

**The Truth about
The Alleged
Punishment for
Apostasy in Islam**

An address by
**Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Ṭāhir Aḥmad
Khalīfatul Masīḥ IV**

on the occasion of
Jalsa Salana—the Annual Conference, U.K.,
held at Islamabad, Tilford,
on 27th July 1986

2005

ISLAM INTERNATIONAL PUBLICATIONS LIMITED

اسلام ميں ارتداد كى سزا كى حقيقت

The Truth about the Alleged Punishment for Apostasy in Islam

An English rendering of a lecture
delivered in 1986 by
Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Ṭāhir Aḥmad
Khalīfatul Masīḥ IV

Translated into English from Urdu by
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First Published in UK in 2005

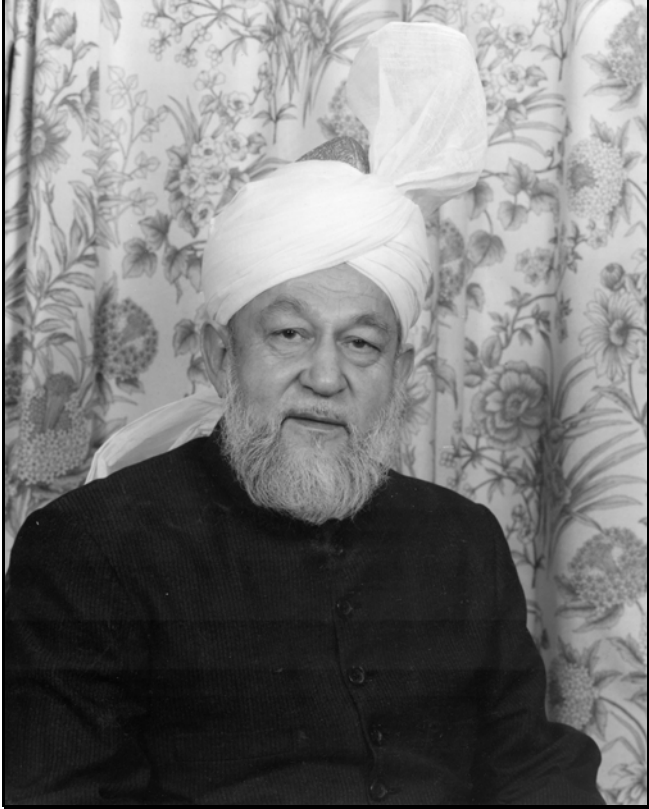
© Islam International Publications Ltd

Published by
Islam International Publications Ltd
Islamabad
Sheephatch Lane
Tilford, Surrey
United Kingdom GU10 2AQ

Printed in UK at
Raqem Press
Tilford, Surrey

ISBN: 1 85372 850 0

About The Author



Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Ṭāhir Aḥmad (1928-2003) (may Allāh have infinite mercy on his soul), a man of God, Voice articulate of the age, a great orator, a deeply learned scholar of phenomenal intelligence, a prolific and versatile writer, a keen student of comparative

religions was loved and devoutly followed by his approximately 10 million Aḥmadī Muslim followers all over the world as their Imam, the spiritual head, being the fourth successor of Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad (the Promised Messiah and Mahdi^{as}), to which august office he was elected as Khalīfatul Masīḥ in 1982.

After the promulgation of general Ḍiyāʾ's anti Aḥmadiyya Ordinance of 26th April 1984 he had to leave his beloved country, Pakistan, and migrated to England from where he launched Muslim Television Ahmadiyya (MTA) which would (and still does) telecast its programmes 24 hours a day to the four corners of the world, making it possible for him to reach out to his followers around the world in particular and to humanity (especially the Islamic world) in general.

Besides being a religious leader, he was a homeopathic physician of world fame, a highly gifted poet and a sportsman.

He had his schooling in Qādiān, India, and later joined the Govt. College, Lahore, Pakistan, and after graduating from Jāmiʿah Aḥmadiyya, Rabwah, Pakistan with distinction, he obtained his honours degree in Arabic from the Panjab University, Lahore. From 1955 to 1957 he studied at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

He had a divinely inspired and very deep knowledge of the Qurʾan which he translated into

Urdu. He also partially revised and added explanatory notes to the English translation of the Holy Qur'an by Ḥaḍrat Maulawī Sher 'Alī^{ra}. 'Revelation, Rationality, Knowledge and Truth' is his magnum opus.

Though he had no formal education in philosophy and science, he had a philosophical bent of mind and tackled most difficult and abstruse theologico-philosophical questions with great acumen and ease and his intellectual approach was always rational and scientific. For a layman he had an amazingly in-depth knowledge of science, especially life sciences which attracted him most. He also had deep knowledge of human psychology. His was an analytical mind of high intelligence — an intellect scintillating with brilliance, capable of solving knottiest problems with ease, leaving his listeners and readers spellbound.

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Foreword

From the earliest days till now Islam and the world of Islam have not been harmed so severely by any external enemy as by some simple-minded Muslim ulema themselves. In fact, the enemies of Islam have utilized the unwise religious edicts of these naive ulema as a basis to attack Islam.

The wrong trend among the ulema took place when, under the influence of changing socio-political environment, they preferred to adopt some politically coloured Islamic interpretations and ignored the clear teachings of the Qur'an and the noble precedence set by the Holy Prophet^{sa}.

Killing of apostate is one of such erroneous trends and baseless convictions. In fact, this menacing tenet is based neither on the Qur'an nor on the practice of the Prophet^{sa} of Islam. It was merely a political idea invented with the help of some biased ulema, and used by Abbasid caliphs and other rulers to grind their political axe. Later it took such momentum that even the unbiased ulema were influenced by this wrong trend. Unfortunately, the later generation of ulema, who followed the old schools of thought, adopted this unIslamic view uncritically without further research.

This dangerous and untenable belief produced very grave consequences. On minor differences some eminent scholars of Islam were declared apostates by the ulema who opposed them. The rulers and some

politically powerful ulema used this weapon against their opponents. These agonizing chapters in the history of Islam remind us of the Christian rule of Spain when Christians upholding similar views, most savagely punished, for minor differences, their own Christian brothers.

Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Ṭāhir Aḥmadth, the fourth successor of the Promised Messiah^{as} in a lecture delivered at Jalsa Salana (the Annual Gathering) UK on 27th July, 1986 analysed in depth all aspects of this heinous tenet. He showed it to be an utterly false and unfounded belief and smashed once for all the so-called arguments of the ulema in support of this claim. He has proved it to be a false belief. His arguments are based on the Holy Qur'an, the Sunna and *Aḥādīth* of the Holy Prophet^{sa} and the historical events that took place in the eras of the Righteous Caliphs^{ra}. He informs us that this dreadful tenet has been used through a conspiracy to taint the beautiful face of Islam. Thus, this false tenet is the most dangerous weapon that the enemies of Islam have used against Islam. Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Ṭāhir Aḥmad deals with the subject extensively and it is earnestly hoped that the address will help unbiased researchers to fully understand the true teachings of Islam on the subject. It is also hoped that it will go a long way to creating a new spirit in which Islamic teachings are appreciated in their real essence and true nature and prejudice against Islam is eradicated.

The name of Muḥammad^{sa}, the Holy Prophet of Islam, has been followed by the symbol ^{sa}, which is an abbreviation for the salutation *Ṣallallāhu ‘Alaihi Wasallam* (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The names of other prophets and messengers are followed by the symbol ^{as}, an abbreviation for ‘*Alaihissalām*’/‘*Alaihimissalām*’ (on whom be peace). The actual salutations have not generally been set out in full, but they should nevertheless, be understood as being repeated in full in each case. The symbol ^{ra} is used with the name of the disciples of the Holy Prophet^{sa} and those of the Promised Messiah^{as}. It stands for *Radī Allāhu ‘anhu/‘anhā/‘anhum* (May Allah be pleased with him/with her/with them). th stands for *Raḥimahullāhu Ta‘ālā* (may Allah’s blessing be on him). ^{at} stands for *Ayyadahullāhu Ta‘ālā* (May Allah, the Mighty help him).

In transliterating Arabic words we have followed the following system adopted by the Royal Asiatic Society.

- ا at the beginning of a word, pronounced as *a*, *i*, *u* preceded by a very slight aspiration, like *h* in the English word ‘honour’.
- ث *th*, pronounced like *th* in the English word ‘thing’.
- ح *h*, a guttural aspirate, stronger than *h*.

- خ *kh*, pronounced like the Scotch *ch* in ‘loch’.
- ذ *dh*, pronounced like the English *th* in ‘that’.
- ص *s*, strongly articulated *s*.
- ض *d*, similar to the English *th* in ‘this’.
- ط *t*, strongly articulated palatal *t*.
- ظ *z*, strongly articulated *z*.
- ع ‘, a strong guttural, the pronunciation of which must be learnt by the ear.
- غ *gh*, a sound approached very nearly in the *r* ‘*grasseye*’ in French, and in the German *r*. It requires the muscles of the throat to be in the ‘gargling’ position whilst pronouncing it.
- ق *q*, a deep guttural *k* sound.
- ئ ‘, a sort of catch in the voice.

Short vowels are represented by *a* for — (like *u* in ‘bud’); *i* for — (like *i* in ‘bid’); *u* for — (like *oo* in ‘wood’); the long vowels by *ā* for —¹ or Ǿ (like *a* in ‘father’); *ī* for ى — or —¹ (like *ee* in ‘deep’); *ai* for ى — (like *i* in ‘site’)*; *ū* for و — (like *oo* in ‘root’); *au* for و — (resembling *ou* in ‘sound’).

Please note that in transliterated words the letter

* In Arabic words like شيخ (Shaikh) there is an element of diphthong which is missing when the word is pronounced in Urdu. [Publisher]

‘e’ is to be pronounced as in ‘prey’ which rhymes with ‘day’; however the pronunciation is flat without the element of English diphthong. If in Urdu and Persian words ‘e’ is lengthened a bit more it is transliterated as ‘ei’ to be pronounced as ‘ei’ in ‘feign’ without the element of diphthong thus ‘ڪَ’ is transliterated as ‘Kei’. For the nasal sound of ‘n’ we have used the symbol ‘ñ’. Thus Urdu word ‘میں’ is transliterated as ‘meiñ’.*

The consonants not included in the above list have the same phonetic value as in the principal languages of Europe.

We have not transliterated Arabic words which have become part of English language, e.g., Islam, Mahdi, Qur’an**, Hijra, Ramadan, Hadith, ulema, umma, sunna, kafir, pukka etc.

For quotes straight commas (straight quotes) are used to differentiate them from the curved commas used in the system of transliteration, ‘ for ع, ’ for ء. Commas as punctuation marks are used according to the normal usage. Similarly for apostrophe normal usage is followed.

Please note that *Aḥādīth* from *Aṣḥāḥ Sitta* [the six Books of *Aḥādīth* regarded as most authentic—*Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dā’ūd, Tirmadhī, Nas’ī* and *Ibnī*

* These transliterations are not included in the system of transliteration by Royal Asiatic Society. [Publisher]

** Concise Oxford Dictionary records Qur’an in three forms—Qur’an, Qur’an and Koran. [Publisher]

Māja] are all taken from one volume collected edition of these books, published by Darussalām, Riyāḍ, Saudi Arabia.

When the author gives an explanatory translation of a verse of the Holy Qur'an its literal translation is given in a footnote under the verse.

At the end I must express my gratitude to Allah that I had the great honour to have ample opportunities to sit at the feet of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ, the fourth when he was revising and polishing this lecture for the publication. I express my deep gratitude to Mr. Saleemur Rahman of Canada who translated a portion of the first part of the lecture from Urdu into English as well as to Mr. Mubashar Aḥmad of USA who did the rest of the translation into English. I am also grateful to Ḥabībullāh Zirwī who did initial pasting of the verses of the Qur'an and other Arabic excerpts.

Finally I thank Mirzā Anas Aḥmad, M. A. M. Litt. (OXON), Wakīlul Ishā'at, Taḥrīk Jadīd, Rabwah, for revising the translation and editing the manuscript to make it ready for publication. Mirzā Anas Aḥmad was ably assisted by his team, especially by Shaikh Naṣeer Aḥmad who was mainly responsible for pasting and desktop publishing of the manuscript.

Munīrud Dīn Shams
Additional Wakīlut Taṣnīf London

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَنْ يَرْتَدَّ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ
فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهَ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ
وَيُحِبُّونَهُ أَذِلَّةٍ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَعِزَّةٍ
عَلَى الْكُفْرِينَ يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
وَلَا يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةَ لَائِمٍ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ
يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ۝

"O ye who believe! whoso among you turns back from his religion, then let it be known that in his stead Allah will soon bring a people whom He will love and who will love Him, and who will be kind and humble towards believers, hard and firm against disbelievers. They will strive in the cause of Allah and will not fear the reproach of a fault-finder. That is Allah's grace; He bestows it upon whomsoever He pleases; and Allah is Bountiful, All-Knowing."

(Al-Mai'dah 5:55)

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَ
 أَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ
 أَمَا بَعْدُ فَأَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ
 بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ①
 الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ② الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ③
 مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ④
 إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ⑤
 اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ⑥
 صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ ⑦
 غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ ⑧

¹ I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, the One, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger. After that I seek refuge with Allah from Satan, the rejected.

In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful. All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of all the worlds, the Gracious, the Merciful, Master of the Day of Judgment. Thee alone do we worship and Thee alone do we implore for help. Guide us in the right path—the path of those on whom Thou hast bestowed *Thy* blessings, those who have not incurred *Thy* displeasure, and those who have not gone astray. [Publisher]

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَنْ يَرْتَدَّ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ
 فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهَ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ
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 وَلَا يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةَ لَائِمٍ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ
 يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ۝²

ISLAM FACES DANGER FROM WITHIN AND OUTSIDE

Islam is embroiled in a variety of severe dangers in this age that is characterized as the Latter Days. Anti-Islamic powers—whether they are of eastern or western hemisphere—are engaged in assailing Islam in different ways. It is the most painful reality that, in this age, it is the Islamic munitions that are being employed to attack Islam, and the attack on Islam is being undertaken in the name of Islam. An overview of the Islamic world today causes one to be surprised that the

² "O ye who believe! whoso among you turns back from his religion, then *let it be known that in his stead* Allah will soon bring a people whom He will love and who will love Him, *and who will be kind and humble towards* believers, hard and firm against disbelievers. They will strive in the cause of Allah and will not fear the reproach of a fault-finder. That is Allah's grace; he bestows it upon whomsoever He pleases; and Allah is Bountiful, All-Knowing." (The Holy Qur'an 5:55).[Publisher]

factions that advocate the legitimacy of the use of force [Jihad by 'sword'] against the opponents of Islam, and those who promote the idea of subjugating and conquering the opponents of Islam through the use of combative force, are constantly engaged in cutting each other's throats. The sword of the Islamic world is being drawn against the world of Islam, and the daggers of the Islamic world are being used to stab the world of Islam in the chest. Whether it is the conflict between Iran and Iraq, or between two rival factions of Palestinian *Mujāhidīn*; whether it is the contention between Syria and Jordan, or that between Libya and Egypt, whichever way you look at the Islamic world the forces of Islam are locked in combat against each other, to the detriment of the world of Islam. It is quite odd that today Islam is split into two partisan blocs such that certain Islamic countries, by allegedly basing their views on the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and Sunna, proclaim that Islam is red, and Islam and communism are only nominally different from each other: whether you add God to communism, or subtract God from Islam, in either scenario the two ideologies of life would appear to be identical. While in the other camp, the name of Islam is being used to forcefully advocate the cause of Western imperialism, as if the sole purpose of Islam's advent in this world was to buttress capitalism, and it had no objective other than this.

A TERRIBLE CONSPIRACY AGAINST THE ISLAMIC WORLD

In this context, under the influence of Western imperialism, certain ideas are being deliberately propagated among Muslim nations, under a preconceived plan, as a result of which this conflict would no longer be limited to a pair of countries here and there. Rather, it would be transformed into a civil strife within each and every Muslim country. The principle means used to this end is the notion of awarding death penalty for apostasy. This idea is being forcefully stirred up in all those Islamic countries which are particularly under the influence of the United States—those who openly side with the USA, and are organizing their way of life under the aegis of the USA—and massive preparations are underway to give practical effect to this idea. Thus, I deemed it fit today to present to you the true, genuine, eternal, and most beautiful teaching of Islam on the issue of death penalty for apostasy so that, as far it is as possible for you, and within your own sphere of influence, you may counter this most ugly and terrible conspiracy.

