

Prophethood

The Divine outlook on the Universe and what we know of man and the world lead us to believe in the necessity of the Prophets for if there is any purpose of the creation of the Universe and if it is running on set principles, then there must be a set course of action also for man who is a part of this world and that course should be free from all defects and errors and it is that of the Prophets. If man's path is not like that he will be an irregular patch on face of the earth.

If there is any real purpose of man's coming into existence it becomes necessary that he should determine his destination and achieve an everlasting prosperity. But without the proper guidance of the true path this cannot be achieved and it is the Prophets only who can guide us to that path. Since man is apt to err and forget, he needs somebody who can warn him and guide him at every stage. Therefore, the Prophets give warnings to the society about the dangers that lie ahead of it.

If man is held responsible for his actions and his deeds will be accounted for before Allah, then he should be reminded by someone of his responsibilities, duties and obligations. And in this regard there can be no one but the Holy Prophets of Allah.

If man is supposed to build his character he must have before him a perfect example whom he should follow. In this regard there can be none except the Holy Prophets of Allah to guide him.

If a man is supposed to think of his future, then he must have someone who should explain to him of his future. In this respect also nobody but the Holy Prophets can set an example for the people.

On the contrary in the materialistic outlook on the Universe there is no such concept of Prophethood because in this form of approach there is no such program as prearranged course of action or purpose of man's creation.

According to it man has come into existence without any definite purpose or program of action and as such he will ultimately have to perish like other matter.

It is due to the Divine outlook on the Universe that the institution of Prophethood is deeply rooted in the lives of the Muslims. That is to say the Divine outlook of the Universe is the only means through which

we can reach the human and Islamic goal without any doubt and sense of uncertainty and that is the path which is the source of Allah's revelation and Infinite Knowledge, and Allah is Well-Aware of the causes of our prosperity and misfortunes.

The path which attracts mankind to itself and which is free from selfish motives and self-aggrandizement is the path of the Prophets.

We are living in this modern age of advancement of science and technology and we witness various types of crimes, corruptions and transgressions of various nations because they have abandoned the path which the Holy Prophets had directed them to follow. They have by their inventions and discoveries set up a sort of blazing fire in which they thrust the people.

In the meetings that they hold for protecting the mankind from poverty and tyrannies they exercise their right of veto. Despite the fact that there are millions of starving people in the world they spend their money in the armament race. Although there are available means of comfort and luxuries there seems to be no real comfort and peace of mind, and in order to find a relief from the agonies the people are resorting to suicide, drinking, tranquillizers, and other narcotics.

Looking at this sad and sordid state of affairs, can anybody fail to realize that this troubled world needs a straight path of salvation and an infallible guide and leader to lead the people to their ultimate destiny.

Sign of Inability to Recognize Allah

Under the guidance of our intellect we have selected the Divine outlook on the Universe and have accepted that there is a purpose of the creation. It is moving on a fixed path. All the creations are within the reach of mankind under Allah's supervision because they have been created for their benefits.

Under such a circumstance how can one believe that man who is the vicegerent of Allah on this earth and who is the most superior creature of Allah will be left in the lurch without any set principles of guidance and a straight path shown by a guide and a leader? Does this sort of wrong thinking conform to the Divine Wisdom? We can only find an answer to this from the Holy Qur'an which says:

But they failed to make the just estimation of Allah when they said: 'He did not reveal to any man anything'. (Surah al-An'am, 6:91)

Really how is it possible that Allah who has created all his creations for man can leave him alone without any proper guidance? If that be so it will be contrary to the Wisdom of Allah and if anybody thinks so he has not recognized Allah.

The importance of the Prophets and their teachings becomes clear to us when we compare the Divine ideology with the human ideology, we become aware of the defects of human ideology and introduce those ideal people, who have been guided by the teachings of the Holy Prophets, to others.

The Role of Knowledge and Intellect

Islam lays a great emphasis on knowledge and intellect so much so that it considers intellect as an inner Prophet and as such has determined rewards and punishments on the basis of intellect. The Holy Qur'an often exhorts us to use our wisdom. In many of the verses, the Holy Qur'an has addressed those who possess wisdom and power of reasoning.

Islam has given best instances for defining wisdom. It says that it is through wisdom that worship of Allah is best accomplished. In the traditions of our infallible Imams knowledge and intellect have been given more importance than anything else. Thus whenever somebody says about a man's profuse worship the Holy Imams only ask as to how that man thinks?

In all the reliable books of traditions (*ahadith*) the first chapter is about intellect and knowledge and their importance. No other school of thought except Islam has considered it worthwhile or compulsory for people to acquire knowledge and wisdom.

The extent to which Islam has given importance to knowledge and intellect during the days of the Age of Ignorance has no parallel until the present age.

Even if we find a man who spends his life in the acquisition of knowledge from the cradle to the grave, expands knowledge of all kinds from animals to heavens, to friends and adversaries and conquers the space and the heavenly bodies we shall be in need of the knowledge and wisdom of the Holy Prophets.

Necessity of Prophets' Guidance

(i) Limitation of Knowledge:

Man has a limited knowledge. The number of schools and sciences and arts is increasing day by day. Man is continuously making inventions and discoveries. To leave man on his knowledge and intellect is to leave him alone unguided because men's intellect, knowledge and thinking differ. Many serious and dangerous differences start from the learned and wise people. How then can they resolve the differences and disputes among the people?

One man considers one thing proper while the other one considers it improper according to his knowledge and mode of thinking. The fact is that man's knowledge is limited. He has no sufficient knowledge of the past nor of the future; nor is he aware of the immediate or gradual reaction to what he aims at.

How wise it is to say that as compared to man's ignorance his knowledge is so infinitesimal as a drop in the ocean or for reaching the celestial heights his knowledge is only like a small stair-case. The everyday changes and amendments made in the laws by various nations and their fickle-mindedness are the positive proof of man's imperfect and limited knowledge.

(ii) Hurdles in the Way of Recognition:

On the subject of recognition there is a discussion about the hurdles that come in its way. Though man possesses intelligence and power of reasoning, he is so entangled in the whirlpool of his innate weaknesses that he loses the tendency of knowing the truth.

The Holy Qur'an and the traditions have paid great attention to these hurdles. Anger, sexual inclinations, personal considerations, partialities and other such things are a stumbling-block in the way of one's knowing the truth.

Example: For travelling by train, bus or plane tickets are issued for the purpose of maintaining discipline and this can only be achieved if the ticket issuing person exercises impartiality, but if somebody pays more and obtains the ticket, or the ticket issuing person is influenced by personal consideration of friendship or regional or social affiliations, the issuing of tickets will not be done in a just manner.

Thus how can we entrust the job of making legislation for the society to those whose affiliations and inclinations influence their decision?

In short, man does not have the right to legislate and enact laws for the people, because he is a slave of his wishes and is not capable of recognizing the truth. The Holy Qur'an says:

The final judgement is in the Hands of Allah. He reveals the Truth and He is the best judge.

(Surah al-An'am, 6:57)

When we talk of the Islamic legislative assembly making the legislations and enacting laws we do not mean actually enacting of laws but we mean that we bring the legislations and the laws in conformity with the Divine commandments.

(iii) Knowledge Becomes Perfect After Centuries:

It is with the passage of time, that is as when time passes and the knowledge increases man understands some realities. But whom shall we hold responsible for the delay of centuries of years in knowing these realities?

For instance, it is more than half a century now that it was established that eating of pork causes the growth of pin worms in the intestines and man has come to know of this truth after a passage of several hundreds of years, but only those who became aware of the fact by Divine revelations that eating of pork is forbidden have been safe from its injurious effects for centuries.

In Islam there are dozens of other commands whose justification has been discovered after the passage of time and with the advancement of knowledge, but the followers of the ways of the Holy Prophets adopted from the very beginning the right path. But those who depended upon their researches and experiments discovered those hidden facts after centuries.

(iv) Divine Revelations and the Prophets:

Man is only able to solve his materialistic problems by virtue of his knowledge, wisdom and power of reasoning but he cannot discover the right path of eternal prosperity and spiritual enlightenment without adopting the path shown by the Holy Prophets.

(v) Conscience is Not the Only Criterion:

In answer to those people who think that man's conscience is the only guide which directs him to the right course of action and hence, it is not necessary to follow any Prophets, we should like to say that our conscience is subservient to our will and it is influenced by environment, social customs and rites, it does not lead us to the right path.

In this context the example of smoking can be cited. In the beginning smoking leaves a bad taste in the mouth of smoker but gradually he becomes used to it and starts liking it, but a right thinking man will from the very beginning reject it altogether. We also know of people who could not bear the sight of slaughtering the cattle as their conscience did not approve of this act but after the repeated slaughtering of the cattle, their conscience do experience a change.

Under these circumstances man's conscience cannot be relied upon as every man's conscience is guided by individual experience and knowledge of things. For instance if we have not seen a person committing any sin or a serious crime and we find that he is shot before a firing squad, a queer feeling is roused in our mind but a man who was in the know of this man's unpardonable deed will not be moved by emotional feelings.

But despite all this we do not altogether reject the natural and moral impact of a man's conscious. Imam says: "Prophets came to enliven man's disposition and tendencies".

However, our discussion centres upon whether can we depend only on the dictates of our conscience? The answer to this is certainly in negative.

(vi) Feeling of Uncertainty:

Another thing, which makes man feel the necessity of the Prophets and lose confidence in man made laws and regulations is the natural doubt which a man entertains in his mind. As for example man feels that he has made laws only after depending on his own knowledge and intellect and thus doubts arise on the following points:

(i) How could they then be able to fully comprehend all aspects of human nature and how could they conceive the total requirements of human beings?

(ii) How could they inculcate in themselves the spirit of human welfare?

(iii) How could they be immune from errors and forgetfulness while enacting laws and code of human conduct?

(iv) How could they ignore the interest of individual or group of individuals and how could they not have deviated from personal considerations of family or economical affiliations?

(v) How could the individuals or the society have not reacted against the laws made by them?

These are a few examples of uncertainty and doubts. These doubts have now turned into beliefs about the fallibility of those who profess to be the champions of the cause of human rights and welfare of the society.

Thus as a result of the sad experience of imperfect laws hardly anyone would appear to be satisfied and if at all in some areas these laws made by political upstarts and demagogues are being followed, it is simply for materialistic way of life or it is just because of the fear of punishment or harsh treatment by the government in power. Such people unlike the followers of the Prophets do not feel an internal love, a spirit of virtue and purity in themselves.

In fact, why should a man, who is born as a free subject, behave like a vassal? True, such considerations weaken the spirit of obeying man-made laws. This lack of confidence and disinterestedness becomes apparent when man does not find any encouragement about following these laws, because when he finds that in the event of violation he is severely punished by the court of law or other law-enforcing agencies, but he is never rewarded for following these man-made laws in his whole life.

Such a thing is in contrast with the Divine laws which have laid down severe punishments for the sinners and incorrigible defaulters on the one hand and has assured of a good reward in the Hereafter for the pious and the devout Muslims. In the Divine religion the human efforts have been so much appreciated that even if a man walks a step for a noble cause he will be rewarded for that. This characteristic only belongs to the code of conduct prescribed by the Holy Prophets.

An Example: Just imagine a host who has invited to dinner some guests but they do not know the way to the host's house and the path that they have followed has lanes and streets, and besides there are people to misguide them and also there are wild animals and the dark and horrible night! Under such a situation there will be two following alternatives left for the host:

(i) Either he should abandon the idea of giving the feast or if the meals have been prepared already, he should throw them away.

(ii) Or he should send a trusted guide with a lantern and arms to bring the guests to his home otherwise the very purpose of inviting them would be defeated. After giving this vivid example we revert to the subject matter of our discussion.

If Allah, the Lord of the worlds, Who has created the Universe for the benefit of mankind and Who has invited us to worship Him and to attain eternal prosperity, had not sent a messenger like the Holy Prophet of Islam for the guidance of mankind with all his miracles glowing like a lantern, and in one hand with the Holy Qur'an serving as a complete guide to the right path and in another the strength and the sword, the Divine invitation to us would have become meaningless, because we did not know the right path because of doubts, diabolical inclinations, the following of the transgressors and despotic rulers, and because we were apt to fall into the ditch of polytheism, ignorance, corruptions and dissensions.

The purpose of sending the Prophets to mankind was to prepare man for his journey towards his real evolution. And for every journey there is the necessity of a guide who can show him, the direction, the beginning, the path and the destination. Of all the necessities of human life the necessity of a guide is of paramount importance, as without him man would adopt wrong means and would go astray.

Hence the very purpose of the teachings of the Prophets is to show that the Universe is created for the benefit of mankind and man is created to journey towards Allah. And this evolutionary process and journey cannot be accomplished without the teachings of the Holy Prophets, based on Divine revelations.

Difference Between Man's Knowledge And Prophets' Teachings

We have already stated that human knowledge stands no comparison with the knowledge of the Holy Prophets. We should like to recapitulate all those things briefly as under:

Knowledge controls natural phenomena while the Prophets control man himself. Knowledge provides with ways and means while the Prophets furnish with the purpose of life. Knowledge sharpens our wits, while the Prophets guide us.

Knowledge brings about an outward change, while the Prophets bring about inner changes also. Knowledge broadens the mental outlook, while the Prophets cultivate dignity and exaltation.

Knowledge is a lantern, while religion is both the lantern and the path.

The scholars have difference of opinion among themselves, but the path of the Prophets is the same. Sometimes knowledge is based on conjectures, that is man thinks that he has understood a certain thing but later he knows that he had not understood anything, but the Divine revelation has nothing to do with conjectures.

We see that knowledge is expanding day by day, and yet we find that there is no decrease in corruptions and crimes.

Today when you fall sick you surrender yourself to a physician, and when your car is out of order, you hand it over to a motor mechanic.

Obviously the physician knows much more about your body ailments, and the mechanic knows more than you about the car, though he does not concern himself about it as much as you do. Therefore, it is imperative that we should submit ourselves to Allah and the teachings of His Prophets, because Allah knows more about us than we do, and is more Kind to us. The Holy Qur'an says:

Do they seek judgment of the Days of Ignorance? But who could be a better judge than Allah for those who are firm in their belief? (Surah al-Ma'idah, 5:50)

Allah knows better about us because He created us, and the Creator knows all about His creations. The Holy Qur'an says:

Doesn't the One, who is Subtle, All-Aware and who created all things, know all about them? (Surah al-Mulk, 67:14)

We quote here a fine narration from the Martyr Nawab Safawi. He said: "If you buy a thing from a factory it is necessary that the engineer who manufactured it should tell you how to use it, and nobody else has any right to give you instructions about it.

Similarly, man's position is not short of the position of manufactured articles. Hence, it is necessary that only Allah enacts laws for him as He is his Creator and, it is He who is Well-Aware of his temporal and spiritual needs and requirements and also of his future course of action and destiny in this world and the Hereafter".

Thus it is necessary that man should select for himself a path but the question arises as to how he should know that path?

(i) Should he determine it according to his own inclinations?

(ii) Or should he adopt the path others have chosen?

(iii) Or should he follow the path which the Holy Prophets have brought from Allah?

If we ponder over this matter a little carefully we shall approve only the third course, because our experience tells us that many a time we adopted a course of action but ultimately we had to abandon it after discovering our mistakes. You cannot give an example of any man who had not repented hundreds of times of what he had done in his life.

Our intellect and sense of proportion are affected by our lack of knowledge, personal weakness and sentiments, environmental influences and natural disposition and therefore we should not depend upon our own judgment in selecting the first course of action as pointed out above.

The second course of action is also not sound as the same things apply on the judgment of others like that of ours.

Thus the only course of action that remains for us to follow is the path of Allah which emanates from the Infinite Knowledge of Allah and which is shown to us through the Divine revelations by the infallible Holy Prophets of Allah and as such we cannot afford to remain indifferent to it.

The Necessity of Following the Guidance of the Prophets

There are many arguments which lead us to follow the teachings of the Holy Prophets. We give below a few examples.

(i) The Holy Prophets brought about in their times great revolutions, which are preserved in the annals of history and they moved on towards the stage of martyrdom. Their achievements were acknowledged by all including friends and foes.

They possessed high qualities of personal behavior so much so that even their enemies could not accuse them of any fault. The Prophets in support of their teachings and view-points put forward clear proofs and evidences showed miracles and created a large number of their followers.

If we consider that the Prophets' sense of duty and their fear of Allah were the motivating factors for the propagation of the Divine Message, it will be sufficient reason for us to change our course and follow their course because according to the scholars we should avoid all possible risks of loss.

It cannot be said that the possibility of loss is less, because in the opinion of even a stubborn person howsoever less the possibility of loss may be since it entails hard and eternal torment, it turns our intellect towards the search of the path of those great personalities and makes us change our own path.

(ii) People have always been saying that we should try to learn morals from the insolent people by not doing things which they do. Here if we look to the enemies of the Prophets, we shall find that men like Abu Lahab, Abu Jahl and Abu Sufyan were the arch-enemies of the Holy Prophet, and nowadays big powers are bitterly opposed to the ways of the Holy Prophets. We can now trace the truth of the course of action of the Prophets from the opposition of these Satanic powers.

(iii) The third thing which prompts us to follow the teachings of the Prophets is that there is a tendency of appreciating and adopting a good and noble thing present in man. If man tries to look at the innumerable Blessings of Allah and realizes that he has really discovered the worldly and spiritual Blessings he will at once decide to follow the path which the Creator of all these Blessings has set for us especially when we keep this truth in view that in opposition to any law-making man Allah has never kept in view His personal interest or the interest of any particular community or group of people.

He did not want anything except our welfare and prosperity. In the Holy Qur'an Allah directs us to be truthful in acknowledging the favor of His Blessings:

Quraysh should worship the Lord of this House (Ka'bah). It is He Who fed them when they were

hungry and has made them secure from fear. (Surah Quraysh, 106:3–4)

Prophets' Path–Mankind's Long-standing Desire

By his very nature man likes that law which is based on justice. He admires that type of government which is not established by a particular class or group of people. He adores only that leader who is free from selfishness and sense of superiority and who leads a simple life. Equality, freedom, simplicity, truthfulness piety, and justice are man's inherent desires.

History bears testimony that such an ideal form of government based on justice was found with only those people who had before them the teachings of the Prophets, as the inherent desires and aspirations of mankind can only be fulfilled by following the teachings of the Prophets.

This fact is proved by the glaring example of the present day forms of government which are totally void of the teachings of the Prophets and the rulers have been exploiting and sucking the blood of the poor masses in every part of the world for over centuries. They are so deeply engrossed in racial discriminations, idolatry, oppressions and similar other inhuman activities.

The Prophets in the Mirror of the Holy Qur'an

Now that through wisdom we have realized the necessity of the Prophets, we should refer to some verses of the Holy Qur'an:

A Messenger is appointed for all people. When the Messenger for them came he judged among them fairly and they were not wronged. (Surah Yunus, 10:47)

We have sent you in all Truth as a bearer of glad tidings and a warner. (Surah Fatir, 35:24)

Surely, in Our Hands is the guidance. (Surah al-Layl, 92:12)

Who is a better judge for the people whose belief is based on certainty, than Allah. (Surah al-Ma'idah, 5:50)

Say, final authority only belongs to Allah. Had He wanted He would have given you all guidance. (Surah al-An'am, 6:150)

It means that after Allah made it clear about His argument, there remains no excuse on the part of the people that they could not distinguish between the right and wrong path as guided by Allah's infallible Prophets and it is Allah who will bring those people to task as they showed indifference to the teachings of the Holy Prophets.

(That day) when you were at one end of the valley and they (the unbelievers) at the other, and the caravan below you (on the low land by the coast) you would surely have declined to fight if the

Makkans had offered you battle. But the battle did take place that Allah may end the matter which had been accomplished, so that he who had to die may perish after a clear demonstration, and he who had to live may survive in the light of positive proof, for Allah hears all and knows everything. (Surah al-Anfal, 8:42)

Indeed, there should be a clear difference between a straight path and a ditch so that we may select the right path with full freedom. The Holy Qur'an says:

The Messengers were sent to give people the glad tidings (of Allah's Mercy) and warn them (of His punishment) so that mankind would not have any argument against Allah. (Surah al-Nisa, 4: 165)

The underlying idea behind this verse is that people would have put forward an excuse of their ignorance, and for every censure or criticism against them they would have said that none had warned them. In this way the people's argument would have been justified. The Holy Qur'an says:

Had We destroyed them with a torment before the coming of Muhammad they would have said, 'Lord, would that you had sent us a messenger so that we could have followed Your revelations before being disgraced.' (Surah Ta Ha, 20: 134)

The above verse also carries the same idea as conveyed in the previous verse.

A Review of Other Forms of Thinking

Those people who consider themselves unconcerned about the Divine revelations approved of the following types of laws:

- (i) The laws made by one single individual, which are based on self-interest, personal aggrandizement, and have every kind of weakness, defect, injustice, foolishness, narrow-mindedness and scattered ideas.
- (ii) The unjust laws which are made by a particular class or group of people, e.g. the capitalists or the laborers, to suit their individual requirements.
- (iii) The laws which are made by the national assembly no matter whether they happen to be useful or not for the nation. Such types of laws are considered by the people as progressive.

From this we have understood as to who through what source has a right to make laws. We have also known that the lawmaker should possess the following qualifications:

- (i) He should have a complete and thorough knowledge of the subject and should be fully aware of man's carnal and spiritual needs and problems.
- (ii) He should be compassionate and magnanimous.

(iii) He should be honest and just and should not favor one or the other individual or group of individuals out of expediency.

(iv) He should be an honest judge and should not have in view the expediency or the interest of a particular individual or a group ignoring reality and justice of the cause.

Obviously, such a law-maker can be none except Allah whose messages, instructions and laws reach us through His revelations to the Holy Prophets. Thus the Prophets are the medium of receiving Divine messages, which they transmit to the people.

Why People Obey the Laws?

Every law becomes prevalent in a particular way. We should like to state two such ways:

(i) Ignorance and Stupidity:

People sometimes obey the laws because of their ignorance and stupidity. Allama Iqbal said very aptly: "Man has become a slave of a man like himself because of ignorance. He had within himself the ego of self-respect but he threw that precious pearl under the feet of despots like Qubad and Jamshed. He then after acquiring the slavish mentality became a creature worse than a dog for I have never seen any dog bowing down before another dog".

Islam does not approve of blind following. Many of the Qur'anic verses severely criticized the ways and means of the idolaters, who justified their action on the ground that their ancestors did the same thing. Their only plea was that their elders did the same thing. The Holy Qur'an says:

When (the faithless) commit indecent acts they say, 'We found our ancestors used to do so, and Allah has commanded us to do the same!' (Surah al-A'raf, 7:28)

(ii) Fear and Greed:

The tyrants make people obey their laws and unjust commands through threat and intimidation. The Holy Qur'an says:

(Fir'aun) said, 'If you take another god besides me, I will most certainly make you one of the imprisoned.' (Surah ash-Shu'ara, 26:29)

The despotic rulers used to attract the people through allurements just as Fir'aun gathered the magicians of his kingdom and promised them a good reward for humiliating Prophet Musa. The Holy Qur'an says:

When the magicians came they asked Fir'aun: 'Will there be any reward for us if we win?' He replied, 'You will be then my closest associates'. (Surah ash-Shu'ara, 26:41-42)

It is obvious that threat and temptation are the two strong means through which people can be made to follow the laws, and these means weaken the faculty of independent and careful action. Islam has declared about the torment of Hell and the reward of Paradise but these are not meant for the present world as the people consider them as a thing of distant future which will happen after their death.

Hence they select their path and obey the order with perfect calmness and peace of mind. There is a great difference between the two persons one of whom has to pay his debt the following day and the other has to do that after a few years. The former becomes restless and worried about his liability while the latter appears to be free from care as if he has no debt at all.

