

فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكٰفِرُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَكَتَبْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ فِيهَا أَنَّ النَّفْسَ  
 بِالنَّفْسِ ۖ وَالْعَيْنَ بِالْعَيْنِ وَالْأَنْفَ بِالْأَنْفِ وَالْأُذُنَ بِالْأُذُنِ  
 وَالسِّنَّ بِالسِّنِّ ۖ وَالْجُرُوحَ قِصَاصٌ ۗ فَمَنْ تَصَدَّقَ بِهِ فَهُوَ كَفَّارَةٌ  
 لَهُ ۗ وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾  
 وَقَفَّيْنَا عَلَىٰ آثَارِهِم بِعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ  
 مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ ۗ وَآتَيْنَاهُ الْإِنجِيلَ فِيهِ هُدًى وَنُورٌ ۗ وَمُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا  
 بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ وَهُدًى وَمَوْعِظَةً لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾  
 وَلِيَحْكُمَ أَهْلَ الْإِنجِيلِ بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ ۗ وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا  
 أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفٰسِقُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَ أَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ  
 بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمُهَيِّمًا عَلَيْهِ فَاحْكُم  
 بَيْنَهُمْ بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَ هُمْ عَمَّا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ ۗ  
 لِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ شِرْعَةً وَمِنْهَاجًا ۗ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً  
 وَاحِدَةً ۗ وَلٰكِنْ لِّيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتٰكُمْ فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ ۗ إِلَى  
 اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾  
 وَأِنْ أَحْكَمَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ وَاحْذَرْهُمْ أَنْ  
 يَفْتِنُوكَ عَنْ بَعْضِ مَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ ۗ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا  
 يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُصِيبَهُمْ بِبَعْضِ ذُنُوبِهِمْ ۗ وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ  
 لَفٰسِقُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾ أَفَحُكْمُ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ يَبْغُونَ ۗ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنَ اللَّهِ  
 حُكْمًا لِّقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

Surely We have sent down the Torah, having guidance and light therein by which the prophets, the submitting ones, judge for the Jews, and (so do) the Men of the Lord and the Men of knowledge, because they were entrusted with the protection of the Book of Allah, and

they stood guard over it. So, do not fear people. Fear Me. And do not take a paltry price for My verses. And whoever does not judge by what Allah has sent down, then, they are the disbelievers. [44]

And therein We have prescribed for them: life for life, eye for eye, nose for nose, ear for ear and tooth for tooth; and for wounds, an equal retaliation. Then, whoever forgives it, that will be expiation for him. And whoever does not judge by what Allah has sent down, then, they are the unjust. [45]

And in their wake, We sent 'Īsā son of Maryam, confirming what was before him, that is, the Torah; and We gave him the Injīl having guidance and light therein, and confirming what was before it, that is, the Torah, and a guidance and lesson for the God-fearing. [46]

And the people of Injīl must judge by what Allah has sent down therein. And whoever does not judge by what Allah has sent down, then, they are the sinners. [47]

And We have sent down to you the Book with truth, confirming the Book before it, and a safeguard for it. So, judge between them by what Allah has sent down, and do not follow their desires against the truth that has come to you. For each of you We have made a way and a method. And had Allah willed, He would have made a single community of people, but (He did not), so that He may test you in what He has given to you. Strive, then, to excel each other in good deeds. To Allah is the return of you all. Then Allah shall tell you about what you were disputing in. [48]

And (We have revealed to you) : Judge between them by what Allah has sent down and do not follow their desires, and beware of them lest they should turn you away from some of what Allah has sent down to you. So, if they turn away, be sure that Allah intends to make them suffer for some of their sins. And surely, many of the people are sinners. [49]

Is it, then, the judgement of (the days of ) Ignorance that they seek? And who is better in judgement than Allah, for a people who believe? [50]

### Sequence of the Verses

This is the third Section of Sūrah al-Mā'idah. Here, Allah Almighty has asked the Jews, the Christians and the Muslims to pay heed to a particular injunction of the creed they all share as being the three communities attached to the Prophetic Tradition. Appearing in different contexts through verses which have gone earlier, this is the serious matter of acting against the pledges given to Almighty Allah and that of changes, alterations and false interpretations made in injunctions sent to them - something which had become a chronic compulsion of habit with the Jews and Christians.

In the first two verses (44,45) of this Section, addressing the people of the Torah, Almighty Allah has warned them on this crookedness and about the sad end it will bring. With it, as a corollary, some congruent injunctions pertaining to Qīṣāṣ (Even Retaliation) have also been mentioned - for the Jewish conspiracy described in the previous verses was related to Qīṣāṣ which the people of the tribe of Banū Naḍīr did not like to be even and because of which they had compelled their weaker rivals, the Banū Qurayzah, to be content with lesser blood money as compared to themselves. Thus, in these two verses, the Jews have been given a stern warning against imposing their own law contrary to the Law sent down by Almighty Allah and those who do that have been classed as *Kāfir* (disbelievers) and *Zālim* (unjust).

After that, the third (46) and the fourth (47) verses are addressed to Christians. They too have been warned against enforcing a law of their own contrary to the Law sent by Allah. And those who do that have been classed as contumacious and disobedient.

Finally, in the fifth (48) and sixth (49) verses, addressing the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, Muslims have been instructed that they should take precautions to stay immune from the disease which had afflicted the people of the Book lest they too, God forbid, were to start changing through misinterpretations the injunctions and laws given by Almighty Allah - goaded by greed for money and recognition, or stoop to the haughtier level of making and enforcing a self-made law of their own contrary to His Law.

Also stated here subsequently is an important matter of principle which posits that all prophets, may peace be upon them all, adhered to

the same faith and way as far as believing in and obeying Allah is concerned. But, every prophet was given, as wisdom demanded, a Shari'ah or Way or Code, appropriate to the nature and need of his time and in which many subsidiary injunctions differ. Thus, as pointed out here, the very Shari'ah given to a prophet was the wisest choice for that time of the prophet and during which following it was obligatory. When abrogated and replaced by another Shari'ah, the later, then became what was wise and expedient at its time, the following of which also became equally obligatory. That there is a unique element of wisdom in the phenomena of alternation and variation in the systems of Shari'ah is a point which has also been made here.

### Commentary

In the first verse of the set of verses appearing above, by saying: **إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا التَّوْرَةَ فِيهَا هُدًى وَنُورٌ** (Surely We have sent down the Torah, having guidance and light therein), the hint given is that the abrogation of the Shari'ah of Torah at that point of time is not because of any shortcoming of the Torah itself but it has been done rather because of the need to change injunctions with the change of time. Otherwise, the Torah too is a Book revealed by the same Revealer. It has rules of guidance for the Banī Isra'īl and it also has a special light which moves their hearts spiritually.

After that it was said: **يُحْكَمُ بِهَا النَّبِيُّونَ الَّذِينَ أَسْلَمُوا لِلَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالرَّبَّيُّونَ وَالْأَحْبَابُ** that is, 'We had revealed the Torah so that, until its Shari'ah has not been abrogated, all incoming prophets and their deputies, the men of Allah and the 'Ulamā shall all decide and rule in accordance with this Torah making it the working law of their time.' The deputies of the prophets, may peace be upon them all, have been mentioned in two categories - 'Rabbāniyyūn' and 'Aḥbār.' The word, 'Rabbāniyy' is attributed to 'Rabb' and means 'Man of Allah.' As for 'Aḥbār', it is the plural form of Ḥibr which, in the Jewish terminology, used to stand for 'Ālim (roughly, a scholar of religious sciences). It is obvious that for one to be a Man of Allah one has to have the knowledge of the necessary injunctions of Almighty Allah, otherwise deed *sans* knowledge is not possible - and no one can become a Man of Allah without obeying Divine injunctions and acting in accordance with them. Similarly, an 'Ālim is, in the sight of Allah, one whose deeds in life are a mirror of his knowledge, otherwise

an 'Ālim who, despite his knowledge of Divine injunctions, does not fulfill his binding religious obligations by doing what is required of him nor shows any concern for his failure to do so, is worse than an ignorant person in the sight of Allah. The outcome is that every Man of Allah is an 'Ālim and every 'Ālim is a Man of Allah (or should be, in principle). But, at this place, by mentioning both separately, a notice of caution has been given - no doubt, knowledge is necessary for a Man of Allah and deed, for an 'Ālim - but, one gets to be identified with his dominant activity or colour (of the rainbow he follows in his path of obedience to Allah) and that becomes the name he is called with. A person who mostly devotes himself to 'Ibādāt (acts of worship), A'māl (deeds) and the Dhikr of Allah (remembrance) and acquires religious knowledge sufficient for his needs, he is called a Rabbāniyy or Man of Allah. This, in our contemporary usage, is given names like Shaykh, Murshid, Pīr and a good many others. As for the person who acquires the highest practical expertise available in religious sciences, and devotes himself to the mission of teaching and training people in the rules of the Shari'ah, and fulfills the obligations of discharging what is Farḍ, Wājib and Sunnah al-Mu'akkadah - but is unable to spend any more time in performing Nafl 'Ibādāt (voluntary acts of worship) - he is called 'Hibr' or 'Ālim.

To sum up, it can be said that the explanation given above also makes it clear that there is no dichotomy in Shari'ah and Tariqah and no distance between 'Ulamā and Mashā'ikh. They all converge into the basic unity. As far as the difference in their method of work and the predominant area of occupation is concerned, it becomes equally evident that the 'Ulamā (religious scholars) and Sūfis (religious mystics) are not two sects or factions. Far from it, they are, rather, one - in the sense that they both work for the same purpose in life, that of submission and obedience to Allah and His Messenger. But, their comparative methods employed to achieve this purpose do seem to be formally divergent.

After that, it was said: بِمَا اسْتَحْفِظُوا مِنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ وَكَانُوا عَلَيْهِ شُهَدَاءَ (because they were entrusted with the protection of the Book of Allah and they stood guard over it). It means that these prophets and their two kinds of deputies, the 'Ulamā and the Mashā'ikh (Men of Knowledge and Men

of Allah) were responsible for enforcing the laws of the Torah because Almighty Allah had entrusted them with the protection of the Torah and they had given the pledge that they would guard it.

Upto this point, the text was referring to the Torah as Divine Scripture and guidance and light which was enforced and guarded by prophets, and their deputies among guides and scholars. Then, the focus turns on to the contemporary Jews who have been censured for not having guarded the Torah as their elders did. They acted crookedly when they started changing its injunctions, for example, the glad tidings of the coming of the Last among Prophets, Muhammad al-Muṣṭafā, may the peace and blessing of Allah be upon him, was mentioned clearly in the Torah and the Jews were asked to believe in him. But, rather than believe in him as required, they became hostile to him. Also given here is the reason as to what prompted them to do so. It was love for power and love for money. They knew that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was a true prophet of Allah but they balked at the thought of following him because they were taken as leaders among their people, common Jews who followed them. Now if they were to embrace Islam, they will turn into common Muslim individuals. Gone will be their pivotal position for power play. Other than this, they had almost made it a profession that they would bend and alter the provisions of the Torah to provide officially endorsed conveniences for influential people against payment of bribes. The contemporary Jews were warned about this practice in the following words:

فَلَا تَحْشَوْا النَّاسَ وَاحْشَوْنِي وَلَا تَشْتَرُوا بِآيَاتِي ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا

(So, do not fear people, fear Me. And do not take a paltry price for My verses).

It means that they should not fear that their people will stop following them or will turn against them and that they should not alter Divine commands for the sake of insignificant worldly gains for it would ruin them both materially and spiritually because:

وَمَنْ لَمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ

And whoever does not judge by what Allah has sent down, then, they are the disbelievers.

In the second verse after that (45), there is a description of the in-

junctions of Qīṣāṣ (Even Retaliation) with a particular reference stressing that 'We had revealed these injunctions in the Torah.' The words of the text are:

وَكَتَبْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ فِيهَا أَنَّ النَّفْسَ بِالنَّفْسِ وَالْعَيْنَ بِالْعَيْنِ وَالْأَنْفَ بِالْأَنْفِ  
وَالْأُذُنَ بِالْأُذُنِ وَالسِّنَّ بِالسِّنِّ وَالْجُرُوحَ قِصَاصٌ

'We had revealed in the Torah this injunction of Qīṣāṣ for the Jews that there will be life for life, eye for eye, nose for nose, ear for ear, tooth for tooth; and for wounds an equal retaliation.'

It will be recalled that the case of Banū Qurayzah and Banū Naḍīr was brought before the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. Counting on their power, Banū Naḍīr had compelled the weaker Banū Qurayzah to agree to their oppressive conditions which stipulated that should a man from Banū Qurayzah kill a man from Banū Naḍīr, they will have to pay two penalties. The Qīṣāṣ of life for life will be taken as well as the blood money will have to be paid. If the case was the reverse, that is a man from Banū Naḍīr kills a man from Banū Qurayzah, then, there will be no Qīṣāṣ; only blood money will be paid but that too will be half of what Banū Naḍīr were entitled to.

In this verse, Allah Almighty has exposed the lie of these people by pointing out that the injunctions of equality in Qīṣāṣ (retaliation) and Diyat (blood money) exist in the Torah too. What these people are doing is considered avoidance and that they bring their case to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم for a decision as alleged is no more than a ruse to find an excuse.

