

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Kind

## Sunni/Shia Dialouge

(All references are from the Qur'an and Sunni books)

# The practices of Shia Islam

From the Qur'an and Sunni books

### Topics Included are

- Why Shi'ah?
- Who are these Twelve Successors Of the Prophet (s)?
  - Did the Prophet (s) Appoint a Successor?
  - Why Follow the Family of the Prophet (s)?
  - Were All Companions Just and Truthful?
- Why do the Shi'ah avoid Tarawih congregations?
  - Why do the Shi'ah Combine Prayers?
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### Issues Pertaining to the Practice of the Prayers

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- 9-Tarawih Prayers

The Prophet (s) said:

**"The Religion (Islam) will continue until the Hour (Day of Resurrection), having Twelve Caliphs for you, all of them will be from Quraysh."**

[Sahih Muslim, (English), Chapter DCCLIV, v3, p1010, Tradition #4483; Sahih Muslim (Arabic), Kitab al-Imaara, 1980 Saudi Arabian Edition, v3, p1453, Tradition #10]

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# A Call for Shia Sunni Dialog: Why and How

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By Abdul Malik Mujahid

Shia-Sunni violence has been on the rise in the last few years, particularly in Iraq and Pakistan. Every month, it seems, scores of Shias and Sunnis are killed in a vicious tit-for-tat between extremists on both sides. Many of the victims are killed as they pray or are in mosques.

These incidents belie the reality of Shia-Sunni coexistence and cooperation. In Iraq, it is estimated that up to 30 percent of marriages are between Shias and Sunnis; victims of violence between the two groups frequently attend each other's funeral prayers; one group often helps the other's victims after an incident.

This silent majority must come together through dialog to defeat the terrorists who have been responsible for these killings.

## **Seven reasons why a dialog between Shia and Sunni is needed:**

- Theological differences between Shia and Sunni are old and are better left for God to judge, as He knows best and has said in the Quran that He is the final judge of religious disagreements. The killing of Shias or Sunnis will not resolve these disputes.
- The principle of "no compulsion in matters of faith" (Quran 2:256) is not just limited to Muslim-non-Muslim relations. It applies to Muslim interpretations of Islam as well. This instruction of God serves as a guideline for the Muslim community to not impose one's interpretation on others. That is why throughout history, not only have Hanafis and Shafis worked with each other despite differences, but Shias and Sunnis have lived and worked side by side with each other as well.
- When human beings sit down and talk to each other, they learn to respect each other.
- Dialog allows parties to understand each other better by allowing participants to acquire direct knowledge about beliefs instead of relying on propaganda and stereotypical images. (Quran 49:6-12)
- Dialog will isolate the extremist fringe. It is a major sin to kill a human being. Killing a human being is like killing the whole of humanity. By talking to each other, Shias and Sunnis will be able to save lives, which is like saving the whole of humanity. (Quran 5:32)
- Revenge is not justice. Killing in revenge is unjust, inhuman, and un-Islamic. Retribution through the state, which the Quran sanctions via capital punishment does not amount to individuals taking the law in their hands or killing an innocent person in revenge. The call for, "an eye for an eye," does not mean an innocent eye for an innocent eye.
- Even if some Shias and Sunnis consider each other enemies, the Quran asks us to be just even toward one's enemy "O you who believe! Stand out firmly for God, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is next to Piety: and fear Allah. For Allah is well-acquainted with all that you do." [Quran 5:8]

## **Some considerations for dialog:**

The Shia community like Sunnis is diverse. There are many differences between one Shia group and another. This is why it is important that dialog between Sunnis and Shias becomes a movement and a

process throughout society instead of everyone waiting for one high powered dialog to yield some results at the leadership level. Here are some preliminary thoughts on how a dialog between Shias and Sunnis can be beneficial for each side.

### **Goals of dialog**

Although I consider dialog a process that is beneficial to all, it is necessary that everyone involved recognize some of its tangible benefits. The following are a set of achievable goals for Shia-Sunni dialog.

- Developing an agenda of common concerns
- Identifying issues of conflict
- Issuing joint Fatwas against the killings
- Isolating extremists on each side
- Preventing a potential conflict or mediating an existing conflict
- Education to clarify stereotypes about each other
- Setting up joint task forces to deal with outstanding issues

### **Who should participate in the dialog**

- Imams and caretakers of Masjids
- Students of Madrassas
- University students
- National level religious leadership
- Shia and Sunni media persons
- Shia and Sunni businesspersons

### **Mechanism of dialog**

Dialog is a process that should occur at all levels of society. In the 1960s in Pakistan, when Shia- Sunni fights were far less significant, city officers used to convene joint meetings of Shia and Sunni leaders to chalk out Muharram plans so no confusion would result in rioting. These government-arranged dialogs helped keep conflicts at a minimum. Considering the current level of mistrust, it will be beneficial if civil society takes initiatives for dialog at all levels of society.

- Private Dialog: Host roundtable discussions initially at the top leadership level that should later expand to include
- Others working on different committees.
- Public Dialog: Shia and Sunni both use public forums and media to speak to each other's audiences
- Visiting each other's Masjids to enhance confidence and to demonstrate that they are not supportive of the extremists who isolate each other.
- Shia-Sunni Dinners: Masjids and social associations should invite Shia and Sunni friends to eat with each other publicly.

### **Publicity of dialog**

Publicity of the dialog will generate hope and confidence in it and will empower those in dialog vis-a-vis the extremists.

- Media should facilitate self-criticism and introspection by the religious leadership
- Those leaders who participate in dialog should be recognized through interviews, reports, and documentaries

- Investigative reports should be aired and published about the truth behind sectarian propaganda
- It is important for society to honor those Shia and Sunni leaders who take initiative and demonstrate leadership in participating in dialog. Sunnis, being members of the majority community, have the higher level of responsibility towards initiating and participating in dialog

### **Sponsors of Dialog**

Funding always facilitates the beginning of a process in civil society. Every task requires time and money. While participating organizations and individuals can take care of their own costs, it would be very rewarding if some individuals and businesses came forward with funds to sponsor and host these dialogs. American Muslims can start a dialog in North America where there is no conflict in the Shia-Sunni community and then inspire and sponsor dialogs where it is needed the most.

### **Beyond Dialog**

Considering that Shias and Sunnis live side by side in the Muslim world, they are not unknown to each other, and considering that most of them have nothing to do with the current extremism which is responsible for the killings and violence, it is important for the moderate majority to come up with a few initiatives which are beneficial for Shia- Sunni harmony. These could be communicated in the print form or in any other media. They should discuss the following themes and/or use the methods outlined here:

- Khutba points which can help harmony
- What type of talk can hurt at personal level
- What is common between Shias and Sunnis
- Common Hadith between Shias and Sunnis
- What is hate speech
- Islamic teachings of tolerance
- A Shia-Sunni security force, jointly safeguarding each other's houses of worship will be a significant blow to the extremist agenda.

### **Conclusion**

Shia-Sunni conflict and sectarian terrorism is tearing our community apart.

The Quran, the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the Kaba and the five pillars of Islam are common to Shias and Sunnis. That is why no one in Islamic history has stopped Shias from performing Hajj, although the Kaba has always been in the control of Sunnis. Even today, when those currently in charge of the Kaba are part of a predominantly Salafi establishment, which maintains extremely negative views of Shias, Shias like other Muslims are free to perform Hajj. Shias, by the same token, since the 1979 Iranian revolution, are ordered by Imam Khomeini to pray behind these same Salafi imams instead of praying separately.

This mutual recognition gives us hope that a dialog can bear fruit of peace and harmony between both the communities.

**And hold fast, all of you together, to the Rope of Allah and be not divided among yourselves  
(Qur'an 3:103)**

## **Why Shi'ah?**

The term "Shi'ah" is an adjective used by Muslims who follow the Imams from the Family of the Prophet (*Ahl al-Bayt*). They use it not for reasons of sectarianism or for causing divisions amongst Muslims. They use it because the Qur'an uses it, the Prophet Muhammad used it, and the early Muslims used it - before words such as *Sunni* or *Salafi* ever came into existence.

### **Shi'ah in the Qur'an**

The word "Shi'ah" means "followers; members of a party". Allah has mentioned in the Qur'an that some of His righteous servants were Shi'ah of His other righteous servants.

**And most surely Abraham was among the Shi'ah of him  
(Qur'an 37:83)**

**And he (Moses) went into the city at a time when people (of the city) were not watching, so he found therein two men fighting, one being of his Shi'ah and the other being his enemy, and the one who was of his Shi'ah cried out to him for help against the one who was of his enemy  
(Qur'an 28:15)**

Thus Shi'ah is an official word used by Allah in His Qur'an for His high rank Prophets as well as their followers.

If one is a Shi'ah (follower) of the most righteous servants, then there is nothing wrong with being Shi'ah. On the other hand, if one becomes the Shi'ah of a tyrant or a wrong-doer, he shall meet with the fate of his leader. The Qur'an indicates that on the Day of Judgment people will come in groups, and each group would have its leader (*Imam*) in front of it. Allah says:

**(Remember) the day when we will call every people with their Imam  
(Qur'an 17:71)**

On the Day of Judgment, the destiny of the "followers" of each group depends on the destiny of their Imam (provided that they really followed that Imam). Allah mentioned in the Qur'an that there are two types of Imams:

**And We made them Imams who call to the fire, and on the Day of Resurrection they shall not be assisted. And We caused a curse to follow them in this world, and on the Day of Resurrection they shall be of those made to appear hideous  
(Qur'an 28:41-42)**

The Qur'an also reminds that there are Imams who are appointed by Allah as Guides for the mankind:

**And We made of them Imams to guide by Our command when they were patient, and they were certain of Our communications  
(Qur'an 32:24)**

Certainly, the true followers (Shi'ah) of these Imams will be the real prosperous people on the Day of Resurrection.

### **Shi'ah in the Hadith**

In the history of Islam, "Shi'ah" has been especially used for the followers of Imam 'Ali (a). This phrase is not something invented later! The first individual who used this term was the Messenger of Allah himself. When the following verse of the Qur'an was revealed:

**(As for) those who believe and do good, surely they are the best of creatures  
(Qur'an 98:7)  
The Prophet (s) said to Ali: "It is for you and your Shi'ah."**

He further said: **"I swear by the one who controls my life that this man (Ali) and his Shi'ah shall secure deliverance on the Day of Resurrection."**

Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti, *Tafsir al-Durr al-Manthur*, (Cairo) vol. 6, p. 379

Ibn Jarir al-Tabari, *Tafsir Jami' al-Bayan*, (Cairo) vol. 33, p. 146

Ibn Asakir, *Ta'rikh Dimashq*, vol. 42, p. 333, p. 371

□ Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, *al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah*, (Cairo) Ch. 11, section 1, pp 246-247

The Prophet (s) said: **"O Ali! (On the day of Judgment) you and your Shi'ah will come toward Allah well-pleased and well-pleasing, and there will come to Him your enemies angry and stiff-necked (i.e., their head forced up).**

Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihaya fi gharib al-hadith*, (Beirut, 1399), vol. 4 p. 106  
al-Tabarani, *Mu'jam al-Kabir*, vol 1 p 319  
□ al-Haythami, *Majma' al-Zawa'id*, vol. 9, number 14168

The Prophet (s) said : **"Glad tidings O Ali! Verily you and your Shi'ah will be in Paradise."**

Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, *Fadha'il al-Sahaba*, (Beirut) vol. 2, p. 655  
Abu Nu'aym al-Isbahani, *Hilyatul Awliya*, vol. 4, p. 329  
al-Khatib al-Baghdadi , *Tarikh Baghdad*, (Beirut) vol. 12, p. 289  
al-Tabarani, *Mu'jam al-Kabir*, vol. 1, p. 319  
al-Haythami, *Majma' al-Zawa'id*, vol. 10, pp. 21-22  
□ Ibn 'Asakir, *Ta'rikh Dimashq*, vol. 42, pp. 331-332  
Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, *al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah*, (Cairo) Ch. 11, section 1, p. 247

## **But how could the Prophet (s) use such a divisive term?**

Was Prophet Abraham a sectarian? How about Prophet Noah and Prophet Moses? If Shi'ah was a divisive or sectarian term, neither Allah would use it for His high rank Prophets nor would Prophet Muhammad (s) have praised them.

It should be emphasized that the Prophet (s) never wished to divide Muslims into groups. He ordered all people to follow Imam Ali (a) as his agent during his life time, and as his Successor and Caliph after him. Unfortunately those who heeded the Prophet's wish were few and were known as "Shi'ah of Ali". They were subjected to all types of discrimination and persecution, and suffered from the day that the Mercy to Mankind, Prophet Muhammad (s), passed away. If all the Muslims had obeyed what the Prophet wished, then there wouldn't exist any group or school within Islam. In a tradition, the Prophet (s) said:

**"Shortly after me discord and hatred will arise among you, when such a situation arises, go and search out Ali because he can separate the Truth from falsehood"**

□ Ali Muttaqi al-Hindi, *Kanz al-'Ummal*, (Multan) vol. 2 p. 612, number 32964

Regarding the Qur'anic verse quoted earlier, some Sunni scholars narrated from Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a), the sixth Shi'ah Imam from the Family of the Prophet (*Ahl al-Bayt*), that:

**"We are the Rope of Allah about whom Allah has said: And hold fast, all of you together, to the Rope of Allah and be not divided among yourselves**

□ al-Tha'labi, *Tafsir al-Kabir*, under commentary of verse 3:103  
□ Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, *al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah*, (Cairo) Ch. 11, section 1, p. 233

Thus, if Allah denounces sectarianism, He denounces those who separated from His Rope, and not those who hold fast to it!

