with the source of creation and the lamp of whose intellects has been kindled from the eternal flame of His infinite knowledge. Another portion of the Prophets' teachings relates to the reform of our state and the correction of the errors into which we have fallen. Whenever the sphere of what is knowable to us is penetrated by mistake or error, it is possible to correct the error and make up for the deficiency in our knowledge by referring to the guidance of the Prophets. We will thus be able to travel on a path that we could never traverse without the aid of those guides.

Thus we come to understand the significance and value of the mission of the Prophets and the services rendered by them in guiding the human beings and elevating them to the pinnacle of triumph and perfection. We know that the human being attains and develops his knowledge gradually. If science wishes to display to the human being the principles of his development, it must first be acquainted with all of his powers, capacities, and inner mysteries, and discern all of his various needs. In the opinion of all contemporary thinkers who count as authorities in the areas of education, sociology and politics, any plan or ideology that fails to take into

account the basic nature of the human being is bound to be fruitless and valueless. The establishment of laws is dependent not only on a complete knowledge in all the dimensions of human existence but also on a knowledge of the other beings with which the human being has dealings. It also requires a knowledge of society and its complex relationships. Furthermore, the legislator must be completely removed from distorting and misleading factors such as ambition, selfishness, personal inclination and desire, which militate against the acquisition of perfect knowledge. It is factors and obstacles such as these which cause the human beings to differ in their assessment of good and evil and the definition and implementation of justice. Is it possible to cure a sick person without diagnosing his illness? Establishing laws for the human being without understanding his essence and permitting it to remain covered in a host of unknowns, is exactly like trying to cure a patient whose illness is unknown. For this reason, and because no school of thought has yet succeeded in defining the human being, any plan in the area of legislation is bound to end in failure and defeat. Despite all the efforts that have been made to discover the secrets contained in the existence of the human being (who is only one small entity among the countless and varied beings found in the scheme of the universe), and despite all the researches carried out by scientific associations having at their disposal precise and complex instruments? despite all this, who can doubt that there are numerous unconquered peaks in the spiritual being and inner world of the human being that we have not even glimpsed?

Is it possible that a person may know many scientific and technical facts but be completely ignorant of one topic? namely, the limits and nature of his own being. The knowledge he has acquired is next to zero when compared to this ignorance. Ignorance of the limited nature of one's ability to perceive and understand gives rise to many other forms of ignorance; it causes the human being to turn his back on many truths and avert his gaze from many realities. If all obscure points concerning the corporeal aspect of the human being had been clarified, the scientific researches carried out throughout the world by millions of scientists would still be in vain. A French scholar says: "However much we try, we cannot render these mechanisms comprehensible to our minds. All we know is that the regularity of the parts of our body is greater and more precise than that of a thousand great machines operated by the most highly specialized engineers. "If you do not regard our opinion as a kind of belittlement or insult, all doctors and specialists who exert themselves in their field are convinced that the knowledge we have acquired until now is paltry and insignificant when compared to what we need to know in the future. The truth is that the human being is a complex, obscure and indivisible whole that cannot easily be recognized. We still lack the methods that would enable us to know him in all of his different parts and, as a whole, as well as in his relations with his environment. Numerous techniques and precise sciences would be needed for such an undertaking, and each science would be able to study only one part of the complex system that is the human being, yielding only a partial result. We advance on this path only so far as technological progress permits us, and the totality of the abstract concepts we acquire does not furnish us a perception of the reality of the human being, for there are numerous significant and valuable points that remain unclarified. Anatomy, physiology, chemistry, education, history, economics, together with all their branches, cannot reach the ground of the human being's essence."4 With respect to the astonishing activities of his soul, human being

is without doubt a deep and limitless ocean, and our worldly knowledge concerning him is inevitably slight and insignificant. Who can claim to have discovered all the capacities and minutiae contained within this mysterious being, or to be aware of all his capacities and the degrees of perfection that are open to him? Thus we conclude that we have but a drop of insignificant knowledge, shot through with doubt and hesitation, compared to an ocean of ignorance and unknowing. Science today is then confronted with the problem of the limitation of human powers, on the one hand, and the expanse and infiniteness of the world and of the human being, on the other; this problem has induced both bewilderment and humility in science.

In fact, science itself has aided us in understanding that the knowledge of the human being can illumine only a small and insignificant part of this expansive world. Now let us see whether science and intellect alone can assume the mission of impelling the human being to perfection. A world that cannot provide a precise knowledge of being, that does not know what the human being is, from the point of view of either body or soul, that is ignorant of the mysterious social relationships that arise from his spiritual and bodily properties does such a world have the capacity to lay down laws for the human being that will reflect intelligence and wisdom, and be formed in accordance with the knowledge of the human being's true needs in their various dimensions? Laws that will ensure his true happiness, answer the totality of his needs, and enable him to walk on the path that benefits him. As long as we do not know what we wish to make, and for what purpose and for whose sake, how can we even speak of laying down a plan and a program? Those schools of thought which claim to be able to make the human being's capacities blossom do so without first knowing what the human being is. How can they succeed in turning him into a being that would deserve all those efforts? The human being's basic problem today is not simply the acquisition of power but rather, the various roads laid out before him he should travel. Many scientific topics and principles were accepted unanimously by thinkers of the past, but with the passage of time and the advancement of knowledge it has become apparent that their views were erroneous and invalid. If we look at the history of legislation among the nations of the world, we will see that many laws which were the product of careful reflection and lengthy study on the part of outstanding experts and were drawn up with recourse to considerable scientific and intellectual resources, were proved mistaken and inadequate by the passage of time and by the emergence of more accurate research. That the social utility of which was before regarded as proven is seen today as palpably inappropriate and even harmful. The place of such laws is then taken by a new set of laws which will, in turn, be amended and revised in accordance with the advancement of science and thought. Naturally this does not mean that all the regulations and ordinances that originate in the human mind are useless and incorrect. The point is that because of such errors and their lack of inerrancy, man-made legal systems are incapable of providing for the different needs of the human beings and of leading society. It is entirely true that some scholars have expressed valuable views on the subject of legislation, but their ideas and works have been influenced, directly and indirectly, by the teachings of the Prophets.

We can clearly see that deficiency and inadequacy are the hallmark of all those systems in the world that derive from manmade laws. Moral and material inadequacy, forms of corruption that kill the personality of the human being and drag him down to decline - all these are caused by regulations and laws that derive from human thought. The insufficiency and fallibility of human laws is sufficient proof of this. Even if they acquire knowledge of the principles of human development, science and human thought are unable to assume alone the responsibility for the human being's ascent. Such a mission presupposes freedom from arbitrary and capricious desire and from the desire for advantage, for these are factors which prevent the human being from realizing his knowledge of self. The human being's love of the self and his devotion to its interests, as well as to whatever stands in relationship to him, is so profound that on a broad scale, whether consciously or unconsciously, he looks at all things from the point of view of his own interests; self-love deprives him of true realism. When taken to the extreme, the pursuit of self-interest becomes a powerful and destructive factor that does away with the human being's honor. A condition appears in the human being such that every instant he is planning the violation of ethical norms and transgression against the rights of others, in order to draw to himself all conceivable benefits and gains. There is thus no guarantee that the human being can analyze affairs with true impartiality and establish just laws. Are those who have studied the human being and then - whether individually or collectively - established legal system, really aware of the problem and its solution? Have they avoided the trap of egoism, and are their thoughts and reflections immune from self-interest, discrimination and error? Are they truly aware of the problems of the groups and classes other than their own, scattered across the world, and the solutions of those problems call for? Are they fully protected from the arbitrary whims and desires, the threats and the tricks, of the wielders of power and influence, of biased and evil-hearted of the human beings? Given all of these questions, it is possible to hope that such founders of legal systems will prove to be ideal, positive and desirable elements? Finally, is it confidently possible to ensure the happiness of the human being by following and submitting to such dubious systems? Now all these systems are supposed to bring order and equilibrium to the capacities and abilities of the human being, to his perception and choice; they are situated on a higher level than he is. How, then, can it be logically correct that the human being, the intended object of this process, should also be its subject? The human being, the object of the process, wishes to establish a system that will bring order and equilibrium, but ought not he himself be situated within four impenetrable walls that cannot be reached by the factors of deviance and error? If this is necessary, how is it to be achieved? Do the vision, perception and other faculties of the human being extend far enough to permit him to assume a position for which he is not qualified, to establish laws and regulations that take into account the different dimensions of the human being and bring order into all the affairs of the individual and of society, and solve both present difficulties and future problems?

Objective realities without doubt lead us to conclude that the human being is incapable of truly knowing his own individual world or the world of being, and that, at the same time, he faces obscure, complex and vital problems that call for solution. It is here that the inability of science and thought to fulfill such a mission becomes fully apparent. Even if the ray of science was able one day to illumine all the corners of human existence and to solve all those

mysteries that were thought incapable of solution, it would still be unable to guarantee human happiness, given the fact that the human being is by nature condemned to live beneath the sway of self-interest and personal inclination. Another problem that arises with respect to human legislation concerns the difference in levels of education and cultural circumstances prevailing among individuals that belong to different ranks of society. Judgments, interpretations and assessments of existing realities, as well as of national concepts and customs and many other matters, will differ according to the educational, cultural and social situation in which an individual has grown up. Even the viewpoint of a single class in society is not uniform; the ways in which members of that class elaborate concepts and interpret certain words and terms may be completely different from each other. Think of all the different interpretations of words such as peace, justice and equality, and of how the interpretation made by every individual or group corresponds to his breadth of vision or thought, as well as to personal or collective viewpoints. Normal people understand these truths in a clear and humane sense, but the rulers and leaders of society look on these terms and the matters connected with them in quite a different way. Without doubt, the influence on the human beings of their environment is an important factor contributing to the deficiency and inadequacy of man-made laws. Legal scholars and legislators, subject to the influence of the ideas and beliefs prevailing in their societies, accept as irrefutable truth whatever they absorb from their environment. When they draw up laws, their minds are drawn, consciously or unconsciously, to the beliefs and ideas they have acquired or inherited. The specific cultural atmosphere of society robs them of a realistic spirit and does not permit them to perceive realities as they truly are. Further, the views and opinions of the human being change according to different situations and conditions; as a result of the transformations, events and advances that occur in his life, his views and positions will change.

Once the human being is installed in the seat of power, his ideas and manner of judgment will no longer be the same as when he was an ordinary individual without any power. According to circumstances, he will look at things in two quite different ways. Once the human being's position changes, his views may be so thoroughly transformed that they no longer bear any resemblance to those he held in the past or had any connection with them; it is as if everything has taken on a new meaning for him. This is an obvious reality; everyone has seen in his own lifetime examples of these changes in direction as individuals rise and fall in the course of their lives. In addition, when drawing up laws, legislators generally take into account the desires and wishes of the majority, not the truth, even though those desires and wishes may not be beneficial and even be harmful for the individual and for society. Addressing himself to the inadequacies of these various schools of thought that turn out to be opposed to the advancement and welfare of mankind, Rousseau makes the following realistic remarks: "In order to discover the best possible laws that should truly benefit all nations, a universal intelligence is needed that should be aware of all human passions but not experience them itself; that should have no connection with nature but know it intimately; and whose happiness is not in any way dependent on us but is willing to help us in attaining our happiness." [5] Another thinker says: "All of the different systems of government that have been fashioned by the thoughts and ideas of theoreticians are mere castles in the sky. Both the human being who was the good of the French Revolution and the human being who,

according to the vision of Marx and Lenin, is to build the society of the future, are unreal. Let us not forget that the laws governing the relations of the human beings with each other have not yet been discovered. Both physiology and economics are imperfect sciences, or even pseudo-sciences. It thus appears that the environment we have created around ourselves with the aid of science is not worthy of us, because it has been created in a haphazard way, without adequate knowledge of the human being's nature or attention to his nature."[6] Legislation can belong, then, only to God, Whose knowledge embraces all directions and dimensions. He knows the human being and his relations with the world and other beings; He is aware of the changes and developments that occur in the human being and the world; He has infinite knowledge of the conditions to which the human being is subject and the limits of his perfection; and His essence is exalted above all the factors that hold the human being back and inflict harm on him. The Quran says: "The One Who created, does He not know?" (67:14)

A Rich and Fruitful School of Thought

The first condition for attaining the true goals of life, the lofty rank of happiness, and, not least, a comprehensive and authentic system of governance, is to appreciate, in a precise and scientific way, the necessity for a message and a Messenger. This recognition will enable us to conquer new horizons and journey toward undiscovered and virgin territories of human thought. Human being has extensive resources at his disposal and he may enter a network of guidance, both within his own being and within the world where he lives, through the laws that God has laid down for him. That guidance is protected against all deviation and error, and its bearer is preserved, through the inerrancy bestowed on him by the Creator, from all sin, error, and forgetfulness in the receipt, promulgation and implementation of revelation. Therefore, for those who draw their inspiration from sound thought, no doubt will remain that a system based on such guidance is able to secure the true interests, moral and material, of mankind. The efforts of the Prophets in their summons to the human beings are directed to giving shape to God's rule over mankind, this being the most just form of rule conceivable. In such a system, the domination of the human being over the human being and his imprisonment in the grasp of demonic oppressors will be fully negated. The intrinsic value and force of the words of the Prophet derive from the fact that he is the bearer of God's message.

The knowledge of the true human being and of human reality forms the basis of the worldview and the planning of all Divine schools of thought. A school of thought that is based on the very creation of the human being, that is aware of all the dimensions of his existence, and that supervises with infinite knowledge all of his natural properties, is well able, in the course of its planning and elaboration of laws, to take into account all the fundamental and authentic concerns of the human being. Setting itself against all ego worship, all desire for fame, all search for mastery over the powers of nature, the movement of the Prophets derives its substance from the Divine will; it is God Who is the source of their actions. If the Prophets come into conflict with the human beings, it is fundamentally because of the limited ideas of the human beings; the Prophets attempt to bring to an end the narrow and limited vision of the human beings and to introduce them to a more productive mode of

thought. The distinctive feature of the system of governance established by the Prophets is the realization of justice in the true and comprehensive sense of the word. By virtue of the principles underlying the movement of the Prophets, the most just social relations come into existence in a way that edifies the human being's inner being. The equality of the human beings on a basis of brotherhood is translated into reality. It is therefore impossible to ensure social justice in the true meaning except by way of God's message. At the same time, the schools of thought established by the Prophets give positive answer to the human being's profoundly felt need for freedom, and thereby break all the inner chains that fetter the human being's capacities, energies and will, and transform his vitality into stagnation. Parallel to this inner liberation of the human being, the Prophets also endow his outer life with freedom, setting him free from servitude to the tyrants of his age. Under such conditions, there is no longer any question of laying down laws that are inadequate and erroneous, nor of rulers coercively enforcing their arbitrary will. For then, the legislator is God, God Who has created the world and all its inhabitants and knows in a precise and perfect fashion how to meet all the needs of the human beings in their various dimensions. Similarly, there is no question of ignorance or imperfect knowledge or of the slightest degree of oppression and injustice; selfishness and self-interest do not exist. These are realities that deserve our deepest attention, and we must recognize the objective effect of all those ordinances which God has promulgated for the sake of social life and the resurrection of the human being. The Quran says: "Who can rule better than God?" (5:55) "God it is Who determines our social relations and rules over our deeds and conduct; He is the best of all rulers." (7:87) "Do they desire the rule of ignorance, whereas there is no ruler better than God?" (5:50)

One of the distinguishing characteristics of the school of thought founded by the Prophets is that according to their teachings, the interests of society also benefit the interests of the individual, because the life of the human being never terminates, his interests being ensured by a long line that continued after his death. Wherever the laws of heaven make their appearance and a prophetic mission, appearing as a Divine phenomenon, takes on the responsibility of responding to the intellectual, spiritual and material needs of the human being, as well as reforming both the individual and society - wherever this occurs, nothing will be reflected but reality. With respect to God, the question of environmental conditions and susceptibility to the concepts prevailing in society and culture does not even arise; there is also no question of the effect of change giving thought a new direction. The factors that cause the human being to lose faith in his ability to attain the truth and perceive his true interests are thus totally negated. In the Divine school of thought, it is faith, the symbol of the human being's intellectual ascent, which functions as a powerful support for ensuring the implementation of the law. This is another advantage of systems of governance based on religion, as well as being a gushing spring from which the reality of existence flows forth. In societies that are founded by Prophets, the human being is commonly entrusted with the supervision of his own person; he relies on his own findings, acquisitions and efforts. At the same time that the human being is thus free, he feels an intense sense of responsibility toward God. He measures every act he wishes to undertake and every position he wishes to take up against the criteria of religion, and then personally assumes the responsibility for that act and position. He knows that to act on the basis of duty will bring numerous fruitful results, and

that if he turns his back on his duties, he must be ready to face harmful effects and to endure evil consequences. A sense of duty vis-a-vis the Divine laws that embrace all dimensions of human life causes the human being to submit to the will of God with all of his being.

The training of the human being in the school of the Prophets takes place in such a way that gradually his passionate inclinations gradually yield to truly human and Divine desires, permitting him ultimately to rise to the glorious station of servitude to God and being His representative on earth, this being the true nature of the fully evolved the human being. By contrast, in legal systems of human origin, where there is no question of religious belief in a legislator, law lacks moral underpinning and the ability to influence the human beings profoundly and comprehensively. Everyone is constantly thinking how he might best shake off the constraints of the law, with the result that the implementation of the law faces all kinds of difficulty. Various coercive forces must be broadly deployed in order to ensure it. If the law contradicts the desires of the people, the task of its implementation becomes particularly complex and difficult. When such a law is enforced, it will be met with a storm of anger, dislike and repulsion, and it is only pressure that can then impose it.

No Guarantee for the Implementation of Human Law

It is, of course, possible to find people in society who believe in and adhere to laws and regulations of human origin, but it must be affirmed that such individuals are extremely rare and form the exception. They certainly do not represent the average member of society and cannot be regarded as a principal support of the social order. The practical effectiveness of a conscience that is not guaranteed by religious faith or principle is, moreover, very slight when compared to effectiveness of religious beliefs. It must, therefore, be accepted that this advantage deriving from the teachings of the Prophets is restricted to the heavenly religions. If the spirit of people is nurtured with faith in God and religious belief serves as a support for legal principles, law takes on a universal aspect, and its implementation is guaranteed to a degree superior to the ability of human laws to influence the human beings. Since belief has its roots in the activity of the existential mechanism of the human being and since it plays a basic role in the structure of human personality, profoundly altering the conditions of the soul, the human being comes to believe in and adhere to the laws of religion not only with his brain but with the entirety of his being. The certainty that religion shines like a light in the depths of the human being's being, illumining it and warming it at the same time. The impetus that religion can create in the human being cannot be found in any non-religious school of thought. Experience has shown that other schools of thought are unsuccessful in this respect, because it is religion alone that relies on the heart, and the more firmly rooted faith becomes in the heart, the more it will serve as a source of dynamic activity. The human being witnesses today the elaboration and ratification of laws on the part of societies that officially recognize all the human beings, irrespective of racial, national, religious or geographical differences, as possessing certain rights and values. Nonetheless, although scientific advances have created today more suitable conditions for the acceptance of reality, the attitude of different groups to the laws that represent their own accomplishment is entirely negative and denies those laws any influence or value.

What people accept in theory they do not observe in fact.

Whenever the law concerns them directly and their interests and desires are threatened, they will not hesitate to cross the boundaries of the law, to perform inhuman acts, and to engage in trickery and sabotage. It is obvious that the attitude of others towards laws of this nature will also not be one of positive acceptance. This disregard for the value of the human being, this violation of law and the expansion of political struggle and conflict, the unhealthy economic rivalries of powerful states with most countries in the world, the tempestuous waves of social crisis and moral corruption - all this shows clearly how shaky and unfirm is the position of man-made laws, how slight are their influence and standing from the point of view of implementation, and how limited is the sphere of their rule. A brief look at the manner in which the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has been observed and implemented suffices to show that the only effect this declaration has had consists of the celebration of festivals, and the delivery of empty, meaningless lectures. If we follow, step by step, the development of religious ideas among the masses of humanity, will this not cause us to conclude that non-religious principles, which do not derive from exalted concepts, are weak and inadequate? Will it not bring us to believe firmly in the veracity and truthfulness of religious systems which are nurtured with the power and majesty of the Lord of all creation and the influence of whose culture and ideology on the entire cultural life of the human being becomes more fully known every day through the researches of thinkers?

We must look at results, at the fruits that different schools of thought have been borne in human society. Isn't the reason for the failure of human laws in ensuring the human being's progress and happiness not to be sought in their having remained ignorant of the true nature of the human being and their neglect of his real needs and creative abilities? All of this serves to elucidate a single truth: that belief in the school of thought of the Prophets is a guarantor for the life of society, a support for all healthy relationships among the human beings, and a protector for the oppressed masses, and it has always bestowed the gift of freedom and brotherhood on mankind. Whatever society, group or system does not set its face on this path and does not respond affirmatively to the liberating summons of God's Messengers to a more elevated life, will never experience true prosperity and salvation. The school of thought of the Prophets has provided penal laws for those persons who may exceptionally transgress against God's law. These laws weigh the offense carefully and specify a punishment corresponding to the degree of seriousness of the crime and take the situation of the criminal into consideration.

Miracles: An Effective and Eloquent Proof

In the mission and summons of the Prophets, the human being's free will and choice are the first subject to attract our attention. If the human being had no share of free will and choice, he would never have any need of Prophets; he would travel along a predetermined path, advancing automatically.

Thus, in accepting the mission of the Prophets, we must necessarily accept also the freedom of the human being; otherwise, the fundamental themes in the mission of the Prophets could never be put forward, and it would not be possible to find any justification for their message,

a message which, in reality, awakens the human beings who are asleep and transforms them into free and conscious beings, not torpid masses without will. The general law of guidance is a universal law that covers the entirety of being. Given the insufficiency of the instinctual guidance the human being contains within himself, given the fact that his motion is not predetermined, given the various defects that negate the idea of reason being an adequate guide to perfection and happiness, given all this, it is necessary that the deficiency within the human being be made good, that the vacuum within him be filled. Therefore, the scheme of creation lays open before the human being the path of prophethood which will enable him to reach his unchanging goal. With the tools and resources that he has at his disposal to acquire knowledge and consciousness, he can then discover, within the sphere laid out by the Prophets, precise, clear and infallible instructions for the attainment of happiness, and find answers to both his long-standing and increasing needs. It is a fundamental principle that nobody's claim can be accepted without proof, particularly if it is a big and lofty claim. Then more decisive and convincing proofs must be offered for the claim being advanced.

Therefore, for those who have accepted the worldview based on Divine unity as the foundation for their beliefs and their mode of viewing the world, whenever someone claims a particular relationship with God, the importance of the matter necessitates that it be examined carefully. One must look for the properties and characteristics that are necessary in guides of humanity in order to be able to recognize a true Prophet. Given the significance of the rank of prophethood, the great responsibility borne by the Prophets and the role of their message in determining the different concerns of human life, Prophets must be able to furnish a decisive proof for their claim to prophethood. The proof must be of such a nature that it could be obtained only by means of God's infinite power, of forces that lie beyond nature. History bears witness that the Prophets came to show the path of salvation to the human being who had become empty, and to remove the great obstacles that were standing in the way of his intellectual development and his innate perceptions, causing him to become alienated from himself. Thus, the human being was enabled to find anew what he had lost, and the groundwork was laid for the establishment of justice, a society based on equity, and an environment conducive to spiritual advancement. The fulfillment of such a commitment without doubt, depended on the possession of great spiritual capacities. The Prophets had first to be armed with the weapon of miracles, which provided them with a decisive force for entering the arena and beginning of their mission.

A miracle is a deed performed by a Prophet, by the will of God, in order to demonstrate the truth of his claim to prophethood. The proof that the miracle constitutes is without any doubt an indication of the Prophets relationship with the source of revelation, the Creator of being. For the one who claims to possess a mission from heaven, to have a message from God, and to be in contact with another world, must perform a deed that lies beyond the confines of nature, a deed that will serve as his letter of credentials from the Creator and confirm his claim to be in contact with revelation. To prevent His servants from falling into the trap of false claimants to prophethood, God has placed this blazing lamp, this decisive proof, in the hands of his envoys to mankind, so that the face of truth should never be obscured by veils of trickery and deceit. Just as the form of the entire scheme of being and the existence of all

phenomena is a clear proof of the existence of God and His pre-eternal unity, the miracle is a clear and manifest proof of the relationship of the Prophet with the source of revelation. Religion cannot be interpreted correctly except with reference to revelation; all the topics dealt with by religion become meaningless and worthless once severed from revelation. A Prophet who loudly claims prophethood for himself is, in reality, issuing the human beings with a challenge to enter the field of struggle against him with greater seriousness and energy than his, through mobilizing all their capacities and resources. But despite their desperate efforts, they get nowhere in their confrontation with him, and in their utter impotence they are obliged to surrender. The miracle of the Prophet is by its very nature a demonstration of his connection with the source of all being and the world of revelation; its properties are such that it is impossible for the human beings who are not connected to the world beyond nature to confront or resist it, however much they expend of their powers and energies. Hence the demonstration of prophethood depends on the performance of a deed that transcends the limits set by natural norms and common laws, and the performance of such a deed is not possible without the permission of the Creator. This provides a criterion for distinguishing the true from the false. Naturally, the miracle differs from other phenomena in the world only from our point of view, not from the point of view of the One Who has precise and complete knowledge of all the causes of existence. Generally speaking, the proof of prophethood was provided by miracles in areas that were in each age the object of special attention, so that those specialized in each area might know that the deed in question was beyond the limits of human capacity. This is the starting point for the task of the Prophets; by taking into account the human beings' level of intellectual development, they conquer broad horizons of human belief and swiftly attain their exalted goals.

Denial and Negation on the Basis of Pride

Those who regard miracles as something impossible and unacceptable should know that their incredulity arises from a superficial and simplistic view of things. Many events occur in the material world of which the human being knows the causes, but there are other events which the natural sciences are unable to interpret and explain. We should not, therefore, arrogantly deny everything the cause of which is unknown to us, relying on our slight knowledge. The human being's error is to imagine that he knows everything; when he cannot penetrate the depths of a problem, he proceeds simply to deny it. However, it is beyond dispute that certain limits have been set to the reach of our thought, and however much farther the realm of human knowledge be extended, it will always remain limited. It is not wise to try and extend our own limited knowledge and laws to embrace the whole of infinite being. The instruments of our science will not have enough power or capacity to examine many matters, for causes and determining factors are not limited to those things of which we are aware. The miracles of the Prophets remain covered by the overall order of creation; it is we who on account of the limited scope of our awareness, and the cessation of our thought-mechanisms at the boundaries of the supra-natural realm, are unable to penetrate the unknown and virgin territories of the universe. From the point of view of time and place, being is infinite, and that segment of it which has been studied by the human being cannot in any way provide him with a complete idea of being. Why, then, should it be objectionable if our questions concerning the

causes of the miracles wrought by the Prophets remain unanswered? It is not possible to compare miracles with the extraordinary states attained by ascetics, because deeds such as theirs do not lie beyond the scope of human thought and inspection, instruction and practice; they inevitably yield certain results and they can be performed by others who pursue the same course. Moreover since accomplishments such as these derive from the limited powers of the human being, they cannot be performed under all conditions and without the use of certain instruments. Furthermore, the deeds of ascetics are in many cases a kind of frivolous entertainment; they do not play any positive, constructive role in human life nor do they bear any fruit worth speaking of.

No one will regard the deeds of ascetics as miraculous or a proof of communication with God.

As for the deeds wrought by geniuses, they result from their possessing the power of thought, intelligence and mental calculation, from their awareness of a series of precise scientific mysteries, the deduction and application of which depends on knowledge of certain complex and precise principles. None of this has anything in common with miracles. Anyone who studies the rudiments of one of the sciences can, in principle, reach the same result as a genius; it is a matter of education and instruction. Scientific accomplishment is restricted to certain cases and it is open to contradiction by other, similar attainments. A miracle depends on revelation and derives from the infinite power of God; it does not stand in need of education and instruction nor is it subject to rivalry. Jesus, upon whom be peace, began speaking while still in the cradle without any teacher or instructor having the least to do with it, and without it being contradicted by another supra-normal phenomenon. Imam Sadiq, upon whom be peace, said: "God bestowed miracles on Prophets to serve as a clear proof of their truthfulness and veracity. He does not give such proof to anyone except his Messengers and His Proofs, so that the true claimant to a connection with God should be distinguishable from cunning tricksters." It is for this reason that even a supra-normal act cannot withstand the force of a miracle; it loses its illusory power on the field of battle and is condemned to inevitable defeat. We must bear in mind that the miracle never violates the law of causality or destroys the norms of creation. However, the powerful God Who has created the order now observable in the scheme of being through the relations of causes with effects is not Himself bound or imprisoned by these causes. Since He is absolutely empowered over them, there is nothing to prevent Him from originating miracles through an unknown and mysterious chain of causes, beyond the ability of today's science to interpret an unknown even to geniuses among the human beings of learning. Taking into consideration the finiteness of our knowledge, our instruments of measurement and our powers of assessment, it is possible that the human being will never come to grasp those mysterious causes which are controlled and willed by God. Nonetheless, those Divine norms which are unknown to us should not be imagined to be outside the sphere of the law of causality.

We have said that the miracles of the Prophets indicate a supranatural relationship; they arise from the manifestation of the light of Divine unity, and they are a part of the will of the Divine essence which has created all phenomena in the world and set universal schemes and unique laws and place to rule over them. We are acquainted with some of these unique laws

in our own world. We see that in the severe, freezing cold of winter when all vegetation is robbed of its verdure and freshness, the pine tree and the box tree withstand the pressure of the murderous cold and preserve their freshness and greenness. Does the fact that these two trees form an exception to the general condition of plant life mean that the norms and laws governing all plants have been broken? We certainly have no proof establishing in a definite and empirical fashion that the factors and causes we have so far discovered for phenomena are eternally valid, or that nothing can occur in accordance with extraordinary causes. Numerous scientists tell us today that we must not deny the existence of a whole series of phenomena that do not accord with natural causes, because we do not possess a decisive proof permitting us to negate paranormal phenomena. Alexis Carrel writes in *The Human Being, the Unknown Being* "In every country and age, people have believed in the possibility of miraculous and almost immediate cures being effected at shrines and holy places. Today those beliefs have been weakened, and many physicians believe those cures to be impossible. Nonetheless, given the testimony we have at our disposal, it is necessary to examine the matter and think it over more carefully. The Lourdes Medical Institute has collected many of these testimonies. Our present information concerning the immediate effect of prayer on the curing of diseases rests on the testimony of persons who had suffered from sicknesses such as tuberculosis of the bones, skin cancer and running sores. The nature of the cure does not differ much from one case to the next: first, a feeling of intense pain, then a complete cure. After a few seconds, minutes or, at most, hours, the wounds heal, no trace of the sickness remains, and the patient's appetite returns." Although this passage does not apply to miracles, it does point to real occurrences that indicate the existence of phenomena the causes for which are unknown to the human being.

The answer of the Prophets to the Illogical Demands of the Polytheists

Without doubt, extreme self-worship, going to extremes in self-worship and in distorting reality and ignoring it, causes the human being's misguidance to increase, together with the dominance of personal, arbitrary inclination over his mind. A true orientation to reality, a decisive entry onto the path of truth, requires the human being to empty his inner being of all obstinate tendencies, the negative consequences of which are irreparable. Everyone has the individual duty of seeking the truth, and this can be attained only by following the path of salvation. The Quran recognizes as logical that miracles be demanded of the Prophets as proofs of the veracity of their claim, and it narrates in detail the practical and affirmative answer given by the Prophets to this demand of mankind. Nonetheless, there were certain obstinate and illogical persons in each age who were in effect unwilling to accept the truth and demanded from the Prophets miracles of their own choosing. Sometimes they even demanded the performance of deeds that were rationally impossible. Naturally enough, the Prophets who were in communication with the source of revelation did not submit to their childish and obstinate demands. The purpose of miracles is to bear witness to messengerhood, and this aim is accomplished by any miraculous deed that gives assurance that a Prophet has indeed received a mission from God. Is it necessary that Prophets should produce miracles corresponding to the particular taste and desire of everyone? Must a Divine miracle be subordinate to the will of frivolous and aimless individuals?

The Prophets proclaimed to the human beings that they were entrusted with the guidance and teaching of mankind, so the occurrence of miracles had to be based on the will and desire of God and the necessities of the situation; it was not a means for entertaining illogical and obstinate people. The Noble Quran says: No Messenger had the right to perform a miracle without God's permission. (40:78) One of the reasons for the Prophets' refusal to submit to those who were demanding miracles of them may have been that those persons imagined the Prophets to be claiming some kind of control over the whole of the universe. The Quran therefore says: "Tell people I am a human being like you, except that revelation comes to me. (41:6) Say: God is transcendent and elevated. Am I more than a the human being whom God has chosen as His Messenger?" (17:92) However, when people were seeking guidance and pursuing the truth, and the Prophets themselves wished to establish the truth of their mission, miracles took place, as is evident from many such instances in the case of Moses, upon whom be peace. It is always possible for God to draw the attention of the human beings to a miracle in some spectacular way. For example, He can cause inanimate objects and plants to speak or do other remarkable things in order to establish the veracity of His religion. However, such miracles would not be conducive to the human being's freedom or his conscious choice and development. Therefore, God has not acted in this fashion and He has not sought to guide the human being at the expense of his intellectual freedom. Those who turn their back on the truth will naturally come to experience the result of their deeds and the consequence of their behavior. It is thus that everything moves forward in this world in complete harmony. If God were to punish all humans immediately because of their misdeeds, no one would be able to endure it, for if every wrongdoer were to be killed, the human race would inevitably come to an end. If those opposing the Prophets had no aim other than uncovering the truth, they would come to accept it both as a result of their own extensive and comprehensive reflections and of the manifest miracles displayed to them. However, the manner in which they demand miracles indicates an evil intention on their part, and a tendency to make unjustifiable objections, not a real search for the truth. The basic concern of these obstinate persons whose hearts had died within them was denial and turning away from the truth, for considering the existence of clear miracles there was no need for them to be repeated. Even if they had been repeated, those deniers would still not have believed. The Quran says: "When the Messenger of Truth was sent to them by Us, they said, 'Why has he not been given what Moses was given?' But did they not disbelieve in what had been given to Moses? (28:48) Many of their demands did not even accord with the conditions of a miracle. Thus, the Quran tells us that they proposed the following to the Prophet of Islam: "... to prove your mission you must bring God and the angels here to us." (25:24) In another verse, their foolish objections and expectations along the same lines are analyzed as follows: "They said: 'We will not believe in you unless you make a spring gush forth for us from the ground, or have a garden of date trees and vines with water flowing through it, or cause the sky to fall in on our heads, or make God and His angels appear in front of us, or have a house covered with gold, or ascend into the sky. But we will not believe in your ascending into the sky unless you bring for us a book we can read.' Say: 'Glory be unto my Lord! Am I anything more than a human being, sent by God with a mission?' (17:90-93) It is evident from these verses that the objectors were demanding from the Messenger of God that, in order to prove his prophethood and his special relationship with the origin of all existence, he should perform miracles such as

causing a spring to gush out of the ground or possessing an orchard overflowing with fruit or a palace of god, these being the marks of aristocratic opulence in that age. It was possible for those demands to be fulfilled, for certain individuals possessed one or all of the things mentioned; however, they were not Prophets. The possession of material resources can never be a criterion for prophethood and the ability to perform miracles; such things can never be accepted from anyone as a proof of prophethood . This shows how short-sighted and banal they were in their thinking; they imagined illusory power, wealth, and abundance, to constitute criteria for leadership. Another demand of these tricksters, who were interested in nothing more than enjoying the same kind of entertainment that the deeds of an ascetic might have provided, was the immediate descent of Divine punishment, bringing human life to an end. But the ultimate aim of the miracle is something quite different: to guide the human beings and make them aware, to nurture their capacities and to liberate them from attachments. It is for this reason that as a result of his accepting the truth, the human being begins to act within a new system of thought. As for the demand that God and the angels should descend, considering the fact that God is not a body and is not limited with respect to time and space, He cannot have a material or relative manifestation. To imagine the contrary is the result of childish and illogical thinking. God's final answer to the illegitimate objections of the miracle seekers is explicit and clear: Say: 'Glory be unto my Lord! Am I anything more than a human being, sent by God with a mission?'

Through these words, the Prophet fully absolves God from any weakness or inability, while, at the same time, emphasizing his own utter powerlessness to produce miracles of himself. Miracles proceed from the will of God's unlimited essence and the Prophet follows His will. Without God's permission, he has no right to intervene in the workings of the universe, and under no circumstances can he surrender to every demand made on him for the performance of miracles. Another objection that was made was that they considered the Prophet's belonging to the same human species as themselves a point of weakness. They imagined that Prophets could not be raised up from within society, from among the masses. This, too, the Prophet answers with the same words, condemning thereby the narrow and erroneous view that was a result of their failure to understand the meaning of a prophetic mission. With the lesson and message contained in these words, he barred the path to any deviant interpretation of prophecy and messenger hood. Still more amazing was that the polytheists used to say: "We will not believe until we receive what was given to the other Prophets." (6:124) For those who have no intention of changing and do not wish to be liberated from bondage to their obstinate illusions in order to enter the straight path of guidance, the repetition of a miracle would be entirely fruitless.

An Inadequate Analysis

Those whose thoughts lack a foundation of religious belief attempt to explain the question of revelation and the teachings of the Prophets as follows: those teachings did not have a heavenly origin, but arose instead from the intellectual genius of those pure and outstanding humanitarians. Since the peoples that lived in the time of the Prophets could not be convinced by the logic of reason, in order to gain their support, the Prophets attributed to God the laws and regulations they themselves had drawn up which were indeed useful for the reform of

corrupt societies. This interpretation of the matter is neither logical nor realistic, for however much abundant talent and innate genius an individual possesses, his talents will remain buried and his genius unfulfilled unless he receives instruction and education. By contrast, the knowledge of the Prophets was not learned or acquired; they did not acquire learning from some masters with whom they were contemporary. In addition, the work of geniuses unfolds in accordance with material and natural principles, whereas the miracles of the Prophets are not based on natural and conventional laws or formulae. If they had no source other than genius and perspicacious intelligence, unless they had discovered some entirely new factor, the teachings they promulgated after claiming prophethood would have to have had some antecedent, and they would have developed their thoughts and ideas gradually, not suddenly and all at once. By contrast, all the profound transformations we see in the lives of the Prophets begin, without exception, at the moment they proclaim themselves to be Prophets. Before that moment, putting aside their abundant spirituality and inward purity, everything in the external circumstances of the Prophets is entirely normal.

This abrupt transformation, this sudden presentation of teachings that within a comprehensive theoretical and practical framework orient the thoughts and actions of the human being toward a specific goal - his liberation from domination by natural and social forces - is clear evidence and proof that a new factor has entered the lives of the Prophets, that a new gushing source for the discovery of truth has been placed at their disposal. Nowhere in the course of human history will we encounter persons the products of whose talent and the fruit of whose genius make such a sudden, abrupt appearance. However, this was precisely the case with the Prophets. Any impartial researcher who examines the history of the Prophets will realize that the entirety of their noble lives was characterized by truthfulness, honesty, devotion to the truth, and love of humanity. Particularly apparent in their lives were their spirit of self-sacrifice, their endurance of pressure and overwhelming problems, and their constructive determination at all times to advance toward fulfilling their goal. Even their hate-filled enemies were obliged to credit them with all these virtues. These qualities demonstrate well what constituted the foundation on which the Prophets stood in their mission devoted to truth and humanity, while confronting the inhumane and impure elements that always emerged to confront the men of God. Given this, can we attribute the utterance of falsehood, for the sake of gaining greater influence in society, to persons who represent an ideal model of freedom from all crookedness and deviousness? Is it permissible to accuse of making false and unfounded statements personages in whose conduct we see not the slightest trace of selfish desire? It was precisely their lofty and worthy conduct that accelerated their success in winning over a whole segment of mankind that was drowning in the stagnant waters of ignorance. Furthermore, one of the principal teachings put forward by those men of God, one of the hallmarks of their mission, was a summons to honesty and truthfulness and a condemnation of hypocrisy and deviousness. Specimens of Human Perfection According to Ali, upon whom be peace In one of his speeches, Ali, upon whom be peace, discusses the lives of the Prophets, describing those most exalted exemplars of human virtue as follows: "Let me speak of the characteristics of Moses, to whom God spoke. When he raised his hands in prayer to the presence of his Lord, he swore and affirmed, 'O God, I need nothing of all Your bounty save only a piece of bread to relieve my hunger.' He asked for nothing more

because in his indigence he used to ward off hunger with the wild grasses of the desert, and so this was he that the greenness of the grass he used to consume was visible through the diaphanous skin of his stomach. "Let me mention David, the Prophet who first introduced reed pipes. He would weave baskets from date fiber, and then ask his companions, 'Which of you will buy this basket?' He would buy barley bread with the money he earned from selling the baskets and eat it. "Let me speak of Jesus, son of Mary, upon whom be peace. He would place a stone beneath his head to sleep on at night; he always wore coarse clothing and passed his days in hunger. The moon was his lamp in the darkness of the night, and the azure roof of the heavens was his shelter in winter. He prepared his food from the plants that grew in the ground; he had neither a spouse to draw his attention to her nor a child on whom to lavish anxious care. He had no wealth calling for his attention, nor greed and desire to abase him with the search for riches. His only mount was his own two feet, and his two hands were always at work in the service of God's creatures. "Follow your own Prophet of pure disposition, Muhammad, upon whom be peace and blessings. He was a perfect example of all human virtues. God loves those who in the conduct of their lives follow His Messenger, who place their feet in his footsteps, and who follow him in their choice of a way of life. He took but a slight portion of the life of this world. "His nurture was dry bread, and he never ate to satiation. They offered him the world, and he did not accept it. He disliked whatever God disliked, and he despised whatever God regarded as lowly. "When he ate, he would sit on the ground. He would sit and stand with the meekness of a slave. He would mend his own clothes and stitch his own shoes. A simple curtain covered the door to his dwelling, and he would tell his wives to remove it, because it reminded him of the worldly life and its adornments. Even within his heart, he would wage war against worship of the world, obliterating all consciousness of it from his heart. He expelled all concern for worldly well-being from his mind and closed his eyes to all adornment and luxury. "Every possessor of intelligence must ask himself whether God was honoring the Prophet through this way of life or, on the contrary, humiliating and abasing him. If he says that God was abasing him, he has spoken in error and accused God of a monstrosity. "So follow the Prophet in the conduct of your lives, for it is he who holds the banner of resurrection and who provides the measure by which all humans deeds are to be measured. He entered the arena of this world with a pure intelligence and conscience and passed through this world, closing his eyes to the things of the world for the sake of God's message. He never placed one stone on top of another in order to build himself a dwelling, and he never constructed a palace. "How grateful we should be to God that in His kindness and favor sent us Muhammad, upon whom be peace, for us to follow and take as our model, and to follow step by step the path he traced out with his life." [8] The way of recognizing Prophets is not restricted to the miracles they performed. Indeed, the method prescribed by reason and knowledge represents the most profound way of recognizing a Prophet, particularly in an age when the intellect has developed and knowledge has advanced. Through careful examination and objective analysis, by taking into consideration both individual and social characteristics, as well as the content of the teachings being proclaimed, it is possible to recognize the true Prophet, and to do so, in fact, at a more profound level than do those who merely witness the miracles they perform. A distinct school of thought can present itself to researchers and investigators more effectively and convincingly than by means of a miracle; it can demonstrate the veracity of the program it proposes. The clearest,

most evidential and primary proof of a correct school of thought, in an age when knowledge and learning are fully present, is its complete conformity with the criteria of science and the observable realities of the universe. It should, therefore, be realized that if a school of thought does not accord with the criteria of science, and if, from the point of view of its content and regulations, it contradicts science and free thought, that school definitely has no relation to the Creator. It is thus that with the advancement of knowledge and the intellectual development of society, the authentic teachings of the Prophet - which ensure the perfection of the human being, provide for his spiritual and material needs, and enable both the individual and society to grow and advance, shine ever more strongly through the darkness of illusion and superstition and display their brilliant visage ever more clearly. The heavenly nature of the Prophets, which is clearly delineated in the Quran, is an indication of their lofty standing and status before the Creator. A whole separate surah was revealed concerning the Prophet Noah. He has such an exalted status that God invokes peace on him in the following terms: "Peace be upon Noah and greetings be unto him! Thus do we reward the doers of good, for he was truly one of our believing servants." (37:79-80) The Quran mentions Abraham, upon whom be peace, the champion of Divine unity, as follows: "God chose Abraham as His friend." (4:125) "It is fitting for the believers that they should follow Abraham." (60:4) "He was a truthful bestower of counsel." (11:107) Concerning Solomon, that just ruler, He says: "We bestowed Solomon on David; he was a virtuous servant who turned always to God." (38:30) God granted him His favor and generosity in both worlds, as is apparent from these two verses: "This is a limitless bounty bestowed in this world. (38:39) For Solomon there shall be a goodly return in the next world, and a station of nearness in the presence of his Lord." (38:40) Concerning David, God says: "Mention Our servant David. He was most powerful, and he constantly turned to Our presence in repentance. We strengthened his kingdom and rule, and gave him the power to perceive truths and to distinguish the true from the false." (38:17-18) God mentions Joseph, that veracious one who taught all seekers of virtue the lesson of struggle against sin, in the following terms: "Joseph who had heard these words, raised up his hands in supplication and said: 'O God, the torment of prison is more preferable to me than the ugly deed the women demand of me.'" (12:33) Finally, expressing the respect that is due all of the Prophets, He says: "God's peace and blessings be upon His cherished Messengers." (37:181)

What is revelation?

Within the overall scheme of being, revelation is the precise, complex and unique relationship that links the Prophets to God. It is the sole source for the knowledge of prophethood, the basis for the cognition and insights of the Prophets, and the vehicle for their exalted mission of bringing about fundamental and positive change in human society. Through their superior, clear and direct awareness of the realities of being, the Prophets are inspired by God with heavenly teachings and laws, which they then present to the human beings as messages from the realm of the unseen. The process of revelation consists of an angel softly conveying certain matters to the hearing of a Prophet. Sometimes the Prophet sees the angel and exchanges words with him. If matters are conveyed only to the heart, this is a question of inspiration, not of revelation. Prophets who shone forth in the darkness at a time when

discrimination, injustice and disunion had reached their height, began their missions with a command received through revelation. By arousing human beings' minds, they directed their attention to the subtle perceptions latent within their own primordial nature and attempted to cleanse them of the effects left by the beliefs and customs they had acquired from their environment. Thus they were able to make blossom the higher capacities and urges of the human being and to guide them towards happiness and the good. Of course, the ultimate nature of revelation and the type of perception that leads to it is not known to us, because it lies beyond the categories accessible to normal perception and the forms of awareness that are available to the human being through the operation of his creative intellect on the data and knowledge that he acquires. Despite the spiritual and intellectual legacies that have been passed down to us, we are unable to perceive the particular characteristics of this relationship with God. This has always remained a dark corner inaccessible to our thought and imagination, and it may always remain so. Nonetheless, it is certain that abundant spirituality and extraordinary inward purity in a given individual may create in him a certain receptivity that fits him to receive God's abundant revelation and to be chosen for undertaking the mission of a Prophet. At the same time, being actually able to receive heavenly commands and to be linked to the pre-eternal source of revelation depends exclusively on the will of God. The purity and worthiness of an individual cannot be a causative factor in the establishment of that relationship. Since the purpose of prophethood is the comprehensive guidance of the individual and society toward perfection and the laying down of a legal system and a social order for mankind, the assumption of responsibility involved is necessarily heavy and taxing. To accept bearing the burden of prophethood requires great capacity and energy. God therefore bestows the station of prophethood on those who have the ability and capacity to bear the heavy responsibilities of delineating a practical course for the human being to follow through the light of revelation. Being appointed to this mission is like a storm that envelops the whole being of the Prophet. It causes his mind to overflow with the light of insight and wisdom, and by virtue of this clarity of vision, as well as his freedom from arbitrary and selfish desires and erroneous thought, he mobilizes all his capacities with an inexhaustible ardor to fulfill his Divine mission. Iqbal, the celebrated thinker of the Indian subcontinent, compares the Prophets with other spiritual personalities whom he calls mystics. Although what he has to say is interesting, the comparison of Prophets with mystics is inadequate. "The mystic does not wish to return from the repose of 'unitary experience'; and even when he does return, as he must, his return does not mean much for mankind at large. The Prophet's return is creative. He returns to insert himself into the sweep of time with a view to control the forces of history, and thereby to create a fresh world of ideals. For the mystic, the repose of 'unitary experience' is something final; for the Prophet it is the awakening, within him, of world-shaking psychological forces, calculated to completely transform the human world."⁹

The phenomenon of revelation neither contradicts the norms of creation nor is it possible to find in philosophy or those of the natural sciences that have not been contaminated by dogmatic prejudices masquerading as science, any proof for the impossibility of such a relationship between the human being and God, for the content of revelation does not constitute a category opposed to science. It is possible that in the course of time science will

advance to a point where it can show interesting findings in this area. As we know, being is infinite; therefore, the possibility of knowledge and perception also extends toward the infinite. In our judgment of matters we should not imagine that we are able, within our own limited historical period, to comprehend the entirety of being and its complex realities in their majesty and infinitude. Rather we must hope that as human knowledge expands and increases, certain mysteries will be disclosed to us and matters of which we are now ignorant will become clarified. The ability of the Prophets to communicate with God, to receive and pass on messages from the world of the unseen without any material instruments, is in no way inferior to a radio receiver and transmitter; on the contrary, its effectiveness is much greater and stronger than that of any instrument manufactured by humans. At night, ships on the ocean make use of radar in order to find out about other ships approaching, and radar can also be used to send pilotless planes to whatever destination may be desired. If the human mind can produce radar waves, why cannot it not also emit and receive other waves that are unknown to us and unrecognized by us? Is the human being less than the instrument he has created himself?

Once we understand the truths suggested by these questions, we can no longer assume an attitude of denial when faced with mysterious and complex phenomena. With a profound understanding of phenomena, and with a wide panorama open in front of him, human being's consciousness and culture will ultimately reach a point where many truths and mysteries will be unfolded before him. Although the human being has sense perception in common with the animals, some senses are far more highly developed in certain animals than in the human being. There are mysterious forms of perception in animals that scientists are unable to comprehend. It is not necessary that waves should be transmitted by means of metal instruments. Moths have something similar to radar waves, so, in principle, we may say that waves can be produced, received and emitted by flesh, skin and bones. Would it be correct to regard the human being as less than a moth?

An animal can be blindfolded and transported hundreds of kilometers away from its home, but astonishingly it is able to make its way back. What capacity and what type of perception is it that enables it to return to its original location? What capacity is it that gives rise to this remarkable, unerring sense of direction? What instrument produces these rays, and in accordance with what frequency? Scientists have undertaken different experiments to understand how birds find their direction, but they have never been able to neutralize this capacity either in a bird or in any other animal. Numerous waves are broadcast from every corner of the globe, waves which may be received elsewhere, yet we are totally unaware of them. We do not yet understand the true nature of energy, of light, or of waves, so how can we grant ourselves the right to deny revelation which arises from the elevated nature, the pure vision, and the special relationship of Divinely chosen personages with God? Does the fact that such a relationship is unavailable to us constitute a proof of its impossibility for everyone?

There is no scientific proof negating the possibility of revelation. The fact that science has been unable, down to the present, to discern the sources of revelation does not mean that the fact of revelation should be regarded as a scientifically unacceptable phenomenon. When we

cannot fully solve, with some scientific interpretation, the problem of the unique and astonishing perceptions and sense that are used by animals to guide them in their existence; when we cannot comprehend the nature of the mysterious transmitter that is secreted in certain birds, enabling them to communicate with the opposite sex over great distances - given these inabilities, how can we insist on trying with the methods of the empirical sciences to solve the problem of revelation, the unique relationship existing between one exalted human being and the source of all being? If the phenomenon of revelation lies outside the scope of sense perception and experimentation, and human knowledge has been unable, up to the present, to clarify this kind of reality, why should the impotence of science in this area arouse doubt and hesitation in us? The French scholar de la Mane says concerning the impossibility of knowing the ultimate reality and essence of God: "What a fool is the denier who says, 'since I do not understand His true essence, therefore, He does not exist. !' If he can define a single grain of sand, I will bring God before him!" Revelation is a particular mode of awareness and perception that occurs in certain rare individuals. The nature of that awareness is clear enough to them, and if it is unknowable to others, it is because they do not find in themselves that mysterious superawareness. However, through studying the properties and effects of that form of awareness, they can discern the truth or falsehood of those who lay claim to it and see whether or not they truly possess that great and abundant source of knowledge.

Revelation in the Quran

The word revelation is used frequently in the Noble Quran, and its various occurrences demonstrate that revelation is not confined to human beings. However, the unfolding of revelation is connected to the general progress of all beings toward perfection, and the highest stage of revelation, which the human being alone is fitted to receive from the world of the unseen, consists of that which God sends to His chosen Messengers based on the need of them for Divine guidance. All phenomena - whether it be the plants that raise their heads above the soil, in the planets, the constellations, and the sun which aid us with their heat, their light and their rotation - benefit the human being by fulfilling their functions in accordance with a certain type of revelation. The laws and the order which govern the whole expanse of being and on the basis of which all things take shape, demonstrate that the whole of being is imprinted with a certain revealed law.

The entire universe is, then, never deprived, even for an instant, of the favor of God's law.

Once we see matters in this light, is there any phenomenon which can be said to lie beyond the scope of God's revelation? Is obedience to the order of creation not a form of worship, one which involves neither logic nor knowledge? God provides for the needs of the infant even before its birth by placing milk, the most appropriate form of sustenance for it, in the reservoir of the mother's breast, so that the sustenance of the child is ready for it as soon as it enters the world. Why then should it not be possible for God as Sustainer to have prepared in advance the life-giving food needed by human beings and societies as they evolve, thereby providing future generations with the appropriate and necessary sustenance? Considering the

fact that revelation is not restricted to the human being, and the will of God and His signs are at work in the ordering of the sun and the moon and the succession of day and night, the revelation sent to the Prophets may also be said to lie at the very heart of the mechanism of the universe, following its general and comprehensive laws while preserving its own distinctive features. This should not be taken to negate the role of the human being as a free and independent being living within the world of contingencies; the assistance rendered unilaterally by nature to the human being does not diminish his value and standing. Clearly, the spirit of every individual human being does not receive revelation; not everyone can establish a direct relationship with the heavenly realm and receive laws and ordinances from God without intermediary. One of the reasons for this is that humans as a species are strongly subject to instinctual desires and material causes and limitations; this constitutes an obstacle which prevents the human being from attaining the conditions necessary for a direct relationship with the supramaterial realm. In addition, as was pointed out above, the receipt of commands from heaven depends entirely on God's will. Thus the Quran says: "God knows best where to place His message. " (6:122) Without recourse to some instrument, we cannot hear the waves that are broadcast by transmitters throughout the world, so we need an instrument with two complementary capacities: on the one hand, it must receive the waves in the air exactly as they are transmitted, and, on the other, it must convey them to our ear. Failing this, we will be unable to benefit from the waves that are being broadcast. Likewise, mankind similarly needs those outstanding individuals who have two complementary properties: on the one hand, they will be linked to the material dimensions of human life, and, on the other hand, on account of certain powerful spiritual capacities, they will be in simultaneous contact with two worlds. Those individuals are, of course, the Prophets, who on account of possessing these two properties have been chosen by the Creator as highly evolved beings able to receive His message. Having received from the source of all being those positive, constructive commands of God and the elevated principles of culture that derive from them, they then convey them to the inhabitants of the world.

