

of other slaves that embraced Islam. For how did embracing Islam improve the position of slaves in society? Any slave who embraced Islam was not given a free pass to join parties that were thrown by the nobility; to the contrary, they were tortured, whipped, and taken out to the hot sands of the desert to be melted and crushed by rocks. It stands as a fact, therefore, that, like other better-off Companions ﷺ, slaves who embraced Islam did so because faith had entered their hearts. And to uphold their faith, they were willing to sacrifice everything, even their very lives. Bilaal ؓ in particular decided to be tortured to death rather than to utter words of disbelief, even though doing so is permissible, so long as one is forced to do so, and so long as one is at rest with faith in his heart, both of which conditions Bilaal ؓ had fulfilled. One day, Bilaal ؓ was tortured so severely that his torturers realized that he was too weakened from their constant beatings to be of any more use to them. Abu Bakr ؓ then walked by and addressed Ummayyah ibn Khalaf, Bilaal's owner, saying, "Will you not fear Allah regarding this poor person? Until when (will you continue to persecute him)!"

"You are the one who corrupted him," said Ummayyah, "So you save him from his present condition."

"I will do so," said Abu Bakr ؓ. "I have a black slave who is stronger than him and firmer than him upon your religion. I will trade you him for Bilaal."

"I indeed accept (your offer)," said Ummayyah. Once the trade was completed, Abu Bakr ؓ declared that Bilaal ؓ was now a free man.^[1] But according to another narration, Abu Bakr ؓ purchased Bilaal ؓ for either 7 *Awaaqin* (a measurement used for gold) or 40 *Awaaqin* of gold.^[2]

After every trial, there is a payoff, a reward of some kind. After suffering cruel and inhuman torture at the hands of the Quraish, after having almost died from that torture, Bilaal ؓ was not only

^[1] *As-Seerah An-Nabawiyah* by Ibn Hishaam (1/394).

^[2] *At-Tarbiyyah Al-Qiyaadiyyah* (1/140).

purchased by a caring and benevolent Muslim, but he ﷺ also became a free man at the same time. From that time onward, Bilaal ﷺ showed the same dedication to Islam as a free man as he did when he ﷺ was a slave. In fact, he ﷺ was able to do more. Being a free man, he was able to dedicate all of his energies to the service of Islam. Bilaal ﷺ continued thereafter to adhere closely to the company of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, who, upon his death, was pleased with Bilaal ﷺ, and who, during his lifetime, once said to Bilaal ﷺ, "Indeed, last night, I heard the sound of your footsteps ahead of me in Paradise."^[1] As for Bilaal's ranking among the Prophet's Companions ﷺ, 'Umar ﷺ would say, "Abu Bakr is our chief, and he has freed our chief (i.e., Bilaal ﷺ)."^[2]

One of the greatest problems the Companions ﷺ faced was the constantly increasing frequency and intensity of the torture sessions to which poor and weak Muslims were subjected. Not that they could do much, for all Muslims, both rich and poor, were being subjected to persecution to at least some degree. Nonetheless, Abu Bakr ﷺ found a way to help some slaves that were being tortured; he purchased them and then freed them, regardless of the cost.

One of the slaves Abu Bakr ﷺ freed was 'Amir ibn Fuhairah ﷺ, who later participated in the battles of Badr and Uhud and was then later martyred on the Day of Bair Ma'oonah; two others were Umm 'Ubais ﷺ and Zinneerah ﷺ. Upon being set free, Zinneerah ﷺ lost her eyesight; of course, the Quraish took the opportunity to say, "It was none other than Al-Laat and Al-'Uzzah (two of their idols) who took away her eyesight." Zinneerah ﷺ did not waive in her faith, but instead said, "They have lied...Al-Laat and Al-'Uzzaa can neither harm nor benefit." Allah ﷻ then gave her back her eyesight.^[3]

^[1] *Saheeh Muslim*, "The Book of Virtues"; chapter, "The Virtues of Bilaal ﷺ." *Hadeeth* number: 2458.

^[2] *At-Tabaqaat Al-Kubra* by Ibn Sa'd (3/232). All of the narrators of this *Hadeeth* are trustworthy.

^[3] *As-Seerah An-Nabawiyah* by Ibn Hishaam (1/393).

Abu Bakr ﷺ also freed An-Nahdiyyah ﷺ and her daughter ﷺ. Both mother and daughter belonged to a woman from the Banu 'Abd-ud-Daar clan. On the day they were set free, Abu Bakr ﷺ passed by them; they were carrying flour for their mistress. Abu Bakr ﷺ then went to speak to their mistress, asking her to set them free, but she refused, saying, "By Allah, I will never free them." Abu Bakr ﷺ asked her to take back her oath, and she agreed to do so, but then said, "You are the one who corrupted them, so you set them free (i.e., buy them from me and then set them free)."

"How much will you sell them for?" asked Abu Bakr ﷺ. After she told him their price, Abu Bakr ﷺ said, "Then I have taken them, and they are now free (women)." He ﷺ then went back to An-Nahdiyyah and her daughter ﷺ in order to tell them the good news. "Give her back her flour," he ﷺ added. They said, "O Abu Bakr, shall we not first finish (doing what was required of us regarding this flour) and then return it to her?" He ﷺ said, "If you want, you may do so."^[1]

Observe how Islam set the two women ﷺ and Abu Bakr ﷺ on an equal footing; they addressed him not as one would address one's master, but as one would address one's equal. Also, observe how Abu Bakr ﷺ was humble enough to agree to their decision, even though he ﷺ had just done them a tremendous service by freeing them. And observe how Islam polished the manners of An-Nahdiyyah ﷺ and her daughter ﷺ; they could have just left the flour where it was, or they could have simply returned it, but they insisted upon finishing the task that was assigned to them and then returning the flour to their former mistress.

Abu Bakr ﷺ also purchased and then freed a young female slave from the Banu Muammil clan. After she became a Muslim, 'Umar ibn Al-Khattaab ﷺ, who was still a polytheist at the time, physically beat her, in order to make her renounce her faith. During a given torture session, 'Umar ﷺ would stop hitting her

^[1] Refer to *As-Seerah An-Nabawiyah* by Ibn Hishaam (1/393).

and say, "I apologize to you (for stopping); it is only boredom that has made me stop (hitting you)." Not allowing him to have the satisfaction of such an insult, she said, "It is indeed Allah ﷻ Who made you become bored (so you would stop hitting me)."^[1]

Abu Bakr's heart flowed with sympathy and compassion for the weak. He ﷺ spent a great deal of his wealth on setting slaves free, doing so even before Verses of the Qur'an were revealed on the topic – Verses that exhorted Muslims to free slaves and that promised a great reward for those who did so.

Most people among the Quraish made fun of Abu Bakr ﷺ, deeming it a waste of money to spend so much money on the poor and weak. Even his father, who was still a polytheist, discouraged him from setting slaves free, considering the act of doing so to be a fruitless venture. One day, he said to Abu Bakr ﷺ, "O my son, I see that you are freeing weak slaves. If you have to do what you are doing, then you should at least free strong men who could protect and defend you." Abu Bakr ﷺ answered, "My father, I am doing this for Allah 'Azza wa Jall (the Possessor of might and majesty) only (and for no other purpose)." In Abu Bakr's mind, Muslim slaves were his equals and his brothers in faith; for that matter, all of the polytheists on the earth were not, in his mind (and in reality), equal in value to a single Muslim slave. It is no wonder, therefore, that Allah ﷻ revealed Verses about Abu Bakr's generosity that will be recited until the Last Day. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿فَأَمَّا مَنْ أَعْطَى وَاتَّقَى ⑤ وَصَدَّقَ بِالْحُسْنَى ⑥ فَسَنَسِرُهُ لِلْيُسْرَى ⑦ وَأَمَّا مَنْ بَخِلَ ⑧ وَاسْتَعْتَنَ ⑨ وَكَذَّبَ بِالْحُسْنَى ⑩ فَسَنَسِرُهُ لِّلْعُسْرَى ⑪ وَمَا يَغْنَى عَنْهُ مَالُهُ إِذَا تَرَدَّى ⑫ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا لَلْهُدَى ⑬ وَإِنَّ لَنَا لَلْآخِرَةَ وَالْأُولَى ⑭ فَأَنْذَرْتُمْكُمْ نَارًا تَلْظَنُ ⑮ لَا يَصْلَاهَا إِلَّا الْأَشْقَى ⑯ الَّذِي كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّى ⑰ وَسَيَجْزِيهَا الْآلُفَى ⑱ الَّذِي يُؤْتِي مَالَهُ يَتَزَكَّى ⑲ وَمَا لِأَحَدٍ عِنْدَهُمْ مِنْ نِعْمَةٍ تُجْزَى ⑳ إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِ الْأَعْلَى ㉑ ㉒﴾

^[1] As-Seerah An-Nabawiyah by Ibn Hishaam (1/393).

“As for him who gives (in charity) and keeps his duty to Allah and fears Him, and believes in Al-Husna [the Best (i.e., either La ilaha illallah : none has the right to be worshipped but Allah) or a reward from Allah (i.e., Allah will compensate him for what he will spend in Allah’s Way or bless him with Paradise)]. We will make smooth for him the path of ease (goodness). But he who is greedy, miser and thinks himself self-sufficient, and gives the lie to Al-Husna; we will make smooth for him the path for evil; and what will his wealth benefit him when he goes down (in destruction). Truly, Ours it is (to give) guidance. And truly, unto Us (belong) the last (Hereafter) and the first (this world). Therefore I have warned you of a Fire blazing fiercely (Hell). None shall enter it save the most wretched, who denies and turns away. And Al-Muttaqoon (the pious and righteous) will be far removed from it (Hell). He who spends his wealth for increase in self-purification, and have in his mind no favour from anyone for which a reward is expected in return, except only the desire to seek the Countenance of his Lord, the Most High. He surely will be pleased (when he will enter Paradise).” (Qur’an 92: 5-21)^[1]

To be sure, Muslims desperately need to revive the deeds of Abu Bakr As-Siddeeq ؓ, in order to bring unity to a nation whose people are constantly being subjected to persecution, torture, and death at the hands of Islam’s enemies.

3) ‘Ammmaar ibn Yaasir ؓ; His Father, Yaasir ؓ; and His Mother, Sumayyah ؓ

‘Ammmaar’s father, Yaasir ؓ, was not a native of Makkah, which helps to explain why he was so vulnerable to persecution at the hands of the Quraish; he was from the Banu ‘Anas, one of the tribes of Yemen. Yaasir ؓ and his two brothers, Al-Haarith and Maalik, came to Makkah in search of one of their brothers. Al-Haarith and Maalik eventually returned to Yemen, whereas Yaasir ؓ settled in Makkah. He ؓ allied himself with Abu

^[1] *Seerah Ibn Hishaam* (1/319), and *Tafseer Al-Aloosee* (30/152).

Hudhaifah ibn Al-Mugheerah, a member of the Makhzoom clan; the latter married the former off to one of his female slaves; her name was Sumayyah bint Khayyaat ؓ, and she bore Yaasir ؓ a son, 'Ammar ؓ. Abu Hudhaifah died shortly thereafter, but before he did, he set 'Ammar ؓ free. Though no one in the family remained a slave, they all owed a form of allegiance to the Makhzoom clan - a relation that would customarily remain after a master freed his slave. So when Yaasir ؓ, Summayyah ؓ, 'Ammar ؓ, and 'Abdullah ؓ - 'Ammar's brother - embraced Islam, it was the Makhzoom clan that was responsible for inflicting punishment upon Yaasir's family. The tormenters would take Yaasir's family out to the hot sands of the desert at high noon and torture them. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ would pass by them as they were being tortured and comfort them by saying, "Patience, O family of Yaasir, for indeed, your place of appointment is Paradise."^[1]

It is not surprising that Yaasir's family suffered so much at the hands of the Makhzoom clan, for Abu Jahl, a prominent member of the clan, was one of the staunchest enemies of Islam. One day, Abu Jahl said to Sumayyah ؓ, "You believe in Muhammad only because you are in love with him for his beauty." She reproached Abu Jahl as he deserved to be reproached, and in response, he jabbed her in her private area with a spear and killed her. Sumayyah ؓ became the first martyr in Islam, sacrificing the most valuable thing a person has to offer - her very life. Shortly after she ؓ died, her husband, Yaasir ؓ, became martyred in a similar manner.

The Prophet ﷺ was unable to help Yaasir's family; they ؓ were not slaves, so he ﷺ could not purchase them; and he ﷺ had not the strength to save them from physical torture. All he ﷺ was able to do was to give them glad tidings of Paradise and exhort them to be patient, so that their blessed family could become an example for all proceeding generations.

As for 'Ammar ؓ, he continued to be tortured even after his

^[1] *Saheeh As-Seerah An-Nabawiyah* by Ibraaheem Al-'Alee (pgs. 97, 98).

parents died. The Quraish were venting their rage when they tortured weak Muslims and slaves, but they were also trying to make them renounce their faith. ‘Ammar ؓ did not succumb to their pressure until the pain they inflicted upon him became too much to bear. After that happened, ‘Ammar ؓ went to the Prophet ﷺ, who, seeing the troubled expression on his face, asked him what had happened. “Evil,” ‘Ammar ؓ answered. “By Allah, the polytheists did not leave me (i.e., they didn’t stop torturing me), until I spoke evil about you and well about their gods.” The Prophet ﷺ said, “What state do you find your heart to be in?” ‘Ammar ؓ answered, “At rest with faith.” The Prophet ﷺ then said, “If they return to the same (method of torture), then you return [with the same answer (i.e., as long as your well-being is threatened, as long as you are forced to pronounce words of disbelief, and as long as your heart is at rest with faith, then you may say what you need to say in order to save yourself)].”^[1] Verses were then revealed that confirmed the truthfulness of ‘Ammar ؓ. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿مَنْ كَفَرَ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِيمَانِهِ إِلَّا مَنْ أُكْرِهَ وَقَلْبُهُ مُطْمَئِنٌّ
بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَكِنْ مَنْ شَرَحَ بِالْكُفْرِ صَدْرًا فَعَلَيْهِمْ غَضَبٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَلَهُمْ
عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٠٦﴾﴾

“Whoever disbelieved in Allah after his belief, except him who is forced thereto and whose heart is at rest with faith – but such as open their breasts to disbelief, – on them is wrath from Allah, and theirs will be a great torment.” (Qur’an 16: 106)

‘Ammar ؓ later participated alongside the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in every battle that took place between the Muslims and the polytheists.

Both what Bilaal ؓ did and what ‘Ammar ؓ did were permissible ways of reacting to a similar situation. It is up to the *Daa’ee* to reflect on the lessons of both their stories and to

^[1] Refer to *Fiqhus-Seerah* by Al-Ghazaalee (pg. 103).

apply those lessons, without going to the extremes of negligence and extravagance.

4) Sa'd ibn Abee Waqqaas ؓ

Like other Companions ؓ, Sa'd ibn Abee Waqqaas ؓ was put to trial in his faith; where he parted from them was in the fact that his torturer, his mother, aimed not to physically torment him but to psychologically torment him. Sa'd's mother was a polytheist, and she vowed to neither eat nor drink until Sa'd ؓ renounced his faith and returned to her religion. Sa'd ؓ said, "This Verse was revealed about me:

﴿وَإِنْ جَاهِدَاكَ لِتُشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا﴾

"But if they strive to make you join with Me (in worship) anything (as a partner) of which you have no knowledge, then obey them not." (Qur'an 29: 8)

Sa'd ؓ later narrated his own story: "I was a man who was very dutiful to his mother. Then, when I embraced Islam, she said, 'O Sa'd, what is this religion that I see you have accepted? You will indeed abandon this religion of yours, or I will neither eat nor drink until I die, and then you will be disgraced through me. It will be said (to you): O, killer of his mother.' I said, 'O my mother, I will not do so, for nothing will make me abandon my religion.'" She spent the entire day and night without eating anything; she woke up the following morning in a weakened state. She then spent a second day and night without eating anything, and she woke up on the following morning in a weakened state. Then she spent another day and night without eating anything, and when she woke up on the following morning, she was extremely weak. When I saw that, I said, 'O my mother, you know, by Allah, that were you to have 100 souls, and they all departed one soul at a time, still nothing would make me abandon my religion. So if you want, eat; and if you want, don't eat.' She then ate."^[1]

^[1] Tafseer Ibn Katheer (3/446).

Imam Muslim, may Allah have mercy on him, narrated that the mother of Sa'd swore that she would not eat, drink, or ever speak to him until he disbelieved in his religion. She said to Sa'd ﷺ, "You claim that Allah commanded you to be good to your parents. I am your mother, and I order you to do this (i.e., to disbelieve in Islam)." Sa'd ﷺ later recounted, "She remained (upon her oath) for three days, after which she became so weak that she fainted." 'Umaarah, one of her sons, went to her and gave her something to drink. She began to supplicate against Sa'd ﷺ, and Allah ﷻ then revealed this Verse:

﴿وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حُسْنًا وَإِنْ جَاهَدَاكَ لِتُشْرِكَ بِي﴾

"And We have enjoined on man to be good and dutiful to his parents ; but if they strive to make you join with Me." (Qur'an 29: 8)

When the people close to her wanted to feed her, they would force her mouth open with a stick and then pour food into it. Although his trial was different in nature to the trials that other Muslims were subjected to, Sa'd's trial was nonetheless tremendously difficult for him. And the way in which he acted attests to how deeply *Eemaan* (faith) had penetrated the inner recesses of his heart. No matter what the result, Sa'd ﷺ refused to put his faith and religion on any negotiating table.

5) Mus'ab ibn 'Umair ﷺ

Mus'ab ibn 'Umair ﷺ lived a life of luxury; no other young man in Makkah lived more comfortably, wore better clothing, or anointed himself with better perfume than he ﷺ did. Mus'ab's parents loved him dearly, and his mother in particular doted upon him a great deal, making sure that he always wore fine and soft clothing. She was so extravagant in her love for her son that, when he slept, she would place beside his head a cup, in which she would mix together dates, cheese, and grease; so that if he woke up hungry, would have.

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Allah ﷺ was inviting people to embrace Islam. Mus'ab ؓ went to him ﷺ in the house of Al-Arqam and ended up embracing Islam; however, fearing mistreatment from his mother and fellow clansmen, Mus'ab ؓ, like some other early converts, kept his acceptance of Islam a secret. And so he ؓ would secretly visit the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. But his secret was soon found out; one day, after he saw Mus'ab ؓ praying, 'Uthmaan ibn Talhah informed Mus'ab's mother and his fellow clansmen about what he saw. They apprehended Mus'ab ؓ and imprisoned him; he ؓ remained a prisoner until he managed to escape and migrate to Abyssinia during the first of the two famous migrations to that land.

No longer did Mus'ab ؓ lead a life of comfort and luxury; his skin hardened and his body weakened. Nonetheless, the more hardships he faced, the stronger he became in his faith; and the more ill-treatment he received from his relatives, the more determined he ؓ became to make sacrifices for Islam. Mus'ab ؓ continued to strive and to sacrifice until Allah ﷻ honoured him with martyrdom on the Day of Uhud.

Mus'ab ؓ is an ideal example of how Islam transforms an extravagant youth into a real man with a true purpose in life. Hitherto having no other aim in life but to satisfy his desires, Mus'ab ؓ now became a man of purpose, who practically endured many hardships and difficulties for the cause of Islam. The day Mus'ab ؓ entered into the fold of Islam was the day he bade farewell to the comfort and luxury he had previously enjoyed throughout his life; such was the wonderful impact that Islam had on his character. Because of the life Mus'ab ؓ chose, he inevitably had to take various paths of hardship, all for the purpose of strengthening and solidifying his faith. So in spite of all of the poverty and punishment he had to endure, not least of which was being cast off by his relatives, Mus'ab ؓ was content and at peace. With each hardship, his faith strengthened – until he faced and passed his final test on the Day of Uhud, the events of which we will discuss further, *In Sha Allah* (if Allah wills), later on in this work.

6) Khabbaab ibn Al-Arat ﷺ

Khabbaab ﷺ too did not have anyone to protect him once he embraced Islam; he ﷺ worked as a blacksmith in Makkah, and he was allied to a woman named Umm Anmaar, who was from the Khuzaa'ah tribe. Once it became known that Khabbaab ﷺ had embraced Islam, he ﷺ was subjected to brutal torture sessions. The polytheists would heat stones in fire, place the stones on the ground, and make Khabbaab ﷺ lie down on them.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ liked Khabbaab's company and would visit him after he embraced Islam; but when Umm Anmaar found out about that, she took a piece of heated iron and placed it on Khabbaab's head. Later on, when Khabbaab ﷺ complained about what had happened, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "O Allah, help Khabbaab." Not much time passed before Umm Anmaar complained about severe pain in her head, pain that was so intense that her screaming competed in volume with the howling of stray dogs. Cauterization, the process of burning or searing with heat, was often resorted to for wounds and a variety of ailments; and in the case of Umm Anmaar, cauterization was recommended to her as treatment. It was not to a doctor that she needed to visit, but to a blacksmith, and so she betook herself to Khabbaab ﷺ and asked him to cauterize her. At her behest, Khabbaab ﷺ then did to her as she did to him: He ﷺ took a piece of heated iron and used it to cauterize her head. The Prophet's supplication was answered in the most wonderful of ways, for it was Umm Anmaar herself who went to Khabbaab ﷺ and asked him to cauterize her.

When the weak Muslims of Makkah began to suffer more and more at the hands of the Quraish, Khabbaab ﷺ went to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and said, "Will you not ask help for us? Will you not invoke Allah for us?" The Messenger of Allah ﷺ, who had been resting his head on his robe underneath the shade of the Ka'bah, sat up. His face turned red and he ﷺ said, "Among those who came before you, a man would have (a pit) dug for him in the ground; he would be placed inside of it, and then a saw

would be brought and placed over his head. Then he would be split into two (halves), yet that did not turn him away from his religion. What is beneath his flesh (i.e., beneath the flesh of a man from those who came before you), in terms of bone and nerve, would be combed (off) with combs of iron, yet that did not deter him from his religion. By Allah, He (i.e., Allah ﷻ) will indeed complete this matter (i.e., will make Islam supreme) until a rider will travel from Sinai to Hadramoot, and fear no one (along the way) but Allah, or (he may also fear an attack of) a wolf upon his sheep; but you indeed are in a rush (for matters to improve before the appointed time comes for that to happen).”^[1]

Commenting on this *Hadeeth*, Shaikh Salmaan Al-'Audah - may Allah protect him - said:

“How perfect indeed is Allah! What happened that made the Prophet’s face turn red, that made him sit up (in that state) from his lying down position, and that made him speak to his Companions (for Khabbaab ؓ did not go alone) in such a strong and powerful tone? Was he ﷺ reproaching them because they asked him to supplicate for them? Of course not! Far be it from him to do that, for he was kind and merciful to the people of his nation. The tone of (their) request - ‘Will you not supplicate for us? Will you not ask help for us?’ - suggested the reality that was behind it: that it was coming from hearts that were worn out by punishment, overcome by fatigue, and crushed by affliction. They were searching out for quick relief from their travails, and they felt that help was too slow in coming. But the Prophet ﷺ knew that for each matter there is an appointed time and that before help, comes affliction. Messengers ﷺ were put to trial, but then the final good outcome was theirs. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿حَقٌّ إِذَا اسْتَيْسَسَ الرُّسُلُ وَظَنُوا أَنَّهُمْ قَدْ كَذَّبُوا جَاءَهُمْ نَصْرُنَا فَنُجِّى
مَنْ نَشَاءُ وَلَا يَرُدُّ بَأْسُنَا عَنِ الْقَوْمِ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿١١٠﴾﴾

^[1] *Saheeh Bukhaaree*, “The Book of Virtues”; chapter, “The Signs of Prophethood in Islam.” *Hadeeth* number: 3612.

