

## Section 5: Invitation to the followers of the Book to Unity of Allah as a common basis of Faith

### Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 65

يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لِمَ تُحَاجُّونَ فِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمَا أُنزِلَتِ التَّوْرَةُ وَالْإِنْجِيلُ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ  
أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ

**65. "O' People of the Book! Why do you dispute about Abraham when the Torah was not sent down, neither the Evangel, but after him? Have you then no sense? "**

Both Jewish people and Christian people considered Abraham exclusively theirs. These kinds of statements were so current that the Qur'an says:

**"Abraham was neither (as) Jew nor (as) Christian... "1**

Hence this verse, to refer to the absurdity of their claim, addresses them both and says how do you know Abraham (as) the follower of the Torah and the Evangel while he lived before those two Books. Surely, the Book which was not revealed had not any follower. So, do you not contemplate at least thus far that your speech be adapted to the history?

**"O' People of the Book! Why do you dispute about Abraham when the Torah was not sent down, neither the Evangel, but after him?  
Have you then no sense? "**

## Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 66

هَآأَنْتُمْ هُوَآءَ حَآجَجْتُمْ فِيمَا لَكُمْ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلِمَ تُحَآجُّونَ فِيمَا لَيْسَ لَكُمْ بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَاللَّهُ  
يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

**66. "Ha, you are those who disputed about that of which you had knowledge; why then do you dispute about that of which you have no knowledge? Surely Allah knows, and you know not."**

This verse is both a reminder and a warning to the People of the Book. It tells them that they raised objections and asked some inappropriate questions upon what they knew. For instance at that time, they observed the natural life of Jesus (as) with their own eyes, and saw –his material needs: his need to food, his need to clothing, and his need to residence, yet they disputed about him.

Some of them called him (as) a liar and some others considered him Son of God! Or, they disputed about Muhammad (S) whose tokens were clearly cited in the Torah and Evangel and they were known to them.<sup>2</sup>

When you can not find a definite point and dispute upon what you know, why do you refer to a phenomenon that you have not knowledge about it and, for example, you seek for the religion of Abraham (as)?

**"Ha, you are those who disputed about that of which you had knowledge; why then do you dispute about that of which you have no knowledge? ..."**

This is because *Allah* knows everything but you do not. (Then you should learn it from the concerned ones, viz. from the Prophet (S) and his book.)

**"... Surely Allah knows, and you know not."**

## Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 67

مَا كَانَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ يَهُودِيًّا وَلَا نَصْرَانِيًّا وَلَكِنْ كَانَ حَنِيفًا مُّسْلِمًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ  
الْمُشْرِكِينَ

**67. "Abraham was neither (as) Jew nor (as) Christian but he was an upright Muslim, and he was not (one) of polytheists."**

The Arabic term /hanafa/ means: 'tending to the Truth', while its opposite Arabic term is /janafa/ which means: 'deviation or swerving to falsehood?'

The term /hanif/ is applied for a person who is on the path of Truth. But this very word was one of the perverted words which the idolators used to employ about themselves. Therefore, the pagans were also called /hunafa/ which is the plural form of this word.

With the occurrence of the term /musliman/ 'a muslim' in this verse and beside the term /hanafan/, the Qur'an has purified both Abraham, from the dirt of polytheism, and this holy word from the misusers.

**"Abraham was neither (as) Jew nor (as) Christian but he was an upright Muslim, and he was not (one) of polytheists."**

## Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 68

إِنَّ أَوْلَى النَّاسِ بِإِبْرَاهِيمَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ وَهَذَا النَّبِيُّ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَاللَّهُ وَلِيُّ  
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

**68. "Verily the nearest people to Abraham are those who follow him and this Prophet and those who believe, and Allah is the Guardian of the believers."**

It is realized from this verse that the theological relationships are higher and fixer than the family relationships. Those who have the same belief, the same line, and the same goal, are closer to each other than those who are apparently relatives but are aloof from each other from the point of idea and belief.

An evidence for this meaning is found in the tradition of Imam Sadiq (as) who in a statement told 'Umar-ibn-Yazid:

*"By Allah! You are from among the family of Muhammad (S)",* and then he (as) recited the above verse.