The Difference between Prophets and Scholars of Genius---The Steadfastness of the Prophets in Conveying their Message

Who can deny the distinctive sincerity of the Prophets, the profound faith that is anchored in the depths of their beings, and the creative exertions they make in order to convey their teachings and message? Who can belittle their uncompromising struggle against corruption and oppression? If we deny the sincerity and pure intention of the Prophets, the progress made by their teachings and the ability of their message to conquer the hearts and spirits of nations cannot be possibly be explained. First, the unique decisiveness shown by the Prophets in propagating their message and defending their message, their sense of urgent necessity, points to that message being something quite different from the scientific theories put forth by scholars. Whenever scientific personalities wish to put forward their views, they cannot disregard the possibility of those views being invalidated, however firmly they may be based on the most advanced scientific knowledge. Since immobility is unacceptable on the path to the future advancement of knowledge, they do not block the path to additional and scientifically more acceptable research. Continuous and unceasing effort may result in the

supplementing or modification of their views. This was not the method of the Prophets. They believed profoundly in what they said, and in carrying out and advancing the mission contained in revelation, they unhesitatingly refused to retreat even a single step. They pursued their call strenuously and with steadfastness, and went forward even at the risk of their lives with their campaigns to bring about change and convey to human beings those Divine principles of culture that inspire the human being to ascend. Second, to rely on devious methods, to have recourse to trickery deceit and lies, creates anxiety; to act contrary to the truth arouses disquiet and unease. History does not provide a single example of a bearer of Divine revelation who manifested the least sign of anxiety. This striking characteristic of the Prophets permits us to grasp the profound reason why they conveyed their message, and gave to mankind the glad tidings of salvation through following their teachings, clearly, directly, with the utmost confidence, and without any preliminary. The task of the Prophets was utterly removed from any kind of trickery or deceit; their teachings were profoundly rooted in the realities of being and linked to the true source of all knowledge and awareness.

Third, furthermore, scholars frequently fall prey to error in their views. A given researcher can often be seen to express contradictory views on the same subject in the course of his career and it is impossible to find a single scholar who has not made a single mistake in the course of his life. Einstein says: "Not many scholars can be found today who regard themselves as qualified to put forward something as a definitive truth. On the contrary, figures such as Newton admit that what appears today to them today to be clear may be regarded by future generations as confused and obscure. Our descendants may look at our works of our predecessors." [10] By contrast, the scheme of creation is not subject to error in the guidance it dispenses to the human being on obtaining his material needs. Similarly, in guiding the human being to his ultimate goal, it provides him with unerring revelation that derives from the same source as the laws of creation and points together with them to the same goal. There is no instance in the history of prophethood of a Prophet taking back what he had previously said, after once enunciating the Divine message, or of his admitting an error and negating his previous program in order to substitute new teachings. By contrast, the ideas of thinkers are frequently seen to change as the horizons of scientific thought expand. The abrogation of a certain revealed ordinance does not contradict what we have said concerning the Prophets. First, a temporary ordinance is revealed in order to assure a certain limited benefit, and later it loses its validity with the issuance of a second, more comprehensive ordinance.

Fourth, the successes attained by scientists and scholars in discovering certain truths come gradually and pre-suppose the completion of courses of study and experimentation. Much time passes between the first stage of his work, when he begins his efforts to uncover something, and its final stages. But when we look at the lives of the Prophets, we see that they had no need of any preliminaries in order to uncover the truth, nor were they subject to any hesitation. Instead, the truths they received came to them in all their dimensions directly from the source of being, without their passing through various stages of learning and investigation, and they proclaimed those truths immediately. Fifth, if we look at the fundamental emphases in the teachings of the Prophets, at the great variety and

comprehensiveness that is to be seen in every aspect of them, in a precise and analytical fashion, not in a purely abstract, superficial and limited framework, we will come to appreciate more profoundly how those teachings constitute a complete school of thought, liberating the human being in every sense of the word. Again, if we examine the firm foundations and principles on which religions are based, we will realize that none of their principal elements correspond to the views and utterances of the scholars that lived in those times. Considering the unfavorable conditions of the environment, the intellectual decay of the societies in which the Prophets were raised, it is impossible that the fruitful and elevated principles contained in every Divine message should have derived from the thoughts of a man. Never in human history, in the course of the overall development of human society, have thinkers and men of learning been seen to produce such texts that overflow with spirituality and awareness, that in their comprehensiveness relate to all the concerns and stages of individual and social life, and that have had such a profound and observable effect. The teachings of the Prophets have had special characteristics, representing the richest and most vital source of culture in the ages when they made their appearance.

Sixth, choosing to accept the path of the Prophets is not simply an abstract or creedal matter that remains exclusively in the sphere of belief. Through accepting that path, human beings are, in reality, choosing a method of life, a special mode of existence, that leaves its imprint on their outer conduct. The Divine worldview is not merely an intellectual infrastructure for it also has distinctive superstructures that in their aggregate give shape to human behavior and the fabric of society. It is possible to attribute such abundant sources of life, such comprehensive teachings that lead to the growth and improvement of the human being, to any source other than Divine revelation? For the teachings of the Prophets all exude the scent of authentic Divine message. The investigations of researchers make it plain that the efforts of scientists and scholars take place in isolation from each other. Each travels his own path in seeking solutions to scientific problems, and they are unconcerned with the efforts of others as they pursue their researches. If their theories occasionally become interconnected in the course of their investigations, this is because of the interrelatedness of scientific questions with each other, without this being intended by the researchers in question. Matters are quite different in the case of the Prophets. Not only do they consider the books received by their predecessors to be valid, they also confirm their missions and praise their efforts and strivings. This proves that all heavenly religions have but one source of inspiration, with each serving to supplement and perfect its predecessor. If we look carefully at the preaching of the Prophets, we see that each of them was required to confirm those who had preceded him, and it may also have been necessary that each should proclaim the mission of the next Prophet to follow him. The abrogation of a religion does not mean its invalidation; it consists rather in the proclamation of a new and more complete message. God-given knowledge cannot be invalidated; it is simply that the following Prophet states it more fully and more precisely. The same applies to changes in divine ordinances. Addressing the Prophet of Islam, the Glorious Quran says: "In truth We have sent the Quran to you, confirming all the previous heavenly books that were revealed before you and bearing witness to them." (5:48) "When God took the covenant of the Prophets, saying, 'I give you a book and wisdom,' then there came to guide you, O People of the Book, a messenger from God who bore witness to the

truth of your book and your law so that you might believe in him and aid him. God said, 'Do you accept My messenger and that which I have sent in his heavenly book, the Quran?' They all said, 'We accept.' God said, 'Be witnesses over yourselves and your peoples, and I too will be a witness with you over them.' (3:81) The Bible similarly relates these words from Jesus, upon whom be peace: "Do not think that I have come to invalidate the Torah or the scrolls of the Prophets. I have come not to invalidate, but to fulfill." [11] The truths enunciated in these quotations are an eloquent proof of the unity linking together the missions of all of the Prophets. Their teachings took wing in the direction of infinity, having no source other than the all-penetrating will of God, the revelation of the Creator. Since the clear and conscious faith of the Prophets was profoundly linked to the origin of all being, decisiveness, self-reliance and steadfastness came to be their special characteristics.

The Inerrancy of the Prophets

Taking on the grave and sensitive responsibilities of prophethood and the guidance of society requires the possession of a whole series of exalted and previous qualities, without which a person will never be fit to assume a position of leadership. One of the exceptional qualities required in a Prophet is that there should exist within him a restraining force that, arising from the perfection of his faith and the intensity of his piety, protects him against not only the commission of sins and acts of moral corruption but also from considering them or intending to commit them, so that throughout the entirety of his life, both before and after the beginning of his mission, all dimensions of his being should be free of the dark blemish of sin. There can be no doubt that the more crucial the position of an individual in society, the deeper is his need for public trust and confidence. Now can any position be graver and carry more responsibility than that of the Prophet who is to guide society, exercising his guidance in all affairs of life, both spiritual and material?

The supreme purpose and aim of the mission of God's Messengers is to guide and educate human beings across the world by means of a series of Divine teachings and ordinances. It is, at the same time, the religious duty of mankind to submit to all the sublime injunctions of religion that the Prophet has presented as revelation and Divine law. Naturally, humans will implement those teachings with all their heart and soul and accord absolute value to them only when they are thoroughly convinced that those teachings do indeed emanate from the source of all being. What authority or person can earn such universal trust that whatever he says will earn sincere and unquestioning acceptance so that human beings submit to his commands? Can anyone deserve that trust unless he is armed with the weapon of inerrancy and virtue is manifest in him in all its dimensions? Were it not possible to trust completely a Messenger of God in his receiving and conveying the revelation, the aim of prophethood - which is the perfection of humanity - could not be ensured; were the Prophets to lack inerrancy in conveying the Commands of God, society would inevitably deviate from its true course. Were the Prophets not to be protected from pollution by sin and infection by moral disease, and were they not to gain immunity from all kinds of impurity, the possibility would always exist that they would stumble when confronted with the deceptive allure of the material world and pursue personal goals such as wealth and power. This would be true even if they had lofty human attributes to a superior degree. It is obvious that the existence of such

a possibility would cause their followers to hesitate before implementing the commands and pronouncements. The one who claims prophethood and the right to lead human beings, whom human beings must follow in order to attain the pinnacle of perfection in all aspects of their life - if such a one were to have the slightest record of deviance, dishonesty and inclination to sin, could it be totally excluded that he would never again live, betray or speak an untruth? Could he be accepted as a model of virtue and purity? Without doubt, intelligence and logic compel us to answer this question in the negative. No one could accept with complete confidence as revelation and the Command of God the words of someone whose life did not shine with purity, who had fallen into the whirlpool of sin and openly engaged in corruption and moral turpitude before claiming prophethood, even though later a spiritual revolution and transformation had occurred in him. No one could accept his teachings as an unquestionable message from heaven, particularly with regard to matters that lie beyond the experience of the human being. The Prophets must also be completely removed from anything that causes doubt to arise or impairs the completeness of God's proof. The Quran proclaims: "Before this, you were unable to read or to write; this was lest the deniers should doubt concerning your prophethood." (29:47) "Say: God's is the best and most eloquent proof. " (10:47) "We sent the Prophets as givers of glad tidings and warnings so that no excuse should remain thereafter for human beings." (4:165)

Therefore the first necessary condition for the appearance of revelation is the absolute sincerity and inner purity of the Prophets. The burning love of human beings for the Prophets and their devotion to them which arises from the deepest layers of their inner being as well as their belief in absolute values, in God, and the guardians of religion - all of this is made possible by the inerrancy and perfection of those Divinely guided personages. The effectiveness of conduct and mode of action is infinitely greater than that of mere words. The behavior and attributes of a teacher plays a fundamental role in the instruction of those for whom he is responsible, action having a far-reaching effect in building the character of an individual that cannot in any way be compared with the effect of speech. It will be a disaster for humanity if the one who assumes a lofty position of spiritual guidance in society is himself immersed in a whirlpool of pollution and evil. If he lacks true awareness and piety, can he create an appropriate environment for the fostering of virtue, and can he bring about an inward transformation and revolution in the human being that will have a lasting effect? Will he have the capacity to train human beings and be their moral guide? Can he implant piety and virtue in their minds and their thoughts?

The commission of even a single sin by the Prophets would render fruitless their attempts at nurturing human beings to attain perfection, which is the goal of their mission. How can one who is himself polluted with sin purify others of their sins? One who is not himself morally and spiritually perfect cannot possibly succeed in training human beings to perfection. We cannot take into consideration only the deeds and conduct of the Prophets during the period of their mission, and treat them separately from the spiritual and ethical characteristics they display during the rest of their lives. A more comprehensive investigation must be carried, for it is not enough that Prophets turn to purity only at the beginning of their missions. The firm and continuous link of the Prophets with the source of existence and the complete absence of

pollution by sin throughout all of their lives constitute an absolute necessity. Divinely guided personalities must never have been polluted by sin. Any prior record of sin on their part will form a great obstacle in the path of their heavenly mission which is to guide human beings to God and call them to purity and the avoidance of all abomination. One who until yesterday stood in the ranks of the impure, those polluted by corruption, and who devoted a whole segment of his life to sin, will inevitably have his evil record remembered by others; it will be vividly present in their minds, and they cannot overlook it as they analyze and sit in judgment on his past life. The beginning of a profound spiritual transformation cannot by itself wash away all previous corruption and remove it from the minds of human beings. When studying the histories of the Prophets, one should never content oneself with a superficial listing of events. The perceptive researcher must investigate all the different dimensions of the lives of the Prophets before their assumption of the prophethood. Then only will they be able to understand why the obstinate sworn enemies of the Prophets, in their conspiratorial efforts to prevent the dissemination of the heavenly message, do not shrink even from attributing madness to the Prophets, but never dare to accuse them of moral corruption.

The character and personality of the Prophets were so well known and so brilliant to their contemporaries that such an idiotic accusation on the part of their enemies would have caused people to reject their other accusations as well and thus nullified all their long-standing efforts. If the Prophets had been sullied by even as much as a single sin, this would have been used as an effective weapon to destroy their social standing and prestige. It is obvious that point out weaknesses in the past lives of the Prophets and recalling their previous errors and sins would have been a most effective weapon for destroying the repute of the Prophets and shaking people's trust and belief in them. This in itself constitutes vital and eloquent proof that they had already acquired a certain sanctity which characterized both their way of viewing things and their actions. In the story of Moses we read that Pharaoh, the oppressive tyrant, immediately reminded Moses of his past when he was confronted by him. He addressed him critically as follows: "'Are you not that child whom we reared and who spent years of his life in our presence? Did you not kill a man and did you not deny our Divinity?' Moses answered: 'I did indeed commit that act, but not intentionally. I was acting only with the intent of saving one who had been wronged, and the result was an accidental killing. Then I fled because of my fear of you until God taught me knowledge and wisdom and made me one of the Prophets.' " (26:18-21) Let us recall that the environment in which the Prophets were raised was encircled by all kinds of darkness and corruption. It was not an environment in which purity, innocence, and piety might flourish, or the inner nature of the human being, with its predisposition to the truth, might be nurtured. Such an unfavorable environment ought surely to have caused the Prophets also to become polluted by conforming to the social conditions that surrounded them. However, we see that true awareness, virtue and honor came into being in precisely the most corrupt of environments, shining like so many jewels over the heads of human beings. This in itself is clear testimony to the different dimensions and aspects of the personality of the Prophets, the nature of their inerrancy and their complete moral immunity. It can also be clearly deduced from the Quran that attaining the lofty station of prophethood (as well as that of imamate) is possible only through being free of all contamination by sin and spiritual evil. When Abraham addresses the Divine Presence with

the petition that He appoint his descendants as leaders and guides, God responds by making the avoidance of oppression an explicit condition of prophethood: "My covenant and the station of prophethood are given only to those who have not committed any oppression (whether toward themselves or others)." (2:123) "He knows the unseen dimensions of this world, whereas none knows His world of the unseen except those He has chosen from among the Prophets, to protect whom He sends angels from in front and behind. Thus He may know that the Messengers have fully conveyed the messages of their Creator to mankind," (72:26-28) So from the point of view of the Quran, which describes the Prophets by the use of various attributes, it is an essential condition of prophethood that the Prophet possess inerrancy and never have been polluted by any act of oppression, for this counts as an encroachment on God's sanctity. God does not permit the reins of guidance for humanity to fall into the incompetent hands of one whose heart is blackened by sin and whose hands are stained by cruelty and oppression. The question of the apparent attribution of sins to the Prophets by the Quran can be understood when we examine the type of sins at issue, for there are differences of degree among sins. Veritable and absolute sin lies in rebelling against the commandments of God; the commission of this sin brings punishment and retribution, and God's Messengers are absolutely protected against it. Another kind of sin is relative; if a human being commits a sin of this category, Divine Law does not provide for punishment or retribution. However, acts of this type would detract from the loftiness of the Prophets and would be totally irreconcilable with their vision and moral refinement. In social and religious matters, the expectations of different personages are not uniform. The level of expectations depends on the capacities of individuals, together with the position they hold, the knowledge they have, and other matters. If an illiterate person delivers an eloquent and powerful speech, it will be a matter for congratulation, even though the content of the speech, deriving from the thoughts of an undeveloped mind, may be insignificant. But if a serious scholar, whose words ought to create a storm and to leave an impress on the mind, delivers the same kind of speech, it will be regarded as deficient and open to objection. Let us now draw an analogy with the sublime and majestic personalities of the Prophets. They have vast resources of knowledge and faith, as well as direct access to reality and the richest and most abundant source of awareness and knowledge. Considering this, if for an instant they are neglectful of God - something which would not earn a reproach for others - it will count as a manifest error on their part. The brilliant visage of their prophethood will be clouded and sin will be ascribed to them, for that instant of neglect was not compatible with their lofty personality. In addition, the position of prophethood and the guidance of mankind is of such crucial importance that if the Prophet commits any error, the honor of the community he leads will also be affected; society will also carry the stain of his shame.

Inerrancy Does Not Negate Free Will

Here the following question arises. If inerrancy is a gift from God, resulting in the protection of the Prophets when faced with abomination and sin, their abstention from sin cannot be conscious and deliberate, nor be regarded as a proof of their superior status or a source of pride for them. For their mental constitution is such that God has guaranteed them immunity from sin. This objection would be justified if inerrancy were the result of pre-determination,

with the commission of any kind of sin being impossible for the Prophets, and the Prophets being compelled to obey God's Commands and acquire virtues and purity of soul. But this is not the case; the inerrancy under discussion is founded on perfect faith and awareness. It demonstrates itself clearly in action, and in no way negates free will and choice. All the deeds of the leaders of religion, like those of other human beings, arise from free will and consciousness. Why should it be necessary for an external coercive force to push them in the direction of inerrancy? Will any difficulty remain if their vision of the world is seen to play this role? With their profound vision, the Prophets perceive the majesty and splendor of the Supreme and Absolute Power, manifest across the limitless plain of existence, at so sublime a level that their heart and their mind overflow with the love of God. How could it be believed that such highly conscious and excellent beings should stain their hearts with sin and disobey the commandments of their God and Beloved? Furthermore, they are profoundly aware of the awesome consequences of sin, given which it would be impossible for them even to consider committing sins and evil acts. It is true that knowledge of the evil consequences of sin does not in itself provide immunity against it. However, the inerrancy of the Messengers of God arises from so powerful and realistic a form of knowledge that they are able clearly to see with the eye of their heart the requital that sin brings. It is this that makes it quite impossible for them to commit any sin. A doctor will never drink from a vessel that is contaminated by a microbe because he knows the dangerous consequences this would entail. Mountaineers spend a whole life climbing mountains, but their intelligence and awareness never allow them even to conceive of the possibility of deliberately falling vertically, let alone undertaking such an act.

Do the doctor and the mountaineer in these two examples have some kind of built-in and involuntary immunity against these irrational acts? Do they avoid these fatal acts without exercising free choice? To drink from the contaminated vessel or not to drink to fall or not to fall - both alternatives are possible for them, but their conceptualizing of the results and consequences of the fatal acts reduce to near zero the likelihood of their undertaking them. Here we can grasp clearly the link between knowledge, which is the very kernel of awareness, and action, which is the external manifestation of awareness. We can see how profound and exact mental awareness objectifies itself, and how the human being is situated between cause and effect, between subjective and objective action and reaction. Similarly, inerrancy in the Prophets proceeds from their profound awareness of the effects of sin, of Divine anger and punishment. Their awareness of these is so clear and complete that the abolition of spatial and temporal distance would not have the slightest effect on their profound and categorical faith. Furthermore, the Prophets acquire a steely determination as a result of their strivings and unstinting self-sacrifice and their continuous orientation to the origin of being; they have no fear of the problems and difficulties that confront them on the road to establishing justice and truth, and they devote their entire beings to winning the satisfaction of God. This, too, is a powerful factor in bestowing inerrancy on those men of God and protecting them from making use of their ability to sin and even from allowing the idea of sin to enter the pure sanctuary of their minds. This comprehensive protection against sin is, then, the direct result of their encompassing knowledge of the requital that evil deeds earn and their perfect awareness of the exalted station of the Lord. It is, too, an indication of their lofty, proud

spirituality which harnesses all the rebellious inclinations of their being as that they never step beyond the bounds that have been set. Let us set aside for the moment the case of the Prophets. In every age there have been persons of pure heart who as a result of a fundamental change in their manner of thought and constant struggle against various forms of captivity, have torn apart the chains of attachment and liberated their thoughts and their deeds from the entrapping prison of enslavement to the world. For human beings such as these, the only source of value in life has been their love for God, their determination to do His will and to advance towards Him. Their burning love, arising from their purity of mind and their belief in the primacy and authenticity of religion, gives them a certain kind of protection against many forms of sin and moral corruption. In many cases, they may not be fully aware of the harmful consequences of sin, but their sense of obedience to God creates such a transformation in their consciousness that it functions like an impenetrable barrier interposed between them and sin. So firm and unbreakable is that barrier that instinctual desire and arbitrary inclination are unable to breach it.

Muhammad b. Umayr relates the following: "I asked Hisham, the outstanding student of Imam Sadiq, peace be upon him, whether the Imams have the station of inerrancy. He answered that they do. I then asked him to explain for me the nature of their inerrancy. He replied as follows: 'There are several qualities that give rise to sin and vice: greed, envy, lust and anger, and none of these can penetrate the beings of the Imams. How might they experience greed, considering the abundant resources they have at their disposal, including the public treasury of the Muslims? Similarly, why should the Imam be envious? The envious person is the one who cannot endure the thought of someone being higher than him, and the imamate is assuredly the highest of all stations. "As far as worldly matters are concerned, it is impossible for the Imam to be angry because he has been entrusted with the implementation of the penalties God has decreed. As for anger in matters touching on the hereafter, which is a praiseworthy form of anger, it is impossible for the Imam to fall prey to lust and desire, for he is well aware that the pleasures and desirable things of this world are transitory and totally insignificant when compared to the Divine reward and bounty which are reserved on the Day of Judgment for the pure and the worshippers of God." [12] There are then two basic sources for the commission of sin: a failure to recognize the ugliness of sin, and a defeat of the intelligence when confronted by the power and pressure of lusts. So if a person be fully aware of the corrupt and ugly nature of all sin and if he can bring his desires fully under control, it is impossible that he should pollute his hands with the commission of sin. Imam Sadiq, upon whom be peace, says: "God extends His aid and assistance to human beings in proportion to their will, determination and choice, so that whoever makes a correct choice and a firm determination will receive the full aid of God, and he who falls short in his choices will find God's aid withheld from him in due proportion." [13] But as for total protection from error and sin, this is possible only through the special favor of God. The Quran says: "Were God's mercy and favor not to embrace you, a group of enemies would have attempted to turn you aside from the right path. But through God's favor, they were able only to turn themselves aside from the right path, and they could not harm you in any way. God has bestowed on you this book and the station of wisdom and prophethood and taught you what you knew not, because God's favor and grace toward you are infinite." (4:113) In addition, it can perhaps be

said that the Prophets participated directly in the unfolding of realities and when the human being confronts objective realities in accordance with a certain particular sense, error and sin can have no meaning for that person. It is only when the human being attempts to transpose mental forms into objective reality that error can arise, not when the person is inwardly linked with the reality of being, a condition which makes it impossible for mistakes to occur. Thus it is that the Prophet is immune against error when guiding human beings and summoning them to God. Were it to be otherwise, you would look with doubt and hesitation on whatever the Prophet said in promulgating the commandments of God and you would not regard yourself as obliged to obey them. Inerrancy applies to the receipt of revelation, the preservation of revelation, and the promulgation of the message. All three aspects are contained in this verse of the Noble Quran: "In order that God might know that the Messengers have fully conveyed to mankind the messages of their Lord, that He be fully aware of what the Messengers possess and that He know full well the numbering of all things in this world..." (38:28) In addition, as far as the receipt of revelation is concerned, we know that all things are at the disposal of God; there is no question of any personal view being intermingled in it. We know that the infinite knowledge and power of the Creator are utterly removed from the possibility of error, and that God's complete vigilance in ensuring the propagation of His message removes the possibility of all error and mistake. So just as the receipt of God's commandments takes place beneath His vigilance, so too does the propagation of the message. Comprehensive inerrancy, with respect to thought, word and deed, is then indispensable for undertaking the mission of guidance and leadership. It is inconceivable that God should send Messengers subject to error who would thwart the whole purpose of the message they bear. Freedom from various bodily defects and spiritual inadequacies also forms part of the conditions of prophethood and the receipt of revelation. Contagious diseases, belonging to a family of ill-repute, a harsh and abrasive character, are some of the factors that might arouse repulsion and cause people to shun the Messenger and become disinclined toward him. Thus the aim of the Prophet's message, the training and edification of the human being, would receive a setback. Given the fact that the Prophet is the bearer of a Divine message, the doctrines he presents must not contradict the firm principles of human logic and knowledge. Were this not to be the case, the message brought by a claimant to prophethood would not be worth studying, nor would it be necessary to demand miracles and proofs in support of it. We see, however, that the Prophet is described in certain religious traditions as 'the external intellect,' i.e., the intellect external to one's own being. Of course, the principle we have put forward concerns the firm rules and established laws of reason and science, a category that does not include hypotheses and theories. The teachings of the Prophets are none other than that system of law laid down by the Creator, and the universal order of creation consists of scientific principles and laws. Since both orders derive from the same source, they must everywhere preserve their harmony. It is impossible that a Prophet be chosen by God and then propagate his message something contrary to rational laws, for God Who Himself established reason as a criterion for distinguishing between the true and the false will never promulgate a commandment contradicting it. It is likewise impossible that the ordinances of heaven should contradict science, which is, in its essence, the order that God causes to rule over things. However, it should be borne in mind that if science posits a way for reaching the goal, this does not mean that the way of science is the only way available or

that all others are closed. In matters that are apparently opposed to science, one should always be cautious and avoid hasty judgments aimed at reconciling religious ordinances with scientific concerns. Science still has an infinite road to travel and there is always the possibility that scientific theories will fall subject to doubt as a result of more extensive and comprehensive research.

The Splendor of the Prophet of Islam

Previous Prophets mentioned some of the characteristics of the Prophet of Islam in their heavenly books, giving their followers the glad tidings of his future appearance. As the Quran says: "Those to whom We sent books (the Jews and the Christians) know well of Muhammad and his truthfulness, just as they know their own children, but some of them obstinately hide the truth, although they are well aware of it." (2:145) In the troubled world of those days, cultural and moral decline, together with polytheism and idolatry and all their ramifications had submerged the whole globe. Even the heavenly religions that had followers in different parts of the world had undergone radical change in the course of time; not only had they lost all vitality and ability to guide mankind, but their most creative elements had fallen prey to decline. There was no hope of infusing a new spirit of life in them, of making blood course once again through their hardened arteries. The People of the Book were therefore waiting for some profound eruption and the emergence of a new heavenly personality who would bear on his capable shoulders the heavy burden of guiding mankind, leading them away from decaying systems of thought to a new and progressive teaching. The world had reached the end of its tether in the midst of all that confusion and unrest. It longed for a whole new environment, different from the poisoned one in which it lived, and waited for a hand to emerge from the sleeve of the unseen which would destroy the crumbling structure of the old order and build a new one on its ruins. Each of the peoples and nations that were then dominating the world had in some way fallen prey to anarchy and confusion. The Arabs who lived at the crossroads of the great powers of that age and whose broad homeland was traversed by the caravans of international commerce felt more powerfully each day their weakness and impotence vis-a-vis their powerful neighbors. The danger of complete extinction that faced the Arabs because of their lack of an organized political structure and because of the power of their oppressive neighbors, was plain to any farsighted person. It was under these circumstances that the promised deliverer Muhammad, upon whom be peace, was born at dawn on Friday, the seventeenth day of the month of Rabi' al-Awwal, fifty three years before the migration (hijra), corresponding to the year 570 of the Christian era, in the city of Mecca in the Arabian Peninsula. It was a land of stifling repression, the very symbol of a sick and decadent society where ignorance was actively cultivated. It was like a swamp where the waters of corruption stagnated, a pit in which humanity had been buried. It was in such a place that the Prophet first set eyes on the world and the light of his splendor first shone on the horizons of human life; it was there that this quintessence of being who was destined to bring human thought to maturity generated a new energy and an inexhaustible vitality in mankind. None could reach his level of excellence in the qualities he possessed, and all expectations were fulfilled with his coming. He appeared at a time that society was prepared for him because it needed him. Not only the Arabian peninsula but the world at large was

prepared for his coming, because the whole of the ancient world was longing with all of its being for the appearance of a man who would take it by the hand and guide it to its goal.

The sphere of the heavens, in its prolonged and ceaseless rotation had never been able to bring forth a creature like him whose substance was pure and free of all defect, who was completely untainted by all imperfection. History bears witness that this blessed infant, whose splendor shone forth from the arms of his mother, Aminah, over the whole world, came to establish the most creative of all faiths and the purest, most profound and pervasive of impetus, for the cultivation of knowledge and spirituality. By prohibiting flattery and subservience before the thrones of the emperors and the powerful, he awakened to new life the dormant minds of human beings and created a suitable environment for their cultivation. He drove away idols from the threshold of their veneration, instructing them instead in the mysteries of Divine unity and teaching them how to live and die with dignity. As a result of his teachings, idolatry gave way to monotheism and the worship of the one true God; ignorance yielded to knowledge and science, brotherliness, compassion, and other human virtues took the place of hostility, hatred and discord; and those who had been reared in an atmosphere of corruption and ignorance became the choicest specimens of humanity. Abdullah, the father of the Prophet, was a descendent of Ishmael. His was a truly human heart, a heart that overflowed with love, fidelity and mercy. After marrying Aminah, he went trading in Syria, accompanying a caravan that was leaving Mecca. Aminah was already pregnant and impatiently awaited the return of her husband. But a severe illness laid hold of Abdullah, drawing the life out of him so that he died far away from his homeland. He closed his eyes on the world and its pleasures, full of painful regret that he would be unable to see Aminah again or the child that she was to bear him. After a time, the young mother learned that in the sixteenth year of her life she had been widowed and left alone with a small infant. Her father-in-law, Abd al-Mutallib, took her and the infant to his own house, and then decided to send his newborn grandson to the Banu Sa'd in the desert, to be suckled by them and to grow up in the pure air of the desert. Four months had passed after the birth of the Most Noble Prophet when the wetnurses of the Banu Sa'd came to Mecca and one of them, a woman of pure disposition called Halimah, declared herself ready to suckle the orphaned Muhammad.[14] Halimah returned to the desert with the child to take care of him there and he stayed among the Banu Sa'd continuing to grow until he was weaned. Still, however, his grandfather continued to leave him in the care of the tribe until he was five years old, and throughout this period the kindly wetnurse took good care of him and paid attention to his upbringing. He learned the best and most authentic dialect of Arabic, and imbibed the most eloquent forms of Arabic speech. Halimah took him to see his mother two or three times, and on the last of these occasions she turned him over to his mother. When a year had passed, Aminah left Mecca, taking him with her to show him to the wetnurses who lived in the villages between Mecca and Yathrib. Full of joyous satisfaction, she reached the dwelling places of the wetnurses, but she was not destined to return to Mecca. Aminah died in the course of her return journey and was buried where she died. Her infant orphaned son, now six years of age, was left alone at the side of her grave.[15] He had never seen his father nor had he fully enjoyed the kindness and affection of his mother for just as he was about to begin

benefiting from her upbringing, fate snatched her away and left him alone in the awesome expanse of the desert.

At the time of the death of his mother, the infant Prophet had reached the age when intellectual and spiritual characteristics begin to develop. His grandfather, Abd al-Mutallib, for whom he was the only reminder of his own son, Abdullah, and a source of consolation for his weary heart, then assumed responsibility for his care and fulfilled this trust worthily until his death. This period in which the Prophet enjoyed the care and protection of his grandfather, which were like a soothing balm placed on his wounds, did not last long. Just as he reached the age of eight the life of Abd al-Mutallib came to an end. A new grief assailed the Prophet, lines of sorrow and pain became apparent in his face, and the powerful spirit that was never troubled by the perils he faced throughout his life was gripped by the pain of bereavement. However, Divine favor had bestowed on him the ability to accept and endure these setbacks. For an orphan who was due to become the father of humanity and the comforter of all the burdened and oppressed in the world had to become acquainted, from childhood onward, with all forms of deprivation and affliction; he had to have a spirit as firm and resistant as a mountain in order to carry on his shoulders the otherwise unbearable burden of the Divine message. The ability to resist and withstand all kinds of obstacles and difficulties was essential for him, and his lofty and expansive spirit was a sign that he possessed precisely this ability. The orphaned boy next moved to the house of his paternal uncle, Abu Talib, a great and noble person who was the full brother of his father. Although he was surrounded by the kindness of his cousins in his uncle's house, Muhammad, upon whom be peace, naturally felt lonely. One morning he learned that his uncle Abu Talib was planning to journey to Syria, leaving him behind. Muhammad, upon whom be peace, then approached his uncle and asked him for permission to accompany him, but his uncle refused, since he was still too young to endure the rigors of travel. When the caravan was about to depart, Muhammad's eyes filled with tears, and Abu Talib was deeply moved by the sad expression on his face. He was compelled to take him with him on his journey to Syria, and thus it was that at the age of twelve he set out on a journey to distant lands. Before the Quraysh caravan reached its destination, it passed through the city of Bostra where the party met a monk called Buhayra. Buhayra passed his days engaged in devotion in his cell, and being a man deeply learned in Christianity, he was revered by all of the Christians. As soon as Buhayra caught sight of Abu Talib's nephew, he found himself profoundly attracted by him. His piercing and mysterious glances seemed to indicate some secret hidden in his heart. Finally Buhayra broke his silence and asked to whom this child belonged. The party pointed to his uncle, and Abu Talib said, "This is my nephew." Buhayra then said: "This child has a brilliant future in front of him. This is the promised Messenger whose coming and prophethood have been foretold in the scriptures, and I see in his person all the signs mentioned in those books. He is that true Prophet whose name and family I have read of. I know where this great personality will rise to fame and how the Divine religion he brings will conquer the whole world. However, you must conceal him from the view of the Jews, because they will destroy him once they become aware of this." [16]

Historians have clearly discerned in all dimensions of his person great spiritual energy and power, together with all the other qualities that are fitting in a great leader sent by heaven. No researcher or scholar can claim that the Prophet, upon whom be peace, fell prey at any point in his life to moral or spiritual deviation or to nervous excitement. Although the characteristics of the Prophet of Islam are more clearly and fully known than those of other people who have left their mark on history, in the near or distant past, history cannot point to the slightest rebelliousness, ill-temper or evil conduct on his part, nor even to a single error or sin. The remarkable life of the exalted Prophet of Islam is clearly and completely known in all of its aspects: the period before his birth, his infancy, his youth, his moral characteristics, his travels, his marriages, his conduct in war and peace. Recorded history bears witness that the slightest trace of corrupt belief cannot be found to have clouded his brilliant visage. Although he had no access to any form of instruction, he had no connection with the Age of Ignorance surrounding him, and vice was never able to take root in him. The creedal environment in which he grew up was a compound of polytheism and idolatry, as is shown by the strong resistance of the Arabs to his summons to monotheism. The entirety of his early life was spent in the midst of an ignorant, evil-living and oppressive people and he never left that environment before the beginning of his mission with the exception of two journeys outside the Arabian Peninsula, once in childhood, in the company of Abu Talib, in the early part of the second decade of his life, and once in his mid-thirties when he went trading with the goods of Khadijah. Nonetheless, we find not the least affinity between his personality and the society in which he lived. The aspect of his personality that was particularly valuable in that corrupt and polluted environment was his honesty, trustworthiness and unfailing sense of justice, together with his hostility to all the forms of humiliation from which mankind was suffering.

Muhammad, upon whom be peace, captivated the hearts of his contemporaries with his nobility of character and his kindness toward the weak and the afflicted. Friend and enemy are agreed that none of the men of his age even approached him in the perfection of his attributes and spiritual characteristics. For example, Zayd b. Haritha, who had been separated from his family at an early age and was given by Khadijah to the most Noble Messenger, upon whom be peace, as a slave, spent his entire life with him. After a time, Zayd's father came looking for him in order to reclaim him. Now Zayd had been emancipated by the Prophet, upon whom be peace, but he was still a slave to the love the greatness and the splendor of the Prophet, and captivated by the excellence of his conduct and behavior. So although he was free to return to his family, he preferred to remain with the Prophet and serve him. Eloquence and profundity of speech, fairness in judging, superior intelligence and perception, heavenly disposition and brilliance of thought - all these were abundantly evident in the being of this great personage. They shone forth in all the varied scenes of his life, and he so lived that years before the beginning of his prophetic mission, he was awarded the title "amin", 'trustworthy', an eloquent description of his whole mode of conduct.[17] During one of the religious festivals of the Quraysh, an incident occurred that struck a blow at the rule of the idolators. In the middle of the festival, while the people were gathered around an idol and rubbing their foreheads in the dust in front of it, a few clear-minded and pure-hearted people such as Waraqa b. Nawfal, who were distressed by the corruption prevailing in Mecca, began

to discuss the situation. They asked themselves how much longer it could continue and when the time of delivery would come. Why were those people prostrating in front of objects, and why had they distorted the religion of their forefather Abraham?

One of the things they said was this: "What is that piece of stone around which they are walking? A thing that neither sees nor hears, that does not breathe, that can give no benefit and inflict no harm!"[18] As the Prophet grew into maturity of the body and mind, he became inclined to periodic retreat and withdrawal. His profound inward thoughts, together with the unsuitability of his environment, impelled him to seek solitude. In his evaluation of phenomena he was never hasty nor dependent on his own ideas and perceptions. He clearly saw a hand that inscribed its will on the pages of nature, and this was itself an indication of the profundity of his vision and the exaltation of his thought. He would spend the month of Ramadan alone in the cave of Hira, on the outskirts of Mecca, benefiting fully from the darkness and silence. Far removed from men and their corruption, he engaged in supplication and armed himself with the weapon of faith. He developed his spiritual personality through humble worship in the presence of the Majestic Creator that enveloped his whole being, and through cultivating the thoughts that welled up from the depths of his spirit. In the morning, overflowing with faith and certainty, with spiritual enthusiasm and vigor, he would leave the cave to engage in his daily tasks. Love of God animated his kind and tranquil face, and he was greatly distressed by the polytheism and foolishness of his people who would prostrate before the idols they had manufactured themselves. He began to struggle against this idolatry, remaining steadfast in the truth through all the trials and hardships he underwent. As his age approached forty, signs of anxiety and distress became marked in his behavior and speech, and he told his loving wife of sounds that were continually re-echoing in his ear and of a dazzling light that would envelop him.

The beginning of the Mission

Finally the appointed moment arrived, the moment which had been foretold by previous Prophets to their followers. At the age of forty, the orphan son of Abdullah attained the exalted station of messengerhood. It was he alone that time had prepared for guiding the world with his message for only this great and heavy responsibility could call for such qualities and virtues as he possessed. Only in such a vast enterprise could the energies of that quintessence of all existence unfold, for the entire being of Muhammad, upon whom be peace, was prepared to undertake the grave task of prophethood. If he had not been prepared, in the best possible way, to assume that sacred and fateful responsibility, there would have been none other in the world capable of conveying the Divine mission in all its dimensions. It was only the being of Muhammad, upon whom be peace, that was capable of stilling the thirst of the world. While engaged in worshiping in a corner of the cave of Hira in the heart of the night, the Prophet who had never studied or attended a school, was suddenly shaken by the summons, "O Muhammad!" followed by the command to recite, this was the beginning of revelation. A wave arose from the limitless ocean of Divinity, rent the breast of the Prophet, bewildered and anxious, and filled to the brim the cup of his spirit. The shining of a light from the realm of the unseen covered and enveloped his being and shone forth on his fair features, giving rise to new and bright life in the darkness of the night. Then, with a painful

tumult in his heart and bearing on his shoulders the heaviest responsibility conceivable, he set out for home from the cave of Hira, destined to become the teacher of all human beings and to assume the leadership of humanity on its long march forward. What force was it that had disquieted him despite his infinite patience, made him anxious despite all his tranquil courage, and plunged his whole being into painful turmoil? Thereafter the envoy of revelation came repeatedly, reciting verses to him, profound and astounding verses that bore no resemblance from the point of view of style and content either to the words of the Prophet himself, eloquent as they were, or to the conventional prose and poetry of the age. Although the Arabs of the Age of Ignorance knew neither how to read nor how to write and had no historians, philosophers or scholars, they were famed for the excellence of their poetry and the eloquence of their speech. The Prophet, however, had never participated in the cultivation of the arts of poetry and eloquence before the beginning of his mission. His conduct, on one hand, and the verses of the Quran, on the other, both testify that he made no compromises in conveying his message. He conveyed the message that he had been ordered to deliver clearly, unambiguously and in utter contradiction both with the beliefs and inclinations of the people and with his own immediate interests. He loudly proclaimed the revelation he had received to the evil and the ignorant, to the people made degenerate and corrupt by the worship of the idols they had fashioned themselves, and he informed them that their sole salvation lay in the worship of the One God. The new factor that appeared at a particular time in the life of the Prophet and caused him to engage in unprecedented forms of activity was the wondrous phenomenon of revelation, the heavenly message which he as the most lofty and qualified of men had been chosen to receive. Before then, no preliminary effort or particular inclination had been seen on his part that might have led to the bringing about of the sudden and remarkable transformation of the world he was now about to accomplish. The factor that had this profound effect on Muhammad, that changed that quiet and reflective man into an explosive source of revolutionary energy and enabled him to bring about such a profound transformation of humanity, from within the intense darkness of the Arabs' Age of Ignorance, was nothing other than revelation. It was a call that penetrated the very depths of the souls of human beings that melted the marrow of their bones, and directed all their strivings to the attainment of perfection. The command of revelation negated all the false and lying criteria which human beings had regarded as the measure of goodness and considered the sole means of evaluating human characteristics and habits, while, in fact, clothing falsehood in the garment of truth. It brought into operation new and clear criteria which showed human beings the goals to which they should strive to advance and brought about creativity in their lives. The veil of ignorance and silence was torn apart, the human beings' energies were set to work, the power of thought within them was aroused, and their spirits were borne aloft toward the infinite summit of being. The people who in their ignorance and lowliness would tear each apart on account of the most insignificant things and had lost all virtue, thanks to their various forms of enslavement, now became, through Islam and its great concept of monotheism - the true pillar of humanity and the breaker of idols - so elevated of spirit and so self-sacrificing that they happily abandoned both their lives and their property. The remarkable stories of self-sacrifice on the part of those early Muslims will stand eternally as examples of true nobility.

The Prophet of Islam had the vision and belief of a world leader, but he began to proclaim his Divine summons to monotheism in a relatively restricted sphere, a closed environment where tribal institutions exercised great influence and idols were counted as the most sacred and beloved of objects. It was an environment that was not in any way prepared to accept the message of Divine unity. The heavenly teachings of Islam and the culture to which they gave rise were superior not only to the intellectual atmosphere prevailing in the idolatrous society of the Arabs but also to all the religious doctrines and cultures of that age. The program for reforming systems of thought and culture that had become corrupt was laid down by a man who had never studied, who was unlettered, and who knew nothing of the religious books or the civilization of his age. At first he invited his relatives to worship the Creator, and then the people of Mecca and the Arabian Peninsula. Finally he proclaimed to the entire world his mission as the last of the Prophets. Ali b. Abi Talib, upon whom be peace, was the first man to accept his religion, and his wife, Khadijah, was the first woman to believe in his heavenly mission. Gradually others, too, proclaimed their belief in the new religion. Ali, upon whom be peace, said: "One day the Prophet summoned his relatives and addressed them as follows: 'Children of AW al-Mutallib! I bring you something more excellent than anything the Arabs have ever brought you. I bring you as a gift the means of your salvation in this world and the hereafter, a Divine Command to which I invite your submission. Who among you will help me, so that he will be my brother, my successor and my legatee among you?'

"All remained silent but I, who was younger than all of them, said: 'O Messenger of God, I will help you!' Muhammad, upon whom be peace, then said: "This is my brother, my successor and my legatee among you; listen to this words and accept them.' "[20] With his extraordinary powers of leadership and mature political sense, the Prophet began to refashion human beings by concentrating on their inner beings. He strove to awaken the sense of monotheism that was innate in them by drawing their attention to the mysteries of creation and acquainting them with the infiniteness of the universe. The Prophet had been born into an environment where human beings engaged in empty boasting out of their shortsightedness and tribal mentality, where privileges were based on unjust social conditions and prejudices. Now he arose and swept aside all those false privileges. He established new values and concepts with respect to labor, life and social relations, in the framework of a series of rules and ordinances, and strove to concentrate all the goals and thoughts of the human being on a program for liberating peoples from slavery, and delivering the oppressed from the tyranny of emperors and kings. Even for those who do not regard these exalted aims as having a heavenly origin will admit that they are among the most exalted and previous values observable in human history. The preaching of the Prophet remained hidden for three years. He established Islam secretly. Throughout the thirteen years that he concentrated his mission on Mecca, the leaders of the polytheists, who understood well the gravity of their situation, resisted him with obstinate hostility, doing their utmost to preserve the beliefs and customs of the Age of Ignorance and to silence the liberating cry of Islam. They conducted themselves with extreme ferocity against all who had converted to Islam. They fettered and chained those defenseless ones for their crime of having accepted Islam and left them lying hungry and thirsty on the ground beneath the burning sun of Mecca. They placed heavy stones on their bare breasts in an effort to make them forswear the religion of Muhammad. Yasir and

Sumayyah, those two heroes, were subjected to the most barbaric of torturers and every day endured the weight of the heavy stones the Quraysh used to place on their breasts beneath the fiery rays of the sun. These were the first martyrs of Islam: the husband died under torture and the wife was martyred by Abu Jahl.[21] By applying these methods, the idolaters wanted to stifle Islam while it was still in the cradle. For it was a life and death struggle: if the call of the Prophet were to advance, they would lose their sovereignty forever and the empty privileges they had enjoyed. Envy, too, played an important role in intensifying their hostility to Islam. The continuation of this unpleasant situation turned the city of Mecca into a prison and a place of torture for the defenseless Muslims. The polytheists made it forbidden even to listen to the verses of the Quran, and they appointed certain people to go out and meet incoming caravans and warn them not to make contact with the Muslims. Because of the pressure and cruelty of the Quraysh, a number of Muslims decided to leave Mecca and migrate to Ethiopia, in order to have a safe and tranquil environment to practice their religion, and worship the One God, free from harassment by the unbelievers. Even then the opponents of Islam did not abandon their persecution of them. The Quraysh sent two envoys to the ruler of Ethiopia in order to persuade him to send back the Muslims. But the ruler received the migrants hospitably and extended his protection to them, so that they were able to carry out their devotional duties in freedom in the land of Ethiopia. When the envoys of Quraysh presented gifts to the Emperor in an effort to have the refugees sent back to Mecca, he answered that since they had chosen him out of all rulers to seek refuge, he could not expel them without investigating them. When Ja'far b. Abi Talib, the spokesman of the migrants, spoke of the beliefs of the Muslims concerning Jesus, upon whom be peace, the Emperor was much impressed and said: "I swear by God that Jesus had no station beyond what these Muslim say." Although the corrupt ministers of the Emperor were displeased by his words, he praised the beliefs of the Muslims and gave them complete freedom, turning over the gifts that the Qurayshi envoys had brought. Saying that when God had given him power, he had not required any bribe of him, so it was inappropriate to benefit from such gifts.[22] Thus light triumphed over darkness, and the forces of polytheism and ignorance retreated in defeat and despair.

The Tactics of the Enemy

When the enemies of Islam saw that their power was crumbling in the face of the new order of monotheism and realized that Islam was falling all their idols, both material and mental, just like an axe felling trees, they first resorted to threats. When they saw that threats were useless, they tried by means of promises and the award of privileges to turn the Prophet back from the path on which he had embarked. But these efforts, too, proved fruitless as he rejected with disgust all their promises of power and wealth, with all the firmness demanded of the bearer of a heavenly mission. He proclaimed: "I swear by God that if you were to put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left, I would never abandon my mission until the religion of God spreads over the globe or I lose my life in propagating it." [23] Ya'qubi writes as follows in his history: "The Quraysh told Abu Talib that his nephew was vilifying their gods, accusing them of insanity and proclaiming that their ancestors were in error. They asked him to tell the Prophet that they would give him all of their wealth if he abandoned his

preaching. Muhammad, upon whom be peace, answered: 'God did not raise me up as a Prophet in order that I might accumulate the wealth of this world; rather, He raised me up to convey His message to mankind and to call them to Him.'"

Then the enemy changed its tactics once more, and employed every conceivable weapon against this movement in order to destroy the newly constructed edifice of Islam. Old enemies made peace with each other in order to destroy the Prophet. By attempting to blacken the fair name of the Prophet and sully his reputation, they wished both to quench the fire of hatred they felt in their hearts and to neutralize his summons and call. Everywhere they proclaimed that he was a magician, a sorcerer, a madman, a poet, and they stirred up the ignorant against him. This is the same satanic strategy that the enemies of truth always use in order to undermine and defeat great personalities. The Quran makes it plain that this strategy was not peculiar to the Age of the Prophet of Islam. It proclaims: "Never was a Prophet raised up for earlier peoples without men saying that he was a sorcerer or mad. Is this a legacy of denial they have transmitted from one age to the next? No, these people are themselves rebellious and transgressors." (51:52-53) The Prophet, however, consistently refrained from adopting an attitude of anger toward his enemies. Although their fanatical prejudice, their shortsightedness, their blind traditionalism, and their calumnies increased the difficulties that he was facing, they were never able to arouse his anger. Instead, he always sought to bring them to see the truth, by means of spiritual instruction. Neither pressure nor promises, neither deprivation nor difficulty, was able to shake the determination of the Prophet. Nor did the spreading of cunning and baseless accusations yield any result, for the compelling logic of the Quran and its re-echoing melody were too profound and too exalted not to leave an effect on the mind of whoever heard it; or to captivate and transform them. Even enemies were sometimes compelled to admit the truth. Tabarsi writes in his commentary on the Quran: "When Walid, the celebrated sage of the Arabs, heard the Prophet recite the verses of Surah Fussilat, he was profoundly affected. The Banu Makhzum gathered around him and he described the Quran to them as follows: 'It has a distinctive charm and a unique beauty. Its branches are laden with fruit and roots are blessed. It is an elevated form of speech, higher than all others.' Thus he spoke and went on his way, and the Quraysh thought he had embraced the religion of Muhammad, upon whom be peace." [25] Although the Prophet had vast resources of patience, he was sometimes distressed by the foolish conduct of his people. He would go into a corner until Divine command summoned him back to his grave responsibilities, for to desist for a single instant in striving toward the sacred goals that had been set for him was impermissible; he had to shun all rest and retreat. (See 74:1-4) One of the distinctive factors enabling the Prophets to succeed in the movements they launched was their steadfastness and power of endurance. The Quran mentions the method followed by the Prophets in their struggles as follows: "Ishmael, Idris and Dhu 'l-Kifl were all steadfast and patient in fulfilling their missions." (21:98) All the envoys of God endured hardship and suffering when they were faced with denial and rejection, but they remained steadfast until the aid of God secured them their triumph.

The Beginning of Migration

As a result of the oppressive atmosphere in Mecca and the unbridled persecution of the Muslims to be threatened constantly with imprisonment, torture and death, and in recognition of the fact that the Muslim warriors were not yet ready for battle, the command was given to migrate. The Prophet gave instructions that the Muslims should leave the city one by one and proceed to Yathrib. The Quraysh understood well the danger represented this action, and they stooped to all kinds of illicit means to prevent the Companions of the Prophet from departing, even taking their wives hostage. But true to their original decision, the Muslims began gradually to leave the center of polytheism, ignorance and oppression, leaving behind their attachments and their families. The people of Yathrib took them into their embrace.

Most of the Muslims had left, and Mecca was almost empty.

This unusual situation and the disquieting news arriving from Medina greatly worried the Quraysh. Since the previous ill conduct of the leaders of unbelief and rejection had not yielded any results, they arrived at a grave and perilous decision: they planned to kill the Prophet. It was agreed that as soon as the night fell, the designated assassins should go about their work.[26] They surrounded the house of the Prophet at night, waiting in front of the door for the Prophet to emerge at dawn. They kept his room under surveillance throughout the night and were convinced that the son of Abdullah, who had not a single protector in the city, would be unable to escape their siege of his house and that his fate would be sealed at dawn. However, the Messenger of God ordered Ali, upon whom be peace, to sleep in his bed - Ali whose very spirit had been formed in Islam and who thought nothing of dying for the sake of God and the life of the Prophet. The Prophet then left the house secretly, in the company of Abu Bakr. At this point a man chanced by the house and asked those who were thirsting for the blood of the Messenger of God whom they were waiting for. When they replied, "Muhammad," he told them, "he has escaped your grasp." When dawn rended the breast of the horizons, they were astonished to see Ali, upon whom be peace, rise up from the bed of the Prophet. It is not quite clear how the Prophet managed to break through the circle that had been thrown round his house without arousing attention. What is certain is that God had willed to deliver His chosen Messenger from the grasp of those vile and lowly persons. The Prophet left Mecca in the heart of the night and took refuge in a cave, and then continued on to Medina using back roads. Once he reached the city, it was clear that the treacherous plan of the Quraysh had ultimately harmed them and benefited Islam and the Muslims. The powerful hand that had protected the burning torch of Islam for thirteen years against all harm was able with ease to bring this conspiracy to naught. Before the migration of the Prophet, a number of citizens of Medina had come to Mecca to seek the support of the Quraysh in the tribal wars that for years had pitted the Aws against the Khazraj. Despite the warnings of the Quraysh, they had listened to the words of the Prophet, upon whom be peace, and had been deeply affected, even transformed, by them. The next time that they came to Mecca in order to perform the pilgrimage, they had formally accepted the summons of the Messenger of God and embraced Islam. After leaving Mecca and returning to their native city, they expended great efforts to enlighten the people of Yathrib and convey the Divine message to all classes of the population. This represented in itself a massive blow to the

foundations of idolatry. The people of Medina were exhausted by the long tribal wars, and they saw in the call of the Messenger a message of hope and a means of deliverance from the consuming fire of civil strife. In order to appreciate the need of society at that time for the great movement of Islam and to grasp the role played by Islam in putting an end to corruption and misguidance, we must understand the situation prevailing in the Arabian Peninsula. Ali, upon whom be peace, said: "God sent Muhammad, upon whom be peace and blessings, to warn people away from the path in which they were engaged, and He appointed him trustee of His heavenly decrees. At that time, O Arabs, you were following the worst of beliefs and customs, and you lived in the most deprived of all lands. You slept in the midst of rough stones and poisonous snakes, drank foul water, ate no proper food, split each other's blood, disregarded the ties of kinship. There were idols among you, and sin had rendered you impotent." [27] The migration of the Most Noble Messenger to Medina, which marked the beginning of the Islamic era, was the start of a new chapter in the history of Islam. Thereafter blows rained down continuously on the forces of corruption and falsehood. The Prophet's cause took root in Medina. His call went from house to house, and a new society crystallized. The powerful logic and creativity of the ideas set forth by Muhammad, upon whom be peace and blessings, were such that the previous cultural, moral and social structures of the people of Medina thoroughly collapsed, together with all the customs that dominated their lives. The chains of slavery and the fetters of cruelty and oppression were torn asunder; the powerful were pulled down from their thrones of arrogance. The immortal shari'a brought by the Prophet to mankind as a gift of new norms of justice and elevated culture, and Medina became swiftly transformed into a religious, social and military base for the Islamic cause. The experiences they had gone through in Mecca, the continued harassment and torture of the believers, the sundering of old ties and the forging of new ones, the continuous deepening of spiritual maturity - all this contributed to the development of the migrants, so that just as Medina became the center of spiritual and political power for the whole of Arabia, so, too, it became a base for the ultimate diffusion of Islam throughout the world. That was the place where that the Prophet of Islam presented his message to the nations of the world. He summoned all human beings to unite beneath the banner of monotheism and its vital, life-giving teachings, so that in less than half a century the religion he had founded brought under its sway the great and prosperous nations of that day. It fell like a rain of mercy and blessing on souls and hearts that were anxious to receive it. Those who fail to grasp the profound causes of events attribute the swift progress and diffusion of Islam to mere chance. In fact, none of the major events of the world can be attributed to chance, and this is especially true of the emergence of the founder of an ethical, philosophical and legal system. Can it have been a matter of pure accident that the spark of such a phenomenon appeared but once in the history of Arabia, without anything similar occurring there ever again. If certain sociological factors caused the emergence in Arabia of such a vast movement, why would another hero comparable to the Prophet not arise in the same area, because of the same factors? Why should this one particular event stand forth from all others, as a unique and self-contained instance?