'(They were reprieved) until, when the Messengers gave up hope and thought that they were denied (by their people), then came to them Our Help, and whomsoever We willed were delivered. And Our Punishment cannot be warded off from the people who are Mujrimoon (criminals, disobedients to Allah, sinners, disbelievers, polytheists).' (Qur'an 12: 110)

The Prophet ﷺ was aware of the precarious position his Companions ﷺ were in, and he ﷺ knew how worn out they had become from constant torture; their very faith was being tested. Just by reading the text of the (above-mentioned) narration, it is hard for one to understand the reality of the situation that led them to ask the Prophet ﷺ to supplicate for them and invoke Allah ﷻ to help them; only if one has experienced something similar to what they experienced can one understand the feelings and emotions that overwhelmed their souls."

The Prophet ﷺ trained his Companions ﷺ to do the following:

- 1) To follow the way of previous Prophets ﷺ, Messengers ﷺ, and their followers, in terms of how they patiently endured punishment and torture in the path of Allah ﷻ.
- 2) To be attached not to this world, but to what Allah prepared in Paradise, in terms of bliss and reward for patient believers; and to not be deceived by the material pleasures that are in the hands of the disbelievers.
- 3) To be positive about the future, knowing fully well that Allah ﷻ will make Islam reign in the life of this world and humiliate in it wrongdoers and the people of disbelief.

Furthermore, the Prophet ﷺ constantly strove to improve the situation of his Companions ﷺ, to protect them from the polytheists, to establish for them their own country, within which they could freely worship Allah ﷻ without having cause to worry about being punished or tortured for doing so.^[1]

^[1] Refer to *Al-Ghurabaa Al-Awwaloon* (pgs. 145, 146).

Later on in his life, Khabbaab ؓ described some of the ways in which the Quraish mistreated him and other Muslims. In one such account, he ؓ said, "I was a blacksmith. Al-'Aas ibn Waail owed me money, and when I went to him in order to collect what he owed me, he said, 'I will not pay you back until you disbelieve in Muhammad.' I said, 'You will die and be resurrected before I disbelieve!' He said, 'And will I be resurrected after death? If that is the case, then I will pay you back when I will return (after death) to my wealth and children.'" The following Verse was then revealed for Al-'Aas ibn Waail^[1] :

﴿أَفَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي كَفَرَ بِآيَاتِنَا وَقَالَ لَأُوتِيَنَّ مَالًا وَوَلَدًا ﴿٧٧﴾ أَطَّلَعَ الْغَيْبَ أَمِ
أَتَّخَذَ عِنْدَ الرَّحْمَنِ عَهْدًا ﴿٧٨﴾ كَلَّا سَنَكْتُبُ مَا يَقُولُ وَنَمُدُّ لَهُ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ مَدًّا
﴿٧٩﴾ وَنَرِثُهُ مَا يَقُولُ وَيَأْتِينَا فَرْدًا ﴿٨٠﴾﴾

"Have you seen him who disbelieved in Our Ayaat (this Qur'an and Muhammad ﷺ) and (yet) says: "I shall certainly be given wealth and children (if I will be alive (again))," Has he known the unseen or has he taken a covenant from the Most Beneficent (Allah)? Nay! We shall record what he says, and We shall increase his torment (in the Hell); and We shall inherit from him (at his death) all that he talks of (i.e., wealth and children which We have bestowed upon him in this world), and he shall come to Us alone." (Qur'an 19: 77-80)

During his caliphate, 'Umar ibn Al-Khattaab ؓ asked Khabbaab ؓ to inform him of some of the hardships he faced in the early days of Islam. In response to the *Khaleefah's* question, Khabbaab ؓ simply raised his shirt, revealing a sight that completely shocked 'Umar ؓ, who said, "I have not seen anything like this before!" Khabbaab's back was filled with crevices and holes, the insides of which were the charred remains of his flesh. Khabbaab ؓ said, "O Leader of the Believers, they (the polytheists of Makkah) lighted a fire and cooked me in it. Then a man placed his foot over my

^[1] Refer to *Musnad Ahmad* (5/111).

chest." According to one account, Khabbaab ؓ then said, "It was nothing other than my back that cooled the ground, and nothing other than my fat (and flesh) that extinguished the fire."

7) 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ood ؓ

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was kind and gentle in his dealings not just with the nobility and tribal chieftains, but also with young children and teenagers. A meeting between the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ood ؓ, who was then still an adolescent, illustrates that kindness and gentleness. Years after that meeting took place, 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ood ؓ gave an account of it: "I was a young adolescent, and was herding sheep for 'Uqbah ibn Abee Mu'ait, when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and Abu Bakr ؓ passed by me. He (the Prophet ﷺ) said, 'O young lad, is there any milk?' I said, 'Yes, but I am entrusted with (taking care of these sheep).' The Prophet ﷺ said, 'Then is there a sheep that has not been mounted by a male sheep (i.e., a sheep that is not supposed to have milk in its udder, in which case 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ood ؓ would not be breaching his trust)?' I brought him (such) a sheep, and he wiped its udder. Milk came out, and as he milked the sheep, the milk was deposited in a container (this was one of the miracles that Allah ﷻ blessed the Prophet ﷺ with, since the kind of sheep he ﷺ asked for should not have had milk in its udder). The Prophet ﷺ drank, and he ﷺ gave Abu Bakr ؓ (the container) to drink. He then said to the udder, 'Contract,' and it became contracted. I then went to him after that and said, 'O Messenger of Allah, teach me from this speech (i.e., from the Qur'an).' He ﷺ passed his hand over my hand (in a gesture of kindness and gentleness) and said, 'May Allah have mercy on you, for indeed you are a young lad who is *Mu'allam* (i.e., who is inspired or guided to what is correct and good).'"^[1]

These inspiring words of the Prophet ﷺ certainly had a profound impact on 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ood's character. When he grew up,

^[1] *Al-Bidaayah Wan-Nihaayah* (3/32), and *Siyyar 'Alaam An-Nubalaa* (1/465).

'Abdullah ibn Mas'ood ؓ became one of the most learned of scholars among the Prophet's Companions ؓ. Having embraced Islam in the early days of the Prophet's Mission, 'Abdullah ؓ migrated both to Abyssinia and then to Al-Madeenah; he ؓ participated in the Battle of Badr and all ensuing battles; he adhered closely to the company of the Prophet ﷺ, so much so that he ؓ would try to always be there to hand the Prophet ﷺ his shoes, or, when necessary, to take them from him.^[1]

Perhaps 'Abdullah ؓ is best remembered for being the first Companion ؓ to openly recite the Qur'an in front of a gathering of polytheists, an amazingly brave feat considering the fact that 'Abdullah ؓ was not a member of a subtribe in Makkah, but was only allied to one, which means that he ؓ had no family to protect him. What is more, 'Abdullah ؓ was skinny, with especially thin calves, and not a person who could defend himself against large or muscular attackers. But the eventuality of a physical attack on his person was probably far away from the thoughts of 'Abdullah ؓ, who stood right in front of Quraish's central place of gathering and recited the Qur'an to men whose hearts and ears were closed to the truth.

It began when, one day, the Prophet's Companions said to one another, "By Allah, the people of the Quraish have never before heard the Qur'an being recited for them in the open. Where is the man that will make them hear it?" The most unlikely of volunteers, unlikely because of his size and status, said, "I will do it!" That volunteer was 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ood ؓ. The Companions ؓ said, "We indeed fear that they will harm you. What we want is a man who has a clan to protect him from the people if they intend to do him harm." 'Abdullah ؓ said, "Leave me to go, for indeed, Allah ﷻ will protect me." 'Abdullah ؓ went to the Ka'bah ؓ in the morning, at which time the Quraish were seated nearby in their gatherings. 'Abdullah stood at Al-Maqaam (the Maqaam of Ibraaheem ؑ, which is right in front of the

^[1] *Al-Isaabah* (6/214).

Ka'bah) and recited in a loud voice:

"In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful."

He then began to recite "The Most Beneficent" Chapter of the Qur'an:

﴿الرَّحْمٰنُ ۝۱ عَلَّمَ الْقُرْاٰنَ ۝۲﴾

"The Most Beneficent (Allah)! Has taught (you mankind) the Qur'an (by His Mercy)." (Qur'an 55: 1, 2)

He ﷺ continued to recite the Chapter; meanwhile, the people of the Quraish were all staring at him in wonder, trying to size up the situation, for this was truly unprecedented, considering how in their minds 'Abdullah ﷺ was merely a young shepherd who was only supposed to serve. They began to say, "What is Ibn Umm 'Abd saying?" 'Ibn Umm 'Abd' is the disparaging name they had for 'Abdullah ﷺ. Some of them said, "He is reciting some of that which Muhammad ﷺ has come with!" Upon realizing that that was the case, they stood up and began to strike him in his face, but not even that had an effect on 'Abdullah ﷺ, who continued to recite the Chapter while he was being beaten up! He ﷺ reached as far as he was able to reach in the Chapter, and then he ﷺ returned to his Companions ﷺ, who, upon seeing his bruised face, were greatly moved by his condition. They said to him, "This is what we feared would happen to you"; to which, 'Abdullah ﷺ lightly answered, "The enemies of Allah were never more insignificant to me than they are now. And if you wish, I will go to them tomorrow morning and do the same thing." They answered, "No, this is sufficient for you. You have made them hear that which they dislike."^[1] Such was the faith and courage of 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ood ﷺ; not even a brutal mob attack deterred him from continuing to convey the message of Islam.

^[1] Refer to *Ibn Hishaam* (1/314-315), and *Asad Al-Ghaabah* (3/385, 386).

8) Khalid ibn Sa'eed ibn Al-'Aas ؓ

Khalid's acceptance of Islam was prompted by a dream he ؓ saw during the early days of Islam. He ؓ dreamt that he was on the brink of falling into fire. There was someone who was pushing him into it, but the Messenger of Allah ﷺ held on to him, in order to prevent him from falling. It was at this point of the dream that Khalid ؓ woke up in a state of alarm, being certain that he had just seen a true dream. He ؓ related the contents of the dream to Abu Bakr As-Siddeeq ؓ, who said, "Goodness was intended for you (in your dream). Here is the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, so follow him." Khalid ؓ went to him and embraced Islam.

Although Khalid ؓ tried to keep his Islam a secret from his father, who was a staunch polytheist, the latter soon discerned what had happened based on the fact that his son remained aloof from his side for long periods at a time, a phenomenon that began around the time when the Prophet ﷺ first began preaching the message of Islam. Khalid's father sent his other sons - all of whom had not yet embraced Islam - to search out for Khalid ؓ. When Khalid ؓ came back with them, his father censured him and beat him with a stick (or a rapper) that was in his hand, and continued to do so until the stick broke upon making impact with Khalid's head. Khalid ؓ refused to renounce his faith, and so his father imprisoned him and forbade his brothers from speaking to him. The situation turned from bad to worse: Khalid's father began to starve Khalid ؓ and, at one point, made him go without water for three days. Hoping for his reward from Allah ﷻ, Khalid ؓ remained patient. Flushing with anger, Khalid's father once said, "By Allah, I will prevent you from getting sustenance." Khalid ؓ replied, "If you prevent me, then Allah will provide for me that which will nourish me and keep me alive." The torture did not continue indefinitely, for Khalid ؓ eventually managed to escape from his father. He then migrated to Abyssinia with other Muslims on the second of the two famous migrations to that land.

9) 'Uthmaan ibn Maz'oon ﷺ

When 'Uthmaan ibn Maz'oon ﷺ embraced Islam, his relatives from the Banu Jumah clan began to mistreat him, and no one more so than Umayyah ibn Khalaf, who was a particularly vile and brutal persecutor. Like other Muslims who were able to or who absolutely needed to, 'Uthmaan ibn Maz'oon ﷺ migrated to Abyssinia, where he could freely practice Islam, without the fear of punishment or torture. However, it was soon wrongly conveyed to the Muslims of Abyssinia that the situation of Muslims in Makkah had improved. 'Uthmaan ﷺ, along with others, then returned to Makkah, only to find out that, if anything, the situation had worsened.

Upon arriving at the border of Makkah, 'Uthmaan ibn Maz'oon ﷺ faced a difficult situation, for who was going to protect him from persecution? But in the end, he was able to enter Makkah under the protection of Al-Waleed ibn Al-Mugheerah. Some Muslims had similar guardians to protect them; the clearest example is that of the Prophet ﷺ, who had protection from his uncle, Abu Taalib. What this meant is that the guardian, or protector, openly announced that no one could touch the person who was under his protection. People generally honoured the guardian's pledge of protection, so long as the guardian was a polytheist and a rank and file member of Quraish's nobility - conditions that both Al-Waleed ibn Al-Mugheerah and Abu Taalib fulfilled. Thus 'Uthmaan ﷺ was able to walk the streets of Makkah in almost complete safety; this actually bothered 'Uthmaan ﷺ a great deal, for he ﷺ was not at peace with the knowledge that, while he was safe, his brothers in faith suffered on a daily basis. Although he ﷺ could do nothing to help them, he nonetheless felt a great deal of anxiety for being in a better situation than they were in; he said to himself, "It is a great defect in myself that I go about safely in the morning and afternoon, under the protection of a man from the people of polytheism, while my companions ﷺ and the people of my religion are subjected to hardship and affliction for the cause of Allah ﷻ."

'Uthmaan ؓ then went to Al-Waleed ibn Al-Mugheerah and said, "O Abu 'Abd-Shams (i.e., Al-Waleed), you have fulfilled your obligation, but I now return to you your protection."

"My nephew, why?" asked Al-Waleed. "Perhaps you have been harmed or violated in some way."

"No," said 'Uthmaan ؓ, "But I am content with the protection of Allah, and I do not want to seek out the protection of anyone else."

"Then go to the *Masjid* and openly renounce my protection, just as I gave it to you openly." The two of them then went to the *Masjid*, and in front of the people that were gathered there, 'Uthmaan ؓ pronounced that he was no longer under the protection of Al-Waleed. Upon renouncing Al-Waleed's protection, 'Uthmaan ؓ sat down in one of Quraish's gatherings. Among those present was Labeed ibn Rabe'e'ah, the famous poet. Labeed was reciting some of his poetry. "Indeed, everything other than Allah is false," Labeed said. 'Uthmaan ؓ said, "You have spoken the truth."

"And every instance of happiness must necessarily come to an end," continued Labeed.

"You have uttered a lie," said 'Uthmaan ؓ. "The happiness of Paradise never comes to an end!"

Labeed, who was not a native member of the Quraish, said, "O people of Quraish, a person who would sit among was never before harmed (like this)! When has this started among you?"

One man among those gathered said, "Indeed, he is one among other foolish people that are with him; they have parted from our religion, so please do not mind what he says." 'Uthmaan ؓ refuted the man's words, and the situation between them soon escalated, until the man stood up and struck 'Uthmaan ؓ in the eye, causing it to turn green in colour.

Standing nearby, Al-Waleed ibn Al-Mugheerah saw and heard all that had happened; he said to 'Uthmaan ؓ, "My nephew, by

Allah, your eye needed not the blow that was inflicted to it, for you had over you (my) secure protection.”

“By Allah,” ‘Uthmaan ؓ said, “My good eye is in need of that which afflicted its sister (i.e., his other eye) in the way of Allah ﷻ. And indeed, I am under the protection of He Who is mightier and more able than you are, O Abu ‘Abd-Shams.” Feeling sorry for his relative, Al-Waleed repeated his offer to protect ‘Uthmaan ؓ, but the latter outright refused. ‘Uthmaan ؓ didn’t have to forego Al-Waleed’s protection, but he did so anyway, desiring reward from Allah ﷻ.

When ‘Uthmaan ؓ migrated to Al-Madeenah, a woman named Umm Al-‘Alaa Al-Ansaariyah ؓ provided him with a place to sleep. Years later, after he ؓ died, Umm Al-‘Alaa ؓ saw a dream about him; in it, ‘Uthmaan ؓ had (with him) a flowing river. Umm Al-‘Alaa ؓ later went to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and informed him about what she ؓ had seen. The Prophet ﷺ said, “That is his (good) work (i.e., good deeds).”^[1]

There were other Muslims who also suffered at the hands of the Quraish, and who also remained firm upon their religion, despite the ill treatment they received from their fathers and relatives. For the cause of Islam, they were willing to sacrifice all of the comfort and worldly pleasures they enjoyed prior to entering the fold of Islam, because they hoped for their reward from Allah ﷻ.

It is important to note that persecution was not limited to men only; many Muslim women were also victims of punishment and torture – women such as Sumayyah bint Khayyat; Faatimah bint Al-Khattaab; Labeedah, the young girl of the Baru Muammil clan; Zinneerah Ar-Roomiyyah; An-Nahdiyyah and her daughter; Umm ‘Ubais; Humaamah, mother of Bilaal; and others – may Allah be pleased with them all.

^[1] *Saheeh. Bukharee*, “The Book of Dream Interpretation”; chapter, “The Dreams of Women.” *Hadeeth* numbers: 7003 and 7004.

The Wisdom Behind Passive Resistance In Makkah; And How, While In Makkah, The Prophet ﷺ Concentrated Mainly On Spiritual Development

Throughout the Makkan phase of the Prophet's life, Muslims did not physically fight back against the Quraish. The humble position of the Muslims bothered some Companions ﷺ, primarily the younger ones among them. One day, while still in Makkah, 'Abdur-Rahmaan ibn 'Auf ﷺ and some of his Muslim friends ﷺ went to the Prophet ﷺ and said, "O Prophet of Allah, we were honoured when we were polytheists; ever since we have had faith, we have been humiliated." They were not having doubts about their faith, but rather wanted to be able to fight back against their polytheistic persecutors. The Prophet ﷺ said to them, "Verily, I have been ordered to forgive, so do not fight the people (i.e., the Quraish)."^[1] Some Islamic researchers have attempted to pinpoint, or infer from historical narrations, the divine wisdom behind fighting not being legislated during the Makkan period of the Prophet's life. One such researcher was Sayyid Qutub – may Allah have mercy on him – who said, "The conclusions we have arrived at (regarding this issue) we do not assert authoritatively, because we would then have made ourselves gods above Allah ﷻ and we would have mentioned the reasons and wisdom behind things, when we could very well be wrong. Whenever the believer is commanded to believe or do something as an Islamic duty, then it is in his purview to only submit, since Allah ﷻ is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. When we infer and say that such and such is the wisdom or reason for a given legislation, we do so using our ability to reason, with the understanding that we are mentioning a possibility (and not the concrete truth), since none knows the reality (and truth and wisdom behind things) but Allah ﷻ. I am referring here to when Allah ﷻ does not explicitly mention the wisdom or reason for a

^[1] Refer to *As-Seerah An-Nabawiyyah As-Saheehah* (1/158).

given legislation in a revealed source (the Qur'an and *Sunnah*).'' Keeping this in mind, I list below some of the reasons why fighting was not legislated in Makkah; these reasons complement one another, meaning that two or more of them can be considered as partial reasons and that the correctness of one reason does not necessarily mean that another is false.

- 1) The Makkan phase of the Prophet's life was a period of training and preparation for things to come. Part of that training involved teaching the Prophet's Companions ﷺ to be patient in the face of adversity, to not lose their temper quickly, to follow the orders of the Prophet ﷺ, regardless of their own opinions regarding matters. All of this training took place in a practical setting; Muslims were subjected to harsh treatment, yet they were ordered to not take up arms.
- 2) In a society like that of the Quraish, peaceful preaching has a stronger impact than non-peaceful actions. The polytheists among the Quraish were arrogant and obsessed with the concept of tribal loyalty; fighting them, during the Makkan phase of the Prophet's biography, would possibly have made them even more obstinate in the face of the truth; revenge for killings would have then become a common occurrence, and Islam would possibly have been transformed in the minds of people from an important message to a cause for revenge killings.
- 3) One possible reason was to prevent battles from taking place inside every household. It was not the chiefs of the Quraish who directly punished and tortured every Muslim; rather, the task of torturing individual Muslims was delegated to the leaders of subtribes or to guardians – such as fathers – of individuals. What fighting would have meant in such a situation and in such a society is that killing would have taken place in each home, and then Islam would have been blamed. As it was, the Quraish would say to foreign delegates that Muhammad ﷺ divided father from son. How would matters have stood, then, had a Muslim child been ordered to kill his disbelieving father?

- 4) Another wisdom is that Allah ﷻ of course knew that many among those who obstinately opposed the truth and tortured Muslims would one day sincerely join the ranks of the Muslim nation; indeed, some of them would go on to become leaders of the Muslim nation; was not 'Umar ibn Al-Khattaab ؓ one such person?
- 5) The prevailing conditions in Makkah made peaceful resistance a more potent strategy than the taking up of arms. In a tribal setting, where practically everyone was related in some way to his fellow tribesmen, people would stand up to help someone who had been wronged, especially if he was a member of the nobility or a fellow clansman. Consider the example of Ibn Ad-Dughnah, who declared Abu Bakr ؓ to be under his protection when the latter was forced to leave Makkah by its people and intended to migrate to Abyssinia. Ibn Ad-Dughnah felt that, by forcing a nobleman like Abu Bakr ؓ to leave Makkah, the Quraish were bringing disgrace upon themselves and upon all Arabs. Also, consider the example of how certain polytheists, realizing that the Banu Haashim clan was being wronged, worked to bring an end to Quraish's boycott against them. And there are many more examples of this from the Prophet's biography.
- 6) Muslims were few in number and were constricted within the boundaries of Makkah; the message of Islam had not yet reached the rest of the Arabian Peninsula, except on a very limited scale. It is interesting to note that, before the Prophet's migration to Al-Madeenah, the various tribes of the Arabian Peninsula took a neutral stance regarding the struggle that was taking place between the Quraish and a few of its members; they were all simply waiting to see what the outcome was going to be. If such a battle occurred, the few Muslims there were in Makkah would likely have been killed. Even if the Muslims managed to fight well and killed many polytheists in Makkah, many polytheists would still have remained; polytheism would have remained strong, and Islam would have weakened with many of its followers dead.