At the end of the verse it was said: وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ (And whoever does not judge by what Allah has sent down, then, they are the unjust.) It means that people who do not take the injunctions of Allah binding and who do not decide matters in accordance with them, are dissenters to the Divine commandment, its rejectors and rebels. They are unjust. The third verse (46) begins with the mention of the coming of Sayyidnā 'Isā عليه السلام who was sent to confirm the previous Scripture, that is, the Torah. Mentioned after that is the Injīl because that too, like the Torah, is guidance and light.

In the fourth verse (47) it was said that the people of the Injīl

should enforce injunctions in accordance with the Law revealed by Almighty Allah in the Injīl, and those who enforce what is against the injunctions sent down by Almighty Allah are disobedient, sinners.

### **The Qur'ān: Custodian of Torah and Injīl**

In the fifth (48) and the sixth (49) verse, the address is to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم saying that to him Allah has revealed the Qur'ān which confirms the Torah and Injīl, Books previous to it, and is their custodian as well. This is because, after the people of the Torah altered the Torah and the people of Injīl made changes in the Injīl, it was the Qur'ān alone which turned out to be the kind of overseer and protector which exposed the alterations made by them, lit up truth and reality in their proper perspective. Even today, the true teachings of the Torah and Injīl still survive through the Qur'ān while those who inherited them and those who claim to follow them have disfigured them to the extent that it has become impossible to distinguish truth from untruth. Towards the end of the verse, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been given the same instruction as was given to the people of the Torah and the people of the Injīl, that is, all orders and judgements given by him should be according to injunctions revealed by Allah, and that he should see through the ploy of these people who intend to have him decide matters according to their wishes and take his guard against their evil plans. There was a particular reason for saying what was said. Some Jewish religious scholars came to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. They told him that they were religious leaders among the Jews. If they became Muslims, the rest of them would become Muslims too. But, there was a condition to it. They said that they had a legal dispute with his people. They would bring that case to him. If, in this case, he were to decide in their favour, they would embrace Islam. Thereupon, Almighty Allah gave him the word of caution that he should never decide against considerations of equity and justice and the Law revealed by Allah because of the offer to become Muslims made by these people - a proposition which was not for him to worry about.

### **The Wisdom behind Partial Difference in Shari'ahs of Prophets**

Besides other elements of guidance, this verse carries an answer to a basic question of principle. The question is: When all prophets have

been sent by Allah, and all Books and Shari'ahs come from Him, why do they differ and why do a coming Book and Shari'ah abrogate the outgoing Shari'ah and Book? The answer has been given in this verse, alongwith its wisdom:

لِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ شِرْعَةً وَمِنْهَاجًا وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِنْ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ

For each of you, We have made a way and a method. And had Allah willed, He would have made a single community of people, but (He did not), so that He may test you in what He has given to you. Strive, then, to excel each other in good deeds.

To explain this in other words, it can be said that Allah has made for every section among human beings a particular Shari'ah and particular method of doing things in which, despite common principles, there are expedient differences in subsidiary injunctions. Had Allah so willed, it would have not been at all difficult for Him to make all human beings one community with only one Book and one Shari'ah for everyone. But, Allah Almighty did not prefer to do so for He intended to test people. He wanted to see who gets to know the reality of 'Ibādah (worship) and stays alert to receive and respond positively to whatever command comes for them. It may be a new Book or a new Shari'ah. They will be ready to accept and follow that, no matter how dear the previous Shari'ah and Book may be to them and no matter how hard its abandoning may be on them because of its grip on them as their ancestral religion. But, such people with their awakened sense of belonging to their ultimate master, always stay tuned to the next Divine call, and always ready to obey. At the other end of this trial shall obviously be those who fail to see this essential reality of obedience, who take to a particular Shari'ah and Book as closed objectives of life giving it the uncompromising status of ancestral religion as a result of which they choose not to pay any attention to any Divine command.

Great wisdom lies in this difference among Shari'ahs. This is the channel through which every section of the human community of any time is taught the reality behind genuine 'Ibādah (worship) and the reality behind human servitude to God. The message given is that the

reality of *Tbādah* (acts of worship) lies in being an 'Abd, a servant, and in obeying and following - which does not depend on Ṣalāh, Ṣawm, Ḥajj, Zakāh or Dhikr of Allah or Tilawah of the Qur'an - nor are these acts of worship an end by themselves. Instead of that, they all have one single purpose behind them: Obedience to the Command of Allah. This is the reason why times during which Ṣalāh is prohibited, offering Ṣalāh at those times does not bring any reward. On the contrary, it becomes a source of sin. During the days of the two 'Īds, the 'Īdul-Fiṭr and the 'Īdul-Adḥā, when fasting is forbidden, it becomes a sin to fast at that time. Other than the ninth of the month of Dhil-Ḥijjah, gathering in the plain of 'Arafāt on any day or month to pray and worship is no reward-worthy act while on the ninth of Dhil-Ḥijjah, this is the greatest *Tbādah* on the plain of 'Arafāt. The same rule applies to all other acts of worship. Done when asked to do, they are *Tbādah*. But, when they are stopped at a certain limit, they too become Ḥarām, unlawful and impermissible. Ignorant people are usually not aware of this reality. 'Ibadāt which become their habit, rather, national customs which they get used to as if they were 'Ibadāt, then, they would ignore even open commands from Allah and His Messenger. This is from where sprout the seeds of innovations and deviations (*Bid'at* and *Muḥaddathāt*) in established religion which, with the passage of time, become attached to it as if they were a part of it while they are not. This has been the major cause of alterations in past Shari'ahs and Books. By sending different Books and Shari'ahs to different prophets, Allah *Jalla Sha'nuhū* has taught human beings the lesson that they should not take one mode of action or one mode of worship as their primary objective. They should, instead, become obedient servants of Allah in its most desirable sense on the strength of which they should be able to instantly leave what they were doing earlier, as and when asked to do so. And, conversely, they should immediately be ready to do whatever they are asked to do.

Other than this, yet another wisdom behind this difference in Shari'ahs is that since tempers and tastes of human beings from every period and section of the world are different, the variation in the time frame affects human disposition considerably. If subsidiary injunctions were to be made identical for everyone, human beings would be in deep trouble. Therefore, it was the dictate of Divine wisdom that

appropriate change be made in subsidiary injunctions with due consideration of the response patterns of the people of different tastes and times. Here, the religious terminology of Abrogator (*Nāsikh*) and Abrogated (*Mansūkh*) does not mean that the Law Giver did not know conditions before and gave one law - and when new circumstances prevailed it was abrogated - or the earlier law was promulgated by mistake or lack of attention but was changed on later recollection. This is not the way it is. The *Nāsikh* and *Mansūkh* are just like the prescription of a doctor or physician where a change in medicines appears gradually since the doctor or physician knows in advance that a certain symptom will show up in the patient after he or she has used the initially prescribed medicine for three days which then will be the time to prescribe a certain other medicine. So, when he cancels his earlier prescription and replaces it with a new one, it will not be correct to say that the previous prescription was wrong and for that reason it was cancelled. Instead, the truth of the matter is that this very prescription was correct and necessary for use during the initial days of sickness - and under later conditions, the same second prescription is correct and necessary.

### A Summary of Subsidiary Injunctions

1. We know from the initial verses that the case brought to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم by the Jews was decided by him. The decision was in accord with the Shari'ah of the Torah. This proves that the religious injunctions in force in the previous Shari'ahs remain in force until abrogated by the Holy Qur'an or Divine Revelation as it was in the cases of the Jews where the injunction concerning equality in Qisās (Law of Retaliation) and stoning to death (*Rajm*) in punishment of adultery (*Zinā*) was there in the Torah as well. Then, the Qur'an too retained it as it was.

2. Similarly, in the second verse (45), the injunction of Qisās about the Retaliation for Wounds which has been mentioned with reference to the Torah was enforced in Islam by the Holy Prophet ﷺ. On this basis, the rule of procedure with the majority of the 'Ulamā of Islam is that injunctions of previous Shari'ahs which have not been abrogated by the Qur'an are valid, enforcable and obedience-worthy in our Shari'ah too. That is why, in the cited verses, the people of the Torah have

been asked to decide, judge and obey in accordance with the Torah and the people of the Injīl have been asked to decide, judge and obey in accordance with the Injīl - though both these Books and their Shari'ahs stand abrogated after the appearance of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The outcome is that the injunctions of the Torah and Injīl which were not abrogated by the Qur'ān are obedience-worthy even today.

3. The third injunction which stands proved from these verses is that ruling contrary to the injunctions revealed by Almighty Allah is Kufr (disbelief in and rejection of Faith) under some conditions specially when it is combined with belief in its being not true. And under some conditions, it is *Zulm* (injustice) and *Fisq* (disobedience, sin) - when belief-wise, one does accept them as true, but, in practice, does what is contrary to it.

4. The fourth injunction which appears in these verses is that taking bribe is absolutely *Haram* (unlawful) - specially, the taking of bribe in a judicial case, which is far too grave.

5. The fifth injunction which emerges clearly from these verses is that all prophets, may peace be upon them, and their Shari'ahs agree in principle, but there is that difference in minute and subsidiary injunctions with them - a difference which is based on considerations of great wisdom.

### Verses 51 - 58

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَىٰ أَوْلِيَاءَ ۚ  
بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ ۚ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنَّهُ مِنْهُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ  
لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٥١﴾ فَتَرَى الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ  
يُسَارِعُونَ فِيهِمْ يَقُولُونَ نَحْشَىٰ أَنْ تُصِيبَنَا دَائِرَةٌ ۗ فَعَسَىٰ  
اللَّهُ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ بِالْفَتْحِ أَوْ أَمْرٍ مِّنْ عِنْدِهِ فَيُضْبِحُوا عَلَىٰ مَا  
أَسْرَوْا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ نَدِيمِينَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَهْلُو لَاءِ  
الَّذِينَ أَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ أَنَّهُمْ لَمَعَكُمْ ۗ حَبِطَتْ  
أَعْمَالُهُمْ فَاصْبَحُوا خُسْرِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَنْ

يَزْتَدُّ مِنْكُمْ عَن دِينِهِ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهَ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ  
وَيُحِبُّونَهُ أَذِلَّةٌ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَعِزَّةٌ عَلَى الْكٰفِرِينَ يُجَاهِدُونَ  
فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةَ لَائِمٍ ۗ ذٰلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ  
يُؤْتِيهِ مَن يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٥٤﴾ إِنَّمَا وَلِيَكُمُ اللَّهُ  
وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلٰوةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكٰوةَ  
وَهُمْ رٰكِعُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فَإِنَّ  
حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْغٰلِبُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا  
الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا دِينَكُم هُزُوًا وَلَعِبًا مِّنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتٰبَ  
مِن قَبْلِكُمْ وَالْكَفَّارَ أَوْلِيَآءَ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ  
﴿٥٧﴾ وَإِذْ نَادَيْتُم إِلَى الصَّلٰوةِ اتَّخَذُوهَا هُزُوًا وَلَعِبًا ۗ ذٰلِكَ  
بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَّا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾

O those who believe, do not take the Jews and Christians for intimate friends. They are friends to each other. And whoever takes intimate friends from them, he is one of them. Surely, Allah does not take the unjust people to the right path. [51]

Now, you see those who have disease in their hearts race towards them saying, "We apprehend that some misfortune may overtake us." So, it is likely that Allah may bring victory or a command from His own side, whereupon they become regretful over what they concealed in their hearts. [52]

And those who believe will say, "Are these the ones who swore by Allah on emphatic oaths that they were with you?" Their deeds have gone waste; hence they became losers. [53]

O those who believe, whoever of you turns back from his Faith, then, Allah shall bring a people whom He loves and who love Him, soft on the believers, hard on the disbelievers, who fight in the way of Allah and are

not afraid of the reproach of any critic. That is a grace of Allah. He confers it on whom He wills. And Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing. [54]

Your only friend is Allah, and His Messenger, and those who believe - those who establish *Salāh* and pay *Zakāh* and bow before Allah. [55] And whoever takes to friendship with Allah and His Messenger and those who believe, then, the people of Allah are the ones to prevail. [56]

O those who believe, do not take as friends those who have taken your Faith in jest and fun, those who have been given the Book prior to you, and the disbelievers. And fear Allah, if you are believers. [57]

And when you call for *Ṣalāh*, they take it in jest and fun. That is because they are a people who do not understand. [58]

### Explanation in Brief

The verses cited above take up three important subjects which are the basic principles of unity among Muslims as a collectively organized community.

1. Muslims can deal with non-Muslims in the spirit of tolerance, sympathy, goodwill, equity, justice, favour and kindness, almost everything within that line of conduct. In fact, they should do that for they have been taught to do that. But, what is not permitted is the kind of fast friendship and indiscriminating intimacy which may garble the distinctive hallmarks of Islam. This is the issue known as the '*Tark al-Muwā'āt*' to refrain from deep (friendship) in Islamic terminology.

2. The second principle stressed upon is that should the Muslims of any time and place shift away from the first principle stated above and develop an intimacy of this nature with non-Muslims, then, let them not be under the impression that their conduct could harm Islam in any manner whatsoever - because Allah Almighty has Himself taken the responsibility of seeing that Islam remains duly protected. It cannot be eliminated by anyone. However, if a set of people still go out of their minds, break the limits of Islamic modality of doing things and, let us presume, decide to leave the very pale of Islam, then, Allah Ta'ālā will bring in another set of people who will uphold and establish

the principles and laws of Islam.