If a revolutionary movement occurs in a given society as the product of certain social conditions, it is impossible to happen suddenly, without any precedent or connection to prior

developments. On the contrary, it is like a wave that gradually expands, until the conditions become fully ripe for the emergence of a leader. When propagating his message, the Prophet of Islam did not represent the latest in a chain of ideological movements such as occur in every society. No groundwork had been laid, in the environment where he grew up, for the lofty concepts, values and ideas that he presented nor did any foundation exist on which he might have built. The revolutionary wave of Islam derived its force exclusively from the being of the Prophet; it came about without any preliminary. It was not a question of the revolutionary movement, comprising the Companions of the Prophet, serving as a nucleus around which the message grew; on the contrary, that movement was itself an extension of the person of the Prophet. The movement was a part of his person; his person was not part of the movement. From this point of view, the revolutionary movement of the Prophet of Islam is utterly different from all other movements in history. In Islam, we encounter a comprehensive, all-embracing movement that concerns itself with all aspects of life, for it represents a profound revolution in all human values and concepts. The teachings of Islam shook the very foundations of tribal society, and so vast and lofty was the Islamic ideal that it conceived the idea of a world society, bringing together all human beings under the banner of monotheism. It is useful to hear these facts as others have expounded them. Nehru, for example, the well-known Indian statesman, writes as follows: "It is strange that this Arab race, which for long ages had lived a sleepy existence, apparently cut off from what was happening elsewhere, should suddenly wake up and show such tremendous energy as to startle and upset the world. The story of the Arabs, and of how they spread rapidly over Asia, Europe and Africa, and of the high culture and civilization which they developed, is one of the wonders of history. "Islam was the new force or idea which woke up the Arabs and filled them with self-confidence and energy. This was a religion started by a new Prophet, Muhammad. Within seven years of the flight, Muhammad returned to Mecca as its master. Even before this he sent out from Medina a summons to the kings and rulers of the world to acknowledge the one God and his Prophet. Heraclius, the Constantinople Emperor, got it while he was still engaged in his campaign against the Persians in Syria; the Persian King got it; and it is said that even Tai-Tsung got it in China. They must have wondered, these kings and rulers, who this unknown person was who dared to command them! From the sending of these messages we can form some idea of the supreme confidence in himself and his mission which Muhammad must have had. And this confidence and faith he managed to give to these people, to inspire and console them, these desert people of no great consequence managed to conquer half the known world. "Confidence and faith in themselves were a great thing. Islam also gave them a message of brotherhood - of the equality of all those who were Muslims. A measure of democracy was thus placed before the people. Compared to the corrupt Christianity of the day, this message of brotherhood must have had a great appeal, not only for the Arabs, but also for the inhabitants of many countries where they went." [28] This profound and amazing transformation in human history was originated with one man acting entirely alone. He had no material resources at his command, had never engaged in scientific or technical study, and had never even taken anything from the learning of others. This cannot be regarded as a natural or normal occurrence; it is, on the contrary, eloquent testimony to the superhuman capacities of that outstanding personality. Were his enemies in Arabia not to have engaged him in internal wars, he would have summoned other peoples to Islam more

swiftly and energetically. But the unrelenting attacks of his enemies compelled him to devote the major part of his time and resources to the defense of Islam.

An Answer to the Opponents of Islam

Opponents of Islam make the criticism that Islam relied on military force in order to secure its progress. However, we see that the Prophet never initiated hostilities against any group or people, whether it be the Jews or the Quraysh or the Byzantines. History bears witness that all the wars waged by the Most Noble Messenger, upon whom be peace and blessings, were defensive in nature: the purpose was always to respond to the attacks of the enemy, with the exception of certain cases where the Muslims were convinced that the enemy would persist in its aggressiveness and treachery and were correspondingly ordered to take the initiative in defending themselves.

In the following verses from the Quran, the initial reason for legislating jihad - i.e., responding to the attacks of an aggressive enemy - is clearly laid forth: "Permission is given to the warriors of Islam to fight against their enemies, for they have suffered oppression at their hands. God is able to aid them, and they are people who have been expelled from their homeland without due reason. Their crime was, that they said, "God is our Lord." (22:39-40) "Fight in the way of God against those who do battle with you, but be careful not to transgress the bounds, for God loves not the transgressors." (2:190) {88 they break their oath after concluding a treaty and vilify your religion, fight against the leaders of the unbelievers, for they observe no pledge or treaty; only then may they cease their violations." (9:12) Were the Muslims carrying weapons at the very dawn of Islam when the polytheists began turning to Islam in droves? Did the Muslims start a war in order to diffuse and propagate the religion of God? Everyone knows that in the very beginning, far from attacking any group or nation, the Muslims were themselves the victims of aggression. Moreover, if it be supposed that the early Muslims embraced Islam without understanding its veracity, later generations were under no compulsion to follow them; it was the profundity of the Divine teachings that elicited their belief, in accordance with love, willingness and free choice. If we assumed that Islam was imposed on people through coercion and threats, a corollary of this assumption would be that conversion to Islam was compulsory wherever Islam was strong. We see, however, that Islam gave human beings the choice of either accepting Islam or simply assenting to its governmental institutions while retaining their own religion. If Islam had not respect freedom of opinion, it would never have provided for the second possibility. Islam never took advantage of its position of strength to force people to accept the religion of God. Apart from all this, faith and belief are a matter of the heart; they can never come into being without an inward inclination on the part of the human being, purely through the exercise of compulsion and force. In order to change the beliefs and ideas of people, instruction, teaching, deduction and logic are called for; force and coercion can never remove beliefs that have taken root in people's minds. Islam had a recourse to military force and began an armed struggle at a time when people had been deprived of freedom of thought and denied the opportunity to choose the correct path. Islam issued its proclamation of war in order to defeat the oppressive tyrants who were preventing the Islamic call from being preached freely and to put an end to the stifling of thought. Only then would the masses of humanity be able, in an

atmosphere of liberty to choose with absolute freedom a correct path in life. If Islam had not acted thus, truth would have been stifled in the cradle. In order for the religion which has human happiness as its aim and wishes to reform all of human affairs to reach its lofty goals, and in order for those persons who have the capacity to learn and assimilate the teachings of that religion to come into contact with it, without encountering any obstacle, a position of dominance must be attained. It is obvious, moreover, that power can be defeated only by power. In order to destroy the forces that were standing in the path of the diffusion of the light of truth and were fighting against the formation and development of sound and exalted modes of thought, does any path exist save confrontation and battle against the agents of corruption?

The obstinate chiefs of the Quraysh wished to exploit the ignorance and weakness of the people, to continue ruling over their lives, their property and their honor, and to preserve forever the customs of ignorance that underlie their hereditary rule. They could not tolerate the influence, still less the prevalence, of a religion that was seizing them by the throat and dragging them down from their thrones of arrogance and self-worship. They understood well that the spread of Islam would utterly destroy their ancient, rotting customs and all their pomp and splendor. Hence they rose up with all their beings to fight against this religion and the laws it was bringing, in a struggle the purpose of which was the defense of their ancestral customs and traditions and their hereditary lordship and rule. Was it possible for Islam to respond to such ideas and motivations purely with logic and proof? If a certain group of people tries to place a government in difficulty, drawing the sword and lighting fires everywhere, can the government in question save itself without resort to military force? How else can it defeat the miscreants. Thus the Quran says: "Fight against them until disorder is brought to an end and the religion of God is established. If they cease causing disorder, do not fight against them. " (2:190) No one can deny that in such cases it is a necessary final resort to take up weapons, because disorder, corruption, and violence will end only when the glint of the sword flashes and the hands of the miscreants are severed. Islam is not, then, a religion of violence and war, nor was the Prophet of God one who sought to destroy the enemy in battle despite the availability of other means. At a time when the Muslims were being harassed and tortured by the polytheists in Mecca for the crime of having accepted Islam, a Divine command entrusted them with the duty of delivering the oppressed masses from the grasp of cruel tyrants and cleansing the surrounding area of all forms of slavery and domination, by recourse to military force. Only thus could the newly emergent Islamic society continue to grow and develop in freedom. The Quran says: "Why do you not rise up in jihad in the path of God and for the sake of delivering the oppressed ? A group of men, women and children in Mecca are prisoners to the cruelty of the unjust, and they say: 'O Lord, deliver us from this realm of the oppressors and set us free, and send us one who will lead us and aid us.'" (4:75) The battle implied here is one waged against oppressors who are fighting against God, freely indulging in the oppression of mankind, and depriving human beings of their share of the justice and luminosity that is contained in God's religion. This is in contrast to the wars waged by the conquerors known to us from history, of whom it certainly cannot be said that they were fighting for the sake of justice, equal human rights and happiness for the whole of mankind! If people sought to defend its life and dignity and

refused to accept humiliation, wouldn't these world-conquering warriors become infuriated and order massacres and plundering to take place? Did Muhammad, upon whom be peace and blessings, have an aim similar to theirs? Did he engage in bloodshed to satisfy his own whims so that men would bow reverentially before his splendor and might and he might seize their property for his own use? Didn't their conquests augment their arrogance and self-worship, and did they not use the booty of war to enhance the opulence of their rule? However ignorant and unjust a person might be, no one can attribute any of this to the Prophet of Islam. The war waged by Muhammad, upon whom be peace and blessings, was a war of monotheism against polytheism. It was a struggle of light against darkness, and represented the last resort for the destruction of misguidance and the diffusion of virtue and justice. He was a reformer devoted to advancing the true life of the human being and he progressed unceasingly toward that lofty goal. When the Prophet first proclaimed his mission, all the Arab tribes were prepared to submit to his rule and assign him all kinds of privilege, but he decisively rejected their proposals. He wished to unite the masses of mankind beneath the banner of virtue and Divine unity, to establish the government of reason and piety, and to guide mankind on the path to eternal felicity.

Today, after the passage of more than fourteen centuries, the triumph of the Prophet is fully apparent. The book that he brought, which includes the essence of all heavenly scriptures, guarantees the happiness of mankind, and the noble name of this lofty personage is reverentially mentioned by millions of human beings. His name resounds from all the minarets in the world with a great spiritual splendor, and it will always continue to do so, morning and evening, in accordance with a Divine promise, penetrating the souls of men and illumining their hearts. For God said in the Quran: " We have elevated and borne on high your goodly name. " (94:4)

The Prophet's Birth

Prophet Muhammad (s) was born in 570 CE in Mecca). His father, Abdullah, died several weeks before his birth in Yathrib (Medinah) where he went to visit his father's maternal relatives...Prophet Muhammad (s) was born in 570 CE in Makkah (Bakka, Baca, Mecca). His father, Abdullah, died several weeks before his birth in Yathrib (Medinah) where he went to visit his father's maternal relatives. His mother died while on the return journey from Medinah at a place called 'Abwa' when he was six years old. He was raised by his paternal grandfather 'Abd al Muttalib (Shaybah) until the age of eight, and after his grandfather's death by Abu Talib, his paternal uncle. 'Abd al Muttalib's mother, Salma, was a native of Medinah and he was born and raised as a young boy in Medinah before his uncle Muttalib brought him to Makkah to succeed him. Many years before Muhammad's birth, 'Abd al Muttalib had established himself as an influential leader of the Arab tribe 'Quraish' in Makkah and took care of the Holy sanctuary 'Ka'bah'. Makkah was a city state well connected to the caravan routes to Syria and Egypt in the north and northwest and Yemen in the south. Muhammad was a descendant of Prophet Ismail through the lineage of his second son Kedar.

Ka'bah is the first house of worship built on earth for the worship of Allah, the One True God. It was re-built (raised from the existing foundation) by Prophets Ibrahim (Abraham) and Ismail (Ishmael). Allah is the proper name of the One True God, creator and sustainer of the universe, who does not have a partner or associate, and He did not beget nor was He begotten. Unlike the word god, the word Allah does not have a plural or gender. Under the guardianship of Abu Talib, Muhammad (s) began to earn a living as a businessman and a trader. At the age of twelve, he accompanied Abu Talib with a merchant caravan as far as Bostra in Syria. Muhammad was popularly known as 'al-Ameen' for his unimpeachable character by the Makkans and visitors alike. The title Al-Ameen means the Honest, the Reliable and the Trustworthy, and it signified the highest standard of moral and public life. Upon hearing of Muhammad's impressive credentials, Khadijah, a rich merchant widow, asked Muhammad (s) to take some merchandise for trade to Syria. Soon after this trip when he was twenty-five, Khadijah proposed marriage to Muhammad through a relative. Muhammad accepted the proposal. At that time, Khadijah was twice widowed and forty years old. Khadijah (ra) and Muhammad (s) were the parents of six children - four daughters and two sons. His first son Qasim died at the age of two. He was nicknamed Abul Qasim, meaning the father of Qasim. His second son Abdullah died in infancy. Abdullah was also called affectionately as 'Tayyab' and 'Tahir' because he was born after Muhammad's prophethood. The four daughters were: Zainab, Ruqayyah, Umm Kulthum, and Fatimah (ra).

The Holy sanctuary Ka'bah was now filled with three hundred sixty idols. The original, pristine message of Prophet Ibrahim was lost, and it was mixed with superstitions and traditions of pilgrims and visitors from distant places, who were used to idol worship and myths. In every generation, a small group of men and women detested the pollution of Ka'bah and kept pure their practice of the religion taught by Prophets Ibrahim and Ismail. They used to spend some of their time away from this polluted environment in retreats to nearby hills.

Muhammad (s) was forty when, during his one of many retreats to Mount Hira for meditation during the month of Ramadan, he received the first revelation from the Archangel Jibril (Gabriel). On this first appearance, Gabriel (as) said to Muhammad: "Iqraa," meaning Read or Recite. Muhammad replied, "I cannot read," as he had not received any formal education and did not know how to read or write. The Angel Gabriel then embraced him until he reached the limit of his endurance and after releasing said: "Iqraa." Muhammad's answer was the same as before. Gabriel repeated the embrace for the third time, asked him to repeat after him and said:--"Recite in the name of your Lord who created! He created man from that which clings. Recite; and thy Lord is most Bountiful, He who has taught by the pen, taught man what he knew not."

These revelations are the first five verses of Surah (chapter) 96 of the Qur'an. Thus it was in the year 610 CE the revelation began.

Muhammad (s) was terrified by the whole experience of the revelation and fled the cave of Mt. Hira [Qur'an 81:19-29]. When he reached his home, tired and frightened, he asked his wife: 'cover me, cover me,' in a blanket. After his awe had somewhat abated, his wife

Khadijah asked him about the reason of his great anxiety and fear. She then assured him by saying: "Allah (The One God) will not let you down because you are kind to relatives, you speak only the truth, you help the poor, the orphan and the needy, and you are an honest man. Khadijah then consulted with her cousin Waraqa who was an old, saintly man possessing knowledge of previous revelations and scriptures. Waraqa confirmed to her that the visitor was none other than the Angel Gabriel who had come to Moses. He then added that Muhammad is the expected Prophet. Khadijah accepted the revelation as truth and was the first person to accept Islam. She supported her husband in every hardship, most notably during the three-year 'boycott' of the Prophet's clan by the pagan Quraish. She died at the age of sixty-five in the month of Ramadan soon after the lifting of the boycott in 620 CE. Gabriel (as) visited the Prophet as commanded by Allah revealing Ayat (meaning signs, loosely referred to as verses) in Arabic over a period of twenty-three years. The revelations that he received were sometimes a few verses, a part of a chapter or the whole chapter. Some revelations came down in response to an inquiry by the nonbelievers. The revealed verses were recorded on a variety of available materials (leather, palm leaves, bark, shoulder bones of animals), memorized as soon as they were revealed, and were recited in daily prayers by Muslims [Qur'an 80:13-16]. Angel Gabriel taught the order and arrangement of verses, and the Prophet instructed his several scribes to record verses in that order [Qur'an 75:16-19 and 41:41-42]. Once a year, the Prophet used to recite all the verses revealed to him up to that time to Gabriel to authenticate the accuracy of recitation and the order of verses [Qur'an 17:106]. All the revealed verses (over a period of 23 years and ending in 632 CE) were compiled in the book known as Qur'an. The name Qur'an appears in the revealed verses. The Qur'an does not contain even a word from the Prophet. The Qur'an speaks in the first person, i.e., Allah's commandments to His creation. Gabriel also visited the Prophet throughout his mission informing and teaching him of events and strategy as needed to help in the completion of the prophetic mission. The Prophet's sayings, actions, and approvals are recorded separately in collections known as Hadith.

The mission of Prophet Muhammad (s) was to restore the worship of the One True God, the creator and sustainer of the universe, as taught by Prophet Ibrahim and all Prophets of God, and to demonstrate and complete the laws of moral, ethical, legal, and social conduct and all other matters of significance for the humanity at large. The first few people who followed this message were: his cousin Ali, his servant Zayd ibn Harithah, his friend Abu Bakr and his wife and daughters. They accepted Islam by testifying that:--"There is no Deity (worthy of worship) except Allah (The One True God) and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah." Islam means peace by submission and obedience to the Will and Commandments of God and those who accept Islam are called Muslims, meaning those who have accepted the message of peace by submission to God. In the first three years of his mission forty people (men and women) accepted Islam. This small group comprised of youth as well as older people from a wide range of economic and social background. The Prophet was directed by a recent revelation to start preaching Islam to everyone. He then began to recite revelations to people in public and invite them to Islam. The Quraish, leaders of Makkah, took his preaching with hostility. The most hostile and closest to the prophet was his uncle Abu Lahab and his wife. Initially, they and other leaders of Quraish tried to bribe him with money and power including

an offer to make him king if he were to abandon his message. When this did not work, they tried to convince his uncle Abu Talib to accept the best young man of Makkah in place of Muhammad and to allow them to kill Muhammad. His uncle tried to persuade the Prophet to stop preaching but the Prophet said: "O uncle, if they were to put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left hand to stop me from preaching Islam, I would never stop. I will keep preaching until Allah makes Islam prevail or I die."

The Quraish began to persecute Muslims by beating, torture and boycott of their businesses. Those who were weak, poor or slaves were publicly tortured. The first person to die by this means was a Muslim women by the name Umm Ammar (the mother of Ammar Ibn Yasir). The Muslims from well-to-do families were physically restrained in their homes with the condition that if they recant they will be allowed freedom of movement. The Prophet was publicly ridiculed and humiliated including frequent throwing of filth on him in the street and while he prayed in the Ka'bah. In spite of great hardships and no apparent support, the message of Islam kept all Muslims firm in their belief. The Prophet was asked by God to be patient and to preach the message of Qur'an. He advised Muslims to remain patient because he did not receive any revelation yet to retaliate against their persecutors. [Persecution] When the persecution became unbearable for most Muslims, the Prophet advised them in the fifth year of his mission (615 CE) to emigrate to Abyssinia (modern Ethiopia) where Ashabah (Negus, a Christian) was the ruler. Eighty people, not counting the small children, emigrated in small groups to avoid detection. No sooner had they left the Arabian coastline, the leaders of Quraish discovered their flight. They decided to not leave these Muslims in peace, and immediately sent two of their envoys to Negus to bring all of them back. However, Negus allowed them to stay under his protection after he investigated Muslim belief and heard the revelations about Jesus and Mary (peace be upon them both), which appears in Chapter 19, entitled Mary, of the Qur'an. The emigrants were allowed freedom of worship in Abyssinia.

The Quraish then made life even more difficult for the Prophet by implementing total ban on contact with the Prophet's family (Bani Hashim and Muttalib). The ban lasted for three years without the desired effect. Just before the ban was lifted, the Prophet was contacted by the leaders of Quraish to agree to a compromise under which they should all practice both religions (i.e., Islam and Idolatry). Upon hearing this, the Prophet recited a revelation (Chapter 109) he had just received and which ends with the words: "... For you your religion and for me mine." The ban was lifted when leaders of Quraish discovered that their secret document on the terms of ban, which they had stored in Ka'bah, was eaten by worms and all that was left were the opening words 'In Your name, O Allah.' The effects of the three-year boycott left the Prophet with more personal sorrow when he lost his beloved wife Khadijah (ra) and uncle Abu Talib soon after the ban was lifted. After Khadijah's death in 620 CE, the Prophet married a widowed Muslim woman, Sawdah (ra) who was fifty years old. She and her husband had emigrated to Abyssinia in the early years of persecution. After her husband died, she came back to Makkah and sought Prophet's shelter. The Prophet, recognizing her sacrifices for Islam, extended his shelter by marrying her. Later in the same year, the Prophet upon receiving the divine command in a dream, after approval of Sawdah, contracted marriage to A'ishah, the daughter of his dear companion Abu Bakr. She joined the Prophet in

Medinah, completing the marriage contract. Sawdah and A'ishah (ra) were the only wives until he was fifty-six years old. After the death of his uncle Abu Talib, the Prophet went to Taif (about 50 miles east, southeast of Makkah) to seek their protection. They flatly refused and mocked at him, and severely injured him by inciting their children to throw stones at him. Gabriel (as) visited the Prophet here suggesting that the angels were ready to destroy the town if he were to ask Allah for the punishment. Nevertheless, the Prophet declined and prayed for future generations of Taif to accept Islam [Taif]. It was on the return journey from Taif that the verses from Surah Al Jinn (Chapter 72) were revealed. It indicated that the Qur'an is a book of guidance to both the Jinns and Humankind. Soon after the terrible disappointment at Ta'if, the prophet experienced the events of al-Israa and al-Miraj (621 CE). In the Al-Israa, Gabriel (as) took the Prophet from the sacred Mosque near Ka'bah to the furthest (al-Aqsa) mosque in Jerusalem in a very short time in the latter part of a night. Here, Prophet Muhammad met with previous Prophets (Abraham, Moses, Jesus and others) and he led them in prayer. After this, in Al-Miraj, the Prophet was taken up to heavens to show the signs of God [More... The Dome of the Rock]. It was on this journey that five daily prayers were prescribed. He was then taken back to Ka'bah, the whole experience lasting a few hours of a night. Upon hearing this, the people of Makkah mocked at him. However, when his specific description of Jerusalem, other things on the way, and the caravan that he saw on this journey including its expected arrival in Makkah turned out to be true, the ridicule of the nonbelievers stopped. The event of Israa and Miraj is mentioned in the Qur'an - the first verse of Chapter 17 entitled 'The Children of Israel.'

In 622 CE, the leaders of the Quraish decided to kill the Prophet and they developed a plan in which one man was chosen from each of the Quraish tribes and they were to attack the Prophet simultaneously. Gabriel informed the Prophet of the plan and instructed him to leave Makkah immediately. The Prophet, after making arrangements to return the properties entrusted to him by several nonbelievers, left with Abu Bakr in the night he was to be assassinated. They went south of Makkah to a mountain cave of Thawr [see Qur'an 9:40], and after staying three nights they traveled north to Yathrib (Medinah) about two hundred fifty miles from Makkah. Upon discovery of his escape, the leaders of Quraish put up a reward of one hundred camels on him, dead or alive. In spite of all their best scouts and search parties, Allah protected the Prophet and he arrived safely in Quba, a suburb of Medinah [Qur'an 28:85]. This event is known as the 'Hijra' (migration) and the Islamic calendar begins with this event. The people of Aws and Khazraj in Medinah greeted him with great enthusiasm in accordance with their pledge made at Aqaba less than a year ago during the annual pilgrimage. One by one those Muslims (men and women) of Makkah who were not physically restrained, and who could make a secret exit, left for Medinah leaving behind their properties and homes. To insure the peace and tranquility, the Prophet proposed a treaty defining terms of conduct for all inhabitants of Medinah. It was ratified by all - Muslims, non-Muslim Arabs and Jews. After his emigration to Medinah, the enemies of Islam increased their assault from all sides. The Battles of Badr, Uhud and Allies (Trench) were fought near or around Medinah. In these battles until the year 627 CE, the nonbelievers with encouragement from Jews and other Arabian tribes attacked the Prophet and Muslim community. The Muslims while defending their city and religion lost many men, which

resulted in many widowed Muslim women and numerous orphaned children. In these circumstances, Prophet Muhammad (s) married several women during fifty-sixth year up to the sixtieth year of his life. He did not contract any marriage in the last three years of his life, following the revelation limiting the number of wives up to a maximum of four. This is the first time in the history of revealed scriptures that a limit on the number of wives was imposed and the terms of conduct were specified. The Prophet was instructed not to divorce any of his wives after this revelation [Qur'an 33:52]. All of the ladies he took as wives were either widowed or divorced, except A'ishah.

The Prophet married Umm Salamah (ra) in 626 CE. Her husband had died of wounds inflicted in the Battle of Uhud (625 CE). When the Prophet asked her for marriage, she replied: "O Messenger of God, I suffer from three shortcomings. I am a very jealous woman, and I am afraid this might cause me to do things that you dislike. Secondly, I am an old woman. Finally, I have many children." The Prophet answered: "Regarding your jealousy, I pray to God to remove it from you. As for your age, we are similar in age. As for the children, your children are mine." Thus it was that she agreed to marry the Prophet. The Prophet's marriage contract with Umm Habibah (ra) was solemnized, by proxy, by Negus, King of Abyssinia, in 628 CE. Two of his wives, Juwayriah and Safiyah, were prisoners of war. Both belonged to the family of the chief of their tribes and were set free by the Prophet; they then gladly accepted Islam and were pleased to become the Prophet's wives. The Prophet's marriages provided security to women who would have otherwise remained unmarried, unprotected, or felt humiliated. His marriages were also a means of transmitting important teachings of Islam. The Prophet's wives, called the "Mothers of the Believers," [Qur'an Surah 33, Verse 6 and the last part of Verse 53] showed themselves as examples of proper Muslim womanhood. All his wives, especially 'Aishah, transmitted many ahadith (sayings, deeds, and actions) from Prophet Muhammad (s).

A year after the Battle of Allies (Trench), the Prophet and fifteen hundred of his companions left for Makkah to perform the annual pilgrimage (628 CE). They were barred from approaching the city at Hudaibiyah, where after some negotiations a treaty was signed allowing for them to come next year. This treaty facilitated exchange of ideas among the people of the whole region without interference. Many delegations from all regions of Arabia came to the Prophet to investigate the teachings of Islam, and a large number of people accepted Islam within a couple of years. The Prophet sent many of his companions (who memorized the Qur'an by heart) to new communities to instruct them about the practice of Islam. More than fifty of them were murdered by non-believers. A few weeks after Hudaibiyah the Prophet sent inviting them to Islam. Negus, the king of Abyssinia, and the Ruler of Bahrain accepted Islam, and Emperor Heraclius acknowledged Muhammad's Prophethood. Among rulers who accepted Islam but without any initiative from the Prophet was Chakrawati Farmas, a Hindu King of Malabar (located on the southwest coast of India). About two years later at the end of 629 CE, the Quraish violated the terms of the Treaty of Hudaibiyah by helping Banu Bakr in the surprise attack on Bani Khuza'ah who were allied with the Prophet. Some of Bani Khuzah's men escaped and took shelter in Makkah and they sought redress. However, the leaders of Quraish did nothing. They then sent a message to the

Prophet for help. The Prophet, after confirming all the reports of the attack and subsequent events, marched to Makkah with an army consisting of three thousand Muslims of Medinah and Muslims from other Arab communities that joined him on the way totaling ten thousand Muslims. Before entering the city he sent word to citizens of Makkah that anyone who remained in his home, or in Abu Sufyan's home, or in the Ka'bah would be safe. The army entered Makkah without fighting and the Prophet went directly to the Ka'bah. He magnified Allah for the triumphant entry in the Holy city. The Prophet pointed at each idol with a stick he had in his hand and said, "Truth has come and Falsehood will neither start nor will it reappear" [Qur'an 17:81]. And one by one the idols fell down. The Ka'bah was then cleansed by the removal of all three hundred sixty idols, and it was restored to its pristine status for the worship of One True God (as built by Prophets Ibrahim and Ismail). The people of the city expected general slaughter in view of their persecution and torture of Muslims for the past twenty years. While standing by the Ka'bah, the Prophet (s) promised clemency for the Makkans, stating: "O Quraish, what do you think that I am about to do with you?" They replied, "Good. You are a noble brother, son of a noble brother." The Prophet forgave them all saying:--"I will treat you as Prophet Yousuf (Joseph) treated his brothers. There is no reproach against you. Go to your homes, and you are all free."

The Prophet also declared:--Allah made Makkah holy the day He created heavens and earth, and it is the holy of holies until the Resurrection Day. It is not lawful for anyone who believes in Allah and the last day to shed blood therein, nor to cut down trees therein. It was not lawful to anyone before me and it will not be lawful to anyone after me. The people of Makkah then accepted Islam including the staunch enemies of the Prophet. A few of the staunchest enemies and military commanders had fled Makkah after his entry. However, when they received the Prophet's assurance of no retaliation and no compulsion in religion, they came back and gradually the message of Islam won their hearts. Within a year (630 CE), almost all Arabia accepted Islam. Among the Prophet's close companions were Muslims from such diverse background as Persia, Abyssinia, Syria and Rome. Several prominent Jewish Rabbis, Christian bishop and clergymen accepted Islam after discussions with the Prophet.

One night in March 630 CE, Angel Gabriel visited the Prophet and addressed him as: "O father of Ibrahim." A few hours later, the Prophet received the news of the birth of his son from his wife Mariah, and the Prophet named him Ibrahim. He was the only child born after the six children from Prophet's first wife Khadijah. Ibrahim died when he was ten months old. On the day of Ibrahim's death, there was an eclipse of the sun. When some people began to attribute it to the Prophet's bereavement, he said: "The sun and the moon are two signs of the signs of God. Their light is not dimmed for any man's death. If you see them eclipsed, you should pray until they be clear." The great change in Arabia alarmed the two superpowers, Byzantines and Persians. Their Governors, particularly the Byzantines, reacted with threats to attack Medinah. Instead of waiting, the prophet sent a small army to defend the northmost border of Arabia. In the remaining life of the Prophet, all of the major battles were fought on the northern front. The Prophet did not have a standing army. Whenever he received a threat, he called the Muslims and discussed with them the situation and gathered volunteers to fight

any aggression. The Prophet performed his first and last pilgrimage in 632 CE. One hundred twenty-thousand men and women performed pilgrimage that year with him. The Prophet received the last revelation during this pilgrimage. Two months later, Prophet Muhammad (s) fell ill and after several days died on Monday, 12 Rabi al-Awwal, the eleventh year after Hijra (June 8, 632 CE) in Medinah. He is buried in the same place where he died. Prophet Muhammad lived a most simple, austere and modest life. He and his family used to go without cooked meal several days at a time, relying only on dates, dried bread and water. During the day he was the busiest man, as he performed his duties in many roles all at once as head of state, chief justice, commander-in-chief, arbitrator, instructor and family man. He was the most devoted man at night. He used to spend one- to two-thirds of every night in prayer and meditation. The Prophet's possession consisted of mats, blankets, jugs and other simple things even when he was the virtual ruler of Arabia. He left nothing to be inherited except a white mule (a gift from Muqawqis), few ammunition and a piece of land that he had made a gift during his life time. Among his last words were: "We the community of Prophets are not inherited. Whatever we leave is for charity."

Muhammad (s) was a man and a messenger of Allah (The One God). He is the last of the prophets [Qur'an 33:40] sent by Allah to guide man to the right path; Adam was the first Prophet. The Qur'an mentions twenty-five Prophets by name and provides a great insight of their mission, struggle and their communities. The Qur'an exonerates prophets from charges leveled against them in previous Scriptures. The Qur'an also mentions four previously revealed Scriptures: Suhoof (Pages) of Ibrahim (Abraham), Taurat ('Torah') as revealed to Prophet Moses, Zuboor ('Psalms') as revealed to Prophet David, and Injeel ('Evangel') as revealed to Prophet Jesus (pbuh). Islam requires belief in all prophets and revealed scriptures (original, non-corrupted) as part of the Articles of Faith. Muhammad (s) is greatly respected as the model of Qur'anic behavior. Muslims mention his name by adding "peace be upon him," a phrase used with the name of all prophets [e.g., Qur'an Surah 37: verses 79, 109, 120 and 130; also 33:56]. All sincere Muslims try to follow the Qur'an and the Prophet's example to minute details. The account of every aspect of his life has been preserved (numerous daily accounts including his family life). Prophet Muhammad (s) has served as an example for all Muslims in all periods to modern times. He will remain a model example for all of humanity.

At the end of his mission, the Prophet was blessed with several hundred thousand followers (men and women) of Islam. Thousands prayed with him at the mosque and listened to his sermon. Hundreds of sincere Muslims would find every opportunity to be with him following five daily prayers and at other times. They used to seek his advice for their everyday problems, and listened attentively to the interpretation and application of revealed verses to their situation. They followed the message of the Qur'an and the Messenger of Allah with utmost sincerity, and supported him with every thing they had. The most excellent among them are Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman, Ali, Talha, Zubair, 'Abdur Rahman ibn Auf, S'ad bin Abi Waqqas, S'ad bin Zaid, Abu 'Ubeidah, Hasan, Hussain, and several dozen others. They faithfully carried the message of Islam after the Prophet, and within ninety years the light of Islam reached Spain, North Africa, the Caucasus, northwest China and India. Allah: Allah is the proper name in Arabic for The One and Only God, The Creator and Sustainer of the

universe. It is used by the Arab Christians and Jews for the God (Eloh-im in Hebrew; 'Allaha' in Aramaic, the mother tongue of Jesus, pbuh). The word Allah does not have a plural or gender. Allah does not have any associate or partner, and He does not beget nor was He begotten. SWT is an abbreviation of Arabic words that mean 'Glory Be To Him.' s or pbuh: Peace Be Upon Him. This expression is used for all Prophets of Allah. ra: Radiallahu Anha (May Allah be pleased with her). ra: Radiallahu Anhu (May Allah be pleased with him).

MUHAMMAD (PBUH): AN 'ORDINARY' HUMAN OR A PROPHET

Question:-Is Mohammad (pbuh) was an ordinary man or prophet? What is the proof of him being a Prophet?

Answer:--Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was and continued to be an ordinary human being throughout his life. This is indeed what he has been required to declare to his people when they made absurd demands that he should accomplish some supernatural things to prove his prophethood. Allah instructs him in Surah 17:93 entitled "The Night Journey":*Say: "Glory to my Lord! Am I aught but a man,- a messenger?"* The final verse of Surah 18:110 entitled "The Cave" gives this instruction to the Prophet: *"Say: I am but a mortal man like all of you. It has been revealed to me that your God is the One and only God...."* (Cave 18:110) In both the verses, the emphasis is placed on the fact that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was an ordinary human being, a mortal, who had been chosen for the noble task of being Allah's messenger. He himself made no claim whatsoever to being anything other than a human being who has been given a divine message to convey to mankind. If we were to claim that he had a superhuman status, should we not ask what status would that be?

We can only think of an angel, or that of a god. Far being from him to make any claim to godhood. We should never contemplate for a moment that anyone, including Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), had any divine status of any sort. The only alternative would be that he was an angel. He certainly was not, because he had all the characteristics of human beings. Let us remember that angels have not been given the power to choose attitudes and actions. They simply *".... over which are (appointed) angels stern (and) severe who do not disobey Allah whatever He commands them, and they do what they are bidden."* (At-Tahrim 66:6) It simply does not occur to an angel to disobey. Human beings, on the other hand, have always the choice of doing what God likes them to do or of disobeying Him. This ability to choose is the distinctive quality of human beings, which enables them to earn admittance into heaven if they consistently choose what pleases Allah. They certainly experience temptation to disobey Him and it is through rising above that temptation that they prove their worth. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was certainly a human being and he shared with all humans all their qualities and characteristics. He would love and hate, experience happiness and distress, satisfaction and irritation, calmness and anger, etc. The Prophet was great because he was able to conduct his life in the way he did despite experiencing all the feelings and emotions of human beings and working within their limitations. You say that he was extraordinary because he did extraordinary things. He certainly was favored with receiving Allah's message and being assigned the task of conveying it. That is why we are required to declare that we believe that he was Allah's messenger. If we do not, then we are not Muslims. But that as far

as it goes. He gave us a living example of what a perfect human being is like. We can follow his example in every respect. Indeed, we should try to do so. But we should remember that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) did not choose to have revelations, it was Allah who chose him to be His last messenger to mankind and sent down His revelations to him. Nor did Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) have any say in his ascension to heaven: it was Allah who wished to favor him with that to give him reassurance, at a time when he certainly needed that reassurance. He decidedly did not meet with Allah nor did he converse with Him. Allah only revealed what He wished to reveal to him through the Archangel Gabriel.

What we are told about his ascension to heaven in the Qur'an is:-- "*Glory be to Him Who made His servant to go on a night from the Sacred Mosque to the remote mosque of which We have blessed the precincts, so that We may show to him some of Our signs; surely He is the Hearing, the Seeing*". (Al-Isra 17:1) It is that he "*has seen some of the greatest signs of his Lord.*" No human beings has ever spoken to Allah directly except Prophet Moses. We must not confuse matters. When we stress the humanity of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), we are not being disrespectful to him. Indeed, we love him and respect him so much because he has been a means for us to have divine guidance which enables us to earn reward from Allah and ensures for us a happier life in the next world.

Another way of Mohammed (PBUH) prophethood

You ask how can we prove the Prophet's existence. Do we need to prove it? How to prove the existence of any historical personality? Is it not by the reports we have about him and the events in which he took part or he helped accomplish?

We have a full record of the life of the Prophet. We also have reports of all his actions, from the most private ones to those of state and public interest. In the case of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), however, we also have the radical change in the Arabian society and in human life as a whole which he brought about. Perhaps what you actually mean is how to prove that he actually was a messenger of Allah and that his message was the final one addressing mankind as a whole. In this case, I have to refer you to the Qur'an which is the ultimate proof of all that. I have several points to make here but I can only refer to them very briefly, because of the limitation of space.

The Qur'an was revealed at a time when the Arabs gave so much importance to literary excellence, particularly in poetry. A poet of high standard was a source of pride for his tribe. In the tribal warfare, poetry was as important a weapon as swords, spears and arrows. When the Prophet received his revelations and recited them to the people of Makkah, they listened to something totally new. It was not poetry, but its literary excellence surpassed everything they knew. They realized that it could not have been composed by a human being. Even the staunchest of the enemies of Islam acknowledged that. Moreover, the Qur'an was so different in style, rhythm and use of imagery from the Hadith which was the Prophet's own expression. It is not possible for any human being to use two widely different styles to express the same subject matter and to do that so consistently over a period of 23 years, which was the length of the time during which the Qur'an was revealed. Moreover, the Qur'an mentions certain facts which were totally unknown to mankind at the time of its revelation and only very

recently we started to discover them. One example is the details the Qur'an gives about the various stages of the development of the fetus, from the moment it is conceived to the time of its birth. These details are now scientifically proven by the use of sophisticated technology, such as ultrasound scanning. The Prophet had no means of knowing these, except through revelation from Allah, the Creator of man and the universe. Another example is the clear reference to the fact recently proven by scientists:--

When a strait separates two seas, as the Red Sea is separated from the Indian Ocean by the Strait of Bab Al-Mandab, the two seas are actually separated to the extent that the maritime life in one is so different from that in the other. *"It is Allah who has created two bodies of free flowing water. One sweet and palpable and the other salt and bitter and between them, He has made a barrier which is forbidden to be trespassed."* (Al-Furqan 25:53) In Surah 55, Verses 19 and 20, which may be rendered in translation as follows: *"He has given freedom to the two seas so that they might meet; (19) yet between them is a barrier which they not transgress."* (Ar-Rehman 55:19-20) If Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) did not receive this from Allah Himself, how could he have known it when he never came near the sea in his life? Moreover, the Qur'an laid down new legislation in various social matters which represented a great departure from what prevailed in Arabia and in surrounding countries and states. Yet there was no earthly reason for the enactment of such legislation which any reformer would have hesitated to introduce because they were bound to upset the social balance. Perhaps, the best example of these is the high position Islam gives to women, bring them to a level of equality with men, with only a few differences of secondary importance, necessitated by the different role they have to fulfill in human life. As you realize, the Qur'an is preserved intact. Allah has guaranteed that it would remain in its original form for all time. We recite it in prayer and at other times. Its recitation earns us reward. Yet the Qur'an contains a reproach to the Prophet for a step he made. If the Qur'an was of the Prophet's own composition, would he have included such reproach? If he recognized his mistake, would it not have been courageous of him just to admit it? Would he have included such reproach in his book of worship?

Allah says: *"Now if he (whom We have entrusted with it) had dared to attribute some of his own sayings to Us, (44) We would indeed have seized him by his right hand (45) then would have indeed have cut his life vein (46) and none of you could have saved him."* (Al-Haaqa 69:44-47) If the Qur'an was of Muhammad's (PBUH) own invention, far be it from him to do so, would he have included such a threat to himself? Moreover, I want also to refer to the fact that the Prophet demonstrated his absolute faith in the Qur'an as the word of Allah. The Qur'an tells the Prophet, that he had nothing to fear from human beings because Allah protects him. *"O Messenger! Make known that which hath been revealed unto thee from thy Lord, for if thou do it not, thou wilt not have conveyed His message. Allah will protect thee from mankind. Lo! Allah guideth not the disbelieving folk."* (Al-Maeda 5:67)

In the battle of Hunain, the Muslim army was in retreat and the Prophet in a highly vulnerable position. The disbelievers would have sacrificed any number in order to kill him. Yet, he stood on his horse, calling on his companions to rally to the cause of Islam. He drew very close to his enemy on purpose. Anyone else in his position could have been easily killed, but

he did not even try to have any cover. This sort of attitude demonstrated the strength of his faith. When Allah tells him that he will be protected, he was certain that nothing would happen to him and he went extremely close to his enemies as if he was inviting them to kill him, hoping to persuade them of the truth of his message when they related his action to what is said in the Qur'an. No one other than a messenger from Allah and a prophet would have done that.

All Prophets come with signs and evidences furnished by God that they truly are what they claim to be. Among these signs are miracles witnessed by the people that defy the laws of nature. Generally, miracles are experienced only by the people who were there when the miracle actually occurred. God, however, furnished the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) with a miracle that would endure for all time. That miracle is the Qur'ân. It is appropriate that the final Messenger should have an enduring miracle, since his Message is binding on Creation until the Last Day.

The Qur'ân is the revealed word of God that God has preserved from corruption. The Qur'ân reads: *"Surely We have revealed the Reminder and We will most surely be its guardian."* (Al-Hijr 15:9) *"No falsehood can approach it from before or behind it. It is sent down by One Full of Wisdom, Worthy of Praise."* (Fussilat 41:42) In the Qur'ân, God challenges the Arabs to produce something like it. *"Say: 'If the whole of humanity and the Jinn were to gather together to produce the like of this Qur'ân, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they backed up each other with help and support.'" (Al-Isra 17:88)* This challenge was reduced even further to the point where only one chapter of the Qur'ân was needed: *"And if you are in doubt as to that which We have revealed to Our servant, then produce a chapter like it and call on your witnesses besides God if you are truthful. (23) But if you do not do it, and never shall you do it, then fear the fire whose fuel is men and stones, prepared for the unbelievers."* (Al-Baqarah 2:24) This is Islam's eternal miracle. The challenge remains open and unmet to this very day. There are many aspects of the Qur'ân's miraculous inimitability. Among these are its eloquence and its style.

The Arabs were given this challenge and they were the masters of their language and were well known for their eloquence. Not one of them, however, could produce a single chapter comparable to the Qur'ân. Today, we are conveying this challenge once again to all humanity. This challenge has stood for over 1400 years and continues to be a testimony to the truth of the Qur'ân and the Messenger who brought it. The enemies of Islam have always had in this challenge a perfect opportunity to prove Islam false. They definitely had enough reason to try. It would have surely been much less strenuous for them to pick up the pen and write then to pick up the sword and die trying to suppress Islam. It would have been far less costly than the time and money they spent on fighting against Islam.

We feel that by conveying this challenge we have done our duty. It becomes the duty of the one who hears it to hear the Qur'ân in its entirety and not to rely on unbelievers for their information but go directly to the source. Another proof that Muhammad (PBUH) is God's Messenger is the strength of the religion that he was sent with and the fact that it has been preserved from corruption. We can see all the scholarly disciplines that developed around it

over the ages and how Islam was able to respond to all the changes that took place throughout history. Islam has retained its strength while the Muslim world has passed through periods of strength and weakness and of freedom and occupation. Among the evidence that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is a Prophet of God is the fact that his coming was foretold by the Prophets who came before. In their books and their statements they described him and his followers. They even mentioned him by name. The Qur'ân states this fact in the following verses: *“And remember, Jesus, the son of Mary, said: "O Children of Israel! I am the messenger of Allah (sent) to you, confirming the Law (which came) before me, and giving Glad Tidings of a Messenger to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad." But when he came to them with Clear Signs, they said, "this is evident sorcery!" (As-Saff 61:6) “Those who follow the Messenger, the Prophet who can neither read nor write, whom they will find described in the Torah and the Gospel which are with them. He will enjoin on them that which is right and forbid them that which is wrong. He will make lawful for them all good things and prohibit for them only the foul; and he will relieve them of their burden and the fetters that they used to wear. Then those who believe in him, and honor him, and help him, and follow the light which is sent down with him: they will be the ones to prosper.” (Al-Araf 7:157)*

In spite of the distortions and deletions made by some Jewish rabbis and Christian priests to their sacred texts, and in spite of the incorrect interpretations they imposed on them, there still remains within those texts enough to establish the proof of Muhammad (PBUH) being a prophet of God. Another proof that Muhammad (PBUH) was a prophet of God is the history of his mission, the events of his life, the success of his followers, and how swiftly Islam spread throughout the nations of the world. The attributes of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his mode of conduct show us that he was truly a prophet of God. He was, in every aspect of his character, an exemplary human being and history has never witnessed anyone else like him. One of his most pronounced character traits was his capacity for mercy. He had great love and compassion for the poor and preferred to sit and partake of meals in their company. He showed great empathy for the sick and would go out of his way to help them. He would not leave a sick person or a child in need without fulfilling that need. He showed mercy to the orphans and encouraged people to care for them. He had great affection for children and would often carry babies and make them laugh. He taught his followers that children had the right to play and to be humored. His mercy extended even to animals. He commanded his followers to be kind to the animals in their care and prohibited abusing them. He instructed that animals used for food should be slaughtered carefully and with compassion. He reprimanded a man for overburdening his camel and failing to give it sufficient nourishment. He also informed us that a woman once was consigned to Hell for her mistreatment of a cat. She had locked it up and denied it food until it starved to death. Conversely, a prostitute received God's forgiveness and entered heaven because she showed pity on a thirsty dog and gave it water. Once he was asked if people were rewarded for the good treatment they gave to animals. The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: “For every creature possessing a liver there is a reward.” Added to his mercy was his courage. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was among the most courageous of people. He was always present in the battlefield during war, and when things became severe, he would be seen fighting in the front lines. He would

remain firm even when other brave men would turn to flee. He never hesitated in the face of falsehood and never ceased to call to the truth, even when most of the people of the Earth were opposed to him. He never wavered on any of his principles but continued to enjoin what was right and forbid what was wrong. He was also very forgiving to those who wronged him. He never became angry or hateful on a personal level. No matter how greatly someone wronged him when he was weak, he would show that person clemency when he was in a position of power. He would accept excuses even when he knew that the one making the excuse was lying. He was the most generous of people. He gave in charity like a person who had no fear of poverty. He never once refused to give to someone who asked. He gave everything that came into his possession to the poor and the needy. He would prefer his guests to himself and the members of his household. He usually sufficed himself and his family with dates and water and months would sometimes go by without a cooking fire being lit in his house. He was at the same time a most exemplary husband. He was very affectionate and caring. He was quick to overlook mistakes. He never once hit one of his wives, nor did he ever raise his voice to them or ridicule them. He always showed kindness. He would indulge them in anything that was not sinful. He shared in the housework and took care of himself. He mended his own clothes and shoes. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was kind to his servants. He commanded his followers not to overwork their servants and commanded that they must eat the same food that the members of the household eat and wear clothing of the same quality. Anas b. Mâlik said: "I worked as a servant for the Prophet (peace be upon him) in his residence and on his journeys. No matter what I did, he never once said to me: "Now why did you do that?" Likewise, no matter what I might have failed to do, he never once said to me: "Now why didn't you do that?"

Once the Prophet (PBUH) saw a man beating his slave. The Prophet (PBUH) said to him: "God is more capable of punishing you than you are of punishing him." Upon hearing this, the man stopped and said: "I set him free for the sake of God." The Prophet (PBUH) then said: "If you did not free him, you would have been touched by the fire." The Prophet (PBUH) was extremely shy and modest. He hated foul speech. He never once uttered a foul word. He said: "A strong sense of shame is a good quality in every way." He also said: "Nothing but good comes from having a strong sense of shame." He was also very humble. He taught his followers: "None will enter Paradise who has within his heart an atom's weight of pride." He used to sit on the floor and eat. He forbade his companions from standing in honor when he entered the room. When he walked, he never expected anyone to move out of the way. He never allowed himself to stand out in his dress or his steed. He never seated himself in a place of honor when he was in the company of others. Above all of these qualities was his devotion to God. He immersed himself in worship and eschewed the pleasures of the world. The remembrance and praise of God was always on his lips. He always sought the forgiveness of his Lord. His reverence of God often brought him to tears. He fasted so much that it sometimes seemed that he never went a day without fasting. He spent long stretches of the night standing in prayer until his ankles would swell. When he was asked why he worshipped so much when God had forgiven him all of his past and future sins, he replied: "Should I not then be a grateful servant?" These are just a few of his noble

qualities. The combination of worldly and spiritual perfection that he exhibited was a miracle in and of itself and a testimony to his truly being a prophet of God.

Among other proofs are:

1. Muhammad (PBUH) was raised illiterate, unable to read or write, and remained like that till his death. Among all his people, he was known as being truthful and trustworthy. Before receiving revelation, he had no prior knowledge of Religion or any previously sent Message. He remained like that for his first forty years. Revelation then came to Muhammad (PBUH) with the Quran that we now have between our hands. This Quran mentioned most of the accounts found in the previous scriptures, telling us about these events in the greatest detail as if he witnessed them. These accounts came precisely as they were found in the Torah sent down to Moses and in the Gospel sent down to Jesus. Neither the Jews nor Christians were able to belie him regarding anything that he said.
2. Muhammad (PBUH) also foretold of everything that would occur to him and his community after him, pertaining to victory, the removal of the tyrannical kingdoms of Chosroes [the royal title for the Zoroastrian kings of Persia] and Caesar, and the establishment of the religion of Islam throughout the earth. These events occurred exactly as Muhammad foretold, as if he was reading the future from an open book.
3. Muhammad (PBUH) also brought an Arabic Quran that is the peak of eloquence and clarity. The Quran challenged those eloquent and fluent Arabs of his time, who initially belied him, to bring forth a single chapter like the Quran. The eloquent Arabs of his day were unable to contest this Quran. Indeed, till our day, none has ever dared to claim that he has been able to compose words that equal-or even approach-the order, grace, beauty, and splendor of this Glorious Quran.
4. The life history of this Noble Prophet (PBUH) was a perfect example of being upright, merciful, compassionate, truthful, brave, generous, distant from all evil character, and ascetic in all worldly matters, while striving solely for the reward of the Hereafter. Moreover, in all his actions and dealings, he was ever mindful and fearful of Allah.
5. Allah instilled great love for Muhammad (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) in the hearts of all who believed in and met him. This love reached such a degree that any of his companions would willingly sacrifice his (or her) self, mother or father for him. Till today, those who believe in Muhammad honor and love him. Anyone of those who believe in him would ransom his own family and wealth to see him, even if but once.
6. All of history has not preserved the biography of any person in the manner it has preserved the life of Muhammad (PBUH), who is the most influential human in history. Nor has the entire earth known of anyone whom every morning and evening, and many times thereafter throughout the day, is thought of by those who believe in him. Upon remembering Muhammad (PBUH), the believers in him will greet him and ask Allah to bless him. They do such with full hearts and true love for him.

7. Nor has there ever been a man on earth whom is still followed in all his doings by those who believe in him. Those who believe in Muhammad (PBUH), sleep in the manner he slept; purify themselves (through ablution and ritual washing) in the manner he purified himself; and adhere to his practice in the way they eat, drink, and clothe themselves. Indeed in all aspects of their lives, the believers in Muhammad (PBUH) adhere to the teachings he spread among them and the path that he traveled upon during his life. During every generation, from his day till our time, the believers in this Noble Prophet have fully adhered to his teachings. With some, this has reached the degree that they desire to follow and adhere to the Prophet's way in his personal matters regarding which Allah has not sought of them to adhere to in worship. For example, some will only eat those specific foods or only wear those specific garments that the Messenger liked. Let alone all that, all those who believe in Muhammad (PBUH) repeat those praises of Allah, special prayers, and invocations that he would say during each of his actions during day and night, like: what he would say when he greeted people, upon entering and leaving the house, entering and leaving the mosque, entering and leaving the bathroom, going to sleep and awaking from sleep, observing the new crescent, observing the new fruit on trees, eating, drinking, dressing, riding, traveling and returning from travel, etc. Let alone all that, all those who believe in Muhammad (PBUH) fully perform-even to the minute detail-every act of worship-like prayer, fasting, charity, and pilgrimage-as this Noble Messenger (PBUH) taught and as he himself performed. All of this allows those who believe in him, to live their lives in all aspects with this Noble Messenger as their example, as if he was standing before them, for them to follow in all their doings.

8. There has never been nor will there ever be a man anywhere upon this earth who has received such love, respect, honor, and obedience in all matters-small and large alike-as has this Noble Prophet.

9. Since this day, in every region of the earth and during every period, this Noble Prophet has been followed by individuals from all races, colors and peoples. Many of those who followed him were previously Christians, Jews, pagans, idolaters, or without any religion. Among those who chose to follow him, were those who were known for their sound judgment, wisdom, reflection, and foresight. They chose to follow this Noble Prophet after they witnessed the signs of his truthfulness and the evidences of his miracles. They did not choose to follow Muhammad out of compulsion or coercion or because they had adopted the ways of their fathers and mothers. Indeed many of the followers of this Prophet (PBUH), chose to follow him during the time when Islam was weak, when there were few Muslims, and when there was severe persecution of his followers on earth. Most people who have followed this Prophet (PBUH) have done so not to acquire some material benefits. Indeed many of his followers have suffered the greatest forms of harm and persecution as a result of following this Prophet. Despite all this harm and persecution, this did not turn them back from his religion. My brethren! All of this clearly indicates to anyone possessing any sense, that this Prophet was truly and really Allah's messenger and that he was not just a man who claimed prophethood or spoke about Allah without knowledge.

10. With all this, Muhammad (PBUH) came with a great religion in its creedal and legal make-up. Muhammad (PBUH) described Allah with qualities of complete perfection, and at

the same time in a manner that is free of ascribing to Him any imperfection. Neither the philosophers or the wise could ever describe Allah like such. Indeed it is impossible to imagine that any human mind could conceive of an existing being that possesses such complete ability, knowledge, and greatness; Who has subdued the creation; Who has encompassed everything in the universe, small or large; and Who possesses such perfect mercy. Nor is it in the ability of any human being to place a perfect law based upon justice, equality, mercy and objectivity for all human activity on earth like the laws that Muhammad brought for all spheres of human activity - like buying and selling, marriage and divorce, renting, testimony, custody, and all other contracts that are necessary to uphold life and civilization on earth.

11. It is impossible that any person conceive wisdom,, morals, good manners, nobleness of characters as what this honorable Prophet (PBUH) brought. In a full and complete manner, Muhammad (PBUH) spread a teaching regarding character and manners toward one's parents, relatives, friends, family, humanity, animals, plants and inanimate objects. It is impossible for the human mind alone to grasp all of that teaching or come with a similar teaching. All of that unequivocally indicates that this Messenger did not bring any new religion from his own accord, but that it was rather a teaching and inspiration that he received from the One Who created the earth and the high heavens above and created this universe in its miraculous architecture and perfection.

12. The legal and creedal make-up of the religion that the Messenger, Muhammad, (PBUH) brought resembles the engineering of the heavens and the earth. All of that indicates that He who created the heavens and the earth is the One Who sent down this great law and upright religion. The degree of inimitability of the Divine law that was sent down upon Muhammad is to the same degree of inimitability of the Divine creation of the heavens and earth. For just as humanity cannot create this universe, in the same manner humanity cannot bring forth a law like Allah's law that He sent down upon His servant and messenger Muhammad (PBUH).