7) There was no pressing need to fight, for the goals of that particular stage of the Prophet's *Da'wah* were being fulfilled. In Al-Madeenah, defending Muslims from outside enemies was important, but so was spreading the message of Islam to the far corners of the Arabian Peninsula and beyond. In Makkah, however, it was hard enough to simply preserve the life of the Prophet ﷺ and be able to preach to the Quraish. Despite constant persecution at the hands of the Quraish, both of these goals were being fulfilled. The looming threat of Banu Haashim's swords prevented the Quraish from trying to kill the Prophet ﷺ. To be sure, Quraish's leaders did what they could to weaken the effect of the Prophet's *Da'wah*. But fearing reprisals from the Banu Haashim clan, they did not dare to physically prevent the Prophet ﷺ from walking in the midst of their gatherings and inviting them to Islam. Thus the Prophet ﷺ was to be found everywhere - beside the Ka'bah, in community gatherings, standing on top of Mount As-Safaa - preaching the message of Islam. Witnessing this, Quraish's leaders could not imprison him, kill him, or even limit his freedom of speech.

These, in my view, are some of the reasons why Muslims were not ordered to fight in those early days of the Prophet's *Da'wah*. Overall, it was a period of training, when particular circumstances provided the groundwork for general principles that could be applied in the future. For example, one particular incident taught the Companions ﷺ the importance of weighing the values of benefits and harms before proceeding to embark on an endeavour. What happened was that the Companions ﷺ cursed the false deities of the Quraish; as a result, the leaders of the Quraish began to curse Allah ﷻ out of ignorance. The Companions ﷺ were doing something good by cursing false deities, but by weighing the benefit of doing that against the consequent harm of the Quraish cursing Allah ﷻ, they were made to realize that they should not curse Quraish's false deities. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَلَا تَسُبُّوا الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَيَسُبُّوا اللَّهَ عَدْوًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ
كَذَلِكَ زَيْنًا لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ عَمَلُهُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ مَرْجِعُهُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا
يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٠٨﴾﴾

“And insult not those whom they (disbelievers) worship besides Allah, lest they insult Allah wrongfully without knowledge. Thus We have made fair-seeming to each people its own doings; then to their Lord is their return and He shall then inform them of all that they used to do.” (Qur’an 6: 108)

The overall principle that the Companions ﷺ learned is that, if a correct action leads to a greater harm, then they should not apply that correct action. The people of knowledge have mentioned that that principle applies today as well. So if disbelievers are strong and are not under the authority of a Muslim government, and if it is feared that they will curse Islam, or Allah ﷻ, or the Prophet ﷺ, then it is not permissible for Muslims to curse their gods, their places of worship, or their religion. If a Muslim does any of the above deeds, then it is as if he is encouraging others to perpetrate a sin.

By studying the the Makkan phase of the Prophet’s *Da’wah* – which lasted for 13 years – one realizes that, beyond the fact that it was a period of training, Islamic beliefs were of such paramount importance that it was not wise to rush matters. It takes time to first plant the seeds of sound beliefs in people’s minds, and then to nurture the growth of those beliefs until they develop strong roots. Today, Muslims need to learn the same lesson: the overcoming of disbelief and ignorance requires training and patience. The Prophet ﷺ taught his Companions ﷺ about patience by encouraging them to develop a strong relationship with Allah ﷻ and to find strength through worshipping Him. It was in the Makkan era that these Verses were revealed:

﴿يَأْتِيهَا الْمُرْمَلُ ① فُرُ الْبَلِّ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ② نِصْفَهُ ③ أَوْ أَنْقَضَ مِنْهُ قَلِيلًا ④ أَوْ زِدَ عَلَيْهِ ⑤ وَرَبِّلِ
الْقُرْءَانَ تَرْبِيلاً ⑥﴾

“O you wrapped in garments i.e., Prophet Muhammad ﷺ! Stand (to pray) all night, except a little. Half of it, – or a little less than that, Or a little more; and recite the Qur’an (aloud) in a slow, (pleasant tone and) style.” (Qur’an 73: 1-4)

This Chapter of the Qur’an, Soorah Al-Muzammil, impressed upon the Companions ﷺ the importance of standing in the night to pray, of remembering Allah ﷻ constantly, of depending upon Him in all of one’s affairs, of being patient, and of seeking His forgiveness.

In the first few Verses of Soorah Al-Muzammil, Allah ﷻ ordered the Prophet ﷺ to dedicate one-half of every night to prayer. And so for approximately one year, the Prophet ﷺ and His Companions ﷺ prayed for one-half – sometimes a little less and sometimes a little more – of every night. After it became evident that the Companions ﷺ were willing to work hard to please Allah ﷻ, and were prepared to obey and execute His commands, Allah ﷻ eased the command to pray at night with the revelation of this Verse:

﴿إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَعْلَمُ أَنَّكَ تَقُومُ أَدْنَىٰ مِنْ ثُلُثِي اللَّيْلِ وَنِصْفَهُ وَثُلُثَهُ وَطَائِفَةٌ مِّنَ الَّذِينَ مَعَكَ
وَاللَّهُ يُقَدِّرُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ عَلِمَ أَن لَّنْ نَّحْتَصِمُ عَلَيْهِ فَأَقْرَأُوا مَا يَتَّسَّرَ مِنَ
الْقُرْآنِ عَلِمَ أَن سَيَكُونُ مِنْكُمْ مَّرْضَىٰ وَآخَرُونَ يَضْرِبُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَبْتَغُونَ مِن
فَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَآخَرُونَ يَقْتُلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَأَقْرَأُوا مَا يَتَّسَّرَ مِنْهُ وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ
وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَقَرِّضُوا اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا وَمَا تُقَدِّمُوا لِأَنفُسِكُمْ مِن خَيْرٍ نَّحْدُوهُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ
هُوَ خَيْرٌ وَأَعْظَمَ أَجْرًا وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٢٠﴾﴾

“Verily, your Lord knows that you do stand (to pray at night) a little less than two thirds of the night, or half the night, or a third of the night, and so do a party of those with you. And Allah measures the night and the day. He knows that you are unable to pray the whole night, so He has turned to you (in mercy). So, recite you of the Qur’an as much as may be easy for you. He knows that there will be some among you sick, others travelling through the land, seeking of Allah’s Bounty; yet others fighting

in Allah's Cause. So recite as much of the Qur'an as may be easy (for you), and perform As-Salaat (Iqamat-as-Salaat) and give Zakaat, and lend to Allah a goodly loan, and whatever good you send before you for yourselves, (i.e., Nawafil non-obligatory acts of worship: prayers, charity, fasting, Hajj and 'Umrah, etc.), you will certainly find it with Allah, better and greater in reward. And seek forgiveness of Allah. Verily, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most-Merciful." (Qur'an 73: 20)

They were being at once tested and trained to ward off sleep. But sleep deprivation was not the aim of that training; rather, the aim was to train the Companions ﷺ to forsake the comforts of life and, more importantly, to resist and overcome their desires. Such a high level of spiritual training was necessary, since Allah ﷻ had chosen the Companions ﷺ for the most important of missions – to bear the message of Islam and to spread it to the far corners of the earth. Many of the early Muslims later went on to play important roles in the great events that took place years later. Much of their successes can be attributed to the fact that their sides would “forsake their beds, to invoke their Lord in fear and hope.” (Qur'an 22: 16) Allah ﷻ described late-night prayer in the following Verse:

﴿إِنَّ نَاشِئَةَ اللَّيْلِ هِيَ أَشَدُّ وَطْأًا وَأَقْوَمُ قِيْلًا ۖ﴾ ٦

“Verily, the rising by night (for Tahajjud prayer) is very hard and most potent and good for governing (the soul), and most suitable for (understanding) the Word (of Allah).” (Qur'an 73: 6)

Prayer and recitation of the Qur'an have a very potent effect on the soul in the quietness of the night, when other human beings are resting. In the middle of the night, one is not disturbed by the pressing needs and errands of everyday life; one's heart thus becomes free to remember Allah ﷻ and to invoke Him. With such training, the Companions ﷺ were truly prepared to shoulder the duty of spreading the message of Islam. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿إِنَّا سَنُلْقِي عَلَيْكَ قَوْلًا ثَقِيْلًا ۝﴾ ٥

“Verily, We shall send down to you a weighty Word (i.e., obligations, legal laws, etc.).” (Qur’an 73: 5)

That “Weighty Word” is the Noble Qur’an – its teachings, legal laws, commandments, etc. Through the training that the Companions ﷺ underwent, they were later able to form a country in Al-Madeenah, to fight and make sacrifices for the cause of Islam, and to spread Islam to the rest of mankind.

The Companions ﷺ were also being trained to love one another as brothers. As a single unit composed of many brothers in faith, the Companions ﷺ were immune to the psychological attacks of the Quraish. Ties of faith became stronger and more binding than the ties of blood. Islamic brotherhood meant loving one’s brother, hoping for his betterment, and even preferring him to one’s own self. Many of the Prophet’s sayings about the duties of brotherhood had a profoundly positive impact on the Companions ﷺ. In such sayings, the Prophet ﷺ would exhort Muslims to cooperate with one another and to help one another out of difficult situations. But the Prophet ﷺ made it clear that, when they help one another, they should do so, not with the intention of returning a favour or for any other worldly reason, but with the intention of pleasing Allah ﷻ. In a *Qudsee Hadeeth*, the Prophet ﷺ related that Allah ﷻ said, “Those who love one another for My majesty [(i.e., for My sake (will))] have pulpits made of light (in the Hereafter); the Prophets and the martyrs will envy them.”^[1] To love another Muslim for the sake of Allah ﷻ, which is a part of true brotherhood, is one of the best of deeds, and will lead to the highest of rankings in the Hereafter. The Prophet ﷺ warned Muslims not to take the duties of Islamic brotherhood lightly. He ﷺ said, “Do not hate one another, and do not be jealous of one another. And be slaves of Allah, brothers unto one another. And it is not permissible for a Muslim to forsake his brother (i.e., cut off ties with him, by not greeting him

^[1] Related by At-Tirmidhee, who declared it to be authentic in *The Book of Az-Zuhd* (4/51); *Hadeeth* number: 239.

or speaking to him) for more than three nights.”^[1]

Also, from the very beginning of his Prophethood, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ made it clear that all of his followers were equals, both rich and poor, nobleman and commoner. He ﷺ taught them that just because people are different from one another in terms of sex, lineage, race, or colour, that in no way means that there should be differences in how people are treated. Before Allah ﷻ, all are equal. This policy of course further strengthened the bonds of brotherhood between Muslims. Conversely, it did not sit well with the nobility of the Quraish, for they demanded from the Prophet ﷺ that, when he ﷺ would meet with them in order to address them, he ﷺ should make a separate gathering for them, one that would be free of slaves and commoners. And of course the Prophet ﷺ refused, for all people equally have the right to be guided. This Verse of the Qur’an was then revealed:

﴿وَأَصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ
وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ تُرِيدُ زِينَةَ الدُّنْيَا وَلَا تُطِعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَن
ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ فُرُطًا ﴿٢٨﴾﴾

“And keep yourself (O Muhammad ﷺ) patiently with those who call on their Lord (i.e., your companions who remember their Lord with glorification, praising in prayers, etc., and other righteous deeds, etc.) morning and afternoon, seeking His Face, and let not your eyes overlook them, desiring the pomp and glitter of the life of the world; and obey not him whose heart We have made heedless of Our Remembrance, one who follows his own lusts and whose affair (deeds) has been lost.” (Qur’an 18:28)

In another Chapter of the Qur’an, Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَلَا تَطْرُدِ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ مَا عَلَيْكَ
مِنْ حِسَابِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَمَا مِنْ حِسَابِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَتَطْرُدَهُمْ فَتَكُونَ

^[1] Related by Bukhaaree in the Book of Manners, chapter, “The Hijrah, and the saying of the Messenger of Allah: ‘It is not permissible for a man to forsake his brother for more than three (nights).’” Hadeeth number: 6076.

﴿ ٥٢ ﴾ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

“And turn not away those who invoke their Lord, morning and afternoon seeking His Face. You are accountable for them in nothing, and they are accountable for you in nothing, that you may turn them away, and thus become of the Zaalimoon (unjust).” (Qur’an 6: 52)

Once, when the Prophet ﷺ turned away from Ibn Umm Maktoom ؓ - who was blind - because he ﷺ was busily engaged in a discussion with certain noblemen from the Quraish, Allah ﷻ reproached him, as is related in the following Verses:

﴿ عَبَسَ وَتَوَلَّى ۚ ١ أَنْ جَاءَهُ الْأَعْمَى ۚ ٢ وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّهٗ بُرِّئَ ۚ ٣ أَوْ يَذَّكَّرُ فَتَنْفَعَهُ ۚ ٤ أَمَّا مَنْ اسْتَعْتَضَ ۚ ٥ فَأَنْتَ لَمْ تَصَدِّ ۚ ٦ وَمَا عَلَيْكَ إِلَّا يَرْكَبُ ۚ ٧ وَأَمَّا مَنْ جَاءَكَ يَسْعَى ۚ ٨ وَهُوَ يَخْشَى ۚ ٩ فَأَنْتَ عَنْهُ تُلَهَّى ۚ ١٠ ﴾

“(The Prophet ﷺ) frowned and turned away, because there came to him the blind man (i.e., ‘Abdullah bin Umm-Maktoom, who came to the Prophet ﷺ while he was preaching to one or some of the Quraish chiefs). But what could tell you that per chance he might become pure (from sins)? Or that he might receive admonition, and that the admonition might profit him? As for him who thinks himself self-sufficient, to him you attend; what does it matter to you if he will not become pure (from disbelief, you are only a Messenger, your duty is to convey the Message of Allah). But as to him who came to you running. And is afraid (of Allah and His Punishment). Of him you are neglectful and divert your attention to another.” (Qur’an 80: 1-10)

On the one hand, the bonds of brotherhood were strengthened through a sense of equality; and on the other hand, the Prophet ﷺ consoled poor Muslims by calling upon the rich and strong among his Companions ؓ to help the weak and poor. So united were the Muslims in various ways that the Quraish found no way to sow dissension among them.

The Effect The Noble Qur'an Had In Terms Of Raising The Morale Of The Companions ﷺ

The Companions ﷺ were greatly comforted by the Verses that were being revealed during the Makkan era. This was especially the case in regard to those Verses in which Allah ﷻ defended them, which He ﷻ did in three main ways:

- 1) Allah ﷻ exhorted the Prophet ﷺ to take care of them and to treat them well; He ﷻ even reproached the Prophet ﷺ on certain occasions when he ﷺ would not give attention to some Companions ﷺ because he ﷺ was busy inviting Quraish's nobility to Islam.

The Prophet ﷺ would sit in the *Masjid* alongside his poor or weak Companions ﷺ – among whom were the likes of Khabbaab ﷺ, 'Ammar ﷺ, Ibn Fakeehah Yasaar ﷺ (whose owner was Safwaan ibn Umayyah), and Suhaib ﷺ; meanwhile, the Quraish would mock them, saying to one another, "You know the situation of his Companions (i.e., that they are poor and weak). Is it then these that Allah has bestowed His favour upon from among us with guidance and the truth? Had what Muhammad came with been good, these people would not have beaten us to it, and Allah would not have chosen them instead of us."

Allah ﷻ refuted the mockery of those disbelievers, making it clear to them that His being pleased with His slaves does not hinge upon their degree of wealth or status in this world. And for his part, the Prophet ﷺ made the same point clear, both in his sayings and in his deeds. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَلَا تَطْرُدِ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ مَا عَلَيْكَ مِنْ حِسَابِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَمَا مِنْ حِسَابِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَتَطْرُدَهُمْ فَتَكُونَ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ فَتَنَّا بَعْضَهُم بِبَعْضٍ لِيَقُولُوا أَهَؤُلَاءِ مَن آتَى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ بَيْنِنَا أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِأَعْلَمَ بِالشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾ وَإِذَا جَاءَكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِآيَاتِنَا فَقُلْ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ كَتَبَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ أَنَّهُ مَن عَمِلَ مِنكُمْ سُوءًا

﴿٥٤﴾ بِجَهَلَةٍ ثُمَّ تَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَنَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٥٤﴾

“And turn not away those who invoke their Lord, morning and afternoon seeking His Face. You are accountable for them in nothing, and they are accountable for you in nothing, that you may turn them away, and thus become of the Zaalimoon (unjust). Thus We have tried some of them with others, that they might say: “Is it these (poor believers) that Allah has favoured from amongst us?” Does not Allah know best those who are grateful? When those who believe in Our Ayaat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) come to you, say: “Salamun ‘Alaikum” (peace be on you); your Lord has written Mercy for Himself, so that, if any of you does evil in ignorance, and therefore repents and does righteous good deeds (by obeying Allah), then surely, He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” (Qur’an 6: 52-54)

By ordering the Prophet ﷺ to not turn away from his Companions ﷺ, Allah ﷻ was pointing out their worth, which the disbelievers were ignorant of, or at least feigned to be ignorant of. Furthermore, Allah ﷻ ordered the Prophet ﷺ to extend greetings of peace to them and to inform them of His promise to forgive them their sins after they repent. To be sure, all of this raised the morale of the Companions ﷺ, to the degree that they felt no hurt at the mockery and spiteful words of the Quraish; in fact, they felt content with Quraish’s ill-treatment of them, since they knew that that ill-treatment was what caused them to reach such high rankings with their Lord ﷻ.

In Verses that will be recited until the Day of Resurrection, Allah ﷻ reproached His Messenger ﷺ concerning a blind Companion named Ibn Umm Maktoom ﷺ. On only one occasion did the Prophet ﷺ turn away from Ibn Umm Maktoom ﷺ, without answering his question, and even that was because of a sound reason: He ﷺ was busy inviting some of Quraish’s nobles to Islam. Even though this occurred only one time, it was sufficient cause for Allah’s reproach and the revelation of the following Verses:

﴿ عَبَسَ وَتَوَلَّى ۙ ١ أَنْ جَاءَهُ الْأَعْمَى ۙ ٢ وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّمْ يَتَذَكَّرُ ۙ ٣ أَوْ يُذَكَّرُ ۙ فَانْفَعَهُ ۙ ٤ أَمْ مِنْ أَسْتَفْتَى ۙ ٥ فَأَنْتَ لَمْ تَصَدَّى ۙ ٦ وَمَا عَلَيْكَ إِلَّا بَرَئِي ۙ ٧ وَأَمَّا مَنْ جَاءَكَ يَسْعَى ۙ ٨ وَهُوَ يَخْشَى ۙ ٩ فَأَنْتَ عَنْهُ تُلَهَّى ۙ ١٠ ﴾

“(The Prophet ﷺ) frowned and turned away, because there came to him the blind man (i.e., ‘Abdullah bin Umm-Maktoom, who came to the Prophet ﷺ while he was preaching to one or some of the Quraish chiefs). But what could tell you that per chance he might become pure (from sins)? Or that he might receive admonition, and that the admonition might profit him? As for him who thinks himself self-sufficient, to him you attend; what does it matter to you if he will not become pure (from disbelief, you are only a Messenger, your duty is to convey the Message of Allah). But as to him who came to you running. And is afraid (of Allah and His Punishment), Of him you are neglectful and divert your attention to another.” (Qur’an 80: 1-10)

There is no room in Islam for the preferred treatment of the rich and of the noble classes. Islam came to instill into mankind one view of life and to make clear to them that human beings all come from the same origin, which by extension means that they should be treated equally. With this in mind, we can understand why Allah ﷻ sternly reproached His Messenger ﷺ. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ gave greater attention to Ubai ibn Khalaf than to Ibn Umm Maktoom ﷻ, even though, in all actuality, Ibn Umm Maktoom ﷻ is better than even billions of the likes of Ubai ibn Khalaf – may Allah curse him!

One of the lessons we learn from this story is that it is upon the Daa’ee to convey the truth, but results are not in his control. The Prophet ﷺ strove hard to convince Quraish’s nobles to accept the truth, but even he ﷺ couldn’t control the way in which they responded, for many of them persisted upon the ways of falsehood. This story also establishes the truthfulness of the Messenger of Allah’s Prophethood. For had Muhammad ﷺ not been the Messenger of Allah, he ﷺ would have kept this story a

secret, since in it he ﷺ is sternly reproached. But of course the Prophet ﷺ didn't keep it a secret; instead, he ﷺ taught his Companions ﷺ the above-mentioned Verses from *Soorah Al-'Abasah*, which, he ﷺ knew, will be recited until the Last Day.

2) Allah ﷻ consoled the Companions ﷺ by informing them about stories of previous Prophets ﷺ and nations. When the Companions ﷺ read Verses about the ill treatment that the Prophets ﷺ received at the hands of their people and about how the Prophets ﷺ were then patient, they felt that they too should be patient. Being made to feel a sense of brotherhood with Muslims from previous nations, and learning about the hardships they endured, the Companions ﷺ felt comforted. And they thought less of the hardships they were experiencing, knowing fully well that others before them had experienced even more hardships.

Stories in the Qur'an about previous Prophets ﷺ - such as Nooh ﷺ, Ibraaheem ﷺ, Moosa ﷺ, and 'Eesa ﷺ - all had the effect of making the Companions ﷺ firm and strong upon their faith.

