

A Commentary on the Holy Qur'an

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Foreword

by Hojjatol-Islam Maulana Syed Shamin-us- Sibtain Rizvi

This short treatise is a brief introduction, by two eminent scholars, to the Shia interpretation of Islam. The theme running through the book is that the Holy Prophet Muhammad named the Holy Family, the Ahlul Bait (consisting of the Lady Fatema and the Twelve Imams - of whom Ali is the first) as the true guardians of the Book and of the Faith, and identified them closely with the Holy Qur'an.

This book examines and discusses the many traditions about the its present arrangement was completed during the lifetime of the Holy Propht.

The authors provide a very useful guide to the meaning of Islam, placing it in the context of the other world relingions. This is followed by an introduction to the beliefs of Shia Islam and a short account of some of the principal truths of the Faith.

This revision was commissioned by Haj Mirza Mohammad taqui Ansariyan of Ansariyan Publications, Qum, Islamic Republic of Iran. His concern for the propagation of the faith is highly appreciated and honoured.

S.S.S.R.

19 May 1996 1 Muharram 1417 30th Urdi Bahesht 1375

Introduction

The Age of Rapid Change

This is the age of the conquest of time and space. Faster means of communication have brought changes to the movement of men and materials far beyond the imagination of former generations. Such ease of communication has brought revolutionary changes in ideology and mode of living and a new economic interdependence of nations. No nation in the world can remain in isolation if it hopes to advance in its economic and social life. Problems have ceased to be local, and the problems of one nation very soon have an impact upon the international community.

Such rapid change has affected not only the economic structure of the world; it has brought a more vital change in the exchange of thought and religious ideology. Economic and cultural forces always go hand in hand. However, while exchange in goods is a two-way traffic, in the cultural sphere this may not be the case. The conveyance of men and materials is visible, but the exchange in ideology is latent, visible only in its effects.

In this respect, there is no give and take. The groups with the greater political and economic power are bound to wield a stronger and a more compelling influence upon the weaker and poorer groups, leading to a revolution in the latter's intellectual and social life which is irresistible and which defies all reason. The West, with its economic superiority and its political position, has gained sway over most of the Eastern countries.

Muslim communities have been constantly and strongly influenced by materialist thought and lifestyle, to the extent that some have become not only irreligious, but anti-religious. A knowledge of the English language, which is seen to be necessary for the welfare and improvement of economic and political life, has led many Muslims to neglect to learn their own mother tongue and the languages of the Holy Qur'an, Arabic and Persian.

Such Muslims whose education comes through the medium of English can read and understand material presented in the English language better than in their mother tongue, and even books on the Holy Qur'an and on their faith have an appeal for them only if they are in English. Such people care more for the beauty of the language than for the correctness of the material expressed.

Many Western translators of the Holy Qur'an and most of those who produce literature on Islam in the English language are, in fact, the anti-Muslim elements whose aim is to distort the facts about the faith and cause confusion about Islamic belief. These hostile elements continue to blacken the name of the Holy Prophet and of Islam through their intentional mistranslations, misinterpretations, misrepresentations and distortions of the facts.

Such distortions are framed in English of such linguistic excellence and delusive argument that the blind admirers of the English language, being ignorant of the truths of their faith, are easily conditioned to accept what they read, and thus serve the purpose of the hostile producers of these publications.

in so doing, they become agents of the enemy. Had it not been for these writers against Islam and its Holy Founder, God alone knows how many people throughout the world might have embraced the truth. in this way western writers have not only misrepresented Muslim ideology, but have obstructed sincere seekers of the truth from discovering the real Islam.

While these hostile elements continue to distort our religious belief and social traditions, it is our duty to God and His Word, and to the faith of Islam, to present the truth and make it clear to every true seeker and to dispel any doubts created by hostile forces.

Translations of the Holy Qur'an into English

The Holy Qur'an has been translated into the English language by many scholars of repute, and some of these have provided detailed notes of commentary. They include: George Sale, J.N. Rodwell, E.H. Palmer, M. Pickthal, Hafiz Ghulam Sarwar, N.i Dawood and M.H. Shakir.

Translation of the text alone is not sufficient unless each revelation is put into its true context. The most recent translation, by M.H. Shakir, contains some brief and useful notes on selected verses, but these are too few and too brief Had he lived longer, he might have provided a fuller commentary.

Earlier, Badhsa Husain of Lucknow attempted a detailed work which was published in two volumes. But he too died before completing his work However, he used the translation of J.N. Rodwell, not his own, and his notes are based on the sermons of some maulvi and lack any reference to modern-day problems and do not attempt to answer anti-Islamic criticism. This fact the author openly acknowledged in his introduction.

The translations by Christian scholars such as Rodwell, Sale and Palmer, etc. are clearly prejudiced. Any Islamic scholar can easily see that these translators betray either a faulty knowledge of Arabic or an intention to distort the truths of the Holy Qur'an to serve their own purposes. Their purpose seems, clearly, to prejudice the reader against the Qur'an rather than help him to understand it. To expose these translations, particularly those by Christian scholars, would require more time and space than this work can provide.

The following quotations offer the opinions of some who were impartial in their attitude to the Holy Qur'an. The great Christian scholar, Sir E. Dennison Ross, in referring to the translation by Mr Sale, shows the full extent of the ingenuity and the lies that those prejudiced against Islam have resorted to.

It must, however be borne in mind that the Koran plays a far greater role among the Muhammadans than does the Bible in Christianity, in that it provides not only the canon of their faith, but also the text-book of their ritual and the principles of their civil law.

For many centuries the acquaintance which the majority of Europeans possessed of Muhammadanism was based almost entirely on distorted reports of fanatical Christians which led to the dissemination of a multitude of gross calumnies. what was good in Muhammadanism was entirely ignored, and what was not good, in the eyes of Europe, was exaggerated or misinterpreted.

It must not, however, be forgotten that the central doctrine preached by Muhammad to his contemporaries in Arabia, who worshipped the star; to the Persians, who acknowledged Ormuz and Ahriman; to the Indians who worshipped idols; and to the Turks, who had no particular worship, was the unity of God, and that the simplicity of his creed was probably a more potent factor in the spread of Islam than the sword of the Ghazis.

It is difficult to decide to what extent Mr sale's citations in the notes represent first-hand use of Arabic commentators, but I fear that the result of a close inquiry only points to very little original research on his part. His

refutations, which swell the work to a large volume, are of little (use) or none at all, being often unsatisfactory, and sometimes impertinent.

I do not wish to imply that Sale did not know Arabic, but I do maintain that his work as it stands gives a misleading estimate of his original researches, and that his tribute to Marracci falls far short of his actual indebtedness.

(from Introduction to Sale's Qur'an, by E. Dennison Ross, Frederick Warne, London)

The translation of the Holy Qur'an by Mr Sale is claimed by its publishers to be the best and the most accurate. Such a claim is regarded as false by another great Christian scholar, E.H. Palmer:

From the large amount of exegetical matter which has been incorporated in his (Sale's) text, and from the style of language employed, which differs widely from the nervous energy and the rugged simplicity of the original. his (Sale's) work can scarcely be regarded as a fair representation of the Qur'an.

In spite of his endeavour to distort the meaning of the Holy Qur'an in order to help the missionaries and to divert the attention of the world from the Holy Book, George Sale could not help confessing its glorious and miraculous nature:

The Koran is universally allowed to be written with utmost elegance and purity of language. It is confessedly the standard of the Arabic tongue, inimitable by any human pen and therefore insisted on as a permanent miracle.

(George Sale, in the preliminary discourse to his translation) Every seeker of the truth will want to hear what the great Western scholar Goethe says of the Holy Qur'an: However often we turn to the Qur'an, it soon attracts, astounds and in the end reinforces reverence. Thus this Book will go on exercising through all ages its most potent influence.

Sarojini Naidu a great scholar and famous poetess in India, said in her lecture on The Ideals of Islam in Madras in 1918's As I read the Qur'an, I find those dynamic principles of life not mystic but practical ethics for the daily conduct of life suited to the whole world Dr A. Bertherand declared to the intellectuals of the world: To seek knowledge is the duty of every Muslim man and woman.

Seek knowledge even though it be in China The Savants are the heirs of the Prophet These profound words of the Great Reformer are indisputable contradiction to those who seek and exert themselves In putting the responsibility of the intellectual degradation of Muslims upon the spirit of the Qur'an.

Let them read and meditate upon this great Book and they will find it, at every passage, a constant attack upon idolatry and materialism; they will read that the Prophet incessantly called the attention and the meditation of his people to the splendid marvels, to the mysterious phenomenon of creation.

The incredulous, sceptical and unbelieving may convince themselves that the importance of this Book and its doctrine was not to throw back, eventually, the intellectual and moral faculties of a whole people. On the

contrary, those who have followed its counsels have been, as we have described in the course of this study, the creators of a civilisation which is abounding unto this day.

The claim that Islam was spread by the sword is a distortion of the truth. What aggression could the lonely one, the Holy Prophet, commit? What sword was in the hand of one who was himself persecuted and whose followers were tortured and killed? This vicious fabrication has been exposed by many great scholars Of the West One of these, De Lacy O'Leary, writes:

History makes it clear, however, that the legend of fanatical Muslims sweeping through the world and forcing Islam at the point of the sword upon conquered races is one of the most fantastic and absurd myths that historians have ever repeated.

(De Lacy O'Leary: Islam at the Crossroads, 1923) About the perfection of Islamic law, the great British politician, Edmund Burke, wrote: The Muhammadan law, which is binding on all from the crowned head to the meanest subject, is a law interwoven with a system of the wisest the most learned and the most enlightened jurisprudence that ever existed in the world.

(Edmund Burke in his "Impeachment of Warren Hastings")

The Muslim scholars Maulvi Muhammad Ali of the Ahmedia school and Allama Yousuf Ah have shown clear bias towards their own school in their translations and commentaries.

Both have consistently avoided reference to the source of the Ahlul-Bait, and even seem to object to making reference to the holy ones when they are the direct concern of the revelations. Also, when one compares Muhammad Ali's work with the great commentary Majma'ul Byan of the Shia authority Shaikh-e- Tabarsi, it is obvious that there has been a great deal of borrowing without acknowledgement. Besides this, basic Shia sources have been deliberately avoided.

Yousuf Ali's work, likewise, omits reference to the Ahlul- Bait. This suggests that, either, this scholar has wilfully avoided using this most accredited and authentic source of Qur'anic knowledge, or was totally ignorant of the holy ones and their position in Islam. The Holy Prophet openly declared that the Qur'an is with the Ahlul-Bait and that, in order to avoid going astray, Muslims should attach themselves to these two (See the Hadeethuth Thaqualain).

The interpretations offered by these scholars clearly suit the bias of their own respective schools and, intentionally or unintentionally, provide a faulty view of the Qur'an and of the holy ones. The sources they have used reveal a bias against the Holy Ahlul-Bait.

One conspicuous feature of the writings of the Ahmadi scholar is the practical denial of the miraculous, by presenting the miracles of the Apostles of God as non-spiritual events and thus denying the special spiritual powers with which the Holy Apostles were endowed. Translations of the Holy Qur'an into English The Holy Qur'an has been translated into the English language by many scholars of repute, and some of these have provided detailed notes of commentary. They include: George Sale, J.N. Rodwell,

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Misinterpretation

The question is: from whence comes the venom which is used against Islam and its Holy Founder? How is it that some non- Muslim scholars misunderstand Islam, while others understand and appreciate it? This is the question for which we must find an answer. This misunderstanding exists not only in the minds of the anti-Islam element, but also in the minds of some Muslims whose only available source of knowledge is literature in the English language which provides faulty information about Islam and its Founder. However sincere these Muslims are in seeking to know the truth of Islam, the literature available to them makes them doubt the claims of Islam to be God's revealed religion and its Holy Founder the Apostle of God.

Consider, for instance, the following:

1 The fabricated story of the Holy Prophet being frightened by the heavenly Messenger, being comforted by Lady Khadija, and being advised of the apostleship conferred on him by Waraqa bin Nawfil.

2 The false stories of sexual lust indulged in by the Holy Prophet.

3 Descriptions of the defensive resistance which Islam was forced to exercise, such as wielding the sword for territorial ambition.

4 The fabricated story of the Holy Prophet seating one of his wives on his shoulders to show her the slave dance.

5 The denial of the miracles of the apostles of God and the Holy Prophet.

6 The false story of the Virgin Mary having contact with Joseph in the Sanctuary, assigning a human father to the Holy Prophet Jesus and thus denying his miraculous birth.

7 Creating doubts upon the bodily Ascension (Me'raj) of the Holy Prophet.

8 Aligning the sinful ones with those purified by God Himself.

9 Misinterpreting the Qur'anic laws of heritage relating to the Apostles of God.

10 Inventing false traditions in the name of the Holy Prophet.

11 Hiding the defects, drawbacks and the natural deficiencies of some pet heroes, and praising them in spite of their known errors, and presenting even tyrants as leaders of the faith.

12 Lowering the position of the holy ones in favour of those who can never be their equal.

13 Misinterpreting verses of the Holy Qur'an to suit a particular theory.

14 Misinterpreting the significance of the most important historic event of Ghadeer-e-Khum.

15 Denying that the Holy Prophet appointed his successor, claiming that he left this world without doing so.

16 Presenting as legal and warranted the acts of some political leaders after the departure of the Holy Prophet, and presenting them as heroic deeds for the faith. Such falsehoods and misrepresentations appear in the translations and works of many non-Muslim writers. And those who take guidance from the Holy Ahlul-Bait have a responsibility to present the truth to the world and correct the lies against Islam which are misleading many men and women who are searching for the truth. Besides the above falsehoods,

there is also mischievous propoganda against the genuineness of the Holy Qur'an, which throws doubt about the completeness of the Holy Book and the arrangement of the material in it In reply to this hostile material which is misleading its readers, the only source of correct information about the faith and its truths is the verdict of the Ahlul-Bait, the authorities divinely set up by the Lord through the Holy Prophet. The pity is that this panacea for all evils has not been made available by us for the information and guidance of seekers of the truth and as an answer to the hostile forces.

Therefore, instead of attempting to answer each mischievous publication and each mischief-maker who may appear on the scene each day in a different garb, the foremost concern of the advocates of Islam and its Holy Founder is to put a stop to these poisonous publications and bring Out an authentic version of the Holy Qur'an in the English language so that there will be no misunderstandings of the Qur'anic truth either by uninformed friends or misinformed foes. With such an authentic source,

we can quell all antagonistic movements against the teachings of Islam and the Holy Prophet by making available to the misguided ones an authentic source of the faith. Until this is done, errors and misunderstandings will continue to occur. And to do the task, the responsibility rests with those who call themselves the devotees of the Ahlul-Bait, the Shias.

I considered it my first concern to clarify the actual position of the Holy Qur'an, which is the greatest and ever-current miracle of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, the last Apostle of God until the Day of Final Judgement. Because of the importance of this subject and its direct concern with the faith, I have taken detailed notes from Hujjatul Islam Ayatullah Alhaj Allama Agha Mirza Mahdi Pooya Yazdi, one of the well-known authorities on the Holy Qur'an and Islam. These notes were prepared with special care and effort, using authentic sources, and are presented with maximum brevity.

There is clear evidence of the following:

1. The Qur'an, as a whole and complete Book, was revealed to the Holy Prophet on the Night of Qadr (2:185,44:3,97:1). 2. In the course of its Tanzeel, or gradual revelation, as and when the verses were revealed, the Holy Prophet put them in their respective places as he was divinely directed to do. 3. The Holy Qur'an was recorded in writing at least by the following:

(a) Ameerul Momineen Ali ibne Abi Taleb, whose collection contained not only the text, but also the notes - both ordinary and special - from the Holy Prophet. (b) Abdullah ibne Mas'ood (c) Ma'aaz ibne Jabal (d) Obai ibne Kaab 4. The Holy Prophet, before his departure from the world, made the well-known historic announcement, universally acknowledged by the Muslim world, that he was leaving behind for the people (not one particular person, for the words are clear, Feekom, "among you") the Saqalain (or Thaqaalain),

the two weighty or important things, the Kitaaballah, the Book of God and the Ahlul-Bait. This shows that by that time the Qur'an had been collected and formed a complete Book. 5. If the Qur'anic verses had not been collected into a complete Book, what was the Book to which Omar

referred when he said in reply to the demand of the Holy Prophet for pen and paper, Hasbona Kitaaballah, "Sufficient for us is the Book of God."

With all this unchallenged evidence of history, any one who suggests that the verses of the Qur'an were collected by some one else, or who suggests its Tahreef is either betraying a determination not to know the truth, or an inability to understand it Readers may refer to the notes by Ayatullah Pooya Yazdi on Tahreef where they will find the truth about the compilation of the Qur'an and the genuineness of the version in our possession.

In addition to the detailed notes from Ayatullah Pooya Yazdi, I wrote to the great scholar-divines, the Mujtahids in Iran and Iraq, and have obtained their respective verdicts on Tahreef in the Qur'an, providing a decisive verdict for the Shia world. (See the Fatwas).

Thus, any talk denying the genuineness, completeness, originality and correctness in the arrangement of the material in the Qur'an is anti-Shia and anti-Islamic.

With regard to the other doctrines of Islam, about which many slanderous allegations have been made aimed at poisoning the mind of the general public, I have given short explanatory notes under each topic, and have quoted one or two of the many verses of the Qur'an on which the doctrine and its practice are based. This has been offered to the seekers of the truth, and that the general public may know what is meant by the original Islam which, in order to distinguish it from other sects, is termed Shiaism.

The Originality and Genuineness Of The Holy Qur'an in Its Text and Its Arrangement

by Hajjatul-Islam Ayatullah Allama Haji Mirza Mahdi Pooya Yazdi

The great majority of scholars of all schools of thought in Islam agree that the Holy Qur'an, as it is today in our hands, was put into writing under the command, and under the personal supervision, of the Holy Prophet himself, and that there were no additions, omissions or alterations whatsoever.

There are, however, a few traditionalists of the Sunni as well as the Shia schools who, influenced by tradition rather than reason and historical fact, have held the view that some omissions and alterations occurred before official assent was given to the present version by the Third Caliph. The advocates of this view have not succeeded in providing any evidence of this. Their views remain as individual opinion with support from others. Our intention here is to:

1. Point out the reasons underlying these doubts.
2. Weigh up the traditions put forward in support of the doubts.
3. Given the internal and external historical evidence for and against these theories.
4. Explain what Muslims are required to believe about the Holy Qur'an as a part of their belief.

Before dealing with these matters, the following points must of necessity be made.

The Qur'an: What Does it Mean?

By the Qur'an we mean the verses, phrases, sentences and chapters uttered by the Holy Prophet of Islam, not as his own words, but as the Word and the Book of God revealed to him; this he claimed as his Everlasting Miracle which bears testimony to his Prophethood; and with this he challenged not only those who doubted its origin, and not only humankind alone, but even the Jinns, saying that even if the Jinns and men joined forces to produce the like of it, they would never be able to do even a small part of it This challenge was made not to any particular age, but to all ages.

By this definition we exclude all the utterances of the Holy Prophet which he did not claim to be the words of God (although the ideas and subject matter were certainly a revelation from God).

The definition also excludes the words of the Holy Prophet which he presented to the people as the Word of God, but not as a miracle or a part of it with which he challenged the world (namely the various Ahadees-e-Qudsi). These Ahadees-Qudsi are so numerous and abundant that, collected together, they would be no less than the size of the Holy Qur'an, if not more, but their value is no greater than the other genuine traditions of the Holy Prophet This definition must be kept in mind throughout the discussion of the Holy Qur'an.

1. Of the religious records of historical value, pre- Islamic or post-Islamic, in our possession, no document can ever compete with the Holy Qur'an in authenticity. Of the historical records which the Muslims claim to

be most authentic and genuine - of the Sunni school the Sehha-e Sitta and of the Shia school the KotobeArba'a - none can be said to have been within the reach of every Muslim from his earliest years until his death as has the Holy Qur'an. And no tradition is considered so important that every Muslim child must learn, recite and memorise it word for word with grammatical accuracy and phonetic perfection as they must do with the Holy Qur'an.

2. This importance and care which is given to the Qur'an by every Muslim did not emerge in a later period. The Muslims were attracted to the Holy Qur'an as the Word of God from the time of its revelation to the Holy Prophet and its recitation to the people. The Holy Qur'an itself; from the time of its revelation, encouraged the people in various ways to learn, read, recite and memorise it and to ponder over every word of it and to listen carefully when it was recited. When one recites it, one must first prepare for it by dissociating oneself from anything which would cause any diversion of thought or distraction of attention (16:98-7:204).

3. The Holy Prophet was commanded by God not to be in a hurry in the recitation, or in the arrangement, of the Holy Qur'an, but to follow the divine order in both respects. (This indicates that the arrangement is not to be according to the date of the revelation). In short, the student of the Holy Qur'an will realise the importance and care attached to the Qur'an by its Author; and therefore the Muslims who rightly believe that God is the Author of the Holy Qur'an, show the utmost devotion to the Holy Book and obey the orders required of them. They learn it, and make their children learn it and put it into writing.

Thus the Muslims in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet were taught that to learn the Holy Qur'an is "Ibadat" (Devotion); to recite it is "Ibadat"; to write it down is "Ibadat"; to teach others and make them read and learn it by heart and understand it is "Ibadat"; and to use the verses of the Holy Qur'an in daily life is "Ibadat". History records people who never used any other verse or phrase or sentence in their life than the words of the Holy Qur'an. The Holy Qur'an declares that the purpose of the coming of the Holy Prophet was to bring the teachings of the Book (the Divine Book) and to show the importance of the written word. If the teacher is absent, the student can read the written word. The Holy Qur'an commands the people, in their business transactions, to write down their contracts before witnesses to avoid later doubts and disputes.

Is it possible that the Author of the Holy Qur'an, who attaches so much importance to writing down our business affairs, should not care for His own important work, namely the provision of a Book containing the fundamental principles of the true, divine, universal and final message, a message which is not only for one section of humanity, or for a particular period of time, but for the human race as a whole, for all times and for all parts of the earth?

The authenticity and genuineness of the version of the Holy Qur'an now in our possession, and its being the same Qur'an uttered by the Holy Prophet, is so evident and obvious that no Muslim scholar of any standing has ever doubted that this same version of the Holy Qur'an - every letter, word, sentence, verse and chapter - was uttered by the Holy Prophet. In other

words, what we have in our possession is the Qur'an. The dispute is about omissions and alterations in the arrangement of some letters, and not about additions.

Alterations and alternatives given by some commentators regarding the writing or pronunciation of some words in the Holy Book do not effect any substantial change either in the meaning or the significance of phrases or sentences. This will be dealt with in discussing variations in the same word, for example "Malika" and "Malika". In short, the Muslim World throughout the ages has believed unanimously that nothing has been added to the Holy Qur'an now in our possession. Religious records other than the Holy Qur'an, Islamic and non-Islamic, are suspected of containing passages and even chapters which have been added to the original work.

Having in mind this complete authenticity of the Holy Qur'an in every part, the Holy Prophet and his companions and scholars in subsequent generations are unanimous in the belief that the Holy Qur'an is to be regarded as the standard and the criterion upon which other religious records, Islamic and non-Islamic, must be judged.

Any utterance or action attributed to the Holy Prophet or the Holy Imams of his House which may disagree with the Holy Qur'an is to be considered spurious and must be rejected. This was declared by the Holy Prophet and by Ali, Hasan and Husain and by the succeeding nine Imams of the Holy House, which means that the Qur'an existed as the standard and criterion for the verification of the falsehood and truth of other statements and narratives available to the public through the ages until 260 A.H.

There is no doubt that the Qur'an in our possession is the same as the version which received the official assent of the Third Caliph. All that has been said about the omission or alteration refers to the arrangement or the wording of verses or chapters in the period between the departure of the Holy Prophet and the official assent of the Third Caliph to the present version.

As has already been pointed out, the Holy Qur'an was in use in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet. There was a keen desire on the part of Muslims, men, women and children, to possess the Book - in writing or, mostly, by heart. There were also the chosen scholars among the early Muslims to whom the Holy Prophet had entrusted the duty of recording the Qur'an as it was revealed and recited by him. The foremost of these was Ali ibne Abi Taleb, Jafar ibne Abi Taleb;

besides Ali there were Abdullah ibne Mas'ood and Mas'ab ibne Omair among the earliest Muslims in Mecca, and Obai ibne Kaab among the earliest adherents in Medina, Ma'az ibne Jabal, Salim Maula Hazaifa and others. Jafar ibne Abi Taleb was the head of the early Muslims who had migrated to Abyssinia and he was a master of the Qur'an so far revealed. Mas'ab ibne Omair was sent to Medina to teach the Qur'an to the people before the migration of the Holy Prophet to that place.

These people recorded the Qur'an in writing under the direct command and personal supervision of the Holy Prophet, in his presence, as it was revealed, placing each part of it in its relevant place as commanded by the Holy Prophet, and reading their manuscripts to him then and there for his

approval and also repeatedly afterwards. These scribes were considered to be responsible for teaching the Qur'an to others. They were regarded as the masters and teachers of the Holy Qur'an during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet and thereafter.

These people, and thousands of prominent companions (Sahabas) who were interested in learning the Holy Qur'an and its meaning, and their disciples such as Abdullah ibne Abbas and others, all lived in the intermediary period between the departure of the Holy Prophet from this world and the time that the Third Caliph gave official assent to the present version. They taught Muslims throughout the length and breadth of the fast-Expanding Muslim Empire. And the people of various races and creeds learnt it by heart and wrote it down for their own use. In fact, it is said that in the one battle of Yamama, which took place about six months after the departure of the Holy Prophet, seven hundred Huffaz (those who know by heart) were killed in a single day's fight.

The Qur'an existed during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet in the form of an arranged Book as approved by the Holy Prophet himself. As the Holy Prophet said, "Gabriel would place before me the Qur'an for review once a year, but this year he did it twice, which indicates that the time of my departure is close at hand." It is evident that the divine Author and the Holy Prophet both guarded the Qur'an to the extent that no adulteration of any kind could be made by any profane hand, and that the Qur'an received its complete arrangement and order not later than about three months before the departure of the Holy Prophet. It is to this revealed Book in its complete form and available to all that the Holy Prophet referred when he declared to his followers: "I leave amongst you Two Great Things, the Book of God and my Ahlul-Bait."