DEFINING THE TERMS: "MUSLIM" AND "APOSTATE"

Before undertaking a detailed analytical discussion on the so-called belief in death penalty for apostasy, it

is necessary to define the two basic terms involved, i.e., who is a "Muslim", and who is termed as an "apostate"—and how does one *become* an apostate? When I pondered over this matter, I was reminded of the proceedings of the Court of Inquiry that was instituted under Mr. Justice Munīr and Mr. Justice Kiyānī, to investigate the riots that broke out in Pakistan in 1953. These two learned judges conducted a profound investigation, and in this venture they invited the ulema from all the religious sects of Muslims—in fact, several ulema from every sect—and requested them for help in understanding these two issues, and asked them: How do *you* define Islam? Who *is* a Muslim?

These learned judges set out a clear exposition of the fact that until and unless we are first able to define a "Muslim" the next step cannot be taken, and the issue of what may be the punishment of apostasy becomes pointless. It is only after the term "Muslim" is first defined that one can determine as to whether or not someone has, actually, recanted Islam.

Thus, after a deep investigation and very detailed cross-examination, the learned judges reached the conclusion that is reproduced below in their own words:

"The question, therefore, whether a person is or is not a Muslim will be of fundamental importance, and it was for this reason that we

asked most of the leading *ulama* to give their definition of a Muslim, the point being that if the *ulama* of the various sects believed the Ahmadis to be *kafirs*, they must have been quite clear in their minds not only about the grounds of such belief but also about the definition of a Muslim because the claim that a certain person or community is not within the pale of Islam implies on the part of the claimant an exact conception of what a Muslim is. The result of this part of the inquiry, however, has been anything but satisfactory, and if considerable confusion exists in the minds of our *ulama* on such a simple matter, one can easily imagine what the differences on more complicated matters will be".³

DISSENT AMONG THE ULEMA ON THE DEFINITION OF A "MUSLIM"

After quoting, as examples, the numerous definitions advanced by the ulema, they wrote:

"Keeping in view the several definitions given by the *ulama*, need we make any comment except that no two learned divines are agreed on this fundamental. If we attempt our

³ Report of The Court of Inquiry ... into the Punjab Disturbance of 1953., p. 215. [Publisher]

own definition as each learned divines has done and that definition differs from that given by all others, we unanimously go out of the fold of Islam. And if we adopt the definition given by any one of the *ulama*, we remain Muslims to the view of that *alim* but *kafirs* according to the definition of every one else."⁴

I have quoted these two excerpts from the Report just by way of illustration. These learned Judges embarked on a very detailed discussion of this issue. The interested reader is referred to the original Report for this purpose.

THE DEFINITION OF A MUSLIM ACCORDING TO THE HOLY PROPHET^{SA}

Now I will tell you the definition that the Holy Prophet Muḥammad^{sa} himself formulated, and it was formulated in two or three different ways. It is inconceivable that these ulema were unaware of these definitions. Why did their minds not turn to these simple clear and transparent definitions? Simply because, on the basis of these definitions, the Aḥmadiyya Jamā‘at cannot, in any way, be declared kafir.

It was the extreme instance of transgression and

⁴ Report of The Court of Inquiry ...into the Punjab Disturbance of 1953, p. 218. [Publisher]

lack of integrity on their part that they abandoned the clear definitions given by the Holy Prophet^{sa} and only on account of their enmity towards the Aḥmadiyya Jamā'at they tried to give their own self-made definition of a Muslim and miserably failed in this attempt.

THE FIRST DEFINITION BY THE HOLY PROPHET^{SA}

The definition in the Holy Prophet's sacred words that we have found, which has the greatest level of generality and is the broadest one—and on the basis of which it is impossible for a person, who is called a Muslim, to declare another Muslim to be an apostate, unless the latter himself recants Islam by his own formal declaration—is as follows:

قَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ اَكْتُبُوا لِي مَنْ تَلَفَّظَ بِالْإِسْلَامِ مِنَ النَّاسِ

"The Holy Prophet^{sa} said: 'Write down for me the name of every such individual who claims to be a Muslim by the word of his own mouth.'"⁵

⁵ *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, Kitābul Jihādi Wassiyar, Bābu Kitābatil Imāminnāsa, Hadith No. 3060. See also Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Kitābul Īmān, Babu Jawāzil Istisrāri Bil Īmani Lil Khā'ifi, Hadith No. 377. [Publisher]*

The context of this Hadith was the occasion when the Holy Prophet^{sa} ordered a census in Medina. Since, a census, by its very nature, is a broad ranging entity, the most broad-ranging definition by him was given in the context of that particular occasion.

He did not allow dabbling into any contentious issue—he did not even mention the *Kalima*—and said that, as far as the general census of population and national political realm is concerned, only this much is adequate by way of a definition that whoever calls himself a Muslim, you should record the name of all such individuals for me.

The phrase "for me" is a beautiful expression and it signifies: this definition 'will be acceptable to me', regardless of whether or not it is acceptable to thousands of other people. For me—for Muḥammad^{sa} who has been appointed as the Messenger^{sa} of Allah—only this general definition is adequate that a person declares himself to be a Muslim.

THE SECOND DEFINITION BY THE HOLY PROPHET

The second definition, by comparison, has a greater religious flavour. But this, too, is so simple, so transparent, so beautiful and so unambiguous that after listening to even this definition there does not remain any basis for contention. He said:

مَنْ صَلَّى صَلَاتَنَا وَاسْتَقْبَلَ قِبْلَتَنَا وَ أَكَلَ ذَبِيحَتَنَا فَذَلِكَ
 الْمُسْلِمُ الَّذِي لَهُ ذِمَّةُ اللَّهِ وَ ذِمَّةُ رَسُولِهِ فَلَا تُخْفَرُوا اللَّهَ فِي
 ذِمَّتِهِ

"Whoever observes Prayer in the same way as we do, and declares our *qibla* to be his *qibla* [i.e., faces the same direction in Prayer as we do]; one who eats from our *dhabīḥa* [i.e., the meat of our slaughtered animals] such a one is a Muslim. To protect such a person is a matter of obligation for God and His Messenger. So, [O ye Muslims!] make sure that you do not violate the obligation from God."⁶

What a magnificent, how clear, and how beautiful is this definition! Now, look at how the ulema in Pakistan are today showing the audacity to formulate a definition that is diametrically opposite to the above definition. In this day and age, hundreds of Aḥmadīs have been persecuted, jailed, and the ulema have issued openly provocative fatwas to murder them. They have proclaimed that the Aḥmadīs observe Prayers like us and in so doing they face the same *qibla* as we do, and they eat from the *dhabīḥa* like we do. Yet, until and unless the Aḥmadīs *desist* from these three actions, we will not discharge our obligation of

⁶ *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, Kitābuṣ Ṣalāt, Bābu Faḍli Istiqbālil Qiblati*, Hadith No. 391. [Publisher]

protecting them. And the day they abandon these three acts, they would instantly become part of those whom we are obliged to protect and give their civil rights to.

Was this the obligation that was mentioned by the Holy Prophet^{sa}? By taking a position directly opposed to, and by contradicting every clause and proviso of the obligation laid down by God and the Messenger^{sa} of God, these ulema have formulated a new obligation for themselves. They have invented a new definition of a Muslim, and their demands that the Aḥmadī mosques should be demolished and that Aḥmadīs must be forced to face a direction other than that of *Ka'ba*, seems to indicate that they have, in effect, appointed a new *qibla*, and have suggested to Aḥmadīs to follow a new mode of worship.

As far as the Aḥmadiyya Jamā'at is concerned, only the definition given by the Holy Prophet Muḥammad^{sa} is sufficient for them, and only the obligation by God and His Messenger, imposed on them, is adequate. We do not care a whit about the umbrella of obligation imposed by any mullah.

THE THIRD DEFINITION BY THE HOLY PROPHET^{SA}

The Holy Prophet^{sa} has given a definition in regard to those people who are on the look out for an excuse to kill non-Muslims. This is actually not a definition *per se* of a Muslim but it consists of his^{sa} reaction

expressed in a context that determines, in effect, the definition of a Muslim.

عَنْ أُسَامَةَ بْنِ زَيْدٍ قَالَ بَعَثَنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
 وَسَلَّمَ فِي سَرِيَّةٍ فَصَبَّحْنَا الْحُرُقَاتِ مِنْ جُهَيْنَةَ فَأَدْرَكْتُ رَجُلًا
 فَقَالَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ فَطَعَنْتُهُ فَوَقَعَ فِي نَفْسِي مِنْ ذَلِكَ فَذَكَرْتُهُ
 لِلنَّبِيِّ ﷺ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ "أَقَالَ 'لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ' وَ
 قَتَلْتُهُ؟" قَالَ قُلْتُ "يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنَّمَا قَالَهَا خَوْفًا مِنَ السِّلَاحِ"
 قَالَ "أَفَلَا شَقَقْتَ عَنْ قَلْبِهِ حَتَّى تَعْلَمَ أَقَالَهَا أَمْ لَا" قَالَ
 "فَكَيْفَ تَصْنَعُ بِلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ إِذَا جَاءَتْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ" قَالَ "يَا
 رَسُولَ اللَّهِ اسْتَغْفِرْ لِي" فَقَالَ "أَقَتَلْتَهُ بَعْدَ مَا قَالَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ"
 قَالَ "فَمَا زَالَ يُكْرِرُهَا عَلَيَّ حَتَّى تَمْنَيْتُ أَنِّي لَمْ أَكُنْ أَسْلَمْتُ
 قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ الْيَوْمِ".

"Ḥaḍrat Usāma^{ra} relates: We went on a *sariyya* (a military expedition, unaccompanied by the Holy Prophet^{sa}) and mounted an early morning attack on the *al-Ḥuruqāt* region of the *Juhaina* tribe. I encountered a man and, when I got the better of him, he recited the *Kalima*, 'There is none worthy of worship, except

Allah.⁷—but I still killed him. This pricked my conscience, and when I returned to Medina I related the incident to the Holy Prophet^{sa}. He replied, "O Usāma! Did you kill him despite his reciting *Lā ilāha illAllāh*?" I submitted, "O Messenger of Allah! but he recited *Lā ilāha illAllāh* due to his fear of the weapons and for fear of getting killed." The Holy Prophet^{sa} exclaimed, "Why did you not cut open his [chest to look at his] heart so that you could ascertain whether he had recited it due to fear or whether it was a heartfelt recital?" Thereafter he said, "On the day of Judgement, what would be your response to *Lā ilāha illAllāh*?" I submitted, "O Messenger of Allah! Please say *istighfār** for me." But he continued to repeat his remark time and again—so much so that I wished that I had not become a Muslim prior to that day, [so as to escape this occasion of being the recipient of such displeasure of the Holy Prophet^{sa}].⁸

Today, the definition being given runs counter even

⁷ This Hadith *only* mentions his recital of the part *Lā ilāha illAllāh*, i.e., 'There is none worthy of worship except Allah'—he had *not even uttered the remainder*, **Muhammadur Rasūlullāh**, i.e., 'Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.' [Author]

* Prayer beseeching God to cover up a sin. [Publisher]

⁸ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Kitābul Īmāni, Bābu Taḥrīmi Qatli Kāfirī Ba'da Qaulihī: Lā ilāha illAllāh*, Hadith No. 277, 278, 279. [Publisher]

to this third definition. How is it possible that this Hadith escaped the attention of the ulema? Today, the ulema are openly proclaiming that any Aḥmadī, who recites *Lā ilāha illAllāh*, would deserve to be put to death. We cannot tolerate it, under any circumstance, that an Aḥmadī may recite *Lā ilāha illAllāh*, or that he may go round wearing a badge of *Lā ilāha illAllāh* on his lapel. The fatwas have gone to such limits as to declare that: 'if now we ever caught any Aḥmadī in the act of reciting *Lā ilāha illAllāh*, we will dismember his nose and ears!' Some fatwas have gone to the extent of declaring that it becomes obligatory upon every Muslim to kill any such Aḥmadī who recites *Lā ilāha illAllāh*, *Muḥammadur Rasūlullāh*. And the argument they advance in support of their position is the one that has already been rejected by the Holy Prophet Muḥammad^{sa}. Their argument is: we prescribe this because *Lā ilāha illAllāh* does not reside in their hearts; it only flows upon their tongues.

It is astonishing. Such an act of transgression against that Spiritual Master^{sa} whose devotional servitude they continue to profess. This constitutes an open revolt, and they insist on continuing in this rebellion. And, due to this rebellion, they practice such high-handedness and persecution that they are forcing the government authorities that they should follow the lead of the ulema and officially declare the legitimacy of a general massacre of all those Aḥmadīs who proclaim to adhere to *Lā ilāha illAllāh*, *Muḥammadur*

Rasūlullāh—i.e., 'There is none worthy of worship except Allah, Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah.'

Thus, as far as defining a Muslim is concerned I have found only these three definitions, and I like only these three definitions. Apart from these definitions of a Muslim given by the Holy Prophet^{sa} himself I am not ready to accept any other.

LAME EXCUSE BY THE ULEMA

It is interesting to note here that, commenting upon the finding by the Report of the Court of Inquiry that 'no two ulema were able to agree to any single definition', the ulema subsequently voiced their criticism alleging that they in fact were not given adequate time and were thus not prepared to answer the question regarding the definition of a Muslim; were they granted enough time, they would certainly have succeeded in formulating a definition on which they unanimously agreed.⁹

⁹ Murtaḍa Aḥmad Khān Maikash Durrānī, *Muḥāsiba ya'nī 'Adālati Taḥqīqāti Fasādāti Punjab (1953) kī Report par aik Jāmi' aur Baligh Tabshirah*, Page 38, Published by *Daily Nawa'ie Waqt*, [i.e., Calling to Account: A Comprehensive and Eloquent Comment on the Report of the Court of Inquiry into the Disturbances of the Punjab (1953)]. [Publisher]

A DEFINITION CONCOCTED BY THE ULEMA

Thus, they had to wait for a long time. When numerous years elapsed after the anti-Aḥmadiyya Movement of 1953, then in 1974, the ulema were able to complete their preparatory work and they invented a definition of Islam that has absolutely nothing to do with the Holy Founder^{sa} of Islam, or the Holy Qur'an and Sunna.

A negative element was introduced in this definition, i.e., a Muslim is one who does not just affirm faith in *Lā ilāha illAllāh, Muḥammadur Rasūlullāh*, but he must also affirm that Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad^{as}, Qādiānī was an impostor and thus, clearly and unreservedly, deny his prophethood. Unless a person becomes a "Muslim" according to *this* definition, he cannot be called a Muslim.¹⁰

The new door that has been opened in this definition has spawned many an evil outcome, and many more evil outcomes will follow. However, the main objection that applies to this particular definition is that a definition is supposed to be universal—free of time frame, and free of any geographical boundaries. It is inadmissible that a definition that could not be applicable during the time of the Holy Prophet^{sa} should

¹⁰ Refer to National and Capital Registration act, under the section 4(1)(A) promulgated by the Directorate General of Registration (Ministry of Interior) the Government of Pakistan. [Publisher]

be accepted today as correct. Only that definition will be acceptable which would first find application in the time of the Holy Prophet^{sa} and, thereafter, goes on finding application in every subsequent era—without having even a single moment to elapse in which that definition becomes inoperative. Moreover, that definition may not just apply to the case of Pakistan, but it must find applicability, without exception, in every country of the world whether it is in the East or West, and whether it is in the North or South. But this particular definition is strangely flawed in that it cannot be made applicable to the pre-1974 period. It cannot be applicable even to the time of the Promised Messiah^{as} because a multitude of Aḥmadīs have died prior to the formulation of this particular definition—they departed from this world in a state of being described as Muslims, long before this definition was invented. In the absence of this definition, and owing to the fact that nobody's mind had conceived of such a definition, they were to be considered Muslims contrary to this definition.

Then, there is the case of all those Muslims who existed prior to the time of the Promised Messiah^{as}. What would you say about them? Because they, obviously, did not deny the Promised Messiah^{as}, so for them only *Lā ilāha illAllāh, Muḥammadur Rasūlullāh* was enough. Thus, a definition which cannot find application in the earlier times is wrong and inapplicable even in this day and age.

Should the ulema's rejoinder to this be that because in the earlier times there *was* no false prophet in existence the erstwhile definition could not possibly have found any reference to a false prophet, then there could not be a more blatant lie than this. Because, Musailamah Kadhdhāb, the impostor claimant to prophethood, who advanced his claim as a rival to the Holy Prophet^{sa} was a contemporary of the latter. Despite the presence of this false claimant to prophethood, the Holy Prophet^{sa}, did not modify the definition of a Muslim, nor did his successor Caliphs change the definition of a Muslim, nor did the *tābi'īn* [the generation of the followers of the companions of the Holy Prophet^{sa}], nor even the *taba' tābi'īn* [the generation of the latter's followers] brought about any such modification, nor did the generations that followed thereafter changed the definition of Islam. Was it so because it just did not occur to the Holy Prophet^{sa} that until he incorporated the clause about the denial of an impostor prophet, his definition of a Muslim would not become complete?

Now what is your reply to this? Search the entire world of Islam and show us a single instance of an application of this criterion—prior to 1974—according to which a Muslim cannot be considered a Muslim at all until and unless the denial of a false prophet is inevitably introduced as part of the definition governing his being a Muslim.

