

An Account of the Mubahila (Imprecation) Ceremony

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We should know that the incident of Mubahila is from widely related reports (Mutawatir) and Sunni and Shia sects have mentioned in all commentaries, histories and books of traditions have related it with slight difference. Shaykh Tabarsi and others have narrated that a group of

Christian nobles of Najran comprising of three persons, came to the Holy Prophet (S).

The first of them was Aqib, their leader and the second was Abdul Masih whose help was sought in sorting out all problems, and the third was Abu Haritha, one of their leaders and scholars. Roman kings had built churches for him and they used to send him gifts and presents due to his extensive knowledge.

When they came to the Messenger of Allah (S), Abu Haritha was astride a mule, which was driven by his brother, Karz bin Al-Qama, when the animal began to run fast and he passed a remark derogatory on the Holy Prophet (S). Abu Haritha said: "What you have said would happen to you only." "Why, brother?" he asked. Abu Haritha said, "He is the same Prophet we were anticipating." So Karz said, "Then why don't you follow him?" He said, "Perhaps you don't know how these Christians consider us. They have considered us their leader and made us rich and honorable. They are not prepared to follow that Prophet. If we begin to follow him, they would take back everything from us." And when he came to the Holy Prophet (S), he became a Muslim.

The Christian delegation reached Medina at the time of Asr prayer, dressed in fine silk clothes and they came to the Messenger of Allah (S) as no one from Arabs had ever come dressed in such a way to salute the Prophet. The Holy Prophet (S) did not reply their salutations and neither did he speak to them. From there, they came to Uthman and Abdur Rahman bin Auf as they had known him from before and said: "Your Prophet wrote to us and we accepted his invitation and came to meet him; now he neither replies to our greetings, nor speaks to us."

Uthman and Abdur Rahman bin Auf brought the Christians to Amirul Momineen (a.s.) and took counsel from His Eminence. Imam Ali (a.s.) said: "Remove these silk garments and gold rings and go to meet the Prophet in ordinary clothes." They followed this advice and again came to meet the Messenger of Allah (S). They greeted the Messenger and he replied to them. After that he said, "By the One Who sent me with truth, when these people came to me the first time, they were also accompanied by Satan and that's why I did not reply to their greetings."

Thus, that day, members of the delegation posed questions to His Eminence and held

discussions with him. At last their scholar said, "O Muhammad, what do you hold about Christ?" He replied, "He was a servant of God and His messenger." They said, "Have you ever seen any child come into this world without a father?" At that moment the following verse was :revealed

إِنَّ مَثَلَ عِيسَىٰ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ آدَمَ خَلَقَهُ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ

Surely the likeness of Isa is with Allah as the likeness of Adam; He created him from dust," then said to him, Be, and he was."¹

Thus when the discussion prolonged, and the opponents increased in their enmity to the :Prophet, the Almighty Allah revealed the following command

فَمَنْ حَاجَكَ فِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ فَقُلْ تَعَالَوْا نَدْعُ أَبْنَاءَنَا وَأَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَنِسَاءَنَا وَنِسَاءَكُمْ وَأَنفُسَنَا وَأَنفُسَكُمْ ثُمَّ نَبْتَهِنَ فَنَجْعَلُ لَعْنَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكَاذِبِينَ

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."²

When this verse was revealed, it was decided that the following day they will participate in a Mubahila ceremony and the Christians returned to their place of lodging. Abu Haritha told his companions, "If tomorrow, Muhammad comes with his family members and Ahlul Bayt (a.s.), you must beware of divine punishment and if he is accompanied by his companions and

followers, you must not worry, and go ahead with the Mubahila ceremony."

On the next day, the Messenger of Allah (S) came to the residence of Amirul Momineen (a.s.), took the hand of Imam Hasan (a.s.), picked up Imam Husain (a.s.) in his arms and Amirul Momineen (a.s.) walked before His Eminence and Lady Fatima Zahra (s.a.) followed the Messenger of Allah (S). In this way, these divine personalities came out in Medina. When they reached the Christians, Abu Haritha asked, "Who are these people with him?"

He was told, "The one walking in front is the cousin of Muhammad and the husband of his daughter and his most favorite person in the world' and the two boys are the sons of this man; and the one walking behind, is his daughter, Fatima, the most beloved person for him in the world." Thus His Eminence came forward and sat down to participate in the Mubahila ceremony. On the other hand Sayyid and Aqib took their boys and wanted to proceed for the ceremony.

Abu Haritha said, "Muhammad, is sitting in the style of prophets when they sit down for debates." So they turned back from there and did not dare to take part in the Mubahila ceremony, Sayyid asked, "Where are you going?" Abu Haritha said, "If they had not been on truth he would not have dared us for this Mubahila ceremony. If they have Mubahila with us, the year will not pass that there will not remain a single Christian on the face of the earth."

According to another report he said, "I am seeing such faces, that if they pray to the Almighty Allah to move the mountain from its place, Allah will indeed do so. Therefore, do not participate in this Mubahila as you will be destroyed and not a single Christian will remain on the earth."

After that Abu Haritha came to the Holy Prophet (S) and said, "O Abal Qasim, refrain from Mubahila and sign a treaty with us with conditions that we can fulfill."

So they made peace with the Prophet with the condition that every year they will pay the Messenger of Allah (S) 2000 robes, each worth 40 dirhams and if there is a battle, they will give 30 coats of mail, 30 spears and lend 30 horses. After that His Eminence put the treaty in writing for them and returned from there.

The Holy Prophet (S) said, "By the One in Whose hands is my life, destruction come upon them, if they had gone ahead in Mubahila, all of them would have been transmogrified into monkeys and pigs. And indeed this whole valley would have been filled with fire and all of them would have been reduced to ashes.

The Almighty Allah would have destroyed the Christians of Najran so thoroughly that not even a bird would have survived on their trees and before the end of the year, all the Christians would have become extinct. Thus Sayyid and Aqib returned from there and back to the Messenger of Allah (S) after a few days and embraced Islam.

The author of Kashaf has narrated that the Bishop of Najran said, "O people of Najran, I can see such faces that if they pray, the Almighty Allah will move the mountain from its place. Therefore you must not take part in Mubahila with them as you would be destroyed. And when he refused to take part in the Mubahila, the Holy Prophet (S) told them to accept Islam. But when they also refused to become Muslims, the Prophet signed a treaty with them that every year they will pay 2000 robes in the month of Safar and 1000 robes in the month of Rajab and also 30 ancient coats of mail.

The author of Kashaf and Ahle Sunnat have narrated in Sihah (six canonical books) from Ayesha that on the day of Mubahila, the Holy Prophet (S) took a sheet of black hair, covered Imam Hasan (a.s.), Imam Husain (a.s.) and Fatima Zahra and Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) and then he recited the following verse

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرُكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا

Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O people of the House! and to purify you a (thorough) purifying.”³

Ali bin Ibrahim has narrated through a good chain of narrators, from Imam Ja’far Sadiq (a.s.) that he said: When the Christians of Najran came to the Chief of the prophets, the Messenger of Allah (S) under the leadership of Ahtam, Aqib and Sayyid, and when it was time for their worship, they began to blow the bugle. Companions said, “O Allah’s Messenger, do you see how they are blowing the bugle and praying like the Fire-worshippers?”

The Holy Prophet (S) said, “Do not object to them, so that they may see my method and that the proof of Allah is completed for them.” When they finished their devotions they came to the Holy Prophet (S) and asked, “To what do you invite us?” The Prophet said, “To the Oneness of God and to my prophethood and to the belief that Isa (a.s.) is a servant and a creature of God.

He used to eat and drink like human beings and also pass out refuse.”

They asked, “Who was the father of Isa (a.s.)?” At that moment divine revelation came to the Prophet: “What do you say about Adam (a.s.) who was a servant and a creature of God. He also used to eat and drink like human beings and have relations with women?” The Holy Prophet (S) asked, “Is it not so?” They replied that it was correct. Then he asked, “Who was the father of Adam?” They could offer no reply. At that moment, the following verse was revealed

إِنَّ مَثَلَ عِيسَىٰ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ آدَمَ خَلَقَهُ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ. الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُنْ مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ فَمَنْ حَاجَكَ فِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ فَقُلْ تَعَالَوْا نَدْعُ أَبْنَاءَنَا وَأَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَنِسَاءَنَا وَنِسَاءَكُمْ وَأَنفُسَنَا وَأَنفُسَكُمْ ثُمَّ نَبَّهْلُ فَنَجْعَلُ لَعْنَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكَاذِبِينَ

Surely the likeness of Isa is with Allah as the likeness of Adam; He created him from dust,” then said to him, Be, and he was. (This is) the truth from your Lord, so be not of the disputers. 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.”⁴

They said, “You have done justice to us.” And it was decided to have a Mubahila ceremony. When they returned to their lodging, Sayyid, Aqib and Ahtam said, “If he comes with his followers, we would take part in the Mubahila, because it would be known that he is not a Prophet, because he does not have trust in his rightfulness, and that he has come with an army

and a big group. If he comes with his Ahlul Bayt and special people, we will have Mubahila with him, because, if had not been true, he would not have taken the risk of cursing his family members.

In the morning, they came to the Prophet and saw that he has come with Amirul Momineen (a.s.), Lady Fatima, Imam Hasan and Husain (a.s.). They asked the companions, "Who are these personages?" They replied, "One of them is his cousin, successor and beloved, Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.), one is his daughter, Fatima and the two (boys) are her sons, Hasan and Husain." They began to fear after being told this and they said, "Please excuse us from the Mubahila and we are prepared to accept any of your conditions." And at last they agreed to pay the Jizya and returned to their town.

Sayyid Ibn Tawus has mentioned that Muslim Ibn Abbas bin Mahiyar has narrated the tradition of Mubahila from 51 different Sunni and Shia channels. We mention one of the most comprehensive of them as follows: It is narrated from Mankadar bin Abdullah that when Sayyid and Aqib, leaders of fire-worshippers, who were from the nobles, came to Medina with seventy riders to ask the Prophet I was also present with them. One day the mule of Karz came in rapture; it was carrying rations. Karz said, "May he be destroyed to whom we are going." He

implied the Messenger of Allah (S). Aqib said, "You yourself should be destroyed."

Karz asked, "Why?" Aqib said, "You have caused disrespect to Ahmad, who is the unlettered Prophet." Karz asked, "How do you know that he is a Prophet?" Aqib said, "Perhaps you have not read the fourth chapter of the New Testament. In which the Almighty Allah revealed to Jesus Christ: Tell the Bani Israel, how ignorant and foolish they are; that they apply fragrance so that when you meet people you smell nice, you your hearts are like filthy carrion in my view.

O Bani Israel, have faith in that Prophet of Mine who is the unlettered Prophet and he will be sent during the last period of time. Whose face would be bright and elegant and his forehead will broad. He will have good manners and nature. He would wear thick clothes. Among the past people, he would be the best and among the future ones he will be the most honored. He

would be acting on My practices and adopt patience in difficulties for My pleasure.

