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Section 7

Ever living Testimony to the Truth of Islam Attaining to goodness demands sacrifice –Main features of Abraham's religion from the basis of Islam –The first house of blessings and guidance to the worlds–

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 92

لَنْ تَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ

92. "You will never attain righteousness unless you spend out of what you love; and whatever thing you spend, surely Allah is well aware of it."

In this verse, the Qur'an points to one of the signs of Faith in a believer. It says:

"You will never attain righteousness unless you spend out of what you love..."

The Arabic Term /birr/ has a vast meaning which covers all good deeds irrespective of belief and pious deeds.

As it is understood from Surah Al-Baqarah, No.2, verse 177, belief in *Allah*, belief in the Resurrection Day, belief in prophets, helping the indigent, prayer and fasting, to fulfil the promise, and to be steadfast in confronting with problems and adventures, all in all, are counted the branches of righteousness.

Therefore, to attain the rank of righteousness needs many qualities. One of those qualities is spending out from the possessions that are loved by that person. This kind of giving charity is a standard for measuring the Faith and personality of the person.

To attract the attention of the givers of charity, at the end of the verse, it says:

"...and whatever thing you spend, surely Allah is well aware of it."

The Believers and Giving Charity

1. Abu-Talhah Ansari had the largest number of date trees in Medina when his garden was his most beloved thing for him. This garden was located in front of the Prophet's Mosque wherein there was a spring with wholesome water.

Sometimes the Prophet (S) entered that garden and drunk water from the spring. The garden was so beautiful and splendid with a great income that people commonly spoke well of it. When the above verse was sent down, Abu-Talhah went to the Prophet (S) and said:

"The most beloved things with me is this garden. I want to give it in charity in the way of Allah."

The holy Prophet (S) said:

"Well done! this is a wealth which will be of profit for you."

Then the Messenger of Allah (S) continued saying:

"We have accepted it from you but we return it back to you in order that you give it to your own relatives as alms."

He accepted it and divided the garden among them willingly. 1

2. When Hadrat Fatimah Zahra (as) was going to go to her husband's house at her wedding night, a beggar asked her for a worn out dress. She (as) remembering the above verse, gave in charity the same new dress which was for her wedding. 2

3. Once it happened that a guest came to Abu Dharr Ghafari. Then he told the guest since he was busy at that time and he had some camels, then the guest would go out and bring him the best of them. So he went and came back with a thin camel.

Then Abu Dharr told him that he was not faithful to him with that camel. The guest replied that he found the best camel, but he thought of the future day he would need it. Then Abu Dharr said:

"Verily my needy day to it will be the day I will be put inside my grave, since Allah says: 'You will never attain righteousness unless you spend out of what you love; '!" 3

4. Once it happened that 'Abdullah-ibn Ja'far, a rather rich but gracious Muslim, entered a palm-plantation where a black slave was working. At the time of need of food, a dog came inside the garden and approached the slave.

Then he threw a loaf of bread for the dog, and it ate it. After that the slave threw the second and the third loaves of bread for the dog one after another, and it ate both of them, too.

'Abdullah, standing looking at the slave, asked him how much his everyday food was, and the slave answered: "That which you saw." 'Abdullah said: "Why did you donate (the whole your food) to this dog?"

The slave replied that the dog was not from that region and had come from a distanced place while it was hungry, so he (the slave) did not like to return it.

'Abdullah said that the slave was more gracious than him. Then, he bought the palm-plantation with all its equipments including the slave. He let him be free (not to be slave any more) when he donated him all the garden and the equipments, too.⁴

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 93

كُلُّ الطَّعَامِ كَانَ حَلَالًا لِّبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ إِلَّا مَا حَرَّمَ إِسْرَائِيلُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تُنَزَّلَ التَّوْرَةُ قُلْ فَاتَّبِعُوا بِالتَّوْرَةِ فَاتْلُوهَا إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

93. "Every food was lawful to the Children of Israel except what Israel (Jacob) had forbidden to himself before the Torah was sent down. Say: 'Bring you hither then the Torah and read it, if you are truthful'."

It is cited in some books that the Children of Israel raised objections to the Prophet of Islam (S) that if his teachings were adopted to the teachings of the former prophets, such as Abraham, Moses, and Issac (as), why he (S) did not decree meat and milk of camel unlawful.

