

Baldatun Tayyibatun, A Land Most Goodly

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This text portrays the importance and role of Yemen in early Islamic history journeying through its civilisation. It starts with the stories of the ancient Prophets as described in the Holy Qur'an, then focuses on Yemen's conversion story at the hands of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib ('a) as well as information on the great Companions who hail from the region and its relationship to the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) thereafter.

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Dedication

The reward of this book is dedicated to the soul of Haji Amirali MohamedJaffer Nasser Lakha.

He was known as a person dedicated to helping those in need.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بُرْهَانٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ نُورًا مُبِينًا فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَاعْتَصَمُوا بِهِ فَسَيُدْخِلُهُمْ فِي رَحْمَةٍ مِنْهُ وَفَضْلٍ وَيَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمًا

“O you people! A manifest proof has indeed come to you from your Lord, and We have sent down a clear light to you which distinguishes (the right from the wrong). Now as to those who believe in Allah and hold fast to Him, He will surely admit them to His mercy and to (His) grace and will guide them along a straight and right path (leading) to Himself.” (Qur'an, Surah al-Nisa 4: 174-175)

قال رسول الله: مَنْ أَحَبَّ أَهْلَ الْيَمَنِ فَقَدْ أَحَبَّنِي وَ مَنْ أَبْغَضَهُمْ فَقَدْ أَبْغَضَنِي

Prophet Muhammad (S) is narrated to have said, “Whosoever loves the people of Yemen, certainly he has loved me; and whosoever angers them, certainly has angered me.”

قال رسول الله: لَوْلَا الْهَجْرَةُ لَكُنْتُ أَمْرَاءَ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْيَمَنِ

Prophet Muhammad (S) is narrated to have said, “Had it not been for the migration (to Medina), I would have been from the people of Yemen!”

Introduction



Ancient Yemen

Yemen's role in human history, and in particular Arabian history, is especially important as it is known to be one of the oldest civilisations in the Near East.

At the beginning of the Christian age, there stood four regions of settled life with organised power and high culture around Arabia. To the west was the Byzantine Empire; while across the Euphrates River reigned the Sassanian Empire over modern day Iran and Iraq; and to the south lay Ethiopia, an ancient kingdom which adopted the Coptic Church as its official religion. The other was Yemen, in south-west Arabia.

Albert Hourani, in his *A History of the Arab Peoples* states that Yemen was: “A land of fertile mountain valleys and a point for long distance trade. At a certain stage, its small local states had been incorporated in a larger kingdom, which had grown weak when trade declined in the early Christian era but revived later. Yemen had its own language, different from Arabic which was spoken elsewhere in Arabia, and its own religion: a multiplicity of gods were served by priests in temples which were places of

pilgrimage, voting offerings and private but not communal prayer, and also centres of great estates.”¹

Life was a balance of desert and steppe; nomadic and sedentary forms of living which often required exchange for the other.

Hourani explains the rare oases of the Arabian Peninsula allowed for regions of cultivation, “Inhabitants spoke various dialects of Arabic and followed different ways of life. Some of them were nomads who pastured camels, sheep or goats by using the scanty water resources of the desert; these have traditionally been known as ‘beduin.’ Some were settled cultivators tending their grain or palm trees in the oases, or traders and craftsmen in small market towns; some combined more than one way of life. Although they were a minority of the population, it was the camel–nomads, mobile and carrying arms, who together with merchant groups in the towns, dominated the cultivators and craftsmen. Their ethos of courage, hospitality, loyalty to family, and pride of ancestry was also dominant. They were not controlled by a stable power of coercion, but were led by chiefs belonging to families around which there gathered more or less lasting groups of supporters, expressing their cohesion and loyalty in the idiom of common ancestry; such groups are usually called tribes.”²

He goes on to say, “The religion of pastoralists and cultivators seem to have had no clear shape. Local gods, identified with objects in the sky, were thought to be embodied in stones, trees and other natural things; good and evil spirits were believed to roam the world in the shape of animals; soothsayers claimed to speak with the tongue of some supernatural wisdom. The settled societies ruled by the empires were full of questionings about the meaning of life and the way that it should be lived, expressed in the idioms of the great religions.”³

Though these tribal relationships and religious practises remained until the age of Islam, Yemen was regularly exposed to the message of monotheism, and had an intimate relationship with the ancient prophets; some adhered to the call, while others faced divine retribution for their outright spurning and aggression against prophets.

Hadhramawt, a Governorate of Yemen retaining its name since half a millennia before Christ (‘a), for example, was the site of two Prophets – Hud and Salih (‘a) who were sent to their tribes, ʔAd and Thamud.

ʔAd, arrogant and emboldened by their technological advancement at establishing the world’s first several story high abodes, rejected Prophet Hud’s (‘a) call to worship one God. Believing that their lofty buildings could withstand God’s punishment, they challenged Prophet Hud (‘a) to bring a destruction which they could not withstand. God reigned down upon them winds and storms for seven days, levelling all of what they had established in opposition to Him.

Thamud, despite watching the levelling of their neighbours, did not learn from what occurred right before them. Rather than depend on technology, they resorted to a stronger defence, nature, to be resolute in the face of winds. Thamud sought refuge by hewing out abodes in mountains, assuming that God could

not destroy entire mountainous ranges. This time, a massive earthquake struck, followed by dust storms which engulfed them.

Their eventual destructions and preservation of their remains as reminders of God's power was well known amongst the Arabs with their stories passed down between the generations.

Hadhramawt is identified in the Bible in Genesis 10:26 and 1 Chronicles 1:20, while the 11th chapter of the Qur'an is named after Prophet Hud ('a); and there are numerous other verses alluding to their story such as in Surah al-Mo'min,

“O my people! Surely I fear for you the like of what befell the groups. The like of what befell the people of Nuh, Ad and Thamud.” (Qur'an, Surah al-Ghafir 40:30-31).

After Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) ('a) established the Ka'bah in Mecca as the symbolism of God's absolute unity, nearby Yathrib became home to Jews and Christians alike who were awaiting their next prophet.

Just as many Jews travelled from Syria to Hijaz, many also settled in Yemen. The Qur'an⁴ also mentions this referring to a particular sect, the al-Saduqiyya (Sadducees), as those who held the Prophet Uzayr (Ezra) as the son of God.

Yemen's interaction with Mecca and Yathrib thus made for it to be a prime region of religious curiosity, debate, worship, religious paraphernalia often relayed particularly through early revelation, poetry and story-telling.

With its fluid movement of interaction for migration, religion, trade, war and marriage, accessed by the Indian Ocean on one side, northern Arabia on the other, and Africa and Persia further afield, Yemen was also a hub for ancient languages, though the majority of them are no longer extant, like many of its tribes.

Classical Arabic, or fusha, is very much indebted to the Yemeni regional dialects. Formed in the Peninsula from a mixture of Semitic languages in antiquity, regional Yemeni languages developed from the Himyrateic language used in the 1st century B.C., Modern and Old Southern Arabian languages, the vast majority of which are now extinct. Until today, classical Arabic as used specifically by Yemeni tribes is studied in comparison to their northern, Hijazi and Kufi dialects⁵.

Pre-Islamic Yemen was well known for its production of fruits, dates and grains. Its mountainous ranges – peaks, some as high as 4,000 metres above sea level, received heavy rain from the monsoons of the Indian ocean. Though Yemen had no rivers for easy traveling, wells and seasonal streams encouraged irrigation, cultivation, animal rearing and travel.

Yemen, prior to Islam was also known for its beautiful cloths, cloaks⁶ and other products, the quality of which was unavailable in other parts of Arabia. Some of these were mentioned by Ali ibn Abi Talib ('a)

in a sermon when he spoke about the wonders of creation, and he mentioned the peacock as one of Allah's (SwT) most beautiful and unique creations, vividly comparing the magnificence of the two saying:

You would imagine its feathers to be sticks made of silver and the wonderful circles and sun-shaped feathers growing thereon to be of pure gold and pieces of green emerald. If you likened them to anything growing on land, you would say that it is a bouquet of flowers collected every spring. If you likened them to cloths, they would be like printed apparels or amazing variegated cloths of Yemen⁷. If you likened them to ornaments then they would be like gems of different colour with studded silver.⁸

He also said:

The peacock walks with vanity and pride, and throws open its tail and wings, and laughs admiring the handsomeness of its dress and the hues of its necklace of gems. But when it casts a glance at its legs it cries out loudly with a voice which indicates its call for help and displays its true grief, because its legs are thin like the legs of Indo-Persian cross-bred cocks. At the end of its shin there is a thin thorn and on the crown of its head there is a bunch of green variegated feathers. Its neck begins in the shape of a goblet and it stretches up to its belly like the hair-dye of Yemen⁹ in colour, or like silk cloth put on a polished mirror which looks like it has been covered with a black veil, except that on account of its excessive lustre and extreme brightness it appears that a lush green colour has been mixed with it.¹⁰

☞Ali ibn Abi Talib's ('a) extensive knowledge about Yemen and its produce was not borne out of his interactions as a nearby Hijazi. Rather Imam ☞Ali ('a) spent several weeks in Yemen, it was he who converted the entire region to Islam in only one day!

Prophet Muhammad (S) had previously sent two delegations, preaching for six months, but neither of them were successful in bringing the curious Yemeni tribes to the religion of Allah (SwT). ☞Ali ibn Abi Talib ('a) went there to collect taxes, teach the religion and offer judgements, many of which were considered extraordinary.

Yemen always remained a source of fondness and support for ☞Ali ibn Abi Talib ('a), who often referred to his experience as an example for others to follow.

In his famous letter to Malik al-Ashtar on how to correctly govern Egypt, he drew on the advice given to him by the Prophet (S), before he embarked and wrote:

The particular thing by which you should purify your religion for Allah should be the fulfilment of those obligations which are especially for Him. Therefore, devote to Allah some of your physical activity during the night and the day, and whatever (worship) you perform for seeking nearness to Allah should be complete, without defect or deficiency, whatsoever physical exertion it may involve. When you lead the prayers for the people, do not scare them away from it (by prolonging it), nor waste it (by making it too short), because among the people there are those who are sick, as well as those who have needs of their own. When the Holy Prophet (S) sent me to Yemen¹¹ I asked him how to lead the prayers. He

advised me, ‘Offer prayers like a weak and old person and be kind to the faithful’ (so that weak and old persons may follow your prayers easily and happily).¹²

Yemen long remained a regional support for the family of the Prophet (S) and ﷺ Ali ibn Abi Talib (‘a), and also for the Ahlul Bayt (‘a) throughout the shifting times until the present time.

Modern History Of Yemen

Today however, much of Yemen lies in ruins, and millions of people are living in dire poverty at the hands of a Saudi–lead war of decimation upon it. What was once the location of Islam’s greatest single conversion to Islam, has been besieged by a war of ethnic cleansing, collective punishment, the poisoning of water supplies, trade embargos and mass starvation as a political weapon.

In the year 2010 began what came to be known as ‘The Arab Spring’ in which some 18 Arab and African nations spontaneously initiated civil uprisings. Each nation, independent from the other, sought socio–political changes, ranging from civil reforms to revolution to the overthrow of despot or repressive regimes.

Though beginning in Tunisia, Yemenis witnessed Egypt overthrow dictator Hosni Mubarak; Libya exerted mob justice on Mu’ﷺ Ammar Ghaddafi; mass demonstrations happened by Bahrainis against a deeply oppressive monarchy, and the same occurred in Saudi Arabia. Arguably the assassination of Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, and the subsequent arrests of security chiefs charged with their collusion in the killing had another great visual impact on the potential of justice. David Gardner states, “The spectacle of four generals in an Arab country’s security services being held over the assassination of a politician was not just unusual – it was unique. It electrified the Arab world, introducing into people’s minds the profoundly subversive idea that Arab despots, for long untouchable within a political culture of unbridled power and legal impunity, could be held to account.”¹³ Yemeni’s – long oppressed and downtrodden by President Ali ﷺ Abdullah Saleh sought their own revolution and just government.

Yemen’s present circumstances, like much of the Middle East, can be traced to post–World War II independence of the Arab world. Yemen’s primary distinguishing feature has always been its relationship with Zaydism, a form of Shi’ism, distinguished from their Ithna–Asheri and Isma’ili counterparts. As early as the 9th century A.D., Yemen was a majority Zaydi region and remained as such even while mainstream Shi’ism declined during the 11th century across the Muslim lands, allowing it to proceed as a hub of Shi’ism. Yemen also remained largely independent during the Ottoman control, with power retained by the Zaydi Imams, only sporadically coming under Caliphate control.

With the demise of the Ottoman Empire came the domination of British and French powers over Arabia, each carving up states at the behest of their mandates. Only parts of the Arabian peninsula remained free from Arab rule including Yemen. Now an independent state, Yemen formally adopted Zaydi Imamate and leadership in its name, while concurrently Abdul al–Aziz al–Sa’ud ascended to

monarchical and dictatorial rule in Hijaz, creating its neighbouring Saudi Arabia. Neither state could be entirely free as British power remained around and in both countries. While Saudi cooperation with Britain grew stronger long with its administrative rule, Yemen's Imamate was not able to extend its rule over the entire region, as some tribal loyalties remained with British rule, eventually causing the division of North and South Yemen.

In 1962 the Zaydi ruler died and his successor was quickly deposed. The Imamate was renamed the Yemen Arab Republic in the North, while the South was known as the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen. The North, a coalition made up of liberals, the army and tribal support joined the Arab League at its inception, while the South joined 22 years later in 1967, a sign of its isolation from other Arab states. Not all accepted the new government, especially those who retained strong support for the Zaydi Imamate. The government sought help from the Egyptian army, while the Zaydi loyalists called on neighbouring Saudi Arabia, to which several years of civil war ensued, with a wider proxy war between the two larger nations being played out. With the defeat of ʿAbd al-Nasir in 1967, Egypt pulled their forces out of Yemen.

Arguably one of the strongest reasons for the modern day political climate was the Arab states' attitudes toward Israeli occupation and ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians in the 1970's. Arab nationalism and separate interests of competing economic and military power had allowed a new Western power of influence to replace fading British and French influence and that was the United States of America. Seen as protector to the encroaching Russia and the gateway to a capitalist economy, the US demanded political compromise with Israel or at the very least indifference. Those who submitted would receive US support and financing; and those who did not would be considered an enemy. The Arab world split broadly into those two camps with Algeria, Libya, Iraq, the PLO and South Yemen not bowing to US bribery over their stance towards Israel. The first group, the remaining Arab states would soon turn neutralism towards Israel into a generally pro-West national policy.

[The Revolution To Overthrow Despotism](#)

Yemen's participation in the Arab spring started in January 2011. Saudi Arabia paid particular interest to events in Yemen, not only since Saleh was its ally, but internal unrest at home and a democratic revolution gaining strength in Bahrain could quickly see all three states fall to Shi'i lead movements. Yemeni's – well experienced with the external hand of Saudi repression and influence in their own country, were sympathetic to the plight of the Bahraini and Saudi citizens seeking to overthrow their respective governments, and they voiced their support for the democratic revolutions in the neighbouring countries. Their tacit support for their Arab brothers against despot rulers was not to be forgotten by the monarchs of Saudi Arabia.

Seeing the Middle East being reshaped, demonstrators initially protested against governmental proposals to modify the constitution, unemployment, economic conditions and corruption, with demands

soon including Saleh's resignation. Saleh agreed to cede power in exchange for immunity from prosecutions, but on three separate occasions he backed out of the deal. On the 3rd of June he was injured in an assassination attempt and was evacuated by the Saudi government handing power to his vice president, Mansur al-Hadi, to continue his rule and policies. Despite injury, Saleh returned after three months with Saudi backing to resume control, but with the promise not to run in the upcoming presidential election. The election in the following year saw al-Hadi stand as the only candidate, who 'won' 99.8% of the country's votes.

This only escalated the opposition towards the government; and two main groups of opposition emerged. The first, Ikhwan al-Muslimeen, or The Muslim Brotherhood akin to their Egyptian counterparts, waged an unsuccessful campaign to remove what was a de facto military government. The second, successful in overthrowing the dictatorship, was undertaken by Houthi rebels, known as Ansar-Allah or The Helpers of God. On the 22nd of January 2015, Ansar-Allah stormed the capital Sana'a and removed both of those who were loyal to Saleh and those working directly for the Saudi government.

AnsarAllah had been hostile to the Salehi government since the early 2000's with several insurgencies and peace agreements being kept and broken. In 2009 however, a larger push to remove Saleh began in which the Saudi government militarily intervened with support for the Yemeni regime, quelling the Houthi movement, only to arise again in 2011 as part of the Arab Spring.

On the 21st of March 2015, after rejecting a proposal to split the country into six federal regions, Ansar-Allah took over the government and continued its expedition through the country to also remove al-Hadi, who then subsequently fled the country. On the 25th of March, Saudi Arabia, with a coalition of Arab states, supported by British and American intelligence and armament, began a mass bombing campaign against the Houthi government in order to restore the Saleh/al-Hadi dictatorship.

From the perspective of Ansar-Allah, their aim was to establish an independent government. The threat of Saudi interests was solely the religious and political alignments of the Houthi, being Zaydi Shi'i and rejecting Saudi hegemony in their country. This has been the incentive for the Saudis to crush the Houthi government and since then have carried out a massive bombing campaign against military, civilian and residential targets for more than three years.

The Present Day Desperate Situation

The United Nations and independent aid agencies are unanimous: the bombing campaign and embargos have led to a humanitarian catastrophe. According to many, Yemen is today the world's largest and most urgent human crisis zone with famine, lack of drinking water, working sanitation, a devastated economy and mass inflation.

Two million people are suffering from acute malnutrition. In a joint statement by the World Health Organisation, the UN Children's Fund and the World Food Programme, Yemen presently has "the

world's worst cholera outbreak in the midst of the world's largest humanitarian crisis." Bismarck Swinging, a communication specialist for Unicef Yemen stated, "When you look at the number of children who are starving to death due to malnourishment, and now that is compounded by a cholera outbreak, children are not only being killed directly as a result of the conflict, but more children are at risk and could die from indirect consequences."

Caroline Anning, senior conflict and humanitarian advocacy adviser for Save the Children stated, "This is an off-the-scale humanitarian crisis, much bigger than what we see in Syria, much bigger than in other parts of the world, and it happens in the background almost, it doesn't get the same amount of attention."¹⁴

Alex de Waal, author of the book *Mass Starvation: The History and Future of Famine* states that, "Yemen is the greatest famine atrocity of our lifetimes. The Saudis are deliberately destroying the country's food-producing infrastructure. The United States and the European countries, if they cared about it enough, have enough leverage to get the Saudis and the Emiratis to stop bombing agricultural, health, and market infrastructure, open the ports, and have a much less restrictive definition about what food is allowed in. They also need to start a peace process. This is not a war that is going to be won in any meaningful sense. It is a political[ly] created famine and it will have to be solved by political[ly] created means."¹⁵

Each time a treaty starts to be discussed or make positive steps, the Saudi-led bombing campaign targets civilians and vital infrastructure for Yemen so they cannot function healthily. An example among the many is a hospital supported by Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), the internationally renowned medical aid agency, which was bombed where at least 11 people were killed and 19 were injured in an airstrike. Teresa Sancristóval, MSF desk manager for the Emergency Unit in Yemen said: "This is the fourth attack against an MSF facility in less than 12 months." Adam Baron, a visiting fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations who was previously based in Yemen said, "When you are seeing a country where your reaction to the hospital is not just shock and horror, but rather a sad shrug, that is a testament to how desperate the situation in Yemen really is right now. You are also seeing the absolute collapse of the health system even in areas that are distant from the war."¹⁶

Sadly this type of war crime is the norm even with weddings, schools, bridges, clinics, factories and distribution centres which have been hit – adding to the plight of the already devastated country.

It appears that this oppression of Central Arabia upon its Southern neighbour is something that even Prophet Muhammad (S) predicted and warned about. It has been narrated by Bukhari from ʿAbdullah ibn ʿUmar that Prophet Muhammad (S) said, "O Allah! Bless our Sham (Syria) and our Yemen." The people said, "Our Najd as well." The Prophet (S) again said, "O Allah! Bless our Sham and Yemen." They said again, "Our Najd as well." On that the Prophet (S) said, "There will appear earthquakes and afflictions, and from there will come out the side of the head of Satan."¹⁷

It is interesting that the Prophet (S) specifically prayed for the blessings of God to be upon Syria and Yemen, and not upon the Najdi Arabs – from where the modern Saudi Arabian leadership hail from – at present when both Syria and Yemen have been decimated by Saudi led coalitions.

The Aims Of This Book

It was in the light of such devastating and urgent circumstances that I decided to write this short book on the conversion of the region of Yemen to Islam at the time of the holy Prophet Muhammad (S) and its experience with the Commander of the Faithful, ﷺ Ali ibn Abi Talib (‘a) thereafter.

I had long since desired to write a book on the delegation of ﷺ Ali ibn Abi Talib (‘a) to Yemen. This is because while many Muslims are aware of the events at Ghadir Khumm after the ‘Farewell Pilgrimage’ of the Prophet (S) where he made an announcement about ﷺ Ali ibn Abi Talib (‘a), they are oblivious to the events that immediately preceded it, that being the conversion of Yemen to Islam.

My focus was planned to study in detail the events that followed the region’s conversion to Islam, particularly the small genre of narrations that describe some of the companions being critical or accusing ﷺ Ali ibn Abi Talib (‘a) of misconduct while there. These were of interest because of their relationship to the event of Ghadir Khumm and whether the sermon at Ghadir by the Prophet (S) was a response to the apparent accusations of Imam ﷺ Ali (‘a) or they were said despite them. That is to say, whether these rumours caused the Prophet (S) to announce his friendship with ﷺ Ali ibn Abi Talib (‘a) as is one historical view, or whether the announcement was the Prophet (S) appointing Imam ﷺ Ali (‘a) as Caliph after him, as is the other view. As many Muslims may not have known about the events following the conversion of Yemen, the study would have started at the point of ﷺ Ali ibn Abi Talib’s (‘a) deputation.

In any case, until now I did not have a chance to commence that work, however I have briefly included some of the narrations and points as they are pertinent to the story of Yemen’s conversion to Islam. It was upon the unexpected passing away of my uncle Amiral Lakha, a committed humanitarian, on the 10th of January this year that committed me to writing this book, the reward of which is dedicated to him.