3) Allah ﷻ praised some of their actions and promised them eternal bliss in Paradise. For example, when Abu Bakr ﷺ freed seven Muslim slaves, Allah ﷻ revealed the following Verses, in which He ﷻ praised Abu Bakr ﷺ and condemned Umayyah ibn Khalaf, the Makkan chieftain who would torture Bilaal ibn Rabaah ﷺ:

﴿فَأَنْذَرْتُكُمْ نَارًا تَلَظَّى ﴿١٤﴾ لَا يَصْلَاهَا إِلَّا الْأَشْقَى ﴿١٥﴾ الَّذِي كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّى ﴿١٦﴾ وَسَيُجَنَّبُهَا الْأَتْقَى ﴿١٧﴾ الَّذِي يُؤْتِي مَالَهُ يَتَزَكَّى ﴿١٨﴾ وَمَا لِأَحَدٍ عِنْدَهُ مِنْ نِعْمَةٍ تُجْزَى ﴿١٩﴾ إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِ الْأَعْلَى ﴿٢٠﴾ وَلَسَوْفَ يَرْضَى ﴿٢١﴾﴾

“Therefore I have warned you of a Fire blazing fiercely (Hell); none shall enter it save the most wretched, who denies and turns away. And Al-Muttaqoon (the pious and righteous) will be far removed from it (Hell). He who spends his wealth for increase in self-purification, and have in his mind no favour from anyone for

which a reward is expected in return, except only the desire to seek the Countenance of his Lord, the Most High. He surely will be pleased (when he will enter Paradise).'' (Qur'an 92: 14-21)

In another example, historians^[1] mention that, when the polytheists made fun of Christian delegates from Najraan because they embraced Islam, Allah ﷻ revealed the following Verses:

﴿الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ هُمْ بِهِ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَإِذَا يُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ قَالُوا ءَأَمَنَّا بِهِ إِنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا مِنْ قَبْلِهِ مُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ يُؤْتَوْنَ أَجْرَهُمْ مَرَّتَيْنِ بِمَا صَبَرُوا وَيَدْرُءُونَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ السَّيِّئَةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾ وَإِذَا سَمِعُوا اللَّغْوَ أَعْرَضُوا عَنْهُ وَقَالُوا لَنَا أَعْمَلُنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَلُكُمْ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ لَا نَبْغِي الْجَاهِلِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾﴾

“Those to whom We gave the Scripture [i.e., the Taurat (Torah) and the Injeel (Gospel), etc.] before it, – they believe in it (the Qur'an). And when it is recited to them, they say: “We believe in it. Verily, it is the truth from our Lord. Indeed even before it we have been from those who submit themselves to Allah in Islam as Muslims (like ‘Abdullah bin Salam and Salman Al-Faarisi, etc.). These will be given their reward twice over, because they are patient, and repel evil with good, and spend (in charity) out of what We have provided them. And when they hear Al-Laghw (dirty, false, evil vain talk), they withdraw from it and say: “To us our deeds, and to you your deeds. Peace be to you. We seek not the ignorant.” (Qur'an 28: 52-55)

In general, many Verses revealed during the Makkan era promised the Companions ﷺ that, as a reward for their patience and many sacrifices for the cause of Islam, Allah ﷻ will bestow upon them eternal bliss in Paradise. At the same time, Allah ﷻ informed them of the evil destination of their enemies. For example, Allah ﷻ said:

﴿إِنَّا لَنَنْصُرُ رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْأَشْهَادُ﴾

^[1] Refer to *As-Seerah An-Nabawiyyah* by Ibn Katheer (2/4).

﴿٥١﴾ يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ الظَّالِمِينَ مَعَذِرَتُهُمْ وَلَهُمُ اللَّعْنَةُ وَلَهُمْ سُوءُ الدَّارِ ﴿٥٢﴾

“Verily, We will indeed make victorious Our Messengers and those who believe (in the Oneness of Allah – Islamic Monotheism) in this world’s life and on the Day when the witnesses will stand forth, (i.e., Day of Resurrection), The Day when their excuses will be of no profit to Zaalimoon (polytheists, wrongdoers, and disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah). Theirs will be the curse, and theirs will be the evil abode (i.e., painful torment in Hellfire).” (Qur’an 40: 51, 52)

In another Verse, Allah ﷻ praised the Companions ﷺ for adhering closely to the teachings of the Noble Qur’an and for believing in it:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَتْلُونَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنْفَقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً يَرْجُونَ تِجَارَةً لَّنْ تَبُورَ ﴿٢٩﴾ لِيُؤْتِيَهُمْ أَجُورَهُمْ وَيَزِيدَهُمْ مِّنْ فَضْلِهِ إِنَّهُ غَفُورٌ شَكُورٌ ﴿٣٠﴾﴾

“Verily, those who recite the Book of Allah (this Qur’an), and perform As-Salaat (Iqamat-as-Salaat), and spend (in charity) out of what We have provided for them, secretly and openly, hope for a (sure) trade-gain that will never perish. That He may pay them their wages in full, and give them (even) more, out of His Grace. Verily! He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Ready to appreciate (good deeds and to recompense).” (Qur’an 35: 29, 30)

Also, Allah ﷻ praised them for patiently and steadfastly performing worship even while they were being persecuted for doing so. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿أَمَّنْ هُوَ قَانِئٌ بِأَنَّهُ سَاجِدٌ لِّسَاجِدٍ مِّمَّا يَدْعُونَ وَلَٰكِن يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْكُفْرِ وَلَٰكِن يُسَئِرُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَلْيَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ هَٰؤُلَاءِ جَمْعٌ مُّشَبَّهٌ بِأُولَٰئِكَ أَلَّا يَعْلَمُوا ﴿٩﴾ قُلْ يٰٓأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ وَأَرْضُ اللَّهِ وَاسِعَةٌ إِنَّمَا يُوَفَّى الصَّابِرُونَ أَجْرَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿١٠﴾﴾

“Is one who is obedient to Allah, prostrating himself or standing (in prayer) during the hours of the night, fearing the Hereafter and hoping for the Mercy of his Lord (like one who disbelieves)? Say: “Are those who know equal to those who know not?” It is only men of understanding who will remember (i.e., get a lesson from Allah’s Signs and Verses). Say (O Muhammad ﷺ): “O My slaves who believe (in the Oneness of Allah – Islamic Monotheism), be afraid of your Lord (Allah) and keep your duty to Him. Good is (the reward) for those who do good in this world, and Allah’s earth is spacious (so if you cannot worship Allah at a place, then go to another)! Only those who are patient shall receive their rewards in full, without reckoning.” (Qur’an 39: 9, 10)

Negotiations

One day, while the leaders of the Quraish were gathered together, one among them said, “See among you who is most knowledgeable regarding magic, soothsaying, and poetry, and then let him go to the man who has divided our ranks, broken up our affair, and found fault with our religion. Let him speak to that man and listen to what he responds.” Someone said, “We do not know of anyone (who is better suited to this task) than ‘Utbah ibn Rabe’e’ah.”

They all agreed, saying, “It is you then, O Abu Al-Waleed (i.e., ‘Utbah ibn Rabe’e’ah) [who will go to him (i.e., to the Prophet ﷺ)].” ‘Utbah went to the Prophet ﷺ and said, “O Muhammad, who is better: you or ‘Abdul-Muttalib?” The Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not respond, and so ‘Utbah continued, saying, “If you claim that they (i.e., your forefathers) are better than you, then (you know that) they worshipped the very same gods that you find fault with. And if you claim that you are better than them, then speak, so that we can hear what you have to say. By Allah, we have never seen a lamb that is more unlucky to your people than you are: You have divided our ranks, broken up our affair, found fault with our religion – and you have exposed us among the Arabs, to the degree that it is being said among them, ‘Verily,

there is a magician among the Quraish,' and, 'Verily, there is a soothsayer among the Quraish.' By Allah, we will not wait until some of us stand up with swords against others among us, until we all perish. O man, if the only problem is that you are in need (of wealth), we will gather for you our wealth, until you become the richest man among the Quraish. And if all that you desire is marriage, choose any women from the Quraish you want, and we will marry you off to ten (women of your choice)."

Up until this point, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ remained silent, but now he ﷺ said, "Are you done?" 'Utbah said, "Yes." The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

﴿حَرَ ١ تَنْزِيلٌ مِنَ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ٢ كِتَابٌ فُصِّلَتْ آيَاتُهُ قُرْءَانًا عَرَبِيًّا لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ٣﴾

"Ha-Mim. [These letters are one of the miracles of the Qur'an, and none but Allah (Alone) knows their meanings.] A revelation from Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful. A Book whereof the Verses are explained in detail; - a Qur'an in Arabic for people who know." (Qur'an 41: 1-3)

And he ﷺ continued to recite until he ﷺ reached this Verse:

﴿فَإِنْ أَعْرَضُوا فَقُلْ أَنْذَرْتُكُمْ صَاعِقَةً مِثْلَ صَاعِقَةِ عَادٍ وَثَمُودَ ١٣﴾

"But if they turn away, then say (O Muhammad ﷺ): "I have warned you of a Sa'iqah (a destructive awful cry, torment, hit, a thunderbolt) like the Sa'iqah which overtook 'Ad and Thamood (people)." (Qur'an 41: 13)

'Utbah then said, "That is sufficient for you! You have nothing else with you other than this?" The Prophet ﷺ said, "No," and 'Utbah returned to the other leaders of the Quraish. When he arrived at their gathering, they asked, "What happened?" 'Utbah said, "I said everything I thought you would have said to him." They asked, "And did he answer you?" 'Utbah said, "Yes."^[1]

^[1] Al-Bidaayah An-Nihaayah by Ibn Katheer (3/68, 69).

The following is related in the narration of Ibn Ishaq: When he sat down with them, they said, "What happened, O Abu Al-Waleed?" 'Utbah said, "What happened is that I heard speech that, by Allah, I have not heard the like of ever before. By Allah, it is not poetry; nor is it magic or soothsaying. O people of Quraish, obey me and let me decide on the course of action we should take. Do not stand between this man and that which he is upon. Leave him be. For by Allah, the speech that I heard from him will become great news indeed. If the Arabs get him (with harm or death), then it means that others will have taken care of him for you. But if he is victorious over the Arabs, then his kingdom will be your kingdom, and his honour will be your honour. And of all people, you will be the most highly favoured with him." The rest of the Quraish said: "By Allah, he bewitched you with his words, O Abu Al-Waleed." 'Utbah said, "This is my opinion regarding him, but do as seems most befitting to you."^[1]

Lessons and Morals

- 1) The Prophet ﷺ stayed on course, concentrating on the matter that was of most importance. He ﷺ didn't allow 'Utbah to bring him into a debate regarding a secondary issue: Whether or not he ﷺ was superior to his father and grandfather. Had he ﷺ entered into that debate, the matter would have ended there, and 'Utbah wouldn't have stayed to listen to what the Prophet ﷺ wanted to say. The Prophet ﷺ was concentrating on what was most important, and he ﷺ didn't allow himself to become sidetracked with all of the things that 'Utbah was saying. When 'Utbah was finished speaking, the Prophet ﷺ showed a characteristic display of lofty manners, making sure that it was his turn to speak; he ﷺ said, "Are you done, O Abu Al-Waleed?"
- 2) The Prophet ﷺ did what was required of him given the situation: He ﷺ gave an answer that had an air of finality to it, making it perfectly clear to 'Utbah that nothing he could offer

^[1] *As-Seerah An-Nabawiyah* by Ibn Hishaam (1/294).

would make him turn his back on his faith. The Prophet's choice of Verses attests to his wisdom, for they are Verses that establish the most important of matters – that the Qur'an is revelation from Allah ﷻ; that the Creator is One, and He is Allah ﷻ; that He ﷻ is the Creator of the heavens and the earth; that previous nations disbelieved and were then destroyed; and that the Quraish were facing, if they did not change their ways, "A *Sa'iqah* (a destructive awful cry, torment, hit, a thunderbolt) like the *Sa'iqah* which overtook (the people of) 'Ad and Thamood."

- 3) Wealth, status, and women – these are three of the greatest dangers that threaten the moral rectitude of a Muslim, but especially of one who invites others to Islam. The downfall of many preachers has been the temptation of wealth. And those that have been tempted by wealth but then remained firm are the true followers of the Prophet ﷺ. Similarly, the temptation of status is dangerous for both the scholar and the *Daa'ee* (one who invites others to Islam). In the face of all temptations, the true follower of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is he who doesn't forget the purpose for which he lives and dies:

﴿قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١١٢﴾ لَا شَرِيكَ لَمْ
وَبِذَلِكَ أُمِرْتُ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿١١٣﴾﴾

"Say (O Muhammad ﷺ): "Verily, my Salaat (prayer), my sacrifice, my living, and my dying are for Allah, the Lord of the 'Alamin (mankind, jinns, and all that exists). He has no partner. And of this I have been commanded, and I am the first of the Muslims." (Qur'an 6: 162, 163)

And as for the temptation of women, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "I have not left after me a temptation (trial or test) that is more harmful to men than women."^[1] This is equally true regarding

^[1] Related by Bukhaaree, in the Book of Marriage; *Hadeeth* number: 5096; and related by Muslim, in the Book of *Ar-Riqaaq*; *Hadeeth* number: 2740, 2741.

both the test of a wife who weakens the determination of her husband to preach the message of Islam, and the test of wicked, fallen women who try to ensnare men into their traps by enticing them to fornicate with them. Consider how the Quraish offered the Messenger of Allah ﷺ the choice of marrying any ten women from the Quraish he ﷺ wanted; he could have chosen the best and most beautiful among them to be his wives. But of course the Prophet ﷺ refused. Callers to Islam must follow his example, and they must always keep in mind the following saying of Yousuf ﷺ:

﴿قَالَ رَبِّ السِّجْنُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا يَدْعُونَنِي إِلَيْهِ وَإِلَّا تَصْرِفْ عَنِّي كَيْدَهُنَّ أَصْبُ إِلَيْهِنَّ وَأَكُن مِّنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾ فَاسْتَجَابَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ فَصَرَفَ عَنْهُ كَيْدَهُنَّ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٣٤﴾﴾

“He said : “O my Lord! Prison is more to my liking than that to which they invite me . Unless You turn away their plot from me, I will feel inclined towards them and be one (of those who commit sin and deserve blame or those who do deeds) of the ignorants.” So his Lord answered his invocation and turned away from him their plot. Verily, He is the All-Hearer, the All-Knower.” (Qur’an 12: 33, 34)

- 4) Despite his arrogance, ‘Utbah acknowledged the beauty of the Qur’an and the greatness of the Prophet’s message. While the other polytheists wanted to bring an end to the Prophet’s Da’wah, ‘Utbah wanted to do the opposite, not because he believed, but because he saw a worldly benefit in leaving the Prophet ﷺ alone.
- 5) The Companions ﷺ were listening to the conversation that took place between the Prophet ﷺ and ‘Utbah. They witnessed firsthand how the Prophet ﷺ refused all of the enticing things that were being offered to him. And of course they learned the most valuable of lessons: That no matter what the temptation, one must remain firm upon one’s principles and beliefs.
- 6) The Companions ﷺ also learned a lesson about patience and

forbearance. The Prophet ﷺ remained both quiet and patient while 'Utbah continued to hurl invective upon him. Instead of responding in like manner to the personal attacks that 'Utbah leveled against him, the Prophet ﷺ remained calm and did his duty by inviting 'Utbah to Islam, showing us that in every action and saying of his, there is an ideal example for us to follow.

Some *Seerah* books mention that, after the above-mentioned incident occurred, the leaders of the Quraish made subsequent attempts to negotiate terms with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Throughout such efforts, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ remained steadfast and firm, establishing an important precedent for all Muslims from future generations: In no way whatsoever may one make a compromise in one's beliefs. On one occasion, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ responded to Quraish's offers by saying, "I want nothing from what you say. I have not come to you with that which I bring to you in order to seek out your wealth, status among you, or kingship over you. To the contrary, Allah ﷻ has sent me to you as a Messenger. He ﷻ has sent down a Book to me and has ordered me to be a bearer of glad tidings and a warner to you. I have indeed conveyed to you the message of my Lord, and I have advised you sincerely. If you accept from me what I have brought you (i.e., the message of Islam), then that (action of yours) will give you your share in this world and the Hereafter. If you reject it from me, then I will be patient for Allah's command, until Allah judges between me and you."

When the leaders of the Quraish had sufficiently witnessed the patience and steadfastness of the Muslims, they began to lose hope, fearing that their tribe had become irreversibly divided. But they were still deluded enough into thinking that their flexibility regarding their beliefs would rub off on their enemies. And so they sent a delegation to the Prophet ﷺ, which consisted of Al-Aswad ibn 'Abdul-Muttalib, Al-Waleed ibn Al-Mugheerah, Umayyah ibn Khalaf, and Al-'Aas ibn Waail. They said, "O Muhammad, come and let us worship that which you worship, and let you worship that which we worship. Let us become

partners in this affair. If that which you worship is better than that which we worship, then we will have taken our share from Him (i.e., we will have achieved our share of worshipping Him). And if that which we worship is better than that which you worship, then you will have taken your share of him (i.e., them: their false deities)." Allah ﷻ then revealed these Verses:

﴿قُلْ يَتَّيِبُهَا الْكَافِرُونَ ۝١ لَا أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ ۝٢ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عَابِدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ ۝٣ وَلَا أَنَا عَابِدٌ مَا عَبَدْتُمْ ۝٤ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عَابِدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ ۝٥ لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ ۝٦﴾

"Say: (O Muhammad ﷺ) to these Mushrikoon and Kaafiroon): a "O Al-Kaafiroon (disbelievers in Allah, in His Oneness, in His angels, in His Books, in His Messengers, in the Day of Resurrection, and in Al-Qadar, etc.)! I worship not that which you worship, nor will you worship that which I worship. And I shall not worship that which you are worshipping. Nor will you worship that which I worship. To you be your religion, and to me my religion (Islamic Monotheism)." (Qur'an 109: 1-6)

There are other Verses of the Qur'an that are similar to this chapter in meaning. For example, Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَإِنْ كَذَّبُوكَ فَقُلْ لِي عَمَلِي وَلَكُمْ عَمَلُكُمْ أَنْتُمْ بَرِيئُونَ مِمَّا أَعْمَلُ وَأَنَا بِرِيءٌ مِمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ۝٤١﴾

"And if they deny you, say: "For me are my deeds and for you are your deeds! You are innocent of what I do, and I am innocent of what you do!" (Qur'an 10: 41)

And Allah ﷻ said:

﴿قُلْ إِنِّي نُهَيْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ قُلْ لَا أَلْبِغُ أَهْوَاءَكُمْ قَدْ ضَلَلْتُ إِذَا وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُهْتَدِينَ ۝٥٦ قُلْ إِنِّي عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّي وَكَذَّبْتُمْ بِهِ مَا عِنْدِي مَا تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ بِهِ إِنْ الْحُكْمُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ يَقْضُ الْحَقَّ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْفَاصِلِينَ ۝٥٧﴾

“Say (O Muhammad ﷺ): “I have been forbidden to worship those whom you invoke (worship) besides Allah.” Say: “I will not follow your vain desires. If I did, I would go astray, and I would not be one of the rightly guided.” Say (O Muhammad ﷺ): “I am on clear proof from my Lord (Islamic Monotheism), but you deny (the truth that has come to me from Allah). I have not gotten what you are asking for impatiently (the torment). The decision is only for Allah, He declares the truth, and He is the Best of judges.” (Qur’an 6: 56, 57)

Soorah Al-Kaafiroon stressed, emphasized, and then repeatedly reemphasized the point that the path of the truth is one; it is straight and has no crookedness in it; it is the path of worshipping Allah ﷻ alone, without associating any partner whatsoever with Him. Allah ﷻ made it clear to the polytheists that there is no middle ground or meeting point between the truth and falsehood, between light and darkness; the difference is fundamental and complete. The reality of Islam is not as the hypocrites of today say: “Religion is for Allah, and our homeland is for everyone.” In all times and places, ignorance is ignorance, and Islam is Islam; to go from ignorance to Islam one has to dispense with ignorance completely, both in worship and in the laws by which one lives. Otherwise, “To you be your religion, and to me my religion (Islamic Monotheism).”

After the previous group of delegates failed in their attempt to negotiate terms with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, the Quraish sent another delegation, which consisted of ‘Abdullah ibn Abee Umayyah, Al-Waleed ibn Al-Mugheerah, Mukraz ibn Hafs, ‘Amr ibn ‘Abdullah Abee Qais, and Al-‘Aas ibn Waail. The delegates were for the most part different, and so was the offer they were coming with. They didn’t ask the Prophet ﷺ to stop teaching the Qur’an; they only asked that he ﷺ remove from the Qur’an those Verses that made them angry – particularly those Verses that disparaged their gods. Allah ﷻ sent down a clear and decisive answer to their request:

﴿وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ قَالِ الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا أَنْتِ بِقُرْآنٍ غَيْرِ هَذَا أَوْ بَدِّلْهُ قُلْ مَا يَكُونُ لِي أَنْ أُبَدِّلَهُ مِنْ تَلْقَائِي نَفْسِي ۚ إِنِ اتَّبَعْتُ إِلَّا مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ ۚ إِنِّي أَخَافُ إِنْ عَصَيْتُ رَبِّي عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١٥﴾﴾

“And when Our Clear Verses are recited unto them, those who hope not for their meeting with Us, say: Bring us a Qur’an other than this, or change it. Say (O Muhammad ﷺ): “It is not for me to change it on my own accord; I only follow that which is revealed unto me. Verily, I fear if I were to disobey my Lord, the torment of the Great Day (i.e., the Day of Resurrection).” (Qur’an 10: 15)

By sending such delegations, the Quraish were indicating just how desperate they were, and how much willing they were to make compromises regarding their own religion. It is interesting to note how they went from bigger demands to lesser demands with each subsequent visit. In the first visit, they asked the Prophet ﷺ to altogether forsake his religion. But in the second visit, they asked for a smaller compromise. Also, with the exception of Al-Waleed ibn Al-Mugheerah, the second group of delegates consisted of altogether different people. They were hoping that, by using a variety of minds and styles of argument, they would have a better chance of convincing the Prophet ﷺ to accept their terms.

In this story there is an important lesson for scholars and preachers from all generations: One must not compromise the teachings of Islam, not even regarding a seemingly small matter. Scholars and preachers today need to be especially careful in responding to the offers that are made to them, since the enemies of Islam are getting smarter and are resorting to more indirect means to entice well-known Islamic personalities away from the important mission of inviting people to Islam. Richard B. Mitchell, a Western man of influence in the Middle East, put together a

report in which he made suggestions of how to weaken Islamic movements in an indirect manner. One suggestion he made was to entice scholars and preachers to take seemingly important, high-paying jobs in order to keep them away from the masses, and in order to keep them occupied with Islamic projects that have no substantial impact on real life events and that will take up all of their energies. Another suggestion he made was to offer lucrative partnerships to Muslim businessmen in Muslim countries; the businesses that they would be entering would bring them substantial profits, but would involve those kinds of projects that work to promote the goals of the enemies of Islam. Both of his suggestions involved indirect compromises made by Muslims. And when one studies the situation of the Islamic world, one finds that the said suggestions and other similarly insidious plans are quietly being executed without anyone being the wiser about the situation. Indeed, we belong to Allah, and to Him is our return!