THE DEFINITION CONCOCTED BY MAULĀNĀ MAUDŪDĪ

Apart from all these definitions Maulānā Maudūdī Ṣāhib has come up with a definition of his own. He has not set out this definition in any detail, but has presented its applied version. I would like to present an excerpt from a book of his, so that you can see for yourselves whether a look at the faces of contemporary Muslims in Pakistan would, as is implied by his definition, show the appellations 'Muslim', 'Kafir' written on their faces. Since the present regime is pro-Maudūdī, and the ulema of Wahābī school of thought presently hold sway over the government, it is necessary to present Maudūdī's definition to you at this stage. In his book *Musalmān aur Maujūda Siyāsī Kashmakash* (Muslims and the Contemporary Political Strife) volume 3, Maudūdī Ṣāhib writes:

"This gigantic horde that is called "Muslims", in reality 999 out of every thousand of its members neither have any knowledge of Islam nor are they able to distinguish between the truth and falsehood. Their moral viewpoint and mental attitude has also not undergone any transformation under Islam. A grandson inherits a Muslim name from his father just as the father inherited it from his own father—that is the sole reason why they happen to be

Muslims. They have neither adopted the truth after recognizing it as the truth, nor have they abandoned false doctrines as a result of recognizing those to be false. After placing the reigns of power in the hands of such people, if someone entertains the hope that the caravan will traverse on the path of Islam then the naivety of his perception should be commendable."¹¹

What happened in 1974 and consequently what definition was adopted then was in fact made possible only because the reigns of Islam were given in the hands of the people described above by Maudūdī Ṣāhib.

But one might interpret the above excerpt in a different way and say that Maududi Ṣāhib was only expressing the opinion that if common people alone made any decision by consensus, then it would not carry any weight; and perhaps Maudūdī Ṣāhib had it in mind that it was the prerogative of the leading ulema of high rank to pass judgement on such important matters, because—on account of their possessing Islamic perception and because of their understanding of Islam—their judgment on such matters has authenticity. Moreover, since ulema of this calibre

¹¹ *Musalmān aur Maujūdah Siyāsī Kashmakash* [Muslims and the Contemporary Political Strife], vol. 3, Page 130, Published by, *Maktaba Jamā'ati Islāmī, Darul Islam, Jamālpur, Pathankot (India)*. [Publisher]

were participants in the decision given in 1974, it [the decision] stands on a different pedestal. Or one might argue that the popular sentiment emanating from the laity alone ought to be rejected—just because the laity is of the kind described above by Maudūdī Ṣāhib, yet the Representative Assembly elected by the same laity must necessarily possess the right [to decide questions of faith] and that they are above reproach. Instead of giving my own reply to both these points. I give a reply in Maudūdī Ṣāhib's own words. His reply to the first point is:

'Whether it is the political leaders who have received Western education and training, or it be the ulema of our faith and the *mufties** of the Islamic Sharia¹², the leaders of both these types—on account of their ideology and their policy—have equally lost their way: both categories have gone astray from the path of truth, and are floundering in a myriad of darkness ... neither of these possesses the vision of a Muslim.'¹³

As far as the whim that no matter what kind of

*Religious divines who are entitled to issue a fatwa, or religious edict. [Publisher]

¹² Note that the Assembly—that passed the definition according to which the Aḥmadiyya Muslim Jamā'at is declared outside the pail of Islam—was composed of only *these* two types of people! [Author]

¹³ *Ibid* Page 95.

human beings they are is concerned, once they have achieved democratic power, and the representative status from the populace, then their fatwas must necessarily be considered legitimate and their 'definition' must become acceptable—I would give a reply to such an idea, again, in the words of Maudūdī Ṣāhib. He writes:

'A democratic election has the exact analogy of the process of churning to extract butter.¹⁴ If the milk is poisonous, then the butter that will be extracted from it would naturally be even more poisonous than the milk itself. ... Thus, those who have this whim that if the areas characterized by Muslim-majority are freed from the hegemony of the [overall] Hindu majority and a democratic order is established in them then this will result in the establishment of a theocracy*, their conjecture is wrong. In fact, as a result of this, what would be achieved would only be the Disbelievers' Government** by the Muslims.'¹⁵

But these are the assertions of yesterday. Today, a different litany is being heard. Is this how Islam

¹⁴ What a great analogy—there is no denying it! But notice, also, the conclusion he draws from it. [Author]

* حکومت الہی *Hakūmati Ilāhī*; literally, "Government of God". [Translator]

** مسلمانوں کی کافرانہ حکومت *Musalmānu'ī kī Kāfirāna Hakūmat*". [Translator]

¹⁵ *Ibid* Page 132.

changes its colours? Or, for that matter, does any statement of truth takes such twists and turns and acquires a variety of appearances and shapes? He writes further:

"In our case, the nation that is given the appellation of "Muslims" is filled with all kinds of riffraff. This nation has as many types of [malefactor] characters as are to be found among kafirs."¹⁶

DEFINING APOSTASY

Now, I turn to the question of defining apostasy. ‘Allāma Rāghib wrote in his lexicon, *Al-Mufridāt*:

وَالْإِرْتِدَادُ وَالرِّدَّةُ الرَّجُوعُ فِي الطَّرِيقِ الَّذِي جَاءَ مِنْهُ، لَكِنِ
الرِّدَّةُ تَخْتَصُّ بِالْكَفْرِ، وَالْإِرْتِدَادُ يُسْتَعْمَلُ فِيهِ وَفِي غَيْرِهِ قَالَ
(إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ارْتَدُّوا عَلَىٰ أَدْبَارِهِمْ) وَقَالَ (يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَنْ
يَرْتَدَّ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ).....

The words *Irtidād* and *Riddatu* mean, ‘to return on the same path as one had traversed earlier’, however the word *Riddatu* is specifically used to indicate a return to *kufr*

¹⁶ *op cit.* [Publisher]

[disbelief], whereas the word *Irtidād* may be used to indicate a return to disbelief or to any other matter, Allah says: ¹⁷ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ارْتَدُّوا عَلَىٰ أَدْبَارِهِمْ ["Surely those who turns their backs"] and Allah says: ¹⁸ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَنْ يَرْتَدَّ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ ["O ye who believe! whoso among you turns back from his religion"].¹⁹

The latter verse illustrates the usage to indicate 'returning from Islam to disbelief'.

A GREAT SUBTLETY IN THE WISDOM OF GOD

The word "*Irtidād*" is exclusively used in *active* sense, and it can never be used in the *passive* sense. That is, only such a person is called a *murtad* [i.e., an apostate] who *himself* announces that he is relinquishing the faith. The rules of Arabic grammar certainly do not permit someone else to declare him a *murtad* and throw him out of faith. The volition of a *murtad* is, inevitably, implied here. God has chosen such a remarkable word to describe apostasy as [it emancipates] every Muslim from any unilateral intervention in his faith by anyone else. The Holy

¹⁷ The Holy Qur'an 47:26. [Publisher]

¹⁸ The Holy Qur'an 5:55. [Publisher]

¹⁹ *Mu'jamu Mufradāt al-Fāzil Qur'āni* [known as *Al-Mufradāt*] by 'Allāma Ḥusain bin Muḥammad, known as Imām Rāghib, Al-Aṣḥāhānī, under *Radda*. [Publisher]

Qur'an, too, provides a definition along the same lines. It says:

وَقُلِ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ
فَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُكْفُرْ

"And say, 'It is the truth from your Lord; wherefore let him who will, believe, and let him who will, disbelieve.'"²⁰

NOBODY HAS THE RIGHT TO CALL ANYONE A 'KAFIR'

The act of 'willing' is associated with one's heartfelt desire. The Holy Qur'an has not, under any circumstances, permitted anyone that if he wants he can declare so and so to be included among the faithful and, if he so desires, declare so and so to be a disbeliever. Instead, it has been granted as a volitional right of everyone to profess his or her faith and freely announce it. Thus there is no room left for anyone to coerce others in matter of faith.

For the verdict has been given:

فَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُكْفُرْ

²⁰ The Holy Qur'an 18:30. [Publisher]

"let him who will, believe, and let him who will, disbelieve."²¹

But if apostasy [*irtidād*] is punishable by death, or if disbelief [*kufṛ*] is punishable by death, then what meaning can be attributed to the phrase "let him who will"? One's 'will' can only be arrived at by one's own self. Thus, if someone is asked, "Do you want to become a kafir or remain among the faithful?", and he replies, "I am one among the faithful—I am a Muslim", then—since the act of 'willing' is associated with one's own heartfelt desire the Holy Qur'an does not, in any way, grant permission to another person to state how someone else's heart feels about his faith.

THE HOLY QUR'AN'S VERDICT ON THE IDEA OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT FOR AN APOSTATE

I will now present a few verses that exemplify Islam's marvelous teaching regarding freedom of religion and, subsequently, I will advert to those arguments that are advanced by the ulema to legitimize capital punishment for an apostate.

²¹ *ibid.* [Publisher]

FIRST VERSE:

Allah the Exalted says:

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ ۚ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ ۚ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ
بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ
لَا انْفِصَامَ لَهَا ۗ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ۝

"There should be no compulsion in religion. Surely, right has become distinct from wrong; so whosoever refuses to be led by those who transgress, and believes in Allah, has surely grasped a strong handle which knows no breaking.²² And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."²³

This verse presents a profound piece of wisdom. The theme presented here is directly opposite to the contemporary practice. Allah has not stated here that: 'You have a right to prevent people from becoming apostates.' Rather, Allah has said: 'Nobody has the right to force you to give up your faith.' Allah says: 'Since the truth has become manifestly obvious, and since there is no compulsion in matters of religion, you [O people of faith!] are not expected to use

²² Or, alternatively, now that hand is not going to let go of that handle. [Author]

²³ The Holy Qur'an 2:257. [Publisher]

compulsion—because you have received God’s commandment in this regard. But even compulsion from the other people is not going to have any impact on you, because you have accepted the truth after fully understanding it to be the truth; you have taken hold of a strong handle. Thus, whoever will defy the forces of transgression, and will refuse to return to the ways of those who use such force, and will persevere in his faith in Allah, it is as if such a one has got hold of a strong handle. This bond is now bound not to be broken. In other words, no doubt, coercion will be used against you, but we do know you are now positioned at such a station of spiritual illumination that you are not, in any way, bound to return to the realm of darkness.

SECOND VERSE:

Allah, the Exalted, says:

وَاطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَاطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَاحْذَرُوا ۚ فَإِن تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا عَلَي رِسْوَانَا الْبَلِغُ الْمُبِينُ ۝

"And obey Allah and obey the Messenger, and be on *your* guard. But if you turn away²⁴, then know that on Our Messenger lies only the

²⁴ i.e. despite this cautionary warning. [Author]

clear conveyance of the Message."²⁵ ²⁶

Had apostasy been punishable with death, the verse would have, stated instead: We have made the truth manifest, but if despite that you ever relinquished this faith then remember that you will be dealt with sword and your throat will be slit

THIRD VERSE:

Allah, the Exalted, says further that introducing the element of compulsion, while preparing the layout of religion, was never a part of God's scheme of things. In the picture of this universe that was painted by the Perfect Painter*, He never allowed any linkage between religion and compulsion. He says:

وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَأَمَنَّ مِنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ كُلَّهُمْ جَوِيعًا
أَفَأَنْتَ تُكْرِهُ النَّاسَ حَتَّى يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ ○

"And if thy Lord had *enforced* His will²⁷, surely, all who are on the earth would have

²⁵ i.e., killing is not part of his mission. [Author]

²⁶ The Holy Qur'an 5:93. [Publisher]

* i.e., God, the Creator. [Publisher]

²⁷ i.e., had He desired the number of the faithful to swell, merely His desire to do so would have been sufficient: All mankind would have affirmed belief in God as soon as He had wished for it. But since He has *not* willed so, then will it ever be that *you*, O Muḥammad!, may compel people to join the faith? [Author]

believed together. Wilt thou, then, force men to become believers?"²⁸

TWO IMPORTANT DECLARATIONS

The foregoing contains two important declarations. First, the allegation against the Holy Prophet^{sa} to have ever resorted to compulsion has been, hereby, negated forever. The will of Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad^{sa} was identical with the will of God; his speech was the same as the word of God—he used to talk about everything in accordance with what God's intent was in that regard.

قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي
لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ○

"Say, 'My Prayer and my sacrifice and my life and my death are *all* for Allah, the Lord of the worlds.'"²⁹

This is the one and only Prophet^{sa} whom God has permitted to proclaim in front of the entire human race that: 'I have not a shred of my own that survives. All my acts of worship, all my acts of sacrifice, my life and death have all become purely for the sake of God, the Lord of all the worlds.'

²⁸ The Holy Qur'an 10:100. [Publisher]

²⁹ The Holy Qur'an 6:163. [Publisher]

When Allah said: 'O Muḥammad^{sa}! I am telling you that it is my intention that there should be freedom in matters of religion—and nobody should be compelled to join the ranks of the faithful—then the phrase 'Wilt thou, then, force men...?' is not a statement of reproach but, instead, an expression of endearment. It signifies: 'We know it well that you are incapable of doing any such thing because you have been made aware of Our intent.'

Second, it contains a declaration for the benefit of all the future generations of Muslims that if you would ever promote the idea of using compulsion in religion, then remember you would be doing it in contravention of the explicitly conveyed reassurance and aim of Allah and the Holy Prophet Muḥammad^{sa}, and certainly not in accordance with it.

FOURTH VERSE:

Allah the Exalted says:

فَذَكِّرْ ۗ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُذَكِّرٌ ۗ لَسْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِمُصَيِّرٍ ۗ
إِلَّا مَنْ تَوَلَّىٰ وَكَفَرَ ۗ فَيُعَذِّبُهُ اللَّهُ الْعَذَابَ الْأَكْبَرَ ۗ

"[O Muḥammad], Admonish, therefore, for you art but an admonisher; You are not a

warden³⁰ over them; But whoever turns away and disbelieves, Allah will punish him with the greatest punishment."³¹

In this context, the phrase, ‘You are not a warden’ means that: Although We have appointed you for the guidance of the whole of mankind, yet We have not granted you the prerogative of using compulsion in this regard. You should keep on exhorting and admonishing. The matter of those who would disbelieve is for Us to deal with. There is the greatest chastisement for those who would disbelieve. But as far as your personal liability is concerned, you would certainly not be questioned about those people who are disbelieving.

ANALYSIS OF THE SELF-STYLED "QURANIC ARGUMENTS" PUT FORWARD BY THE ULEMA

Now I shall critically examine and refute the arguments of the ulema which they try to base on the Qur’an. They falsely allege that there are injunctions in the Qur’an which enjoin killing of apostates.

³⁰ i.e., unlike a warden—who is charged with the responsibility of safekeeping of valuables and, if something is lost, he is held accountable—you will not be held responsible for it. [Author]

³¹ The Holy Qur’an 88:22-25. [Publisher]

FIRST ARGUMENT OF ULEMA

‘Allāma Shabbīr Aḥmad ‘Uthmānī has presented the one and only argument in his booklet, *Ash-Shihāb*. He develops his argument in the following manner. He quotes the following part of the verse 55 of Al-Baqarah: **إِنَّكُمْ ظَلَمْتُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ بِاتِّخَاذِكُمُ الْعِجْلَ فَتُوبُوا إِلَىٰ بَارِئِكُمْ** **فَأَقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ** which he translates as: "O nation of Banī Isrā’īl! you wronged your souls by making a calf an object of worship. You should now turn toward God and, then murder your own people." and basing his thesis on this translation of his he tries to substantiate it by arguing thus:

"Although there are many verses of the Holy Qur’an which prescribe death penalty for an apostate there is one incident recorded in the Qur’an with such clear exposition and elucidation—regarding the killing of a group of apostates, under the command from God—that, for those who have fear of God in them, there is no room left, not even a wee bit, for any other interpretation of it.³² The context does not imply any fighting, or cutting off of a passage, or any other offence—with the sole exception of the offence of apostasy, for which

³² As if, the verses of the Holy Qur’an that I have recited here, before you, do permit (God forbid!) a considerable leeway of interpretation, but the incident noted in this particular verse [‘Allāma ‘Uthmānī postulates] allows no interpretation. [Author]

God has commanded that they be unhesitatingly put to sword..."