And it was with reference to the complete Book of God, which was in the hands of the Muslims at the time of the departure of the Holy Prophet, that Omar dared to say reply to the demand of the Holy Prophet for paper and ink, "Hasbona Kitaballa", that is, "Sufficient for us is the Book of God" This clearly proves that the Qur'an in its complete and duly arranged form existed among the people, and was within the reach of the common man, as were the Ahlul-Bait who were left by the Holy Prophet together with the Qur'an. If this were not so, a reference to the "Book of God" is meaningless.

The Holy Qur'an claims for itself a pre-Existence with God (in the Lauhe Mahfooz, the Secured Tablet) and the Kitabe Maknoon, ie. the Hidden Book (for believers) or at least in the mind of the Holy Prophet (for unbelievers). The arrangement of the revealed book should be in accordance with the pre-revealed arrangement, rather than in the order of the date of its revelation. For instance, a poet or writer may arrange his lyrics or articles in his mind. Although circumstances may force him to recite portions from two lyrics of different method on the same occasion, when he comes to put the work into writing, the lines of the lyrics will be put in their correct order irrespective of the date of the recitation.

Although there is no problem, theological, theoretical or practical, which the Qur'an has not dealt with (and it surpasses all scriptural records of pre-Islamic or post-Islamic periods in the abundant variety of its contents), yet

its method of approach, presentation and solution is exclusively unique. It does not deal with a topic in the systematic way - by ordinary authors of theology or even by any apostolic writer; on the contrary, it expressly says that it has adopted a special method of its own, with changing topics, moving from one subject to another, or reverting to the previous one and deliberately repeating the same subject in order to reinforce the understanding, learning and memorising of it:

And certainly We have used various arguments for men in this Qur'an, every kind of description, but most men consent not to aught but denying. (17:89)

And certainly We have repeated (the verse) to them that they may be mindful, but the greater number of men consent not to aught but denying. (25:50) Say! Have ye considered that if God taketh away your hearing and your sight and setteth a seal on your heart, who is the god besides God that can bring it to you? See how We repeat the verses, yet they turn away. (6:46)

Say! He hath the power that He should send on you chastisement from above you or from beneath your feet, or that He should throw you into confusion (making you) of different parties, and make some of you taste the fighting of others. See how We repeat the verses that they may understand (6:65) The repetition is to show forth in various ways the signs (of the Unity of God).

From the following verse of the Holy Qur'an, it is quite obvious that the Holy Qur'an was already aware that there would be those who would accuse its Author of scattering its subject- matter here and there. For this reason, the verse (and other verses) explains the special and unique system of presentation:

And thus do We (variously) repeat the verses and that they may say, Thou hast learnt (them from others) and that We may make it clear to a people who know. (6:106)

However, it is a fact that the Holy Qur'an deals in each chapter of a particular rhythm with various topics in various ways, and this variety only adds to its unique beauty and matchless eloquence. Any attentive reciter or intelligent audience of the Holy Qur'an, while -sing through variations in one rhythm, will enjoy what the Holy Qur'an itself declares:

God hath the best announcement, a Book comfortable in its various parts, repeating thereof do make tremble the skins of those who fear the Lord; then their skins and hearts became pliant to the remembrance of God; This is God's guidance. He guideth with it whomsoever he willeth; and (as for) him whom God alloweth to err, there shall be no guide for him.

Is he then who has to guard himself with his own person against the evil chastisement on the Resurrection Day? And it will be said to the unjust: "Taste ye what ye earned."

Those before them rejected (the apostles) therefore there came unto them the chastisement from whence they perceived not.

So God made them taste the disgrace in this world's life, and certainly the chastisement of the hereafter is greater; if they only know (it)!

And certainly We have set forth for men in this Qur'an similitudes of every sort that they may mind.

An Arabic Qur'an without any crookedness that they may (guard) against evil.

God setteth forth a parable; there is a man in whom are (several) partners differing from one another, and there is another man (devoted) wholly to a man. Are they two alike in condition? (All) praise is God's; nay! most of them know not (39:23-29)

Even those who doubted the genuineness of the arrangement of the present version did not claim that the whole arrangement of the verses in all the chapters has been affected. There are chapters which were undoubtedly revealed in complete form, namely Chapters 54, 55, 56 and the chapters immediately preceding and succeeding them. One will find the same variation of subject is manifested in those chapters. This variety of expression in rhythmical form is found not only in the chapters, but even in the verses of the Holy Book. These are the facts an intelligent and a sincere student of the Holy Qur'an will recognise in studying the Book.

The Causes of Doubt

There is no doubt that the irresistible fascinating force and challenging power of the Holy Qur'an were the main means of conversion ever since the start of the Holy Prophet's mission. Opponents did everything they could to prevent the Holy Prophet and his disciples from reciting the Qur'an to the public, and to obstruct people, the young in particular, from listening to it. There is abundant historical evidence for this. Opponents also tried to overcome the force and effect of the recital of the Holy Qur'an by trying to disturb its recital by interjections:

And those who disbelieve say: "Listen ye not to this Qur'an and make noise therein." (41:26) One of the consequences of this is the story that, when the Holy Prophet while reciting Sura 53 (Wan-Najm - The Star) reached verse 20, one of the infidels among the audience uttered this passage of his own in continuation of the verse,

thus adulterating the lines and disturbing the sequence of the succeeding verses. Whereupon the infidels prostrated themselves as a sign of their approval and satisfaction. This shows that they had a pre-arranged plan to disturb the recital of the Qur'an by the Holy Prophet, which is condemned by the Qur'an as a satanic ploy used against all preceding prophets when they used to deliver God's message:

And We sent not before thee any apostle or prophet but when he recited (Our message), reading of the devil made his (interrupting) desire in (between) the recital; but God annulleth that which the devil casteth; then God doth establish His signs and God is All-Knowing, All-Wise. (22:52)

So that He may make what the devil casteth a trial for those in whose hearts is disease and those whose hearts are hard, and verily the unjust are in a great opposition. (22:53)

And that those who have been given the knowledge may know that it is the truth from thy Lord, so they may believe in it and their hearts may be lowly before it; and verily God is the Guide, of those who believe, towards the right path. (22:54)

It is surprising that some critics and some ignorant commentators of the Holy Qur'an attribute the satanic addition to the Holy Prophet himself, but the internal evidence of Sura 53 itself (ie. the verses preceding and succeeding verse 20) make the utterance by the Holy Prophet himself impossible. The opponents, during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet and afterwards, did not hesitate to use every means to divert the attention of Muslims from the Qur'an and weaken its influence upon the minds of the people.

An unauthorised attempt was made by the immediate ruling Party to make their own collection of the Qur'an, separate from the collection already prepared under the supervision and instruction of the Holy Prophet by the scribes who were put in charge of recording the Qur'an in writing as it was revealed, together with a commentary by the Holy Prophet.

The First Caliph, on the advice of the Second, entrusted Zaid ibne Sabit with the task, a youth of no experience or standing when compared with the official scribes appointed by the Holy Prophet, namely Abdullah ibne

Mas'ood and Obai ibne Kaab, besides Ali ibne Taleb who was foremost in the knowledge of every letter and of the significance and implications of the Holy Qur'an The incompetency of Zaid ibne Sabit concerning the Qur'an is evident from the remarks of Obai ibne Kaab when a dispute arose between the two about the recital of a certain passage of the Qur'an:

Thou teacheth me Qur'an? while I was reading the Qur'an with the Holy Prophet while thou wert yet a child playing in the streets. A similar remark was passed by the same Obai ibne Kaab against the Second Caliph in a dispute about another point. Obai told the Second Caliph:

I used to read Qur'an with the Holy Prophet while you were yet busy in your transactions in the Bazaar.

Neither Zaid nor Omar dared to refute the claim of Obai. Zaid ibne Sabit had to refer to the ordinary people who possessed some scattered portions of the Qur'an, either in writing or in memory, rather than the acknowledged authorities mentioned above. Unfortunately, neither the First nor the Second Caliph was an authority on the Qur'an and there are authentic evidences of their ignorance of it in matters of State administration Not only did Zaid lack academic qualifications to compile the Qur'an, but the dispute between himself and the Second Caliph during his reign are proof of the lack of regard both had for the revelation In this dispute, the Second Caliph wanted something from Zaid, who declined to comply The Second Caliph said:

Look! It is my command and not the revelation with which you could play.

This shows that playing with the revelation meant nothing to either of them as long as their desires were served. However, as history shows, they attempted the collection of the Qur'an in this manner and something was collected; but it was not published and remained under the bees of Ayesha or Hafsa. The Muslims had no access to it, and it is also said that a goat devoured a portion of the collection. This anecdote is further testimony to the lack of regard for their collection.

The reign of the first two Caliphs passed away and the collection remained where it has been left years ago. But the Qur'an was being written, taught, learnt, memorised, recited, discussed and applied in the daily lives of Muslims throughout the fast- expanding Muslim Empire.

The Second Caliph is said to have claimed that even the ladies had a greater knowledge of the Qur'an than had those at the helm of the administration. No one complained of lack of access to the collection by Zaid, and no one asked the State to publish it The teachers of the Qur'an continued to perform their duties directly and through their disciples throughout the Muslim world quite independently of the collection in the possession of the State.

The first half of the reign of the Third Caliph had also passed when a variation in the recital of the Qur'an was noticed among Muslim soldiers who were fighting the infidels on the remote borders of the Empire. This worried Hozaifa-Yamani, one of the most trusted confidants and a prominent disciple of the Holy Prophet. He advised the Third Caliph as a precaution to unify Muslims and prevent diversity in recitals. The Third Caliph again entrusted the work to Zaid.

Zaid did what Hozaifa had suggested and it was adopted as the official version to which the Third Caliph gave his assent. Several copies of that official version were made and despatched to various parts of the Empire so that people could revise their versions accordingly. There was no complaint of any omissions, additions or alterations to the Caliph or his party. Even the opponent parry who were making charge after charge against the Caliph about deviation from the right path made no complaint. The Third Caliph was blamed for ordering that other variations from the official version be burnt or destroyed.

But no one charged him with adulteration of the text of the Qur'an. However, in spite of the utmost care taken by the ruling party over the publication of the official version and the destruction of other versions, they did not succeed; all the other current recitations have come down to us in the form of the seven or ten recitations. The Omayyid rulers could not stop the publication of the other recitations.

The presence of the seven or the ten variations of the recitation, and the absence of any copy or record of a different version of the Holy Qur'an after the publication of the received version, is the best proof of the genuineness of the received version. However, unwarranted remarks attributed to members of the ruling party, before official assent was given to the received version, provided an opportunity for Muslims and others who could not otherwise disturb the miraculous force of the Qur'an, to spread rumours about the incompleteness and incorrect arrangement of the received version.

These rumours gained currency alongside other religious and political diversifies. And, in spite of the efforts of the Holy Imams of the House of the Holy Prophet, these rumours found their way into the books of traditions, first among the Sunni School and even Shia books of traditions were not untouched by them. As a result, some of the scholars of both schools who failed to make a proper examination of the external and internal evidence concerning the traditions accepted these rumours in the face of the indisputable genuineness of the Holy Qur'an.

Another reason for the rise of doubts was the traditions which assert that the collection of the Qur'an by Ali was in one form and those by Abdullah ibne Mas'ood and Obai ibne Kaab were in different forms. There are traditions about the collection of Ali: whether he refused to place his collection at the disposal of the ruling party and the public, or whether the ruling party refused to accept it when it was offered, and whether this happened in the reign of the First Caliph (as Majlisi maintains) or of the Second Caliph.

The collection remained with Ali and his successors in the office of Imam out of the reach of the public, and no one has claimed to have seen it or copied it, except for a few traditionalists who maintained that the Sixth Holy Imam, Jafar ibne Muhammad, showed the collection to them and allowed them to glimpse it, and that in one small Sura they found the names of seventy Munafiq. This is, however, contrary to Ali's declaration that no one must see the collection before the Last Imam appears. According to the tradition, the Sixth Imam gave the collection to the traditionalist and ordered him not to look at it, but he disobeyed him. The story seems absurd.

Why would the Imam entrust the collection to some one who would disobey him? In spite of all these contradictory traditions, there is no doubt that the collection in question was a fully detailed commentary on the Qur'an containing the revelations with their interpretations alongside. This was not the only miraculous text presented to mankind. The collections of Abdullah ibne Mas'ood and Obai ibne kaab and other acknowledged early students of the Qur'an surely had notes and interpretations for their own guidance, and may have had a different arrangement of the verses and chapters for commentary purposes (chronologically and subjectwise). These collections would be different from the current received version within the reach of people today.

The commentary nature of the collection of the close companions of the Holy Prophet is obvious from such traditions as the following: Abdullah ibne Mas'ood would recite with the verse of Muta (temporary marriage) the phrase *ila ajalin* (until a term) after *8 Famastamta tumbihi minhunna* (when you commit Muta with them). It is obvious that this phrase was used by him as an explanatory note of guidance and of protest when the Muta was prohibited by the Second Caliph.

Then there is the account that ibne Abaas used to recite *Fi Aliyin* (about Ali) after *Maonzila ilaik* (that which has already been sent unto thee) in verse 5:67 as a reference to the significance of the revelation when the people were neglecting it Or, in the verse *Innallahastafa Aadama wa Noohan*, there is a tradition that .ibne Abbas added *Aala Muhammad* (the descendants of Muhammad) After *Aala Imran*,

or replaced *Aala Imran* by *Aala Muhammad*. if this tradition is true, Abdullah ibne Abbas might have said that *Aala Muhammad* was meant, but not in the words of the Qur'an; if the words of the Qur'an were *Zorriyatun Ba-zahu min Ba'z*, Ali could not be included in *Aale Muhammad* and if *Zorriyatun Ba'zuhu* is omitted, people other than the House of the Holy Prophet would be included in the *Aal* (descendants) in the same way as all the followers of Pharaoh are included in *Aale Firaun*.

In short, the existence of the different collections of the Qur'an by different companions of the Holy Prophet, which were never published and which never gained currency among the Muslims (in part or in whole), can have value only as a commentary to the text. And this is why no student of the Holy Book ever raised objection to the received version, even though they voiced other complaints and grievances of religious importance against the ruling party, and did complain against the Third Caliph for committing an act of desecration by burning some copies of the Qur'an.

In summary, causes of doubts were:

1 The unwarranted, unauthorised and unnecessary attempt of the First Caliph and his party to make their own collections of the Qur'an.

2 The unwarranted and irresponsible utterances of some members of the ruling party about the incompleteness their own collection 3 The Claimed existence of a special collection of the Qur'an by Ali, complete in all aspects and respects.

4 The unsuccessful attempt of the Third Caliph to stop the other seven or ten recitations of the Qur'an except for the official version by burning and destroying some copies of the Qur'an with the other recitations.

5 The system of dotting and the introduction of the vowel signs and the other pronunciation marks by Hajjaj bin Yousuf about the end of the first century A.H., the purpose of which was to guard the recitation of the Qur'an from mispronunciation by non-Arabs.

6 The above gave opportunities to the enemies of Islam, external and internal, to criticise the authenticity of the Qur'an, to resist its miraculous force by adulterating the text by making insertions, and to make false claims about the omission and alteration of certain verses of the Qur'an.

Traditions on the Collection of the Holy Qur'an

We now examine a few references given by the traditionalists which have somehow found their way into the books of traditions of both the Sunni and the Shia Schools.

Regarding the first attempt of the ruling party to make a collection of their own, Bokhari quotes Zaid bin Thabit that, after the battle of Yamama, the First Caliph sent for Zaid and told him, in the presence of Omar, that he (Omar) had told him that many reciters of the Qur'an had been killed in the battle and that he was afraid that others would be killed and that a great portion of the Qur'an would be lost. Omar had said, "I believe that you should order the collection of the Qur'an",

and the First Caliph had replied, "How could I do what the Holy Prophet did not do?", to which Omar had replied, "BY God I swear, it is good that this be done". Said the Caliph to Zaid' "Omar continued demanding this of me until God opened my heart to it", claiming a sort of inspiration. Zaid said that the First Caliph had told him, "You are an intelligent young man whom we do not suspect, and you used to write the revelations for the Holy Prophet. You search for the Qur'an and collect it."

Zaid Says, "I swear on my God, if they had ordered me to carry out the task of shifting a mountain from its place, I would not have felt it so heavy a task as the one which they asked me to undertake." To the First Caliph he said, "How dare you do something which the Holy Prophet did not do?" and the First Caliph replied,

"By God I swear, it is good that this be done." He says, "Thereafter the First Caliph continued to ask me to undertake the task until God opened my heart as he had opened the heart of the First Caliph and of Omar. Thereafter I carried out a search for the Qur'an, collecting it from the pieces of wood, bones, and from the memories of the people, until I found the last verse or the Sura-e-Tauba with Abi Khozaima-e4nsari and with none other.¹¹ The collection remained with the First Caliph until his death and then passed to Omar and then to his daughter Hafsa.

Boldiari tells us that Hozaiyatibnil-Yaman, on his return from the expedition to Armenia and Azarbaijan, expressed his anxiety about the variation among the members of the expedition in the recitation of the Qur'an, and asked the Third Caliph to take the necessary steps to unite the Muslims to avoid controversy over the Book of God such as existed about the Holy Scriptures of the Jews and the Christians; even today there are different versions of the Old and New Testaments, some parts being regarded as apocryphal by some and not by others.

The Third Caliph asked Omar's daughter Hafsa to hand over the collection left with her so that copies could be made. He ordered Zaid, Abdullah ibne Zobair, Sayeed ibnul As and Abdur-Rahman ibne Harith ibne Hisham to make copies of it. The Third Caliph told the three Khoraishtes that wherever they differed from Zaid in the recitation of the Qur'an and its pronunciation, it should be written in the dialect of the Qoreish since it was revealed in their dialect.

They did as they were bidden and prepared copies of the collection, and returned the original to Hafsa and sent the copies to all corners of the

empire. The Third Caliph ordered the Qur'an in all other forms or collections to be burnt and destroyed.

Bokhari relates that the son of Zaid claimed that he had heard his father say, "when we were copying the collection, we missed a verse from Sura-e-Ahzab which I used to hear the Holy Prophet reciting; we searched for it we found it with Khozaimat ibne Thabith Ansari and we put it in the same Sura in the collection."

These two traditions of Bokhari regarding the collection of the reign of the First Caliph and the copying of it during the reign of the Third Caliph contain a slight contradiction regarding the missing verse.

Now, besides these two, there are twenty more traditions regarding the collection of the Qur'an, each contradicting the other in some way. Eleven of them are mentioned in the Muntakhab-e-Kanzul Ummal and the rest have been taken from Itqan of Suyooti and others. The following is a brief account of these traditions.

In one tradition ibne Abi Shaiba relates that Ali said that Abu Bakr was the greatest one in the collection of the Qur'an, being the first person to collect the Qur'an. Another tradition says that Abu Bakr collected the Qur'an on paper and asked Zaid ibne Thabit to review it; when Zaid refused, he sought the help of Omar to persuade Zaid, which he succeeded in doing, and the reviewed copy remained with Abu Bakr, being passed to Omar and then to Hafsa.

A third tradition from Hisam ibne Orwa claims that after the battle of Yamama, when some of the companions of the Holy Prophet who had collected the Qur'an were killed, Abu Bakr ordered Omar and Zaid ibne Thabit to sit at the gate of the Mosque and collect the Qur'an from the people.

Another tradition, from Muhammad ibne Seereen, relates that Omar was killed before the Qur'an was collected.

A fifth tradition says that, when Omar asked for one verse of the Holy Qur'an, he was told that it was with some one who was killed in the battle of Yamama. He became very worried and ordered the Qur'an to be collected, and was the first person to collect it in book form.

A sixth tradition tells us that Omar decided to collect the Qur'an and ordered that "whosoever has received from the Holy Prophet any portion of the Holy Qur'an should bring it to US". The people had the Qur'an on pieces of wood, stones, skin, leaves of trees and bones. Omar would not accept anything from any one unless it was certified by two witnesses. But he (Omar) was killed while the collection was still going on. Osman succeeded him and continued the task, also demanding two witnesses before he accepted anything.

Then Khozaimatibne Thabit came with the last two verses of the Sura-Bar'at, saying, "I have received it from the Holy Prophet and you have not got it in your Qur'an", to which Osman replied, "Yes, I also give evidence that these verses are from God, but tell me where we should place them. Abu Khozaimat said, "Place these two verses at the end of the last revealed portion of the Qur'an." Accordingly, they were placed at the end of the Sura-Bar'at.

The seventh tradition asserts that it was Omar who accepted these last verses of the Sura-Bar'at from a man of the Ansars without any witnesses, with his own confirmation of it.

The eighth tradition says that, after the battle of Yamama in which four hundred or seven hundred reciters of the Qur'an were killed, Zaid ibne Thabit approached Omar and said, "The Qur'an is the only unifying factor of our religion; if it is lost, our religion is also lost. I have decided to collect it in book form.",

to which Omar replied, "Wait until I ask Abu Bakr". Both went to Abu Bakr and informed him of their conversation. Abu Bakr replied, "Wait until I consult the Muslims." He then began to talk to the people, and all approved of the plan. Then they collected the Qur'an, and Abu Bakr ordered a crier to announce that whoever had a part of the Qur'an should bring it. A ninth tradition tells that Khozaimatibne Thabit said that he brought the last verses of the Sura-Tauba to Omar and Zaid ibne Thabit. Then Zaid asked Khozaimat who would give evidence in his support, to which Khozaimat replied that he did not know any one. Then Omar said that he was there to witness it.

The tenth tradition says that, when Omar had collected the Qur'an, he asked, "Who is the best in pronunciation?" The people said, "Syeed ibnul As", and then Omar asked, "Who is the best calligrapher?" The people named Zaid ibne Thabit. Then Omar said, "Let Syeed dictate and Zaid write." They made four copies, of which one was sent to Kufa, one to Basra, one to Damascus and one to Hidjas.

The eleventh tradition reports that, when Omar wanted to write the Leading Qur'an, he made a few of his companions undertake the task, saying, "wherever you differ in the wording, write it down in the dialect of Mozar, for the Qur'an was revealed to a man of Mozar."

The twelfth tradition gives the report of Abu Qullaba that, during the reign of Osman, the teachers of the Qur'an started teaching their pupils different recitations and the students used to meet and differ from each other. This was brought to the notice of the teachers and each condemned the other's recitation. News reached Osman, who said, "You people differ in the recitation and you recite in my presence. what about those who are far away in distant cities? Their recitation would differ even more.

Then he spoke to the companions of the Holy Prophet, ordering them to write a Leading Qur'an for the people. Abu Qullaba says that Malik ibne Anas claimed that he was among those who used to dictate the Qur'an; they used to dictate the Qur'an, mentioning the name of the person who had received that verse from the Holy Prophet. If that person was not present, they would write down the preceding and succeeding verses, leaving a space for the verse under consideration until the person concerned was available. And Osman completed the collection and wrote to the people in the big cities that he had destroyed what he had and that they should do the same.

The thirteenth tradition tells that Osman addressed the people in one of his talks, saying, "Only thirteen years have passed between you and your Prophet and you doubt the Qur'an, saying the recitation of Obai or of ibne Mas'ood, and one telling the other that his recitation is not the right one."

Then he urged them all by an oath that whoever had a portion of the Qur'an should bring it. People brought pieces of paper, bits of wood, skin, etc.,

with the Qur'an on them until a great number were collected. Then Osman went inside (his house) and called one after another and made each one swear that he had heard it from the Holy Prophet, and that the Holy Prophet had dictated it to him. After finishing this, he asked who was the best in pronunciation; the people said, "Syeed ibnul As." Then he ordered Syeed to dictate and Zaid ibne Thabit to write. Several copies were made and were distributed among the people and the one who tells of the events (Mas'ab ibne Sa'b) says that he heard some of the companions of the Holy Prophet approving this act of Osman.

The fourteenth tradition tells us about the persons who were ordered by Osman to make the collection. The one who dictated was from the tribe of Hozail and the scribe from the tribe of Thaqeef. A fifteenth tradition relates that, after the collection was completed, it was brought to Osman who looked at it and said, "You have done well, the best. Yet I see some mistakes which the Arab would correct by his own tongue."

The sixteenth tradition relates that, when the collection was shown to Osman and he found some mistakes in it, he said, "Had the dictator been from the Hozails and the scribe from the Thaqeefs, these mistakes would not have occurred." A seventeenth tradition reports that, when Osman wanted to make copies of the Qur'an, he sent for Obai ibne Kaab, who dictated to Zaid ibne Thabit, and Zaid wrote it down and Syeed ibnul As was there to correct the pronunciation. Thus the Qur'an of Osman was the recitation of Obai and Zaid.

The eighteenth tradition reports the seventeenth one, but adds a person named Abdur-Rahman ibnul Harith to assist Syeed ibnul As in correcting the pronunciation.

In the nineteenth tradition, Zaid ibne Thabit says that, while they were making the copies of the Qur'an, he found the passage 33:23 of Sura-e-Ahzab was missing and he found it with Khozaimatibne Thabit only, whose sole evidence was accepted by the Holy Prophet as the evidence of two.

The twentieth tradition tells us that the first person who collected the Qur'an was Abu Bakr. Zaid ibne Thabit was the scribe, and people would come to Zaid with passages and he would not accept any passage unless it was supported by at least two pious men, except in the case of the last passage of the Sura- e-Bar'at which was found by Abu Khozaimatibne Thabit, whose lone evidence was taken as two by the Holy Prophet; that Omar brought the passage concerning the stoning of adulterers, but it was not accepted as there was no other witness.

There are the reports of the attempts by the ruling party to make a collection of the Qur'an during the reigns of the first three Caliphs. But none of these has any authenticity and they are subject to criticism in various ways.

Let us now examine the first two traditions on the authority of Bokhari:

1. Assuming that the Qur'an was not collected and arranged in book form during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet, what right would any one have to do it according to his own preference or fancy? What does Sharhe Sadr (the

opening of the heart) mean? Does it mean the kind of inspiration or revelation which Christians claim for the authors of the Gospels?