## **Conclusion:**

We have shown that the term Shi'ah has been used in Qur'an for the followers of the great servants of Allah, and in the traditions of the Prophet for the followers of Imam Ali (a). One who follows such a divinely appointed Guide is safe from the disputes in the religion and has grasped the Strong Rope of Allah, and has been given the glad tidings of Paradise

Narrated Jabir ibn Samura: I heard the Prophet (s) saying:  
**"There will be Twelve Commanders." He then said a sentence which I did not hear. My father said, the Prophet added, "All of them will be from Quraysh."**  
[Sahih al-Bukhari (English), Hadith: 9.329, Kitabul Ahkam;  
Sahih al-Bukhari, (Arabic), 4:165, Kitabul Ahkam]

The Prophet (s) said:  
**"The Religion (Islam) will continue until the Hour (Day of Resurrection), having Twelve Caliphs for you, all of them will be from Quraysh."**  
[Sahih Muslim, (English), Chapter DCCLIV, v3, p1010, Tradition #4483; Sahih Muslim (Arabic), Kitab al-Imaara, 1980 Saudi Arabian Edition, v3, p1453, Tradition #10]

## Who are these Twelve Successors Of the Prophet (s)?

### What the Sunni scholars say:

#### Ibn al-'Arabi:

We have counted the Amirs after the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) as twelve. We found them as follows: Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman, Ali, Hasan, Mu'awiyah, Yazid, Mu'awiyah ibn Yazid, Marwan, 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan, Yazid bin 'Abd al-Malik, Marwan bin Muhammad bin Marwan, As-Saffah... After this there were twenty-seven caliphs from the Bani Abbas.

Now if we consider twelve of them we can reach only till Sulayman. If we take the literal meaning we have only five of them and to these we add the four Righteous Caliphs, and 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz...

**I cannot understand the meaning of this Hadith.**

[Ibn al-'Arabi, Sharh Sunan Tirmidhi, 9:68-69]

#### Qadi 'Iyad al-Yahsubi:

The number of Caliphs are more than that. **To limit their number to twelve is incorrect.** The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) did not say that there will be only twelve and there is no scope for more. Hence it is possible that there can be more.

[Al-Nawawi, Sharh Sahih Muslim, 12:201-202;

Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, Fath al-Bari, 16:339]

#### Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti:

**There are only twelve Caliphs until the Day of Judgement.** And they will continue to act on truth, even if they are not continuous.

We see that from the twelve, four are the Righteous Caliphs, then Hasan, then Mu'awiyah, then Ibn Zubayr, and finally 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz. They are eight. Four of them remain. Maybe Mahdi, the Abbasid could be included as he is an Abbasid like 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz was an Umayyad. And Tahir 'Abbasi will also be included because he was a just ruler. **Thus two more are yet to come.** One of them is Mahdi, because he is from the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.).

[Al-Suyuti, Tarikh al-Khulafa, Page 12;

Ibn Hajar al-Haytami, Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa Page 19]

#### Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani:

**No one has much knowledge about this particular hadith of Sahih Bukhari.**

It is not correct to say that these Imams will be present at one and the same time.

[Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, Fath al-Bari 16:338-341]

#### Ibn al-Jawzi:

The first Caliph of Bani Umayya was Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah and the last, Marwan Al-Himar. **Their total is thirteen. 'Uthman, Mu'awiyah and ibn Zubayr are not included as they were among the Companions of the Holy Prophet (s).**

If we exclude Marwan bin al-Hakam because of the controversy about his being a Companion or that he was in power even though Abdullah ibn Zubayr had the support of the people. **Then we can get the figure of Twelve.** ... When the Caliphate came out of the Bani Umayya, a great disturbance arose. Until the Bani Abbas established themselves. Hence, the original conditions had changed completely.

[Ibn al-Jawzi, *Kashf al-Mushkil*, as quoted in Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, *Fath al-Bari* 16:340 from Sibt Ibn al-Jawzi]

## **Al-Nawawi:**

It could also mean that the twelve Imams will remain during the period of Islam's supremacy. The time when Islam will be a dominant religion. **These Caliphs will, during their tenure, glorify the religion.**

[Al-Nawawi, *Sharh Sahih Muslim*, 12:202-203]

## **Al-Bayhaqi:**

**This number (twelve) is found till the period of Walid ibn 'Abd al-Malik. After this, there was chaos and disturbance.** Then came the Abbasid dynasty. This report has increased the number of Imams. If we neglect some of their characteristics which came after the disturbance, then their number will be much higher."

[Ibn Kathir, *Ta'rikh*, 6:249; Al-Suyuti, *Tarikh al-Khulafa* Page 11]

## **Ibn Kathir:**

Whosoever follows Bayhaqi and agrees with his assertion that Jama'ah means those Caliphs who came intermittently till the time of **Walid ibn Yazid ibn 'Abd al-Malik the transgressor** comes under the purview of the tradition quoted by us criticising and denouncing such people.

And if we accept the Caliphate of Ibn Zubayr before 'Abd al-Malik **the total shall be sixteen.** Whereas their total should be twelve before 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz. **In this method Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah will be included and not 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz.** However, it is established that the majority of the 'ulama accept 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz as a truthful and a just Caliph.

[Ibn Kathir, *Ta'rikh*, 6:249-250]

## **Confused?**

We need another Sunni scholar to finally clarify who these Twelve Successors, Caliphs, *Amirs* and *Imams* really are:

The famous scholar al-Dhahabi says in *Tadhkirat al-Huffaz*, vol. 4, p. 298, and Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani says in *al-Durar al-Kaminah*, vol. 1, p. 67 that Sadruddin Ibrahim bin Muhammad bin al-Hamawayh al-Juwayni al-Shafi'i was a great scholar of Hadith. The same Al-Juwayni reports from Abdullah ibn Abbas (r) from the Prophet (s) who said,

**"I am the chief of the Prophets and Ali ibn Abi Talib is the chief of successors, and after me my successors shall be twelve, the first of them being Ali ibn Abi Talib and the last of them being Al Mahdi."**

Al-Juwayni also narrates from Ibn 'Abbas (r) from the Prophet (s):

**"Certainly my Caliphs and my legatees and the Proofs of Allah upon his creatures after me are twelve. The first of them is my brother and the last of them is my (grand) son." He was asked: "O Messenger of Allah, who is your brother?" He said, "Ali ibn Abi Talib" Then they asked, "And who is your son?" The Holy Prophet (s) replied, "Al Mahdi, the one who will fill the earth with justice and equity like it would be brimming with injustice and tyranny. And by the One Who has raised me as a warner and a give of good tidings, even if a day remains for the life of this world, the Almighty Allah will prolong this day to an extent till he sends my son Mahdi, then he will make Ruhullah 'Isa ibn Maryam (a) to descend and pray behind him (Mahdi). And the earth will be illuminated by his radiance. And his power will reach to the east and the west."**

Al-Juwayni also narrates that the Messenger of Allah (s) informed:

**"I and Ali and Hasan and Husayn and nine of the descendants of Husayn are the purified ones and the inerrant."**

[Al-Juwayni, *Fara'id al-Simtayn*, Mu'assassat al-Mahmudi li-Taba'ah, Beirut 1978, p. 160.]

**Amongst all the Islamic schools of thought, only the Shi'ah Imamiyyah Ithna 'Ashariyyah (Twelver Shi'ites) believe in these individuals as the Twelve rightful successors of the Prophet (s) and obtain their understanding of Islam from them.**

**O Messenger, Proclaim what has been sent down to you from your Lord; and if you don't do it, you have not delivered His Message (at all); and Allah will protect you from the people (Qur'an: Chapter 5, Verse 67)**

## **Did the Prophet (s) Appoint a Successor?**

The Shi'ah believe that the proclamation mentioned by the Qur'anic verse was fulfilled by the Prophet (s) when he appointed Imam 'Ali bin Abi Talib (a) as his successor on the day of Ghadir Khumm

### **What happened on the day of Ghadir Khumm?**

Ghadir Khumm is a location some miles from Makkah on the road to Madinah. When the Prophet (s) was passing by this place on 18 Dhu'l Hijja (10 March 632) on his return from the Farewell Pilgrimage, the verse "*O Messenger, Proclaim what has been sent down...*" was revealed. He therefore stopped to make an announcement to the pilgrims who accompanied him from Makkah and who were to disperse from that junction to their respective destinations. By the orders of the Prophet (s) a special pulpit made of branches of trees was erected for him. After the noon prayer the Prophet (s) sat on the pulpit and made his last public address to the largest gathering before his death three months later.

The highlight of his sermon was when, taking Imam 'Ali (a) by the hand, the Prophet (s) asked his followers whether he was superior in authority (*awla*) to the believers themselves. The crowd cried out in one voice: "It is so, O Apostle of Allah".

He then declared: "**He of whom I am the master (mawla), of him 'Ali is also the master (mawla). O God, be the friend of him who is his friend, and be the enemy of him who is his enemy.**"

Immediately after the Prophet (s) finished his speech, the following verse of the Qur'an was revealed:

**Today I have perfected your religion and completed my favor upon you, and I was satisfied that Islam be your religion. (Qur'an 5:3)**

After his speech, the Prophet (s) asked everybody to give the oath of allegiance to 'Ali (a) and congratulate him. Among those who did so was 'Umar bin al-Khattab, who said: "Well done Ibn Abi Talib! Today you became the master of all believing men and women."

An Arab, having heard of the event of Ghadir Khumm, came up to the Prophet (s) and said: "You commanded us to testify that there is no deity but Allah and that you are the Messenger of Allah. We obeyed you. You ordered us to perform the prayers five times a day and we obeyed. You ordered us to observe fasts during the month of Ramadhan and we obeyed. Then you commanded us to offer pilgrimage to Makkah and we obeyed. **But you are not satisfied with all this and you raised your cousin by your hand and imposed him upon us as our master by saying 'Ali is the mawla of whom I am mawla.' Is this imposition from Allah or from you?"** The Prophet (s) said : "By Allah who is the only deity! This is from Allah, the Mighty and the Glorious."

On hearing this reply the man turned back and proceeded towards his she-camel saying: "O Allah! If what Muhammad said is correct then fling on us a stone from the sky and subject us to severe pain and torture." He had not reached his she-camel when Allah flung at him a stone which struck him on his head, penetrated his body and left him dead. It was on this occasion that Allah, the exalted, caused to descend the following verses:

**A questioner questioned about the punishment to fall. For the disbelievers there is nothing to avert it, from Allah the Lord of the Ascent. (Qur'an 70:1-3)**

### **Do the Sunni scholars consider this event authentic?**

The number of Sunni authorities who narrate this event, both in detail and in summary, is mind boggling! This historic event was narrated by 110 Companions of the Prophet (s), 84 Successors from the following generation and then by many hundreds of scholars of the Islamic world, from the first to the fourteenth century AH (seventh to twentieth century CE).

### **These statistics only include transmitters appearing in narrations recorded by Sunni scholars!**

A very small selection of these sources is given below. Many of these scholars not only quote the Prophet's declaration but also call it authentic:

- al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak `ala al-Sahihayn (Beirut), volume 3, pp. 109-110, p. 133, p. 148, p. 533. He expressly states that the tradition is *sahih* in accordance with the criteria of al-Bukhari and Muslim; al-Dhahabi has confirmed his judgment.
- al-Tirmidhi, Sunan (Cairo), vol. 5, p. 633
- Ibn Majah, Sunan, (Cairo, 1952), vol. 1, p. 45
- Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, Fath al-Bari bi Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari, (Beirut, 1988), vol. 7, p. 61
- Al-'Ayni, 'Umdat al-Qari Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari, vol. 8, p. 584
- Ibn al-'Athir, Jami` al-'usul, i, 277, no. 65;
- Al-Suyuti, al-Durr al-Manthur, vol. 2, p. 259 and p. 298
- Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, Tafsir al-Kabir, (Beirut, 1981), vol. 11, p. 53
- Ibn Kathir, Tafsir Qur'an al-'Azim, (Beirut), vol. 2, p. 14
- Al-Wahidi, Asbab al-Nuzul, p. 164
- Ibn al-'Athir, Usd al-Ghaba fi Ma'rifat al-Sahaba, (Cairo), vol.3, p. 92
- Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, (Hyderabad, 1325), vol. 7, p. 339
- Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah, (Cairo, 1932), vol. 7, p. 340, vol. 5, p. 213
- Al-Tahawi, Mushkil al-Athar, (Hyderabad, 1915), vol. 2, pp. 308-9
- Nur al-Din al-Halabi al-Shafi'i, al-Sirah al-Halabiyya, vol. 3, p. 337
- Al-Zurqani, Sharh al-Mawahib al-Ladunniyya, vol. 7, p.

## But doesn't the word *mawla* mean friend?

Although a huge number of Sunni scholars from all ages and from all points of view have confirmed the event and the historic words of the Prophet (s), they have found it difficult to reconcile it with what actually happened after the demise of the Prophet (s). It is outside the scope of this short document to detail those incidents. The important point is that many Sunni scholars claimed that the Prophet (s) merely wished to declare 'Ali (a) as a friend and helper to the Muslims!

There are many aspects to this event that show that it was much more significant. The revelation of the various verses of the Qur'an, the large gathering, the final stages of the Prophet's life, the confirmation by the people that the Prophet (s) was superior in authority, the subsequent congratulations by 'Umar as well as many other factors which are difficult to cover in this short document, all point to the occasion as one of designation of successor by the Prophet (s). It is evident that the word *mawla* was used in the sense of absolute authority after the Prophet (s) including, but not restricted to, temporal power.

## The Final Word

If there still remains doubt about the historic importance of this statement and the efforts of some people to cover it up, let this be the final word:

**When Imam 'Ali (a), during the time of his caliphate and decades after the event of Ghadir, said to Anas bin Malik, the Companion of the Prophet (s): "Why don't you stand up and testify what you heard from the Messenger of Allah on the day of Ghadir?" He answered, "O Amir al-Muminin! I have grown old and do not remember." Thereupon 'Ali (a) said: "May Allah mark you with a white spot (of leprosy) unconcealable with your turban, if you are intentionally withholding the truth." And before Anas got up from his place he bore a large white spot on his face."**

- Ibn Qutaybah al-Dinawari, Kitab al-Ma'arif, (Cairo, 1353 AH), p. 251
- Ahmad bin Hanbal, al-Musnad, vol. 1, p. 119
- Abu Nu`aym al-'Isfahani, Hilyat al-Awliya', (Beirut, 1988), vol. 5, p. 27
- Nur al-Din al-Halabi al-Shafi'i, al-Sirah al-Halabiyya, vol. 3, p. 336
- Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, Kanz al-'Ummal, (Halab, 1969-84), vol. 13, p. 131

**Verily Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O People of the House (Ahl al-Bayt) and to purify you a thorough purifying [Verse of Purification from Qur'an 33:33]**

Prophet Muhammad (s) was asked by his Companions: "How should we invoke blessings for you?" ... He said:

**"Say: 'O Allah! Send Your blessings on Muhammad and the Family of Muhammad, as You sent Your blessings on Abraham and on the Family of Abraham, for You are the Most Praiseworthy, the Most Glorious.'"**

[Sahih al-Bukhari, volume 4, book 55, number 589]

## **Why Follow the Family of the Prophet (s)?**

The Shi'ah believe that the twin legacy of Prophet Muhammad (s) is the Qur'an and the *Ahl al-Bayt* (specific members of his family). The *Ahl al-Bayt* are the source for the authentic *Sunnah* of the Prophet (s). Only by obtaining instruction from **both** these sources can a Muslim hope to attain true guidance.

