

رَبَّنَا وَابْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ  
آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ إِنَّكَ  
أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ )

(129. "Our Lord! Send amongst them a Messenger of their own, who shall recite unto them Your verses and instruct them in the Book (this Qur'an), and purify them. Verily, You are the Mighty, the Wise.")

### Ibrahim's Supplication that Allah sends the Prophet

Allah mentioned Ibrahim's supplication for the benefit of the people of the Sacred Area (to grant them security and provision), and it was perfected by invoking Allah to send a Messenger from his offspring. This accepted supplication, from Ibrahim, conformed with Allah's appointed destiny that Muhammad be sent as a Messenger among the Ummyyin and to all non-Arabs, among the Jinns and mankind.

Hence, Ibrahim was the first person to mention the Prophet to the people. Ever since, Muhammad was known to the people, until the last Prophet was sent among the Children of Israel, Jesus the son of Mary, who mentioned Muhammad by name. Jesus addressed the Children of Israel saying,

إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ مُّصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيَّ مِنَ  
التَّوْرَةِ وَمُبَشِّرًا بِرَسُولٍ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِي اسْمُهُ  
أَحْمَدُ )

(I am the Messenger of Allah unto you, confirming what is before me in the Tawrah, and giving glad tidings of a Messenger to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad) (61:6)

This is why the Prophet said ,

«دَعْوَةُ أَبِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَبُشْرَى عِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ»

(The supplication of my father Ibrahim and the glad tidings brought forth by Jesus the son of Mary.)

The Prophet said,

«وَرَأَتْ أُمِّي أَنَّهُ خَرَجَ مِنْهَا نُورٌ أَضَاءَتْ لَهُ  
قُصُورُ الشَّامِ»

(My mother saw a light that went out of her and radiated the palaces of Ash-Sham.)

It was said that the Prophet's mother saw this vision when she was pregnant with, narrated this vision to her people, and the story became popular among them. The light mentioned in the Hadith appeared in Ash-Sham (Greater Syria), testifying to what will later occur when the Prophet's religion will be firmly established in Ash-Sham area. This is why by the end of time, Ash-Sham will be a refuge for Islam and its people. Also, Jesus the son of Mary will descend in Ash-Sham, next to the eastern white minaret in Damascus. The Two Sahihs stated,

«لَا تَزَالُ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْ أُمَّتِي ظَاهِرِينَ عَلَى الْحَقِّ لَأَ  
يَضُرُّهُمْ مَنْ خَذَلَهُمْ وَلَا مَنْ خَالَفَهُمْ حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ  
أَمْرُ اللَّهِ وَهُمْ كَذَلِكَ»

«وَهُمْ بِالشَّامِ»

(There will always be a group of my Ummah who will be on the truth, undeterred by those who fail or oppose them, until the command of Allah comes while they are on this.)

Al-Bukhari added in his Sahih, (And they will reside in Ash-Sham.)

### The Meaning of Al-Kitab wal-Hikmah

Allah said,

(وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ)

(and instruct them in the Book) meaning, Al-Qur'an,

(وَالْحِكْمَةَ)

(and Al-Hikmah) meaning, the Sunnah, as Al-Hasan, Qatadah, Muqatil bin Hayyan and Abu Malik asserted. It was also said that `Al-Hikmah', means `comprehension in the religion', and both meanings are correct. `Ali bin Abi Talhah said, that Ibn `Abbas said that,

(وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ)

(and purify them) means, "With the obedience of Allah."

(إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ)

(Verily, You are the Mighty, the Wise).

This Ayah stated that Allah is able to do anything, and nothing escapes His ability. He is Wise in His decisions, His actions, and He puts everything in its rightful place due to His perfect knowledge, wisdom and justice.

(وَمَنْ يَرِغَبْ عَنْ مِلَّةِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِلَّا مَنْ سَفِهَ نَفْسَهُ  
وَلَقَدْ اصْطَفَيْنَاهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَإِنَّهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ لَمِنَ  
الصَّالِحِينَ - إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ أَسْلِمْ قَالَ أَسْلَمْتُ  
لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ - وَوَصَّى بِهَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ بَنِيهِ  
وَيَعْقُوبُ يَبْنَى إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَى لَكُمْ الدِّينَ فَلَا  
تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ )

(130. And who turns away from the religion of Ibrahim (i.e. Islamic Monotheism) except him who fools himself Truly, We chose him in this world and verily, in the Hereafter he will be among the righteous). (131. When his Lord said to him, "Submit (i.e. be a Muslim)!" He said, "I have submitted myself (as a Muslim) to the Lord of the `Alamin (mankind, Jinn and all that exists).") (132. And this (submission to Allah, Islam) was enjoined by Ibrahim (Abraham) upon his sons and by Ya`qub (Jacob) (saying), "O my sons! Allah has chosen for you the (true) religion, then die not except as Muslims.")

### Only the Fools deviate from Ibrahim's Religion

Allah refuted the disbelievers' innovations of associating others with Allah in defiance of the religion of Ibrahim, the leader of the upright. Ibrahim always singled out Allah in worship, with sincerity, and he did not call upon others besides Allah. He did not commit Shirk, even for an

instant. He disowned every other deity that was being worshipped instead of Allah and defied all his people in this regard. Prophet Ibrahim said,

(فَلَمَّا رَأَى الشَّمْسَ بَازِغَةً قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي هَذَا  
أَكْبَرُ فَلَمَّا أَفَلَتْ قَالَ يُقَوْمُ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِّمَّا  
تُشْرِكُونَ - إِنِّي وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ  
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ  
(

(O my people! I am indeed free from all that you join as partners (in worship with Allah). Verily, I have turned my face towards Him Who has created the heavens and the earth Hanifa (Islamic Monotheism), and I am not of Al-Mushrikin.) (6:78-79). Also, Allah said,

(وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ إِنَّنِي بَرَاءٌ مِّمَّا  
تَعْبُدُونَ - إِلَّا الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي فَإِنَّهُ سَيَهْدِينِ )

(And (remember) when Ibrahim said to his father and his people: "Verily, I am innocent of what you worship. "Except Him (i.e. I worship none but Allah alone) Who did create me; and verily, He will guide me") (43:26-27),

(وَمَا كَانَ اسْتِغْفَارُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لِأَبِيهِ إِلَّا عَنْ مَوْعِدَةٍ  
وَعَدَهَا إِيَّاهُ فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ أَنَّهُ عَدُوٌّ لِلَّهِ تَبَرَّأَ مِنْهُ إِنَّ  
إِبْرَاهِيمَ لَأَوَّاهٌ حَلِيمٌ )

(And Ibrahim's invoking (of Allah) for his father's forgiveness was only because of a promise he (Ibrahim) had made to him (his father). But when it became clear to him (Ibrahim) that he (his father) was an enemy of Allah, he dissociated himself from him. Verily, Ibrahim was Awwah (one who invokes Allah with humility, glorifies Him and remembers Him much) and was forbearing) (9:114), and,

إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَانَ أُمَّةً قَنِئًا لِلَّهِ حَنِيفًا وَلَمْ يَكُ مِنَ  
الْمُشْرِكِينَ - شَاكِرًا لِأَنْعُمِهِ اجْتَبَاهُ وَهَدَاهُ إِلَى  
صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ - وَءَاتَيْنَاهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَإِنَّهُ  
فِي الْآخِرَةِ لَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ )

(Verily, Ibrahim was an Ummah (a leader having all the good qualities, or a nation), obedient to Allah, Hanif (i.e. to worship none but Allah), and he was not one of those who were Al-Mushrikin. (He was) thankful for His (Allah's) favors. He (Allah) chose him (as an intimate friend) and guided him to a straight path. And We gave him good in this world, and in the Hereafter he shall be of the righteous.) (16:120-122).

This is why Allah said here,

(وَمَنْ يَرْغَبْ عَنْ مِلَّةِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ)

(And who turns away from the religion of Ibrahim), meaning, abandons his path, way and method

(إِلَّا مَنْ سَفِهَ نَفْسَهُ)

(except him who fools himself) meaning, who commits injustice against himself by deviating from the truth, to wickedness. Such a person will be defying the path of he who was chosen in this life to be a true Imam, from the time he was young, until Allah chose him to be His Khalil, and who shall be among the successful in the Last Life. Is there anything more insane than deviating from this path and following the path of misguidance and deviation instead Is there more injustice than this Allah said,

(إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ)

(Verily, joining others in worship with Allah is a great Zulm (wrong) indeed) (31:13).

Abu Al-`Aliyah and Qatadah said, "This Ayah (2:130) was revealed about the Jews who invented a practice that did not come from Allah and that defied the religion of Ibrahim." Allah's statement,

(مَا كَانَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ يَهُودِيًّا وَلَا نَصْرَانِيًّا وَلَكِنْ كَانَ  
حَنِيفًا مُسْلِمًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ - إِنَّ أَوْلَى  
النَّاسِ بِإِبْرَاهِيمَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ وَهَذَا النَّبِيُّ وَالَّذِينَ  
ءَامَنُوا وَاللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ )

(Ibrahim was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was a true Muslim Hanifa (to worship none but Allah alone) and he was not of Al-Mushrikin. Verily, among mankind who have the best claim to Ibrahim are those who followed him, and this Prophet (Muhammad ) and those who have believed (Muslims). And Allah is the Wali (Protector and Helper) of the believers.) (3:67-68), testifies to this fact.

Allah said next,

(إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ أَسْلِمَ قَالَ أَسْلَمْتُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ )

(When his Lord said to him, "Submit (i. e. be a Muslim)!" He said, "I have submitted myself (as a Muslim) to the Lord of the `Alamin (mankind, Jinn and all that exists).")

This Ayah indicates that Allah commanded Ibrahim to be sincere with Him and to abide and submit to Him; Ibrahim perfectly adhered to Allah's command. Allah's statement,

(وَوَصَّىٰ بِهَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ بَنِيهِ وَيَعْقُوبُ)

(And this (submission to Allah, Islam) was enjoined by Ibrahim upon his sons and by Ya`qub means, Ibrahim commanded his offspring to follow this religion, that is, Islam, for Allah. Or, the Ayah might be referring to Ibrahim's words,

(أَسْلَمْتُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ)

(I have submitted myself (as a Muslim) to the Lord of the `Alamin (mankind, Jinn and all that exists)).

This means that these Prophets loved these words so much that they preserved them until the time of death and advised their children to adhere to them after them. Similarly, Allah said,

(وَجَعَلَهَا كَلِمَةً بَاقِيَةً فِي عَقْبِهِ)

(And he (Ibrahim) made it i.e. La ilaha illallah (none has the right to be worshipped but Allah alone) a Word lasting among his offspring, (true Monotheism)) (43:28).

It might be that Ibrahim advised his children, including Jacob, Isaac's son, who were present. It appears, and Allah knows best, that Isaac was endowed with Jacob, during the lifetime of Ibrahim and Sarah, for the good news includes both of them in Allah's statement,

(فَبَشِّرْنَاهَا بِإِسْحَقَ وَمِنْ وَرَاءِ إِسْحَقَ يَعْقُوبَ)

(But We gave her (Sarah) glad tidings of Ishaq (Isaac), and after Ishaq, of Ya`qub (Jacob)) (11:71).