Can it be taken an authorised source like Kitaab and Sunna (the Book and the Tradition) of Islamic Jurisprudence giving the Halal (the permitted) and the Haram (prohibited)? Or was it an exclusive privilege granted to these three only (Abu Bakr, Omar and Zaid ibne Thabit)? And what about the other companions of the Holy Prophet who had also made collections as unanimously acknowledged by the Muslim world?

2 Why did then Osman destroy the other collections without the sanction of the Holy Prophet? Zaid's collection, as well as the collection of others were,

according to this statement, based on their ijtehad. Then why should one ijtehad be preferred above another?

3 Why was Zaid's inspired collection not immediately published and placed within the reach of the people without providing time for other versions of the Qur'an to gain currency through the Muslim empire for twenty years before Osman destroyed them?

4 What is the implication of the words of Abu Bakr to Zaid, "You are an intelligent young man whom we do not suspect and you used to write the revelations for the Holy Prophet."?

What were the qualifications of Zaid which made him preferred above the other scribes who were writing the revelations when Zaid was still a child? What was actually needed was ripe age. And what do the words "whom we do not suspect" mean? Ignore Ali ibne Abi Taleb, who was declared by the Holy Prophet to be the one who would always be with the Holy Book and with whom the Holy Book would always be? Ali, about whom there were numerous declarations from God and the Holy Prophet,

identified with the Holy Prophet in the words, "Aliyyun Minni wa ana min Ali" (Ali is of me and I am of Ali); who was named as the Nafs, the soul of the Holy Prophet on the occasion of the historic Mubahila, and about whom the Holy Prophet declared, "Ana wa Ali min Noorin Wahid" ('and Ali are of one and the same Light); who was next only to the Holy Prophet as meant by the verse of Tatheer; who was declared by the Holy Prophet to be always with the truth, and the truth always with him;

who was foremost of the Itrat, ie. the Ahlul-Bait along with the Kitaaballah, the Book of God, the Holy Qur'an, the two being left among the Ummat (the Muslims) as the Two Inseparable entities of the highest value for the guidance of the Ummate Muslima (the Muslim nation as a whole); who was regarded by the Holy Prophet in the same relationship as Aaron was to Moses (with the exception of Nubuwaat (Apostleship); who was declared by the Holy Prophet to be "The Gate of the City of Knowledge and Wisdom" and "The Best Judge and the Witness of Truth". And if; as is said by Bokhari and Muslim, through Malik ibne As binul Hassan, the ruling party believed that Ah had no good opinion of them and was not, at the time,

on good terms with them, what about Abdullah ibne Mas'ood, Obai ibne Kaab, Ma'aaz ibne Jabal and Saalim Maula Abi Hozafa, whose authority according to Bokhari was declared by the Holy Prophet who had ordered the

people to receive the Qur'an from the above four persons. This is related by Abdullah ibne Omar. of course, Saalim was killed in the battle of Yamama, but the other three were alive and available at the time that Osman issued the official version, but no reference was ever made to any of these persons. Why?

During the reign of Osman, the assistance of certain Omayyid youths such as Syeed ibnul As and Abdur-Rahinan ibnul Haris ibnul Hisham was sought while persons such as Abdullah ibne Mas'ood and Obai ibne Kaab were ignored. Was it because they suspected them, and if so, of what?

Was it:

(a) a lack of knowledge of the Qur'an, (b) a lack of truthfulness and reliability, or (c) a lack of political loyalty to the ruling party?

Considering the declaration of the Holy Prophet, the first two possibilities must be discarded. Only the third possibility remains. It is a historic fact that the above were not loyal to the ruling party. But Zaid ibne Thabit was loyal to that party and, as Ibne Abdul-Bir (the author of Istee'aab) tells us, Zaid remained pro-Osman and pro-Omayyid and never joined hands with the opposition. For this act of loyalty on his part, he was rewarded with wealth and comfort, while persons like Abdullah ibne Mas'ood and Obai ibne Kaab suffered disfavour and, particularly the former, persecution by the ruling party. if these were the reasons for ignoring these people, the bonafide of the attempt itself to collect the Qur'an becomes subject to suspicion.

5 These two traditions of Bokhari contain contradictory statements regarding the missing verse of the Qur'an.

In one tradition, the verse is not found by any one but Abi Khozaima-Ansari, and in the other tradition it was found by Khozaimatibne Thabit-Ansari. In the first tradition it is said that the passage became the last verses of the Sura- Bar'at, and in the second it is said to be verse 33:23.

of the twenty traditions mentioned above, the first and second tell us that Abu Bakr was the first person to collect the Qur'an; according to the second, Zaid ibne Thabit was asked only to review Abu Bakr's collection, contradicting the previous tradition which says that it was Zaid who collected it at the order of Abu Bakr.

The third tradition says that Omar and Zaid were given the joint task of making the collection, and that some companions of the Holy Prophet who had already collected the Qur'an were killed in the battle of Yamama. History is silent about these collections and why they were not sought by the ruling party which was so seriously interested in the collection of the Qur'an. And this contradicts the two previous traditions and the two before them, as it asserts that others had already collected the Qur'an.

The fourth tradition contradicts all the other traditions that Omar was killed before the Qur'an was collected. The fifth tradition is entirely different, stating that Omar was the first to order the Qur'an to be collected in book form after he had asked about some passage of the Qur'an and was told that the person who had it had been killed in the battle of Yamama. This would mean that the collection of the Qur'an took place during the reign of Omar and after the end of the battle of Yamama.

The sixth gives an entirely different picture, saying that it was Omar who decided to collect the Qur'an from bones, leaves, bits of wood, paper, etc., with witnesses, but that he was killed before the work was completed, that Osman continued the work and that he, not Omar, was the one who supported the statement of Khozaimatibne Thabit But the seventh tradition says that this happened in the reign of Omar and that he accepted the verses from a person who brought them without asking for any witnesses.

The eighth tradition gives the credit for the initiative and the decision to collect the Qur'an to Zaid ibne Thabit during the reign of Abu Bakr, saying that Abu Bakr would not approve the proposal of Zaid (which was supported by Omar) until he had consulted a crowd of Muslims and gained their approval, after which he ordered the collection.

The ninth makes Osman and Zaid ibne Thabit the joint champions of the collection of the Qur'an, and says that Omar accepted the statement of Khozaimatibne Thabit without further evidence, offering himself as a witness to it.

The tenth asserts that Omar was the initiator of the collection, employing Syeed ibnul As the dictator and Zaid ibne Thabit as the calligrapher, and produced four copies which were despatched to the big cities mentioned in the tradition. This contradicts the first two traditions of Bokhari which date the initiative to make the collection in the reign of Abu Bakr and the despatch of the prepared copies to the big cities during the reign of Osman. And it contradicts the traditions which give credit for the initiative to Omar and the completion to Osman.

The eleventh tradition wants to confer the honour of the authorship of the Leading Qur'an on Omar.

The twelfth gives the credit for the initiative in the collection and completion and preparation of copies to Osman, and introduces Anas ibne Malik as one of the dictators while it was being copied. It also asserts that Osman advised the people in the big cities of what he had done with the Qur'an and ordered them to follow his footsteps, without sending any copies to them, which clearly indicates that Osman was sure that the people already had copies of the Qur'an. It shows that, of the various recitations, the most currently used was that of Abdullah ibne Mas'ood and Obai ibne Kaab.

The thirteenth tradition asserts that Syeed ibnul As was the dictator and Zaid ibne Thabit the calligrapher who produced the copies which were distributed to the people.

The fourteenth tradition claims that the talk of dictation and writing down the Qur'an was given by Osman to Hozails and Thaqeefs, and not to Syeed ibnul As and Zaid ibne Thabit, the first of whom was an Omavi and the second an Ansari, while the sixteenth says that, if the dictator and calligrapher had been Hozails and Thaqeefs, mistakes found by Osman in the prepared copies would not have occurred, clearly indicating that Hozails and Thaqeefs were never employed to copy the Qur'an.

The fifteenth and sixteenth traditions state that the prepared copy was not free from mistakes, that they were left to the tongue of the Arabs, and no corrections were made.

In the sixteenth and eighteenth traditions, the name of Obai ibne Kaab is mentioned as the dictator and Zaid ibne Thabit as the calligrapher, contradicting the traditions which give Zaid ibne Thabit as the only responsible person to undertake the work.

The nineteenth and twentieth traditions contradict each other about the missing passage found by Khozaimatibne Thabit. The first says that it was verse 33:23 and the other says that it was the last verse of the Sura-e-Bar'at.

All these contradictory and inconsistent statements, if they are not the creation of later periods, show that, in order to counter the special authority given by the Holy Prophet to Ali and the other members of the Ahlul-Bait, as well as to Abdullah ibne Mas'ood, Obai ibne Kaab, Ma'aaz ibne Jabal and Saalim as the highest authorities on the Qur'an, an attempt was made by the ruling party to produce their own collection, brush aside all these other authorities and gain accreditation for themselves. But they differed even among themselves as to who should get the credit. So there were parties within parties, each trying to claim credit for its own group and its own hero. The only thing that can be said is that, whoever it was,

he was neither competent nor authorised for the task. And although they collected scattered fragments from here and there, they dared not publish it for more than twenty years, during which time the Qur'an in perfect book form gained tremendous currency throughout the Muslim empire, and was taught,

learnt, memorised and acted upon in the daily lives of the people, and justice was meted out according to it. When Osman and the ruling party of his time recognised the failure of their attempt to gain credit for their venture, they procured a copy of the current version, gave official assent to it and called it the official version. The absence of the so-called collection of Abu Bakr (which was passed to Omar and then to his daughter, Hafsa), of the so-called collection of Omar and the so-called collection of Osman, and the absence of any other collection, together with the absence of any objection to the official version, is the greatest, irrefutable testimony to the fact that this received version had continued to be the same since the departure of the Holy Prophet, about which the Holy Prophet declared, "I leave among you the Book of God and my Ahlul- Bait."

So, whatever has been said in contradiction of this is mere fabrication or wishful thinking without validity. It only throws light on the fact that there were people who attempted to discredit the received version by spreading rumours and mischievous propaganda. In support of this fact, we quote some of the statements attributed to some prominent members of the ruling party about omissions from the present version:

First and foremost, the majority of the Sunni school hold that there are some passages where the wording is not in the Qur'an, but the content of the instructions remain valid. An example is the reference to the stoning of adulterers, the wording for which is provided in three different forms, as Boldiari and Muslim report on the authority of Ibne Abbas from Omar.

And Muslim tells us that Ayesha said that there were two revealed passages dealing with the number of feedings which will prohibit a foster mother, or quality her, to be considered the mother of the baby. Ayesha said

that, in the first passage the number was ten different feedings, this being replaced by another passage which reduced the number to five, and that both passages were read as part of the Qur'an until the departure of the Holy Prophet. This is given as an example of the abrogation of passages, the wording and the instruction implied.

However, a careful examination shows that the word "abrogation" was merely a sugar-coated word to avoid using the word "omission" since only the Holy Prophet had the right to omit anything from the Qur'an, either in wording or in meaning. It is obvious that the abrogation was not the work of the Holy Prophet, as the first statement says that Omar brought the passage dealing with the stoning of adulterers when they were collecting the Qur'an, but it was not accepted, not because it was abrogated,

but because there was no other witness to support Omar's statement. In the second case, Ayesha expressly states that the passages dealing with the fostering mother were a part of the Qur'an until the departure of the Holy Prophet. Therefore, if these statement are true, it means only that there was an intentional omission of certain passages of the Qur'an by unauthorised people.

Suyuti, in his Itqan in continuation of the narrative of Bokhari and Muslim regarding this matter, relates from Omar that there is another passage which is said to be missing from the received version of the Qur'an. But a proper examination of the said missing passages which Omar and Ayesha present, companions them with the style of the Qur'an proves beyond any doubt that they can never have been a part of the Qur'an and are nothing but personal fancies.

This is nothing new, for the companions of the Prophet used to accuse each other of such mistakes regarding the mourning for a departed, and Ayesha accused Omar of misunderstanding the statement of the Holy Prophet. It is impossible that a part of the Qur'an should be unknown to all the companions of the Holy Prophet except for Ayesha and Omar, both of whom were accused of forgetfulness and a lack of knowledge of the Qur'an.

The Itqan, on the authority of Tibrani, states that Omar said that the Qur'an contained ten lakhs twenty-seven thousand letters, whereas the Qur'an available at the time would not reach even one-third of the quantity, which means that more than two-thirds of the Qur'an has been omitted. A question arises, if, according to Omar and the ruling party, the Qur'an was still being collected up to the end of his life. how is it that the letters of the whole book were counted? Especially considering that he was intimately acquainted with the existing one-third and a multitude of Muslims had even memorised it.

Moreover, considering that his evidence for just one verse which he so well remembered was not accepted by his own party, while Khozaima's statement was accepted without the testimony of others, how can his solitary statement about the missing two-thirds of the Qur'an be accepted of which he could not remember one single verse?

The Itqan tells us that Abdullah ibne Omar said that some one may say that he has received the whole Qur'an, but what does he know about the whole? One can only say that he received of the Qur'an only that which has

been known in evidence. Again Itqan says that Ayesha claimed that the Sura-Ahzab at the time of the Holy Prophet contained 200 verses and that in Osman's collection we find much less. Similarly, the Muntakhabet Khanzul Ummal quotes Obai ibne kaab as saying that the Sura-e- Ahzab, which now contains seventy-three verses, was originally equal to, or even longer than, the Sura-Baqara.

Omar is the one whom Obai ibne kaab discredited in the matter of the Qur'an as a person who was busy in his transactions in the marketplace while Obai and 6thers were busy studying the Qur'an under the Holy Prophet And in another dispute about the status of the Ansar being equal to the Mohajir or subordinate to them, Omar quoted verse 100 of Chapter 9, omitting the conjunctive letter between Ansar and the relative pronoun (those who follow them), making the following adjectival clause qualify the Ansar, which would mean that the Ansars should follow the Mohajirs.

Obai ibne Kaab refuted Omar's misreading by inserting the conjunctive letter between the Ansar and the relative pronoun, which makes the Ansar's status equal to the Mohajirs, the relative pronoun referring to those who follow the Mohajirs and then the Ansars. This was a matter of great political importance as it dismisses the claim of the Khoraish to be superior to the Ansar. Obai's authority was accepted and Omar withdrew his misquotation.

Ayesha's evidence for the missing 127 verses of the Sura- Ahzab, without quoting even a single verse of it, should be discredited as she did not remember even the first words of verse 33 of the same Sura, which concern herself as well as the other wives of the Holy Prophet. Also, the statement attributed to Obai ibne Kaab is also to be dismissed because of the omission of so large a portion of one particular Sura, without it being remembered by such an acknowledged authority on the Qur'an - and none other than he remembering such a large amount of material - is unbelievable; and such a claim could never have come from some one of the stature of Obai ibne Kaab.

Another tradition of the Itqan asserts that Ayesha had a collection of her own, quoting her father as saying that in the Sura-e-Ahzab, alter "Tasleema" in verse 56 of Salawat, there was a conjunctive clause, "wa alallazina yasiloona sofooful awwal", and that was before Osman made changes in the collection.

First of all, the internal evidence against this is the style of the alleged missing clause: it is contrary to the common usage of Muslims, since Muslims in their Salawat on the Holy Prophet either stop with the Holy Prophet or add his family, or go further and add the companions in general, or the wives and issue of the Holy Prophet There is no trace of evidence in support of this suffix. Further, no one else has ever said that Ayesha's Mus'haf (her own collection) was destroyed by any one. So what happened to that collection?

Another tradition of Sahih Muslim says that Abu Musa-e- Ash'ari called the reciters of the Qur'an in Basra, and people who had studied the Qur'an came to him:

He addressed them, saying: "You are the chosen ones of the people of Basra and reciters of the Qur'an. You continue to recite the Qur'an regularly

and do not neglect it for long lest your hearts become hardened like the hearts of the people of old times." He said, "We used to read a Sura in the Qur'an which was equal in length and rigidity to the Sura-e-Bar'at, but I have forgotten it except for one verse.

and there was another Sura which resembled the Musabbihat, but that also I have forgotten except for one verse of it which runs as follows...

The style of both the quotations of Abu Musa is quite inferior to that of the Qur'an and the wording of the first passage itself makes it quite obvious that it belongs to the category of Ahadees- e-Qudsi, a definition of which has already been given. Regarding the second quotation, it might be taken as a parenthetical sentence, a commentary added to verse 61:2 before the third verse (Kabora ma maqtan indallah) of the same chapter.

Abu Musa, having heard it, might have taken it to be a different Sura because he is known to have been credulous and weak in memory and literary taste; and since he himself confesses to have forgotten both the suras and no one else had any knowledge of it, this statement must automatically be dismissed. Further, if the statement is true, it may have been made after the start of the tension between Osman and himself which led to his removal from the governorship, in which case it would have been intended to discredit Osman by accusing him of the omission.

Suyuti, in his Itqan, tells us that once Omar told Abdur- Rahman ibne Auf, "Didn't you find this passage among what was revealed to us?" ("In jahado kama jahadtum awwala marratin". "Surely we do not find it now!") To this Abdur-Rahman replied that it was one of the passages of the Qur'an which was omitted.

First of all, this is a conditional clause, part of the larger one. The following sentence is not mentioned, and neither Omar nor Abdur-Rahman ibne Auf mentions of which part of which verse of which Sura it was, thereby showing the failure of this man. In the second place, who prevented Omar from re-inserting this and the other omitted passages into their respective places in the Qur'an, he being a powerful leader of the ruling party? Or, rather, is it that these and many other passages fancied by Omar and Abdur-Rahman to be parts of the Qur'an were rejected by the Muslims through lack of internal and external supporting evidence?

Similar to this is the statement of Suyuti, claiming that a prominent companion of the Holy Prophet, Muslimatibne Mukhallad Ansari, once asked the people (among whom was also Sa'aad ibne Malik Ansari), "Will you tell me about the two passages of the Qur'an which were not included in the collection?" But no one replied, except his son (probably Muhammad ibne Muslima) who recited the passage.

A proper examination of this passage will reveal beyond all doubt that the reciter had confused passages from different suras, adding his own fancies, which throws light on the miraculous style of the Qur'an which exposes any one who tries to imitate it.

Secondly, one can infer that having a knowledge of the Qur'an at that time brought merit, credit and honour. So that those who lacked it tried to pose as students of it, but were betrayed, on the one hand by the miraculous nature of the style of the Qur'an, and on the other hand by the lack of

supporting witnesses, just as we, today, have among us incompetent and unqualified people who pose as great scholars of science and politics. To this tradition may be added what is said about the two suras found in the collection of Ibne Abbas and Obai ibne Kaab,

which reveal a style which is different from that of the Qur'an and must be classed as supplications (Adyiya, prayers) worded by the Holy Prophet or some member of his family. In the opinion of some, these two are inferior in language and style even to the supplications of the Imams of the Holy House of the Holy Prophet, the authentic collections of which are in our Possession.

There are some more traditions like the above which are not worth considering. What is given here is only "Mushti az Kharwar", a handful from a heap. Sufficient to say that the Qur'an has its own internal evidence, an inimitable style peculiar to itself, together with innumerable external witnesses. All the verses and suras, since their revelation, have been placed within the reach of those who longed to hear, write, learn, understand, memorise and act accordingly. Not a single word or sentence can be accepted as part of the Qur'an without such internal and external evidence.

Therefore, it is easy for a student of the Qur'an to discard such traditions, irrespective of the qualifications of the companions of the Holy Prophet to report them and the number of people who subsequently repeated them. We must assume that those responsible for the traditions were' either trying to discredit each other, or to discredit the received version of the Qur'an which stood between themselves and their political aspirations; some of the members of the ruling party were inclined to spread such disruptive rumours.

On the other hand, those of the Ahiul- Bait, the people attached to them and other companions who were not close to the ruling party, during this period never attacked or criticised the received version or even raised any voice of dissent against it. On the contrary, they, following the command of the Holy Prophet, insisted upon the authenticity and validity of the received version as the standard and criterion prescribed by the Holy Prophet by which false traditions, both pre-Qur'anic and post-Qur'anic, were to be judged. The Holy Ahlul-Bait recorded the saying of the Holy Prophet:

Certainly, the liars around me have increased abundantly. Beware! For every truth there is a proof and for every Right there is the Light Thus, to whatsoever agrees with the Book of God hold fast, and whatsoever is opposed to the Book of God, reject it.

The Holy Ahlul-Bait maintained this; Ali said the same, Hasan said the same, Husain said the same, and each of the nine succeeding Imams after Husain followed the same principle, as did their adherents (see Kaafi and all the subsequent authorities on tradition). No tradition dealing either with the theory or practice of Islam has been, or ever will be, acceptable to the Imams of the Holy House of the Holy Prophet or to members of their school of thought if it does not agree with the Book of God. As Allama Majlisi has put it:

Of the innumerable miracles of the Holy Prophet, the first and foremost is the Holy Qur'an, which is the most genuine and authentic one (narrated

and recorded ever since its revelation by innumerable persons generation after generation down to us) and will last as such till the day of Resurrection. (Haqul-Yaqeen)

Before concluding this section, it is desirable to refer to some more traditions of the Sunni school about the nature of Ali's collection of the Qur'an, the date of the collection, its authenticity and Ali's knowledge of the inner and outer aspects of the Qur'an in its parts and its whole.

Suyuti, in his Tarikhul Khulafa, tells us that Ali is one of the godly scholars, the celebrated Warrior, the famous Ascetic and the well-known Orator, one of those who collected the Qur'an and presented it to the Holy Prophet for his review. And in the Itqan, Suyuti, on the authority of Abu Na'yeem, quotes the statement of Ali himself, "Of every verse of the Qur'an which was revealed I know about what, and when, it was." And the same Abu Na'yeem quotes Abdullah ibne Mas'ood as saying that the Qur'an was revealed on seven sides (Ahrof) or aspects, each of which has an inner and an outer significance, and that Ali ibne Abi Taleb had with him all the inner and outer aspects with all the inner and outer aspects with all the significance of each aspect.

The author of Waseelatun Najaat, Mullah Muhammad Mubeen Luckhnavi, on the authority of Ibne Seereen, assets that Ali arranged the Qur'an according to the dates of the revelation.

Again, Suyuti in his Itqan, says that Ali was one of those who arranged the Qur'an according to the dates of revelation. And Abu Shukoor, the author of Tamheed, says that the companions of the Holy Prophet were not unanimous in accepting Ali's collection. The Itqan of Suyuti says that Ali's collection began with Sura Iqra, and then Almuddasir, then Muzzammil and then Tabbat, and then Takweer, and so on. Ali the Meccan suras, then the Madinite suras. And Abdullah ibne Mas'ood's collection began with Baqara, then Nisa, then Aale Imran, with many differences therein. And the same was the case with the collection of Obai ibne Kaab.

These accounts and others of the same kind, if we accept their authenticity, will only go to confirm that Ali is the foremost one next only to the Holy Prophet in the thorough knowledge of the inner and the outer significance of every word, sentence, passage, part or chapter of the Qur'an in its revealed and pre-revealed form. The Qur'an itself hears testimony to this if it is properly and impartially read without prejudice:

verses 56:77-79 as the major premises and verse 33:33 as the minor premise, and verse 3:60 as the conclusion defining the personnel of the Ahlul-Bait, added to which is the unanimous verdict of the Muslim world as to the names of the persons to whom the above verses applied. These verses, supported by many other verses of the Qur'an, declare that the descendants of Abraham (Aale Ibrahim), those who were divinely made to inherit the Book (Kitaab), Wisdom (Hikmat), the Great Kingdom (Mulke Azeem) and the Office of Imam (Ohda-e-Imamat), they are foremost in total obedience and service of the Absolute, purified from all ungodly desires.

The foremost of the Ishmaelite branch is the Holy Prophet Himself, and next to him the members of his holy family (the Ahlul-Bait) headed by Ali as Imam and succeeded by the eleven holy Imams. The inclusion of the

Holy Lady Fatema in the Ahlul-Bait is not only because of her personal purity but also by virtue of her three-sided position, being the daughter of the Holy Prophet, the wife of the first Holy Imam, and the "mother" of the eleven 'mains, thus establishing her link between Prophethood (Risalat) and divine guidance (Imamat), a status achieved not only by being a wife of a prophet, but by having a role in establishing the divinely chosen line of Abraham's descendants.

This clear evidence of the Qur'an is supported by the authentic declarations of the Holy Prophet:

Ali is of me and I am of Ali Ali is with the Qur'an and the Qur'an will be with Ali Ali is with the Right and the Right will be with Ali The Qur'an and the Ahlul-Bait are the Two Inseparable Entities, each perfect in itself reflecting the others. (These Inseparable Ones were left among the people by the Holy Prophet for their guidance and to protect them from going astray.

Regarding Ali's collection and those of others, it has already been said that the particular arrangements of others must be for commentary purposes or for the personal information and guidance of the collectors themselves, or for other academic purposes. There is abundant evidence that Ali's collection and those of the other authorised companions of the Holy Prophet (namely, Abdullah ibne Mas'ood and Obai ibne Kaab), contained explanatory notes which were meant to be placed alongside the text,

and that these people never attempted to give any publicity to their notes against the received version of the Qur'an which is meant for all men for all times and as an everlasting miracle of the Holy Prophet The point to be noted here is that the statement of Suyuti to the effect that Ali collected the Qur'an and presented it to the Holy Prophet for his review contradicts all the statement which assert that Ali collected the Qur'an after the departure of the Holy Prophet. Furthermore, we support the fact that the collection of the Qur'an in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet was made, not only by Ali, whose authenticity is unquestioned and by other authorised companions of the Holy Prophet, but there were many others who collected the Qur'an during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet, including not only men, but also women.

It is amusing to note that, in some traditions, Zaid ibne Thabit, the hero of the official venture by the ruling party to collect the Qur'an, is also included among those who collected the Qur'an during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet. This discredits all the stories of his collecting fragments of the Qur'an from pieces of paper, bits of wood, bones, leaves, skins, etc. by the order of the First, Second and Third Caliphs, jointly or severally.