### **Prophet Muhammad's Legacy**

**"I am about to answer the call (of death). Verily, I leave behind two precious things (thaqalayn) amongst you: the Book of Allah and my Ahl al-Bayt. Verily, the two will never separate until they come back to me by the side of the Pond."**

This authentic *hadith* from the Prophet Muhammad (s) is narrated by over 30 of his Companions and recorded by a large number of Sunni scholars. Some of the famous sources for this *hadith* include:

- al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak `ala al-Sahihayn (Beirut), volume 3, pages 109-110, 148, and 533). He expressly states that the tradition is *sahih* in accordance with the criteria of al-Bukhari and Muslim; al-Dhahabi has confirmed his judgement
- Muslim, al-Sahih, (English translation), book 031, numbers 5920-3
- al-Tirmidhi, al-Sahih, volume 5, pages 621-2, numbers 3786 and 3788; volume 2, page 219
- al-Nasa'i, Khasa'is 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, hadith number 79
- Ahmad b. Hanbal, al-Musnad, volume 3, pages 14, 17, 26; volume 3, page 26, 59; volume 4, page 371; volume 5, pages 181-2, 189-190
- Ibn al-'Athir, Jami' al-'usul, volume 1, page 277
- Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah wa al-nihayah, volume 5, page 209. He quotes al-Dhahabi and declares this *hadith* to be *sahih*.
- Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim, volume 6, page 199
- Nasir al-Din al-Albani, Silsilat al-Ahadith al-Sahihah (Kuwait: al-Dar al-Salafiyya), volume 4, pages 355-8. He lists many chains of narration that he considers reliable.

There are many more sources for this *hadith* than it is possible to list here.

### **Didn't the Prophet (s) say "I leave behind the Book of God and my Sunnah" ?**

This is a popular misconception. The fact is that there is no reliable basis for this statement attributed to the Prophet's (s) Final Sermon. **It is completely absent from any of the six *Sihah* books!** The version in Malik's *Muwatta'*, Ibn Hisham's *Sirat Rasul Allah*, and from him in al-Tabari's *Ta'rikh*, **all suffer from incomplete chains of narration** with several links in the chain missing! The other versions that have a full chain of narration (*isnad*) - of which there are very few - **all contain narrators that are unanimously considered to be highly unreliable** by leading Sunni scholars of *rijal*. These remarkable facts can be confirmed by those interested in research by referring to the relevant books.

Clearly, no one is suggesting that the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (s) should not be followed. As stated before, the Prophet (s) wished for the Muslims to refer to his Ahl al-Bayt as a reliable, pure and inerrant source for his *Sunnah*.

### **What is so special about the Family of the Prophet (s) ?**

**When the verse "(O Muhammad) Say, 'I do not ask for any reward for this (bringing of Allah's message) except the love for the near kinship.'" (42:23) was revealed, the Muslims asked the Prophet: "Who are these near kin of yours whose love is obligatory upon us?" He replied, "'Ali, Fatima, and their two sons."**

- ❑ al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak `ala al-Sahihayn, volume 2, page 444
- ❑ al-Qastallani, *Irshad al-Sari Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari*, volume 7, page 331
- ❑ al-Suyuti, al-Durr al-Manthur, volume 6, pages 6-7
- ❑ al-Alusi al-Baghdadi, *Ruh al-Ma'ani*, volume 25, pages 31-2

The position of truthfulness and virtue of the Ahl al-Bayt was further confirmed by the Qur'an during the disputation with the Christians of Najran. When the verse was revealed **"But whoever disputes with you in this matter after what has come to you of knowledge, then say: come let us call our sons and your sons and our women and your women and our near people and your near people, then let us be earnest in prayer, and pray for the curse of Allah on the liars."** (3:61), the Prophet (s) called 'Ali, Fatima, al-Hasan and al-Husayn and said: 'O Allah, these are my Family (Ahli)'.

- ❑ Muslim, al-Sahih, (English translation), book 031, number 5915
- ❑ al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak `ala al-Sahihayn, volume 3, page 150. He states that it is *sahih* in accordance with the criteria of al-Bukhari and Muslim
- ❑ Ibn Hajar al-`Asqalani, Fath al-Bari Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari, volume 7, page 60
- ❑ al-Tirmidhi, al-Sahih, kitab al-manaqib, volume 5, page 596
- ❑ Ahmad b. Hanbal, al-Musnad, volume 1, page 185
- ❑ al-Suyuti, History of Khalifas Who Took The Right Way, (London, 1995), page 176

## Isn't it enough to show respect towards the Ahl al-Bayt ?

Is it sufficient to just show respect towards the Qur'an? Surely the Muslims have no choice but to follow it, as a source of Divine guidance, in *all* their affairs. The Prophet Muhammad (s) left two things as legacy to the Muslims, and promised that they will never separate from each other until the Day of Judgement. **By twinning the Ahl al-Bayt with the Qur'an, the Prophet (s) was telling us to not only show respect towards them, but also to take explanations of Islamic doctrine, practices, *hadith* and *tafsir* from them.**

**"Behold! My Ahl al-Bayt are like the Ark of Noah. Whoever embarked on it was saved, and whoever turned away from it perished"**

- al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak `ala al-Sahihayn, volume 3, p. 151 and volume 2, page 343. He states that it is *sahih* in accordance with the criteria of Muslim
- al-Suyuti, al-Durr al-Manthur, volume 1, pages 71-72
- Ibn Hajar al-Makki, al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa, page 140. He states that this tradition has come down through many chains of narration that strengthen each other.

## Who are included in the Ahl al-Bayt ?

It has been shown that the Family of the Prophet (s) – interchangeably referred to as the *Ahl al-Bayt*, *Itrah* and *Aal* - included his daughter Fatima al-Zahra', her husband Imam 'Ali, and their children Imams al-Hasan and al-Husayn ('a). The members of this Family of five, with the Prophet Muhammad (s) at its head, were the ones alive at the time the Qur'anic verses regarding their virtue were being revealed to the Prophet (s). However, nine other Imams from the descendants of Imam al-Husayn ('a) are also in this chosen Family, the final one being Imam al-Mahdi ('a). The Prophet (s) said:

**"I and 'Ali and al-Hasan and al-Husayn and nine of the descendants of al-Husayn are the purified ones and the inerrant."** [al-Juwayni, Fara'id al-Simtayn, (Beirut, 1978), page 160. Note that al-Juwayni's greatness as a scholar of hadith has been attested by al-Dhahabi in Tadhkirat al-Huffaz, volume 4, page 298, and also by Ibn Hajar al-`Asqalani in al-Durar al-Kaminah, volume 1, page 67]

**"I am the chief of the Prophets and 'Ali ibn Abi Talib is the chief of successors, and after me my successors shall be twelve, the first of them being 'Ali ibn Abi Talib and the last of them being al-Mahdi."** [al-Juwayni, Fara'id al-Simtayn, page 160]

**"Al-Mahdi is one of us Ahl al-Bayt" and "al-Mahdi will be of my family, of the descendants of Fatima"** [Ibn Majah, al-Sunan, volume 2, page 519, numbers 4085-6; Abu Dawud, al-Sunan, volume 2, page 207]

## What about the Wives of the Prophet (s) ?

**The verse of purification "Verily Allah only desires to ... " was revealed to the Prophet (s) in the house of his wife Umm Salama (may Allah be pleased with her); the Prophet called al-Hasan, al-Husayn, Fatima and 'Ali, and he gathered them together and covered them with the mantle. Then he said, "O Allah, these are my Ahl al-Bayt, so keep away every impurity from the Ahl al-Bayt, and purify them with a perfect purification." Umm Salama said, "Am I with them, O Apostle of Allah?" The Prophet (s) said, "You stay in your place, and you are virtuous."**

- ❑ al-Tirmidhi, al-Sahih, volume 5, pages 351 and 663
- ❑ al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak `ala al-Sahihayn, volume 2, page 416. He states that it is *sahih* in accordance with the criteria of al-Bukhari
- ❑ al-Suyuti, al-Durr al-Manthur, volume 5, page 197

The beginning of verse 33:33 and subsequent statements are addressed to the wives of the Prophet (s) as is evident from the feminine pronouns used. However, in the verse of purification, the gender changes to the masculine or mixed gender. This also shows that it was an independent revelation addressed to different individuals.

**“O Believers, if an unrighteous person comes to you with information, you should verify it or else you might inflict harm on a people in ignorance and then end up regretting what you have done”  
(Qur'an: Chapter 49, Verse 6)**

## **Were All Companions Just and Truthful?**

The Shi'ah are devoted to all those Companions of the Prophet Muhammad (s) who were loyal to his teachings in his life and remained so after his death. According to the Sunni view, even those who merely saw the Prophet (s) for a few seconds are called Companions and are considered immune from criticism. This idea is not supported by the Qur'an or historical facts, and has led to much of the difference between the two schools of thought.

### **A Companion Defined**

Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, the famous Sunni scholar, defined a Companion of the Prophet (s) as a person who met the Prophet Muhammad (s), after having accepted Islam, and died while still being a Muslim. He included in this definition the following:

all those people who met the Prophet (s), irrespective of the fact whether it was for a long period or a very brief one,

those who transmitted traditions from the Prophet (s) and those who did not,

those who fought along with the Prophet (s) and those who did not,

those who merely saw the Prophet (s) but did not sit in a gathering with him,

as well as those who did not see him due to any excuse such as being blind.

[Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, *al-'Isabah fi Tamyiz al-Sahaba*, (Beirut), vol. 1, p. 10]

### **Were All Companions Just and Truthful?**

The Ahl al-Sunnah are unanimous on the issue that *all* the Companions were just and trustworthy and that they were the best of the *ummah*. Many Sunni scholars have stated this belief, including:

□ Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, *al-'Isabah fi Tamyiz al-Sahaba*, (Cairo), vol. 1, pp. 17-22

□ Ibn Abi Hatim al-Razi, *al-Jarh wa al-Ta'dil*, (Hyderabad), vol. 1, pp. 7-9

□ Ibn al-'Athir, *Usd al-Ghaba fi Ma'rifat al-Sahaba*, vol.1, pp. 2-3

This concept is difficult to accept in the light of indisputable evidence to the contrary. Consider the following example:

□ **"Az-Zubair told me that he quarrelled with an Ansari man who had participated in (the battle of) Badr in front of Allah's Apostle about a water stream which both of them used for irrigation. Allah's Apostle said to Az-Zubair, "O Zubair! Irrigate (your garden) first, and then let the water flow to your neighbor." The Ansari became angry and said, "O Allah's Apostle! Is it because he is your cousin?" On that the complexion of Allah's Apostle changed (because of anger) and said (to Az-Zubair), "Irrigate (your garden) and then with-hold the water till it reaches the walls (surrounding the palms)." So, Allah's Apostle gave Az-Zubair his full right. Before that Allah's Apostle had given a generous judgment beneficial for Az-Zubair and the Ansari, but when the Ansari irritated Allah's Apostle he gave Az-Zubair his full right according to the evident law. Az-Zubair said, "By Allah ! I think the following Verse was revealed concerning that case: "But no by your Lord They can have No faith Until they make you judge In all disputes between them." (4.65)"**

[Sahih al-Bukhari (English translation), volume 3, book 49, number 871]

According to the Sunni doctrine this Companion of the Prophet (s) would be beyond reproach as an authority on *sunnah* and his actions would be a model to be followed. This is despite the fact that this Companion not only refused to accept the judgment of the Prophet (s) but caused him grief resulting in the revelation of the Qur'anic verse.

Unfortunately, Islamic history is replete with many examples of such people who, although they meet the Sunni criteria to be called Companions, behaved in an un-Islamic way. This behavior was exhibited during the Prophet's (s) life or afterwards or both!

### **Al-Walid bin 'Uqbah**

**Is he then who is a believer like he who is a transgressor (fasiq)? They are not equal.  
(Qur'an: Surah al-Sajdah, verse 18)**

Leading Sunni commentators tell us that the context of the revelation of this verse was an incident whereby the word "believer" referred to Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib and the "transgressor" (*fasiq*) referred to a Companion of the Prophet (s) called **al-Walid bin 'Uqba bin Abi Mu'ayt**.

al-Qurtubi, *Tafsir*, (Cairo, 1947), vol. 14, p. 105

al-Tabari, *Tafsir Jami' al-Bayan*, under commentary for this verse

Al-Wahidi, *Asbab al-Nuzul*, (Dar al-Diyan li-Turath edition), p. 291

We have already seen the Qur'anic verse that forbids believers from blindly believing any news transmitted by a *fasiq*:

**O ye who believe! if a wicked person (fasiq) comes to you with any news, ascertain the truth, lest ye harm people unwittingly, and afterwards become full of repentance for what ye have done.  
(Surah al-Hujurat, verse 6)**

It is interesting to note that the exegesis of this verse indicates *another* incident where the same al-Walid lied about a matter that led to the revelation of this verse declaring him a transgressor (*fasiq*).