The purpose of this small book is four fold:

1. The primary goal is to raise urgent charitable donations for the humanitarian plight of the oppressed and devastated Yemeni community through the sale of this book.
2. As part of this, there needs to be awareness raised about their plight and the level of destruction that the Saudi led coalition has meted out on what always should have been an internal matter for the Yemeni people to resolve. People across the world, especially the Muslims, have a duty to pressurise their governments into being part of the political solution.
3. This leads to the third aspiration which is to raise awareness about the role of Britain and the United States of America in this ongoing crime against humanity. The fighter jets, bombs, missiles, training and

technologies used by Saudi Arabia are mainly from the British, French and US governments, or contracts that they have signed allowing the industrial military complex to export to them. For every death and disease contracted, for every pain of hunger and emotional trauma brought about by this campaign of quelling the revolution, it is upon the British, French and US government heads as well. Only a few days before writing this, the US Senate shamefully voted to reject a bill that would have halted the nation's military support for Saudi Arabia. Geert Cappelaere, UNICEF's regional director for the Middle East and North Africa said, "Water and sanitation systems have been bombed out of commission by Saudi Arabian airstrikes and they receive direct support from the US military." In addition, "The US – and the UK – backed Saudi-led coalition has bombed civilians and blocked the delivery of life-saving healthcare and medicine. This is a violation of international humanitarian law and indefensible" said David Miliband, president and CEO of the International Rescue Committee.¹⁸ At the time of completing the writing (of this book), the Saudi and UAE coalition have begun a war to capture the port city of Hudeidah, crippling the humanitarian aid services of which 80% use the port as a point of entry into the country. This has no doubt exacerbated the already disastrous situation. It is also the duty of the righteous people of Britain and the US, especially Muslims, to do whatever they can to stop their governments or the weapons companies that export mass destructions to Yemen.

4. The fourth purpose of this book is to raise awareness of the important role that Yemen had in the early history of Islam. This small work aims to collect the story of Yemen from its pre-Islamic era with the ancient prophets, to the story of its conversion at the time of the holy Prophet Muhammad (S), the subsequent events that affected its history, and their relation to ﷺ Ali ibn Abi Talib ('a).

Many Muslims, who adore and cherish Imam ﷺ Ali ('a), are largely unaware of his contribution to Islam in relation to Yemen, and to learn about his achievements there will not only increase our appreciation of his greatness, but also make us realise how devastated he would be to see that the country which he brought to Islam is being decimated the way it is today. Such a pain in his heart should be an inspiration for us to help halt these atrocities from occurring.

In light of this point that ﷺ Ali ibn Abi Talib ('a) would be distraught at seeing the suffering of the Yemeni people and its beautiful region being turned into a theatre of war, I offer a final narration to this introduction from ﷺ Ali ibn Abi Talib ('a) himself. In regards to the sufferings of the Arab people, he said:

I wished I could have taken the way leading towards (worldly pleasures like) pure honey, fine wheat and silk clothes, but it cannot be that my passions lead me and greed takes me to choosing good meals, while in the Hijaz or in Yamamah there may be people who have no hope of getting bread or who do not have a full meal. Shall I lie with a satiated belly while around me there may be hungry bellies and thirsty livers? Or shall I be as the poet has said:

It is enough for you to have a disease that you lie with your belly full while around you people may be badly yearning for dried leather.¹⁹

Thus, this book is written for the purpose of sale to raise money for the desperate plight of our brothers

and sisters in Yemen. All of the money raised will go towards clean water, food and medical aid supplies.

While we do not wish to limit the donations of the generous people who wish to purchase this book, we do however want to set a minimum. We also want to encourage those who purchase the book, not just to buy it as a charitable donation and then leave it on the shelf to gather dust or be left downloaded on a phone, but rather to benefit from its content, and the phenomenal role that Yemen played in the earliest days of Islam.

The title of this book, 'A Land Most Goodly' is rendered from the title **بَلَدَةٌ طَيِّبَةٌ** – Baldatun Tayyibatun – given to Yemen in the Holy Qur'an.²⁰ This means that Yemen being adorned with such a title is from Allah (SwT) Himself. Therefore there can be no better way to refer to Yemen, nor a more preferable title to this work reminding the Muslim community about the importance that Yemen has in Islam – by the mention of Allah's (SwT) name for the country.

The philosophy behind the cover was to bring together the devastation of the country by the Saudi led war on it and Yemen's nation colours, red, white and black. The designer notes that the white represents the good and pure land of Yemen and its righteous struggle, whilst the black represents the destructive and calamitous forces encroaching on the pure land. In the national flag, the red would come before the white, however the red has been splashed across mainly the white, denoting the bloodshed caused by the invading, dark side. Faintly in the red, you can see the image of a dismayed and weeping Yemeni child.

My sincerest thanks goes to Sheikh Mahmood Abdullah and Sajida Khatun for proofreading; Zulfikar Hussein for designing the covers; **The Muslim Vibe** (www.themuslimvibe.com [6]) for their support; **The World Federation Aid** (www.wfaid.org [7]); **Penny Appeal** (www.pennyappeal.org [8]) and the **Islamic Humanitarian Service** (www.al-haqq.net [9]) teams for distributing the funds raised; Sheikh Saleem Bhimji and his wife, Sister Arifa Hudda for their efforts in bringing this project to fruition. Your thanks comes from the Yemeni people and your rewards are with Allah (SwT).

All praise and thanks belong to Allah (SwT). May His blessings be upon all of His prophets and messengers, especially His last Prophet Muhammad (S) and his Progeny ('a).

Jaffer Ladak

Rajab ١٤٣٨/March 2018

Karbala al-Muqaddasa

1. Albert Hourani, A History of the Arab Peoples, p. 10.
2. Albert Hourani, A History of the Arab Peoples, p. 11.
3. Albert Hourani, A History of the Arab Peoples, p. 11.
4. Qur'an, Surah al-Tawbah (9), verse 30.
5. Zubaydi, Dr. Abd al-Kareem al-, Commentary of Sharh Ibn Aqeel 'Ala Alfiyati Ibn Malik at <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=Rkly0B1MA6w> [10] (Last accessed on May 15, 2018).

6. The hadith corpus is replete with narrations about purchasing and using Yemeni cloaks.

7. The Arabic text is as follows:

تَخَالَ قَصَبُهُ مَدَارِيَّ مِنْ فِضَّةٍ، وَمَا أُنْبِتَ عَلَيْهَا مِنْ عَجِيبِ دَارَاتِهِ وَشُمُوسِهِ خَالِصَ الْعُقَبَانِ، وَفَلَدَ الزَّرَجِدِ. فَإِنْ شَبَّهْتَهُ بِمَا أُنْبِتَتِ الْأَرْضُ قُلْتَ: جَبِيُّ جُنَى مِنْ زَهْرَةٍ كُلِّ رِبْعٍ، وَإِنْ ضَاهَيْتَهُ بِالْمَلَابِسِ فَهُوَ كَمَوْشِيِّ الْحُلَلِ أَوْ كَمَوْتِقِ عَصَبِ الْيَمَنِ، وَإِنْ شَاكَلْتَهُ بِالْحُلِيِّ فَهُوَ كَفُصُوصِ ذَاتِ الْأَوَانِ، قَدْ نَطَقَتْ بِاللُّجَيْنِ الْمُكَلَّلِ .

8. Al-Radhi, Sharif, Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon 165

<https://www.al-islam.org/nahjul-balagha-part-1-sermons/sermon-165-allah-...> [11] (Last accessed on May 15, 2018).

9. The Arabic text is as follows:

يَمْشِي مَشْيَ الْمَرْحِ الْمُخْتَالِ، وَيَتَصَفَّحُ ذَنْبَهُ وَجَنَاحَهُ، فَيَقْفَهُ ضَاحِكًا لِجَمَالِ سِرْبَالِهِ، وَأَصَابِيغِ وَشَاحِيهِ؛ فَإِذَا رَمَى بِبَصَرِهِ إِلَى قَوَائِمِهِ زَقًا مُعُولًا بِصَوْتِ بَكَادٍ يُبِينُ عَنْ اسْتِعَانَتِهِ، وَيَشْهَدُ بِصَادِقِ تَوَجُّعِهِ، لِأَنَّ قَوَائِمَهُ حُمُسٌ كَقَوَائِمِ الدِّيَكَةِ الْخَلَّاسِيَّةِ. وَقَدْ تَجَمَّتْ مِنْ طُنُوبِ سَاقِهِ صَيْصِيَّةٌ خَفِيَّةٌ، وَلَهُ فِي مَوْضِعِ الْعُرْفِ قَنْزَعَةٌ خَضْرَاءُ مُوشَاةٌ، وَمَخْرَجٌ عِنْفِهِ كَالْأَبْرِيْقِ، وَمَعْرُزُهَا إِلَى حَيْثُ بَطْنُهُ كَصَبِغِ الْوَسْمَةِ الْيَمَانِيَّةِ، أَوْ كَحَرِيرَةٍ مُلْبَسَةٍ مِرَاءً ذَاتَ صِقَالٍ، وَكَأَنَّهُ مُتَلَفِّعٌ بِمَعْجَرٍ، أَسْحَمَ، إِلَّا أَنَّهُ يَخِيلُ لِكَثْرَةِ مَائِهِ، وَشِدَّةِ بَرِيقِهِ، أَنَّ الْخَضِرَةَ النَّاصِرَةَ مُمْتَرِجَةٌ بِهِ

10. Ibid.

11. The Arabic text is as follows:

وَلْيَكُنْ فِي خَاصَّةٍ مَا تُخْلِصُ لَهُ بِهِ دِينُكَ: إِقَامَةُ فَرَائِضِهِ الَّتِي هِيَ لَهُ خَاصَّةٌ، فَأَعْطِ اللَّهَ مِنْ بَدَنِكَ فِي لَيْلِكَ وَنَهَارِكَ، وَوَفِّ مَا تَقَرَّبْتَ بِهِ إِلَى اللَّهِ مِنْ ذَلِكَ كَامِلًا غَيْرَ مَتْلُومٍ وَلَا مَنْقُوصٍ، بِالْعَاقِبَةِ مِنْ بَدَنِكَ مَا بَلَغَ.

وَإِذَا قَمَّتْ فِي صَلَاتِكَ لِلنَّاسِ، فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مُنْفَرًا وَلَا مُضْطَبَعًا، فَإِنَّ فِي النَّاسِ مَنْ بِهِ الْعِلَّةُ وَلَهُ الْحَاجَةُ. وَقَدْ سَأَلْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ (صلى الله عليه وآله) حِينَ «وَجَّهْتَنِي إِلَى الْيَمَنِ كَيْفَ أُصَلِّي بِهِمْ؟ فَقَالَ: «صَلِّ بِهِمْ كَصَلَاةِ أُضْعَفِهِمْ، وَكُنْ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَحِيمًا

12. Al-Radhi, Sharif, Nahj al-Balaghah, letter 53,

<https://www.al-islam.org/nahjul-balagha-part-2-letters-and-sayings/lette...> [12] (Last accessed on May 15, 2018).

13. Hourani, Albert, A History of the Arab Peoples, p. 469 (Originally from Gardner's, Last Chance – The Middle East in the Balance, 2nd ed. (London, 2012) pp. 134–5).

14. <https://amp.theguardian.com/global-development/2017/jul/27/childrens-cri...> [13] (Last accessed on May 15, 2018).

15. https://phys.org/news/2018-01-mass-starvation-political-weapon.amp?_twi... [14] (Last accessed on May 15, 2018).

16. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/aug/15/saudi-led-air-strike-yemen...> [15] (Last accessed on May 15, 2018).

17. Sahih al-Bukhari, vol. 2, book 17, number 147.

18. <https://www.mintpressnews.com/in-wake-of-shameful-senate-vote-unicef-iss...> [16] (Last accessed on May 15, 2018).

19. Al-Radhi, Sharif, Nahj al-Balaghah, Letter 45,

<https://www.al-islam.org/nahjul-balagha-part-2-letters-and-sayings/lette...> [17] Uthman-ibn-hunayf-al-Ansari (Last accessed on May 15, 2018). The Arabic text is as follows:

وَلَوْ شِئْتُ لَاهْتَدَيْتُ الطَّرِيقَ، إِلَى مُصَفَّى هَذَا الْعَسَلِ، وَلِبَابِ هَذَا الْقَمْحِ، وَتَسَائِحِ هَذَا الْفَرْ، وَلَكِنْ هَيْهَاتَ أَنْ يَغْلِبَنِي هَوَايَ، وَيَقُودَنِي جَشْعِي إِلَى تَخْيِيرِ الْأَطْعَمَةِ وَلَعَلَّ بِالْحِجَازِ أَوْ بِالْيَمَامَةِ مَنْ لَاطَمَعَ لَهُ فِي الْفُرُصِ، وَلَا عَهْدَ لَهُ بِالشَّبَعِ أَوْ أَيْبَتَ مِيطَانًا وَحَوْلِي بَطُونٌ غَرَّتِي وَأَكْبَادٌ حَرَى، أَوْ أَكُونُ كَمَا قَالَ الْقَائِلُ:

وَحَسْبُكَ دَاءٌ أَنْ تَبَيْتَ بِيْطَنَةَ

وَحَوْلَكَ أَكْبَادٌ تَجْنُ إِلَى الْقَدِّ

20. Qur'an, Surah al-Saba':

لَقَدْ كَانَ لِسَبَإٍ فِي مَسْكَنِهِمْ آيَةٌ ۖ جَنَّاتٍ عَن يَمِينٍ وَشِمَالٍ ۖ كُلُوا مِن رِّزْقِ رَبِّكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لَهُ ۗ بَلَدَةٌ طَيِّبَةٌ وَرَبٌّ غَفُورٌ

Certainly there was a sign for Saba in their abode; two gardens on the right and the left; eat of the sustenance of your Lord and give thanks to Him: a land most goodly and a Forgiving Lord! (34: 15).

Image:



Chapter 1: Ancient Yemen In The Qur'an

The story of Yemen as a region of the Arabian peninsula is one of great tradition and culture. Much of this tradition was circulated and retold amongst the Arab peoples by the priests of religion, soothsayers, poets, tradesmen who travelled to distant lands and tribal leaders. Many of these stories were moral tales or lessons to be imparted to a community eager to exchange learnings and compete for religious and tribal rites.

The Qur'an states,

"Indeed We have sent messengers to every community" (Surah al-Nahl, 16:36).

"We have not sent a messenger except in the language of the people, so that they may make (the message) clear to them." (Surah Ibrahim, 14:4).

The fact is that stories and lessons of the great events of Yemen were discussed and debated so vigorously across Arabia by a community that were skilled in the arts of memorisation and were also weaved into a story through the art of composing beautiful poetry for competition, and in addition, the Holy Qur'an also sought to eternalise these stories in its revelation.

To some people, these were just "stories of the ancients" from another soothsayer prophet, aiming to take the tribes away from their system of living and worship of idols. However, the reality was that Yemen had an intimate and profound past with prophets, miracles and great communities of faith and denial; these could not be lost to poetry or storytelling, but it required recording and understanding so that the people of Arabia and the world could take lessons from them.

The fact that the inhabitants of the Hijazi had heard about these great prophets, retained their stories and had even travelled to the places of their histories meant that the earliest recipients of the Qur'an felt

that revelation was speaking to them about their own communities and forefathers; peoples whom they had traded and intermarried with. Yemen's history was their history and vice versa. It also enlivened the entire region of Yemen to know that their land was the subject of revelation and that a prophet was recounting their history with so much depth and accuracy, such that had even been lost by their own great storytellers. This piqued the interest of many thousands of Yemeni's who eventually sent their delegations to the Prophet (S) and received delegations from him.

In light of this, our story of Yemen starts with the some of the verses of the Qur'an that speak about this region, its ancient prophets, tribes and events. We will recount the narratives of The People of Sheeba, the Prophets Hud ('a) and Salih ('a), and 'The Story of The Year of The Elephant' as mentioned in the Qur'an. As these stories require some explanations, we will also mention the relevant exegesis (*tafsir*) to the stories, however owing to the fact that this work is a brief history of Yemen, the commentaries will be limited. For those wishing to research further, they may refer to other commentaries and hadith literature.

[The People Of Sheeba \(Saba\)](#)

[Surah Saba \(Chapter 34\) – Verses 15–19](#)

لَقَدْ كَانَ لِسَبَإٍ فِي مَسْكِنِهِمْ آيَةٌ ۖ جَنَّاتٍ عَنْ يَمِينٍ وَشِمَالٍ ۖ كُلُوا مِنْ رِزْقِ رَبِّكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لَهُ ۖ بَلَدَةٌ طَيِّبَةٌ وَرَبُّ غَفُورٌ

Indeed there was a sign for the (people of) Sheeba in their abode, two gardens on the right and the left; Eat of the sustenance of your Lord and give thanks to Him (that you have) a pure city and a forgiving Lord. (34: 15)

Saba is the name of the cultivated land of Yemen. This name, Saba, had been the name of a great personality in that region that was chosen for this land. The biography of this country is instructive.

After the statement of the great bounties that Allah had bestowed upon the prophets Dawud (David) ('a) and Sulayman (Solomon) ('a) and that these two Divinely-sent prophets acted on the duty of thanksgiving in the preceding verses, verse fifteen refers to another nation who was in a state opposite to them, and they lived perhaps in the same time with them or a little after them.

The people of Sheeba were people whom Allah had granted various kinds of blessings to, but they paved the way of disbelief, and consequently, Allah negated His blessings from them. Then they became so scattered that the story of their lives became a lesson and memorial for the people of the world.

The Qur'an has stated their instructive biography in five verses and it has pointed to some important details and specialties of their lives in these few verses. At first it says: "***Indeed there was a sign for the (people of) Sheeba in their abode...***" By utilizing the particular spatial conditions and situation of

the mountainous region, the talented people could control the floods. What could have resulted in destruction was then avoided behind a strong dam which they led to building a habitable country.

This Divine sign, originating here from these people will be elaborated upon below, however it should be noted what a great sign it was that a means of destruction was changed into a very important means of development.

Scholars are divided as to what Saba[۞] was or whose name it referred to. A popular idea is that Saba[۞] was the name of the father of the Arabs of Yemen. According to a tradition of the holy Prophet Muhammad (S), there was a man by the name of Saba[۞], from whom ten children were born, and from every one of them a tribe from the tribes of the Arabs came into being in that land. Some people believe that Saba[۞] was the name of the land of Yemen, or a part of it. The apparent meaning of the Qur'an in the story of Prophet Sulayman ('a) and the hoopoe in Surah al-Naml, verse 22, also shows that Saba[۞] had been the name of a place, where it says: ***"...and I have come to you from Sheeba with a sure tiding."***(27:22)

The situation here is that the apparent meaning of the verse shows that Saba had been a group of people who lived in that region, because the plural masculine pronoun, 'hum' has returned to them. There is no inconsistency between these two commentaries because it may be that at first Saba[۞] had been the name of a person, then all of his offspring and his tribe were entitled by that name, and later this name was also used for their land.

Then the Qur'an refers to the explanation of this Divine sign which was given to the people of Saba[۞]. It says: ***"...two gardens in the right and the left..."*** The story was such that the people of Saba[۞], by building a great dam between the magnificent mountains of that region, could store the water from the numerous floods which would have caused destruction or at least would have been wasted in the deserts vainly, at the back of that great dam; and by creating some windows in the dam they could take the vast store of water behind it under their own control. Thus, they succeeded to plant and grow different things in the vast lands over there.

These gardens were so bountiful of fruits and blessings that as history indicates, if a person put a large basket on his head and at the season of fruits, one passed under these trees there he would get so much fruit in it that after a short time the basket would be filled with fruits. Is it not wonderful that a flood which is the source of destruction becomes the cause of cultivation? Is it not counted as a sign of Allah? In addition, an extraordinary security existed in that land which itself was counted as one of the signs of Allah. This fact will later be referred to in the Qur'an.

Then the verse says that Allah told them as follows: ***"...Eat of the sustenance from your Lord and give thanks to Him (that you have) a pure city and a forgiving Lord."*** This short sentence has reiterated a collection of material and spiritual bounties in the most beautiful form. From the point of material bounties, they had a pure and clean land. It was clean from the various pollutions: from thieves

and unjust people, from pests and afflictions, from drought and famine, and from insecurity and terror. It has even been said that their land was clean from harmful insects, as well. Their town had clean air, a pleasant enlivening breeze, and a fertile land with productive trees. From the point of spiritual bounties, they had the forgiveness of Allah. He would overlook their short-comings and faults and did not punish them, and He did not involve their land in misfortune.

فَأَعْرَضُوا فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ سَيْلَ الْعَرِمِ وَبَدَّلْنَاهُم بِجَنَّتَيْهِمْ جَنَّتَيْنِ ذَوَاتِي أُكُلٍ خَمْطٍ وَأَثَلٍ وَشَيْءٍ مِنْ سِدْرٍ قَلِيلٍ

But they turned away (from Allah), so We sent upon them the Flood of ‘arim, and We gave them in exchange for their two gardens, two gardens bearing bitter produce and tamarisk-bushes, and (here and there) a few lote-trees. (34: 16)

Through this verse, the Qur’an implicitly says that instead of being thankful to Allah, they turned away from Him. They counted the bounties of Allah as insignificant. They considered the cultivation and security of their land very simple; and forsaked the affluence of bounties and became neglectful of the remembrance of Allah. Their rich people boasted to the poor and imagined them as bothersome for their own status. The explanation of this will be dealt with in the commentary of later verses.

It was here that the lash of punishment was whipped on their bodies, as the Qur’an says: ***“But they turned away (from Allah), so We entered upon them the flood of ‘arim...”***

The Arabic term ‘arim is derived from ‘aramah in the sense of harshness, ill-temper, and strictness; and since flood is modified by it, this points to its harshness and destructiveness. The application of the phrase *sayl al-‘arim* (the flood of ‘arim) is so to speak, a kind of addition to emphasise the harshness of the flood.

Some commentators have rendered the Arabic term ‘arim into field-mice which as a result of making holes in this dam, caused its destruction. The Arabic dictionary, *Lisan al-‘Arab* introduces different meanings about the Arabic term ‘arim including: ‘a tiresome flood, barriers which are built between valleys for stopping water, and also a big field-mouse’.

Then the Qur’an explains the later situation of this land as follows: ***“...and We gave them in exchange for their two gardens, two gardens bearing bitter produce and tamarisk-bushes, and here and there a few lote-trees.”*** The Qur’anic word *ukul* means any kind of victuals. The Arabic term *xamt* means a bitter plant. The Arabic word *athl* is in the sense of ‘tamarisk-bush.’ Therefore, instead of those masses of green trees, there remained only a few wild, and deserted trees with a very low value that perhaps, the most important of them was lote-tree a few of which were found among them.