Tabarani and Ibne Asakir quote Sho'abi as saying that the Qur'an was collected during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet by six persons of the Ansars: Obai ibne Kaab, Zaid ibne Thabit, Abu Darda, Ma'aaz ibne Jabal, Sa'ad ibne Abaid and Abu Zaid. There was a seventh one, Majama' ibne Jariah, who also collected the Qur'an, but with the exception of two or three suras.

Bokhari tells us that Arias ibne Maalik said that four persons, all from the Ansars, collected the Qur'an during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet, namely Obai ibne Kaab, Zaid ibne Thabit, Ma'aaz ibne Jabal and Abu Zaid.

Nasaee asserts that Abdullah ibne Omar said:

I collected the Qur'an and used to complete its recitation (as a whole) every night, which news reached the Holy Prophet, and he called me and told me not to hurriedly complete the recitation of the whole Qur'an in one night (ie. not to recite it mechanically as recitation for recitation's sake), but to recite it (intelligently), to ponder over its contents to understand them by completing the recitation in one month.

Ibne Sa'ad asserts in Tabaqat on the authority of Fadhl ibne Dakeen, from Valeed ibne Abdullah ibne Jameel, who reports from his grandmother Umme Waraqa, that the Holy Prophet used to visit her and call her "Shaheedah" (witness) and she was one of those who had collected the Qur'an.

There is a report from ibne Abbas related by Ahmed ibne Hambal, Ibne Abi Shaiba, Tirmizi, Nasaee, Ibne Habban, Haakim, Baihaqi arid Zia-e-Maghdasi, that ibne Abbas once asked Osman why "Bismillah" was not written at the beginning of the Sura-Bara'at, and why they had joined this Sura with the other and put the two suras in the seven big suras. Osman replied as follows: sometimes suras would be revealed to the Holy Prophet, but not complete, and later some verses of the Sura would be revealed,

at which time the Holy Prophet would call the scribes arid tell them to place those verses in certain positions in the suras, arid so the verse subsequently revealed would be placed in position as directed by the Holy Prophet. The Sura-Anfaal was revealed in Madina early after the Hijrat, arid the Sura- Bara'at was the last of the Madinite Suras, but the contents were very similar arid the Holy Prophet did not say whether it is a separate Sura or a continuation of the previous Sura. Therefore, said, Osman, I joined these two together without using "Bismillah" arid put in the long suras.

This statement of Osman, if true, is an attempt on his part to gain credit for the arrangement of some of the Qur'an, namely Bara'at and Anfaal, but it asserts the fact that the Qur'an used to be written under the supervision and instruction of the Holy Prophet, and that arrangement of the verses (Aayats) in the suras, and the arrangement of the suras one after another, was done according to the instruction of the Holy Prophet (ie. Anfaal and Bara'at). But there are authentic traditions by both the schools (the Sunni as well as the Shia) that the revelation of the Sura-- Bara'at began in the ninth year of the Thjrat with the twenty verses which Ali was eutnisted to recite at Mecca during the Haj season, and "Bismillah" was not revealed in the staat of it.

Thus there is no question of Osman joining these two suuas or arranging them together as one. The Sura--Bara'at was revealed without '~Bismillah" and, on account of the similarity of the contents, was put after Anfaal at the corninand of the Holy Prophet, and not as part of Anfaal, but as a separate sura. Probably Osman had no knowledge of this, and he followed what was current among the Muslims. It is not possible to imagine that, when the Sura--Bara'at was revealed (its first part being revealed in the beginning of Zilkaffah of the 9th Hijri),

its actual position among the other suras would not have been made clear by the Holy Prophet until a year before his deparrure from this world, when he used to himseff direct the scribes about the arrangement of the suuas and

even the arrangement of the verses in them. In any case, this statement discredits Osman's claim that he collected fragments of the Quran from people and copied them with the support of witnesses, and supports all the evidence to show that the Qur'an was collected during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet.

According to the unanimous statement of the Ahlul-Bait, Bismillah is a part of the Quran revealed to the Holy Prophet at the beginning of every sura except the Sura-e-Bara'at which was revealed without Bismillah. The last portion of Osman's statement cannot be his, and may be a fabrication of a later period by those schools of thought which do not consider Bismillah as a part of the Qur'an except for the Bismillah used in the middle of the Sura-e-Naml.

Shia Traditions Shia Traditions

However, a thorough and critical study of the stories regarding the collection of the Qur'an, along with the external and internal evidences given above, proves beyond doubt that to credit the First, Second or Third Caliphs, or their deputies, with the collection of the Qur'an is nothing but stories of wishful thinking, the result of unauthorised, unwarranted and unnecessary attempts by them to produce a collection of their own and thereby gain honour and distinction.

These attempts failed miserably, were "much ado about nothing" and the collections disappeared into oblivion. The only thing supported by history is the bundle which was left under the bed of a lady and was partly consumed by a goat. Thank God that the Holy Qur'an of the lifetime of the Holy Prophet remained the same, unrivalled by any in its text and its arrangement.

The only thing which is to the credit of Osman is that he ordered copies of the Qur'an to be made in accordance with the recitation which was current during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet, in an attempt to get rid of all the other recitations adopted by reciters of their own choice. However, these recitations were not entirely stopped, and have come down to us in the form of the seven or ten recitations of the Holy Book. Even this act of Osman was not entirely approved of by many Muslims and earned for him the title "Harraql Mosaahif" (the Burner of the Scriptures).

Of course, the flitile attempt of the ruling party and the irresponsible utterances of its members gave rise to criticism of the Holy Prophet and the Holy Qur'an which have even deluded a few Shia traditionalists. Therefore, to remove, once and for all, all doubts about the views held by the Shia school about the Holy Qur'an now in our possession, we will deal with all the Shia traditions which question the completeness and the arrangement of the existing version of the Holy Qur'an.

It is said that the number of Shia traditions about the Holy Imams of the Ahlul-Bait are so many that there is no doubt that some at least are reliable and worthy of consideration. We do not reject these traditions entirely upon the unreliability of the narrators, although most of these traditions are related by persons such as Ahmed ibne Muhanunad--Sayyari and Mi ibne Muned Kufi, the first of whom was accused of heresy and the second accused of lies and heresy. However, our concern here is the text of these accounts which we must classify into several groups:

The first are those in which the word 'Tahreef' (change) has been used; of these there are twenty, but we refer here to only eight.

1 Mi ibne Ibrahim--Qimmi relates from Ab a Zar'e Ghaffari that the Holy Prophet, in commenting on the verse "Yauma Tabyazzat wojoohohum", said:

On the Resurrection Day my people will come to me under five different standards and I will ask the group under each standard about what they have done with the Two Precious Legacies which I left among you, ie. The Thaqalain?

The people under the first standard will reply, "Of the two precious things which you left behind, the greater one we have distorted and thrown

behind our backs and ignored, and the lesser one we opposed or hated" The group under the second standard will reply, "Of the Two Pre~ious Ones, the greater (the Qur'an) we distorted and tore to pieces and went against it, and the lesser one we opposed and waged war against it"

2 Thne Taoos and Seyyed Nairnatullali Jazairi, the two prominent Shia traditionalists relate a lengthy tradition that the Holy Prophet declared to Hozaifatibnul Yamaani that the person who profanes the sanctuary of Islam would make people deviate from the path of God, would distort His Book and would alter the Sunnat (traditions) of the Holy Prophet.

3 Sa'd ibne Abdullah-e-Qummi quotes the Fifth Holy Imam of the Ahiul-Bait, Muhammad ibne Ali Al-Baqir, that the Holy Prophet called th~ people of Mina and said:

Oh people! I am leaving among you Two precious things and if ye adhere to these ye will never go astray: namely the Book of God and my AhIul- Bait. And, beside these Two, here is the Ka'ba, the Sanctuary (the Holy House)

Then the Holy Imam said' "The Book they have distorted, the Jtrat (the AhIul-Bait) they have killed and the Ka'ba they have destroyed, and all the things of God that were with them they threw away and detached themselves from them."

4 Shaikh-e-Sadooq asserts in his Khisaal, through Jabir ibne Abdullab-e-Ansari, that the Holy Prophet said that on the Resurrection Day three entities would complain, the Guran, the Mosque and the Itrat The Quran would say, "Oh my Lord! They distorted me and tore me to pieces." The Mosque would say, "Oh my Lord! They kept me and spoiled me." The Itrat would say, "Oh my Lord! They killed us, drove us out of our homes and made us wander hither and thither."

5 The tradition told by Kaafi and Sadooq from Mi ibne Sowaid says that he wrote to the Seventh Holy 'main, Musa ibne Jafar al-Kazim, while he was in prison and received the following reply: "They were ent"usted with the Book of God and they distorted and altered it."

6 Thne Shhhr Aashoob tells that the Third Holy 'main, Husain ibue Mi, while addressing the enemy army on the day of Aashoora, said:

Ye are of the same rebellious party and the remnant of the infidel allies (against the Holy Prophet), and the remnant of those who threw out the Book (the Holy Qur'an) and were inspired by Satan and the gang of criminals and of those who distorted the Book.

7 In the book, Kacirnilur Ziyarah it is said that the Sixth Holy 'main, Jafar ibne Muhammad As-Sadiq, prescribed the following prayer for the pilgrims who entered the shrine of the Holy Irnam~ Hnaain: "Oh God! Curse those who deny Thy Prophets, destroyed Thy House (the Ka'ba) and distorted Thy Book."

8 It is said that the Sixth Holy 'main~ Jafar ibne Muhammad As-Sadiq, said, "The masters of the Arabic language distorted the Word of God from its proper place."

The rest of the twenty traditionalists have also used the words "Talneef" and "Tagh'eer" along the same lines.

These traditions and others of their kind can be read in the light of the words of the Holy 'main MUhaImnad--Baqir: "They threw away the Book of God by confining the letter, but altering and distorting its scope and significance." This means that there was no change in the lettering of the Qur'an by omission, addition or alteration,

but the change took place in the significance, interpretation and application of its text. There is no doubt that the words "Ththreef, 1#Taghfeey and "Tabdeel", as used in these traditions, meant nothing but the misuse and misinterpretation of the contents of the Qur'an. This fact is fully confirmed in the history of the development of Islamic thought. The Holy Prophet was expecting this when he said on the occasion of his rejection of three divorces in one session: "Do they play with the Book of God when I am still present among them?"

There are many more examples of misinterpretation and misuse of the contents of the Book of God in every generation down to present times.

The last tradition quoted here supports the fact that many who think themselves to be masters of the Arabic language try to interpret the Holy Book, destroying the real significance and distorting the wording, even to the extent of denying the miracles wrought by the prophets of God. The best example of misinterpretation and distortion are the attempts by the anti-Ahiul-Bait commentators to distort the significance of the verses relating to the divine excellence of the Holy Ones of the House of the Holy Prophet and the status they have held since the earliest days of Islam.

An example of the distortion of the scope and significance of the Qur'an is verse 33:33 (Aayate Tat'heer) which leaves no room for the inclusion of the wives of the Holy Prophet in the Ahiul-Bait or any one other than the Abna 'dna, Nisa 'dna and the Anfasa of verse 3:60 (Mubahila). Especially if the verses preceding and following verse 33:33 are taken into account and the verses of the Sura--Tahreem dealing with the wives of the Holy Prophet, verse 33:33 must be seen as applicable only to those who have attained the highest stage of accomplishment.

In fact the wives of the Holy Prophet were subjected to severe warnings of God, and two of them were called upon to repent (66:4) on account of their deviation from the right course, and there were other Muslim women much better than they in every respect (66:5). Had these wives been of the standard required in verse 33:33, they would have been included among the Nisa 'dna of 3:60 (Mubahila).

Moreover, the Holy Prophet expressly pointed out, in both 3:60 (Mubahila) and 33:33 (Tat'heer), that Mi, Fatema, Hasan and Husain alone were his Alilul-Bait and his Itrat. This statement of the Holy Prophet has been acknowledged to be authentic almost unanimously by almost all the Muslim world. The distortion of the implication of these two important verses (3:60 and 33:33),

which give Mi, Fatema, Hasan and Humin the highest divine status and rank next only to the Holy Prophet, exclusive of his wives and all other relatives and companions, should be examined: The anti-Ahiul-Bait group misinterpret 33:33 as being in line with other verses relating to the wives of the Holy Prophet, even though the masculine pronoun in 33:33 separates it

from the verses preceding and following it which deal with the warnings to the wives of the Holy Prophet about their misbehaviour. In spite of the exclusive expression of the Holy Prophet about the members of the Aayaye Tat'heer 33:33 and the A~yaye Mubahila 3:60, they distort the exclusive expression to mean "also", or "besides the wives" This distortion has been continued from the early commentators right up to the present day.

The significance of Anfosona in Mubahila 3:60, which identifies "ourselves" with the person of the Holy Prophet, is supported by the known declaration of the Holy Prophet, "Mi is of me and I am of Mi". But they distort it by identifying "ourselves" as meaning all Muslims in general. But, since it is known that only Mi was Anfosona, Fatema Nisa'ana and Husainain Abna'ana, this distortion would mean that the other wives, relatives and companions of the Holy Prophet were not even his people.

For further understanding of the distortions of the Holy Quran, look at the verses 3:32, 5:55, 4:54, 33:33, 35:31-2, 42:23, and all the passages dealing with the distinction between "Aale Ibrahim", and also the passages which deny the position of opponents of the Ahiul-Bait, particularly verse 9:40 (Aayaye Ghar) and the verses which clearly show that the prophets of God inherit and leave behind legacies to their issue, and the verses which contradict those who try to deprive Fatema of her right.

These are only a few of the many distortions against which the Holy Irmuns of the House of the Holy Prophet have had to protest, both in private and in public. The Holy Imam Husain spoke in the field of Karbala, referring to this distortion of the Holy Qur'an. And Yazeed's quoting of the verse 3:25 when the Ahiul-Bait was brought to him as his captives was a blatant attempt to distort the Word of God, suggesting that the status which God confers on whom he will in the Spiritual Kingdom as meaning temporal and worldly power; this was refuted by the Holy Lady Zainab, the daughter of Mi and Fatema, one of the captives, who spoke to the court of Yazeed. This distortion has been one of the fundamental principles in the Theory of Government in Islam.

The second group of traditions is that which claims that in some verses of the Holy Qur'an the name of Mi, in particular, or of other members of the Holy Ahiul-Bait in general, were originally mentioned but were omitted or altered later on. These traditions are of two kinds:

1 The tradition from Kaafi that in verse 2:23, after the phrase "Ala Abdina" , was the phrase "Al Aliyyin" which was later omitted.

2 There is a tradition from both the Sunni and Shia schools that, in verse 5:67 after the phrase ilaikan there was the phrase "Al aliyyin", which was later omitted.

3 The author of the Faslul-Khitab, on the authority of Alirned ibne ~ (accused of heresy), says that "allyva" in verse 15:41 "Inna haara sraaton aialyya if was originally "Allyvin."

One may find traditions of a similar nature indicating the omission or the alteration of the name Ali in some other passages in books such as the Tafseer~lbne Foraat or the spurious commentary incorrectly attributed to the Eleventh Holy Imam, Haaan ibne Mi Al-Askari (for which Sahl ibne AhIned Deebaji is accused).

However, regarding the first, although it is in Kaafi, the most authentic book of the traditions of the Shias, it is to be totally rejected because of the content. It is unanimously agreed by all Muslims that verse 2:23 is an ever-urgent challenge to all who doubt the divine nature of the Book, in part or in whole, to bring a chapter of the kind ~without restriction to a particular part of it. If there had been such a restricting phrase as "In the name of Allah", the challenge as a whole would fall flat and the verse itself would also become meaningless. Those who doubted the divine origin of the Holy Qur'an did so not merely because of the association of the name of Mi. Secondly, Mi's name was not mentioned anywhere else in the Holy Qur'an to raise these doubts.

Thirdly, if Mi's name had been mentioned, it would have been known to all those who had heard it from the Holy Prophet, or from the other Sahabas, and would have come down to us, not just through a solitary, unauthentic chain of traditions. It should be noted that the authenticity of Kaafi does not mean the genuineness of everything therein.

There are conflicting traditions also in it. And there are traditions against the facts of history, particularly in the Rauza-e-Kaafi. And, as we have already said, no book of Islamic traditions of any school can compete in authenticity with the Holy Qur'an. Hence any report lacking that degree of authenticity can never be considered as part of the Qur'an. Moreover, this sort of tradition is contradicted by the authentic traditions of Kaafi itself on the authority of Aha Baseer, who says:

I asked the Sixth Holy Imam Jafar ibne Muhammad As- Sadiq about verse 4:59 which deals with Olil-Amr and he said that it was revealed about Ali, Hasan and Husain.

Then he told the Holy 'main that people say: "If it is so, then why were Ali and the people of his house not mentioned by name in the Qur'an." To this the 'main replied:

Tell them, the daily prayer "Salat" is mentioned in the Qur'an in several places, but nothing of the number of Rak'ats in each prayer has been given. It was for the Prophet to explain the details. And the same is the case with the details about Haj, Zakat, Saum, etc., which were left to the Prophet to explain. Likewise, it was the duty of the Prophet to explain who are the people qualified to be termed "Olil-Amr", obedience to whom would be as compulsory as obedience to the Prophet,

next to obedience to God And the Prophet did explain when it was demanded, the last being the declaration of Ghadeer-e-Khum which left no room for doubt or ambiguity But those who were determined to doubt and to create doubts in others did all in their power to create such doubts. Nevertheless, they did not succeed.

This tradition contradicts all other traditions which suggest that Ali's name, or that of Hasan, Husain or Fatema, were revealed in the text of the Qur'an but later dropped. Such traditions can be interpreted to mean that these holy names were mentioned as a commentary to the text, as in verse 5:67 mentioned in Number 2 above. Traditions that would not sustain such an interpretation should be totally rejected as being against the Qur'an and the authentic traditions.

Regarding the third tradition, assuming the tradition to be true, it does not convey any particular distinction or qualification for Ali which he did not already possess, particularly if the context is considered. Ali that it proves is that Ali is one of those who do not follow Satan - which is no great distinction for any righteous one. In the second place, Siyyari, whom the author of Fasul-Khitab quotes, did not say that here "Aliyyin" is a proper noun in the possessive case,

as in another recitation of this verse "Aliyyon" is used as an adjective qualifying "Siraat" in verse 15:41. It is more likely that Siyyari, with his ultra views, intended to say that, although "Ali" is used here as an adjective, it means Ali, and not only here wherever the word "Ali" is used in the Qur'an as an adjective. According to the Ultra-Shiaites, Ali is meant. And according to them, the Holy Prophet named him Ali by divine command. Hence the name carries the same quality as the name Muhammad. And whatever is called by God "Ali", as an adjective, must be associated with Ali.

There are traditions which show that "Aale Muhammad" was originally mentioned in some passages of the Holy Qur'an, and omitted or altered lately, for example the traditions narrated by Ayashi that in 3:32 and 3:33, alter "Aale Ibrahim" there was "Aale Muhammad" instead of "Aale Imran", the former being omitted and the latter inserted. Such a tradition, if it be true, means not only omission but also the addition of non-Qur'anic matter in the Qur'an. This is against the unanimous verdict of all schools, particularly the Ithne-Ashari School.

Besides being reported by a single reporter (which is unacceptable as already pointed out), the insertion of the term 'Aale Muhammad" instead of "Aale Imran" would exclude Ali from "Aale Muhammad" thereby denying the fact as well as the Shia faith, because of the subsequent appositional phrase, "Zurriaton Ba'zoha mm Ba'z", as Ali is not a descendant of Muhammad;

and if the subsequent phrase is discarded, the term "Aale Muhammad" will include not only the members of the family, but all the followers as in the case of "Aale Firaun" (3:32, 33). However, in the case of the present version of the Qur'an, both Muhammad and Ali, along with their issue, are included in "Aale Ibrahim" (descendants of Abraham).

There is another tradition claiming that in 26:226, after "Zalamo" the term "Aale Muhammad" was included. If true, this would restrict the condemnation of injustice to the case of "Aale Muhammad" only, and not to others, which is against the spirit of the Qur'an about the universal justice of God, that whoever commits injustice is punishable, and goes against the words of Ali, "It is easier for Ali to bear all sorts of tortures than to meet God while he has committed injustice to any one of his creatures." It is likely that the words, "Aale Muhammad" were a commentary to show the seriousness of injustice to holy people.

Another tradition deals with verse 37:130 which shows that, instead of "Ilyaseen" there were the words "Aale Yaseen". Suffice it here to say that it is totally against the context which deals with "Ilyas" inverse 123:132.

There are also some single traditions dealing with the word "Ummat" used in various passages in the Qur'an giving the duties and qualifications required of leading persons. The tradition suggests that, instead of "Ummat", the word was "A'imma" in verses 2:143, 2:128, 3:103, 109 Rny. where the word "Ummat" is used in the sense of Imam. The tradition is interpreted as meaning that the word "Ummat" meant "A'imma".

There is another kind of tradition dealing with the word, "Imaman wa Rahmat" in verse 11:17 suggested that, in the original arrangement, "Imaman wa Rahmat" came after "Shaahidun minh" before qualifying "Shaahid" and not "Kitaabe Musa". We have dealt with this and proved that "Imaman wa Rahmat" in the present position qualifies both "Kitaabe Musa" and "Shaahid" The suggested arrangement is absurd; it runs contrary to the Qur'an itself and to the commentaries of the Holy Ahlul-Bait, as "Kitaabe Musa" is qualified in "Imaman wa Rahmat" 46:12.

Another tradition of this nature deals with 25:74, claiming that, in the place of the present "Waj'alna lil Muttaqeen Imama" were the words "Waj'al lana minal Muttaqeen Imama". A glance at this passage will show the absurdity of the claim and the soundness of the present verses. The suggested version would reduce the position of the persons referred to by the personal pronoun "Na" meaning "us" to the position of praying to have a leader from among the pious ones,

in which case the infallible Imam would be excluded from "Na", and could be the prayer of an ordinary man, while in the present version the pronoun means only the infallible persons who are fit to be leaders of the pious and not led by another. In either case, the restriction in the meaning of the personal pronoun is unavoidable. In the suggested version, the position of Imam is reduced to that of an ordinary pious one Muttaqi while, in the present version, the Imam prays for the post of "Imamul-Muttaqeen" as Abraham prayed for his "Zurriat" (2:124).

There are traditions which claim that there were omissions or alterations in favour of the Ahlul-Bait. But a thorough study shows them to be either the work of a foolish friend or a crafty enemy who wanted to damage the reputation of the Holy 'mains of the Ahlul-Bait and the unique status of the Holy Qur'an.

There are traditions which are quite unacceptable, such as that Ali ibne Ibrahim narrates through his chain from Horrais from the Sixth Holy 'main Jafar ibne Muhammad As-Sadiq that the Imam read the last portion of the Sura-Fateha as follows: "Sirata man an'amtal alaihim, Ghairil Maghzoobe alaihim wa gahriz Zaalleen", that is, he used the relative pronoun "Man" and, instead of "Ia" before "Zaalleen", he used "Ghair". It is obvious that this imagined recitation does not differ from the present recitation in substance,

but it is so absurd that one can only ask why would some one like Ali ibne Ibrahim relate such nonsense. The Fatehatul Kitab is a chapter recited by the Muslims daily. There is no prayer without the recital of the Fatehatul Kitab, so it is impossible for the correct version to escape the memory of any Muslim over the age of five years. If a Muslim cannot retain one Sura of Fateha correctly, we have to read a Fateha on Islam!

There is another group of traditions in support of Tahreef indicating that the Qur'an contains different sections, sections dealing with the Ahlul-Bait, their enemies, the exemplary events of old times, and the laws and precepts of Islam. It is obvious that these kinds of traditions have nothing to do with Tahreef, ie. omission, alteration or addition. It refers to the applicability of the subject matter, and not its arrangement. As such it does not convey more than is said in the celebrated Ziarate-Jaamiah, "Wherever, or whenever anything good is mentioned, it applies to you as its origin,

its development, its source and its final phase." The traditions narrated in this connection by Ayashi in his commentary confirm what has been said, that the names of the Ahlul-Bait were not mentioned in the Qur'an, and passages of the Qur'an should be restricted to persons or occasions relating to its revelation. He says, through his chain from the Fifth Holy 'main, that he said, "The Qur'an was revealed in three groups, one-third about us and our devotees,

and one-third about our enemies and the enemies of those before us (the prophets and the righteous ones.)" The third was about law, precepts and exemplary narrations. The 'main said that a passage revealed about some persons would be restricted to those persons and would lose its applicability with the death of the persons. But the applicability of the Qur'an continues to be valid so long as the heavens and the earth remain. For every person there is a passage in the Qur'an which applies to him, good or bad. The same 'main is reported by Ayashi to have said, "Whenever a follower of Islam is said to be virtuous, We are meant; and whenever some one is said to be wicked, even in the past, our enemies are meant."

There is another tradition from the Sixth Holy 'main related by Ayashi that, if the Qur'an is read as it was revealed, one would find us named therein. This means that if one reads the Qur'an studiously, without prejudice, he would realise the exclusive status given to them by the Qur'an. For example, in verse 3:60, there is no doubt that nobody's name has been mentioned in the verse,

but there is no doubt that nobody else is meant by the verse except Hasan, Husain, Fatema and Ali respectively. And it is natural that only these can be said to be the People of the House and the members of the family. Therefore, whatever God has said in the Qur'an about the Ahlul-Bait and the chosen members of the Aale-Ibrahim applies to these people to the exclusion of all others. Instead of mentioning names, the Qur'an in places referred to them by the traditions already discussed. God has introduced them in a manner which is much more effective than merely mentioning their names.

The fifth group of traditions assert that a large portion of the Qur'an has been omitted and some non-Qur'anic material has been inserted into the present version. An outstanding example of this is the lengthy statement of Ali reported by Ahmed ibne Abu Taleb Tabarsy, the author of the book Ehtijaj (not to be confused with Shakhe Tabarsi, the author of Majma'u'l Byan. Ali says that, between the beginning portion of 4:3 and verse 137 of the same chapter, about one-third of the Qur'an has been omitted, and the

same statement says that verse' 7:188 is not a genuine part of the Qur'an. The absurdity of this tradition is evident.

