

guidance one can make use of in comparable situations.

As for stories and events taken up here, they relate to seven prophets, but the Sūrah has been identified with the name of Sayyidnā Hūd عليه السلام, which shows that the story of Sayyidnā Hūd عليه السلام has a particular significance in it.

Allah Ta'ālā had sent Sayyidnā Hūd عليه السلام as a prophet to the people of 'Ād. They were known for their physical build, strength and bravery. Sayyidnā Hūd عليه السلام was also one of them – as indicated in: اخاهم هودا (their brother, Hūd – 50). How regrettable that a people so strong and brave had lost their reason to the extent that they had taken to worshipping gods they had carved out of stones with their own hands.

Three basic principles of the call of faith Sayyidnā Hūd عليه السلام presented before his people have been mentioned in the first three verses (50-52). One: Belief in Tauḥīd (Oneness of Allah) and that taking someone or something else worthy of worship other than Allah is nothing but a lie and fabrication. Two: He was a Messenger of Allah. He had come with the call of Tauḥīd for them. This was the mission of his life. He was working hard against heavy odds to convey the message to them. Why would he do that? If they thought about it, they would see that he was not asking them to pay for his services, nor did he receive any material benefits from them. If he did not honestly believe it to be the will and command of Allah, and right and true, why would he go to all that trouble of inviting them to believe and live a better life?

Payment for *Da'wah* work

The Holy Qur'ān reports almost all prophets saying that they do not ask for any payment against the duty of *Da'wah* they do. This shows that, in case payment is accepted (as pre-arranged or as implied by custom) against *Da'wah* and *Tablīgh*, the call remains ineffective. Experience bears it out that those who take wages for their religious sermons, addresses and good counsels leave the hearts of their audience unchanged at the end of the exercise.

Three: Forgiveness and Repentance: He exhorted them to seek forgiveness from Allah Ta'ālā for their disbelief and for sins they had committed in their past life. Then, for future, let them be ashamed of what they had done, repent and promise to themselves making a firm

resolve and commitment that they would never go even near them. If they sincerely went through this process of seeking forgiveness from Allah and showing repentance before Him, the result will be that they shall, no doubt, be blessed with everlasting prosperity in the Hereafter, but in the mortal world too, they will themselves notice its many benefits coming to them. Firstly, the act of Istighfār and Taubah will remove the distress of famine from them. Heavy rains will come when due making their provisions sumptuous. Secondly, it would increase their strength and power.

The word: *قوه* (*quwwah*) has been used here in a general sense which includes physical strength and power as well as the strength that comes from increases in wealth and children.

This tells that Taubah and Istighfār have a special property of their own – that their practitioner is blessed with extended means of sustenance and satisfying increase in wealth and children, even in this mortal world.

Captives of their ignorant ways, the people of Sayyidnā Hūd عليه السلام brushed his call aside by saying, in effect, ‘a miracle would have been something, which you did not show to us. You are simply saying what you have to say. Now, just because what you are saying, we are not going to leave our gods we worship and, in you, we are not going to believe. In fact, we believe that you have lost your mind as a result of maligning our gods, otherwise you would not be saying all that.’

Demonstrating his prophetic courage, Sayyidnā Hūd عليه السلام said in response, ‘If you would not listen to me, then, hear this – I make Allah my witness and you too bear witness that I am disgusted with all your gods other than Allah. Now, do, you and your gods, whatever you all can do against me and do not even give me the least respite.’

And he said, ‘this I am telling you seriously for I have placed my trust in Allah who is my Lord and your Lord as well. He holds every creature that walks on the earth by the forelock. There is no one around who can dare cause harm or loss to anyone even to the measure of a tiny particle without His will and permission. Surely, my Lord is on the straight path, that is, one who takes the straight path finds Him and is helped by Him.’

Here was one man against a whole people making a claim so

strong and loud and putting them to shame and no one from a people so strong and brave dared budge before him! This was a standing miracle of Sayyidnā Hūd عليه السلام – which also provides an answer to their complaint that he did not show them a miracle. And it also provides yet another answer to their audacious comment that their gods had made him mentally deranged for, had their gods been exercising this kind of power, they would have never left him alive after what he had said against them.

After that, he said, 'If you continue to be so insanely opposed to truth, then, you must understand that I have already conveyed to you the message with which I have been sent. Now, its logical outcome could be no other but that the wrath and punishment of Allah falls on you and you are destroyed to the last man and my Lord brings another people to settle on this land. As for what you are doing against this matter of truth, you are simply hurting yourself, not Allah. Surely, my Lord oversees everything and He is aware of all your deeds and thoughts.'

They were the kind of people who would not listen to anything. They chose to stick to their contumacy. Then, the punishment of Allah descended upon them in the form of a stormy wind that uprooted their homes and trees. Living entities, human and animal, would be blown up high into the air and ricochet back on to the ground faces down. Human cries could be heard coming from the sky – until this whole set of people, unique in their size and strength, were annihilated to the last man.

When came the command to send Divine punishment on these people, Allah Ta'ālā, in accordance with His customary practice, saved His prophet and his companions from this severe punishment as they were ordered to leave that area before the punishment came.

After having mentioned the event relating to the people of 'Ād and the punishment that came upon them, an exhortation was necessary so that others could learn their lesson from it. So, it was said: That was the tribe of 'Ād! They rejected the signs of their Lord, disobeyed their Messengers yet kept following the dictates of those who were tyrannical and obstinate.

The outcome was that curse, that is, the state of being away from

the mercy of Allah, kept pursuing them in the mortal world and will keep pursuing them similarly on the day of Qiyāmah as well.

From this event, we learn that the people of 'Ād were overtaken by a stormy wind. But, it appears in Sūrah al-Mu'minūn (23:41) that they were destroyed by a harsh sound (*aṣ-ṣaiḥah*: The Cry, The Shriek). It is possible that both kinds of punishments had visited the people of Sayyidnā Hūd عليه السلام.

The event relating to the people of 'Ād and Sayyidnā Hūd عليه السلام ends here.

After that, the next eight verses (61-68) carry the story of Sayyidnā Ṣāliḥ عليه السلام, peace be upon him. He was sent to the people of Thamūd, another branch of the tribe of 'Ād. He too invited his people to believe in Tauḥīd, the Oneness of Allah. As customary, his people belied him and insisted that he must first make a she-camel of a specified description come out from the rock of the mountain in front of them in order to have them believe that he was a true prophet of Allah.

Sayyidnā Ṣāliḥ عليه السلام warned them: If Allah Ta'ālā shows you your custom-ordered miracles, and you still fail to believe, then, according to the customary practice of Allah, the punishment will come and destroy all of you. But, they remained obstinate and Allah Ta'ālā, in His perfect power, made the miracle they demanded manifest before them. The rock of the mountain in front of them split asunder. Out from it came the she-camel bearing the features specified by them. Allah Ta'ālā ordered them not to harm that she-camel in any manner, otherwise the punishment will come upon them. But, they disobeyed this order as well, and killed the she-camel. Consequently, they were seized by Allah Ta'ālā, Sayyidnā Ṣāliḥ عليه السلام and his companions were saved from the punishment, and the rest of those people were destroyed by a Sound which was severe and terrifying.

As part of this event, the people of Sayyidnā Ṣāliḥ عليه السلام have been reported to have said to him: *قَدْ كُنْتَ فِينَا مَرْجُوًّا قَبْلَ هَذَا* (O Ṣāliḥ, we had hopes in you before this - 62). It means that, before he claimed to be a prophet and started telling them to shun idol-worship, they had great hopes in him. They thought he would rise to be a great reformer and leader of their people. The reason is that Allah Ta'ālā nurtures and grooms his prophets from their childhood in a way that they become

models of good morals and habits. Whoever looks at them, loves and respects them. This is what happened in the case of the Last Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. Before he declared that he has been sent as a prophet, the whole Arabia called him *al-amīn* (the trustworthy one) and took him to be true and righteous. It was only when he announced his prophet-hood and prohibited idol-worship that everyone turned hostile to him.

In verse 65, it was said: *تَتَمَتُّوا فِي دَارِكُمْ ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ*: “Enjoy yourselves in your homes for three days [only].” That is, when these people killed the she-camel associated with the miracle in flagrant contravention of the Divine command, then, something serious happened. As warned earlier, ‘lest a near punishment should seize you - 64’, the punishment did come upon them in a manner that they were given a respite of three days and told that they all will be destroyed on the fourth day.

According to Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī, these three days were Thursday, Friday and Saturday. On Sunday, the punishment descended upon them: *وَأَخَذَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا الصَّيْحَةَ* (And those who transgressed were caught by the Cry – 67). This awesome Cry was that of the archangel, Sayyidnā Jibrā’īl عليه السلام which was far more terrorizing than the combined thunderbolts of worldly lightening could ever be, something human senses could not take. All hearts were rent apart by the horrific sound resulting in the mass destruction of those people.

From this verse we learn that the people of Sayyidnā Ṣāliḥ عليه السلام were destroyed by a severe Sound, but what Sūrah al-A‘rāf says about them is: *فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الرَّجْفَةُ* (So, the earthquake seized them – 7:78,91) which, as obvious, tells us that the punishment visiting them was that of the earthquake. Commentator al-Qurṭubī has said that there is no contradiction here. It is possible that the earthquake came first and then they all were destroyed by the severe Sound. Allah knows best.

Verses 69 – 73

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلَنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ بِالْبُشْرَى قَالُوا سَلَامًا قَالَ سَلَامٌ
فَمَا لَبِثَ أَنْ جَاءَ بِعِجْلٍ حَنِيذٍ ﴿٦٩﴾ فَلَمَّا رَأَى أَيْدِيَهُمْ لَا تَصِلُ
إِلَيْهِ نَكِرَهُمْ وَأَوْجَسَ مِنْهُمْ خِيفَةً قَالُوا لَا تَحْزَنْ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا
إِلَى قَوْمِ لُوطٍ ﴿٧٠﴾ وَأَمْرَأَتُهُ قَائِمَةٌ فَضَحِكَتْ فَبَشَّرْنَاهَا

بِاسْحَاقَ ۖ وَمِنْ وَّرَاءِ اِسْحٰقَ يَعْقُوبَ ﴿٧١﴾ قَالَتْ يَوٰىلَتٰى
 اٰلِ دَاوٰنَا عَجُوْزٌ وَّهٰذَا بَعْلِى شَيْخًا ۗ اِنَّ هٰذَا لَشَىْءٌ عَجِيْبٌ
 ﴿٧٢﴾ قَالُوْا اَتَعْجِبِيْنَ مِنْ اَمْرِ اللّٰهِ رَحْمَتُ اللّٰهِ وَبَرَكَتُهُ عَلَيْكُمْ
 اَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ ۗ اِنَّهٗ حَمِيْدٌ مَّجِيْدٌ ﴿٧٣﴾

And Our messengers came to Ibrāhīm with the good news. They said, “Salām (peace).” He said, “Salām.” Then he made no delay in bringing a roasted calf. [69]

So, when he noticed their hands not reaching for it, he found them strange and felt a bit of fright from them. They said, “Be not frightened. We have been sent to the people of Lūṭ.” [70] And his wife was standing (nearby). She laughed, so, We gave her the good news about Ishāq, and about Ya‘qūb after Ishāq. [71]

She said, “Woe is to me! Shall I give birth to a child while I am an old woman and this is my husband, an old man? This is something strange, indeed.” [72] They said, “Do you marvel at Allah’s command? Allah’s mercy and His blessings are upon you, the people of the house. Surely, He is praiseworthy, glorious.” [73]

Commentary

In these five verses, an event relating to Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام has been mentioned. Allah Ta‘ālā sent some angels to give him the good news of a birth in his family because Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام had no children from his wife, Sayyidah Sārah and he wished he had. But, they were much advanced in years. Obviously, there was no hope. Then, Allah Ta‘ālā sent the good news through the angels and that too of the nature that the new born would be a male child and even proposed the name of the child as Ishāq. Then, he was also told that he would live, have children and that the name of his son will be Ya‘qūb, and both of them would be the messenger and prophet of Allah. Since these angels had come in human form, Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام took them to be normal guests and lost no time in offering his hospitality. He placed a dish of roasted calf before them. But, they were really angels, free of eating and drinking. Therefore, despite the food being before them, they did not extend their hands towards it. When Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام noticed this, he was concerned. They did not look like

guests, may be they had come to create some problem for him. The angels scented his concern and disclosed their identity. They told him that they were angels of Allah Ta'ālā. There was no need for him to be frightened. They had been sent to give him the good news of a birth in his family, as well as to accomplish another mission, the mission of bringing Divine punishment on the people of Lūṭ عليه السلام. Sayyidah Sārah, the wife of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام was listening to this conversation from behind a curtain. When she found out that they were angels, not human beings, there was no need for the otherwise essential *hijāb*. She laughed at the good news of the birth of a child in old age and said, 'shall I give birth to a child while I am an old woman and my husband, an old man?' The angels said as to why would she marvel at the command of Allah Ta'ālā who has everything within His power. Was it not that, as a member of the prophet's family, she has been witnessing that this was a family on which extraordinary Divine mercy and blessing descends all the time, which is mostly above and beyond the obvious chain of causes? So, what was there to wonder about? This was a gist of the event. Let us now go to details as they appear in the text of the verses cited above.

The first verse (69) tells us that these angels had come to Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام with some good news. The good news has been mentioned later in the third verse (71): *كَبَّرْنَا بِهَا بِإِسْحَاقَ* (so, We gave her the good news about Ishāq).

Sayyidnā 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbās said that the three angels were Jibra'īl, Mikā'īl and Isrāfīl عليهم السلام. (Qurtubī) They came in human form and greeted Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام with 'salām.' Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام responded to their *salām* greeting and, taking them to be human, offered the usual hospitality.

Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام is the first human being who introduced the custom of honoring guests by offering hospitality to them. (Qurtubī) It was his routine that he would never eat alone. Instead, when came the time for meals, he would be looking out for a guest so that he could eat with him.

Al-Qurtubī has reported from Isrā'īlī narratives that, on a certain day, Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام started looking for a guest at the time for meals. The man he met was a stranger. When he sat down to eat, Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام said to him, 'say: I begin with the name of

Allah.' He said, 'I do not know Allah. Who and what is He?' Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام asked him to leave the dining-spread on the floor. When he went out, Sayyidnā Jibra'īl عليه السلام came in and said, 'Allah Ta'ālā says: As for him, We gave sustenance to him throughout his life despite his disbelief and as for you, you were stingy about giving him even one morsel of food.' Hearing this, Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام went after him and called him back. He said, 'unless you tell me the reason why you turned me out first and why are you asking me to come in again, I will not go with you.'

When Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام told him the episode, the episode itself became the reason for his becoming a believer. He said, 'the Lord who made you do this is very noble. I believe in Him.' Then he went in with Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام, behaved like a true believer and ate his food after having recited Bismillah first.

So, Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام, true to his habit of entertaining guests, welcomed angels who had come in human form. Naturally, to him they were human, and guests. The host did his most, lost no time and placed a roasted calf before them.

In the second verse (70), it was stated that the angels had, though, come in the human form and it was also possible that they could have been given human characteristics of eating and drinking at that particular time. But, the wiser choice for them was no other but that they should not eat so that the secret that they were angels comes out in the open. Therefore, their angelic characteristics were allowed to remain, even in their human form, because of which they did not extend their hands towards the food.

According to some reports, they had some arrows in their hands. They started poking the heads of their arrows into the roasted meat. When they acted in that manner, Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام apprehended them to be his enemies, because, according to the social custom known to him, if a guest refused to eat, it was a sign of mischief to be made from his side. (Qurtubī) His apprehension was quashed when the angels themselves disclosed their identity and said that they were angels, therefore, they do not eat. So, there was no danger for him to bother about.

Injunctions and Rules

Many injunctions and important rules of guidance regarding social living appear in the verses under study. Imām al-Qurṭubī has discussed them in detail in his Tafsīr.

The *Sunnah* of *Salām*

The words of verse 69 -- قَالُوا سَلَامًا قَالَ سَلَامٌ (They said, “*Salām.*” He said, “*Salām.*”) – teach us that it is a *Sunnah* for Muslims that, when they meet each other, they should offer *Salām*. The guest coming in should say it first while others should respond.

That people say some words to greet each other when they meet is a custom found in all communities. But, the teaching of Islām is unique in this matter for the *masnūn* word of *salām* is السلام عليكم : *As-Salāmu ‘Alaikum*. It carries the name of Allah with it. So it is both a Dhikr of Allah, and a prayer for peace and protection from Him – in addition to being a guarantee of the protection of life, property and honor from one’s own side. (When we equate *As-Salāmu ‘Alaikum* with ‘peace on you’ we go by the anatomy and leave the spirit that is essential to it – tr.)

At this place in the Qur’ān, it has been said that the angels said ‘*salām*’) (سَلَامًا) and Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام responded with ‘*salām*’) (سَلَامًا). Obviously, here it was not considered necessary to mention *salām* in its complete form – as customary in usage when it is said that a person said *salām* to someone where it is presupposed that he said the whole greeting of *As-Salāmu ‘Alaikum*. Similarly, at this place, *salām* stands for the full *masnūn* greeting which has been taught to his community by the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم through his word and deed, that is, saying: السلام عليكم (*As-Salāmu ‘Alaikum*) at the beginning of *salām*, and: والسلام ورحمة الله (wa ‘*alaikum-s-salām*, or wa ‘*alaikum-s-salāmu wa raḥmatu-l-lāh* to be more generous) while responding to the *salām*.

Some Rules for Guests and Hosts

It has been said in the last sentence of verse 69: فَمَا لَيْتَ أَنْ جَاءَ بِعِجْلٍ حَنِيذٍ (Then he made no delay in bringing a roasted calf).

This tells us a few things:

1. It is a part of the etiquette of hospitality that the host should, soon after the arrival of the guest, bring out something to eat, or drink, something he has on hand and which could be offered quickly

and conveniently. Then, if the host is a man of means, he can arrange for additional hospitality later. (Qurtūbī)

2. A host should not worry about making too many formal arrangements for a guest. Anything good available easily is good enough. Let him put it before the guest. Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام had some domestic animals at home. Therefore, he slaughtered a calf, had it roasted quickly and offered it to his guests. (Qurtūbī)

3. Receiving guests and offering hospitality to them is a part of the essential etiquette of Islam, in fact, a hallmark of high morals. This is the blessed habit of prophets and the righteous. Is it necessary (*wājib*) to entertain guests? Or, is it not? ‘Ulamā’ have difference of opinion in this matter. According to the majority of them, it is a *sunnah*, and desirable, but not *wājib* (necessary, obligatory). Some of them say that it is *wājib* on village people that they should offer hospitality to a person who stays in their village because a stranger has no arrangement for his meals there. Since such arrangements are possible through a hotel in cities, therefore, it is not *wājib* on those who live in cities. Al-Qurtūbī has reported all these different views in his Tafsīr.

In verse 70, it was said: فَلَمَّا رَأَوْا أَيْدِيَهُمْ لَا تَصِلُ إِلَيْهِ نَكِرَهُمْ (So, when he noticed their hands not reaching for it, he found them strange and felt a bit of fright from them).

From here we learn that there are rules of etiquette for guests as well. A guest should accept whatever is offered. Let him partake from it a little bit to please the host, even if not willing to eat because of unfavorable taste or apprehended harm.

This very sentence also tells us that the host should not consider himself absolved after having placed the food before the guest. Instead, he should be benignly watching whether or not the guest is partaking of the food, as was done by Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام when he noticed that the angels were not eating.

But, this watching has to be discreet, not something like staring at the guest while he is eating. A casual look is enough, because looking at the morsels of food being eaten by the guest is contrary to the etiquette of entertainment and certainly very humiliating for the invited guest. This is illustrated by an incident relating to Khalīfah Hishām ibn ‘Abd ul-Mālik. On a certain day, the Khalīfah was sharing his food-

spread with a rustic Arab. The morsel of food being eaten by the Arab had a strand of hair in it. When Khalīfah Hishām noticed it, he told the Arab about it. The Arab instantly rose in a huff saying, 'we never eat with a person who watches our morsels.'

Al-Ṭabarī reports at this place: When the angels abstained from eating the first time, they had said that they do not eat free meals. If they were to accept payment for it, they would. Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام said, 'Yes, there is a price for it that you can pay. The price is: Say 'with the name of Allah' when you begin, and praise Him when you finish.' Hearing this, the archangel Jibra'īl عليه السلام told his companions, 'That Allah Ta'ālā calls him His friend is correct. He deserves it.'

This tells us that saying: بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ (*bismillah*: With the name of Allah) when beginning to eat, and saying: الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ (*alhamdulillah*: Praise belongs to Allah) at the end of it is Sunnah.

Verses 74 - 83

فَلَمَّا ذَهَبَ عَنْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الرَّوْعُ وَجَاءَتْهُ الْبُشْرَىٰ يُجَادِلُنَا فِي قَوْمِ لُوطٍ ﴿٧٤﴾ إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لَحَلِيمٌ أَوَّاهٌ مُنِيبٌ ﴿٧٥﴾ يَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ أَعْرِضْ عَنْ هَذَا إِنَّهُ قَدْ جَاءَ أَمْرٌ رَبِّكَ وَإِنَّهُمْ آتِيهِمْ عَذَابٌ غَيْرُ مَرْدُودٍ ﴿٧٦﴾ وَلَمَّا جَاءَتْ رُسُلُنَا لُوطًا سِيقَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَصَاقَ بِهِمْ دَرْعًا وَقَالَ هَذَا يَوْمٌ عَصِيبٌ ﴿٧٧﴾ وَجَاءَهُ قَوْمُهُ يُهْرَعُونَ إِلَيْهِ وَمِنْ قَبْلُ كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ ط قَالَ يَقَوْمِ هَؤُلَاءِ بَنَاتِي هُنَّ أَطْهَرُكُمْ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تَخْزُونِ فِي صِيفِي ط أَلَيْسَ مِنْكُمْ رَجُلٌ رَشِيدٌ ﴿٧٨﴾ قَالُوا لَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمْ مَالَنَا فِي بَنَاتِكُمْ مِنْ حَقٍّ وَإِنَّكَ لَتَعْلَمُ مَا نُرِيدُ ﴿٧٩﴾ قَالَ لَوْ أَنَّ لِي بِكُمْ قُوَّةً أَوْ آوِي إِلَىٰ رُكْنٍ شَدِيدٍ ﴿٨٠﴾ قَالُوا يَلُوطُ إِنَّا رُسُلُ رَبِّكَ لَنْ نَبْصِلُوكَ إِلَّا أَمْرًا نَكْرَهُ إِنَّهُ مِصِيبُهَا مَا أَصَابَهُمْ ط إِنَّ مَوْعِدَهُمُ الصُّبْحُ ط أَلَيْسَ الصُّبْحُ بِقَرِيبٍ ﴿٨١﴾ فَلَمَّا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا جَعَلْنَا

عَالِيهَا سَافِلَهَا وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهَا حِجَارَةً مِّن سِجِّيلٍ لِّمَنْضُودٍ
﴿٨٢﴾ مُّسَوِّمَةً عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ وَمَا هِيَ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ بِبَعِيدٍ ﴿٨٣﴾

So, when fear left Ibrāhīm and the happy news came to him, he started pleading before Us for the people of Lūṭ.

[74] Surely, Ibrāhīm is forbearing, very penitent, ever-turning to Allah. [75]

O Ibrāhīm! Leave it, in fact, the command of your Lord has come, and there has to come upon them a punishment, not to be turned back. [76]

And when Our emissaries (angels) came to Lūṭ, he felt uneasy and was strained in his heart on account of them, and said, "This is a very hard day." [77]

And his people came to him, rushing upon him. And already they used to commit evil deeds. He said, "These are my daughters. They are far more clean for you. So, fear Allah and do not disgrace me in respect of my guests. Is there not a single right man among you." [78]

They said, "You know that we have no claim on your daughters, and you know well what we want." [79]

He said, "O that I had power over you or might have some strong support for refuge." [80]

They (the angels) said, "O Lūṭ, we are emissaries of your Lord. They shall never reach you. So, move with your family in a part of night, and none of you shall turn to look back; except your woman. There has to befall her whatever befalls them. Their deadline is the morning. Is it not that the morning is near?" [81]

So, when Our command came, We turned its highest into the lowest, and We rained on it stones of hard clay, one over another [82] marked, with your Lord. And it is not far from the transgressors. [83]

Commentary

Sūrah Hūd carries an account of different kinds of Divine punishments sent over past peoples because of their antagonism to prophets of the time. Described in the verses cited above is the moral condition of the people of Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام and the severe punishment given to them.

Besides being disbelievers, the people of Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام were involved in the practice of such abject evil and immodesty as was not found in the world before them, something even wild animals hate. That a man would pollute his honor and dignity with another man is a curse the fallout from which is far more injurious than common fornication. Therefore, the harsh punishment that descended on these people had never hit known practitioners of common acts of immodesty.

The event relating to Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام as it appears in the cited verses tells that Allah Ta'ālā sent some angels, including Sayyidnā Jibrā'īl عليه السلام, to execute the punishment against these people. They first went to Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام in Palestine, the account of which has appeared in previous verses. After that, they came to Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام whose abode was located at a distance of ten or twelve miles from there.

Certainly great is the majesty of Allah Ta'ālā. When He seizes a people in punishment, the punishment that he makes descend upon them is chosen to be congruous to their misdeed. On this occasion too, these angels of Allah were sent in the form of handsome young men. When they reached the home of Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام, he too took them to be visiting guests for they had come in human form. He found himself in a fix. If he backed out from entertaining guests, it would be against his dignity as a prophet. If he took them in as his guests, then, he knew how evil and dirty his people were. The danger was that they might storm his home and hurt the guests while he failed to defend them. So, in his heart, he said, 'this is a very hard day.'

Allah Ta'ālā has, in His great design, made this world of ours an open gallery of lessons full of the countless exhibits of His perfect power and eloquent wisdom. He made His friend Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام come out as a prophet from the home of Āzar, the idol-worshipper. In the home of the highly revered prophet, Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام, there was that wife of his who worked in league with disbelievers and opposed her prophet husband. When these honored guests in the form of handsome young men came to stay at the home of Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام, his wife passed on the information to perverted hoods from these people telling them about the kind of guests they had in their home on that day. (Qurtubī, Mazharī)

Things turned out as Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام had first apprehended.

This finds mention in the second verse (78): *وَ جَاءَهُ قَوْمُهُ مُهْرَعُونَ إِلَيْهِ* (And his people came to him, rushing upon him) – and they were already used to committing evil deeds.

It has been hinted here that such was the curse of their evil deed that they had lost all sense of modesty and propriety, so much so that they did not hesitate to storm even the home of Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام for a purpose that sinister.

When Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام realized that it was difficult to protect his guests, he tried to divert the attention of his people from their evil advances by telling them that he would give his daughters in marriage to their chiefs, if they were to stop their evil-mongering. The marriage of a believing girl with a disbelieving man was permissible at that time. The practice had continued up to the early period of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, therefore, he had given two of his daughters in marriage to ‘Utbah ibn Abī Lahab and Abu al-‘Āsh ibn al-Rabī’, though both of them were disbelievers. Later came the verses that prohibited the marriage of Muslim women with disbelieving men as *ḥarām*. (Qurtubī)

According to some commentators, ‘my daughters’ at this place means the daughters of the whole community because every prophet is like a father to his people and the whole community is his spiritual progeny. It is supported by the noble verse: *الَّذِي أَوْلَىٰ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجَهُ أُمَّهَاتُهُمْ* (The Prophet comes first with the believers against their own selves and his wives are (like) their mothers – 33:6). This should be seen with the additional words: *وَهُوَ آبٌ لَهُمْ* (and he is [like] a father for them) as they appear in the rendition (*Qirā’ah*) of Sayyidnā ‘Abdullah ibn Mas‘ūd رضى الله عنه where the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم has been identified as a father to the entire Muslim Ummah. According to this Tafsīr, the statement of Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام would mean, ‘you leave this evil habit of yours, behave like gentlemen, marry girls from your people and have them as your wives.’

After that, it was to warn them against Divine punishment that Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام said: *فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ* (So, fear Allah). Then he pleaded with them: *وَلَا تُخْزُونِ فِي ضَيْفِي* (do not disgrace me in respect of my guests) and then wondered: *أَلَيْسَ مِنْكُمْ رَجُلٌ رَشِيدٌ* (Is there not a single right man among you?), someone who would listen to his plaint.

But, there was no trace of gentility or even humanness left in any of them. So, in acid wickedness, they all responded: لَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمْ مَالَنَا فِي بَنِيكَ مِنْ حَقِّ وَرَثَتِكَ لَتَعْلَمُنَّ مَا نُرِيدُ (You know that we have no claim on your daughters, and you know well what we want.)

Totally exasperated, what Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام could say at that time was: لَوْ أَنَّ لِي بِكُمْ قُوَّةً أَوْ آيَةٌ إِلَىٰ رُكُنِي شَدِيدٍ that is, 'only if I had enough strength in me to stand against this onslaught by my people, or that I had the backing of some strong group who would have helped me get rid of these oppressors.'

Seeing this anxiety of Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام, the angels disclosed their identity and said, 'do not worry. Your group is very strong and very powerful. We are angels of Allah. They cannot touch us. We have come to execute the punishment for them.'

It appears in a Ḥadīth of the Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhārī that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said about it, 'may Allah Ta'ālā have mercy on Lūṭ عليه السلام. He was compelled to seek the protection of some strong group.' And the report in Tirmidhī carries another sentence with it, 'after Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام, Allah Ta'ālā sent no prophet whose clan or tribe was not his supporter.' (Qurtubī) This was true in the case of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. The disbelieving Quraysh did everything they could against him, but his entire clan supported him – though, they did not agree with him religion-wise. This was the reason why Banū Hāshim as a whole sided with the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم in the boycott imposed by the Quraysh disbelievers whereby they had cut off essential supplies to him.

During this episode, as reported from Sayyidnā 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbās رضى الله عنه, when the people of Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام mobbed his home, he had closed the entrance door. The conversation with these wicked people was going on from behind it. The angels too were inside. The mob was threatening to jump the walls, barge in and break the door. Thereupon, came these words on the lips of Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام. When the angels saw this anxiety of Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام, they disclosed their real identity and asked him to open the door. It was time that they took over and gave the miscreants a foretaste of the Divine punishment. When the door was opened, archangel Jibrā'īl عليه السلام pointed his 'Feather' towards their eyes. They turned blind and started running.

At that time, the angels under Divine command said to Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام: *فَاسْرِبْ بِأَهْلِكَ بِقِطْعٍ مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ* (So, move with your family in a part of night). And asked him to instruct everyone in his family not to turn and look back with the exception of his wife because she was going to be hit by the same punishment that was to fall on his people.

This could also mean that he was not to take his wife along with him. And it could also mean that, being his wife, she was to go along as part of his family, but she would not obey the instruction of not looking back he would give to his family. According to some reports, this is what happened. This wife started off with others, but when she heard the big bang of the punishment given to her people, she looked back and felt sorry at their destruction. At that moment there came a splintered rock and finished her off like others. (Qurtubī, Maḥzarī)

The angels had also told Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام that: *إِنَّ مَوْعِدَهُمُ الصُّبْحُ* (The deadline [of the punishment] is the morning). He said that he wished the punishment would come sooner. Thereupon, the angels said: *أَلَيْسَ الصُّبْحُ بِقَرِيبٍ* (Is it not that the morning is near?)

After that, the Qur'an portrays the occurrence of the punishment by saying: So, when Our command came, We turned whatever there was in their habitat upside down raining such stones over it as had the names of everyone there marked on it.

Reports say that these habitations were composed of four major towns where those people lived. These very habitations have been named as 'al-mu'tafikāt' (the towns overturned) elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an (9:70, 69:9). When the Divine command came, the archangel Jibrā'īl *al-Amīn* عليه السلام dissected the base of the land mass holding all those towns on top of it with his wing, raised all of it upwards in a way that everything stayed where it was, even water in a water vessel. It was in the backdrop of human, animal and canine voices coming from the sky that he heaved all these habitations straight up towards the sky and, then, threw the whole thing back upside down – as appropriate to and as called for by the evil they indulged in.

At the end of the verse (83), after having mentioned the actual punishment that hit the people of Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام, it was to warn the contemporary peoples of the world that it was said: *وَمَا هِيَ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ بَعِيدٍ* (And it is not far from the transgressors). It means that people who

insist upon indulging in this shameful act should not consider themselves very far from this punishment. It can come even today. The Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said, 'even in my Ummah, some people will do what the people of Lūt عليه السلام used to do. When this starts happening, then wait, for they too would be subjected to the same punishment that was inflicted on the people of Lūt عليه السلام.'

Verses 84 - 95

وَالِى مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا ۗ قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ
 إِلٰهٍ غَيْرُهُ ۗ وَلَا تَتَّقُوا الْمِكْيَالَ وَالْمِيزَانَ إِنِّىٓ أَرَاكُمْ بِخَيْرٍ
 وَإِنِّىٓ أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ مُّحِيطٍ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَيٰقَوْمِ أَوْفُوا
 الْمِكْيَالَ وَالْمِيزَانَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ أَشْيَاءَهُمْ وَلَا
 تَعْتُوا فِى الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾ بَقِيَّتُ اللَّهُ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن
 كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ ۗ وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِحَفِيظٍ ﴿٨٦﴾ قَالُوا يٰشُعَيْبُ
 أَصَلَوْتِكَ تَأْمُرُكَ أَنْ نَتْرُكَ مَا يَعْبُدُ آبَاؤُنَا أَوْ أَنْ نَفْعَلَ فِى
 أَمْوَالِنَا مَا نَشَؤُ ۗ إِنَّكَ لَأَنْتَ الْحَلِيمُ الرَّشِيدُ ﴿٨٧﴾ قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ
 أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّى وَرَزَقْنِى مِنْهُ رِزْقًا حَسَنًا
 وَمَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ أُخَالِفَكُمْ إِلَىٰ مَا أَنهَكُمْ عَنْهُ ۗ إِن أُرِيدُ إِلَّا
 الْإِصْلَاحَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُ ۗ وَمَا تَوْفِيقِى إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ
 وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ ﴿٨٨﴾ وَيٰقَوْمِ لَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شِقَاقِى أَنْ يُصِيبَكُمْ
 مِّثْلُ مَا أَصَابَ قَوْمَ نُوحٍ أَوْ قَوْمَ هُودٍ أَوْ قَوْمَ صَالِحٍ ۗ وَمَا قَوْمُ
 لُوطٍ مِّنكُمْ بِبَعِيدٍ ﴿٨٩﴾ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ ۗ إِنَّ
 رَبِّى رَحِيمٌ وَدُودٌ ﴿٩٠﴾ قَالُوا يٰشُعَيْبُ مَا نَفَقَهُ كَثِيرًا ۗ إِنَّمَا تَقُولُ
 وَإِنَّا لَنَرَاكَ فِينَا ضَعِيفًا ۗ وَلَوْ لَا رَهْطُكَ لَرَجَمْنَاكَ ۗ وَمَا أَنْتَ
 عَلَيْنَا بِعَزِيزٍ ﴿٩١﴾ قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ أَرَهْطِىٓ أَعَزُّ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَ
 اتَّخَذُ قَوْمُهُ وِرَآءَكُمْ ظَهْرِيًّا ۗ إِنَّ رَبِّى بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ مُّحِيطٌ ﴿٩٢﴾

وَيَقُومِ اعْمَلُوا عَلَىٰ مَكَانَتِكُمْ إِنِّي عَامِلٌ سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ۖ
 مَنْ يَأْتِيهِ عَذَابٌ يُخْزِيهِ وَمَنْ هُوَ كَاذِبٌ ۖ وَارْتَقِبُوا إِنِّي
 مَعَكُمْ رَقِيبٌ ﴿٩٣﴾ وَلَمَّا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا نَجَّيْنَا شُعَيْبًا وَالَّذِينَ
 آمَنُوا مَعَهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنَّا وَآخَذَتِ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا الصَّيْحَةَ
 فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي دِيَارِهِمْ جُثَمِينَ ﴿٩٤﴾ كَانَ لَمْ يَغْنَوْا فِيهَا ۗ أَلَا
 بُعْدًا لِلَّذِينَ كَمَا بَعَدَتْ ثَمُودُ ﴿٩٥﴾

And to Madyan (We sent) their brother, Shu'aib. He said, "O my people, worship Allah. You have no god other than Him. And do not lessen the measure and the weight. I see you quite well off, and I fear for you the punishment of an encircling day. [84]

And O my people, perfect the measure and the balance with justice and do not make the people short of their things, and do not go about the earth spreading disorder. [85]

Whatever is left (with you) by Allah is better for you, if you are believers. And I am not a watchman over you. [86]

They said, "O Shu'aib, does your *ṣalāh* (prayer) command you that we should give up what our fathers used to worship or give up our free-will in (spending) our wealth? You are provenly the man of wisdom and guidance." [87] He said, "O my people, tell me, if I am on a clear path from my Lord and He has provided me from Himself with a good provision, (should I still leave you unguided?) And I do not want to do in your absence what I prohibit for you. I want nothing but to set things right as far as I can. And my ability to do things comes from none but Allah. In Him alone I have placed my trust and to Him alone I turn in humbleness. [88] O my people, let not your hostility towards me cause you to suffer what was suffered by the people of Nūḥ, or the people of Hūd, or the people of Ṣāliḥ. And the people of Lūṭ are not far from you. [89] And seek forgiveness from your Lord, then turn towards Him in repentance. Surely, my Lord is very merciful, most loving." [90]

They said, "O Shu'aib, we do not understand most of

what you say, and, in fact, we see you weak among us. But for your clan, we would have stoned you. And to us, you are not a man of respect.” [91]

He said, “O my people, is my clan more respectable to you than Allah? And you have taken Him as something thrown behind your backs. Surely, my Lord encompasses all that you do. [92] And O my people, do what you can, I am to do (what I can). Soon you will know the one whom the punishment visits humiliating him, and the one who is false. And wait. I am, with you, waiting.” [93]

And when Our command came, We saved Shu‘aib and those who believed along with him, out of mercy from Us, and those who transgressed were caught by the Cry, and they were found (dead) in the homes, fallen on their knees, [94] as though they never lived there. Lo! Curse be upon Madyan, like Thamūd were cursed. [95]

Commentary

An account of Sayyidnā Shu‘aib عليه السلام and his people appears in the verses cited above. Besides being *kāfirs* and *mushriks*, his people used to give less in weights and measures. Sayyidnā Shu‘aib عليه السلام carried his call to them, told them not to give less in weights and measures, and warned them of Divine punishment if they persisted with this way of life. But, they did persist with their denial and contumacy and, as a consequence, all those people were destroyed through a severe punishment, details of which appear as follows.

In the first verse (84), it was said: *وَالِى مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا* (And to Madyan [We sent] their brother, Shu‘aib عليه السلام).

Madyan was actually the name of a town settled by Madyan ibn Ibrāhīm. Its present location has been given as ‘Ma‘ān’ in Jordan. The people of this town are also called Madyan. Therefore, by calling Sayyidnā Shu‘aib عليه السلام a ‘brother of Madyan,’ it was hinted that Allah Ta‘ālā sent His messenger to those people from among them so that they feel familiar and find it easier to accept his teachings.

Then, it was said:

قَالَ يَقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ، وَلَا تَنْقُصُوا الْمِكْيَالَ وَالْمِيزَانَ

O my people, worship Allah. You have no god other than Him.

And do not lessen the measure and the weight.

Here, Sayyidnā Shu‘aib عليه السلام has invited his people to believe in the Oneness of Allah (Tauhīd) because they were Mushriks, those who associated partners in the divinity of Allah. They worshipped trees. That has been pointed to through the use of the word: الايكة (*al-'aikah*: trees) in the Holy Qur‘ān and it is in this respect that the people of Madyan have also been given the sobriquet of أَصْحَابُ الْأَيْكَةِ (*ashabu al-'aikah*: the people of *aikah* – 15:78, 26:176, 38:13, 50:14). Along with this *kufr* and *shirk*, they were also involved in the grave sin of cheating in commercial transactions when they would weigh short and give less in measure and thus deprive people of what was to come to them as their right. Sayyidnā Shu‘aib عليه السلام told them not to do that.

Special Note

Here, it is useful to keep in mind that *kufr* and *shirk* are the roots of all sins. People soaked in these are usually the first to be invited to believe. Faith comes before consideration could be given to matters like social transactions and individual deeds. Whether they have deliverance in the present world or would deserve punishment are things that too are decided on the basis of this faith or denial. All events related to past prophets and their peoples mentioned in the Qur‘ān bear witness to this mode of action – with the exception of two communities. Punishment came upon them because of their disbelief as well as due to their evil deeds. The people of Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام were one of them upon whom, as mentioned earlier, their entire habitation was overturned. It has been stated that their evil practice was the reason for it. The people of Sayyidnā Shu‘aib عليه السلام were the other one. They were punished because of their *kufr* and *shirk* as well as because of their habit of weighing less and measuring short.

This tells us that both these things are most hated and grave, more than any other sin. Obviously, the reason is that they bring serious loss upon the entire human race leaving the world populated by it in a disorder of ominous proportions.

Turning to the verses cited above, we see that Sayyidnā Shu‘aib عليه السلام has used his prophetic compassion to make his people stop their evil practice of giving short measure and less weight. The words he has used to say that are eloquent: إِنِّي أَرَأَيْتُمْ كَيْفَ تَزَوَّجُ الْوَالِدَ وَالَّذِي يَمْتَلِكُ أَيْدِيكُمْ يَهْدِيكُمْ إِلَى الْأَنْبَاءِ وَإِنَّ أَرْأَيْتُمْ كَيْفَ تَزَوَّجُ الْوَالِدَ وَالَّذِي يَمْتَلِكُ أَيْدِيكُمْ يَهْدِيكُمْ إِلَى الْأَنْبَاءِ (I see you quite well off, and I fear for you the punishment of an encir-

cling day – 84). It means that Sayyidnā Shu'aib عليه السلام found them living comfortably. There were not poor, hungry and financially straitened which could be one of the reasons why they had to take recourse to such a cursed practice. Now that they were already blessed by Allah Ta'ālā, it required that they should not subject His creation to injustice. Not leaving it at that, they were also told that, in the event they did not listen to their prophet and did not stop this evil practice, he apprehended that Divine punishment might encircle them. This punishment could mean the punishment of the Hereafter, and the punishment of the present world too. Then, the punishments due to come in this world may be of different kinds. The lowest punishment could be that they might lose the prosperity they had, or they may fall victims to famines and price hikes, as said by the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم:

'When a people start lessening weights and measures, Allah Ta'ālā makes them suffer from the punishment of famine and price hikes.'

Obviously, the very prohibition of weighing and measuring short makes weighing and measuring in full necessary. But, to emphasize it further, Sayyidnā Shu'aib عليه السلام said:

وَيَقْرُومِ أَوْفُوا الْمِكْيَالَ وَالْمِيزَانَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ أَشْيَاءَهُمْ وَلَا تَعْتُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ

And O my people, perfect the measure and the balance with justice and do not make the people short of their things, and do not go about the earth spreading disorder – 85.

Then, affectionately, he explained to them:

بَقِيَّتُ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ، وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِحَفِيظٍ

Whatever is left [with you] by Allah is better for you, if you are believers. And I am not a watchman over you – 86.

It means if they were not to listen to him, let them remember that he was not responsible for the eventuality that they may be seized by some punishment.

The Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said about Sayyidnā Shu'aib عليه السلام that he was an orator among prophets. His eloquence was exceptional. He went to its farthest limits in order to make his people understand his message and take to the right path. But, even after having listened

to him, the response of his people was different from that given by ignorant diehards to their reformers. They threw taunts at him, made fun of him, and said:

أَصْلُوْتُكَ تَأْمُرُكَ أَنْ تَتْرَكَ مَا يَعْبُدُ آبَاؤُنَا أَوْ أَنْ تَفْعَلَ فِى أَمْوَالِنَا مَا نَشَاءُ، إِنَّكَ لَأَنْتَ الْحَلِيمُ الرَّشِيدُ.

O Shu'aib عليه السلام, does your *ṣalāh* (prayer) command you that we should give up what our fathers used to worship or that we give up doing with our wealth whatever we wish? You are properly the man of wisdom and guidance – 87.

The *ṣalāh* (prayer) of Sayyidnā Shu'aib عليه السلام was well known among his people as he was constantly devoted to it. Therefore, they referred to it tauntingly in the sense that (God forbid) his *ṣalāh* taught him to say all those 'wild' things. From what they said we learn that they too thought that religion is restricted to acts of worship, and that it had nothing to do with material dealings. Let everyone earn and spend one's wealth at will. Placing any restriction on that is no job of religion – as many people, even in this time of ours, generally believe, in total ignorance of the real fact.

What Sayyidnā Shu'aib عليه السلام had said to his people was good counsel based on earnest fellow feeling. But, his people responded to him with a sarcasm that was biting. However, they had done that to a blessed prophet of Sayyidnā Shu'aib's class. He heard their caustic comments, yet turned to them with the same empathy and once again tried to make them see the truth. He said: يَقُومُ أَرِيْتُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُ عَلَى بَيْتِهِ مِنْ رَبِّى وَرَزَقْنِى (O my people, tell me, if I am on a clear path from my Lord and He has provided me from Himself with a good provision, [should I still leave you unguided?]) Sayyidnā Shu'aib عليه السلام was telling his people that he had been blessed by his Lord in that He gave him good provision for his material life and in that He also gave him the light of revelation and spiritual insight. Now, with these wonderful assets in his hands, how could he ever think of becoming like them, willingly embracing error and injustice, and thus failing to bring the truth home to them?

After that, he said: وَمَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ أَحَاِلَفَكُمُ إِلَى مَا أَنهَيْكُمُ عَنْهُ (and I do not want to do in your absence what I prohibit for you). This tells us that the way a preacher of religion conducts his life has a major role in what he

preaches. What a preacher does not himself practice produces no effect on others.

Then, he said: *إِنْ أُرِيدُ إِلَّا الْإِصْلَاحَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُ* (I want to do nothing but to set things right as far as I can). And since, this effort too was not by his personal choice and volition, he further said: *وَمَا تَوْفِيقِي إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ، عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ* (And my ability to do things comes from none but Allah. In Him alone I have placed my trust, and to Him alone I turn in humbleness).

After having given this good counsel to them, he warned them of the punishment of Allah Ta'ālā. He said:

*وَيَقَوْمٍ لَا يُجِرُ مَتَّكُمُ شِقَاقِي أَنْ يَصِيبَكُمْ مِثْلُ مَا أَصَابَ قَوْمَ نُوحٍ أَوْ قَوْمَ
هُودٍ أَوْ قَوْمَ صَالِحٍ، وَمَا قَوْمٌ لَوْطٍ مِنْكُمْ بَعِيدٍ*

And O my people, let not your hostility towards me cause you to suffer what was suffered by the people of Nūh, or the people of Hūd, or the people of Ṣāliḥ (عليه السلام). And the people of Lūṭ (عليه السلام) are not far from you.

The sense of the last sentence is that the overturned habitations of the people of Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام were close to Madyan where they were. Then, in terms of time, the punishment that came upon them was very close. From this they could learn their lesson and leave their obstinacy.

Hearing this, his people were enraged. They said that had it not been for the support he had from his clan, they would have stoned him to death. Despite this threat, Sayyidnā Shu'aib عليه السلام, true to his mettle as a prophet, did not hesitate to tell them that they feared his clan all right, but would have no fear of Allah who holds everything in His power.

Finally, when his people did not listen to anything said to them, Sayyidnā Shu'aib عليه السلام told them that they could now wait for the punishment. After that, Allah Ta'ālā took out Sayyidnā Shu'aib عليه السلام and those who had believed in him, as is the Divine practice, from that habitation and the rest of them were destroyed instantly at the harsh Cry of Sayyidnā Jibra'īl عليه السلام.

Injunctions and Rulings:

Rules about Lessening of Weights and Measures

One of the reasons why punishment fell on the people of Sayyidnā

Shu'aib عليه السلام was their practice of weighing and measuring less than due – called *tatfīf*. The Holy Qur'an has described the severe punishment for those who do that in Sūrah al-Muṭaffifīn which opens with the verse: **وَيْلٌ لِّلْمُطَفِّفِينَ** (Woe to those who give less – 83:1). There is a consensus of the entire Muslim Ummah that doing so is strictly *ḥarām* (unlawful). Quoting a saying of Sayyidnā 'Umar رضى الله عنه, Imām Mālik has said in Mu'aṭṭā' that weighing and measuring less essentially means that someone does not fulfill the right of another person due on him, fully and duly. In fact, makes it less, whether it happens to be something given by weight, or measure, or something of another kind. If an employee falls short in performing his or her assigned duty, or an office worker, or a laborer cuts his working hours short, or fails to fulfill his job assignment as due, then, they all will be counted in this category. Anyone who does not perform his or her Ṣalāh with due consideration of everything obligatory and *masnūn* in it has also committed the crime of this '*tatfīf*.' May Allah keep all of us protected from it!

Ruling

It appears in Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī that the people of Sayyidnā Shu'aib عليه السلام would save gold and silver by trimming the edges of gold and silver coins, like *dinār* and *dirham*, circulating in the country as official currency, and which they would channel back into circulation at par value. Sayyidnā Shu'aib عليه السلام prohibited them from doing so.

In Ḥadīth as well, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم has declared the chipping of the coins of an Islamic state to be *ḥarām* (unlawful). Tafsīr authority, Zayd ibn Aslam has said exactly this while explaining the verse of the Qur'an: **تِسْعَةُ رَهْطٍ يُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا يُصْلِحُونَ** (nine family heads spreading corruption in the land and not correcting [their ways] – 27:48). He says that these people of the city mentioned in the verse used to chip off gold and silver from *dinār* and *dirham* coins and ran a profitable business of their own through this source – something the Qur'an calls a great corruption.

During the Khilāfah of Sayyidnā 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz, someone was arrested while he was cutting a *dirham* coin. He was awarded a punishment of lashes and was paraded around head shaved. (Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī)

Verses 96 - 101

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا وَسُلْطٰنٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٩٦﴾ إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَ
 مَلَائِكِهِ فَاتَّبَعُوا أَمْرَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَا أَمْرُ فِرْعَوْنَ بِرَشِيدٍ ﴿٩٧﴾
 يَقْدُمُ قَوْمَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ فَأَوْرَدَهُمُ النَّارَ وَيُسَّ الْوَرْدُ الْمَوْرُودُ
 ﴿٩٨﴾ وَأَتَّبَعُوا فِي هٰذِهِ لَعْنَةً وَيَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ بِئْسَ الرِّفْدُ الْمَرْفُودُ
 ﴿٩٩﴾ ذٰلِكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْقُرَىٰ نَقِصُهُ عَلَيْكَ مِنْهَا قَابٍ وَحَصِيدٌ
 ﴿١٠٠﴾ وَمَا ظَلَمْنَاهُمْ وَلٰكِنْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ فَمَا أَغْنَتْ عَنْهُمْ
 آلِهَتُهُمُ الَّتِي يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللّٰهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ لَّمَّا جَاءَ أَمْرُ
 رَبِّكَ وَمَا زَادُوهُمْ غَيْرَ تَتٰبٍ ﴿١٠١﴾

And We sent Mūsā with Our signs, and with clear proof, [96] to Pharaoh and his group. So, they followed the command of Pharaoh. And the command of Pharaoh is not right. [97] He will lead his people on the Day of Judgement, and make them descend into the Fire. And it is the evil descending place. [98] And the curse was made to pursue them here and on the Day of Judgement. It is the evil reward to be offered. [99]

That is a part of stories of the towns that We narrate to you. Some of them are standing, and (some) harvested. [100]

And We have not wronged them; rather, they have wronged themselves. So, their gods whom they used to invoke beside Allah did not come to their help in any thing, when came the command of your Lord, and they gave them nothing more than destruction. [101]

Verses 102 - 111

وَكٰذٰلِكَ أَحٰذُ رَبِّكَ إِذَا أَحٰذَ الْقُرَىٰ وَهِيَ ظَالِمَةٌ ۗ إِنِ أَحٰذَهُ الْيَمُّ
 شَدِيدٌ ﴿١٠٢﴾ إِنِّ فِي ذٰلِكَ لَآيَةٌ لِّمَنْ خَافَ عَذَابَ الْآخِرَةِ ۗ ذٰلِكَ
 يَوْمٌ مَّجْمُوعٌ لِّلنَّاسِ وَذٰلِكَ يَوْمٌ مَّشْهُودٌ ﴿١٠٣﴾ وَمَا
 نُوْخِرُهُ إِلَّا لِآجَلٍ مَّعْدُودٍ ۗ ﴿١٠٤﴾ يَوْمَ يَأْتِ لَاتَكَلَّمُ نَفْسٌ إِلَّا

بِأَذْنِهِ فَمِنْهُمْ شَقِيٌّ وَسَعِيدٌ ﴿١٠٥﴾ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ شَقُوا فِيهِ
 النَّارَ لَهُمْ فِيهَا زَفِيرٌ وَشَهِيقٌ ﴿١٠٦﴾ خُلِدِينَ فِيهَا مَا دَامَتِ
 السَّمَوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ رَبُّكَ ط إِنَّ رَبَّكَ فَعَّالٌ لِمَا يُرِيدُ
 ﴿١٠٧﴾ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ سَعِدُوا فِي الْجَنَّةِ خُلِدِينَ فِيهَا مَا دَامَتِ
 السَّمَوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ رَبُّكَ ط عَطَاءٌ غَيْرَ مَجْدُودٍ
 ﴿١٠٨﴾ فَلَاتُكَ فِي مِرْيَةٍ مِمَّا يَعْبُدُ هَؤُلَاءِ ط مَا يَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا كَمَا
 يَعْبُدُ آبَاؤُهُمْ مِنْ قَبْلُ ط وَإِنَّا لَمُوقِفُوهُمْ نَصِيبُهُمْ غَيْرَ مَنْقُوصٍ
 ﴿١٠٩﴾ وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ فَاخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ ط وَلَوْ لَا كَلِمَةٌ
 سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَبِّكَ لَقَضَىٰ بَيْنَهُمْ ط وَإِنَّهُمْ لَفِي شَكٍّ مِّنْهُ مُرِيبٍ
 ﴿١١٠﴾ وَإِنَّ كَلِمًا لَّيُوفِّيَنَّهُمْ رَبُّكَ أَعْمَالَهُمْ ط إِنَّهُ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ
 خَبِيرٌ ﴿١١١﴾

And such is the seizing of your Lord when He seizes the (people of) towns while they are transgressing. Indeed, His seizing is painful, severe. [102]

In this there is a sign for the one who fears the punishment of the Hereafter. That is a day when all the people shall be gathered together, and that is a day having everyone present. [103] And We do not defer it but for a limited term, [104] the day it comes no one shall speak except by His leave. So, some of them are wretched and (some) blessed. [105]

As for those who are wretched, they shall be in the Fire. For them there is (nothing but) crying and howling. [106] They shall remain there for ever, as long as the heavens and the earth remain, unless your Lord wills (otherwise). Surely, your Lord does what He intends. [107]

As for those who are blessed, they shall be in Paradise living there forever, as long as the heavens and the earth remain, unless your Lord wills (otherwise) an award never to be cut off. [108]

So, be not in doubt about what they worship. They do not worship except in the way their fathers used to worship earlier. And surely, We are going to pay them their full share, non-curtailed. [109]

And We gave Mūsā the Book, then it was disputed about. But, for a word from your Lord that had already come, the matter would have been decided between them. And surely, they are in confounding doubt about it. [110]

And to all of them, your Lord shall pay for their deeds in full. Surely, He is aware of all that they do. [111]

Verses 112 - 113

فَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَا أَمَرْتَ وَمَنْ تَابَ مَعَكَ وَلَا تَطْغَوْا إِنَّهُ بِمَا
تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿١١٢﴾ وَلَا تَرْكُنُوا إِلَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا
فَتَمَسَّكُمُ النَّارُ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ أَوْلِيَاءَ ثُمَّ
لَا تُنصَرُونَ ﴿١١٣﴾

So, stand firm – as you have been commanded – you, and those who have repented with you, and do not cross the limits. Surely, He is watchful of what you do. [112]

And do not incline towards the wrongdoers, lest the Fire should catch you, and you shall have no supporters other than Allah, then you shall not be helped. [113]

Commentary

Events relating to past prophets and their peoples, from Sayyidnā Nūh عليه السلام to Sayyidnā Mūsā, have been mentioned in Sūrah Hūd in a fair enough order and detail with many wise counsels, injunctions and directives. At the end of the description of these events, it is by addressing the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم that his entire community has been exhorted to draw their essential lessons from them. It was said: ذَلِكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْفُرَى نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْهَا قَائِمٌ وَحَصِيدٌ (That is a part of the stories of the towns that We narrate to you. Some of them are standing, and (some) harvested – 100). It means that some of the habitations that were visited by Divine punishment still have their ruins standing while some others have been erased like harvested fields with no signs of what

was there in the past.

After that it was said that Allah did not wrong them, rather, they had wronged themselves (101,102) in that they abandoned their creator and sustainer and took to idols and other things as their gods. Finally, when the Divine punishment came, their self-made gods did not come to their rescue in any way. The lesson to learn was that the grip of Allah is painful and severe. When He seizes heedless wrongdoers doing what they do, this is what happens invariably.

Then, to turn them round to the concern of the Hereafter, it was said (103-105) that these events carry in them great lessons and signs for those who fear the punishment of the Hereafter, a day when all human beings will be gathered together, with everyone present there. That will be a day of such awe that no one present there shall dare utter a word without Divine permission.

Six verses later, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was addressed again by saying:

فَاسْتَقِمُّ كَمَا أُمِرْتُ وَمَنْ تَابَ مَعَكَ وَلَا تَطْغَوْا إِنَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

So, stand firm – as you have been commanded – you, and those who have repented [from *kufr* and are] with you, and do not cross the limits. Surely, He is watchful of what you do – 112.

The Sense of *Istiqāmah* (Standing Firm):

Some related problems and their solutions

Istiqāmah means to stand straight without the least tilt one way or the other (hence expressed in English as straightforwardness, straightness, directness, rectitude etc.) As obvious, it is not something easy to do. If we were dealing with a vertical object cast in iron, rock or some other material, our expert engineers could make it stand straight at the very outset in a way that it stands on perfect right angles from all sides without the least tilt on any side. But, having a moving object stand straight at all times and under all conditions in this perfect state is certainly something extremely difficult. For discerning people, this is no secret.

The Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and all Muslims have been commanded in this verse that they should stand firm under all conditions in everything they do. *Istiqāmah* is a small word but in its sense it ex-

tends to many areas of application in a very unusual manner. The very meaning of this act of standing firm is that one has to move straightforwardly, as commanded by Allah, on the straight path identified by Him, remaining within the limits set by Him. This has to be in all matters of beliefs, acts of worship, personal and collective transactions, morals, social dealings, economic pursuits inclusive of all channels of income and expenditure. In the event, there occurs the slightest tilt, or decrease or increase, or shortcoming or excess, under any condition, and in any deed, in any of these areas of activity, Istiqamah becomes the first casualty.

Errors in thinking and practice that show up around us are an outcome of this deviation from the command to stand firm. When people do not stand firm in beliefs (*'aqā'id*), they start with self-invented practices in religion (*bid'āt*) and end up into the extremes of *kufr* (disbelief) and *shirk* (associating others with Allah). The principles of Allah's Oneness (*Tauhīd*) and His Being (*Dhāt*) and Attributes (*Ṣifāt*) conveyed to us by the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم are moderate and sound. People who commit any act of excess and deficiency or addition and deletion in them – even if they may be doing so with good intentions on their part – shall be considered astray and in error. As for those who belittle and lessen the limits set for having regard and love for the blessed prophets, everyone knows that they are astray and audacious. Similarly, those who commit the excess of assigning a prophet proprietary rights in Divine attributes and powers also cross those limits and fall into an error of this nature. The Jews and the Christians lost themselves into this error. The methods of worshipping Allah and seeking nearness to Him determined by the Glorious Qur'ān, and the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم are great benchmarks. Any slicing, undercutting or shortcoming in these drags one down from the desired level of standing firm and, similarly, any addition to these from one's own side ruins one's chances of standing firm by his indulgence in self-innovated ways in established religion. Unfortunately, such a person honestly thinks that he is pleasing Allah while, in fact, it is precisely the very cause of His displeasure. Therefore, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم has very emphatically prohibited his community from indulging in self-innovated ways in established religion (*bid'āt* and *muḥdathāt*) and has declared that to be acute error and straying. Therefore, before one does something as an act of worship (*'ibādah*) for the pleasure of

Allah and His Rasūl صلى الله عليه وسلم, he must first investigate and ensure fully as to the nature of his action. He must find out whether or not what he is going to do stands proved from the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and his noble Ṣaḥābah in the same state and form. If it does not, let him not waste his good time and energy in this pursuit.

Similarly, there are matters relating to transactions, morals and social dealings. The Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم has followed the principles given by the Qur'ān in his practical teachings through which he has marked out a moderate and sound way of conducting ourselves in our lives. It has provided the Muslims with a moderate and straight course of action in the matters of friendship, enmity, softness and strictness, anger and forbearance, miserliness and generosity, economic activity and monasticism, trust in Allah and use of possible material means, finding what is necessary and relying on the Prime Mover of all causes. These are different things, yet they have been fused into one, a straight path of moderation, and a virtual gift to Muslims not to be found elsewhere in the whole world. So, the key is to act in accordance with these teachings and become perfect human beings. When people do not stand firm and tilt one way or the other, the society goes bad inevitably.

In short, the concept of standing firm is comprehensive. It covers all parts and pillars of religion. When acted upon correctly, it becomes its eloquent demonstration.

Sufyān ibn 'Abdullāh Thaqafī asked the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, 'please tell me something so comprehensive about Islām that I need not ask anyone anything after you.' He said, 'قُلْ آمَنْتُ بِاللَّهِ ثُمَّ اسْتَقِيمْ : Say: I believe in Allah. Then, stand firm on it.' (Reported by Muslim, as quoted by al-Qurṭubī)

'Uthmān ibn 'Abdullāh al-Azdī said that once he went to the famous Ṣaḥābī and the commentator, Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās رضى الله عنه and requested him for some words of advice. He said, 'عَلَيْكَ بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ، 'وَالْإِسْتِقَامَةِ وَإِنِّي وَلَا تَبْدَعُ' (Reported by al-Dārimī in his Musnad, as quoted by al-Qurṭubī). It means that he should make the fear of Allah essential for him, and also that he should stand firm in his faith. The method of doing so was to follow the percepts of the Shari'ah in all religious matters and not to invent and introduce any *bid'ah* in it from his own side.

Out of the many tough jobs handled in this world, the toughest is nothing but to stand firm. Therefore, Ṣufī authorities have said that standing firm is a station much superior to the working of miracles (*karāmah*). It means that a person who is holding on firmly to the assignments of his religion is a saint in his own right – even though, no miracle has issued forth from him throughout his life.

Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās رضى الله عنه said that no verse revealed to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم in the entire Qur’an was harder and more trying than this (112). And he said that once the Companions noticing some gray strands of hair in his blessed beard sorrowfully remarked, ‘old age is approaching you much earlier.’ Thereupon, he said, ‘Sūrah Hūd has made me old.’ The events of severe punishments that came upon past communities as described in Sūrah Hūd could also be the reason for it, but Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās رضى الله عنه said that this verse alone is its reason.

Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī reports from Abū ‘Alī Sirriy that he, on seeing the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم in a dream asked him, ‘have you said something like “Sūrah Hūd has made me old?”’ He said, ‘yes.’ Abū ‘Alī asked again, ‘had the subject of punishments that came upon the peoples of the past prophets made you old?’ He said, ‘no, in fact, this saying of Allah Ta‘ālā did: فَاسْتَقِيمْ كَمَا أُمِرْتُ (So, stand firm – as you have been commanded – 112)’.

As for the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, it is obvious that he had graced this world as the blessed substantiation of the perfect universal man. Standing firm was his natural habit. But then, why was it that he felt its weight to be so conspicuous and telling upon him? Perhaps, it was because the verse did not ask him to stand firm in an absolute sense, instead, asked him that this act of standing firm should be as commanded by Allah. How overwhelming is the fear and awe prophets have of their creator and master is well recognized. It must have been the effect of this fear and awe that, despite having his perfect stance of firmness, he was still concerned whether or not he had been able to come up with the kind of firmness and rectitude expected by his master, the most exalted Allah.

And it is also possible that he was not that concerned about his personal stance of firmness, because he, by the grace of Allah, had it in him. But, there was something else to it. In this verse, the command

given to him was also given to the entire Muslim Ummah. So, it was his realization that his Ummah may find it difficult to stand firm as commanded that made him sad.

After the command to stand firm, it was said: *وَلَا تَطْغُرْ* (and do not cross the limits). This word is a derivation from the verbal noun: *طغيان* (*ṭughyān*) which means to cross limits, and which is the opposite of standing firm. It will be noticed that the positive statement to stand firm in the verse has not been considered sufficient, rather, its negative aspect, that of its prohibition, was clarified expressly. This establishes the sense of the verse: 'do not cross the limits set by Allah and His Rasūl – in beliefs, acts of worship, transactions, morals etc. – for it was the outlet of all disorder and corruption in material and religious life.'

To keep human beings protected from this disorder and corruption, another guideline has been provided in the second verse (113): *وَلَا تَرْكَبُوا إِلَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا فَتَمَسَّكُمُ النَّارُ* (And do not incline towards the wrongdoers, lest the Fire should catch you). The word: *لَا تَرْكَبُوا* (*lā tarkanū*) comes from the verbal noun *ركن* : *Rukūn* which means a slight tilt towards one side having confidence in and approval of it. Therefore, the sense of the verse is: 'Whoever indulges in injustice and oppression ruins his or her life, worldly and spiritual both – this is a fact every one knows. But, the slightest of tilt or inclination towards the unjust, placing confidence in them, being pleased with them, could also push man to the edges of the same abyss.'

What is the meaning of this 'tilt' and 'inclination'? There are some statements of Ṣaḥābah (Companions) and Tabi'īn (Successors) about it in which there is no contradiction or difference. They are all correct in their respective places.

Sayyidnā Qatādah said, it means, 'do not have friendship with the unjust and do not follow what they say.' Ibn Jurayj said, 'do not nurse a leaning of any kind towards the unjust.' Abū al-Āliyah said, 'do not like everything they do.' (Qurtubī) Al-Suddiyy said, 'do not court the favor of the unjust through servile flattery (*mudāḥanah*), that is, do not observe silence or show your approval at their evil deeds.' 'Ikrimah said, 'do not sit in the company of the unjust.' Qāḍī al-Baiḍāwī said, 'following them in personal looks, fashion, and ways of living are all included under this very prohibition.'

Qāḍī al-Baiḍāwī also said that this verse exudes the highest imaginable degree of severity in the matter of prohibition and unlawfulness of injustice and oppression. The reason is that it not only prohibits friendship, and all other cordial relationships, with the unjust but, going farther ahead, it also prohibits the least possible inclination towards them, or even sitting with them.

Imām ‘Abdur-Rahmān ibn ‘Amr Al-Awzā‘ī said, ‘with Allah Ta‘ālā no one is as detested as the ‘Ālim (religious scholar) who, for the sake of his worldly interest, goes to meet someone unjust. (Maḏharī)

According to Tafsir al-Qurṭubī, this verse tells us that it is obligatory (*wājib*) to abstain from the company of those who disbelieve (*kāfirs*), those who disobey (sinners) and those who innovate in the established religion (practitioners of *bid‘ah*) – unless they have to be met under some compulsion. The truth of the matter is that company and social setting play a major role in one’s betterment or corruption. Therefore, the famous Ḥasan al-Baṣrī said about the two words of these two verses that Allah Ta‘ālā has compressed the entire religion within the two letters: لا (*lā*: do not). The first one appears in the first verse: لَا تَطْغَوْا (*lā taṭghaw*: do not cross the limits – 112) and the second one appears in the second verse: لَا تَرْكَبُوا (*lā tarkanū*: And do not incline towards the wrongdoers – 113). The first ‘*la*’ or ‘do not’ prohibits the crossing of the limits set by the Sharī‘ah of Islām while the other prohibits the company of wrongdoing people – and this is the essence of the whole religion.

Verses 114 – 123

وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ طَرَفِي النَّهَارِ وَزُلْفًا مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ ط إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ
يُدْهَبْنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ ط ذَلِكَ ذِكْرِي لِلذَّكِرِينَ ﴿١١٤﴾ وَأَصْبِرْ فَإِنَّ
اللَّهَ لَا يَضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١١٥﴾ فَلَوْلَا كَانَ مِنَ الْقُرُونِ
مَنْ قَبْلِكُمْ أُولُوا بَقِيَّةً يَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْفَسَادِ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا
قَلِيلًا مِّمَّنْ أَنْجَيْنَا مِنْهُمْ وَاتَّبَعَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مَا أُتْرِفُوا فِيهِ
وَكَانُوا مُجْرِمِينَ ﴿١١٦﴾ وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ لِيُهْلِكَ الْقُرَى بِظُلْمٍ
وَأَهْلَهَا مُصْلِحُونَ ﴿١١٧﴾ وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَجَعَلَ النَّاسَ أُمَّةً

وَاحِدَةً وَلَا يَزَالُونَ مُخْتَلِفِينَ ﴿١١٨﴾ إِلَّا مَنْ رَحِمَ رَبُّكَ
 وَلِذَلِكَ خَلَقَهُمْ وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ
 وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١١٩﴾ وَكَلَّا تَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الرُّسُلِ
 مَا نَشِئْتُمْ بِهِ فُؤَادَكَ وَجَاءَكَ فِي هَذِهِ الْحَقُّ وَمَوْعِظَةٌ وَذِكْرَى
 لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٢٠﴾ وَقُلْ لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ اعْمَلُوا عَلَى
 مَكَانَتِكُمْ إِنَّا عَمِلُونَ ﴿١٢١﴾ وَانظُرُوا إِنَّا مُنْتَظِرُونَ ﴿١٢٢﴾
 وَلِلَّهِ غَيْبُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَإِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ كُلُّهَا فاعْبُدْهُ
 وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَيْهِ وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢٣﴾

-And establish *ṣalāh* at both ends of the day, and in the early hours of the night. Surely, good deeds erase bad deeds. That is a reminder for the mindful. [114]

And be patient, for Allah lets not the reward of the good-doers be lost. [115]

Then, why is it that there was none, among the generations before you, having some remnants (of wisdom) to stop people from creating disorder in the land, except a few among them whom We saved? And the wrongdoers pursued the luxuries they were involved in, and they became sinners. [116]

And your Lord is not such that He would destroy the towns unjustly while their people are good in their ways. [117]

Had your Lord willed, He would have made all the people a single community. But, they will continue in their differences, [118] except those whom Allah has blessed with mercy. And for that He has created them. And perfect is the word of your Lord: "I will surely fill the hell with Jinns and the human beings, all together." [119]

And We narrate to you everything from the events of the messengers with which We strengthen you heart. And herein there has come to you the truth, a good counsel and a reminder to those who believe. [120]

Say to those who do not believe, "Do whatever you can. We are doing (what we can). [121] And wait. We are

waiting.” [122].

And to Allah belong the secrets of the heavens and the earth, and to Him the whole matter shall be returned. So worship Him and have trust in Him. And your Lord is not unaware of what you do. [123]

Commentary

The diction of the Qur’ān points out to the great station the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم occupies

It would be recalled that following the description of awe-inspiring events relating to past prophets and their peoples in Sūrah Hūd, some instructions have been given to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and his community that begin from the previous verse (112): فَاسْتَقِيمْ كَمَا أُمِرْتَ (So, stand firm – as you have been commanded). In these instructions, the beauty and eloquence of the Holy Qur’ān stands out as highly educative. It will be noticed that a positive command to do something has been addressed to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم with his community included therein as a corollary. Examples are as follows: فَاسْتَقِيمْ كَمَا أُمِرْتَ وَمَنْ كَانَتْ مَعَكَ (So, stand firm – as you have been commanded – you and those who have repented with you – 112) and أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ (And establish *ṣalāh* – 114) and then: وَاصْبِرْ (And be patient – 115). But, when something was prohibited and instruction was given to abstain from it, the address was beamed at the Muslim community directly, for instance: لَا تَطْفُرُوا (and do not cross the limits – 112) and: لَا تَزْكُرُوا إِلَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا (And do not incline towards the wrongdoers – 113).

If we were to look at this in depth, it will be realized that it happens to be the general form used throughout the Qur’ān whereby a positive imperative has been addressed to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم while the negative imperative of prohibition to the Muslim community. This is an indication towards his high station. It tells us that things worth leaving off are things the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم himself abstained from. Allah Ta‘ālā had made his elemental nature tuned so right that he would simply not incline towards any desire or thing that was evil. The limit was that things that were permissible and *ḥalāl* (lawful) during the early period of Islām – but, their becoming *ḥarām* (unlawful) later was already settled in the ultimate knowledge of Allah Ta‘ālā – were things he never went near, even when they were *ḥalāl*, such as, liquor, interest, gambling etc.

In this verse (114), addressing the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, he and his entire Ummah has been commanded to establish *ṣalāh*. Scholars of Tafsīr among the Ṣaḥābah and Ṭabī‘īn concur that *ṣalāh*: *ṣلوة* at this place means obligatory prayers (al-Bahr al-Muḥīṭ, al-Qurtubī) and the ‘*iqāmah* of *ṣalāh*’ means establishing and implementing it fully and faithfully and being constantly regular with it. Some have said that it means performing Ṣalāh with due consideration of all its inherent rules of etiquette. Some others have said that it means performing Ṣalāh at its most preferred time. These reflect the three positions taken in the Tafsīr of the verse: *أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ* (*aqimi ‘s-ṣalāh*: establish the prayer). The truth of the matter is that there is not much of a difference in there. Everything said here is included in the sense of ‘establishing the prayer’.

Following the command to establish Ṣalāh, the statement about its timings appears briefly as: ‘and establish Ṣalāh at both ends of the day [at the beginning and at the end], and in the early hours [parts] of the night.’ Here, “زُفَاً” (*zulafan*) is the plural of *زُفَاة* (*zulfah*) which means a part or unit. As for the prayer ‘at both ends of the day,’ there is a consensus of revered early commentators that the prayer at the first end is the Ṣalāh of Fajr. However, the prayer at the last end has been taken by some of them as the Ṣalāh of Maghrib for it is almost at the end of the day. But, some others have taken the Ṣalāh of ‘Aṣr as the prayer at the last end because that is the last prayer of the day. The time of Maghrib is not a part of the day, rather, comes after the passage of the day. Then, the text’s: *زُفَاً مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ* that is, ‘prayers during parts of the night,’ have been declared as referring to the Ṣalāh of Maghrib and ‘Ishā’ by the majority of early commentators Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Mujāhid, Muḥammad ibn Ka‘b, Qatādah, Daḥḥāk and others. And a Ḥadīth which says that *زُفَاً مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ* (prayers during parts of the night) are Maghrib and ‘Ishā’ confirms it. (Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr)

When the text’s: *طَرَفَيْ النَّهَارِ* (at both ends of the day) means the Ṣalāh of Fajr and ‘Aṣr, and *زُفَاً مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ* (in the early hours or parts of the night) the Ṣalāh of Maghrib and ‘Ishā,’ the timings of four prayers find mention in the verse. What remains to be mentioned is the Ṣalāh of Zuhr which appears in another verse: *أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذُلُوكِ الشَّمْسِ* (Establish *ṣalāh* at the decline of the sun – 17:78).

After the command to establish Ṣalāh, and its timings, the text

points out to the great good these bring. It was said: *إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُذْهِبْنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ* (Surely, good deeds erase bad deeds). Early commentators have said that ‘*al-hasanāt*’ means all good deeds. These include Ṣalāh, Ṣawm, Zakāh, Ṣadaqāt, good morals, good dealings etc., but Ṣalāh takes precedence over all of them. Similarly, ‘*as-saiyyi’āt*’ covers all bad deeds, *ka-bīrah* (major sins) or *ṣaghīrah* (minor sins). But, there is another verse of the Qur’ān, as well as, several sayings of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم where it has been particularized with *ṣaghīrah* sins, according to which, it would mean that good deeds – Ṣalāh being the superior most – become the *kaffārah* (expiation) of *ṣaghīrah* sins which stand erased. This verse of the Qur’ān says: *إِنْ تَحْتَسِبُوا كِبَائِرَ مَا تُنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ نَكَّرْنَا عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ* (If you abstain from the major [sins] out of what you have been forbidden from, We shall write off your minor sins – Al-Nisā’ 4:31) (See Ma’ariful-Qur’ān, Volume II, pages 405-410 under 4:31 for a detailed discussion of the nature of *ka-bīrah* and *ṣaghīrah*)

It appears in a Ḥadīth of Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said that five prayers and a Jumu‘ah until the next Jumu‘ah, and a Ramaḍān until the next Ramaḍān, become the *kaffārah* (expiation) of all sins committed in between them. This is subject to the condition that the person concerned has remained safe from major sins (*ka-bā’ir*). It means that major sins are such that they are not forgiven without Taubah (repentance). But, minor sins do get to be forgiven automatically when one keeps doing other good deeds such as Ṣalāh, Ṣawm, Ṣadaqah etc. However, Tafsīr al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ has reported the saying of authentic scholars of the Principles of the Shari‘ah of Islām that even minor sins are forgiven by doing good deeds only when one feels ashamed of having done these and makes a solemn resolve of not doing these in the future. It is important that one does not insist on them. There are many events mentioned in Ḥadīth reports to the effects that sins were so erased. They too state clearly that this happens on condition that the sinner is ashamed of his doing, repents and resolves not to do it in future. It was on this basis that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم has given the good news of forgiveness of a sin to a sinner. Allah knows best.

The following have been declared as *ka-bā’ir* or major sins in well known Ḥadīth reports:

(1) Ascribing anyone as partner or equal in the Being or Attributes

of Allah Ta'ālā.

- (2) Intentionally skipping an obligatory (*farḍ*) Ṣalāh.
- (3) Killing someone unjustly.
- (4) Committing fornication or adultery.
- (5) Stealing.
- (6) Drinking.
- (7) Disobedience to parents.
- (8) Taking false oaths.
- (9) Giving false witness.
- (10) Practicing magic.
- (11) Transacting interest.
- (12) Usurping the property of the orphan by unfair means.
- (13) Deserting the battlefield in Jihād.
- (14) Accusing chaste women falsely.
- (15) The taking of someone's property or wealth by unfair means.
- (16) Breaking a pledge.
- (17) Committing a breach of trust.
- (18) Using foul language against anyone.
- (19) Accusing someone as a criminal unjustly, etc.

Details about major and minor sins appear in standard books written by Muslim scholars. It can also be seen in 'Sin sans Taste' (*Gunāh-i-bay-Ladhdhat*) a treatise written by this humble writer.

In short, this verse proves that sins are also forgiven by doing good deeds. Therefore, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said, 'after a bad deed gets to be committed by you, do a good one and it will erase its evil;' and he said, 'deal with people pleasantly.' (Ibn Kathīr with reference to the Musnad of Aḥmad)

Sayyidnā Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī said, 'I requested the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم to order me to do something. He said, 'if you fall into some sin, do some good deed after that, so that it erases the sin.'

In fact, these Aḥādīth tell us about the preferred method of repent-

ing from a sin. This is as it has been reported in the Musnad of Aḥmad from Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضى الله عنه that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said, ‘if a Muslim unfortunately falls into some sin, he should make *wuḍū* and offer two *raka‘āt* of *nafl* prayer – that sin will be forgiven. (All *riwāyāt* have been taken from Ibn Kathīr) This prayer is known by the very name of Ṣalātu-t-Taubah (the prayer of repentance).

In the last sentence of the verse (114): ذلك ذكرى للذكرين (That is a reminder for the mindful), the word: ذك (dhālik) could be referring to the Holy Qur‘ān, and to the do’s and don’ts both, which have been mentioned earlier. The sense is that this Qur‘ān, or its injunctions referred to above, are guidance and good counsel for those who listen to and are used to obeying it. The hint embedded here is that a person, who is so compulsively obstinate that he would just not think about anything reasonable, remains deprived of every guidance.

In verse 115, it was said: واصبر فان الله لا يضيع اجر المحسنين (And be patient, for Allah lets not the reward of the good-doers be lost).

Literally, صبر (*ṣabr*) means to tie. Therefore, in usage, Ṣabr is also used to carry the sense of keeping one’s naughty self in control. Also included within its sense is the effort made to keep one’s self firm and unflinching when it comes to doing what is good and right, as well as the effort to check and hold it back from getting involved with bad deeds. At this place, asking the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم to be patient could also mean that the injunctions given to him in the cited verses – for example, ‘stand firm,’ ‘establish *ṣalāh*,’ etc. – are things he should hold fast to. And it is also possible that the purpose may be to exhort him to be patient in the face of the hostility of enemies and the pains caused by them. As for what was said after that – ‘Allah lets not the reward of the good-doers be lost’ – it obviously suggests that ‘*al-muḥsinīn*’ (good-doers) are people who faithfully observe the injunctions of do’s and don’ts as given in the cited verses. In other words, they are firm in their religion, adhere to the limits set by the Shari‘ah, maintain no friendly relations with the unjust unnecessarily, are punctual with their Ṣalāh, offering it as its etiquette demands, at the most preferred timings, and that they stand firm on all religious injunctions.

The essence of what has been said above is what the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم has himself said while defining ‘Iḥsān’ – “obey and wor-

ship Allah Ta'ālā as if you are seeing Him or, at the least, that Allah Ta'ālā is seeing you.” When one achieves this station of the certitude of the Being and Attributes of Allah Ta'ālā, all words and deeds that issue forth from him become automatically correct. Worth remembering are the three truisms that were so popularly recognized among the revered scholars of the early centuries of Islām (*as-salaf*). These they used to exchange in writing to each other (as if they were souvenirs worth saving). They said:

(1) Anyone who gets busy working for the 'Ākhirah (life-to-come), Allah Ta'ālā takes it upon Himself to put his worldly chores in order and sees to it that they come out right for him.

(2) Anyone who corrects his inward state of being, (so much so that he moves the orientation of his heart away from everything and turns it towards Allah Ta'ālā) He sees to it that his outward state of being stands corrected all by itself.

(3) Anyone who puts his matter with Allah Ta'ālā sound and correct, Allah Ta'ālā Himself corrects all matters pertaining to him and to those he relates with. The original wording of these three truisms is being given below:

وكان اهل الخير يكتب بعضهم الى بعض بثلاث كلمات، من عمل لآخرته
كفاه الله امر دنياه، ومن اصلح سريره اصلح الله علاقته ومن اصلح فيما
بينه، وبين الله اصلح الله ما بينه وبين الناس (تفسير روح البيان ج ٢ ص ١٣١)

(Tafsīr Rūḥ al-Bayān, p. 131, v. 2)

Given in the third and the fourth verse (116, 117) is the reason why Divine punishment came upon past peoples as well as the instruction as to how they could have stayed safe from it. It was said: How sad that among them there could have been at least some good and wise people who would have stopped their erring fellowmen from spreading disorder. The exception was that of a counted few who followed the noble prophets and they were the ones who stayed safe from the punishment. As for the rest of them, they went for the luxuries of the material world and turned into compulsive sinners.

In this verse, people of discernment, balance and foresight have been identified through the expression: 'اولوا بقية: remnants [of wisdom].' The word: بقية (*baqīyyah*) means that which remains. It is human habit

that one lets what is most dear to him remain with him under all conditions, preserved and retrievable. When some need would arise, he would give away everything but not that. Therefore, reason and insight are called '*baqīyyah*' or remnants, because that is the dearest one has.

It was said in the fourth verse (117) that Allah does not destroy towns and habitations unjustly while people living there are good in their ways, that is, they are believing Muslims. The sense is that the probability of injustice and oppression does not exist with Allah Ta'ālā. Those destroyed deserve being destroyed. Some early commentators have said that the word: ظلم: '*ẓulm*' (injustice) in this verse means *shirk* (ascribing of partners in the pristine divinity of Allah) and مُصْلِحُونَ: '*muṣliḥūn*' (people good in their ways) refers to people who, despite being Mushriks and Kāfirs, are good in morals and dealings, do not hurt and cause pain to anyone, do not lie and do not cheat. Thus, the sense of the verse comes to be that the punishment of the world does not fall on a people simply because of their being Mushriks and Kāfirs – unless they were to spread disorder in the land by their very deeds and morals. The cause of all punishments that came upon the past peoples was but their particular evil deeds. The people of Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام caused him all sorts of pains. The people of Sayyidnā Shu'aib عليه السلام spread disorder by weighing and measuring short. The people of Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام took to the worst type of evil act. The people of Sayyidnā Mūsā and 'Īsā oppressed their prophets. The Holy Qur'ān says that these very misdeeds were the reason why punishment came upon them. Divine punishment does not come in this world because of bland Kufr and Shirk. The everlasting punishment of the fire of Hell is its punishment. Therefore, some 'Ulama' have said that countries and governments can survive with Kufr and Shirk, but they cannot survive with injustice and oppression.

Difference: Blameworthy and Praiseworthy

When it was said in the fifth verse (118) – 'had your Lord willed, He would have made all the people a single community' – the sense is that had it been the will of Allah, He would have made all human beings accept Islām by force. All of them would have then become nothing but Muslims without any difference remaining between them. But, such are the dictates of His wisdom that, in this world, Allah Ta'ālā does

not compel anyone to do something. Instead, He has entrusted man with a kind of choice under which he could do whatever good or bad he wishes to do. Then, human temperaments differ, ways differ and deeds differ. The outcome is that there always will be some people who would keep at loggerheads against the true faith – of course, with the exception of those whom Allah Ta‘ālā has blessed with His mercy, that is, those who have been following the noble prophets.

This tells us that ‘difference’ at this place means hostility and opposition to the true faith and the teachings of prophets. The difference based on Ijtihād, which is inevitable among religious authorities and jurists of Islam, an ongoing process since the period of the Ṣaḥābah, is not included under this purview, nor is it contrary to Divine mercy. In fact, it is the very dictate of Allah’s wisdom and mercy. Those who have declared the differences among Mujtahid Imāms to be counter to Mercy in terms of this verse, have done something which is itself counter to the context of this verse as well as counter to the consistent practice of the Ṣaḥābah and Tabi‘īn.

وَاللَّهُ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ أَعْلَمُ

And Allah is Pure and High and He knows everything best.

Alḥāmdulillāh

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- "Neither are you stronger than me, nor am I need-free of the reward of the Hereafter that I let you have the chance of earning a little Thawab for myself!" 162
- "O Allah, let the promise you have made to me come true now. O Allah, if this modest group of Muslims were to perish..." 168
- "O Abū Bakr, here comes good news for you. This is Jibrā'il standing near the cliff..." 175
- "Allah does not subject common people to the punishment of some sin committed by a particular group among them unless..." 193
- "Those who commit the sin of transgressing the limits set by Allah and those who ignore them knowingly or accommodate them psychopantly..." 194
- "Shield your Masajid from small children, insane individuals and from mutual disputations." 211
- "In such a situation one who keeps sitting is better than one who stands up." 217
- "O my people, do not look forward to fight the enemy in a combat, rather, pray that Allah keeps you in a state of peace and well-being, however, when..." 241
- "When a cease-fire or peace pact with a people comes into effect, let no knot be opened or tied against their provisions." 261
- "Allah Ta'ālā has placed Barakah on the forehead of horses." 263
- "Carry out Jihād against Mushriks with your belongings, your own selves and your eloquence." 264
- "There is no Hijrah after the Conquest." 287
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- "After giving shares to those identified in the Qur'ān, that which remains is for males nearer to the deceased." 295
- "The disbelievers shall not perform Ḥajj after this year." 309
- "One is not bitten twice from the same hole." 310
- "Do you know what 'Imān in Allah is?" 328
- "When you notice that a person is punctual with his presence in the Masjid, bear witness to his 'Imān because..." 329
- "A person who comes into the Masjid is a visiting guest of Allah Ta'ālā..." 329
- "Should I not tell you about an act that is superior to all your acts and certainly more so in sight of your Master?" 333
- "No one can be a true believer until I become to him dearer than his father, children and everyone else in this world." 339
- "Anyone who takes a friend or makes an enemy for the sake of Allah or spends his wealth or withholds it for the sake of Allah has made his faith perfect." 339
- "There are three traits which, if found in a person, would bless him or her with the sweetness of faith..." 341
- "The delight of my eyes is in Ṣalāh." 341

- "Here are your brothers. They have repented. I wish that their prisoners should be returned back to them..." 350
- "Tomorrow we shall be staying at a place where our enemies had once sat and resolved to excommunicate Muslims!" 352
- "I do not make entry into the Masjid lawful for any woman in menstruation or for any person in the state of major impurity." 356
- "Wealth for which Zakāh has been paid is not included under 'Kanaztum: you have accumulated' [9:35]." 356
- "Do not grieve. Allah is with us." 385
- "There is no negligence in sleep. Negligence occurs only when awake." 390
- "Viva brother Sudā'i, the loved one of his people who followed him!" 397
- "Allah Ta'ālā has never handed over the distribution of Sadaqat to any prophet, even to anyone other than a prophet..." 397
- "Meeting a Muslim with a smile is also a Ṣadaqah." 400
- "Helping the bearer of a burden carry it is also a Ṣadaqah." 400
- "To share the water drawn from a well for personal use with someone else is also a Ṣadaqah." 400
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- "Ṣadaqah is not Ḥalāl for anyone rich except five persons..." 402
- "Recite the Qur'ān but do not eat by means of it." 405
- "Take it (Ṣadaqat) from the rich among them (Muslims) and disburse it back to the poor among them." 419
- "You too will take to the ways taken by communities before you. You will imitate them in toto as dittos and clones to the limit that should you see one of them entering into the hole of a lizard, you will follow him there too." 425
- "If a bondwoman of anyone among you commits fornication, just enforce the Islāmic legal punishment for it on her - but, do not denounce her verbally." 428
- "Had I known that he will be pardoned by praying for his forgiveness more than seventy times, I would have done that too." 441
- "My shirt cannot save him from the punishment of Allah. But, I did it in the hope that on the basis of this action thousands of his people will embrace Islām." 441
- "The fire of Jahannam cannot touch the Muslim who has seen me or has seen those who have seen me." 453
- "As for Allah Ta'ālā, I lay down the condition that all of you shall worship Him - and worship none but Him..." 470
- "The Siyāhah of my Ummah is Jihād in the way of Allah." 473
- "My uncle, recite the Kalimah: Lā ilāha ilālah. I shall try to seek forgiveness for you." 475
- "In war, deception (by concealing intentions) is permissible." 481, 489
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- "O Ka'b, I congratulate you for this day of bliss for you..." 488
- "The angels of Allah spread out their wings to welcome the seeker of knowledge." 495
- "Prophets leave no gold and silver as inheritance but they do leave the legacy of knowledge. So, whoever inherits this has inherited great wealth." 495
- "Ulamā are the inheritors of blessed prophets." 495
- "The Ālim is superior to the Ābid..." 495
- "A Faqīh, when confronting Shaitān, is stronger... 496
- "Seeking knowledge (of Dīn) is obligatory on every Muslim." 496
- "One who recites these verses (9:128-129) three times, morning and evening, shall find that Allah makes things easy for him." 506
- "To My servant busy glorifying Me all the time and finding no time to ask, I shall give the best..." 525
- "Never pray that evil may fall on your children or things you own..." 531
- "Allah Ta'ālā hastens to repay mercy shown to relatives and favor done to people..." 538
- "There are three sins the curse of which falls on the sinner himself..." 538
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- "(Auliya) are those who love each other only for Allah with no worldly interest in between." 559
- "A person shall be with one he loves." 560
- "(Auliya) are those who, when one sees them, remind of Allah." 561
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- "O 'Umar, you are still lost in those thoughts. These people have been given the reward of their good deeds here in this world!" 616
- "Whoever intends the Hereafter through his deeds, Allah makes his heart need-free in this world..." 616
- "When a people lessen weights & measures, Allah Ta'ālā makes them suffer from the punishment of famine and price hikes." 667
- "Say: 'I believe in Allah.' Then, stand firm on it." 676
- "Deal with people pleasantly." 684
- "If you fall into some sin, do some good deed after that, so that it erases the sin." 684
- "If a Muslim unfortunately falls into some sin, he should make Wudu and say two Raka'āt of Nafl prayer, that sin will be forgiven." 685
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