Just imagine! Maulawī Shabbīr Ṣāhib could not find any incident from the lifetime of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, yet he could spot a single incident in the case of the people of Prophet Moses^{as}, narrated in the Holy Qur'an, which he uses to lay the foundation for the thesis that an apostate should be killed. He further writes:

"The meaning of [the word] *anfusakum* in [the phrase] *faqtulū anfusakum* is the same as it is in [the phrase] *thummā antum hā'ulā'i taqtulūna anfusakum*." "Thus, there is no reason whatsoever to deviate from the literal and real meaning of the word *qatl* which encompasses all manners of killing, whether with the help of iron or of stone." "As a result of this commandment from God, it is noted in various related-traditions, thousands of people were slain in front of Prophet Moses^{sa} due to the offence of apostasy. The situation got to a point where every single one of those people in the nation, who had not worshipped the calf, killed with his own hand any of his close relatives who had been guilty of worshipping

the calf."³³ "Let it be clearly understood that these guilty ones, prior to their being punished with death penalty, were also engaged in a sort of repentance. But even this repentance did nothing to save them from meeting the chastisement in this world." "It may be argued that this incident is associated with the Mosaic Law, and it cannot be used in the case of the body of followers of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad^{sa}. But you must know that those ordinances and commandments that were applicable to the earlier religious communities—but which have been quoted in the Holy Qur'an—are also tenable for us and we, too, are under command to obey those, unless our own Prophet^{sa} or our Book instructs us to part with it...Thus, under this principle the [mention in the Qur'an about the] commandment to kill the apostates among the Children of Israel is, in fact a teaching for us Muslims."³⁴

³³ He has not given any further reason or explanation of this assertion. Later on, when I will analyze the meaning of this verse, the reader will be astonished to learn how extensively 'Allāma 'Uthmānī has deviated from the meaning of this verse. [Author]

³⁴ *Ash-Shihāb li Rajmil Khāṭīfil Murtāb* by Maulawī Shabbīr Aḥmad 'Uthmānī, pp. 27-34, Published by Adbī Kutub Khāna, Ḥussain Āgāhī, Multan. [Publisher]

MUTILATED FACTS:

The above-noted assertion is totally wrong and baseless, viz., the commandments and ordinances of the ancient Scriptures that are mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, become part of our Sharia—unless it is explicitly forbidden by the Holy Qur'an to act on them. A historical reality has been presented in distorted form. And that historical reality is as follows. Up until the teachings of the Holy Qur'an were completely revealed, and the revelation of the Sharia was not yet completed, it was the practice of the Holy Prophet^{sa} that if there had not yet been revealed any commandment regarding a particular matter, then the Holy Prophet^{sa} used to take guidance (regarding that particular matter) from the earlier scriptures.³⁵ But, in regard to those matters about which a clear injunction from the Holy Qur'an had already been revealed, the Holy Prophet^{sa} never ever—not even once—looked at the precedent in any earlier Scripture in order to make it applicable to the Muslims. Despite the mention of apostates in it, the Holy Qur'an makes absolutely no mention of killing an apostate. A detailed exposition of teachings in regard to apostates is found quite frequently in the Holy Qur'an. But, when the Holy Qur'an has given complete expression to the issue of apostates—and has not mentioned anything about

³⁵ See *Muslim, Kitābul Faḍā'il, Bābu Şiffati Sha'rihi^{sa} ...*, Hadith No. 6062. [Publisher].

killing them—then it is an extremely spurious argument to assert that since an incident from the ancient history is mentioned, and it has not been disavowed, we shall take it as precedent and shall make it a part of our Sharia, and that it is incumbent on us to do so. This idea is completely wrong and diametrically opposed to the Sunna. Although it is true that until a commandment on a specific issue was revealed to him, the Holy Prophet^{sa} used to follow the earlier religious scriptures, i.e., Torah. But when an injunction regarding that particular issue was revealed to him then, he would not even consider the possibility of consulting Torah.

FURTHER EXAMINATION OF THE ARGUMENT OF ‘UTHMĀNĪ ṢĀḤĪB

Let us now further examine his argument. Maulānā ‘Uthmānī Ṣāḥib refers to the following verse of the Holy Qur’an:

وَلَمَّا سَقَطَ فِي أَيِّدِيهِمْ وَرَأَوْا أَنَّهُمْ قَدْ ضَلُّوا قَالُوا لَئِن
لَّمْ يَرْحَمْنَا رَبُّنَا وَيَغْفِرْ لَنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخٰسِرِينَ ۝

"And when they were smitten with remorse and saw that they had indeed gone astray, they said, 'If our Lord do not have mercy on us and forgive us, we shall surely be among the

losers.'"³⁶

That is, when they lost control over that matter, and they came to a full realization that they had gone astray, and had been guilty of wrongdoing, they exclaimed: If Allah, the Exalted, does not show mercy on us, and does not forgive us—or, had He not shown mercy to us and forgiven us—we would certainly (have) become of those who are the losers.

Quoting this portion of the verse, Maulana ‘Uthmānī says:

"But even this repentance did not save them from the punishment in this world" [i.e., they were murdered in spite of their repentance.]³⁷

It is as if, according to Maulawī Şāhib, this is the definition of the 'losers' [*Khāsirīn*].

DETAILS OF THE INCIDENT ACCORDING TO THE HOLY QUR’AN

But the Qur’an rejects the above argument. However, first let us have a look at the whole incident in the light of the context in which the Holy Qur’an sets it out. Allah, the Exalted, says:

³⁶ The Holy Qur’an 7:150. [Publisher]

³⁷ *Ibid* p. 31. [Publisher]

وَإِذْ وَعَدْنَا مُوسَىٰ أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً ثُمَّ اتَّخَذْتُمُ الْعِجْلَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ
 وَأَنْتُمْ ظَالِمُونَ ۝ ثُمَّ عَفَوْنَا عَنْكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ لَعَلَّكُمْ
 تَشْكُرُونَ ۝ وَإِذْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ الْكِتَابَ وَالْفُرْقَانَ لَعَلَّكُمْ
 تَهْتَدُونَ ۝ وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ يُقَوْمِ إِنَّكُمْ ظَلَمْتُمْ
 أَنْفُسَكُمْ بِاتِّخَاذِكُمُ الْعِجْلَ فَتُوبُوا إِلَىٰ بَارِيكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوا
 أَنْفُسَكُمْ ۖ ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ عِنْدَ بَارِيكُمْ فَتَابَ
 عَلَيْكُمْ ۖ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ۝

"And remember the time when We made Moses a promise of forty nights; then you took the calf *for worship* in his absence and you were transgressors. Then We forgave you *even* thereafter, that you might be grateful³⁸. And remember the time when We gave Moses the Book and the Discrimination, that you might be

³⁸ This treatment of forgiveness and pardon was—in Maulawī ‘Uthmānī’s viewpoint—like this: On the one hand, God said, ‘I am forgiving you’ but, on the other hand, He ordered that they be put to death. That is, they got murdered while they were expressing their gratitude to God, saying, as it were, that, ‘O God! We are exceedingly grateful to You. In forgiving us You showed us how great Your forgiveness is—and, indeed, we had never experienced such manner of pardon and forgiveness at the hands of any human being. That is, while the decree of pardon is flowing from the tongue, overtures are being made—simultaneously—to keep on killing the same group of people. It is not possible to find any greater example of pardon and forgiveness!’ [Author]

rightly guided. And *remember the time* when Moses said to his people: ‘O my people, you have indeed wronged yourselves by taking the calf *for worship*; turn you therefore to your Maker, and slay your own selves; that is the best for you with your Maker.’ Then He turned towards you with compassion. Surely, He is Oft-Returning *with compassion, and is Merciful.*" ³⁹

In the last verse the part "*faqtulū anfusakum*" has been wrongly translated, and the wrong translation has been publicized among people. The truth is that, in this context, the word "*anfusakum*"*, included in the Arabic phrase "*faqtulū anfusakum*", refers to the very same "*anfusakum*" that are, earlier in this context, included in the phrase "*zalamtum anfusakum*"**. Thus, a reference to the context clarifies the meaning of the commandment, "*faqtulū anfusakum*" as follows: Everyone (who wronged his soul) must slay his own self[†]. It is not stated anywhere, in the entire context, that you must kill each other. Rather, only those individuals who had wronged their own souls are addressed here, and they are commanded: You must slay your own, wronged, souls.

³⁹ The Holy Qur'an 2:52-55. [Publisher]

* i.e., 'your own selves' (or, egos). [Publisher]

** i.e., 'you have wronged your own souls (i.e., selves)'. [Publisher]

† i.e., the very *self* (or ego) that incited them to commit evil, in the first place. [Author]

THE MEANING OF "SLAYING ONE'S OWN SOUL"

The meaning of 'slaying one's own soul'—on the authority of Arabic lexicon is, clearly, as follows: Crush your ego* by means of supplicating and tearfully praying to God, and through self-imposition of penance. In other words you first wronged your souls by resorting to the sin of *Shirk***, now to expiate for this sin do another 'wrong' to yourselves i.e. be cruel, for the sake of God, to yourselves—that is you must keep reminding yourselves of the great sin you have committed and subject yourselves to repeated repentance and go on supplicating God for forgiveness.

‘Allāma Shabbīr ‘Uthmānī did not understand this obvious fact and, instead, he presented an idea that is not even remotely related to the Holy Qur’an. He did seem to have understood how it was not possible, at all, for people to have committed *suicides* in the wake of their repentance! Thus, he invented the solution to this difficulty by asserting that the people were commanded that those among them, who had not committed this sin, must kill all the others who had committed this sin. That is, those who remained steadfastly attached to their religion, they must murder

* i.e., *Nafsi Ammārah*, or that part of the self that incites one to commit evil. [Publisher]

** The sin of associating partners to be worshipped with the one and only God. [Publisher]

all the apostates who had committed the sin. This flies in the face of the fact that the Holy Qur'an is addressing *only those* people who had wronged their souls—and not addressing those people, at all, who had not wronged their souls. Nowhere in the Qur'an—where this subject is mentioned—the people who did not commit the sin are addressed, and they are nowhere asked to kill (the apostates). It is something which Maulānā 'Uthmānī has invented himself and has attributed his invention to the Qur'an.

DIVERGENCE BETWEEN THE NARRATIVES OF THE TORAH AND THE HOLY QUR'AN

The most that we can concede to Maulawī 'Uthmānī Ṣāḥib is that, perhaps, he learnt the details of this incident from the Bible. But had he learnt it from the Bible, he would not have presented the narrative the way he did. For in its account of the incident the Bible very explicitly and strongly opposes the Qur'an. Hence, the Biblical narrative of this incident no longer remains credible for Muslims. The Bible states⁴⁰ that all the people were guilty of that sin. However, the person who had incited the people to commit that sin was not Sāmri, but Aaron^{as} the brother of Moses^{as}. Aaron^{as} himself had invented that method of *shirk* and then replied to Moses^{as}: 'I had no option left, because the whole nation had overwhelmed me and there were

⁴⁰ The Old Testament, Exodus (32:2-28). [Publisher]

not left any virtuous people among them. Then I contrived this plan, and I gathered all the jewellery from them and cast it in the fire, out of which the calf emerged.' At that, according to the Bible, Prophet Moses^{as}, issued this strange decree of 'justice' (God forbid!) that he called upon his own clan of Levi and told them that if they were faithful to him they should come on his side. Thus, despite the fact that *they* were the founders of that sinful act, Moses summoned them and ordered them to kill the *other* people. In this manner, three thousand people were murdered on that day.

This is all there is to the "*Uthmānian* argument"—in support of the notion of capital punishment for the apostates—which is being bandied about as the "*Quranic argument*"! The Holy Qur'an rejects this notion so explicitly that, after learning this, no one who has even an iota of the fear of God in him can infer the justification for awarding capital punishment to the apostates from this context. For according to the Holy Qur'an, the architect and prime mover of this incident, and its underlying act of transgression, was none other than Sāmri. But, even Sāmri, who was the leader, was not commanded to be put to death*. The punishment awarded to him was:

فَإِنَّ لَكَ فِي الْحَيَاةِ أَنْ تَقُولَ لَا مِسَاسَ

* i.e., according to the Holy Qur'an's narrative of the incident. [Author]

"...It shall be thine to say throughout thy life, 'Touch *me* not;' ..."⁴¹

i.e., you will be subjected to a boycott, or you will contract such a disease that will make your body repulsive and, in consequence, you will always say to people, "Don't come near me. Don't touch me. Stay away from me. I am a contaminated person." There is no commandment, anywhere, to murder him!

Moreover, in every other instance where this incident is mentioned, the Holy Qur'an always elucidates so clearly, how Allah, the Exalted, had accepted their repentance. For instance, it is stated:

فَتُوبُوا إِلَىٰ بَارِيكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوا
 أَنفُسَكُمْ ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ عِنْدَ بَارِيكُمْ فَتَابَ
 عَلَيْكُمْ ۗ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ۝

"...turn you therefore to your Maker, and slay your own selves; that⁴² is the best for you with your Maker.' Then He turned towards you⁴³ with compassion. Surely, He is Oft-Returning *with compassion, and is*

⁴¹ The Holy Qur'an 20:98. [Publisher]

⁴² i.e., *this particular method* of dealing with it. [Author]

⁴³ i.e., not only did you turn towards God—with supplication and repentance—but He, too, granted acceptance to your repentance. [Author]

Merciful⁴⁴.⁴⁵

Could such sentiments have arisen from within the hearts of those who were witnessing that—despite their repentance—the commandment to chop off their heads had been issued? What a grotesquely cruel allegation against the Holy Qur'an is *this*! And what an openly audacious deviation is *this* from the intent of the Holy Qur'an! But, then they [the mullahs] have the audacity to say, in support of their belief that apostasy is a capital crime, that they base their argument on the Qur'an. They seem to be labouring under the misapprehension that a person of even modest intelligence would not be able to see through their snare and rid himself free of it. The truth is that a person of even a modest degree of intelligence would not allow himself to be entrapped in this snare, in the first place. And the reason is that the above verses of the Holy Qur'an permit no one at all to use them for the justification for awarding capital punishment to the apostates. If this statement of the Qur'an is deemed to be correct that the entire people became apostate except Moses and Aaron, then who killed whom? Could it be shown, even by implication, that Prophet Moses^{as} and Prophet Aaron^{as} got together and killed their entire people, and only spared the life of their

⁴⁴ Look, how lovable is your God—how frequently does He accept repentance! And how Merciful is He! [Author]

⁴⁵ The Holy Qur'an 2:55. [Publisher]

leader Sāmīrī? Had that been the case, the followers of Moses^{as} would have been obliterated from the face of the earth.

METAPHORICAL 'SLAYING'

Then, immediately in the next verse, Allah, the Exalted, says:

ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَاكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَوْتِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ○

'Then We raised you up after your death, that you might be grateful.'⁴⁶

In other words, this is the clarification of the notion of "death" that they had been commanded to impose on their own selves. Thus it enunciates that those people did not get killed, in the physical sense, i.e., they were not slain. Rather, for their own sake they had subjected their own selves to a kind of "death", as was the commandment for them. Because, when a human being subjects his own *self* to a sort of "death", solely for the sake of God, then God ensures that he is given a new life. Thus, Allah has also touched upon the theme of how He turned towards them* with compassion, i.e., when they imposed a sort of "death" on their selves

⁴⁶ The Holy Qur'an 2:57. [Publisher]

* تَابَ, *tāba*. [Publisher]

then, consequently, God granted them a new life. And they used to marvel at it, in gratitude, as to how God had infused a new life in them, spiritually, and how it surely occasioned gratitude on their part.

OPINIONS OF THE EARLIER EXEGETES

There are still more arguments based on the verses of the Holy Qur'an but, since the contemporary ulema are comparatively more favourably inclined towards the fatwas passed by the medieval theologians and religious scholars—than they are towards the Holy Qur'an—I would not embark on the discussion of additional verses of the Holy Qur'an and, instead, present here the views given in a few commentaries of the Holy Qur'an.

1. In Tafsīr Rūḥul Bayān, it is stated:

”فَاقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ“ بِقَمْعِ الْهَوَى لَأَنَّ الْهَوَى هُوَ حَيَاةُ النَّفْسِ.....
 أَوْ ارْجِعُوا بِالْإِسْتِنصَارِ عَلَى قَتْلِ النَّفْسِ بِنَهْيِهَا عَنْ هَوَاهَا
 فَاقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ بِنَصْرِ اللَّهِ وَعَوْنِهِ..... (ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ عِنْدَ
 بَارئِكُمْ) يَعْنِي قَتْلُ النَّفْسِ بِسَيْفِ الصِّدْقِ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ، لِأَنَّ بِكُلِّ
 قِتْلَةٍ رِفْعَةٌ وَدَرَجَةٌ لَكُمْ عِنْدَ بَارئِكُمْ، فَانْتُمْ تَتَقَرَّبُونَ إِلَى اللَّهِ
 بِقَتْلِ النَّفْسِ وَقَمْعِ الْهَوَى، وَهُوَ يَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَيْكُمْ بِالتَّوْفِيقِ لِلتَّوْبَةِ

وَالرَّحْمَةَ عَلَيْكُمْ.....

That is when the Holy Qur'an states that:

"You should slay your "selves", it means you should slay your selfish desires and greed, and crush your foul wishes—because, it is the selfish desires and greed that constitute the essence of the "self". Such an act is better for you, in the sight of your God. Because, the more you crush *the-self-that-incites-to-evil*⁴⁷, the more rapidly would you advance in high rank and spiritual elevation in the presence of God. And He, too, would enable you to undertake more acts of virtue and, by treating you mercifully, He, too, would continue to draw closer to you."⁴⁸

So, this is the meaning of the verse:

فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ

"Then He turned towards you with compassion. Surely, He is Oft-Returning *with*

⁴⁷ *Nafsi Ammārah*. [Publisher]

⁴⁸ Shaikh Ismā'il Ḥaqqī Al-Barūsawī, *Tafsīr Rūḥul Bayān*, Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:55, Part 1, Page 139, Published by Al-Maktabatul Islāmiya. [Publisher]

compassion, and is Merciful."⁴⁹

2. Imam Rāghib Aṣḥāhānī states,

(فَاقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ) قِيلَ: مَعْنَاهُ: لِيَقْتُلَ بَعْضُكُمْ بَعْضًا. وَقِيلَ: عَنِ
بِقْتْلِ النَّفْسِ إِمَاطَةُ الشَّهَوَاتِ—

[With reference to] "*faqtulū Anfusakum*" it is said that it means that some of you should kill some others from among yourselves. And it is also said that by '*Qatlin Nafsi*' is meant crushing and stamping out the carnal passions of the self."⁵⁰

Now, I advert to the second argument.

ULEMA'S SECOND ARGUMENT

The second argument—allegedly based on the Holy Qur'an—to justify death penalty for an apostate, is presented by Maudūdī Ṣāḥib in a book of his. Yet he does not even mention the argument presented by Maulana 'Uthmānī Ṣāḥib, which shows that he, too, attaches no significance to this argument. Had it been, in fact, a notably strong argument, he would have at least paid some attention to it.

⁴⁹ The Holy Qur'an 2:55. [Publisher]

⁵⁰ *Al-Mufradāt* by Imam Rāghib, under the word *Qatl* (i.e., slaying). [Publisher]

Maudūdī Ṣāhib gives a different argument which he bases on the following verse of Surah Al-Taubah:

فَإِنْ تَابُوا وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ فَإِخْوَانُكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ
 وَنَقَضُوا الْأَيْتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ○ وَإِنْ نَكَثُوا أَيْمَانَهُمْ
 مِنْ بَعْدِ عَهْدِهِمْ وَطَعَنُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ فَقَاتِلُوا أَيْمَةَ
 الْكُفْرِ إِنَّهُمْ لَا أَيْمَانَ لَهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَنْتَهُونَ ○

'But if they repent and observe Prayer, and pay the Zakat, then they are your brethren in faith. And We explain the signs for a people who have knowledge. And if they break their oaths after their covenant, and revile your religion, then fight *these* leaders of disbelief—surely, they have no regard for their oaths—that they may desist.' ⁵¹

But, at this point, the very verse on which he bases his argument rips it apart, because the verse states the *purpose* of it all, which is: 'So that they might desist.' But, if they were to be put to death then *how* would they ever *desist*? In this scheme, the question of repentance (or desisting) does not at all arise for them. He argues on the basis of the verse 12 of Al-Baqarah

⁵¹ The Holy Qur'an 9:11, 12. [Publisher]

وَإِنْ تَكْفُرُوا أَيْمَانَهُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ عَهْدِهِمْ وَطَعْنُوا فِي
 دِينِكُمْ فَقَاتِلُوا أَيْمَةَ الْكُفْرِ^{٥٢}
 إِنَّهُمْ لَا أَيْمَانَ لَهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَنْتَهُونَ ○

as follows:

"Here, violation of oaths can by no means be taken to mean violation of political covenants. Indeed, the reference to the context unambiguously fixes its meaning as 'turning back from the covenant of accepting Islam'. Following this, the phrase: *فَقَاتِلُوا أَيْمَةَ الْكُفْرِ* ("Then fight with the leaders of disbelief") can be none other than fighting with the leaders of a movement of apostasy."⁵²

ANALYSIS OF MAUDŪDĪ'S INTERPRETATION

If one looks at the *context*, then his assertion that the covenant, here, means 'the covenant to accept Islam' is established. But, in fact, referring to the context *refutes* his claim.

These are the verses from Surah Al-Taubah, and the Holy Qur'an's theme, in this context, is that the idolaters—who entered into a covenant (or pact) with

⁵² Maudūdī, *Irtidād kī Sazā Islāmī Qānūn mein* [The Punishment of Apostasy in the Islamic Law], page 9, Published by Markazī Maktaba Jamā'ati Islāmī, Ichra, Lahore, Pakistan, 1951. [Publisher]

you—are guilty of violating that covenant. Their [attachment to that] covenant is no longer trustworthy, and you would have to go to battle against them. Thus the Surah begins with the verse:

بَرَاءَةٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ إِلَى الَّذِينَ
عَاهَدْتُمْ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ○

"*This is a declaration of complete absolution on the part of Allah and His Messenger from all obligation to the idolaters with whom you had made promises.*"⁵³

Where is there any mention at all in this verse, of the idolaters converting to Islam? God says that those, in reference to whom a contract is mentioned here, *are* the idolaters. And, We are telling you to get ready to go to battle against those among the *idolaters* who have violated their covenant with you. Then the Qur'an goes on to say:

كَيْفَ يَكُونُ لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ عَهْدٌ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَعِنْدَ رَسُولِهِ إِلَّا
الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتُمْ عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ فَمَا اسْتَقَامُوا لَكُمْ
فَأَسْتَقِيمُوا لَهُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ ○

⁵³ The Holy Qur'an 9:1. [Publisher]

كَيْفَ وَإِنْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَيْكُمْ لَا يَرْقُبُوا فِيكُمْ إِلَّا وَلَا ذِمَّةً^ط
 يُرْضُونَكُمْ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَتَأْبَى قُلُوبُهُمْ^ع وَ
 أَكْثَرُهُمْ فَسِقُونَ^ح ۝ اشْتَرُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا فَصَدُّوا عَن
 سَبِيلِهِ^ط إِنَّهُمْ سَاءَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ۝ لَا يَرْقُبُونَ فِي مُؤْمِنٍ
 إِلَّا وَلَا ذِمَّةً^ط وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُعْتَدُونَ ۝

"How can there be a treaty of *these* idolaters with Allah and His Messenger, except those with whom you entered into a treaty at the Sacred Mosque? So, as long as they stand true to you, stand true to them. Surely, Allah loves those who are righteous.

How *can it be* when, if they prevail against you, they would not observe any tie of relationship or covenant in respect of you? They would please you with their mouths, while their hearts refuse, and most of them are perfidious.

They barter the Signs of Allah for a paltry price and turn *men* away from His way. Evil indeed is that which they do.

They observe not any tie of relationship or covenant in respect of anyone who trusts *them*.

And it is they who are transgressors."⁵⁴

In this entire excerpt, too, there is not even a hint of Muslims being the subject of discussion. How could Allah and His Messenger attach any significance to the covenant of those who are idolaters? The only exception being those with whom you have entered into a covenant within the Sacred Mosque*. This is the particular set of idolaters with respect to whom—while they are abiding by their covenant with you—it is incumbent on you to keep them protected from any chastisement or suffering at your hands. Allah loves those who follow the path of *Taqwā*.

How can it be [that any importance be attached to their covenant, while the reality is] that should they prevail against you, they would not care for any ties of kinship, nor would they care for any existing covenant. They only verbally please you, whereas their hearts are full of enmity for you, and they are averse to you. They have bargained for the paltry gain of this world, having forgone the Signs of Allah, in exchange. They obstruct people from the way of God. Their actions are, certainly, evil. They do not have any regard for the ties of kinship in relation to any of the believers, nor are they mindful of the sanctity of mutually binding covenants with the believers.

This is the *context* of the verse under discussion.

⁵⁴ The Holy Qur'an 9:7-10. [Publisher]

* *Masjidul Harām*. [Publisher]

Are these Muslims who are being discussed in this context? It is astonishing how Maudūdī Ṣāhib could allow himself to advance this claim that if one looks at the context of this verse then it will be established with certainty that the covenant to which this verse refers to is the "covenant of initiation into the fold of Islam"!

Then Allah says:

فَإِنْ تَابُوا وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ فَإِخْوَانُكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ
وَأَنْفَصِلُ الْأَيْتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ⁵⁵

This verse embodies a momentary digression from the theme of the 'covenant' *per se*, and it states that if anyone among those people (with whom you have this covenant) accepts Islam, then, in that case, you should overlook their previous offences. That is, in that case, you will no longer have any dispute with them and your entire attitude towards them will change. After this digression, the previous theme of the 'covenant' is resumed,

وَإِنْ تَكْفَرُوا أَيْمَانَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ عَهْدِهِمْ وَطَعْنُوا فِي
دِينِكُمْ فَقَاتِلُوا أُمَّةَ الْكُفْرِ⁴

⁵⁵ But if they repent and observe Prayer and pay the Zakat, then they are your brethren in faith. And We explain the Signs for a people who have knowledge. (The Holy Qur'an 9:11). [Publisher]

إِنَّهُمْ لَا آيْمَانَ لَهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَنْتَهُونَ ۝⁵⁶

That is, if they break their oaths after their covenant, and—over and above that—they proceed to revile your religion ... Notice how it is not deemed as sufficient for going to battle against them if they *only* break their covenant. How sublime is this Word of God—what an all-embracing mercy. Although the idolaters are guilty of breaking their covenant, yet the punitive Divine decree, in regard to them, does not descend. Allah says that in the event that they stoop to such a base level that they not only break their covenant but also hurt you and openly revolt against you then you must, surely, go to battle against the leaders of disbelief. Because it is not legitimate to take any action against them until they break their own covenant (and rise against you), so that they may desist from such activities.

According to Maulāna Maudūdī Ṣāhib, and a few other ulema, there is no use even to "desist" either; i.e. an apostate must be killed even after he repents, because these ulema are of the view that an apostate's repentance does not find Divine acceptance.⁵⁷ But, the phrase⁵⁸ "so that they may desist" clearly indicates that

⁵⁶ And if they break their oaths after their covenant, and attack your religion, then fight *these* leaders of disbelief—surely, they have no regard for their oaths—that they may desist. (The Holy Qur'an 9:12). [Publisher]

⁵⁷ See, *Ash-Shihāb li Rajmil Khātīfil Murtāb*, page 31. [Publisher]

⁵⁸ *La'allahum yantahūn* (i.e., "so that they may desist"). [Publisher]

it is the height of cruelty for anyone to deduce a sanction for a punitive "slaying of an apostate" from this verse. Since the context is clearly that of the idolaters—not of those who have accepted Islam—therefore, I wish that these ulema desist from their attempt to impute those ideas to the Holy Qur'an that are not even remotely connected to it.

THE GENUINE CONTEXT

Taking Maulawī Maudūdī Ṣāḥib up on his suggestion that one must refer to the context of the verse in question, we now proceed to discuss the verses that immediately follow. This will enlighten the reader as to which type of people are being referred to here and as to whether the matter under discussion is "the punishment for apostasy is murder", or some other issue is being dealt with? Who should you fight against? It is stated:

أَلَا تُقَاتِلُونَ قَوْمًا نَكَثُوا أَيْمَانَهُمْ وَهَمُّوْا بِإِخْرَاجِ
الرَّسُولِ وَهُمْ بَدَءُوكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ أَتَخْشَوْنَهُمْ
فَاللَّهُ أَحَقُّ أَنْ تَخْشَوْهُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ۝

"Will you not fight a people who have broken their oaths, and who plotted to turn out the Messenger, and they were the first to

commence *hostilities* against you? Do you fear them? Nay, Allah is most worthy that you should fear Him, if you are believers."⁵⁹

Allah has made it clear: 'We are not commanding you to fight these people either because you have ascendancy over them, or because you are powerful and their necks are securely held in your hands. In fact, they are so strong, and powerful that they are poised to throw the Messenger [of God] and his followers out of the city, What is the nature of their crimes? It is not stated that *ارْتَدُّوا عَلَىٰ أَدْبَارِهِم* i.e., "They turned their backs to Islam, and adopted disbelief". Not at all. Rather, it is stated, *نَكَثُوا أَيْمَانَهُمْ* i.e., "They have broken their oaths, and have pre-empted the acts of mischief and transgressions. They are the ones who have first drawn their swords against you. They were the first to start aggression against you.

The Command is: "*tuqātilūna*"*, and not "*taqtulūna*"**

The imperative form of the verb, *tuqātilūna*, is itself indicative of the fact that, here, the command to fight is directed against someone who has pre-emptively drawn his sword against you. For according

⁵⁹ The Holy Qur'an 9:13. [Publisher]

* "To fight, in *retaliation*, against someone who has *initiated* the fight, e.g., by drawing his sword against a person". [Publisher]

** "To kill someone" (retaliation is not implied). [Publisher]

to Arabic grammar, *tuqātilūna* is of the measure "Fā'ala/Yufa'ilu/Mufā'alatun". If only slaying was the intent of this commandment, then the appropriate verb would have been "*alā taqtulūna*", instead of "*alā tuqātilūna*". Anyone, who has even a nodding acquaintance with the Arabic language, cannot overlook the fact that the Holy Qur'an has not used the expression, "*alā taqtulūna*"; rather, it has used the expression, "*alā tuqātilūna*". And, the statement, *وَهُمْ بَدَأُوا وَاوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ* i.e., "and they were the first to commence *hostilities* against you" has made it abundantly clear that the people referred to here are those who have first drawn their sword against you; those who are recalcitrant, who have reneged their covenant, those who are given to intrigues, i.e., they are conspiring to force Prophet Muḥammad^{sa} out of Medina. Since their covenant is reduced to total insignificance—and because they have committed the aforesaid crimes—do not be afraid of [fighting] them, for they have taken the initiative in fighting against you.

This is the genuine Quranic context of Maulānā Maudūdī's argument that apostasy is punishable by death. Like Shabbīr Aḥmad 'Uthmānī, who had a single [alleged] argument from the Holy Qur'an, the aforesaid argument is the one and only Maudūdian argument [allegedly] based on the Holy Qur'an. Maudūdī Ṣāhib could find no other argument in the entire Holy Qur'an to support his claim.

THE THIRD ARGUMENT BY THE ULEMA

Now I will discuss some of those verses from the Holy Qur'an that were presented in the proceedings of the Federal Sharia Court, which were used by the ulema, during the proceedings of the Court, as allegedly providing the basis for the deduction that the apostasy is punishable by death.

إِنَّمَا جَزَاءُ الَّذِينَ يُحَارِبُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَسْعَوْنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ
فَسَادًا أَنْ يُقَتَّلُوا أَوْ يُصَلَّبُوا أَوْ تُقَطَّعَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُمْ
مِنْ خِلَافٍ أَوْ يُنْفَوْا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ لَهُمْ خِزْيٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا
وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٦١﴾

"The reward of those who wage war⁶⁰ against Allah and His Messenger and strive to create disorder in the land is *only this*⁶¹ that they be slain or crucified or their hands and their feet be cut off on alternate sides, or they be expelled from the land. That shall be a disgrace for them in this world, and in the Hereafter they shall have a great

⁶⁰ Those who do مُحَارَبَةً "Muḥārabah", i.e., those who engage in such activities against you, using the power of sword, that disrupt peace. [Author]

⁶¹ This is the punishment for them. [Author]

punishment;"⁶²

Not even a single word in this verse can be translated as "apostasy". Apostasy is not a theme discussed in this context — it is not even implicitly alluded to here. To stretch the word *Muḥārabah* [i.e., waging a war] and taking it to mean *Irtidād* [i.e., apostasy] amounts to a great injustice done to the Holy Qur'an as well as the Arabic language. It is amazing how, despite being called ulema, they have the audacity to do such things.

THE OPINION OF A GREAT EXEGETE OF THE INDIAN SUB-CONTINENT

Among the contemporary ulema, Maulānā Muḥammad Shaf'ī, a *muftī*** and a scholar, who is quite influential in India, where he is held in high esteem, says:

"The first point to note, in this context, is: What is the meaning of waging a war [i.e., *muḥārabah*] against Allah and His Messenger, and creating disorder on earth? And who are the people to whom it is applicable? The word *muḥārabah* is derived from *ḥarb*, and its primary meanings are: to carry off forceful

⁶² The Holy Qur'an 5:34. [Publisher]

** One who is entitled to issue a Fatwā (or religious edict). [Publisher]

plunder, to snatch away. It is idiomatically used opposite to the word *salama*, which signifies: peace and safety. Thus, one concludes that the word *ḥarb* carries the connotation of ‘creating disorder’ and, it is obvious, that sporadic episodes of stealing, murder, or destruction do not divest the entire society of peaceful conditions.⁶³ Rather, this situation arises only when a powerful, organized, group rises up to commit robbery, and murder, and wreak havoc and destruction. Therefore, the juridical theologians [i.e., *fuqahā*’]⁶⁴ have held that only such an individual, or organized group of individuals, deserves the aforesaid punishment, that commits armed robbery against the common people and, by the use of force, seeks to subvert the government’s rule of law, i.e., one who can be dubbed as a bandit or a rebel. The individual offenders, who commit theft, pick pockets etc. are not included in this provision.

⁶³ This is quite a rational argument presented here by Mualānā Muḥammad Shafī’, because there was, otherwise, a danger that the juridical theologians (i.e., *fuqahā*’) would deduce from it that the Holy Qur’an prescribes such stiff punishments for anyone who has ever been guilty of banditry, or stealing; so that, if the offender’s offence has an aggravated character then, by all means, award him such torturous punishments that are far apart from what are commonly regarded as punishments. [Author]

⁶⁴ Muftī Shafī’, elucidating in this context, further states that he is not alone in holding this viewpoint. Rather, a sizeable number of *fuqahā*’ share his views on this matter. [Author]

The second point worth noting here is that the act of waging a war [*muḥārabah*] has been mentioned in relation to Allah and His Messenger, whereas the *muḥārabah* that the bandits or rebels engage in, is against other human beings. The reason for this [usage] is that, when a powerful, organized, group seeks to subvert the law of Allah and His Messenger^{sa} then, although, apparently, it is pitted against the other people and other human beings, yet, as a matter of fact, it is waging a war against the government. Thus, in an Islamic realm, wherein the law of Allah and His Messenger is enforced, this *muḥārabah* [i.e., the act of waging a war] will also be considered to be one against Allah and His Messenger."⁶⁵

OPINION OF A JUDGE OF PAKISTAN'S SHARIA COURT

Justice Pīr Muḥammad Karam Shah, of the well-known Federal Sharia Court, while discussing this topic in his book, *Ḍiyā'ul Qur'an*, writes:*

"Allah and His venerated Messenger^{sa} have

⁶⁵ *Tafsīri Ma'āriful Qur'an*, Vol. 3, pp. 119-120, Surah Al-Mā'idah by Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' (former Grand Muftī of Pakistan), Published by Idāratul Ma'ārif, Karachi, Pakistan. [Publisher]

* Original, in Urdu. [Publisher]

commanded that peace be established in every part of the Islamic State, and to ensure the safety of travel routes, and to uproot the sources of evil, mischief and disorder, anyone who violates the law of Allah and His Messenger, and causes a general massacre and plunder, it is as if such a one is proclaiming a general mutiny against Allah and His Messenger. Thus, persecuting any citizen of an Islamic State—whether he is a Muslim, or a *dhimmi***—is construed as waging a war against Allah and His Messenger."

He further writes:

"The letter 'و' (*wā'u*) is used here as an explanatory particle (one of its usages) and thus the nature of the '*muḥārabah*' that is referred to in the preceding sentence has, thereby, been elucidated.⁶⁶

Who *are* these people, who are called warmongers*, whose punishments are mentioned here? In regard to this, the esteemed juridical theologians have held that those who fulfil the following three

** i.e., a free non-Muslim, living under Muslim rule. [Publisher]

⁶⁶ *Tafsīr Diyā'ul Qur'an*, Vol. 1, Surah Al-Mā'idah by Pīr Muḥammad Karam Shāh, page 464, Published by *Diyā'ul Qur'an* Publications, Lahore. [Publisher]

* *Muḥārabīn*, or those who wage a war. [Publisher]

conditions, qualify as those who wage such a war:

1. They are armed with weapons, e.g., guns, swords, and spears etc.
2. They commit highway robbery and banditry, away from the populated area, or in a desert. [But, according to Imam Shāfi‘, Auzā’ī and Laith (may Allah have mercy on them), those who commit robbery in an urban area, too, would qualify as ‘those who wage a war’ and would deserve the same punishments].
3. They do not lie in ambush; rather, they commit overt attacks and engage in plunder.⁶⁷

So, this is an example of the interpretative analysis by their own ulema, which is in conformity with the rules of the Arabic grammar, the idiom of the Holy Qur’an, and fits the context. It is impossible for a normal person, even if he possesses a modest level of rationality, to deduce from the verse under discussion the sanction for killing an apostate. Unless one’s own mental faculties are impaired, one cannot vitiate the meaning of this verse.

⁶⁷ *Op cit.*

THE FOURTH ARGUMENT BY THE ULEMA

Now, I present the fourth argument, which is the favourite argument of the Federal Sharia Court—the same Sharia Court against which one of its own Judges, Pīr Muḥammad Karam Shāh expressed his views which I have quoted above. This argument is as follows:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَنْ يَرْتَدَّ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهَ
بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ أَذِلَّةٍ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَعِزَّةٍ
عَلَى الْكُفْرِيِّينَ يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةَ لَائِمٍ
ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ۝

"O ye who believe! Whoso among you turns back from his religion, then *let it be known that in his stead* Allah will soon bring a people whom He will love and who will love Him, *and who will be* kind and humble towards believers, hard and firm against disbelievers. They will strive in the cause of Allah and will not fear the reproach of a faultfinder. That is Allah's grace; He bestows it upon whomsoever He pleases; and Allah is Bountiful, All-

Knowing."⁶⁸

It is the same verse that I had recited in the beginning of this speech. It is utterly beyond reason to deduce a sanction for capital punishment even from this verse. It does not admit of even a remote possibility of making such a deduction. They have based their argument on the following three portions of the Verse 5:55:

1. فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ 'Allah will soon bring a people whom He will love and who will love Him;'
2. أَدْلَّةٍ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَعْرَظَ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ 'who will be kind and humble towards believers, hard and firm against disbelievers;'
3. يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَخَافُونَ تَوْمَةَ لَآئِمِهِ 'they will strive in the cause of Allah and will not fear the reproach of a faultfinder.'

They say what it means is this: Whoever will turn apostates, Allah will bring forth a people to fight with them. And Allah will love those people and they will love Allah. They will fight with those apostates and kill them with the sword because they will be kind to the believers, but very harsh towards the disbelievers. In other words, according to them, the words "Allah

⁶⁸ The Holy Qur'an 5:55. [Publisher]

will soon bring a people" describe a people who are yet to come in the future.

If the punishment of apostasy was death by the hands of a people who were yet to come, then it meant that the Holy Prophet^{sa} and his servants (Companions^{ra})—God forbid—were not the people who loved Allah and nor did Allah love them! Those were the people who were being informed about apostasy, and yet there was none among them with a sense of honour for their faith and a passion to obey Allah, showing courage to fight with those apostates!

What an abhorrent argument it is! This is a severe attack on the faith of the Holy Prophet^{sa} and his servant Companions!^{ra} It would mean as if Allah was telling the Holy Prophet^{sa} that if anyone from among his Companions^{ra} who were being purified by him turned to be an apostate, then he was to do nothing — not to worry at all! Allah would bring forth such a people who loved Allah, and Allah loved them, and their characteristics will be that they will be kind to the believers and very harsh towards the disbelievers, and they would destroy them with the sword! **يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ** "They will strive in the cause of Allah"⁶⁹ is translated to mean what is said at the end of above paragraph i.e. the new faithful followers will fight with sword against the apostates! But the fact is that the term "JIHAD" has vast meanings. Elsewhere the Qur'an says: **وَجَاهِدْهُمْ بِهِ جِهَادًا كَبِيرًا**: ["Strive against them

⁶⁹ The Holy Qur'an 5:55. [Publisher]

with it (the Qur'an) a great striving"],⁷⁰ using the word jihad with reference to the Qur'an itself. There is no indication here at all to fight with the sword!

If we accept their reasoning, it would be a tremendous insult to the Holy Prophet^{sa} and his Companions^{ra}. As if there was none among them to honour the faith and be ready to fight. So Allah told them that He would send such righteous people after the Holy Prophet^{sa} who would have the sense of honour for God (which is bestowed by the Grace of God) and who would be loved by God!!! They would deal with those apostates on their own; the Prophet^{sa} did not have to worry at all. **ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ** "That is Allah's Grace; he bestows it upon whomsoever He pleases; and Allah is Bountiful, All-Knowing."⁷¹

They forgot that this term "AZIZ" has already been used most gloriously in the Holy Qur'an for the Holy Prophet^{sa}. And a stronger term than "being kind" (*ADHILLATUN*) has been used to show the Holy Prophet's love for the believers: The Holy Qur'an states:

لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا
عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ ٥

⁷⁰ The Holy Qur'an 25:53. [Publisher]

⁷¹ The Holy Qur'an 5:55. [Publisher]

"Surely, a Messenger has come unto you from among yourselves; grievous to him is that you should fall into trouble; *he is* ardently desirous of your *welfare*; *and* to the believers *he is* compassionate, merciful." ⁷²

That is, he is much grieved if you are in trouble, and he feels strongly in his heart against those who hurt you. And then it is stated that he is compassionate and merciful. As compared to being "compassionate, merciful" the word "being kind" is less in significance. To be Compassionate and Merciful are two attributes of Allah, and they are reflected most gloriously in the person of the Holy Prophet^{sa} that is why the Holy Qur'an affirms that he was "compassionate, merciful."

Though he was strong against the enemies and compassionate and merciful towards the believers, yet Allah did not command him to kill the apostates? Why did Allah delay the matter by making a promise that He would send a people in future to get the job done for him?

According to my research, the religious scholars (ulema) have not presented any other argument besides these four discussed above in support of their claim concerning the death penalty for apostasy. If some one is aware of any other argument, send it to me, and that

⁷² The Holy Qur'an 9:128. [Publisher]

too shall be refuted, *inshā'Allāh*.*

THE HOLY QUR'AN'S STAND CONCERNING APOSTATES:

Now, against the forgoing arguments, I present the verses of the Holy Qur'an that clearly deal with the subject of apostasy, but there is no mention at all that death is its punishment. On the contrary, the subject is so very evident that there remains no place to entertain the opinion that the punishment of apostasy is death.

THE FIRST VERSE:

Allah the Exalted says:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ○ إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُنْفِقُونَ قَالُوا
نَشْهَدُ إِنَّكَ لَرَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ إِنَّكَ لَرَسُولُهُ وَاللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ
إِنَّ الْمُنْفِقِينَ لَكَاذِبُونَ ○ اتَّخَذُوا أَيْمَانَهُمْ جُنَّةً فَصَدُّوا
عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُمْ سَاءَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ○ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ
أَمَنُوا ثُمَّ كَفَرُوا فَطُبِعَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ ○

"In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful. When the hypocrites come to thee, they say, 'We bear witness that thou art indeed

* Allah Willing. [Translator]

the Messenger of Allah.' And Allah knows that thou art indeed His Messenger, but Allah bears witness that the hypocrites are surely liars. They have made their oaths a shield; thus they turn *men* away from the way of Allah. Evil surely is that which they have been doing. That is because they *first* believed, then disbelieved. So a seal was set upon their hearts and *consequently* they understand not."⁷³

Apparently they are saying the truth but in reality they are telling a lie as they do not believe in their hearts what is on their lips.

Pertaining to the subject this is the first instance that has come to our knowledge where God Himself is bearing witness that some persons have turned into apostates. That was not possible for men to know, but God knows the secrets of the hearts. He Himself bears witness that though some persons are verbally making a confession of faith, but they are lying and they have nothing to do with the religion—they have become apostates! Then Allah says: 'They have made their oaths or declarations of their faith a shield; thus they turn men away from the way of Allah. Evil surely is that which they have been doing. That is because they first believed. Then, after that they disbelieved i.e. they have openly become apostates. So a seal was set upon their hearts and consequently they understand not.

⁷³ The Holy Qur'an 63:1-4. [Publisher]

They have become staunch apostates now that all the doors of repentance in their hearts have been shut! And they themselves do not understand what is happening to them.

THE HOLY PROPHET^{SA} AND HIS COMPANIONS^{RA} KNEW WHO WERE THE APOSTATES:

Who were those people? Did the Holy Prophet and his Companions have any specific knowledge of them or not? If they had the knowledge, then, after having such strong and certain evidence that not only that they had turned apostates but also that there was no chance of their repentance, then why an order for killing them was not issued? Or, why none of them was killed on the command of the Holy Prophet^{sa}?

For their identification the Qur'an goes on to say that there are specific persons, about whom you (i.e. believers) know; but in spite of this knowledge you call them and say "Come [and repent so] that the Messenger of Allah may ask forgiveness for you,"⁷⁴ It is not said here that the Messenger of Allah will kill them as soon as they repent because this is the punishment of apostasy that is enjoined by Allah. Not at all! What is said here is an invitation to come and repent! And if they repent, then the Messenger of Allah

⁷⁴ The Holy Qur'an 63:6. [Publisher]

will also seek forgiveness for them. What else could be done? And "they turn their heads aside (in arrogance), and you see them keeping back while they are full of pride." And they stop others too from coming forward. They are continuously doing so and "they are full of pride."⁷⁵

In the light of these verses of the Holy Qur'an, it is evident that God did not command to kill the apostates even when Allah, Who knows the secrets of the hearts, Himself was a witness to their disbelief, and the Holy Prophet^{sa} and his Companions^{ra} knew well who they were. They were specifically invited to repent! Those apostates kept on stopping others from joining Islam. They were arrogant and proud, and they persisted in their crime. Despite all these factors, the Holy Prophet^{sa} did not ask anyone to kill them.

MESSENGER OF GOD'S TREATMENT OF THE CHIEF OF THE APOSTATES:

An amazing incident is recorded in the Holy Qur'an concerning the chief of the hypocrites. Allah had informed the Holy Prophet^{sa} about him by telling him his name. Knowing the merciful heart of the Holy Prophet^{sa} that he would try to seek forgiveness for him, Allah commanded him not to perform his funeral prayer.

⁷⁵ The Holy Qur'an 63:6. [Publisher]

وَلَا تُصَلِّ عَلَىٰ أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ مَاتَ أَبَدًا وَلَا تَقُمْ عَلَىٰ قَبْرِهِ ۗ ط

"And never pray thou for any of them that dies, nor stand by his grave (to pray); ..."⁷⁶

That hypocrite remained alive among the Muslims. He continuously derided the Holy Prophet^{sa} and was so disrespectful that at one place the Holy Qur'an states:

يَقُولُونَ لَيْنُؤْمَرُ رَجَعْنَا إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ
لَيُخْرِجَنَّ الْأَعَزُّ مِنْهَا الْأَذَلَّ ۗ ط

"They say, 'If we return to Medina, the one most honourable will surely drive out therefrom the one most mean;' ..."⁷⁷

‘Abdullāh bin Uba’ī bin Salūl had arrogated himself the title of the "most honorable" and (we seek protection from Allah from this) he called the Holy Prophet^{sa} "the one most mean"!

Here, Allah, the Exalted, did not mention the name of the Holy Prophet^{sa}. The wisdom in doing so was that the Companions^{ra} could reverse the order of the persons referred to in this verse. And that's what happened. One of the Companions^{ra} talking about this

⁷⁶ The Holy Qur'an 9:84. [Publisher]

⁷⁷ The Holy Qur'an 63:9. [Publisher]

event submitted to the Holy Prophet^{sa}: "O, Messenger of Allah! He speaks the truth! The most honorable man on the earth (that is, the Holy Prophet^{sa}) will drive the meanest man, the chief hypocrite, out of Medina."

That wretched person, the chief of the hypocrites, despite all his expressed insults, was kept alive. He roamed arrogantly in the streets of Medina unchecked, and tried to turn others to become apostates! He made his own group. At the time of war, they deceived and defected. He committed all sorts of atrocities; hurled all kind of abuses. Despite all that, the Holy Prophet's attitude towards him was such that, seeing the condition of his heart, Allah had to command him saying: O, Muḥammad^{sa}! and do not seek forgiveness for him. 'Even if you seek forgiveness for them [the hypocrites] seventy times, Allah will never forgive them.'⁷⁸

There was no one more obvious and confirmed apostate than Abdullāh bin Uba'ī bin Salūl. Show us if you can find any! And also show us if you could find any better and splendid treatment than the treatment anyone would have received from any quarters! Now you are daring to make these claims! And you are trying to blemish the illustrious character of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, making it look contrary to the teachings of the Holy Qur'an! You should feel ashamed that you are making filthy accusations against a person^{sa} who was the most kind and loving! You are trying to defame his

⁷⁸ The Holy Qur'an 9:80. [Publisher]

religion in the world!

The Second Verse:

Allah, the Exalted, says:

وَقَالَتْ طَّائِفَةٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ آمَنُوا بِالَّذِي أُنزِلَ
عَلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَجَهِ النَّهَارِ وَكُفِرُوا
آخِرَهُ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ۝

"And a section of the People of the Book say, 'Believe in that which has been revealed unto the believers, in the early part of day, and disbelieve in the latter part thereof; perchance they may return;'"⁷⁹

It is reported in the *Tafsir* books that this verse was revealed after the Christian delegation of Nijrān had visited the Holy Prophet^{sa} in Medina. And the visit of the Nijran delegation took place in the later years of Holy Prophet's^{sa} life. By then the Islamic State was well established. This provides definite proof that at that time when the Nijrān delegation's visit took place there was no trace of the idea of death penalty for apostasy. How was this possible that the People of the Book could suggest to their own brothers to believe in

⁷⁹ The Holy Qur'an 3:73. [Publisher]

the Holy Qur'an in the morning and then to commit apostasy in the evening?⁸⁰ At that time, the Islamic State was firmly established and the People of the Book were fully subjugated. If they knew the prescribed punishment for the act of apostasy was death, then they could never dare suggest this behavior to their companions. If we accept the stand taken by those who believe in the death penalty for apostasy, then obviously those People of the Book who were advised to adopt the above behavior would have considered the advisors as completely out of their minds! Did they not know that if they recanted their faith in the evening after accepting it in the morning, then in consequence Muḥammad^{sa} and his Companions^{ta} would behead them instantly? It just proves that they did not have any reason to fear of committing apostasy in the evening if they believed in the morning.

THE THIRD VERSE:

كَيْفَ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ قَوْمًا كَفَرُوا بَعْدَ إِيمَانِهِمْ وَشَهِدُوا
 أَنَّ الرَّسُولَ حَقٌّ وَجَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي
 الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ۝ أُولَئِكَ جَزَاءُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِعَهْدِهِمْ
 وَعَقْدِهِمْ وَأُولَئِكَ جَزَاءُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِعَهْدِهِمْ
 وَعَقْدِهِمْ ۝ خُلِدِينَ فِيهَا لَا يُخَفَّفُ

⁸⁰ *Sīrah Ibnī Hishām, Qudūmi Wafdi Naṣāra Najrān.* [Publisher]

عَنْهُمْ الْعَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ يُنْظَرُونَ ۗ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا
 مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ وَأَصْلَحُوا ۗ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ۝

Here is the subject of apostates' killing is fully dealt with. The Holy Qur'an says:

"How shall Allah guide a people who have disbelieved after believing and who had borne witness that the Messenger was true and to whom clear proofs had come? [It was not only a verbal commitment; they had disbelieved after witnessing clear Signs!] And Allah guides not the wrongdoing people."⁸¹

But the Ulema of today know the art of providing guidance by the dint of sword! About the punishment of the said apostates it has been declared that:

"Of such the reward is that on them shall be the curse of Allah and of angels and of men, all together." [It is not said that all of them shall be murdered!] "They shall abide thereunder [in that condemned condition.] Their punishment shall not be lightened nor shall they be reprieved; except those who repent thereafter and amend. And surely (they shall find that)

⁸¹ The Holy Qur'an 3:87-90. [Publisher]

Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful."82

THE FOURTH VERSE:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بَعْدَ إِيمَانِهِمْ ثُمَّ أَزَادُوا كُفْرًا تَنْ
 تُقْبَلُ تَوْبَتُهُمْ ۚ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الضَّالُّونَ ۝
 إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ كُفَّارًا فَلَنْ يُّقْبَلَ
 مِنْ أَحَدِهِمْ مِلْءُ الْأَرْضِ ذَهَبًا وَلَوْ افْتَدَىٰ بِهِ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ
 لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ وَمَالَهُمْ مِنْ نَاصِرِينَ ۝

"Surely, those who disbelieve after they have believed and then increase in disbelief, [if they were to be killed immediately then how could they increase in their disbelief?] their repentance shall not be accepted. and these are they who have gone astray [and thus enhanced greatly in sin]. *As for* those who have disbelieved, and die while they are disbelievers, there shall not be accepted from anyone of them *even* the earthful of Gold, though he offer it in ransom. It is these for whom shall be a grievous punishment, and they shall have no helpers."83

82 The Holy Qur'an 3:88-90. [Publisher]

83 The Holy Qur'an 3:91-92. [Publisher]

A CROOKED REASONING:

I understand that some ulema argue from the verse *لَنْ تُقْبَلَ تَوْبَتُهُمْ* ["their pardon will not be accepted"] that Islam prescribes death penalty for apostasy. However, the next verse refutes this argument. Allah says: *إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ كُفَّارٌ قَتِلُوا وَهُمْ كُفَّارٌ* i.e. they were killed while they were disbelievers, meaning that they died a natural death while they were disbelievers and were not killed having apostasized. Then it is said: "No ransom shall be accepted from anyone of them even though it be earthful of gold." This phrase makes the meaning clear. Here, acceptance of their repentance in this world by other humans is not mentioned at all. And as they would die in a state of disbelief, there shall not be any bargaining with them even on the Day of Judgment. And nothing shall be accepted from them as ransom even if they offer gold equal to the mass of earth or anything other than that. For such, there shall be a grievous punishment, and they shall have no helpers.

THE FIFTH VERSE:

Allah Says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن تَطِيعُوا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا

يَرُدُّوكُمْ عَلَىٰ أَعْقَابِكُمْ فَتَنْقَلِبُوا خَاسِرِينَ ۝

"O ye who believe! if you obey those who have disbelieved, they will cause you to turn back on your heels, [that is, they will take you out of your religion and push you back in disbelief], and you will become losers."⁸⁴

Here, it is not stated that *فَسَقَلِبُوا مَقْتُولِينَ* if you returned to disbelief, you shall be killed. If for apostasy the prescribed penalty was death, then it should have been mentioned here.

THE SIXTH VERSE:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ثُمَّ كَفَرُوا ثُمَّ آمَنُوا ثُمَّ كَفَرُوا ثُمَّ أزدَادُوا
كُفْرًا ۗ أَلَمْ يَكُنْ اللَّهُ لِيُغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَلَا لِيُهْدِيَهُمْ سَبِيلًا ۝
بَشِّرِ الْمُنَافِقِينَ بِأَنَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ۝

"Those who believe, then disbelieve, then *again* believe, then disbelieve, *and* then increase in disbelief, [as it is not the established law—the Sunna—of Allah to forgive them,] Allah will never forgive them nor will He guide them to the way. Give to the hypocrites the tidings that for them is a grievous

⁸⁴ The Holy Qur'an 3:150. [Publisher]

punishment."⁸⁵

Here again it is mentioned that they will first believe, then recant and become disbelievers; and then again they would become believers and once again they will become disbelievers and increase in their disbelief! But for such persons, there is no mention of being killed by the hands of the Muslims. What is stated is only this: O Prophet! give them the tidings that from God is a grievous punishment for them.

THE SEVENTH VERSE:

.....وَمَنْ يَرْتَدِدْ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ فَيَمُتْ وَهُوَ كَافِرٌ فَأُولَئِكَ
حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ ۖ وَأُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ ۗ
هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

"...And whoso from among you turns back from his faith and dies while he is a disbeliever, it is they whose works shall be vain in this world and the next. These are the inmates of the Fire and therein shall they abide."⁸⁶

This verse also states that the works of the apostates shall be vain in this world and in the Hereafter. And they will have Fire as chastisement on

⁸⁵ The Holy Qur'an 4:138, 139. [Publisher]

⁸⁶ The Holy Qur'an 2:218. [Publisher]

the Day of Judgment. There is no reference at all in this verse that they will get any corporal punishment by the hands of others in this world!

On this topic there are other verses, too, which deal with apostasy, but ‘killing’ is not prescribed in anyone of them. On the contrary, their subject matter most clearly presents evidence against killing.

THE VIEW OF DEATH PENALTY FOR APOSTASY IN THE LIGHT OF *AḤĀDĪTH*:

Now, I come to *Aḥādīth*. When the ulema cannot find anything in the Holy Qur’an in support of their views, they turn towards *Aḥādīth*. This attitude is permissible only to the extent if we cannot find, because of our ignorance, any verse in the Holy Qur’an dealing with a specific matter and we wish to seek help from *Aḥādīth*. But we cannot make a Hadith to overrule the Holy Qur’an. That was exactly the inviolable principle adopted by the Holy Prophet^{sa}. In itself I have no objection to referring to *Aḥādīth*. But those whom I have mentioned earlier—who did not care to misuse the Holy Qur’an—cannot refrain from misusing *Aḥādīth* too. Those who did not respect the Word of God and forced their misplaced ideas upon it, we should not expect from them that they would not treat *Aḥādīth* in the same manner. And that is exactly what they do.

AḤĀDĪTH ADOPTED BY THE SUPPORTERS OF DEATH PENALTY FOR APOSTASY.

THE FIRST HADITH:

A Hadith concerning ‘Abdullah bin Abī Sarḥ is presented that he had once been a scribe of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, however the Satan led him astray. At the time of the fall of Mecca, the Holy Prophet^{sa} gave orders for his killing. Later, Ḥaḍrat ‘Uthmān^{ra} sought refuge for him which the Holy Prophet^{sa} granted⁸⁷.

So according to some, this is the Hadith that substantiates killing of the apostate! Those representing the testimony, in addition to their crooked arguments, have committed unfairness by concealing the background of the event from us. They have tried to give the impression that as soon as the man apostatized, the Holy Prophet^{sa} gave orders for his killing, and then awaited his capture for this purpose. Most certainly nothing of this sort took place.

The actual fact is that this man was one of those criminals who had exceeded all limits and who were thus exempted from the general pardon after the fall of Mecca. Just as, despite the exemption from the general pardon, many were mercifully forgiven by the Holy

⁸⁷ Maudūdī, '*Irtidād kī Saḍā Islāmī Qānūn mein*' page 15. The *Aḥādīth* are given on page 88. [Publisher]

Prophet^{sa}, he too was forgiven by his great mercy.

What happened was that ‘Abdullāh bin Abī Sarḥ not only apostatized but went too far in mischief and was involved in combats with the Muslims. After the fall of Mecca, the Holy Prophet^{sa} included him among those people about whom he had stated that they would not be pardoned. He sought refuge from Ḥaḍrat ‘Uthmān^{ra} who got forgiveness for him. It is thus written:

1. عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ: كَانَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ ابْنُ سَعْدِ بْنِ أَبِي السَّرْحِ يَكْتُبُ لِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ فَازَلَهُ الشَّيْطَانُ فَلَحِقَ بِالْكَفَّارِ، فَأَمَرَ بِهِ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ أَنْ يُقْتَلَ يَوْمَ الْفَتْحِ، فَاسْتَجَارَ لَهُ عُثْمَانُ بْنُ عَفَّانَ فَأَجَارَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

"Ibni ‘Abbās relates that ‘Abdullāh bin Sa‘d bin Abī Sarḥ used to be a scribe of the Holy Prophet^{sa} but was led astray by Satan and he joined the non-believers. On the day of the fall of Mecca, the Holy Prophet^{sa} ordered that he be killed. Ḥaḍrat ‘Uthmān^{ra} requested for his pardon, which was approved and he was thus forgiven."⁸⁸

⁸⁸ Sunan Abī Dā‘ūd, Awwalu Kitābil Ḥudūdi, Bābul Ḥukmi fi Manirtadda. Hadith No. 4358. [Publisher]

Similarly *Sunan al-Nasa'ī* states:

لَمَّا كَانَ يَوْمُ فَتْحِ مَكَّةَ آمَنَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ النَّاسَ ، إِلَّا أَرْبَعَةَ نَفَرٍ
وَأَمْرَاتَيْنِ وَقَالَ: ”أَقْتُلُوهُمْ وَإِنْ وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ مُتَعَلِّقِينَ بِأَسْتَارِ
الْكَعْبَةِ، عِكْرَمَةَ بِنْتُ أَبِي جَهْلٍ وَ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بِنْتُ خَطْلٍ وَ مِقْيَسَ بِنْتُ
ضُبَابَةَ وَ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بِنْتُ سَعْدِ ابْنِ أَبِي السَّرْحِ.....“

"On the day of the fall of Mecca, the Holy Prophet^{sa} granted general pardon to all except four men and two women and said: kill them even if they are found seeking refuge clutching the drapes of the Ka'ba. [Their names were:] 'Ikrama bin Abū Jahl, 'Abdullāh bin Khatal, Miqyas bin Şubābata and 'Abdullāh bin Abī Sarḥ...."⁸⁹

This is the real account. However, the situation that emerges by the reasoning of these scholars is as if untill the fall of Mecca, Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān^{ra} was unaware that the Holy Qur'an had stated death as the punishment of apostasy, that it would be criminal to give refuge to such a person and would be strictly against the teachings of the Holy Qur'an. That is to say that those who make this deduction disregard that they are in fact making a gross allegation against Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān^{ra} in that he first gave refuge to 'Abdullāh bin

⁸⁹ *Sunan Al-Nasa'ī, Kitābul Muḥārabati [Taḥrīmuddamī], Al-Ḥukmu Fil Murtaddi, Hadith No. 4072. [Publisher]*

Abī Sarḥ and then had the pluck to present him to the Holy Prophet^{sa} requesting that he be initiated into Islam.

That the Holy Prophet^{sa} did not even remark: "‘Uthmān, what misdeed are you committing? Do you not know my sense of honour concerning the limits set by Allah? Do you not remember when I was asked to make a concession for a thief, I had sworn by God that even if my own daughter Fāṭima had committed the offence of theft I would have had her hands cut off, because there can be no concession in matters of the limits set by Allah. How dare you make a recommendation to me about him!"⁹⁰

Despite all this the Holy Prophet^{sa} did not even once say any of this. Rather when Ḥaḍrat ‘Uthmān^{ra} made the appeal, he turned his face away. At the second request he kept silent, at the third request, again he kept silent. At the fourth request, by extending his hand, the "Mercy for Mankind", accepted the initiation of that person⁹¹.

ANOTHER INCIDENT:

In connection with this event, there is another small incident that the scholars present to corroborate their inference. After accepting this man’s initiation, the

⁹⁰ See *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī Kitābul Ḥudūd, Bābu Iqāmatil Ḥudūdi ‘Alashsharīfi Walwaḍī’i, H. No. 6787.* [Publisher]

⁹¹ *Sunan Al-Nasa’i, ibid.* [Publisher]

Holy Prophet^{sa} by way of complaint said to his Companions^{ra}: 'Were you not aware that this man was included in the list of those who I was not going to forgive? Why—what was it that stopped you from killing him?' This happened two or three times. The Companions^{ra} submitted 'O Prophet of God^{sa} you should have given us a signal with your eyes. The Holy Prophet^{sa} said, 'It is against the dignity of a Prophet^{sa} to commit deception with the eyes. Whatever he says, he says it clearly and openly.' That is to say, if he wanted to have him killed, he would have told them to do so. He would have never done it in a deceptive way.⁹²

It is a shame that some ulema try to deduce from this straightforward matter their own conclusions by crooked reasoning.

Not to *commit deception of the eye* only means that erroneous ways of this kind were beneath his moral greatness. If he had wanted to have him killed he would have clearly told them to rise and kill him. He only wanted to find out as to what it was that, despite having full knowledge of his directive, made them refrain from killing him?

The question arises that had the Holy Qur'an clearly directed the punishment of apostasy as death, would the Holy Prophet^{sa} have made concessions to the

⁹² *Assununul Kubrā* by Abū Bakr Aḥmad bin Ḥusain Al-Baiḥqī, Part 8, *Kitābul Murtaddī, Babu Man Qāla Fil Murtaddī Yustatābu Makānahū Fa'in Tāba Wa'illā Qutila*, Page 205, published by Nashrusunna, Multan, Pakistan. [Publisher]

prescribed punishment? Most certainly not. It cannot be entertained even for a moment about the Holy Prophet^{sa} that he would have deviated even slightly from the corporal punishment set by the Holy Qur'an. The heavens and the earth could evaporate, but this could have never been possible.

SECOND HADITH:

Maulānā Maudūdī Ṣāhib has also mentioned another Hadith in his book, from which he deduces that death is the punishment for apostasy.

He says: A woman by the name of Ummi Rūmān (or Ummi Marwān) apostatized. The Holy Prophet^{sa} ordered that she be presented with Islam one more time. If she repented, it would be good; otherwise she was to be killed⁹³.

Another Hadith by Baihaqī in this regard is that as she refused to accept Islam she was killed.

However, in 'Nailul Autār', Imam Muḥammad bin 'Alī Shaukānī writes regarding this Hadith: قَالَ الْحَافِظُ أَسْنَادُهُمَا ضَعِيفَانِ that the *Isnad* of both *Aḥādīth** are feeble⁹⁴.

Similarly, 'Allāma Shamsul Ḥaq 'Azīm Ābādī also

⁹³ *Irtidād kī Sazā Islāmī Qānūn Meīn* – pp. 11-19. See the reference⁹⁵ below. The Hadith is recorded in *Sunan Dār Quṭnī*. [Publisher]

* The plural is used for this Hadith because it comes through two sources. [Publisher]

⁹⁴ *Nailul Autār – Sharḥu Muntaqal Akhbār Min Aḥādīthi Sayyidil Akhyār* by Muḥammad bin 'Alī Ash-Shaukānī, Part 7, Page 217. [Publisher]

writes in his commentary of this Hadith that its credentials are weak. He writes: *أَسْنَادُهُمَا ضَعِيفَانِ* The *Isnād* of both *Aḥādīth* are weak⁹⁵.