It seems that Ali is talking of some remote, ancient book, that one- third of the Qur'an is deleted in his presence, that he and all the Muslims kept quiet and none can tell even one verse of that one- third of the Qur'an. In the case of Fadak, Ali and his followers did not hesitate to raise objection to a minor deviation from Islamic law,

and people such as Abu Zar, Ammar, Miqdaad, etc. raised objection against the ruling party, even endangering their lives. But one-third of the Qur'an was omitted and no one objected? And such a deliberate addition to the Qur'an was made and Ali and his party kept quiet? This spurious tradition does not in the least affect the authenticity of the Qur'an.

There is another tradition from Kulaini in the chapter dealing with the Qur'an to the effect that the Sixth Holy Imam Jafar ibne Muhammad As-Sadiq said that the Qur'an which Gabriel brought to the Holy Prophet contained seven thousand verses. This is according to Waafi's version taken from Kaafi, but in some editions of Kaafi, instead of seven thousand, it is seventeen thousand. There is no doubt that Waafi's account from Kaafi is much more reliable than the ordinary editions of Kaafi.

However, the conflict is there. But to assume from this that there have been omissions from the present Qur'an is useless conjecture because the reference is to the number of passages in the Qur'an, and the number depends on the punctuation, in which reciters of the Qur'an differ. According to the current punctuation, the number of verses are 6666, but according to the punctuation attributed to the Holy Prophet in Majma'lul Byan, there are 6263. The different schools of reciters - Kufi, Hidjazi, Macci, Madani, Shami, differ in this regard from each other. It is said that the numbering by the Kufi school is based on the authority of Ali.

However, it should be noted that difference in numbering was not based on the numbering of letters and words in the Qur'an, as confirmed by a tradition from Kaafi saying that, "No change in the letters of the Qur'an, in addition or omission, ever took place," and that the Muslims established the letters of the Qur'an but distorted its significance and its application.

It is not out of place to recommend here that the reader refer to a tradition quoted by the author of Majma'ul Byan. In chapter 76, dealing with the question of the date and occasion of Shan-e-Nuzool, a full account of the number of chapters, verses, letters, and the date and place of their revelation is given. It is said that there are chapters whose beginning was revealed in Mecca and others which were revealed in Madina and' put in their proper places by order of the Holy Prophet.

To the fifth group belongs a single tradition stating that the Qur'an originally had forty JUZ (parts), of which we have only thirty, the other ten remaining with the last Imam who will bring them when he appears. The absurdity of such a statement has already been pointed out when dealing with the tradition of the Ehtijaj. No word, phrase, sentence, verse or chapter, small or large, can be considered as a part of the Qur'an if it has only one reporter.

We have described the Qur'an as a revealed statement put within the reach of mankind as an everlasting miracle. A revealed statement as such cannot be known to only one chain of reporters. In this category is the spurious Sura known as the Sura-Vilayat which the author of the Dabistanul Mazahib has narrated from some unknown source and which may be the same Sura to which Ibne Shahr Aashoob refers as the Omitted Chapter of the Qur'an. The Chapter is the size of the Musabbehaat, not more than half a page.

Its style betrays it. It cannot be classed even with the style of the Ahlul-Bait in their sermons and prayers. It is an attempt to imitate the rhythm of the Qur'an, but is far from the Qur'an in grammatical structure and rhetorical manner, the like of which can be composed by any imitator who is acquainted with the Arabic language. There are other compositions of this type said to be the omitted chapters of the Qur'an whose style betrays them. of these there are two suras named Khol and Hafd. Combined, they do not exceed two lines of the Qur'an. It is said that they are parts of the copy of the Qur'an of Obai Ibne Kaab, but the style shows that they are some sort of prayers composed by some one, far inferior even to the style of the Holy Prophet and his Ahlul-Bait, let alone the style of the Qur'an.

There is also another tradition of this kind related by Kaafi from Abu Nasr-Bazanti, who said that the Eighth Holy Imam Ali ibne Musa ar-Riza gave him a Qur'an and told him not to look at it, but he opened it and read chapter 98 known as the Byyanah, and found therein the name of seventy persons of the Khorash along with the names of their fathers. Then the Holy Imam sent for the Qur'an and it was returned to him. First of all, it is surprising that the Holy Imam would give the Qur'an to some one and tell him not to read it. Second, how reliable is the person who disobeys the orders of the Holy Imam.

Third, assuming the report is true, the very fact that he found the names of so many people with the names of their fathers is the best proof that what he saw was not the Qur'an, but some commentary. of the contemporaries of the Holy Prophet, his ancestors, his followers, and the members of his family, nobody's name had come into the Qur'an except the name of Zaid (among the friends) and Abi Lahab (among the enemies) and the name of the Holy Prophet himself. If anyone else's name had appeared,

the report would have come through more than one solitary tradition. Apart from this, this tradition can be taken as evidence that the celebrated Mus'haf attributed to the First Holy Imam Ali ibne Abi Taleb was not confined to the text of the Qur'an, but also contained in the commentaries which the Holy Prophet dictated to him or the explanatory notes which he himself added to it.

These are the main traditions quoted in favour of Tahreef in the sense of addition or omission. There remains the question of Tahreef in regard to the arrangement of words in the phrases, sentences in the verses, verses in the chapters, and chapters in the collection. As pointed out, the Qur'an expressly asserts that the arrangement, the recitation and the explanation are all the responsibility of God, and this must have been completed before the

completion of the religion, and before the Holy Prophet's declaration, "I have left among you within your reach Two things:

the Book of God and the Holy Ahlul-Bait. "Otherwise it would be absurd for the Holy Prophet to refer to the pieces of bone, wood, skins, leaves of trees, on which the verses of the Qur'an had been written without proper arrangement as a Book which was yet to be given shape either by Ali, Zaid ibne Thabit,

or others later on. It is impossible to imagine that the Founder of Islam, who has dealt with the most minute aspects of human life even down to the etiquette of sitting in an assembly (Rv. 58:11) and is so particular that doubt and dispute in transactions both big and small should be avoided as much as possible (Rv. 2:282), should fail to give final shape to the Book declared to be the guardian of past scriptures and the criterion for post-Islamic literature; that he should fail to declare the final infallible authority to whom the Muslims should refer in unequivocal clear wording and leave both subjects to be decided by people whom he considered to be very weak in the faith (Rv 3:143).

It is obvious from the point of view of the Shia faith, from the facts of history and in the Qur'an's assertion, that no opportunity for argument or excuse was left for the people after the Holy Prophet (4:165). There are authentic traditions to support the genuineness of the present wording, and the position of the verses in their respective chapters of the Qur'an. These are the traditions of the Ahlul-Bait which deal with the spiritual effect and the divine reward offered by the recitation of any chapter of the Holy Book in the daily compulsory prayers, with the exception of four suras which contain Sijda-e-Wajib. The Imams were so cautious and particular in this respect that,

in the case of Chapters 93 and 94, though separated from each other by Bismillah, yet they said that the latter is supplementary to the former, and thus they should be recited together if read in any compulsory prayers. They said the same about Chapters 105 and 106. It should be noted that, according to the Ahlul-Bait, it is necessary that one complete Sura of the Qur'an, neither more nor less, is to be recited after Chapter 1 in the first and second Rak'at of the prayers.

Therefore, if there was an misarrangement in any chapter of the Holy Book which affects its completeness and genuineness, they should have pointed this out to their disciples as they did in the above-mentioned case. Once the genuineness of the arrangement of the verses in the chapters is proved, there should be no need to argue that the divine hand which did not miss the said arrangement would not miss the arrangement of the chapters in the Book as a whole. The question of the Macci and the Madani origin of some verses of some chapters, of early or late dates, does not arise, as there are authentic traditions showing expressly that the arrangement was made by the direction of the Holy Prophet himself; and by no one else.

Kaafi, on the authority of Sa'd-e-Iskof, relates that the Holy Prophet said:

I was given the lengthiest Suras in the place of (Taurat) Torah, and I was given hundred-verse chapters in the place of (Injeel) the Evangel, and I was given the lengthy one next to the first, in place of (Zaboor) Psalms, and I

was made to exceed them with the separate ones - they are sixty-eight Suras and the Qur'an is the guardian over all the Scriptures.

There remains a criticism by some unscrupulous friends or mischievous enemies that, in the present arrangement, there are some verses which do not fit in with the preceding and following verses. It has already been said in reply that the Qur'an itself declares that its method of arrangement is peculiar to itself and should not be compared with the human method of arrangement. Such comparisons would be like condemning natural scenery because it is not like a man-made garden.

However, it should be remembered that the chronological arrangement of the Qur'an attributed to Ali was for commentary only. It is the unanimous belief of Shia theologians and scholars That any recitation which is different from the present arrangement, with any additions or omissions, in any compulsory prayer, renders the prayer null and void. Even in the optional prayers or in the ordinary recitation, if it is different from the present arrangement, it is a sin.

There are some individual reports about the recitation of some Qur'anic words by the Ahlul-Bait other than the present; namely, Mou'ooda (verse 81:8) as Al- Mawaddat (Rnv. 81:8), and there are other words also. But according to the authentic tradition of Kaafi, and the unanimous verdict of the Shia theologians, any recitation other than the seven or the ten current ones, is forbidden.

MI these show that mischievous hands were working, alter the departure of the Holy Prophet to create doubts about the authenticity of the Qur'an, as they did about the infallible authority of the Ahlul-Bait who were declared by the Holy Prophet to be inseparable from the Qur'an. However, the Holy Imams of the Ahlul-Bait and their disciples in particular, and Muslims in general, were on guard against any move by insisting that nothing other than the present version of the Qur'an should be accepted as the unique standard of the truth.

It should also be remembered that the report which states that, on the eve of his departure, the Holy Prophet told Ali to take care of the fragments of material on which the Holy Qur'an was written and which were in the custody of the Holy Prophet, does not mean that the Qur'an was not yet collected.

It was already collected in the form of a complete Book by Ali and the others in charge and reviewed by the Holy Prophet; but the Holy Prophet did not want these fragments which were the first copy of the verses to fall into the hands of those who might misuse them. Hence he ordered Ali to take care of them, and none has claimed ever to have seen these fragments which the Holy Prophet gave into the custody of Ali. The fragments from which Zaid bin Sabi attempted to produce a collection were different from those of the Holy Prophet.

The Holy Prophet dictated to Ali the details of the Islamic precepts, theoretical and practical, and Ali wrote them down in the form of a scroll, known as a Jamea and another collection on hide parchment known as Jafr. And these would not differ from the collection of the Final Word of God

which remained as the challenging miracle within the reach of all mankind for all times.

In short, as suggested by the Holy Prophet and the 'mains of the House of the Holy Prophet, and followed by their disciples in their presence and pursued by scholars and theologians, any report throwing doubt on the genuineness of the present version of the Qur'an is to be totally rejected. No one who confesses Islam, of whatever school, can ever doubt the fact that the Qur'an, as well as containing the last message of God, has been revealed as an ever-current challenging miracle and, as such, should remain intact for all times, protected against omission, alteration or distortion.

Anything else would affect its status and standard as a miracle and as a guardian, as has been expressed in the Qur'an (15:9 and 41:42). It is absurd to say that these verses refer to the true copy of the Qur'an which is with the Imams, because it has been repeatedly said that the Qur'an must be within the reach of all mankind, and not to be hidden and treasured by any single soul. In short, to doubt the genuineness of the present version of the Qur'an amounts to doubting the very apostleship of the Holy Prophet and other apostles of God who preceded him and the infallible authority of the Ahlul-Bait. To doubt one is to doubt the other.

The Qur'an as it stands today mirrors the infallibility of the Holy Prophet and the Imams of his House in a manner which leaves no room for doubt. Similarly, the life of the Imams and their teachings mirror completely the Holy Book as it is now. We recommend readers to refer to the chapter in Kaafi (by Kulaini) dealing with the need to refer to the Qur'an as the standard in any controversial matter.

Kaafi:

From the Seventh Imam Musa ibne Jaffar al-Kazim:

Whosoever derives his religion from the Book of God and the teachings of the Holy Prophet, the mountain will move from its place, but he will not be shaken in his faith. But the man who takes it from one man, another one will refute it.

From the Seventh Imam:

The person who did not understand our status from the Qur'an is not safe from mischief which means the present Qur'an is the Standard for the identification of Imam.

From the Sixth Holy Imam:

Surely God has revealed in the Qur'an the norm of everything. Surely God did not leave anything which people would be in need of but he revealed it in the Book so that nobody could say: "I wish that had been in the Qur'an."

There is no matter under dispute between two persons but there is a ruling for it in the Qur'an, but people's minds cannot grasp it, which clearly shows that the Qur'an is short of nothing, but the shortcoming is from our side.

From the Fifth Imam:

Whenever I inform you about something, you should ask me about the origin of it in the Qur'an.

There are similar traditions of similar tone told in Kaafi here and elsewhere, asserting that everything is in the present Qur'an, but the ordinary people may not be able to grasp it. We would like here to summarise the gist of all these traditions in the words of Ali:

Innallaha Tajalla fi Kitaabihi le'ibadeh (God manifested himself in his Book for mankind.)

From the Sixth Imam, quoting the Holy Prophet:

For every truth there is a way of verification and for every right thing there is light to be thrown on it. Therefore whatever is in conformity with the Qur'an, take it; and whatever is contrary to it, leave it.

A man asked the Sixth 'main about the conflicting reports quoting the Holy Prophet or the Imams of the House of the Holy Prophet. The Imam replied, The one which is supported by evidence from the Qur'an or from the Holy Prophet, take it; otherwise return it to the person who has brought it.

Everything should be valued which is from the Book of God and the teachings of the Holy Prophet, and any tradition which does not agree with the Book of God is spurious and should be rejected.

From the Sixth Imam, narrating through the chain of his ancestors the Sermon delivered by the Holy Prophet:

Oh ye people! Ye are in an abode of truce, and ye are on a journey and the movement is fast and indeed you see the night and day, the sun and the moon, both wearing out everything new and bringing near everything afar and bringing everything promised. Equip yourselves with provisions for the remote journey.

Miqdad ignul Aswaod stood up and asked:

Oh Apostle of God! what is the abode of truce? The abode to take provisions and leave.

The Sermon continued:

whenever the ordeals confuse as the piece of dark night, adhere to the Qur'an. Verily it is the intercessor whose intercession is accepted, and the pleader whose pleading is approved. He who keeps it in view (as his guide and norm), it guideth him to Paradise, and he who puts it behind, it will drag him to hellfire. It is the guide which guideth to the best path. It is the Book wherein are details and explanations and the extract and it is decree, not to amuse. For it is the apparent on the outer and hidden on the inner sides. The outer side is law and order, while the inner side is knowledge and enlightenment. The outer is a fascinating beauty, the inner is deep. It is bottomless.

Its wonders are innumerable and its marvels are ever renewed Therein are the torches of guidance and the minarets of wisdom and guidance to knowledge for the one who understands.

Verily the meditation upon it is life for an awakened heart as the one who walks in darkness enlightening him by the light (of the Qur'an). It is impossible for the Sixth 'main to refer people to the recommendation of the Holy Prophet about a Qur'an which is not within the reach of the public.

In confirmation of the traditions, a few of which have been referred to above as examples, the following are universally accredited scholars of the

Ithna-Ashari School who are considered to be the leading authorities to be referred to after the disappearance of the Last Imam of the Ahlul-Bait:

Kulaini Abu Jaffar Muhammad ibne Yacoob-Kilaini (329 AH.), in the introduction of his celebrated work, Kaafi:

Passed away the Holy Prophet, leaving behind among his ("Ummat) people the Book of God and the Executor of his will, Amirul-Mo'mineen, the Commander of the Faithful and Imamul-Muttaqeen, leader or guide of the pious ones (Peace of God be on him) as the two inseparable associates, each of whom stands as a witness to the truth of the other.

In pointing out the sources of the true knowledge of God's religion, Kulaini quotes the two traditions which have already been quoted above and, in answering the question about the conflicting traditions narrated by the different reporters and the method of their verification, Kulaini says (in the introduction to Kaafi, Volume 1):

Behold Oh my brethren! May God guide you that none among the scholars can distinguish the true and false ones of the conflicting traditions by his own direction, but the way shown by the Holy Imam who said, Place them before the Book of God and then the one which agrees with the Book of God, take it, and the one which disagrees with the Book of God, reject it.

This quotation from Kulaini proves beyond doubt that, to him, the Qur'an and the Ahlul-Bait are two inseparable and infallible authorities left by the Holy Prophet among the people for their guidance, and that the Qur'an is the criterion for the scrutiny of the traditions. And it is unjust to suggest that Kulaini doubts the genuineness of the Qur'an simply because he mentions in his book individual reports which to some may indicate Tahreef while such reports are capable of various interpretations, as already pointed out.

Next to Kulaini comes the outstanding authority of Abu Jafar Muhammad ibne Ali ibne Babawai Qummi, author of Maula Yahzoruhud Faqeen, known as Sadooq, who has dealt with the subject in his famous book Eteqadaat, ie. The Beliefs. But here Sadooq's views are quoted through the authority of Mullah Mohsin-e-Faiz in his word, Wafi to prove the unanimity between the two great authorities separated from each other by six centuries. The Mullah quotes from Sadooq in his Eteqadaat:

Our belief is that the Qur'an which God the Most high revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him and on his family) is what is between these two covers and which is in the hand of the people, and this is the full Qur'an. The numbers of its chapters, according to the people, is one hundred and fourteen and, according to us, numbers 93 and 94 are one, and 105 and 106 are one. whoever claims that we say it was more than this, he is a liar.

The above statement clearly says that it is not only the personal view of Sadooq, but is the unanimous verdict of all Shia authorities before him; and it does not refer only to the number, but also indicates the genuineness of the arrangement that is in the hands of the people. Had there been any discrepancy, other than the number of suras or the quantity of matter, Sadooq would have pointed it out as he did the two sets of the four chapters.

Then Sadooq gives support to the Shia view about the Qur'an and the Mullah Mohsin-Faiz confirms Sadooq's views, saying, "Whatever tradition has come down concerning Tahreef or distortion, it must be taken to refer to

the application or significance of the verses of the Qur'an and not to its wording." (Wafi, final chapter on the Qur'an).

Next to Sadooq comes the Shaikhut Taifa, popularly known as Shaikh-e-Toosi, the author of the Kitab-e-Tahzeeb and Istibsar. In his commentary known as Tibyan he relates the views of his master Seyyed-Murtuza (known as Alamal-Huda), the celebrated authority of the Shias after Shaikh Mufeed, whose firm and sound belief was that the Qur'an now in our hands was finalised and given shape in writing during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet and under his supervision.

Next to Shaikh-Toosi is the celebrated Shia commentator Shaikh-e-Tabarsi, the author of the Majma'ul-Byan. Then there are the scholars of the Safavite period; namely:

Mohaiqe-Karaki, who has written a separate book on the subject, and says that any statement in support of Tahreef should be interpreted to refer to application, and anything else must be utterly rejected as being against the Qur'an and authentic sunnat and the unanimous verdict of the Ulema (scholars). Next comes Mullah Mohsin-Faiz and then Seyyed Hashim Bahrani - (Safavites) Tafseer Burhan.

From among the Ulema of the last three centuries there are: Shaikh Muhammad Husain, author of the Principles of Jurisprudence, who has discussed in his standard book, Fusool, the genuineness of the Qur'an as the supreme authority. The celebrated jurist-scholar Shaikh Jafar who, in his Kashful-ghita, claims the unanimous verdict of the scholars on the genuineness of the Qur'an without omission, addition or alteration. The Agha Muhammad Husain Tabatabai, author of the commentary Al-Meezam, and Khija Khan, author of Sharhe-Wafiya Mohaqqiqe- Kalbasi.

Then comes the celebrated scholar of all Semitic Scriptures, the late Shaikh Mohammad Jawad Balaghi, in the introduction to his commentary, A'laa 'ur Rahman.

The late Ayatullah Buroojerdi also held and advocated the same view. And Seyyed Shan-Shahani, author of Orwatul-Osqa, not to be confused with a book of the same name by another author.

And there are the present divines: Ayatullah Seyyed Mohsin Hakim (Najaf), Ayatullah Seyyed Mahmood Shahroodi (Najaf), Ayatullah Seyyed Abol Qasim Kharyi Najaf, author of the commentary Albayan, and Ayatullah Seyyed Abdul Hadi Al Husainy Al-Meelani (Mash'ad). See the copies of the verdict of the above Mujtahids of Najafe Ashof and Mash'ade Muqaddas at the end of the section.

The Various Recitations of the Holy Qur'an

A few words should be said about the recitations "Qira'at". It is generally known that there are seven or ten different recitations of the Qur'an. By the word "recitation" is meant the various wordings which convey the same or allied meanings ("Maalik" and "Malik") For example "Yatta'harna" and "Yat'harna". It is generally believed that the recitation of the seven or of the ten reciters of the first, second and third centuries of Islam are valid, and Muslims are allowed to adopt either of these in reciting the Qur'an.

It is generally believed that the origin of these various recitations goes back to the time of the Holy Prophet who approved these varieties but, according to the Shia Ithna-Ashari School, whose views are based on the teachings of the Holy Imams, the revealed recitation of the Qur'an can be only one since, as the Imam put it,

"The Qur'an is One, came down as One, the variation in the recitation comes from the reciters, not from God" It is a misrepresentation of the fact by the ruling party for propaganda purposes that the Holy Prophet followed the recitation of Zaid ibne Thabit during the close of his ministry. But, as stated by Mustafa Sadiq-e-Rufaa'yee in his book Ejaazu Qur'an, the Holy Prophet does not follow anything but the divine recitation 75:16-19. Zaid ibne Thabit and the ruling party who already failed to produce a collection of their own had no alternative but to adopt an approved collection of the Holy Prophet and his recitation; anything else would have been rejected by the Muslim world. 67

Shia Qurra (Reciters):

1 Hamzatubna Habeeb.

2 Aasim 3 Abdullah ibne Aamir Yasabi, who acquired knowledge from Waasila Adqu' (a companion of the Holy Prophet) d. 116 A.H.

4 Abi ibne Hamza-e-Kas'ayi, who acquired knowledge from Hamza b. Habeeb, and Ibne Abi laila, who had learnt from Ameerul Momineen Ali ibne Abi Taleb.

5 Khalaf ibne Hashanul Bazzar, a student of Hamzatibna Habeeb.

6 Yakooob ibne Is'haaq Qazrami, who learnt from Ameerul Momineen Ali ibne Abi Taleb.

7 Yazeed ibne Qeeqaa' Makhzoomi, from Abdullah ibne Abbas, who learnt from Ameerul Momineen Ali ibne Abi Taleb.

WHAT IS ISLAM?

The Islamic Way of Inviting Mankind to the Truth The following verse of the Holy Qur'an lays down in clear terms the only method by which mankind can be invited to the Truth, that is, through Islam.

It is true that Islam was spread with the sword. But which sword? Not the one the Christian Church used under the Edict of Milan against the poor and helpless Jews, men, women and innocent children, but with the sword of ever-triumphant Islamic ethics, through the ideal conduct and godly character of the Holy Prophet, and through the matchless sacrifices of the Holy Ahlul- Bait - a lovely heavenly weapon shipper and surer than the brutal one used to spread the creed started in the name of Jesus. The

following is the Qur'anic injunction on the preaching of the faith by the Muslims:

And call thou unto the way of thy Lord with wisdom and kindly exhortation, and dispute with them in the manner which is the best; Verily thy Lord knoweth better of him who hath gone astray from His path; and He knoweth best of those guided aright. Truth is that which even the enemy is helpless to deny. Let the world listen to what the great Christian scholar declares:

History makes it clear, however, that the legend of fanatical Muslims sweeping through the world and forcing Islam at the point of the sword upon the conquered races is one of the most fantastically absurd myths that historians have ever repeated.

(De Lacy O'Leary in Islam at the Crossroads, London 1923, page 8) There are many more of such open declarations by impartial scholars of the non-Muslim world who earnestly seek the truth. To quote all of them would need a separate volume in itself.

The Meaning of Deen and Maz'hab

The Arabic term Deen or Maz'hab stands for the word "Religion" in English. Religion is Human recognition of superhuman controlling power and especially of a personal God entitled to obedience, effect of such recognition on conduct and mental attitude." (OED)

Man by nature is conscious of an Absolute Authority, a Super Power of the highest order, and the way he thinks and behaves in his desire to reach or to please that Power, that is religion. Islam, as a religion, stands for the divinely prescribed code for disciplining the human Ego or self in its practical life on earth, to enable man to raise himself from the abyss of material degradation towards the sublime heights of eternal heavenly bliss. Such bliss is in store for those who successfully conquer the lust for material possessions and physical power and restrain carnal desires.

Islam is a divinely formulated and perfectly regulated formula. Expressed in a few words, it is:

Say thou (Oh, our Apostle Muhammad!), My Prayer, my Sacrifice, my Life and my Death (are all, only) for God, the Lord of the worlds. (6:163) It is worth imagining, if man ponders over the complete implications of this heavenly guidance in its fullness and acts upon it, how glorious life on earth would Be; there would be no need for man to aspire to Paradise, For the earth itself would become a replica of Heaven. This is the spirit and aim of Islam, the Islam-Original called "Shiaism".

How was the Qur'an, the Final Word of God, Acquired?

It is a well-known historic fact that every religious Scripture revealed before the Holy Qur'an suffered alterations, additions and subtractions; some have even disappeared altogether. Leaving aside the ancient ones, take for instance the case of Jesus, the most recent of the Apostles of God before the Holy Prophet Muhammad. What is available today is a collection of mere stories told by different persons at different times based upon often contradictory records.

And even this has undergone revision, with various translations of the text, hailed by some and contested by others; for example the Douai Bible

of the Catholic Church, the King James Version of the Protestant Churches and the Diaglott of the Watchtower Society, etc. This destructive activity by man was tolerated by the Almighty Providence while the Scriptures were being tampered with, awaiting the Final and All-Comprehensive revelation which was yet to be given to the human race.

This was revealed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, the Last of the Messengers and Warners from God. This Final Word of God, the Qur'an, was sent down with a challenging Under taking and assurance that none thereafter shall ever be able to tamper with it, meddle with it, as the Omnipotent Author of the Word and its Revealer Himself would take care of its Originality, Arrangement, Completeness and Security:

Verily, We have sent down the Reminder (the Qur'an), and verily We (Ourself) for it will certainly be the Guardian. (15:9) On Us is its (Qur'an's) Compilation, its Recitation and its Explanation.