In answer to them, this verse was revealed saying that all kinds of food were lawful to the Israelites, but it was the Israel himself that made some of foods unlawful for himself.

"Every food was lawful to the Children of Israel except what Israel (Jacob) had forbidden to himself before the Torah was sent down.

Say: 'Bring you hither then the Torah and read it, if you are truthful'."

The reason for this treatment, as it has been mentioned in some authentic books, is that whenever Israel consumed these kinds of food (meat of camel, for example), they were harmful for him and caused him to be physically unhealthy. Therefore, he avoided eating those sorts of food but the children of Israel thought that it was an eternal canonical prohibition.⁵

The Arabic term /ta'am/ 'food' is applied for something which is tasteful for human beings.

The Qur'anic word /hill/ means: 'to be free from or released from', therefore /ta'am-i-halal/ is stated for 'the lawful edible things'.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 94

فَمَنْ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

94. "So, whoever invents a lie against Allah after that, they are unjust."

In this verse, it says: now that they are not ready to bring the Torah and their false allegation unto *Allah* has been proved, they should know that, after this, those who invent a lie against *Allah* are unjust, because they know it and they commit such wrong intentionally. It says:

"So, whoever invents a lie against Allah after that, they are unjust."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 95

قُلْ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ فَاتَّبِعُوا مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

95. "Say: Allah has spoken the Truth, therefore follow the creed of Abraham, the upright (in faith) and he was not (one) of the polytheists."

The address, in this verse, is to the Prophet (S), denoting that, *Allah* is true and those false things had never been in the pure religion of Abraham (as). Therefore, follow the religion of Abraham (as) who was upright in faith and was not one of those who associate partners to Allah.

It says:

"Say: Allah has spoken the Truth, therefore follow the creed of Abraham, the upright (in faith) and he was not (one) of the polytheists."

That is, now that you see I am truthful in my invitation, and then follow my religion which is the same as the pure religion of Abraham, the upright. He was never one of the polytheists. So, this idea that pagans of Arab consider themselves as the followers of his creed is completely meaningless. How far the distance between an idol-worshipper and an idol-breaker is!

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 96

إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِي بِبَكَّةَ مُبَارَكًا وَهُدًى لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

96. *"Verily the first House (of worship) set up for mankind the one at Bekka (Mecca), blessed and guidance for the worlds."*

One of the objections of the Children of Israel was that they said why 'Muslims had taken the Ka'bah as their Qiblah instead of Jerusalem which has been built 1500 years Before Christ by Solomon. This verse is an answer to them that the Ka'bah has existed from the beginning day and it is the first House, viz, its ancientness and its date is further than any other places of worship.

By the way, it is cited in Tafsir–Al–Mizan (vol. 3, p. 583, Persian version) that there are many traditions upon the expansion of the earth /dahw–ul–'ard/ 6 while there is no scientific reason to oppose it and it does not differ from the verses of the Qur'an.

In Nahjul–Balagha, sermon 192, Imam Amir–ul Mu'mineen Ali (as) says:

"... Allah, the Glorified, has tried all the people among those who came before, beginning with Adam, upto the last ones in the world with stones (of Ka'bah)... "7

It is understood from this statement that the Ka'bah has existed from the time of Adam (as) and its background is further than any other worshipping place.

In the Qur'an and the traditions of Ahlul–Bayt (as), the Ka'bah has been referred to with different terms. Some of them are as follows:

1. The Ka'bah is the first House: Surah' Ale–'Imran, No.3, verse 96.
2. Ka'bah, maintenance for the people: Surah Al–Ma'idah, No 5, verse 97.
3. The Ka'bah, the ancient (*free*) House: Surah Al–Hajj, No.22, verse 29.
4. The Ka'bah, the House, a resort and a secure sanctuary for the people: Surah Al–Baqarah, No.2, verse 125.
5. The Ka'bah is a sign of Islam: Nahjul–Balagha.

Explanations

1. Ka'bah is the secret of the guidance of people, an inclusive guidance for all, since it is the Qiblah of all. It is similar to the Holy Qur'an and the Prophet of Islam (S) that have been revealed and who have been appointed for all human kind.

2. When *Allah* wills, the stones of Ka'bah will be blessed and will guide human beings. Besides that, looking at Ka'bah is counted worship, and, by His command, Abraham and Ishmael (as) become its particular servants.