Debating The Polytheists

The Prophet ﷺ came with clear proofs to establish the truthfulness of his message; furthermore, he ﷺ would choose the most opportune moments to present those proofs and convey his message. When he ﷺ did find opportunities to present Islam to the people of the Quraish, he ﷺ used various approaches to convince them of the truth, approaches that are mentioned or implied in the Noble Qur'an. Among the approaches he ﷺ used are the following:

1) Comparison

The Prophet ﷺ would present two matters, one that was desirable and good, and the other that was reprehensible and evil. He ﷺ wanted to stimulate the other person into thinking about both matters and their respective consequences, so that that person would then prefer what is good – i.e., Islam – and follow it. Allah ﷻ said:

أَوْ مَنْ كَانَ مَيِّتًا فَأَحْيَيْنَاهُ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُ نُورًا يَمْشِي بِهِ فِي النَّاسِ كَمَنْ
مَثَلُهُ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ لَيْسَ بِمُخَارِجٍ مِنْهَا كَذَلِكَ زُيِّنَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ مَا كَانُوا
يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢٢﴾

“Is he who was dead (without faith by ignorance and disbelief) and We gave him life (by knowledge and faith) and set for him a light (of belief) whereby he can walk amongst men, like him who is in the darkness (of disbelief, polytheism and hypocrisy) from which he can never come out? Thus it is made fair-seeming to the disbelievers that which they used to do.” (Qur’an 6: 122)

Ibn Katheer said in his *Tafseer*, “This is an example that Allah has set forth for the believer who previously had been dead, or in other words, had been misguided, destroyed (through his misguidance), and confused. Allah ﷻ then gave him life, which means that Allah ﷻ gave life to his heart through *Eemaan* (faith) and guided him to follow His Messengers.”

2) Forcing an Admission

In this approach, one is forced into thinking about possible truths and then, after a process of rejecting from them what is false, admitting the actual truth. This approach is used in the following Verses:

﴿أَمْ خُلِقُوا مِنْ غَيْرِ شَيْءٍ أَمْ هُمْ الْخَالِقُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾ أَمْ خَلَقُوا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بَلْ
لَا يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾ أَمْ عِنْدَهُمْ خَزَائِنُ رَيْكِ أَمْ هُمْ الْمُصْطَفُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾ أَمْ لَهُمْ سُلَّمٌ يَسْتَمِعُونَ
فِيهِ فَلْيَأْتِ مُسْتَمِعُهُمْ بِسُلْطَانٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٣٨﴾ أَمْ لَهُ الْبَنَاتُ وَلَكُمْ الْبَنُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾ أَمْ تَسْأَلُهُمْ أَجْرًا
فَهُمْ مِنْ مَعْرَمٍ مُمْتَلُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾ أَمْ عِنْدَهُمُ الْغَيْبُ فَهُمْ يَكْتُمُونَ ﴿٤١﴾ أَمْ يُرِيدُونَ كَيْدًا فَالَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا هُمْ الْمَكِيدُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾ أَمْ لَهُمْ إِلَهٌ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَإِنْ يَرَوْا
كَسْفًا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ سَاقِطًا يَقُولُوا سَحَابٌ مَرْكُومٌ ﴿٤٤﴾ فَذَرَهُمْ حَتَّى يَلْقُوا يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِي فِيهِ
يُصْعَقُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾﴾

“Were they created by nothing, or were they themselves the creators? Or did they create the heavens and the earth? Nay, but they have no firm belief. Or are with them the treasures of your Lord? Or are they the tyrants with the authority to do as they like? Or have they a stairway (to heaven), by means of which they listen (to the talks of the angels)? Then let their listener produce some manifest proof. Or has He (Allah) only daughters and you have sons? Or is it that you (O Muhammad ﷺ) ask a wage from them (for your preaching of Islamic Monotheism) so that they are burdened with a load of debt? Or that the Ghaib (unseen) is with them, and they write it down? Or do they intend a plot (against you, O Muhammad ﷺ)? But those who disbelieve (in the Oneness of Allah – Islamic Monotheism) are themselves in a plot! Or have they an ilah (a god) other than Allah? Glorified be Allah from all that they ascribe as partners (to Him). And if they were to see a piece of the heaven falling down, they would say: “Clouds gathered in heaps!” So leave them alone till they meet their Day, in which they will sink into a fainting (with horror).” (Qur’an 52: 35-45)

Ibn Katheer said in his *Tafseer*, “Allah ﷻ said:

﴿أَمْ خُلِقُوا مِنْ غَيْرِ شَيْءٍ أَمْ هُمُ الْخَالِقُونَ﴾ (٣٥)

“Were they created by nothing, or were they themselves the creators?” (Qur’an 52: 35)

This Verse involves two questions: 1) Did they come into existence without a creator? 2) Or did they create themselves? The answer to both questions is of course, no; rather, it was Allah ﷻ Who created them and brought them into being after they had been non-existent.”

The first of the above-mentioned Verses consists of a very powerful logical argument, since the inherent logic that man is endowed with rejects the idea that he was created without a creator; or in other words, every person intrinsically knows that a creator brought him into being. As for the second question mentioned above, no person of sound mind claims that he has

created himself. The only possible logical conclusion that remains is the truth: Allah ﷻ is the Creator of all that exists, and He has no partner.

As-Sa'dee said in his *Tafseer*, "This proof that is used against them (i.e., the polytheists) leaves them with no choice other than to submit to the truth, or to cast off the logical conclusions of the mind... Polytheists reject the Oneness of Allah and disbelieve in His Messenger ﷺ. What this implies is that they deny the fact that Allah ﷻ created them. It is an established fact in the mind and in the religion that there are only three possible realities: 1) Either they were created out of nothing, which means that there is no creator who created them, and this is impossibility itself; 2) Or they created themselves, and this too is impossible, for one cannot even imagine that one has created one's own self; and if these two are false and are established as being impossible, then the third possible reality is necessarily true: 3) That Allah ﷻ is the One Who created them. That being the sole possible truth, one consequently knows, therefore, that Allah ﷻ alone deserves to be worshipped and that worship is only sound and correct when it is performed for Allah ﷻ alone."

3) Ignoring secondary arguments

Sometimes, when one is arguing with an arrogant, stubborn person, one does well by not responding to some of his arguments. Rather than enter into an endless debate, one should concentrate on what is of primary importance and on refuting main points rather than secondary ones. One particular discussion between Moosa ﷺ and Fir'aun exemplifies this approach. Moosa ﷺ did not respond to most of what Fir'aun had said to him, but instead concentrated on refuting Fir'aun's claim of godhood. An account of this debate is related in Verses from *Soorah Ash-Shu'araa*, in which Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ وَمَا رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾ قَالَ رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِنَّ كُنْتُمْ مُوقِنِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾ قَالَ لِمَنْ حَوْلَهُ أَلَا تَسْمَعُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾ قَالَ رَبُّكُمْ وَرَبُّ آبَائِكُمُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴾

﴿٢٦﴾ قَالَ إِنَّ رَسُولَكُمْ الَّذِي أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ لَمَجْنُونٌ ﴿٢٧﴾ قَالَ رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِن كُنْتُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾ قَالَ لَئِن أَخَذَتِ إِلَهًا غَيْرِي لَأَجْعَلَنَّكَ مِنَ الْمَسْجُونِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

“Fir’aun (Pharaoh) said: “And what is the Lord of the ‘Alamin (mankind, jinns, and all that exists)?” Moosa (Moses) said: “Lord of the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them, if you seek to be convinced with certainty.” Fir’aun (Pharaoh) said to those around: “Do you not hear (what he says)?” Moosa (Moses) said: “Your Lord and the Lord of your ancient fathers!” Fir’aun (Pharaoh) said: “Verily, your Messenger who has been sent to you is a madman!” Moosa (Moses) said: “Lord of the east and the west, and all that is between them, if you did but understand!” Fir’aun (Pharaoh) said: “If you choose an ilah (god) other than me, I will certainly put you among the prisoners.” (Qur’an 26: 23-29)

It was based on the principles of these and other Verses of the Qur’an that the Prophet ﷺ debated the polytheists of the Quraish. When the Prophet ﷺ established clear proofs to the Quraish, they became confused, not knowing how to respond. Overcome by clear and logical arguments, they disbelieved, not because they inwardly disbelieved in the Prophet ﷺ, but because they were stubborn and intransigent. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿قَدْ نَعْلَمُ إِنَّهُ لَيَحْزَنُكَ الَّذِي يَقُولُونَ فَإِنَّهُمْ لَا يَكْذِبُونَكَ وَلَكِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ بَعَايَتِ اللَّهَ يُجْحَدُونَ﴾ ﴿٣٣﴾

“We know indeed the grief which their words cause you (O Muhammad ﷺ): it is not you that they deny, but it is the Verses (the Qur’an) of Allah that the Zaalimoon (polytheists and wrongdoers) deny.” (Qur’an 6: 33)

Due to their perverse way of thinking, they made unreasonable requests to the Prophet ﷺ. By making such requests, which involved the performance of great miracles, they were not trying

to ascertain the truthfulness of the Prophet ﷺ, for they already inwardly knew that he ﷺ was indeed truthful. They were simply making requests which they felt the Prophet ﷺ would not fulfill, for that would give them the opportunity to give forth a reason to disbelieve in him. These were some of the requests they made:

- ◆ They asked the Prophet ﷺ to “cause a spring to gush forth from the earth for us.” Given that they lived in a dry desert and depended on water deep below the ground, they asked the Prophet ﷺ to cause springs to flow above ground level.
- ◆ They requested that the Prophet ﷺ have “a garden of date-palms and grapes” and that rivers gush forth in the midst of that garden.
- ◆ One of the miracles they asked for involved their own destruction. They asked the Prophet ﷺ to “cause the heaven to fall upon us in pieces,” which will in fact occur on the Day of Resurrection.
- ◆ They asked the Prophet ﷺ to “bring Allah and the angels before (us) face to face.”
- ◆ They requested from the Prophet ﷺ that he have a house made of adornable materials – which refers to gold.
- ◆ They asked him to ascend up into the sky.
- ◆ They asked him to bring down a Book for them to read. Explaining this request, Mujaahid said, “This means that they were asking for a book to be sent down to each one of them. Each book would say, ‘This is a Book from Allah to so-and-so, son of so-and-so.’ And they wanted it to be placed beside the head of each one of them.”^[1]
- ◆ They asked the Prophet ﷺ to make mountains move and to make the earth be cloven asunder. And they asked him to raise their fathers from the dead.

^[1] Refer to *Al-Mu’awwiqoon Lid-Da’wah Al-Islaamiyyah* by Dr. Sameerah Muhammad, pgs. 171, 172.

Throughout history, people have asked Prophets ﷺ to perform miracles. And although he ardently wanted his people to embrace Islam, the Prophet ﷺ refused to fulfill such requests from his people. He ﷺ did so because he knew that – like what happened to previous peoples – if the Quraish were to still disbelieve after miracles were shown to them, then they would be punished with a severe torment. And the Messenger of Allah ﷺ knew that the Quraish were asking for miracles, not out of a desire to be convinced of the truth, but out of a perverse desire to give an excuse not to believe. In response to their requests, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “It is not with this (the miracles of which you ask) that I have been sent to you. I came to you from Allah, bringing with me only that which Allah sent me with. And I have indeed conveyed to you that which I have been sent with. If you accept what I have been sent with, then that is your share in this world and the Hereafter (i.e., you will get your share of good reward in both worlds). And if you reject it from me, I will be patient for the command of Allah ﷻ, until Allah judges between me and you.”^[1]

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ then returned to his family, feeling sad on account of the attitude of Quraish’s leaders. Allah ﷻ related these events in the following Verses:

﴿وَقَالُوا لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتَّى تَفْجُرَ لَنَا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ يَنْبُوعًا ۙ ﴿٩٠﴾ أَوْ تَكُونَ لَكَ جَنَّةٌ مِّنْ نَّخِيلٍ وَعِنَبٍ فَتُفَجِّرَ الْأَنْهَارَ خِلالَهَا تَفْجِيرًا ۙ ﴿٩١﴾ أَوْ تُسْقِطَ السَّمَاءَ كَمَا زَعَمَتْ عَلَيْنَا كِسْفًا أَوْ تَأْتِيَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ قِيْلًا ۙ ﴿٩٢﴾ أَوْ يَكُونَ لَكَ بَيْتٌ مِّنْ زُخْرٍ أَوْ تَرْقَىٰ فِي السَّمَاءِ وَلَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لِرُفَيْكَ حَتَّى تُنَزِّلَ عَلَيْنَا كِتَابًا نَّقْرُؤُهُ ۗ قُلْ سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ هَلْ كُنْتُ إِلَّا بَشَرًا رَسُولًا ۙ ﴿٩٣﴾ وَمَا مَنَعَ النَّاسَ أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا إِذْ جَاءَهُمُ الْهُدَىٰ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا أَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ بَشَرًا رَسُولًا ۙ ﴿٩٤﴾ قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَلَائِكَةٌ يَّمشُونَ مُتَمَمِّينَ لَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْهِم مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ مَلَكًا رَسُولًا ۙ ﴿٩٥﴾ قُلْ كَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ شَهِدًا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ إِنَّكُمْ كَانْتُمْ بَعَادِهِ خَيْرًا بَصِيرًا ۙ ﴿٩٦﴾﴾

^[1] Refer to *As-Seerah An-Nabawiyah* by Ibn Hishaam (1/495).

“And they say : “We shall not believe in you (O Muhammad ﷺ), until you cause a spring to gush forth from the earth for us. ‘Or you have a garden of date-palms and grapes, and cause rivers to gush forth in their midst abundantly. “Or you cause the heaven to fall upon us in pieces, as you have pretended, or you bring Allah and the angels before (us) face to face. “Or you have a house of adornable materials (like silver and pure gold, etc.), or you ascend up into the sky, and even then we will put no faith in your ascension until you bring down for us a Book that we would read.” Say (O Muhammad ﷺ): “Glorified (and Exalted) be my Lord (Allah) above all that evil they (polytheists) associate with Him! Am I anything but a man, sent as a Messenger?” And nothing prevented men from believing when the guidance came to them, except that they said: “Has Allah sent a man as (His) Messenger?” Say: “If there were on the earth, angels walking about in peace and security, We should certainly have sent down for them from the heaven an angel as a Messenger.” Say: “Sufficient is Allah for a witness between me and you. Verily! He is the All-Knower, the All-Seer of His slaves.” (Qur’an 17: 90-96)

And these Verses were also revealed:

﴿وَلَوْ أَنَّ قُرْآنًا سُيِّرَتْ بِهِ الْجِبَالُ أَوْ قُطِعَتْ بِهِ الْأَرْضُ أَوْ كَلِمٌ بِهِ الْمَوْتُ ۚ بَل لِّلّٰهِ الْأَمْرُ جَمِيعًا ۗ أَفَلَمْ يَأْتِئِسَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَن لَّو يَشَاءُ اللّٰهُ لَهَدَى النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَلَا يَزَالُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا تُصِيبُهُم بِمَا صَنَعُوا قَارِعَةٌ أَوْ تَحُلُّ قَرِيبًا مِّن دَارِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَ وَعْدُ اللّٰهِ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُخْلِفُ الْمِيعَادَ ﴿٣١﴾﴾

“And if there had been a Qur’an with which mountains could be moved (from their places), or the earth could be cloven asunder, or the dead could be made to speak (it would not have been other than this Qur’an). But the decision of all things is certainly with Allah. Have not then those who believe yet known that had Allah willed, He could have guided all mankind? And a disaster will not cease to strike those who disbelieve because of their (evil) deeds or it (i.e., the disaster) settle close to their homes, until the

Promise of Allah comes to pass. Certainly, Allah does not fail in His Promise." (Qur'an 13: 31)

Again, the reason why they were not granted the miracles they asked for is that they didn't ask sincerely, out of a desire to ascertain the truth; rather, they asked arrogantly and mockingly, hoping to put down Islam and the Prophet ﷺ. Allah ﷻ of course knew that even if they witnessed firsthand the miracles they asked for, they still wouldn't believe. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَأَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ لَئِن جَاءَتْهُمْ آيَةٌ لَّيُؤْمِنَنَّ بِهَا قُلُوبُكُمْ إِنَّمَا أَلَايَتُ
عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَمَا يُشْعِرُكُمْ أَنَّهَا إِذَا جَاءَتْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٠٩﴾ وَنُقَلِّبُ أَفْئِدَتَهُمْ
وَأَبْصَارَهُمْ كَمَا لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِهِ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَنَنْزِلُ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ﴿١١٠﴾ ﴿١١٠﴾ وَلَوْ
أَنَّا نَزَّلْنَا إِلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ وَكَلَّمَهُمُ الْمَوْتَى وَحَشَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ قُبُلًا مَا كَانُوا لَيُؤْمِنُوا
إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ يَجْهَلُونَ ﴿١١١﴾﴾

"And they swear their strongest oaths by Allah, that if there came to them a sign, they would surely believe therein. Say: "Signs are but with Allah and what will make you (Muslims) perceive that (even) if it (the sign) came, they will not believe?" And We shall turn their hearts and their eyes away (from guidance), as they refused to believe therein for the first time, and We shall leave them in their trespass to wander blindly. And even if We had sent down unto them angels, and the dead had spoken unto them, and We had gathered together all things before their very eyes, they would not have believed, unless Allah willed, but most of them behave ignorantly." (Qur'an 6: 109-111)

By not granting them their requests, Allah ﷻ was showing mercy to the Quraish, for one of His *Sunan* (ways, laws) regarding the creation is that if a people ask for a miracle, are granted it, but then still disbelieve, Allah ﷻ punishes them with complete destruction, which is what He ﷻ did with 'Ad, Thamood, and the people of Fir'aun. Nothing proves more conclusively the lack of sincerity and seriousness on the part of the Quraish than the fact

that they had with them the Qur'an, the clearest of miracles. Therefore, when they asked for miracles, Allah ﷻ answered them with the following Verses:

﴿وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِ قُلْ إِنَّمَا الْآيَاتُ عِندَ اللَّهِ وَإِنَّمَا أَنَا نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٥٠﴾ أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِهِمْ أَنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ يُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّكَ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَرَحْمَةٌ وَذِكْرٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٥١﴾ قُلْ كَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ شَهِيدًا يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِالْبَاطِلِ وَكَفَرُوا بِاللَّهِ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْخٰسِرُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾﴾

“And they say: “Why are not signs sent down to him from his Lord?” Say: “The signs are only with Allah, and I am only a plain warner.” Is it not sufficient for them that We have sent down to you the Book (the Qur'an) which is recited to them? Verily, herein is mercy and a reminder (or an admonition) for a people who believe. Say (to them O Muhammad ﷺ): “Sufficient is Allah for a witness between me and you. He knows what is in the heavens and on earth.” And those who believe in Batil (all false deities other than Allah), and disbelieve in Allah and (in His Oneness), it is they who are the losers.” (Qur'an 29: 50-52)

According to a narration that is related by 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbaas ؓ, the leaders of the Quraish once said to the Prophet ﷺ, “On our behalf, invoke your Lord to turn As-Safaa (a mountain in Makkah) into gold for us, and we will then believe in you.” The Prophet ﷺ asked, “Will you indeed do so?” They said, “Yes,” and so the Prophet ﷺ invoked Allah ﷻ to fulfill their request. Jibreel ؑ then came to the Prophet ﷺ and said, “Verily, your Lord – 'Azza wa Jall (the Possessor of might and majesty) – sends As-Salaam (peace) upon you and says, ‘If you want, As-Safaa will turn into gold for them. After that, whosoever among them disbelieves, I will punish with a punishment that is so severe that I will not punish with it anyone else from all that exists. And (i.e., or) if you wish, I will open for them the doors of repentance and mercy.’” The Prophet ﷺ said, “Rather, (I choose) the door (s) of

repentance and mercy." Allah ﷻ then revealed this Verse:

﴿وَمَا مَنَعَنَا أَنْ نُرْسِلَ بِالْآيَاتِ إِلَّا أَنْ كَذَّبَ بِهَا الْأَوَّلُونَ وَعَٰثِنَا ثُمُودَ
الْنَّاقَةَ مُبْصِرَةً فَظَلَمُوا بِهَا وَمَا نُرْسِلُ بِالْآيَاتِ إِلَّا تَخْوِيفًا ﴿٥٩﴾﴾

"And nothing stops Us from sending the Ayaat (proofs, evidences, signs) but that the people of old denied them. And We sent the she-camel to Thamood as a clear sign, but they did her wrong. And We sent not the signs except to warn, and to make them afraid (of destruction)." (Qur'an 17: 59)

In asking for miracles, the leaders of the Quraish were actually plotting against Islam. Hoping that the Prophet ﷺ would not give them the miracles they requested, they wanted to inform other tribes about his refusal, and thus deter them from embracing Islam. And they made it clear that, even if their requests were granted, they still wouldn't believe. All they wanted was to make the Prophet ﷺ look weak in order to discredit him and prevent others from following him.