Before leaving this world, the Holy Prophet declared:

I leave among you Two great (very important) things, the Book of God and my Ahlul-Bait; should ye be attached to these Two, never, never shall ye go astray, and verily never, never shall these Two be separated from one another.

This Apostolic announcement clearly states that:

1 The Holy Qur'an was there in the form of a complete Book.

2 It was there in the hands of the people, for the Holy Prophet says, "I leave among (or in the midst of) you".

3 To avoid going astray, people should hold fast to both, the Qur'an and the Ahlul-Bait, and not to others.

4 The Ahlul-Bait will always be with the Qur'an, and the Qur'an in its original form and with its correct meanings will be only with the Holy Ahlul-Bait. 5 As the Holy Prophet says, these Two will never be separated from each other. As long as the Qur'an is there in this world, there will be one of the Ahlul-Bait (the Imam of the age).

The historic recital of the Qur'an by the severed head of Husain, the King of Martyrs, at Karbala, proved that a member of the Ahlul-Bait, even when killed, is the custodian of the Qur'an and can deliver it to the world.

The Word of the Holy Prophet Muhammad was the Revealed Word of God The Holy Prophet Muhammad spoke nothing but the revelation from the Lord. This unique character, or exclusive distinction, of the Holy Prophet has been declared by the Holy Qur'an as well as in the ancient Scriptures:

Nor does he speak of (his own) inclination; It (the wording) is naught but a revelation revealed (unto him.) The Holy Prophet has been identified as such even in ancient Scriptures:

For Moses truly said unto the fathers, a Prophet shall the Lord your God raise unto you of your brethren like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.

And it shall come to pass that every soul which will not hear "that Prophet" shall be destroyed from among the people. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.

And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him. (Deuteronomy 18:18, 19)

Howbeit, when the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you unto all truth for he shall not speak of himself but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; he will show you things to come. (St John's Gospel, 16:13)

Islam: What does it Mean, and Who are the Muslims?

Islam literally means Surrender, Submission, that is, the complete handing over of one's self to another. Islam also means Peace. Islam as a religion means an unconditional and complete submission to the All-Supreme and the Absolute Sovereign authority of the Lord of the Universe. In other words, the total submission of the individual will to the Universal will of the Lord. Whoever does this is a Muslim. In fact, once one does this one's individual will ceases to operate and it becomes subject to the Universal will of the Lord. In relation to this state of submission, the Holy Qur'an declares:

Say: Verily my prayer and my sacrifice, my life and my death (are all, only) for God, the Lord of the worlds. (6:163)

Verily the religion with God is ISLAM (submission to God's will); and those to whom the Book had been given did not differ, but after the knowledge (of the Truth) had come unto them... (3:18) Yea! whosoever submitteth his self (entirely) to God and is a doer of good, for him there shall be his reward with the Lord, on such shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.

(2:112)

And who is better in religion than he who resigneth himself entirely unto God and is righteous, and followeth the creed of Abraham, the Upright One, And God took Abraham for a Friend. (4:125)

What is demanded of a human being, or that which is acceptable to God, is nothing short of Islam: This day have I perfected for you your religion, and have completed My favour on you, and chosen for you ISLAM (to be) the Religion. (5:3) The following verse gives the last word on the choice of a religion for mankind: And whosoever seeketh any religion other than Islam (total resignation unto God) never shall it be accepted from him, and in the next world he shall be among the losers. (3:84)

SHIAISM: THE ORIGINAL ISLAM

Shiaism: What is it and Why is it So Called?

Shiaism is another name for the original Qur'anic faith. In short, it is nothing more nor less than the Islam-Original. It is an historic fact that, no sooner had the Holy Prophet departed from this earth, than the vested interests of man gained hold on matters secular as well as spiritual and started making additions, subtractions and alterations to the original teachings of Islam, misinterpreting the Word of God and inventing counterfeit traditions in the name of the Holy 'Prophet. The Holy Prophet, before departing from this world, had openly and repeatedly made the following guiding announcement for the people to abide by:

Of whomsoever I am the Lord, this Ali is the Lord And the Holy Prophet, before his departure, declared:

I leave behind me amidst you Two weighty (very important) things, the Book of God (the Holy Qur'an) and my Ahlul-Bait. Should ye be attached to these Two, never, never shall ye go astray, and never shall these Two be separated from one another until they meet me at the Spring of "Kauthar" (ie. Paradise). (Tafsir-e-Kabir, Tafsir-e-Durre Manthur and others)

The Holy Prophet further announced:

The likeness of my Ahlul-Bait is that of the Ark of Noah. whosoever getting into it is saved and who soever turneth from it is drowned and lost. (Hadith)

People neglected the Ahlul-Bait and began following their own ways and created what they called their own Schools of Islam, and, as deviators from the prescribed course, called themselves Muslims. Then those who had faithfully followed the original teachings of the Holy Qur'an and remained faithful to the course prescribed by the Holy Prophet had of necessity to distinguish themselves from those who had discarded the divinely established guides, the Ahlul-Bait. So those who followed Ali alter the Holy Prophet called themselves Shias of Ali and the Islam-Original became identified as "Shiaism". This was quite in accordance with the Bait, or allegiance to Ali, required by the Holy Prophet at Ghadeer-e-Khum. But others disregarded it and paid allegiance to their own chosen leaders.

Thus Shiaism stands for the Islam-Original and Shias for the true Muslims faithfully attached to the Holy Prophet and the Holy Ahlul-Bait. In fact the Shia-Ithna-Ashari School is the Qur'anic Islam of the Holy Prophet and the rest are the newly-established sects and sub-sects deviating from the original course.

The Most Misrepresented and Misunderstood School, the School of the Islam-Original

Islam in general is no doubt misrepresented and misunderstood on account of the antagonistic propaganda by Christian missionaries. However, the most misrepresented and misinterpreted of all is Shiaism, which is the most misunderstood of all the religions of the world. The reason for this is the absence of literature about it in languages other than Arabic, Persian and Urdu.

A very brief note on the fundamental doctrines, with a few leading verses of the Qur'an on which the ideology is based, will help the reader to see that Shiaism, the Islam-Original, is the superb and unchallengeable pure Qur'anic Faith presented to mankind by the Holy Prophet and preserved By the Ahlul-Bait.

The notes are not intended to lengthen the work, but have the sacred purpose of establishing a better understanding of the Truth and creating the love and fellowship among the various groups of the human family on earth.

The Classification of Religious Knowledge

The knowledge of the religion of Islam has been classified as follows:

1 UsooI-e-deen, the fundamental roots and basis of the religion; 2 Fur-e-deen, the articles of the practice of the faith.

In the following pages I will deal only with the first, the Usool-e- deen, the basis of Islam.

Usool-e-Deen

There are five fundamentals of the faith:

Tauheed: the Unity of God

Adl: the Divine Justice

Risalat: the Apostleship

Imamat: the Divine Guidance

Qiamat: the Day of Final Judgment

(2) ADL: THE DIVINE JUSTICE

Belief in the All-Just disposition of a ruling authority has a dual aspect for its subjects. When the subjects are sure of justice being meted out by their ruler, they always guard against breaking the law and inviting punishment. At the same time, knowing that there will be recognition and reward for loyalty, they are encouraged to be obedient. Justice attracts honour, reverence and loyalty, while injustice is corrupt and evil. God is All-Just and All-Perfect.

This is for what your (own) hands have brought forth and because God is not unjust to his servants. God Himself witnesseth that there is no god but He, and so do the angels and those possessed of knowledge, standing firm for justice, (there is no) god but He, the Mighty and Wise.

The absolute justice of God has been repeatedly declared in the Holy Qur'an and justice has repeatedly been enjoined on man in all his dealings with God and His creatures. Besides, justice is an essential factor in the establishment and maintenance of peace and security on earth, and unless the Lord of the Universe Himself is just, He cannot expect man to be just. Faith in the Absolute Justice of God is one of the essential articles of Islam-Original belief identified as Shiaism. Some of the other schools subsequently established by the Muslims believe that God need not necessarily always be just.

The Divine Justice is tempered with Mercy

It must be remembered that divine justice of All-Merciful God cannot be compared with the justice meted out by judges in the courts of law. These judges are only executors of the law without authority outside the limits of the law. They are bound by the law and any petition for mercy must be addressed to the Crown only, i.e. the maker of the law. God is not a mere judge, bound by the law. He is the Absolute Monarch with Absolute Independence. Hence His justice is always tempered with mercy, for only He can grant mercy. Whereas an earthly judge cannot be swayed by a person's repentance, the All-Merciful may pardon him where there is sincere repentance and a determination to mend his ways.

(All) praise is God's alone, the Lord of the worlds, the Beneficent, the Merciful, the Master of the Day of Judgment. (1:24) It should be noted that the above qualities of God have been declared to man in the opening chapter of the Holy Qur'an which must be repeated at least seventeen times every day in the prescribed compulsory prayers which a Muslim must offer, so that he may always remember that God is All-Merciful and All-Just and at the same time Absolute Sovereign of the Universe.

It is for man to glorify God, rejoicing at His being All- Merciful as well as being warned of His Justice. Thus he will guard against breaking the divine law and promote goodness in himself and to others, knowing that there will be a reward from the All-Just Master of the Day of Judgment.

(3) RISALAT: THE APOSTLESHIP

God alone and none else could ~ granted His creatures knowledge and guidance. With the creation of man began the divinely commissioned apostleship (Risalat) for the guidance of mankind. Every person on earth had a warner and guide, an apostle from God in his own language. And for every people (was sent) an apostle; and when their apostle came, the matter between them was decided with equity and there shall not (in the least) be done (any) injustice. (10:47)

And indeed raised We in every nation an apostle (of Ours), (preaching) that "Worship ye God (only) and shun ye (the worship) of idols" so of them there were some whom God guided, and of them were others on whom error was confirmed. (16:36) Verily We sent thee with truth, as a bearer of glad tidings and a warner; and there is not a people but a warner hath gone among them. (35:24)

And we sent not any apostle but with the language of the people that he might clearly explain (Our commandments) unto them; then God leaveth to stray whom He willeth and guideth whom He willeth, and He is the Mighty, the Wise. (14:4) A guide from God should necessarily be infallible, is sinless by nature, and all the apostles of God were naturally so. otherwise the one who is himself fallible cannot reasonably preach sinlessness to others. The demand of Islam regarding the apostles of God is found in the following verse of the Holy Qur'an:

Say ye (O Muslims!), "We believe in God and that which hath been sent down unto us and that which was sent down unto Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and which was given to Moses and Jesus, and that which was given unto the apostles from their Lord. No difference do we make between any of them and to Him (alone) have we submitted (ourselves)." (2:136)

The above verse is clear in its declaration that a Muslim has to believe in God and the Holy Qur'an and all the heavenly Scriptures revealed to the ancient prophets who preceded the Prophet Muhammad, and there should be no distinction made about their personal purity and truthfulness, and a Muslim is he who has submitted himself to God.

Though the names of all those apostles of God are not given in the Holy Qur'an, the number of them is reported to be a lakh and twentyfour thousand, and this number may mean the innumerable numbers of guides given to humanity since its advent on earth.

And verily sent We apostles before thee, of them there are those whom We have mentioned unto thee; and of them are those whom We have mentioned not unto thee; and it was not given to any apostle to bring a sign (miracle) save with the leave of God, but when came the 97 behest of God, (it) was executed with truth, and those who stood on falsehood were then the losers. (40:78)

The first of them was Adam and the Last the Holy Prophet Muhammad, with whom concluded the apostleship and after whom neither any other apostle came nor would ever come until the end of the world. A Muslim has to believe in the finality of the apostleship of Muhammad, the last Apostle of God. Belief in the Prophets preceding the Holy Prophet Muhammad:

This is another proof of Islam's being the universal religion of man that, unlike any other religious order of the world, Islam demands faith in the infallibility and the truthfulness of all the prophets preceding the Holy Prophet Muhammad, that they were truly Messengers of God sent for the guidance of the human race throughout the world.

A Muslim has to believe in a lakh and twenty-four thousand prophets, of whom only a very few have been mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. The following are a few of the verses concerning the divinely sent Messengers of God:

This Our argument We gave to Abraham against his people; We exalt (any one) whom We please; Verily thy Lord is All- Wise, All-Knowing. And Zachariah and John and Jesus and Elias; every one was of the righteous (ones).

And Ishmael and Elisha and Jonah and Lot; and every one We did exalt (with Our apostleship) over the worlds.

These are they to whom gave We the Book and the authority of apostleship; so if these (people) disbelieve it, indeed have We (already) entrusted it unto a people who are not disbelievers. (6:84-90)

And indeed We did send apostles before thee and gave We unto them wives and offspring! And it is not for an apostle to bring or show a sign (miracle) but by God's permission; for every term there is a book prescribed (13:38)

And indeed We did send apostles before thee among the people of yore. (15:10) Indeed sent We Our apostles with clear proofs, and sent We down with them the Book and the Scale that people may establish themselves in justice; and sent We down from wherein is latent (in its use) mighty power and also benefits for mankind and that God may prove who helpeth Him and His apostles in secret; Verily God is All-strong and Ever-Present. (75:25) The advent of Muhammad1 the Last Apostie1 prophesied:

In the Old Testament:

The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee of thy brethren, like unto me, unto him shall ye hearken. (Dent. 18:25) I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren and will put My words into his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.

And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto My words which he shall speak in My name I shall require it of him. (Deut. 18:18,19) In the New Testament: The Holy Prophet Jesus had also prophesied the advent of this Promised Guide:

And I will pray the Father, and he' will give you another Comforter that he may abide with you for ever. (John 14:16)

Nevertheless I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you, and if I depart, I

will send him unto you. And when he is come he will reprove the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment (John 16:7,8)

But the Comforter which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name he shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance whatever I have said unto you. (John 15:25) I have yet many things to say unto you, but he cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all truth, for he shall not speak of himself whatsoever he shall hear that shall he speak and he will show you things to come. (John 16:12- 13)

The above verses clearly identify the Holy Prophet Muhammad as the one promised by God, and the Holy Qur'an as the Word of God put into his mouth, and state that he will speak only that which is revealed to him by God.

He (Our Apostle Muhammad) speaketh not by himself but only that which hath been conveyed to him by revelation. (53:3) The quoted verses of the Christian Scriptures clearly show that the Holy Prophet Muhammad is the "Comforter", "The Holy Ghost", and "The Spirit of Truth" foretold by the Holy Prophet Jesus, and "The Prophet" prophesied by Moses.

The Christian Scriptures further declare that the coming of the Promised Prophet, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, had been continuously prophesied by all the ancient prophets:

Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken have likewise foretold these days (Acts 3:22) The Apostleship of the Holy, Prophet Muhammad:

The following are a few of the verses of the Holy Qur'an referring to the position of the Holy Prophet Muhammad as the Apostle of God: And Muhammad is not but an Apostle; (other) apostles have already passed away prior to him; Therefore if he dieth or be slain, will ye turn upon your heels? And he who turneth upon his heels will by no means do harm to God in the least, and shortly will God reward the grateful ones. (3:143) Whatever good befalleth thee (O man) it is from God and whatever evil befalleth thee, it is from thyself We have sent thee (O Our Apostle Muhammad) unto mankind as (Our) Apostle; and God is sufficient witness (thereof)

Whoso obeyeth the Apostle, he indeed obeyeth God; and whoever turneth away, We have not sent thee upon them to watch. (4:79-80)

O mankind! Verily the Apostle Muhammad hath come unto you with truth from your Lord; Believe (in him), it is good for you. (4:170) Indeed hath come unto you an Apostle from among yourselves; grievous to him is your falling into distress, (he is) solicitous regarding your welfare, towards the faithful (he is) compassionate, (and) merciful (9:128)

And We sent thee not (O Our Apostle Muhammad) but a Mercy unto (all) the worlds. (21:107)

And We sent thee not (O Our Apostle Muhammad) but a Bearer of glad tidings and a Warner (25:56)

Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but an Apostle of God and the seal of the prophets; and God is Of all things ever the Knower. (33:40) O (Our) Prophet (Muhammad), Verily We have sent thee as a Witness, and as a Bearer of Glad Tidings and as a Warner. And as the

Inviter unto God by His command, and an illuminating torch. And give you the glad tidings unto the believers that there shall be for them from God a great grace. (33:45, 46,47)

And (O Our Apostle Muhammad), We sent thee not but unto the whole of mankind, a Bearer of glad tidings and a Warner, but most of the people know (it) not (34:28)

There are many other verses of the Holy Qur'an referring to the Holy Prophet Muhammad and his unique position as the Last Prophet of God. Muhammad the Last Apostle of God:

The Holy Qur'an, the final Word of God, declares in clear terms that the Holy Prophet Muhammad is the last of the apostles of God, meaning that no other Prophet, apostle or messenger will ever come after him:

Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but an Apostle of God and the Seal of the prophets; And God is Of all things ever the Knower. (33:40) After this heavenly declaration, a Muslim has to believe as an article of faith that no prophet did come, or will ever come, after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, and if any one claims to be a prophet he is definitely a liar and an imposter.

Why Prophethood ended with the Holy Prophet

Prophethood or apostleship is only the office through which the Word of God is conveyed in revealing to the human world the code of living or the religion. Prophet after prophet was sent to various parts of the earth according to the mental evolution of the different ages. Finally the divine guidance was consolidated in a universal teacher to unite all mankind under a single constitutional order in a final divinely regulated and perfect code. The religion was finally declared to have been perfected and was given the name "Islam", Submission.

This day have I perfected for you your religion, and have completed my favour on you, and chosen for you Islam (to be) the Religion.

The greatest of the favours of God is his guidance, and in sending His last Apostle Muhammad and perfecting the religion for man the divine favour was complete. Once perfected, there was no need to send any other apostle. Hence the conclusion of prophethood saw the institution of Imam, the Divine Guidance towards the true meaning of the Holy Qur'an and its correct interpretation in practical life. Imam is only for the preservation of the Word of God and the correct guidance on the path preached and practised by the last Apostle of God, the Holy Prophet Muhammad. The Strict Surrender to the Verdict of the Holy Prophet demanded:

Every Muslim, as ordained by the following ordinance from the Lord, must accept the verdict of the Holy Prophet without reluctance and with implicit submission.

So No! By thy Lord! They believe not (really) until they have set thee up as their judge in all that they dispute about among themselves and thereafter find not in their selves any vexation (at all) against what thou decideth and submit (themselves) with total submission. (4:65) Particularly concerning the faith, one must remember the verdict of the Holy Prophet as to the only source of the correct meaning of the Holy Qur'an:

I leave behind me amidst you Two great things, The Book of God (the Holy Qur'an) and my Ahlul-Bait (the members of the Holy Family, namely Ah and Fatema and their godly issue). Should ye be attached to these Two, never, never shall ye go astray from me, for verily these Two will never be separated from one another or until they meet me at the Spring of Kauthar (See Tafsire-Kabir, Tafsire-Durre, Manthur and others)

According to the above ordinance of God, and the declaration of the Holy Prophet, every Muslim has to follow only Ameerul Momineen Ali ibne Abi Taleb as his Maula or Lord in the place of the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet, before the great assembly of the Hajies at Ghadeer-e-Khum while returning from his last Haj (pilgrimage),

which historic event none of the historians could fail to report, raised All by the Prophetic strength of his own arms from the improvised pulpit, declaring him to be the Maula, the Guardian and Master of the Muslims in his place. And immediately coming down from the pulpit, he commanded every one to address All as the Ameerul-Momineen, and Omar ibne Khattab was the first one commanded to do so, which he did, acknowledging Ah as the Ameer, or the Commander of the Faithful. Why the appointment of the Ameer by the Holy Prophet was set aside, and whether setting aside the verdict of the Holy Prophet and the appointment of another was legal and acceptable is left to the readers to judge. The Holy Prophet had declared:

Of whomsoever I am the Maula (or the Lord), this Ah is his Lord.

Under the above apostolic declaration, he who holds the Holy Prophet as his Lord must necessarily hold Ali as his Lord, meaning that he who does not hold Ali as h is Lord, does not hold the Holy Prophet as his Lord. Be in known that it is under this divine ordinance of God communicated to us through the Holy Prophet at Ghadeer-e- Khum that the Shias, or the followers of the Islam- original, follow Ali as their guide or Imam in the place of the Holy Prophet Muhammad after his departure from this world. And to identify themselves from those who do not follow the verdict of God and the Holy Prophet, they call themselves the Shias of Ali, ie. the followers of Ali, the Maula or the Ameer appointed by the Holy Prophet at God's Command. The readers must judge whether this is justifiable.

(5) QIAMAT: THE LAST DAY OF THE FINAL JUDGMENT

Islam demands that a Muslim believe in the return of everything to the Lord for the final Judgment of every soul in matters of faith and action. There are repeated declarations in the Holy Qur'an warning mankind to guard his life on earth against the retribution which is sure to come. This should keep man on the right track protected against future accountability. A Muslim must believe in Ma 'ad or Qiamat, the Final Day of Judgment and live such a clean life that he will easily earn eternal life and heavenly bliss. The fifth principle of the faith of Islam-Original, or Shims, is the belief in Ma'am or Qiamat. Every human being is Individually accountable for his own faith and deeds.

And for all (are ranks assigned) according to what they did; that (God) may (fully) recompense their deeds, and they shall not be done any injustice. (46:19)

After death, each human being will rise from the dead to be rewarded and punished according to the sum of his virtue and vice in this life. The present life is only a season for cultivation and effort, while the afterlife will be a period of harvest. This life creates the causes for the effects in the hereafter. As one sows, so shall he reap. It is not necessary to repeat that human life on earth started with a single pair, Adam and Eve, and over countless ages that life multiplied. Something that has a beginning will have an end.

Death is not the extinction of life; if it were, there would be no difference between the end of the good and the evil. The good and the evil can never be equal.

Say (O Our Apostle Muhammad!) equal are not the bad and the good though the abundance of the bad may enchant thee; so then fear ye God, O ye of under- standing, that ye may be successful (5:100)

When we are enjoined to do good only and to abstain from every evil, the question arises, "Why?" The only natural or reasonable answer can be that if good is done, good will return, and if evil is done, evil will return. It is with this assurance that one will incline to goodness and resist evil. Note the Qur'anic declarations:

On that day shall come out people (from their graves) in (scattered) groups, to be shown their own deeds. Then he who hath done an atom-weight of good shall see it. And he who has done an atom-weight of evil shall see it. (99:6-8)

It would not be divine justice to allow both good and evil lives to end in extinction. It would not be just and reasonable for those who have suffered misery, torture and painful death for the sake of goodness to please the Lord to be put on the same level as those who have lived in vice, sinful luxury and criminal enjoyments prohibited by the Lord.

Moses and Pharaoh, Jesus and his persecutors, Muhammad the Holy Prophet and Abu Jehl, Ali and ibne Mulim, Husain and Yazid, can never be equated. The merits and the sins must be recognised. The Ma 'ad or Qiamat is for this alone.

Death is only a turning point in life, a transition from this life of causes to the state of effects.

The period between death and the Day of Judgment is called Barzakh (Purgatory). The Last Day will be the Day of Final Judgment when every soul shall account for individual good or evil during life on earth. On this day the people will be divided into three groups: those who did only good, did not pollute themselves with any evil and did good to others; those who lived their whole life in evil and did evil to others; and those who have a mixed record of good and evil.

It is also well known that a good deed may seem to be a minor goodness, yet may have an abiding major effect; and an evil may seem to be minor, yet it may have a far-reaching consequence. Hence every good deed, major or minor, and every evil deed, major or minor, will be judged according to the actual merit or demerit of its consequent effects.

Those who did good will enjoy eternal bliss; those who did evil shall suffer punishment; and those who did both good and evil will have their deeds balanced against each other, and will be rewarded or punished in accordance with the result.

There is room for intercession, but it is conditional and will not be for those who have intentionally rebelled against the authorities set up by God and have tortured and killed God's vicereagents on earth, namely the Apostle and the Holy Imams.

The Holy Qur'an says that killing one man is equal to killing the whole human race, and saving one man's life is like saving the whole human race. If this is true of an ordinary man, consider the gravity of the killing of an apostle or Imam of God, and what will be the fate of those who killed Husain and his whole godly band of faithful supporters of the truth?

For this reason did We prescribe unto the Children of Israel that he who slayeth any one (man) without (that being for) murder, or for mischief in the land, ('t shall be) as though he hath slain mankind as a whole; and he who saveth it (a human life) shall be as though he hath saved mankind as a whole; and certainly our Apostles came unto them with clear evidences and yet, verily, many of them even after that certainly commit excesses in the land. (5:32)

The return of everything to its Creator Lord in the life hereafter has repeatedly been declared: And He is God, there is no god but He! His is all praise, in first and (in) the last, and His is the authority, and unto Him (only) ye shall be returned (28:70)

The day of a total gathering is announced:

On the day (of resurrection) when We will gather them all together, then will We say unto those who associated others (with Us), "Keep ye where ye are, ye and your associated gods." Then We shall separate them, the one from the other, and shall say (unto them) their associate gods, "It was not Us that ye worshipped" (10:28)

Regarding the return of all men to their True Lord, and the speed with which it will be effected, it is declared:

Then they are returned unto God, their Maula Master), the (only) Real One; Beware! (now surely), His (alone) (as the Master) is the Judgment, and He is the swiftest of reckoners. (6:62) (See also Chapter 36, "Yasin", particularly verses 51-54 and 65) 134

The following verse tells of the deeds which will he judged according to their merits and demerits, and will be rewarded accordingly:

And for all (are ranks assigned) according to what they did; that (God) may (fully) recompense their deeds, and they shall not be done any injustice. (46:19)

God is the best of judges:

what! Is not God the Judge of judges?

The following verses of Sura-Tatwif, (Sura 83, the Defaulters) clearly declare the facts about the Judgment:

Verse;

4 what! Think they not that they shall be raised?