The statement of these three kinds of trees which remained in that ruined region refers to three different groups of trees: a part of which were harmful, some of them were useless, and some of them were of very little benefit. On the whole they had their turning away, ingratitude and Divine punishment as a

sequel, of: flood, earthquake, tempest, thunder and lightning, and these were not casual or natural events in this sense.

ذَلِكَ جَزَيْنَاهُمْ بِمَا كَفَرُوا ۚ وَهَلْ نُجَازِي إِلَّا الْكَفُورَ

This We recompensed them for their disbelief; and do We ever recompense any but the ungrateful?(34: 17)

The Divine retributions were Allah's (SwT) way of punishment and a Godly law against evil doers, and they are not exclusive to the people of Sheeba. As a conclusion, this verse explicitly implies that this was a chastisement that Allah (SwT) gave them for their own infidelity. The verse says: ***"This We recompensed them for their disbelief..."***

But in order that no one considers that this fate belongs to only this group, but it is generally for all of those who have similar actions is certain, it says: ***"...and do We ever recompense any but the ungrateful?"***

وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ وَبَيْنَ الْقُرَى الَّتِي بَارَكْنَا فِيهَا قُرَى ظَاهِرَةً وَقَدَرْنَا فِيهَا السَّيْرَ ۚ سِيرُوا فِيهَا لِيَالِي وَأَيَّامًا آمِنِينَ فَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا بَاعِدْ بَيْنَ أَسْفَارِنَا وَظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ فَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أَحَادِيثَ وَمَزَقْنَاهُمْ كُلَّ مُمَزَقٍ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُورٍ

And We made between them and the towns which We had blessed (other) towns to be easily seen and between them We had appointed stages of journey in due proportion: 'Travel therein secure, by night and by day.' And they said: 'O our Lord! Place longer distances between our journeys'; and they were unjust to themselves, so We made them stories and We dispersed them all in scattered fragments. Verily in this there are signs for every patient, grateful one. (34: 18-19)

Ingratitude Causes The Destruction Of A Person's Life

Through these two verses the Qur'an returns again to the story of the people of Sheeba and explains their story in some more detailed explanation. It refers to their punishment bigger than before and in such a way that it can be an important and instructive lesson for everyone.

It implies that Allah made their land so cultivated that not only He caused their cities to become full of bounties but also He appointed between them and the cities that Allah had blessed some other manifest cities.

The verse says, ***"And We made between them and the towns which We had blessed (other) towns apparent..."*** In fact, between them and the blessed land there were some towns joined together like a chain, and the distances between these towns were so little that from each of them the other town could

be easily seen; and this is the meaning of the Qur'anic phrase: *qurr'an zahirah* (towns apparent).

Some of the commentators have rendered this phrase in another way. They say that it refers to the towns which were just manifestly alongside the way and passengers could comfortably stay in them. Or that these towns were upon some high places and they were apparent for the wayfarers to see.

As for the location of 'these blessed towns' which ever towns they may be, most commentators have rendered it as the towns of old Syria, since this meaning has been mentioned about this land in Surah al-Isra' (chapter 17), verse 1, and in Surah al-Anbiya' (chapter 21), verse 81. But some other commentators say that its area may be the towns of Sana'aa or Ma'arib – both of which were located in the region of Yemen. This commentary is more likely because the distance between Yemen, which is located in the most southern point of Arabia; and Shamat (Syria), which is located in the most northern point and had been covered with some dry and hot deserts, makes the first explanation of the verse seem very improbable.

Some commentators also believe that the blessed lands may be the land of Mecca, but this is improbable as well. This explanation was from the point of cultivation, but since cultivation only is not enough, and security is an important and basic condition, the verse adds, “...**and between them We had appointed stages of journey in due proportion...**” The verse continues and we read, “...**Travel therein secure, by night and by day.**”

Therefore, the towns had an appropriate distance, and from the point of the attack of wild and fearsome animals of the desert, or thieves and robbers, they were also in utmost security in a manner that people could travel between them without having any provision or any mount. They did not need to travel in groups and use some armed persons with them because of fear of insecurity on the way nor distress for a lack of water and food along the way.

Based on the phrase “**travel therein**” there are two probabilities: one of them is that it was conveyed to them by their prophet, and the other is that the mute tongue of that cultivated land and its secure and safe roads was a means of conveying the message to them.

Preceding the word *layali* before *ayyam* in the verse is for the sake of the importance of the existence of security at nights – both security from the point of thieves on the way, and also the wild animals of the desert.

Through the next verse, the holy Qur'an implies that these ingratitude of the people in the face of these great bounties, had thoroughly encompassed their whole living, like many other nations who lived in pleasure, but were involved in pride and negligence. This affluence of bounty and lack of want caused them to pave the way of ingratitude and they deviated from the path of truth and became heedless of the commands of Allah (SwT).

Among their demands was that they asked Allah (SwT) to appoint long distances between their journeys.

The verse announces, ***“And they said: ‘O our Lord! Place longer distances between our journeys’...”***

Their purpose of asking this strange supplication was that they wanted Allah (SwT) to set a distance between their cultivated towns and that there would be some dry deserts between them. This was because the rich did not want to let the poor members of the community travel like them freely, without any provision or mount.

Travelling was among their boasts, and it was a sign of power and wealth, and they desired that this privilege and superiority be registered for them mainly. Comfort and welfare had made them complacent, the same way that *manna* and *salwa* (two heavenly foods) had made the Children of Israel tired, discontent and they asked Allah (SwT) for onion, garlic, and lentils.

Some have also understood that the sentence, ***“Place longer distances between our journeys”*** may point to the fact they had become so pleasure-seeking that they were not ready to travel for the purpose of breeding livestock or merchandise and agriculture, and they asked Allah (SwT) that they would always remain at home and the time between their journeys would be increased. But the first commentary is more correct.

Next to this short sentence which is stated about their painful fate, the Qur’an implies that Allah (SwT) punished them so seriously that it became a matter of talk for others. The verse says, ***“...so We made them stories...”*** This means that from that furnished living and glorious vast civilization, there remained nothing but some news talked by others, and a remembrance in the minds, and some lines written on the pages of histories!

The verse continues saying, ***“...and We dispersed them all in scattered fragments...”*** This accords to what was mentioned in the beginning of this chapter than ancient Yemen remained as stories and poetry as lessons to be learned.

Their region and town became so ruined that they did not have the ability of living there and in order to continue their lives, they had to go towards different places in different groups.

Like leaves in the season of fall which are in a current of storms, every one of them was thrown to a different corner in a manner that their division became a ‘proverb,’ and whenever people wanted to say that a group was severely scattered, they used to say, “Like the people of Sheba and their bounties, they have been scattered.”

Some commentators said that the tribe of Qasan went to Syria, Asad went to Amman, the tribe of Khaza^{ah} went toward Tahamah, and the tribe of Anmar went to Yathrib. At the end of the verse, it says ***“...Verily in this there are signs for every patient, grateful one.”***

So how can the patient and grateful ones take lessons from these events? The holy Qur’an uses the

Arabic words: *sabbar* (patient) and *shakur* (thankful) both are in the Arabic amplification form which indicates a statement of repetition and emphasis. This is achieved by controlling insatiable desires by means of patience and perseverance, and by giving thanks which is best established by obeying Allah (SwT) and reflecting on how these verses apply to our lives in the contemporary contexts.

In regard to the subject on the story of Yemen, we find that in these verses, much of its history is appreciated, from the perspectives of its tribes, cultivations, attitudes, challenges and the reasons for its scatterings to various parts of Arabia. It is from here that new communities flourished and were also given great blessings, which we will now explore in the stories of the tribes of **Ad** and Thamud. [1](#)

The Tribes Of Ad And Thamud

Surah Al-Fajr (Chapter 89) – Verses 6–9

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِعَادٍ

Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with (the tribe of) Ad? (Surah al-Fajr, 89:6).

The term *tara* – ‘see’ here means ‘know or understand,’ but since the story of these sects were so clear and known to all, it seems that the people of the later generations had also been able to see them with their own eyes, or at least the remnants of them. In this verse of course the addressee is Prophet Muhammad (S) primarily, but the warning is for everyone. The people of Ad with their Prophet Hud (‘a), are as some historians believe, mentioned separately in two groups:

1. The first group lived in very ancient times and they are called in the Qur’an, ‘*ad-al-ula*, (the early generation of Ad) who probably used to live in prehistory and;
2. A remnant from the former group, also known by the name Ad, existed during recorded history, which may be about 700 B.C.; and they lived in Ahqaf, Yemen at the southern end of the Red Sea. These people were tall and strong in stature, and likewise they were considered excellent fighters. Moreover, they were very advanced in their material civilization, having lofty buildings in large cities with cultivated lands of verdant fields and luxuriant gardens.

Some others say that Ad is the name of an ancestor of the people, and a tribe was usually called by the name of its ancestor.

إِرَمَ ذَاتِ الْعِمَادِ

Of the (city of) Iram with lofty pillars. (Surah al-Fajr, 89:7).

Opinions are divided about the name 'Iram' as to whether it is the name of a person, a sect or a city.

In his book *al-Kashshaf*, Mahmud al-Zamakhshari cites from some others that ʿAd was a son of ʿAus (Uz), the son of Iram (A'ram), the son of Sham (Shem), the son of Prophet Nuh (Noah); and since the name of the ancestor of a tribe was used for the tribe, the ʿAd people were also called Iram. Others believe that Iram is the same as *'ad-al-ula* (the early generation of ʿAd) and that ʿAd is the second group of people. There are others who believe that Iram is the name of a city or the land where they lived, corresponding with the following verse. It is most likely that Iram is the name of their matchless city as per the apparent meaning of verse 8.

The term *'imad* means 'pillar' whose plural form is *'umood*. According to the first commentary it points to a strong pillar-like stature of the people of ʿAd; and taking the second commentary into consideration, it points to their great, lofty buildings with strong pillars – both of which illustrate the strength and the power of the people of ʿAd, but the second commentary, i.e., the great lofty pillars of their buildings is more appropriate.

That is why in the next verse, it says:

الَّتِي لَمْ يُخْلَقْ مِثْلُهَا فِي الْبِلَادِ

The like of which was not created among (other) cities? (Surah al-Fajr, 89:8).

The interpretation here shows that the meaning of Iram is 'a city' and does not mean a sect or tribe, and this may be why some great commentators have accepted that this is the correct commentary, and we have preferred it too.

Some of the commentators have told long stories about the recent excavated beautiful, supposed city of Iram in the deserts of Arabia, and the lands of Eden, speaking about its high, splendid buildings and its extraordinary jewellery. There is no doubt however that the people of ʿAd were the strongest and the most advanced people of their time and their cities were admired by others. As the Qur'an says, there was not any city like that among the other cities.

There are many stories told about Shaddad, who was a son of ʿAd and Shaddad's paradise. These stories are told by people and written in books so abundantly and frequently that 'his paradise' and 'the gardens of Iram' are used proverbially in the language, but they are all myths developed over time which have some roots in reality.

Then the Qur'an refers to the second group of transgressors of ancient times and says:

وَتَمُودَ الَّذِينَ جَابُوا الصَّخْرَ بِالْوَادِ

And the (people of) Thamud hewed out the (huge) rocks in the valley. (Surah al-Fajr, 89:9).

The Thamud were among the most ancient of people, and whose messenger and warner was Prophet Salih (‘a). They lived in a land between Medina and Damascus named *wadi-al-qurra* and had an advanced civilized life with comfortable houses and lofty buildings. Some have said that Thamud was the name of the father of a tribe, and so they took their name from him. It is probable that there was some relation between the tribes of Ad and Thamud.

The term *jaabu* is originally from *jaubah* which means ‘low land,’ so it is used with the sense of ‘to split, cleave, or cut out any piece of land.’ An answer is called *jawaab* because it cleaves the air when it comes out from the mouth of a speaker and reaches the ears of the listener, or because it carves out a question and puts an end to it. In any case, here it means cutting the rocks of the mountains and making safe and sound houses as Surah al-Hijr says about the people of Thamud,

“Out of the mountains did they hew (their) edifices, (considering themselves) secure.” (15:82)

Similar to this idea, it is also mentioned in Surah al-Shu’ara ***“And you hew houses out of the mountains exultingly,” (26: 149)***, but here the word *farihin* ‘exultingly’, is an evidence to show that they lived with pleasure and were making merry in those houses. Some have said that the Thamud were the first people who carved the rocks and produced firm houses inside the mountains for them to live in.

The term *wad*, which was originally *wadi*, means ‘river bed or flood route’ and sometimes it has been used with the meaning of ‘valley’ since the flood waters pass through valleys at the base of the mountains. Here the second meaning is more appropriate to explain the word, because it is understood about these people from the verses of the Qur’an and also from the above verse, which they used to build their houses in the mountain sides to make safer living quarters.

A tradition from Prophet Muhammad (S) says that on his way to the Northern part of Arabia, while riding on horseback for the battle of Tabuk, he reached the valley of Thamud and ordered the others to make haste, because they were in a cursed land.

Undoubtedly, the Thamud had an advanced civilization with grandiose cities in their time, but the descriptions written about them are exaggerated and mythical. For example, some commentators have written that they had 1,700 cities all made of stone.²

The Year Of The Elephant

Surah Al-Fil (Chapter 105)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِأَصْحَابِ الْفِيلِ أَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ كَيْدَهُمْ فِي تَضْلِيلٍ وَأَرْسَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ طَيْرًا أَبَابِيلَ تَرْمِيهِمْ بِحِجَارَةٍ مِنْ سِجِّيلٍ فَجَعَلَهُمْ كَعَصْفٍ مَأْكُولٍ

Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the companions of the elephant? Did He not make their stratagem go awry? And He sent upon them birds in flocks, Pelting them with stones of petrified clay, Thus He made them like straw eaten up. (105: 1-5)

This chapter refers to the well-known historical event that happened in the year of the birth of Prophet Muhammad (S) when Allah (SwT) protected the Ka'bah against the attack of the army of pagans who riding on the backs of elephants, came from Yemen intending to destroy it. This surah is therefore a recollection and eternalization of the miraculous event which many people of Mecca had lived through and remembered, by its inclusion in revelation. It also worked as a means of confirmation that the Arabs would receive verses of truth and pertinence to their lives.

The remembrance of this event was a warning against the proud and arrogant pagans to make them aware that they have no power to stand in the way of the power of Allah, Who destroyed that great army of elephants by little, tiny birds which pelted them with 'small stones of petrified clay' – thus He could punish those stubborn oppressors as well.

The pagans of Mecca's equipment and power was no more than that of Abrahah, the Yemeni commander, nor did the number of their fighters even match his army. In other words, they had seen that event with their own eyes, and yet were willfully arrogant toward Allah (SwT). The chapter came as a reminder that Allah (SwT) will always protect His religion and cannot be defeated.

Dhu Nuwas, the king of Yemen, persecuted the Christians of Najran who lived there in order to force them to leave their faith. The Qur'an has pointed out with the terms of *ashab-i-ukhdud* 'the makers of the pit of Fire' in Surah al-Buruj (85), verses 4-10.

After that terrible massacre against the Christians mentioned in that chapter, a man by the name of Dus was able to escape and went to seek refuge with the Caesar of Rome, who was Christian, and described to him the event. Since there was a long distance between Rome and Yemen, Caesar wrote a letter to Najashi, the king of Ethiopia, advising him to take revenge for the massacre and sent a letter by the man himself.

Najashi prepared an army of about 70,000 men and sent them to Yemen under the leadership of Irbat. Abrahah was also one of the commanders of that army. The army invaded Yemen and before long defeated Dhu Nuwas, and Irbat became the ruler of Yemen. But, after a short time, Abrahah rose against him and killed him, and thus substituted Irbat.

The news reached Najashi who decided to punish Abrahah. Abrahah shaved the hair of his head and with some soil of Yemen sent to Najashi as a sign of complete submission and loyalty. When Najashi understood the situation, he forgave him and retained him in his position.

Then to show his good behaviour and gratification, Abrahah built a great, beautiful, splendid church unsurpassed in the world at that time. After that he introduced it as the Ka'bah to the people of Arabia, instead of the real Ka'bah and decided to make it the centre for the Arab *Hajj* pilgrimage and to transfer the great central place of gatherings of Mecca to that place. For this purpose, he sent many preachers to different places among the Arab tribes in Arabia. But the Arabs who intensely loved Mecca and the Ka'bah and knew it as the greatest sign of Prophet Ibrahim ('a) the Khalil or 'Friend of Allah (SwT), felt endangered.

According to some narrations, a group of people secretly burned the church and according to other narrations some people desecrated it, and thus they showed their intense reaction against that vast invitation and discredited Abrahah's church.

Abrahah became very angry and decided to destroy the Ka'bah totally – both in order to take revenge, and to attract the Arabs to the new temple. He set out to invade Mecca with an army which consisted of soldiers and elephants.

Approaching the outskirts of Mecca, Abrahah's men captured 200 camels belonging to 'Abdul Muttalib ('a), the grandfather of Prophet Muhammad (S). Abrahah sent a man to Mecca to find the supreme chief of Mecca and tell him about his intentions to destroy the Holy Ka'bah, and inform the authorities that if they did not stand against him he would not kill anyone.

The man arrived in Mecca and looked for the chief of the city. Everyone showed 'Abdul Muttalib ('a) to him and he gave him the message. 'Abdul Muttalib ('a) said that they were not in a position to fight with them and the Ka'bah would be protected by Allah Himself.

The man told 'Abdul Muttalib ('a) that he should accompany him to see Abrahah. When 'Abdul Muttalib ('a) approached the military camp he was received respectfully, and Abrahah gave him an honourable seat near him and then he asked him about the purpose of his visit. 'Abdul Muttalib ('a) said that he had come to complain to Abrahah about the 200 camels that Abrahah's men had taken away and to request him to return his animals to him.

Abrahah was taken aback when 'Abdul Muttalib ('a) spoke like that. The conversation between the two is reported as follows: "What? I have come to destroy your place of worship the Ka'bah, and you, instead of pleading to save the Holy House, speak about your camels?!"

'Abdul Muttalib ('a) replied: "The camels belong to me, and I as the owner of the camels, have come for them. The Ka'bah belongs to Allah and it is the concern of the Owner of the Ka'bah to save it or to leave it to its fate in your hands." This statement shook Abrahah and he ordered that the camels be

returned to ﷺ Abdul Muttalib (‘a).

ﷺ Abdul Muttalib (‘a) returned to Mecca and advised the citizens to take refuge in the mountains around the city so as to be safe from being hurt by the invaders, and he himself, with a group of men went beside the Ka‘bah to pray to Allah and ask for help saying:

“O Lord! I have no hope [to be protected from them], except from You. O Lord! Withdraw You therefore Your protection from them. O Lord! Verily he who is the enemy of this House is Your enemy. Verily, they have not defeated Your forces.”

Then ﷺ Abdul Muttalib (‘a) went to the valleys around Mecca with a group of the Quraish and sent one of his sons over Abu-Qubays mountain to see what was happening. He returned and said that he had seen a black cloud coming from the Red Sea. ﷺ Abdul Muttalib (‘a) became happy with that news and said: “O citizens of Quraish! Return to your houses because Allah has sent you His help.”

This was the scene on one side. On the other side, when Abrahah while riding on his elephant by the name of Mahmood intended to destroy the Ka‘bah entered the city, a huge flock of tiny birds like a cloud, appeared in the sky; each bird with three small stones – as small as a pea, carrying one in its tiny beak and two in its claws. They dropped them on the invading soldiers and they were killed at once.

Abrahah tried to go forth on elephant-back, but the animal did not move until it turned its head and moved swiftly towards Yemen, and there Abrahah too died in San‘a, the capital of Yemen.³

In these Qur’anic stories – the People of Sheeba, the tribes of ﷺ Ad and Thamud, and the story of the Year of the Elephant, the land of Yemen has been mentioned. Given its inclusion in the Qur’an, its role in pre-Islamic history, and the effect of it on the early Muslim community, there can be no doubt as to the importance and spiritual value of the land and people of Yemen.

It is also instructive that Allah (SwT) speaks about their people often in negative ways, the people destroyed there who ignored Divine blessings. Yet in the coming chapter, reviewing the people of Yemen and their interaction with Prophet Muhammad (S) and his praise of them means that he (S) left them while in a state of pleasure and appreciation of them. This means they learnt well from their own history and are an evidence of people who truly adopted the Qur’anic messages.

In the forthcoming chapter, we will address the tribes that sent delegations to the Prophet (S) and his sending emissaries to the people of Yemen. Their conversions took place on one day, and thereafter produced some of the most important companions in the history of Islam.

[The Quraysh Known For Travel To Yemen](#)

Surah Al-Quraysh, Verses 1-4

Surah al-Quraysh, Verses 1-4

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

لِإِیْلَافِ قُرَیْشٍ إِیْلَافِهِمْ رِحْلَةَ الشِّتَاءِ وَالصَّیْفِ فَلِیَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ هَذَا الْبَیْتِ الَّذِیْ أَطْعَمَهُمْ مِنْ جُوعٍ وَأَمَّنَّهُمْ مِنْ خَوْفٍ

For stabilizing and unifying the Quraysh, (We maintain for them) their trading caravans by winter and summer, So let them worship the Lord of this House (Ka'bah), Who fed them against hunger and secured them from fear. (106: 1-4)

In the previous chapter (al-Fil) the story of the destruction of the possessors of the elephant and Abrahah's army, who came to Mecca intending to destroy the Ka'bah was related.

The first verse of this chapter joins the last verse of the previous and is a supplement to it – For stabilizing and unifying the Quraysh.

The term '*ilaf*' is an infinitive which means 'uniting together', and the term '*ulfat*' means 'a gathering with intimacy and union'. The purpose of using it is for the familiarity and union amongst the Quraysh who, together with all the citizens of Mecca, had settled there was due to the honour, importance and security of the holy Ka'bah. If the army of Abrahah were successful in destroying the Ka'bah, no other people would become familiar with the region.

The next verse reads: ***(We maintain for them) their trading caravans by winter and summer.***

The purpose of the unifying the Quraysh may have been due to their love for their sacred land. The political and economical importance of the holy Ka'bah kept them secure from the invasions of the hostile tribes and helped them monopolize the trade of the area owing to the annual *Hajj* pilgrimages.