The Role The Jews Played During The Makkan Era Of The Prophet's Biography

The Qur'an discusses the Jews, or the Children of Israel, in more detail than it does the people of any other nation. And though the Jews played an important role only during the Madanee era of the Prophet's biography, about 50 Makkan Verses of the Qur'an make some mention of their history. Each particular Verse about the Jews was suitable to the specific phase of *Da'wah* that the Prophet ﷺ had reached at the time. In Makkan Verses of the Qur'an, Allah ﷻ reminds Muslims that the disbelief of the Quraish was not something new; rather, the people of previous nations – such as 'Ad, Thamood, Fir'aun, the Children of Israel, the people of Tubba', and the people of Ar-Rass – also disbelieved and harmed the Prophets ﷺ that were sent to them. Consider, for instance, the following Verses from *Soorah Al-Muzammil*, which was, in terms of chronological order, the third Chapter of the Qur'an to be

revealed to the Prophet ﷺ:

﴿ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ رَسُولًا شَاهِدًا عَلَيْكُمْ كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ رَسُولًا ﴿١٥﴾ فَعَصَىٰ فِرْعَوْنُ الرَّسُولَ فَأَخَذْنَاهُ أَخْذًا وَبِيًّا ﴿١٦﴾ فَكَيْفَ تَنْقُوتَ إِنْ كَفَرْتُمْ يَوْمًا يَجْعَلُ الْوِلْدَانَ شِيبًا ﴿١٧﴾ السَّمَاءُ مُنْفَطِرٌ بِهِ ۗ كَانَ وَعْدُهُ مَفْعُولًا ﴿١٨﴾ إِنَّ هَذِهِ تَذْكِرَةٌ ۖ فَمَنْ شَاءَ اتَّخَذَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ سَبِيلًا ﴿١٩﴾ ﴾

“Verily, We have sent to you (O men) a Messenger (Muhammad ﷺ) to be a witness over you, as We did send a Messenger [Moosa (Moses)] to Fir’aun (Pharaoh). But Fir’aun (Pharaoh) disobeyed the Messenger (Moses), so We seized him with a severe punishment. Then how can you avoid the punishment, if you disbelieve, on a day that will make the children grey-headed (i.e., the Day of Resurrection)? Whereon the heaven will be cleft asunder? His Promise is certainly to be accomplished. Verily, this is an admonition, therefore, whosoever will, let him take a Path to His Lord!” (Qur’an 73: 15-19)

Another example is Soorah Al-‘A’laa, which, again in terms of chronological order, was the eighth chapter of the Qur’an to be revealed to the Prophet ﷺ. After mentioning some of His Glorious and Majestic qualities, after reminding His slaves of the many blessings that He ﷻ has bestowed upon them, after pointing out the way to success in this life, and after making it clear that the Hereafter is better and more everlasting, Allah ﷻ ended the Chapter with His Saying:

﴿ إِنَّ هَذَا لَفِي الصُّحُفِ الْأُولَىٰ ﴿٨﴾ صُحُفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَىٰ ﴿٩﴾ ﴾

“Verily! This is in the former Scriptures, the Scriptures of Ibraaheem (Abraham) and Moosa (Moses) ﷺ.” (Qur’an 87: 18, 19)

And in Soorah Al-Fajr, Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِعَادٍ ﴿٦﴾ إِرْمَ ذَاتِ الْعِمَادِ ﴿٧﴾ الَّتِي لَمْ يُخْلَقْ مِثْلُهَا فِي الْبِلَادِ ﴿٨﴾ وَتَمُودَ الَّذِينَ جَابُوا الصَّخْرَ بِالْوَادِ ﴿٩﴾ وَفِرْعَوْنَ ذِي الْأَوْدَادِ ﴿١٠﴾ الَّذِينَ طَغَوْا

فِي الْبَلَدِ ۝ فَكَثَرُوا فِيهَا الْفَسَادَ ۝ فَصَبَّ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّكَ سَوْطَ عَذَابٍ ۝ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لِبِالْمِرْصَادِ ۝ ﴿١٤﴾

“Did you (O Muhammad ﷺ) not see (thought) how your Lord dealt with ‘Ad (people)? Who were very tall like lofty pillars, the like of which were not created in the land? And (with) Thamood (people), who cut (hewed) out rocks in the valley (to make dwellings)? And (with) Fir’aun (Pharaoh), who had pegs (who used to torture men by binding them to pegs)? Who did transgress beyond bounds in the lands (in the disobedience of Allah). And made therein much mischief. So your Lord poured on them different kinds of severe torment. Verily, your Lord is Ever Watchful (over them).” (Qur’an 89: 6-14)

As an instance of human beings who are persecuted and tested in life, the Children of Israel are discussed in Soorah An-Najm. Some among them failed by deviating from the truth, and yet others among them succeeded by remaining steadfast upon the truth. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿فَاعْرِضْ عَنْ مَن تَوَلَّىٰ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَلَمْ يُرِدْ إِلَّا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا ۝۲۹﴾ ذَلِكَ مَبْلَغُهُم مِّنَ الْعِلْمِ ۚ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَن ضَلَّٰ عَن سَبِيلِهِ ۚ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَن اهْتَدَىٰ ۝۳۰﴾ وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْتَوُوا بِمَا عَمِلُوا وَيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا بِالْحُسْنٰى ۝۳۱﴾ الَّذِينَ يَجْتَنِبُونَ كَثِيرَ الْإِثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشِ إِلَّا اللَّمَمَ ۚ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ وَاسِعُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ ۚ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِكُم بِذُنُوبِكُمْ ۚ إِذْ أُنشَأَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَإِذْ أَنْتُمْ أَجِنَّةٌ فِي بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ ۚ فَلَا تُزَكُّوْا أَنْفُسَكُمْ ۚ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَن اتَّقَىٰ ۝۳۲﴾ أَفَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي تَوَلَّىٰ ۝۳۳﴾ وَأَعْطَىٰ قَلِيلًا وَأَكْدَىٰ ۝۳۴﴾ أَعِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ الْغَيْبِ فَهُوَ يَرَىٰ ۝۳۵﴾ أَمْ لَمْ يُبْنَأْ بِمَا فِي صُحُفِ مُوسَىٰ ۝۳۶﴾ وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ الَّذِي وَفَّىٰ ۝۳۷﴾ أَلَا نُزِدُ وَزْرًا وَزَرَ أُخْرَىٰ ۝۳۸﴾ وَأَنْ لَّنِيسَ لِلْإِنسٰنِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَىٰ ۝۳۹﴾ وَأَنَّ سَعْيَهُ سَوْفَ يُرَىٰ ۝۴۰﴾ ثُمَّ يُجْزَاهُ الْجَزَاءَ الْأَوْفَىٰ ۝۴۱﴾ وَأَنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ الْمُنْتَهَىٰ ۝۴۲﴾ ﴿

“Therefore withdraw (O Muhammad ﷺ) from him who turns away from Our Reminder (this Qur’an) and desires nothing but

the life of this world. That is what they could reach of knowledge. Verily, your Lord it is He Who knows best him who goes astray from His Path, and he knows best him who receives guidance. And to Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth, that He may requite those who do evil with that which they have done (i.e., punish them in Hell), and reward those who do good, with what is best (i.e., Paradise). Those who avoid great sins and Al-Fawahish (illegal sexual intercourse, etc.) except the small faults, – Verily, your Lord is of Vast Forgiveness. He knows you well when He created you from the earth (Adam), and when you were fetuses in your mothers' wombs. So ascribe not purity to yourselves. He knows best him who fears Allah and keep his duty to Him [i.e., those who are Al-Muttaqoon (pious)]. Did you (O Muhammad ﷺ) observe him who turned away (from Islam). And gave a little, then stopped (giving)? Is with him the knowledge of the unseen so that he sees? Or is he not informed with what is in the Pages (Scripture) of Moosa (Moses), and of Ibraaheem (Abraham) who fulfilled (or conveyed) all that (what Allah ordered him to do or convey), that no burdened person (with sins) shall bear the burden (sins) of another, and that man can have nothing but what he does (good or bad), and that his deeds will be seen. Then he will be recompensed with a full and the best recompense. And that to your Lord (Allah) is the End (Return of everything).'' (Qur'an 53: 29-42)

The principles outlined at the end of these Verses were previously established in the Scriptures of Moosa ﷺ and Ibraaheem ﷺ. Moosa ﷺ was sent to the Children of Israel, so, in these Verses, it was being suggested to the Jews that they should return to their scriptures if they are in doubt about the Prophet ﷺ, for the truth in those Scriptures – before they were distorted at the hands of the Children of Israel – and the Qur'an is one. And the mention of the scrolls of Ibraaheem ﷺ is significant because the Quraish knew that they were descended from Ibraaheem ﷺ, and they claimed to honour him by upholding the rites they inherited from him – such as maintaining the Ka'bah and serving pilgrims.

In Chapters *Sad*, *Yaa-Seen*, *Maryam*, and, *Taa-Haa*, stories are mentioned of how Prophets ﷺ were mistreated at the hands of their people. For example, Allah ﷻ said:

﴿جُنْدٌ مَّا هُنَالِكَ مَهْزُومٌ مِّنَ الْأَحْزَابِ ۝۱۱ كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ وَعَادٌ وَفِرْعَوْنُ ذُو الْأَوْنَادِ ۝۱۲ وَثَمُودُ وَقَوْمُ لُوطٍ وَأَصْحَابُ لَيْكَةِ الْأَحْزَابِ ۝۱۳ إِنَّ كُلَّ إِلَّا كَذَّبَ الرُّسُلَ فَحَقَّ عِقَابِ ۝۱۴ وَمَا يَنْظُرُ هَتُّوْلَاءِ إِلَّا صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً مَّا لَهَا مِنْ فَوَاقٍ ۝۱۵ وَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا عَجَلْنَا لَنَا قَطْنَا قَبْلَ يَوْمِ الْحِسَابِ ۝۱۶ أَصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَادْكُرْ عَبْدَنَا دَاوُدَ ذَا الْأَيْدِ إِنَّهُ أَوَّابٌ ۝۱۷﴾

“(As they denied Allah’s Message) they will be a defeated host like the confederates of the old times (who were defeated). Before them (were many who) belied Messengers, – the people of Nooh (Noah); and ‘Ad; and Fir’aun (Pharaoh) – the man of stakes (with which he used to punish the people), And Thamood, and the people of Loot (Lot), and the dwellers of the wood; such were the confederates. Not one of them but belied the Messengers, therefore my Torment was justified. And these only wait for a single Saihah [shout (i.e., the blowing of the trumpet by the angel Israfil)] there will be no pause or ending thereto [till everything will perish except Allah (the only God full of majesty, Bounty and Honour)]. They say: “Our Lord! Hasten to us Qittana (i.e. our Record of good and bad deeds so that we may see it) before the Day of Reckoning!” Be patient (O Muhammad ﷺ) of what they say, and remember Our slave Daawood (David), endued with power. Verily, he was ever oft-returning in all matters and in repentance (towards Allah).” (Qur’an 38: 11-17)

Not a single Prophet ﷺ was saved from being harmed, no matter how honoured and respected a given Prophet ﷺ was among his people. Nooh ﷺ, Hood ﷺ, Moosa ﷺ, Saaleh ﷺ, Loot ﷺ, Shu’aib ﷺ were all common members of their respective societies, and they were all persecuted and harmed. But so was Daawood ﷺ, who was a powerful king, and whose miracles were witnessed firsthand by his people – for example, mountains

glorified Allah ﷻ with him, and birds were brought to life so that they could hear his recitation. What, then, did the Children of Israel write about him? They ascribed many evil actions to him in their writings, though, in reality, he was a pious worshipper. Similarly, they ascribed evil to Maryam ﷺ. Allah ﷻ related to us the miraculous nature of her pregnancy and delivery. He ﷻ also mentioned the miracles that took place for both her ﷺ and her son, 'Eesa ﷺ. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿قَالَ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ رَبِّكَ هُوَ عَلَيَّ هَيِّنٌ وَلِنَجْعَلَهُ آيَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَرَحْمَةً مِنَّا وَكَانَ أَمْرًا مَّقْضِيًّا ۝۱۱﴾

“He said : “So (it will be), your Lord said : ‘That is easy for Me (Allah) : And (We wish) to appoint him as a sign to mankind and a mercy from us (Allah), and it is a matter (already) decreed (by Allah).’” (Qur’an 19: 21)

If that was the attitude of the People of the Book - people who had in their hands the Torah, a revealed book from Allah ﷻ - then it is no surprise that the Quraish answered the Prophet’s invitation to embrace the truth with disbelief.

The Children of Israel even mistreated the greatest of their Prophets ﷺ, Moosa ﷺ. In *Soorah Taa-Haa*, Allah ﷻ relates how they rebelled against Allah’s commands and disobeyed Prophet Moosa ﷺ. As soon as Moosa ﷺ left them in order to speak with His Lord, they plotted against him. They gathered the jewelry they had with them, and Samiri made out of it a calf. They began to worship the calf, and they even made a heinous claim, which is related in this Verse:

﴿فَأَخْرَجَ لَهُمْ عِجْلًا جَسَدًا لَهُ خُورٌ فَقَالُوا هَذَا إِلَهُكُم وَإِلَهُ مُوسَىٰ ۝۸۸﴾

“Then he took out (of the fire) for them (a statue of) a calf which seemed to low. They said : “This is your ilaah (god), and the ilaah (god) of Moosa (Moses), but he [Moosa (Moses)] has forgotten (his god).’” (Qur’an 20: 88)

When Moosa عليه السلام later found out about what had happened, he عليه السلام asked Samiri why he did such a foolish and misguided thing. Allah ﷻ related Samiri's answer in the Noble Qur'an:

﴿قَالَ بَصُرْتُ بِمَا لَمْ يَبْصُرُوا بِهِ فَقَبَضْتُ قَبْضَةً مِّنْ أَثَرِ الرَّسُولِ فَنَبَذْتُهَا وَكَذَلِكَ سَوَّلَتْ لِي نَفْسِي﴾ (٩٦)

“(Samiri) said: “I saw what they saw not, so I took a handful (of dust) from the hoof print of the messenger [Jibreel's (Gabriel) horse] and threw it [into the fire in which were put the ornaments of the Fir'aun's (Pharaoh) people, or into the calf]. Thus my inner-self suggested to me.” (Qur'an 20: 96)

Can any good be expected from people who sink to such low depths of misguidance and wickedness? Can it be expected from them that they will support the truth? Among Verses that mention the covenant taken by the Children of Israel, Allah ﷻ referred to the universality of Prophet Muhammad's message, making it clear to the Children of Israel that they must believe in the Prophet ﷺ.

Stories about the Children of Israel that were revealed during the Makkan era of the Prophet's biography played an important role in developing good qualities in the Prophet's Companions رضي الله عنهم. During the Makkan era, details of how the Children of Israel went astray are given, among other reasons, to prepare the believers for the reaction of the Jews to the Prophet's message. For if they mistreated their own Prophets عليهم السلام, nothing different could be expected of them regarding the message of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, even though they found his description in their books. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَأَكْتَبْنَا لَنَا فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ إِنَّا هُنَا إِلَيْكَ قَالِ عَدَابِي أَصِيبُ بِهِ مَنْ أَشَاءُ وَرَحْمَتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَسَأَكْتُبُهَا لِلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِآيَاتِنَا يُؤْمِنُونَ﴾ (١٥٦) الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ النَّبِيَّ الْأُمِّيَّ الَّذِي يَجِدُونَهُ مَكْنُوبًا عِنْدَهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ يَأْمُرُهُمْ

بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَيْهِمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُحَدِّثُ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ
 الْخَبِيثَاتِ وَيَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ وَالْأَغْلَالَ الَّتِي كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ فَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
 بِهِ وَعَزَّرُوهُ وَنَصَرُوهُ وَاتَّبَعُوا النُّورَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ مَعَهُ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ
 ﴿١٥٧﴾ قُلْ يَأَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعًا الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ
 السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ فَآمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ النَّبِيِّ الْأُمِّيِّ
 الَّذِي يُوْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَكَلِمَاتِهِ ۖ وَاتَّبِعُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٥٨﴾ ﴿

“And ordain for us good in this world, and in the Hereafter. Certainly we have turned unto You.” He said: (As to) My Punishment I afflict therewith whom I will and My Mercy embraces all things. That (Mercy) I shall ordain for those who are the *Muttaqoon* (pious), and give *Zakaat*; and those who believe in Our *Ayaat* (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons signs, and revelations, etc.); those who follow the Messenger, the Prophet who can neither read nor write (i.e., Muhammad ﷺ) whom they find written with them in the *Taurat* (Torah) (Deut, xviii, 15) and the *Injeel* (Gospel) (John xiv, 16), – he commands them for *Al-Ma’roof* (i.e., Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam has ordained); and forbids them from *Al-Munkar* (i.e., disbelief, polytheism of all kinds, and all that Islam has forbidden); he allows them as lawful *At-Tayibat* [(i.e., all good and lawful) as regards things, deeds, beliefs, persons, foods, etc.], and prohibits them as unlawful *Al-Khaba’ith* (i.e., all evil and unlawful as regards things, deeds, beliefs, persons, foods, etc.), he releases them from their heavy burdens (of Allah’s Covenant), and from the fetters (bindings) that were upon them. So those who believe in him (Muhammad ﷺ), honour him, help him, and follow the light (the *Qur’an*) which has been sent down with him, it is they who will be successful. Say (O Muhammad ﷺ): “O mankind! Verily, I am sent to you all as the Messenger of Allah – to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, *La ilaha illa Huwa* (none has the right to be worshipped but He); It is He Who gives life and causes death. So believe in Allah and His Messenger

(Muhammad ﷺ), the Prophet who can neither read nor write (i.e., Muhammad ﷺ) who believes in Allah and His Words [(this Qur'an), the Taurat (Torah) and the Injeel (Gospel) and also Allah's Word: "Be!" – and he was i.e., Allah's Word: "Be!" and he was, i.e., 'Iesa (Jesus) son of Maryam (Mary) ﷺ], and follow him so that you may be guided." (Qur'an 7: 156-158)

By describing the history of the Children of Israel in *Soorah Al-'Araaf*, Allah ﷻ gives important spiritual guidance to the nation of Muhammad ﷺ. On the one hand, Allah ﷻ is alluding to the role of the Prophet's nation in terms of leading mankind; and on the other hand, Allah ﷻ is warning Muslims not to commit the same mistakes that the Children of Israel committed. Consider the situation of the *Al-Asbaat* and how they suffered from shortages of food and drink. Then Allah ﷻ bestowed upon them gushing springs, manna, and quails, and plentiful shade. Were they then thankful for those blessings? And did they fulfill their religious duties? The answer to both questions is, no; instead of being obedient, they were rebellious, stubborn, disobedient, and deceitful.

Although they spoke lies about Islam and the Prophet ﷺ, the Quraish soon realized that they were unable to say anything against Islam that was true or even seemingly true or based upon proofs. Frustrated by his people's situation, An-Nadr ibn Al-Haarith expressed Quraish's inability to put down the message of Islam by saying to the other leaders of the Quraish, "O people of Quraish, by Allah, a matter has descended upon you for which you have not yet been able to make a counterattack through the use of trickery. So consider your situation, for by Allah, a great matter indeed has befallen you." The leaders of the Quraish thereafter agreed to send An-Nadr ibn Al-Haarith and 'Uqbah ibn Abee Mu'ait to Jewish scholars in Al-Madeenah. They wanted to learn more about the reality of the Prophet's message, not because they wanted to follow it, but because they felt that the Jews might be able to provide them with information that they could use to debate the Prophet ﷺ. The leaders of the Quraish were not so

ignorant as not to know that the malice of the Jews was directed towards all Prophets ﷺ. The coming of the Prophet ﷺ was a great blow to the plans of the Jews. One of the main reasons why they lived in the Arabian Peninsula for so many years was that they knew that a Prophet ﷺ was going to be sent to that area; they ardently hoped that that Prophet would be chosen from their ranks, so that he could put an end to their differences, and so that he could help them against their enemies.

The polytheists of Makkah and the Jews of Al-Madeenah shared one common goal: bringing an end to the Prophet's *Da'wah*. And so the Jews provided Makkah's delegates with certain questions which they hoped the Prophet ﷺ would not be able to answer.

Ibn 'Abbaas ؓ said:

The Quraish sent An-Nadr ibn Al-Haarith and 'Uqbah ibn Mu'ait to meet with Jewish scholars in Al-Madeenah. Quraish's leaders said to their two delegates, 'Ask them about Muhammad, describe him to them, and inform them about what he says. For indeed, they are the people of the first book (i.e., the Torah), and they have knowledge that we do not possess – from the knowledge of the Prophets.' The two of them left until they reached Al-Madeenah. Once there, they asked Jewish scholars about the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. The two of them described his affair to them, as well as some of his sayings. And they said, 'Verily, you are the people of the Torah, and we have indeed come to you, so that you can inform us about this person who is with us (i.e., the Prophet ﷺ).' The Jewish scholars said, 'Ask him about three (matters) that we will command you with. If he informs you about them, then he is a Prophet, who is sent (by Allah). And if he does not do so, then the man is a fabricator of lies. Then (after you question him) establish your opinion regarding him. Ask him about youths who have departed in the first age: What was their story? For their story is indeed amazing. And ask him about a travelling man, who reached both the eastern and western parts of the earth: What was his story? And ask him about the *Ar-Rooh*: What is it? If he informs you about these matters, then he is a

Prophet, and so you must then follow him. If he doesn't inform you (about the answers to these questions), then he is a man who fabricates lies, and you should act regarding his situation as you see fit.' An-Nadr and 'Uqbah then set out until they reached the Quraish in Makkah. They said, 'O people of Quraish, we have come to you with that which will resolve what is happening between you and Muhammad. The Jewish scholars (of Al-Madeenah) ordered us to ask him about certain matters.' The two of them then told the others about the questions. They then went to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and said, 'O Muhammad, inform us,' and they went on to ask him the questions that they (the Jewish scholars of Al-Madeenah) ordered them to ask. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to them, 'I will inform you tomorrow concerning what you asked me about,' but he ﷺ didn't say, 'In Sha Allah (If Allah wills).' They left him, and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ remained (in waiting) for fifteen nights without Allah sending any revelation to him concerning what had happened (concerning the questions of the Quraish). Nor did Jibreel ﷺ come to him (during those nights). (This continued) until the people of Makkah plunged into evil talk, saying, 'Muhammad had promised us for the next day, and today is day fifteen. We have woken up today without him having informed us about anything we asked him about.' (And the situation continued) until the pause of revelation saddened the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and it became very hard upon him (to know and hear) what the people of Makkah were saying. Then Jibreel came to him from Allah - 'Azza wa-Jall (the Possessor of might and majesty) - with the Chapter (Soorah) about the People of the Cave. In it, the Prophet ﷺ is admonished for becoming sad on their account. (Also in it) is news of what they asked him about concerning the matters of the young men and of the travelling man (and of the *Ar-Rooh*). (And in it) is the saying of Allah 'Azza wa Jall (the Possessor of might and majesty):

﴿وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا

﴿ قَلِيلًا ﴾ ٨٥ ﴿

“And they ask you (O Muhammad ﷺ) concerning the Rooh (the Spirit); Say: “The Rooh (the Spirit): it is one of the things, the knowledge of which is only with my Lord. And of knowledge, you (mankind) have been given only a little.” (Qur’an 17: 85)

And when the Jews heard, “And of knowledge, you (mankind) have been given only a little,” they said, “How is that so, when we have been given the Torah? Indeed, whosoever is given the Torah has been given much goodness.” This Verse was then revealed:

﴿قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ الْبَحْرُ مَدَادًا لَكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّي لَنَفِدَ الْبَحْرُ قَبْلَ أَنْ نُنْفِدَ كَلِمَاتِ رَبِّي وَلَوْ جِئْنَا بِمِثْلِهِ مَدَدًا ﴿١٠٩﴾﴾

“Say (O Muhammad ﷺ) to mankind). “If the sea were ink for (writing) the Words of my Lord, surely, the sea would be exhausted before the Words of my Lord would be finished, even if we brought (another sea) like it for its aid.” (Qur’an 18: 109)

The Jews of Al-Madeenah provided questions to the Quraish, questions that were answered in *Soorah Al-Kahf*. Although their questions were answered, they shouldn't have asked them in the first place. Since when did not knowing the answer to a question prove a Prophet ﷺ to be false? Prophets ﷺ are human beings, and they have knowledge of the unseen world, but only that knowledge which Allah ﷻ reveals to them. The Jews should have considered the case of a specific Prophet ﷺ that was sent to them – Moosa ﷺ, one of the greatest of Prophets ﷺ from the Children of Israel. Although he was a Prophet ﷺ sent from Allah ﷻ, Moosa ﷺ did not know the interpretation of the three events that took place while he was in the company of Khidr ﷺ; in fact, he objected to what Khidr ﷺ did, even though, as he later found out, what Khidr ﷺ did in each of the three situations was ultimately correct. None of this had an effect on Moosa's status as a Prophet, and the Children of Israel didn't doubt his Prophethood. That being the case, what right did they have to use the questions they thought up to ascertain the truthfulness of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ?