Also, if Jacob was not alive then, there would be no use here in mentioning him specifically among Isaac's children. Also, Allah said in Surat Al-`Ankabut,

(وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَجَعَلْنَا فِي ذُرِّيَّتِهِ  
النُّبُوَّةَ وَالْكِتَابَ)

(And We bestowed on him (Ibrahim), Ishaq and Ya`qub, and We ordained among his offspring prophethood and the Book.) (29:27), and,

(وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ نَافِلَةً)

(And We bestowed upon him Ishaq, and (a grandson) Ya`qub) (21:72), thus, indicating that this occurred during Ibrahim's lifetime. Also, Jacob built Bayt Al-Maqdis, as earlier books testified. The Two Sahihs recorded that Abu Dharr said, "I said, `O Messenger of Allah! Which Masjid was built first' He said, (Al-Masjid Al-Haram (Al-Ka`bah).) I said, `Then' He said, (Bayt Al-Maqdis.) I said, `How many years later' He said, (Forty years. )" Further, the advice that Jacob gave to his children, which we will soon mention, testifies that Jacob was among those who received the advice mentioned in Ayat above (2:130-132).

### Adhering to Tawhid until Death

Allah said,

(يَبْنَىٰ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ اصْطَفٰى لَكُمْ الدِّينَ فَلَا تَمُوْنَنَّ اِلَّا  
وَأَنْتُمْ مُّسْلِمُوْنَ)

((Saying), "O my sons! Allah has chosen for you the (true) religion, then die not except as Muslims.") meaning, perform righteous deeds during your lifetime and remain on this path, so that Allah will endow you with the favor of dying upon it. Usually, one dies upon the path that

he lived on and is resurrected according to what he died on. Allah, the Most Generous, helps those who seek to do good deeds to remain on the righteous path.

This by no means contradicts the authentic Hadith that says,

«إِنَّ الرَّجُلَ لَيَعْمَلُ بِعَمَلِ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ حَتَّى مَا يَكُونُ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَهَا إِلَّا بَاعٌ أَوْ ذِرَاعٌ فَيَسْبِقُ عَلَيْهِ الْكِتَابُ فَيَعْمَلُ بِعَمَلِ أَهْلِ النَّارِ فَيَدْخُلُهَا. وَإِنَّ الرَّجُلَ لَيَعْمَلُ بِعَمَلِ أَهْلِ النَّارِ حَتَّى مَا يَكُونُ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَهَا إِلَّا بَاعٌ أَوْ ذِرَاعٌ فَيَسْبِقُ عَلَيْهِ الْكِتَابُ فَيَعْمَلُ بِعَمَلِ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ فَيَدْخُلُهَا»

(Man might perform the works of the people of Paradise until only a span of outstretched arms or a cubit separates him from it, then the Book (destiny) takes precedence, and he performs the works of the people of the Fire and thus enters it. Also, man might perform the works of the people of the Fire until only a span of outstretched arms or a cubit separates him from the Fire, but the Book takes precedence and he performs the works of the people of Paradise and thus enters it.) Allah said, (92:5-10),

(فَأَمَّا مَنْ أَعْطَى وَاتَّقَى - وَصَدَّقَ بِالْحُسْنَى -  
فَسُيِّرَهُ لِلْيُسْرَى - وَأَمَّا مَنْ بَخِلَ وَاسْتَغْنَى -  
وَكَذَّبَ بِالْحُسْنَى - فَسُيِّرَهُ لِلْعُسْرَى )

(As for him who gives (in charity) and keeps his duty to Allah and fears Him. And believes in Al-Husna. We will make smooth for him the path of ease (goodness). But he who is a greedy miser and thinks himself self-sufficient. And belies Al-Husna (none has the right to be worshipped except Allah). We will make smooth for him the path for evil),

(أَمْ كُنْتُمْ شُهَدَاءَ إِذْ حَضَرَ يَعْقُوبَ الْمَوْتَ إِذْ قَالَ لِبَنِيهِ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِن بَعْدِي قَالُوا نَعْبُدُ إِلَهَكَ وَإِلَهَ

أَبَائِكَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا  
وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ - تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ لَهَا مَا  
كَسَبَتْ وَلَكُمْ مِمَّا كَسَبْتُمْ وَلَا تُسْأَلُونَ عَمَّا كَانُوا  
يَعْمَلُونَ )

n(133. Or were you witnesses when death approached Ya`qub (Jacob) When he said unto his sons, "What will you worship after me" They said, "We shall worship your Allah (God Allah) the Allah of your fathers, Ibrahim (Abraham), Isma`il (Ishmael), Ishaq (Isaac), One Allah, and to Him we submit (in Islam))." (134. That was a nation who has passed away. They shall receive the reward of what they earned and you of what you earn. And you will not be asked of what they used to do.)

### Ya`qub's Will and Testament to His Children upon His Death

This Ayah contains Allah's criticism of the Arab pagans among the offspring of Isma`il as well as the disbelievers among the Children of Israel Jacob the son of Isaac, the son of Ibrahim. When death came to Jacob, he advised his children to worship Allah alone without partners. He said to them,

(مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِن بَعْدِي قَالُوا نَعْبُدُ إِلَهَكَ وَإِلَهَ  
أَبَائِكَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ)

("What will you worship after me" They said, "We shall worship your Allah (God Allah) the Allah of your fathers, Ibrahim, Isma`il, Ishaq,")

Mentioning Isma`il here is a figure of speech, because Isma`il is Jacob's uncle. An-Nahas said that the Arabs call the uncle a father, as Al-Qurtubi mentioned).

This Ayah is used as evidence that the grandfather is called a father and inherits, rather than the brothers (i.e. when his son dies), as Abu Bakr asserted, according to Al-Bukhari who narrated Abu Bakr's statement from Ibn `Abbas and Ibn Az-Zubayr. Al-Bukhari then commented that there are no opposing opinions regarding this subject. This is also the opinion of `A'ishah the Mother of the believers, Al-Hasan Al-Basri, Tawus and `Ata', Malik, Ash-Shaf`i and Ahmad said that the inheritance is divided between the grandfather and the brothers. It was reported that this was also the opinion of `Umar, `Uthman, `Ali, bin Mas`ud, Zayd bin Thabit and several scholars among the Salaf and later generations.

The statement,

(إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا)

(One Ilah (God)) means, "We single Him out in divinity and do not associate anything or anyone with Him."

(وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ)

(And to Him we submit), in obedience meaning, obedient and submissiveness. Similarly, Allah said,

(وَلَهُ أَسْلَمَ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ طَوْعًا  
وَكَرْهًا وَإِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُونَ)

(While to Him submitted all creatures in the heavens and the earth, willingly or unwillingly. And to Him shall they all be returned) (3:83).

Indeed, Islam is the religion of all the Prophets, even if their respective laws differed. Allah said,

(وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا نُوحِي إِلَيْهِ  
أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدُونِ)

(And We did not send any Messenger before you (O Muhammad) but We revealed to him (saying): La ilaha illa Ana none has the right to be worshipped but I (Allah), so worship Me (alone and none else)) (21:25).

There are many other Ayat - and Hadiths - on this subject. For instance, the Prophet said,

«نَحْنُ مَعَشَرَ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ أَوْلَادُ عِلَاتٍ دِينُنَا وَاحِدٌ»

(We, the Prophets, are brothers with different mothers, but the same religion.)

Allah said,

(تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ)

(That was a nation who has passed away) meaning, existed before your time,

(لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَلَكُمْ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ)

(They shall receive the reward of what they earned and you of what you earn).

This Ayah proclaims, Your relationship to the Prophets or righteous people among your ancestors will not benefit you, unless you perform good deeds that bring about you religious benefit. They have their deeds and you have yours,

(وَلَا تُسْأَلُونَ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ)

(And you will not be asked of what they used to do)."

This is why a Hadith proclaims,

«مَنْ بَطَأَ بِهِ عَمَلُهُ لَمْ يُسْرِعْ بِهِ نَسَبُهُ»

(Whoever was slowed on account of his deeds will not get any faster on account of his family lineage.)'

(وَقَالُوا كُونُوا هُودًا أَوْ نَصْرَى تَهْتَدُوا قُلْ بَلْ  
مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ )

(135. And they say, "Be Jews or Christians, then you will be guided." Say (to them O Muhammad ), "Nay, (we follow) only the religion of Ibrahim, Hanif (Islamic Monotheism), and he was not of Al-Mushrikin (those who worshipped others along with Allah. )

Muhammad bin Ishaq reported that Ibn `Abbas said that `Abdullah bin Suriya Al-A`war said to the Messenger of Allah, "The guidance is only what we (Jews) follow. Therefore, follow us, O Muhammad, and you will be rightly guided." Also, the Christians said similarly, so Allah revealed,

(وَقَالُوا كُونُوا هُودًا أَوْ نَصْرَى تَهْتَدُوا)

(And they say, "Be Jews or Christians, then you will be guided.") Allah's statement,

(قُلْ بَلْ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا)

(Say (to them O Muhammad ), "Nay, (we follow) only the religion of Ibrahim, Hanif) means, "We do not need the Judaism or Christianity that you call us to, rather,

## (مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا)

((we follow) only the religion of Ibrahim, Hanif) meaning, on the straight path, as Muhammad bin Ka`b Al-Qurazi and `Isa bin Jariyah stated. Also, Abu Qilabah said, "The Hanif is what the Messengers, from beginning to end, believed in."

(قُولُوا ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَى  
إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ  
وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَى وَعِيسَى وَمَا أُوتِيَ النَّبِيُّونَ مِنْ  
رَبِّهِمْ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ  
(

(136. Say (O Muslims): "We believe in Allah and that which has been sent down to us and that which has been sent down to Ibrahim (Abraham), Isma`il (Ishmael), Ishaq (Isaac), Ya`qub (Jacob), and to Al-Asbat (the offspring of the twelve sons of Ya`qub), and that which has been given to Musa (Moses) and `Isa (Jesus), and that which has been given to the Prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and to Him we have submitted (in Islam).")

### **The Muslim believes in all that Allah ` revealed and all the Prophets**

Allah directed His believing servants to believe in what He sent down to them through His Messenger Muhammad and in what was revealed to the previous Prophets in general. Some Prophets Allah mentioned by name, while He did not mention the names of many others. Allah directed the believers to refrain from differentiating between the Prophets and to believe in them all. They should avoid imitating whomever Allah described as,

(وَيُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُفَرِّقُوا بَيْنَ اللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَيَقُولُونَ  
نُؤْمِنُ بِبَعْضٍ وَنَكْفُرُ بِبَعْضٍ وَيُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يَتَّخِذُوا  
بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ سَبِيلًا أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ حَقًّا)

(And wish to make distinction between Allah and His Messengers (by believing in Allah and disbelieving in His Messengers) saying, "We believe in some but reject others," and wish to adopt a way in between. They are in truth disbelievers) (4:150-151).

Al-Bukhari narrated that Abu Hurayrah said, "The People of the Book used to read the Torah in Hebrew and translate it into Arabic for the Muslims. The Messenger of Allah said,

«لَا تُصَدِّقُوا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ وَلَا تُكَدِّبُوهُمْ وَقُولُوا:  
آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا»

(Do not believe the People of the Book, nor reject what they say. Rather, say, `We believe in Allah and in what was sent down to us.)"

Also, Muslim, Abu Dawud and An-Nasa'i recorded that Ibn `Abbas said, "Mostly, the Messenger of Allah used to recite,

(ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا)

(We believe in Allah and that which has been sent down to us) (2: 136), and,

(ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَآشْهَدُ بِأَنَا مُسْلِمُونَ)

(We believe in Allah, and bear witness that we are Muslims (i.e. we submit to Allah)) (3:52) during the two (voluntary) Rak`at before Fajr."