3. Once we know the positive and negative aspects in perspective, it becomes evident that the real friendship of a Muslim - deep, intense, profound and reliance-worthy - can only be with Allah, the Highest of the high, His Messenger, and with those who believe in them.

After this brief introduction of the subject, we can now move to the detailed explanation of the verses.

### **Commentary**

In the first verse (51), Muslims have been commanded not to enter into "Muwālāt" (deep friendship) with Jews and Christians as is the customary practice of non-Muslims in general and, of Jews and Christians in particular, who reserve deep friendship for their own people only. They do not deal with Muslims at the same wave length.

After this clear instruction, should a Muslim do otherwise and enter into an intimate friendship with a Jew or Christian, then, in the sight of Islam, he is fit to be counted as one of them - and not as a Muslim.

### **The Background of Revelation**

Reporting from 'Ikrimah, Ibn Jarīr has said that this verse was revealed in the background of a particular event. After the Holy Prophet ﷺ had settled in Madīnah, he had entered into a treaty with Jews and Christians living nearby which required that they would neither fight against Muslims nor help any other tribe at war with them, rather, they would join Muslims to fight against them. Similarly, Muslims will not fight them nor help anyone against them, rather, would defend them against the aggressors. For some time, both parties kept adhering to the treaty. But, the Jews could not observe the terms of the treaty any longer because of their conspiratorial nature and anti-Islam temperament. They made a secret deal with the pagans of Makkah against Muslims and wrote them a letter inviting them to their fortress. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ came to know about this conspiracy, he despatched a posse of Mujāhidīn to confront them. These Jews from Banū Qurayzah were, on the one hand, conspiring with the disbelievers of Makkah, while on the other, having infiltrated among Muslims, they had succeeded in making pacts of friendship with many of

them. This was their front of spying for the disbelievers of Makkah against Muslims. Revealed thereupon was this verse which stopped Muslims from indulging in deep friendship with Jews and Christians, so that they could be deprived of having access to sensitive information about Muslims. At that time, some noble Companions, including Sayyidnā 'Ubadah ibn Ṣāmit, openly announced the cancellation of their treaty obligations as well as their support for abandonment of any close friendship in the future. As for the hypocrites who had their pragmatic relationship with Muslims, or people whose hearts had yet to taste the sweetness of genuine faith, they apprehended dangers in breaking relationships with Jews and Christians lest the conspiracy hatched by the disbelievers and the Jews succeeded and Muslims were overpowered in which case it would be necessary that they keep their relationships balanced bothways to avoid any problems for them later on. It was on this basis that 'Abdullāh ibn Ubaiyy ibn Salūl had said that he saw danger in cutting off relationship with these people and, therefore, he cannot do that. Revealed thereupon was the second verse (52):

فَتَرَى الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ يُسَارِعُونَ فِيهِمْ يَقُولُونَ نَخْشَى أَنْ تُصِيبَنَا دَائِرَةٌ،

Now, you see those who have disease in their hearts race towards them saying, "We apprehend that some misfortune may overtake us."

It means that after hearing the religiously binding injunction of the abandonment of close friendships, people who have the disease of hypocrisy in their hearts started racing towards their disbelieving friends saying that cutting off relationships with these people is dangerous for them.

Answering them, Almighty Allah said:

فَعَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ بِالْفَتْحِ أَوْ أَمْرٍ مِنْ عِنْدِهِ فَيُصِيبُحُوا عَلَى مَا أَسْرَوْا فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ نُذْمِينَ

So, it is likely that Allah may bring victory or a command from His own side, whereupon they become regretful over what they concealed in their hearts.

It means that these people are under the impression that the disbelievers and the Jews will overcome Muslims. But, Allah has decided that it will not happen. Rather, close is the conquest of Makkah. Or, even before the conquest of Makkah, Allah may, by exposing the hypocrisy of the hypocrites, put them to disgrace. Then, at that time, these people will regret thoughts they had concealed.

This has been clarified further in the third verse (53) where it was said that once the hypocrisy of the hypocrites has been exposed and the reality behind their claims and oaths of friendship comes out in the open, Muslims would wonder if those were the people who used to assure them with sworn claims of their friendship and there they were all ruined as everything they did just to pretend had gone to waste. That Allah *Jalla Sha'nuhū* has mentioned the conquest of Makkah and the disgrace of the hypocrites in these verses was something which everyone saw only after a few days with their own eyes.

The fourth verse (54) tells us that the prohibition of intimate friendship and inter-mingling with non-Muslims is for the good of Muslims themselves. Otherwise, Islam is the particular religion the responsibility to protect which has been taken by Almighty Allah Himself. The crookedness or disobedience of an individual or group is self-destruct in its place. However, should some individual or group from among Muslims were to really abandon Islam itself, turn into an apostate (*Murtadd*) totally and become a part of non-Muslims, even that too could bring no harm to Islam because Allah who is Absolutely Powerful is responsible for its protection and He will immediately bring in some other nation into action which will carry out the duties of protecting and spreading the *Dīn* of Allah. Things He must do depend neither on an individual nor on the largest of the large party or institution. When He so wishes, He can make straws work for beams and logs, otherwise beams and logs sit in forests turning into compost anyway. As referred to elsewhere in this Commentary, how well this was put in an Arabic couplet:

إِنَّ الْمَقَادِيرَ إِذَا سَاعَدَتْ  
أَلْحَقَّتِ الْعَاجِزَ بِالْقَادِرِ

When Divine decree helps - it can make the meak overtake the mighty.

When it was said in this verse that should Muslims become apostates, it does not matter, for Allah will make another set of people rise to take their place, then, right there, some virtues of this set of people have also been enumerated saying clearly that they can be marked out by such and such distinguishable qualities. Those engaged in the service of their religion should keep these qualities foremost in their minds because these verses tell us that people who have such quality and character are welcome and dear in the sight of Almighty Allah.

1. Their first quality identified by the Holy Qur'ān is that Allah will love them and they will love Allah. There are two parts to this quality. The first one is the love of these people for Almighty Allah. This could be taken, in one or the other degree, within one's control since one can, even if one does not love someone emotionally or naturally, at least make his intention and determination to work for him in loving intellectually. And even emotional or natural love is though not in one's control, yet its causes are, for instance, the meditation of the greatness and majesty of Almighty Allah, the conception of His most perfect power and the recapitulative survey of His authorities and blessings over human beings. This would definitely generate even natural love for Almighty Allah in the heart of a man or woman.

But, as far as the other part is concerned, that is, the love of Allah will be with these people, it obviously seems to indicate that this is a matter where human choice and action play no role. So, what is beyond our control and choice hardly warrants a description and is obviously fruitless - one may be tempted to wonder.

But, by pondering over some other verses of the Holy Qur'ān, one will discover that the causes of this part of love too are within human control. If someone uses these means, the love of Allah will necessarily be with him or her. Those means of achieving this end have been mentioned in the verse of the Qur'ān which appears in Sūrah 'Āl-'Imran: **اللَّهُ: قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحِبُّكُمْ اللَّهُ** (Say [O Prophet], "If you do love Allah, follow me; Allah shall love you" ... 3:31).

This verse tells us that one who wishes to have Allah love him or her should make the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet **صلى الله عليه وسلم** the very pivot of life and develop a committed habit of following Sunnah in whatever one does in each and every department of one's life. If so,

the promise of Allah is there - He will love that person. And this very verse also tells us that the only group of people which can stand up and meet the challenge of Disbelief and Apostacy (Kufr and Irtidād) shall be the group of people which follows the Sunnah conscientiously and habitually - neither falling short in obedience to the injunctions of the Shari'ah, nor initiating and introducing on their own, deeds contrary to the Sunnah.

2. The second quality of this group has been identified as: **أَدِلَّةٌ عَلَى** **الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَعِزَّةٌ عَلَى الْكُفْرِينَ** (...soft on the believers, hard on the disbelievers ...). Here, the word: '*adhillah*' could be, as explained in Qāmūs, the plural of both *dhalīl* or *dhalūl*. *Dhalīl* means low or despicable while *dhalūl* means soft and tractable, that is, easily controlled, docile. According to the majority of commentators, this is the meaning of '*adhillah*' at this place, that is, these people will be soft with Muslims. Even in matters of dispute, they can be controlled and mollified easily. They would set the dispute aside, even if they are right in it - as said by the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم in an authentic *ḥadīth*: **أَنَا زَعِيمٌ بِبَيْتٍ فِي رِضْوَانِ الْجَنَّةِ لِمَنْ تَرَكَ الْمِرَاءَ**; that is, 'I am the guarantor of a home in the middle of Paradise for one who abandons dispute despite being in the right.' Thus, the essential meaning of this word comes to be that these people will have no dispute with Muslims in matters relating to their rights and dealings.

The second word is '*a'izzah*' in: **أَعِزَّةٌ عَلَى الْكُفْرِينَ** (hard on the disbelievers). Here too, '*a'izzah*' is the plural of '*Azīz*' which means dominant, strong and hard. So, the sense is that these people are hard and strong against the enemies of Allah and His *Dīn* who would be unable to control or manipulate them. Now, by combining both sentences we can arrive at the essence of the statement - that this will be a set of people whose love and hate, friendship and enmity will be, not for their person or their rights and dealings, but only for Allah, His Messenger and His *Dīn*. Therefore, when comes the time to fight, it will not be against the obedient servants of Allah and His Messenger, instead of that, it would be against those who are hostile and disobedient to Allah and His Messenger. The same subject appears in a verse of Sūrah Al-Faṭḥ where the words are: **أَشَدُّهُمْ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ رَحْمَةً بَيْنَهُمْ** (severe against disbelievers, merciful between themselves - 48:29).

3. The essence of the first quality was the most perfect fulfillment of the rights of Allah, and the essence of the second quality was moderation in the fulfillment of the rights of the servants of Allah by remaining accomodating in dealings. Now, the third quality of these people mentioned here is: **يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ** that is, they shall keep carrying out Jihād to spread and establish the True Faith. In essence, it means that fighting against forces of disbelief and apostacy is no easy task. In this confrontation, traditionally known devotion to worship in seclusion or a simple softness or hardness of attitude is not enough. Also necessary here is a feeling and fervour for the mission of establishing *Dīn*.

4. To ensure that this feeling and fervor achieves its desired perfection, the fourth quality of these people has been identified as: **لَا يَخَافُونَ كَوْلْمَ أَتَمِّ** that is, they will not care for any blame, censure or derogatory criticism directed against them while they are engaged in their efforts to upraise the true word of Allah and establish His *Dīn*. A little reflection will show that the leader of a movement usually faces two types of impediments in his efforts which are the power of the adversary and the vilification of his own people. Experience bears out that people who lead a movement resolutely would stand firm against any adversary, even go through arrests, jail sentences, beatings and tortures, yet, when it comes to facing blames and vilifications from their own people, even the most determined leaders tend to falter. Perhaps, it is to stress the importance of this trying situation at this place, that Allah Almighty has considered it sufficient to say that these people go on with their Jihād without taking notice of any blames directed against them.

Finally, towards the end of the verse (54), it was added that these good qualities of character are nothing but rewards from Almighty Allah. It is He who gives them to whom He wills. A human being cannot acquire these by dint of his own effort and deed without Divine grace.

### **The *Fitnah* of Apostacy**

Through the explanation of the words of this verse, it has already been clarified that the incidence of some from among Muslims turning into apostates will not harm Islam as a religion because Allah will

raise a set of people with high morals and superior deeds who would defend and support it. However, the majority of commentators have dwelt further on the *Fitnah* (trial) of Apostacy (*Irtidād*). According to them, this verse is actually a prophecy of this Trial and at the same time a good news for the group of people who will fight against it and eliminate it successfully. This coming *Fitnah* of Apostacy was a serious problem the germs of which had already started spreading towards the latermost period of Prophethood. But, after the departure of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم from this mortal world, this became an epidemic spreading all over the Arabian Peninsula. The group blessed with the good news was that of the noble Companions who confronted this onslaught of Apostacy under the command of the first Khalīfah of Islam, Sayyidnā Abū Bakr Al-Ṣiddīq رضى الله عنه .

Chronologically, Musaylimah al-Kadhḥāb (the Liar) was the first to claim prophethood alongwith the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and was so audacious that he returned his emissaries back with the threat that he would have killed them had it not been for the protocol which prohibited killing of envoys and emissaries. Musaylimah was a liar in his claim. The Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم did not get the time to wage *Jihād* against him and he left this mortal world.

Similarly, Aswad al-'Ansi, the chief of the tribe of Mudhḥaj in Yaman announced his prophethood. The Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم ordered the Governor of Yaman appointed by him to fight against him. But, the very next day after the night he was killed, the Holy Prophet ﷺ departed from this mortal world. The news about his being killed reached the noble Companions at the end of Rabi' al-Awwal. Another event like this was reported concerning the tribe of Banū Asad whose chief, Ṭulayḥah ibn Khuwaylid laid a claim to his own prophethood.

Groups from these three tribes had turned Apostates during the last sickness of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. The news of his passing away took the lid out of this storm of Apostacy. Seven tribes of Arabia from different places turned against Islam and its legal authority. They refused to pay *Zakāh* as required by Islamic law to the Khalīfah of the time, Sayyidnā Abū Bakr Al-Ṣiddīq رضى الله عنه .