2. WAS MUHAMMAD A PROPHET?

1) That Muhammad truly did not receive revelations. He believed that he did but it was some kind of mental disorder set off by a traumatic event in his life. Even though he did not show any signs earlier, there is evidence to show that this is scientifically possible. 2) Muhammad did receive revelations, but not from God. There are other spiritual powers, namely Satan and his minions, which try to ensnare souls. Often, their messages appear very good and harmless and even seem to be complying with God, but in reality they are traps for the faithful. I do believe that Muhammad was a good man, and that he honestly believed that he was receiving revelations from God. But I do not believe that he really was. I mean no disrespect by saying this, as I greatly respect your religion, but I would like to know what makes you so certain that God revealed the Qur'an to him.

Answer: *Salaam* Aimee. Thank you for your important question. The fact that you are aware of Muhammad's (peace be upon him) convictions in the truth of his mission shows that you have researched the subject considerably. In other words, you do not consider intended fabrication on the part of the Prophet to be a possible explanation for the origins of the Quran.

Anyone who has read the words of the Qur'an along with some of the Traditions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) knows that he sincerely believed that he was a Prophet of God. Though you may dismiss him as mad or inspired by Satan, nevertheless he could not have been intentionally lying to those around him. He was a passionate believer in God; he was genuinely convinced that God would help him in his mission – this is an undeniable fact to those who have even a cursory knowledge of his life. If we agree to rule out the possibility of his lying, then the next logical objection to his authenticity as a Prophet of God is that he was deluded. As you logically summarize, he was either mentally ill or beguiled by Satan. Let us look at these two possibilities in detail.

Was he mad?

Certain orientalist have proposed the suggestion that Muhammad (peace be upon him) was mad, and they cite certain fictitious Traditions that hint at his suffering from epilepsy in defense of their claims. The purported revelations, they explain, were nothing more than the ramblings of a delusional madman. In fact the Arab pagans around the Prophet also accused him of madness, as Allah mentions in Surah Al-Hijr, Chapter 15, verse 6: *“{And they [the Arab pagans] say, ‘O you to whom the Reminder has been revealed! You are most surely insane!’}”* If the product of this “madness” were anything other than the Glorious Qur'an, there might be some weight to the claim. But as it stands, the question must be asked: Could a madman produce a seemingly perfect text? In fourteen hundred years of intense scrutiny and examination, not a single contradiction, grammatical flaw, or comparable imitation has ever been found. Could a madman inadvertently compose a text that stood as the foundation of the most successful and extensive empires ever to grace the earth? Could a madman write a book that has united peoples of hundreds of different languages and races for over fourteen centuries? A text that directly generated radically original systems of government, economics, human rights, and scholarship that stood the test of time and have subsequently inspired the rules and governing systems by which we live today?

To call the Qur'an the product of insanity is no less implausible than a group of monkeys jumping on a keyboard and producing an unflawed copy of *Webster's Unabridged Dictionary*. Furthermore, the Qur'an itself challenges such accusations through its self-declared inimitability (*i'jaz*). Allah says in Surah Al-Baqarah, chapter 2 verses 23 thru 24: *“{And if you are in doubt as to that which We have revealed to Our servant, then produce a chapter like it and call on your witnesses besides Allah if you are truthful (23) But if you do it not – and you can never do it – then be on your guard against the fire of which men and stones are the fuel; it is prepared for the unbelievers.}”* (24) Furthermore, if we believe in the existence of an all-powerful and controlling God, then we have to acknowledge that He would be in control the mind of a “madman” in the middle of the Arabian desert. As a believer in God, you have to admit that He willed and allowed for Muhammad to speak every verse of the Qur'an, and thereupon God allowed for these verses to travel around the world and win the hearts of billions of Muslims. If you are going on the assumption that the Qur'an is “misguidance,” then God's willing its existence coupled with its colossal influence on mankind makes the Satanic-ploy theory more likely than its being a random creation of the mind of a madman. An English speaker must bear in mid that the miracle of the Qur'an is in

the Arabic original. In fact, the Qur'an only exists in Arabic; English versions are in reality translations of the meanings of the Qur'an. Additionally, it would be appropriate at this point to mention the innumerable scientific miracles scattered throughout the Qur'an.

Was it Satan?

The second logical objective to the Qur'an's divine origins is the possibility that it is the work of Satan. Christians have traditionally argued that the Qur'an was intended by Satan to be a means of leading astray the masses from God's imminence, personified in Jesus (peace be upon him). The Christians have (incorrectly) held the Islamic concept of God to be wholly transcendent, i.e. the Muslim God is seen by them as completely impersonal, as He lacks a human facet like that which Jesus represents to the Christian tradition. Allah says in Surah Qaff, Chapter 50, verse 16: **{We verily created man and We know what his soul whispers to him, and We are nearer to him than his jugular vein.}** If we examine the Satanic-ploy argument objectively, it proves to be extremely feeble. The Qur'an calls only to deeds that are good. Among many other things, it incites its reader to belief in God, trust and reliance on Him, prayer, God-consciousness at all times, sincerity of intention, charity, kindness to orphans and the needy, graciousness to our parents, justice and fairness among people, truthfulness and good business ethics, chastity, cleanliness, etc. One may object: Well and good, but it's all for naught if it calls even to a single evil. It may seem rational for Satan to tell us, "Pray, give charity, eat pure food, and kill your parents." However, the Qur'an doesn't slip once; every deed that it calls to can unanimously be considered virtuous by people of all faiths – we urge you to search for yourself. Then, why would Satan call to belief in God and virtuous deeds? Additionally, Allah says in Surah An-Nahl, chapter 16, verse 98: **{So when you recite the Qur'an, seek refuge with Allah from the accursed Satan.}** If we agree on the existence of God, don't we think that no matter what religion we follow, He will respond to our seeking refuge in Him from Satan? In other words, why would Satan tell us to seek refuge in God from him? Even if we had the wrong religion, wouldn't this weaken his power over us? The verse can only harm him; it serves no benefit to him – why would he include it?

Next, let's look at the state of the world in which Muhammad (peace be upon) lived. The Arab pagans to whom he originally preached were as far from God as is imaginable. They worshipped stone idols, buried their daughters alive, murdered over a camel's drinking out of the wrong well, were ruled by the most absurd superstitions, etc. Satan had fully deceived them already. Why would he start a new religion that clearly brought them closer to God and closer to virtuosity? A Christian cannot deny that the pre-Islamic pagans were infinitely farther from the Christian teachings and ideals than their later-day Muslim counterparts. One may say: But Satan brought the Arabs slightly closer to God in order to later mislead the rest of the world – it was a sacrifice on the part of Satan for the sake of the greater evil. Then let's look at the state of the people who accepted Islam after the Arabs. The Persians, though custodians of a hitherto great civilization, by and large practiced fire-worship; their religious beliefs, rituals, and views on the sanctity of life were no more than a shade better than the desert idol-worshippers. The Indians were steeped in countless forms of idol worship, animism, ancestor worship, and religiously-legitimized socioeconomic bigotry. The advent of

Islam would later lead to a unification, simplification, and reform of the native beliefs of India that now comes under the over-simplified title of Hinduism. North Africa, though containing many Christian enclaves and strongholds many of which would incidentally retain their Christian beliefs after the Islamic conquests, was de-facto ruled by polytheist tribes of Berber and African ethnicity. The later-day Turks and Mongols also worshipped idols and dead ancestors prior to their adoption of Islam. From a Christian perspective, there is no doubt that Islam brought the native populations of the aforementioned areas closer to the Christian ideal than their previous religions. Why wouldn't Satan leave "sleeping dogs lie" and let the people continue on in their religions that epitomized the nadir of misguidance? From strictly a numbers perspective, Satan would have clearly mislead more people and would have caused more people to die in the farthest state from the Christian ideal had he not "inspired" the Qur'an, as the Christians hold. If there are holes in these arguments, please let us know. We respect your question because it is polite yet frank, and more importantly it reflects a logical and sincere quest for the Truth. If you are not Muslim, we expect you to have misgivings about the Qur'an. We are not insulted by your objectives and we hope that more non-Muslims would voice their doubts for the sake of arriving at Truth. On a personal note, I am a convert Muslim from America who accepted Islam in my youth. Within the past two years, I have taken up the part-time study of Arabic with an experienced teacher, and by Allah's Will, I have begun to grasp the meanings of the Qur'an in its original language. I can say from experience that my study has vastly improved my appreciation and understanding of the Qur'an, and I would urge anybody who sincerely seeks to prove its authenticity to him or herself to take up the study of Arabic. For me, the difference between the original language and the translated meanings is like day and night. Thank you again for your question, and please stay in touch.

3. HAVE PROPHET (PBUH) SEEN ALLAH

Question : Did prophet Muhammad (pbuh) directly see Allah almighty, on the day he saw Heaven, Hell, etc? If so, please send me evidence of this from the Quran Hadith.

Answer : Praise be to Allah. Most of the Sahaabah were of the view that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not see Allah with his eyes on the night of the Miraaj. It was narrated that 'Aa'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: "Whoever told you that Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) saw his Lord was lying. He said that no vision can grasp him [cf. al-An'aam 6:103]..." (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, al-Tawheed, 6832). It was narrated that Abu Dharr said: "I asked the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), 'Did you see your Lord?' He said, 'He is veiled by Light, how could I see Him.'" (Narrated by Muslim, al-Eeman, 261). It was narrated that Ibn 'Abbaas said: "*The (Prophet's) heart belied not what he saw, and indeed he saw Him at a second descent.*" [An-Najm 53:11-12] (This means that) he saw Him twice with his heart." (Narrated by Muslim, al-Eemaan, 258). Ibn al-Qayyim said: "'Uthmaan ibn Sa'eed al-Daarimi said in his book al-Ru'yah that there was consensus among the Sahaabah that he [the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)] did not see his Lord on the night of the Mi'raaj. Some of them excluded Ibn 'Abbaas and said that he was not one of those who said that. Our Shaykh says that this does not go against the facts, for Ibn 'Abbaas did not say that

he saw Him with the eyes in his head, and Ahmad relied upon this in one of the two reports narrated from him, where he says that he saw Him but he did not say that that was with the eyes in his head. The wording used by Ahmad is the same as that used by Ibn ‘Abbaas (may Allah be pleased with them both). What indicates that what our Shaykh said about the meaning of the hadeeth of Abu Dharr is correct is the fact that in another hadeeth he said that His veil is Light. And Allah knows best what the Light is that is mentioned in the hadeeth of Abu Dharr (may Allah be pleased with him) where it says, ‘I saw Light.’” Ijtimaa’ al-Juyoosh al-Islamiyyah, vol. 1, p. 12

Shaykh al-Islam (may Allah have mercy on him) said: “Chapter: with regard to seeing Allah, what was proven in al-Saheeh from Ibn ‘Abbaas is that he said: ‘Muhammad saw his Lord with his heart twice, and ‘Aa’ishah denied that he had seen Him. Some people reconciled these two reports by saying that ‘Aa’ishah denied that he saw Him with his eyes and Ibn ‘Abbaas affirmed that he saw Him with his heart. Some versions of the report narrated from Ibn ‘Abbaas refers to seeing without specifying how, and others indicate that it was with the heart. Sometimes he says that Muhammad saw his Lord, and sometimes he says that Muhammad saw Him. There is no clear statement from Ibn ‘Abbaas which says that he saw Him with his eyes. Similarly Imaam Ahmad sometimes says that he saw Him and sometimes says that he saw Him with his heart. No one whom Ahmad heard said that he saw Him with his eyes. But some of his companions heard some of the words that did not specify how, and understood from that that he had seen Him with his eyes, just as some people heard the words of Ibn ‘Abbaas that did not specify how, and understood from that that he had seen Him with his eyes. But there is nothing in the evidence to prove that he saw Him with his eyes, and that was not narrated from any of the Sahaabah. There is nothing in the Quran or Sunnah to indicate that, rather the saheeh texts which indicate that he did not see Him are more definitive. In Saheeh Muslim it is narrated that Abu Dharr said: ‘I asked the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), “Did you see your Lord?” He said, “He is veiled with Light, how could I see Him?”’ And Allah says (interpretation of the meaning): -‘*Glorified (and Exalted) be He (Allah) [above all that (evil) they associate with Him] Who took His slave (Muhammad) for a journey by night from Al-Masjid Al-Haraam (at Makkah) to Al-Masjid Al-Aqsaa (in Jerusalem), the neighbourhood whereof We have blessed, in order that We might show him (Muhammad) of Our Ayaat (proofs, evidences, lessons, signs, etc.)*’ (Al-Isra’ 17:1) If he had seen Him with his own eyes, that He would have mentioned that. The same applies to the words “*Will you then dispute with him (Muhammad) about what he saw [during the Mi’raaj]?*” (An-Najm 53:12). If he had seen Him with his own eyes, that would have been mentioned. It is proven from the saheeh texts and from the consensus of the salaf (first generations) of this ummah that no one can see Allah with his eyes in this world, with the exception of the claim made by some that our Prophet Muhammad alone saw Him. But they are agreed that the believers will see Allah on the Day of Resurrection with their own eyes just as they see the sun and the moon (in this world).” And Allah knows best. Majmoo’ al-Fataawa, vol. 6, p. 509-510

4. IS PROPHET OMNIPRESENT

Question: 1. Is the Prophet (PBUH) or any other being apart from Allah Omnipresent? Can we ask his help in our needs?

Answer: Praise be to Allah. Saying that Prophet (PBUH) or any other is Omnipresent is totally baseless and trying to make prophet raised to the status of Allah as Christians have done to Jesus (PBUH).

Firstly: Allah said to His Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): *“Verily, you (O Muhammad) will die, and verily, they (too) will die”* [Az-Zumar 39:30] And Allah said (interpretation of the meaning): *“Muhammad is no more than a Messenger, and indeed (many) Messengers have passed away before him. If he dies or is killed, will you then turn back on your heels (as disbelievers)?....”* [Aale ‘Imraan 3:144] *“And We granted not to any human being immortality before you (O Muhammad); then if you die, would they live forever?”* [Al-Anbiyaa’ 21:34] Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) said, in his speech after the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had died, “Whoever used to worship Muhammad, Muhammad has died, but whoever used to worship Allah, Allah is Alive and will never die.” (Narrated by al-Bukhaari). This and similar evidence indicates that Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was a human being like all other human beings, who died as they die, and will never be immortal just as no one before him was immortal. iWhoever wants to put the Prophet beyond the human realm and claim that the Prophet is present in all places, is the one who should be asked to produce evidence (daleel). How does he know that the Prophet is omnipresent at all times? Moreover, those who make the same claim with regard to Allah (should know that) this is kufr, deviation and misguidance. This belief implies that Allah is present even in dirty places like bathrooms etc. – Glorified be Allah far above what they say.

5. Allah may have not created this world

Question :I have got a question regarding a hadiih. How sound is the hadiih, that states, that it were not for Muhammad (saw) Allah (swt) would not have created this world? To be honest I am a bit suspicious about this hadiih, could you shatter some light in the matter?

Answer: Praise be to Allah. Many false and fabricated ahaadeeth have been narrated that say similar things. For example: “Were it not for you, I would not have created the universe.” This was quoted by al-Shawkaani in al-Fawaa’id al-Majmoo’ah fi’l-Ahaadeeth al-Mawdoo’ah (p. 326). He said: Al-San’aani said: (it is) mawdoo’ (fabricated). Al-Albaani said in al-Silsilah al-Da’eefah (282): (it is) mawdoo’. Another example is the hadeeth narrated by al-Haakim according to which Ibn ‘Abbaas said: “Allah revealed to ‘Eesa (Jesus, peace be upon him): ‘O ‘Eesa, believe in Muhammad, and tell whoever you meet of your ummah to believe in him. For were it not for Muhammad, I would not have created Adam, and were it not for Muhammad, I would not have created Paradise and Hell. I created the Throne over the water and it would not settle until I wrote on it, Laa ilaaha ill-Allah

Muhammad Rasool Allah (There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah).” Al-Haakim said: its isnaad is saheeh! But al-Dhahabi commented on that and said: I believe it is fabricated and falsely attributed to Sa’eed. Meaning, Sa’eed ibn Abu ‘Aroobah (one of the narrators of this hadeeth). This hadeeth was narrated from him by ‘Amr ibn Aws al-Ansaari, who is the one who is accused of fabricating it. Al-Dhahabi mentioned him in al-Meezaan where he said: “He produced a munkar report,” then he quoted this hadeeth, and said, “I believe that it is mawdoo’ (fabricated).” Al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar agreed with him, as it says in al-Lisaan. Al-Albaani said in al-Silsilah al-Da’eefah (280): There is no basis for it. Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked: Is the hadeeth which some people quote – “Were it not for you, Allah would not have created the Throne or the Kursiy or the earth or the heavens or the sun or the moon or anything else” saheeh or nor? He replied: Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is the leader of the sons of Adam, and the best and noblest of creation, hence some people say that Allah created the universe because of him, or that were it not for him, Allah would not have created the Throne or the Kursiy or the earth or the heavens or the sun or the moon. But this hadeeth that is narrated from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is neither saheeh (sound) nor da’eef (weak), and it was not narrated by any scholar in a hadeeth from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Neither was it known from the Sahaabah. Rather it is the words of one who is unknown. Majmoo’ al-Fataawa, 11/86-96. The Standing Committee was asked: Can it be said that Allah created the heavens and the earth for the purpose of creating the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)? What is the meaning of the hadeeth, “Were it not for you the universe would not have been created,” and does this hadeeth have any basis?

They replied: The heavens and the earth were not created for the sake of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), rather they were created for the purpose which Allah mentions (interpretation of the meaning): *“It is Allah Who has created seven heavens and of the earth the like thereof (i.e. seven). His Command descends between them (heavens and earth), that you may know that Allah has power over all things, and that Allah surrounds all things in (His) Knowledge”* [At-Talaaq 65:12] As for the hadeeth mentioned, it is falsely attributed to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and has no sound basis. Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa’imah, 1/312 Shaykh Ibn Baaz was asked about this hadeeth and said: The answer is that this was transmitted from the words of some of the common people who have no understanding. Some people say that the world was created for the sake of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and were it not for Muhammad the world would not have been created and mankind would not have been created. This is false and has no basis, and these are corrupt words. Allah created the world so that He would be known and worshipped. He created the world and He created mankind so that His names and attributes, His power and knowledge, would be known and so that He alone would be worshipped with no partner or associate, and so that He would be obeyed – not for the sake of Muhammad or for the sake of Nooh or Moosa or ‘Eesa or any other Prophet. Rather Allah created the universe so that He alone would be worshipped, with no partner or associate.

6. VISITING PROPHET GRAVE AS VISITING HIM LIVE

Question: I was once told that Rasulullah (saw) has said that visiting his grave after his death is the same as visiting him when he was alive and that, therefore, when we visit his grave in Madinah, there is no harm in speaking to him as if he were alive and requesting him to intercede on our behalf with Allah. But I am worried that this might be 'shirk'.

Answer: Al-Daaraqutni reported in his *Sunan* (2/278) with an isnaad from Haatib that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever visits me after I die, it is as if he visited me when I was still alive...” This is a hadeeth which many of the scholars of hadeeth judged to be false and not to have been reported with a saheeh isnaad from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Among the scholars who voiced this opinion was al-Haafiz al-Dhahabi in *Lisaan al-Meezaan* (4/285), in his biography of one of the narrators, Haaroon ibn Abi Qaz’ah. Al-Dhahabi said: “...Haaroon ibn Abi Qaz’ah al-Madani [reported] from a man”. Al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar said in *Lisaan al-Meezaan* (6/217): “Al-Azdi said: ‘Haaroon Abu Qaz’ah reports mursal ahaadeeth from a man of Aal Haatib.’ I [Ibn Hajar] say: from this we understand that what he is referring to is al-Azdi. Ya’qoob ibn Shaybah also classed him as da’eef (weak).” Al-Haafiz ibn Hajar also mentioned him in *al-Talkhees al-Habeer*, in his comment on the ahaadeeth of al-Raafa’i al-Kabeer (2/266). He said, “In his isnaad is the unknown [majhool] man” – meaning a man from Aal Haatib. Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah said in *al-Tawassul wa’l-Waseelah* (p. 134) about this hadeeth: “It is obviously a lie that goes against Islam. Anyone who visited him during his lifetime and believed in him, was one of his companions, especially if he was among those who migrated to join him or fought alongside him. It is proven that he (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: ‘Do not slander my Companions, for by the One in Whose hand is my soul, if any one of you were to spend gold equal to the size of Uhud, it would not equal the deeds of one of them, not even half of it.’ [Reported by al-Bukhaari and Muslim]. Anyone who comes after the Sahaabah cannot be like the Sahaabah by doing obligatory duties such as Hajj, jihaad, the five daily prayers and sending blessings upon the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), so how can he become equal to them by doing something that is not obligatory according to the consensus of the Muslims?

We are not even supposed to travel for this purpose, in fact it is forbidden to do so. However, traveling to the [Prophet’s] Mosque, and to al-Masjid al-Aqsaa [in Jerusalem], for the purpose of praying there, is mustahabb (encouraged), and traveling to the Ka’bah for Hajj is waajib (obligatory). If a person who undertakes a journey that is waajib or mustahabb still cannot be like one of the Sahaabah who traveled to visit the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) during his lifetime, how can they achieve this by undertaking a journey that is not allowed?” He also said (p. 133): “All of the ahaadeeth about visiting his grave are da’eef, and are not to be relied upon in matters of religion. For this reason none of the authors of books of *Saheeh* and *Sunan* reported them at all; they were only narrated by those who reported da’eef ahaadeeth, such as al-Daaraqutni, al-Bazaar and others. Shaykh al-Albaani said in *al-Da’eefah* (no. 1021) about this hadeeth: it is baatil (false). He mentioned what is wrong with

the hadeeth, namely the man who is not named, and classed Haaroon Abu Qaz'ah as da'eef. There is a third fault with the hadeeth, which is that it causes confusion and contradiction. Then Shaykh al-Albaani said: "In general, the isnaad of this hadeeth is weak." He also said in *al-Da'eefah* (no. 47): "many people think that Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah and those who follow him among the Salafis forbid visiting the grave of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) altogether. This is a lie and a fabrication, and it is not the only lie told about Ibn Taymiyah, may Allah have mercy on him, or about the Salafis. Everyone who reads the books of Ibn Taymiyah will see that he says it is permissible to visit his grave (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and that doing so is recommended (mustahabb), so long as it is not associated with any objectionable practices or innovations (bid'ah), such as traveling solely for that purpose, because of the hadeeth "No one should set out purposely except to visit three mosques." The hadeeth does not describe a ban only on traveling to visit other mosques, as many people think; it also includes a ban on setting out to visit any place which people think will bring them closer to Allah, whether it is a mosque, a grave or any other place.

This is indicated by the hadeeth narrated by Abu Hurayrah who said: 'I met Basrah ibn Abi Basrah al-Ghifaari and he asked me, 'Where are you coming from?' I said, 'From al-Toor [Sinai].' He said, 'If I had met you before you left, you would not have gone there! I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) say: 'Do not travel except to three mosques.'" (Reported by Ahmad and others with a saheeh isnaad). This clearly indicates that the Sahaabah understood the hadeeth to be general in application [i.e., it did not apply only to mosques]. This is supported by the fact that it is not reported that any of them ever set out with the intention of visiting a grave. They are the predecessors of Ibn Taymiyah in this regard, so whoever condemns Ibn Taymiyah is in effect condemning the salaf (the righteous predecessors), may Allah be pleased with them. May Allah have mercy on the one who said:--"All goodness is in following those who went before (the salaf) and all evil is in following the innovations of those who came later?"

In conclusion, traveling with the intention of visiting the grave of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is bid'ah and is haraam, because of the hadeeth which forbids traveling to worship in any place except the three mosques. As for visiting the grave of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) when one happens to be in Madeenah, this is perfectly acceptable, as is traveling with the intention of praying in the Prophet's Mosque as an act of worship and seeking to draw close to Allah. Those that are confused about this issue are those who do not understand the difference between what is permitted and what is forbidden. And Allah knows best.

7. ADAM PRAYING BY VIRTUE OF MUHAMMAD (PBUH)

Question : I read this hadeeth and I would like to know whether it is saheeh or not. "When Adam committed his sin, he said, 'O Lord, I ask You by virtue of Muhammad to forgive me.' Allah said, 'O Adam, how do you know of Muhammad when I have not yet created him?' He said, 'O Lord, when You created me with Your own hand, and breathed into me the soul that You created, I raised my head and saw written on the pillars of the Throne, Laa ilaaha ill-

Allah Muhammad Rasool Allah [There is no god but Allah, Muhammadi s the messenger of Allah]. Then I knew that You would not mention in conjunction with Your name any but the most beloved of Your creation to You.’ Allah said, ‘You have spoken the truth, O Adam. He is indeed the most beloved of My creation to Me. Pray to me by virtue of Him, for I have forgiven you. Were it not for Muhammad, I would not have created you.’”

Answer : Praise be to Allah. This hadeeth is mawdoo’ (fabricated). It was narrated by al-Haakim via ‘Abd-Allah ibn Muslim al-Fahri (who said), Ismaa’eel ibn Muslimah narrated to us, ‘Abd al-Rahmaan ibn Zayd ibn Aslam told us, from his father, from his grandfather, from ‘Umar ibn al-Khattaab (may Allah be pleased with him), that he said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, “When Adam committed his sin...” Then he quoted the hadeeth as the questioner quoted it. Al-Haakim said: The isnaad of this hadeeth is saheeh. This is what al-Haakim said! But a number of scholars rebuked him and denounced him for classing this hadeeth as saheeh. They ruled that this hadeeth is false and fabricated, and they pointed out that al-Haakim contradicted himself when commenting on this hadeeth. There follow some of their comments: Al-Dhahabi said, criticizing the words of al-Haakim quoted above: Rather it is mawdoo’ (fabricated), and ‘Abd al-Rahmaan is not reliable, and I do not know who ‘Abd-Allah ibn Muslim al-Fahri is. Al-Dhahabi also said in Meezaan al-I’tidaal: It is a false report. Al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar agreed with him in Lisan al-Meezaan. Al-Bayhaqi said: ‘Abd al-Rahmaan ibn Zayd ibn Aslam is the only one who narrated it with this isnaad, and he is da’eef (weak). Ibn Katheer agreed with him in al-Bidaayah wa’l-Nihayyah, 2/323. Al-Albaani said in al-Silsilah al-Da’eefah, 25: (it is) mawdoo’. Al-Haakim himself (may Allah forgive him) accused ‘Abd al-Rahmaan ibn Zayd of being a fabricator of hadeeth, so how could his hadeeth be saheeh? Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah said in al-Qaa’idah al-Jaleelah fi’l-Tawassul wa’l-Waseelah (p. 69): Al-Haakim’s narration of this hadeeth is something for which he was denounced, and he himself said in his book al-Madkhil ila Ma’rifat al-Saheeh ‘an al-Saqeem: ‘Abd al-Rahmaan ibn Zayd ibn Aslam narrated fabricated ahaadeeth from his father, and it is obvious to any competent hadeeth scholar that he is the one to blame for fabricating ahaadeeth. I say: ‘Abd al-Rahmaan ibn Zayd ibn Aslam is da’eef (weak) because he made a lot of mistakes. See Silsilat al-Ahaadeeth al-Da’eefah by al-Albaani, 1/38-47.

8. Buildings over graves

Question:- I would like to ask questions concerning building over the graves. From the hadiths, it is clear that building any sort of structure over the graves or putting graves inside mosques is forbidden. There are many tombs of the saints in the Asian sub-continent and grave worship is the norm. However when telling these people of their *haram* actions they reply that our own Prophet Muhammad's grave is inside the mosque, and secondly that his grave has building over it, hence justifying the building over the graves.

Answer -As for the grave of Prophet, there was no building over it. It happens that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) passed away in the room of `A'ishah and there is an exception for prophets and messengers of Allah. They have to be buried in the same place they pass away; they can't be removed to other place. Since Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) passed away in the room of `A'ishah, therefore, he was buried inside that room. This is considered as a special treatment for all the messengers of Allah. As for the graves of Abu Bakar and `Umar, this should be considered as Ijtihad from both of them and certainly they did request as a reflection and deep expression of their passion and great love to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). Both of them were buried next to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). However, the action of Abu Bakar and `Umar should not be taken as a precedent. The prohibition of building on graves remains as clearly stated by the holy Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). As for having all these great graves inside the mosque, I shall stress that they were not inside the mosque and they supposed not to be inside. They were entered into the mosque as a result of fear and willingness to protect them against the evil attempts in the history to destroy them and remove the body of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). All in all, it is prohibited to build on graves thus it goes against the principles of humbleness that are required in handling the issues of the deceased.

9. PROPHET'S ASECION, BY SOUL ONLY OR WITH BODY

Question: Was the Prophet's Israa' and Mi'raj (Night Journey and Ascension) in soul only or in both body and soul?

Answer:-According to the majority of jurists, scholars of Hadith and Muslim philosophers, the journey of Al-Israa' and Al-Mi'raj was in both body and soul. Therein lay its being a miracle. There is much evidence of this point. The eminent scholar Sheikh `Atiyyah Saqr, former head of Al-Azhar Fatwa Committee, states: Scholars have differed as to whether the Prophet's journey of Al-Israa' and Al-Mi'raj was in soul only or in both body and soul. The majority of jurists, scholars of Hadith, and Muslim philosophers agreed that it was in both body and soul for many reasons. First, according to Almighty Allah's words: *"Glory to (Allah) Who did take His servant (Muhammad) for a Journey by night from the Sacred Mosque to the farthest Mosque, whose precincts We did bless,- in order that We might show him some of Our Signs: for He is the One Who heareth and seeth (all things)."* (Al-Isra 17:1) He Almighty has referred to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) as "His servant." The word "servant" does not refer to one's soul only; it refers to the servant as a whole, body and soul.-This is similar to the word "slave" in Allah's words: *"Hast thou seen him who dissuadeth (9) a slave when he prayeth?"* (Al-'Alaq 96: 9 -10) and *"And when the slave of Allah stood up in prayer to Him, they crowded on him, almost stifling"* (Al-Jinn 72: 19) The word "slave" in both these verses refers to the person in question as a whole, body and soul.

Second, had the Prophet's journey of Al-Israa' and Al-Mi'raj been in soul only, it would not have been regarded as a miracle. It would have been then an ordinary dream. While sleeping, many people visit remote places and see extraordinary things without moving an inch from the places they are already in, and there is nothing extraordinary about that to other people.

Had the Prophet's journey of Al-Israa' and Al-Mi'raj been a dream, Allah Almighty would not have mentioned it in the Qur'an in terms that express its being a miracle and extraordinary incident.

Third, Allah Almighty says about the journey of Al-Israa' and Al-Mi'raj: "...*We appointed the vision which We showed thee as an ordeal for mankind....*" (Al-Israa' 17: 60). "Ordeal" here refers to its being a trial. Contemplating this, the journey would not be a trial unless it was in both body and soul. Had it been in soul only, there would not have been a trial or something extraordinary regarding it. Besides, when the unbelievers knew about the journey of Al-Israa' and Al-Mi'raj, they wondered how the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) could make it on one night, when they would make a similar journey in a month. (Why should they disbelieve it, if it were a mere dream?)

Fourth, it was Allah Almighty Who made His Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) have that journey, and, certainly, nothing is impossible for Allah Almighty to do; He Almighty is able to do all things. Hence, there is nothing that calls us to doubt the occurrence of the journey in both body and soul. Those who say that the journey was in soul only cite as evidence for their view the Qur'anic verse: "...*We appointed the vision which We showed thee as an ordeal for mankind....*" (Al-Israa' 17: 60). They believe that the vision (*ru'ya*) here refers to a dream, not to an actual seeing. But this opinion is not wholly tenable, for *ru'ya*, lexically speaking, refers also to seeing with the eyes. Besides, according to Al-Bukhari, Ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) said, commenting on the verse in question, "The sights which the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was shown on the Night Journey when he was taken to Jerusalem were actual sights, (not dreams)." Those who are of the opinion that the journey was in soul only also cite as evidence for their view the Mother of the Believers 'A'ishah's hadith: "The Prophet's sanctified body was not missing on the Night Journey." But this point is also refuted for the following reasons.

1. The hadith reported to have been said by 'A'ishah is not an authentic one; there are missing and unknown reporters in its chain of narration. 2. 'A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) was not yet married to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) at the time of the journey. She might even not have been born then, if we take into account the controversy regarding the date of Al-Israa' and Al-Mi'raj. 3. Her saying: "The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) did not see his Almighty Allah with his eye" indicates that she believed that the journey was in both body and soul. Had she thought that it was in soul only, she would not have said that. 4. Since the hadith "The Prophet's sanctified body was not missing" is not authentic, there is no need to attempt to explain it to mean that the journey was in both body and soul, for some say that the hadith indicates that his soul was not separated from his body. Anyway, what we are required to believe with regard to Al-Israa' and Al-Mi'raj is that it did take place, as Allah Almighty tells us in the Glorious Qur'an. As for its being in soul only or in both body and soul, this is a controversial point that needs not to be tackled strictly. One can adopt either view, but one is to bear in mind at the same time that Allah Almighty is able to do everything and that the Prophets' visions, according to scholarly agreement, are true.

10. Prophet's (PBUH) stools, urine and shadow

Question: I have read in a book that the stools and urine of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) were not impure. How far is this true?

Answer: Some people tend to ascribe certain things which they consider as virtues to the Prophet, without having any sound basis for them. The point you have raised is one such thing. Recently, I answered a question on whether it is true that the Prophet had no shadow. I said then that it was a false notion and that it neither gave a distinction to the Prophet to have no shadow nor did it detract from his honor and position to have a shadow. To say that Prophet's urine and stools were not impure is just an attempt to say that the Prophet was unlike other human beings or to ascribe to him an air of holiness which he was keen to dispel. Certainly, it is not true at all to suggest that what he discharged as a human being was any different from what is discharged by other people. He certainly washed his clothes from any impurity and he was keen to purify himself every time he went to the toilet. To suggest otherwise, is to deviate from the teachings of the Prophet.



Finality of prophet hood of Muhammad Salal laho aliehi wasalam in light of Quran and Sahih Hadith by Ibtisam Elahi Zaheer

It is clear cut verse of Holy Quran:-Muhammad (SAW) is not the father of any man among you, but he is the Messenger of Allâh and the last (end) of the Prophets. And Allâh is Ever All-Aware of everything. (Al-Ahzab 33:40) Allah swt has declared sever punishment for those who say they are getting revelation like like revelation of Allah swt . Allah swt says:- And who can be more unjust than he who invents a lie against Allâh, or says: "I have received inspiration," whereas he is not inspired in anything; and who says, "I will reveal the like of what Allâh has revealed." And if you could but see when the Zâlimûn (polytheists and wrong-doers, etc.) are in the agonies of death, while the angels are stretching forth their hands (saying): "Deliver your souls! This day you shall be recompensed with the torment of degradation because of what you used to utter against Allâh other than the truth. And you used to reject His Ayât (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) with disrespect!" (Al-An'am 6:93) Similarly it is mentioned in books of hadiths that there can be no prophet after Rasool salal laho aliehi wasalam. Some of the hadiths are as follows:

Hadith No 1:- Narrated Abu Huraira radi Allahu anhu Allah's Apostle(Salal laho aliehi wasalam) said, "My similitude in comparison with the other prophets before me, is that of a man who has built a house nicely and beautifully, except for a place of "ONE" brick in a corner. The people go about it and wonder at its beauty, but say: 'Would that this brick be put in its place!' So I am that brick, and I am the last of the Prophets." (Sahih Bukhari Volume 4,

Book 56, Number 735 Sahih Muslim, Number 5675 ,Musnad Ahmed bin Hanbal Number 7479, Also narrated in Sunnan al-Bayhaqi al-Kubra, Number 11422)

Hadith No 2:-Abu Huraira radi Allahu anhu reported Allah's Messenger (Salal laho aliehi wasalam) as saying: "The Last Hour would not come until there would arise about thrity imposters,liars and each one of them would claim that he is a messenger of Allah" (Sahih Bukhari, Volume 9, Book 88, Number 237, Sahih Muslim Book 041, Number 6988)

Hadith No 3:-Narrated Sad radi Allahu anhu Allah's Apostle (Salal laho aliehi wasalam) set out for Tabuk. appointing 'Ali as his deputy (in Medina). 'Ali said, "Do you want to leave me with the children and women?" The Prophet said, "Will you not be pleased that you will be to me like Aaron to Moses? "But there will be no prophet after me" (Sahih Bukhari Volume 5, Book 59, Number 700)

Hadith No 4:-Narrated Abu Huraira radi Allahu anhu The Prophet (Salal laho aliehi wasalam) said, "The Israelis used to be ruled and guided by prophets: Whenever a prophet died, another would take over his place. "There will be no prophet after me,but there will be caliphs who will increase in number"The people asked, "O Allah's Apostle! What do you order us (to do)?" He said, "Obey the one who will be given the pledge of allegiance first. Fulfil their (i.e. the Caliphs) rights, for Allah will ask them about (any shortcoming) in ruling those Allah has put under their guardianship." (Sahih Bukharee Volume 4, Book 56, Number 661)

Hadith No 5:-They will come to me and say, 'O Muhammad ! You are Allah's Apostle and "The last of the prophets"and Allah forgave your early and late sins. (Please) intercede for us with your Lord. Don't you see in what state we are?(Sahih Bukhari, Volume 6, Book 60, Number 236)

Hadith No 6:-Narrated Jubair bin Mutim radi Allahu anhu Allah's Apostle(Salal laho aliehi wasalam) said, "I have five names: I am Muhammad and Ahmad; I am Al-Mahi through whom Allah will eliminate infidelity; I am Al-Hashir who will be the first to be resurrected, the people being resurrected there after; "And I am also Al Aqib i.e There will be no prophet after me)"(Sahih Bukhari, Volume 4, Book 56, Number 732)

Hadith No 7:-Narrated Isma'il I asked Abi Aufa, "Did you see Ibrahim, the son of the Prophet ?" He said, "Yes, but he died in his early childhood. Had there been a Prophet after Muhammad then his son would have lived, "But there is no prophet after him" (Sahih Bukhari ,Volume 8, Book 73, Number 214)

Hadith No 8:-Abu Huraira radi Allahu anhu reported that the Messenger of Allah (Salal laho aliehi wasalam) said: "I have been given superiority over the other prophets in six respects: I have been given words which are concise but comprehensive in meaning; I have been helped by terror (in the hearts of enemies): spoils have been made lawful to me: the earth has been made for me clean and a place of worship; I have been sent to all mankind and the line of prophets is closed with me"(Sahih Muslim Book 004, Number 1062)

Hadith No 9:-Anas bin Malik radi Allahu anhu narrates from the Prophet (Salal laho aliehi wasalam) said: “The Messengership and Prophethood have ended and there will be no Messenger and Prophet after me”(Sunnan Tirimdhi, Number 2274, Musnad Ahmed bin Hanbal, Volume No.3, Page No. 467, Mustadrak ala Sahihayn al Hakim, Volume No. 4, Page No. 391)

Hadith No 10:-Uqba bin Aamir radi Allahu anhu narrates that the Prophet (Salal laho aliehi wasalam) said: “Had there been a Prophet after me then It would have been Umar” (Sunnan Tirimdhi, Number 3272)

Hadith No 11:-The Prophet (Peace be upon him) said: There will arise 30 grand Liars (Dajjal) from my Ummah, each of them will claim that he is the Prophet whereas “I am khatam an nabiyyeen and there is no prophet after me” (Sunnan Tirimdhi , Number 2202)

Hadith No 12:-The Prophet (Peace be upon him) said: “Allah has not sent any Prophet who did not warn his nation about Dajjal, but Now I am the last prophet (آخر الأنبياء)” and you are the last Ummah (آخر الأمم), he will for sure arise from amongst you.”(Sunnan Ibn Majah, Number 4067)

Hadith no 13:-The Prophet of (Salal laho aliehi wasalam) said: “I am the Slave of Allah and I was a Last Prophet (saw) in (sight) of Allah when Adam’s Khameer was being created” (Imam al Baihaqi in Shuayb ul Imaan Volume 2 Page No. 134, Imam Hakim in his Mustadrak declared Its chain to be Sahih)

Hadith no 14:-On the day of judgement people will run to all Prophets asking for help and intercession, the hadith states(It's long hadith,so part of it related to finality of prophet hood is stated below): Jabir bin Abdullah radi Allahu anhu narrates that the Prophet (Salal laho aliehi wasalam) said: I am the leader of all Prophets and there is no boast, I am the Last of all Prophets and there is no boast (Sunnan al Darimi, Number 50)

Hadith no 15:-Abdullah bin Umar radi Allahu anhu narrates that once the Prophet (Salal laho aliehi wasalam) came to us in a way as If he is leaving us, then he said thrice: “I am Muhammad the Umami Prophet (Salal laho aliehi wasalam) and there is no Prophet after me” (Musnad Ahmed bin Hanbal, Volume No. 2, Page No. 172 : Hassan according to research of Hafiz Ahmed Shakir)

Hadith No 16:-The Propht (Salal laho aliehi wasalam) said: “There is no Prophet after me, and there is no Ummah after you, so you should worship your Lord and say your 5 daily prayers, and fast in your month (Ramadan), obey your leaders and thus enter the Blessed garden of your Lord” (Imam Tabarani in Muj’am al Kabir, Volume No. 8, Number 7217)

Hadith No 17:-Abu Dhar radi Allahu anhu narrates that the Prophet told him: “The first Prophet is Adam and the last one is Muhammad (salal laho aliehi wasalam)” (Kanz ul amaal, Number 32269)

Hadith No 18:-Ibn Abbas radi Allahu anhu narrates that the Prophet (Salal laho aliehi wasalam) said: “I am Ahmed, Muhammad, Hashir, Maqfi (One who is sent in the last) and I am Khatim” (Imam Tabarani in Muj’am as Saghir, Number 152)

Hadith No 19:-Qatada radi Allahu anhu narrates that when the Prophet (Salal laho aliehi wasalam) recited the Ayah { And when We exacted a covenant from the prophets, and from thee (O Muhammad) and from Noah... 33:7} he said: The goodness was started through me and I am the last amongst all Prophets to be sent (Muassanaf Ibn Abi Shaybah, Number 31753)

Hadith No 20:-The Prophet (Salal laho aliehi wasalam) said: Abu Bakr radi Allahu anhu is the best amongst all people (after me) But he is not a prophet (Al Kamil by Ibn Adi, Volume No. 6, Page No. 484)

Conclusion:-We can conclude from the above mentioned hadiths of Rasool salal laho aliehi wasalam that 1 Rasool salal laho aliehi wasalam is the last prophet--2 Decision of Finality of prophet hood was made when Adam aliehis salam was not created--3 Even on the day of judgement prophet salal laho aliehi wasalam will be taken as last prophet--2 Had there been any prophet after him he could be only Umar radi Allahu anhu--3 Abu bakar was best of Ummah but he could not be a prophet--4 Ali was like Haroon in eyes of prophet but difference was that Haroon was a prophet but Ali was sahabi of Rasool salal laho aliehi wasalam--5 Son of Prophet salal laho aliehi wasalam could not survive because prophet hood had been discontinued after him--6 There will be 30 liars after Rasool salal laho aliehi wasalam who will claim to be prophet after him--7 There can be no ummah after Ummah of Muhammadiyyah so Ahmadiyyah ,Bahais ,Babis ,Nation of Islam and Submitters are all kafirs. May Allah keep us steadfast on this aqeedah of Khatme nabowwat and and may Allah guide those who are misguided due to their ignorance and worldly interest Ameen.

Some Selected Verses from the Holy Qur'an on OUR BELOVED PROPHET MUHAMMAD Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam HIS EXALTED STATUS

1. He is Nur (Sacred Light) (5:15) 2. Allah blesses him (33:56) 3. Mercy for all the worlds (21:107) 4. His name is Muhammad (Meaning the Most Praised One) (47:2) 5. Allah has exalted his Zikr (remembrance) (94:1-4) 6. His exaltation on the Night of Mi'raj: his heavenly ascent (53:8-9) 7. His Station of Praise (Al-Maqam al-Mahmud) (17:79)

THE BELOVED OF ALLAH---1. If you want to gain the love of Allah, follow him (3:31) 2. Allah addresses him with love and affection (20:1) (36:1) (73:1) (74:1) 3. Allah says: Realize that My Prophetic Messenger himself is with you (49:7) 4. Allah describes him with His Own Attributes of Rauf (Most Kind) and Rahim (Merciful) (9:128) 5. Allah Himself praises him (33:45-47) 6. Possessor of Allah's Grace (4:113) 7. He is a special favour of Allah (Sub'hanahu wa Ta'ala) (3:164) 8. Allah does not punish people if he is in their midst (8:33) 9. Allegiance to him is allegiance to Allah (48:10)

HE RECEIVED THE HOLY QUR'AN---1. Allah gave him Surah al-Fatiha and the whole Qur'an (15:87) 2. Totally inspired (53:3-4) 3. Allah revealed the Noble Qur'an on his blessed

heart (26:192-197) 4. The first revelation he received (96:1) 5. Teaches the Holy Qur'an and Hadith Sharif (Wisdom) and purifies people (62:2)

AMONG THE PROPHETS ('Alayhimussalam) 1. He is the Final Prophet (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam) (33:40) 2. Mentioned first among the greatest Prophets ('Alayhimussalam) (33:7) (4:163) 3. A Prophet whom Allah appointed with proven prophecies (30:1-6) (48:1) (48:27) (61:13) 4. Given the knowledge of the unseen (3:179) 5. Nabi Ibrahim ('Alayhissalam) prayed for his coming (2:129) 6. Foretold by Nabi 'Isa (Jesus) ('Alayhissalam) (61:6) 7. Allah asks all the Prophets to believe in him (3:81) 8. Confirms the previous (Prophetic) Messengers of Allah (37:37)

SERVES ONLY ALLAH (THE GLORIFIED AND THE EXALTED)-1. Worships only Allah (Sub'hanahu wa Ta'ala) (72:19-20) 2. Puts total trust in Allah (Sub'hanahu wa Ta'ala) (9:129) 3. Selflessly labours for Allah, asks for no reward (25:57) (42:23) 4. Rewarded by Allah (68:3) (108:1)

HIS EXEMPLARY CHARACTER-1. Most exemplary character (33:21) (68:4) 2. Sadiq (Truthful) (33:22) 3. Final judge and arbiter (4:65) (24:51) 4. Honoured, Noble (69: 40) 5. Forgiving (7:199) 6. He is Burhan (Clear Proof) (4:174) 7. Brave: Commands Muslims in battle (3:121)

PREACHES ISLAM----1. Established the correct Message of Islam (6:161-163) (39:11-12) 2. Preacher to all humanity (4:170) (25:1) (34:28) 3. He is Bashir and Nadhir (Bearer of glad tidings and a warner) (5:19) 4. Invites people to Islam (12:108) 5. Even the jinn respond to his call (46:29-31) 6. He brought the truth (17:81) (39:33) 7. He brought a new law (Shari'a) (7:157) 8. A perfect guide to be followed (7:158) 9. He calls you to that which gives you life (8:24) 10. Brings people from the darkness (of Ignorance) to the Light (of Islam) (65:11) 11. His religion prevails over all religion (48:28)

HIS BLESSED FAMILY AND COMPANIONS (Rady Allahu 'Anhum) 1. His Family purified by Allah (Sub'hanahu wa Ta'ala) (33:33) 2. His Companions praised by Allah (Sub'hanahu wa Ta'ala) (48:29) 3. His Companions: The Muhajirin and the Ansar (8:74) (9:100) (59:8-9) 4. His Companions pledge allegiance to him (48:18)

BELIEVE, HONOUR, LOVE, RESPECT AND OBEY HIM----1. Believe, honour and respect him (48:9) (61:11) 2. Love Allah and His Beloved Prophet more than anything else (9:24) 3. He is closer to the believers than their own selves (33:6) 4. Respect him (49:1-3) 5. Obey Allah (Ta'ala) and His Beloved Prophet (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam) (3:132) (4:13) (4:59) (4:69) (4:80) (9:71) (24:52) (24:54) (24:56) (33:71) (49:14) (64:12) 6. Follow the Commands of Allah (Sub'hanahu wa Ta'ala) and of His Beloved Prophet (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam) (33:36) 7. Whatever he gives you, take it (59:7) 8. The reward of believing in him (57:28)

WAGED JIHAD AMIDST PERSECUTION----1. Non-believers plot to kill him (8:30) 2. His persecution (22:39-40) 3. Commanded to fight alone for Allah (Sub'hanahu wa Ta'ala)

(4:84) 4. He led Muslims in prayer while in battle (4:102) 5. Allah asks him to seek peace (8:61) 6. Allah helped him in Jihad (33:9) 7. Allah made him victorious (110:1)

HIS MIRACLES-----1. Living miracle: The Holy Qur'an (2:23) (17:88) (52:34) 2. Human miracle: he was the wasila (means) through whom people's hearts were transformed (5:83) 3. Heavenly miracle: Isra' and Mi'raj (his heavenly ascent) (17:1) (53:8-18) 4. Historic miracle: Hijra; escaped while surrounded (9:40) 5. The miracle of the Battle of Badr: Victory against all odds (3:123-125) 6. The splitting of the moon (54:1-2)

INTERCESSOR (SHAFI')--1. Allah appointed him as an intercessor to plead for people's forgiveness (3:159) (4:64) (60:12) 2. An accepted intercessor (19:87) (20:109) 3. His supplication a relief for hearts (9:103)

Some Selected Verses From The Holy Qur'an On OUR BELOVED PROPHET MUHAMMAD Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam---BELIEVE, HONOUR, LOVE, RESPECT AND OBEY HIM

That you (mankind) may believe in Allah and His (Prophetic) Messenger, and may respect him, and honour him, and may glorify Him (Allah) morning and evening. (48:9) That you believe in Allah and His (Prophetic) Messenger, and struggle hard in Allah's way with your property and your persons; that is better for you, if you only knew! (61:11)

2. Love Allah and His Beloved Prophet more than anything else Say (O Beloved Prophet): If your fathers, and your sons, and your brothers, and your wives, and your kinsfolk, and the wealth you have acquired, and merchandise for which you fear that there will be no sale, and dwellings you desire, are dearer to you than Allah and His (Prophetic) Messenger and fighting in His Way: then wait till Allah brings His Command to pass, and Allah does not guide the disobedient people. (9:24)

3. He is closer to the believers than their own selves -The Prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves, and his wives are their mothers. And blood-relations have closer ties one to another in the Book of Allah (regarding inheritance) than (the brotherhood of) the believers and the Migrants (from Makkah), except that you do any good to your friends. This is inscribed in the Book (of Divine Decrees). (33:6)

4. Respect him -O you who believe! Be not forward in the presence of Allah and His (Prophetic) Messenger, and be in reverential awe of Allah. Surely, Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. O you who believe! Raise not your voices above the voice of the Prophet, nor speak aloud when speaking to him as you shout one to another, lest your deeds become worthless while you perceive not. Surely, those who lower their voices in the presence of the (Prophetic) Messenger of Allah, those are they whose hearts Allah has tested for piety. For them is forgiveness and an immense reward. (49:1-3)

5. Obey Allah (Ta'ala) and His Beloved Prophet (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam) And obey Allah and the (Prophetic) Messenger that you may obtain mercy. (3:132) Those are the limits set by Allah, and whoso obeys Allah and His (Prophetic) Messenger, He (Allah) will make

him enter Gardens (in Paradise) underneath which rivers flow, to abide therein. And that is the great success. (4:13)

O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the (Prophetic) Messenger and those in authority from amongst you, then if you have a dispute concerning any matter, refer it to Allah and the (Prophetic) Messenger if you believe in Allah and the Last Day (of Judgement). That is better and very good in the end. (4:59)

And whoso obeys Allah and the (Prophetic) Messenger, they will be with those to whom Allah has shown favour, of the Prophets and the Truthful and the Martyrs and the Righteous, and the best of Companions are they! (4:69)

Whoever obeys the (Prophetic) Messenger has indeed obeyed Allah; and whoever turns away, so We have not sent you as a keeper over them. (4:80)

And the believing (Muslim) men and the believing (Muslim) women are protecting friends one of another; they enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong, and they establish regular Prayer and they give the obligatory charity (Zakat), and they obey Allah and His (Prophetic) Messenger. As for these, Allah will have mercy on them. Undoubtedly, Allah is Mighty, Wise. (9:71) And he who obeys Allah and His (Prophetic) Messenger, and has reverential awe of Allah, and keeps his duty (to Him): then these it is that are the successful. (24:52)

Say (O Beloved Prophet): “Obey Allah and obey the (Prophetic) Messenger. But if you turn away, he is only responsible for the duty placed on him and you for that placed on you, and if you obey him, you will be rightly guided. And the responsibility of the (Prophetic) Messenger is only to convey (the Message) clearly. (24:54) And establish regular Prayer and give the obligatory charity (Zakat) and obey the (Prophetic) Messenger, so that mercy may be shown to you (from Allah). (24:56)

O you who believe! Have reverential awe of Allah and speak the right word. He (Allah) will set right your deeds for you and will forgive you your sins, and whosoever obeys Allah and His (Prophetic) Messenger, he has indeed gained a mighty success. (33:70-71)

The Bedouins say: “We believe”. Say (to them, O beloved Prophet): “You do not (yet) believe, but rather say ‘We have submitted’, for the Faith has not yet entered your hearts. But if you obey Allah and His (Prophetic) Messenger, He will not diminish anything of (the reward of) your deeds. Surely, Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. The (true) believers are only those who have believed in Allah and His (Prophetic) Messenger and afterward, have never doubted but have struggled with their wealth and their persons in the Way of Allah. It is they who are the truthful. (49:14-15)

And obey Allah and obey the (Prophetic) Messenger; but if you turn away, then (know that) the duty of our (Prophetic) Messenger is only to convey (the Message) clearly. (64:12)

6. Follow the Commands of Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta’ala) and of his Beloved Prophet (Sallallahu ‘alayhi wa Sallam) And it befits not a believing (Muslim) man or a believing (Muslim) woman, when Allah and His (Prophetic) Messenger have decreed a matter (for

them), that they should (after that) claim any choice in their matter; and whoso disobeys Allah and His (Prophetic) Messenger, he has surely gone astray in manifest error. (33:36)

7. Whatever he gives you, take it--Whatever Allah has restored to His (Prophetic) Messenger from the people of the towns, it is for Allah and for the (Prophetic) Messenger, and for the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarers, so that it may not (merely) circulate between the wealthy among you, and whatever the (Prophetic) Messenger gives you, take it and whatever he forbids you, abstain (from it), and be in reverential awe of Allah; surely Allah is severe in retributing (evil). (59:7)

8. The reward of believing in Allah and His Prophet (Sallallahu ‘alayhi wa Sallam)

O you who believe! Be in reverential awe of Allah and believe in His (Prophetic) Messenger. He (Allah) will give you twofold of His Mercy and will appoint for you a light wherein you shall walk, and will forgive you, and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. (57:28)

Twenty-Five Prophets Mentioned by Name in the Holy Qur'an

Qur'an 4:163-165

163 Lo! We inspire thee (Muhammad) as We inspired Noah and the prophets after him, as We inspired Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and Jesus and Job and Jonah and Aaron and Solomon, and as we imparted unto David the Psalms;

164 And messengers We have mentioned unto thee before and messengers We have not mentioned unto thee; and Allah spake directly unto Moses; 165 Messengers of good cheer and off warning, in order that mankind might have no argument against Allah after the messengers. Allah was ever Mighty, Wise.

Qur'an 6:84-86--84 And We bestowed upon him Isaac and Jacob; each of them We guided; and Noah did We guide aforetime; and of his seed (We guided) David and Solomon and Job and Joseph and Moses and Aaron. Thus do We reward the good. 85 And Zachariah and John and Jesus and Elias. Each one (of them) was of the righteous. 86 And Ishmael and Elisha and Jonah and Lot. Each one of them did We prefer above (Our) creatures,

Qur'an 21:85-88 85 And (mention) Ishmael, and Idris (Enoch), and Dhul-Kifl (Ezekiel). All were of the steadfast. 86 And We brought them in unto Our mercy. Lo! they are among the righteous. 87 And (mention) Dhun Nun (Jonah), when he went off in anger and deemed that We had no power over him, but he cried out in the darkness, saying: There is no God save Thee. Be Thou glorified! I have been a wrong-doer. 88 Then We heard his prayer and saved him from the anguish. Thus We save believers.