Abu Al-`Aliyah, Ar-Rabi` and Qatadah said, "Al-Asbat are the twelve sons of Jacob, and each one of them had an Ummah of people from his descendants. This is why they were called Al-Asbat." Al-Khalil bin Ahmad and others said, "Al-Asbat among the Children of Israel are just like the tribes among the Children of Isma`il." This means that the Asbat are the various tribes of the Children of Israel, among whom Allah sent several Prophets. Moses said to the Children of Israel,

(اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ جَعَلَ فِيكُمْ أَنْبِيَاءَ  
وَجَعَلَكُمْ مُلُوكًا)

(Remember the favor of Allah to you: when He made Prophets among you, made you kings) (5:20). Also, Allah said,

(وَقَطَعْنَاهُمْ اِثْنَيْ عَشَرَ سَبْطًا)

(And We divided them into twelve tribes) (7:160).

Al-Qurtubi said, "Sbt is the group of people or a tribe all belonging to the same ancestors."

Qatadah said, "Allah commanded the believers to believe in Him and in all His Books and Messengers. " Also, Sulayman bin Habib said, "We were commanded to believe in the (original) Torah and Injil, but not to implement them."

(فَإِنْ ءَامَنُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا ءَامَنْتُمْ بِهِ فَقَدْ اهْتَدَوْا وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا هُمْ فِي شِقَاقٍ فَسَيَكْفِيكَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ - صِبْغَةَ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنَ اللَّهِ صِبْغَةً وَنَحْنُ لَهُ عِبْدُونَ )

(137. So if they believe in the like of that which you believe then they are rightly guided; but if they turn away, then they are only in opposition. So Allah will suffice for you against them. And He is the Hearer, the Knower.) (138. Our Sbbghah (religion) is the Sbbghah of Allah (Islam) and which Sbbghah can be better than Allah's And we are His worshippers.)

Allah said, if they, the disbelievers among the People of the Book and other disbelievers, believe in all of Allah's Books and Messengers and do not differentiate between any of them,

(فَقَدْ اهْتَدَوْا)

(then they are rightly guided) meaning, they would acquire the truth and be directed to it.

(وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا)

(but if they turn away) from truth to falsehood after proof had been presented to them,

(فَإِنَّمَا هُمْ فِي شِقَاقٍ فَسَيَكْفِيكَهُمُ اللَّهُ)

(then they are only in opposition. So Allah will suffice you against them) meaning, Allah will aid the believers against them,

(وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ)

(And He is the Hearer, the Knower). Allah said,

(صِبْغَةَ اللَّهِ)

(The Sbgah of Allah). Ad-Dahhak said that Ibn `Abbas commented, "The religion of Allah." This Tafsir was also reported of Mujahid, Abu Al-`Aliyah, `Ikrimah, Ibrahim, Al-Hasan, Qatadah, Ad-Dahhak, `Abdullah bin Kathir, `Atiyah Al-`Awfi, Ar-Rabi` bin Anas, As-Suddi and other scholars. The Ayah,

## (فِطْرَةَ اللَّهِ)

(Allah's Fitrah (i.e. Allah's Islamic Monotheism)) (30:30) directs Muslims to, "Hold to it."

(قُلْ أَتُحَاجُّونَنَا فِي اللَّهِ وَهُوَ رَبُّنَا وَرَبُّكُمْ وَلَنَا أَعْمَلْنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَلُكُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُخْلِصُونَ - أَمْ تَقُولُونَ إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطَ كَانُوا هُودًا أَوْ نَصَارَى قُلْ ءَأَنْتُمْ أَعْلَمُ أَمْ اللَّهُ وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ كَتَمَ شَهَدَةً عِنْدَهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَفِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَلَكُمْ مَّا كَسَبْتُمْ وَلَا تُسْأَلُونَ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ )

(139. Say (O Muhammad to the Jews and Christians), "Dispute you with us about Allah while He is our Lord and your Lord And we are to be rewarded for our deeds and you for your deeds. And we are sincere to Him (i.e. we worship Him alone and none else, and we obey His orders).") (140. Or say you that Ibrahim, Isma`il, Ishaq, Ya`qub and Al-Asbat, were Jews or Christians Say, "Do you know better or does Allah And who is more unjust than he who conceals the testimony he has from Allah And Allah is not unaware of what you do.") (141. That was a nation who has passed away. They shall receive the reward of what they earned, and you of what you earn. And you will not be asked of what they used to do.)

Allah directed His Prophet to pre-empt the arguments with the idolators:

## (قُلْ أَتُحَاجُّونَنَا فِي اللَّهِ)

(Say (O Muhammad to the Jews and Christians), "Dispute you with us about Allah) meaning, "Do you dispute with us regarding the Oneness of Allah, obedience and submission to Him and in avoiding His prohibitions,

(وَهُوَ رَبُّنَا وَرَبُّكُمْ)

(while He is our Lord and your Lord) meaning, He has full control over us and you, and deserves the worship alone without partners.

(وَلَنَّا أَعْمَلْنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَلَكُمْ)

(And we are to be rewarded for our deeds and you for your deeds.) meaning, we disown you and what you worship, just as you disown us. Allah said in another Ayah,

(وَإِنْ كَذَّبُوكَ فَقُلْ لِي عَمَلِي وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَالُكُمْ أَنْتُمْ بَرِيئُونَ مِمَّا أَعْمَلُ وَأَنَا بَرِيءٌ مِمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ )

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

(فَإِنْ حَاجُّوكَ فَقُلْ أَسَلَمْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّهِ وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِ)

(So if they dispute with you (Muhammad ) say: "I have submitted myself to Allah (in Islam), and (so have) those who follow me") (3:20). Allah said about Ibrahim,

(وَحَاجَّهُ قَوْمُهُ قَالَ أَتُحَاجُّونِي فِي اللَّهِ)

(His people disputed with him. He said: "Do you dispute with me concerning Allah") (6:80), and,

(أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِي حَاجَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ فِي رَبِّهِ)

(Have you not looked at him who disputed with Ibrahim about his Lord (Allah)) (2:258). He said in this honorable Ayah,

(وَلَنَّا أَعْمَلْنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَالُكُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُخْلِصُونَ)

(And we are to be rewarded for our deeds and you for your deeds. And we are sincere to Him.) meaning, "We disown you just as you disown us,"

(وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُخْلِصُونَ)

(And we are sincere to Him), in worship and submission.

Allah then criticized them in the claim that Ibrahim, the Prophets who came after him and the Asbat were following their religion, whether Judaism or Christianity. Allah said,

(قُلْ ءَأَنْتُمْ أَعْلَمُ أَمِ اللّٰهُ)

(Say, "Do you know better or does Allah") meaning, Allah has the best knowledge and He stated that they were neither Jews, nor Christians. Similarly, Allah said in the Ayah,

(مَا كَانَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ يَهُودِيًّا وَلَا نَصْرَانِيًّا وَلَكِنْ كَانَ حَنِيفًا مُّسْلِمًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ )

(Ibrahim was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was a true Muslim Hanifa (to worship none but Allah alone) and he was not of Al-Mushrikin) (3:67) and the following Ayat. Allah also said,

(وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ كَتَمَ شَهَادَةَ عِنْدَهُ مِنَ اللّٰهِ)

And who is more unjust than he who conceals the testimony he has from Alla0h )2:140(. Al-H asan Al-Bas ri said, They used to recite the Book of Alla0h He sent to them that stated that the true religion is Isla0m and that Muh ammad is the Messenger of Alla0h. Their Book also stated that Ibra0h0m, Isma0 0l, Ish a0q, Ya qu0b and the tribes were neither Jews, nor Christians. They testified to these facts, yet hid them from the people. Alla0h s statement,

(وَمَا اللّٰهُ بِغَفِلٍ ؕ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ)

(And Allah is not unaware of what you do), is a threat and a warning that His knowledge encompasses every one's deeds, and He shall award each accordingly. Allah then said,

(تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ)

(That was a nation who has passed away.) meaning, existed before you,

(لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَلكُمْ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ)

(They shall receive the reward of what they earned, and you of what you earn.) meaning, they bear their deeds while you bear yours,

(وَلَا تُسْأَلُونَ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ)

(And you will not be asked of what they used to do) meaning, the fact that you are their relatives will not suffice, unless you imitate their good deeds. Further, do not be deceived by the fact that you are their descendants, unless you imitate them in obeying Allah's orders and following His Messengers who were sent as warners and bearers of good news. Indeed, whoever disbelieves in even one Prophet, will have disbelieved in all the Messengers, especially if one disbelieves in the master and Final Messenger from Allah, the Lord of the worlds, to all mankind and the Jinns. May Allah's peace and blessings be on Muhammad and the rest of Allah's Prophets.

(سَيَقُولُ السُّفَهَاءُ مِنَ النَّاسِ مَا وَلَّهُمْ عَن قِبَلَتِهِمْ  
الَّتِي كَانُوا عَلَيْهَا قُلْ لِلَّهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ  
يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ - وَكَذَلِكَ  
جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ  
وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ  
الَّتِي كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يَتَّبِعُ الرَّسُولَ مِمَّنْ  
يَنْقَلِبُ عَلَى عَقْبَيْهِ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ لَكَبِيرَةً إِلَّا عَلَى  
الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضَيِّعَ إِيمَانَكُمْ إِنَّ  
اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرَّءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ )

(142. The fools (idolators, hypocrites, and Jews) among the people will say: "What has turned them (Muslims) from their Qiblah prayer direction (towards Jerusalem) to which they used to face in prayer." Say (O Muhammad ): "To Allah belong both, east and the west. He guides whom He wills to the straight way." ) (143. Thus We have made you true Muslims real believers of Islamic Monotheism, true followers of Prophet Muhammad and his Sunnah (legal ways) , a Wasat (just and the best) nation, that you be witnesses over mankind and the Messenger (Muhammad ) be a witness over you. And We made the Qiblah which you used to face, only to test those who followed the Messenger (Muhammad ) from those who would turn on their heels (i.e., disobey the Messenger). Indeed it was great (heavy, difficult) except for those whom Allah guided. And Allah would never make your faith (prayers) to be lost (i.e., your prayers

offered towards Jerusalem). Truly, Allah is full of kindness, the Most Merciful towards mankind.)

## Changing the Qiblah Direction of the Prayer

Imam Al-Bukhari reported that Al-Bara' bin `Azib narrated: "Allah's Messenger offered his prayers facing Bayt Al-Maqdis (Jerusalem) for sixteen or seventeen months, but he wished that he could pray facing the Ka`bah (at Makkah). The first prayer which he offered (facing the Ka`bah) was the `Asr (Afternoon) prayer in the company of some people. Then one of those who had offered that prayer with him, went out and passed by some people in a mosque who were in the bowing position (in Ruku`) during their prayers (facing Jerusalem). He addressed them saying, `By Allah, I bear witness that I have offered prayer with the Prophet facing Makkah (Ka`bah).' Hearing that, those people immediately changed their direction towards the House (Ka`bah) while still as they were (i.e., in the same bowing position). Some Muslims who offered prayer towards the previous Qiblah (Jerusalem) before it was changed towards the House (the Ka`bah in Makkah) had died or had been martyred, and we did not know what to say about them (regarding their prayers towards Jerusalem). Allah then revealed:

(وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِيعَ إِيمَانَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ)

(And Allah would never make your faith (prayers) to be lost (i.e., the prayers of those Muslims were valid)) (2:143)."