After the passing away of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, the responsibility of the country and the community fell on the shoulders of

Sayyidnā Abū Bakr Al-Ṣiddīq رضى الله عنه . There was the great shock on the one hand, and the flood of trials and rebellions on the other. Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها says that the shock faced by her father, Sayyidnā Abū Bakr, after the passing away of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, was so great that had it fallen on high mountains they would have been reduced to powder. But, Almighty Allah had blessed him with the high station of patience and fortitude by virtue of which he fought against all odds with full determination and courage, and did succeed finally.

Rebellion, as obvious, can be quashed by use of force only. But, conditions had reached a point of danger and Sayyidnā Abū Bakr went into consultation with the noble Companions. None of them approved of a hardline against rebellions. The danger was: If the Companions were to be committed to internal warfare, foreign powers would run over their new Islamic country. But, Allah Almighty made the heart of His 'True one' strong and settled for Jihād. He gave an eloquent Khutbah before the Companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ which opened up their hearts too in favour of Jihād. The power and perfection of his determination and fortitude is reflected through his words:

"People who, after they have become Muslims, turn back and reject the injunctions given by the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and the Law of Islam, then, it is my duty that I should wage a Jihād against them. If, against me, they decide to bring along the combined force of all Jinns and human beings, and all trees and rocks of the world, all together, and I have no comrade in arms to support me, even then, I would, all by myself, put my neck on the stake and carry out this Jihād."

After having said this, he mounted his horse and started moving ahead. Then, the noble Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all, came forward and made Sayyidnā Siddīq al-Akbar sit at his place. In no time, a battle plan was drawn with fronts assigned to different people and the time of their departure set for action.

Therefore, Sayyidnā 'Alī رضى الله عنه , Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Ḍaḥḥāk, Qatādah and other Imāms of Tafsīr have said that this verse has been revealed about Sayyidnā Abū Bakr Al-Ṣiddīq رضى الله عنه . He was the first one of the promised people about whom it was said in this verse that they will appear to defend Islam at the command of Allah.

But, not contrary to this, is the possibility that some other group could also be included in the sense of this verse. Therefore, respected elders who have pointed out to Sayyidnā Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī ؓ or other noble Companions as being included in the sense of this verse cannot be really taken as contrary to this suggestion. In fact, the most sound and safe position is to believe that all these blessed people, rather every single Muslim due to come right upto the Last Day of Qiyaamah, who will keep confronting disbelief and apostacy in accordance with the commands of the Qur'an - they all shall be considered as included under the purview of this verse.

Let us now resume our description of how the moving exhortation of Sayyidnā Şiddīq al-Akbar made a group of Şahābah rise to the occasion and meet the challenge of this trial of Apostacy under the leadership of the first Khalīfah of Islam. Assigning an army of fighting men, he sent Sayyidnā Khālīd ibn Walīd to Yamamah to fight against Musaylimah the Liar who had become very powerful in his area. The encounters were tough, but Musaylimah the Liar was ultimately killed at the hands of Sayyidnā Waḥshī, may Allah be pleased with him. His group repented and returned to the fold of Islam. Again, it was Sayyidnā Khālīd who went to fight against Tulayḥah ibn Khuwaylid. He escaped and went out to some other area. Then, Allah gave him the ability to repent and return to Islam once again. He came back as a Muslim.

The news that Aswad al-'Ansi had been killed and his group had surrendered had reached Madīnah toward the end of the month of Rabī' al-Awwal, the first month of the Şiddīqī Caliphate. This was the very first news of victory which reached Sayyidnā Şiddīq al-Akbar under such trying circumstances. So, from this point onwards, the noble Companions of the Prophet were also blessed with more clear victories on every front against other tribes which had refused to pay *Zakāh*.

Thus, the practical demonstration of the truth of the word of Allah mentioned towards the end of the fifth verse (56): *فَاِنَّ رِجْزَ اللّٰهِ هُمْ الْعٰلِيُوْنَ* (then, the people of Allah are the ones to prevail) was seen by the whole world. Speaking historically and objectively, it is a proven fact that the problem of Apostacy did affect some tribes of the Arabian Peninsula.

la after the passing away of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Then, the group that Allah made to rise and fight against the challenge was that of Sayyidnā Şiddīq al-Akbar and his colleagues among the Şahābah. So, it also stands proved from this very verse that the qualities of the promised set of people given in the Qur'an were all present in Sayyidnā Şiddīq al-Akbar and the Şahābah with him. To restate these, we can say:

1. Allah loves them.
2. They love Allah.
3. They are soft with Muslims and hard against disbelievers.
4. Their Jihād was in the way of Allah in which they were not afraid of any blame.

Pointing out to the reality of realities, it was clearly stressed that all these high qualities of character, their timely use and the ultimate success in the Islamic expedition through them were things which are not achieved by simple reliance on planning or power or numbers. This is nothing but the grace of Allah. It is He who bestows this blessing upon whom He wills.

### Marks of True Muslims

In the previous four verses discussed so far, Muslims have been forbidden to maintain intimate friendship with disbelievers. A positive approach has been taken in the fifth verse (55) where those with whom Muslims can have intimate friendship and special camaraderie have been identified. Mentioned first is Allah and then, His blessed Prophet, for Allah is - and He alone can be - the real friend, guardian and guide of a true Muslim, all the time and under all conditions. Other than the relationship with Him, every relationship and every friendship is perishable. As for the bond of fidelity to the Holy Prophet ﷺ is concerned, that too is, in reality, connected with Allah - and not separated. In the last sentence of the verse, the sincerest friends and fellows of Muslims have been identified as those who are true Muslims - not simply Muslims in name. They have three qualities which mark them out. These are:

الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ رَاكِعُونَ

Those who establish *Şalāh* and pay *Zakāh* and bow before Allah.

It means that they: (1) Fulfill the obligation of Ṣalāh punctually observing all etiquettes (*Ādāb*) and conditions (*Sharā'it*) which must be observed in it; (2) Pay *Zakāh* out of their wealth; and (3) they are humble and modest and never become proud and arrogant over their good deeds.

The word, *Rukū'* in the concluding statement of this verse (55) : **وَهُمْ رُكُوعُونَ** translated as 'those who bow before Allah' could be taken in more than one sense. Therefore, some of the leading commentators have said that *Rukū'* refers to the functional *Rukū'* (bowing position) at this place - which is a basic element (*Rukn* : pillar) of Ṣalāh. And the sentence: **وَهُمْ رُكُوعُونَ** (and those who bow before Allah) has been placed after: **يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ** (those who establish Ṣalāh) because the purpose is to distinguish the Ṣalāh of Muslims from the prayer offered by others. As for the essential prayer which Muslims call Ṣalāh is something the Jews and Christians also do, but it has no *Rukū'* in it. *Rukū'* is a distinctive element of the Islamic prayer known as Ṣalāh. (Maḏharī)

But, the majority of commentators says that *Rukū'* at this place does not mean the technical *Rukū'* of Ṣalāh. Rather, it means to bow, to be modest and humble in the lexical sense. Abū Ḥayyān in *Tafsīr al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ* and Al-Zamakhsharī in *Tafsīr al-Kashshāf* have gone by this meaning. The same view has been adopted in *Tafsīr Maḏharī* and *Tafsīr Bayān al-Qur'ān*. Thus, the meaning of this sentence comes to be that these people do not feel proud of their good deeds; their natural disposition is, rather, modesty and humility.

It appears in some narrations that this sentence has been revealed about Sayyidnā 'Alī **رضي الله عنه** in the background of a particular event. It is said that Sayyidnā 'Alī was busy making Ṣalāh on a certain day. When he bowed in *Rukū'*, someone needy turned up and asked for something. He, within that state of *Rukū'*, took out a ring from one of his fingers and tossed it towards him. He could have taken care of the need of this person after having finished his Ṣalāh, but he did not wish to make even that much of a delay in removing the need of a poor faqir. This act of 'racing towards good deeds' was pleasing in the sight of Almighty Allah and it was through this sentence that it was appreciated.

The *Sanad* or authority of this narration is a debated issue among

'*Ulamā* and *Muḥaddithīn*, but, should this narration be taken as correct or sound, it would essentially mean that deserving of the close friendship of Muslims are common Muslims who fulfill the obligations of *Ṣalāh* and *Zakāh* particularly and regularly - and among them, Sayyidnā 'Alī is specially more deserving of this friendship - as has been said by the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم in another authentic *Ḥadīth*: مَنْ كُنْتُ مَوْلَاً فَعَلَيْ مَوْلَاهُ (To whomever I am a friend, then, 'Ali too is a friend of his) (narrated by Aḥmad, as in Mazharī). In yet another *ḥadīth*, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been reported to have said: اَللّٰهُمَّ وَالِ مَنْ وَاٰهُ وِعَادِ مَنْ عَاَدَاكَ (O Allah, befriend whoever befriends him and take as enemy whoever shows enmity to him).

Perhaps, Sayyidnā 'Alī رضى الله عنه has been blessed with this honour because the Fitnah to appear in the future was unveiled before him and he knew that there will be people who will nurse enmity with him and will not hesitate in even rising in rebellion against him - as it did happen during the uprising of the Khawārij.

Anyway, the revelation of the present verse - even if it is related to this event - is worded in a general sense which includes all Companions of the Prophet, and all Muslims. This is not particular to any one individual under a specific command. Therefore, when someone asked Sayyidnā Imām Bāqar: "Do the words: اَلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا (those who believe) in this verse mean Sayyidnā 'Alī رضى الله عنه?" He said: "He too, as included under 'believers', is within the purview of this verse."

### People of Allah shall prevail ultimately

The next verse (56) gives the good news that such people will overcome the world as come forward in obedience to the Qur'ānic injunctions given in this verse and stay away from forging close friendship with others by limiting themselves to taking Allah, His Messenger and those who have faith in them as their genuine friends. The words of the verse are:

وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهُ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا فَاِنَّ حِزْبَ اللّٰهِ هُمُ الْغٰلِبُوْنَ

And whoever takes Allah and His Messenger and those who believe as friends, then, the People of Allah, are the ones to prevail.

In other words, it is said here that those who obey the commands

of Allah are the People of Allah. Given to them is the good news that they will be the ones to finally overcome. The events which unfolded later on confirmed the veracity of this statement when everyone saw that the noble Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all, overcame all powers which threatened them. When internal rebellions challenged Sayyidnā Abū Bakr, Allah Almighty helped him prevail over all of them. When the towering powers of Ceaser and Cyrus marshalled their menacing might against Sayyidnā 'Umar al-Fārūq, Allah Almighty effaced them from the face of the earth. Then, as long as these injunctions were dutifully observed by the Khulafā' and Muslims at large who came after them - by abstaining from establishing close bonds of friendship with non-Muslims - they had always remained winners in the struggle of life.

### **The Prohibition of Friendship with those who make fun of Islam**

In the sixth verse (57), Allah Almighty has again stressed upon the injunction mentioned in verse 51 at the beginning of the Section, the sense of which is that the Muslims should not seek close friendship with people who make fun of their religion. They can be divided in two groups: The People of the Book, that is, the Jews and the Christians; and the disbelievers and non-Muslims in general. In al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ, Imām Abū Ḥayyān says that the People of the Book were already included under the word, Kuffār or disbelievers, still, the People of the Book have been mentioned here particularly perhaps, because the People of the Book were, though, closer to Islam as compared with other disbelievers, yet, experience bears that very few from among them embraced Islam. This is the reason why a look into the statistics of those who embraced Islam after the age of prophethood and during the period later to it, will reveal that the majority of them were from among the common disbelievers. The number of those who became Muslims from among the People of the Book will be much lower.

Why would that be so? The reason is simple. The People of the Book take pride in being adherents to Divine Faith and Divine Scripture. This proud partisanship made them opt for not accepting the Truth. The attitude of mockery against Muslims was something that they displayed most. When mockery becomes wickedness, things

much lower can happen, as would be illustrated by an episode mentioned in the eighth (58) verse in the following words: وَإِذَا نَادَيْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ اتَّخَذْتُمُهَا حُزْنًا وَكُلْعَبًا (And when you call for Ṣalāh, they take it in jest and fun). Tafsīr Mazharī, with reference to Ibn Abī Ḥatīm, reports the event itself by saying that there was a Christian in Madīnah al-tayyibah. When he heard the words : أَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (I testify that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah) in the *Adhān* (call for prayer), he used to say: أَخْرَجَ اللَّهُ الْكَاذِبَ (May Allah burn the liar). At last, this very remark made by him became the cause of his entire family burn to ashes. How this happened was commonplace. When he was sleeping, his servant entered the house with a little fire for some purpose. A speck from it flew out and fell down on some piece of cloth. When everybody was fast asleep, the speck had turned into a blaze and everybody was burnt to death.

### The Tragedy of People who do not Understand

At the end of the verse (58), it was said: ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ (That is because they are a people who do not understand). It means that the reason for their jest and fun being directed against what is True Faith could be no other but that they do not understand.

