

(Foretelling the Advent of Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W

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The prophets of ancient times, especially Hazrat Musa and Hazrat 'Isa (A.S.), had given their followers news of the advent of Islam, even to the extent that indications of the special attributes of the Prophet of Islam appeared in their revealed books. For this reason, the Jews and the Christians and the followers of other religions were watching out for the advent of Islam, like people who see their ship with torn sails and broken anchor in danger of sinking in the sea and therefore direct their gaze at the shore of future safety's some of the Jews had even found, through much searching, a place between the hills 'Ayr and Uhud which were named in their own books as the 'center of Islamic rule', and migrated there, waiting for the advent of Islam.

The Qur'an is a testimony to the truth of these facts, that the Torah and the Evangel (see lessons 17 & 18) had given news of the advent of the prophet of Islam: Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, whom they find written down with them in the Torah and the Evangel, bidding them to good and forbidding them evil, making lawful for them the good things and making unlawful for them the corrupt things, and relieving them of their loads and the fetters that were on them, those who believe in him and succour him and follow the light that has been sent down with him - they are the prosperers.(VII 157)

Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and those who are with him are hard against the unbelievers, merciful to one another. Thou sent them bowing and prostrating, seeking bounty from Allah and good pleasure. Their mark is on their faces, the trace of prostration. That is their likeness in the Torah and their likeness in the Evangel: as a seed that puts forth its shoot, and strengthens it, and it grows stout and rises straight, upon its stem, pleasing the sowers, that through them He may enrage the unbelievers. Allah has promised those of them who believe and do deeds of righteousness forgiveness and a mighty wage. (XLVITH29)

This example indicates that the prophet and his devoted companions started from nothing, and reached to the summit by self-sacrifice, dedication and faith, so that they surprised the world. And when 'Isa, son of Maryam said: "Children of Isra'il, I am indeed the Messenger of Allah to you, confirming the Torah that is before me, and giving good tidings of a Messenger who shall come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad. "And when he brought them clear signs, they said: "this is a manifest sorcery." (LXI,O)

Those unto whom we have given the Book recognize him as they recognize their sons, even

though there is a party of them who conceal the truth and that wittingly. (11; 146)
Those to whom we have given the Book recognize him as they recognize their own sons.

Those who have lost their own souls, they do not Believe. (V120)
It comes out clearly from these ayahs that the previous prophets informed the people of the coming of Muhammad (S.A.) and of his appeared together with Islam, no room remained for any kind of doubt.

Because, if there had been no such news in the Christian and Jewish scriptures at the time of Muhammad (S.A.), it would not have been expected from the radiant thought of someone like Muhammad (S.A.) that he would stand up and say, so as to prove his messenger ship before all the people of the Book: "My name and my characteristics have appeared in the Torah and the Evangel which are in your possession it at this very moment." Because in that case the enemies of Muhammad (S.A.) would not give up, and, in order to annihilate his message, they would collect together the copies of the Torah and Evangel so that they could prove that such characteristics were not in these books.

That there was in their opposition to Muhammad (S.A.), and even rose up to fight him, but they never managed with this facile and simple ruse to prove that these characteristics did not exist. So it is clear that abundant information concerning the Prophet of Islam existed in their sacred books.

Some More Historical Evidence

Before the rise of Islam, two circles or groups of people had grown up in Medina. The first were Jews who had left their original lands desiring to witness the advent of the Prophet of Islam (S.A.).

The second were the tribes of Aws and Khazraj, who were the disconcerts of Tubba', the king of Yemen. When Tubba' came to Medina and learnt that that place would be the place of migration of the Prophet and the place where Islamic govern to remain in that place until such time as the Prophet of Islam appeared and then to support him.

So they stayed there and gradually increased in numbers and became powerful to the point that they seized the houses and property of the unconcerned Jews, and committed aggression; and gradually they forgot the cause of their ancestors' staying in that town and became ignorant of why their ancestors had come there and made their settlement there.