Al-Bukhari collected this narration, while Muslim collected it using another chain of narrators. Muhammad bin Ishaq reported that Al-Bara' narrated: Allah's Messenger used to offer prayers towards Bayt Al-Maqdis (in Jerusalem), but would keep looking at the sky awaiting Allah's command (to change the Qiblah). Then Allah revealed:

(قَدْ نَرَى تَقَلُّبَ وَجْهِكَ فِي السَّمَاءِ فَلَنُوَلِّيَنَّكَ قِبْلَةً تَرْضَاهَا فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ)

(Verily, We have seen the turning of your (Muhammad's) face towards the heaven. Surely, We shall turn you to a Qiblah (prayer direction) that shall please you, so turn your face in the direction of Al-Masjid Al-Haram (at Makkah).) (2:144)

A man from among the Muslims then said, "We wish we could know about those among us who died before the Qiblah was changed (i.e., towards Makkah) and also about our own prayers, that we had performed towards Bayt Al-Maqdis." Allah then revealed:

(وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِيعَ إِيمَانَكُمْ)

(And Allah would never make your faith (prayers) to be lost.) (2:143)

The fools among the people, meaning the People of the Scripture (Jews and Christians), said, "What made them change the former Qiblah that they used to face" Allah then revealed:

(سَيَقُولُ السُّفَهَاءُ مِنَ النَّاسِ)

(The fools (idolators, hypocrites, and Jews) among the people will say...)

until the end of the Ayah.

`Ali bin Abu Talhah related that Ibn `Abbas said: When Allah's Messenger migrated to Al-Madinah, Allah commanded him to face Bayt Al-Maqdis (Jerusalem). The Jews were delighted then. Allah's Messenger faced Jerusalem for over ten months. However, he liked (to offer prayer in the direction of) Prophet Ibrahim's Qiblah (the Ka`bah in Makkah) and used to supplicate to Allah and kept looking up to the sky (awaiting Allah's command in this regard). Allah then revealed:

(فَوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ)

(turn your faces (in prayer) in that direction.) meaning, its direction. The Jews did not like this change and said, "What made them change the Qiblah that they used to face (meaning Jerusalem)" Allah revealed:

(قُلْ لِلَّهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ)

(Say (O Muhammad ): "To Allah belong both, east and the west. He guides whom He wills to the straight way.")

There are several other Ahadith on this subject. In summary, Allah's Messenger was commanded to face Bayt Al-Maqdis (during the prayer) and he used to offer prayer towards it in Makkah between the two corners (of Ka`bah), so that the Ka`bah would be between him and Bayt Al-Maqdis. When the Prophet migrated to Al-Madinah, this practice was no longer possible; then Allah commanded him to offer prayer towards Bayt Al-Maqdis, as Ibn Abbas and the majority of the scholars have stated.

Al-Bukhari reported in his Sahih that the news (of the change of Qiblah) was conveyed to some of the Ansar while they were performing the `Asr (Afternoon) prayer towards Bayt Al-Maqdis, upon hearing that, they immediately changed their direction and faced the Ka`bah.

It is reported in the Sahihayn (Al-Bukhari Muslim) that Ibn `Umar narrated: While the people were in Quba' (Mosque) performing the Fajr (Dawn) prayer, a man came and said, "A (part of the) Qur'an was revealed tonight to Allah's Messenger and he was commanded to face the

Ka` bah. Therefore, face the Ka` bah. They were facing Ash-Sham, so they turned towards the Ka` bah.

These Hadiths prove that the Nasikh (a Text that abrogates a previous Text) only applies after one acquires knowledge of it, even if the Nasikh had already been revealed and announced. This is why the Companions mentioned above were not commanded to repeat the previous `Asr, Maghrib and `Isha' prayers (although they had prayed them towards Jerusalem after Allah had changed the Qiblah). Allah knows best.

When the change of Qiblah (to Ka` bah in Makkah) occurred, those inflicted with hypocrisy and mistrust, and the disbelieving Jews, both were led astray from the right guidance and fell into confusion. They said:

(مَا وَلَّهُمْ عَن قِبَلَتِهِمُ الَّتِي كَانُوا عَلَيْهَا)

(What has turned them (Muslims) from their Qiblah to which they used to face in prayer.)

They asked, "What is the matter with these people (Muslims) who one time face this direction (Jerusalem), and then face that direction (Makkah)" Allah answered their questions when He stated:

(قُلْ لِلَّهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ)

(Say (O Muhammad ): "To Allah belong both, east and the west.) meaning, the command, the decision and the authority are for Allah Alone. Hence:

(فَأَيْنَمَا تُوَلُّوا فَتَمَّ وَجْهُ اللَّهِ)

(...so wherever you turn (yourselves or your faces) there is the Face of Allah (and He is High above, over His Throne).) (2:115),

and:

(لَيْسَ الْبِرُّ أَنْ تُوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ  
وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ)

( It is not Al-Birr (piety, righteousness) that you turn your faces towards east and (or) west (in prayers); but Al-Birr is the one who believes in Allah.) (2:177) This statement means, the best act is to adhere to Allah's commands. Hence, wherever He commands us to face, we should face. Also, since obedience requires implementing Allah's commands, if He commands us every day to face different places, we are His servants and under His disposal, and we face whatever He orders us to face. Certainly, Allah's care and kindness towards His servant and Messenger, Muhammad , and certainly, his Ummah (Muslim nation) is profoundly great. Allah has guided

them to the Qiblah of (Prophet) Ibrahim -- Allah's Khalil (intimate friend). He has commanded them to face the Ka`bah, the most honorable house (of worship) on the face of the earth, which was built by Ibrahim Al-Khalil in the Name of Allah, the One without a partner. This is why Allah said afterwards:

(قُلْ لِلَّهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ)

(Say (O Muhammad ): "To Allah belong both, east and the west. He guides whom He wills to the straight way.")

Imam Ahmad reported that `A'ishah (the Prophet's wife) said that Allah's Messenger said about the People of the Scripture (Jews and Christians):

«إِنَّهُمْ لَا يَحْسِدُونَنَا عَلَى شَيْءٍ كَمَا يَحْسِدُونَنَا عَلَى يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ الَّتِي هَدَانَا اللَّهُ لَهَا وَضَلُّوا عَنْهَا وَعَلَى الْقِبْلَةِ الَّتِي هَدَانَا اللَّهُ لَهَا وَضَلُّوا عَنْهَا وَعَلَى قَوْلِنَا خَلْفَ الْإِمَامِ: آمِينَ»

(They do not envy us for a matter more than they envy us for Jumu`ah (Friday) to which Allah has guided us and from which they were led astray; for the (true) Qiblah to which Allah has directed us and from which they were led astray; and for our saying `Amin' behind the Imam (leader of the prayer).)

### The Virtues of Muhammad's Nation

Allah said:

(وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا)

(Thus We have made you true Muslims , a Wasat (just) (and the best) nation, that you be witnesses over mankind and the Messenger (Muhammad ) be a witness over you.)

Allah stated that He has changed our Qiblah to the Qiblah of Ibrahim and chose it for us so that He makes us the best nation ever. Hence, we will be the witnesses over the nations on the Day of Resurrection, for all of them will then agree concerning our virtue. The word Wasat in the

Ayah means the best and the most honored. Therefore, saying that (the Prophet's tribe) Quraysh is in the Wasat regarding Arab tribes and their areas, means the best. Similarly, saying that Allah's Messenger was in the Wasat of his people, means he was from the best subtribe. Also, `Asr, the prayer that is described as `Wusta' (a variation of the word Wasat), means the best prayer, as the authentic collections of Ahadith reported. Since Allah made this Ummah (Muslim nation) the Wasat, He has endowed her with the most complete legislation, the best Manhaj (way, method, etc.,) and the clearest Madhhab (methodology, mannerism, etc). Allah said:

(هُوَ اجْتَبَاكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ  
حَرَجٍ مِّلَّةَ أَبِيكُمْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ هُوَ سَمَّاكُمُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ مِنْ  
قَبْلُ وَفِي هَذَا لِيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْكُمْ  
وَتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ)

(He has chosen you (to convey His Message of Islamic Monotheism to mankind), and has not laid upon you in religion any hardship: it is the religion of your father Ibrahim. It is He (Allah) Who has named you Muslims both before and in this (the Qur'an), that the Messenger (Muhammad ) may be a witness over you and you be witnesses over mankind!) (22:78)

Moreover, Imam Ahmad reported that Abu Sa`id narrated: Allah's Messenger said:

«يُدْعَى نُوحٌ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ، فَيُقَالُ لَهُ: هَلْ بَلَّغْتَ؟  
فَيَقُولُ: نَعَمْ، فَيُدْعَى قَوْمُهُ فَيُقَالُ لَهُمْ: هَلْ بَلَّغَكُمْ  
فَيَقُولُونَ: مَا أَتَانَا مِنْ نَذِيرٍ وَمَا أَتَانَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ،  
فَيُقَالُ لِنُوحٍ: مَنْ يَشْهَدُ لَكَ؟ فَيَقُولُ: مُحَمَّدٌ وَأُمَّهُ،  
قَالَ فَذَلِكَ قَوْلُهُ:

(وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا)

قَالَ: وَالْوَسَطَ الْعَدْلُ، فَنُدْعَوْنَ فَتَشْهَدُونَ لَهُ  
بِالْبَلَاغِ ثُمَّ أَشْهَدُ عَلَيْكُمْ»

(Nuh will be called on the Day of Resurrection and will be asked, `Have you conveyed (the Message)' He will say, `Yes.' His people will be summoned and asked, `Has Nuh conveyed (the Message) to you' They will say, `No warner came to us and no one (Prophet) was sent to us.' Nuh will be asked, `Who testifies for you' He will say, `Muhammad and his Ummah.')

This is why Allah said:

(وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا)

(Thus We have made you a Wasat nation.)

The Prophet said; (The Wasat means the `Adl (just). You will be summoned to testify that Nuh has conveyed (his Message), and I will attest to your testimony.)

It was also recorded by Al-Bukhari, At-Tirmidhi, An-Nasa'i and Ibn Majah.

Imam Ahmad also reported that Abu Sa`id Khudri narrated: Allah's Messenger said:

«يَجِيءُ النَّبِيُّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَمَعَهُ الرَّجُلَانِ وَأَكْثَرُ  
مِنْ ذَلِكَ، فَيُدْعَى قَوْمُهُ، فَيُقَالُ: هَلْ بَلَّغْتُمْ هَذَا؟  
فَيَقُولُونَ: لَا فَيُقَالُ لَهُ: هَلْ بَلَّغْتَ قَوْمَكَ؟ فَيَقُولُ:  
نَعَمْ، فَيُقَالُ: مَنْ يَشْهَدُ لَكَ؟ فَيَقُولُ: مُحَمَّدٌ وَأُمَّتُهُ،  
فَيُدْعَى مُحَمَّدٌ وَأُمَّتُهُ، فَيُقَالُ لَهُمْ: هَلْ بَلَّغَ هَذَا  
قَوْمَهُ؟ فَيَقُولُونَ: نَعَمْ، فَيُقَالُ: وَمَا عِلْمُكُمْ؟  
فَيَقُولُونَ: جَاءَنَا نَبِيٌّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ  
فَأَخْبَرَنَا أَنَّ الرُّسُلَ قَدْ بَلَّغُوا، فَذَلِكَ قَوْلُهُ عَزَّ  
وَجَلَّ:

(وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا)

(وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى  
النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا)

(The Prophet would come on the Day of Resurrection with two or more people (his only following!), and his people would also be summoned and asked, 'Has he (their Prophet) conveyed (the Message) to you' They would say, 'No.' He would be asked, 'Have you conveyed (the Message) to your people' He would say, 'Yes.' He would be asked, 'Who testifies for you' He would say, 'Muhammad and his Ummah.' Muhammad and his Ummah would then be summoned and asked, 'Has he conveyed (the Message) to his people' They would say, 'Yes.' They would be asked, 'Who told you that' They would say, 'Our Prophet (Muhammad) came to us and told us that the Messengers have conveyed (their Messages).')

Hence Allah's statement:

(وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا)

(Thus We have made you a Wasat nation.)

He said, "(meaning) the 'Adl,' (he then continued reciting the Ayah):

(وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى  
النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا)

(Thus We have made you, a just (and the best) nation, that you be witnesses over mankind and the Messenger (Muhammad) be a witness over you.)"