3. The Qur'an, the Messenger and the Ka'bah are independent for they are specific to *Allah*. Neither is the Quran made up and finished by any individual, nor the Prophet pays the allegiance of anyone, nor the Ka'bah belongs to a particular person.

4. Ka'bah is the first point in the earth.

5. Ka'bah is the first House built for the worship of people.

6. The goodness and blessings of Ka'bah are not only for the believers, but they are for all.

"Verily the first House (of worship) set up for mankind is the one at Bakka (Mecca), blessed and a guidance for the worlds."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 97

فِيهِ آيَاتٌ بَيِّنَاتٌ مَّقَامُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمَنْ دَخَلَهُ كَانَ آمِنًا وَلِلَّهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حِجُّ الْبَيْتِ
مَنْ اسْتَطَاعَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ

97. "Therein are clear signs, the standing place of Abraham, and whoever enters it is secure; and pilgrimage to the House is a duty upon mankind for Allah, who can afford the journey to it; and anyone who disbelieves, then verily Allah is Self-sufficiently independent of the worlds."

Mecca and Ka'bah is an exhibition of *Allah's* power and signs. Its history is full of memories and incidents, so that contemplating on them can be giving a lesson and serving as an admonition. In its structure, Abraham works as a builder and Ishmael as a worker.

The forces of 'Abraha equipped with elephants, did not succeed to ruin it and are abolished by birds of Ababeel. At the time of Hadrat Ali's birth (as) its wall opens for her mother and lets her enter inside to bring a child who, not very late in future, takes the idols of the Ka'bah down.

Bilal, an Abyssinian negro slave, in front of the astonished eyes of the nobles of Mecca, stands upon it and shouts the prayer call. And, finally, there will come a day when the Witness of *Allah* leans against its wall and announces the delivery of human kind and invites the people of the world to Islam.

Yes, Mecca is a Divine safe city where anyone enters into is in peace. When a person arrives inside the sacred Mosque, even the person is a murderer, no one can molest him. The only action that can be done against him is to straighten the circumstances for him so that the person himself be forced to come out.

The Station of Abraham is located beside the Ka'bah. According to the Islamic literature, the Station of

Abraham is the same stone that was under the feet of Abraham (as) when he was building the Ka'bah and promoting its walls, on which the trace of his foot has remained.

This stone with its foot trace, which has existed from centuries before Christ (as) and Moses (as), and with all those changes that happened to Ka'bah and its surroundings as a result of invasions, floods, and destructions, is one of the signs of the Power of *Allah*.

Allah calls people to pilgrimage. The Arabic term 'Hajj' means: 'intention accompanied with movement', while the Arabic word /mahajjah/, from the same root, is called to a straight way which leads a person to the destination.

This word, in Islamic terminology, is applied for the intention of going to the sacred House and performing its concerning rites.

Yes, Ka'bah is the site of manifestation of the signs and Power of *Allah*, where the monotheists, the lovers of divine Unity, gather together after passing from hard high mountains and dry, plantless deserts in order to say /labbayk/.

Explanations

1. In the Sacred House, there are many clear signs: (the sign of holiness and spirituality, the sign of spiritual trance which recalls the divine memories of all prophets, from Adam (as) upon the last prophet, Muhammad Mustafa (S), and that it had been the place where prophets circumambulated, and the direction of all prayers that pray toward it.)".

"Therein are clear signs, the standing place of Abraham..."

2. It is of the privileges of Islam that it has assigned a region of the earth as a safe region where all the oppressed of the world can announce their call.

"And who ever enters it is secure..."

3. Responsibility and doing duty is decreed upon a person as much as the capability of the person allows, (whether from the point of financial ability or physical ability or security), and capability is the proper condition of Hajj.

"... and pilgrimage to the House is a duty upon mankind for Allah, who can afford the journey to it..."

4. Denial of Hajj and its abandonment is infidelity.

"... and anyone who disbelieves..."

It is cited in the book entitled: .Man Layahduruhul-Faghih', vol. 4, p. 368 that once the Prophet of Islam

(S) told Hadrat Ali (as):

"The abandoner of Hajj is infidel when he is capable."

And whoever delay it a day after another until the one dies, it is as if he has died like a Jew or a Christian.