Qur'an 7:73--And to (the tribe of) Thamud (We sent) their brother Salih. He said: O my people! Serve Allah. Ye have no other God save Him. A wonder from your Lord hath come unto you. Lo! this is the camel of Allah, a token unto you; so let her feed in Allah's earth, and touch her not with hurt lest painful torment seize you.

Qur'an 26:123-125--123 (The tribe of) Aad denied the messengers (of Allah), 124 When their brother Hud said unto them: Will ye not ward off (evil)? 125 Lo! I am a faithful messenger unto you,

Qur'an 7:85--To the Madyan people We sent Shu'aib one of their own brethren: he said: "O my people! worship Allah; Ye have no other god but Him. Now hath come unto you a clear (sign) from your Lord! Give just measure and weight nor withhold from the people the things that are their due; and do no mischief on the earth after it has been set in order: that will be best for you if ye have faith.

Qur'an 21:107--And We did not send you (O Muhammad) except as a Mercy to the worlds. Surah 4, Ayat 163-166, 171: 163 Lo! We inspire thee (Muhammad) as We inspired Noah and the prophets after him, as We inspired Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and Jesus and Job and Jonah and Aaron and Solomon, and as we imparted unto David the Psalms; 164 And messengers We have mentioned unto thee before and messengers We have not mentioned unto thee; and Allah spake directly unto Moses; 165 Messengers of good cheer and off warning, in order that mankind might have no argument against Allah after the messengers. Allah was ever Mighty, Wise. 166 But Allah (Himself) testifieth concerning that which He hath revealed unto thee; in His knowledge hath He revealed it; and the Angels also testify. And Allah is sufficient witness. 171 O People of the Scripture! Do not exaggerate in your religion nor utter aught concerning Allah save the truth. The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only a messenger of Allah, and His word which He conveyed unto Mary, and a spirit from Him. So believe in Allah and His messengers, and say not "Three". Cease! (it is) better for you! Allah is only One God. Far is it removed from His transcendent majesty that he should have a son. His is all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. And Allah is sufficient as Defender. Surah 2, Ayat 252-253: 252 These are the portents of Allah which We recite unto thee (Muhammad) with truth, and Lo! thou art of the number of (Our) messengers; 253 Of those messengers, some of whom We have caused to excel others, and of whom there are some unto whom Allah spake, while some of them He exalted (above others) in degree; and We gave Jesus, son of Mary, clear proofs (of Allah's sovereignty) and We supported him with the holy Spirit. And if Allah had so willed it, those who followed after them would not have fought one with another after the clear proofs had come unto them. But they differed, some of them believing and some disbelieving. And if Allah had so willed it, they would not have fought one with another; but Allah doeth what He will. Surah 2, Ayat 285-286: 285 The messenger (Muhammad) believeth in that which hath been revealed unto him from his Lord and (so do) the believers. Each one believeth in Allah and His angels and His scriptures and His messengers--We make no distinction between any of His messengers--and they say: We hear, and we obey. (Grant us) Thy forgiveness, our Lord. Unto Thee is the journeying. 286 Allah tasketh not a soul beyond its scope. For it (is only) that which it hath earned, and against it (only) that which it hath deserved. Our Lord! Condemn us not if we forget, or miss the mark! Our Lord! Lay not on us such a burden as Thou didst lay on those before us! Our Lord! Impose not on us that which we have not the strength to bear! Pardon us, absolve us and have mercy on us, Thou, our Protector, and give us victory over the disbelieving folk.

Surah 2, Ayat 133, 136: 133 Or were ye present when death came to Jacob, when he said unto his sons: What will ye worship after me? They said: We shall worship thy God, the God of thy fathers, Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac, One God, and unto Him we have surrendered. 136 Say (O Muslims): We believe in Allah and that which is revealed unto us and that which was revealed unto Abraham, and Ishmael, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the tribes, and that which Moses and Jesus received, and that which the Prophets received from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and unto Him we have surrendered.

Surah 2, Ayat 1-7, 171: 1 Alif. Lam. Mim. 2 This is the Scripture (Qur'an) whereof there is no doubt, a guidance unto those who ward off (evil). 3 Who believe in the unseen, and establish worship, and spend of that We have bestowed upon them; 4 And who believe in that which is revealed unto thee (Muhammad) and that which was revealed before thee, and are certain of the Hereafter. 5 These depend on guidance from their Lord. These are the successful. 6 As for the disbelievers, whether thou warn them or thou warn them not it is all one for them; they believe not. 7 Allah hath sealed their hearing and their hearts, and on their eyes there is a covering. Theirs will be an awful doom. 171 The likeness of those who disbelieve (in relation to the messenger) is as the likeness of one who calleth unto that which heareth naught except a shout and cry. Deaf, dumb, blind, therefore they have no sense.

Surah 6, Ayah 83-90: 83 That is Our argument. We gave it unto Abraham against his folk. We raise unto degrees of wisdom whom We will. Lo! thy Lord is Wise, Aware. 84 And We bestowed upon him Isaac and Jacob; each of them We guided; and Noah did We guide aforetime; and of his seed (We guided) David and Solomon and Job and Joseph and Moses and Aaron. Thus do We reward the good. 85 And Zachariah and John and Jesus and Elias. Each one (of them) was of the righteous. 86 And Ishmael and Elisha and Jonah and Lot. Each one of them did We prefer above (Our) creatures, 87 With some of their forefathers and thee offspring and thee brethren; and We chose them and guided them unto a straight path: 88 Such is the guidance of Allah wherewith He guideth whom He will of His bondmen. But if they had set up (for worship) aught beside Him, (all) that they did would have been vain. 89 Those are they unto whom We gave the Scripture and command and prophethood. But if these disbelieve therein, then indeed We shall entrust it to a people who will not be disbelievers therein. 90 Those are they whom Allah guideth, so follow their guidance. Say (O Muhammad, unto mankind): I ask of you no fee for it. Lo! it is naught but a Reminder to (His) creatures. Surah 21, Ayat 85-93: 85 And (mention) Ishmael, and Idris, and Dhul-Kifl. All were of the steadfast. 86 And We brought them in unto Our mercy. Lo! they are among the righteous. 87 And (mention) Dhun Nun, when he went off in anger and deemed that We had no power over him, but he cried out in the darkness, saying: There is no God save Thee. Be Thou glorified! I have been a wrong-doer. 88 Then We heard his prayer and saved him from the anguish. Thus We save believers. 89 And Zachariah, when he cried unto his Lord: My Lord! Leave me not childless, though Thou art the best of inheritors. 90 Then We heard his prayer, and bestowed upon him John, and adjusted his wife (to bear a child) for him. Lo! they used to vie one with the other in good deeds, and they cried unto Us in longing and in fear, and were submissive unto Us. 91 And she who was chaste, therefor We breathed into her (something) of Our spirit and made her and her son a token for (all) peoples. 92 Lo! this, your

religion, is one religion, and I am your Lord, so worship Me. 93 And they have broken their religion (into fragments) among them, (yet) all are returning unto Us. Mary and Jesus (peace be upon them)

Surah 3, Ayat 42-63:42 And when the angels said: O Mary! Lo! Allah hath chosen thee and made thee pure, and hath preferred thee above (all) the women of creation. 43 O Mary! Be obedient to thy Lord, prostrate thyself and bow with those who bow (in worship). 44 This is of the tidings of things hidden. We reveal it unto thee (Mohammad). Thou wast not present with them when they threw their pens (to know) which of them should be the guardian of Mary, nor wast thou present with them when they quarrelled (thereupon). 45 (And remember) when the angels said: O Mary! Allah giveth thee glad tidings of a word from Him, whose name is the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, illustrious in the world and the Hereafter, and one of those brought near (unto Allah). 46 He will speak unto mankind in his cradle and in his manhood, and he is of the righteous. 47 She said: My Lord! How can I have a child when no mortal hath touched me? He said: So (it will be). Allah createth what He will. if He decreeth a thing, He saith unto it only: Be! and it is. 48 And He will teach him the Scripture and wisdom, and the Torah and the Injeel(Gospel). 49 And will make him a messenger unto the children of Israel, (saying): Lo! I come unto you with a sign from your Lord. Lo! I fashion for you out of clay the likeness of a bird, and I breathe into it and it is a bird, by Allah's leave. I heal him who was born blind, and the leper, and I raise the dead, by Allah's leave. And I announce unto you what ye eat and what ye store up in your houses. Lo! herein verily is a portent for you, if ye are believers. 50 And (I come) confirming that which was before me of the Torah, and to make lawful some of that which was forbidden unto you. I come unto you with a sign from your Lord, so keep your duty to Allah and obey me. 51 Lo! Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. That is a straight path. 52 But when Jesus became conscious of their disbelief, he cried: Who will be my helpers in the cause of Allah? The disciples said: We will be Allah's helpers. We believe in Allah, and bear thou witness that we have surrendered (unto Him). 53 Our Lord! We believe in that which Thou hast revealed and we follow him whom Thou hast sent. Enroll us among those who witness (to the truth). 54 And they (the disbelievers) schemed, and Allah schemed (against them): and Allah is the best of schemers. 55 (And remember) when Allah said: O Jesus! Lo! I am gathering thee and causing thee to ascend unto Me, and am cleansing thee of those who disbelieve and am setting those who follow thee above those who disbelieve until the Day of Resurrection. Then unto Me ye will (all) return, and I shall judge between you as to that wherein ye used to differ. 56 As for those who disbelieve I shall chastise them with a heavy chastisement in the world and the Hereafter; and they will have no helpers. 57 And as for those who believe and do good works, He will pay them their wages in full. Allah loveth not wrongdoers. 58 This (which) We recite unto thee is a revelation and a wise reminder. 59 Lo! the likeness of Jesus with Allah is as the likeness of Adam. He created him of dust, then He said unto him: Be! and he is. 60 (This is) the truth from thy Lord (O Muhammad), so be not thou of those who waver. 61 And whoso disputeth with thee concerning him, after the knowledge which hath come unto thee, say (unto him): Come! We will summon our sons and your sons, and our women and your women, and ourselves and yourselves, then we will pray humbly (to our Lord) and (solemnly) invoke the curse of Allah upon those who lie. 62 Lo! This verily is the

true narrative. There is no God save Allah, and lo! Allah is the Mighty, the Wise. 63 And if they turn away, then Lo! Allah is Aware of (who are) the corrupters.

Surah 19 (Maryam), Ayat 16-50: 16 And make mention of Mary in the Scripture, when she had withdrawn from her people to a chamber looking East, 17 And had chosen seclusion from them. Then We sent unto her Our spirit and it assumed for her the likeness of a perfect man. 18 She said: Lo! I seek refuge in the Beneficent One from thee, if thou art God fearing. 19 He said: I am only a messenger of thy Lord, that I may bestow on thee a faultless son. 20 She said: How can I have a son when no mortal hath touched me, neither have I been unchaste! 21 He said: So (it will be). Thy Lord saith: It is easy for Me. And (it will be) that We may make of him a revelation for mankind and a mercy from Us, and it is a thing ordained. 22 And she conceived him, and she withdrew with him to a place. 23 And the pangs of childbirth drove her unto the trunk of the palm tree. She said: Oh, would that I had died ere this and had become a thing of naught, forgotten! 24 Then (one) cried unto her from below her, saying: Grieve not! Thy Lord hath placed a rivulet beneath thee, 25 And shake the trunk of the palm tree toward thee, thou wilt cause ripe dates to fall upon thee. 26 So eat and drink and be consoled. And if thou meets any mortal, say: Lo! I have vowed a fast unto the Beneficent, and may not speak this day to any mortal. 27 Then she brought him (Jesus) to her own folk, carrying him. They said: O Mary! Thou hast come with an amazing thing. 28 Oh sister of Aaron! Thy father was not a wicked man nor was thy mother a harlot. 29 Then she pointed to him. They said How can we talk to one who is in the cradle, a young boy (Jesus)? 30 He (Jesus) spake: Lo! I am the slave of Allah. He hath given me the Scripture and hath appointed me a Prophet, 31 And hath made me blessed wheresoever I may be, and hath enjoined upon me prayer and almsgiving so long as I remain alive,

32 And (hath made me) dutiful toward her who bore me, and hath not made me arrogant, unblest. 33 Peace on me the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I shall be raised alive! 34 Such was Jesus, son of Mary: (this is) a statement of the truth concerning which they doubt. 35 It befitteth not (the Majesty of) Allah that He should take unto Himself a son. Glory be to Him! When He decreeth a thing, He saith unto it only: Be! and it is. 36 And lo! Allah is my Lord and your Lord. So serve Him. That is the right path. 37 The sects among them differ: but woe unto the disbelievers from the meeting of an awful Day. 38 See and hear them on the Day they come unto Us! Yet the evil-doers are today in error manifest. 39 And warn them of the Day of anguish when the case hath been decided. Now they are in a state of carelessness, and they believe not. 40 Lo! We inherit the earth and all who are thereon, and unto Us they are returned. 41 And make mention (O Muhammad) in the Scripture of Abraham. Lo! he was a saint, a Prophet. 42 When he said unto his father: O my father! Why worshippeth thou that which heareth not nor seeth, nor can in aught avail thee? 43 O my father! Lo! there hath come unto me of knowledge that which came not unto thee. So follow me, and I will lead thee on a right path. 44 O my father! Serve not the devil. Lo! the devil is a rebel unto the Beneficent. 45 O my father! Lo! I fear lest a punishment from the Beneficent overtake thee so that thou become a comrade of the devil. 46 He said: Rejectest thou my gods, O Abraham? If thou cease not, I shall surely stone thee. Depart from me a long while! 47 He said: Peace be unto thee! I shall ask forgiveness of my Lord for thee. Lo! He was ever

gracious unto me. 48 I shall withdraw from you and that unto which ye pray beside Allah, and I shall pray unto my Lord. It may be that, in prayer unto my Lord, I shall not be unblest. 49 So, when he had withdrawn from them and that which they were worshipping beside Allah. We gave him Isaac and Jacob. Each of them We made a Prophet. 50 And We gave them of Our mercy, and assigned to them a high and true renown. Surah 4, Ayat 156-159: 156 And because of their disbelief and of their speaking against Mary a tremendous calumny; 157 And because of their saying: We slew the Messiah Jesus son of Mary, Allah's messenger They slew him not nor crucified, but it appeared so unto them; and lo! those who disagree concerning it are in doubt thereof; they have no knowledge thereof save pursuit of a conjecture ; they slew him not for certain, 158 But Allah took him up unto Himself. Allah was ever Mighty, wise. 159 There is not one of the People of the Scripture but will believe in him before his death, and on the Day of Resurrection he will be a witness against them

Surah 61, Ayat 6-9: 6 And when Jesus son of Mary said: O Children of Israel! Lo! I am the messenger of Allah unto you, confirming that which was (revealed) before me in the Torah, and bringing good tidings of a messenger who cometh after me, whose name is the Praised One. Yet when he hath come unto them with clear proofs, they say: This is mere magic. 7 And who doth greater wrong than he who inventeth a lie against Allah when he is summoned unto Al-Islam. And Allah guideth not wrongdoing folk. 8 Fain would they put out the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah will perfect His light however much the disbelievers are averse. 9 He it is who hath sent His messenger (Muhammad) with the guidance and the religion of truth, that He may make it conqueror of all religion however much idolaters may be averse.

Surah 3, Ayat 33-34, 38-39: 33 Lo! Allah preferred Adam and Noah and the Family of Abraham and the Family of 'Imran above (all His) creatures. 34 They were descendants one of another. Allah is Hearer, Knower.

35 (Remember) when the wife of 'Imran said: My Lord I have vowed unto Thee that which is in my belly as a consecrated (offering). Accept it from me. Lo! Thou, only Thou, art the Hearer, the Knower! 36 And when she was delivered she said: My Lord! Lo! I am delivered of a female--Allah knew best of what she was delivered--the male is not as the female; and Lo! I have named her Mary, and Lo! I crave Thy protection for her and for her offspring from Satan the outcast. 37 And her Lord accepted her with full acceptance and vouchsafed to her a goodly growth; and made Zachariah her guardian. Whenever Zachariah went into the sanctuary where she was, he found that she had food. He said: O Mary! Whence cometh unto thee this (food)? She answered: It is from Allah. Allah giveth without stint to whom He will. 38 Then Zachariah prayed unto his Lord and said: My Lord! Bestow upon me of Thy bounty goodly offspring. Lo! Thou art the Hearer of Prayer.

Surah 5, Ayat 72-80: 72 They surely disbelieve who say : Lo! Allah is the Messiah, son of Mary. The Messiah (himself) said : O Children of Israel, worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. Lo! whoso ascribeth partners unto Allah, for him Allah hath forbidden Paradise. His abode is the Fire. For evildoers there will be no helpers. 73 They surely disbelieve who say: Lo! Allah is the third of three; when there is no God save the One God. If they desist not

from so saying a painful doom will fall on those of them who disbelieve. 74 Will they not rather turn unto Allah and seek forgiveness of Him? For Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. 75 The Messiah, son of Mary, was no other than a messenger, messengers (the like of whom) had passed away before him. And his mother was a saintly woman. And they both used to eat (earthly) food. See how we make the revelations clear for them, and see how they are turned away! 76 Say: Serve ye in place of Allah that which possesseth for you neither hurt nor use? Allah it is Who is the Hearer, the Knower. 77 Say: O People of the Scripture! Stress not in your religion other than the truth, and follow not the vain desires of folk who erred of old and led many astray, and erred from a plain road. 78 Those of the children of Israel who went astray were cursed by the tongue of David, and of Jesus, son of Mary. That was because they rebelled and used to transgress. 79 They restrained not one another from the wickedness they did. Verily evil was that they used to do! 80 Thou seest many of them making friends with those who disbelieve. Surely ill for them is that which they themselves send on before them : that Allah will be wroth with them and in the doom they will abide.

Surah 66, Ayat 10-12: 10 Allah citeth an example for those who disbelieve: the wife of Noah and the wife of Lot, who were under two of our righteous slaves yet betrayed them so that they (the husbands) availed them naught against Allah and it was said (unto them): Enter the Fire along with those who enter. 11 And Allah citeth an example for those who believe: the wife of Pharaoh when she said: My Lord! Build for me a home with thee in the Garden, and deliver me from Pharaoh and his work, and deliver me from evildoing folk; 12 And Mary, daughter of Imran, whose body was chaste, therefor We breathed therein something of Our Spirit. And she put faith in the words of her Lord and His Scriptures, and was of the obedient.

Surah 2, Ayah 213: 213 Mankind were one community, and Allah sent (unto them) Prophets as bearers of good tidings and as warners, and revealed therewith the Scripture with the truth that it might judge between mankind concerning that wherein they differed. And only those unto whom (the Scripture) was given differed concerning it, after clear proofs had come unto them, through hatred one of another. And Allah by His will guided those who believe unto the truth of that concerning which they differed. Allah guideth whom He will unto a Straight path.

Surah 2, Ayah 177: 177 It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces to the East and the West; but righteous is he who believeth in Allah and the Last Day and the angels and the Scripture and the Prophets; and giveth his wealth, for love of Him, to kinsfolk and to orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and to those who ask, and to set slaves free; and observeth proper worship and payeth the poor due. And those who keep their treaty when they make one, and the patient in tribulation and adversity and time of stress. Such are they who are sincere. Such are the God fearing.

Surah 23, Ayah 44: 44 Then We sent our messengers one after another. Whenever its messenger came unto a nation they denied him; so We caused them to follow one another (to disaster) and We made them bywords. A far removal for folk who believe not!

Surah 37, Ayat 79-81: 79 Peace be unto Noah among the peoples! 80 Lo! thus do We reward the good. 81 Lo! he is one of Our believing slaves.

Surah 37, Ayah 112: 109 Peace be unto Abraham! 110 Thus do We reward the good. 111 Lo! he is one of Our believing slaves. 112 And We gave him tidings of the birth of Isaac, a Prophet of the righteous.

Surah 7, Ayah 73-84: 73 And to (the tribe of) Thamud (We sent) their brother Salih. He said: O my people! Serve Allah. Ye have no other God save Him. A wonder from your Lord hath come unto you. Lo! this is the camel of Allah, a token unto you; so let her feed in Allah's earth, and touch her not with hurt lest painful torment seize you. 74 And remember how He made you viceroys after 'Aad and gave you station in the earth. Ye choose castles in the plains and hew the mountains into dwellings. So remember (all) the bounties of Allah and do not evil, making mischief in the earth. 75 The chieftains of his people, who were scornful, said unto those whom they despised, unto such of them as believed: Know ye that Salih is one sent from his Lord? They said : Lo! In that wherewith he hath been sent we are believers. 76 Those who were scornful said : Lo! in that which ye believe we are disbelievers. 77 So they hamstrung the she-camel, and they flouted the commandment of their Lord, and they said: O Salih! Bring upon us that thou threatenest if thou art indeed of those sent (from Allah). 78 So the earthquake seized them, and morning found them prostrate in their dwelling place. 79 And Salih turned on them and said : O my people! I delivered my Lord's message unto you and gave you good advice, but ye love not good advisers. 80 And Lo! (Remember) when he said unto his folk: Will ye commit abomination such as no creature ever did before you? 81 Lo! ye come with lust unto men instead of women. Nay, but ye, are wanton folk. 82 And the answer of his people was only that they said (one to another): Turn them out of your township. They are folk, forsooth, who keep pure. 83 And We rescued him and his household, save his wife, who was of those who stayed behind. 84 And We rained a rain upon them. See now the nature of the consequence for evil doers!

Surah 26, Ayat 160-175: 160 The folk of Lot denied the messengers (of Allah), 161 When their brother Lot said unto them: Will ye not ward off (evil)? 162 Lo! I am a faithful messenger unto you, 163 So keep your duty to Allah and obey me. 164 And I ask of you no wage therefor; my wage is the concern only of the Lord of the Worlds. 165 What! Of all creatures do ye come unto the males, 166 And leave the wives your Lord created for you? Nay, but ye are froward folk. 167 They said: If thou cease not, O Lot, thou wilt soon be of the outcast. 168 He said: I am in truth of those who hate your conduct. 169 My Lord! Save me and my household from what they do. 170 So We saved him and his household, every one, 171 Save an old woman among those who stayed behind. 172 Then afterward We destroyed the others. 173 And We rained on them a rain. And dreadful is the rain of those who have been warned. 174 Lo! herein is indeed a portent, yet most of them are not believers. 175 And lo! thy Lord, He is indeed the Mighty, the Merciful. Surah 26, Ayat 123-125: 123 (The tribe of) 'Aad denied the messengers (of Allah), 124 When their brother Hud said unto them: Will ye not ward off (evil)? 125 Lo! I am a faithful messenger unto you, Surah 19, Ayat 51-58: 51 And make mention in the Scripture of Moses. Lo! he was chosen, and he was a messenger (of Allah), a Prophet. 52 We called him from the right slope of the Mount, and brought him nigh in communion. 53 And We bestowed upon him of Our mercy his brother Aaron, a Prophet (likewise). 54 And make mention in the Scripture of Ishmael. Lo! he was a keeper of his

promise, and he was a messenger (of Allah) a Prophet. 55 He enjoined upon his people worship and almsgiving, and was acceptable in the sight of his Lord. 56 And make mention in the Scripture of Idris. Lo! he was a saint, a Prophet; 57 And We raised him to high station. 58 These are they unto whom Allah showed favor from among the Prophets, of the seed of Adam and of those whom We carried (in the ship) with Noah, and of the seed of Abraham and Israel, and from among those whom We guided and chose. When the revelations of the Beneficent were recited unto them, they fell down, adoring and weeping.

Surah 2, Ayah 87: 87 And verily We gave unto Moses the Scripture and We caused a train of messengers to follow after him, and We gave unto Jesus, son of Mary, clear proofs (of Allah's sovereignty), and We supported him with the holy Spirit. Is it ever so, that, when there cometh unto you a messenger (from Allah) with that which ye yourselves desire not, ye grow arrogant, and some ye disbelieve and some ye slay?

Surah 18, Ayat 65-66, 83: 65 Then found they one of Our slaves, unto whom We had given mercy from Us, and had taught him knowledge from Our presence. 66 Moses said unto him: May I follow thee, to the end that thou mayst teach me right conduct of that which thou hast been taught? 83 They will ask thee of Dhul-Qarneyn. Say: I shall recite unto you a remembrance of him.

Surah 5, Ayat 10-11: 10 And they who disbelieve and deny Our revelations, such are rightful owners of hell. 11 O ye who believe! Remember Allah's favor unto you, how a people were minded to stretch out their hands against you but He withheld their hands from you; and keep your duty to Allah. In Allah let believers put their trust.

Surah 16, Ayat 120-125: 120 Lo! Abraham was a nation obedient to Allah, by nature upright, and he was not of the idolaters; 121 Thankful for His bounties; He chose him and He guided him unto a straight path. 122 And We gave him good in the world, and in the Hereafter he is among the righteous. 123 And afterward We inspired thee (Muhammad, saying): Follow the religion of Abraham, as one by nature upright. He was not of the idolaters. 124 The Sabbath was appointed only for those who differed concerning it, and lo! thy Lord will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection concerning that wherein they used to differ. 125 Call unto the way of thy Lord with wisdom and fair exhortation, and reason with them in the better way. Lo! thy Lord is best aware of him who strayeth from His way, and He is Best Aware of those who go aright.

Surah 5, Ayat 44-46: 44 Seest thou not those unto whom a portion of the Scripture hath been given, how they purchase error, and seek to make you (Muslims) err from the right way? 45 Allah knoweth best (who are) your enemies. Allah is sufficient as a Friend, and Allah is sufficient as a Helper. 46 Some of those who are Jews change words from their context and say: "We hear and disobey; hear thou as one who heareth not" and "Listen to us!" distorting with their tongues and slandering religion. If they had said: "We hear and we obey; hear thou, and look at us" it had been better for them, and more upright. But Allah hath cursed them for their disbelief, so they believe not, save a few.

Surah 12, Ayat 13-14: 13 He said: Lo! in truth it saddens me (Jacob) that ye should take him (Joseph) with you, and I fear lest the wolf devour him while ye are heedless of him. 14 They said: If the wolf should devour him when we are (so strong) a band, then surely we should have already perished.

Surah 4, Ayat 155-156,161: 155 Then because of their breaking of their covenant, and their disbelieving in the revelations of Allah, and their slaying of the Prophets wrongfully, and their saying: Our hearts are hardened Nay, but Allah hath set a seal upon them for their disbelief, so that they believe not save a few 156 And because of their disbelief and of their speaking against Mary a tremendous calumny; 160 Because of the wrongdoing of the Jews We forbade them good things which were (before) made lawful unto them, and because of their much hindering from Allah's way, 161 And of their taking usury when they were forbidden it, and of their devouring people's wealth by false pretences. We have prepared for those of them who disbelieve a painful doom.

Surah 54, Ayat 31, 33-34: 31 Lo! We sent upon them one Shout, and they became as the dry twigs (rejected by) the builder of a cattle fold. 32 And in truth We have made the Qur'an easy to remember; but is there any that remembereth? 33 The folk of Lot rejected warnings. 34 Lo! We sent a storm of stones upon them (all) save the family of Lot, whom We rescued in the last watch of the night,

Surah 7, Ayat 85-87: 85 To the Madyan people We sent Shu'aib one of their own brethren: he said: "O my people! worship Allah; Ye have no other god but Him. Now hath come unto you a clear (sign) from your Lord! Give just measure and weight nor withhold from the people the things that are their due; and do no mischief on the earth after it has been set in order: that will be best for you if ye have faith. 86 "And squat not on every road breathing threats hindering from the path of Allah those who believe in Him and seeking in it something crooked; but remember how ye were little and He gave you increase. And hold in your mind's eye what was the end of those who did mischief. 87 "And if there is a party among you who believes in the message with which I have been sent and a party which does not believe hold yourselves in patience until Allah doth decide between us: for He is the best to decide."

Surah 29, Ayat 36-37: 36 To the Madyan (people) (We sent) their brother Shu'aib. Then he said: "O my people! serve Allah and fear the Last Day: nor commit evil on the earth with intent to do mischief." 37 But they rejected him: then the mighty Blast seized them and they lay prostrate in their homes by the morning. The verses included here are just a sample of many verses about these prophets, their mission and their communities. Interested reader may want to look into the index of the Holy Qur'an for a complete list of the verses relating to Prophets of Allah. English readers will find Yusuf Ali's translation of the Holy Qur'an very useful.

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Translation and Commentary by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, 1934.(Revised Translation and Commentary by Amana Press, 1991).

The Miracles of the Holy Prophet Muhammad

A number of miracles were bestowed upon and performed by Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) to establish the proof of his prophethood. The greatest miracle bestowed upon him was the revelation of the Qur'an. The Qur'an is miraculous in a number of aspects: Its linguistic perfection and inimitability, its validation by recent historical, archaeological, and scientific discoveries, its prophecies and so on. Unlike the miracles of other prophets before him, the miracle of the Qur'an is eternal. Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) also provided us with a number of true prophecies. Below are accounts of some of the other miracles of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). Before reading these, it helps to know something about the Science of Traditions (Arabic: Ahadith), an exacting and comprehensive system developed by early Muslim scholars to verify the chain of transmission of these accounts, as well as investigating the trustworthiness and capability of every narrator at every level of the chain. This thorough authentication process ensures that these accounts are real, validated narrations of the sayings, actions, and tacit approvals of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). The Traditions mentioned below are all from Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic collection of ahadith.

Splitting of the Moon--"The Hour has drawn near, and the moon has been cleft asunder" [Qur'an 54:1] Volume 6, Book 60, Number 388:--Narrated Abdullah:--The moon was cleft asunder while we were in the company of the Prophet, and it became two parts. The Prophet said, Witness, witness (this miracle)."

Food Multiplication--Volume 4, Book 56, Number 780:--Narrated Jabir:--My father had died in debt. So I came to the Prophet and said, "My father (died) leaving unpaid debts, and I have nothing except the yield of his date palms; and their yield for many years will not cover his debts. So please come with me, so that the creditors may not misbehave with me." The Prophet went round one of the heaps of dates and invoked (Allah), and then did the same with another heap and sat on it and said, "Measure (for them)." He paid them their rights and what remained was as much as had been paid to them.

Water Multiplication--Volume 4, Book 56, Number 779: Narrated 'Abdullah:--We used to consider miracles as Allah's Blessings, but you people consider them to be a warning. Once we were with Allah's Apostle on a journey, and we ran short of water. He said, "Bring the water remaining with you." The people brought a utensil containing a little water. He placed his hand in it and said, "Come to the blessed water, and the Blessing is from Allah." I saw the water flowing from among the fingers of Allah's Apostle, and no doubt, we heard the meal glorifying Allah, when it was being eaten (by him). Volume 4, Book 56, Number 777: Narrated Al-Bara:--We were one-thousand-and-four-hundred persons on the day of Al-Hudaibiya (Treaty), and (at) Al-Hudaibiya (there) was a well. We drew out its water not leaving even a single drop. The Prophet sat at the edge of the well and asked for some water with which he rinsed his mouth and then he threw it out into the well. We stayed for a short

while and then drew water from the well and quenched our thirst, and even our riding animals drank water to their satisfaction.

Volume 1, Book 7, Number 340:--Narrated 'Imran:--Once we were traveling with the Prophet and we carried on traveling till the last part of the night and then we (halted at a place) and slept (deeply). There is nothing sweeter than sleep for a traveler in the last part of the night. So it was only the heat of the sun that made us to wake up and the first to wake up was so and so, then so and so and then so and so (the narrator 'Auf said that Abu Raja' had told him their names but he had forgotten them) and the fourth person to wake up was 'Umar bin Al-Khattab. And whenever the Prophet used to sleep, nobody would wake him up till he himself used to get up as we did not know what was happening (being revealed) to him in his sleep. So, 'Umar got up and saw the condition of the people, and he was a strict man, so he said, "Allahu Akbar" and raised his voice with Takbir, and kept on saying it loudly till the Prophet got up because of it. When he got up, the people informed him about what had happened to them. He said, "There is no harm (or it will not be harmful). Depart!" So they departed from that place, and after covering some distance the Prophet stopped and asked for some water to perform the ablution. So he performed the ablution and the call for the prayer was pronounced and he led the people in prayer. After he finished from the prayer, he saw a man sitting aloof who had not prayed with the people. He asked, "O so and so! What has prevented you from praying with us?" He replied, "I am junub and there is no water. " The Prophet said, "Perform tayammum with (clean) earth and that is sufficient for you."

Then the Prophet proceeded on and the people complained to him of thirst. Thereupon he got down and called a person (the narrator 'Auf added that Abu Raja' had named him but he had forgotten) and 'Ali, and ordered them to go and bring water. So they went in search of water and met a woman who was sitting on her camel between two bags of water. They asked, "Where can we find water?" She replied, "I was there (at the place of water) this hour yesterday and my people are behind me." They requested her to accompany them. She asked, "Where?" They said, "To Allah's Apostle ." She said, "Do you mean the man who is called the Sabi', (with a new religion)?" They replied, "Yes, the same person. So come along." They brought her to the Prophet and narrated the whole story. He said, "Help her to dismount." The Prophet asked for a pot, then he opened the mouths of the bags and poured some water into the pot. Then he closed the big openings of the bags and opened the small ones and the people were called upon to drink and water their animals. So they all watered their animals and they (too) all quenched their thirst and also gave water to others and last of all the Prophet gave a pot full of water to the person who was junub and told him to pour it over his body. The woman was standing and watching all that which they were doing with her water. By Allah, when her water bags were returned she looked like as if they were more full (of water) than they had been before (Miracle of Allah's Apostle) Then the Prophet ordered us to collect something for her; so dates, flour and sawiq were collected which amounted to a good meal that was put in a piece of cloth. She was helped to ride on her camel and that cloth full of food-stuff was also placed in front of her and then the Prophet said to her, "We have not taken your water but Allah has given water to us." She returned home late. Her relatives asked her: "O so and so what has delayed you?" She said, "A strange thing! Two men met me

and took me to the man who is called the Sabi' and he did such and such a thing. By Allah, he is either the greatest magician between this and this (gesturing with her index and middle fingers raising them towards the sky indicating the heaven and the earth) or he is Allah's true Apostle." Afterwards the Muslims used to attack the pagans around her abode but never touched her village. One day she said to her people, "I think that these people leave you purposely. Have you got any inclination to Islam?" They obeyed her and all of them embraced Islam. Abu 'Abdullah said: The word saba'a means "The one who has deserted his old religion and embraced a new religion." Abul 'Ailya said, "The Sabis are a sect of people of the Scripture who recite the Book of Psalms."

Supplication for Rain--Volume 8, Book 73, Number 115:--Narrated Anas:--A man came to the Prophet on a Friday while he (the Prophet) was delivering a sermon at Medina, and said, "There is lack of rain, so please invoke your Lord to bless us with the rain." The Prophet looked at the sky when no cloud could be detected. Then he invoked Allah for rain. Clouds started gathering together and it rained till the Medina valleys started flowing with water. It continued raining till the next Friday. Then that man (or some other man) stood up while the Prophet was delivering the Friday sermon, and said, "We are drowned; Please invoke your Lord to withhold it (rain) from us" The Prophet smiled and said twice or thrice, "O Allah! Please let it rain round about us and not upon us." The clouds started dispersing over Medina to the right and to the left, and it rained round about Medina and not upon Medina. Allah showed them (the people) the miracle of His Prophet and His response to his invocation.

Lights to guide Companions--Volume 1, Book 8, Number 454:--Narrated Anas bin Malik:- Two of the companions of the Prophet departed from him on a dark night and were led by two lights like lamps (going in front of them from Allah as a miracle) lighting the way in front of them, and when they parted, each of them was accompanied by one of these lights till he reached their (respective) houses.

Crying of the stem of the Date-palm Tree--Volume 4, Book 56, Number 783:--Narrated Ibn Umar:--The Prophet used to deliver his sermons while standing beside a trunk of a datepalm. When he had the pulpit made, he used it instead. The trunk started crying and the Prophet went to it, rubbing his hand over it (to stop its crying).

Glorification of Allah by the Prophet's meals--Volume 4, Book 56, Number 779:--Narrated 'Abdullah:--We used to consider miracles as Allah's Blessings, but you people consider them to be a warning. Once we were with Allah's Apostle on a journey, and we ran short of water. He said, "Bring the water remaining with you." The people brought a utensil containing a little water. He placed his hand in it and said, "Come to the blessed water, and the Blessing is from Allah." I saw the water flowing from among the fingers of Allah's Apostle, and no doubt, we heard the meal glorifying Allah, when it was being eaten (by him).

The expulsion of a liar's corpse by the Earth---Volume 4, Book 56, Number 814:--Narrated Anas:--There was a Christian who embraced Islam and read Surat-al-Baqara and Al-Imran, and he used to write (the revelations) for the Prophet. Later on he returned to Christianity again and he used to say: "Muhammad knows nothing but what I have written for him." Then Allah caused him to die, and the people buried him, but in the morning they saw

that the earth had thrown his body out. They said, "This is the act of Muhammad and his companions. They dug the grave of our companion and took his body out of it because he had run away from them." They again dug the grave deeply for him, but in the morning they again saw that the earth had thrown his body out. They said, "This is an act of Muhammad and his companions. They dug the grave of our companion and threw his body outside it, for he had run away from them." They dug the grave for him as deep as they could, but in the morning they again saw that the earth had thrown his body out. So they believed that what had befallen him was not done by human beings and had to leave him thrown (on the ground).

The Speech of the Wolf----Volume 3, Book 39, Number 517:--Narrated Abu Huraira:--The Prophet said, "While a man was riding a cow, it turned towards him and said, 'I have not been created for this purpose (i.e. carrying), I have been created for sloughing.' The Prophet added, "I, Abu Bakr and 'Umar believe in the story." The Prophet went on, "A wolf caught a sheep, and when the shepherd chased it, the wolf said, 'Who will be its guard on the day of wild beasts, when there will be no shepherd for it except me?' "After narrating it, the Prophet said, "I, Abu Bakr and 'Umar too believe it." Abu Salama (a sub-narrator) said, "Abu Bakr and 'Umar were not present then." It has been written that a wolf also spoke to one of the companions of the Prophet near Medina as narrated in Fath-al-Bari: Narrated Unais bin 'Amr: Ahban bin Aus said, "I was amongst my sheep. Suddenly a wolf caught a sheep and I shouted at it. The wolf sat on its tail and addressed me, saying, 'Who will look after it (i.e. the sheep) when you will be busy and not able to look after it? Do you forbid me the provision which Allah has provided me?' " Ahban added, "I clapped my hands and said, 'By Allah, I have never seen anything more curious and wonderful than this!' On that the wolf said, 'There is something (more curious) and wonderful than this; that is, Allah's Apostle in those palm trees, inviting people to Allah (i.e. Islam).' "Unais bin 'Amr further said, "Then Ahban went to Allah's Apostle and informed him what happened and embraced Islam.)" palm trees or other trees and share the fruits with me."

The Prophet's Night Journey to Jerusalem (Arabic: Israa) and Ascent to the Heavens (Arabic: Miraj) Volume 5, Book 58, Number 228:--Narrated Ibn 'Abbas:--Regarding the Statement of Allah "And We granted the vision (Ascension to the heavens) which We made you see (as an actual eye witness) was only made as a trial for the people." (17.60) Ibn Abbas added: The sights which Allah's Apostle was shown on the Night Journey when he was taken to Bait-ul Maqdis (i.e. Jerusalem) were actual sights, (not dreams). And the Cursed Tree (mentioned) in the Quran is the tree of Zaqqum (itself). Volume 4, Book 54, Number 462:--Narrated Ibn Abbas:--The Prophet said, "On the night of my Ascent to the Heaven, I saw Moses who was a tall brown curly-haired man as if he was one of the men of Shan'awa tribe, and I saw Jesus, a man of medium height and moderate complexion inclined to the red and white colors and of lank hair. I also saw Malik, the gate-keeper of the (Hell) Fire and Ad-Dajjal amongst the signs which Allah showed me." (The Prophet then recited the Holy Verse): "So be not you in doubt of meeting him' when you met Moses during the night of Mi'raj over the heavens" (32.23) Narrated Anas and Abu Bakra: "The Prophet said, "The angels will guard Medina from Ad-Dajjal (who will not be able to enter the city of Medina)."

Volume 5, Book 58, Number 227: --Narrated Abbas bin Malik:--Malik bin Sasaa said that Allah's Apostle described to them his Night Journey saying, "While I was lying in Al-Hatim or Al-Hijr, suddenly someone came to me and cut my body open from here to here." I asked Al-Jarud who was by my side, "What does he mean?" He said, "It means from his throat to his pubic area," or said, "From the top of the chest." The Prophet further said, "He then took out my heart. Then a gold tray of Belief was brought to me and my heart was washed and was filled (with Belief) and then returned to its original place. Then a white animal which was smaller than a mule and bigger than a donkey was brought to me." (On this Al-Jarud asked, "Was it the Buraq, O Abu Hamza?" I (i.e. Anas) replied in the affirmative). The Prophet said, "The animal's step (was so wide that it) reached the farthest point within the reach of the animal's sight. I was carried on it, and Gabriel set out with me till we reached the nearest heaven.

When he asked for the gate to be opened, it was asked, 'Who is it?' Gabriel answered, 'Gabriel.' It was asked, 'Who is accompanying you?' Gabriel replied, 'Muhammad.' It was asked, 'Has Muhammad been called?' Gabriel replied in the affirmative. Then it was said, 'He is welcomed. What an excellent visit his is!' The gate was opened, and when I went over the first heaven, I saw Adam there. Gabriel said (to me), 'This is your father, Adam; pay him your greetings.' So I greeted him and he returned the greeting to me and said, 'You are welcomed, O pious son and pious Prophet.' Then Gabriel ascended with me till we reached the second heaven. Gabriel asked for the gate to be opened. It was asked, 'Who is it?' Gabriel answered, 'Gabriel.' It was asked, 'Who is accompanying you?' Gabriel replied, 'Muhammad.' It was asked, 'Has he been called?' Gabriel answered in the affirmative. Then it was said, 'He is welcomed. What an excellent visit his is!' The gate was opened.

When I went over the second heaven, there I saw Yahya (i.e. John) and 'Isa (i.e. Jesus) who were cousins of each other. Gabriel said (to me), 'These are John and Jesus; pay them your greetings.' So I greeted them and both of them returned my greetings to me and said, 'You are welcomed, O pious brother and pious Prophet.' Then Gabriel ascended with me to the third heaven and asked for its gate to be opened. It was asked, 'Who is it?' Gabriel replied, 'Gabriel.' It was asked, 'Who is accompanying you?' Gabriel replied, 'Muhammad.' It was asked, 'Has he been called?' Gabriel replied in the affirmative. Then it was said, 'He is welcomed, what an excellent visit his is!' The gate was opened, and when I went over the third heaven there I saw Joseph. Gabriel said (to me), 'This is Joseph; pay him your greetings.' So I greeted him and he returned the greeting to me and said, 'You are welcomed, O pious brother and pious Prophet.' Then Gabriel ascended with me to the fourth heaven and asked for its gate to be opened. It was asked, 'Who is it?' Gabriel replied, 'Gabriel.' It was asked, 'Who is accompanying you?' Gabriel replied, 'Muhammad.' It was asked, 'Has he been called?' Gabriel replied in the affirmative. Then it was said, 'He is welcomed, what an excellent visit his is!'

The gate was opened, and when I went over the fourth heaven, there I saw Idris. Gabriel said (to me), 'This is Idris; pay him your greetings.' So I greeted him and he returned the greeting to me and said, 'You are welcomed, O pious brother and pious Prophet.' Then Gabriel ascended with me to the fifth heaven and asked for its gate to be opened. It was asked, 'Who

is it?' Gabriel replied, 'Gabriel.' It was asked, 'Who is accompanying you?' Gabriel replied, 'Muhammad.' It was asked, 'Has he been called?' Gabriel replied in the affirmative. Then it was said He is welcomed, what an excellent visit his is! So when I went over the fifth heaven, there I saw Harun (i.e. Aaron), Gabriel said, (to me). This is Aaron; pay him your greetings.' I greeted him and he returned the greeting to me and said, 'You are welcomed, O pious brother and pious Prophet.' Then Gabriel ascended with me to the sixth heaven and asked for its gate to be opened. It was asked, 'Who is it?' Gabriel replied, 'Gabriel.' It was asked, 'Who is accompanying you?' Gabriel replied, 'Muhammad.' It was asked, 'Has he been called?' Gabriel replied in the affirmative. It was said, 'He is welcomed. What an excellent visit his is!'

When I went (over the sixth heaven), there I saw Moses. Gabriel said (to me), 'This is Moses; pay him your greeting. So I greeted him and he returned the greetings to me and said, 'You are welcomed, O pious brother and pious Prophet.' When I left him (i.e. Moses) he wept. Someone asked him, 'What makes you weep?' Moses said, 'I weep because after me there has been sent (as Prophet) a young man whose followers will enter Paradise in greater numbers than my followers.' Then Gabriel ascended with me to the seventh heaven and asked for its gate to be opened. It was asked, 'Who is it?' Gabriel replied, 'Gabriel.' It was asked, 'Who is accompanying you?' Gabriel replied, 'Muhammad.' It was asked, 'Has he been called?' Gabriel replied in the affirmative. Then it was said, 'He is welcomed. What an excellent visit his is!'

So when I went (over the seventh heaven), there I saw Abraham. Gabriel said (to me), 'This is your father; pay your greetings to him.' So I greeted him and he returned the greetings to me and said, 'You are welcomed, O pious son and pious Prophet.' Then I was made to ascend to Sidrat-ul-Muntaha (i.e. the Lote Tree of the utmost boundary) Behold! Its fruits were like the jars of Hajr (i.e. a place near Medina) and its leaves were as big as the ears of elephants. Gabriel said, 'This is the Lote Tree of the utmost boundary) . Behold ! There ran four rivers, two were hidden and two were visible, I asked, 'What are these two kinds of rivers, O Gabriel?' He replied, 'As for the hidden rivers, they are two rivers in Paradise and the visible rivers are the Nile and the Euphrates.'

Then Al-Bait-ul-Ma'mur (i.e. the Sacred House) was shown to me and a container full of wine and another full of milk and a third full of honey were brought to me. I took the milk. Gabriel remarked, 'This is the Islamic religion which you and your followers are following.' Then the prayers were enjoined on me: They were fifty prayers a day. When I returned, I passed by Moses who asked (me), 'What have you been ordered to do?' I replied, 'I have been ordered to offer fifty prayers a day.' Moses said, 'Your followers cannot bear fifty prayers a day, and by Allah, I have tested people before you, and I have tried my level best with Bani Israel (in vain). Go back to your Lord and ask for reduction to lessen your followers' burden.' So I went back, and Allah reduced ten prayers for me. Then again I came to Moses, but he repeated the same as he had said before. Then again I went back to Allah and He reduced ten more prayers. When I came back to Moses he said the same, I went back to Allah and He ordered me to observe ten prayers a day. When I came back to Moses, he repeated the same advice, so I went back to Allah and was ordered to observe five prayers a day.

When I came back to Moses, he said, 'What have you been ordered?' I replied, 'I have been ordered to observe five prayers a day.' He said, 'Your followers cannot bear five prayers a day, and no doubt, I have got an experience of the people before you, and I have tried my level best with Bani Israel, so go back to your Lord and ask for reduction to lessen your follower's burden.' I said, 'I have requested so much of my Lord that I feel ashamed, but I am satisfied now and surrender to Allah's Order.' When I left, I heard a voice saying, 'I have passed My Order and have lessened the burden of My Worshippers.'

Darud Taj: Invocation of blessing upon the Prophet known as "Invocation of the Crown"

The following is the transliteration and translation of a famous invocation of blessings on the Prophet entitled Darud taj or "Invocation of the Crown" which is especially well known in the Indian subcontinent.

Transliteration---*allahumma salli `ala sayyidina wa mawlana Muhammad --sahibi al-taji wal-mi`raji wal-buraqi wal-`alam dafi` al-bala'i wal-waba'i wal-qahti wal-maradi wal-alam ismuhu maktubun marfu`un mashfu`un manqushun fi al- lawhi wal-qalam sayyidi al-`arabi wal-`ajam jismuhu muqaddasun mu`attarun mutahharun munawwarun fil-bayti wal-haram shams al-duha badr al-duja sadr al`ula nur al-huda kahf al-wara misbah al-zulam jamil al-shyam shafi` al-umam sahib al-judi wal-karam wallahu `asimuhu wa jibrilu khadimuhu wal-buraqu markabuhu wal-mi`raju safaruhu wa sidratu al-muntaha maqamuhu wa qaba qawsayni matlubuhu wal-matlubu maqsuduhu wal-maqsudu mawjuduhu sayyid al-mursalin khatim al-nabiyyin shafi` al-mudhnibin anis al-gharibin rahmatun li al-`alamin rahat al-`ashiqin murad al-mushtaqin shams al-`arifin siraj al-salikin misbah al-muqarrabin muhibb al-fuqara' wal-masakin sayyid al-thaqalayn nabiyy al-haramayn imam al-qiblatayn wasilatina fi al-darayn sahibi qaba qawsayn mahbub rabbi al-mashriqayni wal-maghribayn jadd al-hasani wal-husayn mawlana wa mawla al-thaqalayn Abi al-Qasimi MUHAMMAD Ibni `Abdillah nurin min nurillah ya ayyuha al-mushtaquna bi nuri jamalihi sallu `alayhi wa alihi wa sallimu taslima Allahumma salli `ala Muhammadin wa `ala ali Muhammadin wa sallim*

Translation---O Allah, send blessings and Peace upon our Master and Patron Muhammad, The Owner of the Crown and the Ascent and the Buraq and the Standard, The Repeller of Affliction and Disease and Drought and Illness and Pain. His name is written on high, served and engraved in the Tablet and the Pen, The Leader of All, Arabs and non-Arabs, Whose body is sanctified, fragrant, and pure, Illumined in the House and the Haram, The Sun of Brightness, the Full Moon in Darkness, The Foremost One in the Highest Fields, the Light of Guidance, The Cave of Refuge for Mortals, the Lamp That Dispels the Night, The Best-Natured One, The Intercessor of Nations, The Owner of Munificence and Generosity. Allah is his Protector, Gabriel is his servant. The Buraq is his mount, the Ascent is his voyage, The Lote-Tree of the Furthest Boundary is his station, Two Bow-Lengths or Nearer is his desire, His desire is his goal, and he has found his goal, The Master of the Messengers, the Seal of the Prophets, The intercessor of sinners, the friend of the strangers, The Mercy for the Worlds, The rest of those who burn with love, the goal of those who yearn, The sun of

knowers, the lamp of travellers, The light of Those Brought Near, The friend of the poor and destitute, The master of Humans and Jinn, The Prophet of the Two Sanctuaries, The Imam of the Two Qiblas, Our Means in the Two Abodes, The Owner of Qaba Qawsayn, The Beloved of the Lord of the Two Easts and the Two Wests, The grandfather of al-Hasan and al-Husayn, Our patron and the patron of Humans and Jinn: Abu al-Qasim MUHAMMAD Son of `Abd Allah, A light from the light of Allah. O you who yearn for the light of his beauty, Send blessings and utmost greetings of peace Upon him and upon his Family. Other Invocations of blessings and Peace Upon the Prophet

This is another well-known invocation of blessings and peace upon the Prophet. Some of the words in it come from the Ansar who greeted the Prophet with outpourings of joy and acclamation when he entered Madina for his Emigration there. On this chapter the Companion al-Bara' ibn `Azib narrates:

The first people who came to us (in Medina) were Mus`ab ibn `Umayr and Ibn Umm Maktum who were teaching Qur'an to the people. Then there came Bilal, Sa`d, and `Ammar ibn Yasir. After that `Umar ibn al-Khattab came along with twenty other Companions of the Prophet. Later on the Prophet himself came and I had never seen the people of Medina so joyful as they were on the arrival of Allah's Apostle, for even the slave girls were saying, "Allah's Apostle has arrived!" And before his arrival I had already memorized the Sura starting with: "GLORIFY THE NAME OF YOUR LORD, THE MOST HIGH" (87:1) together with other Suras of al-Mufassal. May Allah forgive the dryness of our tongues and the obduracy of our hearts for the sake of His Beloved Prophet who said: "I was sent to all people without exception" and "I was sent only as Mercy. I was not sent as a punishment."

ya nabi salam `alayka O Prophet, Peace be upon you

ya rasul salam `alayka O Messenger, Peace be upon you

ya habib salam `alayka O Beloved, Peace be upon you

salawatullah `alayka The Blessings of Allah be upon you

tala`a al-badru `alayna The full moon has risen over us

min thaniyyat al-wada` From the mountains of al-Wada`

wajaba al-shukru `alayna We shall ever give thanks for it

ma da`a lillahi da` As long as there will be callers to Allah

anta shamsun anta badrun You are a sun, you are a full moon,

anta nurun fawqa nur You are light upon light,

anta iksiru al-wujud You are the quintessence of existence,

anta misbah al-sudur You are the lamp in every breast

ashraqa al-badru `alayna The full moon has risen over us
fakhtafat minhu al-budur Eclipsing all other moons.
mithla husnik ma ra'ayna Such as your beauty we have never seen
qattu ya wajh al-surur No, never, O face of delight!
ya habibi ya muhammad O My beloved, O Muhammad,
ya `arus al-khafaqayn O bridegroom of the East and the West,
ya mu'ayyad ya mumajjad The one Allah vindicated and exalted,
ya imam al qiblatayn O Imam of the Two Directions!
ya nabi salam `alayka O Prophet, Peace be upon you
ya rasul salam `alayka O Messenger, Peace be upon you
ya habib salam `alayka O Beloved, Peace be upon you
salawatullah `alayka The Blessings of Allah be upon you

Answers to those who reject getting blessings from the Prophet's relics (Tabarruk bi al-athar)
as being outside Islam

"Tabarruk": deriving blessing from something once owned or touched by a holy person.

"Athar": relics. As for those who reject the validity of tabarruk or seeking blessings through the relics of the Prophet, we warn them that Allah Himself mentioned the tof the Prophet Ya`qub with the relic of his son Yusuf, and that the evidence for the tabarruk of the Companions and the Tabi`in through the Prophet and the saints is innumerable. Allah said: "Go with this my shirt, and cast it over the face of my father: he will come to see (clearly)... When the Caravan left (Egypt), their father said: I do indeed scent the presence of Yusuf..." (12:93-94). The Companions' Seeking of Blessings with the Prophet's Person and His Relics

Tabarruk with the Prophet's hair and nails---There are countless hadiths on this.--- Bukhari narrates in his Sahih in the Book of Clothing, under the chapter entitled "What is mentioned about gray hair," that `Usman ibn `Abd Allah ibn Mawhab said: "My family sent me to Umm Salama with a cup of water. Umm Salama brought out a silver bottle which contained one of the hairs of the Prophet, and it used to be that if anyone came under the evil eye or ill health they used to send her a cup of water through which she would pass this hair (for drinking). We used to look into the silver bottle: I saw some reddish hairs." Anas said: "When the Prophet shaved his head (after pilgrimage), Abu Talha was the first one to take of his hair." Bukhari. Anas also said: "The Prophet threw stones at al-Jamra, then sacrificed, then told the barber to shave his head right side first, then began to give the hair away to the people." Muslim. He said: "Talha was the one distributing it." Muslim, Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud. He also said: "When the Prophet shaved his head in Mina, he gave me the hair from

the right side and he said: Anas! take it to Umm Sulaym [his mother]. When the Companions saw what the Prophet gave us, they began to compete to take the hair from the left side, and everyone was getting a share from that." Ahmad narrated it. Ibn al-Sakan narrated through Safwan ibn Hubayra from the latter's father: Thabit al-Bunani said: Anas ibn Malik said to me (on his death-bed): "This is one of the hairs of Allah's Messenger, Allah's blessings and peace upon him. I want you to place it under my tongue." Thabit continued: I placed it under his tongue, and he was buried with it under his tongue."