The fear of chastisement or hope of the reward on the Day of Judgement does not compel a man to perform a certain command. This is proved from the fact that despite his being aware of the promises made by Allah, man remains indifferent to his obligations.

(iii) Need and Competition: The third thing which prompts a man to obey laws is his requirements as well as his competition with other people.

(iv) Reason and Intellect: Sometimes reason and intellect play an important part in making the people obey the laws. If for instance, a policeman closes a certain route for the drivers and they know its reason they will obey his order without any grudge, but if they are not told any reason and suspect the policeman's order to be arbitrary they will definitely refuse to follow his instructions.

Islam too adopts the course of reason and intellect for making the people obey its laws. That is why sometimes it says very briefly that we should do a certain thing in order that we may imbibe the spirit of piety. As for example regarding the command of observing fast, the Holy Qur'an says:

Believers, fasting has been made obligatory on you as it was made obligatory on the people before you, so that you may become pious. (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:183)

This command in fact is for man's spiritual advantage. Similarly, in this very context the Holy Qur'an says about charity:

The example of those who spend their wealth to please Allah with firm and sincere intention is like the garden on a fertile land which after a heavy rainfall or even a drizzle, it yields its fruits twice as much. (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:265)

In many of the traditions of our infallible Holy Imams reasons and arguments for following the commands of Islam have been told, and a number of books have been written on this subject like ***Ilalush Shariya'***. Fortunately in these days of development and progress new realities and the philosophy of commands come to light.

(v) Love and Affection: The fifth reason by which one follows the commands of the other is due to love and regards he has for him even if that attachment of love and regard is false not to speak of the love

which is based on knowledge and spiritual enlightenment besides reason. The Holy Qur'an says:

But the love of the faithful for Allah is more intense. (Surah al-Baqarah, 2: 165)

These are the various ways which cause the people to obey the laws. Needless to emphasize that the best and the most rational way is the fourth and the fifth way which we have elaborated about.

In short, the best way in Islam which we should adopt is the one which is based on knowledge, wisdom, love and affection. The Holy Qur'an says:***Call (the pagans) to the path of your Lord with wisdom and good advice, and reason with them in the best possible manner.*** (Surah an-Nahl, 16: 125)

Force should be applied only in the last resort. The Holy Qur'an says:

Quraysh should worship the Lord of this House (Ka'bah), Who provided them with sustenance when they were hungry and gave them security against fear. (Surah Quraysh, 106:3-4)

Feeding and maintenance of peace are the first steps towards worship of Allah. By that means the people would become conscious of Allah's Benevolence and Mercy.

Who is Responsible for the Enforcement of Laws?

We have discussed previously that ignorance, stupidity, threat; temptation, competition etc. are not the real factors which can enforce laws. The best means are to develop one's wisdom, intellect and sense of love and respect for the one who enforces the laws.

Now we deal with the characteristics of those who are responsible for the enforcement of laws:

(i) Intellectual Maturity: No religion other than Islam encourages its followers to acquire knowledge and apply reason. That is why in Islam associating with pious scholars or touring around from country to country and to consult with one another is to broaden one's mental horizon.

In the Holy Qur'an we learn of the past history of the ancient nations, their downfall and the lives of the Prophets and the secret of their success. Ignorance, apathy and obstinacy are found in those people who have given up their power of thinking and faculty of applying their reason. According to the Holy Qur'an, the philosophy of obeying the commands and the ruination of the past stubborn nations are good lessons for ensuring the enforcement of laws.

(ii) Stirring the Sentiments: To stir up the people the law enforcing authority may take the help of their sentiments. The matter of encouragement has been presented in the Holy Qur'an to the extent that it says to the Holy Prophet in the following verses:

Collect religious tax (Zakat) from them. You would purify and cleanse them thereby and pray for them. Your prayers give them peace. (Surah at-Tawba, 9: 103)

Then he is of those who believe and urge upon one another to be patient, and urge upon one another to be kind. (Surah al-Balad, 90:17)

Man is certainly in loss, except those who believe, and do good deeds and enjoin truth on one another and enjoin upon one another to bear with patience. (Surah al-Asr, 103:2-3)

Why do you not fight for the cause of Allah or save the helpless men, women and children who cry out, 'Lord, set us free from this town of wrong doers and send us a guardian and a helper?'
(Surah an-Nisa, 4:75)

In this verse the Almighty Allah in order to persuade them to take part in jihad has referred to the sad plight of those people and children who have got into the clutches of the tyrants, and has stirred the moral sense of the people.

Yet he has not entered into 'aqaba'. Would that you knew what 'aqaba' is? It is the setting free of a slave or the feeding of an orphan relative and downtrodden destitute person in a day of famine.
(Surah al-Balad, 90:13-16)

Thus it should be borne in mind that these revelations had the real aim of rousing the people to action.

(iii) Belief in Allah and the Day of Judgment: The most important and viable factor which plays a vital role in making people abide by the laws is the Belief in Allah and the Day of Judgment. That means the emphasis is on the belief that man is the creature and servant of Allah and as such he has to be obedient to Him as he is under the surveillance of his Creator and being Allah's creature, he will have to return one day to Him and will have to account for his deeds.

This belief also means Allah will compensate him by rewarding him ten times greater than what is due to him against his noble deeds and that He will pardon his shortcomings and errors, and that his deeds and misdeeds even so small as of the size of an atom will be taken into account. Indeed such a perfect faith and belief plays an effective role in obeying the Divine commands.

(iv) Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil: When the people in a certain nation give up doing evil acts, then all the individuals of the society start enjoining good and forbidding evil. When a motor car driver goes to a wrong direction, the drivers of other cars blow the horns and kindle the lights to remind the driver of the traffic rules that he is violating and make the defaulter drive his car in a proper way. By this it is meant that the people can enforce the laws themselves.

(v) Government and Punishment: In the above-mentioned example if the driver does not pay heed to the warning of other drivers, then he will be prosecuted by police and fined. Of course sometimes punishment and a harsh treatment become necessary. But this is in no way related to the following Quranic verse:

There is no compulsion in religion. (Surah al-Baqarah, 2: 256)

Because this verse means negation of compulsion in faith and beliefs. It does not mean that we can do whatever we like otherwise hoarders, thieves and usurers can use this verse as an excuse for their misdeeds, and can say that there is no compulsion in religion and so they can do whatever they like.

Signs of the Prophets

There are three ways of recognizing the Prophets:

(i) Miracles: Whenever a man claims that he has a link with the Creator of the Universe Who possesses Infinite Knowledge and Absolute Power, he should perform such deeds and say such things as others cannot do. To prove the truth of his claim he should cause such events to happen as are beyond human power, and this will show that he has his link with the other world. Such deeds are called miracles.

A Question: How do the miracles of the Prophets differ from the skill and feats of the inventors, magicians, devout worshippers, wrestlers, and why are these people not recognized as Prophets?

Answer: The answer to this question is that the feats of these people are the result of their constant practice and exercise of a long period of time just as in the beginning an athlete lifts a small weight that an ordinary man can do but gradually by virtue of regular practice and exercise he is able to lift a heavy weight of a dumbbell which can only be lifted by several men combined.

But in the case of Prophet Saleh when the people asked him to perform a miracle by bringing a she-camel of a particular characteristic out of a mountain, he did not tell them to wait until he could practice performing that sort of deed because such extraordinary supernatural feats cannot be done even after lifelong efforts and practice.

(ii) Divine Guidance: The ways and manners of the Prophets are the result of Divine teachings and guidance. Every devotee or inventor is dependent on the guidance of a teacher or a helper but Prophets do not need any such teacher or guide.

(iii) Supernatural Powers: An expert or genius specializes in one or the other branches of science and his work is dependent upon some restricted possibilities. On the other hand the Prophets perform all kinds of supernatural acts as they derive their strength and power from Divine sources and the Divine Power is not limited so as to show one or two miracles only.

(iv) Purpose: The main objective of the experts in various fields is to entertain or please the people by their feats but the miracles of the Prophets aim at elevating the mankind making the society an excellent model, and guiding the people towards the real Power (Allah).

(v) Infallibility: The experts are apt to fall in error but the Prophets are infallible and we never find any flaw in their character. We shall deal with this topic in detail afterwards.

(vi) Miracles are Unmatchable: Magicians and other skilled persons know that their feats can be performed or repeated by others like them but the Prophets know that their miracles are performed by them owing to Divine Power and as such they openly declare and challenge that nobody can match them in such miracles.

However, there are many other differences between the Prophets' miracles and the mesmerizing skill of magicians and other such enchanters from the point of view of the nature of performance, the object of performing as well as the personality of the performer. If we ponder over this matter we will at once distinguish the Prophets from these tricksters.

Miracle is Not a Joke: The answer to the question whether the Prophets performed a certain type of miracle according to the wishes of the people is certainly a blunder. It is because in the Qur'anic verses we learn that sometimes the people expected the performance of impossible, irrelevant or damaging things from the Holy Prophets, who never paid any attention to it. We give below some examples of their irrational demands

Or bring Allah and the angels face to face with us. (Surah Bani Isra'il, 17: 92)

Here since Allah does not possess any form, this demand could not be fulfilled.

Or cause the sky to fall into pieces on us. (Surah Bani Isra'il, 17:92)

Or show us that you have a well-adorned house of gold. (Surah Bani Isra'il, 17:93)

Or show us that you have your own garden of palm trees and vines. (Surah Bani Isra'il, 17:91)

Is being the owner of a garden of vines or the house of gold the proof of having link with Allah? Were Firaun, Namrud and Qarun who possessed abundant wealth and property nearer to Allah? Were the Prophets showmen who organized public entertainments and gave demonstration of their miracles to fulfill the wishes of the people? Was the showing of miracles not meant to prove only Prophethood?(See Sermon 197, ***Peak of Eloquence***, ISP, 1984)

If a constructor builds a few houses or a script writer inscribes a few pages in order to prove his skill in construction or penmanship, is it not enough to prove his skill? Should he build the houses for everybody or write for everybody?

Apart from all these, did these people not say after witnessing the miracle performed by the Prophets that they had performed magic only? Thus, if someone is not prepared to accept truth at any cost, he will not do it despite hundreds of proofs and signs?

Are not all cells particles, leaves of trees not sufficient to prove the existence of Allah? But there is no remedy for those who stubbornly refuse to accept truth. So the purpose behind the miracles is to show the link of the Prophets with Allah to the pious and clean hearted people. However, it is not necessary

that the Prophets should show their miracles every day, every hour, and in all matters according to the wishes of the people.

We see ourselves that the lives of the Prophets were full of trials and tribulations and they surmounted all their troubles with perseverance and forbearance but they never used miracles as a means of removing the difficulties that they and their followers suffered.

The Philosophy of Miracles

Normally if a miracle is to be performed to a certain group of people such as carpenters, tailors, gold smiths etc. it should be concerned with their own field of interest. Thus in the times of Prophet Musa since witchcraft was at its height, there was the miracle of his staff as it turned into a serpent after being thrown on the ground.

Similarly in the days of Prophet Isa people were much interested in the science of medicine and treatment of diseases. Thus, the miracle of Prophet Isa was that by Divine Will he used to bring the dead back to life.

In the same way in the times of our Holy Prophet rhetorical language and eloquence were considered to be the mark of distinction and therefore one of the miracles of the Holy Prophet was the Holy Qur'an the like of which could not and cannot be produced by human skill. Thus the Holy Qur'an is the long lasting miracle of the Holy Prophet.

Salient Features of the Holy Qur'an

We have said before that for a Prophet it is necessary that he should perform one miracle or the other so as to establish the fact before the people that he possesses some supernatural power and further that the miracle should be of the kind which should be relevant to the interest of the people of the time. We now deal with some characteristic features of the miracles of the Holy Prophet of Islam:

(a) The Holy Qur'an is the greatest miracle of the Holy Prophet and it is always present in the hands of the people. On the contrary the staff of Prophet Musa or the restoring the dead to life by Prophet Isa cannot be witnessed by the people of other places or ages.

(b) The components of the miracle of the Holy Qur'an are those words by the help of which all people converse daily.

(c) The Holy Qur'an is the miracle as well as the guidance of Allah while the miracles of other Prophets were not like that.

(d) The miracles of other Prophets were miracles in one way while the Holy Qur'an according to Allama Majlisi is a miracle in fifteen ways and according to Allama Tabatabai in eleven ways and it is just

possible that in future some more aspects may be discovered about it as for instance some interpretations of *al-Huruful Muqatta'at* (the abbreviated forms) used in the Holy Qur'an have been made.

In this sacred Divine Book there are 114 chapters (Surahs), more than 6000 verses and 78000 words. The Almighty Allah in His book has warned the disbelievers against obstinacy, destructive activities, improper use of wealth, fighting, making the children orphans, spreading rumors, intimidating, and slandering etc. He has challenged them to produce a Book like the Holy Qur'an. He says:

Say, if the whole mankind and jinn were to come together to bring the equivalent of this Qur'an, they could not do so, even if they all were to help each other. (Surah Bani Israil, 17:88)

Do the unbelievers say that Muhammad has falsely ascribed the Qur'an to Allah? Ask them, 'Compose ten chapters like those of the Qur'an and call on whomever you can for help besides Allah if you are true in your claim. (Surah Hud, 11:13)

Do they say that Muhammad has invented it? (Muhammad) tell them, 'If your claim is true, compose only one chapter like it and call on anyone besides Allah for help. (Surah Yunus, 12:38)

Do they say, 'He has falsely invented it? In fact they themselves have no faith. Let them produce a discourse like it if they are true in their claim. (Surah at-Tur, 52:3)

If you look at these four verses of the Holy Qur'an that have been quoted above and ponder over them a little, you will note that Allah has many times challenged the unbelievers to produce something like the Holy Qur'an.

In the beginning the Prophet of Islam challenges the unbelievers to produce ten chapters like those of the Holy Qur'an.

Then, they have been asked to produce even one single chapter like that of the Holy Qur'an.

At last the Prophet of Islam challenges the unbelievers that it is not necessary that they produce one single chapter like that of the Holy Qur'an but let them bring one single discourse like that of the Holy Qur'an.

The Unbeaten Challenge for 14 Centuries

Despite the open challenge thrown out to the enemies of Islam nobody has as yet come forward to accept it. Arabic is not our mother tongue and we cannot therefore produce anything like the Holy Qur'an, but why are those people whose mother tongue is Arabic keeping mum? We are the followers of Islam but why do the enemies of Islam not come forward?

Still today there are many Arabic speaking people who have socialist and anti-Islamic views in Arab and

non-Arab countries and they spend huge sums of money in the budget of their countries for the propagation of their ideologies and in conspiring against the noble ideals of Islam and these very people can at last gather funds to convene Seminar in which all their brains trust and intellectual giants can take part in producing something like the Holy Qur'an but they are unable to do that.

Imam Ali is reputed to be the most eloquent personality whose eloquence in Arabic language is second to none and who right from the tender age of 10 years was acquainted with the Holy Qur'an with unabated enthusiasm, zeal and vigor, whenever in his sermons in ***Nahjul Balaghah*** even a small verse of the Holy Qur'an is quoted it becomes singularly unique in its merit and overshadows everything.

Even in the traditions of the Holy Prophet the quotations from the Holy Qur'an become singularly unique as compared to the saying of the Holy Prophet. This is the beauty of the eloquence of the verses of the Holy Qur'an that the words and phrases are the same as spoken by others who have the mastery over the language and yet the blending of its words and phrases is such that it is beyond the power of any human being to produce its equal even after fourteen hundred years.

Apart from that another astonishing thing is that the Holy Qur'an was given by an unlettered man, and the more the scientific knowledge is advancing day by day the more are the merits of the Qur'an being discovered. It is in itself an everlasting miracle.

Wherever there appears to be some difference between Divine revelations and the human knowledge the actual position is that knowledge is not real knowledge but it is a theory or an ideology and has no connection with revelation, because a true knowledge is never opposed to the Divine revelation.

There are verses in the Holy Qur'an which at the time of their revelation were prophecies and predicted the future events and it was not long time that they proved to be true.

At the time when some people were thinking that since the Prophet of Islam had no son of his own Islam would be outdated after his passing away and he would only be remembered by the name of his son who had expired during his lifetime. At this the following verse of Holy Qur'an was revealed.

Muhammad, We have granted you abundant virtue. So worship your Lord and make sacrificial offerings. Whoever hates you will himself remain childless. (Surah al-Kauthar, 108:1-3)

That is in this surah, Almighty Allah assured His beloved Prophet that He had been bestowed infinite bounties that is his Holy Progeny will expand from his most beloved and exalted and infallible daughter, Lady Fatimatuz Zahra while his enemies would perish despite their living sons. Everybody then saw that this Qur'anic verse proved to be hundred percent true.

We shall help you against those who mock you. (Surah Hijr, 15:95)

The above verse meant that Allah would defeat all conspiracies and intrigues and destroy the scoffers. We see that the Holy Prophet came out of all these conspiracies and mockeries successfully and how

his teachings and guidance changed the destinies of mankind and people swarmed round him.

Could anybody believe that after the terrible defeat of the Romans they would again become victorious. The Qur'anic verse was revealed saying that within a period of ten years the Romans' defeat would turn into a victory. The Holy Qur'an says:

The Romans have been defeated in a nearby land and after this defeat, (within a few years) they will be victorious. (Surah ar-Rum, 30:2-4)

These verses were prophecies at the time of their revelation and were signs of the miraculous Holy Qur'an. Its details are found in all authentic books.

There is another noteworthy thing. When a man begins some work he has a little knowledge and experience about it and gradually these increase and he becomes perfect in his work. But in the case of the Qur'anic revelations such a thing is not there.

That is the Qur'anic verses which were revealed in the early period of Prophethood when the Holy Prophet was of 40 years of age do not differ in meaning and purpose with those which were revealed at a later period when the Holy Prophet was of 63 years of age. All the verses are of the same tempo and style and not that some improvement was made in them gradually. All these features are the proof of the Holy Qur'an being a miracle. The Holy Qur'an says:

Had it come from someone except Allah, they would have found therein many contradictions. (Surah an-Nisa, 4:82)

The mental condition of man in general does not always remain the same in war and peace, in poverty and affluence, in honor and disgrace, in the beginning and the end of a work, etc. but the meanings of the Holy Qur'an always remain the same and there is no contradiction or discrepancy in them and that is the proof of the fact that the Holy Qur'an is a Book of Allah and not a creation of human mind.

Since it was our intention to give a brief account of the signs of the Prophets, we have avoided to dwell upon the miracles of the Holy Qur'an from the scholarly point of view. There have been startling revelations made in this Book on such subjects as the earth's rotation, earth's gravitational force, earth's spherical nature, blowing of winds and formation of clouds, movements of planets in fixed orbits, life and vegetation in other planets which human mind could not have been able to conceive for fourteen hundred years up to the last four centuries.

We have also not dealt with them because a number of books have been written and research work has been done on them, nor have tried to answer some of the questions which have been raised as for example the doubt in regard to alteration in the Holy Qur'an about which the Holy Qur'an itself has answered in several of its verses. We simply quote two of such verses:

We have revealed the Qur'an and We are its Protector. (Surah al-Hijr, 15:9)

Falsehood cannot reach it from any direction. (Surah Ha Mim Sajdah, 41:42)

On the strength of clear-cut statements in the Holy Qur'an we do not give any cognizance to unreliable and unauthentic narrations regarding the alteration of the Holy Qur'an because according to our school of thought anything which is against the version of the Holy Qur'an should be rejected outright, for it comes from ignorant friends or wise enemies who have falsely ascribed them to the Holy Imams.

Apart from that when we refer to certain narrations regarding the alteration in the Holy Qur'an we find that these narrations pertain to the difference in the recitation or to the background of the revelation of the Qur'anic verses or to those explanations and elaborations which our infallible Imams have derived from them but they do not relate to the question of the alteration in the Holy Qur'an.

Towards Understanding the Holy Qur'an

Contrary to the opinion of the people who consider the Holy Qur'an to be confined to worship, prayers, and morals, we should point out that one-twelfth part of it, (about 500 verses) relates to problems of jurisprudence, while the larger part of it deals with matters pertaining to social, political, administrative, historical, and cultural, faith and other matters.

In no other book you will find so much stress being laid on defending our rights, fighting against social evils, and bringing about peace and tranquility in the society.

The Holy Qur'an is a Book, which has laid down the code of instructions for the guidance of mankind in its most lucid style and has depicted the life of the Prophet of Islam, Prophet Ibrahim, and Asiya, wife of Firaun, as models to follow.

The Messenger of Allah is certainly the best example for those who have hope in Allah and in the Day of Judgment and who always remember Allah. (Surah Ahzab, 33:21)

O Prophet Ibrahim and those with him are the best examples for you to follow. (Surah al-Muntahanah, 60:4)

The Holy Qur'an is not the Book like any other book in the sense that it does not concern only with the mind but it is a code of moral values also. The narrations mentioned in it are not meant for pastime but are for taking lessons from them. Its historical account of the past nations is not just a history but it envisages the philosophy of the rise and fall of nations.

The Holy Qur'an is a Book which in its place is simple and easy-to-understand on the one hand and forceful and effective on the other. The Holy Qur'an is a guide which makes man reach from dust to Allah, and elevates him from corporal to spiritual heights.

The Holy Qur'an is a Book which by cogent reasoning bestows insight upon man. It shows the right path

to man by giving the accounts of the Prophets and the nations and motivates him through parables, exhortations and admonitions.

This Book also deals with the middle course between man and Allah through worship as well as different aspects of relation between man and the created beings, charity, sacrifice, and mutual cooperation.

It also shows the mutual relationship between man and nature, that is, how man conquers nature, how natural principles are kept alive, how natural tendencies are developed, how best they can be utilized, and how further researches can be continued, so that all the phenomena may be proved to be the signs of Allah and His Might.

This Book also speaks of the dealings of men with the opponents and the hypocrites. It deals with the invitation to the right path, wisdom, preaching, and reasonable arguments.

It shows how to get rid of the destructive elements including those who are stumbling-blocks in the way of acceptance of truth. It also tells us of the hard fight against the rebels and hypocrites and its reactions, and above all of the fifth columnist activities.

In the Holy Qur'an, the importance of acquiring of knowledge, character building, social structure, qualities of the guardian, code of conduct, the way of teaching and many other problems have been dealt with for instance.

- What should we learn?
- From where should we learn?
- For what should we learn?

In this Divine Book many subjects such as moral code and behavior, campaign against superstitious ideas, social, political and economical problems, military pacts, rights of family members, husbands and wives, parents and children, respect of parents etc. have been elaborately discussed.

It contains clear-cut commands about taking punitive actions against criminals and those evil-doers, who disrupt the society's peace, who create dissension among the people, who play with the life and honor of the people, and who usurp the people's properties.

The Divine Book creates such a confidence and insight in good and noble people that they feel themselves always under the benign protection of the All-Powerful, All-Knowing Allah. But these days owing to our callous indifference the position of this Holy Book has reached the extent that it is merely remembered on ceremonial occasions only as its verses are recited at inaugural ceremonies or used in calligraphic art, in architectural designs, on tombstones and domes.

Sometime the Holy Book is presented to the bride as a sign of good omen to become an essential item

of her dowry. We borrowed our system of working from our colonial masters and as such we have fallen into a ditch of moral degradation and disgrace. If our young man had learnt in his school the following Qur'anic verse, the colonial powers would not have subjugated us.

If in the morning parade of armed forces the following Qur'anic verses were to be recited as a morning prayer, the Muslim armies would never have been left to the tender mercies of the colonial powers for centuries:

Believers, do not consider the Jews and Christians as your allies. They are allies of one another.