However, the Jews, who were unequal with them in power, continued to tell each other of the advent of the Prophet of Islam (S.A.) and of safety from the aggression. The Qur'an says about the jews: And from before they had been praying for victory over the unbelievers, (but) when

there came to them that they recognise⁴ they disbelieved in it... (Th89)

Ibn Hawash (or Ibn'l-Hayyaban), a Jewish scholar, left Syria seeking to meet the Prophet of Islam (S.A.) and came to Medina, but while he was alive, Muhammad (S.A.) was not yet called to his prophet hood. For this reason, when he was dying, Ibn Hawash said to the Jews: "I left my extensive, comfortable life in Syria out of love to see the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.), came here, and bread and date were enough for me. Alas! I did not achieve my wish. But know that he will rise up in Mecca and will migrate here. In eating he will be content with morsels of bread and dates; he will be so humble that he will ride on unsaddled mount. His rule will spread to an amazing extent, he will be afraid of none, and those who are an obstacle to the straight path and truth will be cast aside.

Zayd ibn 'Amr of the Hijaz came in search of the true religion of Ibrahim. On his way he had crossed from Mecca to Syria and to Mosul, but the more he searched, the less he found. In the end a Christian scholar said to him that there remained no trace of the original religion of Ibrahim, but that in those very days a prophet was to blossom forth in his own homeland from whose message and sayings he could obtain that original religion.

Zayd returned towards Mecca, but on the way he was killed. The Prophet instructed to goodness through his example, saying: "Zayd was someone who left this world in seeking the way to Allah.

Bahira, a Christian scholar, saw Muhammad (S.A.) in the latter's childhood. He recognized him from the signs he had read in the revealed Book. He said to Abu Talib who was accompanying Muhammad (S.A.): "He will be a prophet. Look after him, and take him to his country quickly." Another Christian scholar, Nistur, also when he saw Muhammad (S.A.) in the latter's youth, gave the news that he would become a prophet in a clear way: "He is the prophet of the last days.

On the basis of these predictions of the holy books, a number of people became Muslims at the very beginning of the rise and appearance of Islam without any coercion.

The Predisposition of the People of Madinah towards Islam

When the Prophet received the order from God to invite people to (which existed in a form before Islam) he addressed the people and presented Islam to them. During this time he held a meeting with some of the tribe of Khazraj.

"What tribe are you from?" he asked.

"From Khazraj."

"Are you ready to sit together for a few moment and talk? "Yes, we are."

"I am calling you to the Unique God."

Then the Prophet read for them some verses from the sweet words of God, and they were so enraptured by the Qur'an, that they said to each other: "We swear that this is what the Jews were telling us of. Let not the Jews reach it before us." Then they all became Muslims, and when they returned to Medina they commenced the propagation of Islam. The Prophet also sent Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr after them to teach them the Qur'an and also to call others to Islam. Mus'ab brought many people in Medina to Islam; among them the Usayd, one of the heads of the Aws tribe, became Muslim and said to his tribe, "Muhammad (S.A.) is the very one whose coming the Jews were always announcing." And his tribe became Muslims, and in this way .Islam end, the Prophet himself went to Medina and there he set up the Islamic government

The Attraction of Salman to Islam

Salman was an Iranian from a peasant family; his mother and father were Zoroastrians, fire-worshippers. Salman, whose name was then Ruzbeh, they loved very much. They taught him the beliefs of their religion, and entirely prevented him from mixing with others. One day, Salman went on his father's orders to inspect their fields. On his way he fell upon a church in which a group of God's servants were engaged in prayer. Ruzbeh started to think deeply, and he stayed with them till dusk approached, meditating. At last he understood that their way"en Syria," they answered. His father became anxious because of his late return and sent someone to look for him. When he returned home, his father asked him where he had been. He described what had happened, but his father said, "The religion of your ancestors is much better." "With my own thinking," he replied, "I have seen that their way is purer."

His father became even more disturbed and rebuked him. He then locked him up in the house. Ruzbah secretly sent someone to the Christians and informed them that when merchants came from Syria and had done their work, and when the time came for their return, they should tell him and he would secretly leave his house and accompany them to Syria. And thus it was that he went to Syria, and into the presence of one of the great Christian scholars, and begged him to take him as his servant and to instruct him on the acquisition of knowledge and servitude to God. The scholar accepted him. When the scholar died, Ruzbeh went to some of the other great Christians of the day, in accordance with his master's instructions. From the last of these scholars, who lived in the 'Ammuriyah district of Damascus, he asked guidance to another, but he replied: "I have no idea of anyone else, but in the very near future, a prophet will arise in the lands of the Arabs who will

migrate from his birthplace to a place covered in date-palms. This land is situated between two lava belts. Some of the signs of his magnanimity and special habits are these: He will accept what is given to him out of respect, but he will not take food and alms given out of compassion and aid. Among the signs is the mark and seal of prophet hood on his skin. If you can go there, then you should go!"