Abu Bakr said: "I saw Khalid [ibn Walid] asking for the Prophet's forelock and he received it. He used to put it over his eyes and then kiss it." It is known that he then placed it in his qalansuwa (head cover around which the turban is tied) and never faced battle again except he won. al-Waqidi (Maghazi), Ibn Hajar (Isaba). Ibn Abi Zayd al-Qayrawani relates that Imam Malik said: "Khalid ibn al-Walid owned a qalansiyya which contained some of the Prophet's hair, and that is the one he wore the day of the battle of Yarmuk. Ibn Sirin (one of the tabi`in) said: "One hair of the Prophet in my possession is more precious to me than silver and gold and everything that is on the earth and everything that is inside it." Bukhari, Bayhaqi (Sunan kubra), and Ahmad.

In Sahih al-Bukhari, Volume 7, Book 72, Number 784: `Uthman bin `Abd Allah ibn Mawhab said, "My people sent me with a bowl of water to Umm Salama." Isra'il approximated three fingers indicating the small size of the container in which there was some hair of the Prophet. `Uthman added, "If any person suffered from evil eye or some other disease, he would send a vessel (containing water) to Umm Salama (and she would dip the Prophet's hair into it and it would be drunk). I looked into the container (that held the hair of the Prophet) and saw a few reddish hairs in it." Hafiz Ibn Hajar in Fath al-Bari, Volume 10, page 353, said: "They used to call the silver bottle in which the hair of the Prophet was kept jiljalan and that bottle was in the home of Umm Salama." Hafiz al-Ayni said in `Umdat al-Qari, Volume 18, page 79: "Umm Salama had some of the hairs of the Prophet in a silver bottle. When some people got ill, they would go and obtain blessings from these hairs and they would be healed by means of their blessings. If a person were struck by the evil eye or any sickness, he would send his wife to Umm Salama with a mikhdaba or water-pail, and she would pass the hair through that water and then drink the water and he would be healed, after which they would return the hair to the jiljal." Imam Ahmad narrates in his Musnad (4:42) from `Abd Allah ibn Zayd ibn `Abd Rabbih with a sound (sahih) chain as stated by Haythami in Majma' al-zawa'id (3:19) that the Prophet clipped his nails and distributed them among the people.

Tabarruk with the Prophet's sweat---Anas said: "The Prophet stayed with us, and as he slept my mother began to collect his sweat in a flask. The Prophet awoke and said: O Umm Sulaym, what are you doing? She said: This is your sweat which we place in our perfume and it is the best perfume." Muslim, Ahmad. When Anas was on his deathbed he instructed that some of this flask be used on his body before his funeral and it was done. Bukhari. Ibn Sirin also was given some of Umm Sulaym's flask. Ibn Sa'd.

Tabarruk with the Prophet's saliva and ablution water---These hadiths are extremely numerous. see Fath al-Bari 1989 ed. 10:255-256. In Bukhari and Muslim: The Companions

would compete for whoever would get the remnant of the Prophet's ablution water in order to put it on their faces. Nawawi in *Sharh Sahih Muslim* said: "In these narrations is evidence for seeking blessings with the relics of the saints" (*fihi al-tabarruk bi athar al-salihin*). The Prophet used to heal the sick with his saliva mixed with some earth with the words: "Bismillah, the soil of our earth with the saliva of certain ones among us shall heal our sick with our Lord's permission." Bukhari and Muslim. The Prophet had everyone in Madina then Mecca bring their newborn, whom he would read upon and into whose mouth he would do *naft* and *tifl* (breath mixed with saliva). He would instruct their mother not to suckle them that day until nightfall. Bukhari, Abu Dawud, Ahmad, Bayhaqi (*Dala'il*), Waqidi, etc. We have the names of over 100 Ansar and Muhajirin who received this particular blessing, complete with isnads.

Tabarruk with the Prophet's cup---Hajjaj ibn Hassan said: "We were at Anas's house and he brought up the Prophet's cup from a black pouch. He ordered that it be filled with water and we drank from it and poured some of it on our heads and faces and sent blessings on the Prophet. Ahmad, Ibn Kathir. `Asim said: "I saw that cup and I drank from it." Bukhari.

Tabarruk with the Prophet's minbar---Ibn `Umar used to touch the seat of the Prophet's minbar and then wipe his face for blessing. *al-Mughni* 3:559; *al-Shifa'* 2:54; Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat* 1:13; *Mawsu'at Fiqh `Abdullah ibn `Umar* p. 52. From Abu Hurayra, Jabir, Abu Imama, and Malik: The Prophet made it a sunna to swear to the truth on top of his minbar. Nisa'i, Ahmad, Abu Dawud, Ibn Maja, and others. Bukhari confirms it. Ibn Hajar says: and in Mecca, one swears between the Yemeni corner and Maqam Ibrahim. (Fath al-Bari)

Tabarruk with money the Prophet gave away--- Jabir sold a camel to the Prophet and the latter gave instructions to Bilal to add a qirat (1/12 dirham) to the agreed sale price. Jabir said: "The Prophet's addition shall never leave me," and he kept it with him after that. Bukhari.

Tabarruk with the Prophet's staffs---When `Abdullah ibn Anis came back from one of the battles having killed Khalid ibn Sufyan ibn Nabih, the Prophet gifted him his staff and said to him: "It will be a sign between you and me on the Day of Resurrection." Thereafter he never parted with it and it was buried with him when he died. Ahmad 3:496, *al-Waqidi* 2:533. Qadi `Iyad relates in his book *al-Shifa'*, in the chapter entitled "Esteem for the things and places connected with the Prophet," that after Jihjah al-Ghifari took the Prophet's staff from the hands of `Uthman and tried to break it across his knee, infection seized his knee which led to its amputation, and he died before the end of the year.

Tabarruk with the Prophet's shirt--- Jabir says: "The Prophet came after `Abdullah ibn Ubay had been placed in his grave. He ordered that he be brought out. He placed his hands on `Abdul's knees, breathed (*naft*) upon him mixing it with saliva, and dressed him with his shirt. Bukhari and Muslim.

Tabarruk with the Prophet's musallas or places of prayer---Many chains of transmission: `Utban ibn Malik was one of the Companions of the battle of Badr. After he became blind he said to the Prophet: "I would like you to pray in my house so that I can pray where you

prayed." The Prophet went to his house and asked where exactly he would like him to pray. He indicated a spot to him and the Prophet prayed there. Bukhari and Muslim. The version in Muslim has: I ('Utban) sent for the Prophet the message: "Come and lay for me a place for worship [khutta li masjidan]." Imam Nawawi in Sharh Sahih Muslim said: "It means: "Mark for me a spot that I can take as a place for worship by obtaining blessing from your having been there [mutabarrikan bi aathaarika]... In this hadith is evidence for obtaining blessings through the relics of saints (al-tabarruk bi aathaar al-salihin)." 'Umar feared that the taking of the tree of the bay'a to the Prophet as a place of prayer might lead to a return to idol-worship and he had it cut. Bukhari, Ibn Sa'd (1:73). It is known, however, that Ibn 'Umar derived blessings even from walking in the same spots where Prophet had walked and praying exactly where he had prayed both at the Ka'ba and on his travels, and that he watered a certain tree under which Prophet had prayed so that it would not die. Bukhari, Bayhaqi (Sunan 5:245).

Tabarruk with the Prophet's grave----Dawud ibn Salih says: "[The Caliph] Marwan [ibn al-Hakam] one day saw a man placing his face on top of the grave of the Prophet. He said: "Do you know what you are doing?" When he came near him, he realized it was Abu Ayyub al-Ansari. The latter said: "Yes; I came to the Prophet, not to a stone." Ibn Hibban in his Sahih, Ahmad (5:422), Tabarani in his Mu'jam al-kabir (4:189) and his Awsat according to Haythami in al-Zawa'id (5:245), al-Hakim in his Mustadrak (4:515); both the latter and al-Dhahabi said it was sahih. It is also cited by al-Subki in Shifa' al-siqam (p. 126), Ibn Taymiyya in al-Muntaqa (2:261f.), and Haythami in al-Zawa'id (4:2). Mu'adh ibn Jabal and Bilal also came to the grave of the Prophet and sat weeping, and the latter rubbed his face against it. Ibn Maja 2:1320, Ahmad, Tabarani, Subki, Ibn 'Asakir and Ibn Taymiyya. Hafiz al-Dhahabi writes in the compendium of his shaykhs entitled Mu'jam al-shuyukh (1:73) in the entry devoted to his shaykh Ahmad ibn 'Abd al-Mun'im al-Qazwini (#58): "Ahmad ibn al-Mun'im related to us... [with his chain of transmission] from Ibn 'Umar that the latter disliked to touch the Prophet's grave. I say: He disliked it because he considered it disrespect. Ahmad ibn Hanbal was asked about touching the Prophet's grave and kissing it and he saw nothing wrong with it. His son 'Abd Allah related this from him. If it is said: "Why did the Companions not do this?" It is replied: "Because they saw him with their very eyes when he was alive, enjoyed his presence directly, kissed his very hand, almost fought with each other over the remnants of his ablution water, shared his purified hair on the day of the greater Pilgrimage, and even if he spat it would virtually not fall except in someone's hand so that he could pass it over his face. Since we have not had the tremendous fortune of sharing in this, we throw ourselves on his grave as a mark of commitment, reverence, acceptance, and kissing. Don't you see what Thabit al-Bunani did when he kissed the hand of Anas ibn Malik and placed it on his face saying: "This is the hand that touched the hand of Allah's Messenger"? Muslims are not moved to these matters except by their excessive love for the Prophet, as they are ordered to love Allah and the Prophet more than they love their own lives, their children, all human beings, their property, and Paradise and its maidens. There are even some believers that love Abu Bakr and 'Umar more than themselves... Don't you see that the Companions, in the excess of their love for the Prophet, asked him: "Should we not prostrate to you?" and he replied no, and if he had allowed them, they would have prostrated to him as a mark of utter veneration and respect, not as a mark of worship, just as the Prophet

Yusuf's brothers prostrated to Yusuf. Similarly the prostration of the Muslim to the grave of the Prophet is for the intention of magnification and reverence. One is not imputed disbelief because of it whatsoever (*la yukaffaru aslan*), but he is being disobedient [to the Prophet's reply to the Companions]: let him therefore be informed that this is forbidden. Similarly in the case of one who prays towards the grave."

Imam Ahmad's son `Abd Allah said: "I asked my father about the man who touches and kisses the pommel of the Prophet's minbar to obtain blessing, or touches the grave of the Prophet. He responded by saying: "There is nothing wrong with it."" `Abd Allah also asked Imam Ahmad about the man who touches the Prophet's minbar and kisses it for blessing, and who does the same with the grave, or something to that effect, intending thereby to draw closer to Allah. He replied: "There is nothing wrong with it." This was narrated by `Abdullah ibn Ahmad ibn Hanbal in his book entitled *al-Ilal fi ma`rifat al-rijal* (2:492). We already mentioned the authentic account whereby in the time of `Umar there was a drought during which Bilal ibn Harith came to the grave and said: "O Messenger of Allah, ask Allah for rain on behalf of your Community." We already mentioned `A'isha's account whereby she instructed that the roof be opened over the Prophet's grave in times of drought, and it would rain. `Umar sent a message to `A'isha saying: "Will you allow me to be buried with my two companions (the Prophet and Abu Bakr)?" She said, "Yes, by Allah," though it was her habit that if a man from among the Companions asked her that she would always refuse. Bukhari.

Tabarruk with the Prophet's jubba (robe or cloak) --Imam Muslim relates that `Abd Allah, the freed slave of Asma' the daughter of Abu Bakr, the maternal uncle of the son of `Ata', said: "Asma' sent me to Abdullah ibn `Umar saying: "The news has reached me that you prohibit the use of three things: the striped robe, saddle cloth made of red silk, and fasting the whole month of Rajab." Abdullah said to me: "So far as what you say about fasting in the month of Rajab, how about one who observes continuous fasting? And so far as what you say about the striped garment, I heard `Umar ibn al-Khattab say that he had heard from Allah's Messenger: "He who wears a silk garment, has no share for him (in the Hereafter)." And I am afraid that stripes were part of it. And so far as the red saddle cloth is concerned, here is Abdullah's saddle cloth [=his] and it is red." I went back to Asma' and informed her, so she said: "Here is the cloak (jubba) of Allah's Messenger," and she brought out to me that cloak made of Persian cloth with a hem of (silk) brocade, and its sleeves bordered with (silk) brocade, and said: "This was Allah's Messenger's cloak with `A'isha until she died, then I got possession of it. The Apostle of Allah used to wear that, and we washed it for the sick so that they could seek cure thereby." Muslim relates in the first chapter of the book of clothing. Nawawi comments in *Sharh sahih Muslim* (Book 37 Chapter 2 #10): "In this hadith is a proof that it is recommended to seek blessings through the relics of the righteous and their clothes (*wa fi hadha al-hadith dalil `ala istihbab al-tabarruk bi aathaar al-salihin wa thiyabihim*)."

Tabarruk with spots and people the Prophet had touched---- Suwayd ibn Ghafalah reported: I saw `Umar kissing the Stone and clinging to it and saying: "I saw Allah's Messenger bearing great love for you." This hadith has been narrated on the authority of Sufyan with the same chain of transmitters (and the words are): "He (`Umar) said: "I know

that you are a stone, nor would I consider you of any worth, except that I saw Abu al-Qasim bearing great love for you." And he did not mention about clinging to it. [Muslim: 7: 2916] Qadi `Iyad relates in his *Shifa'*, in the chapter entitled "Esteem for the things and places connected with the Prophet," that Imam Malik would not ride an animal in Madina and used to say: "I am too shy before Allah to trample with an animal's hoof on the earth where Allah's Messenger is buried." Imam Malik gave a fatwa that whoever said: "The soil of Madina is bad" be given thirty lashes and jailed. Qadi `Iyad mentions the verses of an anonymous visitor to Madina:--The veil is lifted from us and a moon shines out to those who look on, banishing all illusions. When our mounts reach Muhammad, it is forbidden for us to be found in our saddles. We are drawing near to the best man ever to walk on the earth, So we hold this ground in respect and honor. `Iyad adds: "One must respect the places... whose soil contains the body of the Master of Mankind and from which the din of Allah and the Sunna of the Messenger spread out... and the first earth that the skin of the Prophet touched after death. Its fragrance should be inhaled and its residences and walls should be kissed." Then he recites: *O Abode of the best of the Messengers...For you (Madina) I have intense love, passionate love, and yearning which kindles the embers of my heart. I have a vow: If I fill my eyes with those walls and the places where you (O Prophet) walked, There my turbaned gray hair will be covered with dust from so much kissing. Had it not been from obstacles and foes, I would always visit them, even if I had to be dragged by my feet.* Al-Tabarani in *al-Awsat* and *al-Kabir* (4:16), and Imam Ahmad in his *Musnad* (5:67-68) with a sound chain as stated by al-Haythami in *al-Zawa'id* (4:211) narrated through Handhalah Ibn Hudhaym that the latter went with his grandfather, Hudhaym, to the Prophet. Hudhaym said to the Messenger of Allah: "I have sons and grandsons, some of whom are pubescent and others still children." Motioning to the young child next to him, he said: "This is the youngest." The Prophet brought this young child whose name was Handhalah next to him, wiped on his head, and told him, "barakallahu fik," which means: "May Allah bless you." After that, people started to bring Handhalah a person with a swollen face or a sheep with a swollen udder. Handhalah would place his hand on that part of his head the Prophet wiped, then touch the swollen part and say Bismillah, and the swelling would be cured.

Ibn Abi Shayba narrated in his *Musannaf* (4:121), in the chapter entitled: "Touching the grave of the Prophet" with a sahih chain as judged by Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, and Qadi `Iyad in his book *al-Shifa'*, in the chapter entitled: "Concerning the visit to the Prophet's grave, the excellence of those who visit it and how he should be greeted": Yazid ibn `Abd al-Malik ibn Qusayt and al-`Utbi narrated that it was the practice of the Companions in the masjid of the Prophet to place their hands on the pommel of the hand rail (*rummana*) of the pulpit (*minbar*) where the Prophet used to place his hand. There they would face the qibla and supplicate (make *du'a*) to Allah hoping He would answer their supplication because they were placing their hands where the Prophet placed his while making their supplication. Abu Mawduda said: "And I saw Yazid ibn `Abd al-Malik do the same." This practice of the Companions clarifies two matters. The first is the permissibility of asking Allah for things by the Prophet (*tawassul*) after his death since by their act the Companions were truly making *tawassul*. Likewise it is permissible to ask Allah for things by other pious Muslims. The second is the permissibility of seeking blessings (*baraka*) from the objects the Prophet touched. The Tabi'i

Thabit al-Bunani said he used to go to Anas Ibn Malik, kiss his hands, and say: "These are hands that touched the Prophet." He would kiss his eyes and say: "These are eyes that saw the Prophet." Abu Ya'la narrated it in his Musnad (6:211) and Ibn Hajar mentions it in his al-Matalib al-'aliya (4:111). al-Haythami declared it sound in Majma' al-zawa'id (9:325). According to Bukhari in his Adab al-Mufrad, 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Razin related that one of the Companions, Salama ibn al-Aku', raised his hands before a group of people and said: "With these very hands I pledged allegiance (bay'a) to the Messenger of Allah," upon hearing which all who were present got up and went to kiss his hand. Another version of this hadith was also related by Ahmad. Abu Malik al-Ashja'i said that he once asked another Companion of the Tree, Ibn Abi Awfa, "Give me the hand that swore bay'at to the Messenger of Allah, Peace be upon him, that I may kiss it." Ibn al-Muqri related it. Bukhari in al-Adab al-mufrad also relates that Suhayb saw Sayyidina 'Ali kiss both the hand and feet of the Prophet's uncle al-'Abbas, and that Thabit kissed the hand of Anas because it had touched the Prophet's hand.

Tabarruk with the soil and vegetation of Madina--The merits of Madina, of prayer in Madina, of visiting the Masjid al-Nabawi, of living in Madina, of not cutting its trees, etc. are all based on the fact that the Prophet is there. The fact that it is a sanctuary (haram) and a preserve (hima) is well documented in numerous ahadith. It is even strongly recommended not to enter Madina except on foot, and many Companions, Tabi'in, and Tabi' al-Tabi'in never entered it except on foot, in respect for the Holy Presence of the Prophet. Narrated Ali ibn Abu Talib: The Prophet said: "Madina's fresh grass is not to be cut, its game is not to be driven away, and things dropped in it are to be picked up only by one who publicly announces it, and it is not permissible for any man to carry weapons in it for fighting, and it is not advisable that its trees are cut except what a man cuts for the fodder of his camel. [Abu Dawud, 10: 2030] Narrated Abu Hurayra: When the people saw the first fruit (of the season or of plantation) they brought it to Allah's Apostle. When he received it he said: "O Allah, bless us in our fruits; and bless us in our city; and bless us in our sa's and bless us in our mudd (i.e. in every measure). O Allah, Ibrahim was Thy servant, Thy friend, and Thy apostle; and I am Thy servant and Thy apostle. He (Ibrahim) made supplication to Thee for (the showering of blessings upon) Mecca, and I am making supplication to Thee for Madina just as he made supplication to Thee for Mecca, and the like of it in addition." He would then call to him the youngest child and give him these fruits. [Muslim, 7: 3170] As the Prophet asked Allah's Blessings on the city, its fruits, and in their measures, then it must be full of blessing as his supplication is a du'a' mustajab or answered prayer. Therefore, it is common practice for pilgrims to purchase the dates of Madina for the blessings to bring back home with them to share among those who could not make the pilgrimage. And it is said that there yet remain living some of the date palms from those planted by the Holy hand of the Most Noble Messenger himself, blessings and peace be upon him. Wallahu a'lam.

Tabarruk with his Holy Hand and Feet---The first hadith Imam Ahmad related from Anas ibn Malik in his Musnad Anas is: "The whole Community of the people of Madina used to take the hand of the Prophet and rush to obtain their need with it." Narrated 'A'isha the Mother of the Believers: "The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, when he had a complaint, would recite the last three suras of Qur'an, over himself and blow."

She said, "When his pain was great, I would recite it over him and wipe him with his right hand hoping for its blessing." Usama ibn Sharik narrates: "I came to see the Prophet while his Companions were with him, and they seemed as still as if birds had alighted on top of their heads. I gave him my salam and I sat down. [Then Beduins came and asked questions which the Prophet answered.] ... The Prophet then stood up and the people stood up. They began to kiss his hand, whereupon I took his hand and placed it on my face. I found it more fragrant than musk and cooler than sweet water." Narrated by Abu Dawud (#3855), Ti(2038 -- hasan sahih), Ibn Majah (3436), al-Hakim (4:399), and Ahmad (4:278). al-Hafiz Imam Bayhaqi cites it in Branch 15 of his *Shu'ab al-iman* entitled: The Fifteenth Branch of Faith, Namely A Chapter On Rendering Honor To The Prophet, Declaring His High Rank, And Revering Him (al-khamis 'ashar min shu'ab al-iman wa huwa babun fi ta'zim al-nabi sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallama wa ijlatihi wa tawqirih) Vol. 2 p. 200 (#1528). Narrated 'Abd Allah ibn 'Umar: Ibn 'Umar was sent with a detachment by the Apostle of Allah. The people wheeled round in flight. He said: I was one of those who wheeled round in flight. When we stopped, we said: What should we do? We have run away from the battlefield and deserve Allah's wrath. Then we said: Let us enter Medina, stay there, and go there while no one sees us. So we entered the city and thought: If we present ourselves before Allah's Apostle, and if there is a change of repentance for us, we shall stay; if there is something else, we shall go away. So we sat down (waiting) for the Apostle of Allah before the dawn prayer. When he came out, we stood up to him and said: We are the ones who have fled. He turned to us and said: No, you are the ones who return to fight after wheeling away. We then approached and kissed his hand, and he said: I am the main body of the Muslims. (Abu Dawud, Book 14 [Jihad], Number 2641.) This hadith is also found in al-Abhari; in the book of al-hafiz Ibn Muqri on standing up and kissing the hand out of respect; in the *Adab al-mufrad* of Imam Bukhari (Chapter on Kissing the Hand and Chapter on Kissing the Foot), in Ibn Maja (Adab), in Bayhaqi's *Dala'il an-Nubuwwa*, and in the *Musnad* of Ahmad ibn Hanbal. Ibn 'Umar told a story and said: "We then came near the Prophet and kissed his hand." It is related in Ibn Maja's *Sunan*, Book of Adab, and Chapter on kissing by a man of another man's hand; in Abu Dawud's *Sunan*, Book of Adab, Chapter on kissing the hand; and in the *Musannaf* of Ibn Abi Shayba through two different chains.

Umm Aban, daughter of al-Wazi' ibn Zari' narrated that her grandfather Zari' al-'Abdi, who was a member of the deputation of 'Abd al-Qays, said: "When we came to Medina, we raced to be first to dismount and kiss the hand and foot of Allah's Apostle... (to the end of the hadith)" [Abu Dawud, 41: 5206.] Bukhari relates from her a similar hadith in his *Adab al-mufrad*: We were walking and someone said, "There is the Messenger of Allah," so we took his hands and feet and kissed them. Burayda narrated that one of the Beduin Arabs who came to the Prophet, Peace be upon him, asked: "O Messenger of Allah, give me permission to kiss your head and your hands," and he received it. In another version, he asks permission to kiss the head and the feet. Narrated in Ghazali's *Ihya'* and the version mentioning the feet is in Hakim's *Mustadrak* and in Ibn Muqri. Both al-Hakim and al-'Iraqi declared the latter's chain authentic. From Safwan ibn 'Asal al-Muradi: "One of two Jews said to his companion: Take us to this Prophet so we can ask him about Musa's ten signs... [the Prophet replied in full and then] they kissed his hands and feet and said: we witness that you are a Prophet..." Narrated

by Ibn Abi Shayba (Book of Adab, Chapter entitled A Man Kissing Another Man's Hand When He greets Him), Tirmidhi (Book of Adab) who declared it hasan sahih, al-Nasa'i, Ibn Maja (Book of Adab), and al-Hakim who declared it sahih. When we were with Allah's Messenger on an expedition, a Bedouin came and asked for a miracle. The Noble Messenger SallAllahu alayhi wa sallam pointed at a tree and said to the Bedouin: "Tell that tree that Allah's Messenger summons you." The tree swayed and brought itself out, and came to the presence of the Holy Messenger SallAllahu alayhi wa sallam, sating, "Peace be upon you Oh Messenger of Allah!" The Bedouin said, "Now let it return to its place!" When Allah's Messenger ordered it, the tree went back. The Bedouin said, "let me prostrate to you!" The Messenger answered: "No one is allowed to do that [ie it is Haraam]." The Bedouin said, "Then I will KISS YOUR HANDS AND FEET." and He (Saw) PERMITTED HIM THAT [ie it is jaa'iz]. REF: al-QaaDee IyaaD, ash-Shifaa', 1:299; al-Bazzaar, Musnad, 3:49.

Tabarruk from His Blessed Skin---Narrated Usayd ibn Hudayr: AbdurRahman ibn Abu Layla, quoting Usayd ibn Hudayr, a man of the Ansar, said that while he was given to jesting and was talking to the people and making them laugh, the Prophet poked him under the ribs with a stick. He said: Let me take retaliation. He said: Take retaliation. He said: You are wearing a shirt but I am not. The Prophet then raised his shirt and the man embraced him and began to KISS HIS SIDE. Then he said: This is what I wanted, Apostle of Allah! (Abu Dawud, Book 41, Number 5205.) Ibn `Abd al-Barr relates, in his Isti'ab fi Ma`rifat al-as-hab (p. 673), that the Prophet, after forbidding two or three times the use of khaluq (a kind of perfume mixed with saffron), and finding that Sawad ibn `Amr al-Qari al-Ansari was wearing it, nudged him in the mid-section with a palm-tree stalk (jarida) and scratched him. The latter asked for reparation; when the Prophet bared his own belly to him, he jumped and kissed the Prophet's belly. Ibn Ishaq's version in the Sira mentions that Sawad was standing in the ranks of the Companions of Badr at the time of this incident. The Prophet was arranging the ranks with his switch (miqra'a) and he nudged Sawad's belly with it, scratching him inadvertently, with the words: "Align yourself with the others." Sawad said: "Ya Rasulallah, you hurt me, so give me reparation." The Prophet handed him the switch and said: "Take reparation." Sawad approached him and kissed his belly. The Prophet said: "What made you do that, O Sawad?" He replied, "Y Rasulallah, the time has come for what you see, and I loved that my last action in this dunya be to touch you." Narrated Buhaysah al-Fazariyyah: My father sought permission from the Prophet. Then he came near him, lifted his shirt, and began to kiss him and embrace him out of love for him... (Abu Dawud, Book 9, Number 1665.) Tabarruk with places the Prophet visited Narrated Abu Burda: When I came to Medina. I met Abdullah bin Salam. He said, "Will you come to me so that I may serve you with Sawiq (i.e. powdered barley) and dates, and let you enter a (blessed) house in which the Prophet entered?"... (Bukhari, Volume 5, Book 58, Number 159)

The Prophet's sandals---Bukhari and Tirmidhi narrate from Qatada: "I asked Anas to describe the sandals of Allah's Messenger and he replied: Each sandal had two straps"; and from `Isa ibn Tahman: "Anas took out a pair of shoes and showed them to us. They did not have hair on them." (The remark refers to the Arabian practice of not removing the hair from the leather from which shoes were made.) Bukhari, Malik, and Abu Dawud relate that

`Ubayd ibn Jarir said to `Abd Allah ibn `Umar: "I saw you wear tanned sandals." He replied: "I saw the Prophet wearing sandals with no hair on them and perform ablution in them, and so I like to wear them." al-Qastallani in his *Mawahib al-laduniyya* said that Ibn Mas`ud was one of the Prophet's servants and that he used to bring for the Prophet his cushion (wisada), his tooth-stick (siwak), his two sandals (na`layn), and the water for his ablution. When the Prophet rose he would put his sandals on him; when he sat he would carry his sandals in his arms until he rose.

Qastallani mentions the following from one of the greatest Tabi`in:--Abu Ishaq (al-Zuhri) said: al-Qasim ibn Muhammad (ibn Abu Bakr al-Siddiq) said: Of the proven blessing of the likeness of the Prophet's sandal is that whoever has it in his possession for tabarruk, it will safeguard him from the sedition of rebels and the mastery of enemies, and will be a barrier against every recreant devil and the evil eye of the envious. If the pregnant woman holds it in her right hand at the time of labor, her delivery will be easier by Allah's change and His might. al-Qastallani also said that Abu al-Yaman ibn `Asakir wrote a volume on the image of the Prophet's sandal, and so did Ibn al-Hajj al-Andalusi. He relates the account of a pious shaykh by the name of Abu Ja`far Ahmad ibn `Abd al-Majid: I cut the pattern of this sandal for one of my students. He came to me one day and said: "I saw a wonder yesterday from the blessing of this sandal. My wife was suffered from a pain which almost took her life. I placed the sandal on the spot of her pain and said: O Allah, show me the blessing of the owner of this sandal. Allah cured her on the spot." al-Munawi and al-Qari mentioned in their commentary on Tirmidhi's *al-Shama'il* that Ibn al-`Arabi said that the sandals are part of the attire of prophets, and the people only left them due to the mud in their lands. He also mentioned that one of the names of the Prophet in the ancient books is sahib al-na`layn or "The wearer of the two sandals." Shaykh Yusuf al-Nabahani recited about the Prophet's sandals: *wa na`lun khada`na haybatan li waqariha fa inna mata nakhda`u li haybatiha na`lu fa da`ha `ala a`la al-mafariqi innaha haqiqataha tajun wa surataha na`lu* A sandal to whose majestic nobility we submit For by submitting to its majesty do we rise:--Therefore place it in the highest spot for it is In reality a crown, though its image is a sandal. And when Imam al-Fakhani first saw the Prophet's sandals he recited:--*wa law qila li al-majnuni layla wa wasluha---turidu am al-dunya wa ma fi zawayaha laqala ghubarun min turabi ni`aliha---ahabbu ila nafsai wa ashfa li balawaha* And if Layla's Madman were asked: do you prefer Union with Layla, or the world and its treasures? He would answer: "Dust from the earth of her sandals Is dearer to my soul, and its most soothing remedy." Shihab al-Din Ahmad al-Muqri wrote a book on this which he named *Fath al-muta`al fi madh al-ni`al* (The opening of the Most High in the praise of the Prophet's sandals). Ashraf `Ali al-Tahanawi the Deobandi shaykh wrote a treatise entitled *Nayl al-shifa' bi na`l al-mustafa* (The attainment of cure through the sandals of the Elect One) found in his book *Zad al-sa'id* (Provision for the fortunate). The muhaddith of India Muhammad Zakariyya Kandhalwi said in his translation of Tirmidhi's *Shama'il*: Maulana Ashraf `Ali Thaanwi Saahib has written in his *kitaab Zaadus Sa`eed* a detailed treatise on the barakaat and virtues of the shoes of Rasulullah Sallallahu `Alayhi Wasallam. Those interested in this should read that *kitaab* (which is available in English). In short, it may be said that it [the Prophet's sandal] has countless qualities. The `ulama have experienced it many a time. One is blessed by seeing Rasulullah Sallallahu

`Alayhi Wasallam in one's dreams; one gains safety from oppressors and every heartfelt desire is attained. Every object is fulfilled by its tawassul (means, petition, request). The method of tawassul is also mentioned therein. We see by all the above evidence that tawassul and tabarruk are an intimate and integral part of the practice of the Companions, that it is Sunna, and that no-one denies it except those who deviate from the Sunna and who harbor the disease of ignorance and suspicion in their heart. May Allah protect us from their designs, and may He keep all Muslims unswervingly on the path of Ahl al-Sunna and that of the true Salaf. And Allah knows best.

MEERAJ-- Night Journey and the Ascension: - (The Night Journey) an Important Event of His Life.

Description: The setting of the start of the journey, and some details about the Prophet Muhammad's early life, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him. By Aisha Stacey (© 2008 IslamReligion.com) Published on 02 Jun 2008 - Last modified on 04 Oct 2009

Prologue

The journey of the Prophet and Messenger, Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, by night from the Holy Mosque in Mecca to the farthest mosque in Jerusalem was a miracle granted to Him by God. It is the first part of a night of wonder and amazement, culminating in Prophet Muhammad's ascension through the heavens and into the presence of God. "Glorified be He Who took His slave on a journey by night from Al-Masjid-al-Haram[1] to the Masjid-al-Aqsa[2], the neighborhood whereof We have blessed, in order that We might show him of Our signs[3]. Verily, He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer." (Quran 17:1) It was a physical journey and all the events about to be described took place in one night. This series of articles will use the word masjid instead of its English translation, mosque. The reason for this is that the word masjid implies much more than the recognisable building where Muslims pray. The word masjid comes from the root "sa-ja-da" meaning to prostrate, therefore a masjid is any place of prostration. The Prophet Muhammad told us "this earth was made a Masjid for me." [4] This gift from God was given only to the nation of Muhammad. A Muslim can pray in any place that is not impure (with a few exceptions). There are buildings specifically for prayer, but any place a Muslim prays is a masjid, in the literal sense – a place of prostration. The act of prostration is the most honourable part of the prayer. When a Muslim's forehead touches the ground, he or she is very close to God. Prayer establishes the connection between the believer and his Lord, and it was on this miraculous night that the five daily prayers were instated. In the story to follow you will learn some more about this man called Muhammad and come to understand a little about why Muslims love him. You will also discover why Masjid al-Aqsa in Jerusalem is one of the three Holy Masjids in Islam. God refers to Jerusalem in the Quran as "the neighbourhood we have blessed". The Dome of the Rock, part of the precinct of Masjid al-Aqsa, is the most recognizable symbol of Jerusalem and holds a special place in the hearts of every Muslim. On this journey we are about to undertake you will learn why. So let us travel back through time, to 7th century Arabia, to the city of Mecca and accompany Prophet Muhammad on his night journey and ascension.

The Journey Commences---Approximately ten years after Prophet Muhammad received the first revelations of the Quran, he suffered two grave losses. One was the death of his uncle Abu Talib, the man who had supported and loved him from the time he was a young orphan, and then only two months later, Muhammad's beloved wife, Khadijah, died. This year became known as the Year of Sorrow. In the years leading up to these sad events, the new Muslims, especially Prophet Muhammad, were persecuted, ridiculed and abused. The strength and loyalty of his uncle combined with the love and compassion shown to him by Khadijah helped him to remain strong and continue spreading the message in the face of grave adversity. However, he now felt alone and extremely overwhelmed by his sadness. When one has truly surrendered to God, the pains and sorrows of this life form part of a test of faith, and these tests are always followed by relief. In chapter 94 of the Quran, called Solace, God assures Prophet Muhammad that with every hardship comes relief, and He repeats it a second time with emphasis - with every hardship comes relief. After this extremely difficult year, Prophet Muhammad felt his relief in the form of a major blessing, the Night Journey and Ascension. "So verily, with hardship, there is relief. Verily, with hardship, there is relief." (Quran 94:4-6) Even though it was dangerous and he risked attack by the Pagans of Mecca, Prophet Muhammad often spent the night in prayer at the Holy Masjid in Mecca. On this particular night, he was lying close to the Ka'ba (the black cube in the middle of the Masjid) in a state between wakefulness and sleep. An angel came and cut open his chest from the throat to the below the stomach. The angel removed Prophet Muhammad's heart and placed it in a golden bowl filled with faith, the heart was purified, filled and returned to its place.[5] This was not the first time that an angel had come down and extracted Muhammad's heart. As a small child, Muhammad lived in the deserts of Arabia with a foster family according to custom, for the desert environment was known to be much healthier and more suitable for proper cultivation than the cities. When he was four or five years old and playing in this wilderness with his young friends, the Angel Gabriel appeared, removed Muhammad's heart and extracted from it a portion, referring to it as "a part of Satan". The Angel Gabriel washed the heart with the water of zamzam (the well of Mecca which sprung to quench the thirst of Ishmael) and returned it to its place. The other children ran away screaming, thinking Muhammad was being murdered, but by the time they returned with help, he was alone, scared and white, but with only a small mark from the ordeal.[6] Prophet Muhammad's mission was to guide all of humanity to the worship of the One True God, thus every aspect of his life formed part of God's plan to prepare him for this great responsibility. As a child, the part of Satan was removed from his heart, and as an adult, about to undertake the building of the Muslim nation, his heart was purified and filled with pure faith. The next part of this miraculous night then commenced. Prophet Muhammad was presented with a white animal he described as being smaller than a horse but larger than a donkey, it was known as al-Buraq. This animal, he said, could take a stride as far as it could see. With one leap, al Buraq could cover an incredibly vast distance.[7] The Angel Gabriel told Prophet Muhammad to mount the animal, and together they travelled more than 1200 km. to the furthest masjid – Masjid al-Aqsa. Prophet Muhammad was on the back of al-Buraq while the animal's stride reached towards the horizon, and the stars glittered in the night sky over the deserts of Arabia and beyond. He must have felt the wind on his face and been

aware of his newly filled heart thumping in his chest. Imagine what signs and wonders of God Prophet Muhammad must have seen on that miraculous journey by night!

Footnotes:---[1] The holy mosque in the sanctuary of Mecca--[2] The furthest mosque in Jerusalem---[3] Ayaat, the word in Arabic, has multiple connotations: proofs, evidences, verses & lessons.--[4] Saheeh Al-Bukhari--[5] Ibid.[6] Saheeh Muslim[7] Saheeh Al-Bukhari --This was a difficult time in the life of Prophet Muhammad, and this journey was a great compliment to him. The deliverance of the message was entering a new phase, and the establishment of the Muslim nation was about to begin. Prophet Muhammad was feeling overwhelmed and alone. The vast majority of Meccans had refused to heed his call or accept his message. Both his beloved uncle and cherished wife had died, and this gift of God offered him support and opened his eyes to the signs and wonders of the universe. After travelling the enormous distance to Jerusalem on the back of al-Buraq, Prophet Muhammad reached the area known as Masjid al-Aqsa. He dismounted and tethered al-Buraq to a ring in the gate.

Another Miracle Occurs---Prophet Muhammad walked into the Masjid – the place of prostration - to be met by a group of the previous Prophets; he then had the great honour of leading them in prayer. God rewarded His Messenger and caused him to understand that the Prophets before him also went through difficult times preaching to their people. They stood behind Prophet Muhammad and acknowledged him as their leader. This was another indication of his importance and excellence as well as the nature of his message. Before the advent of Prophet Muhammad, all the Prophets delivered their message of submission to One God to their own people; Muhammad, however, had come for all of mankind. God refers to him as a mercy. God says in Quran:-- “He listens to what is best for you; he believes in God; has faith in the believers; and is a mercy to those of you who believe.” (Quran 9:61) The message was international, and this communication distributed worldwide was Islam. The Prophets of God stood behind the newest and final Messenger of God and supported him when his need was greatest. Prophet Muhammad mentions in his sayings that all of the Prophets are brothers.[1] This congregation standing behind Prophet Muhammad was a sign of real and everlasting brotherhood.

The Significance of Al-Aqsa---The fact that this momentous occasion took place in Jerusalem is also of significance. This is the land of the Prophets of God; this is the land of Abraham, Isaac, Moses and Jesus. God was forging a link between his Holy House in Mecca and Masjid Al-Aqsa in Jerusalem. God was also linking the so-called cradle of religion, the Holy Land around Jerusalem, with the land of Arabia, the birthplace of the religion designed by the Creator, for all of humanity - Islam. God established Al-Aqsa as one of the three Holy Masjids in Islam. The Holy Masjid in Mecca, the Prophet Muhammad’s Masjid, yet to be established in Medina, and this Masjid in this blessed neighbourhood of Jerusalem. It is only to these three Masjids to which Muslims can travel for the purpose of worship.[2] One prayer in Masjid Al-Aqsa is worth 250 prayers elsewhere, excluding the Prophet’s Masjid where one prayer is the equivalent of 1,000 prayers and the Holy Masjid in Mecca where one prayer contains the reward of 100,000 prayers.[3] God emphasized the significance and sacredness of Masjid Al-Aqsa, and for this reason it plays an important role in a Muslim’s

life. Therefore it is guarded and protected zealously. Al-Aqsa was the first qiblah (the direction in which a Muslim turns to pray) in Islam, but this direction was later changed to Holy Masjid in Mecca. Establishing the exact date for this change is difficult, but from the evidence, we can discover approximately when this occurred because the mission of Prophet Muhammad is divided into two distinct periods. The Meccan period, defined by calling the people to the religion of Islam, and the Medinan period, defined by the establishment of the Muslim state. Prophet Muhammad and the majority of his followers migrated to the city of Medina in the 14th year of Prophethood. The Night Journey and Ascension took place late in the Meccan period, while the qiblah changed to Mecca around 15 months after the Prophet's migration to Medina. From this, we can infer that the Muslims faced Al-Aqsa when praying for approximately three years before God changed the direction to Mecca. This by no means diminished the significance of Jerusalem or Masjid Al-Aqsa, it merely represented another step in the establishment of the message for all of humanity. The Holy Masjid in Mecca was fixed as the central point in Islam.

The Journey and Miracle Continues---While still in the sacred precincts of Masjid Al-Aqsa, the Angel Gabriel presented Prophet Muhammad with two cups. One was filled with milk, the other with wine, and both offered to the Prophet. Prophet Muhammad chose and drank the milk. Angel Gabriel then said to him “Thanks be to God, who guided you to the fitrah; if you had taken the wine, your followers would have gone astray”.^[4] It is difficult to translate the Arabic word fitrah into English; it denotes the natural and pure state in which one is born, an innate feeling that guides one to do the “right” thing. Prophet Muhammad instinctively chose right over wrong, good over evil, and the Straight Path rather than the crooked path to Hell. It was from the Holy city of Jerusalem, in the sacred precincts of Masjid Al-Aqsa^[5] that Prophet Muhammad commenced the next stage of his miraculous Night Journey. Prophet Muhammad ascended to the lowest heaven from a rock. This rock can be found inside the Dome of the Rock, the most famous symbol of Jerusalem. It should not be confused with the actual Masjid building, which is on the other side of the Al-Aqsa compound. The entire precinct is the masjid, but many separate buildings exist there. It is important to remember that although the Dome of the Rock is inside the Masjid compound, it is not Masjid Al-Aqsa and it is not the place of prostration where Prophet Muhammad led the previous Prophets in prayer. From the rock, now covered by the familiar golden dome, Prophet Muhammad ascended to the lowest heaven in the company of Angel Gabriel.

Footnotes:--[1] Saheeh Al-Bukhari -[2] Saheeh Al-Bukhari and Muslim--[3] Saheeh al-Hakim-[4] Saheeh Bukhari--[5] The compound is also known as “Temple Mount” in the West, after the temple that Solomon built there. The Night Journey and the Ascension was a great blessing bestowed upon Muhammad, the Prophet of God. It was a journey beginning at the Holy Masjid in Mecca, then moving overland to Masjid al-Aqsa in Jerusalem and finally continuing up through the seven heavens into the presence of God, the Almighty. As we travel up through the seven heavens with Prophet Muhammad, it is important to remember that the places he visits are not part of Paradise. In the English language, we generally use the word heaven to mean the spiritual plane of eternal happiness, the reward for a righteous life and the opposite of hell, the place of eternal punishment. However, this was not always the

case; the word heaven comes from the Old English word *heofon*,^[1] used to denote the sky, which is the area above the earth where the celestial bodies are. Eventually, heaven lost its original meaning and came to imply Paradise. In Arabic, however, there have always been two separate words used, *sama* and *jannah*. The word *sama* is used for the skies above us, and they are part of the temporary world which will be destroyed on the Day of Judgement. The word *jannah*, however, denotes Paradise, the land of eternal bliss, the permanent home of the righteous believers, and the opposite of Hell. “Then He completed and finished from their creation as seven heavens in two Days and He made in each heaven its affair. And We adorned the nearest heaven with light sources to be an adornment, as well as to guard. Such is the Decree of Him the All-Mighty, the All-Knower.” (Quran 41:12) “Their Lord gives them glad tidings of a Mercy from Him, and that He is pleased, and of Gardens (*jannah*) for them wherein are everlasting delights. They will dwell therein forever. Verily, with God is a great reward.” (Quran 9:21-22)

The Wonders of God---Prophet Muhammad ascended into the heavens from the rock now housed in the familiar golden dome that has become the symbol for Jerusalem. This is a journey that no other human had ever made or has made since. It demonstrates God’s ability to bring the seemingly impossible into being. Here, the concepts of time and space as we know them do not apply, and it is beyond our human capabilities to understand the true omnipotence of God. In his sayings and traditions, Prophet Muhammad described the size of the heavens; the first heaven, as compared to the second, is similar to a small ring in the desert, and he continued this narrative until he described the sixth heaven as being the size of a ring in the desert compared to the seventh heaven. The magnitude of this is unimaginable. Our earth, and what we call the universe, is contained within the first heaven. Even with the scientific knowledge of the 21st century, we have no idea how big this is, how far the universe extends, or what wonders it contains. Prophet Muhammad travelled with the Angel Gabriel up into the heights of the heavens. Together they came to the gate of the first heaven, where Angel Gabriel sought permission to enter. The gatekeepers asked, “Who is it?” to which Gabriel replied, “It is I, Gabriel”. The gatekeepers then asked who was accompanying him; when they were told it was Muhammad, they asked if he had been given his mission to guide all of mankind to the worship of One God. Angel Gabriel answered in the affirmative, so the angels welcomed Prophet Muhammad, called his arrival a pleasure, and opened the gate.

Greeting the Prophets---Prophet Muhammad tells us that he saw his father Adam, the father of all of mankind. He greeted him with the greeting of all Muslims, - *Assalamu alaikum* (may peace be upon you). Adam returned the greeting and expressed his faith in Muhammad’s prophethood. He called him his pure son, the pure prophet. Imagine the pleasure that this meeting must have given to both men. After thousands of years, Adam was able to see his son Muhammad, the greatest of his descendents. Muhammad was able to look into the eyes of the father of mankind. The wonders however were only just beginning. Angel Gabriel and Prophet Muhammad then ascended to the second heaven. At the gate, Angel Gabriel again sought permission to enter. When the gatekeepers learned Prophet Muhammad had been given his mission and was trying to enter, they welcomed him and

opened the gate. There Prophet Muhammad saw the two cousins, Prophet John (known in Christian traditions as the Baptist) and the Messenger of God, Prophet Jesus; Prophet Muhammad exchanged greetings with them. Prophet Muhammad and Angel Gabriel ascended once more to the gates of the third heaven. At each gate, the same exchange took place. When the gatekeepers had established that it was Angel Gabriel in the company of Prophet Muhammad, who had indeed been given his mission, they gave permission to enter. Here, in the third heaven, Prophet Muhammad met Joseph and described him as an embodiment of half of all beauty. As Prophet Muhammad met the Prophets in each heaven, he exchanged greetings with them, and this was always Assalamu alaikum, the greeting of peace used by all those in submission to the One True God. In the fourth heaven, Prophet Muhammad met Prophet Idris, whom God described in Quran (19:57) as being elevated to a very high level. In the fifth heaven, he met Prophet Aaron, the brother of Moses. At each meeting, the Prophets expressed their faith in Muhammad's prophethood. In the sixth heaven, Prophet Muhammad met Moses. Whenever Prophet Moses is mentioned in the Quran or in the narrations of Prophet Muhammad, we know that something important is about to be described. After the two Prophets had exchanged greetings and Prophet Moses had expressed his faith in Muhammad's prophethood, Moses started to weep. When he was asked why, he replied: "A young man has come after me, and more of his followers will enter paradise than my followers". Until the advent of Islam, Prophet Moses had had the largest following of any Prophet. Moses cried, and from this, we can understand that there was a type of rivalry between the Prophets; but it was not a competition filled with jealousy or envy. Rather, it was filled with compassion. As we move further into the journey, we will see the love and compassion Prophet Moses had for Muhammad and his followers. Prophet Muhammad and Angel Gabriel then ascended into the seventh heaven. Footnotes:--[1] Webster's Online dictionary. The Angel Gabriel and Prophet Muhammad continued their miraculous ascension through the heavens. This journey was far beyond the wildest imagining of any human being. It began in the deserts of Arabia and spanned the reaches of the known universe and beyond. At the gate of the seventh heaven, they exchanged the same questions and answers as in the previous heavens, and the angels declared their pleasure at meeting Prophet Muhammad. Permission to enter was given and the Prophet of God, accompanied by Gabriel, the angel trusted with the revelations of God, moved into the final heaven. The seventh heaven is an expression used by Christians to denote extreme happiness or bliss, as in "I am in the seventh heaven". In Islam, the seventh heaven is where Prophet Mohammad met Prophet Abraham; and indeed, he (Muhammad) must have been extremely happy and in a state of bliss, having been honoured with this journey of wonders. Both Prophets exchanged greetings by saying Assalamu alaikum (may peace be upon you) and, as every other prophet had done, Prophet Abraham expressed his belief and faith in Prophet Muhammad's mission. Through his son, Ishmael, Abraham is the father of the Arabs and the ancestor of Prophet Muhammad; he is an ancestor of the people who became the Children of Israel (followers of Prophet Moses) through his son Isaac. In Jewish traditions, Abraham is called the father of the Jews. However, Islam rejects this idea, for the Quran clearly states that he was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but a believer in pure monotheism (belief in One God). "Why do you dispute about Abraham, while the Torah and the Gospel were not revealed until after him? Have you then no sense? Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was a true

Muslim Hanifa.”[1] (Quran 3:65 & 67) Muslims are required to believe in all of the Prophets of God; Abraham, however, holds a special place as one of the important messengers of God and has the unique honour of being called, in both Islamic and Christian[2] traditions, the beloved servant of God. Together, Abraham and his son Ishmael built the Kaaba (the black cubical building in the middle of the Holy Masjid in Mecca). “And remember when Abraham and Ishmael were raising the foundations of the House, saying, Our Lord! Accept this from us. Verily! You are the All-Hearer, the All-Knower.” (Quran 2:127) Muslims turn their faces towards the Kaba many times every day whilst performing their prayers, and in every prayer, they ask God to bless Abraham and his family.

The World of Angels---While in the seventh heaven, Prophet Muhammad was shown the building known as the much-frequented house, or al Bayt al-Mamoor in Arabic. It is fitting that Prophet Abraham was here with this house, as it is the heavenly equivalent of the Kaaba in Mecca. Each year at the time of pilgrimage (Hajj), more than 2 million Muslims from all over the world flock to Mecca to follow in the footsteps of Prophet Abraham and perform certain rites including circling the Kaaba. Every day 70,000 angels visit this much-frequented house in the seventh heaven to worship God. Prophet Muhammad informed us that, once the angels have visited Bayt al-Mamoor, they never return. God swears by this house in the Quran. “And by the Bayt al-Mamoor.” (Quran 52:4) Seventy thousand angels every day! What are the implications of this? Think about it and wonder for how many thousands or even millions of years has this been happening? How many of these beings, created by God from light, are there? This was another wonder that Prophet Muhammad was privileged to see and made able to describe to us. In his traditions, he also informs us that the heavens above us are moaning, every space as big as the width of four fingers is occupied by an angel worshipping God.

The Uppermost Boundary--Prophet Muhammad then moved through the seventh heaven to the uppermost boundary, to Sidrat al-Muntaha, a lote tree. “Near Sidrat al-Muntaha (lote-tree of the utmost boundary. Near it is the Paradise of Abode.” (Quran 53:14-15) He described its fruits like jugs and its leaves as big as elephant ears. Four rivers originated from the lote tree’s roots. When he asked about them, Prophet Muhammad was told that two of the rivers originated in Paradise. Nothing has reached us about the names or significance of these two rivers from the narrative of the ascension. However, he was told that the other two rivers were replicas of the Nile and the Euphrates, two rivers that are especially blessed in this world of mankind.

Sidrat al-Muntaha is called the uttermost boundary because everything that comes up from the earth or the heavens stops there, and everything that comes down stops there,[3] and because the knowledge of the angels stops at that point. No one has gone beyond it except Prophet Muhammad.[4] Beyond this point, we leave the heavens and move into the realm of the hereafter, the realm that contains Paradise and the Throne of God. As Prophet Muhammad continues his miraculous journey, he moves into this realm and stands in the presence of God Almighty.

Footnotes:--[1] The word Muslim denotes a man who submits to God alone, whilst Hanifa connotes purity, truth and sincerity. The Arabic dictionary assigns the word orthodox as one of the denotations of Hanifa, but it is more than orthodoxy. It is an untaught orthodoxy; a sense of the true nature of things that is instinctual and natural. [2] Isaiah 41:8 & 2. [3] Saheeh Muslim [4] Imam Al-Nawawi. Beyond the lote tree, the upmost boundary is a place where, apart from one exception, no human has ever been. The night journey and ascension through the heavens culminated in Prophet Muhammad moving past the upmost boundary and standing in the presence of Almighty God. Beyond the lote tree is the realm of the hereafter, Paradise, and the throne of God and God himself. The word miraculous does not go far enough in describing what a wonder this must have been for Prophet Muhammad. It is beyond description and beyond imagining. However, the Prophet Muhammad did not see God with his eyes, as God tells us in the Quran--- “No vision can grasp Him.” (Quran 6:103) One of the companions asked Prophet Muhammad directly if he saw God, to which he answered, “He is veiled by light, how could I see him.” (Saheeh Muslim) The fact remains however, that Muhammad Prophet of God, stood in the presence of God.

The Importance of Prayer:--God spoke to Prophet Muhammad and we have no details of the exchange except that God enjoined the daily prayers upon Prophet Muhammad and his followers. From this, we immediately understand the importance of prayer. It is the only command which God ordained in the heavens; all other decrees originated on earth. Prayer is a gift from God to those who truly believe in His Oneness. God bestowed this gift upon Prophet Muhammad who in turn gave it to the followers of Islam. It is a gift full of great blessings and bounties. It establishes and maintains our connection to God. God has no need of our prayers but we, as helpless human beings, are in great need of feeling connected to Him. In fact, the Arabic word for the five daily prayers is salah, which come from the root word meaning “connection”. “Guard strictly five obligatory prayers especially the middle prayer . And stand before God with obedience.” (Quran 2:238)

God enjoined 50 prayers on Prophet Muhammad and his followers. As Prophet Muhammad was descending he passed by Prophet Moses who requested to know what had been enjoined. When Prophet Muhammad explained that he had been ordered to prayer 50 times per day, Moses felt astonished and immediately said, “Go back to your Lord and ask for a reduction”. When God prescribed 50 prayers, Prophet Muhammad accepted it, Moses, having had been a great prophet himself, knew what from his followers what people could and could not handle in regards to religious obligations. He was sure that the followers of Muhammad would not be able to perform that many prayers. Prophet Muhammad had knowledge. but Prophet Moses at this time had more experience. Prophet Muhammad accepted the advice of his older brother/prophet, went back into the presence of God, and asked for a reduction. God reduced them by ten to forty prayers. Prophet Muhammad descended again; Prophet Moses asked him what happened. When he heard that the reduction was only ten, Prophet Moses sent him back to ask again for a further reduction. This exchange continued until the number of obligatory prayers became five. Prophet Moses suggested a further reduction saying, “O Muhammad, I know people, your nation will not be able to handle it, go back and ask for the burden on your people to be relieved.” Prophet Muhammad answered “No.” He felt

ashamed to ask for another reduction and said he was satisfied with five daily prayers. A voice rang out, saying, “The prayers have been reduced to five but they will be rewarded as though they were fifty.” God makes it clear to us that even praying these five prayers can be difficult for some people, but that those who establish the connection and trust that they will one day meet their Lord will find it easy. “And seek help in patience and the prayer: and truly it is extremely heavy and hard except for the true believers in God. Those who obey God with full submission, fear much from His Punishment, and believe in His Promise (Paradise, etc.) and in His Warnings (Hell, etc.). (They are those) who are certain that they are going to meet their Lord, and that unto Him they are going to return.” (Quran 2:45–46)

Mercy, Love and Compassion--This miraculous night concluded with this sign of the mercy of God. Imagine how hard it would be to pray 50 times a day. Although we learned during this journey that Moses cried when he realised Prophet Muhammad would have more followers than he on the Day of Judgement, we also learn how eager Prophet Moses was to give advice to Prophet Muhammad, and how keen he was to make the practice of Islam easy upon the believers. The competition between the Prophets was one of love and compassion, and from this we should learn how to treat each other. Although God tells us to compete with one another in doing deeds of righteousness, we should encourage and enable one another to do this easily. “...so strive as in a race in good deeds. The return of you (all) is to God; then He will inform you about that in which you used to differ.” (Quran 5:48) Prophet Muhammad then descended back to the Holy Mosque in Mecca. The companions of the Prophet were now about to face the biggest test to their faith so far. Muhammad, the Prophet of God, was about to reveal that he had returned from an overnight journey to the farthest Masjid in Jerusalem, a journey that normally took more than one month. He was also about to say he had travelled where no man had gone before, through the heavens and into the presence of God. This was a miraculous journey by night, but would his companions believe him and how would his enemies react?