In the summer, they used to go to Syria which had moderate weather and in winter to Yemen where they enjoyed a warm climate, for the purposes of trade, and it was by Allah's grace that they travelled safe and undisturbed on their journeys, otherwise, the routes were not safe and none could travel without being plundered and suffering death and destruction or suffering heavy losses. This was a manifest blessing upon them.

But, the same tribe, the Quraysh, whose protection, safety and honour was due to the Holy Ka'bah being in their city and they being its guardians, later became the prime enemies of Islam.

The next verse states, So let them worship the Lord of this House (Ka'bah) and the chapter ends by the statement, Who fed them against hunger and secured them from fear.

When the Quraysh had been granted such great blessings of security, trade and honour, they should have gratefully worshipped the Lord of the Ka'bah, who, in spite of their land being only a desert and thus unproductive, provided them with every kind of good and provision.

This was an open admonition to the Quraysh who, at the start of the ministry of the Prophet (S), had been the most persistent of enemies. It was also a warning that Allah, the One who protected them from Abrahah, could just as easily destroy them or turn their state to hunger and fear.

The Great Event Of Mubahila

Two years after Prophet Muhammad (S) first made official contact with the Yemeni tribes, a momentous event known as Mubahila⁵ took place in the 10th Year of hijrah. So important was it to the history of Islam that Allah eternalised it in the Qur'an in Surah Al 'Imran, verses 55 to 64. For the sake of brevity, only those verses specific to Yemen will be mentioned, elaborating on the event itself.

إِنَّ مَثَلَ عِيسَىٰ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ آدَمَ خَلَقَهُ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهُ كُن فَيَكُونُ

The likeness of Jesus, with Allah, is as the likeness of Adam. He created him from dust then He said to him 'BE! 'And he 'was'. (Surah 'Ali- Imran, 3:59).

A group of Christian's entered Medina and went to meet the Prophet (S). They stated that the birth of Jesus, without having a father, was a sign of, and an evidence for his divinity.

Then the verse was revealed and answered them such that if the fatherless creation is the evidence for Christ's divinity or being the 'Son' of Allah, the creation of Adam is something more important than that because Adam had neither father nor mother. So, why then do you not consider Adam the Lord or Son of the Lord or greater than Jesus?

أَلْحَقٌ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُن مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

(This about Jesus is) the truth from your Lord, therefore be not you of the doubters. (Surah 'Ali- Imran, 3:60).

The Arabic term *mumtarin* is derived from *miryah* which means 'doubt' or 'suspicion'. It is an expression similar to the words in Surah al-Baqarah (2) verse 147, which also speaks about people of the scriptures knowing the truth about the Prophet Muhammad (S), but allowing their whims to cause doubt in their true knowledge.

فَمَنْ حَاجَّكَ فِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ فَقُلْ تَعَالَوْا نَدْعُ أَبْنَاءَنَا وَأَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَنِسَاءَنَا وَنِسَاءَكُمْ وَأَنْفُسَنَا وَأَنْفُسَكُمْ ثُمَّ نَبْتَهِلْ فَنَجْعَل لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكَاذِبِينَ

And whoever dispute with you concerning him, after what has come to you of knowledge, say: 'Come! Let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, and our selves and your selves, then let us invoke in earnest and lay the curse of Allah upon the liars. (Surah 'Ali- Imran, 3:61).

The verse, owing to its containing the term *nabtahel* has come to be known in Islamic literature as the verse of *mubahilah* translated as 'imprecation' or 'mutual curse'. The Arabic term *mubahilah* means to leave the personal tendencies and invoke God's curse onto the one who is not truthful.

In the tenth year, some Muslims were commissioned to go to Najran, a region in Yemen, to preach Islam. The Christian inhabitants of Najran set out a religious mission from their side to attend Medina and discuss with the Prophet (S).

After some debates and disputes between them and the Prophet (S), they felt hesitation and sought for pretexts. Then, this verse was revealed inviting them to a malediction to see which of the two parties were truthful and which would be cursed by God. They asked the Prophet of Islam (S) for respite to contemplate and consult over the subject, eventually agreeing.

On the day set for the imprecation, they saw that the Prophet (S) approached the appointed spot followed by two boys, a young man and a lady. Those two boys were Imams Hasan and Husayn, the Prophet's grandchildren, the young man was Imam Ali, and the lady was Fatimah, the Prophet's daughter.

When the Chief Monk saw them, he exclaimed: "By God! I see the faces that, if they pray to God for mountains to move from their places, the mountains will immediately move." He then stated: "If they curse you, you will be wiped out of existence to the last day of the life of the earth."

The Christians asked Muhammad (S) to give up the idea of the agreed *mubahilah* and they announced they were ready for compromise. They offered to pay two thousand suits – each of which cost, more or less, at forty dirhams every year. At this place, there has been built a mosque by the name of Masjid al-Ijabah which is about two kilometers from the tomb of the Prophet (S) in Masjid al-Nabi.

The event denotes a great victory for Islam and acted as an evidence of the religion and those who were selected to represent the religion by the Prophet Muhammad (S).

1. An Enlightening Commentary of the Qur'an, vol. 15, section 2 at:

<https://www.al-islam.org/enlightening-commentary-light-holy-quran-vol-15...> [18] (Last accessed on May 15, 2018).

2. An Enlightening Commentary of the Qur'an at

<https://www.al-islam.org/enlightening-commentary-light-holy-quran-vol-20...> [19] (Last accessed on May 15, 2018).

3. An Enlightening Commentary of the Qur'an at

<https://www.al-islam.org/enlightening-commentary-light-holy-quran-vol-20...> [20] (Last accessed on February 2, 2018).

4. An Enlightening Commentary of the Qur'an at

<https://www.al-islam.org/enlightening-commentary-light-holy-quran-vol-20...> [21]

5. An Enlightening Commentary of the Qur'an at

<https://www.al-islam.org/enlightening-commentary-light-holy-quran-vol-3/...> [22]

Chapter 2: The Conversion Of Yemen To Islam

Introduction

As observed above, Yemen has for millennia, been the site of prophetic missions and universal lessons. In keeping with the Arab tradition of poetry and storytelling, these remained as a pride and cultural bedrock of the tribes – both among themselves and when they travelled or were visited.

The generations immediately prior to the advent of Islam have a great history with regards to Yemen, such that much of the Hijazan-based Islam was built off of the movement of Yemeni tribes to Mecca and Medina.

It is narrated that the people of Yemen were the first to respond to the call of attending *Hajj* by Prophet Ibrahim (‘a) after he and Prophet Isma‘il (‘a) built the holy Ka‘bah. The narration says that Prophet Ibrahim (‘a) himself said,

“O people, I am Ibrahim, Khalilullah (the intimate friend of Allah). Verily Allah has commanded you to make the pilgrimage of *Hajj* to this House, so make your *Hajj* to it and those who perform the *Hajj* respond to him until the Day of Judgement; and those who were the first to respond were the people of Yemen.”¹

This means that the awareness and popularity of Mecca as the hosts of the House of God, the holy Ka‘bah, was established through the Yemeni pilgrims. Their subsequent travels across Arabia and in welcoming visitors from the peninsula in turn developed Mecca into the thriving city that it became by virtue of their narrating the story of Prophet Ibrahim (‘a) and encouraging pilgrimage to Mecca.

Medina too, especially the Jewish heritage that it boasted, was a result of the migration of the Yemeni tribes. Banu Aws and Khazraj were originally of Yemeni descent, specifically Qahtani², the descendants of Prophet Isma‘il (‘a)³. It was these two great tribes that invited Prophet Muhammad (S) to live in Medina and be the foundation of the Muslim-Medinan society. It appears that these characteristics were particular to the Yemeni tribes and of benefit to the prophetic mission, no matter which land their ancestral tribes inhabited; the Prophet (S) saw goodness in his mission to them.

The people of Yemen were of such religious and welcoming nature that the Prophet (S) himself stated that had he not migrated to Medina, he would have likely moved to Yemen instead to be the centrality of his movement of spreading the Oneness of Allah (SwT). It is narrated that he said, “Had it not been for the migration (to Medina), I would have been one from the people of Yemen!”⁴

The warmth that the Prophet (S) had for the people of Yemen was evident for all to see. Whether it was tribes from that region or of descent, or living in different areas of Arabia, or whatever religion they were practising, the Prophet (S) seemed to praise their heritage and efforts. Ibn ʿAbbas states that groups of visitors still following ancient prophets would visit the holy Prophet Muhammad (S). He narrates that when people would come from Yemen, the Prophet (S) would say, “Welcome to the group of Prophet Shuʿayb and Rabbis of Prophet Musa!”⁵ Another time the Prophet (S) was narrated to have welcomed a delegation saying, “A soft-hearted community, their hearts firmly established with their faith.”⁶

This appreciation of Yemeni tribes encouraged visitations to the Prophet (S), and also his dispatch of delegations to them. In this chapter we will review the story of the conversion of Yemen to Islam. Arguably it is not only one of the most profound stories in the history of Islam, but it is undoubtedly one of the events that has most impacted the shaping of Islam until today. Despite this, many Muslims are vastly unaware of the conversion story of Yemen or the role that it played on the collective psyche of the Muslim community in the final months of the life of Prophet Muhammad (S). This is because upon its conversion at the hands of ʿAli ibn Abi Talib (ʿa), it caused a number of companions who harboured enmity against him to use the conversion of Yemen to spread rumours about his **supposed** unethical behaviour. This is something we shall observe in the chapter and the way that it has shaped the reading of the event of Ghadir Khumm when the Prophet (S) announced his relationship to ʿAli ibn Abi Talib (ʿa).

Yemen’s many tribes were brought to Islam on one day – and what followed was a great service to Islam and inclusion in its history. Their conversion revealed an unmatched appreciation of Yemen from the Prophet (S) who said, “The best of men are the people of Yemen. Faith is Yemeni and I am Yemeni. Many of the tribes who will enter paradise on the Day of Judgement will be the Mad’hiji and Hadhra Mawti tribes (two of the tribes from Yemen).”⁷

This chapter will also review what transpired in Yemen after its conversion looking at its governance, the great companions that it produced, and some of their achievements and contributions to Islam. It will also look at how some of the tribes continued to interact with ʿAli ibn Abi Talib (ʿa) during his caliphate. Therefore, this chapter is the main theme of this book and should elicit the most attention from the reader as to the role of Yemen in early Islamic history.

It will become clear to the respected reader that when we combine the pre-Islamic role of Yemen in Islam, the love the Prophet (S) had for Yemen, and the regions’ contribution to Islam, that when we see such tragedy unfolding in Yemen today, our duty to serve the humanitarian needs of the Yemeni people become all the more necessary and crucial.

Imam ؑAli's ('A) Description Of Arabia Before Islam

At that time people had fallen into vices whereby the rope of religion had been broken, the pillars of belief had been shaken, principles had been sacrilege, the system had become topsy turvy, openings were narrow, passage was dark, guidance was unknown, and darkness prevailed. Allah was being disobeyed, Satan was given support, and belief had been forsaken. As a result, the pillars of religion fell down, its traces could not be discerned, its passages had been destroyed and its streets had fallen into decay. People obeyed Satan and treaded his paths. They sought water from his watering places. Through them Satan's emblems got flying and his standard was raised in vices which trampled the people under their hoofs, and treaded upon them with their feet. The vices stood on their toes (in full stature) and the people immersed in them were strayed, perplexed, ignorant and seduced, as though in a good house with bad neighbours. Instead of sleep they had wakefulness, and instead of antimony they had tears in their eyes. They were in a land where the learned were in bridle (keeping their mouths shut), while the ignorant were honoured.”⁸

The Story Of Tubba' – The King Of Arabia

Hundreds of years prior to the advent of Prophet Muhammad (S) there lived a man by the name of Tubba' who was a great leader or de facto ruler across much of Arabia, including Yemen. Earlier it was mentioned that the tribes of Aws and Khazraj, who invited and welcomed the Prophet (S) to Medina and would be known as the Ansaar, or the great helpers of Islam, were of Yemeni descent. In this section we will investigate this further by understanding why they migrated from Yemen.

Initially Tubba' had sought to destroy the Ka'bah. It was upon his approach that he learned from a Rabbinic scholar that Mecca was the place of the coming of Prophet Muhammad (S), and his mission to migrate to the city of Medina and establish Islam. We will see that the prophecy of the coming of the Prophet (S) inspired Tubba' so greatly, that he commissioned the Aws and Khazraj to move to Medina and await the Prophet (S) so that this would be his contribution to Islam.

It has been narrated from Ibn al-Walid from al-Saffar from Ibn 'Eisa from al-Hasan son of ؑAli from ؑAmr ibn Aban with the chain going up to Tubba', that he said the following poem during his travels:

Until came to me from Quraydha a Rabbinic scholar;

(I said) I swear by your existence in the Jewish community, certainly he is assisted (by Allah).

He said (to me): Go away, be gone from the forbidden city which belongs to the Prophet of Mecca from the tribe of Quraysh, the guided one;

I forgave him without scolding him; I left him to be punished on the Day that is Eternal.

I left my right to punish him leaving it to God on the Day of Judgement, when the fire shall be stoked;

I left for the Prophet from my people a few high standing, noble elites, those who are praised.

A people, their victory will be in their descent, hoping I may gain the rewards of the Lord of Muhammad;

I did not expect there was a pure House of the Lord, present in Mecca that God is worshiped in. They said: In Mecca you would find a House of wealth that is in ruin, the treasures inside are from pearls and aquamarine; I came on a mission, but the Lord stopped me from accomplishing it. Certainly Allah is the One who pushes away people from ruining the Grand Mosque. So I left what I hoped to accomplish as an example to the people that will see.

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a) said, "The report would come out of this Mecca, a prophet, who would migrate to Yathrib (Medina) so he (Tubba) chose people from Yemen to reside with the Jews so they may be able to aid the Prophet (S) when he came."

Tubba (continues in his poetry):

I testify that Ahmad is the Prophet of Allah, the Creator of souls,
So if my life was extended to see the Prophet, I would be a minister to him and a cousin (support him).
And I would be a torment to the polytheists, feeding them a cup of death and sorrow.

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a) stated, "Tubba said to Aws and Khazraj, 'Stay here until this Prophet comes. As for me, if I would have lived until his time, I would have served him and went on the mission with him.'"⁹

[A Delegation From Yemen Visits Prophet Muhammad \(S\)](#)

Al-Waqidi states that a delegation from Yemen consisting of 13 men came to visit Prophet Muhammad (S) in the 9th year after the migration (hijrah). The Prophet (S) honoured and welcomed them with gifts greater than he would normally bestow upon other delegations. A youth was among them, and the Messenger of Allah (S) asked him what gift he would like. He replied, "O Messenger of Allah, pray to Allah to forgive me, to have mercy upon me, and to place my wealth in my heart." The Messenger of Allah responded, "O Allah, forgive him, have mercy upon him, and place his wealth in his heart." After that he became one of the most pious and ascetic man.¹⁰

[The Group From Hadhr Mawt Visit Prophet Muhammad \(S\)](#)

It has been narrated by Ibn 'Abbas that, "People from Hadhr Mawt including the tribes of Waliat Hamza, Muharrish, Mashrah and Absa'ah, and a sister tribe among them visited the Prophet (S). Among them was al-As'ab ibn Qays, who was the youngest among.

They said to him (S), "It is not possible to curse you, but the curse will not reach you?"

The Prophet (S) replied, "I am not a king. I am Muhammad, the son of 'Abdullah!"

They responded, "Did you give yourself this name?"

He replied, “No Allah gave me this name; and I am Abul Qasim.”

Wanting to test his Prophethood they said, “O Abul Qasim, we have hidden from you something, what is it?” Ibn ʿAbbas says that they had hidden a locust in a pottery of ghee.

The Prophet (S) responded, “Glory be to Allah, this is something you do to a soothsayer; and the whole system of soothsaying and the soothsayer is destined for hell!”

So the group asked, “O Prophet! How do we know that you are the Prophet?”

So the Prophet (S) took a handful of rocks and said this will attest Prophethood to me. The rocks began to praise him while in his hand saying, ‘We testify that you are the Messenger of Allah.’ The Prophet (S) continued, “Allah sent me with the truth and revealed upon me a book which falsehood cannot come near, from in front nor behind. It is a revelation from the Wise and Worthy of all Praise. It is weightier in scale than a huge mountain and in the darkest night it has the light of a shooting star.”

The delegation asked, “Let us hear it!” So the Prophet (S) read the following verses:

(I swear) by those [angels] lined up in rows. And those who drive the clouds. And those who recite the Remembrance (Qur'an). Indeed your God is One. Lord of the heavens and the earth and that which is between them and the Lord of the sunrises. (Surah al-Saffat, 37: 1-5).

The Prophet (S) then paused. He changed from an agitated state to a state of calm and did not move at all. Then he began to cry such that tears fell on his beard.

The group asked, “We see you crying; are you afraid of the one who sent you?”

He replied, “It is not fear, it is sincerity and awe that made me cry. He has sent me on the Right Path like the tip of a blade; if I was to stray, I would be doomed.”

Then he read:

And if We willed, We could surely do away with that which We revealed to you. Then you would not find for yourself concerning it an advocate against Us. (Surah al-Isra', 17:86).

The Deputation Of Imam ʿAli (‘A) By Prophet Muhammad (S) To The People Of Yemen

The historian and scholar of hadith, Sheikh Al-Mufid states, “It is agreed upon by all of the historians (biographers of Prophet Muhammad (S) known as Ahl al-Sirah) that the Prophet (S) sent Khalid b. Walid to the people of Yemen to call them to Islam. With him, he sent a group of Muslims, among whom was al-Bara’ b. ʿAzib, may Allah have mercy on him. Khalid stayed with the people for six months calling them (to Islam), but not one of them responded. That aggrieved the Apostle of Allah (S)[11](#). This was in

the 8th year after hijrah.

He summoned the Commander of the Faithful (ﷺ Ali ibn Abi Talib) (‘a) and ordered him to bring back Khalid and those who were with him. However, he told him that if anyone of those who had been with Khalid wanted to stay, then he should let him.

Al-Bara’ ibn ﷺ Azib reported, “The Prophet (S) sent Khalid ibn Walid to Yemen in order to invite their people to the faith. I was one of the people sent with him. He stayed there for six months, but no one paid any heed to him.”[12](#)

Mufti Jaﻓﺎr Husayn says, “When the Yemenis learned that Khalid ibn Walid was going and ﷺ Ali was replacing him, they were keenly interested and gathered at one place. After the morning prayers ﷺ Ali went to them and read the letter that the Prophet had sent for the people of Yemen. Then he delivered a sermon on the virtues of Islam. The talk was so effective that the people, who did not respond even after six months of Khalid’s efforts, all embraced Islam.”[13](#)

Al-Bara’ b. ﷺ Azib continues, “I was one of those who followed him. When we came to the first people among the Yemenis and the news reached the people (generally), they gathered before him. ﷺ Ali ibn Abi Talib (‘a) prayed the dawn prayer with us, then he advanced in front of us. He praised and glorified Allah. Then he read the letter of the Apostle of Allah. The whole of Hamdan became Muslim in one day. The Commander of the Faithful (‘a) wrote about that to the Apostle of Allah (S). When he read his letter, he was pleased and delighted. He prostrated in thanks to Allah, the Exalted. He raised his head and sat. He said: “Greetings to Hamdan. After the submission to Islam of Hamdan, (the rest of) the people of Yemen will follow (them) into Islam.”

Al-Mufid continues, “This is an achievement of the Commander of the Faithful (‘a) which none of the other companions had done anything like or similar to. He (ﷺ Ali) was (an important element) in the building of the religion, and the strength of the faith in (explaining) the message of the Prophet (S).”[14](#)

The Judgements Of ﷺ Ali Ibn Abi Talib (‘A) In Yemen

Mufti Jaﻓﺎr Husayn writes, “Although the people of Yemen had embraced Islam with one sermon of Imam ﷺ Ali (‘a), they were still not fully conversant with the tenets of the faith. Therefore it was necessary to give them instructions on the legitimate and the prohibited from the Islamic viewpoint. They were also to be told about the mandatory, the optional and the other pillars of Islam. They needed to get their disputes settled according to the laws of the faith. For taking care of all of these things, the Prophet (S) deputed ﷺ Ali (‘a) again to go to Yemen.”[15](#)

Al-Mufid continues, “Among those reports which have been handed down about his [Imam ﷺ Ali’s (‘a)] legal decisions while the Prophet (S) was still alive and present, is the following:

When the Apostle of Allah (S) wanted to invest him with the office of judge in Yemen and to send him to

them so that he might teach them the laws, explain to them what was permitted and forbidden, and judge for them according to the laws of the Qur'an, the Commander of the Faithful ('a) asked him: 'O Apostle of Allah, you are inviting me to (undertake) the office of judge while I am still a young man without knowledge of all (the matters of) judgement?'

'Come near to me,' the Prophet (S) told him. He went nearer and he struck him in the chest with his hand and said: 'O Allah, guide his heart and strengthen his tongue.'

The Commander of the Faithful ('a) reported: 'I never doubted in my ability to judge between two men after that occurrence.'

In another narration it is mentioned that Imam ؑAli ('a) said: "When the Prophet ؑ dispatched me to Yemen, he said, 'Whenever you are faced with a case to judge, do not make a ruling before you hear what the other side has to say in one's own defence.' From then on, I never had any doubts about my judgements."¹⁶

When the administrative house (*dar*) in Yemen was occupied by him and he began to take care of the office of judging and giving decisions among the Muslims, which the Apostle of Allah (S) had entrusted to him, two men were brought before him. Between them was a maidservant who both of them had equal rights of possession over as a slave. They had both been ignorant about the prohibition of having intercourse with her, and had intercourse with her in the same month of her menstrual cycle. (They had done this) in the belief that this was permissible, because of their recent acceptance of Islam and their lack of knowledge about the laws which were in the law of Islam (*shari'a*). The maidservant had become pregnant and given birth to a boy; and they both were in dispute as to (who was the father).

He drew lots with their names on it for the boy. The lot fell upon one of them. He assigned the boy to him, but required him to pay half of his value as if he had been a slave of his partner. He said, "If I knew that you had both embarked on what you have done after the proof had been given to you of it being prohibited, I would have exerted (every effort) to punish you both."

The Apostle of Allah (S) learned about this case. He accepted it and acknowledged the judgement on them within Islam. He said: "Praise be to Allah Who has created among us, the family (Ahlul Bayt), one who can judge according to the practice and method of Dawud in judging." In that he was referring to judgement according to inspiration (*ilham*) which would have been taken in the sense of revelation (*wahy*) and the sending down of a text for it if there had been any explanation of such (an occurrence ever having taken place).