Ibn Kathir, Tafsir Qur'an al-'Azim, (Beirut, 1987), vol. 4, p. 224

al-Qurtubi, Tafsir, (Cairo, 1947), vol. 16, p. 311

al-Suyuti and al-Mahalli, Tafsir al-Jalalayn, (Cairo, 1924), vol. 1, p. 185

Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips, Tafseer Soorah al-Hujuraat, (Riyadh), pp. 62-63

As Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips says, "great caution must always be taken when dealing with information conveyed by people of doubtful character, those whose honesty has not yet been proven or by known sinners". **However, we find in the Sunni hadith collections traditions of the Prophet (s) on the authority of al-Walid!** See, for example:

- Abu Dawud, Sunan, (1973), Kitab al-Tarajjul, *bab fi'l-khuluq li'r-rijal*, vol. 4, p. 404, hadith number 4181
- Ahmad bin Hanbal, al-Musnad, *awwal musnad al-madaniyyin ajma'in*, hadith 15784

Al-Walid's wickedness did not end during the Prophet's (s) time. He was appointed governor of al-Kufah by 'Uthman, the third caliph, where his wickedness continued. **Once he led the morning prayers in a condition of intoxication and prayed four instead of two units.** He was subsequently given the punishment on the orders of 'Uthman. This incident is mentioned in countless sources including some mentioned above, as well as:

Sahih al-Bukhari (English translation), volume 5, book 57, number 45; volume 5, book 58, number 212

Al-Tabari, Ta'rikh, (English translation: *History of al-Tabari, The Crisis of the Early Caliphate*), volume XV, p.120

**Sunni legal experts use precisely this precedent of the wicked (fasiq) Companion al-Walid to legalise praying behind a person who is an open sinner!!**

'Ali al-Qari al-Harawi al-Hanafii, Sharh Fiqh al-Akbar, under chapter '*it is permissible to pray behind a good person or a wicked person*', p. 90

Ibn Taymiyyah, Majmu' Fatawa, (Riyadh, 1381), vol. 3, p. 281

## **But why not let bygones be bygones?**

If we uncover the faults of Companions such as al-Walid, it is not because of any perverse desire to backbite. Rather, it is because Muslims need to be very careful of where they get their information from regarding the tenets of Islam and the *sunnah* of the Prophet (s). This can only be determined by paying careful attention to the lives of all the Companions of the Prophet (s), and letting their own deeds speak for their character and trustworthiness. After all, the Prophet (s) has already warned us:

"I shall arrive at the Pool before you, and he who passes by me will drink, and whoever drinks from it will never feel thirsty. There will come to me people that I know and they know me, but we shall be separated, then I shall say, 'My companions'. An answer shall come, 'You do not know what they did after you'. Then I shall say, 'Away with those who changed after me.'"

[Sahih al-Bukhari (English translation), volume 8, book 76, number 585]

## **The Shi'i View on the Companions**

The Shi'ah love the sincere Companions of the Prophet (s) who are praised in the Qur'an. This praise does not cover individuals such as al-Walid bin 'Uqbah who, despite meeting the Sunni criteria of Companionship, cannot be considered role models or reliable transmitters of the *sunnah*. The Shi'ah therefore do not believe in the universal integrity of all Companions but examine the history of each Companion to discover his or her adherence to the Prophetic message. Of course there were many such Companions including but not restricted to 'Ammar, Miqdad, Abu Dharr, Salman, Jabir, and Ibn 'Abbas. We conclude with an extract from a supplication by the fourth Shi'ah Imam Zayn al-'Abidin (a) in praise of these noble Companions, may Allah be well pleased with them:

**O God, and as for the Companions of Muhammad specifically, those who did well in companionship, who stood the good test in helping him, responded to him when he made them hear his messages' argument, separated from mates and children in manifesting his word, fought against fathers and sons in strengthening his prophecy, and through him gained victory; those who were wrapped in affection for him, hoping for a commerce that comes not to naught in love for him; those who were left by their clans when they clung to his handhold and denied by their kinsfolk when they rested in the shadow of his kinship; forget not, O God, what they abandoned for Thee and in Thee, and make them pleased with Thy good pleasure for the sake of the creatures they drove to Thee while they were with Thy Messenger, summoners to Thee for Thee.**

[Imam Zayn al-'Abidin, Sahifa al-Kamilah, (English translation, London, 1988), p. 27]

**And during a part of the night, engage in the night prayer (Tahajjud) beyond what is incumbent on you; perhaps your Lord will raise you to a position of great glory. (17:79)**

Prophet Muhammad (s) said regarding the month of Ramadan:

**“Whoever establishes the night prayer (Qiyam al-Layl) in it out of sincere Faith and hope for reward from Allah, all of his previous sins will be forgiven.”**

[*Sahih al-Bukhari*, volume 3, book 32, number 226]

## **Why do the Shi’ah avoid *Tarawih* congregations?**

The Ahl al-Sunnah generally consider it a *sunnah* to offer specific evening prayers – the *Tarawih* – in congregation during the holy month of Ramadan. The Shi’ah, while being commended to offer similar *nawafil* (recommended prayers), are not allowed to offer them in congregation. This practice of the Shi’ah is in accordance with the orders and *sunnah* of the Prophet (s).

Brothers and sisters from the Ahl al-Sunnah come together in *Tarawih* congregations during the early evenings of the month of Ramadan. They stand in prayer and recite the Qur’an, and may Allah (swt) reward them for their sincere intentions and actions. However, **the word *Tarawih* was never mentioned by the Qur’an or the Prophet (s) to describe these extra congregational prayers during the evenings of the month of Ramadan.** It is a term developed later amongst Muslims. Linguistically, the word “**Tarawih**” is the plural of the word ‘*tarwihah*’ referring to the short period of rest between every four units of the prayer. Later, the entire congregational prayers in the nights of Ramadan were called by this term.

### **Origins of *Tarawih* as a Congregational Prayer**

It is a well-established fact that the *Tarawih*, as a congregational night prayer of Ramadan, owes its existence to the order of the second caliph, ‘Umar b. al-Khattab.

- **Narrated Abu Hurayra: Allah's Apostle said, “Whoever prayed at night the whole month of Ramadan out of sincere faith and hoping for a reward from Allah, then all his previous sins will be forgiven.” Ibn Shihab (a sub-narrator) said, “When Allah's Apostle died, the people continued observing that (i.e. Nawafil offered individually, not in congregation), and it remained as such during the Caliphate of Abu Bakr and in the early days of ‘Umar's Caliphate.” ‘Abdur Rahman bin ‘Abdul Qari said, “I went out in the company of ‘Umar bin Al-Khattab one night in Ramadan to the mosque and found the people praying in different groups – a man praying alone or a man praying with a little group behind him. Then, ‘Umar said, ‘In my opinion I would better collect these (people) under the leadership of one *Qari* (reciter) [i.e. let them pray in congregation!]. So, he made up his mind to congregate them behind Ubayy bin Ka’b. Then, on another night, I went again in his company and the people were praying behind their reciter. On that, ‘Umar remarked, ‘What an excellent *BID’A* (INNOVATION in religion) this is; but the prayer which they do not perform, but rather sleep at its time, is better than the one they are offering.’ He meant the prayer in the last part of the night.”**

[*Sahih al-Bukhari*, volume 3, book 32, number 227]

- **“It was called *BID’AH* because the Prophet (s) did not use to pray it in congregation, and neither was it prayed like that in the time of al-Siddiq (referring to the first Caliph), nor in the early part of night or with these number of units.”**

[al-Qatallani, *Irshad al-Sari Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari*, volume 5, page 4]

[al-Nawawi, *Sharh Sahih Muslim*, volume 6, page 287]

- **“‘Umar was the first who set the example of the night prayer of Ramadan, the *Tarawih*, and gathered people for it, and instructed different regions regarding it. This was during the month of Ramadhan of the year 14 (*hijri*). He appointed for the people reciters of the Qur’an who led the *Tarawih* prayer for men and women.”**

[Ibn Sa’d, *Kitab al-Tabaqat*, volume 3, page 281]

[al-Suyuti, *Tarikh al-Khulafa’*, page 137]

[al-‘Ayni, *Umdat al-Qari fi Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari*, volume 6, page 125]

### **Congregation in Mosque or Individually at Home?**

Offering the optional prayers individually inside the home and away from congregation in mosque is highly recommended by the Prophet (s) as it brings more blessings for the home and family and helps in the Islamic upbringing of children.

- **The Prophet (s) said: “O people! Perform your prayers at your homes, for the best prayer of a person is what he performs at his home, except the compulsory (congregational) prayer.”**

[*Sahih al-Bukhari*, volume 9, book 92, number 393]

[al-Nasa'i, *Sunan*, volume 3, p. 161, p. 198]

- Once Abdullah bin Mas'ud asked the Prophet (s): "Which is better; to pray in my house or in the mosque?" The Prophet (s) replied: "Do you not see how near to the mosque my house is? **To pray in my house is more beloved to me than to pray in the mosque except for the obligatory prayers.**" [Ibn Majah, *Sunan*, volume 1, page 439, number 1378]

- Narrated Zayd bin Thabit: Allah's Apostle (s) made a small room (with a palm leaf mat). He (s) came out (of his house) and prayed in it. Some men came and joined him in his prayer. Then again the next night they came for the prayer, but the Prophet (s) delayed and did not come out to them. So they raised their voices and knocked the door with small stones (to draw his attention). **He came out to them in a state of anger**, saying, "You are still insisting (on your deed) that I fear this prayer might become obligatory on you. So, **O you people! offer this prayer at your homes, for the best prayer of a person is the one which he offers at home, except the compulsory (congregational) prayer.**" [Sahih al-Bukhari, volume 8, book 73, number 134]

## Didn't the Shi'ah Imams Pray *Tarawih* ?

Imam al-Baqir ('a) and Imam al-Sadiq ('a) were asked about the permissibility of praying optional prayers in congregation during the nights of Ramadan. They both narrated a tradition of the Prophet (s) where he said:

- **"Verily, the offering of *nafila* (recommended prayers) in congregation during the nights of Ramadan is an *INNOVATION*...** O people! do not say *nafila* prayers of Ramadan in congregation.... Without doubt, performing a minor act of worship which is according to the *sunnah* is better than performing a major act of worship which is an innovation." [al-Hurr al-'Amili, *Wasa'il al-Shi'ah*, volume 8, page 45]

This view of the Imams from the Prophet's progeny is confirmed by a scholar well-known amongst the Ahl al-Sunnah who writes:

- "The progeny of the Prophet (s) say that congregation in *Tarawih* is an *INNOVATION*". [al-Shawkani, *Nayl al-Awtar*, volume 3, page 50]

## What do Sunni scholars say about praying *Tarawih* at home ?

- "The scholars agree on its merit, but they differ on whether it is better to pray it in one's home individually or in congregation in a mosque." Al-Nawawi, the famous commentator of *Sahih Muslim*, then goes on to list scholars who support the second and dominant view. He then writes: **"Malik, Abu Yusuf, some Shafi'i scholars, and others say that it is better to pray it individually in the home"**. [al-Nawawi, *Sharh Sahih Muslim*, volume 6, page 286]

## Conclusion

The Shi'ah always aspire to pray the night prayer – called the *Tahajjud* or *Qiyam al-Layl* or *Salat al-Layl* – in the last part of the nights of every month, particularly during Ramadan. They are also commended to offer additional *nawafil* prayers during the nights of Ramadan. However, they offer these optional prayers mostly in their homes and never in congregation. By doing so they abide by the Qur'an and the *sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad (s).

**“Undertake the prayer at the time of the declining sun to the darkness of the night and the morning recitation; for indeed the morning recitation is witnessed”(Qur'an: Chapter 17, Verse 78)**

## **Why do the Shi'ah Combine Prayers?**

The Shi'ah acknowledge the five obligatory daily prayers. However, they frequently combine the Zuhr and 'Asr prayers by offering them consecutively during the time period defined by the start of Zuhr and the end of 'Asr. They also consider it permissible to combine the Maghrib and 'Isha prayers in a similar manner. This practice is in complete agreement with the Qur'an as well as authentic traditions from the Prophet (s). The Sunni schools of law (fiqh) - with the exception of the Hanafi school - allow the combining of the obligatory prayers (al-jam` bayn al-salatayn) in the case of rain, travel, fear, or other emergencies. The Hanafi school of law prohibits the combination of the daily prayers at any time, with the exception of the prayers at Al-Muzdalifa during the Hajj. The Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali schools of law all agree on the permissibility of combining the prayers when one is travelling, but have differences of opinion on other reasons. The Shi'ah Ja'fari school of law states that one can combine the prayers without any particular reason.

### **Prayer timings according to the Qur'an**

Imam Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, the famous Sunni commentator on the Qur'an, wrote regarding the verse quoted (Chapter 17, Verse 78) :

- "If we interpret the darkness (ghasaq) as being the time when darkness first appears then the term ghasaq refers to the beginning of Maghrib. On this basis, three timings are mentioned in the verse: 'the time of noon, the time of the beginning of Maghrib and the time of Fajr'. This requires that noon be the time of Zuhr and `Asr, this time is shared between these two prayers. The time of the beginning of Maghrib is the time for Maghrib and 'Isha' so this time is also shared between these two prayers. This requires allowing the combining between Zuhr and `Asr and between Maghrib and 'Isha' at all times. However, there is proof to indicate that combining whilst at home without any excuse is not allowed. This leads to the view that the combining be allowed when travelling or when there is rain etc."  
[Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, al-Tafsir al-Kabir, vol. 5, p. 428]

We will shortly point out irrefutable evidence that combining prayers without any excuse is perfectly valid. However, it is clear that the times of the obligatory prayers are only three: 1) The time of the two obligatory prayers, Zuhr (noon) and `Asr (afternoon), which is shared between the two. 2) The time of the two obligatory prayers Maghrib (dusk) and 'Isha' (night) which is also shared between the two. 3) The time for the Fajr (morning) prayer which is specific to it.