5. Going to pilgrimage is an acceptance and answering to the invitation of Abraham (as) since it was the command of *Allah* to him to follow:

"And proclaim among people the pilgrimage."⁸

The first rite of the pilgrimage of the Sacred House is the change of clothing accompanied with saying. 'Labbayk', which means: ***O' Lord! I came.***

6. The result of performing the commands of *Allah* will surely return to the person himself, else *Allah* does not need anything.

"... then verily Allah is Self-sufficiently independent of the worlds."

7. This verse is the only verse in which the obligatoriness of Hajj pilgrimage for those who are capable is stated. It means that whoever has physical and financial capacity, it is necessary for the one to perform Hajj pilgrimage. The rest of the ordinances of pilgrimage are stated in the books of sacred rites of the pilgrimage by the jurisprudents.

8. The person who is capable and ought to go to pilgrimage has more duties to do (***than others***).

9. *Allah* invites to pilgrimage but He does not stoop to a favor.

"... and pilgrimage to the House is a duty upon mankind for Allah ...and anyone who disbelieves, then verily Allah is Self-sufficiently independent of the worlds."

10. Obligatory things are a kind of duty upon the believers.

"... and pilgrimage to the House is a duty upon mankind for Allah ..."

11. *Allah* is an Absolute Self-sufficient.

"... verily Allah is Self-sufficiently independent of the worlds."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 98

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لِمَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ شَهِيدٌ عَلَىٰ مَا تَعْمَلُونَ

98. "Say: 'O' People of the Book Why do you disbelieve in the Signs of Allah, while Allah is Witness to what you do?"

This verse is a question accompanied with a reproach but in a polite tone. This manner is the best kind of delivering propagation. However, it denotes that if you bear *Allah* in mind and know Him as a witness to your deeds, you may yield infidelity.

"Say: 'O' People of the Book Why do you disbelieve in the Signs of Allah, while Allah is Witness to what you do?"

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 99

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لِمَ تَصُدُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ مَنْ آمَنَ تَبْغُونَهَا عِوَجًا وَأَنْتُمْ شُهَدَاءُ
وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ

99. "Say: 'O' People of the Book! Why do you obstacle those who believe from the way of Allah seeking to make it crooked, while you are witnesses? But Allah is not heedless of what you do? "

In the previous verse the question was about the infidelity of the People of the Book. In this holy verse, besides criticizing against their former behaviour, they are questioned if they do not believe themselves and disbelieve in the Signs of *Allah*; by what reason they hinder others to pave the path of *Allah*. But they should know that *Allah* is never heedless of what they do.

"Say: 'O' People of the Book! Why do you obstacle those who believe from the way of Allah seeking to make it crooked, while you are witnesses? But Allah is not heedless of what you do?"

Explanations

1. Your enemies always try to pervert you from the Truth.

"...seeking to make it crooked ..."

2. Your enemies know and are witnesses to your rightfulness.

"... while you are witnesses..."

3. The enemies of Islam might know that *Allah* is aware of their deeds and is lying in wait for them.

"... But Allah is not heedless ..."

4. If we know that ourselves and our conduct are not overlooked, even for a moment, we may leave

wrong doing.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 100

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن تَطِيعُوا فَرِيقًا مِّنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ يَرُدُّوكُم بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ
كَافِرِينَ

100. "O' you who have Faith! If you hearken to a party from among of those who have been given the Book, they will turn you back, after your faith, into disbelievers."

In several books it is cited that one of the Jews by the name of Shash-ibn-Qays once passed by the gathering of Muslims consisting of members of two tribes called 'Aus and Khazraj and saw that they were very sincere with each other.

He became worried about it and said to himself that formerly these two tribes were opposite to each other, but now, under the leadership and direction of Muhammad (S), they are living with each other peacefully. If this leadership continues, the existence of the Jews will be in danger.

He, systematically gathered a group to help him, and commissioned a young man to go inside them and to excite them by reminding them the memories of their fight in Biqath (*the place where those two tribes fought against each other*), so that the fire of a hard combat was going to be lit between them.

The Prophet of Islam (S), with his soothing words, warned them and made them aware of that evil plot. Therefore, they put their swords down and kindly embraced each other while they were shedding tear and were regretful.