5 For a mighty day.

6 On the day when mankind shall stand before the Lord of the worlds.
10 Woe on that day unto the disbelievers.
11 Those who disbelieve the Day of Judgment.
12 And disbelieve if not (any one) save a transgressor.
16 Verily, they shall be committed to the flaming fire.
17 Then shall it be said (unto them): "This is that which ye disbelieved"
22 Verily, the righteous ones shall be in bounteous bliss.
24 Thou (O Our Apostle Muhammad!) wilt recognise in their face the
(delightful) radiance of bliss;
29 And verily they who ore the guilty ones used to laugh at those who
believe.
30 And when they pass by them, wink they at one another.
31 And when return they unto their people, return they jesting.
32 And when they see them, they say: "These are the ones who have
gone astray. If;
33 while they are not to be watchers over them.
34 So today, those who believe shall laugh at the disbelievers.
35 On couches (exalted they shall be) seeing (the delightful sights).
36 Shall not the disbelievers be (also) recompensed for what they used to
do?

These verses declare that:

- (i) There is a Day of Final Judgment;
- (ii) At that time every soul shall return to the Lord.
- (iii) The evil shall he punished and the good rewarded.
- (iv) There is a place of suffering for the evil which is called Hell and there is a place of eternal bliss for the good which is called Heaven or Paradise.
- (v) The reward or punishment shall he according to the merit or demerit of the individual.

The Holy Qur'an is full of warnings to mankind about the life after death and the Last Day of Judgment. The following is a glossary of words used:
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- (i) Jannat: Paradise or Heaven.
- (ii) Nar: Hell-fire.
- (iii) Akhirat: Hereafter.
- (iv) Mahshar: The place of the gathering of the souls.
- (v) Qiamat: The Resurrection.
- (vi) Meazan: The Balance - The means of discrimination or balancing against each other such things as merits of intention and action.
- (vii) Siraat: The correct Path. Every soul shall pass through it The righteous shall have no difficulty, but the wicked will have great difficulty and perhaps find it impossible to traverse successfully. Every soul will find it easy or difficult according to the merit or demerit earned in this life.
- (viii) Sawale-Munkir wa Nakir: Every human soul upon leaving the body shall be questioned about its faith and deeds in this present life and will be admitted to the transitory state, Barzakh (Purgatory) in accordance with the answers given.

(ix) Nama-e-Aamaal: Record of deeds. Every one's deeds are recorded and the records are preserved.

From Sura 83: Verse;

7 Nay! the record of the wicked has been preserved.
in the "Sijjin"

8 And what will make thee know what the "Sijjin" is?

9 It is a Written Book.

18 Nay! The record of the righteous shall be in the "Illiyin".

19 And what will make thee know what the "Illiyin" is?

20 (It is) a Written book;

The Book referred to here does not mean a book of paper but a means of natural evidence.

The Day of Judgment shall be a horrible day of the revelation of the truth both hidden and manifest. Every part of man itself shall bear witness to his deeds:

On that day will We set a seal upon their mouths, and shall speak unto Us their hands and shall bear witness their feet of what they were deserving. (36:65)

On that day will bear witness against them their tongues and their hands and their feet, as to what they did (24:24)

On the day whereon shall stand the spirit and the angels arrayed, they shall speak not save he whom the Beneficent God giveth leave, who spoke not (only) the truth. (87:38)

That is the day certain, whoso then desireth may take refuge unto his Lord (78:39)

There are many more verses in the Qur'an dealing with various details of the Last Judgment. Every true Muslim must believe in the Judgment Day as an article of faith.

Jannat: Paradise:

Jannat is a place generally referred to in English as Heaven. It is a place of eternal bliss, the abode of those who did good on earth. On the day of Judgment all actions will be weighed, and one whose goodness outweighs his evil will be granted a place here in a degree of bliss which is in accordance with his level of goodness: Verily (for) those who believe and do good, the Lord guideth them by their faith, beneath them will flow rivers in gardens of bliss. (10:9)

Their cry therein (will be), "Glory be to Thee O God!" and their greetings in it (will be), "Peace" and the last of their cry (will be) that to God is the praise, the Lord of the worlds.

On the Day of Judgment the Lord will declare to His good servants: O My servants! No fear shall be on you this day, nor shall ye grieve. Those who believed in Our signs and were Muslims (those submitting themselves to God). Enter ye the Garden, ye and your companions; ye shall be made to be delighted There shall be passed round unto them dishes of gold and cups (of drinks); and therein shall be whatever desire of their souls and (which) could delight the eyes; and ye shall abide therein. This is the Garden (paradise) ye are made to receive as a heritage (in recompense) for what he have been doing. (43:68-72)

The Faith in the Angels:

Angels are pure spiritual beings created to glorify the Lord and to execute His will. They can appear in any form, but not of any base animal. Their number is unknown. Only a few whose services are directly connected with this life are mentioned. Faith in the existence of these celestial beings is incumbent upon every Muslim. The following are a few of the verses of the Holy Qur'an concerning angels:

It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces towards the East and the West, righteousness is rather one who believeth in God and the Last Day and the angels and the Book, the Apostles, and giveth his wealth out of love for Him to the kindred and the orphans and the poor and the wayfarer and the needy and for those in bondage; And establisheth prayer and payeth the poor-rate; And those who fulfil their promise and the patient ones in distress and affliction and in the time of war these are they who are Truthful and these are they who are the pious. (2:177)

He sendeth down the angels with the spirit (revelation) by His own decree on whomsoever He willeth of His servants saying: "Warn ye (mankind) that there is no god but I, therefore fear Me. (16:2)

And there shall be a blast on the trumpet. It is the Day Promised (warned against). "And shall come every soul, along with it a driver and a witness. (50:20,21)

By those who drag forth violently And by those who untie (the knot) briskly And by those (angels) who glide on (swiftly) Then those (angels) who go ahead with a foremost speed Then those (angels) who (subalissively) manage the affairs. (79:1-5) On the day whereon shall stand the spirit and the angels arrayed they shall speak not save he whom the Beneficent God giveth leave, who spoke not (only) the truth. (78:38)

There are three angels whose special duties are mentioned:

Gabriel: This angel is called Ameen, the Trusted. He is the foremost angel, the one who communicated God's commandments to the Prophets, and it was he who conveyed the Holy Qur'an to the Holy Prophet.

Izrael: The messenger of Death who separates the soul from the body.

Israfeel: The one who will blow the trumpet announcing the Day of the Final Judgment.

Some Truths Of Islam

1 The Whole Humanity is One Family

There could be no means for uniting mankind into one single brotherhood than by convincing them that all mankind is one family, children of the same parents.

Mankind was but one people; and God sent apostles as bearers of good tidings and warners and sent down with them the Book with the Truth that it might judge between men in that wherein they differed; and none differed therein; but those very (people) to whom it was given, after clear signs had come unto them, did revolt among themselves; whereupon God guided those who believed, by His Will, regarding that which the people differed about the Truth, and verily God guideth whomsoever He willeth to the Right Path. (2:213)

Besides this, there are other verses which declare that men and women were created from one single self It can easily be imagined how far the belief in the truth about the unity of the human race would go to sublimate the animal nature in man, to create in him the fellow feeling for others of his kind and thereby establish a human brotherhood on earth. Unfortunately, in the West, the Christian world, there is racism, and in the East our Hindu brothers observe the caste system. The Holy Qur'an declares the unity of the human race and Islam lays great stress upon this truth.

2 The Mystery of the Individual Differences and the Unity of Purpose

Though man has been given physical and mental faculties necessary for his life and progress, not all men are gifted in equal measure. Some have certain gifts which others do not have. Some excel in physical strength while others are gifted with great mental powers. People differ in the level of intelligence and aptitude. Some are gifted writers, some are convincing orators, some are wonderful artists and some are enchanting poets, some are inventive scientists or mathematicians, and some are powerful administrators.

These are gifts of the Omnipotent Creator, intuitive mysteries with which the nature of man is endowed. The fact Seems clear that the members of the human race were destined to be dependent upon each other. If all had been endowed with exactly the same gifts, people would not have needed the help of each other and there would have been no social life upon earth. As man needs his fellow men, he also needs some one with special gifts to explain the very mystery of his life, the way to live, and life in the hereafter. Only those informed by the Creator Himself and chosen for this purpose fulfil this function, and they are the Apostles of God and the Imams (Guides).

3 From God alone can come Guidance

Man could not create himself He was created by a Self-Existing Sovereign Power, and Omnipotent Independent Authority. He was brought into an already-Existing world. Left to himself he could never have been able to guide himself. The ever-Extending universe with its astonishing energies, functioning in perfect harmony, indicates the causative will which

is Omnipotent and All-Wise and with purpose. The knowledge of the purpose of creation is essential to man if he is to adjust himself to the harmony of his environment, talk from it and giving to it in return. Of the purpose in the creation of the universe, the Holy Qur'an says:

Thou who remember God, standing, sitting and reclining on their sides, think (seriously) of the creation of heaven and earth; saying, "O Our Lord! Thou hast not created (all) this in vain! Glory be to Thee! Save us then from the torment of the fire (Hell)." (3:190)

4 All Man-made distinctions annihilated

Islam demands the end of all man-made distinctions in human society. Such distinctions of caste, colour, community and race were outlawed in the declaration:

O ye people! Verily We have created you of a male and a female, and made you in nations and tribes, that ye may recognise each other; Verily the most honoured of you with God is the one of you who guardeth (himself) the most (against evil), verily God is the All-Knowing, the All-Aware. (49:13) The above declaration Clearly states that the distribution of the human family into tribes and families is only for identification, and the distinction within the human race shall be based only on the degree of piety and personal excellence of each individual, man or woman. 5 The Sources of Knowledge: man specially equipped Man has been blessed with special powers and faculties which no other creature on earth owns. But, like other animals, man has eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin. Through these doorways man acquires knowledge of the sensual world.

But man has the gift of special intellect by which he can ponder the mystery of life, choose his own way of life, and his welfare or perdition in the life hereafter. if man controls his sensual nature by the use of the great gift of conscience and reasoning he will succeed; if he allows his conscience to be ruled by degrading sensual forces, he will lose the game of life. This is the Test. 6 God is Nearest to Everything Man is warned that God is nearest to man, nearer than his own Life-Vein:

And indeed We created man, and know We whatever thoughts whispereth he unto himself and We are nearer to him than his very life-vein. (50:16) 7 Man directed to seek the medium to reach the Lord O ye who believe! Fear ye God! And seek ye the medium of approach until Him. (5:35) 8 No Compulsion to Faith Since the Truth has been clearly revealed against falsehood, through the Holy Qur'an, Islam has sounded an open warning against compulsion to faith: No compulsion be in religion; Indeed truth has been made manifestly distinct from error; therefore he who disbelieveth the rebels (false deities) and believeth in God hath indeed laid hold on the strongest handle which cannot be broken; and verily God is All-Hearing, All- Knowing. (2:256)

9 Good and Evil promised to be Individually

Rewarded and Punished

Islam charges every individual man and woman with personal responsibility to make his or her own way to heaven or hell by being good and doing good, or by being evil and doing evil in this life. Life on earth has

been said to be the season for cultivation of the life hereafter. As one sows here so shall one reap in the hereafter, in the life after death. As the right way to eternal bliss has been clearly shown, all have been warned through the following about the Day of Final Judgment:

On that day shall come out people (from their graves) in groups to be shown their (own) deeds. (99:6)

Then he who hath done an atom-weight of good shall see It. (99:7)

And he who hath done an atom-weight of evil shall see it. (99:8)

From this comes great encouragement to do good and to shun evil.

10 No Physical Eye can ever see God

Vision perceiveth Him not, and He perceiveth (all) vision; He is the Subtle, the All-Aware. (6:104) Hence, it is impossible to see God in Person at any time in this life or in the next.

11 The Word of the Holy Prophet is Final

And it is not for a believer, man or woman, to have any choice in a matter when God and His Apostle have decided the matter; and whoever disobeyeth God and His Apostle, indeed he hath truly gone astray. (33:36)

12 Speaking ill of the Holy Prophet

Those who speak ill of or hurt the Holy Prophet by acting against his will or command, or by hurting the Holy Ones or killing their issue, the Ahlul-Bait, the Holy Imams and their devotees shall be punished:

Surely those who hurt God and His apostle, God hath cursed them in this world and hereafter and he hath prepared for them a terrible chastisement.

13 The importance of the Choice of a Leader

On the Day of Judgment every one will be called, along with his Imam, the leader whom he has followed in his life: Remember the Day (of Judgment) when We will summon every people with their Imam (leader); then whosoever is given his book in his right hand, these shall read books (with pleasure), and they shall not be dealt with in the slightest unjustly. (17:71)

who will be better than the Holy Ahlul-Bait whom God Himself purified (33:33)? The Imam is he who embraces all things. The Holy Prophet declared: "Ana Madeenatul wa Alliyyun Babuha." ("I am the City of Knowledge and Ali its Gate") Ali is the Gate of the City of Knowledge and the ever-triumphant Lion of God, a distinction held by Ali and by none other.

14 The Identification of a Genuine Heavenly Guide

If a man sincerely seeks the help of his Creator Lord to find a genuine heavenly guide, there is the Holy Qur'an, God's final word, to help him. It is the declared promise of the All-Merciful Lord to show the right way to those who seek him. The first condition is sincerity in seeking the divine help:

And those who strive hard for Us, certainly will We guide them in Our ways; and verily God is (always) with those who do good. (29:69) Say thou (O Our Apostle Muhammad!), "Of your associates is there any one who can

guide unto truth?" Say thou, 'It is God alone Who guideth unto truth; Is then He Who guideth unto truth more worthy to be followed or he who himself goeth not aright unless he be guided? What then hath befallen you? How (ill) ye judge?' (10:35)

What! Is he who goeth along grovelling on his face better guided, or he who walketh upright upon the straight path?" (67:22)

Thus a genuine heavenly guide is he who never needs any education or guidance from any mortal in this world. He is sent into the world divinely conditioned with guidance as were all the apostles from God, the Last one of them the Holy Prophet Muhammad and the holy Thirteen of his godly family, ie. the Twelve Holy Imams and the Holy Lady of Light Fatema Zahra (the only daughter of the Holy Prophet, who was the wife of the first Holy Imam Ali ibne Abi Taleb, and the "mother?" of the other Eleven Holy Ones.)

15 Blind Following

Professing a creed, blindly following a crowd, or joining any religious order for any material benefit is quite different from adopting a faith with genuine conviction, knowing the truth therein after a thorough study of its fundamentals and reasoning them out against counter-arguments. Islam discourages any blind following, and abhors the exploitation of the ignorance of poor illiterates among the poverty-stricken masses of the slums, and is vehemently opposed to attracting any one or bribing any one with promises of material benefits or social or economic progress in order to swell the ranks of its adherents.

The only aim of Islam is to educate the members of the human family with the truth about the Absolute Sovereignty of the Only True God and the need for every creature to submit voluntarily to the All- Supreme Authority of the Creator Lord of the universe. Islam invites every awakened mind of the human world to a serious study of the mystery of the creation of life, the truth about the Omnipotent Originator, so that people may raise themselves from the abyss of material degradation and ascend to the heavenly heights of eternal spiritual bliss. Islam accepts only the independent judgment of the individual without coercion or pressure of any kind other than that of his own conscience.

16 Man charged with Personal Responsibility for being Guided Aright

Man had been deluded by the false belief in an unconditional escape from punishment for his wickedness by supposed atonement through man-made gods and goddesses. Islam dealt a death blow to such false imagination which allowed people to act without restraint in confidence of redemption. Islam charges man with the personal and individual responsibility for holding the right and correct faith and bearing his own burdens.

whosoever getteth guided aright, verily he getteth guided aright for his own self and he who goeth astray, verily he goeth astray against his own self nor shall the bearer of a burden bear the burden of another; And we chastise not (any people) until We raise an apostle (among them). (17:15)

And no bearer shall bear the burden of another; and if the heavy4aden one should cry for (another bearer to carry) its burden, (even) aught of it shall not be carried, and even if he be near of kin; Thou canst but warn those who fear their Lord unseen and keep up regular prayer; And whosoever purifieth (himself), he only purifieth for his own self And unto God (alone) is the destination (of all). (35:18)

17 The Individual Liberty or Freedom of Choice announced

Having shown the right way against the wrong one, every human soul has been given the freedom of choosing his own way to the life hereafter: Verily have We shown him the (Right) way, be he grateful or ungrateful (76:3)

Let those who blindly criticise Islam and its Holy Founder, attributing compulsion to the spread of the Qur'anic faith, dispassionately and impartially judge, in view of the above Qur'anic declaration and also verse 2:256 whether there be any room for doubt about the mission of the Holy Teacher.

18 The Individual and Personal Responsibility of every man and woman

Islam charges man with the individual responsibility to take the right path on earth, declaring that whatever a soul does, be it good or evil, it is for or against the soul itself:

whosoever getteth guided aright, verily he getteth guided aright for his own self and he who goeth astray, verily he goeth astray against his own self nor shall the bearer of a burden bear the burden of another; And we chastise not (any people) until We raise an apostle (among them). (17:15)

Whosoever doeth good, it is for his own self and whosoever doeth evil, it is against it; and thy Lord is not unjust unto the servants. (41:46)

whoever doeth good, it is for his own self and whoever doeth evil, it is against his own self then unto your Lord ye shall be returned (45:15)

19 The Qur'anic Formula for Following the Right

In a single sentence, the Holy Qur'an gives man the formula for a sure way to follow the Right path:

No compulsion be in religion; Indeed truth has been made manifestly distinct from error; therefore he who disbelieveth the rebels (false deities) and believeth in God hath indeed laid hold on the strongest handle which cannot be broken; and verily God is All-Hearing, All- Knowing. (2:256)

20 The Decree of the Holy Imam

The decree of the Masoom (the Sixth Holy 'main) with regard to Ijtehad is not the only tradition; there are, in fact, many undisputed traditions from other Imams establishing the institution of Ijtehad, prescribing the minutest details of its functioning, a brief outline of which is given below.

The decree of the Holy Imam is as follows:

Ammo Hawadisaal Waqi'aat, Far 'jeoo ila ruwate Ahadeesenafa innahom hujati alaikum Wa ana Hujjatullah ("In all the events of life, refer ye to those who bear our traditions, they are the authority over you on my behalf and I am the authority on behalf of God.")

of the many declarations of the other Imams, two are outstanding. One is from Hazrate Imam Jafar ibne Muhammad As-Sadiq, known as the Maqool-el-Omar-bin Hanzala (the tradition of Omar ibne Hanzala); the other is from the Eleventh Holy Imam Husain al-Askari.

21 Taqleed

The best protection afforded to Shiaism against raids by Satan and his disciple missionaries is the ordinance about Taqleed (16:43), or to abide always by the A'li or the most learned one called the Mujtahid. This course always guides one to the right practice of the faith and protects him from committing any excesses and from onslaughts by Satanic forces.

Taqleed has also been misinterpreted in the innovation of the Mureeds with blind following of the Pirs. Be it known that being guided by a Mujtahid in practice of the faith has nothing in common with this blind following. Taqleed is used only of scholars who have reached the level of Ijtihad (the ability to interpret the Holy Qur'an and the genuine traditions of the Holy Prophet). In matters of doubt about the practice of the faith, Furu-e-Deen or articles of faith Usool-e-Deen, following any one else is Haram (prohibited). For not every one can be expected to know all the minute details about the practice of the faith or correctly interpret the Holy Qur'an, the Hadith and the sayings of the Holy Prophet.

The highest authority in knowledge and piety need only be followed in the case of Fatwa or concerning the law; for the application of the law, to follow the Ijtihad is sufficient. Shiaism, the Islam-Original, has sounded a caution against the ruinous effects of unqualified administration of justice. The following is the decree of the Sixth Holy Imam, Jafar ibne Muhammad As-Sadiq, the Regulator of the Shia faith:

Any one who takes this seat, save a Prophet of God, or the Successor to the prophet, is an evil one.

This declaration warns that any unqualified one (lacking the authority from the Holy Prophet and the Holy Imam) who assumes the seat of Qaza'at (Justice) will be none but the evil one. Thus a Qazi (judge) must be a Mujtahid, qualified under the this declaration. While condemning the yielding to the rule of Taghoot, ie. authority without divine sanction, the Sixth Holy Imam said that, instead of submitting to such a tyrant, the people must seek the greatest scholar, who knows the traditions, the sanctions, the prohibitions and the rulings and accept him as Judge and Ruler. If he gives a ruling which is unacceptable, it will be an offence against God's Sovereignty, which is almost a Shirk (recognition of an authority other than God's.)

The definition and requirements of Ijtihad and Taqleed given below are those prescribed by the Masoom (the Twelfth Holy Imam), as ordained by the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnat which are an intrinsic part of the system of Divine Sovereignty and Absolute Theocracy within the meaning of the word "Islam", complete submission to the Absolute Sovereignty of God.

When the period of codification and consolidation of the Kitab and Sunnat was completed, the age of the Imam serving that purpose came to an end. Thus the seclusion of the Twelfth Imam occurred, though his hidden existence continues as a link between God and His creation. The Imams

declared the institution of Ijtihad as the sole directive authority on their behalf to lead men on the path of submission to God in all matters within the Kitab and Sunnat. In other words, Ijtihad and Taqleed are supplementary to Imamat, which is, in turn, supplementary to Risalat (Apostleship), which is the manifestation of the Divine Sovereignty. There is no room for any individual view or choice, but the door is left open for any one, irrespective of race or place, to qualify to the level of an Ijtihad.

22 The Definition of "Ijtihad"

Ijtihad literally means an effort to interpret and explain the divine orders, rules and regulations of the Holy Qur'an and the authentic sayings of the Holy Prophet and the apostolic Imams. It does not mean using one's discretion in the findings parallel to the Qur'an and the Sunnat. Any one who has the capacity to understand and interpret the divine laws, rules and regulations and is of outstanding learning, knowledge and piety, can be a Mujtahid. Any one who has not reached that level is a layman and must follow one who has reached that standard.

Where there are several men of equal standard, but who differ in their decisions, the layman can choose to follow any one of them, and where these Mujtahids differ in their accomplishments, the best among them should be followed. If one is better in knowledge and the other better in piety, the latter is to be followed.

In trying to find the best Mujtahid, the layman should refer to the evidence of competent and pious scholars of Islamic Theology. By the collection of these evidences, one can easily decide for himself who is the best. This is the best method used throughout history of the Niabat of the Imam after the Ghaibat. There is no room for election or counting votes, nor is there any group to appoint an ecclesiastical head as in the Papal system of Christianity. Nor is it the Pin and the Mureedi practised by some sections of the Muslims as a parallel to Imamat. The qualifications for Ijtihad are recognised and measurable, unlike the qualifications for Piri which are neither fixed nor measurable.

It should be noted that the question of following the opinion of the best in knowledge and piety is confined to such questions in which Mujtahids differ; the question of which to follow does not arise in matters unanimously accepted by all Mujtahids.

For the administration of theological centres and other religious services, any pious Mujtahid is competent for the position, and if any pious Mujtahid offers to take on the task, another Mujtahid should not stand in his way, but should help him.

23 Mere Verbal Profession of the Faith is not Sufficient

Every one will be tried in his faith to prove to himself that his profession is bona fide:

what! Do people imagine that they will be let in by saying, "We Believe!" and they will not be tried? (29:2)

We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and loss of wealth and lives and fruits; and give glad tidings to the patient ones. who, when misfortune befall them, say, "Verily we are God" and verily unto Him shall we return."

Those are they on whom are the blessings from their Lord and (His) Mercy; and they are the ones that are (rightly) guided (2:155-157)

24 The Real Islamic Piety Explained

To all hypocritical show of formal observance of the faith without sincerity in its practical expression, Islam has dealt a death blow in the following decree:

It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces towards the East and the West; righteousness is rather one who believeth in God and the Last day and the angels, the Book and the Apostles, and giveth his wealth out of love for Him to the kindred and the orphans and the poor and the wayfarer and the need' and for those in bondage; and establisheth prayer and payeth the poor-rate; And those who fulfil their promise when they make a promise and the patient ones in distress and affliction and in the time of war; these are they who are the Truthful and these are they who are the pious. (2:177)

25 Man Should Always be with the Truthful Ones

Man was ordained to be always with the Truthful Ones, those who do not utter a lie. The great lie is Shirk, the belief that there is another besides God, or worshipping false deities. Who else can be the Truthful ones other than the Holy Ahlul-Bait who never in their lives bowed down to any besides God and are the ones whom God says He Himself purified (33:33).

O ye who believe! Fear ye God and be ye (always) with the Truthful ones. (9:119)

26 Taqiah

Hiding the faith, giving out a mere verbal profession to save one's life. This is a Qur'anic ordinance.

And said a man who was a Believer, from among the people of Pharaoh, who used to conceal his faith: "What! Slay ye a man for saying, 'My Lord is God' and indeed he hath brought unto you clear proofs (of his mission) from your Lord? while if he be a liar, on him will be his life; and if he be truthful, then will afflict you some of what he warneth you (with); Verily, God guideth not him who is extravagant (and a liar)." (40:28)

And there came a man from the remotest part of the city, running (and) said, "O Moses! Verily the chiefs are consulting to slay thee. Begone (from here at once)! Verily, unto thee lam of the sincere advisers." (28:20)

27 Intercession Available

Intercession for redemption against deserved punishment is available, not from false deities, but from those divinely qualified to do it:

who is he who can intercede unto Him but by His Permission? (2:255)

They shall not own intercession, save he who has made a covenant with the Beneficent God. (19:87)

On that day shall avail not intercession (of any) save (that of) whom hath permitted God, and whose word He is pleased with. (20:109)

Knoweth He what is before them and what is behind them, and they can not intercede but for him whom He approveth, and they, of His fear, tremble. (21:28)

And will avail not aught any intercession with Him save Of him whom He hath permitted (34:23)

28 Killing of Even One Believer

And whosoever killeth a believer intentionally, his recompense shall be Hell, he shall abide therein and God's wrath shall be on him and His curse, and (there) is prepared for him a great torment (4:93)

For this reason did we prescribe unto the children of Israel that he who slayeth any one (man) without (that being for) murder or for mischief in the land, (it shall be as though he hath slain mankind as a whole; and he who saveth it (a human life) shall be as though he hath saved mankind as a whole; and certainly our Apostles came unto them with clear evidences, and yet verily many of them even after that certainly did commit excesses in the land. (5:31) Man must judge in the light of the above ordinances, the position of those who killed the very beloved ones of God, the Holy Ahiul-Bait. History testifies that none but the Fourteenth of the Holy Ones did escape murder at the hands of those who called themselves Muslims and as rulers of States, called themselves Caliphs.