### **Did the Prophet (s) combine prayers?**

**Ibn 'Abbas reported that the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) observed in Medina seven (rak'ahs) and eight (rak'ahs), i. e. (combined) the noon (Zuhr) and afternoon (`Asr) prayers (eight rak'ahs) and the dusk (Maghrib) and night ('Isha') prayers (seven rak'ahs).**

[Sahih al-Bukhari (English translation), volume 1, book 10, number 537; Sahih Muslim (English translation), Kitab al-Salat, Book 4, Chapter 100 Combination of prayers when one is resident, hadith no. 1522]

**'Abdullah b. Shaqiq reported: Ibn 'Abbas one day addressed us in the afternoon (after the afternoon prayer) till the sun disappeared and the stars appeared, and the people began to say: Prayer, prayer. A person from Banu Tamim came there. He neither slackened nor turned away, but (continued crying): Prayer, prayer. Ibn 'Abbas said: "May you be deprived of your mother, do you teach me Sunnah?" And then he said: "I saw the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) combining the noon (Zuhr) and afternoon (`Asr) prayers and the dusk (Maghrib) and night ('Isha') prayers." 'Abdullah b. Shaqiq said: "Some doubt was created in my mind about it. So I came to Abu Huraira and asked him (about it) and he testified to his assertion."**

[Sahih Muslim (English translation), Kitab al-Salat, Book 4, Chapter 100 Combination of prayers when one is resident, hadith no. 1523, 1524]

### **But wasn't that due to travel, fear, or rain?**

Many traditions from the Prophet (s) clearly indicate that he used to combine prayers without any particular reason.

**The Prophet (s) prayed in Madinah, while residing there, not travelling, seven and eight (this is an indication to the seven Raka't of Maghrib and 'Isha' combined, and the eight Raka't of Zuhr and `Asr combined).**

[Ahmad ibn Hanbal, al-Musnad, vol. 1, page 221]

## **The Prophet (s) prayed Zuhr and `Asr in combination and Maghrib and 'Isha' in combination without a reason for fear or travel.**

[Malik ibn Anas, al-Muwatta', vol. 1, page 161]

Indeed, we are even told in some traditions about the rationality behind this practice of the Prophet (s). **It was for the convenience of the ummah!**

- ❑ Ibn 'Abbas reported that the Messenger of Allah (s) combined the noon prayer with the afternoon prayer and the sunset prayer with the 'Isha' prayer in Medina **without being in a state of danger or rainfall**. And in the hadith transmitted by Waki' (the words are): "I said to Ibn 'Abbas: What prompted him to do that? He said: **So that his (Prophet's) Ummah should not be put to (unnecessary) hardship.**"  
[Sahih Muslim (English translation), Kitab al-Salat, Book 4, Chapter 100 Combination of prayers when one is resident, hadith no. 1520; Sunan al-Tirmidhi, vol. 1, p. 26]
- ❑ The Messenger of Allah (s) observed the noon and afternoon prayers together in Medina **without being in a state of fear or in a state of journey**. Abu Zubair said: "I asked Sa'id (one of the narrators) why he did that. He said: I asked Ibn 'Abbas as you have asked me, and he replied that **he (the Holy Prophet) wanted that no one among his Ummah should be put to (unnecessary) hardship.**"  
[Sahih Muslim, English translation, Kitab al-Salat, Book 4, Chapter 100 Combination of prayers when one is resident, hadith no. 1516]

## **Even if it is allowed, why do it?**

No one suggests that there is anything wrong with praying the individual prayers separately. Zuhr and `Asr prayers and Maghrib and 'Isha' prayers can be offered either combined or separately. However, this practice of combining the two prayers by the Prophet (s) reflects the Divine Grace of Allah (swt) for the convenience of the ummah, and there are good reasons why it has become customary amongst the Shi'ah:

- ❑ People are often busy with their own affairs and have their own duties and anxieties, particularly in countries where the educational or work system is not structured to cater to the requirements for Muslims to offer their daily prayers. Some professions require long hours of continuous, uninterrupted work. Hence, for convenience, and in order to avoid missing the second of the two prayers, the Shi'ah offer their two prayers in one interval, whether early or late, during the appointed time.
- ❑ Where people gather from far and wide to offer one of the two prayers and since it is permissible to combine them, they offer the two prayers one after another in congregation. This way they have both fulfilled their obligations as well as participated in the congregation (jama'ah) prayers thus gaining the increased reward. Consider the example of Friday prayers. We observe that thousands of Sunni brethren offer their Friday prayers on time but many of them fail to offer the `Asr prayers at all, let alone in congregation. On the other hand a Shi'i Muslim who offers Friday prayers will invariably perform the `Asr prayer in congregation.
- ❑ The fact that this sunnah is not generally adopted by our Sunni brothers is another reason why the Shi'ah feel they must keep it alive. We would like our children and other Muslims and the posterity to know that the practice of combining the Zuhr and `Asr, and the Maghrib and 'Isha' prayers is permissible as well as from the sunnah (established practice) of the Holy Prophet (s).

## **Conclusion:**

Combining Zuhr and `Asr prayers, and Maghrib and 'Isha' prayers, is in accordance with the Qur'an and permissible according to the sunnah of Prophet (s), besides being more convenient. The fact that this well-evidenced sunnah is not generally practiced by our Sunni brothers does not make it inapplicable in our lives. As the famous Sunni commentator of Sahih Muslim, al-Nawawi, writes:

**When a practice (Sunnah) is confirmed authentic, it is not abandoned just because some, most or all people abandon it.**

[al-Nawawi, Sharh Sahih Muslim, (Beirut, 1392 A.H.), vol. 8, p. 56]

Therefore celebrate the praises of thy Lord, and be of those who prostrate themselves in adoration  
(Qur'an 15:98)

## Why do the Shi'ah prostrate on *Turbah* ?

The Shi'ah Muslims prefer to prostrate on a small block of earth, called a *Turbah*, which is usually made from clay from the land of Karbala in Iraq.

According to the Shi'ah Ja'fari *fiqh* - which is one of the five main schools of law in Islam - prostration must be performed on pure earth or what grows on it, provided that it is not eaten or worn. This includes dust, stone, sand and grass, provided that it is not a mineral. Prostration on paper is permitted, because it is made of a material which grows on earth, but not cloth or carpets.

The legal scholars of all the Sunni schools of law concur regarding the validity of prostration on earth and that which grows on it.

### Did the Prophet (s) and his Companions ever do this?

Praying on the earth was certainly the practice of the Prophet (s) and those around him.

**Narrated Abu Sa'id al-Khudri: I saw Allah's Apostle prostrating in mud and water and saw the mark of mud on his forehead.**

[Al-Bukhari, Sahih (English translation), vol. 1, book 12, no. 798; vol. 3, book 33, no. 244]

**Narrated Anas bin Malik: We used to pray with the Prophet in scorching heat, and if someone of us could not put his face on the earth (because of the heat) then he would spread his clothes and prostrate over them.**

[Al-Bukhari, Sahih (English translation), vol. 2, book 22, no. 299]

According to this *hadith* only in exceptional circumstances would the Prophet (s) and his Companions prostrate on cloth.

### The Prophet (s) also used to have a *Khumra* on which he would put his forehead for prostration.

❑ **Narrated Maymuna: Allah's Apostle used to pray on a *Khumra*.**

[Al-Bukhari, Sahih (English translation), vol. 1, book 8, no. 378]

❑ According to al-Shawkani, a famous Sunni scholar, more than ten Companions of the Prophet (s) have narrated traditions mentioning his prostration on a *Khumrah*. And he lists all the Sunni sources recording these traditions which include **Sahih Muslim, Sahih al-Tirmidhi, Sunan Abu Dawud, Sunan al-Nasa'i** and many others.

[Al-Shawkani, Nayl al-Awtar, Chapter of Prostration on the *Khumrah*, vol. 2, p. 128]

### So what is a *khumrah* ?

**a small mat sufficient just for the face and the hands while prostrating during prayers.**

[Al-Bukhari, Sahih (English translation), vol. 1, book 8, no. 376 (as explained by the translator in paranthesis)]

Ibn al-'Athir, another famous Sunni scholar, in his *Jami al-'Usul* has written:

**"*Khumra* is [like that] upon which the Shi'ah of our time perform their prostrations."**

[Ibn al-'Athir, *Jami' al-'Usul*, (Cairo, 1969), vol. 5, p. 467]

**"*Khumra* is a small mat made from palm fibres or other material.... and it is like that which the Shi'ah use for prostration."**

[Talkhis al-Sihah, p. 81]

### But why the earth of Karbala?

The special characteristics of the soil of Karbala (Iraq) were known and it was an object of special attention during the time of the Prophet (s) as well as in later times:

❑ **Umm Salama says: I saw Husayn (a) sitting in the lap of his grandfather, the Prophet (s), who had a red block of soil in his hand. The Prophet (s) was kissing the dust and weeping. I asked him what that soil was. The Prophet (s) said: "Gabriel has informed me that my son, this Husayn, will be murdered in Iraq. He has brought this earth for me from that land. I am weeping for the suffering**

**that will befall my Husayn." Then the Prophet (s) handed the dust to Umm Salama and said to her: "When you see this soil turn into blood, you will know that my Husayn has been slaughtered." Umm Salama kept the soil in a bottle and kept watch over it until she saw on the day of Ashura, 10<sup>th</sup> of Muharram 61 A.H., that it turned to blood. Then she knew that Husayn bin Ali (a) had been martyred.**

[al-Hakim, al-Mustadrak, vol. 4, p. 398]

[al-Dhahabi, Siyar a`lam al-nubala', vol. 3, p. 194]

[Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah wa'l-nihayah, vol. 6, p. 230]

[al-Suyuti, Khassa'is al-kubra, vol. 2, p. 450; Jam` al-Jawami, vol. 1, p. 26]

[Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, Tahdhib al-tahdhib , vol. 2, p. 346]

**'Ali ibn Abi Talib, passed by Karbala after the battle of Siffin. He took a handful of its soil and exclaimed: 'Ah, ah, on this spot some men will be slain, and will enter Paradise without reckoning!'**

[Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, Tahdhib al-tahdhib , vol. 2, p. 348]

## **Why is it compulsory to prostrate on the clay from Karbala?**

**It is not !** But the Shi'ah *prefer* to prostrate on the earth of Karbala because of the importance given to it by the Prophet (s) and the Imams from his Family (*Ahl al-Bayt*). After the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (a), his son Imam Zayn al-'Abidin (a) picked some up, declared it to be sacred dust, and kept it in a bag. The Imams (a) used to perform prostrations on it and make a *tasbih* out of it, and recited Allah's praises on it.

[Ibn Shahrashub, al-Manaqib, vol. 2, p. 251]

They also encouraged the Shi'ah to perform prostrations on them, with the understanding that it was not compulsory, but with a view to achieving greater recompense. The Imams (a) insisted that prostration before Allah must be on clean earth only and that it was preferable if it was performed on that earth of Karbala.

[al-Tusi, Misbah al-Mutahajjad, p. 511]

[al-Saduq, Man la yahduruhu'l faqih, vol. 1, p. 174]

The Shi'ah for a long time have kept this earth with them. Then, fearing that it might be desecrated, they kneaded it into small tablets or pieces, which are now called *mohr* or Turbah. During prayers we prostrate on it not as a compulsory act but in view of its special nature. Otherwise, when we have no pure soil with us, we prostrate on clean earth, or something that originates from it.

It is a pity that some people maliciously insist that the Shi'ah worship stones or that they worship Husayn (a). The truth is that we worship Allah alone by prostrating *on* the Turbah, not *to* it. And we never worship Imam Husayn, Imam Ali, or the Prophet Muhammad (s). We worship only Allah, and it is in accordance with Allah's order that we perform prostration only on pure earth.

## **Conclusion:**

This is the reason why Shi'ah Muslims carry small tablets, usually made from the earth of Karbala, which enables them to do prostration on this highly recommended object and to follow the *sunnah* of the Prophet (s).

## **Do the Shi'ah Believe in a Different Qur'an?**

The Shi'ah are frequently accused of belief in **Tahrif** in Qur'an which means believing that the Qur'an has been tampered with and is not the same as the one revealed to the Prophet (s).

### **THIS IS not true !!!**

All great Twelver Shi'ah scholars from the earliest period to the present century have believed in the complete preservation of the Qur'an. Some famous early Shi'ah scholars who have clearly stated this belief in their books include:

- ❑ Shaykh al-Saduq (d. 381 AH), Kitabu'l-Itiqadat, (Tehran, 1370) p. 63.
- ❑ Shaykh al-Mufid (d. 413 AH), Awa'ilu l-Maqalat, pp. 55-6;
- ❑ Sharif al-Murtada (d. 436 AH), Bahru 'l-Fawa'id (Tehran, 1314) p. 69;
- ❑ Shaykh at-Tusi (d. 460 AH), Tafsir at-Tibyan, (Najaf, 1376), vol 1 p. 3;
- ❑ Shaykh at-Tabrasi (d. 548), Majma'u 'l-Bayan, (Lebanon), vol. 1 p. 15.

Some of the later scholars who spelt out the same views include:

- ❑ Muhammad Muhsin al-Fayd al-Kashani (d. 1019 AH), Al-Wafi, vol. 1 pp. 273-4, and al-'Asfa fi Tafsir al-Qur'an, p. 348;
- ❑ Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi (d. 1111 AH), Bihar al-'Anwar, vol. 89 p. 75

This belief has continued uninterrupted upto the present time. Shi'ah scholars of this century who have reiterated the belief that the Qur'an is completely protected and unchanged include such famous names as Sayyid Muhsin al-Amin al-'Amili (d. 1371 AH); Sayyid Sharaf al-Din al-Musawi (d. 1377 AH.); Shaykh Muhammad Husayn Kashif al-Ghita' (d. 1373 AH); Sayyid Muhsin al-Hakim (d. 1390 AH); 'Allamah al-Tabataba'i (d. 1402 AH); Sayyid Ruhullah al-Khumayni (d. 1409 AH); Sayyid Abu al-Qasim al-Khu'i (d. 1413 AH) and Sayyid Muhammad Rida al-Gulpaygani (d. 1414 AH).

**This, of course, is not an exhaustive list.**

### **Q: But what about the Shi'ah before these scholars, didn't they all believe in tahrif?**

Not at all! Consider the example of '**Ubaydullah b. Musa al-'Absi** (120-213 AH), a devoted Shi'ah scholar whose narrations from the Imams can be found in the famous Shi'ah hadith collections such as al-Tahdhib and al-Istibsar. Now let's see what some Sunni scholars have to say about him:

"... a pious person, one of the important Shi'ah scholars ... he was considered reliable by Yahya b. Ma'in, Abu Hatim said he was reliable, trustworthy ... al-'Ijli said that he was an authority on the Qur'an..."