Qāḍī Thanāullāh of Panī Pat has said in Tafsīr Mazharī that Allah Almighty calls them devoid of understanding although their reason and intelligence in worldly matters is well known. From here we learn that it is possible that one could be very smart and quick-witted in certain kinds of jobs, but when it comes to doing some other things, he either does not use his mind or his mind does not work in that direction. Therefore, he turns out to be dumb in it, like one who does not understand. The Holy Qur'an has referred to this subject in another verse as follows:

يَعْلَمُونَ ظَاهِرًا مِّنَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ عَنِ الْآخِرَةِ هُمْ غٰفِلُونَ

These people do know outward matters of the present life while they are heedless to the Hereafter. (30:7)

### Verses 59 - 61

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ هَلْ تَنْقِمُونَ مِنَّا إِلَّا أَنْ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِن قَبْلُ وَأَنَّ أَكْثَرَكُمْ فَٰسِقُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾ قُلْ هَلْ

أَنبِئِكُمْ بِسَرِّ مَن ذَٰلِكَ مَثُوبَةً عِنْدَ اللَّهِ مَن لَّعَنَهُ اللَّهُ وَعَظِبَ  
عَلَيْهِ وَجَعَلَ مِنْهُمُ الْقِرَدَةَ وَالْخَنَازِيرَ وَعَبَدَ الطَّاغُوتِ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ  
شَرُّ مَكَانًا وَأَضَلُّ عَن سَوَاءِ السَّبِيلِ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَإِذَا جَاءُوكُم  
قَالُوا آمَنَّا وَقَدْ دَخَلُوا بِالْكُفْرِ وَهُمْ قَدْ خَرَجُوا بِهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ  
بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْتُمُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

Say, “O People of the Book, do you accuse us only because we have believed in Allah and in what has been sent down to us and what has been sent down earlier, and because most of you are sinners?” [59]

Say, “Should I (not) tell you what is worse than that in its recompense with Allah? (The way of ) the one whom Allah has subjected to His curse and to His wrath, and made some of them apes and swines, and who has worshipped the *Tāghūt* (Satan, the Rebel). Those are worse situated and far more astray from the straight path.”

[60]

And when they come to you they say, “We have entered Faith” while they entered with disbelief and with it they went out. And Allah knows best what they used to conceal. [61]

### Commentary

Referring to the Jews and Christians in: أَكْثَرُكُمْ فَسِقُونَ (most of you are sinners) at the end of the first verse, ‘most’ - not ‘all’- of them have been declared to be outside the fold of Faith. The reason for this is that they did have people among them who remained believers under all conditions. Before the coming of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, they followed the injunctions of the Torah and Injil and believed in them. When the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم came and the Qur’an was revealed, they believed in him too and started following the injunctions of the Qur’an.

### Consideration of the Addressee : A Principle of *Da’wah*

The condition of a people who were under the curse and wrath of Allah has been introduced through a similitude in the next verse (60)

which begins with : *فَلْهَلْ أُنَبِّئُكُمْ* [Should I (not) tell you ...]. In fact, this condition applied to these very addressees. The occasion demanded that they should have been the ones to be directly charged with the blame. But, the Qur'an has changed the mode of direct address into the form of a similitude (to show consideration). This shows us a distinctive method of Da'wah (Call) as used by prophets, that is, never say things in a manner which makes the addressees angry.

### Verses 62 - 63

وَتَرَى كَثِيرًا مِّنْهُمْ يُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَأَكْلِهِمُ  
السُّحْتَ ۗ لَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾ لَوْ لَا يَنْهَاهُمُ الرَّبَّيُّونَ  
وَالْأَحْبَارُ عَنْ قَوْلِهِمُ الْإِثْمَ وَأَكْلِهِمُ السُّحْتَ ۗ لَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوا  
يَصْنَعُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾

And you see many of them racing towards sin, and aggression, and their eating of the unlawful. Indeed, evil is what they have been doing. [62]

Why do the Men of the Lord and the Men of Knowledge not forbid them from their saying of the sinful and eating of the unlawful? Indeed, evil is what they have been doing. [63]

### Commentary

#### The Moral Loss of Jews

In the first verse (62) cited above, mentioned there is the moral deprecation and self-destructive attitude of many Jews so that people who know that may take a lesson and stay away from such deeds, as well as from causes that lead to them.

Though, this was generally the condition of Jews, but they also had some good people among them. It is to exclude them that the Qur'an has used the word: *كثيْرًا* 'kathīran' (many). As for aggression and eating of the unlawful, these are though included under the sense of 'sin', yet they have been particularly mentioned, distinctly, in order to lay emphasis on the ruin these two kinds of sins bring on one and all. (Al-Baḥr Al-Muḥīṭ)

According to Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī, by using the expression 'racing towards sin' about these people, the Holy Qur'ān has given the hint that they are chronic subjects of these evil traits and the evil deeds they do have become fixed habits with them, so ingrained that they (automatically) move in that direction, even without intention.

This tells us that a good or bad deed when done many times repeatedly becomes a part and parcel of the inmost being of a person, almost a skill or drive or a fixed habit, after which, there remains no exertion or hesitation in doing what one does. This was the limit reached by Jews in pursuing their evil traits. To highlight it, it was said: *مُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْآثِمِ* (They race towards sin). The same thing applies to prophets and men of Allah in the case of their good traits. About them too, the Holy Qur'ān has used the same expression when it says: *مُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ* (They race towards good deeds - 3:114).

### **The Correction of Deeds**

Of those who have laid the greatest emphasis on the correction of deeds, the foremost are the respected Sūfīs (spiritual masters) and the men of Allah. These blessed souls have deduced from these very sayings of the Qur'ān the significant principle that all human deeds, good or bad, really come from ingrained habits and morals which ultimately become man's second nature. Therefore, when they wish to check, modify or dilute the recurrence of evil deeds, they keep these ingrained habits in sight. Thus, when they correct these, all deeds that issue forth start coming out right. Let us take the example of a person whose heart is overwhelmingly filled with greed for worldly acquisitions. As a result of this greed, he takes bribes, and devours income from interest, and if, given the opportunity, things could also reach the limits of theft and robbery. Instead of correcting these crimes separately, the spiritual masters use one masterly prescription which could cause the very foundation of these crimes razed to the ground - and that is the realization of the mortality of the world and the poisoned nature of its luxuries.

Similarly, if someone suffers from overweening pride or arrogance or anger, and he belittles or insults others, or quarrels with friends and neighbours, these blessed souls will use the same prescription, the prescription with ingredients of the concern for the life-to-come and

the fear of ultimate accountability before Almighty Allah. Once these start remaining in sight actively, such evil behaviour patterns die out automatically.

In short, this Qur'ānic indicator tells us that man has some ingrained traits which become his second nature. If these ingrained traits tilt towards good, good deeds issue forth on their own. Similarly, if the ingrained traits are evil, man starts running towards evil deeds automatically. To achieve a total correction of behaviour, the correction of these ingrained traits is necessary.

### **Are religious leaders responsible for the deeds of common people?**

In the second verse (63), the Shaykhs and 'Ālims among the Jews have been sternly warned as to why would they not stop such people from evil deeds. At this place in the Qur'ān, two words have been used. The first word is: رَبَّائِيَّةُونَ 'Rabbāniyyūn', which means Men of Allah, that is, those who are intensely devoted to acts of worship and abstain from worldly temptations - commonly known as Derwish, Pīr or Shaykh. The second word used is 'Aḥbār.' Religious scholars among Jews are called 'Aḥbār.' This tells us that the real responsibility of the Qur'ānic injunction of *Al-Amr bil-Ma'rūf* (bidding the Fair) and *Nahy 'Anil-Munkar* (forbidding the Unfair) falls on these two groups, that is, on the Shaykhs and 'Ālims. However, some commentators have said that 'Rabbāniyyūn' refers to 'Ulamā who have been appointed by Government and are fully authorized, while 'Aḥbār' means the 'Ulamā in general. Taken in that sense, the responsibility of stopping people from committing crimes comes to fall on government officials and 'Ulamā both. Incidentally, this has been further clarified in some other verses as well.

### **For 'Ulamā and Mashāyikh - a Note of Warning**

Towards the end of the verse (63), it was said: كَيْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَصْنَعُونَ : "Evil is what they have been doing" - which means that it is bad habit on the part of such religious leaders known as Mashāyikh and 'Ulamā that they have abandoned their cardinal duty of bidding the Fair and forbidding the Unfair. They see people ruining themselves and they do not stand up and stop them.

Commentators with knowledge and insight have pointed out that

at the end of the first verse (62) which mentioned the errors made by common people, what was said is: *لَيْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ* (Evil is what they have been doing). But, in the second verse (63), where the Mashāyikh and 'Ulamā have been admonished for their failing, the concluding sentence used is: *لَيْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَصْنَعُونَ* "Evil is what they have been doing [by design]." The reason is that, according to the Arabic usage, the word, *فعل*: *fi'l* (that which is done) includes everything done, whether with intention, or without. But, the word, *عمل*: *Amal* (that which is acted upon) is applied to what is done particularly with intention and volition. As for the words, *صنع*: *Sana'a* and *صنعت*: *San'* at (that which is done by design) are concerned, they are applied when something is done with intention, and volition or choice, and that it is done repeatedly as a matter of habit and considered purpose both. Therefore, as a result of the evil done by common people, the word chosen was *Amal*, that is: *لَيْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ* (Evil is what they have been doing). But, as a result of the wrong done by Mashāyikh and 'Ulamā particularly, the word selected was: *صنع*: *Sana'a*, as in: *لَيْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَصْنَعُونَ*: "Evil is what they have been doing [by design]." In this arrangement here, there may be a hint that the attitude of such religious leaders was false because they knew that if they were to stop their people, they would listen to them and, it was likely, that they would abstain from evil deeds. Yet, such is their greed for whatever offerings they may get from them, or such is their fear of losing the faith of their clients, that their hearts are not moved enough to stand up to defend and uphold the truth. This failing of theirs is far too grave than the evil doings of those evil doers.

The outcome is : If the people of a country get involved in sins and crimes, and their religious leaders know that they will listen and abstain if asked to stop, then, under such a condition, if they do not try to stop the flood of sins and crimes because of temptation, fear or apathy, their crime is more grave than the crime of real criminals and sinners.

Therefore, Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās رضى الله عنه had said that a stronger warning for Mashāyikh and 'Ulamā does not appear anywhere in the entire Qur'an other than the one in this verse. The recognized authority in Tafsīr, Daḥḥāk has said: In my view, this is the most frightening *Āyah* for Mashāyikh and 'Ulamā. (Ibn Jarīr & Ibn Kathīr)

The reason is that in the light of this verse, the failing of religious

leaders gets to be rated as far more serious than the actual crime committed by thieves and robbers and sinners (Refuge with Allah). However, it should be borne in mind that this stern warning stands operative in the situation when the Mashāyikh and 'Ulamā are reasonably certain that their appeal will be heard and accepted. But, under other conditions when prevailing trends or corresponding experience create a stronger likelihood that nobody is going to listen to them, rather, they may even have to face harm or hurt in doing so, the command is that their responsibility, no doubt, stands dropped, but, the conduct which still remains better and higher is that they should - whether heard or negated - go on doing their duty without bothering about any blame thrown or pain caused. This approach was identified earlier as well in verse 54 which highlighted one of the qualities of the Mujāhidīn in the way of Allah by saying: وَلَا يَخَافُونَ كُومَةَ لَائِمٍ that is, they are not afraid of any blame thrown at them by those who would blame anyone who speaks the truth.

It is useful to sum up the main elements of our discussion before we part with it by saying that Mashāyikh and 'Ulama, rather, all Muslims, once they know something to be sinful or against law, are duty-bound to check, stop or prohibit sin and crime, to the best of their ability - with their own hands or word of mouth or, at the least, with distaste of the heart or dislike of the attitude - of course, subject to the condition that the occasion lends to the possibility and stronger probability that they will be heard and their call will be entertained. But, should there be an occasion where stronger probability exists that they will not be heard or they will be subjected to hostility against them, then, that will be a different condition in which it will no more be obligatory on them that they must prohibit and stop people - but, it shall still remain the better and the higher form of conduct. All these details about the well known Qur'ānic maxim of Bidding the Fair and Forbidding the Unfair have been deduced from Ṣaḥīḥ Aḥādīth. We can say that, by placing the responsibility - of personally doing what is right and good, avoiding what is not, and inviting others too to do good and shun evil, - on Muslims at large, and on Mashāyikh and 'Ulamā in particular, Islam has given to the world a priceless principle of peace which, if practiced, could help nations after nations become easily cleansed of all sorts of evils which afflict them.

## The Method of Community Correction

As long as Muslims adhered to this principle right through the early and later centuries of Islam, they held a position of universal distinction in terms of knowledge, deed, morals and character. Once Muslims ignored this duty, started taking the prevention of crime as the sole responsibility of the government and its law-enforcing agencies and withdrew from their role in it, the result that came out was no secret. It is there for everyone to see. Here you have a father, a mother, the whole family, all religiously observing and fully adhering to the Shari'ah. But, their children and their family circle are different, almost their reverse. They think and feel otherwise. They do things differently. It is for this reason that the mission of Bidding the Fair and Forbidding the Unfair has been particularly stressed upon in the Qur'an and Ḥadīth as the surest method of any collective reform in the Muslim Ummah. The Holy Qur'an has identified this mission as a unique distinction of the Ummah of the Prophet of Islam ﷺ. And it has also declared that any contravention of this rule shall be a grave sin and a certain cause of punishment. In Ḥadīth, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said: When sins are committed among a people and there lives someone who does not stop them, then, not far is the likelihood that Allah sends a punishment to fall on all of them. (Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīt)

## Warning against Not hating Sins

Mālik ibn Dīnār says: Allah asked his angels to destroy a certain town. The angels said that there lived in that town a devoted servant of His busy praying to Him. Came the command: Let him too taste the punishment because he never showed his anger against people disobeying Us and committing sins openly, not even with a sign of it on his face.