3

Again, the holy Prophet (S) said about Salman:

*"Salman is from us, Ahlul-Bayt."*<sup>4</sup>

## Explanations

1. The essential relationship between people and their leader is a theological relationship. It is not a tribal or linguiform, or regional or racial relationship.

2. The standard of being nigh to the Prophets, in general, is the obedience that one proves of them.
3. The Prophet of Islam (S) and Muslims are alongside the same line with Abraham (as) and they have the same purpose and the same aim.
4. There is a tradition from Amir-ul-Mu'mineen (as) cited in Majma'ul-Bayan which says:

*"Verily the lover of Muhammad is the person who obeys Allah although the one is far from him (S) from the point of relationship. And, verily, the enemy of Muhammad is the person who disobeys Allah, although the one is a near relative of him."* 5

## Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 69

وَدَّتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَوْ يُضِلُّوكُمْ وَمَا يُضِلُّونَ إِلَّا أَنفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ

**69. A group among the people of the Book desire to make you go astray, while they make not astray but themselves, and they are not aware.**

The Arabic term /ta'ifah/ is derived from /tawaf/ and is applied for a group or a community who, in order to be safe from the danger of savage animals and robbers, decamp tribally both in summer and in winter to continue their lives,

The feature of cultural attack and ideological plots are dealt with in this verse and the following three verses. In this verse, it informs of ideological grudges. In the next verse the Quran informs of obstinacy and infidelity.

The seventy first verse of the current Surah speaks about the style of neglecting aright, overlooking justice, and intentional concealment. Verse seventy second informs of a technical cultural attack arising from inner denial and objecting the existence of weakness and instability among some groups of people.

### Explanations

- 1- Knowing the enemy and his wants is necessary for being safe from the probable harms.
- 2- Those who try to pervert others may commit the sin of deceit, hypocrisy, rancour accusation, and plot.

***"... While they make not astray but themselves, and they are not aware."***

- 3- One of the aims of the enemies of Islam is planning for the creation of moral and ideological deviation amongst Muslims.

4- In Judgements, do not forget justice and equity.

***"A group among the people of the Book desire to make you astray ..."***

5. The danger of ideological and cultural attacks are the most important dangers which need an earnest awareness.

6. Do not trust in the hypocritical expressions of the opponents. They heartily desire your aberration.

## **Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 70**

يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لِمَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَأَنْتُمْ تَشْهَدُونَ

***70. "O' People of the Book! Why do you disbelieve in the Signs of Allah while you bear witness (to their truth)?"***

This verse, maybe, hints to the glad news that the people of the Book had studied in the Torah and the Evangel about Hadrat Muhammad (S).

They did know the Prophet of Islam (S) as they knew their own children. But, they denied all those divine tokens in order to keep their social situation and protect their material interests. So, the Qur'an says:

***"O' People of the Book! Why do you disbelieve in the Signs of Allah while you bear witness (to their truth)?"***

## **Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 71**

يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لِمَ تَلْبِسُونَ الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتَكْتُمُونَ الْحَقَّ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

***71. "O' People of the Book! Why do you confound the Truth with falsehood and hide the Truth while you know (it)?"***

Many of the distorters, under the name of Islamicists, orientalist, historians, and tourists, interfered in books, places, times, and human beings and distorted them.

They worked on encyclopaedias with the title of researchers and illustrated such a feature for Islam that when the seekers of Islam study them feel the circumstance so inconvenient that they do not even think of believing in it either.

***"O' People of the Book! Why do you confound the Truth with falsehood and hide the Truth while you know (it)? "***

## **Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 72**

وَقَالَتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ آمَنُوا بِالَّذِي أُنزِلَ عَلَيَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَجَهُ النَّهَارِ  
وَكَفَرُوا آخِرَهُ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

***72. "And a group of the People of the Book said: 'Believe in what has been sent down to those who believe, at the opening of the day, and disbelieve at the end of it, perhaps (by this device) they return (from Islam)."***

In the explanation of the occasion of revelation of this verse, it is said as follows.