(Surah al-Maidah, 5:51)

Believers do not expose your privacy to the unbelievers. (Surah Ale Imran, 3:118)

If the following Divine Commandment against usury is enforced all centres of interest would have been closed down:

Those who take unlawful interest will stand before Allah (on the Doomsday) as those who suffer from a mental imbalance because of Satan's touch. (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:275)

If the following Qur'anic verse had been acted upon, all the Muslim countries would have strengthened their military power to defeat their enemies and the Islamic world which constitutes one-third of the world's population would have attained its lost glory and honor:

If one party rebels against the other, fight against the rebellious one until he surrenders to the Command of Allah. (Surah al-Hujurat, 49:9)

If all the Muslims of the whole world had paid heed to the following Qur'anic verse:

They disobeyed their Messenger and followed the orders of every transgressing tyrant. (Surah Hud, 11:59)

They could have removed with their own hands those tyrants whom the colonial powers thrust on them, and would have welcomed the Qur'anic verses which exhort us not to obey the following persons:

The evil-doers (Surah al-A'raf, 7:142)

The transgressors (Surah ash-Shu'ara, 26:151)

The sinful or disbelieving person (Surah ad-Dahr, 76:24)

The ignorant (Surah al-Jashiya, 45:18) and

The mean swearer (Surah al-Qalam, 68:10)

Unfortunately, the Muslims did not respond to the true spirit of the Holy Qur'an and from Prophet Ibrahim

up to the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali the invitation to the right path has been ignored and their commands have not been followed by us in right earnest and as a consequence of that we have been passing a life of disgrace by supporting the tyrants and we lagged behind even in material and spiritual advancement and made ourselves undeserving of the Divine Justice, and above all on the Day of Judgment the Holy Prophet will protest in a complaint against us as per the Qur'anic verse:

Lord, my people had abandoned this Qur'an. (Surah Furqan, 25:30)

At this moment we seize this opportunity to refer to Imam Ali who said: "The Holy Qur'an is the safest refuge from sin and vice. It is the harbinger of peace for mankind. It honors those who accept it, guides those who follow it, protects those who act according to its dictates and it acts as a sound argument for those who speak through it.

It testifies those who claim its testimony. It supports those who support it. It brings success to those who embrace it. It is the quickest and the shortest way to salvation for those who formulate their lives according to its tenets". (Sermon 203, p. 485, ***Peak of Eloquence***)

At another place the Holy Imam says. "Fear Allah as far as the Holy Qur'an is concerned lest non-Muslims should surpass you in following its teachings". And actually it did happen.

It is this very Holy Qur'an which exhorts the Muslims to take stock of the world happenings, to travel around the world and to see things for themselves, to take lessons from the events of the past and to exchange views with people of other nations and to find out ways and means for solving the social and individual problems.

We have however seen how the Muslims because of their ignoring the teachings of the Holy Qur'an, deprived themselves of so many benefits, while others went forward winning in the race for advancement. They visited the Muslim countries and examined the causes of the weaknesses and strengths of the Muslim nations and thus became conversant with all the natural resources.

They discovered our mineral wealth and sold them out to us. This is the sort of punishment for us who have forsaken the Holy Book, ignored the teachings of our infallible Imams and became ungrateful to them.

Prophet Musa liberated his people (Bani Isra'il) from the serfdom of Fir'aun and appointed his brother, Prophet Harun in his place, during his absence, as a guide, but the people of Bani Isra'il turned ungrateful and deviated from the path of Allah that Prophet Musa had shown them and started worshipping the calf of Samri again.

When Prophet Musa returned he became much perturbed after having seen his people going back to their original creed of polytheism and became annoyed with his brother, Prophet Harun who could not do much about it than said: "O my Brother! This nation did not accept my authority.

They were slaves the other day, but today they have become arrogant after attaining freedom, and not only did they disobey me, but they were about to kill me also. They gave up their stand and adopted the ways of recklessness and revelries instead of faith, fraternity, mutual cooperation and guidance".

Since these are the factors which rob the nations of their freedom and plunge them into alien domination, we should be aware of the colonial intentions and arm ourselves with faith, fraternity and discipline.

The Holy Qur'an narrates this incident with the purpose of giving us a warning that if we adopt the ways of the people of Bani Isra'il, we too would go astray. Thus all sensible people should take lessons from such happenings, as faced by the people of Prophet Musa. What we have said is not even a fraction of what the Holy Qur'an has said.

To be brief, we will remain content with giving whatever appreciation of the Holy Qur'an that we could possibly do to give an inexhaustible account of the Holy Qur'an in a few pages of this book. The Holy Qur'an is undoubtedly the word of Allah and He has referred this Holy Book as:

- **The Light** (Surah al-Ma'idah, 5:15)
- **The Healer** (Surah Bani Isra'il, 17:82)
- **The Clear Proof** (Surah al-An'am, 6:104)
- **The Guide** (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:2)
- **The Criterion** (Surah al-Furqan, 25:1)
- **The Truth** (Surah Fatir, 35:31)
- **The Reminder** (Surah Ta Ha, 20:3)

Therefore, with these few lines we conclude this topic (the Holy Qur'an) and give below certain rules that the Holy Qur'an itself has made for its recitation.

Rules for Recitation of the Holy Qur'an

(i) According to the Holy Qur'an only the purified ones shall touch it:

None shall touch it save the purified ones. (Surah al-Waqi'a, 56:79)

Hence, one should perform ablution before the recitation of this Divine Book.

(ii) Before reciting the Holy Qur'an we should invoke Allah's protection from the mischief of the Satan, Satan's diabolic whisperings, devilish activities and dispositions which prevent man to fill his soul with the

impact of the Holy Qur'an:

When you recite the Qur'an, seek refuge in Allah from the mischiefs of Satan. (Surah al-Nahl, 16:98)

(iii) While reciting the Holy Qur'an, we should think as if Allah is directly addressing Himself to us. But it should not be so for memorizing it or quoting it in our speeches to arouse passion.

(iv) We should recite the Holy Qur'an in a way as it ought to be recited that is with clear pronunciation of words, in distinct manner, in good voice, with proper care of pauses and not in a hurriedly and unintelligible manner. As the Holy Qur'an says:

Recite the Qur'an distinctly. (Surah Muzzammil, 73 4)

(v) After reciting the Holy Qur'an one should ponder over the meaning also as the Holy Qur'an has objected to those who recite it as a formality just by hurriedly moving their lips without knowing the meaning. The Holy Qur'an says:

Do they not ponder over the Qur'an? (Surah an-Nisa, 4:82)

(vi) While reciting the Holy Qur'an, we should bear in mind the narrations of our infallible Imams about relevant verses of the Holy Qur'an as well as the background of the revelation of those particular verses as to the specific occasions so that we are not distracted from its true meaning and we do not deviate from our basic faith. We should not derive the incorrect meaning of the verse howsoever conservative or progressive it may be in outlook .

Reverting to Main Discussion: Our discussion was about the method of recognizing the signs of Prophethood and we have elaborately discussed the first method which was by means of the miracles of the Holy Prophets. Now we deal with second and third methods one by one.

The Second Method:

We can recognize the Prophets by their life, sayings, miracles and approaches. In this regard, we give an example:

When the two parties quarrel, the police takes them away to lock up and start questioning them in detail as an investigation and ask them:

1. Who are you?
2. Where did the quarrel take place?
3. When did the quarrel happen?

4. What happened then?

5. What did you say?

6. What did you do?

The investigator after making thorough inquiries knows the real facts.

Similarly we can recognize our Holy Prophet from the following inquiries:

1. Who was he?

2. Where did he live?

3. What sort of people visited him?

4. Who were the parties which opposed him?

5. How did he prove his point of view?

6. What was the basic thing he said?

7. Who were the people whom he trained?

The life history of our Holy Prophet appropriately answers the above-mentioned questions:

1. He was unlettered and trustworthy.

2. He was in the midst of the society which was the seat of idolatry, polytheism and dissension and where under the unfavorable and hostile atmosphere of illiteracy, superstitions and savagery he started his mission of inviting people to Allah.

3. He had with him such people as Lady Khadija, his beloved wife and Ali Ibn Abi Talib, his cousin brother, the two being the model of piety and devotion and who before the advent of Islam possessed high qualities of mind and soul.

4. His opponents were powerful, selfish, cruel and haughty.

5. He never deviated from his mission and remained steadfast despite tortures and deceit of the people. He carried out his mission with undaunted courage. He never promised for worldly things to the people in support of his message. Nor did he make any false claims.

6. He proved his point in the light of Divine revelations and preached the Divine commands as revealed by the Holy Qur'an.

7. He trained men like Salman, Abuzar and Miqdad to carry on his message.

Indeed, even if the Holy Prophet had not been endowed with miracles, his life, achievements and sincerity of purpose would have been enough to testify his truthfulness and the righteous cause he stood for.

The Third Method:

We can accept the sayings of the earlier Prophets as the third method of the recognition of the Holy Prophets. We can cite an example as follows:

Suppose I come to your house and claim that your house is actually my house and I am its owner and that the documents mention my name as the owner. The natural course against such a claim should be that you should take out the document and show to the people that nowhere in that document any claim is proved.

If on the contrary you become excited, start quarrelling with me, spend money and are not prepared to disprove the claim of my ownership; what decision would the people give in this case? Is your failing to give the proof and quarrelling and suffering not the proof of my claim?

The Holy Prophet came and he claimed that he was the same Prophet whose name was mentioned in Taurat and Injil. The Jews fought the battles and the Christians sustained losses. If this thing had not been mentioned in Taurat and Injil, they would have defamed the Holy Prophet by claiming that his name was not mentioned in their Scriptures.

But the enemies of Islam fought the battles against Islam and sustained heavy losses which proved that the name of Prophet of Islam was mentioned in the Scriptures but those people expunged that portion of the text from the Scriptures which contained the name of the Prophet of Islam.

Attributes of the Prophets and the Life of the Last Prophet

We will discuss briefly the qualities and the attributes of the Prophets with special reference to the life of the Holy Prophet of Islam for these have a direct bearing on our basic faith as well as on our moral conduct, deeds and general behavior.

The thing that influences man's progress and training is knowledge of history and its philosophical approach. What would be better than that we become acquainted with those who are history's most successful and infallible personages.

The knowledge of history and the life and characteristic attributes of the Holy Prophets not only leave a good effect on us but it also has a similar effects on the Prophets; because we find that whenever the Holy Prophet was confronted with some serious difficulties by way of people's oppositions, intrigues, threats and intimidations, the Almighty Allah narrated to him the similar circumstances which the earlier Prophets had passed through in their lifetime so as to console him in his anxieties.

When the Holy Prophet happened to be surrounded by the scoffers, the following verse was revealed:

They mocked the Messengers who were sent before you; thus the torment which they had ridiculed encompassed them all. (Surah Anbiya, 21:41)

This verse indicates that the Holy Prophet too should remain steadfast like his predecessors.

Furthermore against the hardships that the Holy Prophet suffered at the hands of the infidels of Makkah, the Almighty Allah revealed the following verse:

We shall exercise patience against the troubles with which you afflict us. (Surah Ibrahim, 14: 12)

In short by knowing the life history of the Prophets and their attributes we are to be greatly benefited. Now we deal with this subject in some detail.

Social Life of the Prophets

Since the best way of preaching is through action the Prophets should share the hardships and the difficulties with the people so as to set a practical example before them. That is why the Holy Prophets led a simple life like other people and shared all their difficulties. Like other people they also underwent troubles.

They would also experience captivity at the hands of their enemies, the agony as a result of the disobedience of their sons, opposition from the side of their wives, illness, penury, scoffing, taunts and several other unpleasant things. In this connection we quote below some relevant Qur'anic verses:

We sent the Messengers before you (Muhammad) and gave them wives and offspring (Surah Ra'd, 13:38)

All Messengers whom We sent before, certainly ate food and walked through the streets. (Surah Furqan, 25:20)

We sent Nuh to his people who said, 'My people worship Allah for He is your only Lord. Will you then not have fear of Him'. The chiefs of the unbelievers said to the others, he is a mere mortal like you. (Surah Mu'minun, 23:23-24)

He is a mere mortal like you. He eats and drinks as you do. (Surah Mu'minun, 23:33)

We read in the life history of the Holy Prophet that whenever he sat amongst his companions he made the sitting arrangement in a circular order so as not to make anyone occupy a seat of distinction.

And his way of sitting, putting on clothes and behavior was such that whenever a visitor happened to visit him in the Masjid he would glance over everybody sitting there but would not know who amongst

them was the Holy Prophet. This was the life of a true leader of the Islamic State.

From the point of view of vocational occupation most of the Prophets used to possess cattle, plough the fields and tend the sheep. Whenever the Holy Prophet was on a journey he would take for himself the job of collecting the fire woods for cooking meals.

Not only the Prophets but their loyal followers and disciples also used to follow their footsteps in these matters. When Imam Sajjad proceeded to perform **Hajj** he settled with the chief of the caravan of pilgrims that he would willingly take upon himself the task of doing their work himself.

Similarly once a man comes to a public bath and sees Imam Ali Riza there, but he does not recognize him. He then asks the Holy Imam to scrub his back and shoulders before his taking the bath and the Holy Imam willingly accepts to do that job. But when the man knows that he is Imam Riza he becomes extremely sorry and offers apologies to the Holy Imam. But the Holy Imam says that he would not stop until he finishes the job of scrubbing his body.

Imam Ali says: "Whenever in the battlefield we faced difficulties the Holy Prophet used to become our shelter".

Imam Ali often assisted Lady Fatimatuz Zahra, his worthy wife, in her household work.

This in brief is our mode of thinking and conduct of life, and this is how our Holy Imams behaved. We are proud to put these examples to the world at large so that those, who are posing as the champions of equality, justice and moral values, may know that they have not given a new gift to the people nor can they produce a worthy example of their leaders to follow.

Cautioning the Prophets

If the Prophets had so much love for Allah and they were so close to Allah they were also not spared of Allah's cautioning so much so that if even for a single moment they had deviated from the Will and command of Allah, afflictions would befall them. We quote a few Qur'anic verses as follows:

It has been revealed to you and to those who lived before you that if you consider other things equal to Allah, your deeds will be made devoid of all virtue and you will certainly be lost. (Surah az-Zumar, 39:65)

O Messenger! Preach what is revealed to you from your Lord. If you will not preach, it would be as though you have not conveyed the message. (Surah al-Ma'idah, 5:67)

O Had he (Muhammad) invented some words against Us, We would have caught hold of him by his right hand and cut-off his main artery. (Surah al-Haqqah, 69:44-46)

There are many such verses in the Holy Qur'an which admonish the Prophets, and on some occasions

their tone is very severe so as to prevent them from erring.

Conduct of the Prophets

When Allah told Prophet Musa that he was His Prophet and the leader of his people, the first thing he desired from Allah was that he should be endowed with a generous heart, high-spirited soul, patience, steadfastness and courage. The Holy Qur'an says:

O He said, 'O my Lord! Enlarge my breast, and make my mission easy. (Surah Ta Ha, 20:25)

What strength is that which can withstand scoffing, taunts, disgrace, subversion and unreasonable demands without the gift of courage and Divine Help bestowed by Allah? Yes, the only thing which can withstand the burden of all these hardships is patience. Allah says:

No Messenger came to them at whom they did not scoff. (Surah Hijr, 15:11)

O Similarly no Messenger came to those before them but they said: 'He is a sorcerer or a mad man'. (Surah Zariyat, 51:52)

But as to our most exalted of the Prophets, the Holy Prophet of Islam the pagans called him by various names such as poet, or sorcerer, but according to the Holy Qur'an as he was the model of high morals, compassion and mercy he bore all these things with patience and perseverance, for had it not been so, the very mission of his Prophethood would have not been brought to a successful completion. The Holy Qur'an says:

O Only through Divine Mercy have you (Muhammad) been able to deal with your followers so gently. If you had been stern and hard-hearted they would all have deserted you a long time ago. (Surah Ale Imran, 3:159)

Whenever any of the wives of the Holy Prophet misbehaved towards him, his companions would suggest her being turned out of the house, but he would say that he ignored the shortcomings of his wives after taking into account their good qualities also.

The Holy Prophet used to pray for the salvation of his people. He used to consult the people on certain matters, too. He treated them with compassion and he used to care for giving them proper guidance and training. The Holy Qur'an says:

We have not sent the Qur'an on you so that you should be burdened, but it is an admonition for him who fears. (Surah Ta Ha, 20: 2)

Perhaps you will grieve to death if they disbelieve this Book! (Sura al-Kahf, 18:6)

As knowledge increases the importance of its value is also increased. The Holy Prophet was above all

social and family prejudices as he only acknowledged reality and he made no distinction between the poor and the rich; also he was not daunted by fear and intimidation.

The Holy Prophet was sometimes found worshipping Allah in the Cave of Hira; inviting people to Allah on the top of Mount of Safa; drawing his sword against the enemies; carrying bricks and mortar for building the Masjid at Quba. At long last he conquered the city of Makkah.

But all these multifarious activities of the Holy Prophet did not bring about any change in his mode of thinking, doing, and saying. He was always guided by the realities which he had himself discovered within himself and thus devoted himself to his dedicated mission.

Selfless Devotion:

One of the attributes of the Prophets is their selfless devotion to the cause of Divine mission. These chosen servants of Allah did not pin their hope on anybody except Allah. In the 26th Surah (ash-Shura) from verses 109 to 180 of the Holy Qur'an a gist of the messages of Prophets Nuh, Hud, Salih, Lut and Shu'ayb is given that all of them said one and the same thing that their reward was only in the Hands of Allah.

The Holy Prophet also would always declare that he would not expect any return from his followers except that they should follow the path of Allah. This is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an as follows:

Tell them, 'I ask no recompense for preaching to you, except that whoever wants should choose the way of Allah'. (Surah Furqan, 25:57)

This is the kind of recompense which benefits the people themselves and not their benefactor. It is like a teacher who tells his pupils that his recompense lies in their memorizing the lessons or each one of them should collect firewood for the fireplace so as to warm the class room. Here again this kind of recompense benefits the pupils themselves in return. But when the Holy Qur'an says:

(Muhammad), say, 'I do not ask you for any payment for my preaching to you except the love of my kindred' (Surah ash-Shura, 42:23)

It means that the love of the infallible leaders is the guarantee for keeping oneself on the path of Allah and His chosen Prophets.

Here again when we see that the recompense of the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet is linked with the love of the Holy descendants of the Holy Prophet it is also linked with the following of the path of Allah.

This means that the path of the infallible Imams is not different from the path of Allah and both are linked together as the Book of Allah and the Holy Progeny of the Holy Prophet are inseparable from each other.

In short, the Prophets never demanded anything from their people in return for their accepting and following their (the Prophets') message. The Holy Qur'an says:

Say, whatever reward I ask you (for my preaching) will be for your own good. No one can reward me except Allah. (Surah Saba, 34 47)

As we read in history the Prophets not only did not expect anything of material benefit from their people but they also did not promise their people any such material gains.

Some people came to the Holy Prophet and said to him: "If we accept you as Prophet of Allah and profess Islam, would you then give your status and authority to us after you?"

The Holy Prophet replied: "We talk about Prophethood and the worship of Allah which concerns only Allah and not me".

According to Imam Ali they are different people who want to allocate the share of the milk and who consider appointments, dismissals, sharing of profits as the main purpose of worldly gains and to rule over the people by force.

But it is only the personality of the Holy Prophet who against all the promises of worldly gains says to the infidels: "By Allah! Even if you place the sun on my right hand and the moon on my left hand or make me the master of the entire Universe, I shall never deviate from my path". (*Sirah Ibn Hisham*, vol. I, p. 265)

In fact, speaking things in such clear-cut words is the special trait of the Prophets.

Infallibility

One of the special characteristics and personal distinctions of the Holy Prophets is their infallibility. This attribute of "Infallibility" is that quality by which man by virtue of his belief, knowledge and faith reaches such an exalted height of human perfection that with full freedom he keeps aloof from every sin, so much so that he does not even think of committing any sin.

Some people wonder that a man may not even conceive at committing any sin. We can very easily solve this problem. The explanation is that even like an ordinary man you yourself are immune from committing any error or sin that is you have not thought of committing them either. If you do not agree to this, then you should answer the following question:

(i) Have you ever gone before the people completely nude?

(ii) Have you ever set yourself on fire?

(iii) Have you ever thrown yourself down from the top of a tower?

(iv) Have you ever killed a person who was a worshipper of Allah?

The answers to all these questions will be in the negative. It is because we have already presupposed the dangerous consequences of these actions and have made ourselves certain about that in our mind as well as in our heart and we have actually convinced ourselves about it.

Hence, if we really know from the depth of our heart that the backbiting that we are doing today will assume such a horrible form on the Day of Judgment, we will never think of backbiting. The only fault with us is that our knowledge does not go deep down to our heart and though we are mentally aware of it yet we are not certain about it. That is why knowing that doing a certain thing is bad, we do it.

Let us consider the following example:

We know that a dead body cannot bite us nor can it move its limbs but still we are frightened to pass the night beside it in the same room where it is lying, knowledge has not reached our heart. Our knowledge has not as yet reached a state of certainty. But on the contrary we note that the person, whose profession is to bathe the dead bodies would pass his night with that dead body without any fear or fright.

Here lies the difference. We only know but we are not sure but the other person knows as well as believes that the dead person cannot do any harm to anybody.

From this example, it is proved that the reason why we can protect ourselves from committing any sin is our faith, perfect knowledge and conviction.

Signs of Conviction

Once the Holy Prophet after the morning prayers attended the people, he saw a young man in a sad plight. He was pale, his eyes sunk in their sockets, and hair disheveled. The Holy Prophet enquired of him about his condition. The man replied: "At this moment when I am before you, I am in a state of conviction".

The Holy Prophet became surprised with this remark as the young man had not said that he had knowledge or that he knew, but had said that he had conviction. The Holy Prophet asked the young man the sign of his conviction.

He said: "I have become sure of the Day of Judgment to that extent that it has robbed me of my sleep and I visualize Hell with its blazing fire on one side and on the other Paradise with all its benevolent things, the justice of Allah and the crowd of people and in the midst I find myself also present there for the account of my deeds".

The Holy Prophet accepted the young man's argument. The young man then requested the Holy

Prophet to pray for him that he might die a martyr in the path of Allah. His request was accepted by the Holy Prophet. After sometime that young man participated in a battle in which he attained martyrdom.

Proof of Infallibility for a Divine Leader

We give below a Persian proverb as a proof of infallibility: "Salt preserves things from getting decayed, but what will happen on that day when salt itself gets decayed".

We need a leader to guide us because we are apt to err and commit wrong. But what will become of us when our leader will also err and commit wrong! Under such a situation that leader himself will need a leader who should be infallible.

It is also necessary that Allah should make the people know His commands so that they should not have any excuse for their faults. This thing cannot be done without the guidance of an infallible leader.

Thus the responsibility of an infallible leader cannot be entrusted to one who himself is liable to commit wrong and who is not safe from committing sins. It will, therefore, be a great injustice to the people if they are allowed to follow a leader who is not safe from committing wrong. Moreover, is it not man's disgrace, if he is put under the leadership of a sinner?