Among the cases brought before Imam ؑAli ('a) while he was in Yemen, is the report of (the case in which) a pit was dug for a lion. It fell into it and the people gathered around to look at it. One man was standing on the edge of the pit. His foot slipped and he hung on to another man. That man hung on to a third, and the third to a fourth. They all fell into the pit and were all killed. Imam ؑAli ('a) gave the judgement that the first was the prey of the lion and he (and his family) were responsible for the payment

of a third of the blood-price for the second. Similarly the second (and his family) were responsible for the payment of a third of the blood-price for the third, and the third (and his family) were responsible for the payment of a third of the blood-price for the fourth.

The report of that reached the Apostle of Allah (S), who said, “Abu al-Hasan has given judgement in their regard with the judgement of Allah, the Mighty and High above (on) His throne.”

Then there was brought before him (the case in which) it is reported that a girl was carrying (another) girl on her shoulder in a game. Another girl came along and pinched the girl who was carrying (the other one). She jumped because of being pinched. The girl who was being carried fell and broke her neck and died. Imam ʿAli (‘a) judged that the girl who did the pinching was responsible for a third of the blood-price, the girl who jumped was responsible for (another) third of it, and the remaining third was inoperative because the riding of the girl who broke her neck, on the girl who jumped was in fun.

The report of that reached the Apostle of Allah (S) and he accepted it and testified to the correctness of it.

Imam ʿAli (‘a) gave judgement on (a case where) a wall had fallen on some people and killed them. Among them was a slave-woman and a free woman. The free woman had a small child, born of a free man; and the slave-woman had a small child, born of a slave. The free child could not be distinguished from the slave child.

Imam ʿAli (‘a) drew lots between them and he adjudged freedom as belonging to the one of them for whom the lot for freedom was drawn, and he adjudged slavery for the one for whom the lot for slavery was drawn. Then he freed (the slave child) and made him a retainer (of the free child). In this way he also decided about their inheritance with the decision going in accordance with (the norm for) the free one and his retainer.

The Apostle of Allah (S) accepted his judgement in this decision and declared its correctness through his acceptance of it, as we have mentioned and described. [17](#)

The Conversion Of Yemen As Praised In The Qur’an

In the Qur’an in Surah an-Nasr (110), verses 1–3, we read the following:

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

In The Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

إِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُ اللّٰهِ وَالْفَتْحُ وَرَأَيْتَ النَّاسَ يَدْخُلُونَ فِي دِينِ اللّٰهِ أَفْوَاجًا فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَاسْتَغْفِرْهُ ۗ إِنَّهُ كَانَ تَوَّابًا

When there comes the help of Allah and the victory; And you see people entering Allah's religion in multitudes; Then celebrate the praise of your Lord, and seek His forgiveness, (for) surely He is Oft-returning (to mercy). (110: 1-3).

In this chapter, the words are first about the help of Allah, then the victory, then the influence and spread of Islam, and finally the entering of people in groups, into the religion of Allah (SwT). All of them are causes and effects of one another.

Victory is absent unless there is the help from Allah (SwT), and people do not enter Islam in multitudes unless there is triumph and victory in order to remove the barriers and hindrances from the way. Of course, along with these stages, each of which is a great Divine blessing, the stage of being thankful and praising Allah (SwT) comes forth.

On the other hand, the help of Allah (SwT), and the victory are all for the final goal, i.e., people entering Allah's (SwT) religion in multitudes, and guidance for everyone. [18](#)

Regarding the second verse and those entering into Islam in great numbers it is said in the books on the commentary of the Qur'an, "What is meant by 'people' here is specifically the people of Yemen. When the verse was revealed, the Prophet (S) said, 'Glory be to Allah! The help of Allah has come and the victory, and the people of Yemen have come. (They are) a people of gentle hearts. Faith is Yemeni (meaning faith belongs to the people of Yemen). Understanding is Yemeni (meaning knowledge belongs to the people of Yemen); and wisdom is Yemeni (meaning wisdom is Yemeni in its nature)." He (S) then said, "I see the relief of your Lord coming from the direction of Yemen." [19](#)

The Effect Of Imam ؑAli's ('A) Converting The People Of Yemen Upon Some Muslims, And Its Relation To The Event Of Ghadir Khumm

The 9th and 10th years after the migration were particularly eventful for ؑAli ibn Abi Talib ('a) in relation to how Prophet Muhammad (S) treated him and afforded him particular responsibilities. Some of these responsibilities were delegated to him by virtue of his position within the Ahlul Bayt ('a), and some of them were due to his particular characteristics; but in either case, his being given certain tasks and his ability to accomplish them when others could not had its effects upon some of the companions.

For example, when Surah al-Tawbah, the ninth chapter of the Qur'an, also known as Surah al-Bara'a was revealed, the Prophet (S) dispatched Abu Bakr to read out the chapter to the people of Mecca and oversee the declarations of the Prophet (S) regarding the upcoming *Hajj*. After Abu Bakr's departure, the Arch Angel Jibra'il ('a) descended and told the Prophet (S) that Allah (SwT) has commanded that: "Only a man from your own family can transmit the Qur'an."

These effects were to carry on for a number of years – firstly manifesting itself during the farewell *Hajj* where some companions either made false claims against Imam ʿAli (‘a) or complained to the Prophet (S) against him. Their goal was to create a discord between the Prophet (S) and Imam ʿAli (‘a), and between the companions and Imam ʿAli (‘a). It appears that so many rumours against Imam ʿAli’s (‘a) conduct were being circulated in the farewell *Hajj* that the Prophet (S) was forced to address them and even reprimand certain companions.

It appears that this series of events played a large role in the Sunni understanding of the events of Ghadir, and particularly the statement of the Prophet (S): “Whosoever master I am, this ʿAli is his master too.” That is because the word “master” or “*mawla*” in the Arabic is the source of dispute between the Sunni and Shiʿa. While no historian or scholar denies that the Prophet (S) said this statement in front of 100,000 companions in his last meeting before his demise, scholars differ on the interpretation of the word “*mawla*”. While the Shiʿa community believe it to mean “master” as in superior authority or leadership, the Sunni community believe it to mean “friendship” making the translation, “Whosoever I am a friend to, this ʿAli is his friend too.”

The reason why the Sunni scholarship traditionally argued as such may have been owing to these events of the 9th and 10th years in which the merits and accomplishments of ʿAli ibn Abi Talib (‘a) were so great, and it caused a rift and jealousy of certain other companions. Thus the response is, the event of Ghadir was the Prophet’s (S) response to the collective people, and his need to advocate on behalf of ʿAli ibn Abi Talib (‘a) to adjure the companions’ friendship of him.

In this section we will look at some of the narrations that describe this series of events. We will see how the jealousy of certain companions for Imam ʿAli (‘a) started with the delegation to bring Yemen to Islam, the subsequent collections of taxes and the arrival to *Hajj*. The purpose of this is not to debate the theological differences or advocate for either the Sunni or Shiʿa causes, but rather to demonstrate the importance of the history of Yemen and its events in Islamic history.

1) Bukhari narrates from his chain reaching to ʿAbdullah ibn Burayda from his father who said, “The Messenger of Allah (S) sent ʿAli to Khalid ibn al-Walid to collect the *khums* (the one-fifth tax payment). I hated ʿAli. The next morning ʿAli took a bath (implying the ghusl or ceremonial bath on account of having intercourse with a slave-girl included in the *khums* taxes). I asked Khalid, ‘Won’t you just look at this?!’”

“When we returned to the Prophet (S), I related the situation to him and he asked, ‘Burayda, do you really hate ʿAli?’ ‘Yes I do’ I replied. The Prophet (S) responded, ‘Do not hate him, he deserves more than that from the *khums*.’”

2) Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal states that Yahya ibn Saʿid related to him quoting ʿAbd al-Jalil who said, “I was in a circle of people that included Abu Mijlaz and Burayda’s two sons. ʿAbdullah ibn Burayda said, ‘My father Burayda related to me the following, ‘I used to hate ʿAli more strongly than I ever hated

anyone else; and there was one man from the Quraysh whom I liked only because of his hatred for ﷺ. That man was sent out with the cavalry and I went with him, solely because of his hatred for ﷺ. We took some prisoners.’ He then wrote to the Messenger of Allah (S) saying, ‘Send someone to us who will divide the booty (*khums*), and he dispatched ﷺ to us.’ Among the best of the captives was a black slave-girl. ﷺ took the booty (*khums*), divided it up and then came out. When he did so his head was wet (meaning that he had taken a ghusl). I asked, ‘O ﷺ, what is this?’ He replied, ‘Did you not see that slave-girl included in the captives? I made the division and she became part of the *khums*. Then she became part of the household of the Prophet (S), and so one of ﷺ’s family. So I had intercourse with her.’

That man (the unnamed man from Burayda’s party that hated ﷺ) then sent a message to the Messenger of Allah (S) so I said, ‘Dispatch me with it’ and so he did. When in the presence of the Prophet (S) I began to read out the message testifying that it was true. The Prophet (S) then took hold of my hand and the message and asked, ‘Do you hate ﷺ?’ ‘Yes’ I replied. ‘Do not hate him. Whatever love you have for him, make it stronger. I swear by Him Who holds the soul of Muhammad in His hand, the share of the *khums* due to the family of ﷺ is more than one slave-girl.’

Following what the Messenger of Allah (S) said to me, there was no one that I loved more than ﷺ ibn Abi Talib.”

3) Muhammad ibn Ishaq states through a chain of narrators to ﷺ Amr ibn Sha’s al-Aslami who said, “I was with ﷺ ibn Abi Talib in the caravan party that the Messenger of Allah sent out to Yemen. ﷺ was somewhat rude to me and I resented his behaviour.

When I returned to Medina, I complained about him in various meetings and to people that I met. One day when I went to the masjid, I found the Messenger of Allah sitting there. When he saw me look into his eyes, he stared straight back at me until I sat down near him. He then stated, ‘I swear ﷺ Amr ibn Sha’s, you have done me harm!’

‘But surely we belong to Allah and to Him we do return! I take refuge in Allah and in Islam against ever harming the Messenger of Allah!’ I replied. He responded, ‘Whoever harms ﷺ harms me!’

4) Al-Bayhaqi narrates through a chain to Abu Sa’id al-Khudhri who is narrated to have said, “The Messenger of Allah (S) dispatched ﷺ ibn Abi Talib to Yemen. I was one of those who accompanied him. When he had taken some camels as *sadaqah* (charitable payments), we asked him if we would ride them and rest our own, which we could see were getting tired. He refused us and said: ‘You only have a share in them, just like all of the Muslims have their share in them.’

When ﷺ had finished his mission and left Yemen to return home, he appointed a certain person in command of us. He himself then hurried off and joined in the pilgrimage. When he had completed his pilgrimage, the Prophet (S) told him, ‘Go back and rejoin your men.’

In the meantime we made the same request to the commander that ʿAlī had appointed over us the same request about using the camels that he had denied, and this deputy agreed. When ʿAlī learned that the camels taken as *sadaqah* payment had been used and saw how this had tired them, he summoned his deputy and rebuked him. I told myself, ‘I swear by God when I reach Medina, I will make a report to the Prophet (S) and tell him how rudely and harshly we have been treated!’

After our arrival in Medina, I went to him early one morning intending to fulfil my oath. I met Abu Bakr coming out from having been with the Messenger of Allah (S) and when he saw me he stopped and welcomed me asking me various questions, like I did him. He asked, ‘When did you arrive?’ to which I replied, ‘Yesterday.’ He then went back with me to the Messenger (S) and announced, ‘Saʿād ibn Malik ibn al-Shahid is here’ to which the Prophet (S) told him to invite me in.

So I entered and greeted the Messenger to Allah (S) as he did me. He came over to me and asked me various questions about myself and my family and did so very kindly. I told him, ‘O Messenger of Allah, we suffered greatly from the ill-conduct and harsh treatment of Ali.’

The Prophet hesitated and I began enumerating the problems that we had with him and right in the middle of my comments he slapped me on the thigh as I was right next to him. He said, ‘Saʿād ibn Malik ibn al-Shahid, tone down what you are saying about your brother ʿAlī! I swear by God, I know well how tough he is in God’s cause!’ I told myself, ‘Saʿād, your mother is as good as bereaved of you! I am sure to be out of favour with the Prophet now! And I will surely never make a negative reference to him again, confidentially or openly!’”

5) Muhammad ibn Ishaq quotes from his chain of narrators from Yazid ibn Talha ibn Yazid ibn Rukana who said, “The army who were with ʿAlī in Yemen became upset that having made their advance, he then put a deputy in command of them and hurried to join the Messenger of Allah (in *Hajj*).”

The deputy went ahead and dressed every person (from the army) in a ceremonial robe (that belonged to the taxes). When the army was sent to meet him, ʿAlī came out to receive them and found them wearing their robes. He asked, ‘What is this?!’ to which they replied, ‘So and so dressed us in them.’ He asked, ‘What made you do this before coming to the Messenger of Allah and letting him decide about the robes as he wished?’ ʿAlī then took the robes away.

When they reached the Messenger of Allah (S), they complained to him about the incident.”

There are several other narrations of this kind suggesting that ʿAlī ibn Abi Talib (‘a) either acted inappropriately or those around him complained for one reason or another to the Prophet (S) about his decisions and the strictness of them.

As this is not a study of this subject in particular, it is not possible to delve into this topic in detail. However, considering that these narrations exist regarding the conversion and interactions with Yemen, it is necessary to evaluate them briefly.

Here we will mention some points which suggest that these narrations are either false or were fabricated in order to achieve the goal of pursuing an agenda against ʿAli ibn Abi Talib (ʿa). This is because as mentioned in the body of texts above, there appeared to be a number of people who “hated” Imam ʿAli (ʿa) firstly without clear reason, and secondly because they partnered together in Yemen because this hatred of them united them. It is not surprising therefore that when these particular individuals were unable to bring the region of Yemen to Islam after six whole months, and ʿAli ibn Abi Talib (ʿa) was able to do so on his first day, this caused them to feel embarrassed, jealous and angry. This gave further cause to their enmity. No matter what Imam ʿAli’s (ʿa) actions were thereafter, they would have found faults and fabricated events even in order to reduce the accomplishments of ʿAli (ʿa) before the Prophet (S) and the Muslim community. This is why narrations of these kinds regarding ʿAli ibn Abi Talib (ʿa) and Yemen have reached us.

We will mention some further points below:

The Holy Qur’an is clear as to the purity of Imam ʿAli ibn Abi Talib (ʿa) when it says,

“Indeed Allah only wishes to remove from you all impurities, O people of the Household (of the Prophet), and purify you with a thorough purification.” (Surah al-Ahzab, 33:33).

If Allah (SwT) advocated for the perfection of Imam ʿAli (ʿa), then no amount of narrations can undermine that.

The genre of narrations are from people who themselves claimed to have hatred for ʿAli ibn Abi Talib (ʿa); or the books of biographies (*ʿilm al-rijal*) mention that the narrators were known to have hatred for him. A narration that accuses Imam ʿAli (ʿa) stated by a person who testifies to hating him, such as above, are obviously inadmissible and cannot be relied upon owing to the problem of bias.

The narrations themselves are inconsistent. One set of narrations speak about ʿAli’s (ʿa) intercourse with a slave-girl; the second that he did not allow the camels that were taxes to be used before the Prophet (S) divided them; the third that he did not permit the robes to be worn before the Prophet (S) decided how to distribute them. Which is it? One, two or all three? If it was the camels then why do reports speak about robes and vice versa? If it was both of them then why did the commanders or the army only complain about one and not the other? One narration accuses ʿAli (ʿa) of usurping the taxes (by intercourse), while the rest state that he reprimanded others for doing the same. Such inconsistencies make the narrations completely unreliable.

The narrations are explicitly against the famous narration where the Prophet ʿ prepared Imam ʿAli (ʿa) for judgement and making decisions. Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal narrates from ʿAli ibn Abi Talib (ʿa) who said, “The Messenger of Allah (S) dispatched me to Yemen. I asked, ‘O Messenger of Allah, you are sending me to people who are older than myself; I am still young and I do not have the knowledge of reaching judgement.’ The Prophet (S) then placed his hand on my chest and said, ‘O Allah make his tongue firm and guide his heart.’ Since then I never had any doubts about a case.”

If Allah (SwT) Himself enabled the tongue and heart of ʿAli ibn Abi Talib (‘a) to make sound decisions, then why were those companions complaining about the decisions of ʿAli? Did they know better or did Allah (SwT) know better? In all of the other judgements in Yemen, ʿAli ibn Abi Talib (‘a) judged correctly – as testified to by the Prophet (S) – sometimes even in the most difficult of cases. How is it therefore, that ʿAli (‘a) judged correctly with those, but not with a simple case of robes belonging to the taxes being usurped by the Muslims?

The decisions of Imam ʿAli (‘a) were certainly correct. The taxes collected were not to be used by some of the Muslims before the Prophet (S) has decided on their distribution. ʿAli’s (‘a) strictness was indeed sound and most correct in that he was commander of the deputation and was ultimately responsible for the taxes reaching soundly. His anger at some of the Muslims usurping them was also correct. Therefore to complain that the commander stopped you from usurping Allah’s (SwT) taxes suggests the issue of unwarranted hatred for Imam ʿAli (‘a) – irrespective of the decision.

Each time the Prophet (S) was told about a complaint or ʿAli’s (‘a) strictness, the Prophet (S) argued for ʿAli ibn Abi Talib (‘a) or rebuked those with hatred in their hearts for him. Never once did the Prophet (S) find Imam ʿAli (‘a) to have done wrong or reprimanded him.

As mentioned earlier, these narrations are of great significance pertaining to the interpretation of the Event of Ghadir Khumm. Ibn Kathir mentions, “Even though ʿAli could be excused for his actions, talk arose among the pilgrims about him. The Messenger of Allah (S) having completed the pilgrimage and its associated ceremonies returned to Medina. Passing the stream at Khumm, he arose among the people and made an address. He acquitted ʿAli of wrongdoing, emphasised his importance and his virtues in order to remove the negative impression that many others held of him.”²⁰

It is our opinion that some of the companions delegated to Yemen were envious of the accomplishments of Imam ʿAli ibn Abi Talib (‘a). Owing to their hatred they sought to nullify this great act of converting the entire region of Yemen – by creating rumours about his personal conduct and management skills. If these lies could be circulated during the *Hajj*, then they would return with the people to their respective cities after the *Hajj* and establish an impression about Imam ʿAli (‘a) in the minds of the people. It is most probable that the narrations regarding the slave-girl are also fabricated; and if ʿAli (‘a) had been strict with his army about their usurping the taxes, this would not be inconsistent with the Qur’an; for even when the Tribes of Israel returned to their worship of the calf in the absence of Prophet Musa (‘a), he became very angry at them.

[ʿAli Ibn Abi Talib’s \(‘A\) Entrance To Hajj And The Prophet \(S\) Narrating A Miracle To Him](#)

Imam Jaʿfar al-Sadiq (‘a) said, “When the Prophet made the farewell *Hajj*, he stopped in al-Abtah. He was given a cushion and sat upon it. He then raised his hands to sky and started crying profusely and

said, ‘O Lord, you have promised me in regards to my father, my mother and my uncle that you will not punish them.’ So God revealed upon him, ‘I have made it upon Myself that no one shall enter My heaven except one who has testified that there is no god but Allah, and that you are My slave and My Messenger. Go to the cavern and call them and if they answer you, then My mercy has been granted to them.’

So the Prophet stood up and went to the cavern and called them: ‘O father, O mother and O uncle!’ They rose up from their graves and wiped off the dirt from their heads. The Prophet said to them, ‘Do you not see this honour that Allah has bestowed upon me?’ They replied, ‘We attest that there is no god but Allah and truly you are His Messenger absolutely. Everything that you have conveyed from God is the truth.’

The Prophet (S) said, ‘Go back to your resting places.’ The Prophet later entered Mecca for the pilgrimage. Ali ibn Abi Talib (‘a) came from Yemen and the Prophet (S) asked him, ‘Do you not want me to give glad tidings?’ He replied, ‘May my father and mother be sacrificed for you, you have been from the start a bearer of glad tidings!’

The Prophet (S) asked, ‘Do you not see what Allah, blessed and high is He, has given to us in this journey of ours?’ So the Prophet (S) narrated the event to Imam Ali (‘a) to which he responded, ‘All praise belongs to Allah!’”

Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) concluded saying, “The Prophet (S) made his parents and uncle partners in the sacrificing of the animals at *Hajj* (sharing the reward with them).”²¹

1. Al-‘Amili, Wasail al-Shia, Chapter on Hajj, p. 8. The Arabic text is as follows:

ايبها الناس اني ابراهيم خليل الله ان الله امركم ان تحجوا هذا البيت فحجوه ، فاجابه من يحج الى يوم القيامة ، و كان اول من اجابه اهل اليمن

2. The Arabic text is as follows:

قَحَطَانِي / بنو قحطان

3. Al-Yamani, Salih Ayyash, The Followers in Yemen, Ancient History, Its Present and Future, Dar al-Mahajjatu al-Baydhaa’, Lebanon, 2011, p. 14.

4. Mustadrak Safinat al-Bihar, vol. 1, p. 206; the Arabic text is as follows:

لولا الهجرة لكنت امرءاً من اهل اليمن مستدرك سفينة البحار ١٠ / ٦٠٢

5. Ibid., the Arabic text is as follows:

عن ابن عباس عن النبي ص انه اذا دخل عليه الناس من اليمن قال مرحباً برهط شعيب و أحبار موسى

6. Al-Nomani, Kitab Al-Ghaybah, p. 39. The Arabic text is as follows:

قوم رقيقة قلوبهم راسخ ايمانهم

7. The Arabic text, as found in Majma al-Zawa‘id, vol. 1, p. 55, is as follows:

إن خير الرجال اهل اليمن و الإيمان يماني و انا يماني و اكثر قبائل دخول الجنة يوم القيامة مذبح و حضرموت _ مجمع الزوائد ج ١٠ ص ٥٥

8. Al-Radhi, Sharif, Nahj al-Balaghah, sermon 2;

<https://www.al-islam.org/nahjul-balagha-part-1-sermons/sermon-2-i-praise...> [23] (Last accessed on February 15, 2018).

9. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 15, pp. 104–105.