Once at the time of the Prophet (S), twelve scholars from Jewish people, in order to create a state of agitation and doubtfulness among the Muslim believers, decided to come to meet Prophet Muhammad (S) in the morning and express their belief in Islam, but on the same day in the evening they would turn their backs to Islam and say that they met Muhammad (S) but he was not the same as the Torah and Evangel had explained.

By this skilful plan, they wanted to show off the common people that if Islam were a good creed and the former religions confirmed it; the scholars of the People of the Book would not desist from it.

Applying this manner, they could create both doubtfulness among Muslims and prevent other Jews to embrace Islam. But, by revealing this verse, the Lord made their plan manifest to all, saying:

***"And a group of the People of the Book said: 'Believe in what has been sent down to those who believe, at the opening of the day, and disbelieve at the end of it, perhaps (by this device) they return (from Islam)."***

### **Explanations**

1. It is possible that sometimes some individuals penetrate into the lines of Muslims and stab from behind, so we ought to be aware.
2. Muslims must not be simple-minded and credulous.
3. We must set our faith so firm that the return of several individuals does not affect our hearts.
4. In the foreign policy, the motive of holding communication, or ceasing it, is often to bring some special

conditions both inside and outside the country.

5. It usually happens that, in sensitive stages, *Allah* divulges the secrets and plans of His enemies.

## Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 73

وَلَا تُؤْمِنُوا إِلَّا لِمَنْ تَبَعَ دِينَكُمْ قُلْ إِنَّ الْهُدَىٰ هُدَىٰ اللَّهِ أَن يُؤْتَىٰ أَحَدٌ مِّثْلَ مَا أُوتِيْتُمْ  
أَوْ يُحَاجُّوْكُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّكُمْ قُلْ إِنَّ الْفَضْلَ بِيَدِ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

**73. "And do not believe save in one who follows your religion. say: "Verily the (true) guidance is Allah's guidance -that a person may be given the like of what you have been given; or they would dispute with you in the presence of your Lord '. Say: 'Verily grace is in the hand of Allah. He endows it with whom He pleases, and Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing'. "**

The People of the Book had some recommendations to enjoin each other. Their first recommendation was:

**"And do not believe save in one who follows your religion..."**

The Divine revelation tells the Prophet (S) that in answer to them:

**"... say: "Verily the true guidance is Allah's guidance..."**

That is, the true guidance is not confined to your religion, therefore, your prejudice is in vain.

Their second recommendation was that: never believe:

**"... that a person may be given the like of what you have been given..."**

Hence, the prophet hood must be in the Children of Israel, not amongst Arab-

**"... or they would dispute with you in the presence of your Lord '... "**

So, you have the best logic and never believe that it be with others. Then, the Lord addresses the Prophet (S) thus:

**"Say: 'Verily grace is in the hand of Allah, He endows it with whom He pleases..."**

And it is not confined to any race or a particular sect.

**"... and Allah is All-Embracing, All-knowing'."**

## Explanations

1. In their plots, the enemies of Islam recommend to concealment. They also have no trust to anyone other than themselves.
2. The grace of Allah is not restricted to a particular group.
3. Prejudice is forbidden.

## Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 74

يَخْتَصُّ بِرَحْمَتِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ

**74. "He specially chooses for His mercy whom He pleases; and Allah is the Lord of mighty grace."**

To consider that *Allah* endows His grace and mercy to no sect like that which He gave to the Jewish sect, is not more than a mere imagination. *Allah* knows well to whom He gives the charge of prophet hood. He chooses the most efficient person among his servants and bestows His special grace upon him, because *Allah's* Grace is vast and His Wisdom is the elector.

**"He specializes for His mercy whom He pleases, and Allah is the Lord of Mighty Grace."**

## Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 75

وَمِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مَنْ إِنْ تَأْمَنْهُ بِقِنطَارٍ يُودِّهِ إِلَيْكَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ إِنْ تَأْمَنْهُ بِدِينَارٍ لَأَ يُودِّهِ إِلَيْكَ إِلَّا مَا دُمْتَ عَلَيْهِ قَائِمًا ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا لَيْسَ عَلَيْنَا فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ سَبِيلٌ وَيَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ

**75. "And among the People of the Book is he who, if you entrust him with a heap of wealth, he will return it to you; and among them is he who, if you entrust him with a dinar, he will not return it to you unless you keep standing firmly upon him (demanding it). This is because they say: 'There is not any responsibility upon us for the gentile, and they tell a lie against Allah while they know (it).'"**

The moral values usually resist. Honesty is always good and treachery, to anyone, is always disgraceful.

**"And among the People of the Book is he who, if you entrust him with a heap of wealth, he will**

*return it to you;*

The justification of sin is graver than the sin itself.

***"...and among them is he who, if you entrust him with a dinar, he will not return it to you unless you keep standing firmly upon him (demanding it). This is because they say: 'There is not any responsibility upon us for the gentile ...'"***

They devoured the wealth of people unlawfully and said *Allah* was content with it.

***"... and they tell a lie against Allah while they know (it)."***

## **Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 76**

بَلَىٰ مَنْ أَوْفَىٰ بِعَهْدِهِ وَاتَّقَىٰ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ

***76. "Yes, whoever fulfils his promise and guards (against evil) -then, verily Allah loves the pious ones."***

The command in this verse is: to stand firm and be steadfast before wrong ideas.

By the way, to keep one's word and fulfil the promise with virtue is the main cause to call the love of *Allah*, not only being the People of the Book with a bare pretension.

***"Yes, whoever fulfils his promise and guards (against evil) -then, verily Allah loves the pious ones."***

## **Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 77**

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَشْتَرُونَ بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ وَأَيْمَانِهِمْ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا أُولَٰئِكَ لَا خَلَاقَ لَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَلَا يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهِمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلَا يُزَكِّيهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

***77. "Verily those who sea Allah's covenant, and their oaths, for a little price, these! there will be no share for them in the Hereafter, and Allah will not speak to them, nor will He look towards them on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He make them grow (by purifying of sin), and they will have a painful chastisement."***

*Allah* threatens, of course, those who breach their promise to following five kinds of divine wrath and deprivation from the grace of *Allah*.

1. The lack of any merit in the Hereafter.
2. The deprivation from the speech of *Allah*.
3. The deprivation from the grace of *Allah*.
4. The deprivation of purity from sin.
5. To be involved in the painful punishment of *Allah*.

***"Verily those who sea Allah's covenant, and their oaths, for a little price, these! there will be no share for them in the Hereafter, and Allah will not speak to them, nor will He look towards them on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He make them grow (by purifying of sin), and they will have a painful chastisement. "***

In the Islamic literature, it is narrated that the Messenger of *Allah* (S) has said:

*"The person who does not observe trustworthiness, is faithless; and the person who does not fulfil his promise, has no religion."* 6

## **Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 78**

وَإِنَّ مِنْهُمْ لَفَرِيقًا يَلُؤُونَ أَلْسِنَتَهُم بِالْكِتَابِ لِتَحْسَبُوهُ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمَا هُوَ مِنَ  
الْكِتَابِ وَيَقُولُونَ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَمَا هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَيَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكُذِبَ  
وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ

**78. "And verily among them is a group who twist their tongues with the Book that you may suppose it to be from the Book, but it is not from the Book; and they say: 'It is from Allah', while it is not from Allah; and they speak falsehood against Allah and they know (it)."**

### **Occasion of Revelation**

This verse was also revealed about a group of the Jewish scholars who used to write with their own hands some things against what was found in the Torah about the characteristics of the Messenger of Islam (S) and said that it was from the Lord. They perverted the facts of the Torah with their speech.

In this verse, again, the words are about some other wrong actions of a group of scholars of the People of the Book. It says:

***"And verily among them is a group who twist their tongues with the Book that you may suppose***

***it to be from the Book, but it is not from the Book;***

They did not suffice to that action either, but they explicitly said that it was from the side of the Lord:

***"...and they say: 'It is from Allah', while it is not from Allah..."***

Then, the Qur'an emphasizes that this action was not done because of their mistake, but they knowingly told a lie about *Allah*

***"... and they speak falsehood against Allah and they know (it)."***

By the way, from this verse and its previous verses, the great danger of the deluded scholars for a community and a nation is made clear.

## **Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 79**

مَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَنْ يُؤْتِيَهُ اللَّهُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحُكْمَ وَالنُّبُوَّةَ ثُمَّ يَقُولَ لِلنَّاسِ كُونُوا عِبَادًا لِي مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنْ كُونُوا رَبَّانِيِّينَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تُعَلِّمُونَ الْكِتَابَ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَدْرُسُونَ

**79. "It is not for a human being that Allah should give him the Book, the judgement and prophethood, then he should say to people: 'Be my servants rather than Allah's'; but rather, (he would say): 'Be godly because of your constant teaching the Book and your constant studying (it yourselves)."**

### **Occasion of Revelation**

Upon the occasion of the revelation of this verse and the following one, it is cited that once a person came to the Prophet of Islam (S) and said that people greeted him (S) as they did unto others, while they thought that kind of ordinary greeting was not enough for them to respect him.

The man asked the Prophet (S) to allow people honour him (S) somehow privileged, and, for example, prostrate before him.

The Prophet (S) said that prostration was not authorized before anybody other than *Allah*. So, they would respect their prophet only as a human being, but they ought to know his due and follow him.

This verse continues stating to nullify and improve the vain thoughts of a group of the People of the Book. It specially reminds the Christians that never Jesus (as) claimed divinity. It also clearly responds the request of those who wanted to repeat those kinds of claims about the Prophet of Islam (S). It says:

***"It is not for a human being that Allah should give him the Book, the judgement and prophet hood, then he should say to people: 'Be my servants rather than Allah's'!..."***

Neither the Prophet of Islam (S) nor either of other prophets is rightful to say such a statement. Therefore, the qualities of this kind attributed to prophets were totally made and finished by some unaware persons who had been far from the prophets' trainings.

Then, it adds:

***"... but rather, (he would say): 'Be godly because of your constant teaching the Book and your constant studying (it yourselves).'"***

Yes, the Messengers of *Allah* never exceeded the limits of servitude and worship and they were always humble before *Allah* more than that others were.

It is understood from the aforementioned sentence that the aims of prophets were not only to educate individuals but also to train some godly, virtuous and learned scholars among the societies who could enlighten their environments with their knowledge.

## **Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 80**

وَلَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَتَّخِذُوا الْمَلَائِكَةَ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ أَرْبَابًا أَيَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالْكُفْرِ بَعْدَ إِذْ أَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ

**80. "And neither would he enjoin you that you should take the angels and the prophets for lords. What! Would he enjoin you with infidelity after you have been Muslims?"**

This verse is a complementary meaning to what was said in the previous verse. It indicates that prophets did not invite people to their worship, nor invited them to worship angels nor other prophets. It says:

***"And neither would he enjoin you that you should take the angels and the prophets for lords..."***

This sentence, on one side, is a reply to the Arab pagans who considered the angels as the daughters of God and believed a kind of divinity for them, while they introduced themselves among the followers of the religion of Abraham.

On the other side, it is a respond to Sabians who counted themselves the followers of John, but promoted the rank of the angels to the extent of worship.

It is also an answer to the Jews and the Christians who introduced Ezra and Jesus the son of God.

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

**"... What! Would he enjoin you with infidelity after you have been Muslims?"**

That is, how is it possible that there comes a prophet and begins inviting people to Faith and monotheism, but afterward he leads them to the path of polytheism?

By the way, the verse implies the immaculate ness of prophets and that they did not swerve from the path towards the obedience of *Allah*.

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1. Surah 'Ale-'Imran, No.3, verse 67
  2. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 2, p. 457 & Tafsir-ul-Qutubi
  3. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 2, p. 458
  4. Bihar-al-Anwar, vol. 22, p.326
  5. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 2, p. 458
  6. Naraqī Commentary, vol. 3; p. 192

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