[Al-Dhahabi, Tadhkirat al-Huffaz (Haydarabad, 1333 AH), vol. 1 p. 322]

"... he was an imam in fiqh and hadith and Qur'an characterized by piety and righteousness, but he was one of the chiefs of the Shi'ah."

[Ibn al-Imad al-Hanbali, Shadharat al-Dhahab (Cairo, 1350 AH), vol. 2 p. 29]

**None of these Sunni scholars would have praised him for his knowledge of the Qur'an if they thought he believed in a different Qur'an!!!**

And 'Ubaydullah was considered so trustworthy, despite being a Shi'ah, that the famous Sunni traditionists al-Bukhari and Muslim as well as many others narrated scores of traditions from him in their hadith collections!

[The Creed of the Imaam of Hadeeth al-Bukhari (Salafi Publications, UK, 1997), pp. 87-89]

### **Q: Don't the Shi'ah believe in Mushaf Fatimah which is three times the size of the Qur'an?**

The Qur'an is a Mushaf (book), but any book is not necessarily the Qur'an! There is no Qur'an of Fatimah! Mushaf Fatimah was a book written or dictated by Fatimah (a) after the Prophet's (s) death. It is not a part of Qur'an and has **nothing** to do with Allah's commandments or legal rulings.

### **Q: But are there not traditions in Shi'ah collections that mention verses of the Qur'an containing extra words than what we have today?**

There are some instances where extra words are indicated only by way of explanation, they do not imply that the original Qur'anic text is being distorted. This happens in both Shi'ah and Sunni sources. Consider the following two examples, both from famous Sunni commentaries of the Qur'an:

**"Ubayy b. Ka'b used to read '... then as to those whom you profit by for an appointed period give them their dowries as appointed...' (Qur'an Chapter 4, Verse 24) and this was also the recitation of Ibn 'Abbas."**

[Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, Mafatih al-Ghayb (Beirut, 1981), vol. 9 p. 53]

[Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim (Beirut, 1987), vol. 2 p. 244]

A footnote in Ibn Kathir's Tafsir explains that the additional words indicated above, which are not part of the Qur'an, were recited by these Companions of the Prophet (s) **only by way of tafsir and explanation.**

**"Ibn Mas'ud said: In the days of the Prophet (s) we used to recite, 'O our Messenger (Muhammad) deliver what has been sent down to you from your Lord that 'Ali is the master of the believers if you do not, then you have not delivered His message.' (Qur'an Chapter 5, Verse 67)**

[Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti, Durr al-Manthur, vol. 2 p. 298]

In this case as well, the part in italics is certainly not part of the Qur'anic text, however the Companion Ibn Mas'ud used to recite it in this way to explain the context of its revelation.

## **Q: But what about those traditions that say a number of revealed verses are no longer part of the Qur'an?**

The Shi'ah do not believe in the immunity of any writer, commentator or narrator from mistakes, and, therefore, they do not take any collection of hadith to be completely valid and correct. The only book which is completely immune from any mistake is the Qur'an. These traditions are mostly considered as weak or interpreted as referring to non-Qur'anic revelation.

It is interesting to point out that there are numerous traditions reported in Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim which allege that many verses of Qur'an are missing. [Al-Bukhari, Al-Sahih, vol. 8 p. 208; Muslim, Al-Sahih, vol. 3 p. 1317]

Not only that, these Sunni reports allege that two chapters from the Qur'an are missing with one of them similar to the Chapter of al-Bara'ah (chapter 9) in length!!! [Muslim, Al-Sahih, Kitab al-Zakat, vol. 2 p. 726]

□ Some Sunni traditions even claim that the Chapter al-Ahzab (chapter 33) was as lengthy as the Chapter of al-Baqarah (chapter 2)!!! The Chapter of al-Baqarah is the biggest Chapter of the Qur'an. The traditions in Sahih al-Bukhari and Muslim even detail some of the missing verses. [Al-Bukhari, Al-Sahih, vol. 8 p. 208]

Yet, fortunately the Shi'ah never accuse the Sunni brothers and sisters of believing that the Quran is incomplete. We say that either these Sunni reports are weak or fabricated.

## **Conclusion:**

**"It is our belief that the Qur'an which Allah revealed to His Prophet Muhammad (s) is (the same as) the one between the two covers (daffatayn). And it is that which is in the hands of the people, and is not greater in extent than that... And he who asserts that we say that it is greater in extent than this (the present text) is a liar."**

[As-Saduq, Kitabu'l-I'tiqadat (Tehran: 1370 AH) p. 63; English translation, The Shi'ite Creed, tr. A.A.A. Fyzee (Calcutta: 1942) p. 85]

## **Rafidi Shi'ah narrators in Sahih al-Bukhari**

The Shi'ah point of view was followed by many early scholars of Islam who were considered truthful and trustworthy, and their narrations of the hadith of the Prophet (s) were relied upon by famous Sunni scholars. Listed below are a few of the Shi'ah scholars that al-Bukhari has relied upon in his Sahih. If we add to these the rest of them including those narrators in the Sahih of Muslim and the other four Sihah Sittah who followed the Shi'ah faith, then the number would increase significantly. To save space, reference is given to the section title (kitab) in each book for only one hadith by each person - the rest can be found using indices or hadith software.

The reader will notice the term Rafidi every now and then in the following biographies. The Sunni scholars generally define a Rafidi as a Shi'ah who openly criticizes or rejects the legitimacy of the Caliphs before 'Ali (a).

### **'Ubayd Allah b. Musa al-'Absi(died 213 AH)**

Sahih Bukhari [kitab al-'iman]

Sahih Muslim [kitab al-'iman]

Sahih al-Tirmidhi [kitab al-salat]

Sunan al-Nasa'i [kitab al-sahw]

Sunan Abu Dawud [kitab al-taharah]

Sunan Ibn Majah [kitab al-muqaddamah]

❑ "Aboo Daawood said: He was an ardent Shee'ee, his ahaadeeth are allowable....Ibn Mandah said: Ahmad ibn Hanbal used to point 'Ubaydullaah out to the people, and he was well known for Rafid (extreme partisanship for 'Alee), and he would not let anyone enter his house who was called 'Mu'aawiyah".

[The Creed of the Imaam of Hadeeth al-Bukhari and of the Great Scholars from whom he narrated (Salafi Publications, UK, 1997), p. 89 from Al-Dhahabi, Siyar A'lam al-Nubala, vol. 9, pp .553-557]

"A pious person, one of the important Shi'ah scholars ... considered reliable by Yahya b. Ma'in, Abu Hatim said he was reliable, trustworthy ... al-'Ijli said: He was an authority on the Qur'an..."

[Al-Dhahabi, Tadhkirat al-Huffaz under "'Ubayd Allah b. Musa al-'Absi"]

### **Abbad b. Ya'qub al-Rawajini (died 250 AH)**

Sahih Bukhari [kitab al-tawhid]

Sahih al-Tirmidhi [kitab al-manaqib]

Sunan Ibn Majah [kitab ma ja' fi al-jana'iz]

❑ He was a trustworthy Rafidi and his hadith is in (Sahih of) al-Bukhari.

[Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib, under "'Abbad b. Ya'qub al-Rawajani"]

❑ Abu Hatim said: He was a shaykh, reliable. Ibn 'Adi said: He used to denounce the Salaf. In him was extremism of Shi'ism. Salih b. Muhammad said: He used to denounce 'Uthman. I heard him saying, "Allah is more just than that he would admit Talhah and al-Zubayr into heaven after they paid allegiance to 'Ali and then fought him." Ibn Hibban said: He was a Rafidi inviting (others to his belief). He narrated this hadith ..., "If you see Mu'aawiyah on my pulpit, kill him!"

[Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, under "'Abbad b. Ya'qub al-Rawajani"]

### **'Abd al-Malik b. A'yan al-Kufi**

Sahih al-Bukhari [kitab al-tawhid]

Sahih Muslim [kitab al-'iman]

Sahih al-Tirmidhi [kitab tafsir al-Qur'an]

Sunan al-Nasa'i [kitab al-'iman wa al-nudhur]

Sunan Abu Dawud [kitab al-buyu']

Sunan Ibn Majah [kitab al-zakah]

❑ He was Rafidi Shi'i, one of (the people of) opinion.

[Abu Ja'far al-'Uqayli, Du'afa al-'Uqayli, under "'Abd al-Malik b. A'yan"]

❑ He was Rafidi, reliable (saduq).

[Al-Mizzi, Tahdhib al-Kamal, under "'Abd al-Malik b. A'yan"]

❑ Al-'Ijli said: He was from Kufah, a Tabi'i (Successor), reliable. Sufyan said: 'Abd al-Malik b. 'A'yan the Shi'i narrated to us, he was a Rafidi to us, a man of opinion. Hamid said: Those three brothers, 'Abd al-Malik, Zurarah, and Hamran were Rawafid all of them. Abu Hatim said: He was one of the earliest to embrace Shi'ism, (he was) on the position of truthfulness, having good traditions, and his traditions are written.

[Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, under "'Abd al-Malik b. A'yan"]

## 'Abd al-Razzaq al-San'ani (died 211 AH)

Sahih Bukhari [kitab al-'iman]

Sahih Muslim [kitab al-'iman]

Sahih al-Tirmidhi [kitab al-taharah]

Sunan Nasa'i [kitab al-taharah]

Sunan Abi Dawud [kitab al-taharah]

Sunan Ibn Majah [kitab al-muqaddamah fi al-'iman]

- Ibn 'Adi said: They (i.e. scholars) did not see any problem in his hadith except that they attributed Shi'ism to him... He was a man of honor ... he narrated traditions in praise of the Household of the Prophet (Ahl al-Bayt) and disparaging others... Mukhlid al-Shu'ayri said: I was with 'Abd al-Razzaq when someone mentioned Mu'awiyah. 'Abd al-Razzaq said: 'Do not pollute our assembly by mentioning the descendant of Abu Sufyan!'.  
[Al-Mizzi, Tahdhib al-Kamal, under "'Abd al-Razzaq al-San'ani"]
- Ibn 'Adi narrated (a hadith) from 'Abd al-Razzaq..., "If you see Mu'awiyah on my pulpit then kill him!".  
[Al-Dhahabi, Mizan al-'I'tidal, under "'Abd al-Razzaq al-San'ani"]

## 'Awf b. Abi Jamilah al-'A'rabi (died 146 AH)

Sahih Bukhari [kitab al-'iman]

Sahih Muslim [kitab al-masajid wa mawadi' al-salat]

Sahih al-Tirmidhi [kitab al-salat]

Sunan Nasa'i [kitab al-taharah]

Sunan Abi Dawud [kitab al-salat]

Sunan Ibn Majah [kitab al-salat]

- He was Rafidi but reliable... He was considered reliable by many scholars, and in him was Shi'ism.  
[Al-Dhahabi, Siyar A'lam al-Nubala, under "'Awf b. Abi Jamilah"]
- 'Awf was a Qadari, a Shi'i, a Shaytan!  
[Abu Ja'far al-'Uqayli, Du'afa al-'Uqayli, under "'Awf b. Abi Jamilah"]
- He was inclined towards Shi'ism. Ibn Ma'in said: reliable, Al-Nasa'i said: Very reliable.  
[Al-Mizzi, Tahdhib al-Kamal, under "'Awf b. Abi Jamilah"]

## **Q: But maybe al-Bukhari, Muslim, and others relied on these people without knowing their true belief?**

These scholars devoted their lives to acquiring and transmitting traditions and studying the lives of the transmitters of these traditions. Most of them have books on Rijal (science of judging reliability of narrators) to their credit. Although their selectivity and choice of authorities and material clearly indicates a staunch Sunni standpoint, they still found themselves relying on those Shi'ah who they judged to be truthful. This is despite the fact that their Shi'ism is expressed with disapproval!

Thus, to say that al-Bukhari, Muslim, and others didn't really know the belief of these Shi'ah narrators would be to call them incompetent in their field!!!

## **Q: But why didn't they just rely on Sunni's as authorities?**

Perhaps they were not as bigoted and narrow-minded as some of our Sunni brethren who insist on associating the Shi'ah belief with all sorts of false allegations. It should be clear from the biographies listed that being critical of some Caliphs and Companions - based on incontrovertible historical evidence - was tolerated by Sunni scholars of previous generations.

## **Q: And do the Shi'ah rely on Sunni narrators in their books?**

As long as the Sunni narrator is not known for his enmity towards the Household of the Prophet (s) (Ahl al-Bayt) and is considered truthful, he is accepted by Shi'ah traditionists.

## **Conclusion:**

The fact is that a significant portion of the Sunni hadith literature would be lost if the material from the Shi'ah narrators was rejected. The Shi'ah faith has always been and remains a well-evidenced alternative to the Sunni point of view.

# Issues Pertaining to the Practice of the Prayers

[http://www.geocities.com/zamaninimami/issues\\_pertaining\\_to\\_the\\_practice\\_of\\_prayersnew.htm](http://www.geocities.com/zamaninimami/issues_pertaining_to_the_practice_of_prayersnew.htm)

- 1-Wiping the feet
  - 2-Combining the prayers
  - 3-About the Call (Adhan) to the prayer
  - 4-Crossing the hands in the prayer
  - 5-Concluding the prayer with three Takbirs
  - 6-Prostrating on earth
  - 7-Prostrating on the earth of Karbala
  - 8-Prayers for the dead
  - 9-Tarawih Prayers
- 

## 1-Wiping the Feet During Ablution (Wudu')

The followers of the *ahl al-bayt (pbu)* follow what the Holy Qur'an teaches them to do during *wudu'* by wiping their feet instead of washing them since the Holy Qur'an commands:

**"O you who believe! When you intend your prayers, wash your faces and your hands from the elbows and wipe (by passing wet hands over) your head and your feet up to the ankles."**<sup>[145]</sup>

Those who practice the washing of their feet during *wudu'* argue that "your feet" in the Holy Qur'an is linked to washing the face, whereas the followers of the *ahl al-bayt* argue that "your feet" is linked to rubbing the head and, therefore, they should be wiped but not washed. In support of the latter view, Ibn 'Abbas narrates from the Holy Prophet (*pbuh&hf*) that they used to rub their feet during the time of the Holy Prophet (*pbuh&hf*).<sup>[146]</sup>

Undoubtedly, Muslims at the time of the Messenger of Allah (*pbuh&hf*) all used to perform *wudu'* in the same way. No disagreements occurred between them since the Messenger of Allah (*pbuh&hf*) was present among them and all the Muslims used to submit their disagreements to him in accordance with the Holy Qur'an: "And if you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger."<sup>[147]</sup>

The same situation existed during the time of the first caliph, Abu Bakr (11-13 *h.*); no disagreements over the performance of *wudu'* have been reported from that time period. Similar was the period of the second caliph, Umar ibn al-Khattab (13-23 *h.*) except for the fact that he allowed wiping of the socks rather than the bare feet as the Holy Qur'an directs (5:6).