Prophet Muhammad travelled on the back of Al-Buraq all the way to the farthest Mosque in Jerusalem. He ascended through the seven heavens and marvelled at wonders unimaginable. He looked into the faces and exchanged greetings with many of his fellow Prophets, and the final slave and Messenger of God, Muhammad, stood in the presence of God Himself. On the same night, only several hours after he had commenced his journey, Prophet Muhammad returned to Mecca. This miraculous journey was about to become a weapon against Prophet Muhammad and his followers by his enemies, and equally it would be an extreme test of faith for the believers. Upon his homecoming, Prophet Muhammad made his way to Umm Ayman and told her of his miraculous journey. She responded, “O Messenger of God, do not tell anyone about this.” Umm Ayman had perfect faith in Prophet Muhammad and believed his account of the journey, but she was afraid of how others would respond. Prophet Muhammad described Umm Ayman as “my mother after my own mother”. She was the faithful servant of his mother Aminah and remained with Prophet Muhammad through the deaths of his mother and grandfather. Prophet Muhammad and Umm Ayman had always been very close, and at the completion of this wondrous journey, he went to Umm Ayman’s home, perhaps for comfort and ease while he contemplated this miracle, and decided his next move. Prophet

Muhammad responded by saying that he would tell the people about the wondrous night. He considered it his responsibility before God to convey the message, no matter the response or consequences; God was responsible for the outcome. He left the house quietly with sombre contemplation, and made his way to the Holy Mosque. He met people along the way, and slowly the news of the night journey spread amongst the people.

The Response---While Prophet Mohammad was sitting silently in the Mosque, Abu Jahl approached him and asked casually, “O Muhammad is there anything new?” Known as one of the greatest enemies of Islam Abu Jahl was responsible for the torture, punishment, murder and harassment of the new Muslims throughout the early days of Islam. Even though he was aware of the animosity and hatred Abu Jahl felt towards him, Prophet Muhammad answered truthfully and said, “This past night I have travelled to Jerusalem and back.” Abu Jahl, being unable to contain his amusement, responded by requesting Muhammad to repeat these words in front of the people of Mecca. Prophet Muhammad responded in the affirmative, and Abu Jahl left the Mosque running, calling out to the people as he ran through the streets. When sufficient people had gathered in the Mosque, at Abu Jahl’s request Prophet Muhammad said, for all to hear, “I have been to Jerusalem and back.” The crowd of people started to laugh, whistle, and clap. They treated it as a big joke and fell against one another laughing. This was the response expected by Abu Jahl and he was thrilled. The disbelievers in the crowd saw a chance to put an end to Islam. They ridiculed and belittled Prophet Muhammad’s claim. Among the crowd were people who had travelled to Jerusalem and they asked Prophet Muhammad to describe what he had seen. The Prophet of God began to describe his journey but he became irritated. He spent only a brief amount of time in Jerusalem, and the miraculous nature of this travels had meant that he did not remember small details and descriptions. However, Prophet Muhammad tells us that God showed him the details “right in front of his eyes” and he described what he had seen “stone by stone, brick by brick”. The travellers confirmed his descriptions. (Saheeh Bukhari) There is another narration [1] that says that whilst travelling back to Mecca, Prophet Muhammad passed over a caravan. He was able to describe clearly. The caravan had lost a camel, and Prophet Muhammad called from the sky telling them the whereabouts of the camel. He also drank from their water supply. The people of Mecca immediately dispatched some one to meet the caravan before it entered the city to ask questions about the previous night. They confirmed that a strange voice called out the location of the lost camel and that part of their water supply had disappeared. Still these confirmations were not enough. The people jeered and laughed and disbelieved the words of the Prophet of God. This miraculous event was such a test of faith that even some of the new Muslims disbelieved and turned away from the faith of Islam.

The Sweetness of Faith--To those whose faith was strong and true, the Power of God was obvious. Some of those who found the whole story difficult to believe went to see Abu Bakr, the best friend and loyal supporter of Prophet Mohammad. They asked him if he believed Prophet Muhammad travelled overnight to Jerusalem, and back to Mecca. Without hesitation Abu Bakr replied, “If the messenger of God said so, then it is true”. It was because of this occasion that Abu Bakr earned the title As-Siddeeq (the foremost believer). This was a turning point for many Muslims; after already facing the physical torture and abuse of the

disbelievers, they now had to grapple with a concept beyond their wildest imaginings. Some failed, but many soared to new heights and were able to taste the sweetness of true submission to the One God. The journey by night, from the Holy Mosque in Mecca to the farthest Mosque in Jerusalem, and the ascension through the heavens and into the presence of Almighty God was a miracle granted by God to His final slave and Prophet, Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, and one of the greatest of honours bestowed upon any human. Footnotes:-[1] The Biography of Prophet Muhammad by ibn Hisham.

Wives of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW)

1. Khadijah bint Khuwaylid 2. Sawada bint Zam'a-3. A'isha Siddiqa bint Abu Bakr 4. Hafsa bint 'Umar--5. Zaynab bint Khuzayma 6. Umm Salama Hind bint Abi Umayya--7. Zaynab bint Jahsh 8. Juwayriya bint al-Harith--9. Umm Habiba Ramla bint Abi Sufyan 10. Safiyya bint Huyayy--11. Maymuna bint al-Harith 12. Maria al-Qibtiyya-- Introduction The Position of 'Aisha Conclusion

Introduction

What is there that a woman may not do? She can do everything except what Allah has forbidden. The teachings of Islam tell us what the limits of behavior are. Anyone who goes beyond these limits is likely to meet trouble, both in this world and in the next world. The best of women have lived their lives within the limits of Allah and have achieved greatness, often through actions, which even the best of men could not have equaled. They have gained the love and respect not only of those who knew them, but also of those who came to hear about them long after they have died. Among the best of women were the wives of the Prophet Muhammad, (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) for he was the best of creation, Al Quthum, the one who has all good virtues and characteristics gathered together in him, and accordingly Allah granted him the best of women in marriage. Today, even hundreds of years later, young girls still learn a little about them and then, as they grow up and become women, they follow their example, seeking the pleasure of Allah. It has been related by Anas that the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "Of all the women in all the worlds, these are enough for you (meaning that they were the best of women): Maryam, the daughter of Imran, (and the mother of Jesus, peace be upon them); and Khadijah, the daughter of Khuwaylid (the first wife of Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon them); Fatima, the daughter of Muhammad (and of Khadijah, may Allah be pleased with them); and Asiyya, the wife of Pharaoh (who rescued Moses from the river Nile when he was a baby and brought him up as her son, peace be on them)." Anas also related that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "Love Allah for the gifts that He gives you; love me for the sake of Allah; and love the People of my House for I love them."

The Wives of the Prophet Muhammad

Abdullah ibn Jafar reported that he heard Sayyiduna Ali say in Kufa that Allah's Messenger, (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "The best of the women of her time was Maryam, daughter of Imran, and the best of the women of her time was Khadijah, daughter of Khuwaylid." Is it not a great honor that the first person to embrace Islam was a woman? She was the first to bear witness that there is no god except Allah and that her husband was the Messenger of Allah. Her husband was our beloved Prophet Muhammad, (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and she was called Khadijah, (may Allah be pleased with her) She was also called Thaira, meaning 'pure'.

KHADIJA bint Khuwaylid

Khadijah, may Allah be pleased with her, came from a noble family. Her father Khuwaylid had been one of the most honored leaders of their tribe until he was killed in battle. Her husband had also died, leaving her a very wealthy woman. When Muhammad (peace be upon him) was still a young man, she entrusted him with some of her wealth, asking him to trade with it in Syria on her behalf. He was already well known for his honesty, truthfulness and trustworthiness. He returned from Syria after having made a large profit for Khadijah. After hearing his account of the journey, she decided that he would make the best of the husbands, even though many of the most important nobles of the Quraish had already proposed to her and had been refused, and in due course she proposed to him. After the Prophet's uncle, Abu Talib, had given the proposed marriage his blessing, Muhammad and Khadijah were married. At the time of the marriage, the Prophet was twenty-five years old, while Khadijah was forty years old. For the next fifteen years they lived happily together, and Khadijah bore several children. Their first child, a son whom they named Qasim, died when he was only two years old. Two more sons, called Tayyib and Tahir, were also born, but they too died in their infancy. However, Muhammad and Khadijah also had four daughters who survived: Zaynab, Ruqayya, Umm Kulthum and Fatima. No one except Allah of course, knows more about a man than his wife, both his good and his bad qualities, his strengths and his weaknesses. The more Khadijah came to know about her husband, the more she loved and respected him. Everyone in Makka called him 'al-Amin', which means 'the trustworthy one', and she, more than anyone else, knew how fitting this name was. It became Muhammad's custom each year to spend the month of Ramadan in seclusion and reflection in a cave on the mountain of Hira, which is on the outskirts of Makka. Khadijah would always make sure that he was provided with food and drink during his retreat. Towards the end of one Ramadan, when he was forty and Khadijah fifty-five, Muhammad suddenly appeared at their house in the middle of the night, trembling with fear and saying, "Cover me up, cover me up!"

Khadijah was very alarmed to see him in such a state. Quickly she wrapped a blanket around his shoulders and, when he had calmed down, she asked him to describe exactly what had happened. He told her how a being whom he had never seen before - in fact it was the angel Jibril - had suddenly appeared to him while he was asleep and had said, "Read!" "But I cannot read," he had replied, for he was unlettered and could neither read or write. "Read!" the angel had repeated, clasping Muhammad close to his chest. "I cannot read," he had

repeated. "Read!" the angel had repeated, firmly embracing him yet again. "What shall I read?" he had asked in desperation, and the angel had replied: Read, in the Name of your Lord who created, created man from a clot, Read, and your Lord is the Most Gracious, Who taught with the pen, taught man what he did not know. (Quran 96:1-5) Although Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not fully realize it at the time, this was the beginning of the revelation of the Qur'an; but in that first encounter with the angel Jibril, Muhammad was very frightened, for he did not know who the angel Jibril was or what was happening. He woke up and ran out of the cave only to find Jibril still in front of him, and whenever he turned away from him, there Jibril was in front of him yet again, filling the horizon with his mighty yet beautiful form.

"Oh Muhammad," said Jibril eventually, "you are the Messenger of Allah and I am Jibril," and with these words he disappeared from Muhammad's sight. After the angel had disappeared Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had clambered down the mountain as fast as he could run, not knowing if he was going mad and imagining things, or if he had been possessed by one of the jinn. As she listened to Muhammad's words, Khadijah did not share any of these fears. She realized that something tremendous and awe-inspiring had happened to her husband, and she was certain, knowing him as she did, that he was neither mad nor possessed. "Do not worry," she said, "for by Him who has dominion over Khadijah's soul, I hope that you are the Prophet of this nation. Allah would never humiliate you, for you are good to your relatives, you are true to your word, you help those who are in need, you support the weak, you feed the guest and you answer the call of those who are in distress."

When Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as a little more relaxed, Khadijah took him to see her cousin, Waraqa ibn Nawfal, for he was a man of knowledge, and she was sure that he would be able to explain the meaning of what had just happened to her beloved husband. Waraqa had studied the books of both the Jews and the Christians very closely and he had learned a great deal from many of their wisest people. He knew that the coming of another Prophet had been foretold by both Moses and Jesus, peace be on them, and he knew many of the signs that would confirm the identity of this Prophet when he appeared. After listening closely to his story, Waraqa, who was both old and blind, exclaimed, "This is the same being who brought the revelations of Allah to Moses. I wish I was young and could be alive why your people will drive you out."

"Will they drive me out?" asked Muhammad.

"Yes," replied Waraqa. "No one has come with what you have been given without being treated with enmity; and if I were to live until the day when you are turned out, then I would support you with all my might. Let me just feel your back." So, saying, Waraqa felt between the Prophet's shoulder-blades and found what he was feeling for: a small round, slightly raised irregularity in the skin, about the size of a pigeon's egg. This was yet another of the many signs that Waraqa already knew would indicate the identity of the next Prophet after Jesus, (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

"This is the Seal of the Prophethood!" he exclaimed. "Now I am certain that you are indeed the Prophet whose coming was foretold in the Torah that was revealed to Moses and in the Injil that was revealed to Jesus, (pbut) You are indeed the Messenger of Allah, and the being who appeared to you on the mountain was indeed the angel Jibril!"

Khadijah as both overjoyed and awed to find that her understanding of what had happened on the mountain had been confirmed. Not long after this incident, Muhammad was commanded in a subsequent revelation from Allah, through the angel Jibril, to call people to worship Allah only, and it was at this point that Khadijah did not hesitate in expressing in public what she had now known for certain in secret for some time: "I bear witness that there is no god except Allah," she said, "and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah."

In the years that followed, difficult years in which the leaders of the Quraish did everything in their power to stop the Prophet spreading his message, Khadijah (may Allah be pleased with her) was a constant source of help and comfort to Muhammad (peace be upon him) in the difficulties which he had to face. All her wealth was spent in the way of Allah, helping to spread the message of her husband, helping to free slaves who had embraced Islam, and helping to feed and shelter the community of Muslims that slowly but surely began to grow in numbers and strength.

The Quraish were infuriated by the Prophet's success and did everything in their power to discourage both him and his followers, often inflicting awful tortures on them, but without success. The situation became so bad that the Prophet told some of his followers to go to Abyssinia, where their ruler, the Negus, who was a sincere Christian gave them shelter and protection. Eventually there came a time when, as Waraqa had foretold, Muhammad and his followers -along with all the members of his tribe, the Banu Hashim were driven out of the city of Mecca and forced to camp out in a small ravine in the mountains nearby. This happened long after Waraqa had died, and about seven years after that extraordinary night of power in which Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had received the first revelation of Quran through the angel Jibril. There, while their homes lay empty in Mecca, the Muslims were exposed to the bitterly cold nights of winter and the fiery hot days of summer, with very little food and shelter. No one would buy and sell with the Muslims, or allow their sons and daughters to marry any of them. Fortunately those who secretly sympathized with the Muslims would send what food they could to them whenever the chance arose, sometimes by loading provisions onto a camel or a horse and then sending it off at a gallop in the direction of the camp, hoping that the animal would not stop or get lost before it reached its intended destination. For three years the small Muslim community lived a life of hardship and deprivation, but although they suffered from hunger and thirst, and from exposure to heat and cold, this was a time in which the hearts of the first Muslims were both purified and also filled with the light of knowledge and wisdom. The Muslims knew that they were following the truth, and so nothing else mattered. They did not care what the Quraish did to them or said about them. Allah and His Messenger were enough for them! It was during this period that the Muslims who had sought shelter in Abyssinia returned, only to find the situation even worse than when they had left it. Not long after, many of them returned to Abyssinia, their numbers swelled by those whom the Prophet (peace and blessings

of Allah be upon him) had told to accompany them. Finally the boycott was lifted and the Muslims were allowed to re enter the city; but the three years of hardship had taken their toll. First of all the Prophet's uncle, Abu Talib, who was by then more than eighty years old, died; and then a few months later, during the month of Ramadan, Khadijah also died, at the age of sixty-five, may Allah be pleased with her. The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) mourned her deeply. They had shared twenty-five years of marriage together and she had given birth to five of his children. Only one of the Prophet's future wives, Maria the Copt, would give him another child, Ibrahim, and he, like Qasim, was destined to die when he was still very young, at the age of eighteen months.

Khadijah had been the first to publicly accept Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as the Messenger of Allah, and she had never stopped doing all she could to help him. Love and mercy had grown between them, increasing in quality and depth as the years passed by, and not even death could take this love away. The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) never stopped loving Khadijah, and although he married several more wives in later years and loved them all, it is clear that Khadijah always had a special place in his heart. Indeed whenever 'Aisha, his third wife, heard the Prophet speak of Khadijah, or saw him sending food to Khadijah's old friends and relatives, she could not help feeling jealous of her, because of the love that the Prophet still had for her.

Once Aisha asked him if Khadijah had been the only woman worthy of his love. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) replied: "She believed in me when no one else did; she accepted Islam when people rejected me; and she helped and comforted me when there was no one else to lend me a helping hand." It had been related by Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) that on one occasion, when Khadijah was still alive, Jibril came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and said, "O Messenger of Allah, Khadijah is just coming with a bowl of soup (or food or drink) for you. When she comes to you, give her greetings of peace from her Lord and from me, and give her the good news of a palace of jewels in the Garden, where there will be neither any noise nor any tiredness." After the Prophet's uncle, Abu Talib, and his first wife, Khadijah, had both died in the same year, the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his small community of believers endured a time of great hardship and persecution at the hands of the Quraish. Indeed the Prophet, who was now fifty years old, name this year 'the Year of Sorrow.'

In private his dearest wife was no longer present to share his life; and in public the insults that he received from the Quraish multiplied, now that he had no longer had the protection of his dead uncle. Even when he journeyed to Ta'if, a small city up in the mountains outside Mecca, to call its people to worship Allah, he was rejected and stoned by them. It has been related by Aisha that on his way back to Mecca, Jibril appeared to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and said, "Allah, may He be exalted and glorified, has heard what the people have said to you and how they have responded to your invitation, and he has sent the angel in charge of the mountains so that you can tell him what you want him to do with them." Then the angel in charge of the mountains called out to him and greeted him and said, "O Muhammad, Allah has listened to what your people have said to you. I am the angel in charge of the mountains, and your Lord has sent me so that you can order me to do whatever you

want. If you wish, I can bring the mountain of the outskirts of Mecca together so that they are crushed between them." But the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to him, "Rather I hope that Allah will make their descendants a people who will worship Allah alone, without ascribing any partners to him." It was a while after this that the following Surah was revealed: In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate By the morning hours, and by the night when it is stillest, Your Lord has not forsake you nor does He hate you, And truly what comes after will be better for you than what has come before, And truly your Lord will give to you so that you will be content. Did he not find you an orphan and protect you? Did he not find you wandering and guide you? Did he not find you destitute and enrich you? So do not oppress the orphan, And do not drive the beggar away, And speak about the blessings of Your Lord. (Quran 93:1-11) And so it happened. After three years of constant struggle, a relative of his, called Khawla, went to him and pointed out that his house was sadly neglected and that his daughters needed a mother to look after them. "But who can take the place of Khadijah?" he asked. "Aisha, the daughter of Abu Bakr, the dearest of people to you," she answered. Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) had been the first man to accept Islam and he was the Prophet's closest companion. Like Khadijah, he had done all that he could do to help the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and had spent all his wealth in the way of Allah. However, while the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was now fifty-three years old, Aisha was only a little girl of seven. She was hardly in a position to look after either the Prophet's household or children. "She is very young." Replied the Prophet. Khawla had a solution for everything. She suggested that he marry at the same time a lady called Sawda, the widow of Al-Sakran ibn 'Amr.

SAWDA bint Zam'a

Sawda bint Zam'a, may Allah be pleased with her had been the first woman to immigrate to Abyssinia in the way of Allah. Her husband had died and she was now living with her aged father. She was middle-aged, rather plump, with a jolly, kindly disposition, and just the right person to take care of the Prophet's household and family. So Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) gave permission to Khawla to speak to Sayyiduna Abu Bakr and to Sawda on the subject. Khawla went straight to Sawda and said, "Would you like Allah to give you great blessing, Sawda?" Sawda asked, "And what is that, Khawla?" She said, "The Messenger of Allah has sent me to you with a proposal of marriage!" Sawda tried to contain herself in spite of her utter astonishment and then replied in a trembling voice, "I would like that! Go to my father and tell him that." Khawla went to Zam'a, a gruff old man,

and greeted him and then said, "Muhammad son of Abdullah son of Abdul Muttalib, has sent me to ask for Sawda in marriage." The old man shouted, "A noble match. What does she say?" Khawla replied, "she would like that." He told her to call her. When she came, he said, "Sawda, this woman claims that Muhammad son of Abdullah son of Abdul Muttalib has sent me to ask for you in marriage. It is a noble match. Do you want me to marry you to him?" She accepted, feeling it was a great honor. Sawda went to live in Muhammad's house and immediately took over the care of his daughters and household, while Aisha bint Abu Bakr became betrothed to him and remained in her father's house playing with her dolls.

There was great surprise in Mecca that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would choose to marry a widow who was neither young nor beautiful. The Prophet, however, remembered the trials she had undergone when she had immigrated to Abyssinia, leaving her house and property, and crossed the desert and then the sea for an unknown land out of the desire to preserve her deen. During the next two years, the Quraish increased their spiteful efforts to destroy the Prophet and his followers, in spite of the clear signs that confirmed beyond any doubt that Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was indeed the Messenger of Allah. Perhaps the greatest of these signs during this period was the Prophet's Mi'raj, his journey by night on a winged horse called the Buraq, through the skies to the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem where he led all the earlier Prophets who had lived before him in the prayer, followed by his ascent on the Buraq, accompanied by Jibril, through the seven heavens, and then beyond the world of forms, to the Presence of Allah where he was given the five prayers that all his true followers have done ever since.

When he described this miraculous journey to the people of Mecca, they just laughed at him, even though he accurately described the Al-Aqsa Mosque to them (and they knew that he had never been there before), and even though he described the place where he had stopped for a drink on the way to Jerusalem, and even though he told them how on the way he had told a man where his lost camel was, and even though he told them that he was seen a caravan, which no one knew about, approaching Mecca and that it should arrive later on that day. Even though the Quraish knew that the Prophet's description of the Al-Aqsa Mosque was completely accurate, and even when they eventually saw the caravan arrive, and met the man whom he had helped, and saw the place where he had stopped for a drink, they still refused to believe him. Only Sayyiduna Abu Bakr, his closest companion and future father in law, accepted the Prophet's account of his miraculous journey immediately: "If he had said this," he said, when some scornful Meccans first gave him the news, "then it is true!" As the enmity of the Quraish increased, (and while Aisha was still a small girl), Allah prepared the way for the future growth of the Muslim community in a place called Yathrib. During the time of pilgrimage in Mecca one year, twelve men from Yathrib, a small city of two hundred miles to the north of Mecca, secretly pledged allegiance to the Prophet, swearing to worship no gods other than Allah, nor to steal, nor to tell lies, nor to commit adultery, nor to kill their children, nor to disobey the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). They returned to Yathrib, accompanied by a Muslim called Mus'ab ibn Umayr, who taught them all that he had learned from the Prophet. As a result, the numbers of Muslims in Madina began to increase, and when the time of the pilgrimage came again, this time seventy five people from Yathrib-

three of whom were women: Umm Sulaym, Nsayba bint Ka'b and Asma bint Amr - pledged allegiance in Mecca to the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) this time also swearing that they would defend and protect him, even to the death if need be. After this, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) gave his followers permission to emigrate to Yathrib, and slowly but surely, in twos and threes, the Muslims began to leave Mecca. The leaders of the Quraish realized what was happening, and decided to kill the Prophet before he had a chance to join them. However, Allah protected the Prophet, and on the very night before the morning on which they had planned to kill him, the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) slipped out of Mecca and hid in a cave called Thawr, which was to the south of Mecca. Everybody knows what happened when the people who were hunting for them came to the cave: They found a wild dove nesting in the tree that covered the mouth of a cave, across which a spider had spun its web. Anyone entering the cave would have frightened away the dove and broken the spider's web, they thought, so they did and not bother to look inside it. Their pursuers were so close that if one of them had glanced down at his feet, he would have discovered them. By the decree of Allah, the Prophet and Abu Bakr were safe!

Once the Quraish had given up the search, the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) circled round the Mecca and rode northwards. Only one man, a warrior called Suraqa ibn Jusham, suspected their whereabouts and set off in hot pursuit, thirsting of the reward that the Quraish had offered to anyone who captured the two men for them. As soon as he was within shouting distance of the travelers, however, his horse suddenly began to sink into the sand, and, realizing that if he did not turn back, then the desert would simply swallow up both him and his steed, he gave up his pursuit, asked them to forgive him and returned home. After a long, hard journey Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) reached Yathrib amidst scenes of great rejoicing. Their time in Mecca had just come to an end, and their time in Medina had just begun - for Madina is the name that was now given to Yathrib, Madina al Munawarra, which means 'the illuminated city', the city that was illuminated by the light of the Prophet Muhammad and his family and his Companions, may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon him and on all of them. The journey of the Prophet Muhammad and Abu Bakr is usually called the hijrah, and it is at this point that the dating of the Muslims begins, for it was after the hijrah that the first community of Muslims rapidly grew and flowered and bore fruit. When she was older, the prophet was worried that Sawda might be upset about having to compete with so many younger wives, and offered to divorce her. She said that she would give her night to Aisha, of whom she was very fond, because she only wanted to be his wife on the Day of Rising. She lived on until the end of the time of Umar ibn al Khattab. She and Aisha always remained very close.

AISHA bint Abi Bakr

Gradually the Muslims who remained in Mecca left the city and traveled to Medina to join their beloved Prophet, and amongst them was a little girl called 'A'isha, the daughter of Abu Bakr. Soon after arriving in Medina, 'A'isha, who was now nine years old, was married to the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), who was now fifty-four

years old. It was at this point that she left her family's household and joined that the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). 'A'isha later reported that the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had told her that Jibril came to him and showed him a picture of her on a piece of green silk and said, "She is your wife in this world and in the next world." About her wedding, she related that shortly before she was to leave her parents' house, she slipped out into the courtyard to play with a friend. "I was playing on a seesaw and my long streaming hair became disheveled," she said. "They came and took me from my play and made me ready." They dressed her in a wedding dress made from fine red striped cloth from Bahrain and then her mother took her to the newly built house where some women of the Ansar were waiting outside the door. They greeted her with the words, "For good and for happiness, may all be well." Then, in the presence of the smiling Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) a bowl of milk was brought. The Prophet drank from it himself and then offered it to 'A'isha. She shyly declined it, but when he insisted she drink as well and then offered the bowl to her sister Asma' who was sitting beside her. The others who were present also drank from it, and that was all there was to the simple and solemn occasion of their wedding. Her marriage to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not change 'A'isha's playful ways, and her young friends continued to regularly come to visit her in her own room. "I would be playing with my dolls," she once said, 'with the girls who were my friends, and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would come in and they would slip out of the house and he would go out after them and bring them back, for he was pleased for my sake to have them there.' Sometimes he would say, "Stay, where you are," before they had time to leave, and would also join in their games. "One day," 'A'isha said, "the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) came in when I was playing with my dolls and said, "'A'isha, whatever game is this?' 'It is Solomon's horses,' I replied, and he laughed." On another occasion, during the days of the Id al Adha, two young girls were with 'A'isha in her room, singing a song about the famous battle of Bu'ath and beating a tambourine in time. "The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) came in," said 'A'isha, 'and lay down with his face turned away. Then Abu Bakr came, and scolded me, saying, 'What is this musical instrument of Shaytan doing in the house of the Messenger of Allah?' The Messenger of Allah turned towards him and said, 'Leave them alone, for these are the days of the 'Id.'" After a while, 'A'isha asked the girls to leave, and the Prophet asked 'A'isha whether she would like to watch the Abyssinians who were giving a fighting display with their weapons in the mosque and she said yes. "By Allah," said 'A'isha, "I remember the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) standing at the door of my room, screening me with his cloak, so that I could see the sport of the Abyssinians as they played with their spears in the mosque of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He kept standing for my sake until I had enough and then I went back in, so you can well imagine how a young girl enjoyed watching this display."

Some might have viewed the marriage of Muhammad and 'A'isha as an exceptional marriage, but then the two partners were exceptional people. The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was the last of the Prophets and the best of creation; and 'A'isha was a very intelligent and observant young girl with a very good memory. 'A'isha

(may Allah be pleased with her) spent the next nine years of her life with the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and she grew into womanhood, she remembered all that she saw and heard with great clarity, for to be the wife of the Prophet was even more than extraordinary. So much happened around him - the Quran continued to be revealed, ayat by ayat, and people's hearts were constantly being turned over and transformed, including hers and she was a witness of so much of all that took place. It is not surprising, therefore, that a great deal of the knowledge that we still have today, about how our beloved Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) lived and behaved, was first remembered and then taught to others by 'A'isha. It is thanks to this exceptional marriage, between a man nearing the end of his life and a woman still near the beginning of hers, that we know so much about the both of them, and this is what makes it so much easier for those who wish to follow in their footsteps to try and follow their example.

Whereas Khadijah was already a wise and mature woman when she married the Prophet Muhammad, 'A'isha was a spirited young girl who still had a great deal to learn when she married the Prophet, (may Allah be pleased with her, and peace be upon him) she was very quick to learn, however, for she had a clear heart, and a quick mind and an accurate memory. She was not afraid to talk back in order to find out the truth or make it known, and whenever she beat someone else in argument, the Prophet would smile and say, "She is the daughter of Abu Bakr!" Musa ibn Talha once said, "I have not seen anyone more eloquent than 'A'isha." 'A'isha (may Allah be pleased with her) became so wise that one of her contemporaries used to say that if the knowledge of 'A'isha were placed on one side of the scales that of all other women on the other, 'A'isha's side would outweigh the other. She used to sit with the other women and pass on the knowledge that she had received from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and long after he had died, and as long as she lived, she was a source of knowledge and wisdom for both women and men. Abu Musa once said, "Whenever a report appeared doubtful to us, the Companions of the Prophet, and we asked 'A'isha about it, we always learned something from her about it."

On one occasion, the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to her, "O 'A'isha, here is Jibril giving you greetings of peace." "And on him be peace." She said, 'and the mercy of Allah.' When she was telling Abu Salama about this, she added, "He (meaning the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)) sees what I do not see." As well as being extremely intelligent, 'A'isha became a very graceful young woman. When she first came to live in the Prophet's household as a young girl, a strong and lasting friendship grew up between her and Sawda, and Sawda took care of her along with the rest of the household. When 'A'isha grew up, Sawda, who was by then an old woman, gave up her share of the Prophet's time in favor of 'A'isha and was content to manage his household and be Umm al Mumineen - 'The Mother of the Believers' - a title of respect that was given to all of the wives of the Prophet, (may Allah be pleased with them), which confirmed what the Quran clearly states that no man could marry any of them after they had been married to the Prophet for:

The Prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves, and his wives are as their mothers. (Qur'an: 33:6) O you wives of the Prophet, if any of you is openly indecent, the punishment for her will be doubled - and that is easy for Allah. And whoever of you submits to Allah and

His Messenger has right action, We shall give her a reward twice over and We have prepared a generous provision for her. O you wives of the Prophet, you are not like any other women. If you are fearful of Allah then do not be soft in speech, lest someone whose heart is sick is attracted to you, but speak words that are wise. And stay quietly in your houses, do not make a dazzling display like that of the time of ignorance before and establish prayer and pay the Zakat and obey Allah and His Messenger. Surely Allah wishes to remove impurity far from you, O People of the House, and to purify you completely. And remember that ayahs of Allah that are recited in your houses and the wisdom. Surely Allah is Allpervading, All Aware. (Quran 33:30-34) It is sometimes difficult to picture what life must have been like for the wives and the Companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) because the light that emanated from him and through them was so unique. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had no shadow because he was light and this light illuminated the hearts and minds and understanding of his followers, giving them insight without blinding them. The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was truly a mercy to all the worlds, and no one with a clean heart could possibly forget this, least of all the Prophet himself. O Prophet, surely We have sent you as a witness and as a bringer of good news and a warner; and one who calls the people to Allah by His permission, and as a shining light. (Quran 33:45-46) It is said that people were awed by the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) when they were in his presence, and that they sat and listened to his words with their eyes lowered, as if they had birds perched on their heads, and that they would do anything for him, so great was their love for him. It was because of the perfection of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that everyone was commanded to ask blessings on him:-Allah and His angels pray blessings on the Prophet; O you who believe! Pray blessings of him and ask for peace for him. (Quran 33:56) It was because of the Prophet Muhammad's unique station with Allah that his wives and his Companions were expected by Allah to behave with such respect and courtesy towards the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him); and that his wives could not possibly marry anyone else after having been married to him:

When you ask his wives for something, ask them from behind a screen. That is purer for your hearts and for their hearts. It is not for you to cause injury to the Messenger of Allah, or ever marry his wives after him. To do that would be something dreadful in the sight of Allah. (Quran 33:53) During the nine years that 'A'isha was married to the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) she witnessed many of the great events that shaped the destiny of the first Muslim community of Madina al Munawarra: It was during the course of their marriage that the direction of the qibla was changed from Jerusalem to Mecca, thereby more clearly distinguishing the Muslims from the Jews and the Christians, and it was during the course of their marriage that she must have listened to many of the Jews and the Christians and the idol worshippers who came not to listen to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) but to argue with him, in the hope that they could find a plausible excuse to justify their rejection of him. It was through exchange such as these that 'A'isha learned to distinguish what was true from what was false. As the prophetic guidance continued to be revealed through the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), 'A'isha's way of life - along with that of all the Muslims - was gradually reshaped

and refined: It was during the course of their marriage that drinking alcohol was finally forbidden, that it was made clear what food was halal and what food was haram, that it became necessary for women to wear the hijab in public and when praying, that the guidance as to how to fast was revealed, that paying the Zakat became obligatory on all Muslims, and that all rites of the hajj were purified and clarified.

In fact every aspect of life, from birth to death and everything that happens in between, was illuminated by the way in which the Prophet behaved - and it was this way of behavior, the Sunna, that 'A'isha helped to preserve and protect, not only by embodying it herself, but also by teaching it to others. 'A'isha was once asked to describe the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and she replied that he was 'the Quran walking', meaning that his behavior was the Quran translated into action. She did all that she could to do likewise. Thus she not only knew and embodied the Sunna, but also she memorized the Quran by heart and understood it. It was during the course of their marriage that, amongst others, the battles of Badr, and Uhud, and Al-Khandaq (the Ditch) were fought. These were the three major battles against the Quraish, that shifted the balance of power out of the hands of the kafirun and into the hands of the Muslims. Although she was still very young, 'A'isha participated in them all, bringing water for the Muslims warriors, and helping to look after the wounded. She witnessed life, and she witnessed death - both in the way of Allah and in the way of the kafirun - and she understood both. Indeed one of the meanings of her name, 'A'isha', is 'life'. It was during the course of their marriage that the Jews plotted and tried to kill the Prophet on more than one occasion, without success, and were punished for this. First the Banu Qayunqa and then the Banu Nadir were expelled from Medina; and then Banu Qurayza - who had broken their agreement with the Muslims during the battle of al-Khandaq and conspired to exterminate all of them - were subjected to the punishment that was decided by the man whom they themselves had chosen to judge their actions, Sa'id ibn Mu'adh. In accordance with the commands contained in their own book, the Torah, all the men were killed - with the exception of four who accepted Islam and all the women and children were taken as slaves. It was after this event that another tribe, the Banu al Mustaliq began to prepare to fight the Muslims, and accordingly the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) led an army against them. Often when the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) went to war, he took one of his wives with him. He did not choose anyone in particular, but simply drew lots and took the wife whose name came out. When he went to fight the Banu al-Mustaliq, the lot fell to 'A'isha, and she it was who traveled with him.

'A'isha who was now thirteen years old, was small, slim, and graceful, so that it was difficult for the men who carried her litter to know for certain whether or not she was actually inside it when they lifted it up. On the way back to Medina, after the Banu al Mustaliq had been subdued, the Muslim army stopped for a rest, but then the Prophet unexpectedly ordered the army to continue the march back. Unknown to everyone else, 'A'isha had stepped out of her litter for a few minutes and had left the camp, seeking some privacy. On her way back she had noticed that her onyx necklace was missing and so she retraced her steps to try and find it. When she had at last found it finally returned to the camp, it was to find that everyone had gone. The men who had been carrying her litter had thought she was still in it, and had picked

it up, strapped it to the camel and marched on. 'A'isha, who trusted completely in Allah, sat down, and waited, hoping that someone would notice her absence and come back for her. Fortunately she did not have long to wait, for a young Muslim man named Safwan ibn al-Mu'attal, who had fallen behind the army after taking a rest, reached the camp during the night and found her lying fast asleep. Safwan immediately recognizing her, because he had seen her in the early days before Allah had commanded Muslim women to wear the hijab.

"Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un!" - "Surely we come from Allah and surely to Him we return!" he exclaimed in surprise, waking 'A'isha up with the loudness of his voice. He did not say anything else, and 'A'isha put the scarf that had fallen off her head while she was asleep back on, Safwan made his camel kneel down close to her so that she could climb up on to it; and then, leading the camel with his hand, he set off on foot after the army, hoping that they would soon catch up with it which they eventually did later the next morning, since the army had halted for a rest during the hottest part of the day. Unfortunately, some hypocrites who had seen Safwan and 'A'isha arrive alone together began to gossip and spread slanderous lies about them. Eventually the story reached the Prophet himself (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and by then the whole community was talking about what might or might now have happened before the two young Muslims. Naturally the muminun were certain that nothing bad had happened, but the munafiqun thought otherwise and were not afraid to insinuate that was the case. As a result of all this gossip, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his household came under a great strain, and in fact 'A'isha herself fell ill, not because she was aware of what the hypocrites were saying about her, but because the Prophet did not seem to care for her as much as he had done before the campaign against the Banu al Mustaliq. Finally, someone told her what some people were saying. This made 'A'isha even more ill, so with the Prophet's permission, she went to stay at the house of her parents. When she arrived, she said to her mother, Umm Ruman, "Mother! What are the people saying?" She replied "O my daughter! Do not make too much of the business. By Allah, seldom has there been a woman of beauty with a husband who loves her and who has co wives but that people say a lot against her." 'A'isha said, "Glory be to Allah! The people have really been saying this?" 'A'isha said, "I have spent the entire night until morning unable to stop weeping and could not sleep at all. Morning found me still weeping." In the meantime, when Safwan was confronted with the allegations that had been made, he replied, "Glory be to Allah! By Allah, I have never removed the veil of any woman!" Since there had been no revelation to clarify the matter, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) asked Barira, who was 'A'isha's maid servant, if she had seen anything in 'A'isha's behavior that was at all doubtful. "By Him who sent you with the truth," she replied, "I have not seen anything wrong with her, other than that she is a young girl and sometimes she falls asleep while she is kneading the dough and a lamb comes along and eats it!" Some of the companions who were present scolded Barira and told her to come to the point. "Glory be to Allah!" she replied. "I know as much about her as a jeweler knows about a piece of pure gold!"

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also asked Zaynab bint Jahsh for her opinion, since he valued it highly. Although she and 'A'isha were frequently at odds with one

another and Zaynab's sister Hamna, was the one of those who were actively gossiping and spreading the rumor, she replied without hesitation, "O Messenger of Allah," she said, "I will not repeat anything that I have not heard with my own ears and seen with my own eyes. By Allah, I find nothing in her but goodness." The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) then tried to vindicate A'isha's honor by calling everyone to the mosque and publicly defending her reputation, but the hypocrites who had started the trouble in the first place only made matter worse, so that arguments broke out all over the mosque, and people had almost come to blows over the matter before the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) calmed them down and silenced them. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) then came to Abu Bakr's house, where A'isha had been crying her heart out, and in the presence of her parents said the shahada, and then continued, "If you are innocent, then Allah Himself will protect your honor, and if by accident there has been a lapse on your part, then seek the forgiveness of Allah and He will pardon you, for when a slave admits a fault and turns to Him in repentance, then Allah also turns and accepts that repentance."

A'isha said, "When the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) finished what he was saying, my tears stopped so that I was not aware of a single tear. I said to my father, 'Answer the Messenger of Allah for me regarding what he has said.' He said, 'By Allah, I do not know what to say to the Messenger of Allah,' I said to my mother, 'Answer the Messenger of Allah for me regarding what he has said.' She said, 'By Allah, I do not know what to say to the Messenger of Allah.'"

A'isha said, "I am a young girl who does not yet recite much of the Qur'an. By Allah, I know that you have heard this story that people are saying and it has become fixed in yourself and you have believed it. If I were to say to you that I am innocent, you would not believe me. If I were to confess to something to you and Allah knows that I am innocent you would believe me. By Allah, I can only say what the father of Yusuf said, Patience is beautiful, and Allah is my protection against what you describe. (Quran 12:18)" Then I turned over on my bed, Allah knowing that I was innocent and hoping that Allah would proclaim me innocent. However, by Allah, I did not think that any relation would be sent down regarding me. I thought too little of myself that something would be said in the Qur'an regarding me, however I hoped that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would have a dream in which Allah would exonerate me. She had hardly finished speaking when the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) received a direct revelation of some more ayahs of the Qur'an, and when it was over, he smiled and said, "Do not worry, 'A'isha, for Allah has revealed proof of your innocence."

A'isha's mother, who had been standing next to her, said, "Get up and thank him." "By Allah," exclaimed A'isha, whose title, 'Siddiqah', means 'the truthful one', "I will not thank him and praise him but rather Allah Who has given the revelation that has protected my honor!" Then the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) went to the mosque and recited what had just been sent down: Surely those who fabricate the lie are a group from among you. Do not think it is bad thing for you; no it is good for you. Every man will receive what he has earned for this sin, and whoever had the greater part in it will have a great punishment. Why did the men and women believers, when they heard it, not think good in their selves and say:

'This is clearly a lie?' Why did they not produce four witnesses? Since they did not produce witnesses, they are certainly liars in the sight of Allah. If it were not for the grace of Allah, and His mercy on you in this world and in the next world, an awful doom would have overtaken you for what you repeated. Since you received it with your tongues, and repeated what you did not know anything about with your mouths, you thought it was a trifle, but in the sight of Allah it is serious. Why, when you heard it, did you not say: 'It is not for us to repeat this, Glory be to You (O Allah), this is a serious rumor.' Allah warns you to never repeat anything like this again, if you are indeed believers and Allah makes the signs clear to you; and Allah is Knowing, Wise. Surely those who love to spread around slander about those who believe will have a painful punishment in this world and in the next world; and Allah knows and you do not know. (Quran 24:11-19). A'isha forgave those who had let themselves be caught in the slander and in later years would not hear anything bad said about them. The fact that A'isha's honor and reputation had been protected by a revelation from Allah could not be ignored by anyone, and from then on everyone was more aware of her high station with Allah. It was also during the course of A'isha's marriage with the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that the Muslim community expanded so rapidly that Mecca was eventually conquered by the Muslim army, and preparations were made for the first of the many battles that were successfully fought against the Greeks and the Persians after the letters from Muhammad inviting Heraclius and Choroës to embrace Islam and worship Allah alone had been contemptuously ignored. This extraordinary expansion - even the idea of which would, at the time of Khadijah's death (may Allah be pleased with her) have seemed like a wild dream was heralded, in 6 AH, by the treaty of Hudaibiyya, by virtue of which peace was declared between the Quraish and the Muslims for ten years, and the right of the Muslims to enter Mecca and do 'umra unharmed was recognized by the Quraish. Although the Muslims had to wait for a year before they could do umra, that year was not long in passing, and in the interval the Jews of Khaybar, who like the other Jews around Madina had attempted to destroy the Muslim community by breaking their peace agreement with the Muslims and supporting the idol worshippers were fought and defeated. After the Jews of Khaybar had been defeated, a Jewess managed to serve the Prophet some poisoned meat, which itself informed him that it had been poisoned, so that he only had a small taste of it. Even though one of his companions who had already eaten some of the meat subsequently died, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) forgave the Jewess and let her go free. The Jews of Khaybar were permitted to stay on their land provided that they paid a yearly tribute to the Muslims. As a result, some of the Muslims began to grow more wealthy than they had been in the past. Indeed on one occasion, the Prophet's wives, led by 'A'isha and Hafsa, asked him for some money that he did not have for there was never one night that he lay down to sleep with any money in his possession. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was distressed by this not because he did not have the money to give to them, but rather because it was this that apparently they desired.

At this time, both Abu Bakr and Umar visited him and they found the Messenger of Allah seated, surrounded by his wives who were all silent. Abu Bakr said to himself, "By Allah, I will say something to cheer up the Messenger of Allah!" So he said, "Messenger of Allah, if I

were to see the daughter of Kharija asking me for money, I would strike her on the neck!" The Messenger of Allah smiled and said, 'These ones you see around me have asked me for money.' SO Abu Bakr went to grab A'isha and Umar went to grab Hafsa, both exclaiming, "DO you ask the Messenger of Allah for something he does not have!" The women said, "By Allah, we would never ask the Messenger of Allah for something he does not have!" This was not the only marital problem which he experienced at this time. There was a great deal of rivalry between some of the wives and also Hafsa had told A'isha something which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had told her not to disclose because it was something which would increase the friction between the wives. Some sources say that he had told her that Abu Bakr and Umar would rule after him. In any case, he stayed away from them for a whole month, during which many of his Companions began to think either that he was going to divorce them or that he had already done so. IT is related by Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) that he went to visit the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who was staying alone in a small upper room, in order to find out what was happening. First of all he visited his daughter Hafsa, who was weeping, and asked her if the Prophet had divorced his wives. "I don't know," she sobbed. Then he went and asked to see the Prophet. After he had been given permission to enter, Umar climbed up the ladder and into the small room: "I visited Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and he was lying on a mat. I saw down and he drew up his lower garment over him. He had nothing else on, and the mat had left its marks on his sides. I looked around at what stores Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had, and saw only a handful of barley equal to one sa' and an equal amount of mimosa leaves in the corner of the room and tanned leather bag hanging nearby, and I as moved to tears. HE said, 'Ibn al Khattab, what is making you cry?' I replied, 'O Messenger of Allah, how can I not cry? This mat has left marks on your sides and I can only see what I have seen of your stores. Caesar and Chosroes are leading their lives of plenty, while you are the Messenger of Allah, His Chosen One, and look what you have!' 'Ibn al Khattab,' he answered, 'isn't it enough for you that for us there is the next world, and for them there is this world?' 'Yes,' I said. Then I said, 'O Messenger of Allah, what has happened with your wives? If you have divorced them, then truly Allah is with you, and His angels, Jibril and Mika'il, and Abu Bakr and I and the believers are with you.' And seldom have I talked like that and hoped that Allah would testify to the words that I uttered. And so it happened that the ayahs of choice were revealed: If you both turn to Allah in repentance, then that is what your hearts desire; and if you help each other against him then surely Allah Himself is his protector, and Jibril, and the righteous from among the believers, and as well as that, the angels will help him. It maybe, if he divorces you, that his Lord will give him wives who are better than you, who submit, who believe, who are devout, who are repentant, who worship, who fast, whether they have been previously married or are virgins. (Quran 66:4-5)

In fact the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) never divorced any of his wives, and as we grow more aware about how they lived, may Allah be pleased with all of them, it is clear that they possessed all of the qualities of the women described in the last ayat. Perhaps this ayat served as a reminder to them, a reminder that they would remember for the rest of their days which for most of them lasted long after the Prophet's

(peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) death. Returning to Sayyiduna Umar's account of his visit to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) during the month of separation from his wives, Umar then asked, "O Messenger of Allah, have you divorced them?" and he replied, "No." So after talking for a while longer and how in Mecca the men tended to dominate the women, whereas in Medina the women tended to dominate the men, which is what the womenfolk from Mecca had learned to do after they had made hijrah to Medina - Umar climbed down and stood at the door of the mosque and called out at the top of his voice: "The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has not divorced his wives!" After the month was up, the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) first went to A'isha's room. She was delighted to see him, but grew more serious when he said that some ayahs had been revealed to him which required him to put two options before her. "Do not make a hasty decision," he said, "and consult your parents first." He then recited these verses:--O Prophet, say to your wives: 'If you desire the life of this world and its adornments, then come, and I will make you content, and I will release you with a fair release. But if you desire Allah and His Messenger and the abode of the next world, then truly Allah has prepared an immense reward for those of you who do good.' (Quran 33:28-29) "Is there any need to consult my parents?" replied A'isha. "Indeed I desire Allah and His Messenger and the abode of the next world." And her response was followed by all of his other wives. A'isha remained true to her word both during the lifetime of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and afterwards. Once, when the Muslims were favored with great wealth, she as given a gift of one hundred thousand Dhirhams. She was fasting when she received the money, and distall of it to the poor and needy, even though she had no provisions in her house. Shortly after that, her maid servant said to her, "Couldn't you have brought a dirham's worth of meat with which to break your fast?" "If I had thought of it," she replied, "I would have done so!" After a year had passed following the treaty of Hudaibiyya, the Muslims traveled to Mecca and they were able to complete all the rites of the umra, doing everything as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did it. In accordance with the terms of the treaty, the Muslims left after three days, when their umra had been completed. Not long after this, the Prophet sent an army of three thousand Muslims northwards to the borders of the Byzantine territories in what is now Palestine to chastise the tribes there for killing the messengers whom he had sent to call them to Islam. The tribes called on the Emperor Herclius for support, and when the Muslim army arrived at Muta, they found themselves facing an army of two thousand men. Many of the Muslims died as shahids on the day of the battle, but thanks to the tactics of Khalid bin Walid, the Greeks withdrew the next day, and so the Muslims were able to return to Medina relatively unscathed. When the news of the battle of Muta finally reached Mecca, the Quraish mistakenly believed that the Muslims had been thoroughly defeated by the Greeks and decided to renew their opposition to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). In doing so, they deliberately broke their treaty that they had made at Hudaibiiya, by allowing their allies to attack and kill some of the allies of the Muslims who lived near Mecca. Accordingly the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) marched on Mecca at the head of an army of ten thousand Muslims. Despite everyone's fears, he conquered it with hardly a drop of blood being spilled. As always, the mercy and forgiveness that he displayed towards those who had relentlessly opposed him for so many years changed

people's hearts, and many of the people of Mecca now embraced Islam as a result. Having pardoned all of the Quraish, with the exception of four men who had all committed murder for personal reasons, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) smashed all the idols and destroyed all the paintings that had been placed inside the Ka'ba by the idol-worshippers. The sanctity of the sanctuary of Mecca had been restored, and at long last the Muslims were free to come and go in Mecca as they pleased.

In the midst of the peace and rejoicing, however, news came that the tribes of Hawazin and Thaqif were preparing to attack the Muslims. The Muslim army that had conquered Mecca, swelled to twelve thousand by some of the men from the Quraish who had just embraced Islam, marched to a place called Hunayn. For the first time in their experience, the Muslims actually outnumbered the enemy, of whom there were only about four thousand. This nearly proved to be the Muslims' undoing, for many of them felt secure because of their large numbers rather than because of the reliance on Allah. When the enemy suddenly attacked at dawn, showering down arrows from the hills, the Muslims were taken by surprise and many began to flee. A small group stood firm with the Prophet, one of whom was Umm Sulaym bint Milhan, the wife of Abu Talha. Although she was pregnant at the time, she had armed herself with a dagger to use against the kafirun. Fortunately the strong Muslims rallied round the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and although there were only six hundred of them, their concerted effort, fighting valiantly in the way of Allah, turned the tide of the battle until those who had turned away in the initial panic and confusion had returned and the battle was won. After the battle of Hunayn, the only continued resistance to the Muslims was from the north and north-east, from the Byzantine and Persian Empires. Having heard that the Greeks were preparing a huge army of thirty thousand men and marched out in the heat of the late summer to do battle with them. After a long, hard, hot march, the Muslim army reached Tabuk, and here they learned that the Greeks had retreated back to their own territory. Accordingly, having made peace treaties with all the border tribes, the Muslims returned to Medina, in time for many of them to go on the pilgrimage to Mecca. Those who had made weak excuses in order to avoid going on the expedition to Tabuk now felt great shame and regret.

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself did not go on the pilgrimage this year, for people were coming to Medina from all over the Arab lands to embrace Islam and to pledge allegiance to him. It was this year that came to be known as 'the Year of the Delegations', during which, at one point, the Prophet became so exhausted from seeing people that he had to pray sitting down. So instead, Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) led the pilgrims. It was during this hajj that the ayat in the Quran that forbade the idol worshippers from ever entering the sanctuary of Mecca again were revealed; they were made public during the hajj by Ali ibn Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) who was sent straight from Medina to Mecca as soon as they had been revealed, so that as many people as possible would hear them. The following year, when the time for the pilgrimage drew near, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) announced that he was going on the hajj, and as a result everyone wanted to do it with him. The Muslims who did not live in or near Medina either first traveled to Medina in order to accompany him on the journey to

Mecca, or else traveled to Mecca from every part of Arabia and joined him there. Amongst the people on what has become known as 'the Farewell Pilgrimage' of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was A'isha, for the Prophet asked all of his wives, may Allah be pleased with them, to accompany him, to ensure that they all fulfilled this particular obligation that every Muslim owes to his or her Lord. It was an extraordinary pilgrimage. There never had been, and there never has been, and there never will be, another hajj quite like it, for at its heart was the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and around him were his family and Companions, may the blessings and peace of Allah be on them, and during it the ayat of the Qur'an was revealed:--This day I have perfected your deen for you and have completed My blessing on you, and have chosen Islam for you as your deen. (Quran 5:3) It was also during this hajj that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) gave his famous Farewell Khutba, whose words still ring in our ears and echo in our hearts all these centuries later. When he had finished speaking to the thousands upon thousands of Muslims who were gathered around him on the plain of Arafah, he raised his voice slightly and asked, "My Lord, have I delivered the message?" And thousands upon thousands of voices from all around him answered his question: "Yes, you have." And many of those who were present passed on that message to those who were not present, and so it has continued, right up until today. And one of those who was present was A'isha, of whom the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) once said, "Learn some of your deen from this red haired lady." Meaning A'isha.

This is not surprising, for she is one of the four people who have transmitted more than two thousand hadiths, the others being Abu Hurairah, Abdullah ibn Umar, and Anas ibn Malik. Many of these are about some of the most intimate aspects of personal behavior and hygiene which only someone in A'isha's position could have learned. It was during the course of his marriage with A'isha that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) married several other wives, usually to strengthen ties between important families and tribes, or to relieve the hardship of a woman who had been unexpectedly divorced or widowed, or in order to clearly demonstrate whom it was permissible for a Muslim to marry, but above all because all of his marriages had been decreed by Allah, and because all of his wives were exceptional women.

HAFSA bint Umar

Hafsa, may Allah be pleased with her, was the daughter of Sayyiduna Umar ibn al Khattab. She had been married to someone else, but was widowed when she was still very young, only eighteen. Umar asked both Abu Bakr and Uthman ibn Affan, one after another, if they would like to marry her, but they both declined because they knew that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had expressed an interest in marrying her. When Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) went to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to complain about their behavior, the Prophet smiled, and said, "Hafsa will marry one better than Uthman and Uthman will marry one better than Hafsa." Umar was startled and then realized that it was the Prophet who was asking for her hand in marriage. HE was overcome with

delight. They were married just after the battle of Badr, when Hafsa was about twenty years old and the Prophet as fifty-six. By this marriage, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) strengthened the ties between two of his closest Companions, the two who would become the first two rightly guided khalifs after his death. He was now married to the daughter of Abu Bakr, A'isha and to the daughter of Umar, Hafsa. Two of the other closest Companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who would become the third and fourth Rightly guided Khalifs were also connected to the Prophet through marriage. Uthman ibn Affan (may Allah be pleased with him) married Ruqayya, then daughter of the Prophet, in Mecca, and then, after her death in Medina, soon after the battle of Badr, he had married Umm Khulthum, also the daughter of the Prophet. It was because he married two of the daughters of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that Uthman was given the title of Dhun Nurayn, which means 'the possessor of two lights'. And Ali ibn Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) had married Fatima, the youngest daughter of the Prophet, shortly before the Prophet had married A'isha.