In this context, the Holy Qur'an narrates the following invocation of Prophet Ibrahim:

When his Lord tested Ibrahim's faith and he satisfied the test, He said, 'I am appointing you as the leader of men.' Ibrahim asked, 'Will this leadership also continue through my descendants?' The Lord replied, 'The unjust do not have the right to exercise My authority'. (Surah al-Baqarah, 2: 124)

In the Holy Qur'an we have been told at a number of places that we must obey the Holy Prophet. Therefore, this Divine commandment is the proof of the infallibility of the Holy Prophet because if the Prophets were also liable to err like other human beings then the Divine commandment on the obedience of the Holy Prophet would have been a conditional one just as in the case of the Divine commandment on the obedience of the parents have been made conditional despite its being obligatory. There are certain occasions when the off-springs are asked not to obey their parents at all. The Holy Qur'an says:

If they (the parents) try to force you to associate with Me that of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them. (Surah Luqman, 31: 15)

By comparison you will realize that the conditional obedience of the parents is one thing and the unconditional obedience of the Holy Prophet is another, because the Prophet is at such a stage of infallibility that his obedience is not subject to any condition. The Holy Qur'an says about the Holy Prophet:

Your companion is not in error nor has he gone astray. He does not speak out of his own desire. It is a revelation which has been revealed to him. (Surah an-Najm, 53:3-4)

Points to Ponder

(i) Some people take certain Qur'anic verses as an excuse for doubting the infallibility of the Prophets. But according to the Qur'anic verses and the narrations as well as logical reasoning which we have with us, the infallibility of the Prophets is not at all affected by cautioning and instructions which are mentioned in the Holy Qur'an about the Prophets as these things by themselves can open the way for the infallibility of the Prophets as well as for putting a check on treating the Prophets as extraordinary supernatural beings.

(ii) Lest the enemies should get a chance of finding fault with the Prophets and shake the belief of the believers, it is necessary that the Prophets should be innocent and infallible not only in matter of conducting their mission but also in all their beliefs and deeds. They should be absolutely free from any possibility of doing any wrong or committing any major or minor sin knowingly or inadvertently. They should not even fall into forgetfulness. The Holy Qur'an says:

Say: 'To Allah belongs the consummate argument. Had He willed He would surely have guided all of you aright'. (Surah al-An'am, 6:150)

Naturally, if the Prophets and the Imams had not been infallible, people would have found contradictions and variations in their words and actions and under such a situation would it be correct to say that Allah fulfilled His covenant for the people so as not to give them a plea against Allah? Thus the Prophets as well as the Imams must be infallible.

(iii) Infallibility of the Prophets does not come into conflict with the invocation and repentance of the Prophets but these are done only because the Prophets know that Allah is All-Aware and He knows their thoughts and intentions and thus they feel embarrassed with even all those actions which actually do not come under the definition of wrong or sin.

It is like this that if I cough in my house I do not feel any embarrassment, but if I am facing a television camera for delivering a lecture on Qur'anic lesson I shall become embarrassed even if I start coughing for once only, although coughing is not a sin. The feeling of embarrassment is because I find myself coughing before the people.

The saints consider themselves always before Allah and they unlike others are very much conscious of even a minute action of theirs and that is one reason why Prophets and the infallible Imams are always afraid of Allah and they always beseech Allah for His forgiveness.

Some Special Merits of the Prophets

- From the Qur'anic verses and the narrations we can enumerate some special merits of a Prophet of Allah:
- He should be the most learned man of his time.
- He should not suffer from any loathsome disease.
- He should be a personification of personal strength, capability, forbearance, moral conduct and noble attributes to the extent that nobody should surpass him in these qualities.
- He should not enjoin anything which is contrary to reason.
- The preceding Prophets had already prophesied of his Prophethood.
- He should understand people properly and thoroughly.
- He should be well-aware of human psychology, inclinations, weaknesses, passions, and should know how to guide them. He should know the social conditions, the causes of rise and fall of the society, and for the welfare of individuals and the society he should adopt effective measures with wisdom.
- His teachings should comply the natural demands and should be compatible with the teachings of preceding Prophets.
- He should come from noble parents.
- He should not be erratic and forgetful. He should be very submissive in offering his prayers. He should be bold and brave.

We can find the specimens of all these qualities and virtues of the Prophets in innumerable verses of the Holy Qur'an and in the traditions and narrations.

Submission to Allah

Contrary to all those people whose mode of thinking, action and deeds are influenced by even ordinary social status, the Holy Prophet despite being on the most exalted position of Prophethood was very submissive in obeying the commands of Allah as well as very humble in his behavior towards the believers.

It is a well-known fact that the Holy Prophet used to take the lead in greeting the children and doing his personal work with his own hands whether in home or on journey. In the battlefield he used to be nearer to the enemies than anybody else. The Holy Prophet often used to say:

I am only a human being like you. (Surah al-Kahf, 18:110)

The Holy Prophet never exerted pressure on anybody because of his superior authority. The Holy Qur'an says:

Allah would never give the Book and authority of Prophethood to any man who would tell others to be his servants instead of being the servants of Allah. He would rather tell them to worship Allah for they had been teaching and studying the Book. (Surah Ale Imran, 3:80)

The Prophets also do not have the right for interceding for their sons just as we know of Prophet Nuh whose intercession was rejected by Allah. The Holy Qur'an says:

Nuh prayed to his Lord saying, 'Lord, my son is a member of my family. Your promise is always true and you are the best judge'. His Lord replied, 'He is not one of your family. He is a man of unrighteous deeds. Do not ask Me for that which you have no knowledge of. I advise you not to become an ignorant person. (Surah Hud, 11:45-46)

Knowledge of the Unseen:

One of the special traits of the Prophets is their knowledge of the unseen. In this behalf the Holy Qur'an says:

O He knows the unseen and He does not allow anyone to know His secrets except those of His Messengers whom He chooses. (Surah Jinn, 72:26-27)

A Question: We read in the Holy Qur'an that nobody but Allah knows the unseen:

He has with Him the keys to the unseen which no one knows besides Him. (Surah al-An'am, 6:59)

Hence, how one can attribute the knowledge of the unseen to the Prophets and the Imams?

Answer: Basically the knowledge of the unseen rests only with Allah and if a Prophet or an Imam knows anything of the unseen, this knowledge comes only from Allah. It is not like that a Prophet or an Imam like Allah is himself the knower of the unseen.

In connection with an incidence when one of the wives of the Holy Prophet asked him as to how he knew about it, the Holy Prophet said as per Qur'anic verse:

The Prophet told a secret to one of his wives telling her not to mention it to anyone else. When she divulged it, Allah informed His Prophet about this. The Prophet told his wife part of the information which he had received from Allah and ignored the rest. Then she asked, 'Who informed you about this'. He replied, 'The All-Aware and All-Knowing One has told me'. (Surah at-Tahrim, 66:3)

Furthermore, the knowledge of the unseen is of two kinds

(i) Those things about which only Allah has the Knowledge and He has not passed on this Knowledge to anyone else as we often recite in our supplications: "O Allah! For the sake of the Knowledge of the unseen which is known to You only . . .".

(ii) There are some other matters which are concerned with knowledge of the unseen and the saints are endowed by Allah with their knowledge.

This knowledge of the unseen, obedience of Allah, infallibility, miracle, perfection, devotion, weeping, implorations, etc. are the things which distinguishes the Prophets from ordinary human beings and puts them on an exalted position.

We have heard of reformers whose sole aim in life was to carve out a social environment in which all and sundry should be dutiful and should perform noble deeds. But it is the Prophets only who with their special attributes and the knowledge of the unseen are distinct from all such reformers.

After elaborating the special traits and attributes of the Prophets in general, it seems appropriate now that we should talk about the life and the attributes of the Holy Prophet of Islam. It is hoped that his followers will draw inspiration from his life.

[A Glance at the Life of the Holy Prophet](#)

Among all the Prophets, the Holy Prophet is the only Prophet about whose life even ordinary matters have been recorded in history and this is a great accomplishment of the Muslim nation because the biographical sketches of other Prophets have been written after a lapse of considerable time with alterations and incorrect accounts by some of their followers.

However on the life and attributes of the Holy Prophets many books were written in Arabic language some details of which have been mentioned in our discussions on the signs of the Prophets. Thus it seems pertinent to give a brief account of the conduct and character of our Holy Prophet.

It would be profitable for all the Muslims to know the details of the Prophet's character, morals, and private life. Whatever is written in the following pages has been derived from *Biharul Anwar*, vol. XVI; *Sirah-i Ibn Hisham*, *Kuhlul Basar*, *Tafsir al-Mizan*, vol. VI and other authentic books.

His Compassion and Sympathy: Before the advent of Islam, it so happened that people were worried about the appalling conditions of famine. Abu Talib, the uncle of the Holy Prophet was also equally perturbed because he had a large family to support and his resources were limited.

The Holy Prophet decided with his uncle Abbas to go to Abu Talib and in order to lessen the burden of his daily expenses, each one of them should take one son of Abu Talib. Thus Abbas took Ja'far and the

Holy Prophet brought Imam Ali to his house and became his guardian from his very childhood. This was one example of the compassionate nature of the Prophet of Islam.

His Morals

The Holy Prophet used to sleep on the floor on a simple mat. He cobbled his shoes and patched his clothes himself. He smiled away any disgraceful remark. He would go to buy things for himself.

Anas bin Malik says, "For years I was in the service of the Holy Prophet but never even for once did he reprimand me on my fault. The Holy Prophet milked the she-goat himself, greeted the children first and accepted the invitation of his slaves. He would never make a disparaging remark about the food which was not of his liking.

He was particular about cleansing his teeth with Miswak, applying perfume and taking bath on Fridays. While going out of the house he put on white dress. While taking his food, he would never lean upon anything so that there might not be any sign of pride when he was sitting before Allah's bounties.

His Family Life

Despite the fact that most of the wives of the Holy Prophet were of advanced age, mothers of orphaned children, and were of varying nature and disposition, he treated them nicely as is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an: **Treat them kindly** ... (Surah an-Nisa, 4:19).

Though some of his wives treated him so badly that his companions used to advise him to leave them for the good. But he used to say that the shortcomings of a woman should be weighed with some of her good qualities also. One should not divorce one's wife on her minor fault or slight unpleasant behavior because women possess some good qualities and noble attributes also.

The Holy Prophet said: "Anyone who is affluent with regard to wealth and property but still remains stingy with his wife and children is not amongst us". (*Mustadrak*, vol. II, p. 643)

After the passing away of his beloved wife, Lady Khadija the Holy Prophet treated all those ladies who were her intimate friends with high esteem and favour.

The Holy Prophet used to say: "I treat my family members better than anyone else". (*Wasa'il*, vol. XIV, p. 122) 285

The Holy Prophet observed justice with his wives so strictly that even during his serious illness his bed was made each night by regular turns in every wife's chamber.

His Feelings For the New-born

A newborn baby was brought to the Holy Prophet for blessings or for giving him a name. The new-born passed urine in the lap of the Holy Prophet and the parents as well as the people standing around became very much embarrassed. At this the Holy Prophet said: "Don't mind. The little one is getting frightened of your making a noise. I shall have my clothes washed". (*Kuhlul Basar*)

His Initiative in Greeting the Children: The Holy Prophet used to call the name of the boys and girls with respect. He gave special instructions about respecting the girls. In his code of conduct the injunction for giving respect to the females is present. This is the view of the Holy Prophet. But once when on the birth of a female child the father of the child became so furious that his face turned black. The Holy Qur'an says:

When the glad news of the birth of their daughter is announced to them, their faces turn gloomy and black with anger. (Surah an-Nahl, 16:58)

Under such ghastly condition of the society, respect for the sons and daughters particularly of the daughter was a conspicuous thing. The Holy Prophet said: "The best of your offsprings are the daughters, and the sign of a woman's auspiciousness is that her first-born is a daughter". (*Mustadrak*, vol. II, p. 614-615)

A companion of the Holy Prophet was sitting with him. When he heard the news of the birth of his daughter he became displeased. The Holy Prophet then said to him: "When earth is her abode, the sky is her shelter and her livelihood is secure with Allah, why have you become so unhappy? She is like a flower spreading its fragrance and she will stand you in good stead". (*Wasa'il*, vol. XV, p. 101)

A man told the Holy Prophet that he had never kissed his child. The Holy Prophet said: "This is the sign of your cold bloodedness".

In the matter of giving equal treatment to all the children, the Holy Prophet said: "If you kiss a child before another, you should kiss the other one also".

He Was Not an Opportunist

One of the sons of the Holy Prophet was Ibrahim who expired early in his infancy. When after his death there happened to be a solar eclipse, people thought it was as a consequence of the demise of the son of the Holy Prophet. At this the Holy Prophet assembled the people and said: "The occultation of the sun was not due to the sad demise of my son, Ibrahim".

Thus the Holy Prophet got the people saved from falling into ignorance, superstition and undue love. On such an occasion if there had been a politician in place of the Holy Prophet he would have given a wrong interpretation of this incident and would have aroused the people to maintain undue love.

He Was Always on the Lead

In the Battle of Ahzab all the enemies of Islam, including the infidels, idolaters and hypocrites decided to wipe out Islam altogether and for this purpose they prepared to make a heavy attack on Madina.

The Holy Prophet decided to fight against the enemies and with the consultation of his companions it was decided that a trench might be dug around the city of Madina as a first measure of defense. On this occasion the Holy Prophet took the lead in digging the trench and he engaged himself in this task until the trench was ready while some of the Muslims had taken leave and some others had gone away without taking permission.

His Hospitality

Salman Farsi, the loyal companion of the Holy Prophet said: "I happened to visit the Holy Prophet at his house. He offered me the same pillow which was the only one in his own use". Such a treatment of his visitors was not particularly shown to Salman Farsi but it was for every Muslim.

One day each of the foster brothers and sisters of the Holy Prophet separately came to the Holy Prophet. He treated the sister with greater respect than the brothers. When the people inquired about this distinction, the Holy Prophet replied: "As this sister used to respect her parents, I have greater regard and love for her". (*Biharul Anwar*, vol. XVI, p. 281)

Sometimes the guests of the Holy Prophet overstayed their welcome even after finishing with their meals and got themselves busy in conversation but still he tolerated it. At last a Qur'anic verse was revealed saying:

If you are invited, you may enter, but be punctual (so that you will not be waiting while the meal is being prepared). When you have finished eating, leave his home, and do not sit around chatting among yourselves. This will annoy the Prophet and he will feel embarrassed to tell you.

(Surah al-Ahzab, 33 53)

His Extreme Dedication

The Holy Prophet used to wake up from his sleep after midnight. After prostrating himself before Allah, brushing his teeth with Miswak, and reciting a few verses of the Holy Qur'an, he got himself busy with the worship of Allah. Some of his wives used to say to him: "You are innocent and infallible and yet you do a lot of imploration!" The Holy Prophet would answer them by saying: "Should I not try to be a grateful servant of Allah".

During the month of Ramazan, the Holy Prophet used to free his slaves. While offering prayers he trembled with fear. When he offered his prayers alone he prolonged his bowing and prostration but in

congregation he shortened them. One of his companions who was appointed to lead the congregational prayers was instructed by him to recite a short Surah after Surah *al-Hamd* so as not to prolong the duration of the prayers in congregation.

His Insight and Sagacity

While solving any problem, the Holy Prophet used to apply his foresight, and sense of justice.

When the different tribes of Arabia rebuilt the Holy Ka'ba, the dispute arose as to which tribe should install the sacred Black Stone (*Hajar ul aswad*) at its original place. This dispute was going to create an ugly situation. A man suggested that whoever came to the Masjidul Haram first of all in the early morning should be made to arbitrate between them.

The following morning the Holy Prophet was the first to come to the Holy Ka'ba and hence he was accepted as an arbiter in this dispute. The Holy Prophet then ordered them to bring a sheet of cloth.

When the cloth was brought he placed the sacred Black Stone in the middle of the sheet of cloth and asked every chief of the tribes to lift it from each corner and carry it near the Holy Ka'ba. Thereafter, the Holy Prophet picked up the sacred Black Stone and placed it at its original place. It was because of the Holy Prophet's insight as well as the sense of justice that the dispute was settled amicably.

The Holy Prophet in the Battlefield

Imam Ali says: "The Holy Prophet used to be always on the forefront in the battlefield to face the enemy. And in the Battle of Trench when it was decided to dig a trench around the city of Madina, the Holy Prophet was the first to pick up the pickaxe for digging the earth and he continued digging the trench along with his followers until the trench was completely ready".

The Holy Imam further says: "In the battlefields whenever we Muslims were faced with some difficulty, we took shelter of the Holy Prophet and sought his help and protection".

His Decisiveness

The Holy Prophet was never prepared to ignore his ideological program or any of its principles for the sake of increasing the number of his followers. Some people from Ta'if came to the Holy Prophet and said: "We can profess Islam provided that you give us permission for idol-worship and exempt us from offering prayers".

The Holy Prophet rejected their conditions straightaway. He did not care to increase the numerical strength of his followers at the cost of the fundamental principles of Islam. The Holy Prophet was not like those who would compromise on principles.

His Piety and Devotion

Once the Holy Prophet gave twelve Dirhams to Imam Ali to buy a dress for him (the Prophet). The Holy Imam went to the bazaar and brought a dress costing the same amount of money. The Holy Prophet seeing the dress said: "If the dress had been more simple, it would have been better. If the shopkeeper agrees to take back the dress and return it to him". The Holy Imam returned the dress and brought back twelve dirhams to the Holy Prophet.

This time the Holy Prophet went along with Imam Ali to the bazaar. On the way he saw a slave-girl who was crying. The Holy Prophet asked her the cause of her trouble. She said: "My master gave me four dirhams to buy things from the bazaar but I lost that amount of money. I am afraid of going back home because of my master".

The Holy Prophet gave that girl four dirhams and bought a dress for himself for four dirhams. On his way back home he saw a man who was without proper clothes. The Holy Prophet gave his dress to this man and came back to the bazaar to buy another dress for the remaining four dirhams left with him.

On his way back again the Holy Prophet saw the same slave-girl still standing there. She lamented that since she was already late for home she was scared of her master who would beat her for this.

The Holy Prophet accompanied the slave-girl to her master's house. In deference to the Holy Prophet's coming to his house the master not only excused the slave-girl but also freed her. The Holy Prophet then said: "Those twelve dirhams were so auspicious that they enabled two needy ones to clothe themselves and a slave-girl to become free". (*Biharul Anwar*, vol. XVI. p. 215)

Indeed if we care to cut down our personal expenditure we can help the needy to procure some of their basic needs.

The Holy Prophet owed a few dirhams to a Jew. One day he came to the Holy Prophet and demanded his money but the Holy Prophet had no money with him to pay off his debt. The Jew said: "I will not leave this place until you give me my money back". He stayed there till it was the Zohr (midday prayers) time. People offered their Zohr prayers.

Then the time for evening, dusk and night prayers came and the Jew was still there to pester the Holy Prophet. At last the people became annoyed. But the Holy Prophet said: "We are not supposed to be unjust to him".

Consequently the Jew who shadowed the Holy Prophet until the following day embraced Islam, and distributed his money in charity in the name of Allah. He said: 'I was not actually meaning to harm the Holy Prophet, for my intention was to test the Holy Prophet's high qualities of character ".

His Loyalty

Ammar Yasir, one of the celebrated companions of the Holy Prophet narrates: "Before the announcement of the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet, he and I together used to tend the cattle. One day I suggested to the Holy Prophet that a certain place was most suited for tending our cattle and we should go over to that pasture. The Holy Prophet agreed.

On the following day I found that the Holy Prophet had already reached there but he was holding his sheep off and was not allowing them to graze. On my asking the reason for this the Holy Prophet said: "There was an agreement between us that both of us together would graze our sheep and thus it was not proper on my part to graze my sheep without you doing the same at the same time".

His Method of Teaching

While teaching the people Islamic faith and moral conduct or answering questions, the Holy Prophet used to repeat his instructions three times so as to drive the idea home.

His Sheltering the Enemy

In the eight year of the migration, when the Holy Prophet left Madina at the head of an army and conquered Makkah? he entered the Holy Ka'ba and smashed up all the idols in it. Safwan, one of the chiefs of the idolaters, who belonged to the tribe of Umayya fled away to Jeddah which was at a distance of a few miles from Makkah. Some people interceded with the Holy Prophet for his pardon.

The Holy Prophet then sent his head-gear to him so that he should be under protection while entering Makkah. Safwan returned from Jeddah and asked for a grace time of two months until he could think of embracing Islam. But the Holy Prophet gave him the grace period of four months instead of two months.

Safwan remained with the Holy Prophet on his many travels and after finding himself enchanted by the personality of the Holy Prophet and move by the powerful force of his preachings, voluntarily professed Islam as his religion. The Holy Qur'an says:

If the pagans ask you to give them refuge, give them asylum so that they may hear the words of Allah. Then let them return to their towns for they are ignorant people. (Surah at-Taubah, 9:6)

According to Islamic jurisprudence in Jihad (the Holy War against the infidels) the giving of shelter and asylum to infidels have been stressed.

His Behavior with the Enemies

On the occasion of the conquest of Makkah, the Holy Prophet pardoned even his blood-thirsty enemies

and not only that he even pardoned the unbelieving woman who had conspired to kill him by cooking for him a poisoned meal.

Once an enemy of Islam happened to come to the Holy Prophet and instead of greeting him with the celebrated Islamic Greeting "**Assalam u Alayka**" (Peace be in you) he said "**Assamu Alayka**" (Death be on you) and insolently repeated these words several times, but despite possessing the means for revenge, the Holy Prophet replied back by saying "**Wa Alayka**" (Same be to you).

Some of those who were present there became very furious at the insolent behavior of the enemy. They said to the Holy Prophet: "Why did you not retaliate upon your enemy?" The Holy Prophet replied: "I reciprocated his greeting in his own words that is, "The same on you" which he had wished for me".

Affectionate Treatment of His Friends

While on a journey people used to divide work among themselves and the Holy Prophet, too, had his work to do himself. He used to collect the firewood for cooking food. Despite his worthy companions desire not to let him work, the Holy Prophet would not agree to it.

Once when the Holy Prophet alighted from the camel's back and went to tether the animal to a tree, some companions rushed forward to do that little job but the Holy Prophet did not accept the help of the companions and instead said "You too should not throw yourself upon the help of other".

Some Special Traits of the Holy Prophet

- The Holy Prophet readily accepted the invitation of the slaves and he considered it necessary to hold them in high regard like other notables of the tribes. However he would entrust their leadership to those who were held in respect by them.
- The Holy Prophet was not mindless of good or bad behavior. He used to encourage as well as admonish people as the occasion demanded. He was always much concerned about the proper guidance of the people In this context the following Qura'nic verse was revealed to him:

We have not revealed the Qur'an on you that you should be burdened, but as admonition for whom who fear. (Sura Ta Ha, 20:2)

- In a gathering the Holy Prophet gave so much individual attention to each other and every person that he thought that he was the only favorite of the Holy Prophet.
- Sometimes the companions suggested to the Holy Prophet to curse the enemies but he never agreed and instead prayed to Allah to show them guidance.
- Whenever he shook hands with somebody he would not withdraw until the other person withdrew his

hand first.

- Whenever he went on riding he never allowed anybody to follow him on foot and instead he asked the people to go separately until he met them on the appointed place.
- The Holy Prophet never disappointed a beggar. A woman sent his son to the Holy Prophet and asked for his dress. When the son came to the Holy Prophet he gave him his dress. On this occasion the following Qur'anic verse was revealed to him.

Do not be niggardly nor extravagant that you may later feel reprehensive and constrained. (Surah Bani Isra'il, 17:29)

- Whenever he happened to attend a gathering he always seated himself at a lower place. He would readily accept a present howsoever humble it was. Whenever he found any Muslim or a companion missing in a meeting, he would immediately inquire after him. If he happened to be on a journey, he would pray for his safe return and if he happened to be sick he would pray for his speedy recovery.
- He would ask the people to sit in a circular seating arrangement so as not to give any distinction to anyone over the other.
- In matters of enforcing laws, he never showed special favour to anybody. Once one of his companions interceded with him for a woman of a famous tribe to excuse her punishment. At this the Holy Prophet said: "By Allah! I am not the one to relax the punishment ordained by Divine commandment in favour of anybody. If my own daughter Fatima had committed a theft, I would have not spared her even from the punishment".
- The Holy Prophet paid particular attention to the captives and the slaves and he himself married a captive woman and thus by this action of his the Muslims started showing regard to the captives and they freed many of them. The Holy Prophet asked the people to be kind to the captives and to feed them and clothe them like themselves and to call them by their names so as not to give them a feeling of inferiority.
- The Holy Prophet treated the poor and the rich alike and during the conversation he never allowed irrelevant or controversial things to be discussed, besides he never found fault with anybody nor did he indulge in laughter.