However, the disagreement regarding the performance of the *wudu'* began during the time of the third caliph, 'Uthman ibn Affan (23-35 *h.*) when he began to wash his feet instead of wipe them.<sup>[148]</sup>

Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, in his book *Kanz al-'Ummal* <sup>[149]</sup> mentions that the third caliph 'Uthman ibn Affan was the first to differ during his caliphate in performing the *wudu'*. In *Sahih Muslim*<sup>[150]</sup> and *Kanz al-'Ummal*, <sup>[151]</sup> 'Uthman ibn Affan says that, during his caliphate, some of the companions of the Holy Prophet (*pbuh&hf*) who performed the *wudu'* differently than himself attributed their practice to the Holy Prophet (*pbuh&hf*).

More than twenty narrations narrated by the third caliph are about the new manner of performing *wudu'*. These traditions indicate his establishment of the new method. Some prominent Muslim historians, such as Ibn Abi al-Hadid al-Mu'tazili,<sup>[152]</sup> regard this trend as nothing new in the tradition of the third caliph since the third caliph was known for his numerous introductions.

There is a near consensus among the Muslim historians that the third caliph 'Uthman was murdered by Muslim revolutionaries in 35 *h.* because of political and financial issues. However, other Muslim historians interpret the third caliph's introductions regarding some of the religious rules during the last six years of his caliphate as a departure from the tradition of the first and second caliphs. The majority of the Muslims during his caliphate looked at this third caliph as a follower of the first and second caliphs and the implementor of their practices. Since the third caliph witnessed numerous introductions during the time of the second caliph, and since he saw himself religiously and intellectually not less than his predecessors,<sup>[153]</sup> he decided to depart from the previous policy and to have an independent opinion regarding different political, financial, and jurisprudential issues, such as washing the feet during *wudu'*.

Although some people today consider washing the feet to lead to better cleanliness and hygiene than merely wiping the feet, Allah the Almighty, Who legislated all the acts of worship, including the *wudu'*, is more aware of the advantages and disadvantages of washing or wiping the feet.

It has been narrated that Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (*pbuh&hf*) said: "If religion were according to human opinion, the bottom of the foot would be more worthy of wiping than the top. But I saw the Messenger of Allah (*pbuh&hf*) wiping the top of his foot." [154]

## 2-Combining the Prayers

All Muslims agree that there are five mandatory prayers throughout the day and the night, and they also agree that these five daily prayers have specific times in which they must be performed and that combining the prayers is at least sometimes permissible (saying the *dhuhr* prayer immediately followed by the *'asr* prayer, or saying the *maghrib* prayer immediately followed by the *'isha* prayer).

The Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali schools of thought agree that combining the prayers while travelling is permitted, but they do not allow combining the prayers for other reasons. The Hanafi school of thought permits combining the prayers only on the day of Arafat, whereas the *imami* Shi'a school of thought allows combining the prayers in all cases - while travelling or not travelling, for any or no specific reason, during war and peace, while the weather is rainy or not rainy, and so on. The dispute really is as to when exactly the beginnings and ends of the times for these prayers are, and so the dispute must be referred to the Holy Qur'an and the narrations of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (*pbuh&hf*).

Three verses in the Holy Qur'an speak of the times for the prayers. Allah, the Exalted, says:

**"Perform the prayers from the mid-day till the darkness of the night, and recite the Qur'an in the early dawn. Verily, the recitation of the Qur'an in the early dawn is ever-witnessed."**[155]

"Mid-day" refers to the shared time for the *dhuhr* and *'asr* prayers, "the darkness of the night" refers to the shared time of the *maghrib* and *'isha* prayers, and "early dawn" refers to the *fajr* prayers. **The Holy Qur'an clearly and simply states that there are three main times for the five daily prayers.** Although the prayers are five, they fall into three main periods of time. The great Sunni scholar Fakhr al-Din al-Razi understood this interpretation from this verse also.[156] Of course, the prayers must be done in order; the *dhuhr* prayers must be performed before the *'asr* prayers, and the *maghrib* prayers must be performed before the *'isha* prayers.

**The Holy Qur'an also says: "And perform the prayers at the two ends of the day, and in some hours of the night. Verily, the good deeds remove the evil deeds. That is a reminder for the mindful."**[157]

The Muslim jurists and Qur'anic commentators agree that this verse refers to the five compulsory prayers and, as the Holy Qur'an states, that it determines the timing of the prayers - namely, three main times, two of them at the "ends of the day" and the third in "some hours of the night." The first "end of the day" is the time of the morning prayers; the second "end of the day" begins at noontime and ends at sunset, making this time the time for the *dhuhr* and *'asr* prayers; and the "hours of the night" is the third main time in which the *maghrib* and *'isha* prayers should be said and extends from the beginning of the night until midnight.

A similar division of times is expressed in a third verse:

**"So bear with patience (O Muhammad) all that they say, and glorify the praises of your Lord before the rising of the sun, and before its setting, and during a part of the night also glorify His praises, and so likewise after the prayers."**[158]

As in the previous verse, the jurists and the commentators agree that this verse refers to the times of the five mandatory prayers and that it divides the time for the prayers into three segments - first, the time from dawn until sunrise which is the time for the dawn prayers; second, the time from noon until sunset, which is the time for the noon and afternoon prayers; and, third, the "part of the night" which extends from after sunset till midnight and which is the time for the evening and night prayers. "And so likewise after the prayers," according to the commentators, refers either to the *nawafil* (recommended) prayers or else, specifically, to *salat al-layl* (the midnight prayers) which are among the highly recommended prayers.

**Imam Bukhari and others report that the Holy Prophet (*pbuh&hf*) used to combine his prayers into these three sections of time: "The Messenger of Allah (*pbuh&hf*) observed the noon and afternoon prayers together and the sunset and night prayers together without being in a state of fear or journeying."**[159]

**Imam Muslim narrates the same *hadith* and adds that when the Holy Prophet (*pbuh&hf*) was asked by Ibn 'Abbas why he authorized combining the two prayers, the Holy Prophet (*pbuh&hf*) replied that he did not want to cause difficulty for his nation.**[160]

In the same book, Ibn 'Abbas himself narrates that they used to combine the two prayers during the time of the Holy Prophet (*pbuh&hf*).[161]

So both the Holy Qur'an and the tradition of the Holy Prophet (*pbuh&hf*) indicate clear authorization and permission to combine the two prayers without any particular reason, and Allah the Merciful made His religion easy for the believers.

### **3-The adhan and "Hayya 'ala khayr al-'amal" ("Come to the best of deeds")**

The entire *adhan* was taught to the Holy Prophet (*pbuh&hf*) by Allah on the night he ascended to Heaven, and the prayers were made obligatory on him the same night.<sup>[162]</sup>

The original *adhan* taught to the Holy Prophet (*pbuh&hf*) contained the phrase "*hayya 'ala khayr al-'amal*." However, at the time of the expansion of the Islamic state, the second caliph, Umar ibn al-Khattab, thought that this phrase would discourage people from performing *jihad* (fighting), so he ordered that it be removed from the *adhan*. Imam Muslim narrates on the authority of Ibn Mas'ud that the Holy Prophet (*pbuh&hf*) had commanded the Muslims to say in the *adhan* and *iqama* "*hayya 'ala khayr al-'amal*," but once Umar assumed authority, he dropped that phrase.<sup>[163]</sup>

He also says that 'Ali ibn Abi Talib and his followers as well as 'Abdullah, the son of Umar, did not drop that phrase.<sup>[164]</sup>

**Umar ibn al-Khattab has been narrated to have said: "O people, three things existed during the time of the Messenger of Allah (*pbuh&hf*) that I prohibit and make unlawful and will punish for: *mut'at al-hajj*, *mut'at al-nisa*, and '*hayya 'ala khayr al-'amal*.'"<sup>[165]</sup>**

In addition, Malik ibn Anas narrates that once the *mu'adhhdhin* came to Umar ibn al-Khattab to announce the morning prayers and found him asleep, so he said to him: "*Al-salat khayrun min al-nawm*." ("Prayer is better than sleep") Umar liked this sentence, so he ordered that it be put in the *adhan* for the morning prayers.<sup>[166]</sup> Imam Muslim and Abu Dawud concur that this sentence was not part of the *adhan* during the time of the Holy Prophet (*pbuh&hf*), and Tirmidhi asserts that Umar was the one who added it.<sup>[167]</sup>

Some people wonder why the Shi'a, in the *adhan*, after the first two testimonies add "*Ashhadu anna 'Aliyan wali Allah*." All the Shi'a jurists and scholars have a consensus that this sentence is not an obligatory part of the *adhan*. However, saying it is a tradition that the Shi'a believe began during the time of the Holy Prophet (*pbuh&hf*) on the day of Ghadir after he (*pbuh&hf*) appointed Imam 'Ali (*pbuh*) as his successor. When the Muslims paid their allegiance of loyalty to Imam 'Ali (*pbuh*), Abu Dharr al-Ghifari raised the *adhan* and added this phrase. The Muslims came to the Holy Prophet (*pbuh&hf*) and said that they had heard something new. When the Holy Prophet (*pbuh&hf*) asked what they had heard, they said that they had heard the sentence "*ashhadu anna 'Aliyan wali Allah*" in the *adhan*. The Holy Prophet (*pbuh&hf*) asked them whether they had not just acknowledged this same phrase to Imam 'Ali (*pbuh*) when they had given their allegiance (*bay'ah*) to him. The Shi'a add this phrase as a recommended but not obligatory part of the *adhan*, and if anyone says it in the *adhan* believing it is obligatory, his *adhan* will be void.

### **4-Crossing the Hands in Prayer (Takfir<sup>[168]</sup>)**

The Messenger of Allah (*pbuh&hf*) has said: "Perform your prayers as you saw me performing my prayers." Crossing the hands voids the prayers in the *Imamiyyah* school of thought since it deemed as the habit of the Magi.<sup>[169]</sup>

In the Hanafi and Shafi'i schools, it is recommended (*mustahhab*) to cross the hands. The Shafi'i school says to cross the right hand on top of the left above the belly, while the Hanafi says to hold the hands below the belly.

### **5-Concluding the Prayers with Three Takbirs ("Allahu Akbar!")**

The Messenger of Allah (*pbuh&hf*) used to conclude his prayers with three *takbirs*.

**Imam Muslim narrates this fact on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas who says: "We knew that the Prophet (*pbuh&hf*) had concluded his prayers when he recited the three *takbirat*."<sup>[170]</sup>**

### **6-Prostrating on Earth (*turbah*)**

Prostrating on earth (*turbah*) does not in any way imply worshipping the stone or earth which is being prostrated on. As a practice, it has a firm foundation in the tradition of the Holy Prophet (*pbuh&hf*) which the Holy Qur'an teaches the Muslims to follow in all aspects.

**Imam Bukhari narrates that the Holy Prophet (*pbuh&hf*) said: "I have been given five things which were not granted to anyone (any other prophet) before me: every apostle was sent particularly to his**

**own people, whereas I have been sent to all people, red or black; the spoils of war have been made lawful for me, and these were never made lawful for anyone before me; the earth has been made pure and a place of prostration for me, so whenever the time of prayer comes for any one of you, he should pray wherever he is; I have been supported by awe (by which the enemy is overwhelmed) from the distance (which takes one month to cover); and I have been granted intercession."**[171]

This narration very clearly says that the earth (the dust and the stones) is the place of prostration. The history of Islam and the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh&hf) shows that his mosque in Madinah was furnished only with dust although numerous types of rugs and furnishings existed at that time. Because this mosque did not have a carpet or any other type of covering on the floor, when it rained, the floor of the mosque would turn into mud. Still, the Muslims prostrated on the mud and did not put any carpets or rugs down.

**Abu Sa'id al-Khidri, a companion of the Holy Prophet (pbuh&hf), reports: "I saw with my own eyes the Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hf) and on his nose were traces of the rain and mud."**

Imam Bukhari narrates that the Holy Prophet (pbuh&hf), when he used to do the prayers in his own room, would pray on "*khumra*" (a solid piece of dirt or a piece of straw): **"The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hf) performed prayer and I (one of the wives of the Holy Prophet) lay opposite to him while I was in menses. Sometimes his clothes touched me when he prostrated, and he used to prostrate on *khumra*."**[172]

Another of the wives of the Holy Prophet (pbuh&hf) narrates: **"I never saw the Prophet (while prostrating) preventing his face from touching the earth."**[173]

Moreover, Wa'il, one of the Prophet's companions, narrates: **"I saw (that) the Prophet (pbuh&hf), once he prostrated, touched his forehead and nose on the earth."**[174]

Other narrations say that the Holy Prophet (pbuh&hf) prohibited the Muslims from prostrating on materials other than the earth.