10. Tarikh ibn Kathir, vol. 4. p. 127

11. This report is the same as reported by al-Tabari in his Tarikh, vol. 2, pp. 289 and 390.

12. Tarikh al-Tabari, vol. 2, p. 289.

13. Biography of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib, pp. 284–287.

[14.](#) Kitab al-Irshad, pp. 38–40.

[15.](#) Biography of Imam ʿAli ibn Abi Talib, pp. 284–287.

[16.](#) Saduq, Shaykh al-, Uyun al-Akhbar al-Ridha, vol. 2, p. 106.

[17.](#) Mufid, Shaykh al-, Kitab al-Irshad, pp. 135–137.

[18.](#) An Enlightening Commentary of the Qur’an at

<https://www.al-islam.org/enlightening-commentary-light-holy-quran-vol-20...> [24] (Last accessed on May 15, 2018).

[19.](#) Tafsir Jawamir al-Jami, vol. 3, p. 866; the Arabic text is as follows:

اراد بالناس اهل اليمن، و لما نزلت قال: الله اكبر، جاء نصر الله و الفتح و جاء اهل اليمن، قوم رقيقة قلوبهم، الايمان يمان، و الفقه يمان و الحكمة يمانيه، و قال: اجد نفس ربكم من قبل اليمن

[20.](#) Tarikh Ibn Kathir, vol. 4, pp. 142–146.

[21.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 15, pp. 63–64.

Chapter 3: Yemen After Its Conversion To Islam

Governance Of Yemen

Jabir ibn ʿAbdullah al-Ansari reports that a companion named Muʿadh ibn Jabal was among the most generous of companions. In his eagerness to assist the Prophet (S) he built up a large debt. When his creditors started pushing him to pay, he hid away from them in his house for several days. The creditors eventually sought the Prophet’s (S) intervention so he (S) sent for both parties. The creditors pleaded, “O Messenger of Allah, please claim our dues from him.” The Prophet (S) responded to them, “Allah will shower His mercy on the person who is charitable towards him who writes off Muʿadh’s debt.”

Consequently some of the creditors wrote off the debt, while others refused insisting the Prophet (S) claim their rights from him.

The Prophet then turned to Muʿadh and said, “O Muʿadh, be patient and settle your remaining debts with them (even if you have to lose all of your wealth). The Prophet (S) then took away all of Muʿadh’s wealth and handed it over to the creditors. After its distribution, it still only reached five-sevenths of what Muʿadh owed. The creditors turned again to the Prophet (S) demanding that he sell Muʿadh as a slave to them. The Prophet (S) refused and said, “Leave him alone now! You cannot lodge any further claim now.”

Having nothing left, Muʿadh then went to live with Banu Salama. Someone there said to him, “O Abu ʿAbd al-Rahman, why do you not ask the Prophet (S) for something now that you have become so poor?” Muʿadh refused to ask, staying there for a few more days until the Prophet (S) called for him. When the Prophet (S) called him, he dispatched him to Yemen to act as a governor and told him, “Perhaps Allah will redeem you for your losses.” Muʿadh remained there as a governor until the Prophet died¹. Jabir also reports from Muʿadh that he said, “The Messenger of Allah (S) settled my debts with my creditors using what wealth I had and then he appointed me as a governor.”²

Ibn ʿAbbas narrates, “The Prophet (S) sent Muʿadh to Yemen and said, ‘Invite the people to testify that no one has the right to be worshipped except Allah and I am Allah’s apostle, and if they obey you, then teach them that Allah has enjoined on them five daily prayers; and if they obey you, then teach them that Allah has made it obligatory for them to pay the alms–tax from their property and that it has to be taken from the wealthy among them and given to the poor.’”³

¹. Nishaburi, Hakim al–, Mustadrak, vol. 3, pp. 123 and 272.

². Sunan Ibn Majah, The Chapter on Rulings and Laws, hadith no. 2357.

³. Sahih Bukhari, vol. 2, book 23, hadith no. 478 (see also book 24, hadith no. 537 and 573 for similar narrations).

Chapter 4: Leading Personalities From Yemen

Having converted what is the equivalent of an entire country and the various tribes within it, the new Muslims were now eager to join Prophet Muhammad (S) in Medina and Mecca for the pilgrimage. Others had travelled to Medina even before the conversion of Yemen upon hearing about the Prophet (S) and his Message.

In this section we will list and briefly describe some of the leading companions and followers, the second generation of Muslims, known as the *tabiʿin*, who came from Yemen – as a way of demonstrating the importance of this region to the history and development of Islam. This is because without these great companions and their efforts, Islam would not have had some of its champions, scholars and saintly figures who have left their intellectual and spiritual fragrance on this religion.

1. Al-Miqdad Ibn Aswad Al-Kindi

Miqdad belonged to an Arabian tribe named Bahra originally from Hadramout, Yemen.

Among the things that he is most famous for is when the Muslims were consulted as to whether they were ready to partake in the first battle against the pagan Meccan’s, many were hesitant until al-Miqdad stood up and said enthusiastically, “O Allah’s Apostle, go on and obey Allah’s Order! We will support you! By Allah, we will not say like the Jews said to their prophet: ‘You and your Lord, go and fight! We will stay here!’ We say: you have come to us with the truth, and we obey and follow you. We will show that you we are real men. We will not back off.” This changed the mood of the entire army it was the beginning to their first victory.

Imam Jaʿfar ibn Muhammad al-Sadiq (‘a) said Miqdad was one of the seven people who most upheld the verse, ***“I do not ask for anything from you as reward except love of my kindred.”*** (*Surah al-Shuara’, 42:23*).

2. [ع](#)Ammar Ibn Yasir

Though [ع](#)Ammar belonged to the Banu Makhzum tribe in Hijaz, his father, Yasir ibn Amir, was from the tribe of Qahtan in Yemen who migrated to Mecca, and married Sumayyah bint Khayyat, known famously as the first and second martyrs in the history of Islam.

[ع](#)Ammar was also severely tortured, but escaped after feigning disavowal of the Prophet (S), but when he confessed it was only to further avert torment, and the Prophet (S) approved of this action in order to save his life.

In addition to Yasir and Sumayyah being promised paradise, the Prophet (S) also famously said about [ع](#)Ammar's torture, "Bear patiently, Aba al-Yaqdhan ([ع](#)Ammar). O Allah, do not punish anyone from the family of [ع](#)Ammar with fire!"

3. Hudhayfa Ibn Al-Yamani

Hudhayfa son of al-Yamani is one of the famous companions, especially for his role in certain battles with Prophet Muhammad (S).

In the battle of Uhud, the Prophet (S) placed al-Yamani, Hudhayfa's father with Thabit ibn Waqsh as they were both elderly and non-combatants, however both eager to participate in the battle. Al-Yamani, not known to the Muslims was mistaken for one of the enemies and was attacked and killed in error. Hudhayfa told his father's killers: "May God forgive you for He is the most Merciful of those who show mercy."

Hudhayfa was also known for his intelligence, wit and ability to maintain secrets such that the Prophet (S) would tell him who the hypocrites among the Muslims were and he was employed to keep watch of their movements and plots. This played a vital role in the formative years of the Islamic community.

He also has a lengthy and interesting relationship with Imam [ع](#)Ali ('a). Hudhayfa was the governor of al-Mada'in during the time of the Caliph [ع](#)Uthman. When [ع](#)Uthman was killed and Imam [ع](#)Ali ('a) took over the caliphate, he permitted Hudhayfa to continue being the governor there. He wrote to him the following,

In the Name of Allah, the most Merciful, the most Compassionate.

From the slave of Allah, [ع](#)Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, to Hudhayfa ibn al-Yaman – peace be upon you. I have confirmed you in your post, just as you was serving my predecessor, in al-Mada'in. It is your responsibility to collect the zakat, kharaj, and jizyah from the Ahl al-Dhimmah. So choose your trustful ones and those whom you are pleased with their religion and who you trust. Use them over your employees. This is better for you and your master ([ع](#)Ali), and it is loathsome to your enemy.

I order you to have consciousness (*taqwa*) of Allah and His obedience in the hidden and the manifest. I warn you against His punishment in every state. I advise you to be good to the good-doers and to be tough to the obstinate. I order you to be kind and soft in all of your matters and be just to all of your people, for you are responsible of that. Give the people who are treated unjustly back their rights. Forgive the people and have good dealings with them for Allah awards the good-doers. I order you to collect fairly and righteously the kharaj from the land. Do not transgress my previous instructions, and do not neglect any one of them.

Do not follow your own self. Divide this kharaj between the people equally and justly and be modest and available to your people. Treat them fairly in your meeting with them. Let the ones who are close to you and those who are not close to you be the same to you when dispensing justice and rights. Decide between the people with truth and justice and be equitable.

Do not follow your own desires, and do not fear the blame of anyone, for Allah is with those who have God-consciousness and those who are good-doers.

Accompanying this letter is another paper from me. It is to be read to your people so that they can be informed of my policy regarding them and all of the Muslims. So gather them and read it to them and take their *bay'ah* (allegiance) – from the youngest to the oldest of them, God-Willing.”

Hudhayfa addressed his people and engaged in dialogue with them about leadership and the precedents of Prophet Muhammad (S), the full text of which can be read online. [1](#)

4. Owais Al-Qarani Al-Muradi

Owais was distinguished with the honour of being a companion, despite having ever met Prophet Muhammad (S), which is usually considered to be the foremost requirement.

Although he had been a Muslim and lived in Yemen, his situation was that he was preoccupied with taking care of his mother. Only permitted to visit Medina for a short time and required to return quickly, he arrived when the Prophet (S) was away on an expedition. The Prophet (S) died before Owais came back to Medina years later.

Prophet Muhammad (S) is narrated to have said about his rank in the eyes of God that, “If he was to swear in the name of Allah that something should happen, Allah would cause it to happen. If you can ask him to pray for forgiveness for you then do so.”

5. Malik Al-Ashtar Al-Nakha'i

Malik was a Madh'hij, a sub-division of the Bani Nakha tribe from Yemen. It is narrated about them from the Prophet (S) who said, “Those who enter paradise will find many of its inhabitants from the people of Yemen; and indeed many of the tribes present in paradise will be of the Madh'hij.” [2](#)

He was known for extraordinary bravery on the battlefield and his extreme loyalty to Imam ʿAli ibn Abi Talib (‘a) such that it was said, Malik is to ʿAli what ʿAli was to the Prophet (S). This is because when Imam ʿAli (‘a) dispatched Malik to be the governor of Egypt, having praised him greatly, Imam ʿAli (‘a) called him his brother, just like the Prophet (S) called Imam ʿAli (‘a) his brother.

Malik is most known for the famous and celebrated letter which he was sent by Imam ʿAli (‘a) instructing him on good governance³, and he later died as a martyr by being poisoned.

6. Hujr ibn ʿAday Al-Kindi

Hujr ibn ʿAday, a companion of the holy Prophet (S), was known as Hujr al-Khayr (the Good). This was because he was the opposite in character to his cousin Hujr ibn Yazid, who was entitled Hujr al-Sharr (the Evil).

Known for his bravery, he was among the commanders of Imam ʿAli’s (‘a) army in the Battles of Jamal and Siffin.

After the Battle of Siffin he attempted to stop the cursing of ʿAli ibn Abi Talib (‘a) and for this was arrested and executed alongside his family and companions. Umm al-Mo’mineen Ayesha narrates that she said to Muʿawiya: “You killed Hujr and his associates, By Allah! The Prophet told me ‘In the ditch of Adra seven men will be killed, due to this all the skies and Allah will be angered.’”⁴

On the 2nd of May 2013, militia which was linked to ISIS (the so called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) exhumed Hujr’s body from Adra, a suburb in Damascus, and took it to an unknown location.

7. Kumayl Ibn Ziyad Al-Nakhaʿi

Kumayl was born in Yemen two years before the Prophet’s (S) migration to Medina. His tribe, Banu Nakha like that of Malik al-Ashtar, also produced great helpers to Islam such as Hilal ibn Nafi’ and Sawadah ibn ʿAmir. Kumayl however, did not get to meet the holy Prophet (S) but he was a close aid and confident of ʿAli ibn Abi Talib (‘a) becoming his governor in the Iraqi city of Heet, situated in modern day al-Anbar Province.

Kumayl is known in history for the number of questions that he would ask Imam ʿAli (‘a). Among their famous dialogues is:

O Kumayl, knowledge is better than wealth – for knowledge guards you, while you have to guard wealth; and wealth is diminished when spent, while knowledge grows and increases when put to use. O Kumayl, the hoarders of wealth have died, while the learned men exist forever; their bodies have disappeared, but their teachings and wisdom are ingrained in the hearts.

8. Adiy Ibn Hatim Al-Ta'ifi

Adiy's father Hatim was well known for being one of the most generous people in all of Arabia in the pre-Islamic era. After him, Adiy became the head of his tribe, Ta'ifi.

His conversion came when the Prophet (S) sent Imam 'Ali ('a) to carry out a raid at al-Fals. As the army approach there, Adiy sent his family to Syria, however his sister was left behind and captured. Adiy petitioned her release to which the Prophet (S) accepted it. After the Prophet (S) released her, he invited Adiy to sit and discuss Islam. At the end of their discussion he converted, either in the 9th or 10th year after the migration.

Adiy was later present at the Battles of the Ridda wars – Mada'in, Jamal, Siffin and Nahrawan. It is said that he lived to be 120 years old and narrated many ahadith.

9. Al-Harith Al-Hamdani

Al-Harith came from the tribe of Hamdan, the same about which 'Ali ibn Abi Talib ('a) was narrated to have said that: "If I was the keeper of the Gate of Heaven, I would have asked the Tribe of Hamdan to enter peacefully."

He was one of the great, knowledgeable and pious tabi'in (the generation which came after the sahaba). In addition to Islamic sciences, he also taught accounting and mathematics, and was a well-known reciter of the holy Qur'an.

Being amongst the closest companions of Imam 'Ali ('a), al-Harith was given a special testimony and instruction. One of the most important recorded interactions between al-Harith and Imam 'Ali ('a) was when al-Harith was old and in poor health, and Imam 'Ali ('a) advised him before his death, in which the Imam told al-Harith the following:

Adhere to the rope of the Qur'an and seek instructions from it. Regard its lawful as lawful and its unlawful as unlawful. Testify the right that has been in the past. Take lessons for the present condition of this world from the past (condition), because it's one phase resembles the other, its end is to meet its beginning, and the whole of it is to change and depart.

Regard the name of Allah as too great to mention Him, save in the matter of right.

Remember death frequently and (what is to come) after death. Do not long for death except on a reliable condition.

Avoid every action which a doer likes for his own self, but dislikes for the Muslims in general. Avoid every such action which is performed in secret and from which shame is felt in the open. Also avoid that action about which if the doer is questioned he himself will regard it as bad or will have to offer excuses

for it.

Do not expose your honour to be treated as the subject of people's discussions. Do not relate to the people all that you hear, for that will amount to falsehood. Do not contest all that the people relate to you for that will mean ignorance. Kill your anger and forgive when you have the power (to punish). Show forbearance in the moment of rage, and pardon in spite of authority; the eventual end will then be in your favour. Seek good out of every favour that Allah has bestowed upon you, and do not waste any favour of Allah over you. The effect of Allah's favours over you should be visible on you.

Know that the most distinguished among the believers is one who is the most forward of them in spending from himself, his family and his property, because whatever good you send forward will remain in store for you and the benefit of whatever you keep behind will be derived by others. Avoid the company of a person whose opinion is unsound and whose actions are detestable, because a man is judged by his companions.

Live in big cities because they are collective centres of the Muslims. Avoid places of neglectfulness and wickedness and places where there are paucity of supporters for the obedience of Allah. Confine your thinking to matters which are helpful to you. Do not sit in the marketing centres because they are the meeting-places of Satan, and the targets of mischiefs. Frequently look at those over whom you enjoy superiority because this is a way of giving thanks.

Do not undertake a journey on Friday until you have attended the prayers, except when you are going in the way of Allah, or in an excusable matter. Obey Allah in all of your affairs because Allah's obedience has precedence over all other things. Deceive your heart into worshipping, persuade it but do not force it. Engage it (in worshipping) when it is free and merry, except in regards to the obligations enjoined upon you, for they should not be neglected and must be performed at the five times. Be on guard lest death comes down upon you while you have fled away from your Lord in search of worldly pleasure. Avoid the company of the wicked because vice adjoins vice. Regard Allah as great, and love His lovers. Keep off anger because it is one large army from Satan's armies; and that is the end to a matter.⁵

10. Al-Asbagh Ibn Nubata

Al-Asbagh was an extremely pious individual and had a special relationship with Imam ʿAlī (ʿa). Not only was he a commander of his in the Battle of Siffin, but he was also among the 'Shurta al-Khamis' or 'Elite Five Guards' who swore to protect Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) in the battles even if it took their lives. Asbagh was also one of the last, if not the last companion to see Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) on his death bed.

Among the beautiful traditions, he narrates, "One day I was leaning on the door of the Commander of the Faithful ʿAlī (ʿa) and was entreating Allah in supplication when Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) exited his house. He asked me, 'O Asbagh, what are you doing?' to which I replied, 'Leaning and supplicating to Allah (SwT)'. He asked, 'Would you like me to teach you a supplication that I heard from the Messenger of Allah?' I

replied in the affirmative.

He said, ‘Say: All praise belongs to Allah for what was; and all praise belongs to Allah in every state.’”⁶

1. <https://www.al-islam.org/articles/narration-hadeeth-hudhayfah-ibn-alyama...> [25] (Last accessed on May 15, 2018).

2. Tarikh Baghdad, vol. 8, p. 225; the Arabic text is as follows:

دخلت الجنة فوجدت اكثر اهلها اليمن و وجدت اكثر اهل اليمن مذبح

3. <https://www.al-islam.org/nahjul-balagha-part-2-letters-and-sayings/lette...> [12] (Last accessed on May 15, 2018).

4. Tarikh Ibn ʿAsakir, vol. 12, p. 227, Chapter entitled Dhikr Hujr ibn Adi.

5. <https://www.al-islam.org/nahjul-balagha-part-2-letters-and-sayings/lette...> [26] (Last accessed on May 15, 2018)

6. Turbi, Muhammad b. ʿAli al-, Bisharat al-Mustafa, p. 157; the Arabic text is as follows:

الحمد لله على ما كان و الحمد لله على كل حال

Chapter 5: Yemen During The Caliphate Of Imam

ʿAli (‘A)

A treaty which Imam ʿAli (‘a) worded for the Bani Rabiʿa tribe and the Yemenites to agree upon, which was written by the Commander of the Faithful as a protocol between the tribes of Rabiʿa and the people of Yemen. Taken from the writing of Hisham ibn (Muhammad) al-Kalbi:

This indenture contains what the people of Yemen, including the townsmen and nomads, and the tribes of Rabiʿa, including the townsmen and nomads, have agreed upon: That they will adhere to the Book of Allah, will call to it (the Book) and order according to it and will respond to whoever calls to it and orders according to it. They will not sell it for any price, nor accept any alternative to it. They will join hands against anyone who opposes it and abandons it. They will help one another. Their voice will be one. They will not break their pledge on account of the rebuke of a rebuker, the wrath of an angry person, the humiliating treatment of one group to the other, or the use of abusive terms by one party against the other.

This pledge is binding upon those of them who are present and those of them who are absent; those of them who are forbearing and those of them who are foolish; those of them who are learned and those of them who are ignorant. Along with this, the pledge of Allah is also binding upon them, and the pledge of Allah is to be accounted for.

Written By ʿAli Ibn Abi Talib (‘A)

This is a treaty which has been agreed upon by the people of Yemen, be they urban or rural and pastoral, and the people of the Bani Rabiʿa tribe, be they dwellers of cities or those living in villages or the deserts.

Through this treaty both of the parties have agreed that they will steadfastly adhere to their faith in the Holy Book, will accept its orders and tenets, will invite people towards it, and will pass verdicts according to its teachings and rulings, and that they will accept the call of those who invite them towards this Book and will accept the judgement passed according to it, and that they will not accept anything in lieu of this Book and will not sell it at any cost; and they will forsake those who forsake this Book, and they will unite to fight against those who go against this Book.

They promise to help each other and to speak with a common voice on affairs of mutual interest.

They will not break this agreement on account of excitement or anger of any person; or because one participant considers the other humble, weak or powerless; or because one group speaks disparagingly of the other.

Every member of the covenanting party – whether present or absent, whether educated or illiterate, wise or ignorant, will stand by this agreement faithfully.

Over and above the terms of this covenant is the promise of its observance which they have made to Allah and for which they will be held responsible.”¹

Yemen’s Support For Imam ﷺ Ali (‘A) During His Caliphate

Mufti Ja‘far Husayn writes, “After the tribe of Hamdan embraced Islam, the avenues for the progress and propagation of Islam opened up in Yemen. With the rays of the sun on knowledge, the darkness of disbelief was dispelled! In every nook and corner there were voices witnessing the Unity of Allah.”²

Mufti Husayn continues, “In the Battle of Siffin the tribe of Hamdan was solidly behind ﷺ Ali (‘a). Seeing their exploits of valour, ﷺ Ali (‘a) said, ‘If I was the keeper to the Gate of Heaven, I would have asked the Tribe of Hamdan to enter peacefully.”³

When ﷺ Ali ibn Abi Talib (‘a) received successive news that Mu‘awiyah’s men were occupying cities, and his own officers in Yemen namely ﷺ Ubaydullah ibn ﷺ Abbas and Sa‘id ibn Nimran came to him retreating after being overpowered by Busr ibn Abi Artah, he was quite disturbed by the slackness of his own men in jihad and their differences of opinion with him. Proceeding on to the pulpit he said:

Nothing (is left for me) but Kufah which I can hold and extend (which is in my hand). (O Kufah) if this is your condition that whirlwinds continue blowing through you, then may Allah destroy you.⁴

Then he illustrated with the verse of a poet:

O ‘Amr! I swear by your good father’s life! I have received only a small bit of fat from this pot (fat that remains sticking to it after it has been emptied).

Then he continued:

I have been informed that Busr has overpowered Yemen. By Allah, I have begun thinking about these people that they would shortly snatch away the whole country through their unity on their wrong and your disunity (from your own right); and separation, your disobedience of your Imam in matters of right and their obedience to their leader in matters of wrong; their fulfilment of the trust in favour of their master and your betrayal; their good work in their cities and your mischief. Even if I give you charge of a wooden bowl I fear that you will run away with its handle.