He would himself fight Jihad with the polytheists. So inform the Bani Israel about the glad tidings of his arrival and command them to honor and help him. Prophet Isa (a.s.) said, "O the sacred deity, O the most pure one, who is that chosen one whose love has appeared in my heart before I could see him?" The Almighty Allah said, "O Isa he is from you and you are from him, and your mother will be his wife in Paradise.

He will have few sons, more wives and he will be a native of Mecca which is the place of foundation of the House which was built by Ibrahim. And his generations will come out through

a blessed lady, who will be a close companion of your mother in Paradise. And that Prophet will have great majesty. His eye sleeps but his heart does not go to sleep. He accept gifts but declines alms (Sadaqah), on Judgment Day, there will be for him a Pool, which would stretch from the well of Zamzam to the western horizon.

That pool will contain two types of water, Rahiq and Tasnim. Its banks will have goblets like the number of stars. One who drinks a gulp from that water will never feel thirsty again and it is from those merits that I have bestowed to him more than the prophets. His words will be according to his action. And his inner being will be like his outward appearance. So what can be said about him and those of his followers who live according to his practice and die on his

Sunnat (practice).

And they will not separate from his Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) and they will always remain fearless, satisfied, in peace and with blessings. And that Prophet will appear at a time when famine and drought would have surrounded the earth. So those people would pray to Me and I will send the rain of mercy for that Prophet the signs of whose blessings will become apparent all over the world. I will bless whatever he puts his hand on.

Prophet Isa (a.s.) said: "O God, tell us what his name is?" The Almighty Allah said, "He is named Ahmad as well as Muhammad and he is My Prophet sent to all the worlds and he is the most honored of My creatures. And his intercession is most acceptable to Me. He will not command except for My pleasure and will not restrain from anything that I dislike."

When Aqib finished his discourse, Karz said, "When that personage is such as you mention, why don't you take me to him? So that we should have a discussion with him." He said, "I am going to him so that we may listen to his arguments and observe his behavior. If he is same as

the one whose qualities we have studied, we would have an accord with him.

So that he may not attack our religion, in such a way that he should not come to know that we have recognized him. And if he is a liar, we shall be safe from his evil. Karz said, "When you know that he is on truth, why don't you bring faith in him, follow him and make peace with him?" Aqib said, "Can you not see this group of Christians; how they have behaved with us.

They have considered us to be their leader and made us rich and honorable.

How many lofty and strong churches they have built for us and how they have exalted our name? In the same way, our self is not prepared to enter a religion in which the deprived and rich are equal." Thus they entered Medina in such a manner that they were dressed in expensive clothes. Anyone of the companions who saw them used to remark: We have not seen anyone from Arab delegations in such splendor. The hair was nicely styled and they had luxurious dresses on. When they entered the mosque, the Holy Prophet (S) was not present

there.

When it was time for their prayers, they arose and began to pray facing the East. Some companions wanted to restrain them but the Holy Prophet (S) entered the mosque at that very moment. He said, "Let them continue." Thus when they concluded their devotions, they came to the Holy Prophet (S) and began the discussions. They said, "O Abul Qasim, what do you say about Isa (a.s.)?" The Holy Prophet (S) replied, "He was a servant and a creature of God. He was a word of God, whom the Almighty Allah threw into Lady Maryam (s.a.).

He was a purified spirit that was fed to Lady Maryam (s.a.). Thus Isa (a.s.) was created in this way. On hearing this, someone from them said, "No, he was the son of God, and he is another god." Some said, "No, he is the third god, that is the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost." And they mentioned absurd points with regard to this matter.

The Almighty Allah revealed the verses of Surah Aale Imran in reply to them and since even after the appearance of truth and the completion of argument they continued to hold their stand, the verse of Mubahila was revealed. And they decided to have a Mubahila ceremony with the Holy Prophet (S) the following day.

When they returned to their lodging, they counseled with each other and decided to see with whom the Holy Prophet (S) comes to take part in Mubahila the following day; whether he comes with a big group of common people and degraded persons or according to the practice of prophets, with a small group of righteous and chosen personalities.

The next day, the Holy Prophet (S) took Amirul Momineen (a.s.) on his right and Imam Hasan and Imam Husain (a.s.) on his left, and Lady Fatima (s.a.) followed behind. All of them were dressed in Yemenite robes. The Holy Prophet (S) was having a small sheet on his shoulders. When they came out of Medina, by his command, a spot was cleaned between two trees. He ties up his sheet to those trees and made his family members enter the shade.

Then he stood before them and kept his left shoulder in the sheet and leaned on a bow that he was carrying. Then he raised his right hand to the sky. People watched from a distance, what the Prophet's next step will be. When Sayyid and Aqib watched this scene, their faces paled and their legs began to shake. They were about to faint. Then one of them asked another: "Shall we take part in Mubahila with them?" He replied: "Perhaps you don't know that any community that did Mubahila with its Prophet, was completely destroyed.

But you must show as if we don't care less for his Mubahila. But you may accept to pay him whatever monies or ornaments that he may demand. Because they depend on wars and they need weapons and tell them in a disdainful way: "Have you come with these personalities to take part in Mubahila with us?" So that he must realize that we are aware of the excellence of

his Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) and him from before."

Then they saw that the Holy Prophet (S) raised up his hands for Mubahila. One of them said, "Monkery is destroyed, go to him fast, so that not even a word of curse should be uttered by him. If it happens we would not be able to return with our folks and belongings, and we will be destroyed completely here only." So they came running to the Holy Prophet (S) and asked,

"Have you come with these folks, to take part in Mubahila?

The Holy Prophet (S) said, "Yes, these are my closest ones in the world." They began to tremble at this reply and said, "O Abul Qasim, we will pay you a tribute of a thousand swords, a thousand coats of mail, a thousand shields and a thousand gold coins every year, with the condition that these weapons will be lent to you till the time we go those of our people who have not seen you and describe to them your behavior and manners and if they agree we all would become Muslims or agree to pay the Jizya and pay you every year whatever you may demand.

The Holy Prophet (S) said: "I accept. And by the One Who sent me with miracles and honor. If you had participated with me and those under the sheet, in Mubahila, indeed these plains would have been filled with fire for you and it would have reached your community in the blink of the eye and destroyed all of them wherever they may be."

Jibraeel (a.s.) descended at that very moment and said, "O Messenger of Allah (S), Allah, the High and the Mighty conveys His salutations to you and says swearing on His Might and Honor: If you had taken part in Mubahila with all the people of the heavens and the earth, against those who stand under the sheet, indeed all of them would have been disintegrated and

the earth would have broken into pieces and ran on the surface of water."

The Messenger of Allah (S) raised his hands to the sky in such a way that the whiteness of his armpits became apparent. And he said, "Woe be to the one who oppresses you, usurps your right and reduces the recompense of my prophethood which the Almighty Allah has made as your love. The curse of the Almighty Allah will continue on him till Judgment Day."

Sayyid Ibn Tawus (r.a.) has narrated through correct chains of narrators from Abul Mufaddal Shaibani that he has written about the account of Mubahila and in the book of Ibn Ashnas Bazzaz which was written about the rituals of the month of Zilhajj, he has also related through reliable chains that when the Holy Prophet (S) conquered and all Arabs became subservient to him, and the Prophet dispatched letters and messages to all the countries, especially the King of Iran and Caesar of Rum and invited them to Islam and wrote that they must either accept Islam or pay Jizya and remain subjugated; or they should be prepared for war.

When this message reached the Christians of Najran, and the community that lived around

them, and it was Bani Abuldan and the descendants of Harith Ibn Kaab and people of different faiths who had joined them and they had the sects like: Salwiya, Deenul Mulk, Maronite, Ubbad, Nestorians all of them became fearful and were overawed. Despite the fact that they were in large numbers.

But their hearts were extremely fearful. Suddenly the messengers of the Messenger of Allah (S) came to them with a communication from him. And then Utbah bin Uzwani, Abdullah bin Umayyah, Huzair bin Abdullah Teemi and Suhaib bin Sinan Numri, came in order to invite them to Islam. It was mentioned in the letter of the Messenger of Allah (S) that all of them should accept Islam and if they accept, they would be considered as brothers in Faith and if they refuse and express arrogance, and do not accept Islam, they must in all humility pay the Jizya voluntarily. And if they refuse this also, and show enmity, they must be prepared for a great battle. And the following verse was mentioned in the letter

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلَا تَعْبُدُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَلَا تُشْرِكُ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ تَوَلُّوْا فَقُولُوا اشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ

Say: O followers of the Book! come to an equitable proposition between us and you that we" shall not serve any but Allah and (that) we shall not associate aught with Him, and (that) some of us shall not take others for lords besides Allah; but if they turn back, then say: Bear witness that we are Muslims."5

People of different religions had been told that the Holy Prophet (S) never waged a war against anyone till he had not invited them to Islam so when the messengers of the Prophet reached them and recited the Prophet's letters to them and conveyed the message, they became more hateful to truth. They gathered in their biggest church and spread carpets on the floor, decorated the wall with curtains of muslin and brocade. And they installed a big cross of pure gold decorated with precious stones. It had been sent to them by the King of Rum. Descendants of Harith bin Kaab were present in that gathering, and all of them were the valiant persons of that time and were famous among the Arabs since the age of Ignorance. They gathered to discuss the Prophet's proposal. When this information reached Bani Madhij, Akh, Hamir and Anmar tribes of Arabs, and those who were near to them in lineage or those who resided near them, like the people of Saba, all of them became infuriated, and a group that had embraced Islam in their vicinity, when they heard this news, due the bigotry of Ignorance, they apostasied.

Thus all the tribes reached an agreement that all of them should attack Medina in a united

manner and fight the Holy Prophet (S). When Abu Hamid Husain bin Al-Qama, who was their greatest scholar and a teacher of theirs, belonging to the Bakr bin Wail tribe, saw that all of them were prepared to fight, he called for his turban and put it on to pull up his eyebrows which were sagging due to old age. He was a hundred and twenty years old.

Then he came out of his community and leaning on his companions, recited a sermon. He had faith in the Lord of the Worlds, and possessed the sciences of the other prophets. He was a monotheist and had faith in Prophet Isa (a.s.). He had also brought faith in the Last Prophet (S), and he had concealed his faith from his companions and the deniers of his community. He began a speech: O sons of Abdul Daar, adopt a soft approach and whatever bounty, prosperity and success the Almighty Allah had bestowed you with should be treasured by you. You must not allow it to be destroyed, because these two bounties are a part of peace and do not form a part of war. Delay this matter and think upon it. Do not follow each other blindly. Do not take any hasty step as carelessness does not carry good results. By Allah, can you do what you have never done so far? And whatever you have done, can you undo it? Indeed, there is good and well being in delay and contemplation. Indeed, it is best to delay and postpone many things.

Most problems should be solved through peace agreements and war is not the preferable option." With these words, he concluded his discourse. On hearing this, Karz bin Sireen Harithi turned to him. He was the chief of Bani Harith bin Kaab and a commander of their forces and the greatest personality among them. He said: "O Abu Harith, you must be mad. When you got

this news, you became like one who has seen a lion and lost his senses.

You mention such examples to us and frighten us with fighting. Indeed you know the merit of fighting in defense of Faith. And it is a great thing to fight for God. And fighting is a mode of reform of the religion of the powerful God. Although all of us are officials of the government, light and rulership. Which period of fighting can you deny for us when we did not dominate our enemies? Or what allegation can you lay against us?"

His statement was yet incomplete when the arrowhead he was holding pierced his hand in his excitement and he was unaware of it. When Karz bin Sireen cooled down, Aqib turned to him, his name was Abdul Masih bin Sharjil and he was an elder of the community and his people did not take any step without his leave. Aqib said to Karz: "May you succeed, may all those who take refuge with you be exalted and one whom you assure security should not be oppressed by anyone. You have by the right of dust smeared foreheads mentioned lineage and honor.

But Abu Sirah, there is an occasion for every statement and a time for every bravery and every person about the next day is like the similitude of his present age and the days of fighting are

different. They destroy one party and give victory to another, but prosperity is the best garment and there are some causes for calamities and sorrow. And the most important cause is that man himself should choose the path of sorrow.

Saying this, Aqib fell silent and he bowed down his head. Then Sayyid turned to the one who was named Ahtam bin Noman and he was an scholar of Najran and like Aqib, an important personality of his community. He was from the learned and had joined the Laham tribe. He said: O Abu Wasila, may your efforts bear fruits, may your star be exalted, every shining thing possesses light and there is a Noor in every true statement but by the One who has bestowed intelligence, only one who has eyes can understand that light.

Doubtlessly, all three of you have adopted such an approach in your discourses that some of them are level and some unleveled. And the view of each of you is like his intelligence, shows hopefulness. And sometimes our fixed matter is decided itself. Indeed, the great chief of Quraish has called for an important matter, so tell us what your opinion is? Either you unite on his obedience or discuss about his opposition.

On hearing this, Karz held on to his view and said in an extremely harsh manner, "Shall we leave our religion on which we have been brought up? Although our forefathers have followed only this faith and the rulers of the world know us because of this and respect us. Shall we agree to pay Jizya in humiliation? No, by Allah, we cannot accept either of the options till we do not take out the swords from the scabbards and till we have not widowed innumerable women. Or that our blood is shed in the presence of Muhammad (S). We will fight him till the Almighty Allah bestows victory to whomsoever He likes." On hearing this, Sayyid said: "O Abu Sirah, have mercy on yourself and us, because if we remove one sword against Muhammad, innumerable swords would come out from his side, because all Arabs have become subservient to him and all the tribes have accepted his suzerainty. And his rulership has spread to all the towns and deserts. The King of Iran and the Caesar of Rum are helpless before him. So what is your worth that you want to oppose him? Very soon you and those who fight in your support will be destroyed in such a way that no one will utter your name. You will be like the twig which is carried away in floods. Or like a piece of meat that is thrown on a rock."

Among them was a person, from among the heretics of Christians, Jahiz bin Sarakha Barikhi, who was a very respectable personality in the view of Christian King and he lived in Najran. Sayyid said: O Abu Saad, you also express your opinion in this case, because important decisions are taken in this conference. He said: In my view, we should go to Muhammad and accept his obedience and give whatever he demands.

Then correspond with Christian Kings. Especially the greatest one, who is the Caesar of Rum

and the black kings of Naubah, Habsha, Alwa, Raa-a, Rahat, Mareeth, Qeet, as they are all Christians. In the same way, of Shaam and Christian kings from areas in its surroundings, Ghassan, Laham, Juzaam and Qaza-a etc. as they also follow your religion and are loyal to you. In the same way, the righteous people of Jira etc. and those who are inclined to the religion of Muhammad.

Also you must dispatch letters and messengers to the tribes of Taghlib and Binte Wail etc. who are from Rabia Nazar, and call them for the help of your religion so that forces may come from Rum and the blacks may be called like the folks of the elephant and the Christian Arabs, who are from the Rabia tribe and have settled in Yemen, they should also come to you. When you receive help from all sides, you must mobilize the people of your tribe who may be prepared to help you.

After that you must together turn to confront Muhammad and then his army will not dare to engage and all of them will be humiliated and defeated. You will be able to destroy them in a short time and the fire of mischief will be extinguished and then you will be considered to be the greatest in the world; like the Kaaba which is in Tahama and to which people head from all the corners of the world.

This is my opinion and it should be considered to be the best option, there is no need think more on this or to discuss the matter further. Everyone liked this suggestion of Jahiz bin Sarakha and it was decided to adopt it as a resolution. They wanted to break up the gathering when a person from the descendants of Qays bin Thalaba, from the tribe of Rabia bin Nazar; named Harith bin Aasaal; stood up. He was also a Christian. He turned to Jahiz and recited some couplets by way of examples which meant the following: "How long can you go on trying to stall the truth with falsehood?

Although truth does not remain concealed, if you want, you can make even the mountains subservient to you through the power of truth.

And if you don't enter the house through the door, you will continue to wander in confusion.

And if you approach through the door, you can enter the house."

After that he turned to Sayyid and Aqib, the scholars and religious personalities of Christians addressed them as there was no one other than them at that place: Hear and understand, O inheritors of knowledge and wisdom and those who establish proof and evidence. By Allah, successful is the one who lends the ear to good advice and does not turn away from truth.

Indeed, I urge you to fear the Almighty and remind you about the bequest of Prophet Isa (a.s.). Then he explained in detail the bequest of Prophet Isa (a.s.) and his appointing Yusha bin Yuhanna as his successor and his narration of those incidents that would come about in his

nation; that people would adopt the religion of falsehood, and he said that the Almighty Allah revealed to Prophet Isa (a.s.): "O son of my slave-girl, act on My Book with all your strength and power, and narrate the interpretation of it for the Syriac people in their own language. And inform them that I am God, except who there is no god. I am Ever-living, never to die, I exist with My own being. I am that same God, Who created all the worlds with nothing. I am the Eternal one, who will never decline, and I don't change from one condition to another. Indeed I sent My messengers to the world and by My mercy sent scriptures for My creatures in order to save them from going astray.

Then, indeed, I will send the most honorable of the prophets, Ahmad, whom I have chosen from all the prophets. And from all the words, I have chosen Parcelete, from all creatures, who is My servant and My friend. I will send him at a time when the world would be devoid of a guide and I will raise him from the place of his birth which is in the honored Mecca and which is the place of his father, Ibrahim.

And I will send as a Noor, from which the sightless eyes, the deaf ears and ignorant hearts may receive illumination. What can be said of the fortune of the one who would be present during his time, who hears his discourses and brings faith upon him and follow his Shariat and book. So, O Isa, when you mention that Prophet, you must invoke blessings on him (Salawat), as all My angels also invoke blessings on him.

The narrator says that when the discourse of Haritha bin Asaal reached this point, there appeared darkness under the eyes of Sayyid and Aqib. Because they did not like that this bequest of Prophet Isa (a.s.) should be recounted in that gathering, as the two of them commanded great respect among the Christians of Najran, and they were highly honored in the view of Kings. They used to send gifts and presents for them. In the same way, common people also sent presents to them.

Therefore they feared that people would abandon them and give their obedience. And if they become Muslims, they would lose all their respect and influence. Therefore Aqib said: "O Haritha, think upon it and consider what you say. Arguments in refutation of these statements are more than acceptable arguments and many statements are more exalted than those who make them and concealing hidden wisdom creates hatred in the hearts, therefore beware of the hatred of the hearts.

Because on that must be said, which is deserved to be said and there is an occasion for every statement. Everything cannot be spoken up in public. On that must be said, which can bring felicity and which is not harmful for anyone. I have fulfilled the right of good advice, so do not utter another word. After that Sayyid also tried to support Aqib and told Haritha: "I always

considered you a knowledgeable and wise person, because the wise were attracted to you; so do not adopt helplessness and shame. And instead of water do not take the people to wine. If someone considers excused in this discussion, in fact you are not excused. If Abu Wakhir had spoken in a harsh tone, he is not liable for it. Indeed all his words and actions are ours, he is our leader. If he criticized you, you must act on his advice. As you should know that the tenure of the religion of chief of Quraish, that is Muhammad is very short, and it will be over in a short time and after time a long period of time will elapse.

At the end of which a Prophet will come with wisdom and eloquence and with sword and kingship, would be owner of a great kingdom. His followers will control the East and the West and through his progeny will come a pure king who will dominate all the kings, and all the religious people will join his faith. And his kingdom will stretch to everything in the world. O Haritha, it is not known how long that period will be. Therefore, you must remain firm on your religion and do not join any other faith as it will become extinct soon or be destroyed in some accident.

And do not be concerned about that which is going to come, because today we are only bound to this faith, and whatever will come in the future is the concern of those who will come in the future. On hearing this, Haritha bin Asaal replied: O Abu Khara, keep quiet, what this day can benefit one who is not concerned with tomorrow. Fear God, so that He may grant refuge to you, because other than Him, there is no one in the world who can give refuge.

You have issued those statement about Aqib because he is your elder and leader and Christians are inclined to you. If you want to reject truth in order to preserve your greatness and leadership, you are free to do so. But advice is for the deserving ones. And you are more deserving of this. It is so because our hearts are inclined to you and both of you are our leaders in faith. O both elders, make reason as your guide and do only that which is advised by reason. And think on the back and surrounding of that which has come over you. Do not delay the matter. Try to gain the pleasure of the Almighty like He grants His mercy and blessings upon you every day. Do not allow your shamelessness to gain an upper hand over you, because one who forsakes control of his self, heads to destruction. One who keeps an eye on his end, is safe from destruction. One who makes use of his intellect, gains lesson and he does not serve as a lesson for others.

One who dispenses good advice for the sake of Allah and obtains the pleasure of Allah, the Almighty Allah makes him inclined to Allah and he obtains greatness and success in the world and Hereafter. After that he turned to Aqib in anger and said: O Abu Wasila, you had said that

one who rejects your statements is ahead of the one who accepts them. By Allah, you were more deserving of that no one should have mentioned this about you. Indeed you know that we are all followers of the New Testament.

Whatever Prophet Isa (a.s.) told his companions and all the believers of the community of Isa, know that whatever I have mentioned is correct and whatever you have said is wrong and whatever you have done is a mistake. Nothing but repentance and acceptance of what you have denied can make amends for it. Again he turned to Sayyid and said: "There is no sword which does not err and there is no scholar who does not make a mistake. Successful is one who amends his mistake.

He has found the Straight Path. Unfortunate is one who insists on his mistake. O Sayyid, you said that two prophets will come after Prophet Isa (a.s.). Where is it mentioned in divine scriptures? Don't you know what Prophet Isa (a.s.) said to Bani Israel? When I go to your and my father, and after sometime two persons will come to you; a truthful one and a liar, what will you do at that time?

People asked Prophet Isa (a.s.): Who are those people and he said: "The Prophet will be from the descendants of Ismail and the liar will be from Bani Israel. The truthful one will be sent with mercy and there will be for him rulership and kingdom till the time the world remains established. And the liar will be the one entitled Masih Dajjal (Antichrist).

His rule would be of a short duration and the Almighty Allah will slay him through my hands at a time when I will be sent into the world for the second time. After this discourse, Haritha said: O people, we admonish you to give up the actions of your predecessors. Those who expressed fear and said that two Christs will come. One would be a Christ of mercy and guidance and another one would be of misguidance and narrated the signs of both of them.

So common Jews rejected the Christ of guidance and falsified and brought faith in the Christ of misguidance, who is in fact Dajjal, and they are also in anticipation of him. And they created such mischiefs in all affairs and cast the Book of Allah behind their back and eliminated the divine prophets. They also killed those who were appointed with justice from the Almighty Allah.

So the Almighty Allah, as result of their evil deeds, destroyed their insight and due to their oppression and mischief ended their rulership; instead they were subject to humiliation and disgrace. God fixed for them Fire of Hell as their abode. Aqib said: O Haritha how do you know that the Prophet who has risen in Medina is the same who is mentioned in divine scriptures? It is possible that it could be your cousin, Musaylima of Yamama, who has also claimed prophethood like Muhammad the Qarshi.

And both of them are descendants of Ismail. Both have followers who testify to their prophethood and accept their messengers. Do you think there is some difference between them or can you describe what is the difference between them? Haritha said: Yes, by Allah, there is difference of heavens and earth and cloud and dust; and the truthfulness of the proofs of Allah, that is prophets and messengers is proved for the servants of Allah, who obtain lessons. Musaylima, the liar of Yamama; regarding him it is sufficient what your messengers and other people and travelers who have visited his place, and the residents of Yamamah who

have visited you say.

All of them informed you that Musaylima had sent a delegation to Muhammad in Yathrib in order to investigate his circumstances. They found in Ahmad the qualities of the previous prophets and upon their return described that Ahmad has some to Yathrib even though all their wells were dry, there was a lot of salty water in them. And before his coming all of them contained water that was not potable and tasty. When he arrived, he put his saliva in some

wells and in some gargled, so they all became sweet and filled up to the brim.

Some people have said that the Holy Prophet (S) applied his saliva to those who had sore eyes, and they were cured and some had wounds that were also cured by the saliva of the Prophet. They narrated many miracles of the Prophet. The people demanded from Musaylima to show the same miracles that Muhammad had shown. Upon their insistence, he went to a well that already had sweet water. When he gargled into the well, it became salty and un-potable and when he dropped his saliva in a well that had less water, it dried up completely and not a drop

remained. A man was suffering from sore eyes was brought to Musaylima.

When Musaylima applied his saliva, the man lost his vision completely. A person had a bodily injury, when Musaylima applied his saliva, the patient became leprous. When people saw these extraordinary happenings and asked him to show the right miracle, he said that they were bad followers for their prophet. And you are bad companions for your prophet and yourself. You demanded some things from me before revelation can come to me.

Now I have received permission from Allah about your bodies and not for your wells, so that I may grant cure to you. So one who has faith in me will be cured and one who had doubt in my prophethood will be worse of it. Now whoever likes may approach me and I will apply my saliva to him as a cure. They said: We don't want you do anything which may cause the people of Yathrib to ridicule us. So they turned away from him lest they become targets of the ridicule of the people of Yathrib. Sayyid and Aqib began to laugh at this.

So much so that they began to stamp their feet in delight saying: What relation Noor has with darkness and truth has with falsehood? There is not as much difference between Noor and

darkness and truth and falsehood as there is so much difference between the truth and falsehood of these two. According to narrators when Aqib saw that the matter of Musaylima became false and invalid, he wanted to make amends for it. So he said: Musaylima is wrong in his claim that the Almighty Allah has sent him as a Prophet. But it is better that he has kept away his people from idol worship and he has faith in the Almighty Allah. Haritha said: I put under the oath of the Almighty Allah who widened the world and lighted up the Sun and the Moon, is it not mentioned in heavenly books that the Almighty Allah says: I am the God, except whom there is no god and I am the one who will recompense the deeds on Judgment Day.

I have sent My books and appointed My prophets in order to save My servants from the deception of the Satan. And I sent to the world My prophets like the stars of the heavens so that they may guide the people according to My command. Those who obeyed them, it was as if they obeyed Me and those who opposed them, it was as if they had disobeyed Me. Indeed, I, angels and all the creatures of the world have cursed him.

Whoever denies My divinity or considers one of My creatures to be My partner or rejects anyone of My prophets and says that I have sent revelations to him whereas I have not revealed anything to him, or he conceals My godhood or claims divinity or misguides My servants, or make them blind from the path of truth, indeed from My creatures one who worships Me knowing what I want from My servants, and he serves Me in accordance with it, one who does not walk the paths clarified by My prophets, his worship will only increase the distance from Me.

Aqib said: I testify that you have said the truth. Haritha said: There is no option other than the truth and there is no refuge other than truth. I have only said what you have said in this regard. Sayyid who was an expert in debates and discussions, said: I believe with regard to that Qarshi (Muhammad), that he is a Prophet for his people who are descendants of Ismail. But he claims that he is a Prophet for all the people of the world.

Haritha said: O Sayyid you know that he is sent to his people from the Almighty Allah. Yes, said the Sayyid. So Haritha said: Do you testify his prophethood from that aspect? Sayyid said: Who can deny in presence of clear proofs. Indeed, I testify to it and there is no doubt in it. He is mentioned in all heavenly scriptures and all prophets have informed about his advent. When he heard this, Haritha began to laugh and he started making lines on the ground.

Sayyid asked: Why do you laugh? He replied: I am astonished and amused. Sayyid said: Perhaps what I said was astonishing and this is what has made you laugh. He said: Yes, is it not a matter of surprise that one who claims knowledge and wisdom, should say that the

Almighty Allah has chosen for prophethood such a person and bestowed him specially with messengership. And has helped him through his spirit and wisdom. One who is false, and says that revelation has come to him, whereas it is not so, and like the soothsayers, he mixes up truth with falsehood who sometimes utter lies and sometimes state the truth. Sayyid was ashamed and he regretted saying what he had said. Narrators say that Haritha was not from Najran. He was a poor man who had settled down in that area. At last Aqib turned to him and said: Keep quiet brother, do not argue, because many things are such that if they are spoken up they lead the speaker to the depths of the well and many things make friends of the enemies.

So give up saying that which is unacceptable even though you are excused in saying it. Listen and you will understand as there is a form of everything and the face of man is his reasoning power and the face of reason is good manners. Good manners are of two types: One is natural and the other is acquired. And the best of the manners are those which the Creator of the

World has commanded.

And one of them is that the honor of ones ruler must be maintained as it is his right and this right does not belong to anyone else, because the ruler is the connection between God and His creatures. And rulers are also of two types: One is having a hot temperament and is harsh and the other has wisdom and rules according to the law of religion. And he has greater right and O Haritha, you know that the Almighty Allah has bestowed us precedence among the Christian kings and then to other people, therefore you must understands everyone's rights and this is sufficient for your admonition as you don't have any consideration for the true kings.

Then he said: You mentioned the brothers of Quraish; that is Muhammad and stated that he has brought miracles. You were right. We also agree and have faith in his messengership. And we testify that he has in his possession miracles and signs of the previous prophets, except for one which is the greatest and clearest and it is like a head. And these signs possessed by him are like the body. And what is the value of headless body?

Have patience so that we can investigate his circumstances and think upon his signs and miracles. If the most important sign is verified, we would join his religion before you and obey him before you do. Haritha said: Whatever you said in the discourse of truth was heard by us and we are prepared to obey you. What is that sign, which if absent would render all these signs defective? Aqib said: Sayyid had mentioned it, but you did not pay attention to it.

And you rendered all these things useless. Haritha said: May my parents be sacrificed on you, please repeat what that sign is? Aqib said: Successful is one who accepts the truth after knowing the truth and he does not turn away from it. Doubtlessly both of us know that and in

addition to us, scholars of the divine Book also know whatever is mentioned in this book from the past sciences and whatever is to occur in the future. Indeed, this glad tiding has been explained in detail in all books that a Prophet, Ahmad will come.

He would be the last of the prophets. His community will dominate the East and the West and he and the people of his nation will rule for a long time. Then they will oppress a king who would be the best among his followers from the aspect of lineage and excellence and the most proximate to the Prophet. They would abandon the bequest of their Prophet in oppression and
injustice.

Then for many years Caliphate will turn into rulership and their rulership will be great. So much so that there will be no house in the Arabian Gulf whose residents will not be inclined to them and some of them will be fearful of them. Then their power will decline and others would ruler over them from among their former servants and slaves.

They would leave evil habits and vices in the world. Their rulership will be accompanied with injustice and force. After that their rulership will be decreased from all sides and the disbelievers will overpower them. After that terrible calamities would befall them and tragedies will surround them from all sides. So much so that due to increase in oppression and injustice
they would prefer death. Their elders would not be capable of leadership.

At last the religion will go out of their hands and only the name of religion will remain with them. During that period, believers will be poor and religious people will be few in number. Except for some very few persons, most of them will have despaired of deliverance from the Almighty Allah. Due to the difficulties surrounding them some of them will think that the Almighty Allah will not help them. At last after their despair the Almighty Allah will from the progeny of their Prophet bring out a person to save them and he will rise from a place unknown
to them. Angels in the skies are invoking blessings upon him.

All that is in the earth, like the human beings, birds and animals, would all be elated due to his reappearance. The earth would reveal its treasures and blessings. So much so that it would again become as it was during the period of Adam (a.s.). During the tenure of this person, poverty, calamities and diseases would disappear that used to befall the previous nations.

And peace will be established in all towns. The venom of every poisonous creature and claws of beasts will all become harmless. So much so that little girls will play with baby snakes without being caused any harm. And the lions will be like the shepherds for the sheep and
goats. Wolves would act like helpers of sheep.

The Almighty Allah would make that person dominate all the religions of the world. He will rule on all the countries till the limits of satisfaction till not a single person remains but that he

would be on the religion of truth. The religion liked by Allah, on which He has prophets from Adam to the Last Prophet.

Reply of Haritha and the Absurd Discourse of Aqib

When Aqib reached this point Haritha said, I testify, for the God Who has created all the things, O respectable and learned gentleman, truth has become clear from your discourse and the world has become illuminated by your true statements. The truth is same as you have mentioned. Whatever Allah has revealed in the books that He sent down for the guidance of His servants. Not a letter of it is against divine scriptures. But what was it that you wanted to

mention? Aqib said, "What you believe respecting Ahmad the Qarshi, is only error.

Haritha said, "Have you not acknowledged that people have testified to his apostleship, prophethood and miracles?" "Yes", replied Aqib, "But between Isa (a.s.) and judgment, two Prophet are to appear, the name of one of which is derived from that of the other; one is Muhammad and the other Ahmad. Musa has announced the advent of the first, and Isa (a.s.) has proclaimed the coming of the second. This Qarshi is raised up for his own people, but after

him a Prophet will appear, whose empire will be great and his reign long.

Allah, the Most High will send him to complete faith, and will be the proofs for all people. After Muhammad, seditions (Fatra) will arise, in which the foundations of all religion will be destroyed. Then the Almighty Allah will send one who would strengthen the foundations of religion, and subdue all opposing religions to his faith. After him, righteous kings will reign all over the world, like the earth and mountains and every dry and wet thing. They will inherit the earth like Adam and Nuh had inherited. These kings of such exalted rank will wear the dress of

mendicants and will be majestic and great. Therefore they are the best of all creatures.

Through that Prophet his townsmen and all the servants of the Lord will achieve guidance. After a long period, Isa (a.s.) will descend to the last of them. After them there shall be no great kingdom or any good in life, for there will be various companies of fools in whose period the Judgment Day will occur in the age of the worst of creatures. It is the promise that Allah will give many miracles to Muhammad. Like He had sent for Ibrahim the Khalil as mentioned in divine scriptures.

Haritha now inquired of Aqib if he was sure that there was no doubt the two names he had mentioned belonged to different individuals in different time periods? He replied in the positive. Haritha asked him if he had any proof about it? He replied that the truth of this was more evident to him than the sun; on which Haritha looked at his toes and began to draw lines on the ground.

Then he said: Destruction lies in the fact that person should possess wealth but does not

spend it. Or that he possesses a sword but that he keeps it as an ornament without using it to fight battles or that he has the reasoning capacity but does not act on it.

Haritha's arguments bewilder Sayyid and Aqib

Aqib said that Haritha has mentioned a very rough matter. Who is it? Haritha swore by the truth of the Lord, by whom the heavens and earth are supported, that the two names under discussion belong to one and the same person and the same Prophet and messenger; about whom informed Musa bin Imran and whose advent Isa bin Maryam announced, and about whom before them, Ibrahim in his book foretold.

This amused the Sayyid and he laughed so that people may think that he was ridiculing Haritha and was astonished at what he had said. After that Aqib said to Haritha in a critical manner that Sayyid is laughing for no reason on your absurd things. Haritha said that if he was laughing, it was a matter of shame and a calamity that he has brought upon himself. It is an evil deed committed by him. Have you not seen in the wisdom of the divine inheritance in which it is mentioned that it does not befit a wise man to make faces or to laugh at something that is not amusing.

Have you not received information from your chief and master, Christ, that he said: The vain laughing of a learned is that carelessness that becomes apparent from his heart? Or it is ecstasy that had made him oblivious of the worry about Judgment Day. Sayyid said: O Haritha, no one is proud of his intellect except one who thinks bad of others. If I am needy of your reports in my knowledge, I am not a scholar.

Have you not received the information from our leader, the Christ, that there are some servants of the Almighty who laugh only apparently because of divine mercy, whereas their hearts weep in secret? Haritha said: If it is thus, it is nice. He said: What else can it be? Therefore you must not think ill of others. Let us conclude our discussion as the discord between us has prolonged

The Third Day of Debate

Narrators say that it was the third day of the debate between them and it was the third meeting of their conference. Sayyid said: O Haritha, did Abu Wasila not inform you in the most eloquent words that which all have heard and did he not remind you? But it had no effect on you and your companions. Now let me explain this in a different way.

I adjure you in the name of God and what He has revealed on Isa (a.s.), have you not seen in the book of Zajerah translated from the Syriac language into Arabic? That is the book of Shamun bin Hamun al-Safa, who was the successor of Isa (a.s.). His book has been transmitted from hand to hand, till it reached to the people of Najran. After mentioning many

other things, it declares that when a certain period shall elapse, men will wander in error and cut asunder the ties of mercy and kindred, and the precepts of the prophets will be obliterated. Then Allah, the Most High will raise the Parcelete and send him in mercy and justice to the people, to separate between truth and falsehood. They inquired from Isa (a.s.), O Christ of the time, who is Parcelete? He replied: Parcelete is Ahmad, the seal of the prophets, and heir of all their wisdom.

By him the most High will send mercy on him during his life, and show him mercy after his death, on account of his pure and sacred descendant. That Prophet will be raised up in the end of time, when all the cords of religion and guidance are broken, and the light of the Prophet extinguished, and in a short period he will restore the faith of Islam in a short time, as it was at first.

Sayyid again confesses to the Qualities of Prophet Muhammad (S): Allah, the Most High will establish His empire, and send other righteous people after him so that His kingdom is established throughout the earth. Haritha said, "What all you have said is true, and in truth there is nothing to fear: and the heart is not satisfied except with truth. But who is that personage you have described? The fact is that he would not be without offspring said Sayyid. True, rejoined Haritha, and he is no other than Muhammad. That is the point in dispute, returned Sayyid: Have not our own messengers and other than that travelers informed us that the sons that Muhammad had, namely, Qasim, from the Quraishi lady, Khadija, and Ibrahim, the son of Mariya, the Copt, are both dead, and he is now left childless, like a sheep with a broken horn about to die? Therefore if Muhammad had a son, your reasoning would have been acceptable; for in the book of Shamun it is mentioned that the son of the Prophet shall conquer the world. But since Muhammad has no son, he cannot be the one Isa (a.s.) foretold.

Haritha said: By Allah, admonitions are many but those who heed are few, and proofs are obvious, if only eyes see them. As those who have enflamed eyes cannot look at the sun, on account of the agony it would give them, so those who have weak understanding cannot comprehend weighty arguments. Then turning to Sayyid and Aqib, he continued: If Muhammad has no child, will you not follow him? Proof has been established by Allah, by the knowledge He has given you and by the evidences that you possess.

In spite of that Allah has given you honor over the common people as well as the kings and made all follow you so that they refer to you in all matters of faith and you are not in need of them. They act on whatever you order, therefore, whoever is given nobility and position by the Almighty Allah he should thank for the divine bounties by humility for the pleasure of Allah,

because the Almighty Allah has exalted him and he should be advisor of Allah and must not distort the divine message.

You have yourself mentioned Muhammad and about the prophecies mentioned about him in the divine scriptures and for your information he had already arrived. But you say that he is sent only for his people and not for all the world? Then you say that he is not the same prophet who is the seal of the prophets and is the one who will preside over Judgment Day and all creatures will be judged through him. And that he is the heir of all the prophets and would have come after all of them. But you say that he is childless. Did you not say this? Sayyid and Aqib said: "Yes, it is so."

Haritha defeats Sayyid and Aqib through his arguments

Haritha said: If it is known that he has sons, would you still doubt that he is the heir of all the prophets and that his religion will not subdue all the faiths and he is not the seal of the prophets and the messenger for all the people? The two said: No, after that there will be no doubt. Haritha said: In spite of this debate you still have faith in it? Yes, replied Sayyid and Aqib. Haritha exclaimed: Allah Akbar! Truth is manifest.

They said: Why have you exclaimed thus? Perhaps you have ridiculed and blamed us. Haritha said: The truth has become manifest and falsehood is destroyed. And the self becomes restless to hear it. Verily it is easier to change the direction of the ocean and to break up the mountains is easier than to remove one who is appointed by the Almighty Allah, because he is the living truth of God. And it is impossible to enliven the one made dead by Allah, because he is falsehood.

And know that Muhammad is not without offspring, and he is the seal of the prophets, in the period of whose faith the judgment will come. There is no Prophet after him. It is during his tenure that the Judgment Day will be established. And only God will be the inheritor of the earth and all that are in it will be destroyed. From his posterity will arise that righteous king you described, and who will be the king of the East and the West and the Almighty Allah will make him conquer through Ibrahimic faith, all idolatrous religions.

The two opponents now said: If Muhammad had offspring, Haritha you have won the debate, but told him that his mode was fox-like and they he does not give up his claim.

Haritha proves his claims through Jamia on the Fourth Day

Haritha said: I bring evidence from your side only which would soon free you from doubt, and impart health to your hearts. He then turned to Haritha bin Al-Qama, their greatest scholar and learned man and said: O respected father, I beseech you to bestow contentment and joy on our minds, by bringing forward the book entitled Jamia (collection).

Narrators say that it came about on the fourth day, it was a hot afternoon and hot wind was blowing there. Sayyid and Aqib now proposed to adjourn to the next day, as it was near noon of a summer's day, and they declared themselves quite exhausted. It was decided that the next day the books of Zajerah and Jamia would be produced, and a decision be made in accordance with them and the gathering dispersed.

The next day all the people of Najran, with devotees and scholars, gathered to hear the debate of Sayyid and Aqib with Haritha and what was produced from Jamia on the subject. When Sayyid and Aqib described the multitude ready to listen to what was mentioned in Jamia, they felt ashamed, for they knew that the book appealed to was against them, therefore they did not like this debate to be held in public. Sayyid and Aqib, were like Satans in deceit.

Thus Sayyid said to Haritha: You have delivered long speeches and you don't want the truth to become manifest. Haritha said: The fact is that you and Aqib don't want the truth to be manifested. Now you may say what you like. Aqib said: I have said all I wanted to say, now I repeat it again. Doubtlessly we want to inform you and don't want to conceal the divine proof and to deny the divine signs.

We don't attribute falsehood to the Lord of the Worlds, as whoever the Almighty Allah has sent with prophethood we should say that he is not a Prophet! O Haritha we agree that from the progeny Ismail, Muhammad (S) is the messenger of God to his people. But from the Arabs and non-Arabs, we don't think that they are obliged to forgo their previous faith and adopt his religion. Haritha asked: Why do you accept such a thing?

They said because it is mentioned in New Testaments and all divine books and it has become apparent for us thus. Haritha said: If it is obvious that Muhammad is a Prophet, in brief or in detail, how can you say that he is not the heir and not the one who will preside on the judgment and that he is not sent for all the worlds. He replied: You know that, and also know that the proof of Allah is never invalidated. And it is a command effected by the Almighty Allah so that remains in force forever.

And the world is never devoid of the divine proof till this world would endure and even if two persons survive on the earth, one of them will the divine proof on another and before this we used to think that the proof would be Muhammad and he would keep this religion established, but since he has no male issue surviving, and made him heirless we thought that he is not the same Muhammad, because he is heirless and divine proof and the last Prophet of God will not be heirless. This is mentioned in all divine scriptures.

Therefore we thought that after Muhammad the Prophet who comes after him and who will survive, whose name Muhammad would be derived from Ahmad about whom Christ has

informed and that his son would be the ruler of all the world and keep all the creatures of the Almighty Allah on His religion. And these matters will come not through him but through his progeny that will be the owner of the world and all that is in it. And all scholars are having consensus; who know the New Testament by heart and before this we have discussed this fully, so what is the use of repeating all this?

Haritha said: We all know this but are repeating it so that if someone has forgotten it, he may be reminded of it and if someone is making a mistake, he may correct it. And that he may be satisfied. You have mentioned that after Masih there will be two prophets, both from the progeny of Ismail. The first of them will rise in Medina and after him the second is Ahmad, and

Muhammad who is from Quraish is the same one who is residing in Medina. But we believe that he is the same Ahmad who is mentioned in all the books. He is the same proof of the Almighty Allah; he is only the seal of the prophets and heir of the messengers. Other than him, or after him, there will be no Prophet or messenger between him and the

Judgment Day.

Sayyid and Aqib swear that if they see the prophecy of Prophet Muhammad (S) in Jamia, they would accept him as a Prophet

Yes, his progeny will continue through his chaste and infallible daughter, and she will get a son who will invite all the creatures to religion and will dominate the countries of the world from the East to the West. So you have said what you wanted to say and you believe in the prophethood of Muhammad and if his progeny continues you will have no doubt that he is the most excellence of the prophets and the last of them.

They agreed to it. Haritha said that since they had doubt about the other Prophet, therefore the book of Jamia will adjudicate between them. People acclaimed aloud and called for Jamia since they were fed up with debates. They were thinking that when the book is brought it would be known that truth is with Sayyid and Aqib as they had made big claims in gatherings. Abu Haritha sent a servant to bring the Jamia, which was very large and weighty book, and the servant brought it in on his head.

The narrator says that a person from Najran informed me that; he used to be present in the service of Sayyid and Aqib. He used to work for them and was knew most their circumstances. He says that when Jamia was brought, Sayyid and Aqib almost died of anger, for they knew it contained a history of Prophet of God, of his character, family, times, and posterity, what should happen in his community, his companion, and all the events down to Judgment Day.

Sayyid and Aqib now had some private exchange, in which they said that the day was not in their favor and public disgrace threatened them, such a situation is impossible that all the

people should gather at one place. In which such a talk is held and in which the people do not gain the upper hand. The other one said: To be defeated by common people is the worst tragedy.

After that it is very difficult to reform them. Because their making mischief is like demolishing a house and their reform is like the construction of a house and whatever occurs in the word of their mischief cannot be corrected in a whole year.

The narrator says that during this time Haritha got an opportunity to send secretly, an agent to a party which had just returned from a visit to Muhammad, to summon them by way of precaution. So Aqib and Sayyid could neither close the meeting nor postpone it to the next day. Since all the Christians of Najran had attended the meet, and all wanted to see the qualities of the Messenger of Allah (S) mentioned in the book of Jamia.

And the people sent by the Prophet were present there. Abu Haritha, a senior member of Christian faith also used to support Haritha. The narrator says that the trustworthy Christian man narrated to me those scholars decided among themselves that whatever Haritha tells them and to whatever matter he invites them, they cannot deny it.

So that people may not think that they are on the wrong. And they expressed the same attitude that they were eager to see the book of Jamia and to act on its correct directions, so that they may not be insulted in the view of the people. Thus Sayyid and Aqib arose and came to Jamia which was with Abu Haritha and Haritha Ibn Asaal also stepped forward. Audiences also craned their necks and the companions of the Prophet also surrounded that book.

When Abu Haritha gestured, Jamia was opened and they first produced from it the book of Adam, which related to the kingdom of the Most High, what He has created, and what He has decreed in heaven and earth respecting things temporal and eternal. This book, which contained all sciences, was transmitted by the father of mankind, to Sheeth. Sayyid and Aqib began to read from it in order to know the qualities of the Holy Prophet (S) so that the dispute between them be resolved. All the assembly gave the strictest attention to the book, in the second chapter of which was written:

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. I am the Lord, besides whom there is no Lord, self-existent in My nature. I created the universe, and the life of all is bestowed by Me. I have appointed one period to succeed another, and in everything have made the true and the false manifest, and according to My own intention have given causes their power. Every difficult thing is easy for Me. I am the great, beneficent Lord, and gracious giver.

I give and forgive, My mercy precedes My wrath, and My favor outstrips punishment. I have created My servants to worship me, and completed the proof for all. Indeed I will send to them

My prophets and My books, from the beginning of time, the first of mankind, Adam to the era of Ahmad, My Prophet, on whom I will send salvation and mercy make in his heart a place for My blessing and by him complete the list of my prophets.

Adam inquired, O Allah, who are those prophets, and who is Ahmad, and whom thou bestowest such exaltation and greatness? The Lord of the universe replied, "They will all be from your progeny, and the last of them will be Ahmad." "For what," said Adam, "Would You raise and send them?"

The Most High declared, "I send them on account of My unity, and to make known My oneness. I will communicate by them to mankind, three hundred and thirty religious dispensations, and will complete this system on Ahmad. Therefore I have decreed that whoever comes to Me according to one of these dispensations, with faith in Me and my Prophet, shall enter Paradise."

The next passage of the book was to this purport: The Most High caused Adam to know the Prophet and the rest of his posterity. His attention was fixed by a light of spirit among them that illumined all the East, and increased till it likewise filled the West and arose to heaven. This is recognized to be the Muhammadan light, and the fragrance shed by that luminous spirit perfumed the world.

Around this spirit, he beheld four others; they were to left, right and before and behind him; that in fragrance and splendor resembled it more than any others of his posterity. Next he saw the spirit of those specially aided by the five luminous spirits, and bearing a similitude to them, and around these again, a multitude like the star of heavens of various degrees of brilliance, but all inferior in splendor to those they surrounded.

The blackness like a dark tempestuous night arose round the whole horizon. The darkness, on nearer approach, proved to be innumerable multitudes of horrid shapes and hideous features, emitting the most putrid odors.

Adam was confounded at this wonderful sight and said, "O knower of all secret and forgiver of sins, the Lord of omnipotent power and victorious intentions, who are these blessed towering lights surrounding that eminent one?" The Most High replied, "They are your heirs, those who eagerly take My mercies and are near me as intercessor, and whose intercession for sinner, I will accept.

This great light is Ahmad, the best of them and of all creatures, whom I have chosen according to My own knowledge, and derived his name from one of My own titles; I am Mahmud and he is Muhammad. The light which resembles him is his vizier and successor, by whom I impart strength to Muhammad, and I bestow on that one My blessing.

He would be pure of all sins. This other light is the best of My handmaids, the heir of My knowledge, and daughter of my Prophet, Ahmad. These two other lights are the grandchildren of Muhammad, and the successors of other in the knowledge and perfection. The lights which surround these are their children, who will be the heirs of their knowledge. Verily, I have chosen them all, and made them pure and innocent, have bestowed blessing on them all, and imparted

to them My perfect mercy, and have made them the cause of illumination to the universe.

Looking down this train of luminous spirit, Adam beheld one that shone like the Morning Star.

"By the blessing of that favored servant of mine", declared the Most High, "I will take away the chains of oppressors from the necks of My servants, remove calamity from them and fill the earth with light, mercy and justice, after it has been over followed with cruelty, anarchy and tyranny. Adam rejoined, "Lord, verily he is great whom You have exalted, and he is ennobled whom You dignify, and whomever You exalt is worthy of the rank: but why are these servants

of Yours so highly exalted?

The Lord of universe declared, I am the Lord, besides whom there is no Lord. I am the forgiving and benevolent, the great and beneficent God, and omniscient over all. I know every thought, and the time and manner of every event, and the circumstances of that which will never transpire had it pleased Me to give it existence. And if something transpired, how it would

transpire?

Verily on examining the heart of my servants, I have found none more obedient to me and benevolent to my creatures, than the prophets, which reason I bestowed on them My wisdom and apostleship, and laid on their shoulders the burden of the doctrine of prophecy. And chose them for My messengership. After that according to the grades of the prophets, I appointed a

special group from their successors so that I can entrust them with My proof.

And make them the leader of the people. And through them remove the defects of the people.

And to correct the deviations of the people. As I am aware about them and their hearts. And My mercy is in their favor. When I looked among the prophets, I found no one that obeyed me better, or who was more benevolent toward My creatures than Muhammad, My chosen, and

best of My creatures. I chose him in my wisdom, and exalted his name by My own.

Those others I found peculiar to him and resembling him in heart; therefore I united them to him and constituted them heirs of My books and of divine communications, the abodes of My wisdom and illumination. I swore by My own nature that I would never punish anyone by fire who should not have sinned against the doctrine of My unity, and who should have seized the

cord of the love of My chosen ones.

Qualities of the Prophet and his Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) in the scroll of Sheeth (a.s.) from the Book of

Abu Haritha now directed them to look into the book of Sheeth, which had been transmitted as a heritage to Idris, from hand to hand. The book was written in the ancient Syriac script. Here it was recorded that when Idris was in the house of his devotions, in the land of Kufa, his people assembled around him, and he addressed them saying: "One day a dispute arose among the offspring of Adam, on the question, as to who was the most exalted creature: some maintaining that this dignity belonged to Adam, since Allah created him with His own hands and make the angels prostrate to him and gave him the successorship of the earth and made all creatures subservient to him.

Others insisted that the honor must be the property of the angels who had never disobeyed the divine commands, some said particularly the archangels Jibreel, Mikael and Israfeel. Some declared that Jibreel must be greatest of all as he was entrusted by the Most High with divine communications. They came at length and referred their dispute to Adam and told him what they had said on the subject.

He replied, "I will tell you, my children, who is most exalted before God. Verily, by Allah, when spirit was breathed into me, and I sat up, the great divine empyrean was beaming in my sight, and on it is written. There is no God but God; Muhammad is the Prophet of God. One of them is the chosen one of God and another is the trustworthy one of God. And he mentioned some names that were joined to the names of Muhammad.

Then Adam (a.s.) said: This I found written all over heaven so that there was no blank left the size of a page. The name of every believer was written on the empyrean, twelve of which Adam repeated, and said: "O my children, Muhammad (S) and those twelve persons are dearest and most exalted of all creatures with the most High."

The narrator says that after this Abu Haritha next referred to the Salawat of Ibrahim that the angels had brought from the Almighty Allah; and notwithstanding the objections of Sayyid and Aqib, who said that quotations enough had been made, insisted on having the testing of that book brought forward.

It was written: The Most High chose Ibrahim for friendship, exalted him with favors, and made him the Qiblah and leader of those who should come after him, and established in his posterity the prophethood and imamate, and possession of the divine books. The Most High gave him by inheritance an ark of Adam which related to science and wisdom. Due to which he became superior to the angels.

Qualities of the Prophet in the scroll of Ibrahim (a.s.) from the Book of Jamia
When Ibrahim (a.s.) looked in the Ark, he found cells equal to the number of those prophets

sent to teach all mankind, and to the number of their respective successors. He broke into all the cells and came at length to that of Muhammad, the last of the prophets, on whose right hand was Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) represented in a gigantic portrait beaming with light, with his hand resting on the girdle of Muhammad. On the portrait was the inscription: This is the similitude of Muhammad, and who is aided by divine victory.

Ibrahim inquired, "O my lord and Master, who is this illustrious creature?" The Lord of the universe answered, "This is My servant and chosen one, who will open the chapters of knowledge and wisdom to the people, and he is the seal of the Prophet and whose successor is the heir of his wisdom and is represented by this portrait. Ibrahim asked, "Who is the opener and the seal?"

The Lord declared, "He is Muhammad, My chosen one whose spirit I created before all other creatures. He is My great teacher among creatures, and I created him a Prophet and chose him when as yet Adam as an unfinished body of clay. I will raise him up in the end of time so that he may perfect My religion, and will complete in him My apostleship. This is Ali, his brother and faithful witness.

I have put brotherhood between them; I have chosen them and sent salvation on them, and have encircled them with My blessing before I created heaven and earth. And made them infallible and chose them as the righteous and good ones from his posterity before I created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them. My choice was made from knowledge of goodness and purity of their hearts, for I am omniscient to know the character of My servants.

Ibrahim then looked and saw twelve portraits dazzling with light and beauty, and bearing a resemblance to Muhammad and Ali, and whose names he inquired. The Lord replied, "This is the light of my handmaid, the daughter of my Prophet, Fatima Zahra, of spotless purity, whom with her husband, I have constituted the parents of the offspring of my Prophet. And these two lights are Hasan and Husain, and this is so and so and that is so and so till he reached to the master of the Age."

Then He said, "This is My Light, by whom I will spread My mercy among mankind, manifest My religion, and guide My servants, when they despair of My attending their cry." Ibrahim pronounced blessings on them, and said, "O Lord, bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, as You have chosen and perfectly purified them."

The Most High added, "Blessed to you be the exaltation I have conferred on you in making Muhammad and his chosen ones of your posterity, and descendants of your first son, Ismail. Rejoice, O Ibrahim for the invocation of blessing on you shall be connected with the same blessings on their behalf. My blessings and mercy shall be continued to My creatures till their

period ends, which I have specified. I am the owner of the heavens and earth, and those who are in it. They all shall die after which I will them raise up in my own justice, to bestow divine equity and mercy upon them.

The narrator says that when the companions of the Prophet heard all that was mentioned in Jamia about the praise and qualities of the Holy Prophet (S) and the extolling of the Prophet in the books of the ancients and the qualities of his Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) who were mentioned with the Prophet and their stations before Allah, their faith and certainty increased and they were so overjoyed that their soul were near flying away.

Qualities of the Prophet in the Old Testament (Tohra)

The narrator says that the attention of the assembly was now turned to the books of Musa and in the second book of the Torah was found written this declaration of the Lord of the universe: "I will send, of the children of Ismail, a Prophet, to whom I will communicate my own book. I will raise him up with a true righteous dispensation for all My creatures and will bestow My wisdom on him and assist him with My angels and hosts.

His offspring shall be from his blessed daughter whom I will give him in blessing. From that daughter, I will cause two sons to spring like two branches, Ismail and Ishaq, I will multiply exceedingly in two great branches, from which I will establish twelve imams for the preservation of that which I will complete by the instrumentality of Muhammad, who is the seal of the Prophet, and in the period of whose nation I will set the Judgment.

Haritha now exclaimed, "The morning of truth appears for all who have eyes to see, and the way of truth is obvious to one that prove the religion of truth. Is there still in your hearts any disease of doubt of which you want to be healed? Sayyid and Aqib made no reply. Abu Haritha rejoined, "Take the last crowning evidence from the words of your Sayyid, His Eminence, Isa (a.s.)!

Attention was now directed to the books of the New Testament (Injeel) which Prophet Isa (a.s.) had brought. In the fourth book of these divine communication was written: "O Isa (a.s.), son of a pure woman without husband, hear My word, and strive in the executions of My commands. Verily, I created you without father, and made you a sign to the universe.

Then serve and trust me. Take this book, and strive with all your might in its performance, and in expounding it to the people of Syria. That I am Lord, besides whom there is no Lord: I am the living, and the life of all is derived from me; and I am without change or variation. Believe in me and in My Prophet whom hereafter I will send, who shall come in the end of time and be a mercy to the worlds.

He will be raised up for mercy and religious war, and shall bring My servants into the way of the

truth by the sword. He is the first and the last; that is, he is the first of all in respect to creation of his spirit, and the last in his manifestation as a Prophet, and is raised up for all creatures, and in his period, the judgment will occur. Announce the glad tidings of his advent to the children of

Yaqub.

Prophet Isa (a.s.) replied, "O Master of all periods, and knower of all secrets, who is that righteous servant whom I love before seeing him? The divine response was, "He is My chosen Prophet, who shall fight with his own hand, and whose word and acts accord with each other, and what he manifests is like what he conceals.

I will send him a new light, that is, the Qur'an, by which I will enlighten blind eyes, and cause deaf ears to hear, and make foolish hearts understand. I have reposed him the sources of knowledge and understanding. Blessed is he, and Blessed is his nation. Prophet Isa (a.s.) asked: "What is his name and what is the sign of his nation? And what will the tenure of his rule? Would he have descendants?"

The reply was: "O Isa, His name is Ahmad, and he is the chosen one of the offspring of Ibrahim and Ismail. His soul is like the moon, and his forehead luminous. He will ride camels. His eyes will sleep, but not his spirit. I will raise him up among an untaught people who have no share in knowledge, and his kingdom will endure till the judgment takes place.

His birth will be in the city of his grandfather Ismail, in Mecca. His wives will be many, but his children few, and his posterity will descend from an immaculate daughter, who will have two illustrious sons, both of whom will be martyred, and from whom the Prophet's descendants will spring. Tooba is for these two sons, and those that love them, take refuge in their protection, and aid them. Isa (a.s.) inquired, "O Lord, what is Tooba?"

He responded, "Tooba is a tree in Paradise whose trunk and branches are gold, and its leaves beautiful garments. Its fruit resembles breasts of virgins, and is sweeter than honey, and softer than butter. The tree is watered by the fountain of Tasnim, and were a wild crow to fly from the time it is first fledged to old age, it would not reach the top of the tree. So immense is Tooba, that it shades, by some of its branches, every abode in Paradise.

Sayyid and Aqib confess to what is written in Jamia These convincing accounts respecting Muhammad, drawn from the Jamia, abashed Sayyid and Aqib, and gave the palm of victory to Haritha. The two could make alterations in the Jamia and thus they decided to give up the debate. They thought that they had left the straight path and deviated. So both returned to their respective Churches to think up some plan.

But the Christians of Najran now gathered around then humbled champions, and asked them what they intended to do, and what was to become of their religion. They declared that they

had not abandoned their faith, and exhorted the people to continue firm in the same, until the religion of Muhammad should be better known, and it is known to what he is inviting. The narrator says that when Sayyid and Aqib decided to proceed to Medina to the Holy Prophet (S). On this journey Sayyid and Aqib were accompanied by fourteen hundred Christians of Najran, eminent for knowledge and rank, and seventy of the principle men of the Bani Harith bin Kaab. The narrator says that Qays bin Husain and Yazid bin Abidaan, who were scholars of

Hadhramaut, and were then at Najran, started with the party for Medina.

So they mounted their horses and led their empty camels and headed for Medina. Since there was delay in news of the companions of the Prophet who had gone to Najran, the Holy Prophet (S) sent Khalid bin Walid with an army to them in order to see what had retained them. On the way, he met the Najran delegation. The Christians said that they had come to make inquiries

about religion.

On approaching Medina, Sayyid and Aqib, who wished to make a display of their grandeur, caused their companions to halt, wash and refit themselves in costly silk garments of Yemen, and perfumed themselves with musk. They then mounted their horses and carried their spears upright, and being more portly in person than the other Arabs, they attracted great admiration

on entering Medina.

They found the Prophet in the Masjid, where they were introduced to him. When the hour for their prayers came, they turned their faces towards the east, and performed their devotion, which some companions of Prophet wished to prohibit, but the Holy Prophet (S) ordered that they should be left to their own way for three days, during which time they might gain some

knowledge of him and his faith.

After three days, the Prophet summoned his visitors to embrace Islam. They replied, O Abul Qasim, we have found in you every characteristic of the Prophet who should arise after Prophet Isa (a.s.), all which are described in the divine and glorious books, with one exception which outweighs all the rest. "What is that important characteristic?" inquired Muhammad.

They replied, "We have read in Injeel that the Prophet will come after Masih, bearing witness to his truth, and having faith in him; but you call Him worthless and false and consider Him a servant. The narrator here observes that their dispute with Muhammad was not in respect to

anything except Isa (a.s.).

Muhammad replied, "It is not as you say, but I declare His truth and have faith in Him and testify that he is a Prophet of the Most High. Yet, I say He is the servant of the Lord of the universe, and not the master of his own advantage or harm nor of his own life or death." They asked, "Can a servant do what He did?

Has any Prophet by his own power wrought such miracles as He manifested? Did he not raise the dead, give sight to those born blind, and heal the leprous? Did he not tell what is in the heart of men and what they had stored in their houses? Can any but the Most High do these things, or one who is truly the son of God?" They said much to this effect, ascribing divinity to Isa (a.s.) from which the Almighty Allah is uncontaminated by such words, in his holy and glorious exaltation.

Debate with the Holy Prophet (S)

The Holy Prophet (S) replied, "What you asserted that my brother Isa (a.s.) raised the dead and healed the blind and leprous and told people what was in their hearts and houses is true; but He did all these things by the power and permission of the Most high, whose servant Isa (a.s.) is not ashamed to be, nor is he aspiring.

Verily, Isa (a.s.) had flesh blood, and He ate and drank, which all are characteristics of a creature; and His lord is the sole Lord, and in truth there is no similitude of Him and no likeness to Him." They rejoined, "Show us one who like Prophet Isa (a.s.) had no father." Muhammad replied, "In respect to his creation, Adam is more wonderful than Isa for he was born without father or mother. But no one mode of creation is more difficult than another with the Most High whose power is such that whatever He wishes to create, He says to it, "Be" and it is. The

:Prophet then recited this verse

إِنَّ مَثَلَ عِيسَىٰ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ آدَمَٰ خَلَقَهُ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ

Surely the likeness of Isa is with Allah as the likeness of Adam; He created him from dust," then said to him, Be, and he was.⁶

They said, "Our belief respecting Isa remains unshaken and we will neither forsake it nor acknowledge that what you say concerning Him is true. Now therefore let us make an appeal to God and let His curse be on either us that lies and let the truth be speedily manifested. And very soon the truth becomes manifest. At that time, the following verse of imprecation was

:revealed

فَقُلْ تَعَاوَلُوا نَدْعُ أَبْنَاءَنَا وَأَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَنِسَاءَنَا وَنِسَاءَكُمْ وَأَنفُسَنَا وَأَنفُسَكُمْ ثُمَّ نَبْتَهُلْ فَنَجْعَلْ لَعْنَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكَاذِبِينَ

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.⁷

The Holy Prophet (S) communicated this verse to them and told them that the Almighty Allah has commanded me to accept your suggestion about imprecation ceremony and if you agree you must do as you say. They said we shall gather tomorrow and invoke divine curse on the liars.

Sayyid Aqib and their companions now retired to their quarters out of the town where they had halted on a hill and said to one another, "Muhammad has decided such a course of action that it will decide our dispute with him. Let us see if Muhammad appears tomorrow with multitude, or with a chosen few who are the chosen ones from the pious, because this is always a small group.

If he comes with many men of worldly rank and riches, we shall be victorious; but if he comes in the manner of the prophets, then take warning by it and avoid the trial. Because it would be a sign for you. So you must see what he does." In this way Sayyid and Aqib showed that they feared the consequences of the imprecation ceremony.

The Holy Prophet (S) brings his family members Muhammad ordered a place between two trees to be swept, and a black cloak to be spread on the trees where at the appointed hour he took his position. Aqib and Sayyid made their appearance with their two sons, Al-Mohsin and Abdul Munim and from their wives, Sarah and Maryam. They were attended by the Christians that came with them from Najran and the riders of Bani Harith bin Kaab, all in splendid array. All the people of Medina came out with banners and making their best display to see the issue of the ordeal.

The Prophet remained in his house till the morning was considerably advanced when he proceeded to the place of divine appeal attended by Ali and Fatima, and their two sons, the young Imams, Hasan and Husain. These five illustrious persons placed themselves under the cloak which had been spread upon the trees. Then sent a man to Sayyid and Aqib to call them for the ordeal. Sayyid and Aqib appeared and demanded of the Prophet if he would make the appeal with only that young man and woman and those two boys, and not with the principal men of his nation.

He replied that he was so ordered by the Lord. At this declaration the color of Sayyid and Aqib turned pale and they went back to their companions, who inquired of them what had happened to which they made no reply. A young scholar of their party now exclaimed. "Woe be to you! You must never engage in the ordeal with them; call to mind what you read in the Jamia respecting Muhammad. Verily, you know he is true. It won't be long for you to be transformed into apes and pigs, therefore fear God." As they knew the young man wished them well, they were silent.

The narrator says that Manzar bin Al-Qama was a brother of Abu Harith, and himself a scholar and an accomplished man. Although the Christians respected him a great extent he was not present in the assembly of Najran and he reached when they were setting out for Medina. So

he also accompanied them and because he found them differing.

Now he took Sayyid and Aqib aside, and after assuring them of his sincere friendship, which they professed not to doubt, warned them that all who had ever engaged in an ordeal with a Prophet had been destroyed; reminding them at the same time all who had any knowledge of the divine books knew that Muhammad was that Prophet whom all the others had announced, with description of him and his family. And even now, open your eyes to the alarming portends

of nature.

The sun is changed in appearance, the trees bow down, the birds lay their heads and spread their wings on the ground; also see the mountains shivering; through divine fear, notwithstanding they are sinless, and this is only because they see signs of impending wrath.

Observe, besides, the trembling of the mountains, and smoke covering the earth, and although it is the clear season of summer, see fragments of black clouds beginning to appear.

Look, Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) have raised their hands in prayer, and are waiting for you to accept the trial by imprecation. Be assured, then if one word of imprecation proceeds from them, we shall never return to our families and possessions again, but all be destroyed. Sayyid and Aqib now trembled and were almost bereft of reason and they knew that if they went ahead with the imprecation, they would be chastised.

Manzar bin Al-Qama saw that they were fearful, so he continued: "If you become Muslims you will be safe in this world and the next; but if you want only the world and cannot forsake the rank you enjoy among your people. I have nothing to say to you. But it is not nice that you are challenging Muhammad to a divine appeal. It was due to your foolishness. Muhammad accepted your challenge and when prophets decided something, they don't stop till they have fulfilled it.

If you intend to retreat from the appeal, do it speedily, and make peace with Muhammad for your situation is like that of the people to whom Yunus was sent who repented when the signs of divine wrath appeared.

Sayyid and Aqib send Manzar with an offer of peace

Sayyid and Aqib now commissioned Manzar to negotiate for them with Muhammad. The deputy accordingly waited on him and addressed him. Peace be on you. I testify that besides the Lord of the universe there is no Lord, and you and Isa (a.s.) are both servants of God, and sent by Him to mankind. Thus Manzar became a Muslim, and then laid the object of his

mission before Muhammad, who on his part empowered Ali to conclude peace with the Christians of Najran.

Amirul Momineen (a.s.) said: May my parents be sacrificed on you, on which conditions should I make peace? The Messenger of Allah (S) said: O Abul Hasan, that which is best according to you as what you say or do is same as what I would say or do. It was stipulated that they should pay an annual tribute of two thousand good robes, and one thousand mithqal⁸ of gold, one half

to be delivered in the month of Mohurrum, and the other half in the month of Rajab.

Ali (a.s.) now introduced Aqib and Sayyid, who were greatly abashed, to the Prophet in whose presence they ratified the treaty to their own humiliation. Muhammad, in declaring his acceptance of the treaty, said that if his opponents had joined issue with him and those under the cloak, in the appeal by imprecation, the whole valley would have been filled with fire and the whole Christian party would have been instantly destroyed.

The Prophet and his sacred family now returned to the Masjid, where presently Jibreel met them, saying. The most High send you salutation, and declares that His servant, Musa, with Harun and his children, made a divine appeal against Qarun who with all his party and property, were swallowed up by the earth. And if you, O Ahmad, with your family, had met in ordeal all other creatures, verily the heavens had been rent in pieces, the mountains pulverized and the

earth had sunk.

But it was against My will. The Prophet immediately fell in adoration, and then raised his hands in such way that the whiteness of his armpits became apparent, and rendered thanks to God saying: "Thanks be to the giver of bounty", thrice. People asked him the reason for happiness that was seen on his face. His Eminence replied: I have thanked the Almighty for the bounty that the Almighty Allah has mentioned about my Ahlul Bayt (a.s.). Then he mentioned the message that Jibreel had brought.

The author says: Accounts of this Mubahila, transmitted down from hand to hand by Shia and Sunni without much difference, in many respects prove the prophethood of Muhammad, the Imamate of Ali and the exalted rank of those under the cloak. First, if the prophet had not full confidence in his own truth, he would not have been so bold in making a divine appeal, nor

would he have exposed those dearest to him to imminent danger.

Second, he forewarned his opponents that if they joined issue with him in the ordeal, the wrath of God would descend upon them, and to bring on the appeal, which, if he had not been perfectly confident of success, would have only exposed his own falsehood, a result which no sensible man would have risked.

Third, the Christians backed out from Mubahila, and if they had no certainty in the veracity of

the Prophet, they should not have cared for the curse of few people and they should have taken up the challenge like they used to be prepared to fight and sacrifice their blood and their families for their faith, since retreat was injurious to their own rank among their people and besides, they submitted to the humiliating terms of tribute. Fourth, all accounts declare that the Christians restrained one another from participating in the ordeal, by saying: "The truth of

Muhammad is manifest, and it is evident that he is the promised prophet."

Fifth, it was proved that His Eminence, Amirul Momineen (a.s.) and Fatima, and Hasan, and Husain, next to the Prophet, were the most exalted of mankind, and dearest of all to Muhammad, as indeed is admitted by our opponents, the Sunni; for instance, by Zamakhshari,

Baidhawi, Fakhruddin Razi and others.

Zamakhshari, who is the most bigoted of them all, in the book entitled *Kashaf*, says, "Since the Prophet challenged his enemies to a divine appeal, in order to make evident which party was true and which false, of what use it was then to bring to that trial women and children?" I answer: "His doing so proves more perfectly his own confidence and faith in his religion, than if

he had made the appeal by himself alone.

For, in bringing them to the ordeal, he exposed those dearest to him - parts of his own liver - and those of all mankind he loved best, to divine curse and destruction, which he never would have done had he not been sure that his enemies were liars, and he wished them and those most dear them to be destroyed if they joined issues with him in the trial, because they are dearest of all and closer to the heart more than any others, and often it happens that a man will expose himself to death in order to protect them, for which reason they have been sometimes taken with an army to prevent flight and therefore verse communicated respecting the ordeal

required their presence."

To the above Zamakhshari adds, "This is the most weighty proof possible of the exaltation of the people of the cloak, or those who were privileged to sit under it with the prophet." So far it is evident that they were the dearest of mankind to the prophet, every man of sense must see they were the best of creatures, and in that time, next to him in excellence, for it is obvious that his love was not due to their relationship, but that those dearest to God were most beloved by himself. Now if they are better than others, it is not proper that others should take precedence

over them.

Sixth, this account proves that the Imams Hasan and Husain were the children of the Prophet, for in the verse Allah, the Most High says, "Our sons and your sons," and Muhammad introduced none but these in the ordeal. Fakhruddin Razi observes that the Shia from this verse maintain that Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) is superior to all the prophets except Muhammad, and

more exalted than all companions of Muhammad, for Allah the Most High has declared in this text, "Let us call ourselves and yourselves;" the reference here not being to Muhammad, for he makes the challenge with respect to others, since a man does not call himself.

This term must therefore mean another than the Prophet, and it is agreed on all hands that no one but a woman and children was there present except, Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.), who therefore must here be denoted by the term soul or self. And as no two souls can be one and the same, the Prophet must here speak metaphorically, and a meaning which lies near the literal implication of a word is preferable to a sense which is remote.

In the case under consideration, the comparison holds in every point, except that Ali does not share with Muhammad in prophethood. And since Muhammad is superior to all other prophets. Fakhrruddin Razi states this as being held by the Shia, and answers it in the following manner: It is conceded that Muhammad is superior to Ali, and in the same way it may be proved that all the prophets are superior to all those who did not enjoy the gift of prophecy.

But he gives no answer to show that Ali is not superior to the other companions of the prophet, for the plain reason that he had none to give. And what he says respecting the superiority of the other prophets over Ali is obviously futile, for the Shia do not agree that superiority rests solely on the ground of Sunni consensus, so what is their consensus worth?

If they say that all Ummah had consensus it is not acceptable, because most Shia scholars believe that Amirul Momineen (a.s.) and the other Imams are superior to all the other prophets, with which view the authority of the Imams themselves concurs. Eighth, most Shia and Sunni traditionists concur that the party the Holy Prophet (S) brought to the ordeal were next to himself, the dearest of creatures.

More will be said on this subject in the book relating to the eminence of Ali, although what has here been stated is sufficient for one who sincerely seeks the truth. Verily God is the guide to the right path

Notes

1. Surah Aale Imran 3:59
2. Surah Aale Imran 3:61
3. Surah Ahzab 33:33
4. Surah Aale Imran 3:59-61
5. Surah Aale Imran 3:64
6. Surah Aale Imran 3:59
7. Surah Aale Imran 3:61
8. 1.234 grammes

:Source

Hayat Al-Qulub, V. 2