His Concern of the Common Man

Unlike those leaders who fled away from the scene of trouble and hardship or those who left their friends in the lurch and migrated from their town or country, the Holy Prophet stayed in Makkah all the time and instead sent his followers to migrate to Abyssinia (Ethiopia). While migrating to Madina, the Holy Prophet first sent a batch of the loyal followers to Madina.

His Consulting the People

In all those matters where there was no special command from Allah and they were left to the people's discretion, the Holy Prophet very often used to consult them before taking any decision. As for example on the occasion of the Battle of Uhud, the Holy Prophet set up an advisory council and consulted the people as to whether the believers should fight the battle outside Madina or they should remain within the city of Madina.

The Holy Prophet himself and a few of his companions were of the opinion that the battle should be fought in Madina and accordingly defense should be built up there, but most of the young people gave their opinion for fighting the battle outside Madina.

Here we see that the Holy Prophet gave preference to the opinion of young and zealous fighters over that of others including his own, and as such they all marched forward towards Uhud to face the enemy. What is more interesting is that the verse 159 of Surah Ale Imran was revealed after the set-back of the Muslims in the Battle of Uhud. (*Tafsir-i Namuna*, vol. III, p. 142)

The above-mentioned verse was revealed despite the fact that after accepting the opinion of the companions, Muslims had to suffer defeat. Allah says in the same verse as follows:

Forgive them and ask Allah to forgive (their sins) and consult with them in certain matters. But when you reach a decision trust Allah. Allah loves those who trust Him. (Surah Ale Imran, 3: 159)

His Behavior with His Opponents

The treatment of the Holy Prophet with his opponents was based on the following Qur'anic injunction:

If they (the unbelievers) propose peace, accept it, and trust in Allah. (Surah al-Anfal, 8:61)

Of course, in another verse we read that if the doubts arise the agreement should be revoked. The Holy Qur'an says:

If you are afraid of treachery of some of your allies, you may disregard your treaty with them. Allah does not love the treacherous ones. (Surah al-Anfal, 8:58)

The Holy Qur'an says about the Jews and the Christians as follows:

Muhammad, say to the followers of the Bible, 'We must come to a common term. Let us worship no one except Allah nor consider anything equal to Allah, nor regard any of us as our lord besides Allah. (Surah Ale Imran, 3:64)

A group among the followers of the Bible would love to mislead you but they mislead no one save themselves. (Surah Ale Imran, 3:68)

Some of them speak ill of the Prophet saying, 'He listens to everything and believes what he hears'. Muhammad, tell them, 'He only listens to what is good for you, believes in Allah and has trust in the believers. He is Mercy for the believers among you. Those who speak ill of the Messenger of Allah will face a painful punishment'. (Su rah at-Tauba, 9:61)

The Holy Prophet considered military preparations for fighting against the enemies of Islam, the necessity of coaching of youngster for the art and skill of archery and similar other skill of paramount importance. He used to say that in exchange for one single arrow that was shot at the enemy of Allah, its maker, its buyer who handed it over to the soldiers of Islam and the one who shot it at the enemy were ensured of Paradise.

In the case of hypocrites, we see that the Holy Prophet ordered the demolition of a Masjid that was built by the hypocrites. On the occasion of the Battle of Tabuk some hypocrites were conspiring against Islam in a room of a public inn.

When the Holy Prophet learnt of such a conspiracy he ordered the storming of the room where the plot was being hatched and accordingly the believers stormed the room over the heads of the hypocrites, (and those who survived were treated harshly).

The Holy Prophet did not offer the funeral prayers for these hypocrites. However, he was lenient towards the infidels when they wanted some more time to take a decision about their embracing Islam.

Family affiliations had no influence on his taking ideological decisions. It was the uncle of the Holy Prophet for whose condemnation a strongly worded Qur'anic verse was revealed. The Holy Qur'an says:

May the hands of Abu Lahab perish! May he too perish! His property and worldly gains will be of no help to him. He will suffer in a blazing fire and so too will his wife (who threw thorns and firewood in the Prophet's way). Around her neck will be a rope of palm tree. (Surah Lahab, 111:1-5)

Indeed the disruptionist's hands should be cut off no matter even if he happens to be the uncle of the Holy Prophet. In this connection there is clear injunction in the Holy Qur'an that believers cannot ask for the forgiveness of the infidels and polytheists. The Holy Qur'an says;

After it was made clear that the pagans are to be the dwellers of Hell, the Prophet and the believers should not have sought forgiveness from Allah for them even if they may have been relatives. (Surah at-Tauba, 9:113)

In the following verse Allah encourages the Holy Prophet lest the enemy's plot might shake his decision.

Do not yield to the disbelievers or the hypocrites, ignore their annoying you and trust in Allah. Allah is your all-Sufficient Protector. (Surah al-Ahzab, 33:48)

Exercise patience and let it be only for the cause of Allah. Do not be grieved about them nor be disappointed at their evil plans. (Surah an-Nahl, 16:127)

But they (the idols) will not be able to help them. Instead the disbelievers as the troops of the idols will be brought before Allah. (Surah Ya Sin, 36:75)

Muhammad, exercise patience against what they say, glorify your Lord with His praise before sunrise and sunset. (Surah Qaf, 50:39)

An Apology To the Holy Prophet

While writing on the merits of the Holy Prophet I am feeling helpless because of my limited knowledge. As a matter of fact an appreciation on the life and attributes of the Holy Prophet can only be undertaken by a person of the caliber of Imam Ali as it is the Holy Prophet whose praise has been done by Allah Himself, whom Allah takes him through the heavens and by whose auspicious presence the angels' abode becomes blessed.

It is the Holy Prophet whom the Divine carrier takes away from the Holy Masjid (the Ka'ba) in Makkah to Baytul Muqaddas (the Masjid in Jerusalem). The Holy Qur'an says:

Glory to Him who carried His servant during the night for a visit from the Holy Mosque (at Makkah) to the Aqsa Mosque (at Jerusalem). Whose precincts We have blessed, that We may show him some of Our signs. (Surah Bani Israil, 17:1)

On the one hand these exalted destinations are the proof of the exalted personality of the Holy Prophet. On the other hand we find his attributes and personal qualities of love and affection and refined thoughts and sympathetic behavior towards all. "Once a thirsty cat keeps an eye on the water container meant for the Prophet's ablution.

The Holy Prophet instead of using that water for ablution places it before the cat. The Holy Prophet is harder than the rock against the enemies and is softer than snow toward his friends. He foregoes his personal rights against his enemies also but in the implementation of the laws he is very strict, so much so that he swears that he would not forgive even his own daughter, if she ever committed any wrong". (***Biharul Anwar***, vol. XVI)

How dare we talk about the attributes of the Holy Prophet? We read in ***Nahjul Balaghah (Peak of Eloquence***, ISP 1984) that when nobody could read or write, the Holy Prophet stressed the acquiring of knowledge by saying that it was obligatory for all the Muslims. Now after the passage of fourteen centuries we see that everybody is clamoring for acquiring knowledge.

At the time when on the murder of one person the entire tribe used to rise for taking revenge upon the murderer's people and several of their innocent people were put to death, the Holy Prophet stopped this

heinous custom.

That was the time when savagery was at its peak. The Holy Prophet said that if anyone would drive his animal even on his journey to Makkah too fast, his testimony would not be considered reliable because the one who cruelly fatigues his animal is hard-hearted. The example of compassion and mercy that the Holy Prophet set before the people in those days became the sign of the success and grace of the nation. The Holy Qur'an says:

Believers, listen to Allah and the Messenger when they call you to that which gives you life.

(Surah al-Anfal, 8:24)

The command of Allah is not without meaning when He says about the Holy Prophet of Islam as follows:

He who obeys the Messenger obeys Allah. (Surah an-Nisa, 4:80)

He does not speak out of his own desire. (Surah an-Najm, 53:3)

You are certainly on the right path. (Surah az-Zukruf, 43:43)

He will grant you a majestic triumph. (Surah al-Fath, 48:23)

How can one attempt to write something in praise of the Holy Prophet when Allah Himself has exalted his name and his mission in the following words?

(Muhammad), haven't We comforted your heart and relieved you of the burden which had been a heavy weight upon your back, and exalted your fame? Surely with hardship there is ease. With hardship indeed there is ease. So when you are free, work diligently and turn to your Lord with all your love. (Surah al-Inshira, 94:1-7)

It is not possible that in these few pages we may throw light on the high morals of the Holy Prophet about whom Allah Himself says in the following verse of the Holy Qur'an:

You have attained a high moral standard. (Surah al-Qalam, 68:4)

The Holy Qur'an which describes this world a poor and insignificant thing makes the position of the Holy Prophet exalted. There can be no better appreciation of the Holy Prophet than the one given in the Holy Qur'an as follows:

(Muhammad), We have granted you abundant virtue. So worship your Lord with full dedication and sacrifice. It is surely your opponents whose line will come to end. (Surah al-Kauthar, 108:1-3)

And in the Hereafter too, Allah dignified the position of the Holy Prophet as an interceder.

What can I write about the highly exalted attributes of the Holy Prophet whose birth extinguished the

leaping flames of the Fireplace of Persia, and who's being installed as Prophet removed all disturbances and chaotic conditions from the land.

When he was born the foundation of the palace of Kisra, the ancient monarchs of Persia (Iran), were shaken. When he was assigned to Prophethood the entire humanity got wonder-struck. It was he, whom the Holy Qur'an declared the "Mercy for the whole Universe". Who can write and how can we write about such a unique personality?

What can I say about him, who reaches such a lofty place of honour that he becomes the guest of Allah on the night of **Ma'raj** (ascension); and yet who, in his humbleness, declares that he would not turn down the invitation of a slave and would travel a far off distance in order to share a simple food with him?

For his journey to the heavens, **Buraq**, a Divine carrier, was provided to him, while at his own, he never hesitated to ride on a mule. The Archangel Jibra'il who brings the Divine revelation to him conveys him the greetings of Allah, and he himself is so humble in disposition that he first greets the children.

In the state of prostrating himself before Allah he submits his forehead and heart before Allah and when his two grandsons (Imam Hasan and Imam Husayn) find him under that position and ride on his back, he prolongs his prostration so that their feeling might not be hurt.

How to speak of him, who at one and the same time is dedicated to the worship and remembrance of Allah and is also mindful of the feelings of the two children! The people should take lesson from this in the matter of upholding the rights of children, men, women and the labourers and they should be ashamed of raising empty slogans.

The Holy Prophet remains cheerful with the people while he is in their company He sheds tears also at the demise of his son, Ibrahim. But in either case he does not exceed the limit and does not do anything against the Will of Allah.

In the morning he offers his prayers, passes the time in the midst of his companions during the day, and lets the companions with one another in useful pursuits, not for fun and pleasure, including riding and archery which can stand them in good stead in times of self-defense against the oppressors. And the prize that is awarded is the date-palm tree, the leaves of which provide pleasant shade, the wood as fuel, and the fruit as food.

False Accusations

Is it correct to make false allegations against Islam whose Prophet gives a grace period of four months instead of the two asked for, on the day of the conquest of Makkah; makes the house of his arch-enemy as sanctuary of peace; announces general amnesty and pardons to all his opponents and bears with patience hardships for fifteen years at the halls of the infidels of Makkah, and if he takes his sword in hand to protect himself and his faith and to defeat the nefarious designs of his enemies and asks the

believers to wage Jihad (Holy War) against them so as to emancipate mankind from treachery, savagery, oppression, and to liberate man from all kinds of domination and subjugation? Certainly not.

Sometimes the opponents say that Islam was spread at the point of the sword and this is not correct because from historical facts and evidence the total number of those killed was not more than 1700 from both sides in all the battles of Islam against enemies.

Sometimes the opponents find fault with the Holy Prophet that he married too many wives and misled the people by insinuating, God forbid, that he was lustful, although the fact is that the Holy Prophet passed the youthful years of his marital life with only wife, the revered Lady of Islam, Khadija-tul Kubra up to the age of fifty years, and his wedding with her was solemnized at the initiation of Lady Khadija when she was forty and the Holy Prophet was twenty five years old.

Lady Khadija had already rejected the offer for marriage of several other men who wanted to marry her because of her financial standing. But Lady Khadija proposed to the Holy Prophet because he was found to be a trustworthy, truthful and righteous person enjoying high reputation in the whole of the Arabian Peninsula and besides, she had already heard from her uncle Warqa bin Nawfal the prophecies of the preceding Prophets about the appearance of the Holy Prophet as the Prophet of Allah and of her marriage with him.

The Holy Prophet spent 25 years of his married life with Lady Khadija and spent her wealth in the preaching of Islam and to relieve mankind from ignorance and tyrannies although there were some of the choicest girls wanted to marry him, but he always refused their offer.

The other wives of the Holy Prophet were married to him only after the demise of his first wife Lady Khadija and that too when he had passed the age of fifty. These women were of elderly age and were widows and had orphaned children and hence he had to lead a hard and strenuous life with them instead of life of ease, comfort, and indulgence.

These wives of the Holy Prophet were of varying temperament and dispositions and as such it was not easy to get along with them. The husbands of some of these wives were martyred while fighting against the infidels and as such they needed protection for themselves and the orphans. If they had not been married to the Holy Prophet they would have reverted to infidelity.

One among them was Sauda whose husband died after he had migrated to Abyssinia and she was left without any patron and supporter. Umm Salama was another such wife who was of old age and was mother of orphaned children.

Zaynab was also another wife of the Holy Prophet who was the daughter of his aunt from the father's side. She was first married to Zayd bin Harith, the slave and adoptive son of the Holy Prophet. Her marriage with Zayd did not last long and she was divorced by him. Then she married the Holy Prophet.

The Holy Prophet married Zaynab at Allah's command so that the very root and basis of a wrong custom might be abolished. According to this custom of the Age of Ignorance nobody was allowed to marry the wife of his adopted son and in this case since Zayd was the adopted son of the Holy Prophet, the latter could not marry Zaynab, the divorced wife of the former. But Allah ordered this marriage in order to abolish this custom at the hands of the Holy Prophet himself.

Juwayria, another wife of the Holy Prophet was a captive. Her marriage with the Holy Prophet motivated the Muslims to treat the captives with great regards and kindness so much so that they freed many of them.

Besides, with a view to maintain cordial relations among various influential tribes, to prevent disruption among them, and to promote internal stability, the Holy Prophet married such women as Ayesha, Hafsa, Umm Habiba, Safiya and Maymuna.

Safiya of course was the daughter of the tribal chief of a big Jewish tribe of Bani Nuzayr. When she was taken prisoner, the Holy Prophet married her and established relationship with a big tribe.

In short, many of the wives of the Holy Prophet were those who had passed the age of youth and personal charm, and most of them had been married once or twice before, and had orphaned children with them, and whom the Holy Prophet married when he was past fifty, an age which by no means can be regarded as an age of youthful and lustful desires and by that time he had attained great reputation already, and that many a beautiful girl aspired to marry him.

This is the proof of the fact that the purpose of the Holy Prophet in contracting various marriages was based on pious and noble cause only and as such no sane person can dare attack his personal character.

Besides keeping these wives, the Holy Prophet most often passed his nights in offering prayers and remembering Allah as he did in his youth also. The Holy Qur'an says about his dedication and worship of Allah as follows.

You, who have enwrapped in a mantle, worship (Allah) for only a few hours at night. (Surah Muzzammil, 73: 1-3)

It is only we who even for the sake of one wife forsake Allah. If the number of wives does not prevent anyone from getting right guidance, spiritual enlightenment, performing religious duties of offering prayers, attending jihad, uplifting the society and doing justice to wives themselves and instead it becomes the source of their support and protection, there cannot be any reason for criticism.

If somebody feels the prick of conscience at the number of wives a man has then it may be due to any of the following reasons:

(i) If the husband is not giving just treatment to his wives.

(ii) If the idea of having many wives is aimed at satisfying ones lustful desires.

(iii) If the husband gets himself involved in investing his energies and talents in pampering his wives.

If none of the above conditions is present then keeping of wives cannot be prevented from any moral or social standpoint.

Answer to Some Questions. We have so far dealt with the necessity of the Prophets' mission, ways and means of recognizing them and their attributes and personal qualities. Now we deal with the answers to some of the doubts created in the minds of the people.

(i) Have the Prophets Founded an Ideal Society? Answer: For teaching and guidance, the sending of the Prophets as well the Divine commandments are necessary and their obedience by the people is another necessity. Both are distinctly separate. It was not the Divine Will to guide the people by force only. Had it been so everybody would have received the right guidance. The Holy Qur'an says:

Had Allah wanted He could have guided all to the right path. (Surah Nahl, 16:9)

Thus, the Prophets were also not supposed to force their teachings on the people. The Holy Qur'an says:

(Muhammad), remind them; you are surely a reminder. You are not a warden over them. (Surah al-Ghashiya, 88:22)

Allah provides the means for guidance. The Holy Qur'an says:

Surely, in Our Hands is the guidance. (Surah al-Layl, 92: 12)

However the people should also accept the guidance. If some people refuse to accept the Divine guidance they should not become an obstruction in its way, just as a gardener does not abstain from watering the land in the presence of weeds, while there are also good trees. The Holy Qur'an says:

When your Lord said to the angels, I am appointing someone as My deputy on earth, they said (almost protesting), 'Are You going to appoint one who will commit corruption and bloodshed therein, even though we (are the ones who) commemorate Your name and glorify You?' The Lord said, 'I know that which you do not know'. (Surah al-Baqarah, 2;30)

In order to prove a new concept it is sufficient to train the people and to set examples. If a mason or a painter shows some specimens of his craft and skill, it will be sufficient to establish his efficiency or proficiency in that particular field.

I remember that some years ago, a pupil got up after my lecture and asked: "If Islam is a good religion then why has it not spread widely?" My instant retort was: "If Muhammad Ali clay is a good boxer, then why has he not boxed our chest?" There was a chuckle of laughter.

A good mason, a painter, a boxer or an orator is not the one who works for everybody or shows his skill to everybody. If he has not done anything for you, the reason is that you have not asked him to do something for you.

If the voice of a speaker or an orator does not reach us, the reason is that we are far from him. If Muhammad Ali has not boxed us as yet, the reason is that we have not gone to the ring to face him. If the Prophets have not shaped a good society or the message of Islam has not gone far and wide, the fault lies with us only.

According to a poet: "If one turns into a beggar his people are not to blame for his lethargic nature". The same applies here. That is to say if the people themselves have become indifferent to the spirit of Islam, Islam itself cannot be blamed.

The Prophets lay the foundation of a society free from flaws strictly in line with Divine commandments and they themselves act upon them in order to give a lead to the people. They in fact present a model of a social environment and invite the people to fashion their social life on the same pattern.

Our blessed Holy Prophet molded a nation comprising the black and white and people of different kinds and types drawn from various tribes and laid its foundation on the belief in Allah and on the war against polytheism and transgressions perpetrated by feudal lords and despotic chiefs.

He eliminated all differences of cast and creed among men as well as superstitious ideas, whims and fancies of the people and established moral values, discipline, unity, equality, justice, freedom, righteousness, sincerity, grace, honor, obedience to Divine commandments and remembrance of Allah. He trained such great men as Imam Ali, Abuzar, Salman, Miqdad and Maytham.

He brought out the laws which were compatible with reason and natural instinct and in order to establish and enforce the supremacy of the Divine laws he never hesitated to offer his and as well as his followers' lives to achieve that objective.

Now when we see that the people have not as yet adopted the Prophets' concept of life and their school of thought, we should trace out the reasons for such apathy instead of criticizing that school of thought or blaming its progenitors.

The sun shines on everything. When it shines on a glass it reflects its light and when its rays fall on a brick it does not reflect but despite this we do not doubt about the sun and its light. It is because if we throw several hundred thousand airtight sealed cylinders into an ocean we shall note that water does not enter those sealed containers.

If they are not sealed water will certainly enter them. Similarly, there are people whose eyes, ears and hearts are sealed. The Holy Qur'an says:

We have destined most of the men and jinns for Hell. They have hearts but do not understand,

eyes but do not see. They have ears but do not hear. They are worst than lost cattle. These are the heedless ones. (Surah al-A'raf, 7:179)

Anyone who has the faculty of discerning the truth, of hearing and of seeing but does not apply it, is worse than animals.

That man whose sole purpose of life is to eat, drink and be merry is definitely not better than animals. Those different schools of thought and ideologies which clamor for food, clothes and shelter for the people confine man's talents and intellectual activities to the limited sphere of corporeal needs only and thus these doctrines reduce man's position of being a vicegerent of Allah to a ridiculously shameful status.

In short, it is the man who should give the society a good shape. The Prophets are the leaders and guides and the people should follow their guidance. The Prophets are the healers and the sick should follow their treatment.

We now seek support of our arguments from the following verses of the Holy Qur'an:

Allah does not guide the unjust. (Surah al-Qasas, 28:50)

Allah does not guide the evil-doers. (Surah al-Munafiqun, 63:6)

Allah does not guide a transgressing liar. (Surah Mu'min, 40:28)

From the foregoing Qur'anic verses it becomes abundantly clear that there are people who because of their polytheism, unjustness, oppression, evil deeds and falsehood have become indifferent to obtaining guidance given by the Prophets and to carve out for themselves a good social order.

There is on the very first page of the Holy Qur'an a declaration which says-

There is no doubt that this Book is a guide for the pious. (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:2)

The Holy Qur'an was revealed for the entire mankind but it is the pious people who preserve themselves from evil things and follow the straight path, have in right earnest accepted it as the source of guidance and thus have abstained from haughtiness, pride, high-handedness, enmity, transgression and greed in the search for truth.

And those who do not give up their stubbornness fanaticism, envy, prejudice and other evils which are a hindrance in the way of truth cannot receive any benefit from the teachings of the Prophets.

(ii) Is Divine Revelation a Sort of Intelligence? Some people, who do not believe in man's connection with the Hereafter, try to invent the reason which necessitated the Divine revelation as for example they say that unemployment, social inequalities, deprivation and love and affection are the things which compel man to endeavor to solve them and as such they sharpen man's intelligence.

In the Prophets also these were the factors of the growth of their talents and there is no harm, they say, if we consider the Prophets as one of such geniuses.

If you care to give a second thought to what we have dealt with in the preceding chapter on "The Attributes and Personal Qualities of the Prophets" you will make out at once that there is a world of difference between a genius and a Prophet.

Infallibility, forgetfulness, refraining from committing any sin, sincerity, knowledge of the unseen through Divine guidance, selfless devotion and worship of Allah, supplications and resigning to the Will of Allah are some of the traits which are not found at all in a genius or a talented person as he is always skeptical, is not free from sins, has no knowledge of the unseen, is far away from Allah's cognition and worship and has no concern with Allah.

And perhaps there is not one in this world who could be called a genius as the so-called genius persons have not been able to produce anything like the Holy Qur'an! The comparison between a genius and a Prophet is like the one which exists between a limited and a limitless, because what a genius person possesses is limited while what a Prophet can do is due to the infinite Knowledge and Wisdom of Allah and that is why Prophets' achievements and accomplishments are not confined to one or two specimens only.

(iii) Why Did All the Prophets Appear in the East Only? We have no definite proof that all the Prophets came to the East. According to the following Qur'anic verse a Prophet was sent to every nation.

For every people there is a Messenger. (Surah Yunus, 10:47)

Just as we put a lamp in the center of a room, it is possible that Allah sent His distinguished Prophets to the areas which are neither in the East nor in the West.

(iv) Why is it Necessary to Believe in All the Prophets? In the Holy Qur'an the names of twenty five Prophets have been mentioned. The Holy Qur'an says.