Hafsa, like A'isha with whom she became close friends, was never at a loss for words, and was not afraid to argue with the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who was content to allow her to say what she thought. One day, while speaking to Hafsa's mother Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "I think I shall so and so." Whereupon his wife replied, "But it would be better if you did such and such." "Are you arguing with me, woman?" said Umar who was a fierce man who did not expect his wives to talk back at him. "Why not?" she answered. "Your daughter keeps arguing with the Messenger of Allah until she upsets him for the whole day." Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) immediately put on his cloak and went directly to his daughter's house. "Is it true that you argue with the Messenger of Allah?" he asked. "Indeed I do." She replied. Umar was just about to chastise her for what he considered were bad manners, when the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) came into the room and would not allow him to even touch her. So Umar went round to visit Umm Salama, to whom Umar was related in order to try and influence Hafsa's behavior through her. "I wonder at you, Ibn Khattab," she said, after she had listened to him. "You have interfered in everything. Will you now interfere between the Messenger of Allah and his wives?" Sayiduna Umar when relating this incident, continued, "And she kept after me until she made me give up much of what I thought proper." Some sources say that the Prophet divorced Hafsa with a single divorce and that Umar was heart broken when this happened and began to throw dust on his head. Then the Prophet took her back after Jibril had descended and said to him. "Take Hafsa back. She fasts and prays and she will be your wife in the Garden." Like A'isha, Hafsa memorized the entire Qur'an by heart. The written copy of the Qur'an which was recorded by Zayd ibn Thabit on Abu Bakr's instructions, and which was then given to Umar for safekeeping, was then given by Umar to Hafsa to look after. When Uthman eventually became the khalif, he instructed several written copies of the Qur'an to be made so that they could be sent to the main centers of the now rapidly expanding Muslim empire, and it was the copy in Hafsa's keeping that was used, after it had been meticulously checked for its accuracy by referring to all the other written records of the Qur'an and to all the Muslims who knew the Qur'an by heart.

Hafsa lived with the Prophet in Medina for eight years, may Allah bless him and grant him peace and lived on for another thirty four years after his death, witnessing with joy the victories and expansion of Islam under her father's guidance, and with sorrow the troubles that beset the Muslim community after the murder of Uthman. She died in 47 AH at the age of sixty-three. May Allah be pleased with her.

ZAYNAB bint Khuzayma

Zaynab bint Khuzayma, may Allah be pleased with her, was married to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in Ramadan, 4 AH, soon after his marriage to Hafsa when he was fifty-six years old and she was thirty years old. After she had been made a widow when her husband was martyred at Badr, she offered herself in marriage to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who accepted her proposal and married her. Zaynab bint Khuzayma was so generous to orphans and the poor that she came to be known as the 'Mother of the Poor'. She died only eight months after her marriage, may Allah be pleased with her, and although not a great deal is known about her today, there will be many who will testify to her generosity on the Last Day.

UMM SALAMA HIND bint Abi Umayya

Umm Salama Hind bint Abi Umayya, may Allah be pleased with her, was married to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in 4 AH at the age of twenty nine, after her first husband, Abdullah ibn Abdul Asad, had died from the wounds he had received while fighting at the battle of Uhud. Umm Salama and Abdal Asad had been among the first people to embrace Islam in the early days of the Muslim community in Mecca. They had suffered at the hands of the Quraish who had tried to force them to abandon their new faith, and had been among the first group of Muslims to seek refuge under the protection of the Negus in Abyssinia. When they had returned to Mecca, believing that the situation of the Muslims had improved, they had found instead that if anything it was worse. Rather than return to Abyssinia, Abdal Asad and Umm Salama had received the Prophet's permission to immigrate to Medina, but this proved not to be as easy as they might have imagined.

In the words of Umm Salama: "When Abu Salama (my husband) decided to leave for Medina, he prepared a camel for me, lifted me up onto it and put my son Salama on my lap. My husband then took the lead and went straight ahead without stopping or waiting for anything. Before we were out of Mecca, however, some men from my tribe, the Banu Mahkhzum, stopped us and said to my husband: "Although you may be free to do what you like with yourself, you have no power over your wife. She is our daughter. DO you expect us to allow you to take her away from us?" They then grabbed hold of him and snatched me away from him. Some men from my husband's tribe, the Banu Abdul Asad, saw them taking both me and my child and became hot with rage: "No, by Allah!" They shouted. 'We shall not abandon the boy. He is our son and we have a rightful claim over him.' So they took him by his arm and pulled him away from me. Suddenly, in the space of a few minutes, I found myself all alone. My husband headed out towards Medina by himself; his tribe had snatched away my son from me; and my own tribe had overpowered me and forced me to stay with them. From the day that my husband and my son were parted from me, I went out at noon

every day and sat at the spot where this tragedy had occurred. I would remember those terrifying moments and weep until nightfall. "I continued like this for a year or so until one day a man from the Banu Umayya passed by and saw my condition. He went to my tribe and said, 'Why don't you free this woman? You have caused both her husband and her son to be taken away from her.' He went on like this, trying to soften their hearts and appealing to their emotions, until at last they said to me, 'Go and join your husband if you wish.' But how could I join my husband in Medina, and leave my son, part of my own flesh and blood, in Mecca among the Banu Abdul Asad? How could I remain free from anguish, and my eyes free from tears, if I were to reach the place of hijrah not knowing anything of my little son left behind in Mecca?

"Some people realized what I was going through and their hearts went out to me. They approached the Banu Abdul Asad on my behalf and persuaded them to return my son. I had no desire to remain in Mecca until I could find someone to travel with me, for I was afraid that something might happen that would delay me or stop me from reaching my husband. So I immediately prepared my camel, placed my son on my lap, and set out in the direction of Medina. I just had just reached Tan'im (3 miles from Mecca) when I met Uthman ibn Talha (He as in charge of looking after the Ka'ba, but did not embrace Islam until the Conquest of Mecca). "'Were are you going, Bint Zad ar Rakib?' he asked. 'I am going to my husband in Medina.' 'And isn't there anyone going with you?' 'No, by Allah, except Allah and my little boy here.' 'By Allah,' he vowed, 'I will not leave you until you reach Medina.' He then took the reins of my camel and led us on our way. By Allah, I have never met an Arab more generous and noble than he. Whenever we reached a resting-place, he would make my camel kneel down, wait until I had dismounted and then lead the camel to a tree and tether it. Then he would go and rest in the shade of a different tree to me. When we had rested, he would get the camel ready again and then lead us on our way. This he did every day until we reached Medina. When we reached a village near Quba (about two miles from Medina), belonging to the Banu Amr ibn Awf, he said, 'Your husband is in this village. Enter it with the blessings of Allah.' Then he turned round and headed back to Mecca."

Thus after many difficult months of separation, Umm Salama and her son were reunited with Abu Salama, and in the next few years that followed, they were always near the heart of the growing Muslim community of Medina al Munawarra. They were present when the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) arrived safely from Mecca, and at the battle of Badr Abu Salama fought bravely. At the battle of Uhud, however, he was badly wounded. At first his wound appeared to respond well to treatment, but then his wounds re opened after an expedition against the Banu Abdul Asad, and after that they refused to heal and he remained bedridden. Once while Umm Salama was nursing him, he said to her, "I once heard the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that whenever a calamity afflicts anyone he should say what Allah has commanded him to say: 'Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un!' 'Surely we come from Allah and surely to Him we return!' and then he should say, 'O Lord, reward me for my affliction and give me something better than it in return, which only You, the Exalted the Mighty, can

give." Abu Salama remained sick in bed for several days. One morning the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) came to see him. The visit was longer than usual, and while the Prophet was still at his bedside, Abu Salama died. With his blessed hands, the Prophet closed the eyes of his dead Companion and then raised them in prayer. "O Allah, grant forgiveness to Abu Salama; elevate him among those who are near to You; take charge of his family at all times; forgive us and him, O Lord of the worlds; make his grave spacious for him and fill it with light. Amin."

Once again Umm Salama was alone, only now she had not one child, but several. There was no one to look after her and them. Recalling what her husband had told her while she was looking after him, she repeated the dua'a that he had remembered: "Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un!" "Surely we come from Allah and surely to Him we return!" she repeated. "O Lord, reward me for my affliction and give me something better than it in return, which only You, the Exalted and Mighty, can give." Then she thought to herself, "What Muslim is better than Abu Salama whose family was the first to emigrate to the Messenger of Allah?" All the Muslims in Medina were aware of Umm Salama's situation, and when her idda period of four months and ten days were over, Abu Bakr proposed marriage to her, but she refused. Then Umar asked her to marry him, but again she refused. Then the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself asked for her hand in marriage. "O Messenger of Allah," Umm Salama replied, "I have three main characteristics: I am a woman who is extremely jealous and I am afraid that you will see something in me that will make you angry and cause Allah to punish me; I am a woman who is already advanced in age; and I am a woman who has many children." "As for your jealousy," answered the Prophet, "I pray to Allah the Almighty to take it away from you. As for your age, I am older than you. As for your many children, they belong to Allah and His Messenger." The Prophet's answer eased her heart, and so they were married in Shawwal, 4 AH, and so it was that Allah answered the prayer of Umm Salama and gave her better than Abu Salama. From that day on, Umm Salama was not only the mother of Salama, but also became the 'Mother of the Believers' 'Umm al Muminin'.

Umm Salama was not the only wife to have been widowed as a result of the battle of Uhud, and thanks to this marriage, many of the Companions followed the Prophet's example, marrying widows and thereby bringing them and their children into the circle of their families, instead of leaving them to struggle on their own.

A'isha said, "When the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) married Umm Salama, I felt very unhappy when he mentioned her beauty to us. I waited until I saw her and she was even more beautiful than her description." She was also from a very noble family and known for her keen intelligence. On more than one occasion, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) asked her advice in tricky situations. Like A'isha and Hafsa, Umm Salama learned the whole of the Qur'an by heart, and an indication of her high station with Allah can be found in the fact that she was permitted to see the angel Jibril in human form: It has been related by Salman that Jibril came to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) while Umm Salama was with him, and had a

conversation with him. After Jibril had left, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to Umm Salama, "Do you know who that was?" and she replied that it was a man called Dihya al Khalbi. "By Allah," said Umm Salama, "I didn't think it was anyone else until the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) told me who it really was." She also had a home for her four children: Salama, Umar, Zaynab, and Durra who were the foster children of the Prophet. Once she was with the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) with her daughter Zaynab when Fatima came with al Hasan and al Husayn. He embraced his two grandsons and said, "may the mercy and blessings of Allah be upon you, People of the House. He is Praiseworthy, Glorious." Umm Salama began to weep and the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) looked at her and asked tenderly, "Why are you weeping?" She replied, "O Messenger of Allah, you singled them out and left me and my daughter!" He said, "You and your daughter are among the People of the House." Her daughter Zaynab grew up in the care of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and became one of the most intelligent women of her time. Once Zaynab came in while the Prophet was bathing and he splashed water in her face. Afterwards her face retained its youthfulness even into her old age.

Her son Salama later married Umama, the daughter of Hamza, the martyred uncle of the Prophet. Umm Salama was married to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) for seven years until his death in 10 AH and accompanied him on many of his expeditions: Hudaibiyya, Khaybar, the Conquest of Mecca, the siege of Ta'if, the expedition against Hawazin and Thaqif, and the Farewell Hajj. She continued to live for a long time, outliving all the other wives of the Prophet, may Allah be pleased with them, until she died in 61 AH, at the age of eighty four, may Allah be pleased with her, and Abu Hurairah said the funeral prayer over her.

ZAYNAB bint Jahsh

Zaynab bint Jahsh, may Allah be pleased with her, married the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in 5 AH, when she was thirty-five and the Prophet was fifty-eight, but only after her previous marriage, which had been arranged by the Prophet himself, had ended in divorce. As with all the marriages of the Prophet Muhammad, there was much for all the Muslims to learn from it. Zaynab bint Jahsh was the Prophet Muhammad's cousin, her mother Umayma being the daughter of Abdul Muttalib, Muhammad's grandfather, who, while he was alive, had ensured the safety of his grandson, thanks to his position as one of the most respected leaders of the Quraish. Thus Zaynab bint Jahsh came from one of the noblest families of the Quraish, and everyone expected her to eventually marry a man with the same high social status.

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was well aware that it is a person's standing in the eyes of Allah that is important, rather than his or her status in the eyes of the people. He wanted her to marry a young man called Zayd ibn Harith, whose background was very different to that of Zaynab bint Jahsh. Zayd had been taken prisoner while he was still a child during one of the inter-tribal wars that had been common before the coming of Islam. He had been sold as a slave to a nephew of Khadijah (may Allah be pleased with her) who

had given Zayd to her as a gift. In turn, Khadijah had given him to the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in the days before the revelation of the Qur'an had begun, and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had given him his freedom and adopted him as his own son, at the age of eight.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had watched both Zayd and Zaynab grow up, and thought they would make a good couple, and that their marriage would demonstrate that it was not who their ancestors were, but rather their standing in the sight of Allah, that mattered. When the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) asked for her hand on behalf of Zayd, Zaynab and her family were shocked at the idea of her marrying a man who in their eyes was only a freed slave. Moreover, Zaynab had wanted to marry the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself and in fact he had already been asked by her family whether or not he would like to marry her. At first both she and her brother refused, but then the following ayat was revealed:--It is not for a believing man or a believing woman, when a matter has been decided by Allah and His Messenger, to have any say in their decision; and whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger has most clearly gone astray. (Quran 33:36)

When Zayd, who had also had misgivings about the proposed match, and Zaynab realized that there was no difference between what the Prophet wanted and what Allah wanted, they both agreed to the marriage, the Prophet providing a handsome dowry for Zaynab on Zayd's behalf. The marriage, however, was not a success. Although both Zaynab and Zayd were the best of people, who loved Allah and His Messenger, they were very different and in the end they could not overcome their incompatibility. Zayd asked the Prophet's permission to divorce Zaynab more than once, and although he was counseled to hold onto his wife and to fear Allah, in the end the divorce took place. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) then was ordered by Allah to marry Zaynab bint Jahsh, while he did in 5 AH, when he was fifty-eight years old, and she was thirty-five years old. In doing so, he demonstrated beyond doubt that in Islam an adopted son is not regarded in the same light as a natural son, and that although a father may never marry a woman whom his natural son has married and then divorced, the father of an adopted son is permitted to marry a woman who was once, but is no longer, married to that adopted son. Furthermore, by marrying Zaynab, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also confirmed that it is permissible for cousins to marry, and , at the same time, Zaynab was given her heart's desire to be married to the Best of Creation. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) received the command to marry Zaynab while he was with A'isha. After he had received the revelation, he smiled and said, "Who will go and give Zaynab the good news?" and he recited the ayat that he had received. Some say that it was Zayd himself who told her the good news. When Zaynab heard the news, she stopped what she was doing and prayed to thank Allah. Afterwards, she was fond of pointing out that her marriage had been arranged by Allah. It was at this point that the Prophet changed her name from Barra to Zaynab.

Zaynab's wedding feast was also the occasion for another ayat of Qur'an to be sent down. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) sacrificed a sheep and then commanded his servant, Anas, to invite the people to partake of it. After they had eaten, two men remained there after the meal chatting. The Messenger of Allah went out and said goodnight to his other wives and then came back and the two men were still there chatting. It was very hard on the Prophet who did not like to criticize people directly, and so he waited patiently until they left. Then Allah sent down the following ayat which is known as "The Ayat of Hijab": O you who believe! Do not go into the Prophet's rooms except after being given permission to come and eat, not waiting for the food to be prepared, However, when you are called, then go in and when you have eaten, then disperse, and do not remain wanting to chat together. If you do that, it causes injury to the Prophet though he is too reticent to tell you. But Allah is not reticent with the truth. When you ask his wives for something, ask them from behind a screen. That is purer for your hearts and their hearts. It is not for you to cause injury to the Messenger of Allah nor ever to marry his wives after him. TO do that would be something dreadful in the sight of Allah. Whether you make something known or conceal it, Allah has knowledge of all things. There is no blame on them regarding their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their brothers' s sons or their sisters' s sons or their women or those their right hands own. Have fear of Allah. Allah is witness over everything. Allah and His angels pray blessings of the Prophet. O you who believe! Pray blessings on him and ask for peace for him. (Quran 33:53-56) Zaynab was a woman who was constantly immersed in the worship of Allah. It is related by Anas ibn Malik that once the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) entered the mosque and found a rope hanging down between two of the pillars, and so he said, "What is this?" He was told, "It is for Zaynab. She prays, and when she loses concentration or feels tired, she holds onto it." At this time the Prophet said, "Untie it. Pray as long as you feel fresh, but when you lose concentration or become tired, you should stop."

Zaynab bint Jahsh (may Allah be pleased with her) was with the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) for six years, and lived for another nine years after his death, dying at the age of fifty, in 20 AH, and thus fulfilling the Prophet's indication that she would be the first of his wives to die after him. Zaynab bint Jahsh, like Zaynab bint Khuzayma before her, was very generous to the poor, and indeed the Prophet said, when speaking of her to his other wives, "She is the most generous among you." It has been related by A'isha that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) once said to his wives, "The one who has the longest hands among you will meet me again the soonest." A'isha added, "They use to measure each other's hands to see whose as longest, and it was the hand of Zaynab that was the longest, because she used to work by hand and give away (what she earned) in charity." The Messenger of Allah said to Umar, "Zaynab bint Jahsh is one who is full of prayer." A man said, "Messenger of Allah, what is that?" He said, "The one who is humble and earnest in prayer." A'isha also said that Zaynab, "I have never seen a woman so pure as Zaynab, so God-fearing, so truthful, so attentive to family ties, so generous, so self-sacrificing in everyday life, so charitable, and thus so close to Allah, the Exalted." Several years after the

Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had died, when Umar was the khalif, great wealth came to the Muslims as a result of their victories in fighting the Persians. The immense treasures of Chosroes, the Persian Emperor, fell into their hands, and when Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) sent Zaynab a pile of gold as her share of the treasure, she called her maid servant and told her to take a handful of it to so-and-so, naming one of the poor people of Medina. One after another, she named all the poor people whom she knew, until they had all received a share of the treasure. Then she told her maidservant to see what was left. All that remained of the large pile of gold was eighty dinars, and this she accepted as her share, thanking Allah for it; but, because she believed so much money was a temptation, she asked Allah that she would never witness such a large distribution of wealth again. By the time a year had passed, when Umar again came to distribute money amongst those wives of the Prophet who were still alive, her prayer had been granted for she had already passed away, may Allah be pleased with her.

JUWAYRIYYA bint al-Harith

Juwayriyya bint Harith, may Allah be pleased with her, married the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in 5 AH, when the Prophet was fifty-eight years old and she was twenty, not long after his marriage to Zaynab bint Jahsh, and as a result of the Muslims' successful campaign against the Banu Mustaliq who were swiftly defeated after the Prophet's surprise attack. Among the captives taken in this campaign was the beautiful Juwayriyya, the daughter of al-Harith, who was the chief of the Banu Mustaliq. She was afraid that once the Muslims realized who she was, they would demand an exorbitant ransom for her safe release. After the Muslims had returned to Medina with their booty and prisoners, she demanded to see the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) hoping that he would help to prevent what she feared. Seeing how beautiful she was, A'isha was not keen on her seeing the Prophet. But she persisted, and eventually she was permitted to see the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and was taken to him while he was with A'isha. After she had finished speaking, the Prophet thought for a moment, and then said, "Shall I tell you what would be better than this?" He then asked her to marry him, and she immediately accepted. Although Juwayriyya was young and beautiful and of noble lineage, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was thinking of how to save her and all her tribe from an ignoble fate. By marrying Juwayriyya, the Banu Mustaliq would be able to enter Islam with honor, and with the humiliation of their recent defeat removed, so that it would no longer be felt necessary by them to embark on a war of vengeance that would have continued until one of the two parties had been annihilated. As soon as the marriage was announced, all the booty that had been taken from the Banu Mustaliq was returned, and all the captives were set free, for they were now the in laws of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Thus A'isha once said of Juwayriyya, "I know of no woman who was more of a blessing to her people than Juwayriyya bint al-Harith." After they were married, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) changed her name was Barra to Juwayriyya. It has been related by Juwayriyya that early one morning the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) left her room while she was doing the dawn prayer. He returned later that morning and she was still sitting in the same place. "have you

been sitting in the same place since I left you?" he asked. "Yes," she replied. Whereupon the Prophet said, "I recited four phrases three times after I left you, and if these were to be weighed against what you have been reciting since dawn, they would still outweigh them. They are: 'Glory be to Allah and Praise be to Him as much as the number of his creations, and His pleasure, and the weight of His Throne, and the ink of His words.'" Which reminds us of the following ayat of the Qur'an:--Say: 'If the sea were the ink for the words of My Lord, truly the sea would be used up before the words of my Lord were completed, and even if We used the same again to assist. (Qur'an 18:109) Juwayriyya was married to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) for six years, and lived for another thirty-nine years after his death, dying in 50 AH at the age of sixty-five, may Allah be pleased with her.

UMM HABIBA Ramla bint Abu Sufyan

Umm Habiba Ramla bint Abu Sufyan, may Allah be pleased with her, in fact married the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in 1 AH, although she did not actually come to live with him in Medina until 7 AH, when the Prophet was sixty years old and she was thirty-five. Umm Habiba was the daughter of Abu Sufyan, who for some of his life was one of the most resolute enemies of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) spending much of his great wealth in opposing the Muslims, and leading the armies of the kafirun against the Muslims in all the early major battles, including the battles of Badr, Uhud and al-Khandaq. Indeed it was not until the conquest of Mecca, when the Prophet generously pardoned him, that Abu Sufyan embraced Islam and began to fight with the Muslims instead of against them. Umm Habiba and her first husband, who was called Ubaydullah ibn Jahsh, the brother of Zaynab bint Jahsh, were among the first people to embrace Islam in Mecca, and they were among those early Muslims who emigrated to Abyssinia in order to be safe. Once in Abyssinia, however, Ubaydullah abandoned Islam and became a Christian. He tried to make her become Christian, but she stood fast. This put Umm Habiba in a difficult position, since a Muslim woman can only be married to be a Muslim man. She could no longer live with her husband, and once they had been divorced, she could not return to her father, who was still busy fighting the Muslims. So she remained with her daughter in Abyssinia, living a very simple life in isolation, waiting to see what Allah would decree for her.

One day, as Umm Habiba sat in her solitary room, a stranger in a strange land far from her home, a maidservant knocked on her door and said that she had been sent by the Negus who had a message for her. The message was that the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had asked for her hand in marriage, and that if she accepted this proposal that she was to name one of the accepted this proposal then she was to name one of the Muslims in Abyssinia as her wakil, so that the marriage ceremony could take place in Abyssinia even though she was not in the same place as the Prophet. Naturally Umm Habiba was overjoyed and accepted immediately. "Allah has given you good news! Allah has give you good news!" she cried, pulling off what little jewelry she had and giving it to the smiling girl. She asked her to repeat the message three times since she could hardly believe her ears. Soon after this, all the Muslims who had sought refuge in Abyssinia were summoned to the palace of the Negus to witness the simple marriage ceremony in which the on the Prophet's

behalf and her wakil, Khalid ibn Sa'id ibn al-As, acting on her behalf. When the marriage was finalized, the Negus addressed the gathering with these words:--"I praise Allah, the Holy, and I declare that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is His servant and His messenger and that He gave the good news to Jesus the son of Mary. "The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) requested me to conclude the marriage contract between him and Umm Habiba, the daughter of Abu Sufyan. I agreed to do what he requested, and on his behalf I give her a dowry of four hundred gold dinars." The Negus handed over the amount to Khalid ibn Sa'id who stood up and said:--"All praise is due to Allah. I praise Him and I seek His help and forgiveness and I turn to Him in repentance. I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and His Messenger whom He has sent with the deen of guidance and truth so that it may prevail over all other religions, however much those who reject dislike this. "I agreed to do what the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) requested and acted as the wakil on behalf of Umm Habiba, the daughter of Abu Sufyan. May Allah bless His Messenger and his wife. Congratulations to Umm Habiba for the goodness which Allah has decreed for her." Khalid took the dowry and handed it over to Umm Habiba. Thus although she could not travel to Arabia straight away, she was provided for by the Prophet, (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) from the moment and that they were married. The Muslims who had witnessed the marriage contract were just about to leave, when the Negus said to them, "Sit down, for it is the practice of the Prophets to serve food at marriages." Joyfully everyone sat down again to eat and celebrate the happy occasion. Umm Habiba especially could hardly believe her good fortune, and she later described how eager she was to share her happiness, saying: "When I received the money as my dowry, I sent fifty mithqals of gold to the servant girl who had first brought me the good news, and I said to her, 'I gave you what I did when you gave me the good news because at that time I did not have any money at all.' "Shortly afterwards, she came to me and returned the gold. She also produced a case which contained the necklace I had given to her and gave it to me, saying, 'The Negus has instructed me not to take anything from you, and he has commanded the women in his household to present you with gifts of perfume.' "On the following day, she brought me ambergris, saffron and aloes wood oil and said, 'I have a favor to ask of you.' ""What is it?" I asked. ""I have accepted Islam,' she replied, 'and now I followed the deen of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Please convey my greetings of peace to him, and let him know that I believe in Allah and His Prophet. Please do not forget.'" Six years later, in 7 AH, when the emigrant Muslims in Abyssinia were finally able to return to Arabia, Umm Habiba came to Medina and there the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), who had just returned victorious from Khaybar, warmly welcomed her. Umm Habiba relates: "When I met the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), I told him all about the arrangements that had been made for the marriage, and about my relationship with the girl. I told him that she had become a Muslim and conveyed her greetings of peace to him. He was filled with joy at the news and said, 'Wa alayha as salam wa rahmatullaahi wa barakaatuh' - 'And on her be the peace and the mercy of Allah and His blessing.'" The strength of Umm Habiba's character can be measured by what happened shortly before the conquest of Mecca, when her father, Abu Sufyan, came to Medina after the Quraish had broken the treaty of Hudaibiyya, in order to try and re-negotiate a fresh settlement with the Prophet Muhammad and the Muslims. He first went to Umm Habiba's

room and was about to sit down on the blanket on which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) slept when Umm Habiba, who had not seen her father for over six years, asked him not to sit on it and quickly folded it up and put it away. "Am I too good for the bed, or it is the bed too good for me?" he asked. "how can the enemy of Islam sit on the bed of the Holy Prophet?" she replied. It was only after Abu Sufyan had embraced Islam, after the conquest of Mecca, and had become the enemy of the enemies of Islam, that Umm Habiba accepted and loved him again as her father. When she received the news that her father and brother Mu'awiya, who later became the Khalif of the Muslims, had become Muslims after the conquest, she fell down in prostration to Allah out of thankfulness. Umm Habiba spent four years of her life with the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and lived for another thirty-three years after he had died, dying at the age of seventy-two in 44 AH, may Allah be pleased with her. Like all the wives of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) Umm Habiba spent much of her time remembering Allah and worshipping Him. She has related that once the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to her, "A house will be built in the Garden for anyone who, in the space of a day and a night, prays twelve voluntary rak'ats;" and she added, "I have never stopped doing this since I it from the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him).

SAFIYYA bint Huyayy

Safiyya bint Huyayy, (may Allah be pleased with her) married the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in 7 AH, when the Prophet was sixty years old and she was seventeen years old. As in the case of juwayriyya bint Harith, this marriage occurred after one of the Muslims' decisive battles, in this case, the battle of Khaybar. After the battle of Khaybar in which the Muslims defeated the Jews, two women were brought before the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) by Bilal, the black mu'adhdhin of Medina whose beautifully piercing voice constantly called the Muslims to prayer right up until the Prophet's death- after which he could not bring himself to call the adhan anymore, until he was present at the surrender of Jerusalem to the khalif Umar in 17 AH. They had passed by those who had been killed in the fighting. One of the two women was shrieking and screaming, and rubbing dust in her hair, while the other was mute with shock. The silent one was Safiyya, the daughter of Huyayy ibn Akhtab, the chief of the Banu Nadir who had all been expelled from Medina in 4 AH after plotting to kill the Messenger of Allah by dropping a stone on his head as he sat talking with their leaders. The noisy one was Safiyya's cousin. Safiyya could trace her lineage directly back to Harun, the brother of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon them). The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) asked someone to look after the woman who was screaming and then took off his cloak and placed it over the shoulders of Safiyya, whose husband had been killed in the battle. It was a gesture of pity, but from that moment she was to be honored and given great respect in the Muslim community. Then the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) turned to Bilal and said, "Bilal, has Allah plucked mercy from your heart that you let these two women pass by those of their menfolk who have been killed?" This was considered a severe reprimand, for the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) rarely criticized the behavior of those who served him. Anas ibn Malik, for example once

said, "I served the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) for eight years. He never once scolded me for something that I had done or for something that I had not done." Like Umm Habiba, Safiyya was the daughter of a great chief. The only person who could save her from becoming a slave after having enjoyed such a high position was the Prophet. Although her father had planned to assassinate Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) after the battle of Uhud, and had conspired with the Banu Qurayza to exterminate all the Muslims during the battle of al-Khandaq, it was characteristic of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that he did not bear any grudges. For those who did wrong, he felt pity rather than anger, and for those who had done no wrong, he had even greater compassion. The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) invited Safiyya to embrace Islam, which she did, and having given her, her freedom, he then married her. Some people may have wondered how it was that Safiyya could accept Islam and marry the Prophet when her father had been his bitter enemy, and when bloody battles had taken place between the Jews and the Muslims. The answer may be found in what she has related of her early life as the daughter of the chief of the Banu Nadir. She said, (may Allah be pleased with her): "I was my father's favorite and also a favorite with my uncle Yasir. They could never see me with one of their children without picking me up. When the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) came to Medina, my father and my uncle went to see him. It was very early in the morning and between dawn and sunrise. They did not return until the sun was setting. They came back worn out and depressed, walking with slow, heavy steps. I smiled to them as I always did, but neither of them took any notice of me because they were so miserable. I heard Abu Yasir ask my father, 'Is it him?' 'Yes, it is.' 'Can you recognize him? Can you verify it?' 'Yes, I can recognize him too well.' 'What do you feel towards him?' 'Enmity, enmity as long as I live.' The significance of this conversation is evident when we recall that in the Torah of the Jews, it was written that a Prophet would come who would lead those who followed him to victory. Indeed before the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) came to Medina, the Jews used to threaten the idol worshippers of Yathrib, as it was then called, that when the next Prophet came to the believers were going to exterminate them, just as the Jews had exterminated other tribes who refused to worship God in the past. As in any case, of the Prophet Jesus, (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who had been clearly described in the Torah - but rejected by many of the Jews when he actually came - the next and last Prophet was accurately described in the Torah, which also contained signs by which the Jews could easily recognize him. Thus Ka'b al-Ahbar, one of the Jews of that time who embraced Islam, relates that this Prophet is described in the Torah as follows:-'My slave, Ahmad, the Chosen, born in Mecca, who will emigrate to Medina (or he said Tayyiba - another name given to Yathrib); his community will be those who praise Allah in every state.' And 'Amr ibn al-'As said that it also says in the Torah:--'O Prophet, We have sent you as a witness, a bringer of good news and a warner and a refuge for the illiterate. You are My slave and My messenger. I have called you the one on whom people rely, one who is neither coarse nor vulgar, and who neither shouts in the markets nor repays evil with evil, but rather pardons and forgives. Allah will not take him back to Himself until the crooked community has been straightened out by him and they say, "There is no god but Allah." Through him, blind eyes, deaf ears and covered hearts will be opened.' It was thanks to these descriptions in the Torah,

that the most learned rabbi of the Jews, 'Abdullah ibn Salam, had embraced Islam on seeing Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and it was because of these descriptions that Huyayy ibn Akhtab was also able to recognize him. However Huyayy, like most of the other Jews, was deeply disappointed that the last Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was a descendant of Isma'il and not of Ishaq, (the two sons of the Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon them), since the Jews of that time claimed exclusive descent from Ishaq, through the twelve sons of his son Ya'qub (who was also known as Israel), from whom the twelve tribes of Israel had originated. Not only did Huyayy resent the fact that the last Prophet had appeared amongst the Arabs, but also he did not want to lose his position of power and leadership over his people. It was for these reasons that Huyayy secretly decided to oppose and fight the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) while in public he and the other leaders of the Jews made peace treaties with the Muslims and the Jews broke as soon as it seemed a favorable time to do so. Although Safiyya was Huyayy's daughter, she had a pure heart and had always wanted to worship her Creator and Lord, the One who had sent Moses, to whom she was related, and Jesus, and finally Muhammad, may Allah be pleased with all of them. Thus as soon as the opportunity arose, not only to follow the last Prophet, but also to be married to him, she took it. Although Safiyya had in Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) a most kind and considerate husband, she was not always favorably accepted by some of his other wives, especially when she had first joined the Prophet's household. It is related by Anas that on one occasion, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) found Safiyya weeping. When he asked her what the matter was, she replied that she heard thHafsa had disparagingly described her as 'the daughter of a Jew'.

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) responded by saying, "You are certainly the daughter of a Prophet (Harun), and certainly your uncle was a Prophet (Moses), and you are certainly the wife of a Prophet (Muhammad), so what is there in that to be scornful towards you?" Then he said to Hafsa, "O Hafsa, fear Allah!" Once the Prophet was accompanied on a journey by Safiyya and Zaynab bint Jahsh when Safiyya's camel went lame. Zaynab had an extra camel and the Prophet asked her if she would give it to Safiyya. Zaynab retorted, "Should I give to that Jewess!" The Prophet turned away from her in anger and would not have anything to do with her for two or three months not to show his disapproval of what she had said. Some three years later, when Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was in his final illness, Safiyya felt for him deeply and sincerely. "O Messenger of Allah," she said, "I wish it was I who was suffering instead of you." Some of the wives winked at each other which made the Prophet cross and he exclaimed, "By Allah, she spoke the truth!" She still underwent difficulties after the death of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Once a slavegirl she owned went to the Amir al Muminin Umar and said, "Amir al Muminin! Safiyya loves the Sabbath and maintains ties with the Jews!" Umar asked Safiyya about that and she said, "I have not loved the Sabbath since Allah replaced it with Friday for me, and I only maintain ties with those Jews to whom I am related by kinship." She asked her slavegirl what had possessed her to carries lie to Umar and the girl replied, "Shaytan!" Safiyya said, "Go, you are free." Safiyya was with the Prophet for nearly four years, She was only twenty-one when the Prophet (peace

and blessings of Allah be upon him) died, and lived as a widow for the next thirty-nine years, dying in 50 AH, at the age of sixty (may Allah be pleased with her).

MAYMUNA bint al-Harith

Maymuna bint al-Harith, (may Allah be pleased with her), married the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in 7 AH, when the Prophet was sixty years old and she was thirty six years old. Maymuna's sister, Umm al-Fadl Lubaba, was the mother of Abdullah ibn Abbas, the son of one of the uncles of the Prophet and the one of the wisest of his Companions. Umm al-Fadl was one of the earliest Companions of the Prophet. Once Abu Lahab, the enemy of Allah and the Messenger of Allah, entered the house of his brother, al-Abbas, and proceeded to attack Abbas client, Abu Rafi, because he had embraced Islam. Abu Lahab knocked him to the ground and knelt on him, continuing to beat him. Umm al Fadl grabbed a post that was there and cracked it across Abu Lahab's head, saying, "Will you victimize him because his master is absent?" He treated in shame and died a week later. Zaynab bint Khuzayma, Umm al Muminin, was also her half-sister. Her other sisters included Asma bint Umayy, the wife of Ja'far ibn Abi Talib, who later married Abu Bakr, and Salma bint Umayy, the wife of Hamza, the "Lion of Allah". Her full sisters were Lubaba, Asma and Izza. Maymuna was thus one of the 'Ahlul- Bayt' , 'the people of the House', not only by virtue of being a wife of the Prophet, (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) but also because she was related to him. Zayd bin Arqam related that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "I implore you by Allah! The People of my House!" three times. Zayd was asked who were the People of the House, and he said, "The family of Ali ibn Abi Talib, the family of Jafar ibn Abi Talib, the family Aqil ibn Abi Talib, and the family of Al Abbas ibn Abdal Muttalib." Maymuna or Barra as she was then called, yearned to marry the Prophet. She went to her sister, Umm al Fadl to talk to her about that and she, in turn, spoke to her husband, al-Abbas. Al-Abbas immediately went to the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) with Maymuna's offer of marriage to him and her proposal was accepted. When the good news reached her, she was on a camel, and she immediately got off the camel and said, "The camel and what is on it is for the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)." They were married in the month of Shawwal in 7 AH just after the Muslims of Medina were permitted to visit Mecca under the terms of the treaty of Hudaibiyya to perform umra. Allah Almighty sent the following ayat about this:--Any believing woman who dedicates herself to the Prophet if the Prophet wishes to wed her, that is only for thee and not for the believers. (Quran 33:50)

The Prophet gave her the name, Maymuna, meaning "blessed", and Maymuna lived with the Prophet for just over three years, until his death. She was obviously very good natured and got on well with everyone, and no quarrel or disagreement with any of the Prophet's other wives has been related about her. 'A'isha said about her, "Among us, she had the most fear of Allah and did the most to maintain ties of kinship." It was in her room that the Prophet first began to feel the effects of what became his final illness and asked the permission of his wives to stay in A'isha's room while it lasted. After the Prophet's death, (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) Maymuna continued to live in Medina for another forty years, dying at the age of eighty, in 51 AH, (may Allah be pleased with her), being the last but one of the

Prophet's wives to die. She asked to be buried where had married the Prophet at Saraf and her request was carried out. It is related that at the funeral of Maymuna, Ibn Abbas said, "This is the wife of Allah's Messenger, (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) so when you lift her bier, do not shake her or disturb her, but be gentle." It is also related by Ibn Abbas that he once stayed the night as a guest of Maymuna, who was his aunt, and the Prophet, (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) They slept on their blanket lengthways and he slept at the end, crossways. After they had all slept for awhile, the Prophet rose in the middle of the night to pray the tahajjud prayer, and Ibn Abbas joined him. They both did wudu, and he prayed eleven rakats with the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Then they both went back to sleep again until dawn. Bilal called the adhan, and the Prophet did another two short rakats, before going into the mosque to lead the Dawn Prayer. Ibn Abbas said that one of the dua'ahs that the Prophet made during this night was : "O Allah, place light in my heart, light in my tongue, light in my hearing, light on my sight, light behind me, light in front of me, light on my right, light on my left, light above me and light below me; place light in my sinew, in my flesh, in my blood, in my hair and in my skin; place light in my soul and make light abundant for me; make me light and grant me light." It is commonly agreed that it was after the Prophet had married Maymuna, giving him now nine wives (A'isha, Sawda, Hafsa, Umm Salama, Zainab bint Jahsh, Juwayriyya, Umm Habiba, Safiyya and Maymuna), that the following ayat was revealed: It is not lawful for you (O Muhammad, to marry more) women after this, nor to exchange them for other wives, even though their beauty is pleasing to you, except those whom your right hand possesses (as maid servants); and Allah is always watching over everything. (Quran 33:52) After this, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not marry again. When however, the Christian ruler, or Muqawqis, of Egypt, sent him two Christian slave girls who were sisters as a gift (in response to the Prophet's letter inviting him to embrace Islam), along with a fine robe and some medicine the Prophet, accepted one of the slave girls, Maria, into his household; he gave her sister Serene, to a man whom he wished to honor, namely Hassan ibn Thabit; he accepted the robe; and he returned the medicine with the message, "My Sunna is my medicine!" This occurred in 7 AH, when the Prophet was sixty years old and Maria was twenty years old.

MARIA al-Qibtiyya

Maria al-Qibtiyya (may Allah be pleased with her) is said to have married the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and certainly everyone gave her the same title of respect as the Prophet's wives, 'Umm al Muminin' 'Mother of the Believers'. Maria was born in upper Egypt of a Coptic father and Greek mother and moved to the court of the Muqawqis when she was still very young. She arrived in Medina to join the Prophet's household just after the Prophet returned from the treaty with Quraish which was contracted at al-Hudaybiyya. Maria gave birth to a healthy son in 9 AH, the same year that his daughter Zaynab died, and the Prophet named his new son Ibrahim, after the ancestor of both the Jews and the Christians, the Prophet from whom all the Prophets who came after him were descended. Unfortunately, when he was only eighteen months old, Ibrahim became seriously ill and died. Even though he knew that his small son would go to the Garden, the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) could not help shedding some tears. When some of his

Companions asked him why he was weeping, he replied, "It is my humanness." As Ibrahim's body was being buried, the sun was eclipsed and it grew dark and gloomy. Some people thought this was connected with Ibrahim's death, but the Prophet soon clarified this. "The sun and the moon are two of Allah's signs," he said, "they are not eclipsed because of anyone's birth or death. When you see these signs, make haste to remember Allah in prayer." Although the kafirun used to mock the Prophet Muhammad because he had no sons, and say that he was 'cut off', Allah made it clear in the following surah that the station of the Prophet Muhammad was far above that of any other man; In the name of Allah, The Merciful, the Compassionate: Surely We have given you AL Khawthar, so pray to your Lord and offer sacrifice. Surely he who mocks you is the one cut off. (Quran 108:1-3) Muhammad is not the father of any man among you, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets, and Allah has knowledge of all things. (Quran 33:40) Maria was honored and respected by the Prophet and his family and Companions. She spent three years of her life with the Prophet, until his death, and died five years later in 16 AH, (may Allah be pleased with her) For the last five years of her life, she remained a recluse and almost never went out except to visit the grave of the Prophet or her son's grave. After her death, Umar ibn al Khattab led the prayer over her and she was buried in al Baqi.

The Position of 'A'isha

Of the Prophet's wives in Medina, (may Allah be pleased with all of them), it is clear that it was A'isha that he loved the most: From time to time, one or another of his Companions would ask him who it was that he loved the most, and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not always give the same answer to this question, for he felt great love for many - for his wives, for his daughters by Khadijah, for their children, for Sayyiduna Abu Bakr and Sayyiduna Umar and Sayyiduna Uthman and Sayyiduna Ali, and for many of his Companions and community - but of his wives the only one whom he named in this connection was A'isha. She too loved him greatly in return and often would seek reassurance from him that he loved her. "how is your love for me?" she once asked. "Like the rope's knot," he replied, meaning that it was strong and secure. Many times after that she would ask, "how is the knot?" and he would reply: "Ala haliha" "The same as ever!" Since A'isha loved the Prophet so much, she could not help being jealous if his attention were directed towards others more than what seemed enough to her. She once asked him, "O Messenger of Allah, tell me about yourself. If you were between the two slopes of a valley, one of which had been grazed, while the other had not been grazed, on which slope would you pasture your flocks?" "On the one that had not been grazed," replied the Prophet. "Even so," she said, "and I am not like any of your other wives. Every one of them had a husband before you, except myself." The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) smiled and said nothing. It is clear that in spite of his wives' high station with Allah, (may Allah be pleased with them) they were still human, and at times rather jealous of each other. Thus, for example, it had been related by A'isha that the Prophet usually visited his wives every afternoon, after the Asr prayer. On one occasion he stayed longer than usual in the room of Zaynab bint Jahsh, for someone had given her some honey, of which the Prophet was very fond. "At this," said A'isha, "I felt jealous, and I, Hafsa, Sawda, and Safiyya agreed between ourselves that as he

visited each of us, we would tell him that there was a funny smell coming from his mouth from what he had eaten, for we knew that he was particularly sensitive to offensive smells." Everything went as planned, and as a result, the Prophet vowed that he would never eat honey again, only to be reprimanded by the revelation of the following ayat:--O Prophet, why do you forbid what Allah has made lawful for you, in seeking to please your wives? And Allah is Forgiving, Compassionate. (Quran 66:1) Allah made the whole matter known to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and he confronted the one whose idea it had been with the truth:--So when he told her about it, she said, 'Who told you this?' He said, 'I was told by the Knowing, the Aware.' (Quran 66:3)

This incident indicates the extent of the Prophet's submission to Allah. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was the means by which Allah taught the Muslims their deen in every moment and situation. What might have seemed an innocent bit of fun to his wives, (may Allah be pleased with them), was not permitted by Allah to result in any alteration to the hudud of Allah, to what is permitted and what is forbidden by Allah, for if the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had never eaten honey again, then many of his Companions and followers might have done likewise. On another occasion, when one of the Prophet's other wives, Umm Salama (may Allah be pleased with her) complained on their behalf about the fact that more presents were being given to the Prophet on the day that he was with A'isha than on the days when he was with his other wives, he replied, "O Umm Salama, do not trouble me by harming A'isha, for by Allah, the Divine inspiration never came to me while I was under the blanket of any woman amongst you except her." "I turn to Allah from troubling you, O Messenger of Allah," she said.--However the Prophet's other wives were still not content, and asked Fatima to speak to the Prophet on their behalf. When she raised the subject, he said, (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) "O my daughter, do you not love those I love?" "Yes." She said. "Then love her." He replied.--On another occasion, A'isha was on a journey with the Prophet and some of his Companions. She had borrowed a necklace from her sister Asma and during the journey she discovered that she had mislaid it. The journey was delayed while some of the Companions looked for it, and after a while the time for the prayer came. There was no water with which to do wudu, so they became very agitated about that. They went to Abu Bakr and said, "Do you see what A'isha has done! She has caused the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to stop at a place where there is no water!" Meanwhile, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had fallen asleep with his head resting against A'isha's leg. Abu Bakr went up to A'isha and started to poke her and upbraid her for holding up the people when they did not have any water. She did not move because she did not want to disturb the Prophet's sleep. The Prophet soon woke up and the ayats about tayammum were revealed, making it clear to everyone what should be done when a Muslim on a journey needs to do wudu, but has no water. Usayd ibn Hudayr said to Abu Bakr, "This is not the first blessing to have come from your family." And to A'isha, "May Allah reward you with good! By Allah, whenever you have difficulty, Allah relieves you of it and gives a blessing to the Muslims by it as well!"

When they were about to resume their journey, A'isha's camel rose to its feet, and there was the necklace. The camel had been lying on it all the time! Being the daughter of Sayyiduna Abu Bakr, who on one occasion had given away all his wealth to be spent in the way of Allah, and the wife of Muhammad (may Allah be pleased with her) who kept nothing for himself, A'isha was very generous. On one occasion, the Prophet had sacrificed an animal, and A'isha was so generous in sharing the meat out amongst the poor, that she found that she had left nothing for the Messenger's large household except the shoulder of the animal. Feeling a little distressed, she went to the Prophet, and said, "I've only been able to save this." "That is the only part that you have not saved," smiled the Prophet, "for whatever you give away in the name of Allah, you save, and whatever you keep for yourself, you lose." It is sometime forgotten that the Prophet Muhammad and his wives and Companions, may the blessings peace of Allah be on him and his family and his Companions, led very simple lives. It has been related that sometimes there was no smoke to be seen coming from the Prophet's home for weeks at a time meaning that there was not even flour to bake bread, let alone meat so that all there was to eat was dates and water, dates that came from palms whose roots the Prophet said were in the Garden. On another occasion, a beggar asked A'isha for some food while she was fasting, and there was only a loaf of bread in her house. She said to her maid servant, "Give it to him." "But you will not have anything to eat when you break your fast." Protested the servant. "Give it to him," repeated A'isha. So she did so. When evening came, the people of the house of a man who did not usually give to them, gave them a sheep and some food to go with it. A'isha called her servant and said, "Eat from this. This is better than your loaf of bread!" It has been related by A'isha, that once when it was the Prophet's turn to spend the night with her, he quietly got up towards the end of the night and slipped out of the room, closing the door quietly behind him. A'isha was curious to see where he was going, thinking that he had waited until he thought she was asleep. Quickly she got up, covered her head and silently followed him until he came to the graveyard of al Baqi. "He stood there," said A'isha, 'and he stood for a very long time. Then he lifted his hands (in prayer) three times, and then turned to go, so I turned, He quickened his step, so I quickened my step. He began to run, so I began to run. I got back before he did, and entered my room and lay down. He came in and said, "Why are you out of breath, A'isha?" "It's nothing." I said. "Tell me, or the One Who is All Pervading and All Ware will tell me." "Messenger of Allah," I said, "May my father and mother be a ransom for you." And then I told him. "Was it you who I saw running in front of me?" he said. "Yes." I replied, and he hit me on the chest and it hurt. "Did you think that Allah and His Messenger would treat you unjustly?" he asked. "Whatever anyone conceals, Allah knows it." I replied. "When you saw me leaving," the Prophet explained, "it was because Jibril had come to me. He called me without you knowing it and I replied, but without you knowing it, because you were not fully dressed. I thought that you were asleep, and did not want to awaken you in case you were frightened. He (Jibril) said, "Your Lord has commanded you to go to the people of Al Baqi and to ask forgiveness of them." "I said, "How should I pray for them?" "Say; Peace be on the people of this place (the graveyard), from among the believers and the Muslims, and may Allah have mercy on those who have gone ahead of us, and on those who will follow later; and inshAllah we will join you." As the day of his own death approached, it is clear that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) wished to die in the company of A'isha, for it is reported that

during his final illness, which was probably the result of the poisoned food that he had been given at Khaybar, he inquired, "Where will I be tomorrow, where will I be tomorrow?" since he was hoping it would be A'isha's turn to be with him. In fact the Prophet asked his wives' permission to remain in A'isha's room during his illness, and his other wives, (may Allah be pleased with them all), agreed to forego their turns. For much of the time during his last few days on earth the Prophet lay on a couch with his head resting on A'isha's breast or lap. She it was who repeatedly recited the last two surahs of the Qur'an, the two surahs of seeking protection, and then blew her breath over him, just as he had taught her to do in the past, and then passed his hand over his body. It is related by A'isha that she used his hand rather than her own, because she knew that his had had greater healing in it than her hand. She was the one who took a toothstick from her brother chewed it soften it and then gave it to the Prophet. Despite his weakness, he rubbed his teeth with it vigorously. "So," said A'isha some time later, "Allah made my saliva mix with his saliva on his last day in this world and his first day in the next world." Not long afterwards, he lost consciousness and A'isha thought it was on the onset of death, but after a while, he opened his eyes and murmured softly, "The Highest Company." A'isha remembered that when the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had been in good health in the past, he had said, "No prophet is taken by death until he has been shown his place in the Garden, and then offered the choice, to remain in this world or go to the Next World." Remembering these words, she said to herself, "Then he will not stay with us." Then she heard him murmur, "O Allah, forgive me and have mercy on me and join me with the Highest Company, the people whom Allah has blessed from among the Prophets and the truthful ones, and the martyrs, and the righteous ones and the best of company are they." (Quran 4:69) It was then that A'isha knew that he had been given the choice, and that he had made it. Again she heard him murmur, "O Allah, with the Highest Company," and these were the last words she heard him speak. Gradually his head grew heavier upon her breast, and gently she laid it on the pillow. Her beloved husband, the Messenger of Allah, the Seal of the Prophets, the Best of Creation, had died in her arms. At the time of his death, the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was sixty three years old, and A'isha was eighteen. At first the Prophet's Companions were not sure where he should be buried, but then Abu Bakr as Siddiq remembered what when he was alive, the Prophet had said that the Prophets were always buried where they had died, so the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was buried in A'isha's room where he had died. A'isha has related that during his final illness, Umm Habiba and Umm Salama mentioned that when they had been in Abyssinia they had seen a church which had pictures in it. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) replied, "When one of their righteous people die, they build a place of worship on his grave and then decorate it with such pictures. In the sight of Allah they will be the worst of people on the Day of Judgment." A'isha has also related that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "Allah has cursed the Jews and the Christians because they made the graves of their Prophets and righteous ones places of worship." A'isha continued, "If it had not been for this, his grave would have been in an open place, but it could not be so, due to the fact that it might become a mosque." In the passage of time, the Prophet's mosque in Medina was enlarged again and again, so that now his grave is no longer next to the mosque, but inside it. However, although the hearts of the millions of Muslims who visit Medina every year are filled with love, for the

Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) they are always careful to direct their worship towards Allah alone, perhaps remembering the words of Sayyiduna Abu Bakr when he first spoke to the Muslims who could not believe that their beloved Prophet had actually died: --"Whoever worshiped Muhammad, Muhammad is dead, and whoever worshipped Allah, Allah is the Living, and does not die." Then he quoted the ayat; Muhammad is only a Messenger, whom other Messengers have preceded. Will it be that when he dies or is killed, you will turn your back on your heels? And whoever turns back on his heels will not harm Allah in the least, and Allah will reward the thankful. (Quran 3:144) Thus it was that the family and Companions of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had to accept the inevitable, even though no loss ever had been or ever would be as great as theirs. It has been related by Anas ibn Malik that after the death of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) Sayyiduna Abu Bakr said to Sayyiduna Umar, "Let us visit Umm Ayman (who had looked after the Prophet when he was a small boy), for the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to visit her." When they came to her, she was weeping, and they said to her: "Why are you weeping? What the Messenger of Allah, (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has now a better than this." "I am not weeping because I am unaware of the fact that what the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has now a better than this," she replied, "but I am weeping because the revelation that used to come from the heavens has ceased." This moved both of them to tears, and they began to weep with her. A'isha Siddiqah (may Allah be pleased with her) once said, "O would that I were a leaf on a tree!" lived on for another fifty years after him after the Prophet's death, (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) dying at the age of sixty eight, in 58 AH (may Allah be pleased with her) During that time she saw many changes, not all of which were pleasant ones, for with the expansion and the conquests that the Muslims experienced, there came wealth, and with the wealth came disagreements and power struggles, and as we all know, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "I do not fear poverty for my community, but I fear wealth for them, for it destroy them as it destroy the people before them." A'isha, however, like all of the Prophet's wives, (may Allah be pleased with all of them) remained detached from this world and longed to be reunited with the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in the next; but while she was alive, she passed on her knowledge and wisdom to everyone who came to her. Much of what she transmitted was recorded in written form, and so countless Muslims have continued to benefit from it right up until today. Abu Musa reported that Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "There have been many men who have reached perfection, but no women, have reached perfection except Mary, the daughter of Imran, Asiyya, the wife of Pharaoh, and the excellence of A'isha as compared to the other women in that of tharid (meat or vegetable stew, which was the Prophet's favorite food) over all other foods."

Conclusion

Qadi Iyad relates that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "Recognition of the family of Muhammad is freedom from the Fire. Love of the family of Muhammad is crossing over Sirat. Friendship for the family of Muhammad is safety from the

Fire." One of the ulama said, "Recognition, in this case means recognizing their place in relation to the Prophet. Recognition of that brings with it recognition of the rights and respect that are due to them because of it." Qadi Iyad also wrote, "Cursing the people of the Prophet's house, his wives and his Companions, and disparaging them is haram, and the one who does it is cursed." Abdullah ibn Mughaffal said that the Messenger of Allah said, "Allah, Allah, my Companions! Do not make them a target after me. Whoever loves them, it is by my love that he loves them. Whoever hates them, incurs my hate by doing so. Whoever harms them has harmed me. Whoever harms me has harmed Allah. Whoever harms Allah is about to be seized." (At- Tirmidhi) The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "Do not curse my Companions. Whoever curses them, the curse of Allah and the angels and all people is on him. Allah will not accept any recompense or counterweight from him." The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "Do not curse my Companions. A people will come at the end of time who will curse my Companions. Do not join them and do not join with them and do not marry with them and do not sit in their assemblies and if they are ill, do not visit them." The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "Whoever curses my Companions, beat him." The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) reported that cursing and harming them harmed him. It is haram to harm the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He said, "Do not harm me in respect of A'isha." HE said about Fatima, "She is part of me. What harms her, harms me." The best known position with respect to speaking ill of the Companions is that adopted by the school of Malik. Malik said, "Whoever reviles the Prophet, (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is killed. Whoever reviles his Companions should be disciplined." Qadi Iyad also wrote: It is related from Malik that anyone who curses Abu Bakr is flogged whereas anyone who curses A'isha is killed. He was asked, "Why is that?" He said, "Whoever attacks her has opposed the Quran." Ibn Shaban related this from Malik because Allah has said, "Allah wishes that you should never repeat the like of it again if you are believers." (24:18) ; so whoever does repeat the like of it has disbelieved. Qadi Iyad also wrote: There are two positions regarding someone who curses one of the wives of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) other than A'isha. One position is that he is killed because he has cursed the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) by cursing his wife. The other is that she is considered to be like the other Companions. He is flogged with the hadd for slander. Ibn Shaban takes the first position. Abu Musab related from Malik that someone who curses someone who is connected to the House of the Prophet is given a painful beating and imprisoned for a long time until his repentance is clear because he has made light of what is due to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) And may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon the Prophet Muhammad, and on his family and on his Companions, and on all who follow him and them in what they are able with sincerity, until the Last Day. AMEEN!