According to the commentators, in this incident, the above verse and the two former verses were revealed which caused the reproach and blame of the People of the Book as well as warning the Muslims.

"O' you who have Faith! if you hearken to a party from among of those who have been given the Book, they will turn you back, after your faith, into disbelievers."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 101

وَكَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ وَأَنْتُمْ تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتُ اللَّهِ وَفِيكُمْ رَسُولُهُ وَمَن يَعْتَصِم بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ
هُدِيَ إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ

101. "But how can you disbelieve while the verses of Allah are being recited unto you and His Messenger is amongst you? And whoever holds fast to Allah will indeed be guided to the Straight Path."

The cause of deviation or disbelief is either the lack of right path or the lack of guidance. But when there are Book, normatic custom, ordinances, and divine leaders, why do they pervert?

Relying on and trusting in *Allah* and seeking help from Him, is the key to security from all temptations and deviations.

"But how can you disbelieve while the verses of Allah are being recited unto you and His Messenger is amongst you? And whoever holds fast to Allah will indeed be guided to the Straight Path."

Explanations

1. The way of approaching to *Allah* is open to everybody.⁹

"... and whoever holds fast to Allah ..."

2. The existence of law alone is not enough to control infidelity and perversion. The presence of leader is necessary, too.

"... and His Messenger is amongst you? ..."

3. Seeking refuge to anyone or any authority rather than *Allah*, is perversion.

4. What is more important than motion, is finding the straightway and paving it.

"...(the one) will indeed be guided to the straight path."

5. Holding fast to *Allah* has a definite result:

"...(the one) will indeed be guided..."

6. Holding fast to *Allah* is an earnest movement accompanied with a cognizant choice which is paving the way with the saints of *Allah* and in the way of *Allah*.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 102

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ

102. "O' You who have Faith! be in awe of Allah as it is due to Him: and do not die unless you are

Muslims."

Any perfection such as Faith, knowledge and piety has stages. There are elementary stages and the stages higher than that up to the absolute perfection. For instance, we recite the Qur'an where it says:

"O' Lord! Increase me my knowledge!"¹⁰

Or in Makarim-ul-Akhlaq, the Supplication, we, asking the Lord, recite: *"O' Lord! Expand my Faith to a perfect faith."*¹¹ And, in the above mentioned verse we recite:

"... be in awe of Allah as it is due to Him..."

Imam Sadiq (as) in this regard, says:

*"The due piety is in the fact that Allah be obeyed and not to be disobeyed; to be remembered and not to be forgotten, and to be thanked with no ingratitude,"*¹²

This shows that there are some stages and steps in piety.

Explanations

1. Every day we must promote to a higher stage.

"O' you who have Faith! be in awe of Allah as it is due to Him...."

2. Mere belief is not enough, but to remain faithful is the condition. Beginning is not so important while the ending is more important.

"... and do not die unless you are Muslims."

3. Islam not only teaches us how to live, but also teaches us how to die.

4. Piety is the only key to the goodness of destiny.

1. Sahih-Bukhari, vol. 4, p. 395, Kitabul-Wasaya, 623, Beirut Edition, Darul-Qalam, 1987.

2. Nuzhat-ul-Majalis, vol. 4, p. 226.

3. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 2, p. 474.

4. Tafsir, Almanar, Vol. 3, p.376.

5. In Tafsir Nimunah, vol. 3, p. 6, it is cited that eating meat of camel caused his sciatic nerve to be moved and pain appeared in his feet.

6. The term /dahv-ul-ard/ means that the earth was expanded and extended from beneath the Ka'bah.

7. Nahjul-Balagha, sermon 192

8. The Quran, Surah Al-Hajj, No.22, verse 27.

9. In Jami'ah Kabirah, the supplication which has been brought forth by Imam Hady (as) it says: "Whoever holds fast to you has indeed held fast to Allah." That is, seeking refuge to the saints of Allah is indeed seeking refuge to the protection of

Allah. As in the previous verse it says obedience to the disbelievers is the key to infidelity, while obedience to the divine leadership is also the key to belief in Allah.

10. The Qur'an, Surah Taha, No.20, verse 114

11. Sahifah Sajjadiyyah, Makirum-ul-Akhlaq, by Imam Sajjad (as)

12. Bihar-al-Anwar, vol. 70, p. 292

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