To Sayyidnā Yūsha' ibn Nūn عليه السلام, (Joshua) the Israelite prophet, Allah Almighty revealed that one hundred thousand of his people will be destroyed by a punishment. Of them, forty thousand were righteous and sixty thousand, evil. Sayyidnā Yūsha' said: O Lord, the ruin of the evil is obvious but why the good ones? It was said: The good ones had friendly relations with the bad ones. Together, they ate and drank and enjoyed life and never frowned on people sinning and disobeying their Creator. (Details of all these narrations can be seen in Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīt)

## Verses 64 - 67

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ يَدُ اللَّهِ مَغْلُوبَةٌ غُلَّتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَلَعِنُوا بِمَا  
 قَالُوا بَلْ يَدُهُ مَبْسُوطَةٌ يُنْفِقُ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ وَلَئِنْ بَدَنَّ كَثِيرًا  
 مِنْهُمْ مَّا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ طُغْيَانًا وَكُفْرًا وَ أَلْقَيْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ  
 الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ ط كَلَّمَا أَوْقَدُوا نَارًا  
 لِلْحَرْبِ أَطْفَأَهَا اللَّهُ وَيَسْعَوْنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَسَادًا ط وَاللَّهُ  
 لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٦٤﴾ وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ آمَنُوا وَاتَّقَوْا  
 لَكَفَّرْنَا عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَلَا ذُخْلُنَهُمْ جَنَّتِ النَّعِيمِ ﴿٦٥﴾ وَلَوْ  
 أَنَّهُمْ أَقَامُوا التَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ  
 لَأَكَلُوا مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَمِنْ تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِهِمْ ط مِنْهُمْ أُمَّةٌ مُقْتَصِدَةٌ  
 وَكَثِيرٌ مِنْهُمْ سَاءَ مَا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا  
 أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ ط وَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ ط وَاللَّهُ  
 يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ ط إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾

And the Jews said, "Allah's hand is fettered." Fettered are their own hands, and cursed are they for what they said. In fact, His hands are well-extended. He gives as He wills. And what has been sent down to you from your Lord shall certainly increase many of them in rebellion and disbelief. And We have put enmity and hatred amongst them lasting to the Day of Doom. Whenever they lit the flame of war, Allah puts it out. And they run about on the earth spreading mischief. And Allah does not like the mischief-makers. [64]

And if the People of the Book had believed and feared, We would have written off their evil deeds and would have surely admitted them to the Gardens of Bliss. [65] And if they had upheld the Torah and the Injil and what had been sent down to them from their Lord, they would have surely had plenty to eat from above them and from beneath them. Among them are moderate

people. As for most of them, evil is what they do. [66]

**O Messenger, convey all that has been sent down to you from your Lord. And if you do not, then, you have not conveyed His message (at all). And Allah shall protect you from the people. Surely, Allah does not take the disbelieving people to the right path. [67]**

### Sequence

Some conditions of the Jews were mentioned in the previous verses. More particular ones appear in the verses cited above, specially the ones identified with Nabbāsh son of Qays and Fenḥās, the chief of the Jewish tribe of Qaiynuqā' who uttered words of affront with reference to Almighty Allah, the description of which follows. Thereupon, the opening verse was revealed. (As in *Al-Lubāb*, from Sayyidnā ibn 'Abbās narrated by Al-Tabarānī and Abū Al-Shaykh)

### Commentary

The first verse begins with the words: وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ (And the Jews said). It mentions what was a grave offence and an utterly undignified remark for any human being to make. They were wretched enough to (God forbid) say that Allah's hand is tied up.

The background in which this was said was that Allah Almighty had given to the Jews of Madīnah extended means and money. But, when the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم came to Madīnah, they heard the call of Islam, yet they remained unmoved because they were more interested in holding on to their communal hegemony and the money they received through offerings based on their self-perpetuating customs. So, they turned against what was the call of truth and took a hostile stand against the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم himself. Then, as a punishment of this behaviour of theirs, Almighty Allah turned their affluent material circumstances into what was materially straightened for them - and they faced poverty. Thereupon, all frustrated and off-guard, they started uttering words to the effect that (God forbid) the Divine treasure seems to be running short or, perhaps, Allah has chosen to become miserly. It was in answer to them that it was said in this verse that the hands to be tied up will be their own hands who are saying what they are saying and cursed they shall be when punishment visits them in the Hereafter, and in the present world as well,

when it comes to them in the form of disgrace. As for the hands of Allah, they are always open and well-extended, and His generosity has been there since ever and shall remain for ever. But, He Himself is Independent, free of need, yet the master of all means. Then, along with this, He is Wise too. He gives and gives in His Wisdom. Means are extended for whom He wills in His Wisdom and means are straightened for whom He wills in His Wisdom.

After that, it was said that the people the Prophet of Islam is dealing with are contumacious people as they refuse to benefit from the open and clear words of the Qur'ān revealed to him, instead of which, their disbelief in and denial of the truth keeps getting more hardened. So, it is to keep Muslims safe from their evil designs that Allah has caused differences to crop up within their own sects because of which they would neither dare fight an open war nor would any conspiracy by them succeed. The failure to wage an open war has been mentioned in : *كُلَّمَا أَوْقَدُوا نَارًا لِلْحَرْبِ أَطْفَأَهَا اللَّهُ* (Whenever they lit the flames of war, Allah puts it out) while the failure to hatch sinister conspiracies has been pointed out in: *يَسْعَوْنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَسَادًا* (And they run about on the earth spreading mischief).

### **Full obedience to the Divine Commands brings Blessings in This World Too**

In verse 65, the Jews have been admonished that the people of the Torah and Injīl have not derived any benefit from the guidance given therein nor from the teachings of the blessed prophets. Once involved in worldly greed, they ignored what was not to be ignored. As a result, they ran into straightened circumstances right here in this world as well. But, if they were to take to the ways of faith and godliness even now, Allah could forgive them their past sins and admit them to Gardens full of bliss.

### **How are Divine Commands carried out in Full?**

Mentioned in verse 66 which begins with the words: *وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ آقَامُوا التَّوْرَةَ* (And if they had upheld the Torah ...), are some details of the same faith and godliness for which worldly blessings have been promised in the previous verse (65). The detail is that they should, uphold the Torah, the Injīl and the Holy Qur'ān revealed after them. The word used here does not refer to 'acting in accordance with these books'. Instead

of that, the word placed here is 'Iqāmah' which means to establish, and to make something stand upright and straight. It signifies that their teachings can be carried out fully and correctly only when there is no increase or decrease or shortcoming in them. What is meant to stand straight must stand perfectly straight - established, not tilting.

The essence of the verse is that if the Jews were to believe in the guidance of the Torah, the Injīl and the Qur'ān, even today, and carry out their instructions fully, without failing to act properly, nor opting for excess and transgression by equating self-innovated things with established religion, then, they shall deserve the promised blessings of the Hereafter, and the doors of sustenance will be thrown open for them in the present world as well. It will come from above and it will come from beneath. 'Above' and 'beneath,' as obvious, mean sustenance which will be available easily and constantly. (Tafsīr Kabīr)

It will be noticed that the earlier verse (65) promised blessings only in the Hereafter. The present verse (66) extends the promise to cover worldly comforts as well. The reason for this may perhaps be that the Jews had taken to malpractices, particularly the practice of altering and distorting Scriptures because of their taste for the temporal and their insatiable greed for money. This became their main hurdle which had stopped them from obeying the Qur'ān and the Prophet of Islam despite that they had seen very clear signs of their veracity. They were scared at the idea that by becoming Muslims, their leadership role in the community will be all over. Also gone will be the offerings and gifts which they received as religious high-priests. It was to remove this kind of doubt or apprehension that Almighty Allah promised to them that if they take to believing truly and acting righteously, nothing will be decreased from their worldly wealth and comfort which would, rather, be increased.

### **Answer to a Doubt**

Details given above also show that this particular promise was made to Jews who were present during the time of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and were his direct addressees. If they had obeyed the command given to them, they would have had all sorts of blessings in the mortal world as well. So, those who took to the message of faith and good deed, they had these blessings in full - like Najāshī (Negus)

the King of Ethiopea and Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn Salām رضى الله عنه. However, it is not necessary that for one who abides by faith and good deed, sustenance will be extended as a rule and, vice versa, for one who does not, sustenance will be straightened as a rule. The reason is that, at this place, the purpose is not to describe a general rule. This is a promise made to a particular group under particular conditions.

However, as far as the standard or general rule regarding faith and good deeds is concerned, the promise of the blessing of good and pure life is universal - but, that could either take the form of extended means of sustenance, or means which are outwardly constricted, as it has been with the blessed prophets and men of Allah not all of whom had extended sustenance all the time, but they all did have the purest of the pure life.

Justice was served when in the last verse (67), it was also added that the evil doings of Jews mentioned in the text do not apply to all Jews. Among them there were moderate people, people who were on the right path. But, the majority was evil doing. 'People on the right path' denotes people who were first Jews and Christians, then believed in the Qur'ān and the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and entered the fold of Islam.

### **Emphasis on *Tablīgh* and Comfort for the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم**

In the present verses as well as throughout the previous two sections, there has been a continued description of the crookedness, waywardness, obstinacy and anti-Islam mechanizations of Jews and Christians. One natural effect it could have on the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was that he, being human, could feel disappointed or compelled by circumstances and, as a result of which, the process of *Tablīgh* or the very mission of prophethood might slow down or left lacking somewhere. The second effect could be that in the event he elected to devote single-mindedly to his call and mission as a prophet without caring for any hostility, enmity, harm or hurt, there was every likelihood that it could result in the worst of hardships at the hands of his adversaries. Therefore, in the last verse (67), the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was, on the one hand, emphatically commanded to convey everything revealed to him by Allah, all of it, without any hesitation, to the people. That someone likes or dislikes it, takes or rejects it, should not

worry him in his mission. Then, on the other hand, by giving the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم the good news that all those disbelievers will be unable to bring any harm to him in his mission as a prophet for Allah will Himself protect him.

The sentence: 'وَإِنْ لَّمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ' : 'And if you do not, then, you have not conveyed His message [at all]' in this verse is worth pondering. This address to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم here means that if he failed to convey even one Divine command to the Muslim *Ummah*, he would not find himself absolved of the responsibility of prophethood. This was the reason why the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم strived with his full courage and strength all his life to fulfill this heavy obligation placed on his shoulders. Muslims are familiar with the renowned *Khutbah* of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم during his Last Ḥajj, the great address which was not only the Constitution of Islam but also the last will and testament of an elementally lenient and merciful prophet who was far more affectionate and caring than a father and mother could ever be.

### **The parting will of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم on the occasion of the Last Ḥajj**

In this *Khutbah* before a huge gathering of his noble *Ṣaḥābah*, after he had given important instructions to them, he asked the audience: 'أَلَمْ يَلْبِغْتُ' (Listen: Have I conveyed your religion to you?). The *Ṣaḥābah* confirmed that he certainly had. Thereupon, he said: You be a witness on this. And along with it, he also said: 'فَلْيَبْلِغِ الشَّاهِدُ الْغَائِبِ' (that is, those present in this gathering should convey my message to those who are not here). Included among the absent are those who were present in the world at that time but were not present in the gathering itself - and also included are those who were yet to be born. The method of conveying the message to them was the spreading of the knowledge of the *Dīn* of Allah, a duty which was fulfilled by great efforts made by the *Ṣaḥābah* and the *Ṭabī'in*.

It was under the direct influence of this parting advice that the noble Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all, took the words and deeds of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم as a weighty trust of Allah and did their best to ensure that not a single sentence uttered by his blessed tongue should remain unconveyed to his *Ummah*. This holds

true under all normal conditions. However, if someone did not narrate a particular *Ḥadīth* before people for a special reason or compulsion, he made it a point to do that before his death by reciting it to at least some people around so that they could be relieved of the burden of trust they have been carrying on their shoulders. A similar event about a *Ḥadīth* from Sayyidnā Mu'adh رضى الله عنه has been reported in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī, that is, اخبر به معاذ عند موته تائما that is, Sayyidnā Mu'adh recited this *Ḥadīth* at the time of his death so that he would not become a sinner because of his failure to convey this trust with him to others.

### The Protection of Allah

In the second sentence of the last verse: وَاللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ (And Allah shall protect you from the people), good news has been given to him that his enemies would remain unable to do anything harmful against him despite their myriad demonstrations of animosity.

It appears in *Ḥadīth* that, before the revelation of this verse, some Companions generally used to stay around him in order to protect him. They guarded him wherever he was, in the city or in travel. After the revelation of this verse, he relieved them all as no security arrangements were needed anymore. Allah had Himself taken that responsibility.

In a *Ḥadīth* narrated by Sayyidnā Ḥasan, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم has been reported to have said: When I was charged with the duty of conveying the message of Allah as His prophet, the charge appeared to be very frightening because people around me were bound to falsify and oppose me. Then, as this verse was revealed, I was at peace. (Tafsīr Kabīr)

Thus, after the revelation of this verse, no one dared to harm the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم during his efforts to spread the message of Islam as a prophet of Allah. Any casual injury received in *Jihād* battles is not contrary to this.