Furthermore, Imam Ahmad reported that Abul-Aswad narrated: I came to Al-Madinah and found that an epidemic had broken out that caused many fatalities. I sat next to `Umar bin Al-Khattab once when a funeral procession started and the people praised the dead person. `Umar said, "Wajabat (it will be recorded as such), Wajabat!" Then another funeral was brought forth and the people criticized the dead person. Again, `Umar said, "Wajabat." Abul-Aswad asked, "What is Wajabat, O Leader of the faithful" He said, "I said just like Allah's Messenger had said:

«أَيُّمَا مُسْلِمٍ شَهِدَ لَهُ أَرْبَعَةٌ بِخَيْرٍ أَدْخَلَهُ اللَّهُ  
الْجَنَّةَ»

ثُمَّ لَمْ نَسْأَلْهُ عَنِ الْوَاحِدِ

«وَتَلَاثَةٌ»

قَالَ: فَفُلْنَا وَاثْنَانِ: قَالَ

.

ثُمَّ لَمْ نَسْأَلْهُ عَنِ الْوَاحِدِ

«وَاثْنَانِ»

(Any Muslim for whom four testify that he was righteous, then Allah will enter him into Paradise.' We said, `What about three' He said, `And three.' We said, `And two' He said, `And two.' We did not ask him about (the testimony) of one (believing) person.)"

This was also recorded by Al-Bukhari, At-Tirmidhi, and An-Nasa'i.

### The Wisdom behind changing the Qiblah

Allah then said:

(وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ  
يَتَّبِعُ الرَّسُولَ مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ عَلَى عَقْبَيْهِ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ  
لَكَبِيرَةً إِلَّا عَلَى الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ)

(And We made the Qiblah (prayer direction towards Jerusalem) which you used to face, only to test those who followed the Messenger (Muhammad ) from those who would turn on their heels (i.e., disobey the Messenger). Indeed it was great (heavy, difficult) except for those whom Allah guided.)

Allah states thus: We have legislated for you, O Muhammad, facing Bayt Al-Maqdis at first and then changed it to the Ka`bah so as to find who will follow and obey you and thus face whatever you face.

(مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ عَلَىٰ عَقِبَيْهِ)

(...from those who would turn on their heels.) meaning, reverts from his religion. Allah then said:

(وَإِن كَانَتْ لَكَبِيرَةً)

(Indeed it was great (heavy, difficult))

The Ayah indicates that changing the Qiblah from Bayt Al-Maqdis to the Ka`bah is heavy on the heart, except for whomever Allah has rightly guided their hearts, who believe in the truth of the Messenger with certainty and that whatever he was sent with is the truth without doubt. It is they who believe that Allah does what He wills, decides what He wills, commands His servants with what He wills, abrogates any of His commands that He wills, and that He has the perfect wisdom and the unequivocal proof in all this. (The attitude of the believers in this respect is) unlike those who have a disease in their hearts, to whom whenever a matter occurs, it causes doubts, just as this same matter adds faith and certainty to the believers. Similarly, Allah said:

(وَإِذَا مَا أَنْزَلْنَا سُورَةً فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَقُولُ أَيُّكُمْ زَادَتْهُ هَذِهِ إِيمَانًا فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا فزَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَهُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ فزَادَتْهُمْ رِجْسًا إِلَىٰ رِجْسِهِمْ)

(And whenever there comes down a Surah (chapter from the Qur'an), some of them (hypocrites) say: "Which of you has had his faith increased by it" As for those who believe, it has increased their faith, and they rejoice. But as for those in whose hearts is a disease (of doubt, disbelief and hypocrisy), it will add doubt and disbelief to their doubt and disbelief; and they die while they are disbelievers.) (9:124, 125)

and:

(وَنُنزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْءَانِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَا يَزِيدُ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا خَسَارًا )

(And We send down of the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe, and it increases the wrongdoers in nothing but loss.) (17:82)

Certainly, those who remained faithful to the Messenger, obeyed him and faced whatever Allah commanded them, without doubt or hesitation, were the leaders of the Companions. Some scholars stated that the Early Migrants (who migrated with the Prophet from Makkah to Al-Madinah) and Ansar (the residents of Al-Madinah who gave aid and refuge to both the Prophet and the Migrants) were those who offered prayers towards the two Qiblah (Bayt Al-Maqdis and then the Ka`bah). Al-Bukhari reported in the explanation of the Ayah (2:143) that Ibn `Umar narrated: While the people were performing the Fajr (Dawn) prayer in the Quba' Mosque, a man came and said, "Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet and he was ordered to face the Ka`bah. Therefore, face the Ka`bah." They then faced the Ka`bah. Muslim also recorded it.

At-Tirmidhi added that they were performing Ruku` (bowing down in prayer), and then changed the direction (of the Qiblah) to the Ka`bah while still bowing down. Muslim reported this last narration from Anas. These Hadiths all indicate the perfect obedience the Companions had for Allah and His Messenger and their compliance with Allah's commandments, may Allah be pleased with them all.

Allah said:

(وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِيعَ إِيمَانَكُمْ)

(And Allah would never make your faith (prayers) to be lost.) meaning, the reward of your prayers towards Bayt Al-Maqdis before would not be lost with Allah. It is reported in Sahih that Abu Ishaq As-Sabi`y related that Bara' narrated: "The people asked about the matter of those who offered prayers towards Bayt Al-Maqdis and died (before the Qiblah was changed to Ka`bah). Allah revealed:

(وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِيعَ إِيمَانَكُمْ)

(And Allah would never make your faith (prayers) to be lost.)"

It was also recorded by At-Tirmidhi from Ibn `Abbas, and At-Tirmidhi graded it Sahih.

Ibn Ishaq reported that Ibn `Abbas narrated:

(وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِيعَ إِيمَانَكُمْ)

(And Allah would never make your faith to be lost.) entails: Your (prayer towards) the first Qiblah and your believing your Prophet and obeying him by facing the second Qiblah; He will grant you the rewards for all these acts. Indeed,

(إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرَّءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ)

(Truly, Allah is full of kindness, the Most Merciful towards mankind.)"

Furthermore, it is reported in the Sahih that Allah's Messenger saw a woman among the captives who was separated from her child. Whenever she found a boy (infant) among the captives, she would hold him close to her chest, as she was looking for her boy. When she found her child, she embraced him and gave him her breast to nurse. Allah's Messenger said:

« أَتُرُونَ هَذِهِ طَارِحَةً وَلَدَهَا فِي النَّارِ وَهِيَ تَقْدِرُ  
عَلَى أَنْ لَا تَطْرَحَهُ »

« قَوْلَ اللَّهِ لِلَّهِ أَرْحَمُ بِعِبَادِهِ مِنْ هَذِهِ بِوَلَدِهَا »

(Do you think that this woman would willingly throw her son in the fire) They said, "No, O Messenger of Allah!" He said, (By Allah! Allah is more merciful with His servants than this woman with her son.)

(قَدْ نَرَى تَقَلُّبَ وَجْهِكَ فِي السَّمَاءِ فَلتُوَلِّيَنَّكَ قِبْلَةً  
تَرْضَاهَا قَوْلٌ وَجْهِكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ  
وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ  
أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ لَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَمَا  
اللَّهُ بِغَفْلٍ عَمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ )

(144. Verily, We have seen the turning of your (Muhammad's) face towards the heaven. Surely, We shall turn you to a Qiblah (prayer direction) that shall please you, so turn your face in the direction of Al-Masjid Al-Haram (at Makkah). And wheresoever you people are, turn your faces (in prayer) in that direction. Certainly, the people who were given the Scripture (i.e., Jews and Christians) know well that, that (your turning towards the direction of the Ka'bah at Makkah in prayers) is the truth from their Lord. And Allah is not unaware of what they do).

### **The First Abrogation in the Qur'an was about the Qiblah**

Ali bin Abu Talhah related that Ibn `Abbas narrated: The first abrogated part in the Qur'an was about the Qiblah. When Allah's Messenger migrated to Al-Madinah, the majority of its people were Jews, and Allah commanded him to face Bayt Al-Maqdis. The Jews were delighted then. Allah's Messenger faced it for ten and some months, but he liked to face the Qiblah of Ibrahim

(Ka` bah in Makkah). He used to supplicate to Allah and look up to the sky (awaiting Allah's command). Allah then revealed:

(قَدْ نَرَى تَقَلُّبَ وَجْهِكَ فِي السَّمَاءِ)

(Verily, We have seen the turning of your (Muhammad's) face towards the heaven), until,

(فَوَلُّوْا وُجُوْهُكُمْ شَطْرَهُ)

(turn your faces (in prayer) in that direction.)

The Jews did not like this ruling and said:

(مَا وَلَّهُمْ عَنْ قِبَلَتِهِمْ الَّتِي كَانُوا عَلَيْهَا قُلْ لِلَّهِ  
الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ)

("What has turned them (Muslims) from their Qiblah (prayer direction) to which they used to face in prayer." Say (O Muhammad), "To Allah belong both, east and the west.") (2:142)

Allah said:

(فَأَيْنَمَا تُوَلُّوْا فَتَمَّ وَجْهُ اللَّهِ)

(. . .so wherever you turn (yourselves or your faces) there is the Face of Allah) (2:115),

and:

(وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ  
يَتَّبِعُ الرَّسُولَ مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ عَلَى عَقْبَيْهِ)

(And We made the Qiblah (prayer direction towards Jerusalem) which you used to face, only to test those who followed the Messenger (Muhammad ) from those who would turn on their heels (i.e., disobey the Messenger).) (2:143)

**Is the Qiblah the Ka` bah itself or its General Direction**

Al-Hakim related that `Ali bin Abu Talib said:

(قَوْلٌ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ)

(...so turn your face in the direction of Al-Masjid Al-Haram (at Makkah).) means its direction."

Al-Hakim then commented that the chain of this narration is authentic and that they (i.e., Al-Bukhari and Muslim) did not include it in their collections.

This ruling concerning the Qiblah is also the opinion of Abu Al-`Aliyah, Mujahid, `Ikrimah, Sa`id bin Jubayr, Qatadah, Ar-Rabi` bin Anas and others. Allah's Statement:

(وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ)

(And wheresoever you people are, turn your faces (in prayer) in that direction) is a command from Allah to face the Ka`bah from wherever one is on the earth: the east, west, north or south. The exception is of the voluntary prayer (Nafil) while one is traveling, for one is allowed to offer it in any direction his body is facing, while his heart is intending the Ka`bah. Also, when the battle is raging, one is allowed to offer prayer, however he is able. Also, included are those who are not sure of the direction and offer prayer in the wrong direction, thinking that it is the direction of the Qiblah, because Allah does not burden a soul beyond what it can bear.

### **The Jews had Knowledge that the (Muslim) Qiblah would later be changed**

Allah stated that:

(وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ لَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ)

(Certainly, the people who were given the Scripture (i.e., Jews and the Christians) know well that, that (your turning towards the direction of the Ka`bah at Makkah in prayers) is the truth from their Lord.)

This Ayah means: The Jews, who did not like that you change your Qiblah from Bayt Al-Maqdis, already knew that Allah will command you (O Muhammad) to face the Ka`bah. The Jews read in their Books their Prophets' description of Allah's Messenger and his Ummah, and that Allah has endowed and honored him with the complete and honorable legislation. Yet, the People of the Book deny these facts because of their envy, disbelief and rebellion. This is why Allah threatened them when He said:

(وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَفْلٍ عَمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ)

(And Allah is not unaware of what they do.)