After the death of that scholar, Ruzbeh asked the caravan leaders who were setting out for business in Arabia to take him with them to that place. They accepted, but on their way they betrayed him and sold him in slavery to a Jew from the Bani Qurayzah, who put him to labor in the vicinity of Medina. It happened that Ruzbeh recognized the very place he had reached as one of the signs told him by the old scholar. So he was happy to start work in the date-groves of his master, but he was always looking out for the advent of Muhammad (S.A.), and searched for him, but, because he was in difficult circumstances, he could not make many enquiries.

Had gone, together with some of his companions, to a place near Medina and Ruzbeh got to hear of this.

He said to himself that this was the best time to look for the signs from this person himself, and to compare them with what he had heard from the Christian scholar. So he took some morsels of food which he had with him and gave them to that honoured person and said: "This food is for the special benefit of the needy, and since your companions are needy, please accept it from me."

The Prophet gave it to his companions. Ruzbeh looked carefully, but he saw that the Prophet did not touch the food, and he could not contain himself with joy, for one of the signs had been found true in him.

With excitement he brought another morsel of food, which he had with him to the prophet, presented it to him and said: "This is my present to you, please accept it from me." The Prophet (A.S) gladly accepted it and ate from it.

Ruzbeh was looking at him and was enthralled. He then walked around the Prophet of Islam (A.S) to see the mark on the Prophet's shoulder. The Prophet understood what he wanted and took off the clothes that were on his back so that he sees the mark Ruzbeh saw it and accepted Islam.

He was renamed 'Salman' and the means to free him were collected. He became close to the group of the companions around the Prophet, and with his insight and deep faith he became, in the shortest space of time, one of the greatest of the Prophet's disciples.'

All seekers after truth, who were suffering from the dryness and burning heat of that time like an unquenchable thirst, were looking for the source of being and the water of life. Since the

signs, which they had read or heard of in the holy books, were present in the Prophet, they gave their hearts to the ocean and washed their souls in that spring of the water of life and wisdom. Group after group gave their hearts to the pure religion of Islam and became followers of Muhammad (S.A.).

People, group after group, turned to Islam. But together with these seekers after truth, there were groups of Jews and Christians and other enemies who did not embrace Islam, through bigotry or because their businesses or positions were endangered, although they were aware of the truth of that great, divine person.

But through obstinacy they clung to their illusions and did not desist from their stubbornness, but became caught in everlasting perdition and failed to reach contentment. Now two examples.

Safiyah, the daughter of Huyayy ibn Akhtab said: "When the Prophet (S.A.) migrated to Medina and alighted at Quha, my father and my uncle, Abu Yasir, went to call on him in the half-light of dawn. The sunset came and they returned, and I went to them with childish joy. But they were very tired, and, contrary to their custom, they paid no attention to me. My uncle said to my father: "Is he the one?"

"By God, I swear he is!"

"Did you recognize him?"

"Yes."

"Now what do you think of him?"

"By God, I swear that as long as I live I will be his enemy!"

We will finish this lesson with another example of this black-beardedness.

One day the Prophet said (A.S) to Ka'b ibn asad: "Do you not remember the example of Ibn Hawash (the Jewish scholar who went from Syria to Medina - see above)? Has it had not effect on you?" "Yes I do," replied Ka'b, "and if the censure of the Jews did not torment me when they say 'Ka'b is frightened to be killed,' I would believe in you. But now I am in the faith of the

Jews and I am safe from their censure, and I shall stay in that religion till I die!

The Qur'an tells of the injury caused by this black-heartedness, which is the origin of the destruction of life and contentment, and speaks of these people thus: Vile is the thing they have sold themselves for, disbelieving in that which Allah sent down, grudging that Allah should send down of His bounty on whomsoever He will of His servants, and they were laden

(with anger upon anger; and for unbelievers awaits. A humbling chastisement (11:90