O my God, they are disgusted of me and I am disgusted of them. They are weary of me and I am weary of them. Change them for me with better ones, and change me for them with a worse one. O my God, melt their hearts as salt melts in water. By Allah, I wish I had only a thousand horsemen of Banu Firas ibn Ghanam (as the poet says): 'If you call them the horsemen would come to you like a summer cloud.'

Thereafter Imam ﷺ Ali ('a) alighted from the pulpit.

When after the arbitration Mu'awiyah's position was stabilized he began thinking of taking possession of ﷺ Ali ibn Abi Talib's ('a) cities and extend his own domain. He sent his armies to different areas in order that they might secure allegiance for Mu'awiyah by force.

In this connection he sent Busr ibn Abi Artat to Hijaz who shed the blood of thousands of innocent people from there up to Yemen, burned alive tribes after tribes in fire, and even killed children, so much so that he butchered the two young boys of ﷺ Ubaydullah ibn ﷺ Abbas, the Governor of Yemen right in front of their mother Juwayriyah bint Khalid ibn Qaraz al-Kinaniyyah.

When ﷺ Ali ibn Abi Talib ('a) came to know about his slaughtering and bloodshed he thought of sending a contingent to crush him, but due to the continuous fighting, people had become weary and showed heartlessness instead of zeal. When ﷺ Ali ibn Abi Talib ('a) observed their shirking from war he delivered this sermon wherein he roused them to enthusiasm and self-respect, and prompted them to jihad by describing before them the enemy's wrongfulness and their own short-comings.

At last Jariyah ibn Qudamah al-Sa'di responded to his call and taking an army of 200,000 set off in pursuit of Busr and chased him out of the Commander of the Faithful's ('a) domain.

Imam ﷺ Ali ('A) Teaches A Powerful Supplication To A Yemeni In Need

One day Imam al-Hasan ('a) entered the area where Imam ﷺ Ali ('a) was and said, "O Commander of the Faithful, there is a man at the door asking for permission to enter. He has a scent of musk emanating from him." "Permit him to enter" came the reply.

There entered a nicely built man, handsome, with an awesome sight, tall and proportionate. He was eloquently spoken and wore the garment of kings.

“Peace be upon you, O Commander of the Faithful. I am a man from the farthest part of Yemen and from the noble families of the Arabs, and I am affiliated to you. I have left behind me a great kingdom. I have an overwhelming bounty, a smooth life, things easily accessible and established lands. I have removed the vagueness from my affairs and time has given me experience. Yet I have a difficult and a tricky enemy. He weighs me down, overcomes me with amassed forces, has the great strength of his supporters, all shoulder to shoulder. I have grown tired in finding a way against him.”

The man continued his story, “I was asleep one night when someone came to me in my dream and said crying out, ‘Stand up, O man and go to the best of creation after the Prophet, the Commander of the Faithful, ؓAli ibn Abi Talib. Ask him to teach you the supplication taught to him by the Beloved of Allah, the one chosen by Him from among His creation, Muhammad ibn ؓAbdullah (S). It contains the great name of God. So supplicate this prayer against your enemy.’”

“I got up aware and cognisant, O Commander of the Faithful. I did not go anywhere until I personally came to you with 400 of my servants. I attest to Allah and His Messenger and to you, that they are free, for I have freed them for the sake of Allah, may His greatness be magnified.”

“I came to you from a distant ravine and vast land. I have become internally weak, and enfeebled. Grace me O Commander of the Faithful with your exceeding blessing. [I ask you] by the right of the fatherhood position that you hold [over the nations] and the tight blood relations. Teach me the supplication which I was told about in my dream and was called upon to come to you for.”

So the Commander of the Faithful replied, “Yes by the will of God.” He asked for a pen and paper and wrote for him this supplication.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ اللَّهُ الْمَلِكُ الْحَقُّ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ وَ أَنَا عَبْدُكَ وَ أَنْتَ رَبِّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي وَ اعْتَرَفْتُ بِذُنُوبِي وَ لَا يَغْفِرُ
الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ فَاعْفُرْ لِي يَا غَفُورُ يَا شَكُورُ

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَحْمَدُكَ وَ أَنْتَ لِلْحَمْدِ أَهْلٌ عَلَى مَا خَصَصْتَنِي بِهِ مِنْ مَوَاهِبِ الرَّغَائِبِ وَ مَا وَصَلَ إِلَيَّ مِنْ فَضْلِكَ السَّابِغِ وَ
مَا أَوْلَيْتَنِي بِهِ مِنْ إِحْسَانِكَ إِلَيَّ وَ بَوَّأْتَنِي بِهِ مِنْ مَطْنَةِ الْعُدْلِ وَ أَنْلَتَنِي مِنْ مَنِكَ الْوَاصِلِ إِلَيَّ وَ مِنْ الدِّفَاعِ عَنِّي وَ
التَّوْفِيقِ لِي وَ الإِجَابَةِ لِدُعَائِي حَتَّى أَنْجِيكَ دَاعِيًا وَ أَدْعُوكَ مُضَامًا

وَ أَسْأَلُكَ فَأَجِدَكَ فِي الْمَوَاطِنِ كُلِّهَا لِي جَابِرًا وَ فِي الْأُمُورِ نَاطِرًا وَ لِذُنُوبِي غَافِرًا وَ لِعَوْرَاتِي سَاتِرًا

لَمْ أَعْدَمْ خَيْرَكَ طَرْفَةَ عَيْنٍ مُذْ أَنْزَلْتَنِي دَارَ الْإِحْتِبَارِ لِتَنْظُرَ مَا أُقَدِّمُ لِدَارِ الْفَرَارِ فَأَنَا عَيْتُكَ مِنْ جَمِيعِ الْأَقَاتِ وَ
الْمَصَائِبِ فِي اللُّوَارِبِ وَالْعُمُومِ الَّتِي سَاوَرْتَنِي فِيهَا الِهُمُومُ بِمَعَارِضِ أَصْنَافِ الْبَلَاءِ وَ مَصْرُوفِ جُهْدِ الْقَضَاءِ لَا
أُذْكَرُ مِنْكَ إِلَّا الْجَمِيلَ وَ لَا أَرَى مِنْكَ غَيْرَ التَّفْضِيلِ

خَيْرُكَ لِي شَامِلٌ وَ فَضْلُكَ عَلَيَّ مُتَوَاتِرٌ وَ نِعْمَتُكَ عِنْدِي مُتَّصِلَةٌ وَ سَوَابِقُ [سَوَابِغُ] لَمْ تُحَقِّقْ حِذَارِي بَلْ صَدَّقْتَ رَجَائِي
وَ صَاحَبْتَ أَسْفَارِي وَ أَكْرَمْتَ أَحْضَارِي وَ شَفَيْتَ أَمْرَاضِي وَ أَوْصَيْتَ وَ عَافَيْتَ مُنْقَلِبِي وَ مَثْوَايَ وَ لَمْ تُشْمِتْ بِي
أَعْدَائِي وَ رَمَيْتَ مَنْ رَمَانِي وَ كَفَيْتَنِي مُوْتَةً مَنْ عَادَانِي

فَحَمْدِي لَكَ وَاصِلٌ وَ ثَنَائِي لَكَ دَائِمٌ مِنَ الدَّهْرِ إِلَى الدَّهْرِ بِأَلْوَانِ التَّسْبِيحِ خَالِصاً لَذِكْرِكَ وَ مَرْضِيّاً لَكَ بِنَاصِعِ التَّوْحِيدِ
وَ إِمْحَاضِ التَّمْجِيدِ بِطُولِ التَّعْدِيدِ وَ مَزِيَّةِ أَهْلِ الْمَزِيدِ

لَمْ تُعْنُ فِي قُدْرَتِكَ وَ لَمْ تُشَارِكْ فِي الْإِهْيَاتِكَ وَ لَمْ تُعَلِّمْ إِذْ حَبَسْتَ الْأَشْيَاءَ عَلَى الْغَرَائِزِ وَ لَا خَرَقْتَ الْأَوْهَامَ حُجْبَ الْغُيُوبِ
فَتَعْتَقِدُ فِيكَ مَحْدُوداً فِي عَظَمَتِكَ

فَلَا يَبْلُغُكَ بَعْدَ الْهَمِّ وَ لَا يَنَالُكَ غَوْصُ الْفِكْرِ وَ لَا يَنْتَهِي إِلَيْكَ نَظَرُ نَاطِرٍ فِي مَجْدِ جَبْرُوتِكَ ارْتَفَعَتْ عَنْ صِفَةِ
الْمَخْلُوقِينَ صِفَاتُ قُدْرَتِكَ وَ عَلَا عَنْ ذَلِكَ كِبْرِيَاءُ عَظَمَتِكَ لَا يَنْقُصُ مَا أَرَدْتَ أَنْ يَزْدَادَ وَ لَا يَزْدَادُ مَا أَرَدْتَ أَنْ يَنْقُصَ
وَ لَا أَحَدٌ حَضَرَكَ حِينَ بَرَأْتَ النُّفُوسَ

كَلَّتِ الْأَوْهَامُ عَنْ تَفْسِيرِ صِفَتِكَ وَ انْحَسَرَتِ الْعُقُولُ عَنْ كُنْهِ عَظَمَتِكَ وَ كَيْفَ تُوصَفُ وَ أَنْتَ الْجَبَّارُ الْقُدُّوسُ الَّذِي لَمْ
تَزَلْ أَرْلِيّاً دَائِماً فِي الْغُيُوبِ وَ حَدِّكَ لَيْسَ فِيهَا غَيْرُكَ وَ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهَا سِوَاكَ

حَارَ فِي مَلَكُوتِكَ عَمِيقَاتُ مَذَاهِبِ التَّفَكِيرِ فَنَوَاضَعَتِ الْمُلُوكُ لِهَيْبَتِكَ وَ عَنَتِ الْوُجُوهُ بِذُلِّ الْإِسْتِكَانَةِ لَكَ وَ انْقَادَ كُلُّ
شَيْءٍ لِعَظَمَتِكَ وَ اسْتَسَلَّمَ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ لِقُدْرَتِكَ وَ خَضَعَتِ لَكَ الرِّقَابُ وَ كُلُّ دُونِ ذَلِكَ تَحْبِيرُ اللُّغَاتِ وَ ضَلَّ هُنَالِكَ التَّدْبِيرُ
فِي تَصَارِيفِ الصِّفَاتِ

فَمَنْ تَفَكَّرَ فِي ذَلِكَ رَجَعَ طَرْفُهُ إِلَيْهِ حَسِيراً وَ عَقَلُهُ مَبْهُوراً وَ تَفَكَّرَهُ مُتَحَبِّراً

اللَّهُمَّ فَلِكَ الْحَمْدُ مُتَوَاتِراً مُتَوَالِياً مُتَسِقاً مُسْتَوْتِفاً يَدُومُ وَ لَا يَبِيدُ غَيْرَ مَفْقُودٍ فِي الْمَلَكُوتِ وَ لَا مَطْمُوسٍ فِي الْعَالَمِ وَ لَا
مُنْتَقَصٍ فِي الْعِرْقَانِ

وَ لَكَ الْحَمْدُ مَا لَا تُحْصِي مَكَارِمُهُ فِي اللَّيْلِ إِذَا أَدْبَرَ وَ الصُّبْحِ إِذَا أَسْفَرَ وَ فِي الْبَرَارِيِّ وَ الْبِحَارِ وَ الْغُدُوقِ وَ الْأَصَالِ وَ

العَشِيِّ وَالْإِبْكَارِ وَ فِي الظَّهَائِرِ وَالْأَسْحَارِ

اللَّهُمَّ بِتَوْفِيقِكَ قَدْ أَحْضَرْتَنِي الرَّغْبَةَ وَ جَعَلْتَنِي مِنْكَ فِي وَايَةِ الْعِصْمَةِ فَلَمْ أَبْرَحْ فِي سُبُوغِ نِعْمَاتِكَ وَ تَتَابِعِ الْإِتِكَ

مَحْفُوظاً لَكَ فِي الْمَنَعَةِ وَ الدِّفَاعِ مَحُوطاً بِكَ فِي مَثْوَايَ وَ مُنْقَلَبِي وَ لَمْ تُكَلِّفْنِي فَوْقَ طَاقَتِي إِذْ لَمْ تَرْضَ مِنِّي إِلَّا طَاقَتِي وَ لَيْسَ شُكْرِي وَ إِنِ بَالِغْتُ فِي الْمَقَالِ وَ بَالِغْتُ فِي الْفِعَالِ بِبَالِغِ آدَاءِ حَقِّكَ وَ لَا مُكَافِئاً لِفَضْلِكَ لِأَنَّكَ أَنْتَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ لَمْ تَغِبْ وَ لَا تَغِيبُ عَنْكَ غَائِبَةٌ وَ لَا تَخْفَى عَلَيْكَ خَافِيَةٌ وَ لَمْ تَضِلَّ لَكَ فِي ظُلْمِ الْخَفِيَّاتِ ضَالَّةٌ إِنَّمَا أَمْرُكَ إِذَا أَرَدْتَ شَيْئاً أَنْ تَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ

اللَّهُمَّ لَكَ الْحَمْدُ مِثْلَ مَا حَمَدْتَ بِهِ نَفْسَكَ وَ أضعَافَ مَا حَمَدَكَ بِهِ الْحَامِدُونَ وَ مَجْدَكَ بِهِ الْمُمَجِّدُونَ وَ كِبْرَكَ بِهِ الْمُكَبِّرُونَ وَ عَظَمَكَ بِهِ الْمُعْظِمُونَ حَتَّى يَكُونَ لَكَ مِنِّي وَحْدِي فِي كُلِّ طَرْفَةِ عَيْنٍ وَ أَقَلِّ مِنْ ذَلِكَ مِثْلَ حَمْدِ الْحَامِدِينَ وَ تَوْجِيدِ أَصْنَافِ الْمُخْلِصِينَ وَ تَقْدِيسِ أَجْنَاسِ الْعَارِفِينَ وَ ثَنَاءِ جَمِيعِ الْمُهْلَلِينَ وَ مِثْلَ مَا أَنْتَ بِهِ عَارِفٌ مِنْ رِزْقِكَ اعْتِبَاراً وَ فَضْلاً وَ سَأَلْتَنِي مِنْهُ يَسِيراً صَغِيراً وَ أَعْطَيْتَنِي مِنْ جَمِيعِ خَلْقِكَ مِنَ الْحَيَوَانِ

وَ أَرَعْبُ إِلَيْكَ فِي رَغْبَةٍ مَا أَنْطَقْتَنِي بِهِ مِنْ حَمْدِكَ فَمَا أَيْسَرَ مَا كَلَّفْتَنِي بِهِ مِنْ حَقِّكَ وَ أَعْظَمَ مَا وَعَدْتَنِي عَلَى شُكْرِكَ ابْتَدَأْتَنِي بِالنِّعَمِ فَضْلاً وَ طَوَلاً وَ أَمَرْتَنِي بِالشُّكْرِ حَقّاً وَ عَدَلاً وَ وَعَدْتَنِي عَلَيْهِ أضعَافاً وَ مَزِيداً وَ أَعْطَيْتَنِي مِنْ رِزْقِكَ اعْتِبَاراً وَ فَضْلاً وَ سَأَلْتَنِي مِنْهُ يَسِيراً صَغِيراً وَ أَعْطَيْتَنِي مِنْ جَهْدِ الْبَلَاءِ وَ لَمْ تُسَلِّمْنِي لِلسُّوءِ مِنْ بَلَائِكَ

مَعَ مَا أَوْلَيْتَنِي مِنَ الْعَافِيَةِ وَ سَوَّغْتَ مِنْ كَرَامَتِ النُّحْلِ وَ ضَاعَفْتَ لِي الْفَضْلَ مَعَ مَا أَوْدَعْتَنِي مِنَ الْحُجَّةِ الشَّرِيفَةِ وَ يَسَّرْتَ لِي مِنَ الدَّرَجَةِ الرَّفِيعَةِ وَ اصْطَفَيْتَنِي بِأَعْظَمِ النَّبِيِّينَ دَعْوَةً وَ أَفْضَلِهِمْ شَفَاعَةً مُحَمَّدٍ

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي مَا لَا يَسَعُهُ إِلَّا مَغْفِرَتُكَ وَ لَا يَمَحِقُهُ إِلَّا عَفْوُكَ وَ لَا يَكْفُرُهُ إِلَّا فَضْلُكَ وَ هَبْ لِي فِي يَوْمِي هَذَا يَقِيناً تَهْوُونَ عَلَيَّ بِهِ مُصِيبَاتِ الدُّنْيَا وَ أَحْزَانَهَا بِشَوْقِ إِلَيْكَ وَ رَغْبَةٍ فِيمَا عِنْدَكَ وَ اكْتُبْ لِي عِنْدَكَ الْمَغْفِرَةَ وَ بَلِّغْنِي الْكِرَامَةَ وَ ارْزُقْنِي شُكْرَ مَا أَنْعَمْتَ بِهِ عَلَيَّ فَإِنَّكَ أَنْتَ اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الرَّفِيعُ الْبَدِيعُ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ الَّذِي لَيْسَ لِأَمْرِكَ مَدْفَعٌ وَ لَا مِنْ عَوَائِدِ فَضْلِكَ وَ طَرْفِ رِزْقِكَ وَ أَلْوَانِ مَا أَوْلَيْتَ مِنْ إِرْفَادِكَ فَإِنَّكَ أَنْتَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ الْفَاشِي فِي الْخَلْقِ عَنْ فَضَائِكَ مُمْتَنِعٌ

أَشْهَدُ أَنَّكَ رَبِّي وَ رَبُّ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَاطِرُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَ الْأَرْضِ عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَ الشَّهَادَةِ الْعَلِيِّ الْكَبِيرِ

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الثَّبَاتَ فِي الْأَمْرِ وَ الْعَزِيمَةَ عَلَى الرُّشْدِ وَ الشُّكْرَ عَلَى نِعْمَتِكَ وَ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ جَوْرِ كُلِّ جَائِرٍ وَ بَغْيِ كُلِّ بَاغٍ وَ حَسَدِ كُلِّ حَاسِدٍ بِكَ أَصُولٌ عَلَى الْأَعْدَاءِ وَ بِكَ أَرْجُو وَ وَايَةَ الْأَحْبَاءِ مَعَ مَا لَا أَسْتَطِيعُ إِحْصَاءَهُ وَ لَا تَعْدِيدَهُ مِنْ عَوَائِدِ فَضْلِكَ وَ طَرْفِ رِزْقِكَ وَ أَلْوَانِ مَا أَوْلَيْتَ مِنْ إِرْفَادِكَ فَإِنَّكَ أَنْتَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ الْفَاشِي فِي الْخَلْقِ

رَفْدُهُ الْبَاسِطُ بِالْحَقِّ يَدُكَ وَ لَا تُضَادُّ فِي حُكْمِكَ وَ لَا تُتَارَعُ فِي أَمْرِكَ تَمْلِكُ مِنَ الْأَنَامِ مَا تَشَاءُ وَ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ إِلَّا مَا تُرِيدُ

قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ مَالِكَ الْمُلْكِ تُؤْتِي الْمُلْكَ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَ تَنْزِعُ الْمُلْكَ مِمَّنْ تَشَاءُ وَ تُعِزُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَ تُدْلِمُ مَنْ تَشَاءُ بِإِذْنِكَ الْخَيْرُ إِنَّكَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ تُولِجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَ تُولِجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ وَ تُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَ تُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَ تَرْزُقُ مَنْ تَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ

أَنْتَ الْمُنْعِمُ الْمُفْضِلُ الْخَالِقُ الْبَارِيُّ الْقَادِرُ الْقَاهِرُ الْمُقَدِّسُ فِي نُورِ الْقُدْسِ تَرَدَّدْتَ بِالْمَجْدِ وَ الْعِزِّ وَ تَعَظَّمْتَ بِالْكَرِيمِاءِ وَ تَعَشَّيْتَ بِالنُّورِ وَ الْبَهَاءِ وَ تَجَلَّيْتَ بِالْمَهَابَةِ وَ السَّنَاءِ لَكَ الْمَنُّ الْقَدِيمُ وَ السُّلْطَانُ الشَّامِخُ وَ الْجُودُ الْوَاسِعُ وَ الْقُدْرَةُ الْمُقْتَدِرَةُ جَعَلْتَنِي مِنْ أَفْضَلِ بَنِي آدَمَ وَ جَعَلْتَنِي سَمِيعاً بَصِيراً صَاحِباً سَوِيّاً مُعَافَى وَ لَمْ تَشْغَلْنِي نُقْصَاناً فِي بَدَنِي وَ لَمْ تَمْنَعْكَ كِرَامَتِكَ إِيَّايَ وَ حُسْنُ صَنِيعِكَ عِنْدِي وَ فَضْلُ إِعْطَاؤِكَ عَلَيَّ إِنْ وَسِعَتْ عَلَيَّ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَ فَضَّلْتَنِي عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِنْ أَهْلِهَا

فَجَعَلْتَ لِي سَمْعاً وَ قُوَّةً يَعْزِمُ عَلَيْكَ عِظَمَتِكَ وَ أَنَا بِفَضْلِكَ حَامِدٌ وَ بِجَهْدِ نَفْسِي لَكَ شَاكِرٌ وَ بِحَقِّكَ شَاهِدٌ فَإِنَّكَ حَيٌّ قَبْلَ كُلِّ حَيٍّ وَ حَيٌّ بَعْدَ كُلِّ حَيٍّ وَ حَيٌّ تَرِثُ الْحَيَاةَ لَمْ تَقْطَعْ خَيْرِكَ عَنِّي طَرْفَةَ عَيْنٍ فِي كُلِّ وَقْتٍ وَ لَمْ تُنْزِلْ بِي عُقُوبَاتِ النَّقْمِ وَ لَمْ تُغَيِّرْ عَلَيَّ دَفَائِقَ الْعِصْمِ فَلَوْ لَمْ أَذْكَرْ مِنْ إِحْسَانِكَ إِلَّا عَفْوَكَ وَ إِجَابَةَ دُعَائِي حِينَ رَفَعْتُ رَأْسِي بِتَحْمِيدِكَ وَ تَمْجِيدِكَ وَ فِي قِسْمَةِ الْأَرْزَاقِ حِينَ قَدَّرْتَ فَلكَ الْحَمْدُ عَدَدَ مَا حَفِظَ عِلْمُكَ وَ عَدَدَ مَا أَحَاطَتْ بِهِ قُدْرَتُكَ وَ عَدَدَ مَا وَسِعَتْهُ رَحْمَتُكَ

اللَّهُمَّ فَتَمِّمْ إِحْسَانَكَ فِيمَا بَقِيَ كَمَا أَحْسَنْتَ فِيمَا مَضَى فَإِنِّي أَسْأَلُ بِتَوْحِيدِكَ وَ تَمْجِيدِكَ وَ تَحْمِيدِكَ وَ تَهْلِيلِكَ وَ تَكْبِيرِكَ وَ تَعْظِيمِكَ وَ بِنُورِكَ وَ رَأْفَتِكَ وَ رَحْمَتِكَ وَ عُلُوكَ وَ جَمَالَكَ وَ جَلَالَكَ وَ بَهَائِكَ وَ سُلْطَانِكَ وَ قُدْرَتِكَ وَ بِمُحَمَّدٍ وَ آلِهِ الطَّاهِرِينَ إِلَّا تَحْرِمَنِي رَفْدِكَ وَ فَوَائِدِكَ فَإِنَّهُ لَا يَعْزِمُ عَلَيْكَ لِكْرَتُهُ مَا يَنْدَفِقُ بِهِ عَوَائِقُ الْبُخْلِ وَ لَا يَنْقُصُ جُودَكَ تَقْصِيرٌ فِي شُكْرِ نِعْمَتِكَ وَ لَا تُفْنِي خَزَائِنَ مَوَاهِبِكَ النِّعَمِ وَ لَا تَخَافُ ضَيْمَ إِمْلَاقٍ فَتُكْذِبِي وَ لَا يَلْحَقُكَ خَوْفٌ عِنْدَ فَيْنُقْصَ فَيْضُ فَضْلِكَ

اللَّهُمَّ ارْزُقْنِي قَلْباً خَاشِعاً وَ يَقِيناً صَادِقاً وَ لِسَاناً ذَاكِراً وَ لَا تُؤْمِنِي مَكْرَكَ وَ لَا تَكْشِفْ عَنِّي سِتْرَكَ وَ لَا تُنْسِنِي ذِكْرَكَ وَ لَا تُبَاعِدْنِي مِنْ جِوَارِكَ وَ لَا تَقْطَعْ عَنِّي مِنْ رَحْمَتِكَ وَ لَا تُؤْيِسْنِي مِنْ رَوْحِكَ وَ كُنْ لِي أُنْساً مِنْ كُلِّ وَحْشَةٍ وَ اعْصِمْنِي مِنْ كُلِّ هَلَاكَةٍ وَ تَجَنِّي مِنْ كُلِّ بَلَاءٍ فَإِنَّكَ لَا تُخْلِفُ الْمِيعَادَ

اللَّهُمَّ ارْفَعْ عَنِّي وَ لَا تَضَعْ عَنِّي وَ زِدْنِي وَ لَا تَنْقُصْنِي وَ ارْحَمْنِي وَ لَا تُعَذِّبْنِي وَ انصُرْنِي وَ لَا تَخْذَلْنِي وَ آثِرْنِي وَ لَا تُؤَثِّرْ عَلَيَّ وَ صَلِّ عَلَيَّ مُحَمَّدٍ وَ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ وَ سَلِّمْ تَسْلِيماً

After writing the supplication, Imam Ali (a) said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah (S) say, 'Should a person recite this supplication with a true intention and a sincere heart, and then command the

mountains to move and head towards the seas, it would happen.”