(وَلَئِنِ أَتَيْتَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ بِكُلِّ آيَةٍ مَّا  
تَّبِعُوا قِبْلَتَكَ وَمَا أَنْتَ بِتَابِعٍ قِبْلَتَهُمْ وَمَا بَعْضُهُمْ  
بِتَابِعٍ قِبْلَةَ بَعْضٍ وَلَئِنِ اتَّبَعْتَ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ  
مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِنَّكَ إِذَا لَمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ )

(145. And even if you were to bring to the People of the Scripture (Jews and Christians) all the Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.), they would not follow your Qiblah (prayer direction), nor are you going to follow their Qiblah. And they will not follow each other's Qiblah. Verily, if you follow their desires after that which you have received of knowledge (from Allah), then indeed you will be one of the wrongdoers.)

### The Stubbornness and Disbelief of the Jews

Allah describes the Jews' disbelief, stubbornness and defiance of what they know of the truth of Allah's Messenger, that if the Prophet brought forward every proof to the truth of what he was sent with, they will never obey him or abandon following their desires. In another instance, Allah said:

(إِنَّ الَّذِينَ حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِمْ كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ -  
وَلَوْ جَاءَتْهُمْ كُلُّ آيَةٍ حَتَّى يَرَوْا الْعَذَابَ الْأَلِيمَ )

(Truly, those, against whom the Word (wrath) of your Lord has been justified, will not believe. Even if every sign should come to them, until they see the painful torment.) (10:96, 97)

This is why Allah said here:

(وَلَئِنِ أَتَيْتَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ بِكُلِّ آيَةٍ مَّا  
تَّبِعُوا قِبْلَتَكَ)

(And even if you were to bring to the People of the Scripture (Jews and Christians) all the Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.), they would not follow your Qiblah (prayer direction)).

Allah's statement :

(وَمَا أَنْتَ بِتَابِعٍ قِبَلَتَهُمْ)

(...nor are you going to follow their Qiblah ), indicates the vigor with which Allah's Messenger implements what Allah commanded him. Allah's statement also indicates that as much as the Jews adhere to their opinions and desires, the Prophet adheres by Allah's commands, obeying Him and following what pleases Him, and that he would never adhere to their desires in any case. Hence, praying towards Bayt Al-Maqdis was not because it was the Qiblah of the Jews, but because Allah had commanded it. Allah then warns those who knowingly defy the truth, because the proof against those who know is stronger than against other people. This is why Allah said to His Messenger and his Ummah:

(وَلَئِنْ اتَّبَعْتَ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِنَّكَ إِذَا لَمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ)

(Verily, if you follow their desires after that which you have received of knowledge (from Allah), then indeed you will be one of the wrongdoers.)

(الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَعْرِفُونَهُ كَمَا يَعْرِفُونَ  
أَبْنَاءَهُمْ وَإِنَّ فَرِيقًا مِّنْهُمْ لَيَكْتُمُونَ الْحَقَّ وَهُمْ  
يَعْلَمُونَ - الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ  
الْمُتَّرِينَ )

(146. Those to whom We gave the Scripture (Jews and Christians) recognise him (Muhammad or the Ka`bah at Makkah) as they recognize their sons. But verily, a party of them conceal the truth while they know it i.e., the qualities of Muhammad which are written in the Tawrah and the Injil ). (147. This is) the truth from your Lord. So be you not one of those who doubt).

### **The Jews know that the Prophet is True, but they hide the Truth**

Allah states that the scholars of the People of the Scripture know the truth of what Allah's Messenger was sent with, just as one of them knows his own child, which is a parable that the Arabs use to describe what is very apparent. Similarly, in a Hadith, Allah's Messenger said to a man who had a youngster with him:

«ابْنُكَ هَذَا»

(Is this your son) He said, "Yes, O Messenger of Allah! I testify to this fact." Allah's Messenger said:

«أَمَّا إِنَّهُ لَا يَجْنِي عَلَيْكَ وَلَا تَجْنِي عَلَيْهِ»

(Well, you would not transgress against him nor would he transgress against you.)

According to Al-Qurtubi, it was narrated that `Umar said to `Abdullah bin Salam (an Israelite scholar who became a Muslim), "Do you recognize Muhammad as you recognize your own son" He replied, "Yes, and even more. The Honest One descended from heaven on the Honest One on the earth with his (i.e., Muhammad's) description and I recognized him, although I do not know anything about his mother's story."

Allah states next that although they had knowledge and certainty in the Prophet , they still:

(لَيَكْتُمُونَ الْحَقَّ)

(conceal the truth.)

The Ayah indicates that they hide the truth from the people, about the Prophet , that they find in their Books,

(وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ)

(while they know it. ) Allah then strengthens the resolve of His Prophet and the believers and affirms that what the Prophet came with is the truth without doubt, saying:

(الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ )

((This is) the truth from your Lord. So be you not one of those who doubt.)

(وَلِكُلِّ وِجْهَةً هُوَ مُوَلِّيٰهَا فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ أَيْنَ مَا تَكُونُوا يَأْتِ بِكُمْ اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ )

(148. For every nation there is a direction to which they face (in their prayers). So hasten towards all that is good. Wheresoever you may be, Allah will bring you together (on the Day of Resurrection). Truly, Allah is able to do all things.)

### Every Nation has a Qiblah

Al-`Awfi reported that Ibn `Abbas said:

(وَلِكُلِّ وِجْهَةً هُوَ مُوَلِّيٰهَا)

(For every nation there is a direction to which they face (in their prayers))

"This talks about followers of the various religions. Hence, every nation and tribe has its own Qiblah that they choose, while Allah's appointed Qiblah is what the believers face."

Abul-`Aliyah said, "The Jew has a direction to which he faces (in the prayer). The Christian has a direction to which he faces. Allah has guided you, O (Muslim) Ummah, to a Qiblah which is the true Qiblah." This statement was also related to Mujahid, `Ata' Ad-Dahhak, Ar-Rabi` bin Anas, As-Suddi, and others.

This last Ayah is similar to what Allah said:

(لِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ شِرْعَةً وَمِنْهَجًا وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِنْ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا)

(To each among you, We have prescribed a law and a clear way. If Allah had willed, He would have made you one nation, but that (He) may test you in what He has given you; so compete in good deeds. The return of you (all) is to Allah.) (5:48)

In the Ayah (2:148), Allah said:

(أَيْنَ مَا تَكُونُوا يَأْتِ بِكُمْ اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ)

(Wheresoever you may be, Allah will bring you together (on the Day of Resurrection). Truly, Allah is able to do all things.) meaning: He is able to gather you from the earth even if your bodies and flesh disintegrated and scattered.

(وَمِنْ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَإِنَّهُ لِلْحَقِّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَفِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ - وَمِنْ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَيْكُمْ حُجَّةٌ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِي وَلَا تَمَّ نِعْمَتِي عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ )

(149. And from wheresoever you start forth (for prayers), turn your face in the direction of Al-Masjid Al-Haram (at Makkah), that is indeed the truth from your Lord. And Allah is not unaware of what you do.) (150. And from wheresoever you start forth (for prayers), turn your face in the direction of Al-Masjid Al-Haram (at Makkah), and wheresoever you are, turn your faces towards it (when you pray) so that men may have no argument against you except those of them that are wrongdoers, so fear them not, but fear Me! And so that I may complete My blessings on you and that you may be guided.)

### Why was changing the Qiblah mentioned thrice

This is a third command from Allah to face Al-Masjid Al-Haram (the Sacred Mosque) from every part of the world (during prayer). It was said that Allah mentioned this ruling again here because it is connected to whatever is before and whatever is after it. Hence, Allah first said:

(قَدْ نَرَى تَقَلُّبَ وَجْهِكَ فِي السَّمَاءِ فَلَنُوَلِّيَنَّكَ قِبْلَةً تَرْضَاهَا)

(Verily, We have seen the turning of your (Muhammad's) face towards the heaven. Surely, We shall turn you to a Qiblah (prayer direction) that shall please you) (2:144), until:

(وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ لَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَفِلٍ عَمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ)

(Certainly, the people who were given the Scripture (i.e., Jews and the Christians) know well that, that (your turning towards the direction of the Ka`bah at Makkah in prayers) is the truth from their Lord. And Allah is not unaware of what they do.) (2:144)

Allah mentioned in these Ayat His fulfillment of the Prophet's wish and ordered him to face the Qiblah that he liked and is pleased with. In the second command, Allah said:

(وَمِنْ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَإِنَّهُ لَلْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَفِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ )

(And from wheresoever you start forth (for prayers), turn your face in the direction of Al-Masid Al-Haram that is indeed the truth from your Lord. And Allah is not unaware of what you do.)

Therefore, Allah states here that changing the Qiblah is also the truth from Him, thus upgrading the subject more than in the first Ayah, in which Allah agreed to what His Prophet had wished for. Thus Allah states that this is also the truth from Him that He likes and is pleased with. In the third command, Allah refutes the Jewish assertion that the Prophet faced their Qiblah, as they knew in their Books that the Prophet will later on be commanded to face the Qiblah of Ibrahim, the Ka`bah. The Arab disbelievers had no more argument concerning the Prophet's Qiblah after Allah commanded the Prophet to face the Qiblah of Ibrahim, which is more respected and honored, rather than the Qiblah of the Jews. The Arabs used to honor the Ka`bah and liked the fact that the Messenger was commanded to face it.

### **The Wisdom behind abrogating the Previous Qiblah**

Allah said:

(لِيَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَيْكُمْ حُجَّةٌ)

(...so that men may have no argument against you)

Therefore, the People of the Book knew from the description of the Muslim Ummah that they would be ordered to face the Ka`bah. If the Muslims did not fit this description, the Jews would have used this fact against the Muslims. If the Muslims had remained on the Qiblah of

Bayt Al-Maqdis, which was also the Qiblah of the Jews, this fact could have been used as the basis of argument by the Jews against other people.

Allah's Statement:

(إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ)

(...except those of them that are wrongdoers,) indicates the Mushrikin (polytheists) of Quraysh. The reasoning of these unjust persons was the unsound statement: "This man (Muhammad) claims that he follows the religion of Ibrahim! Hence, if his facing Bayt Al-Maqdis was a part of the religion of Ibrahim, why did he change it" The answer to this question is that Allah has chosen His Prophet to face Bayt Al-Maqdis first for certain wisdom, and he obeyed Allah regarding this command. Then, Allah changed the Qiblah to the Qiblah of Ibrahim, which is the Ka`bah, and he also obeyed Allah in this command. He, obeys Allah in all cases and never engages in the defiance of Allah even for an instant, and his Ummah imitates him in this.

Allah said:

(فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِي)

(...so fear them not, but fear Me!) meaning: `Do not fear the doubts that the unjust, stubborn persons raise and fear Me Alone.' Indeed, Allah Alone deserves to be feared.

Allah said:

(وَلَأَتِمَّ نِعْمَتِي عَلَيْكُمْ)

(...so that I may complete My blessings on you.)

This Ayah relates to Allah's statement:

(لِنَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَيْكُمْ حُجَّةً)

(...so that men may have no argument against you), meaning: I will perfect My bounty on you by legislating for you to face the Ka`bah, so that the (Islamic) Shari`ah (law) is complete in every respect. Allah said:

(وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ)

(...that you may be guided.), meaning: `To be directed and guided to what the nations have been led astray from, We have guided you to it and preferred you with it.' This is why this Ummah is the best and most honored nation ever.

(كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِيكُمْ رَسُولًا مِّنكُمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِنَا  
وَيُزَكِّيكُمْ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُم مَّا  
لَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ - فَادْكُرُونِي أذكُرْكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا  
لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونِ )

(151. Similarly (to complete My blessings on you), We have sent among you a Messenger (Muhammad ) of your own, reciting to you Our verses (the Qur'an) and purifying you, and teaching you the Book (the Qur'an) and the Hikmah (i. e., Sunnah, Islamic laws and Fiqh jurisprudence), and teaching you that which you did not know.) (152. Therefore remember Me (by praying, glorifying). I will remember you, and be grateful to Me (for My countless favors on you) and never be ungrateful to Me.)