### Verses 68 - 69

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَسْتُمْ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ حَتَّىٰ تُتَيَّمُوا بِاللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَالِمٌ بِمَا  
الْإِنْحِيلَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَلَيَزِيدَنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنْهُم مَّا

أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ طُغْيَانًا وَكُفْرًا فَلَا تَأْسَ عَلَى الْقَوْمِ  
 الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٦٨﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالصَّابِئُونَ  
 وَالنَّصَارَى مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَا  
 خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾

Say, "O people of the Book, you have nothing to stand unless you uphold the Torah and the Injil and what has been sent down to you from your Lord." And what has been sent down to you from your Lord will certainly increase many of them in rebellion and disbelief. So, do not grieve over the disbelieving people. [68]

Surely, those who believe, and those who are Jews, and the Sabians, and the Christians - whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, and acts righteously, shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve. [69]

### Sequence

Earlier, the people of the Book were persuaded to embrace Islam. Mentioned now is the futility of their current approach which they claimed to be the God's truth while it was unworkable in the sight of Allah, insufficient for salvation and dependant on Islam as the only source of salvation. Then, as an antidote to their insistence on remaining disbelievers after being warned, there are words of comfort for the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. The mention of *Tabligh of Dīn* had appeared in between as based on particular need and congruity.

### Commentary

#### Follow the Divine Shari'ah : Instruction for the people of the Book

In the first verse (68), the people of the Book, that is, the Jews and Christians were instructed to follow the Divine Shari'ah by making it clear that they would be reduced to nothing if they chose not to abide by the injunctions of the Shari'ah. In other words, if they do not adhere to the Shari'ah of Islam, all their achievements shall stand wasted. To them Allah had given the privilege of being the progeny of prophets. Then, they had the intellectual excellence of the Torah and the Injil as well. Added to this was the presence of many men of Allah

among them who went through strenuous spiritual exertions in their search for truth. But, for all this to be valid and weighty the one binding condition was that they should follow the Divine Shari'ah. Without it, no geneological superiority will work, nor would their intellectual excellence or their spiritual strivings become the means of their salvation.

This statement provides for Muslims too the crucial guidance that there is no way of Dervishes or path of spiritual realization (*Sulūk & Tariqat*) or repeated strivings to achieve spiritual goals (*Mujāhadah* and *Riyādāt*) or extra-sensory spiritual illumination (*Kashf*) or having visitations of inspiration (*Ilhām*) which can become the source of spiritual achievement or salvation in the sight of Allah unless there is full adherence to the Shari'ah.

To prove one's obedience to the Divine Shari'ah, the instruction given in this verse is to follow three things. These are the Torah and Injīl which had been revealed earlier for the Jews and Christians while the third one is: وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ , that is, what has been revealed to you from your Lord.

According to the consensus of the majority of commentators, the Ṣaḥābah and the Tabi'īn, it means the Holy Qur'ān which was sent for the universal community of inviters to faith - including the Jews and Christians - through the (midmost) medium of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. Therefore, the verse comes to mean 'unless you act in accordance with the injunctions brought by the Torah, the Injīl and the Qur'ān - correctly, fully and totally - no lineal or intellectual excellence of yours shall be valid or acceptable with Allah.'

At this point one may wonder why, in this verse, rather than mentioning Qur'ān by its brief name, as was done with the Torah and the Injīl, a long sentence : وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ (and what has been revealed to you from your Lord) has been used. What is the wisdom behind it? It is possible that it may be carrying a hint to what was said by the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم in which he disclosed that the way he was given the Qur'ān which is a treasure of knowledge and wisdom, also given to him were other sources of knowledge and insight, which could be called, in a certain aspect, the explication of the Holy Qur'ān as well. The words of the *Hadīth* are:

الا ائى اوتيت القران ومثله معه الا يوشك رجل شبعان على اربكته يقول عليكم بهذا القران فما وجدتم فيه من حلال فأحلوه وما وجدتم فيه من حرام فحرموه وان ما حرم رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وسلم) كما حرم الله . (ابوداؤد، ابن ماجه، دارمى وغيرها)

Remember! I have been given the Qur'an and, with it, (many fields of knowledge) like it - lest, in times to come, some sated man reclining on his couch were to say: For you this Qur'an is sufficient - what you find Halāl in it, take that as Halāl; and what you find Hārām in it, take that as Hārām - although, what the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has declared to be Hārām is like what Allah has declared to be Hārām. (Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Mājah, Dārimī & others)

### Three Kinds of *Aḥkām*

The Qur'an itself is a testimony of this subject. It says: وَمَا يُنطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ ۚ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ which means that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم does not say anything on his own - whatever he says is all revealed to him from Almighty Allah; and under conditions when he says something based on his *Ijtihād* (fully deliberated judgement) and *Qiyās* (analogical deduction) - following which he receives no guidance contrary to it - then, consequently, that *Qiyās* and *Ijtihād* too hold the same legal force as that of an injunction revealed through *Waḥy*.

In a nutshell, we can say that, out of the injunctions (*Aḥkām*) given to the *Ummah* by the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, first come those which have been mentioned clearly in the Holy Qur'an. Then, there are those which have not been mentioned in the Qur'an clearly, instead of which, they were revealed to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم through a separate *Waḥy* (*Waḥy Ghayr Matlū*: Revelation not recited). Thirdly, the command which he gave as based on his *Ijtihād* and *Qiyās* - following which no command was revealed by Almighty Allah - then, that too takes the legal force of a revealed injunction. It is obligatory to follow all these three kinds of injunctions. They are included within the purview of : وَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ : (What has been revealed to you from your Lord).

It is also possible that the use of the longer sentence: وَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ (and what has been revealed to you from your Lord) in place of the likely brief name of Qur'an in this verse may have been preferred so as

to indicate that the following of all injunctions given in the Qur'ān or given by the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم is equally mandatory.

Another point worth noting in this verse is that the Jews and Christians have been asked to follow the injunctions of all three Books, that is, the Torah, the Injīl and the Qur'ān - although, some of them abrogate others. The Injīl abrogates some injunctions of the Torah and the Qur'ān abrogates many injunctions of the Torah and the Injīl. How then, could the sum of three be followed in action?

The answer is clear. Since every incoming Book changed some injunctions of the outgoing Book, it becomes obvious that following the replaced modality, in itself, amounts to acting in accordance with both Books. Following and acting in accordance with abrogated injunctions is against the requirement of both Books.

### Allah consoles His Prophet

To console the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, it was said at the end that there will be many among the people of the Book who would fail to benefit by the Divine magnanimity shown to them. They may even react adversely by increasing the tempo of their disbelief and hostility.

Let this be no cause of grief to him, nor should he have any sympathetic concern for them.

### Salvation promised for Four Communities having faith and good deeds

In the second verse (69), Allah Almighty addresses four traditional religious communities, persuades them to have faith and act righteously whereupon He promises salvation for them. The first of those are: الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا (those who believe) that is, the Muslims. Secondly : الَّذِينَ هَادُوا (and those who are Jews); thirdly : الَّذِينَ صَبَّأُوا (the Sabians); and fourthly : الَّذِينَ نَصَرُوا (the Christians). Three of these Communities - Muslims, Jews and Christians - are well-known and found in most parts of the world.

Any community having the name Sabian does not exist today. Therefore, scholarly opinion varies as to their exact identity. Quoting Qatādah, the Tafsīr authority, Ibn Kathīr has reported that Sabians were people who worshipped angels, offered prayers contra-oriented to the Qiblah and recited the Scripture, Zabūr (revealed to Sayyidnā Dāwūd)

The context of the Qur'an seems to support it as the four Scriptures mentioned in the Qur'an are Torah, Zabūr, Injīl and Qur'an. Thus, named here are the believers in these four Books.

Another verse on the same subject, almost in the same words, has appeared in the seventh Section of Sūrah al-Baqarah:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالنَّصَارَى وَالصَّبِيَّةَ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ  
وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ،

Surely, those who believed, and those who are Jews, and Christians, and the Sabians - whoever believes in Allah and in the Last Day, and does good deeds - they have their reward with their Lord. And there is no fear for them nor shall they grieve. (2: 62)

Other than the place-oriented transposition of some words, there is no difference between them.

### With Allah, Distinction Depends on Righteous Deeds

The gist of both these verses is that distinctions of lineage, homeland, and nationality do not matter in the sight of Allah. Anyone who takes to total obedience, faith and good deeds as a way of life - no matter what he has been before - shall find himself acceptable with Allah and his devotion will bring the best of appreciation from his Creator. And it is obvious that total obedience after the revelation of the Qur'an depends on being a Muslim - because, there are instructions to this effect in the past Scriptures of the Torah and the Injīl as well, while the Qur'an itself was revealed for this particular purpose. Therefore, after the revelation of the Qur'an and the appearance of the Last among Prophets صلى الله عليه وسلم, it cannot be correct - without believing in the Qur'an and having faith in the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم - to follow either the Torah or the Injīl or the Zabūr. Thus, these verses would mean that whoever from among these communities becomes Muslim shall become deserving of salvation and reward in the *Ākhirah* (Hereafter). Provided right here is the answer to the doubt as to what would happen to all their dark doings of sin and disobedience and disbelief and anti-Islam and anti-Muslim mechanizations once they have become Muslims? The disarming answer is: All past sins and shortcomings will stand forgiven and in the life-to-come, they shall have no

fear or grief.

A surface view of the subject may suggest to someone that this should not be the place to mention Muslims because they are - in their faith and through their obedience - at the stage desired in the verse. In other words, the occasion here calls for the mention of only those who are supposed to be persuaded to enter the fold of Islam. But, what we have here is a special mode of eloquence employed by the Qur'ān. It is like the law promulgated by the highest imaginable authority saying that it is for everyone, in favour or in opposition, bringing reward for the law-abiding and punishment for the law-breaking. It is obvious that those in favour are already obedient. The purpose is to make those in the opposing camp hear it. The particular element of wisdom behind mentioning those already in favour is that they are being told here that they are being appreciated not because of any personal or group excellence of theirs but simply because of their quality of obedience to their Creator. If the dissenter in the opposing camp were to take to the path of obedience to his Creator, he too will deserve the same grace and reward.

### **There is No Salvation (*Najāt*) without Belief in Prophethood (*'Īmān bir-Risālah*)**

The set of instructions given in the address to these four Traditional Religious Communities is divided in three parts: (a) *'Īmān bil-lāh* : Belief in Allah (b) *'Īmān bil-yawmil-ākhir* : Belief in the Last Day (c) and *Al-'Amalus-Sālih* : Good deeds.

It is obvious that the intention in this verse is not to give the entire details of Islam's articles of faith, nor is there any occasion for it. By mentioning some basic beliefs of Islam here, the aim is to point out to all Islamic beliefs, and to invite people to them - nor is it something so necessary that whenever *'Īmān* or faith is mentioned in a verse, all details about it should also be mentioned right there. Therefore, the absence of a clearly emphasized mention of the faith in the Messenger or Prophet at this place should have not given anyone having the least commonsense and justice the room to entertain any doubt - specially, when the whole Qur'ān and hundreds of its verses are brimming with clear statements about belief in the *Risālah*. Present there are loud and clear assertions that there is no *Najāt* (salvation) without believ-

ing in the *Rasūl* (Messenger of Allah) and the sayings of the *Rasūl* fully and completely, and that no belief and action is acceptable or valid without it. But, a group of deviators, which insists on thrusting its repugnant ideas in the Qur'an somehow, has come up with a new theory based on the absence of an explicit mention of prophethood in this verse - which is absolutely contrary to so many open assertions of the Qur'an and Sunnah. They theorize that every person, despite his religion, a Jew or Christian, even an idol-worshipping Hindu could deserve salvation in the Hereafter - if he believes only in Allah and the Last Day and does good deeds. For final salvation (as they would prefer) entry in Islam is not necessary. (*Na'ūdhu-bil-lāh* : Refuge with Allah!)

People whom Allah has blessed with the Taufiq of reciting the Qur'an and having true faith in it would not need some major knowledge or insight to help them remove this doubt which even they could do through these very clear statements. Even readers of the Qur'an with the help of authentic translations could understand the falsity of this kind of theorizing. Some verses are being given here as an example.

The place where the Holy Qur'an has described the articles of faith (*'Imān*) in details appears at the end of Sūrah al-Baqarah as follows:

كُلُّ اٰمَنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَمَلٰٓئِكَتِهٖ وَكُتُبِهٖ وَرُسُلِهٖ لَا تَفَرَّقُوْا بَيْنَ اَحَدٍ مِّنْ رُّسُلِهٖ

... All have believed in Allah, and His angels, and His Books, and His Messengers. (in a way that) "We make no difference between any of His Messengers," and they have said ... (2:285).

Within the details of *'Imān* (faith) described clearly in this verse, it has also been clarified that believing in any one or some Messengers is absolutely insufficient for salvation. Instead of that, believing in all Messengers is a binding condition. If anyone does not believe even in one single Messenger, his or her *'Imān* shall not be valid and acceptable in the sight of Allah.

At another place, it is said:

اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يَكْفُرُوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَرُسُلِهٖ وَيُرِيدُوْنَ اَنْ يُفَرِّقُوْا بَيْنَ اللّٰهِ وَرُسُلِهٖ وَيَقُولُوْنَ  
نُؤْمِنُ بِبَعْضٍ وَنُكْفِرُ بِبَعْضٍ وَيُرِيدُوْنَ اَنْ يَّتَّخِذُوْا بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ سَبِيْلًا اُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ

الْكٰفِرُوْنَ حَقًّا ،

Surely those who disbelieve in Allah and His Messengers, and wish to make division between Allah and His Messengers, and say, "We believe in some, and disbelieve in some" and wish to take a way in between that. Those are the disbelievers in reality ... (4:151).

The Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم has said:

لَوْ كَانَ مُوسَى حَيًّا لَمَا وَسِعَهُ إِلَّا اِتِّبَاعِي

Had Mūsā عليه السلام been alive, he would have had no choice but to follow me.

Now, if someone were to say: 'Let the followers of every religion keep acting according to their respective religions. Thus, they can find Paradise and achieve salvation in the Hereafter without having to believe in the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and without having to become Muslims!' - this would, then, be a flagrant disregard of the verses cited above.

In addition to that, if every religion or community is something acting according to which in every age is sufficient for ultimate success and salvation, then, the coming of the Last among Prophets and the revelation of the Qur'an itself becomes meaningless. The sending of one Shari'ah after the other also becomes redundant. The first Messenger would have brought one Shari'ah and one Book. That would have been sufficient. What need was there to send other Messengers, Shari'ahs and Books? At the most, sufficient would have been the presence of people who would have preserved the Shari'ah and the Book, practiced it themselves and persuaded others to do the same - as has been the duty of the 'Ulamā of every community. This, then, would be a situation in which the words of the Qur'an: *لِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمِثْلَهَا* (For each of you We have made a way and a method - 5:48) will lose their meaning.

Is it not that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم carried out the mission of *Jihād* against Jews and Christians, and others, those who did not believe in him and in the Book of Allah revealed to him, even fought against them on battlefields? What justification would remain for that? And if, for a human being to be a true believer acceptable with

Allah, having faith only in Allah and the Last Day should be taken as sufficient, why then, would Iblīs (Satan) be cursed? Did he not believe in Allah? Or, was he a denier of the Last Day? Was he not the one who, even in his fit of anger, by saying: اِلَىٰ يَوْمٍ يُعْتَبَرُونَ (Till the Day, the [dead] are raised - 34:79), confirmed his faith in the Last Day?

The truth of the matter is that this error is the product of the notion that religion can be given as a gift on a silver plate as done in marriages. Seen in modern and international context, religion can be used to develop bonds of relationship with other nations - although, the Holy Qur'an has said very openly and clearly that we should have our relations with non-Muslims based on tolerance, sympathy, favour, charity, mercy and things like that, but this should be done by ensuring that the limits of religion are not crossed and that its frontiers remain fully guarded.

If, in the verse under reference, let us suppose, there was no mention of the faith in prophethood, then, other verses quoted above which command it emphatically, would have been sufficient. But, a closer look at this verse itself will show a distinct hint towards belief in prophethood because, in the terminology of the Qur'an, only that 'Imān bil-lāh (belief in Allah) is valid, in which there is belief in everything told by Allah. The Qur'an has made its terminology very clear in the following words:

فَإِنْ آمَنُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا آمَنْتُمْ بِهِ فَقَدِ اهْتَدَوْا

So, if they (the Companions) believe in the like of what you (the Prophet ﷺ) believe in, they have certainly found the right path - 2:137.

It means that the kind of 'Imān the noble Ṣaḥābah had is the only 'Imān which deserves to be called 'Imān bil-lāh. And it is obvious that 'Imān bir-rasūl was a great pillar of the edifice of their 'Imān. Therefore, the words: مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ (whoever believes in Allah) are inclusive of the belief in the Messenger of Allah.

#### Verses 70 - 71

لَقَدْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَارْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ رَسُولًا مُّكَلِّمًا  
جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ بِمَا لَا تَهْوَىٰ أَنفُسُهُمْ فَرِيقًا كَذَّبُوا وَفَرِيقًا

يَقْتُلُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾ وَحَسِبُوا آلًا تَكُونُ فِتْنَةً فَعَمُوا وَصَمُوا ثُمَّ  
 تَابَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ ثُمَّ عَمُوا وَصَمُوا كَثِيرٌ مِنْهُمْ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ  
 بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٧١﴾

Certainly We took a pledge from the Banī Isrā'īl and sent Messengers to them. Whenever a Messenger came to them with what did not meet their desires, they falsified some and started killing others. [70] And they thought that no harm would follow. Therefore, they turned blind and deaf. Then, Allah accepted their repentance, but again they turned blind and deaf, many of them. And Allah is watchful of what they do. [71]

### Commentary

This is an account of how the Banī Isrā'īl kept breaking the pledge taken from them. As said in verse 70, whenever their Messenger brought a command which did not suit their fancy, they would break their pledge and go about betraying Allah to the limit that they would falsify His Messengers, even kill some of them. They were commanded 'to believe in Allah and act righteously.' But, this was what they did in response. As for the other part of the command - 'Belief in the Last Day' - their behaviour was equally reckless. After having committed acts so oppressive, they became totally carefree as if they would not have to pay for what they had done and as if the consequences of their injustice and rebellion will never come out in the open. Under this false impression, they became totally blind and deaf to Divine signs and words. They went on doing what should have not been done.

So much so that they killed some prophets and put some others behind bars. Finally, Almighty Allah imposed on them the mastery of Nebuchadnezzar (King of Babylonia, 605-562 B.C., who took them as slaves to Babylon - Old Testament, book of Daniel). When, after a long time, they were sent back to Jerusalem from Babylon through help from some Persian kings who secured their release from disgrace under Nebuchadnezzar, they repented and turned to making amends. Allah relented and accepted their repentance. But, with the passage of some time, they went back to their old practices which made them so blind and deaf once again that they dared killing Sayyidnā Zakariyah

(Zechariah) and Sayyidnā Yaḥyā (John) and were all set to kill Sayyidnā 'Īsā (Jesus). (Tafsīr Usmanī - Notes)

### Verses 72 - 76

لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ وَقَالَ  
 الْمَسِيحُ يَبْنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ مَنْ  
 يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ الْجَنَّةَ وَمَأْوَاهُ النَّارُ وَمَا  
 لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ ﴿٧٢﴾ لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ  
 ثَلَاثٌ ثَلَاثَةٌ وَمَا مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِلَّا إِلَهُ وَاحِدٌ وَإِنْ لَمْ يَنْتَهُوا عَمَّا  
 يَقُولُونَ لَيَمَسَّنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٣﴾ أَفَلَا  
 يَتُوبُونَ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونََّهُ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٧٤﴾ مَا  
 الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ وَأُمُّهُ  
 صِدِّيقَةٌ كَمَا يَكُلُنِ الطَّعَامُ أَنْظَرَ كَيْفَ نَبِّئُنَّ لَهُمُ الْآيَاتِ ثُمَّ  
 أَنْظَرْنَا يُؤْفَكُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾ قُلْ اتَّعَبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَكُمْ  
 بِمِلْكِكُمْ صَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا وَاللَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٧٦﴾

Surely, they became disbelievers who said, "Allah is exactly the Masīḥ son of Maryam (Jesus son of Mary)" while the Masīḥ had said, "O children of Isrā'īl, worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord." The fact is, whoever ascribes any partner to Allah, to him Allah has prohibited the *Jannah* (the Paradise) and their shelter is the Fire. And for the unjust there are no supporters. [72]

Surely, they became disbelievers who said, "Allah is the third of the three" while there is no god but One God. And if they do not desist from what they say, a painful punishment shall certainly befall the disbelievers among them. [73] Why then do they not turn to Allah in repentance and seek His forgiveness when Allah is most forgiving, very merciful? [74]

The Masīḥ, son of Maryam, is no more than a Messenger. There have been messengers before him. And his

**mother is very truthful. Look how We explain signs to them, then see how far they are turned away. [75]**

**Say, "Do you worship, besides Allah, what has no power to do you harm or bring you benefit?" And Allah is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing. [76]**

### Commentary

1. The words : **إِنَّ اللَّهَ ثَالِثُ ثَلَاثَةٍ** in verse 72, translated here literally as 'Allah is the third of the three,' refers to Sayyidnā Masīḥ (Jesus Christ), *Rūḥul-Quds* (The Holy Spirit) and Allah, or to Masīḥ, Maryam (Mary) and Allah - with all three taken as God (Refuge with Allah). Thus, Allah becomes a one-third partner with them, then all three of them become one, and that one is three. This unity in trinity, with three persons in one godhead, is the common belief of Christians. They explain this belief which is supported by neither reason nor revelation with a language that is kept circuitous and ambiguous. When not understood, they declare it to be reality beyond comprehension. (Shabbīr Aḥmad Usmanī - Notes)

2. In verse 75, by saying: **فَدَخَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ** (There have been messengers before him), the assigning of godhood to Sayyidnā Masīḥ عليه السلام has been refuted. Prophets came to this world. They completed their mission. Then, they were gone. They were not eternal which is the mark of godhood. Similarly, Sayyidnā Masīḥ, may peace be upon him (being human like them) was not eternal. So, he cannot be what God is.

A little reflection will show that everyone who needs to eat and drink almost depends on everything in the world. We cannot say that the earth, the air, the water, the sun and the animals are what we do not need. Look into your own self. There is that grain of food outside you, then begins its journey from the entry into the stomach to the next destination of its digestion. Think of all those factors involved and things required directly and indirectly in this complex procedure. Then, there will be a chain of effects generated through eating and no one can tell precisely how far will they go. So, by pointing out that Sayyidna Masīḥ and his pious mother used to eat, the Holy Qur'an has referred to the endless chain of needs it entails. The argument, thus runs that Masīḥ and Maryam, may peace be upon them both, were not

free of the need for eating and drinking which is proved by observation and authentic narrations (not denied by even Christians). And anyone who is not free from the need of eating and drinking cannot be free from anything in this world. How then, a human person, who like all human beings is not free of the need to depend on the chain of causation for survival, could become God? This is a strong and clear proof which can be understood by the educated and the uneducated alike - that is, eating and drinking is contrary to godhood. Though, not eating and drinking is not a proof in favour of godhood, otherwise all angels would become gods! (Refuge with Allah) (Tafsīr Usmānī)

3. Was Sayyidah Maryam a prophet or saint? This is a debated issue. In the present verse (75), the complimentary use of the word "Ṣiddīqah" (truthful) obviously seems to indicate that she was a godly person, not a *Nabiyy* ( prophet) - because on a complimentary occasion, what is mentioned is the higher rank. If she had the station of prophethood, the word used for her at this place would have been "*Nabiyyah*"- but, the word used here is "*Ṣiddīqah*" which is the station of sainthood or godliness (abridged from Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī).

According to the majority of Muslim scholars, the station of *Nubūwwah* (prophethood) has never appeared among women. This mission has been particular with men:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ إِلَّا رِجَالًا نُوْحِيْ اِلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ اَهْلِ الْقُرَىٰ

And We have not sent any (one) before you but men to whom We revealed from among the peoples of the towns - Sūrah Yusuf, 12 : 109. (Tafsīr Usmānī)

### Verses 77 - 81

قُلْ يَا اَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِيْنِكُمْ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوْا اَهْوَاءَ قَوْمٍ قَدْ ضَلُّوا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَاَضَلُّوا كَثِيْرًا وَّضَلُّوا عَنْ سَوَاءِ السَّبِيْلِ ﴿٧٧﴾ لِعَنِ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مِنْ اِبْنِيْ اِسْرَائِيْلَ عَلٰى لِسَانِ دَاوُدَ وَ عِيْسٰى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ ذٰلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَّكَانُوْا يَعْتَدُوْنَ ﴿٧٨﴾ كَانُوْا لَا يَتَنَاهَوْنَ عَنْ مُنْكَرٍ فَعَلُوْهُ لَبِْسًا مَّا

كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾ تَرَى كَثِيرًا مِّنْهُمْ يَتَوَلَّوْنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا  
 لَيْسَ مَا قَدَّمَتْ لَهُمْ أَنفُسُهُمْ أَنْ سَخِطَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَفِي  
 الْعَذَابِ هُمْ خَالِدُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾ وَلَوْ كَانُوا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالنَّبِيِّ  
 وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مَا اتَّخَذُوهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ وَلَٰكِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنْهُمْ  
 فَاسِقُونَ ﴿٨١﴾

Say, "O people of the Book, be not excessive in your faith unjustly, and do not follow the desires of a people who already went astray, misled many and lost the right path. [77]

On those who disbelieve from among the children of Isra'īl was a curse pronounced by Dāwūd and 'Īsā son of Maryam. All this because they disobeyed and used to cross the limits. [78] They did not forbid each other from an evil they committed. Indeed, evil is what they have been doing. [79]

You see many of them take the disbelievers as friends. Indeed, evil is what their own selves have sent ahead for themselves as Allah is angry with them, and they are to remain under punishment for ever. [80]

And if they have been believing in Allah, in the prophet and in what had been sent down to him, they would have not taken them as friends, but many of them are sinners. [81]

## Commentary

### The Crookedness of Banī Isra'īl : Yet Another Aspect

It will be recalled that, in previous verses, mentioned there was the contumacy of Bani Isra'īl along with their tyranny and injustice with reference to what they did to their benefactors, the prophets sent by Allah who had come to show them the way to succeed in this life and in the life to come. But, they mistreated them, by falsifying some and killing others: قَرِيعًا كَذَّبُوا وَقَرِيعًا يَفْتُلُونَ (72)

The present verses expose another aspect of the crooked ways of Bani Isra'īl. So astray were they that they, not content with one extreme mentioned above, reached for another when they committed ex-