29 The Dead in the Way of the Lord are Alive

The following declaration of God through His Final Word, the Holy Qur'an, says that those who lay their lives in God's way are alive, and must not be counted as dead. Thus the Shias believe that the martyrs are alive and continue to revere their memory:

And say not of those who are slain in the path of God that they are dead; Nay (they are) living, but ye perceive it not (2:154)

Reckon not those who are slain in the way of God to be dead; Nay! alive are they with their Lord being sustained (3:168)

30 Reverence and Respect for the Signs of God

Everything in the Universe is a Sign of God, particularly those associated with godly objects and the men of God:

Verily "Safa" and "Morwa" among the signs of God; whoever therefore maketh a pilgrimage to the House or performeth "Umra"; therefore it shall be no blame on him to go round them both; and whoever of his own accord doeth anything good in deed, verily God is Gracious, All-Knowing. (2:158) (As for the Camels) We have made them for you of the Signs of God. (22:36) That shall be so, and whosoever respecteth the Signs of God, then that verily is the outcome of the piety of heart. (22:32)

It is obvious that if the mounds of Safa and Marwa and animals of sacrifice are worthy to be Signs of God, the Standard of Islam with which Husain fought and established the Truth will be the greatest sign of God, the Sign of the Religion revealed by the Lord, and respect and reverence for it must be the Sign of the piety of the individual. The Shias, the followers of the Qur'anic faith, the Islam-Original, are more careful against Shirk than any other school. They regard the Alam-e-Husainy neither as God, nor as Husain, but as a token of the Standard of Islam.

31 Mourning for the Martyrs

So wept not on them the heavens and the earth nor were they respited (44:29)

The Holy Qur'an declares that heaven and earth also mourn When they do not mourn for the wicked, it means that they mourn for the righteous.

Mourning for the righteous, particularly for those who have laid down their lives for the Lord, is godly behaviour.

There are authentic traditions of the Holy Prophet shedding tears for the prophesied martyrdom of Husain even before the event had taken place.

There is Qur'anic evidence of Jacob's weeping for his son Joseph who had disappeared, even though, as an Apostle, he knew that his son was not dead.

Thus mourning for Husain or for any other martyr of the House of the Holy Prophet is in accordance with the apostolic tradition.

32 Breast-Beating for the Martyrs

Breast-beating, which is generally done by the Shias for the martyrs of the House of the Holy Prophet, the Ahlul-Bait, is not a part of the Shia faith. It is an active expression of sorrow for the holy ones and identification with their suffering in serving the Lord. History records similar conduct by Owais Qarani, who hurt himself, breaking his own teeth in grief for the suffering of the Holy Prophet in Ohad. This is known by the Muslim world and was recognised by the Holy Prophet Himself. Though breast-beating is not a part of the religion, it is tolerated.

The violent expression of feeling on the part of Shias for the martyrdom of the Holy Ones of the House of the Holy Prophet represents a natural attachment to the Holy Ones. People do not Condemn one who weeps and mourns when a close relative dies, and the Shias actually regard the Holy Ones as their spiritual parents. The Holy Prophet said, "I and Ali are the two fathers of this people."

33 Reverential Prostrations

Reverential prostration before any sacred object is not prohibited in Islam. People who misunderstand it may wrongly term it Shirk. But Iblees or Lucifer was cast out for not prostrating himself before Adam:

And when said We unto the angels, "Prostrate ye before Adam!", they all prostrated themselves save Iblees, who refrained and was puffed up with pride and was turned into one of the disbelievers. (2:34)

And indeed We did create you, then We did fashion you, then said We unto the angels, "Prostrate yourselves unto Adam!" So they all did prostrate themselves except Iblees; he was not of the prostrating ones. (7:11)

Jacob, being the Apostle of God, prostrated himself; along with his sons, before his own son on the throne of authority:

And raised he his parents to the throne, and they fell down unto him, prostrating themselves, and he said, "O my father! This is the interpretation of my dream of aforetime! Indeed my Lord hath made it come true; and indeed He was kind unto me when He took me out of the prison and hath sown Satanic dissension between me and my brothers. Verily my Lord is Beneficent unto whomsoever He willeth; verily He is All-Knowing, All-wise."

34 Every Muslim is not a Mo'min ie. a Genuine Believer

The Qur'an clearly gives the actual position of a Muslim and a Mo'min. The word, Muslim, refers to one who submits himself to the faith of Islam, whether forced by circumstances or sincerely. The word, Mo'min, means a believer who has an earnest and genuine conviction about the Truth: Say the desert Arabs "We believe." Say thou (unto them), "Ye believed not, but say ye, We submit, for faith hath not yet entered your hearts; and if ye obey God and His Apostle, He will deny none of your deeds. Verily God is Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful (49:14)

35 Respite Given to Disbelievers

The respite given to disbelievers is not, in fact, good for them. Let not those who disbelieve think that Our giving them respite is good for their selves; We only give respite to them that they may increase in sins, and for them it is a terrible punishment (3:77)

36 Hoarding of Wealth

These verses concern those who hoard wealth and do not spend it in God's way:

And as for those who hoard up gold and silver and spend it not in the way of the Lord announce unto them a painful punishment.

On the day when the fire of hell shall be heated, their foreheads and their sides and their backs shall be branded with the words: "This is what ye hoarded up for yourselves, so taste ye what ye hoarded" (9:34,35)

37 A Goodly Loan to God has a Multiple Return

Spending in the way of God is lending to God, which earns not only a multiple return, but forgiveness of sins: If ye lend God a goodly loan, He will double it unto you and will forgive you; And God is Most Gracious and Most Forbearing. (64:17) Let him with abundance spend of his abundance and he who is straitened let him spend of what God hath given him; (for) God layeth not on any soul a burden save to the extent to which He hath given it; God will soon bring ease after difficulty. (65:7)

38 Self-Defence Prescribed

Islam is not an impractical ideal. Man must resist evil as best he can by all good means. But when the aggressor goes beyond the reasonable limit and exploits the goodness of the one who is resisting, then he must defend himself with an equal measure of strength, but he himself must not go beyond the reasonable limit.

O ye who believe! Retaliation is prescribed for you in the matter of (unlawful) murder freeman for freeman, bondman for bondman, woman for woman; but if any remission is made (in any case) by his (aggrieved) brother, then the recognised course be adopted and payment made to him in handsome manner. This is a dispensation and a mercy from your Lord, and whosoever transgresseth the limit after this, then for him shall be a painful punishment. (2:178)

This is an ordinance of the Holy Qur'an. The Bible teaches that one should turn the other cheek if one is smitten, and to surrender the coat if the cloak is taken away. This is not practical, and could never be practised even

by the staunchest Christian. It is clear which ordinance will help to maintain peace, security, safety and order, and which will let loose mischievous elements through the practice of self-surrender preached by the Christian Church, which in fact is not, and cannot be, practised.

39 A Believer Described

Indeed successful are the believers, Those who in their prayers are humble, And those who, from what is vain keep (themselves) aloof And those who act for purification, And those who guard their private parts, Except from their wives or those whom their right hands possess, for then verily they are not blameable. (23:1-6)

40 Sex Segregation or Purdah for Women

Let those who advocate the modern social freedom and individual liberty which leads to immorality hear what Mrs Annie Besant says about the state of womanhood:

You can find others stating that the religion (Islam) is evil because it sanctions a limited polygamy But you do not hear as a rule the criticism which I spoke about one d~ in a London hall where I knew that the audience was entirely uninstructed. I pointed out to them that monogamy with a blended mass of prostitution was an hypocrisy and more degrading than a limited polygamy Naturally a statement like that gives offence, but it has to be made because it must be remembered that the law of Islam in relation to women was until lately,

when parts of it have been imitated in England, the most just law as far as women are concerned to be found in the world. Dealing with property, dealing with rights of succession and so on, dealing with cases of divorce, it was far beyond the law of the West, in the respect which was paid to the rights of women. Those things are forgotten while people are hypnotised by the words monogamy and polygamy and do not look at what lies behind it in the West - the frightful degradation of women who are thrown into the street when their first protectors, weary of them, no longer give them any assistance.

I often think that woman is more free in Islam than in Christianity. Woman is more protected by Islam than by the faith which preaches monogamy In Al-Qur'an the law about women is more just and liberal. It is only in the last twenty years that Christian England has recognised the right of women to property, while Islam has allowed this right from all times. It is slander to say that Islam preaches that women have no souls. (Annie Besant, The Life and Teachings of Muhammad, Madras, June 1932, page 3)

Islam aims at keeping men and women separate to keep them safe against sexual attractions and contact, and to protect them from modern lifestyles which permit pre-marital and free sex.

41 The Veil for the Believing Woman

And say unto the believing women that they cast down their gaze and guard their private parts and they display not their adornment save what is apparent of it; and to draw their veils over their bosoms and display not their adornment save to their husbands or their fathers or the fathers of their

husbands, or their sons, or the sons of their husbands or their brothers, or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women, or those whom their right hands possess, or the male servants void of sexual stimulant, or the children who have not yet attained the carnal knowledge of women's nakedness, and let them not strike their feet (while walking) that what they hide of their adornment becomes apparent; and turn ye (repentant) unto God all of you, O ye believers, that ye may prosper. The believing ladies who faithfully follow the Holy Lady Fatema Zahra need no directions beyond that godly model of chaste womanhood.

43 Marriage: Man told to Marry

There is no celibacy or monasticism in Islam Man must marry. The Holy Prophet declared, Marriage is my "Sunnat" (tradition) and he who turns away from my Sunnat is not of me. Wed and meet and multiply yourselves, for on the Day of Judgment I shall be proud of the number of my followers compared to those of other peoples.

The First Holy Imam, Amirul Momineen Ali ibne Abi Taleb says:

A prayer (Namaz) consisting of (the minimum of) only Two Rak'ats (units) offered by a wedded pair is better than seventy Rak'ats offered by single ones.

44 "Muta": Temporary Marriage

What the Holy Prophet validated shall remain valid and none shall invalidate it. Muta, or temporary marriage, is valid 160 according to the Qur'an and was valid during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet and in the time of the first Caliph, Abu-Bakr. But later Omar chose to invalidate it. The Shias, who follow the Holy Qur'an, hold Muta as valid:

And (all) protected (married) ones of the women (are forbidden unto you) save those whom your right hands possess. (This is) God's written ordinance unto you; And it is allowed for you (all women) besides these that ye may seek (them) by means of your wealth taking (them) into marriage and not committing fornication; and as such of them that "ye have Muta" with them, give them their dowries as a fixed reward; and it shall not be a sin on you in whatever you mutually agree (to vary) after the fixed reward; Verily God is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

45 Polygamy and Islam

People, without knowing what Islam says about polygamy, criticise it Islam did not start Polygamy, but controlled it. No religion has protected women as much as has Islam. The verse permitting polygamy does not order a Muslim to be polygamous; in fact, it warns man that if he has more than one wife he must observe total equality among them. Islam permits man to marry up to four wives, but warns that if he cannot maintain justice he should have only one:

Then marry those who seem good to you, two, or three, or four, and if ye fear that, ye shall not deal justly (with so many) then (marry) only one. (4:3)

The earlier quotation from Annie Besant commends Islam for its treatment of women. And James Michener writes: Western writers have based their charges of voluptuousness mainly on the question of women.

Before Muhammad, however, men were encouraged to take innumerable wives; he limited them to four only, and the Koran is explicit that husbands who are unable to maintain strict equality between two or more wives, must confine themselves to one. (James A. Michener, "Islam: The Misunderstood Religion" Readers Digest, American Edition, May 1955, pages 68-70)

Suppose the wife of a man becomes incurably ill, or she is proved barren, or she becomes incurably insane, without discarding his wife or himself living a miserable life, Islam allows him to take another wife.

46 Birth Control

Slay not your children for fear of poverty (6:152)

47 Reward for Shunning the Greater Evils Shunning the greater evils makes up for other sins:

And (as for) those who believe and do good, certainly blot out from them their evil deeds, and certainly we will reward them the best of what they are doing. (29:7)

48 Intoxicants and Gambling 48 Intoxicants and Gambling

When man becomes sunk in sinning, he begins to delude himself with self-deceiving arguments in favour of his conduct, justifying his actions as being within the law. He argues that liquor and gambling are not forbidden in the Holy Qir'an. But the Qur'an speaks vehemently against these things.

They ask thee (O Our Apostle Muhammad) concerning wine and lots (games of chance); Say, in both these is great sin and also (some) profit for men; but their sin is greater than their profit. And they will ask thee (O Our Apostle Muhammad) what they shall spend (in alms); Say, "whatsoever can be spared"; thus doth God make clear for you the signs so that ye may ponder. (2:219)

O ye who believe! Intoxicants and games of chance, (dedications of) stones (ie. idols) and (divination by) arrows, are only an abomination of Satan's handiwork, so be ye away from it so that ye may be successful (5:90)

49 Niggardliness

A niggardly person regards only himself. Whatever he owns he will leave in this world and will leave it without spending his wealth in the right way and thus without earning good in the afterlife.

He who is niggardly is verily niggardly to his own self (47:38)

For God says:

Never shall ye attain to righteousness until ye give away (in the way of your Lord) of what ye love; and of whatsoever ye give, verily God knoweth it (3:91)

50 Behaviour Towards Parents

And thy Lord hath commanded that thou worship not (anyone) but Him, and show goodness to parents; if either or both of them reach old age with thee, utter not unto them (even so much a) "Fie", nor chide them, and speak unto them a generous word (17:23)

And We did enjoin upon man concerning his parents; his mother beareth him in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning taketh two years (and) saying: "Be thou grateful unto Me and unto thy parents." (31:14)

51 Usury or Charging Interest on any Lending

Those who swallow interest will not (be able to) stand (in the Resurrection) except as standeth one whom Satan hath confounded with his touch; this because they say trade is only like (earning) interest, whereas God hath decreed trade lawful and hath forbidden interest, wherefore whosoever (after) the admonition hath come unto him from His Lord, if he desists, shall have what hath gone before; and his affair rests with God; and whoever returneth (to in even after the admonition), they are the inmates of the fire (hell), therein shall they abide. (2:275)

52 Life of This World

Verily the life of this World is only an idle sport and play. (47:36). See also 6:32, 29:64, 57:20

53 No One Knows where He will Breathe His Last

Verily, God is He with Whom is the knowledge of the Hour and He sendeth down the rain, and knoweth He what is in the womb. And knoweth not any soul what he shall earn on the morrow; and knoweth not any soul in what land he will die. Verily God is All-Knowing, All- Aware. (31:34)

54 Khatan: Circumcision

Circumcision in Islam is a tradition which is compulsory. Its origin lies in the time of Abraham, and was the token of Abraham's Everlasting Covenant with the Lord. It is said that the Holy Prophet and all the Holy 'mains of his House, the Ahlul- Bait, were circumcised. Older converts such as the earliest companions of the Holy Prophet were not circumcised and it was not insisted on for them.

Abraham:

This is my covenant which ye shall keep between me and you and thy seed after thee: Every man child among you shall be circumcised And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant between me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money to any stranger, which is not of thy seed. (Old Testament, Genesis 17:10-13)

Isaac:

And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac being eight days old, as God had commanded him. (Genesis 21:4)

Jesus:

And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called Jesus, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb. (New Testament, Luke 2:21)

55 Following the crowd blindly

Man is warned against following the crowd and being influenced by numbers:

Indeed We have created for hell many of the jinn and the men; They have hearts (but) they understand not with them; they have eyes (but) they see not with them; and they have ears (but) they hear not with them; they are like cattle, nay, more astray; These are they, the heedless ones. (7:179)

56 Misappropriating the Property of Orphans

And give unto orphans their property, and substitute not (your) worthless things for (their) good ones, and devour not ye their property along with your own; for verily it is a great crime. (4:2)

Verily, those who eat away the properties of orphans unjustly, they swallow (only) fire into their bellies and anon shall they enter the blazing Hell-fire. (4:10)

57 Repel Evil with What is Best

Man should as far as possible be good and do good, and if any one does evil, return evil with that which is best. The best, a very comprehensive term, meaning as well as the situation demands.

And equals cannot be the good and the evil Repel thou (evil) with what is the best, when lo ! he between whom with thee there was enmity, shall be as though he were a warm friend. (41:34)

The best example of some one returning good for evil is seen in Amirul-Momineen Ali ibne Abi Taleb, who having commanded a drink to be brought to him immediately after being mortally wounded by Abdur-Rahman ibne Muljim, served it first to his assassin. Many similar examples exist in the glorious lives of the Holy 'mains, and even of their devotees.

58 Mischief is Graver than Murder

Mischief is more grievous than murder. (2:217)

59 Merciful Pardon in response to Sincere

Repentance Promised

Islam, while warning against the false belief in vicarious atonement, preaches the hope of a sure and merciful pardon by the All-Merciful Lord where there is sincere repentance, and so encourages man to forsake his evil ways and return to righteousness:

Say thou (O Our Apostle Muhammad), "O My servants who have been extravagant unto their own selves, despair ye not of the mercy of God; verily God forgiveth sins all together; verily He is the Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful. (39:53)

60 Every One's Actions are Being Watched

And say thou (unto them), "Act ye as ye wil4 God beholdeth your deeds, and His Apostle and the believers and then ye shall be brought back to the Knower of the hidden and the manifest." (9:105)

The Omnipresence of God is indisputable, and the presence of the Holy Prophet is definitely declared But who else can be the Believers other than those who were purified by the Lord Himself ie. the Holy Ahlul-Bait? (33:33)

The above verse declares that, in every age, there will be a Believer (a member of the Ahlul-Bait), the Imam of the age. As it has been declared by the Holy Prophet:

Man Maata walam ya'rif Imama Zamaanihi faqad Maatameetatul jahiliah ("He who dieth without knowing the Imam of his age, hath died the death of the age of ignorance (as did Abu Jehaland Abu Lahab and the others of his kind.")

REVOLUTIONARY CHANGES RESULTING FROM THE Qur'anIC TEACHINGS

The wonderful transformation that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, the Last Apostle of God, so successfully effected within the short span of only twenty-three years of his apostolic mission is, in itself, the mightiest of the miracles the world had ever witnessed. He successfully attacked every problem of wild barbarism and chronic paganism which prevailed at the time of his advent, and established a godly life of superb virtues through these changes:

1 Humanity was united under One God. 2 A death blow was dealt to the misconceptions about multiple deities. 3 All apostles of God were declared to be equally truthful, holy and sinless. Thus the Brotherhood of Religions was established. 4 Respect for the leaders of the other faiths was enjoined. 5 The truthfulness of all heavenly scriptures was declared, and respect and regard for all heavenly scriptures was ordained. 6 All kinds of worship of creatures other than the Creator was strictly prohibited. 7 All man-made distinctions of caste, colour and birth were eliminated. 8 Compulsory and regular congregational prayers (daily, weekly, and at other fixed times),

with the annual rehearsal of the Human Brotherhood at Haj, were prescribed and firmly established. 9 Uniform methods of prayer at fixed times, with the text of the verbal supplication to be recited, were prescribed to be strictly followed. 10 Idolatry of every kind was strictly prohibited and banned. 11 The rights of men and women were prescribed in detail and were effectively enforced. 12 The minimum amount of regulated charity was made compulsory. 13 Celibacy was condemned; marriage was encouraged and wedlock honoured. 14 The ways of a godly life in the world were demonstrated with practical examples to be followed.

15 Women were honoured; marriage was sanctified; parental rights were prescribed; widow marriage was legalised and commended. 16 Unlimited marriages and the institution of concubinage or having an unlimited number of wives was stopped and controlled. 17 Polygamy as a curative measure was made strictly conditional subject to a perfect equality among wives. 18 Women were given equal opportunity for spiritual elevation along with men. 19 The burial of female babies was stopped.

The value of daughters was made equal to that of sons. 20 Sobriety and temperance were ordained. The use of all intoxicants was strictly prohibited. 21 Distribution of property was prescribed in detail and strictly enforced. 22 Places of worship were declared open to all worshippers, without any monopoly for any individual or community. 23 Nude dances were stopped. Modest dressing was prescribed. 24 Seeking of knowledge was made

compulsory for both men and women. Scholarship was encouraged and scholars honoured. 25 Gambling and all games of chance were declared to be crimes. 26 Adultery was declared to be the most abhorrent and the most severely punishable crime.

27 Slavery was abolished in the most practical and peaceful way. 28 The law of 'Maktabah' to help slaves to become liberated was enforced. 29 Usury was strictly prohibited. Lending without interest was highly commended. 30 A socialistic pattern of society was established through a commonwealth called 'Bait-ul-mal'. 31 The accumulation of wealth was controlled through the Laws of Inheritance and by an annual tax at a prescribed rate. 32 The hoarding of food grains and other foodstuffs was declared to be a punishable crime. 33 The just and correct use of weights and measured was ordered. 34 Cleanliness of body, thought, conduct and character was mandatory.

35 The varieties of food and drinks, and the limits of eating and drinking, were controlled.

36 Strictly regulated fisting was prescribed and made compulsory.

37 The protection and help of travelers was made obligatory and highly commended.

38 Patronage of orphans and the destitute was declared to be one of the great virtues.

39 Forced conversion was prohibited.

40 People were given freedom to choose their own faith.

These most ancient and basic works on Islam do not reveal any mention of Tahreef-Makani, or any addition to or subtraction from the present version of the Holy Qur'an which is in our hands. The only mention found in these basic authorities concerns Taweel (interpretation). In the Tenth Volume of the Biharul-Awar of Mullah Baqir Mujlisi, there is a discussion between Abdullah ibne Abbas and Ma'aviah. Ibne Abbas, in answering Amir Sham, who had commanded that praising Ali and the Ahlul-Bait be discontinued, does not speak of any distortion or misarrangement of the verses of the Holy Qur'an,

or of any addition or subtraction, but he questions Ma'aviah, challenging him on the interpretation of the verses of the Qur'an which expressly speak of Ali and the Ahlul-Bait. This is another clear evidence that the present Qur'an is the same collection as was made in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet at his command, and was the collection that was with Ameerul-Mo'mineen Ali ibne Abi Taleb, with the special explanatory notes from the Holy Prophet and by himself regarding the external as well as the internal meaning of the Word of God.

ONE OF THE MYSTERIES

One of the wonderful mysteries about the personalities of Muhammad, the A-c of God, his daughter Fatema, the Lady of Light, and the Eleven of the Twelve chosen successors (imams) from Ali-al-Murtaza to Hasan-Al-askari, is that all of them were martyred and none of the Holy Fourteen had had any education; and yet they were the fountainhead of a wonderful, divinely-inspired knowledge and were unequalled by any other than those of their own holy group.

Imam Hasan-al-Askari, the 11th Imam, was martyred in 260 A.H. The Abbasid Caliph Mo'tmad sent his men to kill the 12th Imam who, under divine inspiration, took shelter in the cave at 'Surra manra' and disappeared. Many great Sunni Scholars have also accepted this incident, namely:

- 1 Mullah Jami in his Shawahidun-Nubwwa.
- 2 Abdul-Wahab Sha'rani in his Lawahaqul-Answar and in his Alyawa queet-Wal-Jawahir.
- 3 Shaik-e-Akbar, Mohieddin ibne-Arabi, in his Futuhate- Makkiah.
- 4 Khaja Parsa in Faslul-Khitab.
- 5 Abdul Huq Mohaddis Dehlavi in A'immatul-At'har.
- 6 Jamaluddin Mohaddith in his raudzatul-ahbab.
- 7 Abu-Ahdullah Shami, author of Kifayatul-Tibyan-Fi- Akbare-Sahebuzz-Zaman.
- 8 Sibte-ibne-Jawzi in his Tizkirae-Khawasal-Umma.
- 9 Ibne-Sabbagh Nuruddin Ali Maleki in his Fusoolul- Muhimma.
- 10 Kamaluddin-bin Talha Shafayi in his Matalebus-Su'ool.
- 11 Shah Waliullah in his Fazlul-Mubeen.
- 12 Shaik Sulaiman Hanafi in his Yanabiul Mo'addah.

About the indefinite and extraordinary length of life granted to the 12th Imam, the great scholars have said that, when Muslims believe in the life of the holy prophets Jesus, Khizr, Idris and even the Dajjal, why should people wonder about the life of a Divine?

The Abbasid Caliphs

Until the Omayyids, there was one Caliph (Ruler) for the whole of the Muslim Empire, but with the start of the Abbasid Caliphate, the Spanish territory did not acknowledge the Abbasid rulers. Abdur-Rahman had established his hold on Spain, competing with the pomp and show of the Abbasid Court. The African positions were under different rebel heads. Thus, with the start of the Abbasid rule, there were many separate rulers in various parts of the Muslim Empire, each claiming to be the Caliph or the rightful successor of the Apostle of GOCL Thus the word, "Caliphate" and the title "Caliph" became openly identical with rulers of the Muslim States, but the people still considered the Caliphs as, not only their political lords, but as their supreme spiritual leaders. The Shias, the followers of Ali, though subjected to the most miserable persecution and painful torture, were always with the Holy Imams who were the source of spiritual knowledge.

The Abbasids, though related to Ali, as the issue of Abbas, the uncle of the Holy Prophet, were hostile to the family of Ali and Fatema.

The Abbasids ruled as kings until 656 A.H., when Mo'tasim, son of Mustansar, was killed by the Mongol King Halako, and thus the Caliphate at Baghdad came to an end. But one of the sons of Tahirbillah fled to Egypt and started a dynasty which ruled until 1517 ~D when Sultan Salim of Turkey conquered Egypt and founded the Ottoman Caliphate in Turkey which continued until 1922 A.D., when Mustafa Kamal Ataturk abolished it altogether. From that time there has been no Caliph. Thus the Caliphate 'started by man was abolished by man, while the Imam, or the divinely commissioned succession from the Holy Prophet, continued and was acknowledged by the Muslim world as the Golden Chain of the divinely

commissioned and sinless guides and Imams, guardians of the Holy Qur'an and its correct interpretation, and perfect models of Islamic practice.

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