So the man left to return to his land in Yemen with the supplication from Imam ʿAli (‘a) and after forty days, God destroyed his enemies such that not even one of them was left from his side. Afterwards Imam ʿAli (‘a) said, “I knew this would be the case for the Messenger of Allah (S) taught me that nothing will be an extremely difficult issue to resolve except that it will be made easy by this supplication.”⁵

1. Letter 74, Nahj al-Balaghah, <https://www.al-islam.org/nahjul-balagha-part-2-letters-and-sayings/lette...> [27] (Last accessed on May 15, 2018).

2. Biography of ʿAli ibn Abi Talib, p. 285.

3. Biography of ʿAli ibn Abi Talib, p. 285. The Arabic text is as follows:

و لو كنت بوابا على باب جنة لقلت لهمدان ادخلي بسلام

4. Biography of ʿAli ibn Abi Talib, p. 285. The Arabic text is as follows:

مَا هِيَ إِلَّا الْكُوفَةُ، أَقْبَضُهَا وَأَبْسُطُهَا، إِنْ لَمْ تَكُونِي إِلَّا أَنْتِ، تَهْبُ أَعَاصِيرُكَ، فَقَبَّحَكَ اللَّهُ

5. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 92, p. 242.

Chapter 6: Yemen During The Time Of The Ahlul Bayt (‘A)

In one narration, we read the following:

Jabir ibn ʿAbdullah al-Ansari narrates from her holiness, Lady Fatima az-Zahra (‘a) who said, “One day, my father the Messenger of Allah (S) visited me and said, ‘Peace be upon you, O Fatima!’ ‘Peace be upon you too,’ I answered. ‘I can feel some fatigue in my body,’ he said to me, so I answered, ‘I pray Allah to protect you O father against fatigue.’”

The Prophet (S) then said, ‘O Fatima, bring me the Yemeni cloak and cover me with it.’ Fatima said, ‘I brought him the Yemeni cloak and covered him with it. I then kept on looking at his face, which was glittering like the moon at night due to its fullness and perfection...’¹

In another narration, we read the following:

Salam ibn Saʿid al-Makhzumi said, “Once I was in the presence of Abu ʿAbdillah (Imam Jaʿfar al-Sadiq) (‘a) when ʿAbbad ibn Kathir, a devoted worshipper of Basra, and Ibn Shurayh, the scholar of the people of Mecca, came to visit the Imam (‘a). In the presence of the Imam (‘a) was also Maymun al-Qaddah, the servant of Abu Jaʿfar (Imam al-Baqir (‘a)). ʿAbbad asked Abu ʿAbdillah, ‘How many pieces of cloth were used to shroud the Messenger of Allah?’ The Imam (‘a) replied, ‘Three pieces were used. Two of them were Suhari (made in Suhar, Yemen) and one Hibaran (made in Hibara, Yemen). Burd (a type of fabric also made in Yemen) was rare to find.’”

Al-Makhzumi continues, ٱAbbad seemed to frown at this, not believing in the rarity of the fabric used for the Prophet (S).’ The Imam (‘a) responded by explaining, ‘The palm tree of Lady Mariam (‘a) was ajwa (a type of palm tree) and it had come from the heavens. Whatever grew from its roots were also ajwa and whatever grew from the pits of the dates were from lower quality.’

When they left the house of the Imam (‘a), ٱAbbad said to Shurayh, ‘By Allah, I did not understand the smile that Abu ٱAbdillah put forward to me (while talking).’ Ibn Shurayh said, ‘Ask this boy (Maymun). He will explain it to you because he is from them (the household). Maymun asked, ‘Is it correct that you did not understand what was being said to you?’

Maymun continued, ‘The Imam (‘a) referred to his own self. He informed you that he is one of the Divine children of the Messenger of Allah (S) and that the knowledge of the Messenger of Allah (S) is with them. Whatever knowledge comes from them is true and correct and whatever comes from other sources is not genuine.’”[2](#)

In a third narration, we read the following:

Imam ٱAli ibn Musa al-Ridha (‘a) narrated on the authority of his grandfathers (‘a) from Imam ٱAli ibn Abi Talib (‘a) who said, “The Messenger of Allah (S) came to us having an agate ring from Yemen on his finger. He (S) prayed with us. When he finished praying, he gave it to me and said, ‘O ٱAli! Pray while wearing this. Do you not know that praying with an agate ring on one’s finger has the reward of seventy prayers? The agate recites glorifications, repents and its reward will be given to its wearer. Piety is due to God and by Him we may succeed.’”[3](#)

Imam Al-ٱAskari (‘A) Visited By A Man From Yemen

Abu Hashim Dawud ibn al-Qasim al-Jaʿfari mentioned, “I was in the presence of Abu Muhammad (Imam Hasan ibn ٱAli al-ٱAskari (‘a)) when permission was requested for a man from Yemen to see the Imam (‘a). A tall and heavy man came in and greeted the Imam with a greeting of *wilayah* (acknowledging the Divinely-granted authority) and received acceptance in response.

The Imam asked him to sit and he sat right next to me. I then said to myself, ‘I wish I knew who he is!’ Abu Muhammad (‘a) then said, ‘He is from the children of the Arab lady for whom my grandfathers had printed their insignia on a pebble which the print took in an engraving form. He has brought it with him and wants me to press my insignia on it as well.’

He then asked the man to give it to him. The man took out a pebble and on one side there was a smooth place. Abu Muhammad took it, brought his insignia and imprinted it on the pebble. Even now it is as if I see the print of his insignia on the pebble.

I then asked the man from Yemen, ‘Have you ever met him (Abu Muhammad) before?’ He replied, ‘No, I have not seen him before, however, I swear by Allah that I had always been anxious for this hour to see

him when a young man came to me whom I had not seen before. He said, ‘Stand up and come in’ and I came in (meaning he was called in at the request of the Imam to see him).”

The man from Yemen then left saying, ‘May Allah’s grace and blessings be with you O the people of family of the Prophet (the Ahlul Bayt) whose generations are just like the generations before. I testify before Allah that it is obligatory to preserve your rights just as it was the case with preserving the right of the Commander of the Faithful ؑAli ibn Abi Talib (‘a) and the Imam’s after him, may Allah grant them all his blessings.’ He then left and I never saw him after that.”

Ibn Ishaq has said that Abu Hashim al-Jaʿfari stated, ‘I asked him his name.’ He said, ‘My name is Mahjaʿ ibn al-Salt ibn ؑAqaba ibn Samʿan ibn Ghanim ibn Umm Ghanim.’ She was the Arab lady from Yemen had had a pebble on which the Commander of the Faithful ؑAli (‘a) had printed his insignia and also his descendants up to the time of Abu al-Hasan (Imam ؑAli al-Askari).”⁴

1. Bahrani, ؑAbdullah ibn Nurullah al-; The narration is famously referred to as Hadith al-Kisa or The Event of the Cloak. For the full narration see <http://www.duas.org/hadis-e-kisa.htm> [28] (Last accessed on July 25, 2018).
2. Kulayni, Shaykh al, Usul Al-Kafi, vol. 1, chapter 101, hadith no. 6.
3. Uyun al-Akhbar al-Ridha, vol. 2, p. 276.
4. Usul al-Kafi, vol. 1, chapter 81 – The Criterion to Discern the Truthful and False Claims of Entitlement to Leadership, hadith no. 4.

Conclusion

Amongst the aims of this small book was to provide the respected readers with an appreciation of Yemen’s ancient and early Islamic history, and its foundational role in the culture of Arabia, its interaction with prophetic stories, and its unique importance in the development of Islamic history.

According to the Qur’an, Yemen is one of the few places to have experienced Divine retribution for its form of rejection and objections to the prophetic missions. Yemeni kings tried on multiple occasions to conquer Arabia or in the least to destroy the Kaʿbah as a symbolic means of their gods’ supremacy over the God of Ibrahim. On every occasion, either the Yemeni kings and tribes were obliterated or they found guidance. This suggests that whenever Allah (SwT) found goodness in them, he ensured that they prospered through faith such that Yemen became a hub for receiving religious migration and the tribes awaited to be at the service of their prophet. Moreover, Yemen here is also demonstrated as a place of great humility, growth and religious fervour. That is to say that though its ancient history tells the story of Divine destruction, its middle history proves its benefitting from those lessons and belief in their latter prophets.

Arguably other faiths or regions adopted the opposite – believing in earlier prophets, but rejecting the

latter ones.

In their preparation for Prophet Muhammad (S), while other regions, particularly in and around Yathrib also experienced this immigration of people for the purpose of supporting prophecy, not all of the tribes and sects fulfilled their oaths.

The Qur'an mentions the story of the Jewish inhabitants of Medina that,

“When there came to them the prophet verifying that which was among them (the Torah), they did not have cognisance of him (the Prophet) and rejected him.”(Qur’an, Surah al-Baqarah, 2:92)

So while all of these various groups migrated for and awaited the same prophet, the Yemeni tribes were unique in their fulfilment of adopting Islam and fully serving its mission.

This awaiting and support manifested itself in two ways: The Ansar (helpers) of Medina who invited, welcomed and sustained the Prophet (S) in his migration, would be of Yemeni descent; and those regional tribes that heard of the Prophet (S), sent to him (S) and welcomed from him (S) delegations. This shows the characteristics of faith, humility, truth and generosity. It is of no surprise then that the Prophet (S) is narrated to have said, “Faith is Yemeni and they are from me, to me and from them is al-Marba’¹ (the place where spring time is heralded). They will come to you as helpers and aids so I commend to you to deal with them with goodness.”²

These many praises and appellations are not to be taken lightly. Given the number of times that they appear in the hadith corpus, even in varied ways, it gives confidence that such words indeed emanated from the Prophet (S), and since ***“He does not speak of his own whims, rather it is inspiration..(Qur’an, Surah al-Najm, 53:3-4)”*** these are greatly instructive as to how important Yemen was to the Messenger and therefore Allah (SwT).

In this regards, there are also numerous narrations that speak about the role of Yemen in the final age and specific assistance to the awaited saviour of humanity, al-Mahdi (‘a); unfortunately including them is outside of the remit of this work. These narrations however, do suggest the same theory of awaiting and support to al-Mahdi (‘a) as they did to Prophet Muhammad (S), presenting a consistency of faith and commitment of the Yemeni people.

Another goal of this work is to raise awareness of the dire and tragic circumstances that exist on the ground in Yemen. Several statements and statistics from some of the leading organizations and aid agencies were mentioned in the introductions; however to summarize the situation, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) has published a factsheet about the Yemen crisis with the following eleven critical points:

1. The humanitarian situation in Yemen is still the worst in the world.
2. Around 8.4 million people in Yemen do not know where they will get their next meal from.

3. Every ten minutes a child under the age of five in Yemen dies from preventable causes.
4. Civilians are bearing the brunt of the violence.
5. Women and children are subject to widespread protection violations.
6. Approximately 3 million people have been displaced.
7. Ending the conflict is the only way to resolve the humanitarian crisis.
8. Half of all of the health facilities are damaged or unable to function.
9. Millions of Yemenis do not have access to safe drinking water and cholera could resurge there.
10. Humanitarian response faces a nearly 2 billion dollar funding gap.
11. Keeping the ports and other access channels open is crucial to deliver aid.[3](#)

According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) statement which was given on the January 21st, 2018, in the previous year, donors provided \$ 1.65 billion of aid out of the minimum \$ 2.34 billion, or 70% of the target. This demonstrates the gap in support from just one aid agency perspective. To know more about how the UN relief program is supporting the Yemeni people, you can read their Humanitarian Response Plan: January–December 2018.[4](#)

Combining the importance of Yemen in Islamic history, the love that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ had for the Yemeni people and the collective punishment meted out on them, culminating in the present humanitarian disaster – all for seeking a government free and independent from Saudi influence – should be sufficient to inspire the respected readers to deeply consider his or her commitment to solving the crisis – both humanitarian and politically. Both are urgently required – which brings about the final goal of this work, which is to seek whatever little time, effort and financial assistance that can be given to the cause of the Yemeni people.

Most in need is clean water, food, medical supplies and adequate shelter. To halt the bombing, especially civilians and key infrastructure is also a top priority, something that governments would take seriously as an agenda if their constituents were to raise it with enough vigour and care. In a world already ravaged by war, especially across the Middle East – diplomatic solutions with the Yemeni's being able to govern themselves should be an obvious and indisputable expectation.

Your buying this book has contributed financially and all of the proceeds will God–Willing, be distributed to those in need. For that I thank you on behalf of all of the people whom it will reach but will never know of your contribution. They now require your support for their safety, independence and opportunity to rebuild their lives.

In order to do this, we require an awareness of what is happening on the ground and the diplomatic solutions in the near future. To this end, I leave the respected readers with a list of names of reporters to follow for good information on the crisis, and some solutions that we can participate in, God–Willing:

- Ahmad Alghobary, Yemeni journalist based in Sana'a;
- Dr. Nevio Zagaria, World Health Organisation representative in Yemen;
- Iona Craig, Yemen/Arab Peninsula journalist;
- Joana Cook, Senior Research Fellow at the International Centre for the Study of Radicalization and Political Violence (ICSR);
- Hussain Albukhaiti, Yemen based journalist;
- Ahmed Jahaf, freelance reporter digital artist;
- Shireen al–Adeimi, Assistant Professor at Michigan State University;
- Mnar A. Muhawesh;
- Mint Press News;

I ask Allah (SwT) to accept this work and whatever goodness He sees in it, the reward goes to Marhoom al–Hajj Amirali MohamedJaffer Lakha. May it be a means of assistance and solace to those who so desperately need it; and may Allah ﷻ bring victory to those on truth and justice, and guide those who are far from it.

We read the following in the Noble Qur'an:

مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ﷻ وَمَنْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ قَلْبَهُ ﷻ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ ﷻ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَإِنَّمَا عَلَى رَسُولِنَا الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ﷻ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنِّ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ وَأَوْلَادِكُمْ عَدُوًّا لَكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوهُمْ ﷻ وَإِنْ تَعَفَّوْا وَتَصَفَّحُوا وَتَغْفِرُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ إِنَّمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَأَوْلَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ ﷻ وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ وَأَسْمَعُوا وَأَطِيعُوا وَأَنْفِقُوا خَيْرًا لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَمَنْ يُوقِ شُحَّ نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ إِنْ تُقْرَضُوا لِلَّهِ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا يَضَاعِفْهُ لَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ﷻ وَاللَّهُ شَكُورٌ حَلِيمٌ عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

No calamity befalls but by the permission of Allah. (When it happens) Allah guides the mind of the person who believes in Him (into the ways of its purification and enlightenment); and Allah knows all things very well. Obey Allah and obey the Messenger; but if you turn away (paying no heed) then (bear in mind that) Our Messenger is responsible only for the plain conveying (of the messages). Allah, there is no god (cannot be and will never be One worthy of worship) but He.

So let the believers put their trust in Allah. O you who believe! Surely some of your spouses and children are enemies to you, so beware of them; and (if you overlook their short-comings) and forgive and pardon (them), then you will find that surely Allah is a Great Protector, Ever Merciful. Verily, your possessions and your children are a means to reveal your hidden attributes. As for Allah there awaits an immense reward with Him. Therefore do your duty towards Allah to the best of your ability, and listen to Him and obey Him, and go on spending in (His cause). (If you do so) it will be best for your own selves. For only those who are rid of covetousness of their souls shall be really successful in every way. If you set apart a handsome portion of your wealth for (the cause of) Allah, then He will multiply it for you and will protect you (against your lapses); and Allah is Most-Appreciating, All-Forbearing. He is the Omniscient of the unseen and the seen. (He is) the All-Mighty, the All-Wise. (Surah al-Taghabun, 64: 11-18).

1. Yamani, Salih Ayyash al-, The Followers in Yemen, Ancient History, Its Present and Future, Dar al-Mahajjatu al-Baydhaa', Lebanon, 2011, p. 18; the Arabic text is as follows:

المَوْضِعُ يُقَامُ فِيهِ زَمَنُ الرَّبِيعِ

2. 83 Majma' al-Zawa'id, vol. 1, p. 55; the Arabic text is as follows:

(الإيمان يمانى و هم منى و إلبى و إن بعد منهم المربع و يوشك أن يأتوكم أنصاراً و أعواناً فأمركم بهم خيراً (مجمع الزوائد ج ١٠ ص ٥٥

3. <https://unocha.exposure.co/eleven-facts-about-the-yemen-crisis> [29] (Last accessed on May 15, 2018).

4. <https://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-humanitarian-response-plan-janu...> [30] (Last accessed on July 15, 2018)

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Links

[1] <https://www.al-islam.org/person/muallim-jaffer-ladak>

[2] <https://www.al-islam.org/organization/islamic-publishing-house-iph>

[3] <https://www.al-islam.org/printpdf/book/export/html/95124>

[4] <https://www.al-islam.org/printepub/book/export/html/95124>

[5] <https://www.al-islam.org/printmobi/book/export/html/95124>

[6] <http://www.themuslimvibe.com>

[7] <http://www.wfaid.org>

[8] <http://www.pennyappeal.org>

[9] <http://www.al-haqq.net>

[10] <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=Rkly0B1MA6w>

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<https://amp.theguardian.com/global-development/2017/jul/27/childrens-crisis-yemen-conflict-80-percen>

t-kids-urgent-aid-acute-malnutrition

[14] https://phys.org/news/2018-01-mass-starvation-political-weapon.amp?__twitter_impression=true

[15]

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/aug/15/saudi-led-air-strike-yemen-hospital-kills-at-least-seven>

[16]

<https://www.mintpressnews.com/in-wake-of-shameful-senate-vote-unicef-issues-new-cholera-warning-for-yemen/239553/>

[17] <https://www.al-islam.org/nahjul-balagha-part-2-letters-and-sayings/letter-45->

[18]

<https://www.al-islam.org/enlightening-commentary-light-holy-quran-vol-15/section-2-destruction-saba#surah-saba-verse-15>

[19]

<https://www.al-islam.org/enlightening-commentary-light-holy-quran-vol-20/presentation-muslims#surah-fajr-verses-6-14>

[20] <https://www.al-islam.org/enlightening-commentary-light-holy-quran-vol-20/Surah-fil-chapter-105>

[21]

<https://www.al-islam.org/enlightening-commentary-light-holy-quran-vol-20/surah-Quraysh-chapter-106>

[22]

<https://www.al-islam.org/enlightening-commentary-light-holy-quran-vol-3/section-4-christians-were-invited-spiritual-contest>

[23]

<https://www.al-islam.org/nahjul-balagha-part-1-sermons/sermon-2-i-praise-allah-seeking-completion-his-blessing>

[24]

<https://www.al-islam.org/enlightening-commentary-light-holy-quran-vol-20/Surah-nasr-chapter-110>

[25]

<https://www.al-islam.org/articles/narration-hadeeth-hudhayfah-ibn-alyaman-hasan-ibn-Muhammad-al-daylami>

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<https://www.al-islam.org/nahjul-balagha-part-2-letters-and-sayings/letter-69-al-harith-ibn-abdillah-al-awar-al-hamdani>

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[28] <http://www.duas.org/hadis-e-kisa.htm>

[29] <https://unocha.exposure.co/eleven-facts-about-the-yemen-crisis>

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