We have told you the stories of some of Our Messengers whom we had sent before you and we have not told you the stories of some others. (Surah Mu'min, 40: 78)

From this verse we know that the number of the Prophets is not restricted to those twenty five Prophets whose names are mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. But if we refer to various narrations we come across various versions but one of such narrations is famous which is quoted as Hadith of the Holy Prophet from his companion, Abuzar who says: "I asked the number of the Prophets from the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet replied "Hundred and twenty four thousand! " (*Majma'ul Bayan*, vol. X, p. 476; *Biharul Anwar*, vol. XI, p. 30)

The answer to the question whether belief in all the Prophets is necessary the answer is definitely "yes",

because the Holy Qur'an says:

(Muslims) say, 'We believe in Allah and what He has revealed to us and to Ibrahim, Isma'il, Ishaq, Ya'qub and their descendants, and what was revealed to Musa, Isa and the Prophets from their Lord. (Surah al-Baqarah, 2: 136)

Those who disbelieve in Allah and His Messengers try to create differences between Allah and His Messengers, by rejecting their message. They say, we believe in some but not in others. (Surah an-Nisa, 4: 150)

Thus from the above quoted Qur'anic verse it is not only clear that the belief in the Prophets has been made obligatory, but it also means that the Prophethood of the Prophets has not been a merely accidental thing but it was a fact which was in accordance with the command of Allah. The Divine command that we should believe in the Prophets and follow their teachings is the proof of Allah's Mercy on all His creatures. It shows the Wisdom of Allah that is the eternal necessity of following an infallible guidance of the Prophets.

And besides, it reveals the fact that in the long period of history men have been supporting the truth on the one hand, and fighting against the evil forces of transgressors, oppressors and despots on the other, and ultimately the righteous were triumphant and the evil-doers had to suffer disgrace. This knowledge, and belief in Allah's method is the cause of man's progress, steadfastness, and eminence in history.

(v) Why are Revelations not made On Us? Undoubtedly a radio-set cannot catch all the waves and sounds. It can catch only those sounds which are transmitted on particular wave-lengths. Similarly, every man cannot have –revelations. Truthfulness, righteousness, piety and several other qualities are required in a man for receiving Divine revelations and inspirations. Revelation has its own merit. It is only the pious and believing people who can discern the truth. The Holy Qur'an says:

Have fear of Allah and believe in His Messenger. Allah will grant you twice as much of His Bounty, a light by which you can walk, and forgive your sins. (Surah al-Hadid, 57:28)

You can see that, light of the inward eye is not bestowed on everyone except those who fear Allah. The Holy Qur'an says:

Believers, if you fear Allah, He will give you guidance, will expiate your bad deeds and forgive you. Allah's favors are the greatest. (Surah al-Anfal, 8:29)

Man needs to distinguish between the right and the wrong, good and evil, friend and enemy and blessings and misfortunes and his intellect helps him do so, but greed, passions, pride, jealousies, love of wealth, wife and children and many other temporal considerations prevent his intellect and wisdom from discerning good from bad. But in that case piety can make him discover his real wisdom and understand the realities.

A poet has says. "Reality is a sort of a well-decorated and well-elevated house which is surrounded by heavy dust of temptations and ambitions which cannot be seen by naked eyes".

Another poet says: "One has to remove the polluted atmosphere before looking at the beauty of his beloved".

But in a society where newspapers, television and radio centers are transmitting news which are based on consideration of worldly gains, people cannot recognize the truth and reality and if these media stop propagating prejudiced views, the society can to a great extent distinguish between good and bad, and right and wrong. The Holy Qur'an says:

Be careful of (your duty) to Allah, Allah gives you knowledge, and Allah knows all things. (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:282)

Indeed man's heart is like a mirror and if the dust is wiped out of it, it will glow with the Divine light. For realizing the truth one needs to have a clean heart and right thinking. The Holy Qur'an regarding the Holy Prophet says:

Had he (Muhammad) invented some words against Us, We would have caught hold of him by his right hand and cut off his main artery. (Surah al-Haqqah, 69:44-46)

(vi) Why was Prophethood terminated After the Holy Prophet? When water in a reservoir gets turbid it is drained out and fresh water is poured into it. When a road, a house or a car is damaged we repair them. Similarly, the necessity of a new Prophet is felt when the teachings of the previous Prophets are tampered with or they are forgotten.

Hence, when not a single word of the Holy Qur'an has been altered, there should be no necessity of a new Prophet. But it is different with other Divine Books. If one looks into the Taurat and the Injil, one will find many wrong things which are contrary to reason, and after reading them one would feel much ashamed.

The reason of the coming of the Holy Prophet as the last of the Prophets is the tampering with .the Divine Books which have been revealed on earlier Prophets and the suppressing of the truth. Such a tampering has not been made possible in the Holy Qur'an.

Example: If an illiterate person wants to travel to a distant place, he goes around from place to place to find out the location of his ultimate destination and he enquires about it from people around him but in case such a person happens to be learned he would be given a road map by which he can himself find his way to his ultimate destination.

Similar is the case with the man who has obtained a complete guidance of the code of life from the Holy Prophet. He does not need to look for any other Prophet.

Second Example: When a child falls sick, the parents point out to him things one by one which he should abstain from as for instance, vinegar, sour grapes, lemon juice, etc. But when one would give the same sort of instruction to a grown up man, he will only say, "Avoid eating sour things".

In the olden times the people needed to be told of each and every lanes and by-lanes because they were mentally not fully-developed but now when the time has gone much advanced a man can find his a way out by means of a guide-map or other given indications.

Thus in the present day civilization one need not have any new Prophet but for the preservation of Islam, the Imams and the religious jurists would suffice them. Besides, during the time of the former Prophets only a few of them brought with them the Divine Books and the rest of them were only devoted to their missionary work of preaching only as they had not brought with them any new commandments.

Similarly, when in our time this responsibility of preaching and carrying on the mission of the Holy Prophet can be shouldered by the infallible Imams and the pious and devout scholars there remains no necessity of any new Prophet.

Indeed there is always the necessity of the Divine religion and its teachings, but it is not necessary always to reorient religion. We should not, however be oblivious of the necessity of '*Ijtihad*' because the just and pious jurists have the answer of all relevant matters by virtue of which they can interpret the meaning of all Divine commands.

These were a few examples of the questions which are raised from time to time but to be brief here we cannot discuss more of them.

Prophets' Achievements

In the preceding pages, we have dealt with briefly about the indispensability of the Prophets, the signs of their identification, their merits, attributes, virtues etc. Under the current discussions we shall mention the Prophets' achievements and their pious goals. In all such discussions, it has been our method to rely on the authority of Divine revelations and the narrations of the Infallible Imams.

First of all let us look into the Holy Qur'an and find out as to how Almighty Allah traces the duties of the Prophets.

The Duties of the Prophets

1. Allah addresses Prophet Musa saying:

Go to Fir'aun as he has become exceedingly rebellious. (Surah Ta Ha, 20:24)

Indeed it was the Prophets who fought against the tyrants and the rebels. It is not like the people of our

time who raise slogans against the despots and imperialistic powers but do not go a step ahead of slogan-mongering.

To eliminate these despots and proud transgressors paves the way for monotheism because unless all the false gods and demigods are destroyed, we cannot reach the true Lord. The phrase: ***La ila ha illal lah*** (There is no god save Allah) is a part and parcel of our faith (monotheism), we begin with "There is no god" in order to emphasize our faith in Oneness of Allah and to assert our determination against all false gods. Thereafter, we genuinely become aware of Allah. In fact, unless we clean our hearts of all other things except Allah we cannot make it a seat of Allah, the One.

2. The Holy Qur'an says about Allah's directive to Prophet Musa to go to Fir'aun as follows:

So go you both to him and say, 'Surely we are two messengers of your Lord, therefore send the children of Isra'il with us and do not oppress them! Indeed we have brought to you a token from your Lord, and peace is on him who follows the guidance'. (Surah Ta Ha, 20:47)

Indeed one of the other important duties of the Prophets is to liberate their people from the oppressive domination of the despotic rulers. But this action of the Prophets is obviously different from that of our present day political leaders of various governments as they only indulge in slogan-mongering and tall talks. We see that Prophet Musa not only liberated the people of Bani Isra'il but also destroyed Fir'aun.

On the other hand the present-day champions of the so-called human rights do not defray even their one month's income of their lifelong earning of colossal amount of money and wealth for liberating the downtrodden and enslaved people.

In fact they have not done anything tangible for the cause of uplifting the rights and benefits of the poor and the oppressed people. Rather in the name of human rights they have preserved their own rights! Has the time not come now that people should dissociate themselves from these showy organizations of human rights and start following the teachings of the Prophets?

3. The Holy Qur'an says about Prophet Ibrahim's determination when he said to himself:

By Allah! I will devise a plan against their idols when they are away. (Surah al-Anbiya, 21:57)

The third important duty that vested in the Prophets was to fight against polytheism and superstitions and to root out the cult of idol-worship of all kinds, worship of gods and demigods among men, etc. They carried on relentless war against power, authority, temporal desires, wealth and other kinds of polytheism.

And this was the goal before Prophet Ibrahim. After trying all possible means by persuading his uncle with softspoken words, arguing with Namrud with logic and reasoning and convincing the worshippers of sun and moon by his strong arguments, he found that his efforts had gone in vain.

He then decided to declare to the pagans at the top of his voice that he was going to destroy their idols very soon and he actually did it, because when admonition, preaching, and arguments have no effect on the people, then a decisive and revolutionary action is necessary to arouse the moral sense of the people.

Thus we see that on a day when the city had become void of people, Prophet Ibrahim went to the temple with his pickaxe and demolished all the idols kept there except the chief of them, a big giant-sized idol, in whose neck he hung his pick-axe and came back. The Holy Qur'an says about this as follows:

He broke all the idols into pieces, except the biggest among them so that perhaps people would refer to it. (Surah al-Anbiya, 21:58)

When the people returned to the city and visited their temple, they asked one another as to who was so cruel as to break their gods in such a manner, but soon they started thinking of Prophet Ibrahim and said to themselves that this sort of action must have been done by him only as he had always been objecting to their worshipping their idols. They said. "Ibrahim should be brought before the people so that he should confess his guilt, and we should punish him accordingly".

When the people caught hold of Prophet Ibrahim they asked him, "Why have you broken our idols?" Prophet Ibrahim replied, "You should better put this question to the chief of your idols. He will answer your query". People started looking to one another and then said: "But this idol does not speak".

Prophet Ibrahim who was waiting for this reply, saw that the people had become non-plussed and had bowed their heads down. Then he spoke in a loud authoritative tone: "You worship those idols who do not have any control on your loss or gain! Can you not realize this simple thing?"

This story which starts from verse 58 of Surah Anbiya of the Holy Qur'an actually depicts one of the miracles of the Prophets, who dauntlessly stood alone against polytheism and superstitions and face all dangers in order to stir the sleeping conscience of the people. It shows how Prophet Ibrahim plunges himself into the fire of the world in order to save the people from disaster of the blazing fire of Hell.

We know how the cruel enemies burnt the fire and threw this champion of monotheism into it. They did not know that their device would prove futile and Prophet Ibrahim would come out of the fire safe and unharmed.

4. The Holy Qur'an says:

O Dawud! We have appointed you as Our deputy on earth so judge among the people with Truth. Do not follow (worldly) desires lest you should go astray from the way of Allah. Those who go astray from the way of Allah will suffer severe torment for forgetting the Day of Judgment. (Surah Sad, 38:26)

This verse also points out yet another important aspect of the Prophets' achievements and their duties

and obligations, that is to say their responsibility of deciding things based on truth and justice. The Holy Qur'an says.

A Messenger is appointed for all people. When the Messenger for them came he judged among them fairly, and they were not wronged. (Surah Yunus, 10:47)

5. The Holy Qur'an says:

The Messenger enjoins them to do good and forbids them to do all that is unlawful; makes lawful for them all that is pure, and unlawful all that is filthy; removes their burdens and the entanglements in which they are involved. (Surah A'raf, 7:157)

The Prophets brought about a cultural revolution in the society and brought the people from savagery to compassion from idols to Allah; from dissension to unity; from plundering and murdering to brotherhood; from domination to moderation; from ignorance to knowledge; from oppression to justice; from racial discrimination to equality; from pride to humbleness and humility; and from polytheism to monotheism.

6. The Holy Prophet of Islam like all other Prophets used to forbid people to do all that is unlawful.

Before the advent of the Holy Prophet, the life of the people of Arabia was in a miserable state from the point of view of philosophical, cultural, social, economical, corporeal and spiritual conditions. Imam Ali says:

"From the point of view of intellect, the light for receiving guidance was affected by bewilderment, uncertainty and narrow sightedness.

From the point of view of culture, there was nobody who could read a book.

From the point of view of faith and belief they had, installed idols made of wood and stone for worshipping them and they used to swarm round them like moth swarming round a candle flame.

From the point of view of hygienic, those people drank turbid water and used to eat carcass.

From economic point of view they were in such a miserable condition of poverty that mostly people ate dried crust of bread or starved.

From the point of view of peace and tranquility, people were scared of the sword which was hanging on their heads and it was the sword which ruled them actually.

From the social point of view, they were divided in tribes and factions and had differences and disputes over trifles so much so that they never hesitated to kill one another.

There was no consideration of family bonds, the righteous was weak and the devilish was strong and

everyone was in tears". (*Peak of Eloquence*)

On the one hand everybody was scared of the swords of another, but apparently they used to pose themselves as brave and powerful people in order to intimidate others.

In the words of Imam Ali the sad state of affairs at that time was as follows: "They shed your blood with excessive cruelty".

In short those people of the Age of Ignorance were leading miserable lives in superstitions, abject poverty, oppression, rivalries and polytheism.

When the Holy Prophet came, he rooted out oppression and domination and dispelled the dark clouds of ignorance, injustice and infidelity which were hovering over the society.

Indeed the Prophets' great function is to forbid people to do unlawful things and to fight against all evils, whether it be manslaughter, burying the newborn female child alive or prostrating themselves before the despotic monarch as it was done in Iran or before the idols as was done in Arabia or wine-drinking and usury which were common everywhere.

What greater service can it be to the humanity than to liberate mankind from these unlawful evil deeds?

Had we been aware of the lives of these Divine leaders and real reformers we would not have given importance to these people who claim to be the leaders of poor laborers, and themselves live in palatial houses.

These are the so-called philosophers, thinkers, leaders and emancipators who got hundreds and thousands of people destroyed for nothing in the name of knowledge and philosophical dogmas. Would that we continued to follow in the footsteps of the Prophets as their teachings and guidance were true and invigorating, and they were righteous and truthful leaders while others are neither sincere nor truthful.

When we go back into the past few years, we can find the devastating defects in the ideological concepts of the present day leaders. Even those reformers who said something about the good of the society, we can find that the teachings of the Prophets were far superior to that of theirs. As a matter of fact any leader or reformer who is not blessed by Divine insight cannot see things beyond death but the path that is shown by the Prophets for the life is everlasting.

Secondly the path of life which other leaders show only deals with one aspect of life and as such other aspects become neglected. As for instance sometimes for the sake of freedom and liberty other values, moral as well as social, are neglected altogether.

Sometimes stress is laid on economical factors so that economics becomes the basis of social, political, religious and military aspects while other factors are ignored altogether. But the Prophets without

undermining the importance of one aspect or the other of life presents the line of action which is conspicuously attached with the Prophets.

It is only Islam, which even in the battlefield considers offering of prayers, moral values and reformation as fundamentally important and in this the offering of prayers in congregation is not only considered an obligatory worship but it envisages in itself political and social consideration also.

Now we deal with the 7th important duty of the Prophets.

7. Prophets Purify and Train the People

One of the aims of the Prophets is to impart knowledge and to let the people practice self-denial for unless man frees himself from undesirable things like selfishness, ignorance, arrogance etc. he cannot develop his personality. We should like to narrate the following story at this point:

A man riding on a horse came to the bank of a river with shallow water. His horse instead of crossing the river stopped near the water.

The rider got down from his horse and taking the bridle in his hand started leading the horse into the river but the horse did not move at all. At this the rider went behind the horse and started lashing the animal but it also proved to be of no avail. An old man who was standing by was observing all this.

He advised the rider to beat the river water with his whip and then asked the rider to pass through the water. He acted upon the advice of the old man and the horse came into motion. After crossing the river, the horseman thanked the old man and inquired about the wisdom of turning the water turbid by beating the water with the whip.

The old man replied, "When the water was still, the horse was looking its reflection in the water and did not want to walk over its own image which was reflecting on the surface of water '.

Similarly, man suffers from self-esteem, self-conceit and pride. He cannot trample upon his own image of ego and desires. Thus anyone who cannot subdue himself and give up his egoistic tendencies cannot reach a path leading him to Allah.

Self-denial means that man should not be a slave to his passions. Instead he should purify his soul from polytheism, jealousy, temptations, fear, disgrace, cruelty and self-indulgence. He should get himself rid of ignorance, skepticism and apathy, and should protect the society from suffocating environment, conceit, fraud, transgressions, high-handedness and from the domination of transgressors and despotic rulers.

The world of today as of the past is facing untold sufferings despite progress and development. It is all due to lack of self-denial. Scholars are increasing day by day but the crimes are not decreasing. The more the number of supporters of human rights is increasing the more the human rights of

underdeveloped and weaker nations are being violated. Why is it so? It is because they have poured milk in a dirty utensil. That is to say education is being imparted to the present-day man who has not been purified himself of carnal desires.

Thus after gathering facts and figures it becomes crystal clear that there exists a marked difference between those who have been educated and trained according to the teachings of the Prophets and those who have been trained and educated under the teachings of secular and ungodly schools of thought.

Therefore, we cannot call every such man the follower of the teachings of the Prophets as has labeled himself a Muslim. Indeed education and training have been the main aim of the Prophets' mission and in a broader perspective this very education and training is the sole factor which distinguishes man from animals.

We see that in the so-called advanced countries who are considered as civilized and cultured nations the people indulge in false propaganda, conspiracies and tall promises in order to catch the votes of their electors in their favor and as such this speaks of their spiritual bankruptcy, which have blemished their reputation. Self-denial, piety and nobility keep man steadfast and firm in weal and woe alike. And it never allows him (according to Imam Ali) to do injustice even to an ant for the purpose of securing power and authority of ruling over the entire world.

8. To Maintain Justice

The Holy Qur'an says:

We sent Our Messengers with clear evidence to support their truthfulness and sent them with the Book and the Balance so that people would maintain justice. (Surah al-Hadid, 57:25)

Prophets were sent for the purpose of reforming the society to the extent that people should do justice among themselves,. They came to mould the society in such a way that people should neither exert pressure on others nor should they yield to pressure, that is according to the Holy Qur'an the people should neither oppress others nor should they bear oppression.

Their aim was to bring about such a nation as according to the Holy Qur'an was moderate and tolerant and did not sacrifice one principle for the sake of other. If it valued the individual freedom it also valued the sanctity of the society as a whole.

If it talked of the benefit of this world it also talked of the good of the other world. Prophets came to reform the nation, whose slogans should not be hollow but meaningful and who weeps but also raises an inspiring slogan, and whose prayers should be accompanied by **Zakat** (religious tax).

In short, the aim of the Prophets was to establish such a society which had the complexion of Divine influence. The Holy Qur'an says:

We have taken the colouring of Allah; and whose shade is better than Allah 's? Him alone do we worship. (Surah al-Baqarah, 2: 138)

Any man or society having a Divine outlook will never be influenced by any big power, bloc or any despot or environment with racial bias. To adopt a Divine outlook is to dissociate oneself from Western or Eastern influence.

The reason why our society is not as yet established on justice is that it is still subjected to oppression and cruelties and has not adopted the Divine outlook and we have not as yet prepared ourselves to follow in the footsteps of our Divine guides.

9. Elimination of Unwanted Customs and Dogmas

The Holy Qur'an about the Messenger of Allah says:

He enjoins them to do good and forbid, them to do all that is unlawful; make, lawful for them all that is pure, and unlawful all that is filthy; removes their burdens and the entanglements in which they are involved. (Surah al-A'raf, 7: 157)

The important thing that we find in the Prophets is that they were sent to do away with all the evil practices and customs which were rampant among the people. The above-quoted verse shows that Prophets' obligation was to remove the burdens and restrictions in which the people were deeply entangled.

Thus the Holy Prophet removed all those burdens which prevented the people from performing their essential duties. Now that 1400 years have elapsed since the Holy Qur'an was revealed we find that many people are still bound by many formalities though they do have the Holy Qur'an dearest to their hearts and their notions and formalities prevent them from achieving success and progress, as for example owing to the absence of a particular type of dress people abstain from attending religious functions and seminars or for completing the formalities after the performance of **Hajj** they absent themselves from attending Islamic conferences.

For the sake of saving themselves from the trouble of undergoing certain formalities they forego their rights and refuse to get the culprit brought to task or for unusual formalities and customs in respect of marriage ceremonies they postpone the very important matter of the solemnization of marriage.

But when the great personality like the Holy Prophet came, he relieved the people from the burden of inhuman dogmas, customs and restrictions. His building a Masjid made of clay and water got such a unique position that it became the centre of attraction and its importance became greater than huge conference halls and impressive buildings, housing the universities etc.

We should ponder over these things calmly. If we enlarge our visual horizon and look to the world at large we shall find that if unnecessary expenditure is curtailed by various countries which are lavishly

spending money on formal ceremonies and protocol restrictions and invest this colossal amount of money in financially deficit projects or developmental schemes, the condition of many under-developed countries can be changed and people can be appreciably improved and they can be got rid of many of their hardships.

This can explain the meaning of the phrase "removes their burdens" in its truest sense that is, how the Holy Prophet by his directives saved his followers from difficult responsibilities and similarly the latter phrase "the entanglements in which they are involved" explains the fact that the Holy Prophet removed the shackles of the people one by one and brought about the freedom of thought, speech and action.

It is often seen that the people wish to express their free opinion and want to give vent to their pent-up feelings but they cannot express themselves or put them into writing, and sometimes people do not know the truth of the matter as hirelings hold information from them on account of vested interests. Under such a situation a bold and daring leader appears and starts unfolding the truth, and then freedom of speech is established.

Similarly he makes a statement, which appears in writing. He attacks the tyrants and the people are then relieved of the prevailing fear and then he does the thing which were hitherto considered as impossible.

Prophets—the Warners and Bearers of Glad Tidings

Another achievement of the Prophets is to bring the glad tidings to the people, to cheer them up and to predict the bright future. Indeed man lives on hopes and those schools of thought which have no belief in future and consider their future a nonentity and also consider death as a trifling affair just like the death of an animal.

They consider life to be restricted to an affair of a few years of activity only and the sweetness and joys of life are intercepted with many unpleasant and sour experiences. That is why the number of people suffering from mental depression and spiritual maladies is increasing day by day to the extent that they are resorting to tranquilize their mind by taking intoxicants, liquors and sleeping-pills.

The cult of non-conformist young people characterized by unusual dress and behavior known as hippies and the trampling down of the human values and natural disposition are the result of such a thinking, which is hovering over the society as a canopy of hopelessness and depression. Really, if man is not inspired by good hope and better expectation to live his life or if he thinks of getting destroyed by his death, why does he not try to kill himself sooner than later?

That is to say if we are going to be perished even after sustaining lifelong troubles and grief why should we not try to end our life before that. Suppose if we are spared to live for some more years and we happen to eat about 1000 kilo of foodstuff more or drink a few thousand liters of water more, what will then happen afterwards?

That is a sort of thinking of the materialistic outlook of the Universe and the belief of the people who do not consider themselves to be present before Allah and in whose thought and belief the will of Allah and the concept of eternity, eternal life and Paradise have no meaning.

But in the Divine outlook of Universe its cogent reasoning establishes that man is not a perishable creature, that his future is full of bright prospects and that he is compensated for his deeds, small or big, and further that it does not restrict man's life to a few years of living in this world in which the trials and tribulations are underlined with Allah's Blessings like a silver lining in the dark clouds and it becomes the source of man's progress and development.

Since the Divine outlook of the Universe looks at life with a different angle, the life, therefore, has its own pleasure and thus on the one hand there is a hope for the best, expectations of Divine Blessings and several other benevolent rewards and on the other hand the prospect of attaining the eternity of life along with the blessings of having the proximity of Allah and the eternal abode in Paradise with the pious and devout leaders gives a soul-stirring inspiration and makes us cheerful and contented.

For such a life which man leads there is no fraud and frustration nor is his endeavor for bettering his life a wasteful exercise. Now that we have fully comprehended the real meaning and purpose of life the task of giving glad tidings to the people rests only with the Prophets and it is one of their achievements.

Similarly one of the duties of the Prophets is to warn the people not to do evil deeds. Fear is the main factor which prevents man from many evil things but it is also necessary that he should be aware of the dangers of the future so that he remains cautious of them.

A child who does not know the dangerous nature of a snake catches it as if it is a cord. It is the duty of the parents, therefore, to tell the child about the venom in the snakes so that he may be aware of the danger.

The Prophets by narrating the stories of the preceding nations warn the people as to how those nations received the wrath of Allah because of their cruelty, polytheism, pride, fraud, apathy, dissension, intimidation, ungratefulness, hopelessness, manslaughter, self-projection, sins and breach of trust.

They warn the people that the wrath of Allah like His Blessings is also a part of Divine law and thus any nation who adopts the path of truth or falsehood will accordingly be paid back in the same coin.

There is no partiality, no favoritism in the treatment of the nations. The deterrent effect that is produced as a result of narration of the stories of the past nations serves as a signal for the people concerns the overall well-being of the nation. Another kind of deterrent effect relates to the person of man about which the Prophets forewarn us.

They warn of the Fire of Hell and give an account of the treatment that will be done to the transgressors before the justice of Allah in presence of the angels. The record of man's deeds will be presented before

him in which he will find all the details of his big or small deeds and he will wonder as to what type of record it was which had recorded all his deeds and actions.

The Prophets warn us of the day when we shall have to face the scrutiny of our actions and deeds. On that day man will be prepared to forego everything even his wife and children and all of his possessions in order to escape the Fire of Hell.

Is it not a fact that the fear of Allah's wrath, Fire of Hell, agony and disgrace on the Day of Judgment deter man from committing various crimes and sins? We see that in the Holy Qur'an there are more than 1000 verses about the Day of Judgment as well as innumerable verses about the destruction of the nations of the past.

These verses in fact indicate that man should become cautious of the dangerous consequences that he may suffer on account of his deeds. Hence the society should be fearful of Allah's wrath and save himself from ruination.

Thus the main objective of the Prophets besides bearing the glad tidings of Allah's Mercy and Benevolence and rewards is to warn man of the severe punishment on the Day of the Judgment where he may face torment, disgrace and wrath of Allah.

11. Leading to Light

The Holy Qur'an says:

It is He Who forgives you and His angels pray for you so that He will take you out of darkness into light. Allah is AllMerciful to the Believers. (Surah al-Ahzab, 33:43)

The Prophets were sent to the people so that they might lead the people out of darkness to light, out of ignorance to the light of knowledge, out of dissension to the purity of heart, out of polytheism to monotheism, out of disunity to unity, out of fear to peace and tranquility, out of high-handedness to tolerance, out of blind following to rational following, and out of passionate desires to righteous guidance.

These are the perfect lines which show the duties of the Prophets, but their activities were not confined to these spheres only. Their special duties included their call to the people towards monotheism; battling against various forms of polytheism; delivering the oppressed people to freedom; fighting against superstitions; and above all their inviting the people to do well and forbidding them to do evil.

They warned them of the wrath of Allah and cheered them with His Mercy and Benevolence. These were the achievements of the Prophets. But if we wish to have more information about them we shall have to take the support of the Holy Qur'an and study the facts about them one by one very closely and minutely.

12. Invitation to People

The Holy Qur'an says:

Believers! Listen to Allah and the Messenger when they call you to that which gives you life.

(Surah al-Anfal, 8:24)

In this verse the commands of the Prophets are referred to as life giving for the individuals and the society. From this it can be made out that before the coming of the Prophets the society was dead. The society had nothing but the following of idolatrous priests; it had nothing but the bearing of hardships; it did not struggle to break the shackles of domination of the oppressors and despots; it indulged in infanticide and considered the birth of a female child as disgraceful and it was lost in superstitions.

To those people who live in a society which is devoid of all moral or civic sense, which has no freedom of thought and which is in fact a dead society a Prophet is sent so that he should call the people towards Allah, should consider an act of right thinking as worship, should make acquiring of knowledge obligatory for every man and woman, should consider the crushing of the tyrants and the redressing of the grievances of the oppressed ones as every man's bounden duty, and should enlighten the people on health care and hygienic principles in respect of hair, teeth, body and dress and should forbid favoritism, nepotism, partiality, chieftdom, feudalism, undue preferences and discretions, hero-worship, undue sympathy, and dependence on oppressors.

Besides that a Prophet inculcates among his people good habits, piety, unity, tolerance, mutual cooperation, right thinking and worship of Allah in place of disunity, misgivings and idol-worship and above all brings about a cultural revolution in conformity with the Divine commands that are revealed upon him, and they are the commands which are free from selfishness, errors, ambiguity and omission.

This revolution which gives life to a dead society cannot be over-estimated. We note that the Holy Qur'an has described the deeds of the Prophets as life-giving and the relevant verse has already been quoted above.

This thing can best be comprehended if we exclude the world of the Prophets and revelations take stock of the dishonesty, crimes, restlessness, misgivings and defects in our society despite the advancement of science and technology.

Telephone was invented but lies are told on it. Airplane was invented but bombs are dropped on cities from it and thousands of houses and human lives are destroyed. If side by side with this progress, faith and piety are not there, it can be nothing but destruction. According to our heritage which we have drawn from the Holy Qur'an, the progress and development that have been made in this world, without the teachings and guidance of the Prophets, will destroy the world itself one day as we see the indications now.

The international organizations, heads of the States, and Super-Powers have not done anything except for their own benefits. They use the power of veto by virtue of which they strengthen colonialism and suppress the down-trodden people of the under-developed countries.

A time will come at last when the deprived and oppressed people will break their connections with them and the world will once again be prepared to accept the Divine leader and Divine commandments. According to our insight the difficult knot of tyranny and injustice will be untied by Imam Mahdi the existing Imam of the Age, whose advent we have been waiting since long and we should accordingly strive hard to lighten our dark nights with sustained efforts.

If we want to acquaint ourselves with the work of a gardener, we should consider the quantity of fruits that the garden yields and the income that is accrued from its sales so that we can estimate the hard toil that has been invested by the gardener.

Similarly we can look to the people who have been trained according to the teachings of the Prophets and assess the value and benefits of their work. This in itself is a long discussion which depends upon the study of the lives of those who have been the true followers of the Prophets.

Nowadays Islam has become the focal point of the entire world and therefore, we should acquaint the world, the East and the West, with ardent and dedicated followers of the Prophets and prepare films on their lives, to be shown to the people through our embassies abroad, symposia should be organized and brochures and pamphlets carrying the salient features of our faith and beliefs should be widely circulated.

Imam Ali Riza said: "If the people get acquainted with our words they will ultimately become our followers".

In another narration we learn that the Holy Imam said to two persons who were present before him: "Whether you go to the East or to the West, you will nowhere find as pure and flawless teachings as are available with our school of learning and thought". (*Biharul Anwar*, vol. I)

To illustrate it we quote some verses which tell us how we have forgotten the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and how we have been enchanted by alien slogans:

Whatever Allah grants to His Messenger out of the property of the people of the towns, belongs to Allah, the Messenger, the kinsfolk, the orphans, the destitute and wayfarers, so that it does not concentrate in the hands of those who are rich among you. Accept what the Messenger gives you, and refrain from what he forbids you. Have fear of Allah. Allah is severe in His retribution.

(Surah al-Hashr, 59 7)

If you do not give up usury which you demand, know that you are in the state of war with Allah and His Messenger. But if you repent, you will have your capital. Oppress none and no one will

oppress you. (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:279)

Those who obey the commands of their Lord and are steadfast in prayers, and whose affairs are settled by mutual consultation. (Surah ash-Shura, 42 :38)

Whichever place you come from, turn towards the Holy Mosque (Ka'ba) and wherever you are, turn your faces towards it so that people may have no cause of argument against you, except the wicked. But do not fear them, fear Me that you may find the right guidance perchance. (Surah al-Baqarah, 2: 150)

In retribution there is life (and preservation). O men of sense! You may haply take heed for yourselves. (Surah al-Baqarah, 2: 179)

The hypocrites wait and see. If Allah grants you victory, they say, 'Didn't we help you?' If the unbelievers are victorious, they say, 'Didn't we encourage you not to surrender to the believers and didn't we protect you from them?' Allah will judge among them on the Day of Judgement. He will never help the unbelievers against the believers. (Surah an-Nisa, 4: 141)

Do not give the budget of your country and of your possessions in hands of wicked and low persons and to those who in words of the Holy Imam are lustful, drinkers, and gamblers. The Holy Qur'an says:

Do not let the immature waste their possessions. Allah has made you their guardian, so provide them with whatever they need from their property and deal with them in a reasonable way. (Surah an-Nisa, 4:5)

Islam enjoins its followers to remain self-sufficient and to meet their expenses themselves. The Holy Qur'an gives the example of a seedling. It says as follows:

Their likeness in the Taurat and the Injil, is like a seed that sends out stalk, then makes it firm, and it becomes strong and rises straight upon its stem, gladdening the cultivators heart, in order to fill the unbelievers with dismay. Allah has promised, those who believe and do the right, forgiveness and a great reward. (Surah al-Fath, 48:29)

Imam Ja'far Sadiq says: "If you earn your livelihood yourself you will become independent of the stingy wealthy people".

The Holy Qur'an says:

Whoever intercedes for a good purpose will receive his share of the reward but the intercession for an evil purpose only adds more to one's burden. Allah has control over all things. (Surah an-Nisa, 4:85)

Imam Ali says: "O people! From amongst you only he deserves to be the ruler, who possesses moral

strength to maintain peace and to carry on a government based on equity and justice; and who has best understood the commandments of Allah". (Sermon 178, *Peak of Eloquence*)

The Holy Qur'an says:

Mobilize your (defensive) force as much as you can to frighten the enemies of Allah and your own enemies. This also will frighten those, who are behind them whom you do not know, but Allah knows well. For whatever you spend for the cause of Allah, He will give you sufficient recompense with due justice. (Surah al-Anfal, 8:60)

Believers, anyone of you who turns back on his faith should know that Allah will soon raise a people, whom He loves and who love Him, who are humble towards the believers, mighty against the unbelievers, who strive hard for the cause of Allah, and who have no fear of anyone's accusations. Such is the favour of Allah which He bestows on whomever He wants. Allah is Munificent and All-Knowing. (Surah al-Ma'idah, 5:54)

One should be aware of enemy's opinion about oneself as he happens to have his desires. The Holy Qur'an says:

They only want that you relent so that they may come to terms. (Surah al-Qalam, 68: 9)

(Muhammad), if you are among them (your followers during a battle) and you call them for prayers, let a group of them carry their arms during prayers. After they have made their prostrations let them go back to watch the enemy and let the other group who has not yet prayed join you, carrying their arms with due precaution. (Surah an-Nisa, 4: 102)

The unbelievers wish to find you neglectful of your arms and provisions to attack you unawares. (Surah Ale Imran, 3:118)

The Islamic society should remain very vigilant so as not to fall in the trap of its enemies. The Holy Qur'an says:

When a satanic thought starts to bother the pious ones, they understand and see the light while their devilish brothers would like them to continue in error and would not desist. (Surah al-A'raf, 7:201-202)

The Muslim Ummah should not employ such advisers and experts from amongst the aliens (unbelievers) on national affairs as become aware of the State secrets. The Holy Qur'an aptly says:

Believers, do not make the unbelievers your confidants. (Surah Ale Imran, 3:118)

Do not speak out things which may warn your enemies about you. That is why underground treasures, documentary evidences, past records, military codes etc. are treated as guarded secrets.

When Prophet Yusuf narrated his meaningful dream to his father, Prophet Ya'qub, he advised his son to keep the dream secret lest his brothers should harm him. The Holy Qur'an says:

He said, 'My son, do not tell your dream to your brothers lest they plot against you. Satan is the sworn enemy of man. (Surah Yusuf, 12:5)

When the dream can be given such an importance then matters relating to knowledge and technology are obviously more important and must not be disclosed.

In the Holy Qur'an there are inherent lessons underlined in the verses which have a great import. That is why one of the Prime Ministers of England understood the Holy Qur'an better than we did because he is quoted to have said, "As long as this Qur'an remains with the Muslims, we cannot rule over them)

O dear Brothers and Sisters! Has the time not come yet we should revert to the sacred teachings of the Holy Qur'an?

Have you not been able to recite even one page from the Holy Qur'an still? Do you still not want to know the secrets of its hidden treasure? Have we chalked out our program of life by learning one verse of the Holy Qur'an for every year of our life we have passed?

It would be suffice to mention so much about the performance of the duties and achievements of the Prophets as I am afraid I tried to be as brief as possible.

Friends and Foes of Prophets

It is but natural that anyone who has his high ideals and principles, has his followers as well as opponents. It is not important to have friends or foes but it is important to find out the reasons behind friendship and enmity. Some of the verses of the Holy Qur'an narrate the history of Prophets' supporters and opponents and since acquaintance with these accounts will help to guide our budding generation, we have already discussed this matter in the subject regarding the Prophets' achievements.

The Opponents of the Prophets

(i) **The Devils:** In the Holy Qur'an the word denoting the Devil has been mentioned eight times. It means the false gods, tyrants and transgressors. This word is used for an individual as well as for group of such persons as transgressors, oppressors etc. One of the main objectives of the Prophets is to fight against these devils. In the Holy Qur'an Allah says to Prophet Musa:

Go to Fir'aun, surely he has become exceedingly rebellious. (Surah Ta Ha, 20:24)

The modern day slogan against colonialism is an incomplete version of this Qur'anic verse. But Prophet Musa in his simple dress goes to Fir'aun and by his forceful speech frightens his courtiers, asks him to

liberate the children of Isra'il and stop oppressing them. (Vide: Surah Ta Ha, 20:47)

The most important thing the Prophet said to Fir'aun is that he had no special privileges and merits over others and thus all of them should prostrate themselves before one Allah. But Fir'aun's position was strengthened by his false claim of being the deity, and by oppressing the poor and helpless people with strict monarchical system of administration.

And on the other hand there was Prophet Musa who stood like a rock in his simple and unimpressive dress before Fir'aun's impressive court and in a fearless voice demands the freedom of the children of Isra'il from the bonds of slavery. Naturally Fir'aun and his minions could not remain passive and thus they made a device to crush the Divine leader.

We see that Fir'aun arranged a public meeting and decreed that the magicians from all over the country should assemble at a particular place. He set a reward for that magician who could defeat Prophet Musa.

On a particular day the people of the town came to witness the miracle of Musa and the magical feats of the magicians. First of all the magicians showed their skill by converting the ropes into snakes.

Thereafter, Prophet Musa threw his staff on the ground which turned into a huge snake which devoured the magicians' snakes. The magicians after looking at this spectacle changed their mind and rejected the false godhood of Fir'aun and believed in the true Lord.

Fir'aun after realizing the defeat of his plan, started intimidating and levelling charges against Prophet Musa. Addressing the magicians he said, Musa has been the tutor of you, magicians! Therefore, I cut the hands and feet of all of you. But Fir'aun was oblivious of the fact that a miraculous change had occurred in the mind and soul of these magicians.

Those magicians were now a different people altogether, and no more aspired to receive rewards from Fir'aun. These people were openly ridiculing the high-handedness of Fir'aun.

They were boldly telling him: "O Fir'aun! Whatever oppression and torture we are subjected to, only applies to this world alone. But now we have no temptation of a few coins of yours but we have embarked upon a new world of spiritual enlightenment. We have now embraced the faith in Allah and have now come out of the influence of a small creature like you.

Now we will not prostrate ourselves before you because we have discovered the truth within ourselves. We have now chosen the righteous path, our leader and our Lord". (Vide: Surah Ta Ha, 20:61-73)

This indeed is the revolutionizing spiritual and mental change that we have observed.

In short the devils have always been in the forefront to oppose the teachings of the Prophets and they never spared any effort to commit abominable acts and the throwing of Prophet Ibrahim into the fire was

one of such heinous crimes.

(ii) **The Affluent People:** There was another group of the affluent people who were scared of the teachings and preachings of the Prophets for the sake of retaining their domination and hegemony and they became the enemies of the Prophets. The Holy Qur'an says:

Why were there no men of understanding among the people of the destroyed towns of the past (except for a few, whom we saved from destruction) to prevent people from committing evil in the land? The unjust among them indulged in worldly pleasures and so became guilty. (Surah Hud, 11:116)

They asked him, Shu'ayb! Do your piety tell you that we must abandon the worship of what our fathers had worshipped and that we must not deal with our properties as we like? We still believe that you are a man of forbearance and understanding. (Surah Hud, 11:87)

Every time we sent a warner to a town, the rich ones therein said to our Messenger: 'We have no faith in what you have brought to us. We are the ones who have more wealth and children and we shall suffer no punishment'! (Surah Saba, 34:34)

When we read the stories about the Prophets as to how the poor people used to come round them and how the wealthy and debauched people used to oppose them and then we look at the communists who say that Islam is supporter of the well-to-do ones, we are simply amazed.

(iii) **Scholars and Intellectuals:** Scholars and intellectuals were also in opposition to the Prophets. The Jews and the Christians were among them. The Holy Qur'an says.

Those to whom We have given the Bible, know you (Muhammad) just as well as they know their sons. Yet some of them deliberately conceal the truth. (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:146)

The Jews and the Christians knew quite well the truth about the Prophethood of the Prophet of Islam in their heart of hearts as they knew that the prophecy about the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet was made in their sacred Book, the Taur, but they were afraid of revealing the truth because they thought that they would lose all their interest and would be in a disadvantageous position, and their loss would be irreparable. Thus they concealed the truth and committed unpardonable sins. The Holy Qur'an says:

Those who conceal the signs and the guidance that we have revealed, after it has been made clear to everyone in the Bible, will be condemned by Allah and those who have the right to condemn. (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:159)

In fact, if in the time of the Holy Prophet, the Jews and the Christians had not concealed the truth about the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet, today they would not have been fighting against Islam.

Why People Opposed the Prophets?

The Holy Qur'an tells many basic things in connection with the opposition of the Prophets. We mention below some causes of their opposition:

(i) **Contemporaneous Prejudice:** Sometimes man does not agree with another man and argues in support of his non-acceptance of the latter's views, because that man does not give credibility to what another man says as both of them are contemporary and have personal jealousies. But had the same man happened to be in a time about two centuries or so ago people would have accepted his statement as a gospel truth.

Normally the importance of the scholars is not recognized and people do not know them either. If a Pakistani citizen happens to present a scheme or plan for the welfare of the society and if he is not famous among the people, his scheme would not be accepted by anyone.

On the contrary if the same thing is presented by any foreign expert, people will accept it as a very important thing. Similarly some of our teachers or authors quote something of a person who is not very well-known and is alive also they will avoid to mention his name but if a man belonged to the time some centuries ago they will easily mention his name.

When we look into the past history, we note that when Allah made Talut, the commander of an army, people disobeyed him and said, "This man whose position has been very ordinary cannot be deemed fit for leading the troops".

Despite the protest of the Prophet of the time that Talut was pious and possessed all abilities, people ignored him because Talut was just a man among the ordinary persons.

We also note the similar thing in the time of our Holy Prophet. When during his last days he deputed Usama, an eighteen-year-old young man to lead the command of an army, he declared that Allah would curse that person who refused to accept the command of Usama and join his army.

But despite the pronouncement of the Holy Prophet the elderly people who were enjoying good reputation did not agree to accept the command of Usama. This was the pride and rivalry that speaks volumes for contemporaneous rivalry.

A Word to the Readers: Since I do not know you, there is no offence as far as you are concerned. Suppose at this point you set aside the book and for a moment just ponder over that if a contemporary man or anyone who is younger in age or is not well-to-do or is not famous or basically belongs to a different taste or opinion has said a truthful thing or has presented a good proposal, would you accept it easily or with reluctance, or would reject it right away?

In principle, the greatness of a man does not lie in his personality but it lies in his truthfulness. A man's

value is recognized only when he places the truth above his personal interest and desires the pleasure of Allah and upholding the truth.

There are many men whom we consider very good and they consider themselves good also but when the time of trial comes and he notices another person as his rival and fears that his popularity and personal interest will be at stake or he becomes the target of people's opposition he becomes unhappy and indulges in destructive activity or feels happy by seeing the disruptive activities against his rival. All this is due to personal rivalry which is natural between contemporary people.

When we look into the Holy Qur'an, we note how this factor of contemporaneous rivalry was the cause of obstruction in the preachings of the Prophets. The Holy Qur'an says:

Are the people astonished that a man who is one of them was commanded by Us to warn them and to bring glad tidings to those who believe? (Surah Yunus, 10:2)

When they see you they take you only in jest: 'Is this the one whom Allah has sent as Messenger?' (Surah Furqan, 25 :4)

From both these verses it becomes abundantly clear that people's opposition to the Holy Prophet was simply—because he happened to be one among the common people.

(ii) **Pride and Pretension:** In the Holy Qur'an there are several verses which mention the various excuses that the people made in opposing the Prophets and we quote a few of them below:

Bring a different Qur'an or make amendments to this one. Say: 'It is not for me to change it of my will. I follow only what is revealed to me' (Surah Yunus, 10:15)

The unbelievers say: 'Why was the whole Qur'an not revealed at once to him'. (Surah Furqan, 25 :32)

The infidels did not know the real import of this as the Holy Qur'an was revealed in gradual steps in order to strengthen the hearts and provide explanations as it is mentioned in the following verse:

Why has not a treasure been given to him or a garden from which he could eat? (Surah Furqan, 25:8)

They were quite unaware of the fact that to have a treasure is one thing and to be in the good books of Allah is another thing. The Holy Qur'an in many verses of Surah Tur questions the deniers of the Holy Prophets and frustrates all their excuses in the heart-stirring manner. The Holy Qur'an says:

Does their minds prompt them to say this or is it because they are a rebellious people. (Surah at-Tur, 52:32)

Do they say, 'He has fabricated the Qur'an? In fact, they will never believe. So let them bring a

discourse like it if they are true in their claim. (Surah at-Tur, 52:33-34)

Have they been created from nothing or are they themselves their own creators? Have they created the heavens and the earth? In fact, they are certain of nothing(Surah at-Tur 52:35-36)

Do you (Muhammad) demand any wages from them (for your preaching) which they cannot afford ? (Surah at-Tur, 52:40)

Do they have another god besides Allah? He is too exalted for what they associate with Him!
(Surah at-Tur, 52:43)

In short, these Qur'anic verses frustrated the excuses of the Prophets' opponents by marking their conscience prick them.

(iii) **Unusual Demands:** In the Holy Qur'an we read that people used to place impossible demands on their Prophets and that they expected from them the unusual things to happen. The Holy Qur'an says:

These people say, 'After we die, we shall never be raised to life again. Bring back to life our ancestors if you are truthful'. (Surah ad-Dukhan, 44:35-36))

Suppose if these dead were brought back to life then they too would have demanded him to bring back their fathers to life and in that case the Prophets would have to reverse the cycle of Allah's creation. Under the circumstances when one is not unreasonable, a few arguments of the Prophets and a couple of their miracles would suffice to convince them and then they would give up their unreasonable demands.

In some of the verses of the Holy Qur'an we read that a certain group of the Jews and the Christians expressed their desire to the Holy Prophet that the Divine revelation should also come upon them as it was with him. The Holy Qur'an says:

(Muhammad), the people of the Scripture demand of you to make a Book descend on them from the heavens! (Surah an-Nisa, 4: 153)

This is a sort of thing as if a patient says that he is not prepared to go to a physician as he wants to be a physician himself no matter even if he may have to die of his ailment.

They had no sense to realize that revelation was not an ordinary thing that could descend on ordinary soul.

The most astonishing thing is that the people had asked Prophet Musa to show Allah in person. The Holy Qur'an says:

However, they asked Musa for things much harder than this by saying, 'Show us Allah in person'!
(Surah an-Nisa, 4: 153)

The Holy Qur'an says about such unreasonable demands as follows:

Even if We had sent you a transcript on paper which they could feel with their hands, the unbelievers would have said: 'This is nothing but clear sorcery'. (Surah al-An'am, 6:7)

Some of them listen to you but We have veiled their hearts so that they cannot understand, and made them deaf. They disbelieve all the evidence (of Our existence) that they may have seen. They only come to you for the sake of argument and the unbelievers say: 'This is nothing but fables of antiquity'. (Surah al-An'am, 6:25)

(iv) **Opposition Due to Indulgence:** Sometimes the unbelievers had no excuse to deny the Prophethood of Prophets but they simply opposed them because of their own inordinate desires as the teachings of the Prophets did not approve of such desires. the Holy Qur'an says:

Whenever a Messenger came to them with a message which did not suit their desires, they called some of them imposters and killed others. (Surah al-Ma'idah, 5: 70)

Apart from the many reasons of the disbelievers' opposition to the Prophets there was another reason, which was their following the ways of their ancestors. However, after we have known the various reasons for opposition we would now deal with the attitude and behavior of the opponents.

Prophet Musa delivered the people of Bani Isra'il from the oppression and domination of Fir'aun and himself bore the brunt of his attacks and when he deputed Prophet Harun, his brother for a few days to lead them and himself went to Mount Sina (Tur) the people reverted to polytheism and infidelity, and started worshipping the Calf again.

Prophet Harun who was the brother of Prophet Musa, and himself being the Prophet, was his vicegerent. He pleaded with his people very strongly and yet they turned a deaf ear to his preaching. When Prophet Musa returned and saw his followers worshipping the Calf again, he became very furious and got annoyed with his brother, too

Prophet Harun in his defence said to his brother, Prophet Musa: "These newly liberated slaves of Fir'aun flouted my instructions and instead of remaining steadfast they weakened me. When I decided to dissuade them from this ignoble act of worshipping the Calf they were about to kill me".

It is true that in every period of history there were people who followed the preachings of the Prophets and the Divine leaders and attained freedom, self-respect and salvation, but after a time for one excuse or another they became violently opposed to their benefactors and started intimidating them and they invented a different line of approach of their own.

Indeed these verses of the Holy Qur'an serve a good lesson for the leaders and reformers as well as for their followers.

The intimidation of the Prophets by these renegades is also found in the lifetime of our Holy Prophet. When at the last moment of his life the Holy Prophet asked for a pen and paper so that he could indite something for the salvation of Muslim Ummah, but his instructions were insolently flouted!

The wish of the Holy Prophet in respect of appointing his successor as the leader of the Muslim Ummah, on the occasion of Ghadir, was so blatantly disregarded that another man was made his successor. These violations were made in the time of the Holy Prophet himself when Islam had reached the zenith of its fame, glory and power.

If we start enumerating these violations which were against the teachings of the Holy Prophet we shall find that these cannot be counted on finger tips but for them a voluminous book is required.

The Prophets were almost surrounded by their opponents who tried to defeat their mission through indecent acts, inordinate desires, insolent remarks and derisions. By studying the hardships that the Prophets suffered and the struggle that they made, we learn two important lessons as follows.

(i) Man realizes how greatly the Prophets suffered for conveying to us the Divine message and as such they are held in man's highest esteem for their sincerity and dedication to their obligation of Prophethood.

(ii) The followers of the Prophets realize that for the sake of Ummah, the Prophets had to undergo all sorts of troubles and hardships at the hands of the unbelievers and for that patience, steadfastness and determination are needed.

Now whatever has been referred to in the Holy Qur'an is partly reproduced for the benefit of our readers.

We sent Nuh to his people to give them the clear warning that they should not worship anyone besides Allah. Nuh warned them. 'I am afraid that you will suffer the most painful torment'. The disbelievers among his people said, 'We do not believe that you are any better than the rest of us; we see that only the worthless hasty ones, the lowliest among us follow you. Thus, we do not think that you are superior to us, rather you are all liars. (Surah Hud, 11-25-27)

Nuh started to build the Ark but whenever some of his people passed by they would mock him. He in turn would reply, 'Mock us, but just as you mock us we too will mock you. (Surah Hud, 11:38)

They said, 'Shu'ayb, we do not understand much of what you say about, but we know that you are weak among us. Had it not been for our respect of your tribe, we would have stoned you to death; you are not very dear to us. (Surah Hud, 11:91)

We sent Hud to his brethren, the tribe of 'Ad. He told them, 'Worship Allah for He is your only Lord. Will you not become pious?' A group of the unbelievers among his people said, 'You look to us like a fool and we think that you are a liar' He replied, 'My people! I am not a fool but a

Messenger of the Lord of the Universe' (Surah A'raf, 7:65–67)

Similar thing was said to Prophet Nuh by his people.

The chiefs of his people said, 'We see you in clear error' He said, 'O my people! There is no error in me, but I am a Messenger from the Lord of the worlds'. (Surah A'raf, 7:60–61)

Similarly, the Holy Qur'an mentions the conspiracies hatched by the unbelievers of Makkah against our Holy Prophet.

The unbelievers planned to imprison, murder or expel you (Muhammad) from your city. They make evil plans but Allah too plans and Allah's plans are the best. (Surah al-Anfal. 8:30)

Indeed the infidels of Makkah had meted out such a disgusting treatment to the Holy Prophet that some of his own relations had turned against him. It was his blasted uncle, Abu Lahab who was so conspicuous for his evil intentions that wherever the Holy Prophet went, he followed him and disrupted his programmes of inviting the people to Allah.

In the early preaching sessions Abu Lahab used to attend them and created trouble so as to distract people from their listening to the teachings of the Holy Prophet. A usual blame that was put on the Prophets was that of their being a poet, a magician, a lunatic or a sorcerer. The Holy Qur'an says:

We sent Messengers to the past people who lived before you. Every Messenger who came to them was mocked by them. (Surah Hijr, 15: 10–11)

We have seen how Fir'aun used his tactics to arouse the feelings of the people against Prophet Musa by impugning his teachings. Sometimes he used to say that Prophet Musa and Prophet Harun wanted to turn the people out of the city and to dispossess them of their land, and sometimes by showing his false glory he used to say that Prophet Musa and Prophet Harun were leading the people to the wrong path by distracting them from their right path.

Sometimes the opposition to the Prophets assumed such a proportion that the people used to plug their ears by inserting their fingers and cover their heads with their garments. The Holy Qur'an says about Prophet Nuh as follows.

Every time I invite them to Your guidance so that You can forgive them, they put their fingers into their ears, cover their heads with their garments, persist in their disbelief and display extreme arrogance. (Surah Nuh, 71: 7)

It was the most disgraceful thing when the opposition to the Prophets was offered by the inmates of their own house. The wives of Prophet Lut and Prophet Nuh who were treacherously disloyal, particularly the wife of Prophet Lut, who used to sneak out information to the unbelievers. The Holy Qur'an has termed these two wretched women as the model of infidelity and treachery and says

Allah has told the disbelievers the incident of the wives of Nuh and Lut as a parable. They were married to two of Our righteous servants but were unfaithful to them. Nothing could protect them from the wrath of Allah and they were told to enter the Fire of Hell with the others. (Surah at-Tahrim, 66: 10)

This narration of the Holy Qur'an defeats the ideological concept of some schools of thought who believe that man's mode of thinking and selection of the course of life is influenced by economic factors because we have seen that these two women who were the wives of the Prophets and lived with them and who were maintained by them, chose a different course for themselves and they sided with polytheism.

On the contrary it was the wife of that rebellious Fir'aun who lived in a palace but her anxiety was for the well-being of the hut-dwellers. She was born and brought up in an environment of transgression and despotism but she was strongly opposed to the form of government in power. She was maintained by Fir'aun but she was the supporter of Prophet Musa.

From these instances it is established that despite the fact that economics plays a great part in one's life, it is not the solitary factor which can influence man's course of life. Some people say that if one wants to know as to how a man thinks he should better find out from where he is fed, or they say that the people living in palatial house cannot think of the poor and downtrodden people. These are the slogans which in the light of historical evidence have collapsed and that the cult of ideologies which has given these slogans is doomed to oblivion.

These were some of the details of the disruptive activities of the opponents but it is more regretful that there are some who under the garb of friends do much damage and harm.

Islam has termed those people as hypocrites who never relaxed their efforts in stabbing Islam in the back.

Sufferings of the Followers of the Prophets

We should also not be oblivious of the tortures that were borne by the followers of the Prophets, too. The opponents of the Prophets used to dig big ditches in which they threw the believers and then set them on fire. The Holy Qur'an says:

Accursed are the people who tortured the Believers in ditches by a burning fire while they themselves set around it witnessing what they had done to the believers. The only reason for which they tormented the believers was the latter's belief in Allah, the Majestic and Praiseworthy. (Surah Buruj, 85:4-8)

The sinners indeed laughed at the Believers. When passing by them they would wink at one another. And returning to their people, boast about what they had done. On seeing the believers, they would say, 'These people have gone astray'. (Surah al-Mutaffifin, 83 29-32)

The above–quoted verses describe the mode of thinking as well as the strange behavior of the people of the ancient past. But in the modern times this very attitude can be used to dissuade the believers from the righteous path and to stifle their true belief, but those who have really identified themselves with the righteous people believing in Allah, and who have acknowledged the truthfulness of the Divine commandments and accepted the Divine leaders, and have kept themselves aloof from sins, cannot be daunted by such silly remarks of taunt and scoffing, and cannot in any event forego the right path they have chosen for themselves, because the Holy Qur'an has promised them that a day of Reckoning would soon be coming when the believers would laugh at them. The Holy Qur'an says:

On the Day of Judgement, the believers will laugh at the disbelievers while reclining on couches and reviewing (the bounties given to them). (Surah al–Mutaffifin, 83:34–35)

Thus, even today if the transgressors and the violaters of Divine commands laugh at the believers surely they will be laughed at by the believers while enjoying the bliss of eternal life in Paradise and sitting in reclining couches.

Destructive Activities of the Hypocrites

We have already pointed out that the Prophets not only suffered at the hands of their enemies but they were also subjected to hardships and troubles at the hands of the hypocrites almost to the same degree. The hypocrites were the same people who had built a Masjid in comparison with the Masjid built by the Holy Prophet with a view to making it a hotbed of vice and conspiracy where they could hatch the plans to disunite the Muslims.

You may perhaps have heard that these people had invited the Holy Prophet to perform its inaugural ceremony but the Holy Prophet acceding to their request got that Masjid demolished and burnt to ashes. It was Allah who had informed the Holy Prophet of the evil intentions of the hypocrites, as the Masjid was built with a view to bringing about disunity among the Muslims and of spying on their activities. The Holy Qur'an says about this as follows:

The Masjid which some of the hypocrites have established is only to harm people, to spread disbelief, to create discord among the Believers, to wait for (Abu 'Amir) the one who fought against Allah and His Messenger, and to make others believe that it has been established with their good intentions. But Allah is witness that they are liars. (Surah at–Tauba, 9: 107)

Had they (the hypocrites) wanted to join your army they would have prepared themselves, but Allah did not wish to motivate them, so He caused them to linger behind with those whose joining you in the battle would be of no use. Had they joined you, they would have been of no help to you but would have just caused confusion and trouble among you by sneaking through the ranks where some of you would be ready to listen to them. Allah knows best the unjust. Even prior to this, they tried to cause trouble and to turn your affairs upside–down until the truth came

and the cause of Allah triumphed against their desires. (Surah at-Tauba, 9:46–48)

What prevents their offerings from being accepted is their disbelief in Allah and His Messenger, their lack of interest in prayers and their spending for the cause of Allah reluctantly. (Surah at-Tauba, 9:54) 395

They Raised Objections

These hypocrites used to criticize the Holy Prophet for his decisions on financial matters such as distribution of Zakat and taxes. The Holy Qur'an says:

They blame you about the distribution of the welfare funds. They are pleased when you give them something from it, but if they receive nothing, they become angry with you. (Surah at-Tauba, 9:58)

Now we wind up our discussion on the disruptive activities of the enemies of the Prophets and deal with the sacrifices and dedicated spirit of the followers of the distinguished Prophets because knowledge about their dedication and devotion is going to help us in our approach to religion.

Why the Followers of the Prophets Were Sincere?

Quite contrary to the opinion of those who think that the main reason of the believers' inclination towards the Prophets was due to their poor economic conditions and since the Prophets used to fight against oppression, poverty, deprivation and violation of human rights, these believers supported the Prophets and became their ardent followers.

But this notion is far from the truth. Such an explanation is only given by those who want to conceal the truth as well as to suppress the man's feelings of searching the truth. But from historical evidence we note that there were many people who were not at all financially weak and who were not subjected to any oppression or unexpected happenings, and yet they willingly answered the call of the Prophets, followed their teachings, and adopted the righteous path as guided by them.

Not only that, they even sacrificed their life and property for the cause of the path the Prophets showed to them. We have the instance of Asia, the wife of Fir'aun and Lady Khadija the illustrious wife of our Holy Prophet. Therefore, if anybody says that the embracing of the belief of the Prophets was only for the sake of bread, clothes and personal freedom he is like the one who considers the existence of a nose on his face only for the purpose of the eyeglasses to rest on.

The followers of the Prophets can be divided into two categories:

(i) Those who are unsteady.

(ii) Those who are steadfast.

Unsteady Followers

In Surah al-Baqarah of the Holy Qur'an an event about the children of Isra'il, who were the followers of a Prophet, is narrated. We summarize it below:

After Prophet Musa some people of Bani Isra'il who were subjected to tyrannies and disgrace at the hands of the autocrats and despots, decided to rise in revolt. Therefore, they went to their Prophet Shamu'el and asked him for help to have an able ruler.

The Prophet replied, "It is possible that if you are asked to wage Jihad (the Holy War) and to kill the transgressors, you may disobey". At this they assured him of their steadfastness and said, "How can it be possible that we do not take action against those who have driven us from our land, and in whose hands our women and children are in a state of insecurity? We shall fight them and we request you to appoint an able ruler for us".

The Prophet invoked Allah to appoint an able ruler for the nation. His invocation was granted and a man called Talut was referred to the Prophet. He was suitable from the point of view of strength and knowledge and the Prophet introduced him to the people and appointed him their ruler.

But the people who had imperfect wisdom objected to it and said, "This man who has no good mien, and who is not famous either, cannot deserve to be our ruler. And if it is decided that he should be our ruler, we consider ourselves more suitable because we are wealthier than him".

The Prophet pleaded with the people that the appointment of Talut as a ruler had been decided by Allah and that too was because of his physical strength and superior wisdom. But those people did not agree with the Prophet and dissociated themselves from the rest of the people and by this the strength of the fighting people was reduced. It was just a trial which condemned those people who had disobeyed the Prophet.

The second trial was that the ruler told those people who had accepted him as a ruler and leader that they would be given as trial with an ordinary restriction in fighting the tyrant of the time. He said, "You are now approaching a canal and you should not drink water from it, and anyone who drinks it will not be from amongst us.

The greedy glutton cannot be a front line soldier of my army. Of course if at all you drink water, then it should not be more than a handful of water". All those revolutionaries who were fighting against tyrannies, accepted the condition, but when the time for trial came, and they reached the canal, all of them with the exception of a few drank their fill from the canal water.

Here we see again how a group of people again got themselves condemned by violating a small restriction and how the false revolutionaries suffered defeat.

The third trial came at the time when the revolutionaries faced the great army of the opponents, the soldiers got so much frightened that they started shouting that they were not their enemies and they ran away from the army.

Thus another group of people got themselves condemned. But those of the people who had faith in their destinies and had followed the path of Allah and the Prophets did not object to the appointment of the ruler nor did they drink water from the canal, and as they had their firm determination and were not frightened, they fell upon the enemy's forces and a young man, among them, named Dawud defeated the enemy's forces.

Whatever we have narrated above teaches us a great lesson which the Holy Qur'an has mentioned in Surah al-Baqarah 2:247-253. This story distinguishes the true from the false followers, the slogan-mongers from the practical people, and it as well warns that it is not difficult to be revolutionary in name only but to prove it practically is a difficult thing. We have seen that all of those who clamored for victory ultimately failed at the hours of trial.

At Ghadir al-Khum about 100,000 people congratulated the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali on his becoming the leader of the Muslims but two months after, they conveniently forgot all about that. After the assassination of Uthman, the third caliph, people of all tribes and shades of opinion swarmed round Imam Ali and accepted him as their leader, but before long they were divided in different groups against Imam Ali and the Battles of Jamal, Siffin and Naharwan were fought.

The people involved Imam Hasan in a battle against Mu'awiya but when the time came they defected from him and joined Mu'awiya's army.

The people of Kufa invited Imam Husayn to help them overthrow the despotic Umayyad dynasty but before he reached there he was martyred at the plains of Karbala.

Even when the Holy Prophet was delivering his Friday Sermon, people left their positions in the congregation after hearing the beating of the drum of the sellers of imported goods.

We also read in the narrations that at the time of the advent of our existing Imam, Imam Mahdi, a group of people will come out from the Masjids to fight against him!

It is an undeniable fact that after the mischief of his jealous brothers, when Prophet Yusuf came out of the well, and after passing hard time in prison he achieved success and honour, he invoked Allah thus: "O Allah! Let me die as a Muslim".

When the merit of a thing is judged by the result then it is not without reason that when Imam Ali heard the prophecy about his martyrdom he did not ask as to who would martyr him, and when he would be martyred? He only asked the Holy Prophet as to whether he would remain steadfast in his faith and religion at the time of receiving the fatal wound from his assassin's sword?

In short, there is a lot of difference between profession and performance, promise and its fulfillment, and claim and its proof.

It is mentioned about twenty times in the Holy Qur'an that unless the people are given a trial their qualities and abilities are never known. From the early period of Islamic history men like Abuzar, Bilal and Maytham underwent untold sufferings and tortures, but they never forsook their faith.

As against them there were people who gave up Islam altogether for fear of oppression and tortures. Dr Muhammad Ibrahim Ayati has enumerated the names of such people in his book *The Biography of the Prophet of Islam*.

As we have dealt with the disloyal followers of the Prophets, we should better say something about their true followers.

[The Loyal Followers of the Prophets](#)

The Holy Qur'an makes mention of the loyal followers of the Prophets and we quote some of its verses below:

The Believers are those who believe in Allah and His Messenger, who do not change their belief into doubt, and who struggle for the cause of Allah with their property and souls. They are the truthful ones. (Surah Hujurat, 49:15)

Once some Bedouin Arabs came to the Holy Prophet and said: "We have embraced Islam". But Allah in reply sent His revelation as follows:

The Bedouin Arabs have said, 'We are Believers'. Tell them, 'You are not believers, but you should say that you are Muslims. In fact, belief has not entered your hearts'. (Surah al-Hujurat 49:14)

When the believers are called to Allah and His Messenger to be judged, their only words are, 'We have listened and obeyed'. They will have everlasting happiness. (Surah an-Nur, 24:51)

In the Battle of Trench when the Holy Prophet with other Muslims was busy in digging the trench some of them left him without his permission but there were some who asked permission from the Holy Prophet. The Holy Qur'an praises such Muslims and says:

The true believers are those who have faith in Allah and His Messenger, and when they are dealing with the Messenger in important matters, they do not go away without his permission. (Muhammad) those who ask your permission believe in Allah and His Messenger. When they ask your leave to attend to their affairs, you may give permission to anyone of them you choose and ask forgiveness for them from Allah. Allah is All-Forgiving and All-Merciful. (Surah an-Nur, 24:62)

(Muhammad), tell them, 'If you love Allah, follow me. Allah will love you and forgive your sins ' ! Allah is All-Forgiving and All-Merciful. (Surah Ale Imran, 3:31)

Of all men the nearest people to Ibrahim are those who followed him, and then this Prophet (Muhammad) and the true believers. Allah is the guardian of the true believers. (Surah Ale Imran, 3:68)

Believers, obey Allah, His Messenger and your (qualified) leaders. If you have faith in Allah and the Day of Judgment, refer to Allah and His Messenger about the matters in which you differ. This would be more virtuous and a better way of settling differences. (Surah an-Nisa, 4: 59)

(Muhammad), have you not seen those who think that they have faith in what is revealed to you and to others before you, yet choose to take their affairs to Satan (the despots) for judgment even though they are commanded to deny him. Satan only wishes to lead them astray. (Surah an-Nisa, 4:60)

A dispute arose between two companions of the Holy Prophet on a matter of irrigating the land and they came to him for judgment. The Holy Prophet gave them his decision. The one against whom the decision was pronounced misbehaved shamefully towards the Holy Prophet and questioned the justice of the Prophet in giving the decision in favour of the other party. At this moment the following verse revealed:

Indeed, by your Lord, they will not be considered believers until they let you judge their disputes and find no constraint in their minds about your decisions, and accept them with full acquiescence. (Surah an-Nisa, 4:65)

No believing men and women have any choice in a matter after Allah and His Messenger have decided it. Whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger is in plain error. (Surah al-Ahzab,33:36)

Another sign of the true belief in the Prophets is that besides religious matters we take guidance from the Divine revelations and the Prophets in matters of politics, economics and military affairs. The Holy Qur'an has severely criticized that group of Muslims who spread rumors without consulting the Prophets after receiving any information. The Holy Qur'an says:

When they receive any news of peace or war, they announce it in public. Had they told it to the Messenger or to their (qualified) leaders, they could have used that information more properly. (Surah an-Nisa, 4:83)

This verse is applicable for all times, present and future, as it is a standing order for all Muslims to follow the Holy Prophet, his Holy Progeny, and the qualified religious leaders and guides on matters pertaining to political and military affairs besides religious matters, otherwise people with vested interest would put them on the wrong track.

About the sincere and loyal followers of the Prophets, the Holy Qur'an says again:

The righteous and pious of those who obeyed the call of Allah and His Messenger even after they were wounded (at Uhud) shall indeed have an ample reward. (Surah Ale Imran, 3: 172)

The interesting thing is that despite their self-sacrificing spirit, Allah praises them with a condition that righteousness and piety should be their prerequisite qualifications.

Indeed, in the teachings of Islam if the end does not come in the state of righteousness and piety then all other things such as sacrifice, privilege of being a companion of the Holy Prophet, sufferings, hardships, captivity etc. will be of no avail. These warriors supported the Holy Prophet in a state of piety. The Holy Qur'an says:

Many godly men fought to help the Prophets in the cause of Allah. They did not lose courage, show weakness or give in when facing hardships in their fight for the cause of Allah. Allah loves those who are steadfast. (Surah Ale Imran, 3: 146)

The narrations of the nations of the past and their selfless devotion to the Prophets serves as a beacon light for the coming generations of the Muslims so as to keep them on the right path and to give them consolation in the thought that the narrating of the hardships of the past Prophets to the Holy Prophet was with the purpose of providing consolation to him too. We implore Almighty Allah to count us among the loyal and obedient followers of the Holy Prophet of Islam.

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