### Muhammad's Prophecy is a Great Bounty from Allah

Allah reminds His believing servants with what He has endowed them with by sending Muhammad as a Messenger to them, reciting to them Allah's clear Ayat and purifying and cleansing them from the worst types of behavior, the ills of the souls and the acts of Jahiliyyah (pre-Islamic era). The Messenger also takes them away from the darkness (of disbelief) to the light (of faith) and teaches them the Book, the Qur'an, and the Hikmah (i.e., the wisdom), which is his Sunnah. He also teaches them what they knew not. During the time of Jahiliyyah, they used to utter foolish statements. Later on, and with the blessing of the Prophet's Message and the goodness of his prophecy, they were elevated to the status of the Awliya' (loyal friends of Allah) and the rank of the scholars. Hence, they acquired the deepest knowledge among the people, the most pious hearts, and the most truthful tongues. Allah said:

(لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا  
مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ)

(Indeed, Allah conferred a great favor on the believers when He sent among them a Messenger (Muhammad ) from among themselves, reciting unto them His verses (the Qur'an), and purifying them (from sins).) (3:164)

Allah also criticized those who did not give this bounty its due consideration, when He said:

(أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ بَدَّلُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ كُفْرًا وَأَحَلُّوا  
قَوْمَهُمْ دَارَ الْبَوَارِ )

(Have you not seen those who have changed the favors of Allah into disbelief (by denying Prophet Muhammad ) and his Message of Islam), and caused their people to dwell in the house of destruction) (14:28)

Ibn `Abbas commented, "Allah's favor means Muhammad." Therefore, Allah has commanded the believers to affirm this favor and to appreciate it by thanking and remembering Him:

(فَاذْكُرُونِي أَذْكَرْكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونِ )

(Therefore, remember Me. I will remember you, and be grateful to Me, and never be ungrateful to Me.)

Mujahid said that Allah's statement:

(كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِيكُمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْكُمْ)

(Similarly (to complete My favor on you), We have sent among you a Messenger (Muhammad ) of your own,)

means: Therefore, remember Me in gratitude to My favor.

Al-Hasan Al-Basri commented about Allah's statement:

(فَاذْكُرُونِي أَذْكَرْكُمْ)

(Therefore remember Me. I will remember you), "Remember Me regarding what I have commanded you and I will remember you regarding what I have compelled Myself to do for your benefit (i. e., His rewards and forgiveness)."

An authentic Hadith states:

«يَقُولُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: مَنْ ذَكَرَنِي فِي نَفْسِهِ ذَكَرْتُهُ فِي نَفْسِي وَمَنْ ذَكَرَنِي فِي مَلَأٍ ذَكَرْتُهُ فِي مَلَأٍ خَيْرٍ مِنْهُ»

(Allah the Exalted said, `Whoever mentions Me to himself, then I will mention him to Myself; and whoever mentions Me in a gathering, I will mention him in a better gathering.)'

Imam Ahmad reported that Anas narrated that Allah's Messenger said:

«قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: يَا ابْنَ آدَمَ، إِنْ ذَكَرْتَنِي فِي نَفْسِكَ ذَكَرْتُكَ فِي نَفْسِي، إِنْ ذَكَرْتَنِي فِي مَلَأٍ ذَكَرْتُكَ فِي مَلَأٍ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ أَوْ قَالَ: فِي مَلَأٍ خَيْرٍ مِنْهُ وَإِنْ دَنَوْتُ مِنِّي شِبْرًا دَنَوْتُ مِنْكَ ذِرَاعًا، وَإِنْ دَنَوْتُ مِنِّي ذِرَاعًا دَنَوْتُ مِنْكَ بَاعًا، وَإِنْ أَتَيْتَنِي تَمْشِي أَتَيْتُكَ هَرْوَلَةً»

(Allah the Exalted said, `O son of Adam! If you mention Me to yourself, I will mention you to Myself. If you mention Me in a gathering, I will mention you in a gathering of the angels (or said in a better gathering). If you draw closer to Me by a hand span, I will draw closer to you by forearm's length. If you draw closer to Me by a forearm's length, I will draw closer to you by an arm's length. And if you come to Me walking, I will come to you running).

Its chain is Sahih, it was recorded by Al-Bukhari. Allah said:

(وَأَشْكُرُوا لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونَ)

(...and be grateful to Me (for My countless favors on you) and never be ungrateful to Me.)

In this Ayah, Allah commands that He be thanked and appreciated, and promises even more rewards for thanking Him. Allah said in another Ayah:

(وَإِذْ تَأَذَّنَ رَبُّكُمْ لَئِن شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ وَلَئِن كَفَرْتُمْ إِنَّ عَذَابِي لَشَدِيدٌ )

(And (remember) when your Lord proclaimed: "If you give thanks (by accepting faith and worshipping none but Allah), I will give you more (of My blessings); but if you are thankless (i.e., disbelievers), verily, My punishment is indeed severe.)

Abu Raja' Al-Utaridi said: `Imran bin Husayn came by us once wearing a nice silken garment that we never saw him wear before or afterwards. He said, "Allah's Messenger said:

«مَنْ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ نِعْمَةً فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ أَنْ يَرَى  
أَثَرَ نِعْمَتِهِ عَلَى خَلْقِهِ»

«عَلَى عَبْدِهِ»

(Those whom Allah has favored with a bounty, then Allah likes to see the effect of His bounty on His creation), or he said, "on His servant" - according to Ruh (one of the narrators of the Hadith).

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ  
إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ - وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ يُقْتَلُ فِي  
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتٌ بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ )

(153. O you who believe! Seek help in patience and As-Salah (the prayer). Truly, Allah is with As-Sabirin (the patient).) (154. And say not of those who are killed in the way of Allah, "They are dead." Nay, they are living, but you perceive (it) not.)

### The Virtue of Patience and Prayer

After Allah commanded that He be appreciated, He ordained patience and prayer. It is a fact that the servant is either enjoying a bounty that he should be thankful for, or suffering a calamity that he should meet with patience. A Hadith states:

«عَجَبًا لِلْمُؤْمِنِ لَا يَقْضِي اللَّهُ لَهُ قَضَاءً إِلَّا كَانَ  
خَيْرًا لَهُ: إِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ سَرَّاءٌ فَشَكَرَ كَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُ  
وَإِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ ضَرَّاءٌ فَصَبَرَ كَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُ»

(Amazing is the believer, for whatever Allah decrees for him, it is better for him! If he is tested with a bounty, he is grateful for it and this is better for him; and if he is afflicted with a hardship, he is patient with it and this is better for him.)

Allah has stated that the best tools to help ease the effects of the afflictions are patience and prayer. Earlier we mentioned Allah's statement:

(وَاسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ وَإِنَّهَا لَكَبِيرَةٌ إِلَّا عَلَى الْخَاشِعِينَ )

(And seek help in patience and As-Salah (the prayer) and truly, it is extremely heavy and hard except for Al-Khashi`in i.e., the true believers in Allah ) (2:45)

There are several types of Sabr patience: one for avoiding the prohibitions and sins, one for acts of worship and obedience. The second type carries more rewards than the first type. There is a third type of patience required in the face of the afflictions and hardships, which is mandatory, like repentance.

`Abdur-Rahman bin Zayd bin Aslam said, "Sabr has two parts: patience for the sake of Allah concerning what He is pleased with (i.e., acts of worship and obedience), even if it is hard on the heart and the body, and patience when avoiding what He dislikes, even if it is desired. Those who acquire these qualities will be among the patient persons whom Allah shall greet (when they meet Him in the Hereafter; refer to Surat Al-Ahzab 33:44), Allah willing."

### The Life enjoyed by Martyrs

Allah's statement:

(وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ يُقْتَلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتٌ بَلْ أَحْيَاءُ)

(And say not of those who are killed in the way of Allah, "They are dead." Nay, they are living.) indicates that the martyrs are alive and receiving their sustenance.

Muslim reported in his Sahih:

«أَنَّ أَرْوَاحَ الشُّهَدَاءِ فِي حَوَاصِلِ طَيْرٍ خُضِرِ، تَسْرَحُ فِي الْجَنَّةِ حَيْثُ شَاءَتْ، ثُمَّ تَأْوِي إِلَى قَنَادِيلَ مُعَلَّقَةٍ تَحْتَ الْعَرْشِ، فَاطَّلَعَ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّكَ ااطَّلَاعَةَ، فَقَالَ: مَاذَا تَبْعُونَ؟ فَقَالُوا: يَا رَبَّنَا وَآيَّ

شَيْءٍ نَبْغِي، وَقَدْ أَعْطَيْتَنَا مَا لَمْ تُعْطِ أَحَدًا مِنْ  
خَلْقِكَ؟ ثُمَّ عَادَ إِلَيْهِمْ بِمِثْلِ هَذَا، فَلَمَّا رَأَوْا أَنَّهُمْ لَا  
يُتْرَكُونَ مِنْ أَنْ يُسْأَلُوا، قَالُوا: نُرِيدُ أَنْ تَرُدَّنَا إِلَى  
الدَّارِ الدُّنْيَا فَنُقَاتِلَ فِي سَبِيلِكَ حَتَّى نُقْتَلَ فِيكَ مَرَّةً  
أُخْرَى لِمَا يَرُونَ مِنْ ثَوَابِ الشَّهَادَةِ فَيَقُولُ الرَّبُّ  
جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ: إِنِّي كَتَبْتُ أَنَّهُمْ إِلَيْهَا لَا يَرْجِعُونَ»

(The souls of the martyrs are inside green birds and move about in Paradise wherever they wish. Then, they take refuge in lamps that are hanging under the Throne (of Allah). Your Lord looked at them and asked them, `What do you wish for' They said, `What more could we wish for while You have favored us with what You have not favored any other of your creation' He repeated the question again. When they realize that they will be asked (until they answer), they said, `We wish that You send us back to the earthly life, so that we fight in Your cause until we are killed in Your cause again,' (because of what they enjoy of the rewards of martyrdom). The Lord then said, `I have written that they will not be returned to it (earthly life) again.)

Imam Ahmad reported that `Abdur-Rahman bin Ka`b bin Malik narrated from his father that Allah's Messenger said:

«نَسَمَةُ الْمُؤْمِنِ طَائِرٌ تَعْلُقُ فِي شَجَرِ الْجَنَّةِ حَتَّى  
يَرْجِعَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَى جَسَدِهِ يَوْمَ يَبْعَثُهُ»

(The believer's soul is a bird that feeds on the trees of Paradise until Allah sends it back to its body when the person is resurrected.)

This Hadith includes all the believers in its general meaning. Thus, the fact that the Qur'an mentions the martyrs in particular in the above Ayah serves to honor, glorify and favor them (although the other believers share the rewards they enjoy).

(وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ  
مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ

- الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا  
إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ - أُولَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ  
وَرَحْمَةٌ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ )

(155. And certainly, We shall test you with something of fear, hunger, loss of wealth, lives and fruits, but give glad tidings to As-Sabirin (the patient).) (156. Who, when afflicted with calamity, say: "Truly, to Allah we belong and truly, to Him we shall return.") (157. They are those on whom are the Salawat (i.e., who are blessed and will be forgiven) from their Lord, and (they are those who) receive His mercy, and it is they who are the guided ones.)

