

The Opinion of the Quran regarding the Companions

First of all, I must say that Allah – praise be to Him the Most High – commended, in many places in His Holy Book, the Companions of the Messenger of Allah who loved, obeyed, and followed the Messenger without personal greed and without opposition or arrogance, and only wanted the acceptance of Allah and His Messenger; those Companions have pleased Allah and He pleased them, and that is the way for those who fear Allah.

This group of the Companions are appreciated by the Muslims because of their attitude towards the Prophet (saw) and their works with him, therefore they are liked and respected by all Muslims, and they are appreciated whenever people mention their names.

My study does not concern itself with this group of Companions who are respected by both the Sunnis and the Shi'a, nor is it concerned, with those who were well known for their hypocrisy, and who are cursed by all Muslims, Shi'a and Sunnis, whenever their names are mentioned.

However, my study is concerned with the group of Companions about whom the Muslims have expressed different views. There are verses in the Holy Qur'an where they are rebuked and threatened because of their attitudes in certain positions, and the Messenger of Allah (saw) warned them on many occasions, and warned other people about them.

The outstanding differences between the Shi'a and the Sunnis is concerned with this group of Companions, because the Shi'a criticize their sayings and deeds and complain about their justice, whereas they are respected by the Sunnis, in spite of their contradictions. My study is concerned with this group of the Companions because through it I will be able to reach the truth, or part of it. I say that, so that no one may think that I have neglected the Qur'anic verses which commend the Companions to the Messenger of Allah, and that I exposed the verses which criticize them. In fact through my research I discovered that some verses contain praise for the Companions, but if you read in between the lines you find that they contain criticism of them, and vice versa.

I shall not write here about all the hard work that I have done in the past three years in preparing this study, but I will confine myself to some Qur'anic verses as examples, and not for any specific reason. For those who want to go further, I advise them to research and compare, as I did, in order that they may find the Right Faith by themselves, and through their own work. That is what Allah wants for everybody, and that is what the conscience of each individual wants. Thus, one would achieve an absolute conviction that will not be shaken by any storm. After all, the divine guidance which results from personal conviction is far better than that which comes as a result of external factors.

Allah – the Most High says in praise of His Prophet (saw):

"And found you unable to see (the way) then He showed you the way" (Holy Qur'an 93:7).

That is He found you searching for the truth, so He led you to it. He also said:

"And those who strive hard for Us, We will guide them in Our ways" (Holy Qur'an 29:69).

1. The turning back verse

Allah – the Most High says in His Glorious Book:

"And Muhammad is no more than a messenger, the messengers have already passed away before him, if then he dies or is killed, will you turn back upon your heels? And whoever turns back upon his heels, he will by no means do harm to Allah in the least, and Allah will reward the grateful." Allah, the Great, has told the truth (Holy Qur'an 3:144).

This Qur'anic verse is clear about how the Companions will turn back upon their heels, and only a few will stand their ground, as the above Qur'anic verse indicated in the expression of Allah about them. Those who stand their ground and do not turn back are the grateful, for the grateful are only a small minority, as in the words of Allah– the Most High:

"And very few of My servants are grateful" (Holy Quran 34:13).

Also there are many sayings of the Holy Prophet (saw) which explain the "turning back," and we will refer to some of them, and even if Allah, the Most High, did not specify the punishment of those who turned back on their heels in this Qur'anic verse: He glorified the grateful who deserve His reward. However, it is important to know that those who turned back on their heels do not deserve the reward of Allah and His forgiveness, as has been emphasized by the Messenger of Allah (saw) in many of his sayings, some of we will discuss, if Allah wills, in the course of this book.

We could not explain the Qur'anic verse with reference to Tulayha, Sujah and al-Aswad al-Ansi, out of respect for the Companions, because the above-mentioned Companions have turned back and abandoned Islam, and even claimed the prophecy during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah, who

fought them and finally defeated them.

Nor indeed can we explain the Qur'anic verse with reference to Malik Ibn Nuwayrah and his followers, who refused to pay Zakat (alms) in the time of the caliph Abu Bakr, for many reasons. They refused to pay al-Zakat (alms) and give it to Abu Bakr because they wanted to wait and see what happened, for they had accompanied the Messenger of Allah on his farewell pilgrimage, and voted for Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Talib at Ghadir Khum after the Messenger of Allah appointed him as Caliph after him, and indeed Abu Bakr himself voted for 'Ali.

Therefore, they were astonished when a messenger from the caliph came to tell them the news of the holy Prophet's death and at the same time asked them to pay Zakat in the name the new caliph, Abu Bakr. It is a case in which history does not want to go too deep, for the sake of the Companion's honor.

Furthermore, Malik and his followers were Muslims according to the testimony of Umar and Abu Bakr themselves and other Companions who disapproved of Khalid ibn al-Walid's killing of Malik. History testifies that Abu Bakr paid compensation for Malik's death to his brother Mutammem out of the Muslim's treasury, and apologized for his killing. It is well established that the apostate must be killed, and no compensation be paid out of the Muslim's treasury for his killing, and no apologies issued for killing him.

The important thing is that the "turning back" verse refers to the Companions who lived with the Messenger of Allah in al-Medinah al-Munawwarah, and indicates the immediate "turning back" after the Prophet's death. The Prophet's sayings explain all these things in such a clear way, that no one could doubt it. We shall deal with these matters soon, if Allah wills. History also testifies for the "turning back" that happened after the death of the Messenger of Allah, and when we view the events which took place among the ranks of the Companions we notice that only a few managed to come out unscathed.

2. The Holy War (Jihad) Verse

Allah, the Most High, said:

"O You who believe, what (excuse) have you that when it is said to you: Go forth in Allah's way, you should incline heavily to earth; are you contented with this world's life instead of the Hereafter? But the provision of this world's life compared with the Hereafter is but little. If you do not go forth, He will chastise you with a painful chastisement and bring in your place a people other than you, and you will do Him no harm; and Allah has power over all things" (Holy Qur'an 9:38-39).

This Qur'anic verse is clear about the reluctance of the Companions to go and fight in the Holy War (Jihad), and how they chose to be content with the life on earth, in spite of their knowledge of its short duration. Their action warranted a rebuke and a threat from Allah – the Almighty – that a terrible torture was awaiting them, and that He would change them for others who were true believers.

The threat to change them came in many Qur'anic verses which indicate clearly that they showed their reluctance to fight in al-Jihad- Holy War – more than once, and Allah, the Most High, says:

"And if you turn back He will bring in your place another people, they will not be like you" (Holy Qur'an 47:38).

Also the Almighty says:

"O You who believe! Whoever from among you turns back from his religion, then Allah will bring a people, He shall love them and they shall love Him, lowly before the believers, mighty against the unbelievers, they shall strive hard in Allah's way and shall not fear the censure of any censurer, this is Allah's grace, He gives it to whom He pleases, and Allah is Ample-giving, Knowing" (Holy Qur'an 5:54).

If we want to investigate the Qur'anic verses which emphasize this issue and talk about the classification of the Companions, which the Shi'a advocate, then we would need a special book for it. The Holy Qur'an expressed all that in the most direct and eloquent way:

"Let there arise out of you a nation, inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong, and these it is that shall be successful. And be not like those who became divided and disagreed after receiving clear signs and these it is that shall have a grievous chastisement.

On the day, some faces will be white (lit up) and some faces will be black (in the gloom), to those whose faces will be black (will be said): Did you reject the faith after accepting it? Taste then the chastisement for rejecting the faith. But those whose faces will be white, they will be in Allah's mercy, therein to dwell" (Holy Qur'an 3: 106-107).

These Qur'anic verses as every scholar knows are addressing the Companions and warning them of the division and disagreement among themselves after they have already been shown the Right Path. They also tell them that a great torture is awaiting them, and divide them in two groups: The first group: when they will be resurrected on the Day of Judgment, every one of them would have a white face, and those are the grateful who deserve the mercy of Allah. The second group: when they will be resurrected on the Day of Judgment, every one of them would have a black face, and those are the apostates, whom Allah, the Almighty, promised the great torture.

It is well-known that the Companions were divided after the death of the Messenger of Allah. They disagreed among themselves to such an extent that they fought each other bloody wars which led to the regression and the backwardness of the Muslims and made them easy target for their enemies. The above Qur'anic verse could not be interpreted in any other way except that which is readily accepted by people.

3. The Submissiveness

Allah, the most High, said:

"Has not the time yet come for those who believe that their hearts should be submissive for the remembrance of Allah and what has come down of the truth? And (that) they should not be like those who were given the book before, but the time became prolonged to them, so their hearts hardened, and most of them are transgressors." (Holy Qur'an 57: 16).

In al-Durr al-Manthur by Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti, the author says: "When the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (saw) came to al-Medinah and started to enjoy a higher standard of living after having lived through many hardships, they seemed to slow down, so they were punished for that, and hence the verse 'Has not the time yet come for those who believe' was revealed."

Another version of the story, which came from the Prophet (saw), was that Allah, the Most High, found some reluctance in the MuHajjereen seventeen years after the first revelation of the Holy Qur'an, and therefore Allah revealed the verse "Has not the time yet come for those who believe." If those Companions, who are the best people according to the Sunnis, did not feel humble before the name of Allah or His right revelation of seventeen years, so that Allah found them slowing down, and rebuked and warned them for their hardened hearts which were leading them to corruption, we cannot blame the people of Quraysh who only entered Islam in the seventh Hijri year after the conquest of Makkah.

These were some examples which I have selected from the Glorious Book of Allah which give us clear indications that not all the Companions were right, as the Sunnis believe.

If we study the sayings of the Prophet (saw), then we will find many more examples, but just to be brief, I shall refer to some of those examples and the interested reader may further his own knowledge if he so wishes.

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