In addition to answering the questions of the Jewish scholars, Allah ﷻ also used the situation as a means of alluding to near relief and help for the Muslims. For just as the young men of 'the Cave' found shelter, the Prophet's Companions ﷺ were soon to find shelter in Al-Madeenah.

The Siege And Embargo That Occurred At The End Of The Seventh Year Of Prophethood

The more the polytheists of the Quraish persecuted the Muslims, the more the Muslims became steadfast upon their religion, and the more widely did Islam spread to various Arab tribes - and consequently, that cycle began anew with the Quraish becoming more brutal and more oppressive in their persecution. Their ire towards the Muslims reached its pinnacle seven years after the Prophet ﷺ received revelation for the first time. The leaders of the Quraish issued an edict, prohibiting members of the Quraish from engaging in any dealings whatsoever with the Prophet's Companions ﷺ, but also with non-Muslim members of the Banu Haashim clan - except Abu Lahab (and maybe a few others like him), who sided with the polytheists.

Speaking of the seventh year of Prophethood, Az-Zuhree said, "Then the polytheists intensified, more so than ever before, their persecution of the Muslims, until the Muslims became very weak as a result of the severe ordeal they were going through. The people of the Quraish openly agreed to kill the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. When Abu Taalib saw what they were doing, he gathered the Banu 'Abdul-Muttalib (clan) and ordered them to take the Messenger of Allah ﷺ into their mountain pass and to defend him from those who wanted to kill him. They all agreed upon that plan, both the Muslims and non-Muslims among them. Some did so out of a sense of loyalty (to the clan); others among them did so because of their *Eemaan* (faith) and certainty (about the truth). When the Quraish found out that the Banu Muttalib clan was protecting the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, they agreed among themselves not to sit with them, conduct business with them, or

enter their houses – until they surrendered the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to them so that they could kill him. From their cunning, they wrote down a declaration, and they made pledges and agreements not to ever make reconciliation with the Quraish, nor to show mercy to them, until they handed him over to them so that they could kill him.”

Another narration contains the following: “(They pledged) not to marry their daughters to them, nor to marry their daughters; not to sell them anything, nor to buy anything from them; not to allow any means of sustenance to reach them; not to make reconciliation with them; not to show mercy to them; not to mix with them; not to sit with them; not speak to them; not to enter their houses – until they handed the Messenger of Allah ﷺ over to them so that they could kill him. Then they made a pledge and a covenant to abide by those terms. Next, they hung up the declaration (that outlined the terms of their covenant) inside of the Ka’bah, emphasizing upon their own selves (the seriousness of the pact).”

The children of Haashim remained besieged in their mountain pass for three years, three very difficult years. The Quraish prevented them from going to the marketplace; and whenever any merchandise arrived in Makkah from abroad, the Quraish would purchase all of it, regardless of whether they needed it or not, for their sole intent was to inflict as much harm as possible on the Banu Haashim and Banu Muttalib clans, and consequently get their hands on the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

Not every single member of the Banu Muttalib clan remained besieged in the mountain pass; a few took sides with the Quraish; among those few some were not pleased with the situation. Meanwhile, in the mountain pass, Abu Taalib feared that someone would act treacherously and attempt to kill the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in his sleep. So when people went to their places of sleep at night, Abu Taalib told the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to go to his place of sleep, so that anyone who wanted to act treacherously could see where he was. Then, when everyone fell asleep, Abu Taalib ordered one of his children, brothers, or

nephews to take the place of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and instructed the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to sleep in one of their places.

The siege and overall embargo became very difficult to bear both for the Companions ؓ and for the members of the Banu Muttalib clan – so difficult that they were forced, out of hunger, to eat the leaves of trees. One of them would go out to urinate, would hear the sound of something dry beneath his feet, and would realize that it was a piece of a camel's hide. He would then take it, wash it, burn it, crush it, chew it, and then drink water over it. It would then be sufficient nourishment for him for three days. And from behind the mountain pass, the Quraish could always hear the sounds of babies crying from hunger, yet they continued to torture their enemies.

When three years passed, Allah ﷻ decreed for certain noblemen of the Quraish to bring an end to the ruthless siege. The person who led the internal dissent was Hishaam ibn 'Amr Al-Haashimee. Hishaam went to Zuhair ibn Abee Umayyah, a member of the Makhzoom clan – the clan of Abu Jahl. Although Zuhair was, through his father, a member of the Makhzoom clan, he was very closely related to the Banu 'Abdul-Muttalib clan, for his mother was 'Aatikah, daughter of 'Abdul-Muttalib. Hishaam said, "O Zuhair, are you pleased to eat food, wear clothing, and marry women, while your uncles (from your mother's side) are in the situation you know very well about? They cannot buy anything, nor can anyone buy anything from them. They cannot marry (from outside of themselves), nor can they marry (their daughters) to anyone (other than someone from among themselves). Indeed, I swear by Allah that, had they been the uncles of Abul-Hakam ibn Hishaam – i.e., Abu Jahl – and had I then invited him to do the same to them that he asks you to do (to your uncles), he would never have agreed to do so."

Greatly moved and frustrated at the same time, Zuhair said, "Woe upon you, O Hishaam! What can I do? I am only one man. By Allah, if I had with me another man, I would have made a

stand to nullify it (the declaration to place an embargo upon the children of 'Abdul-Muttalib)."

"You have indeed found a man (to join you)," said Hishaam.

"Who is he?"

"Me," said Hishaam.

"Then find us a third (person to join in our cause)," said Zuhair.

Hishaam then went to Al-Mut'im ibn 'Adee and said to him, "O Mut'im, are you pleased that two subtribes from the children of 'Abd-Manaaf will be destroyed, while you will witness that happening, and while you are in agreement with the Quraish (regarding their destruction) ..."

Mut'im said, "Woe upon you! What shall I do? I am only one man."

"I have found for you a second," said Hishaam.

"And who is he?" asked Mut'im.

"Me."

"Find us a third," said Mut'im.

"I already have," said Hishaam.

"Who?" asked Mut'im.

"Zuhair ibn Umayyah."

"Then find us a fourth," said Mut'im. And so Hishaam went to Abu Al-Bukhtaree ibn Hishaam, and basically said to him what he had said to Mut'im ib 'Adee.

"Woe upon you!" exclaimed Abu Al-Bukhtaree. "And will we find anyone who will help us accomplish that?"

"Yes," said Hishaam, "Zuhair ibn Abee Umayyah, Mut'im ibn 'Adee, and myself."

"Find us a fifth (person)," said Abu Al-Bukhtaree. Hishaam then went to Zum'ah ibn Al-Aswad ibn Al-Muttalib ibn Asad, spoke to him, mentioned his family relationship with the Banu 'Abdul-Muttalib clan, and their rights upon him.

Zum'ah said, "As for this matter that you are inviting me to, do

you have anyone to help (you)?" Hishaam answered in the affirmative and named the others who had agreed to help. The five of them agreed to meet that night in the northern part of Makkah. During that meeting, they agreed upon the course of action they were going to take. Once they had decided what they were going to do, Zuhair said, "Let me go before you. I will speak first."

In the morning, they all went to their respective gatherings. All of the gatherings of the Quraish were situated beside the Ka'bah, so the five of them were at once separated, so as to avoid arousing suspicion, and in close proximity to one another. As for Zuhair, he was wearing a robe, and he began the morning by making seven circuits around the K'abah. He then stood before the people and said, "Shall we eat food and wear clothing, while the children of Haashim are being destroyed. They cannot buy, nor can anyone buy from them. By Allah, I will not sit down until this false declaration, this divisive declaration, is torn up."

Abu Jahl, who was to one corner of the *Masjid*, said, "You have lied: by Allah, it will not be torn up."

It was time for the next phase of the plan: Zum'ah ibn Al-Aswad said to Abu Jahl, "By Allah, you are the greater liar. We were not pleased with the writing of the declaration when it was being written." It was now Abu Al-Bukhtaree's turn to speak: "Zum'ah has spoken the truth. We were not pleased with what was written in it, and we do not accept it." Al-Mut'im ibn 'Adee said, "The two of you have spoken the truth. And he has lied who says otherwise. We absolve ourselves from it and from what has been written in it." And then Hishaam ibn 'Amr expressed a similar sentiment. Abu Jahl, realizing what was happening, said, "This is a matter that has been decided upon during the night. Consultations were made regarding this matter in other than this place." Meanwhile, Abu Taalib was seated to one side of the *Masjid*; yet throughout the discussion, he didn't speak.

Mut'im ibn 'Adee went to the declaration in order to tear it up, but

he found that woodworms (or termites) had eaten the scroll upon which it was written. The only part of the scroll that remained undamaged was the part that said, "In Your Name, O Allah."^[1]

Ibn Ishaq related a slightly different account of what had happened. According to his narration, Allah ﷻ sent woodworms (or termites) to eat up those parts of the declaration that contained any of Allah's Names. When the woodworms (or termites) were done with the declaration, all that remained in it were its core contents, which consisted of wrongdoing, the severing of family ties, and slander. No one knew what had happened to the declaration, since it was kept within the Ka'bah. But, through revelation, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ knew what had happened to it. He informed his uncle, Abu Taalib, who then went to the Quraish and told them as well. Of course the Quraish were incredulous about what Abu Taalib told them, since the declaration was locked up inside the Ka'bah, and only certain leaders of the Quraish were allowed to enter the Ka'bah. Nonetheless, Abu Taalib knew his nephew well, and knew that he wouldn't make up such a story, and so he said to the Quraish, "If he is lying, then I promise to surrender him to you, so that you can then kill him. But if he is telling the truth, will that then stop you from aiding one another against us?" He made them pledge to abide by the conditions he stipulated, and they made him do the same. When they took out the declaration, and spread it out, they of course saw that it was as the Messenger of Allah ﷺ described it to be. Mut'im ibn 'Adee and Hishaam ibn 'Amr said, "We absolve ourselves from this declaration of severing family ties, of transgression, and of wrongdoing. And we will not help anyone corrupt ourselves and our noblemen." One after another, other noblemen from the Quraish expressed a similar sentiment. The siege and embargo came to an end, and the Banu 'Abdul-Muttalib clan left their mountain pass and returned to Makkah.

^[1] Refer to *As-Seerah An-Nabawiyyah* by Ibn Katheer (2/43-50, 67-69).

Lessons and Morals

- 1) If we closely consider the provisions of the declaration, we find that the Quraish didn't just put together a last-minute document; instead, they employed their best minds and put in long hours of planning and mutual consultation. To see just how much thought went into the declaration, let us study it one provision at a time:
 - a) They forbade intermarriage between the Banu 'Abdul-Muttalib clan and the rest of the Quraish. In general, and especially among tribal societies, marriage is what bonds people together. Marriage between two families leads to mutual harmony, cooperation, and brotherhood. The Quraish knew that, if intermarriage with the children of 'Abdul-Muttalib were to occur, it would mean the end of their embargo, which is why they of course included a provision in the declaration to forbid such marriages from taking place. Consider how, in the end, one of the key players who brought about an end to the embargo was Zuhair, who, based on his father's marriage to 'Aatikah – a member of the Banu 'Abdul-Muttalib clan – sympathized with his besieged relatives.
 - b) In forbidding people from doing business with the children of 'Abdul-Muttalib, the Quraish were effectively cutting off their livelihood and slowly starving them to death. They succeeded to a great degree in their ruthless aims, for the besieged party was forced to eat tree leaves and leather.
 - c) Not only did they forbid members of the Quraish from doing business with Muslims, they also prevented the goods of foreign traders from reaching them. They would quickly purchase the goods, and then set such a high price on them, that no Companion was able to come up with the money to buy them.
 - d) The Quraish chose the wording of their declaration very carefully. They forbade people from doing business with

Muslims, but they feared that some sympathizers would find a loophole by giving Muslims food, not through a business transaction, but as a gift. The Quraish closed the door to this potential practice by stipulating that they would, "Not allow any means of sustenance to reach them."

- e) Fearing that their resolve to punish the Muslims might weaken, the Quraish included two important provisions: First, "To not make reconciliation with them," and second, "To not show any mercy to them." They knew that, if they showed any willingness to make reconciliation or to show mercy, their embargo would quickly come to an end.
- f) It was not enough to simply state that they would show no mercy to Muslims; they felt that they had to also prevent any intermediary step that might lead to showing mercy later on. And so one of the provisions they added to the declaration forbade people from sitting down with Muslims or talking with them. Conversation, even at its simplest level, leads to understanding the views of others. The Quraish feared that, through conversation, Muslims would be able to convince some of Quraish's leaders to bring an end to the siege and embargo, an easy task considering it was clear that Quraish's leaders were in the wrong and that the Muslims were in the right. But no one could hear their point of view, since no one was allowed to even talk to them. Another provision that closed the door to showing mercy involved prohibiting people from entering into the homes of Muslims and members of the Banu 'Abdul-Muttalib clan. It is one thing to hear about the suffering of others, but to actually see it softens the heart. And the last thing Quraish's leaders wanted was for people's hearts to soften towards the Prophet's Companions. When a person with even an ounce of goodness in him enters a house and sees sickness, hunger, and extreme poverty, he feels that he must do something to help its dwellers. The leaders of the Quraish definitely did not want sympathy to be aroused for their enemies, knowing

fully well that some members of the Quraish would sympathize with the plight of the Prophet's Companions. They knew this for two reasons: First, because familial ties would cause members of the Quraish to feel compassion for their relatives from the Banu 'Abdul-Muttalib clan; and second, in the viewpoint of the Quraish, the only mistake that the Muslims made was to choose a religion different from that of the Quraish. Fearing that some members of the Quraish would protest if they knew to what extent the Muslims were suffering, the leaders of the Quraish outright forbade everybody from entering the home of any Muslim.

- g) By hanging up the declaration inside of the Ka'bah, the Quraish gave it and its contents an air of holiness, for both they, and all Arabs, glorified the Ka'bah. They were hoping that holiness would emphasize the need to adhere to the contents of the declaration.
- 2) No matter how hard the situation, a Muslim should make do with the resources and the help that is available to him. In the context of the embargo, Muslims benefited from the help of non-Muslims from the Banu 'Abdul-Muttalib clan. Likewise today, Muslims should use whatever help and freedom of religion there is in the world to spread the message of Islam.
- 3) Abu Taalib was not able to physically overcome the leaders of the Quraish, but he did have some impact on ending the embargo. He composed a poem that was highly critical of Quraish's unjust policies; that poem aroused a sense of loyalty in certain relatives of the Banu Haashim clan, relatives who then met secretly and came up with a good plan to end the siege and embargo.
- 4) It is often the case in oppressive societies that, though it seems as if everyone is in agreement with their government's brutal policies, there are those who are opposed to injustice and have some goodness in them. Such people can often, when the opportunity is right, help bring an end to

oppression and injustice. Muslims should meet with such people and clearly explain to them the just teachings of Islam.

- 5) Abu Lahab was the archetype of treacherous evildoers who came after him. As Abu Lahab illustrated through his actions, close relatives of callers to Islam can show them more hostility than can their bitterest foes.
- 6) Throughout the siege, the Prophet's Companions ﷺ obeyed the Prophet's commands to the letter, showing a great deal of discipline and patience. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ instructed them not to be confrontational with the enemy, but to instead show restraint. Throughout the siege, Muslims were being trained to be obedient to their leader ﷺ, especially those who were strong, brave, and willing to fight – the likes of Hamzah ﷺ, 'Umar ﷺ, Abu Bakr ﷺ, and 'Uthmaan ﷺ. They listened and obeyed; they were treated with disdain, but they held back their hands, not during a single incident only, or for a single month only, but for three years. During those years, they were not permitted to fire a single arrow or to throw a single punch. That they obeyed the Prophet's command clearly shows how disciplined they were, for nothing would have been easier or more satisfying than to assassinate Abu Jahl or spontaneously start a war without thinking of consequences, a war that, if instigated, could have had evil repercussions on the Prophet's *Da'wah*.
- 7) Miracles and clear proofs have no effect on those who blindly follow their desires – those whose hearts and minds are blocked from the truth. Abu Taalib told them about what the Prophet ﷺ said: that woodworms had eaten the declaration and that the only parts of it left uneaten were the words: "In Your Name, O Allah." What the Prophet ﷺ told them about, they saw with their very own eyes, yet not a single person among them believed.
- 8) At least in one regard, the siege and embargo actually had a

positive effect on the Prophet's *Da'wah*. News of what was happening in Makkah spread all over Arabia – mainly during the *Hajj* season – and foreign tribes became impressed with how the Muslims were suffering from hunger, thirst, and isolation, all for the sake of their beliefs. Some among them began to realize that, if Muslims were willing to bear so many hardships to preserve their faith, it must be a true message that the Prophet ﷺ was inviting people to follow.

Regardless of their religion, Arabs became angry with the Quraish for their brutal treatment of the Banu 'Abdul-Muttalib clan. Members of foreign tribes felt sympathy towards the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions ﷺ, so that no sooner did the siege come to an end, than many people began to enter the fold of Islam. Not only did the leaders of the Quraish fail to meet their goal, they themselves contributed, albeit unwittingly, to the spread of Islam.

- 9) That the Banu Haashim and Banu Al-Muttalib clans protected the Prophet ﷺ had an effect on Islamic jurisprudence later on: The one fifth that is given to “near relatives (refer to the following Verse)” is given to those two clans. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا غَنِمْتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَإِنَّ لِلَّهِ خُمُسَهُ وَلِلرَّسُولِ وَلِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ
وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَأَبِ السَّبِيلِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ ءَامَنْتُمْ بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلْنَا عَلَىٰ
عَبْدِنَا يَوْمَ الْفُرْقَانِ يَوْمَ التَّقَىٰ أَجْمَعِينَ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ
﴿٤١﴾

“And know that whatever of war-booty that you may gain, verily one-fifth (1/5th) of it is assigned to Allah, and to the Messenger, and to the near relatives [of the Messenger (Muhammad ﷺ)], (and also) the orphans, Al-Masaakeen (the poor) and the wayfarer, if you have believed in Allah and in that which We sent down to Our slave (Muhammad ﷺ) on the Day of Criterion (between right and wrong), the Day when the two forces met (the

Battle of Badr) – And Allah is Able to do all things.’’ (Qur’an 8: 41)

Commenting on this Verse, Ibn Katheer said, “As for the share that goes to “near relatives,” it is given to the children of Haashim and the children of Al-Muttalib, because the children of Al-Muttalib supported the children of Haashim during the days of ignorance and during the early days of Islam. Furthermore, they entered the mountain pass, being angry for the sake of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and out of a sense of (tribal) loyalty to him. The Muslims among them did so out of obedience to Allah and His Messenger ﷺ, and the disbelievers among them did so out of tribal loyalty, honour, and obedience to Abu Taalib, uncle of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. As for the Banu ‘Abd-Shams and Banu Naufal clans, they too were cousins of the Banu Haashim clan, but they did not lift a finger to help them. To the contrary, they waged war against them, opposed them, and supported the various subtribes of the Quraish in their war against the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Because Banu ‘Abd-Shams and Banu Naufal were so closely related to Banu Haashim, yet decided to fight against them, Abu Taalib disparaged them more severely than he did others in his famous *Al-Laamiyyah* poem. According to some narrations, when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was speaking about Banu Al-Muttalib, he ﷺ said, ‘Verily, they did not forsake us in (the days of) ignorance or in (the days of) Islam.’^[1] The majority of scholars maintain that he ﷺ was referring to Banu Haashim and Banu Al-Muttalib.’’^[2]

- 10) Years after the embargo and siege, during the farewell pilgrimage, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ wanted to make camp in the valley of Banu Kinaanah, so that he could remember past hardships and thank Allah ﷻ for blessing him with the

^[1] Related by Abu Daawood, in *Al-Kharaaj Wal-Imaarah*; Hadeeth number: 2980.

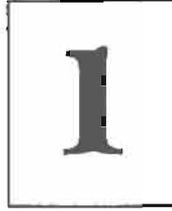
^[2] *Tafseer Ibn Katheer* (2/312).

conquest of Makkah. The valley of the Banu Kinaanah clan revived memories of the siege because the Banu Kinaanah tribe allied themselves with the Quraish against Banu Haashim, pledging not to do business with them or give them shelter. Usaamah ibn Zaid ؓ related that, during the Prophet's farewell pilgrimage, he ؓ said to the Prophet ﷺ, "O Messenger of Allah, where will we stop (to make camp) tomorrow?" The Prophet ﷺ said, "And has 'Aqeel left for us a place ('Aqeel inherited all of Abu Taalib's wealth and then sold most, or all, of his property)?" He ؓ then said, "Tomorrow, we will stop (to make camp) in the valley of Banu Kinaanah, at Al-Muhassib (where the Jimaar are pelted with pebbles during *Hajj* in Al-Minaa), where the Quraish made a covenant based upon disbelief." He ؓ was referring to how the Banu Kinaanah tribe formed an alliance with the Quraish against Banu Haashim. According to the terms of that alliance, Banu Kinaanah agreed to neither conduct business with nor shelter members of the Banu Haashim clan.



**Migration To Abyssinia, The Ordeal
Of Taaif, And The Gift Of *Al-Israa*
(The Night Journey)**





Working In Harmony With The Law Of Cause And Effect

One of the universal laws of Allah ﷻ regarding the creation is the law of 'causes.' Cause and effect is a basic reality in the universe that we must understand and be in harmony with. Allah ﷻ created the universe and then established laws by which it is run. To be sure, had Allah ﷻ wanted, He ﷻ could have made every effect occur without a cause. But it is from His Will and Wisdom that cause and effect occurrences are the norms, and miracles are the rare exceptions. Hence angels carry Allah's Throne, vegetation grows with water, and humans earn sustenance through work.

Allah's universal law of cause and effect is clearly palpable in the universe around us. And it is established in the Book of Allah ﷻ, wherein Allah ﷻ made it clear to Muslims that they must be in harmony with this law both in their worldly and religious affairs. If they want sustenance in this world or Paradise in the Hereafter, they must do those actions that lead to the fulfillment of their goals. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَقُلْ أَعْمَلُوا فَسَيَرَى اللَّهُ عَمَلَكُمْ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَسَتُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ عِلْمِ الْغَيْبِ
وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٠٥﴾﴾

"And say (O Muhammad ﷺ): "Do deeds! Allah will see your deeds, and (so will) His Messenger and the believers. And you will be brought back to the All-Knower of the unseen and the seen."