### **The Believer is Patient with the Affliction and thus gains a Reward**

Allah informs us that He tests and tries His servants, just as He said in another Ayah:

(وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ حَتَّىٰ نَعْلَمَ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ مِنكُمْ  
وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَنَبْلُوَ أَخْبَرَكُمْ )

(And surely, We shall try you till We test those who strive hard (for the cause of Allah) and As-Sabirin (the patient), and We shall test your facts (i.e., the one who is a liar, and the one who is truthful).) (47:31)

Hence, He tests them with the bounty sometimes and sometimes with the afflictions of fear and hunger. Allah said in another Ayah:

(فَأَذَاقَهَا اللَّهُ لِبَاسَ الْجُوعِ وَالْخَوْفِ)

(So Allah made it taste extreme of hunger (famine) and fear.) (16:112)

The frightened and the hungry persons show the effects of the affliction outwardly and this is why Allah has used here the word `Libas' (cover or clothes) of fear and hunger. In the Ayat above, Allah used the words:

(بِشْيءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ)

(with something of fear, hunger,) meaning, a little of each. Then (Allah said),

(وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ)

(loss of wealth,) meaning, some of the wealth will be destroyed,

(وَالْأَنْفُسِ)

(lives) meaning, losing friends, relatives and loved ones to death,

(وَالثَّمَرَاتِ)

(and fruits,) meaning, the gardens and the farms will not produce the usual or expected amounts. This is why Allah said next:

(وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ)

(but give glad tidings to As-Sabirin (the patient).)

He then explained whom He meant by 'the patient' whom He praised:

(الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ)

(Who, when afflicted with calamity, say: "Truly, to Allah we belong and truly, to Him we shall return.") meaning, those who recite this statement to comfort themselves in the face of their loss, know that they belong to Allah and that He does what He wills with His servants. They also know that nothing and no deed, even if it was the weight of an atom, will be lost with Allah on the Day of Resurrection. These facts thus compel them to admit that they are Allah's servants and that their return will be to Him in the Hereafter.

This is why Allah said: t

(أُولَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ)

(They are those on whom are the Salawat (i. e., who are blessed and will be forgiven) from their Lord, and (they are those who) receive His mercy,) meaning, Allah's praise and mercy will be with them. Sa`id bin Jubayr added, "Meaning, safety from the torment."

(وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ)

(and it is they who are the guided ones.) ` Umar bin Al-Khattab commented: "What righteous things, and what a great heights.

(أُولَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ)

(They are those on whom are the Salawat from their Lord, and (they are those who) receive His mercy) are the two righteous things.

(وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ)

(and it is they who are the guided ones) are the heights."

The heights means more rewards, and these people will be awarded their rewards and more.

### **The Virtue of asserting that We all belong to Allah, during Afflictions**

There are several Ahadith that mention the rewards of admitting that the return is to Allah by saying:

(إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ)

("Truly, to Allah we belong and truly, to Him we shall return.") when afflictions strike. For instance, Imam Ahmad reported that Umm Salamah narrated: Once, Abu Salamah came back after he was with Allah's Messenger and said: I heard Allah's Messenger recite a statement that made me delighted. He said:

«لَا يُصِيبُ أَحَدًا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ مُصِيبَةٌ فَيَسْتَرْجِعُ  
عِنْدَ مُصِيبَتِهِ ثُمَّ يَقُولُ: اللَّهُمَّ أَجْرُنِي فِي مُصِيبَتِي  
وَأَخْلَفْ لِي خَيْرًا مِنْهَا، إِلَّا فَعَلَ ذَلِكَ بِهِ»

(No Muslim is struck with an affliction and then says Istirja` when the affliction strikes, and then says: `O Allah! Reward me for my loss and give me what is better than it,' but Allah will do just that.) Umm Salamah said: So I memorized these words. When Abu Salamah died I said Istirja` and said: "O Allah! Compensate me for my loss and give me what is better than it." I then thought about it and said, "Who is better than Abu Salamah" When my `Iddah (the period

of time before the widow or divorced woman can remarry) finished, Allah's Messenger asked for permission to see me while I was dyeing a skin that I had. I washed my hands, gave him permission to enter and handed him a pillow, and he sat on it. He then asked me for marriage and when he finished his speech, I said, "O Messenger of Allah! It is not because I do not want you, but I am very jealous and I fear that you might experience some wrong mannerism from me for which Allah would punish me. I am old and have children." He said:

«أَمَّا مَا ذَكَرْتِ مِنَ الْغَيْرَةِ فَسَوْفَ يُدْهِبُهَا اللَّهُ عَزَّ  
وَجَلَّ عَنْكَ، وَأَمَّا مَا ذَكَرْتِ مِنَ السِّنِّ فَقَدْ  
أَصَابَنِي مِثْلُ الَّذِي أَصَابَكَ، وَأَمَّا مَا ذَكَرْتِ مِنَ  
الْعِيَالِ فَإِنَّمَا عِيَالُكَ عِيَالِي»

(As for the jealousy that you mentioned, Allah the Exalted will remove it from you. As for your being old as you mentioned, I have suffered what you have suffered. And for your having children, they are my children too.) She said, "I have surrendered to Allah's Messenger." Allah's Messenger married her and Umm Salamah said later, "Allah compensated me with who is better than Abu Salamah: Allah's Messenger ." Muslim reported a shorter version of this Hadith.

(إِنَّ الصَّفَا وَالْمَرْوَةَ مِنْ شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ فَمَنْ حَجَّ  
الْبَيْتَ أَوْ اعْتَمَرَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِ أَنْ يَطُوفَ بِهِمَا  
وَمَنْ تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَاكِرٌ عَلِيمٌ )

(158. Verily, As-Safa and Al-Marwah are of the symbols of Allah. So it is not a sin on him who performs Hajj or `Umrah (pilgrimage) of the House to perform Tawaf between them. And whoever does good voluntarily, then verily, Allah is All-Recognizer, All-Knower).

### The Meaning of "it is not a sin" in the Ayah

Imam Ahmad reported that `Urwah said that he asked `Aishah about what Allah stated:

(إِنَّ الصَّفَا وَالْمَرْوَةَ مِنْ شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ فَمَنْ حَجَّ  
الْبَيْتَ أَوْ اعْتَمَرَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِ أَنْ يَطُوفَ بِهِمَا)

(Verily, As-Safa and Al-Marwah (two mountains in Makkah) are of the symbols of Allah. So it is not a sin on him who performs Hajj or `Umrah (pilgrimage) of the House (the Ka`bah at Makkah) to perform the going (Tawaf) between them (As-Safa and Al-Marwah).) "By Allah! It is not a sin if someone did not perform Tawaf around them." `A'ishah said, "Worst is that which you said, O my nephew! If this is the meaning of it, it should have read, `It is not a sin if one did not perform Tawaf around them.' Rather, the Ayah was revealed regarding the Ansar, who before Islam, used to assume Ihlal (or Ihram for Hajj) in the area of Mushallal for their idol Manat that they used to worship. Those who assumed Ihlal for Manat, used to hesitate to perform Tawaf (going) between Mounts As-Safa and Al-Marwah. So they (during the Islamic era) asked Allah's Messenger about it, saying, `O Messenger of Allah! During the time of Jahiliyyah, we used to hesitate to perform Tawaf between As-Safa and Al-Marwah.' Allah then revealed:

(إِنَّ الصَّفَا وَالْمَرْوَةَ مِنْ شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ فَمَنْ حَجَّ  
الْبَيْتَ أَوْ اعْتَمَرَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِ أَنْ يَطُوفَ بِهِمَا)

(Verily, As-Safa and Al-Marwah are of the symbols of Allah. So it is not a sin on him who performs Hajj or `Umrah of the House to perform the going (Tawaf) between them.)" `A'ishah then said, " Allah's Messenger has made it the Sunnah to perform Tawaf between them (As-Safa and Al-Marwah), and thus, no one should abandon performing Tawaf between them." This Hadith is reported in the Sahihayn.

In another narration, Imam Az-Zuhri reported that `Urwah said: Later on I (`Urwah) told Abu Bakr bin `Abdur-Rahman bin Al-Harith bin Hisham (of `A'ishah's statement) and he said, "I have not heard of such information. However, I heard learned men saying that all the people, except those whom `A'ishah mentioned, said, `Our Tawaf between these two hills is a practice of Jahiliyyah. ' Some others among the Ansar said, `We were commanded to perform Tawaf of the Ka`bah, but not between As-Safa and Al-Marwah.' So Allah revealed:

(إِنَّ الصَّفَا وَالْمَرْوَةَ مِنْ شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ)

(Verily, As-Safa and Al-Marwah are of the symbols of Allah.)" Abu Bakr bin `Abdur-Rahman then said, "It seems that this verse was revealed concerning the two groups." Al-Bukhari collected a similar narration by Anas.

Ash-Sha`bi said, "Isaf (an idol) was on As-Safa while Na'ilah (an idol) was on Al-Marwah, and they used to touch (or kiss) them. After Islam came, they were hesitant about performing Tawaf between them. Thereafter, the Ayah (2:158 above) was revealed."

## The Wisdom behind legislating Sa`i between As-Safa and Al-Marwah

Muslim recorded a long Hadith in his Sahih from Jabir, in which Allah's Messenger finished the Tawaf around the House, and then went back to the Rukn (pillar, i.e., the Black Stone) and kissed it. He then went out from the door near As-Safa while reciting:

## (إِنَّ الصَّفَا وَالْمَرْوَةَ مِنْ شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ)

(Verily, As-Safa and Al-Marwah are of the symbols of Allah.) The Prophet then said, (I start with what Allah has commanded me to start with meaning start the Sa`i (i.e., fast walking) from the As-Safa ). In another narration of An-Nasa'i, the Prophet said, (Start with what Allah has started with (i.e., As-Safa).)

Imam Ahmad reported that Habibah bint Abu Tajrah said, "I saw Allah's Messenger performing Tawaf between As-Safa and Al-Marwah, while the people were in front of him and he was behind them walking in Sa`i. I saw his garment twisted around his knees because of the fast walking in Sa`i (he was performing) and he was reciting:

«اسْعَوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَتَبَ عَلَيْكُمُ السَّعْيَ».

(Perform Sa`i, for Allah has prescribed Sa`i on you.)"

This Hadith was used as a proof for the fact that Sa`i is a Rukn of Hajj. It was also said that Sa`i is Wajib, and not a Rukn of Hajj and that if one does not perform it by mistake or by intention, he could expiate the shortcoming with Damm. Allah has stated that Tawaf between As-Safa and Al-Marwah is among the symbols of Allah, meaning, among the acts that Allah legislated during the Hajj for Prophet Ibrahim.

Earlier we mentioned the Hadith by Ibn `Abbas that the origin of Tawaf comes from the Tawaf of Hajar (Prophet Ibrahim's wife), between As-Safa and Al-Marwah seeking water for her son (Isma`il) Ibrahim had left them in Makkah, where there was no habitation for her. When Hajar feared that her son would die, she stood up and begged Allah for His help and kept going back and forth in that blessed area between As-Safa and Al-Marwah. She was humble, fearful, frightened and meek before Allah. Allah answered her prayers, relieved her of her loneliness, ended her dilemma and made the well of Zamzam bring forth its water for her, which is:

«طَعَامٌ طَعْمٌ، وَشِفَاءٌ سَقْمٌ»

(A tasty (or nutritional) food and a remedy for the illness.)

Therefore, whoever performs Sa`i between As-Safa and Al-Marwah should remember his meekness, humbleness and need for Allah to guide his heart, lead his affairs to success and forgive his sins. He should also want Allah to eliminate his shortcomings and errors and to guide him to the straight path. He should ask Allah to keep him firm on this path until he meets death, and to change his situation from that of sin and errors to that of perfection and being forgiven, --- the same providence which was provided to Hajar.

Allah then states:

(وَمَنْ تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا)