



The Infallibility of Prophets

LESSON 5 : THE CASE OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD

The Case of Muhammad

وَوَجَدَكَ ضَالًّا فَهَدَىٰ

"And He found you lost and so He
guided."

Quran 93:7



The Case of Muhammad

IF THE PROPHET IS INFALLIBLE, THEN WHY DOES GOD SAY THAT HE FOUND HIM ضَالًّا WHICH NORMALLY MEANS “ONE WHO HAS GONE ASTRAY” OR “ONE WHO STRAYS FROM THE RIGHT PATH” OR “ONE WHO IS LOST”?

The Case of Muhammad

- THE COMMON MEANING IS NOT APPLICABLE HERE. IN THE NORMAL USAGE OF THE WORD, IT IS APPLIED FOR NON-BELIEVERS. BUT THIS MEANING IS NEGATED BY ANOTHER VERSE OF THE QURAN WHERE GOD SAYS:

وَالنَّجْمِ إِذَا هَوَىٰ مَا ضَلَّ صَاحِبُكُمْ وَمَا غَوَىٰ

"I SWEAR BY THE STAR WHEN IT GOES DOWN, THAT YOUR COMPANION HAS NOT GONE ASTRAY NOR DOES HE ERR..."

QURAN 53:1-2

The Case of Muhammad

- **SECONDLY, THE IDEA OF BEING “LOST” DOES NOT ALWAYS HAVE A NEGATIVE CONNOTATIONS.**
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- **READ THE FOLLOWING TWO SENTENCES CAREFULLY:**
 - **“I WAS LOST.”**
 - **“THE DIAMOND WAS LOST.”**

The Case of Muhammad

- IN THE FIRST SENTENCE, THERE IS A NEGATIVE SENSE; BUT IN THE SECOND SENTENCE, THERE IS NO NEGATIVE CONNOTATION TO THE DIAMOND THAT IS LOST.
- IF WE USE THE WORD “LOST” FOR THE PROPHET IN THE SECOND SENSE, THEN THERE SHOULD BE NO PROBLEM AT ALL. WE CAN THEN EXPLAIN THE VERSE AS FOLLOWS:

وَوَجَدَكَ ضَالًّا فَهَدَىٰ

- “AND [DID NOT GOD] FIND YOU LOST [AMONG YOUR PEOPLE], AND SO HE GUIDED [THEM TO YOU].”

The Case of Muhammad

إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحًا مُّبِينًا لِيَغْفِرَ لَكَ اللَّهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِن ذَنْبِكَ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ
وَيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكَ وَيَهْدِيَكَ صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا

"VERILY WE GRANTED YOU A MANIFEST VICTORY; SO THAT GOD
MAY FORGIVE YOU YOUR SINS OF THE PAST AND THOSE TO
FOLLOW, FULFILL HIS FAVOR TO YOU, AND GUIDE YOU ON THE
STRAIGHT PATH."

QURAN 48:1-2

The Case of Muhammad

- **THE CONTEXT OF THE VERSES:**
- **THESE VERSES WERE REVEALED IN REFERENCE TO THE TREATY OF HUDAYBIYYA IN WHICH THE PROPHET MADE PEACE WITH UNBELIEVERS OF MECCA IN THE YEAR 6 AH.**
- **THE PROPHET HAD GONE WITH ONLY 1400 LIGHTLY ARMED MUSLIMS WITH THE INTENTION OF DOING THE MINOR PILGRIMAGE. THE IDOL-WORSHIPPERS OF MECCA BARRED THEM FROM ENTERING MECCA; AFTER MUCH DISCUSSION, THEY AGREED TO A TEN YEARS PEACE TREATY WITH THE PROPHET.**

The Case of Muhammad

- **GOD DESCRIBED THIS PEACE TREATY AS A “MANIFEST VICTORY”. THEN HE GOES ON TO EXPLAIN WHY HE GAVE THIS “MANIFEST VICTORY” TO THE PROPHET.**
- **HE GIVES THREE REASONS: THE FIRST REASON IS VERY INTERESTING AS WELL AS CONTROVERSIAL.**

The Case of Muhammad

- **THE FIRST REASON, AS COMMONLY TRANSLATED, SEEMS OUT OF PLACE AND IRRELEVANT TO THE ISSUE OF THE PEACE TREATY. THERE IS NO CLEAR CONNECTION BETWEEN GRANTING A MANIFEST VICTORY AND FORGIVING OF SINS.**
- **MOREOVER, IT WOULD SEEM RIDICULOUS TO HELP A MESSENGER TO SPREAD THE WORD OF ISLAM (“TO SUBMIT TO GOD'S LAWS”) AND THEN GRANT ABSOLUTE LICENSE FOR COMMITTING SINS TO THAT VERY MESSENGER!**

The Case of Muhammad

- **THE BEST INTERPRETATION CAN BE SEEN IN TAFSIR AL-MIZAN BY ALLAMAH TABATABAIE WHERE HE GOES TO THE LITERAL MEANING OF THE WORDS: ذنب WHICH IS COMMONLY USED FOR “SIN” AND غفر WHICH IS COMMONLY USED FOR “FORGIVING”.**

The Case of Muhammad

- **THE WORD DHANB IS FROM THE VERB- FORM DHANABA WHICH MEANS “TO FOLLOW”; ITS NOUN FORM DHANAB MEANS “TAIL; SOMETHING THAT FOLLOWS”.**
- **SO THE MAIN IDEA IN THE WORD DHANB IS THE CONCEPT OF SOMETHING FOLLOWING THE OTHER. “SIN” IS KNOWN AS “DHANB” BECAUSE IT IS AN ACT THAT ENTAILS EVIL CONSEQUENCE IN FORM OF GOD'S DISPLEASURE AND PUNISHMENT.**

The Case of Muhammad

- **THE WORD GHAFARA ACTUALLY MEANS “TO COVER OR CONCEAL SOMETHING” WHICH ALSO IMPLIES THE MEANING OF PROTECTING SOMETHING.**
- **“FORGIVING” IS KNOWN AS “GHAFARA” BECAUSE BY FORGIVING, GOD COVERS THE EVIL CONSEQUENCE OF SINS, AND PROTECTS THE SINNER FROM IT.**

The Case of Muhammad

- **WITH THE LITERAL MEANINGS OF THE TWO CRUCIAL WORDS IN THE VERSE: DHANB AND YAGHFIRA, THE ENTIRE PASSAGE UNDER DISCUSSION BECOMES MORE MEANINGFUL AND RELEVANT TO THE TREATY OF HUDAYBIYYA. THE VERSES WOULD NOW READ AS FOLLOWS:**

إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحًا مُّبِينًا لِيَغْفِرَ لَكَ اللَّهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِن ذَنْبِكَ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ

- **VERILY WE GRANTED YOU [IN THE TREATY OF HUDAYBIYYA] A MANIFEST VICTORY; SO THAT GOD MAY PROTECT YOU FROM THE PAST AND FUTURE CONSEQUENCES OF YOUR [POLICY WITH THE MECCANS].**

The Case of Muhammad

- **PROPHET MUHAMMAD'S MISSION HAD ANGERED THE IDOL-WORSHIPPERS OF MECCA TO THE EXTENT THAT THEY PLANNED TO KILL HIM AND WHEN THEY FAILED, THEY WAGED WAR AFTER WAR AGAINST HIM. THIS HAD GREATLY LIMITED THE MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES OF THE MUSLIMS OUTSIDE MEDINA.**
- **WITH THE PEACE-TREATY OF HUDAYBIYYA, THE PROPHET GOT THE CHANCE TO PEACEFULLY CONVEY HIS MESSAGE TO ALL PEOPLE OF THE ARABIAN PENINSULA AND OUTSIDE IT.**

The Case of Muhammad

- **HISTORY SHOWS THAT WITHIN THREE YEARS OF THE PEACE TREATY OF HUDAYBIYYA, ALMOST ALL OF ARABIA HAD COME INTO THE FOLD OF ISLAM – THE YEAR 9 AH IS KNOWN AS THE “YEAR OF DELEGATIONS” SINCE MANY DELEGATIONS OF ARAB TRIBES CAME TO MEDINA AND ACCEPTED ISLAM. IT WAS THIS PEACE TREATY THAT LAID THE GROUND FOR THE FALL OF MECCA AT THE HANDS OF THE MUSLIMS.**

The Case of Muhammad

- **SO GOD FULFILLED HIS PROMISE BY SAYING THAT HE GAVE A GREAT VICTORY THROUGH THE TREATY OF HUDAYBIYYA: THROUGH THIS TREATY, HE PROTECTED THE PROPHET FROM THE CONSEQUENCE OF UNBELIEVERS' REACTION TO WHAT MUHAMMAD HAD DONE BEFORE AND WHATEVER HE DID AFTER THE PEACE TREATY.**

The Case of Muhammad

عَبَسَ وَتَوَلَّىٰ أَن جَاءَهُ الْأَعْمَىٰ وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّهُ يَزَكِّيٰ أَوْ يَذَّكَّرُ
فَتَنفَعَهُ الذِّكْرَىٰ أَمَّا مَنِ اسْتَغْنَىٰ فَأَن ت لَهُ تَصَدَّىٰ وَمَا عَلَيْكَ أَلَا
يَزَكِّيٰ وَأَمَّا مَن جَاءَكَ يَسْعَىٰ وَهُوَ يَخْشَىٰ فَأَن ت عَنْهُ تَلَهَّىٰ

He frowned and turned (his) back because there came to him a blind man. And what would make you know that he may purify himself; or he may be reminded and the reminding would benefit him? But when a free from need (i.e., rich person come to you), then you address yourself to him. But when a hard-working person comes to you (and he also fears), then you turn away from him?!

Quran 80:1-10



The Case of Muhammad

Context:

- These verses refer to an incident in Mecca, when Abdullah ibn Umm Maktum, a blind man, came to a gathering where the Prophet was talking to some people among whom were some leaders of Quraysh. When Abdullah ibn Umm Maktum came to that gathering, someone frowned and turned away from him.



The Case of Muhammad

The Problem:

- Who frowned and turned away from the blind man? The Quran does not give the name. There are two versions of this story.
- 1st View: Sunni sources and a few Shia sources say that it was the Prophet who frowned and turned away from the blind man.
- 2nd View: Most Shia sources, following the teachings of the Ahlul Bayt (who obviously knew the Prophet better than others), say that it was one of the Umayyid leaders of Quraysh who frowned and turned away from the blind man.



The Case of Muhammad

- We accept the second view because there is an internal proof from the Quran that it was well below the character of the Prophet to behave in this way.

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ

And you are upon an exalted standard of character.

Quran 68:4



The Case of Muhammad

- In the very early stage of his mission, the Prophet was clearly told how to behave in conveying his message to the people:

وَأَخْفِضْ جَنَاحَكَ لِمَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

and be kind to him who follows you of the believers.

Quran 26:215



The Case of Muhammad

- Many early converts to Islam were the oppressed and weak people of Mecca like Bilal, Ammar, Salim Maula Abi Hudhayfa, Ibn Mas'ûd, Miqdad and others. The Qurayshi leaders once told the Prophet (S) that, “Why do you sit among these people? If you turn them away from yourself, we might accept you as our leader.” The Prophet refused. And God confirmed the Prophet's response by revealing the following verse:



The Case of Muhammad

وَلَا تَطْرُدِ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ مَا عَلَيْكَ مِنْ حِسَابِهِمْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ وَمَا مِنْ حِسَابِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ فَتَطْرُدَهُمْ فَتَكُونَ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

“And do not drive away those who call upon their Lord at morning and evening desiring His favour. Nothing of their account falls upon you, and nothing of your account falls upon them. So if you drive them away, you will become one of the unjust.”

Quran 6:52



The Case of Muhammad

وَكَذَلِكَ فَتَنَّا بَعْضَهُم بِبَعْضٍ لِيَقُولُوا أَهَؤُلَاءِ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ بَيْنِنَا أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِأَعْلَمَ بِالشَّاكِرِينَ

In this way, We try some of them by others.

[Because of their spiritual perfection, God exalted those poor persons, and thus He tries those rich people who lack faith and] who say, 'Are these [poor people] the ones upon whom Allah has been gracious to among us?' Does not Allah know very well the grateful [servants]?"

Quran 6:53



The Case of Muhammad

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ لِمَ تُحَرِّمُ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكَ تَبْتَغِي مَرْضَاتَ أَزْوَاجِكَ وَاللَّهُ
غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ قَدْ فَرَضَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ تَجِلَّةً أَيْمَانِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ مَوْلَانِكُمْ وَهُوَ
الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ

O Prophet! Why do you forbid (for yourself) what God has made lawful for you? You seek to please your wives; and God is Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful. Indeed, God has made lawful for you the dissolution of your oaths (in such cases), and God (alone) is your Lord. And He is All-knowing, the Wise.

Quran 66:1-2



The Case of Muhammad

- This chapter was revealed in regard to Hafsa and A'isha, the wives of the Prophet . Besides Khadijah, the only wife of the Prophet who bore child for him was Mariya Qibtiyya, the Egyptian slave gifted to him by the Egyptian King. After the birth of Ibrahim (the Prophet's son from Mariya), 'A'isha and Hafsa became very jealous of Mariya.



The Case of Muhammad

- There are many views on the occasion for the revelation of this chapter. The narrations are different but most relate to the jealousy of Hafsa and 'A'isha against Mariya and/or Zaynab bint Jahash. A version of the event considered authentic by some of our scholars is as follows: Hafsa entered her room and found the Prophet (S) with Mariya; she became very upset with him. The Prophet (S), in order to calm Hafsa, took an oath that he would not see Mariya again. He also asked Hafsa to keep the issue of his oath to herself and not divulge it to anyone.



The Case of Muhammad

- Another version says that in order to change the Prophet (S)'s love for Zaynab bint Jahash, Hafsa and 'A'isha made a plan that whenever the Prophet (S) came from Zaynab, they both would say that his mouth is smelling bad—and attribute the bad smell to a drink of honey (**maghafír**) which Zaynab always made for the Prophet (S). The Prophet (S) took an oath not to partake the honey-drink that Zaynab made for him. He also asked Hafsa to keep the issue of his oath to herself and not divulge it to anyone.



The Case of Muhammad

- **Did the Prophet commit a sin by making an oath that he will no longer see his slave-girl, Mariya Qibtiyyah or no longer drink the honey-drink made by Zaynab?**

The Case of Muhammad

- The chapter as a whole is mostly directed to the attitude of the wives who conspired against the Prophet: it talks about God willingly to replace those two wives with better wives and asks them to repent.
- The opening verse, at most, is a friendly rebuke by God to the Prophet for imposing unnecessary restrictions upon himself.
- There is no prohibition in making an oath to abstain from a thing that is permissible. If a person makes such an oath and then intends to nullify it, then he is permitted to do so after paying expiation for it.