**One day he (pbuh&hf) saw a man prostrating on some cloth from his turban. The Holy Prophet (pbuh&hf) pointed to him and told him to remove his turban and to touch his actual forehead to the ground.**[175]

Despite the immense heat of the ground, the Holy Prophet (pbuh&hf) and his companions used to prostrate on it. A great companion of the Holy Prophet (pbuh&hf),

**Jabir ibn 'Abdullah al-Ansari, says: "I used to pray the noon prayers with the Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hf), and I used to take a bunch of pebbles in my palm to cool them because of the enormous heat so I could prostrate on them."**[176]

Another companion of the Holy Prophet (pbuh&hf), Anas ibn Malik, narrates:

**"We used to pray with the Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hf) during the enormous heat, and one of us would take the pebbles in his hand and, once they were cooled, put them down and prostrate on them."**[177]

**Al-Khabbab ibn al-Arth, another companion of the Holy Prophet (pbuh&hf), says: "We complained to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hf) about the intensity of the heat of the ground and its effects on our foreheads and palms (during prostration), and the Prophet (pbuh&hf) did not excuse us from praying on the ground."**[178]

**Abu Ubaidah, also a companion of the Holy Prophet (pbuh&hf), narrates that the companion Ibn Mas'ud never prostrated except on the earth**[179],

while the companion 'Ibada ibn al-Samit has been narrated to have pushed back his turban to allow his forehead to touch the ground. [180]

During the times of the first, second, third, and fourth caliphs, the Muslims used to prostrate on the dust; Abu Umayyah narrates that the first caliph, Abu Bakr, used to prostrate and pray on the earth.[181]

Prostrating on the earth was also the habit of the *tabi'in* (those who did not see the Holy Prophet (pbuh&hf) but met his companions). Masruq ibn al-Ajda', a prominent *tabi'i* and a faithful jurist and a student of 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, made for himself a tablet of the dirt of Madinah and used it to prostrate on, taking it with him on his trips especially when he boarded ships.[182]

The people closest to the Holy Prophet (pbuh&hf), the *ahl al-bayt* (*pbu*), were also very firm in their practice of prostrating on the earth and, in doing so, were following the tradition of their grandfather, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hf).

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (*pbuh*), the sixth *imam* of the school of *ahl al-bayt*, says: **"Prostration is not permitted except on the earth and whatever grows from it except on those things that are eaten or on cotton."**[183]

When he was asked whether having one's turban touch the earth instead of the forehead was acceptable, he replied that this was not sufficient unless the forehead actually touched the earth.[184]

His companion and student, Hisham ibn al-Hakam, asked him whether all seven positions (forehead, hands, knees, and toes) needed to touch the earth during prostration, and Imam Sadiq (*pbuh*) replied that as long as the forehead touched the earth, there was no need for the other six areas to touch the earth as well. Thus, people can use carpets or prayer rugs to pray on as long as the forehead itself touches the earth. However, prostrating by putting the forehead on a piece of cloth, carpet, nylon, sheet, wool, or anything else that is not a product of the earth (excepting items which are eaten or worn and on which prostration is not permissible) is not considered prostrating on the earth.

Besides the issue of validity of prostration, prostrating on the earth has very significant indications and lessons for the believer. Prostrating itself is a gesture of humiliation and insignificance before the Almighty, and if it is done on the dirt, it will have more effect than, say, prostrating on carpets.

The Messenger of Allah (*pbuh&hf*) says: **"Make your faces dusty, and cover your noses with dust."**[185]

When Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (*pbuh*) was asked about the philosophy behind prostrating on the earth, he said:

**"Because prostration is surrendering and humiliation to the Almighty. Therefore, it shouldn't be on what is worn and eaten because people are slaves of what they eat and wear, and prostration is worshipping of Allah, so one should not put his forehead during prostration on that which is worshipped by the people (food and clothing) and that which conceals people."**[186]

However, every rule has its exception. Certain narrations allow people in times of emergency - such as imprisonment or being in a place (*e.g.* a ship, an airplane) in which neither the earth nor a piece of wood or leaf or paper is available to prostrate on - so in these cases, people can prostrate either on the hem of their clothing or else on carpet, for the Messenger of Allah (*pbuh&hf*) has said: "Nothing has been forbidden to man except that Allah permits it for whoever is compelled (in times of emergency)."

## 7-Why Pray on the Soil of Karbala?

The followers of the *ahl al-bayt* (*pbuh*) prefer to prostrate on the earth of Karbala which holds the memory of the great sacrifice of Imam Husayn (*pbuh*). They do not cherish the physical soil so much as the principles of Imam Husayn (*pbuh*) and his great revolution which saved Islam from corruption, deterioration, and the tyranny of the wrongdoers. Many *imams* from the school of *ahl al-bayt* have narrated that prostrating on the soil of Karbala penetrates the seven veils separating the person praying from Allah the Exalted.

Conventional wisdom also determines that some lands are better than others; this fact is normal and rational and has been agreed upon by all nations, governments, authorities, and religions. Such is the case with places and buildings related to Almighty Allah. They enjoy a special status whose injunctions, rights, and obligations are sanctioned and safeguarded. For example, the Ka'bah has an injunction of its own, as does the Mosque of the Prophet in Madinah. The land of Karbala is similar, for the Holy Prophet (*pbuh&hf*) has been recorded to have taken the soil from it, smelled it, and kissed it. The wife of the Holy Prophet (*pbuh&hf*), Um Salamah, also took a piece of the soil of Karbala in her clothes.

**The Messenger of Allah (*pbuh&hf*) has been narrated to have told Um Salamah: "Jibrail has come to me and informed me that some of my nation will assassinate my son Husayn in Iraq, and he brought me a piece of that soil." He gave that piece of soil to his wife and said: "When it is turned into fresh blood, then you will know that my son Husayn has been murdered." Um Salamah took the soil and put it in a bottle. When Imam Husayn (*pbuh*) left for Iraq in 61 h., she checked the bottle every day. One day, she came to the bottle and saw that the dust had turned into fresh blood, so she started screaming. The women of Bani Hashim gathered around her and asked what was wrong; she told them that Husayn had been killed. When they asked her how she knew, she narrated the story, and they joined her in lamentation and crying for Imam Husayn (*pbuh*). [187]**

A man from Bani Asad who smelled the soil where Imam Husayn (*pbuh*) was buried cried. Hisham ibn Muhammad has said: "When water was released to overwhelm and obliterate the grave of Husayn, it dried after forty days, and the grave was completely left without any trace. A bedouin from Bani Asad came and sampled the soil, one handful after another, smelling it each time, until he was able to identify the grave of Husayn, whereupon he wept and said: "May my parents be sacrificed for you! How sweet you smelled when you were alive, and how sweet your soil smells when you are dead!" Then he wept again and composed this verse:

Out of enmity they wanted to obliterate his grave,  
But the good smell of the soil led to the grave.[188]

The first to prostrate on the soil of Karbala where Imam Husayn (*pbuh*) was beheaded and buried was his son 'Ali ibn al-Husayn Zayn al-Abidin (*pbuh*), the fourth *imam* of the school of *ahl al-bayt* and the great-grandson of the Messenger of Allah (*pbuh&hf*). Immediately after he buried his father in Karbala, he took a handful of soil and made the earth solid and used it to prostrate on.

After him, his son Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (*pbuh*) and his grandson Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (*pbuh*) did the same. Imam Zayn al-Abidin (*pbuh*) and Imam Sadiq (*pbuh*) made prayer beads from the burial dust of Imam Husayn (*pbuh*), and Imam Sadiq (*pbuh*) narrates that the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (*pbuh&hf*), Lady Fatima al-Zahra' (*pbuh*), used to carry prayer beads made from twisted wooden threads with which she would praise and glorify Allah the Exalted.

But after Hamzah ibn 'Abd al-Mutalib was killed in the Battle of Uhud, she took the soil from his grave and made prayer beads from it and used them to glorify Allah. People learned her habit and did the same when Imam Husayn (*pbuh*) was martyred, taking the soil of his grave and using it to make prayer beads.

## 8-Prayers for the Dead (Salat al-Mayyit)

During the time of the Holy Prophet (*pbuh&hf*), the prayers over the newly deceased had five *takbirs* (units). Ahmad ibn Hanbal narrates from 'Abd al-A'la: "I prayed behind Zayd ibn Arqam over a dead body, and I did the *takbirat* five times." A man stood behind him and held his hand and asked whether he had forgotten. 'Abd al-A'la replied: "No, but I prayed behind Abul-Qasim Muhammad (*pbuh&hf*), and he did five *takbirat*, and I would not do other than that." [189]

Al-Suyuti mentions the name of the companion who changed the number of *takbirs* from five to four.[190]

## 9-Tarawih Prayers

Imam Bukhari narrates from 'Abdullah ibn 'Abd al-Qari: "In one of the nights of the month of Ramadan, I went to the mosque with Umar ibn al-Khattab. We saw the people in scattered groups, with individuals praying by themselves. Others were praying with a group praying behind them. Umar looked at me and said, 'In my opinion, if I can bring all these people together, behind one reciter, it would be better.' So he gathered them and made 'Ubay ibn Ka'ab lead them in prayers. So I went with him another night to the mosque, and saw people all praying together behind the reciter. Umar looked at them and said, '*Ni'mat al-bid'ah hadhihi*' ('This is a good innovation')." [191]

In the Shi'a tradition, the recommended prayers (*al-nawafil*) during the month of Ramadhan are performed individually.

### Notes:

[145] Qur'an 5:6

[146] *Wudhu' al-Nabi*, al-Shahrastani

[147] Qur'an 4:59

[148] *Sahih al-Bukhari*, 1:52; *Sahih Muslim*, 1:204

[149] *Kanz al-Ummal*, al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, 9:443, *hadith* #26890

[150] *Sahih Muslim*, 1:207 - 8

[151] *Kanz al-Ummal*, al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, 9:423, *hadith* #26797

[152] *Sharh Nahj al-Balagha*, Ibn Abi al-Hadid, 1:199-200

[153] *Tarikh*, al-Tabari, 4:339

[154] *Al-Musannath*, Abu Shaybah, 1:30 #6; *Sunan* Abi Dawud, 1:42 #164

[155] Qur'an 17:78

[156] *Tafsir*, 5:428

[157] Qur'an 11:114

[158] Qur'an 50:39-40

[159] *Sahih Bukhari*, Book on Times of Prayers, *hadith* #510, #529; Book on Friday Prayer, *hadith* #1103; *Sahih Muslim*, Book on the Prayer of Travellers *hadith* #1146; al-Tirmidhi, Book on Prayer *hadith* #172; al-Nisa'i, Book on Timings, *hadith* #585, #597, #598, #599; Abu Dawud, Book on Prayer, *hadith* #1024, #1025, #1027; *Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal*, 1:217, 221, 223, 251, 273, 283, 285, 346, 349, 351, 354, 360, 366; Malik, Book on Shortening the Prayer While Travelling, *hadith* #300

[160] *Sahih Muslim*, Book of the Prayers of Travellers, ch. 6 #50-54

[161] *Sahih Muslim*, ch. 6-8, #58-62

[162] *Kanz al-Ummal*, al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, vol. 6 *hadith* #397; *al-Mustadrak*, al-Hakim, 3:171

[163] *Sahih Muslim*, 1:48

[164] *al-Sirah al-Halabiyyah*, 4:56

[165] *Sharh al-Tajrid*, *Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal* 1:49

[166] Malik ibn Anas, *Kitab al-Muwatta'*, Chapter of the *Adhan*

- [167] *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, 1:64
- [168] *Takfir* comes from the Arabic word for "covering," and since crossing the hands covers part of the chest it is called *takfir*.
- [169] *al-Kafi*, al-Kulayni, 3:336; *al-Ta'dhib*, al-Tusi, 2:84 and 2:309
- [170] *Sahih Muslim*, 1:219
- [171] *Sahih Bukhari*, Book on Making Ablutions with Sand or Earth, *hadith* #323; Prayer *hadith* #419; The Prescribed Fifth Portion *hadith* #2890; *Sahih Muslim*, Book on Mosques and Places of Performing Prayers *hadith* #810; al-Nisa'i, Book on Washing and the Dry Ablution, *hadith* #429; Mosques, *hadith* #728; *Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal*, 3:305; al-Darami, Book on Prayer, *hadith* #1353
- [172] *Sahih Bukhari*, Book on Menstruation, *hadith* #321; Book on Prayer *hadith* #366, #487, #488; *Sahih Muslim*, Book on Prayer, *hadith* #797; al-Nisa'i, Book on Mosques, *hadith* #730; Abu Dawud, Book on Prayer, *hadith* #560; ibn Majah, Book on Immediate Call for Prayer, *hadith* #1018; *Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal* 6:330, 331, 335, 336; al-Darami, Book on Prayer, *hadith* #1338
- [173] *Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal*, 6:58; *Kanz al-Ummal*, al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, 4:212
- [174] *Ahkam al-Quran*, al-Jassan, 3:36; *Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal*, 4:315
- [175] *Sunan al-Bayhaqi*, 2:105; *al-Isabah li Ma'rifat al-Sahabah*, ibn Hajar, 2:201
- [176] *Sahih al-Nisa'i*, 2:204; *sunan al-Bayhaqi*, 1:439; *Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal*, 3:327
- [177] *Sunan al-Bayhaqi*, 2:105; *Nayl al-Awtar*, 2:268
- [178] *Sunan al-Bayhaqi*, 2:106
- [179] *Majma' al-Zawa'id*, 2:57
- [180] *Sunan al-Kubra*, al-Bayhaqi, 2:105
- [181] *Kanz al-Ummal*, al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, 4:212; *Sunan al-Kubra*, al-Bayhaqi, vol. 2
- [182] *al-Tabaqat al-Kubra*, ibn Sa'ad, 6:53
- [183] *Wasa'il al-Shi'ah*, 3:592
- [184] *ibid.*
- [185] *Tarhib wal-Tarhib*, 1:581
- [186] *Wasa'il al-Shi'ah*, 3:591
- [187] *al-Khasa'is*, al-Suyuti al-Shafi'i, 2:125; *al-Manaqib*, al-Maghazali, p. 313; *Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal*, 6:294; *Tarikh al-Islam*, al-Dimishqi, 3:11; *al-Bidayah wal-Nihayah*, 6:230; *al-'Aqd al-Farid*, ibn 'Abd Rabbah, 2:219; *Kanz al-Ummal*, al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, 5:110
- [188] *Tarikh ibn Asakir*, 4:342; *al-Kifayah*, Hafiz al-Kanji, p. 293
- [189] *Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal*, 4:370; *Sahih Muslim*, Chapter of the Prayers over the Graves; *Sahih al-Nisa'i*, *Kitab al-Janazah*
- [190] *al-Kamil*, Suyuti, 15:29; *Tarikh al-Khulafa'*, Suyuti, p. 137
- [191] *Sahih Bukhari*, 1:342