

Section 1: The Prophet Muhammad's Claim Upon the Souls of the Believers

Surah Al-'Ahzab – Verse 1

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ اتَّقِ اللَّهَ وَلَا تُطِعِ الْكَافِرِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. “O’ Prophet! Be in awe of Allah and do not obey the disbelievers and the hypocrites; verily Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.”

Occasion of Revelation

The Islamic commentators have cited different occasions of revelations here, all of which pursue one matter. One of them is that these verses have been revealed about Abusufyan and some of other chiefs of pagans and polytheists who, after the Battle of 'Uhud, asked permission from the Prophet (S) and entered Medina.

They came to the Messenger of Allah (S) accompanied with 'Abdillah-ibn-'Ubay and some others of their friends and said:

“O Muhammad! You may dispense with vilifying our gods (the idols: Lat, 'Uzza, and Manat) and say that they will intercede their worshippers and then we will desist from you, too, and you can explain about

your God whatever you want.”

This suggestion made the Prophet (S) inconvenient, so ‘Umar stood up and addressing the Messenger of Allah, said:

“Let me kill them by my sword!”

The Prophet (S) said:

“I have given them security and such a thing is impossible.”

But he (S) ordered that they should be sent out from Medina. The above holy verse was sent down and ordered the Prophet (S) not to heed such kind of suggestions.¹

One of the most dangerous precipices on the way of the great leaders is the collusive suggestions that are offered from the side of the opponents. It is here that some deviate lines are created in front of the leaders which intend to send them out of the main road, and this is a great trial for them.

The pagans of Mecca and the hypocrites of Medina, for several times, tried to deviate the Prophet of Islam (S) from the line of Monotheism by their collusive suggestions, among which was the one that was said in the above occasion of revelation.

So, the first verses of Surah Al-‘Ahzab were sent down and put an end to their evil plot, and invited the Prophet (S) to continue his decisive style in the way of Monotheism without the least collusion.

These noble verses totally give the Prophet (S) four important commands:

The first Divine Command: is in the field of piety and virtuousness which is a preliminary of any other good program.

It says:

“O’ Prophet! Be in awe of Allah...”

The essence of piety is one’s innate sense of responsibility and as long as this sense of responsibility does not exist, man will not go after any constructive program.

Piety is the motive of guidance and enjoying the Divine verses, as the second verse of Surah Al-Baqarah indicates, this Qur’an is the cause of guidance for the pious ones.

It is true that the last stage of piety will be earned after having faith and acting according to the commandment of Allah, but its primary stage is found before all of these issues, since if a man does not have the sense of responsibility in his self, he will not go to search about the prophets’ invitation, nor does he hearken to their words. Even the issue of “repelling the probable harm”, which the scholars of

theology have mentioned as the foundation of effort for gnosis of Allah, is in fact a branch of piety.

The second command is about the negation of obeying the disbelievers and hypocrites. It says:

“...and do not obey the disbelievers and the hypocrites...”

For laying emphasis on this subject, at the end of the verse, the Qur'an says:

“...verily Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.”

If Allah orders you to leave obeying them, it is according to His infinite Knowledge and Wisdom; because He knows how painful afflictions and numerous harms are hidden in this obedience and collusion.

However, next to piety and sense of responsibility, the first duty is wiping out the face of the heart from the strangers and eradicating the troublesome thorns from this area.

Surah Al-'Ahzab – Verses 2-3

وَاتَّبِعْ مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا

وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا

2. “And follow what is revealed to you from your Lord; verily Allah is aware of what you do.”

3. “And rely on Allah, and Allah is sufficient as a Protector.”

When you close a deviated way, you should let a clear way be open.

The verse says:

“And follow what is revealed to you from your Lord; verily Allah is aware of what you do.”

Therefore, at first the evil of man's spirit must be sent out from inside of his soul so that the goodness substitutes it. In order that the seeds of flowers grow the thorns must be rooted out. At first the false gods must be dismissed and then the government of Allah, the Almighty, and the Divine system substitutes them.

And since there is a great deal of difficulties in the continuation of this way and there are many threats, plots, and hindrances in it, the fourth command is issued as follows:

“And rely on Allah, and Allah is sufficient as a Protector.”

If a thousand enemies intend to kill the Prophet (S) he should not be afraid since Allah, the Knowing, is his protector and his friend.

Apparently the addressee in these verses is the Prophet (S) but it is clear that the command itself is for the whole believers of the world. It is a prescription for salvation as well as a life-giving remedy in any age.

Some commentators have said that the Qur’anic phrase */ya’ayyuhā/* is special for the instances that the aim is to attract the attention of entire people though the addressee is only one person, and it is versus the Arabic word */ya/* which is usually used in the instances that the aim is only the person who is addressed.²

And since in the verses under discussion the statement has begun with the phrase */ya’ayyaha/* it emphasizes the generality of the aim of these verses.

Another evidence for this meaning is the sentence which says:

“...verily Allah is aware of what you do.”

The addressee in this sentence is in plural form. (Be careful)

Without saying, it is evident that the purpose of these commandments to the Prophet (S) is not that he had ever shown shortcoming in the subject of his virtuousness, and abandoning the obedience from the pagans and hypocrites, but these statements, from one side, has an emphasis on the duties of the Prophet (S) and, on the other side, they are some lessons for the whole believers.

Surah Al-’Ahzab – Verse 4

مَا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِرَجُلٍ مِنْ قَلْبَيْنِ فِي جَوْفِهِ وَمَا جَعَلَ أَزْوَاجَكُمْ اللَّائِي تُظَاهِرُونَ مِنْهُنَّ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ أَدْعِيَاءَكُمْ أَبْنَاءَكُمْ ذَلِكَ قَوْلُكُمْ بِأَفْوَاهِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَقُولُ الْحَقَّ وَهُوَ يَهْدِي السَّبِيلَ

4. “Allah has not made for any man two hearts within him, nor has He made your wives whom you divorce by Zihar your mothers: nor has He made your adopted sons your (real) sons these are the words of your mouths, and Allah tells you the Truth, and He guides unto the (right) way.”

The heart and nature of man both incline to one thing, and whatever a person says or acts against it is his own personal hypocrisy, not the will of Allah.

(Allah has not made ...)

In relation to the former holy verses that commanded the Prophet (S) that he should follow the Divine revelations, not from the pagans and hypocrites, the verses under discussion point to the result of obeying them indicating that following them invites man to a series of superstitions, falsehoods, and deviations, three of which have been stated in the verse under discussion.

At first, it says:

“Allah has not made for any man two hearts within him...”

Some of the commentators have cited upon the occasion of revelation of this part of the verse that at the Age of Ignorance there was a man named ‘Jamil–ibn–Mu‘ammar’ who had a very strong memory. He claimed that there were two hearts within him that by either of them he could understand better than Muhammad (S), therefore, the pagans of Quraysh called him in Arabic: /^٢ul qalbayn/ (The possessor of two hearts).

On the day of the Battle of Badr, when the pagans ran away, Jamil–ibn–Mu‘ammar was also among them. Abusufyan saw him in the case that he was escaping while he was wearing one shoe on his foot and he had another one in his hand.

Abusufyan asked him what news he had, and he answered:

“The army ran away.”

He said:

“Why do you have one shoe on your foot and just the other in your hand?”

Then Jamil–ibn–Ma‘ammar answered:

“Verily I did not care it. I thought I had worn both of them on my feet. (It became clear that, with that abundant claim, he was so giddy that he could not understand things as much as having even one heart). Of course, the purpose of heart in these instances is wisdom.”³

However, following pagans and hypocrites and leaving the obedience from Divine revelations, usually invites man to these superstitious subjects.

But besides these, this sentence has a deeper meaning, too, and it is that man has not more than one heart and it does not have capacity save for the love of one object of worship. Those who invite to polytheism and to numerous objects of worship must have numerous hearts in order to appoint each of them as a centre for the love of either of objects of worship.

In principle, a safe and sound person naturally has a single personality, and the line of his thought is a

single line. He is the same in solitude and in society; in manifest and hidden; in outward and inward, and in thought and action, all of them must be the same.

The existence of any sort of hypocrisy and duality in the entity of man is an imposition upon him which contrasts the requirement of his nature.

Since man has no more than a heart, he must be a single centre of emotions, he must submit to one Law, he must have the love of one beloved, he must follow only one proper path in his life; he must parallel his manner with one party, otherwise, the variety of numerous ways and scattered aims may draw him to vanity and deviation from the path of natural Monotheism.

Upon the commentary of this verse, Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) in a tradition said:

"The love of us and the love of our enemy do not assemble in one's heart, since Allah has not appointed for a man two hearts within him, that he loves with one and hates with another. Then our lovers are sincere in the love for us in the same manner that gold becomes pure by fire.

*Whoever desires to know this fact he may test his heart. Then if there is anything of the love of our enemy mixed with the love of us (in his heart) he is not of us and we, too, are not of him."*⁴

Therefore, a single heart is the place of a single belief and it also performs a single program, because man, in fact, can not believe in something but, in action, he separates from it.

In our time, there are some persons who have taken numerous personalities for them and say that they have done, for example, that action from the political view, and another action from the religious view, and something else from the social view and, thus, they often adjust their own contradictory deeds.

They are some hypocrites with ugly behaviour who intend to tread on the law of creation by these words. It is true that the sides of man's life are different, but there should govern a single line over all of them.

Then, the Qur'an refers to another superstition of the Age of Ignorance, which is Zihar.

When they became inconvenient from their wife and wanted to express their hatred to her, they used to say:

"You are to me like my mother's back."

and by this saying they considered her as their own mother and it was a divorce.

In the continuation of this verse, the Qur'an says:

"...nor has He made your wives whom you divorce by Zihar your mothers:..."

Islam has not agreed with this program of Ignorance, and has not appointed the ordinances of mother in

respect of them, but it appointed a punishment for it.

The person who says this statement is not allowed to copulate with her wife until when he pays the necessary atonement, and if he did not give the atonement nor did he go to his wife either, by going to the religious judge, the wife can force him to do one of two things: either he must formally and according to the law of Islam divorce her and separate from her, or he must pay the atonement and continues their matrimonial life as before.

What a kind of statement is this that a man by saying:

“You are to me like my mother’s back”

to his wife she becomes as his mother? The relation of the mother and child is a natural relation and it never becomes true by a mere saying.

So, in Surah Al-Mujadalah, No. 58, verse 2 the Qur’an, in this regard, explicitly says:

“...their mothers are no others than those who gave them birth, and verily they utter a hateful word and a falsehood...”

And if their aim in saying those words was to separate from the wife, that was so in the Age of Ignorance and some of them divorced their wives in this way, separation from one’s wife needs not these ugly words. Can not the divorce be uttered by a proper statement?

Some of the commentators have said that in the Age of Ignorant, the act of Zihar did not work as a cause for the separation of a man and a woman from each other, but it caused woman to be in a state of an absolute suspense.

If it had been so, the criminality of this action would have been made clearer, because by uttering a meaningless saying he would absolutely cut the matrimonial relation with his wife without that the woman could be divorced.⁵

Then the verse refers to the third superstition of the Age of Ignorance, where it says:

“...nor has He made your adopted sons your (real) sons...”

Explanation: In the Age of Ignorance there was a custom that some people would take some other children as their own children and adapted them as their own sons, and then, after it, they considered all the rights that a boy might have from his father for themselves.

For example, that by could inherit from his adopted father and the adopted father would be his heir, too, and the prohibition of step-mother (father’s wife) or daughter-in-law (son’s wife) was current among them.

Islam severely negated these illogical and superstitious rules, and as we will see later, in order to condemn this wrong custom, even the Prophet (S) married the wife of his adopted son, Zayd-ibn-Harithah, after that she obtained her divorce from Zayd in order to make it clear that these empty sayings could not change the facts, because the relation between father and son is a natural relation and it can never be obtained by utterances, agreements, and hollow claims.

Later we will explain that the Prophet's marriage with the divorced wife of Zayd caused a great tumult among the enemies of Islam and they used it in their evil propaganda against Islam, but those tumults were worthy in comparison with condemning that custom of the Age of Ignorance.

So, next to this sentence, the Holy Qur'an says:

"...these are the words of your mouths..."

You utter that so and so is my son, while you know in your heart that surely it is not so. These sound waves turn only in the vacant space of your mouth and come out and they never originate from your heartily belief. These are not any things but some falsehood, while the word of Allah is the Truth.

The verse continues saying:

"...and Allah tells you the Truth, and He guides unto the (right) way."

A true statement is a statement which adapts to a concrete reality or it is an agreement consistent with the interests of the whole matter, and we know that the reprobated subject of Zihar in the Age of Ignorance, or the subject of 'adopted son', which considerably ruined the rights of other children, was neither a concrete reality nor was it an agreement to protect the common interest.

Surah Al-'Ahzab – Verse 5

ادْعُوهُمْ لِأَبَائِهِمْ هُوَ أَقْسَطُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَعْلَمُوا آبَاءَهُمْ فَإِخْوَانُكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ
وَمَوَالِيكُمْ وَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ فِيمَا أَخْطَأْتُمْ بِهِ وَلَكِنْ مَا تَعَمَّدَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ
غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا

5. "Call them after their (true) fathers, that is more equitable with Allah; but if you do not know their fathers, then they are your brethren in faith and your friends, and there is no blame on you concerning that in which you made a mistake, but what you do with intent of heart (you are responsible), and Allah is forgiving, Merciful."

In order to lay a more emphasis and making clear the correct and logical line of Islam, the Qur'an says:

“Call them after their (true) fathers, that is more equitable with Allah...”

The Arabic word */’aqsat/ (more equitable)* used here means that if you call them by adapted fathers’ names it is just and by their real fathers’ names is more equitable. As we have repeatedly said, this Arabic form of the word is sometimes used for the instances that the quality is not found in the opposite party.

For example, it may be said that: ‘It is preferable that man might be cautious and does not put his life in danger’. This statement does not mean that putting life in danger is good, and to be cautious is better than that, but the purpose is to compare ‘good’ and ‘bad’ with each other.

And, in order to remove the pretexts, the Qur’an adds:

“...but if you do not know their fathers, then they are your brethren in faith and your friends...”

That is, the lack of knowing their fathers is not a reason for this that you put the name of another person as their father, but you can address them as your brethren in religion or as your friends.

The Arabic word */mawali/* is the plural form of */maula/* and the Islamic commentators have mentioned several meanings concerning it.

Some of them have taken it in the sense of ‘friend’ and some others have meant it ‘the slave who has become emancipated’, (because some of the adapted sons were the slaves who were bought and then they were emancipated and since they were in the favour of their possessors they were called as their adapted sons).

This point should also be noted that the application of */maula/* in these instances, that he was an emancipated slave, was for the sake that after emancipation they would keep their relation with the possessor, and, from legal point, this relation might somehow substitute the relationship, and it is called in Arabic */wula’-i-’itq/*.

Some Islamic narrations denote that Ziyd-ibn-Harithah was called as Ziyd-ibn-Muhammad after that the Prophet (S) emancipated him, until when the above verse was sent down and from then on the Prophet (S) told him:

“You are Ziyd-ibn-Harithah”,

and people called him *‘Maula Rasulullah’*.⁶

Also it is said Abu-Hathifah had a slave by the name of ‘Salim’. He emancipated him and called him as his son. When the above mentioned verse was sent down he was named as Salim-Maula-’Abi-Hathifah.⁷

But in view of the fact that it happens that, as the result of former custom, or mistake in recognition of

individual's lineage, a person may be ascribed to other than his father, and this is out of the realm of his authority, Allah, the Just, the Wise, will not punish such a person.

Therefore, at the end of the verse, the Qur'an says:

"...and there is no blame on you concerning that in which you made a mistake..."

"...but what you do with intent of heart (you are responsible), and Allah is forgiving, Merciful."

Allah will forgive what happened in the past and what you may do by mistake, err, and forgetfulness, but if after the revelation of this ordinance you oppose it intentionally and optionally and call persons by other than the name of their fathers so that you continue the wrong custom of 'adopted son' and 'adopted father' Allah will not forgive you.

Some commentators have said that 'mistake' envelops those instances that someone does call affectionately unto another one 'son', or for the sake of reverence he says 'father'.

Of course, it is correct to say that these meanings are not 'sin', but not for the sake of mistake, but for the sake that these meanings are used ironically and metaphorically, and its frame of reference is usually mentioned with them. The Qur'an negates the real applications in this field, not the metaphorical ones.

Surah Al-'Ahzab – Verse 6

النَّبِيُّ أَوْلَىٰ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجُهُ أُمَّهَاتُهُمْ وَأُولُوا الْأَرْحَامِ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلَىٰ
بِبَعْضٍ فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ إِلَّا أَنْ تَفْعَلُوا إِلَىٰ أَوْلِيَائِكُمْ
مَعْرُوفًا كَانَ ذَلِكَ فِي الْكِتَابِ مَسْطُورًا

6. "The Prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves, and his wives are (as) their mothers, and blood-relations among each other have closer personal ties, in the Book of Allah, than the believers and the emigrants, except that you do some good to your friends, this (ordinance) is written in the Book."

It is cited in Majma'ul-Bayan, the commentary, that the holy Prophet (S) had appointed brethren knot between Muslims (the Emigrants and the Helpers) in a way that they inherited each other as real brothers, because at the beginning the Emigrants were far from their homes, properties, and relatives and the brethren knot could compensate these instances.

Then the verse was sent down and cancelled such kind of heritage and implied that the criterion of a person to inherit is relationship.

So, when Islam expanded and the former communications gradually came forth, this ordinance was not necessary to be continued.

The above verse was revealed and cancelled the system of brethren-knot which was used to be substitute of lineage and set the ordinance of heritage and the like special to the real relatives.

Therefore, though the system of brethren was an Islamic system, (opposite to the system of 'adopted son' which was a system in the Age of Ignorance), it ought to be cancelled after removing the extraordinary conditions, and it did.

But in the verse under discussion, before mentioning this point, two other ordinances are referred to as a premise, saying that the Prophet (S) is closer to the believers than their own selves and his wives are as their mothers.

The verse says:

“The Prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves, and his wives are (as) their mothers...”

Thus, the Prophet (S) was as father and his wives were as mothers for the believers but they did not inherit from them, then how can it be expected that adopted sons become some heirs?

Then the verse adds:

“...and blood-relations among each other have closer personal ties, in the Book of Allah, than the believers and the emigrants...”

Yet, in the meanwhile, for the sake that the way might not be entirely closed to the Muslims and they can leave something as heritage for their friends and those in whom they are interested, even it is by the way of bequest due to one third of the property, at the end of the verse the Qur'an adds:

“...except that you do some good to your friends...”

In order to emphasize on all former ordinances, or on the recent ordinance, the holy verse implies that this ordinance is recorded in the Divine Book, (The Protected tablet or the Holy Qur'an).

It says:

“...this (ordinance) is written in the Book.”

What does 'the Prophet is closer to the believers' mean?

In this verse, the Qur'an has mentioned the precedence of the Prophet (S) to Muslims in an absolute manner. Its concept is that in all the things that man has authority unto him; the Prophet (S) is also

closer to him than his own self.

Some commentators have rendered it to the subject of 'management of social affairs' or 'precedence in the subject of judgment' or 'obedience for the command', but there is not, in fact, any evidence for restriction in each of these three things.

And if we see that in some Islamic narrations 'precedence' has been rendered into 'government', in fact, it is the statement of one of the branches of this precedence.⁸

Therefore, it must be said that the holy Prophet of Islam (S) was closer to any person than his own self not only in social affairs, but also in personal and private affairs, and in affairs of government, and judgment and invitation, so that the will and desire of the Prophet (S) is prior to the will and desire of all men.

This subject must not be the cause of wonder, because the Prophet (S) is infallible and he is Allah's agent. He does not think of anything save of goodness and interest of the society and individuals. He never follows the carnal desire.

He never gives priority to his own benefits rather than to those of others. On the contrary, his programs are always alongside the benefits of human beings and self-sacrifice for them.

This precedence is, in fact, a branch of the precedence of Allah's will, because whatever we have belongs to Allah.

Moreover, a man can reach the peak of faith when he appoints his strongest love, which is the love of his own self, under the precedence of the love to the Essence of Allah and His agents.

So, the Prophet (S) in a tradition said:

*"None of you reach to true faith until when his desire depends on what I have brought (from the side of Allah)."*⁹

In another tradition he (S) also said:

*"By the One my life is in Whose hand, none of you reaches to true faith until when I am more beloved to him than his self, and his wealth, and his son and all people."*¹⁰

It is narrated from the Prophet (S) who said:

*"There is no believer save that I am closer to him than his own self in the world and the Hereafter."*¹¹

The Holy Qur'an, in the current Surah, verse 36 says:

"And it is not for any believer, man or woman, to have the choice in their affair when Allah and

His Messenger have decreed a matter; and whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger indeed he has strayed off a manifest straying.”

Again we emphasize that the concept of this statement is not that Allah has made His servants totally submit to the desires of an individual, but regarding that the holy Prophet (S) possesses the rank of infallibility and according to the Qur'an which says:

“Nor does he (the Apostle) speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed”¹²,

whatever he says is from the side of Allah and is not from his own accord. He is even more sympathetic and sentimental than father.

This precedence, in fact, is alongside the path of the benefits of people both from the aspects of government and management of Islamic society, and from the personal and individual aspects.

It is for this reason that many a time this precedence puts some heavy responsibilities on the Prophet's shoulder.

So, according to a famous tradition recorded in both Sunnite and Shi'ite sources, the Prophet (S) said:

*“I am closer to any believer than his own self. Whoever leaves a wealth, it is for his heir, and whoever leaves any debt (when he dies) or offspring and wife, the suretyship of them is upon me.”*¹³

This should be noted that the word /diya'/ here means offspring or wife who are remained without any proper guardian, and the application of the word /dayn/ (debt) before it is also a clear frame of reference upon this meaning, because its purpose is to have debt without having any wealth.

Surah Al-'Ahzab – Verse 7

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ مِيثَاقَهُمْ وَمِنْكَ وَمِنْ نُوحٍ وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ وَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُمْ مِيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا

7. “And (remember) when We took a Covenant from the prophets and (also) from you, and from Noah and Abraham and Moses and Jesus, son of Mary, and We took from them a firm covenant,”

Among all Divine prophets (as) only five prophets were ‘possessors of determination’, that is, they had Book and religion, and they had a particular rank with Allah.

This verse has named them specially. Of course, the prophet of Islam (S) has been mentioned before the rest which denotes to another peculiar grandeur, and also the Qur'an has mentioned Jesus' mother

which indicates to the particular situation of Mary and the miraculous birth of Jesus (as).

However, since, in former verses, the vast authorities of the Prophet of Islam (S) were referred to by saying:

“The Prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves...”

The verse under discussion states the heavy duties of the Prophet (S) and other great prophets. We know that authorities are always accompanied with responsibilities, and wherever there is a ‘right’, there is also a responsibility for it and these two will never separate from each other.

Therefore, if the Prophet of Islam (S) has a vast right, there is also a great duty and responsibility appointed for him.

At first, it says:

“And (remember) when We took a Covenant from the prophets and (also) from you, and from Noah and Abraham and Moses and Jesus, son of Mary, and We took from them a firm covenant,”

Thus, at first the verse refers to the whole prophets saying that they were concerned in the subject of covenant, then it points to five arch prophets the first of whom is mentioned the Prophet of Islam (S) for the sake of glory and grandeur he has, and next to him four other arch prophets are mentioned sequentially according to the times of their advent (Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus (as)).

This matter shows that the mentioned covenant had been a common covenant that was taken from all prophets, though the arch prophets had more seriously been engaged in the face of this covenant.

The Qur’anic sentence which says:

“...and We took from them a firm covenant”

is an extraordinary emphasis stated upon this covenant.

As Raqib in Mufradat says, the Arabic word ***/mi‘aq/*** means: ‘a severe covenant’.

It is important for us to know what kind of severe covenant was it that all Divine prophets had undertaken?

The commentators have stated different words about it, for which we can say that all of them are different branches of one general principle. This principle is the accomplishment of the duty of propagation, messengerhood, leadership, and guidance among people in all fields and all dimensions.

They were responsible to invite all humankind toward Monotheism before anything else.

They were also responsible to confirm each other, and the former prophets made their nations prepared

to accept the later prophets, in the same way that the later prophets used to verify and confirm the call of their former prophets.

In short, the invitation of all of them was toward one way, and all of them preached one reality so that they would gather all nations under a single flag. The evidence for this meaning is also found in other verses of the Qur'an.

Surah 'Al-i-'Imran, No. 3, verse 81 says:

“And (remember) when Allah took the pledge of the prophets (saying): ‘since I Have given you of Book and wisdom – then there comes to you a Messenger, confirming that which is with you, you must believe in him, and you must help him’. He said: “Do you affirm and accept my compact in this (matter)?” They said: ‘We affirm’, He said: ‘Then bear witness and I am also with you among the witnesses’.”

Similar to this meaning has also occurred in Surah 'Al-i-'Imran, No. 3, verse 187 wherein the Qur'an explicitly implies that Allah had taken a pledge from People of the Book to make the Divine verses known to people and that they should not hide them.

Thus, Allah has taken covenant from both prophets that they must invite people to Unity of Allah, Unity of the Truth and the heavenly religions, and from the scholars of the People of the Book that they, too, must try to make the religion of Allah known to people as much as they can and avoid hiding it.

Surah Al-'Ahzab – Verse 8

لَيَسْأَلَ الصَّادِقِينَ عَنْ صِدْقِهِمْ وَأَعَدَّ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا

8. “That He might question the truthful of their truthfulness, and He has prepared for the unbelievers a painful chastisement.”

Allah takes a covenant from the Prophets and He has an aim in it. Its aim is to separate the truthful ones from the disbelievers. Thus, being far from truthfulness is being nigh to infidelity.

This verse states the aim of the mission of the prophets and the firm covenant that has been taken from them as follows:

“That He might question the truthful of their truthfulness, and He has prepared for the unbelievers a painful chastisement.”

The Islamic commentators have delivered a great deal of interpretations upon the purpose of the

Qur'anic term **/sadiqin/ (the truthful)** here that who they are, and that what question is this question?

The matter, which seems harmonious with the verses of this Surah as well as other suras of the Qur'an, is that the purpose is to define the believers who have proved the truthfulness of their own claim in action.

In other words, they have been successful in the trial of Allah. The evidence for this statement is as follows:

1- The term 'Sadiqin' (the truthful) here is mentioned versus 'Kafirin' (disbelievers) and this meaning is understood well from the context in opposition of this concept.

2- We recite in verse No. 23 of this Surah (Al-'Ahzab):

"Among the believers are men who were true to their covenant with Allah..."

Immediately after that statement, in verse 34, the Holy Qur'an explains the aim of it by saying:

"That Allah may recompense the truthful ones for their truthfulness, and chastise the hypocrites if He please, or turn unto them (mercifully)..."

3- Surah Al-Hujurat, No. 49, verse 15 and Surah Al-Hashr, No. 59, verse 8 introduce the truthful ones clearly.

The Qur'an says:

"The believers are only those who believe in Allah and His messenger then they doubt not and struggle hard with their wealth and their lives in the way of Allah; and these are the truthful ones."¹⁴

And, concerning the booties that Muslims gain without fighting, it says:

"(It is) for the poor who fled, those who were driven from their homes and their possessions, seeking grace of Allah and (His) pleasure, and assisting Allah and His messenger, these it is that are the truthful."¹⁵

Thus, it is clear that the purpose of the term /sadiqin/ is those who have proved their truthfulness in the fields of supporting the religion of Allah, Holy struggle and perseverance against the difficulties and giving their wealth and lives in the path of Allah.

Now, what is the main purpose of the question from the truthfulness of the truthful ones? Regarding to what was said in the above, it is clear that the purpose is that whether they prove the sincerity of intention and the truthfulness of their claim in their deeds or not.

Among their deeds there are: payment of the alms-tax, Holy struggle, and showing patience and perseverance against the difficulties and the hardships of the battle-field in particular.

Where will this question be asked? The apparent of the holy verse shows that it will be asked in Hereafter and in the just court of Allah. There are also numerous verses in the Qur'an that inform of the performance of this question wholly in Hereafter.

But there is also this probability that the question may have a practical aspect and it performs in this world, because by the mission of the Divine prophets all those who claim faith will be questioned and their action is an answer to this question that whether they are truthful in their claim or not.

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1. Majma'-ul-Bayan, under the above verse
 2. The Commentary by Fakhr-i-Razi, Vol. 25, P. 190
 3. Majma'-ul-Bayan, and the Commentary of Qurtabi, following the verse
 4. Commentary of Ali-ibn-'Ibrahim, according to Nur-uth-Thaqalayn Vol. 4, P. 234
 5. The commentary of Fi-Zilal, Vol. 6, P. 534
 6. Ruh-ul-Ma'ali, Vol. 21, P. 131
 7. Ruh-ul-Bayan, following the verse
 8. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 4, PP. 238-239
 9. The commentary of Fi-Zilal, following the verse
 10. Ibid
 11. Sahih-i-Bukhari, Vol. 6, P. 145, and Musnad Ahmad Hanbal, Vol. 2, P. 334
 12. Surah An-Najm, No. 53, verses 3 and 4
 13. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 17, P. 551
 14. Surah Al-Hujurat, No. 49, verse 15
 15. Surah Al-Hashr, No. 59, verse 8

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