Then he will inform you of what you used to do.” (Qur’an 9: 105)

And Allah ﷻ said:

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ ذَلُولًا فَامْشُوا فِي مَنَاكِبِهَا وَكُلُوا مِن رِّزْقِهِ وَإِلَيْهِ
الْشُّورُ ﴿١٥﴾﴾

“He it is, Who has made the earth subservient to you (i.e., easy for you to walk, to live and to do agriculture on it, etc.), so walk in the path thereof and eat of His provision, and to Him will be the Resurrection.” (Qur’an 67: 15)

When Maryam ؑ was in a state of weakness, Allah ﷻ ordered her to take an action (cause) that would result in her getting sustenance (effect). Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَهَزَىٰ إِلَيْكَ بِجِدْعِ النَّخْلَةِ فَسَقَطَ عَلَيْكَ رُطْبًا جَنِيًّا ﴿٢٥﴾﴾

“And shake the trunk of date-palm towards you, it will let fall fresh ripe-dates upon you.” (Qur’an 19: 25)

In every aspect of his life, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ lived in harmony with the law of cause and effect; and he ﷺ taught his Companions ؓ to do the same. The Prophet ﷺ and his Companions ؓ understood that, regardless whether something happened through a miracle or through a cause and effect chain, it ultimately happened because Allah ﷻ decreed it to happen. They understood that by working to achieve their aims, they were following one of Allah’s universal laws that apply to the universe and to how it is run. And so they didn’t disparage work and planning, as some misguided ascetics do; rather, they knew that working and planning are required of them in their religion.

If Muslims lag behind the rest of the world today, it is not because they have been wronged, but because Allah’s justice has been rendered upon them as a punishment for their having forgotten and neglected their religion. Both in knowledge and in action, Muslims today are not in harmony with Allah’s universal laws; they think that success will come to them through dreaming, but

nothing could be further from the truth:

﴿ذَلِكَ بِمَا قَدَّمْت أَيْدِيكُمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَيْسَ بِظَلَّامٍ لِّلْعَبِيدِ ۝١٨٢﴾

“This is because of that (evil) which your hands have sent before you. And certainly, Allah is never unjust to (His) slaves.”
(Qur’an 3: 182)

One might then ask, “But if this is Allah’s punishment for believers who have disobeyed Him, then what about polytheists who disbelieve in Allah ﷻ altogether? Why is it that they have, from a worldly point of view, achieved such prosperity, advancement, and stability?” Disbelievers have not achieved historically unparalleled prosperity because they are closer to Allah or because He ﷻ is pleased with them; nor have they done so through a miracle or the use of magic. It is not their beliefs or their way of thinking that has enabled them to become so technologically advanced. The reason they are prosperous and advanced is that, through His universal law of cause and effect (work and achieve results), Allah ﷻ has opened the door to worldly prosperity to all of his creation, to believers and disbelievers, righteous people and wicked evildoers. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَزِينَتَهَا نُوَفِّ إِلَيْهِمْ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فِيهَا وَهُمْ فِيهَا لَا يُبْخَسُونَ ۝١٥﴾

“Whosoever desires the life of the world and its glitter; to them We shall pay in full (the wages of) their deeds therein, and they will have no diminution therein.” (Qur’an 11: 15)

Through His universal law of cause and effect, Allah ﷻ has made worldly prosperity hinge upon human planning and human efforts. Whoever strives and works – or in other words, whoever lives in harmony with Allah’s universal law of cause and effect – will achieve results in proportion to his efforts. True, all the technological and material advancement in the world will not open the Doors of Paradise to disbelievers, and will not avail them

in the least in the Hereafter. But we must also keep in mind that negligence on the part of Muslims is a sin, for which they will be held accountable.

Placing one's Trust in Allah ﷻ, and Living in Harmony with Allah's Universal Law of Cause and Effect

Some Muslims, especially those who are of an ascetic bent, feel that there is a contradiction between placing one's trust in Allah ﷻ and working to achieve one's goals. On an individual level, where this sentiment is most palpably felt, one might feel that it is praiseworthy to sit in the *Masjid* 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. When such a person is asked about how he procures food and drink, he answers, "I trust in Allah ﷻ; He ﷻ will provide for me." He fails to realize, however, that Allah ﷻ commands him to work and that there is no contradiction between him working and striving, and him placing his trust in Allah ﷻ.

A believer has a highly nuanced understanding when it comes to this issue. He works and strives and plans in a lawful manner because he has faith in Allah ﷻ and because he wants to be obedient to Allah ﷻ. Yet at the same time, he does not trust in his action and planning; he does not feel that it is his action and planning that will bring him the results he wants. It is up to him to work, and then the results are independent of his actions, for it is Allah ﷻ Who decrees results. With this understanding, the believer does not put unnecessary faith in or dependence upon his actions; but at the same time, he does take whatever action is necessary to achieve his goals because he wants rewards for being obedient to Allah ﷻ.

In various *Hadeeth* narrations, the Prophet ﷺ established that it is necessary to both trust in Allah ﷻ and live in harmony with Allah's law of cause and effect. For example, Anas ibn Maalik ؓ reported that a man once stood with his she-camel at the door of the *Masjid* and intended to enter. He ؓ said, "O Messenger of Allah ﷻ, should I leave it free (without tying it up) and place my trust (in Allah)?" It was as if this man felt that taking necessary

action contradicts placing one's trust in Allah ﷻ. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ explained to him – with the most succinct of wording – that no such contradiction exists. He ﷺ said, “Rather, tie it up, and place your trust (in Allah).”

In another *Hadeeth*, which is related by ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattaab ؓ, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Were you to trust in Allah as He truly should be trusted, He would have provided sustenance for you, just as He provides sustenance for a bird, which leaves hungry in the beginning of the day, and returns full at the end of the day.”^[1] In this *Hadeeth*, the Prophet ﷺ exhorted Muslims to trust in Allah ﷻ, and at the same time, he ﷺ pointed to the importance of working (i.e., applying Allah's universal law of cause and effect) by mentioning how a bird leaves in the morning in search of its sustenance.

Regarding this issue, the correct Islamic understanding can be summarized in the following points:

- 1) Islam confirms Allah's universal law of ‘cause and effect.’
- 2) When one depends on causes and means alone, without depending on and placing his trust in Allah ﷻ, then one has perpetrated an act of *Shirk* (associating partners with Allah in worship).
- 3) Islam establishes a clear link between causes and *Tawheed* (the Oneness of Allah ﷻ); both causes and results are in the Hand of Allah ﷻ.
- 4) Therefore, based on the first three points, a Muslim must both do what is lawfully necessary to achieve his goals and place his trust in Allah ﷻ.

Muslims of today must realize that only if they plan and work can they achieve prosperity. So long as Muslims do their utmost to achieve success, Allah ﷻ will help them. And Allah ﷻ does not require of them an effort that is beyond their scope or ability.

^[1] Related by Ahmad in his *Musnad* (1/52); *Hadeeth* number: 370. Ash-Shaikh Ahmad Shaakir said, “Its chain is authentic.”

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَأَعِدُّوا لَهُمْ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ وَمِنْ رِبَاطِ الْخَيْلِ تُرْهِبُونَ بِهِ عَدُوَّ اللَّهِ وَعَدُوَّكُمْ وَءَاخِرِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِمْ لَا نَعْلَمُونَهُمُ اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُهُمْ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ يُوَفَّ إِلَيْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾﴾

“And make ready against them all you can of power, including steeds of war (tanks, planes, missiles, artillery, etc.) to threaten the enemy of Allah and your enemy, and others besides whom, you may not know but whom Allah does know. And whatever you shall spend in the Cause of Allah shall be repaid unto you, and you shall not be treated unjustly.” (Qur’an 8: 60)

It is as if Allah ﷻ is saying to them in this Verse, “Do the most you are able to do, and prepare as much as you can prepare, even if your preparations are not as good as that of your enemy.” For whatever is beyond the ability of Muslims, Allah ﷻ provides help with His unlimited power. Acting to the utmost of one’s ability is at once proof of one’s sincerity and a prerequisite for achieving Allah’s help.

2

Migration To Abyssinia

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا فِي اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا ظَلَمُوا لَنُبَوِّئَنَّهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَلَآجِرُ
الْآخِرَةِ أَكْبَرُ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤١﴾﴾

“And as for those who emigrated for the Cause of Allah, after suffering oppression, We will certainly give them goodly residence in this world, but indeed the reward of the Hereafter will be greater, if they but knew!” (Qur’an 16: 41)

In regard to the meaning of this Verse, Al-Qurtubee (may Allah have mercy on him) related that Qataadah (may Allah have mercy on him) said, “Those that are intended here are the Companions of Muhammad ﷺ. The polytheists wronged them in Makkah and forced them to leave; a party of them reached Abyssinia, and then Allah ﷻ provided them with the land of migration (Al-Madeenah) and with helpers from among the believers.”

And Allah ﷻ said:

﴿قُلْ يَاعِبَادِ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمْ لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ
وَأَرْضُ اللَّهِ وَسِعَةٌ إِنَّمَا يُوَفَّى الصَّابِرُونَ أَجْرَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿١٠﴾﴾

“Say (O Muhammad ﷺ): “O My slaves who believe (in the Oneness of Allah – Islamic Monotheism), be afraid of your Lord (Allah) and keep your duty to Him. Good is (the reward) for those

who do good in this world, and Allah's earth is spacious (so if you cannot worship Allah at a place, then go to another)! Only those who are patient shall receive their rewards in full, without reckoning." (Qur'an 39: 10)

Ibn 'Abbaas ؓ said that those who are intended here are "Ja'far ibn Abu Taalib ؓ and those who went with him to Abyssinia."

And Allah ﷻ said:

﴿يَعْبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِنَّ أَرْضِي وَاسِعَةٌ فَإِنِّي فَاعْبُدُونِ ﴿٥٦﴾﴾

"O My slaves who believe! Certainly, spacious is My earth. Therefore worship Me (Alone)." (Qur'an 29: 56)

Commenting on this last Verse, Ibn Katheer (may Allah have mercy on him) said, "Here, Allah is commanding His believing slaves to migrate from a land wherein they are not able to practice their religion to Allah's spacious earth, where they can practice it."

The First Migration To Abyssinia

Frustrated by their inability to stop Islam from spreading, the leaders of the Quraish became ruthless in their persecution of the Prophet's Companions ؓ. They eagerly resorted to any method of torture that they could think of – beating their victims, starving them, baking them on the hot sands of the desert, and so on. Their purpose was twofold: First, they were venting their anger on the Prophet's Companions ؓ, and second, they were trying to make them abandon their religion.

What is truly amazing about this period of persecution is that not a single Companion ؓ apostatized from fear of torture or death, a fact that attests to their sincerity. It is true, however, that some of them were so severely put to trial that they uttered words of disbelief; that being the case, their hearts were at peace with *Eemaan* (faith). And at any rate, what they did is correct, for in Islam, whenever one is tortured and coerced to the point that he fears being seriously harmed, he may speak words of disbelief, so long as his heart is at rest with *Eemaan* (faith). Nonetheless, others

among the Prophet's Companions ﷺ remained steadfast not just inwardly, but outwardly as well: No matter how much they were persecuted or tortured, they refused to succumb to the demands of their torturers; for example, when his torturers demanded that he utter words of disbelief, Bilaal ibn Rabaah ﷺ simply repeated the words, "One, One," pointing to the Oneness of Allah ﷻ.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was relatively safe due first to the protection of Allah ﷻ and then the protection of Abu Taalib; many of his Companions ﷺ, on the other hand, were being severely tortured. Being that he ﷺ was merciful and kind to his nation, he ﷺ did what he could to alleviate their hardships; but within Makkah, he ﷺ knew that he was unable to do anything significant to help them. And so he ﷺ said to them, "Perhaps you should go to the land of Abyssinia, for in it dwells a king in whose presence no one is wronged. And it is the land of truth. (Stay there) until Allah provides you with relief from the situation you are presently in." Fearing not so much persecution but the result of constant persecution – the temptation of abandoning one's religion – some of the Prophet's Companions ﷺ migrated to Abyssinia. It was the first migration in Islam.

Scholars have mentioned various reasons that prompted the Prophet's Companions ﷺ to migrate to Abyssinia. One reason was that they felt it necessary to flee with their religion, fearing that constant torture might tempt them to apostatize. Ibn Ishaq said, "At that point in time, some Muslims from the Prophet's Companions ﷺ went to Abyssinia, fearing temptation and fleeing towards Allah ﷻ with their religion."^[1]

Sayyid Qutub offers a different explanation, arguing that the main purpose of the migration was to spread Islam outside of Makkah, and not simply to flee from persecution. In *Fee Dhilaal Al-Qur'an* (In the Shade of the Qur'an), he wrote, "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was searching for a stronghold outside of Makkah, a stronghold that could protect the beliefs of Islam and guarantee

^[1] *As-Seerah An-Nabawiyah* by Ibn Hishaam (1/398).

the freedom to openly practice Islam. In my estimation, this was the foremost reason that prompted the migration (to Abyssinia). The view which states that the Prophet's Companions ﷺ migrated only to save themselves is not corroborated by strong evidence. Had they migrated only to save themselves (from torture and temptation to leave the fold of Islam), those Muslims who were weakest - in status, strength, and protection - would have migrated as well, but the fact is that slaves and weak Muslims, who bore the major grunt of persecution and torture, did not migrate. Only men who had strong tribal ties - ties that protected them from torture and temptation - migrated to Abyssinia. In fact, the majority of those who migrated were members of the Quraish (as opposed to imported slaves or weak Muslims who lived in Makkah but were not from the Quraish, such as the family of Yasir ؓ)."^[1]

Showing agreement with Sayyid Qutub's assessment of the matter, Al-Ghadbaan wrote, "This poignant observation from Sayyid (may Allah have mercy on him) is supported by events in the *Seerah* (the Prophet's biography). In my view, the strongest evidence of that is the overall result of their migration to Abyssinia. From what we know (i.e., from what is related in historical narrations), the Messenger of Allah ﷺ didn't send for those who migrated to Al-Habashah until after (the Prophet's) migration to Yathrib (i.e., Al-Madeenah), Badr, Uhud, Khandaq, and Al-Hudaybiyyah. For a total of five years (after the Prophet's migration), Yathrib was vulnerable to complete destruction at the hands of the Quraish. The last of Quraish's attacks and attempts of destroying (the Muslims in Al-Madeenah) occurred during (the Battle of) Al-Khandaq. After this battle, when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ felt certain that Al-Madeenah was a safe stronghold for Muslims - there being no more danger of an impending attack from the polytheists - he ﷺ summoned those who had migrated to Abyssinia. There was no longer any need to keep a

^[1] *Fee Dhilaal Al-Qur'an* (1/29).

precautionary base in Abyssinia, where the Prophet ﷺ would have possibly been able to seek refuge had Yathrib fallen into the hands of the enemy.”^[1]

Professor Duroozah expressed a similar sentiment, saying, “It certainly occurs to the mind that one of the reasons why the Christian land of Abyssinia was chosen, was the hope of spreading *Da’wah* (the message of Islam) there. And the appointment of Ja’far ؓ (as leader of the Muslims in Abyssinia) had a great deal to do with that hope.” Another scholar who shares the same view is Dr. Sulaiman ibn Hamd Al-’Audah, who said, “The fact that An-Najaashee (the king of Abyssinia) and others from the people of Abyssinia embraced Islam supports the view that spreading Islam in Abyssinia was one of the reasons and goals behind the migration to that land. Furthermore, it was with the Prophet’s guidance that Muslims both migrated to Abyssinia and then remained there until after the conquest of Khaibar. It is related in *Saheeh Bukhaaree* that, when the Ash’ariyyeen met him in Abyssinia, Ja’far ؓ said to them, ‘Verily, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ sent us here, and he ordered us to reside here, so reside here with us.’^[2] This means that they went to Abyssinia with a specific mission in mind – and there is no mission that is more honourable than that of spreading the religion of Allah ﷻ. The mission came to an end when those who migrated were instructed to return (to Al-Madeenah).”^[3]

This does not mean that it was the only reason why they migrated to Abyssinia. To be sure, the Prophet’s Companions ؓ needed to go where they could freely and safely practice their religion. That they went seeking safety and freedom from persecution is indicated by the saying of the Prophet ﷺ, “For in it (i.e., Abyssinia) dwells a king in whose presence no one is wronged.” Safety and freedom is what the Prophet’s Companions ؓ found in

^[1] *Al-Manhaj Al-Harakee Lis-Seerah* (1/67, 68).

^[2] Related by Bukhaaree, the Book of *Al-Maghaazee*, chapter “The Battle of Khaibar”; *Hadeeth* number: 4230.

^[3] Refer to *Al-Hijrah Al-Oolah Fil-Islam* by Dr. Salmaan Al-’Audah, pg. 34.

Abyssinia. Umm Salamah رضي الله عنها said, "When we stopped to reside in the land of Abyssinia, we lived alongside the best of neighbours, An-Najaashee. We safely practiced our religion, and we worshipped Allah ﷻ without consequently being harmed."^[1]

Why the Prophet ﷺ chose Abyssinia

There are a number of reasons why the Messenger of Allah ﷺ chose Abyssinia over other lands. First, An-Najaashee, the king of Abyssinia, was a just king, a fact that the Prophet ﷺ pointed out when he ﷺ said, "For in it dwells a king in whose presence no one is wronged." This proved to be true, for An-Najaashee protected his Muslim guests and refused to hand them over to the Quraish. Furthermore, An-Najaashee was a righteous man. When he became overwhelmed with emotion upon hearing Ja'far رضي الله عنه recite the Qur'an, An-Najaashee showed that his beliefs regarding 'Eesa (Jesus) عليه السلام were correct. Years later, the Prophet ﷺ praised An-Najaashee when he ﷺ said, "Indeed, today a righteous man from Abyssinia has died, so come and pray over him."^[2]

Second, at the time, Abyssinia was a land of prosperity; it was a trading center to which the Quraish traveled. While discussing the reasons for the migration to Abyssinia, At-Tabaree wrote, "The Quraish would go to Abyssinia to do business. There, they would find abundant sustenance, safety, and good business."

Third, and perhaps most importantly, the Quraish had no authority in Abyssinia. The Prophet's Companions رضي الله عنهم could not migrate to any place within the Arabian Peninsula, since for the most part, and on most occasions, Arab tribes within the Peninsula obeyed the Quraish. They humbled themselves before the Quraish because they needed their help during the *Hajj* season, and they relied on them for trade. Moreover, they too opposed the Prophet's *Da'wah*, and so they were natural allies of

^[1] *As-Seerah An-Nabawiyah* by Ibn Hishaam, with the commentary of Hammaam Abu Sa'leek (1/413).

^[2] Related by Bukhaaree, the Book of Funeral Prayers, chapter "Lining up for Funeral Prayers." *Hadeeth* number: 1320.

the Quraish. Therefore, there was no safe haven for the Muslims within Arabia. Abyssinia, on the other hand, was an ideal place for the Prophet's Companions ﷺ to seek sanctuary. Unlike the tribes of Arabia, the people of Abyssinia did not revere or fear the Quraish; the people of Abyssinia did not even adhere to the same religion as the Quraish, for they were Christians. In short, the Quraish had practically no influence on the political affairs of Abyssinia.

Finally, the Prophet ﷺ knew Abyssinia and loved it. In a *Hadeeth* that is related by Az-Zuhree, it is mentioned that Abyssinia was the land to which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ most loved to migrate. That love was perhaps founded upon many reasons:

- ◆ An-Najaashee was a just ruler.
- ◆ Abyssinians were Christians, and so they were closer to Islam than the polytheists of Arabia. That is why the believers became overjoyed when the Christians defeated the Magian polytheists of Persia, during a battle which occurred in the year 8 of Prophethood, while the Prophet ﷺ was still in Makkah.
- ◆ The Prophet ﷺ had knowledge about life in Abyssinia. His nursemaid was Umm Aiman ؓ, who, according to established reports in *Saheeh Muslim* and other *Hadeeth* compilations, was Abyssinian. It is related by Ibn Shihaab, as well as in *Sunan Ibn Maajah*, that Umm Aiman ؓ once prepared a dish that the Prophet ﷺ had not seen before. He ﷺ asked her, "What is this?" She ؓ said, "It is food that we make in our land, and I wanted to make a loaf of it for you." Given that Umm Aiman ؓ was the Prophet's nursemaid, which means that she spent a lot of time with him during his childhood, it is not unlikely that she spoke to the Prophet ﷺ about her homeland, its society, and its rulers.

The Secrecy of their Departure

Those of the Prophet's Companions ﷺ who went to Abyssinia on the first of the two famous migrations to that land departed from

Makkah in Rajab, five years after the beginning of the Prophet's mission. The travelling party consisted of ten men and four women – though it has been said that there were five women. As is indicated in the narration of Al-Waaqidee, they left secretly. Once the Quraish found out about their departure, they gave chase, but by the time they reached the sea, the Prophet's Companions ﷺ had already set sail, and were safely on their way towards Abyssinia.

Upon the Companions' arrival in Abyssinia, An-Najaashee gave them a warm and hospitable welcome. For the first time since they embraced Islam, they felt safe and free. Umm Salamah ﷺ, one of the Prophet's wives, said, "When we stopped to reside in the land of Abyssinia, we lived alongside the best of neighbours, An-Najaashee. We safely practiced our religion, and we worshipped Allah ﷻ without consequently being harmed. And we did not hear anything that we disliked."^[1]

The Names of Those Who Migrated to Abyssinia on the First of the Two Famous Migrations to that Land

The following is a list of the men who made the journey:

- ◆ 'Uthmaan ibn (son of) 'Affaan ibn Abee Al-'Aas ibn Umayyah ibn 'Abd-Shams ﷺ.
- ◆ 'Abdullah ibn 'Auf ibn 'Auf ibn 'Abd ibn Al-Haarith ibn Zuhrah ﷺ.
- ◆ Az-Zubair ibn Al-'Awaam ibn Khuwailid ibn Asad ﷺ.
- ◆ Abu Hudhaifah ibn 'Utbah ibn Rabee'ah ibn 'Abd-Shams ﷺ.
- ◆ Mus'ab ibn 'Umair ibn Haashim ibn 'Abd-Manaaf ibn 'Abdud-Daar ﷺ.
- ◆ Abu Salamah ibn 'Abdul-Asad ibn Hilaal ibn 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar ibn Makhzoom ﷺ.
- ◆ 'Uthmaan ibn Madh'oon ibn Habeeb ibn Wahb ibn

^[1] Refer to *Musnad Al-Imam Ahmad* (1/201, 202).