When nothing is found in the Holy Qur'an, when nothing is found in correct and reliable *Aḥādīth*, still Maudūdī Ṣāḥib, relying on the above Hadith—the authenticity of which is doubted by great scholars of Hadith—are bent or declaring that apostates should be killed. The same is true about other ulema who share their verdict on this issue with Maudūdī Ṣāḥib.

THIRD TRADITION:

Maudūdī Ṣāḥib has presented another Hadith: Ḥaḍrat Abū Mūsā Ash'arī^{ra} relates that having appointed him as the Governor of Yemen, later the Holy Prophet^{sa} sent Mu'ādh bin Jabl^{ra} as his assistant. Upon arrival Mu'ādh^{ra} announced: 'People! I am an envoy of the Prophet of God^{sa} to you.' Abu Musa^{ra} arranged for a cushion for him to recline on. Meanwhile a man was presented who had once been a Jew and had converted to Islam but had then reverted to Judaism. Mu'ādh^{ra} said, 'Most certainly I shall not sit until this man is killed. This is the judgment of Allah and His Messenger.' Mu'ādh^{ra} repeated this three times. Only

⁹⁵ Atta'līqul Mughnī 'Alā Sunani Dār Quṭnī, Kitābul Ḥudūd Waddiyāt, Part III, page 119 footnote on Hadith No.122, Published by Dāru Nashrīl Kutubil Islāmīyati, Lahore. [Publisher]

after the man was killed that Mu‘ādh^{ra} sat down⁹⁶.

Here, on the one hand Mu‘ādh^{ra} says that this is the judgment of Allah and His Messenger. (However, he does not mention as to when this judgment was passed and what was its wording.) On the other hand neither is there a mention of any such Divine decree in the Holy Qur’an nor is there a record of any such verdict of the Holy Prophet^{sa} in *Aḥādīth* that as a consequence of just apostasy one should be killed. This is why it is more credible to deduce from what Mu‘ādh^{ra} said that it was his own reasoning, his personal opinion. From the Holy Qur’an and *Aḥādīth* only this can be confirmed.

Then again, no detail is given regarding the incident, as to why the Jew was brought there? What did he do? Each aspect of the narration is ambiguous and is open to supposition and conjecture. There is the possibility that he was caught for some crime other than that of apostasy and was brought there for that reason. Or that he might have engaged in combat against Islam. As all these facts are vague, so reliance on an ambiguous Hadith—which is merely based on the inference of a Companion^{ra}—in such an important issue and to pass judgment contrary to the manifest verses of the Holy Qur’an is extremely unjust.

It is a universal principle that when the Holy Qur’an is definitive about an issue, even if an authentic

⁹⁶ *Irtidād kī Sazā Islāmī Qānūn Meiñ*, page 14, See *Sunan Al-Nasa’ī Kitābul Muḥārabati [Tahrīmuddamī]*, *Al-Ḥukmu fil Murtaddi*, Hadith No. 4071. [Publisher]

Hadith is found against it, which seems to openly contradict the evident and definitive Quranic injunction, it is the requisite of *taqwā*⁹⁷ to dismiss the apparently authentic Hadith. Moreover, we do not find any mention whether the Holy Prophet^{sa} was informed of this incidence, and if he was, how did he respond to it?

Quite apart from this, there are many other *Aḥādīth*, which very clearly negate this subject, e.g., the ones I have already mentioned above.

So, Quranic verses, the Sunna, history of Islam and the consistency with which the Holy Prophet^{sa} did not ever give orders for the killing of an apostate while he was alive. He went on living, despite his apostacy, till he met his natural death; or was deprived of his life for reasons other than those of apostasy. All this proves that such an important belief can not be founded on so weak an argument.

THE ŞİDDİQĪ ERA AND APOSTASY

I shall now talk about the Khilafat (Caliphate) of Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra}. In most books that are written on the topic of death as the punishment of apostasy that you will come across, you will notice that the scholars, having discussed the Holy Qur'an and Hadith in a cursory manner swiftly move on to the period of

⁹⁷ Fear of God. [Publisher]

Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra}. They seek refuge in that period to support their beliefs and maintain that it is *Ṣiddīqī* Sunna.

In short they overlook the Sunna of Muḥammad^{sa} and begin to discuss *Ṣiddīqī* Sunna.

THE REALITY OF THE SO-CALLED 'ṢIDDĪQĪ SUNNA':

In actual fact '*Ṣiddīqī* Sunna' is not the practice that they associate with Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra}. On the contrary, history clearly negates that Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} had anyone got killed only for the crime of apostasy or that he ever had someone declared apostate and had him thus killed despite his being known as a Muslim, despite his reciting the *Kalima*, despite his observing of *Ṣalāt* facing the *Ka'ba* of the Muslims and despite his believing in the payment of *Zakat*. The fact of the matter is that he only opposed those apostates who, along with apostatizing, raised open revolt against the Islamic government and had driven out its governors and administrators from their regions and were extremely cruel to the Muslims and had them brutally murdered. Abū Bakr^{ra} battled against these wretches because these barbarians had commenced the cruelty and fighting and had started to murder innocent Muslims.

HISTORICAL VERIFICATION OF THE REVOLT BY THE APOSTATES:

The history books and biographies relate the crisis of apostasy and revolt as follows:

1. "This crisis of revolt and apostasy spread like fire and within a few days had reached from one end of Arabia to the other. The rebellious apostates expelled the Muslim administrators and inflicted grievous torture on the faithful Muslim of their region and brutally murdered them."⁹⁸

It was not that Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} had ordered to have them killed as a result of being informed of their apostasy. Rather these cruel wretches were killing the innocent Muslims for what was for them the crime of apostasy on the part of Muslims in that they (the Muslims) had left their (the apostates) faith and had accepted Islam. They were threatening to kill Muslims if they did not revert to their original faith. It were the apostates who, subjecting Muslims to all kinds of torture, were punishing them for their alleged 'apostasy'. To bring these torturous punishments to a halt, Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} mobilised his army and marched on against them for the crime of raising general revolt against the bone fide Muslim

⁹⁸ *Dāstāni Islam*, Part 2, *Khilāfati Rāshida*, p23 by Shaikh Muḥammad Iqbāl M.A., Published by the Panjab Press, Lahore 1970. [Publisher]

government. The author writes:

"Those who could save their lives fled to Medina and sought refuge there. The rebels did not settle on this and started preparing to attack the centre of Khilāfat. During this time, per chance ‘Amr bin al-‘Āṣ^{ra} returned from Bahrain. He observed that the apostate armies had camped from Yemen to Medina. The enemy’s army was innumerable like the sand of Arabia and confronting them were the handful Muslims with no battle equipment."⁹⁹

2. Another historian writes:

"Soon after the haven of our celebrated master was lifted, signs of rebellion against the religion of Allah started to emerge from the length and breadth of Arabia. Only the inhabitants of Mecca, Medina and Ṭā‘if remained steadfast. This crisis of apostasy and rebellion spread like wildfire and reached from one end of Arabia to the other within days. The apostates expelled Islamic administrators and started mercilessly killing true Muslims. Those who could flee took refuge in Medina. Seeing the success of the Holy Prophet^{sa} a few tried their luck at homemade prophethood. Many

⁹⁹ *Ibid* p23.

false prophets arose in different tribes. Among them was a famous person called Ṭulaiḥa bin Khuwailad. His real name was Ṭalḥa but the Muslim derogatorily called him Ṭulaiḥa. He belonged to the tribe of Banū Asad that was an old rival of Quraish. Ṭulaiḥa had assumed prophethood during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet^{sa}.¹⁰⁰

The assertion of the author that Ṭulaiḥa had claimed to be a prophet in the life of the Holy Prophet^{sa} needs our special attention. The ulema say, 'Look how Abū Bakr^{ra} attacked the false prophets.' However, they cannot say 'Look how the Holy Prophet^{sa} raised arms against the false prophets'. This demolishes the whole edifice which they have built on false promises and wrong beliefs.

Besides some other claimants of prophethood, Ṭulaiḥa had claimed prophethood during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet^{sa}. But he (the Holy Prophet^{sa}) did not give any orders for the killing of Ṭulaiḥa. He did not attack any claimant of prophethood.

Regrettably, these crooked scholars commit atrocity upon atrocity. They have no fear of God as regards the foul assaults they make on Islam and do not even desist from attacking the person of the Holy Prophet^{sa}.

¹⁰⁰ *Islāmī Dastūrī Hayāt* by Ghulām Aḥmad Ḥarīrī, pp. 402-403, Published by Polymer Publication, Rāḥat Market, Urdu Bāzār, Lahore. [Publisher]

The author adds:

"However, at that time his deception did not work. After the death of the Holy Prophet^{sa} the entire tribe came under his trap. He abolished the prostration in the *Ṣalāt* on the pretext that it hurts. He also cancelled Zakat. As a result, those who rejected Zakat became his disciples. Ṭulaiḥa organised a huge army and sent it to Medina. Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} came to battle the army and the attackers fled!"¹⁰¹

Thus until such time that Ṭulaiḥa sent the army to Medina, Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr did not even contemplate that the punishment of a false prophet should be to fight against him.

3. The summary of the account of this period in the History of Ibn Khaldūn* is that apart from the tribes of Quraish and Thaḳīf, the news of the apostasy of various Arab populations reached Medina. The crisis of the rebellion created by Musailma reached a critical point. Similarly, Ṭa'ī and Asad tribes gathered around Ṭulaiḥa. The tribe of Ghaḥfān also apostatized. The people of Hawāzan tribe refused to pay Zakat. From Yemen and Yamama the rebels expelled the rulers and administrators appointed by

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

* 'Abdur Raḥmān Ibn Khaldūn 1332-1426 CE. [Publisher]

the Holy Prophet^{sa}. After the death of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} tried to counsel the rebels by means of negotiations through emissaries and via correspondence as well. He waited for the army to return that had gone out under the command of Usāma. However, with the intent to attack, the rebels advanced towards Medina. They encamped at Al-Abraq and Dhul Qarṣa just outside Medina and sent a message to Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} that they were willing to say the Ṣalāt but wanted payment of Zakat to be dispensed with. Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} refused to agree to this demand and appointed Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī, Zubair and ‘Abdullāh bin Mas‘ūd^{ra} to stand guard at various outward points of Medina. The people of Medina started gathering in the mosque. A delegation of the rebels got back to their comrades and informed them that the number of Muslims present in Medina was very small. Consequently, the rebels attacked the outskirts of Medina. In response Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} took the Muslims, who had gathered in the mosque, and they went out on camelbacks to confront the enemy. The enemy retreated. However, even in retreat, it employed different techniques to startle the camels of the Muslims. As a result, the camels ran uncontrollably towards Medina. Although the Muslims did not suffer any casualties, yet the enemy deemed them to be weak and sent a message to their rebel comrades to come and join them in

attacking the Muslims as they were in a weak position. Upon this Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} gathered the Muslims at dawn and went very near to where the enemy was and attacked them. Even before the sun had risen, the enemy retreated. Upon return, the tribes of Banū Dhubyān and ‘Abs as well as other tribes began killing the unarmed Muslims of their region. In response Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} vowed that he would definitely take revenge for each and every Muslim."¹⁰²

4. In *Tārīkh Ṭabrī*, the related circumstances are summarised as follows:

As soon as the news of the illness of the Holy Prophet^{sa} was out, it was also reported that Musailma had taken over Yamāma and Aswad ‘Ansī had taken over Yemen. Soon Tulaiḥa also claimed prophethood, thus becoming a standard bearer of rebellion. He gathered an army and went towards a place called Sumairā’ to fight the Muslims. The populace followed him in great numbers and the situation thus became critical. Moreover, Banū Rabī‘a announced rebellion and apostasy in the region of Baḥrain, and claimed that they would restore monarchy into the dynasty of Mundhar once again and appointed Mundhar bin

¹⁰² ‘Abdur Raḥmān Ibnī Khaldūn – *Tārīkh Ibnī Khaldūn*, Vol. II, pp. 401-414, *Daru Ahyā’it Turāthil ‘Arabī*, Beirut, Labnan. [Publisher]

Naghmān their king. Soon afterwards, the governors of the Holy Prophet^{sa} sent reports that the high and low had rebelled in all the regions and the rebels were persecuting the Muslims in all sorts of ways. In the beginning Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} continued to have a dialogue with the rebels in the manner that the Holy Prophet^{sa} used to hold negotiations with the rebels through the emissaries. However, the tribes of ‘Abs and Dhubyān started advancing their army towards Medina while brutally murdering the unarmed Muslims of their region. The other tribes followed suit. At this Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr vowed that in return of every single Muslim killed, he would kill one rebel. In fact he would kill more. Subsequently, that is exactly what he did. He sent a message to Khālid bin Walīd^{ra} that promptly after the capture, he was to kill a each rebel who had killed a Muslim in a most exemplary way. Before his demise, the Holy Prophet^{sa} had sent Ḥaḍrat ‘Amr bin al-‘Āṣ^{ra} to Jaifar (‘Ummān). When he returned after the death of the Holy Prophet^{sa} the Muslims gathered around him to hear the situation of the rebels. He recounted that the rebels were encamped along the entire route of Daba to Medina. The instigation of rebellion and apostasy took place in the time of the Holy Prophet^{sa} by Aswad ‘Ansī in the region of Yemen. The tribe of Madhḥaj joined them and the havoc of its rebellion started spreading like wildfire. In addition to its infantry, the

rebellious army that joined him had 700 mounted men. He warned the administrators of the Islamic government thus: 'O, usurpers! return our country to us. You may keep whatever wealth you have accumulated but get out of our land.' The Muslim administrator was then replaced with 'Amr bin Ḥazam and Khālid bin Sa'īd bin Al-'Āṣ as the rulers. Later, Aswad took his army to attack Ṣan'ā' and having murdered Shaihar bin Bādhān, who was the administrator appointed by the Holy Prophet^{sa}, seized Ṣan'ā' and murdered the other Muslims. Ḥaḍrat Ma'ādh bin Jabl^{ra} escaped and saved his life. Once he reached Ma'rib, he informed Ḥaḍrat Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī of the situation. They both came towards Ḥaḍrimaut and thus the entire country of Yemen came in the clutches of Aswad. His government was established there and his power increased. The Muslims eventually sent him hell-bound in a battle at Yamāma. Ṭulaiḥa made a claim to prophethood and having gathered the rebels got entrenched at a place called Sumair'. The number of people who followed him was so great that the ground could not accommodate them. They divided themselves in two groups and sent their delegations to Medina. Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} refused to accept their demands. The delegation returned to its comrades and told them that the Muslims were very few in number and suggested to carry out an attack. Following these negotiations Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra}

appointed small contingents to guard the fringes of Medina. He informed the Muslims that an epidemic of rebellion had spread all over the country and the delegation of the rebels had figured out the scantiness of the Muslims and that it was a matter of conjecture whether the enemy would attack during the night or would wait till daybreak and that the Muslims should be fully prepared. Only three days had elapsed that the rebel army attacked Medina at night. Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} gathered the Muslims and came forth to battle and made the enemy retreat. The majority of the tribe of Banū Ḥanīfa joined Musailma. He seized Yamāma and expelled its governor, Ḥaḍrat Thumāma bin Athāl^{ra} who had been appointed by the Holy Prophet^{sa}. Musailma gathered a lot of strength and force. A woman by the name of Sajāḥ, who had made a claim to prophethood, came forth to battle with him. He was apprehensive of her and having reconciled with her, persuaded her into battle with Muslims in these words: 'Had the Quraish (Muslims) been fair, they would have kept half the country and handed over the other half to us. However, they have been oppressive to us. Will you be willing to marry me, so that we can both get together with our tribes and swallow the entire Arab tribes.' He thus married Sajāḥ and came out to fight the Muslims. His army

numbered 40,000. Ḥaḍrat Khālid bin Walīd^{ra} confronted him and defeated him.¹⁰³

5. Similarly it is also recorded in the history of Al Khamīs:

"Majority of Banū Ḥanīfa joined Musailma, the great liar. He seized Yamāma and expelled the governor of the Holy Prophet^{sa}. He (the Governor) informed the Holy Prophet^{sa} about it; after the passing away of the Holy Prophet^{sa} he informed Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra}. In response to this Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} sent Ḥaḍrat Khālid bin Walīdra with a huge army to battle Musailma.¹⁰⁴

In short, the Companions did not fight Musailma the liar, and his tribe of Banu Ḥanīfa only because of their apostasy. Rather, they fought him for the crime of rebellion, because Musailma was a rebel and he had declared war against the Muslims.

6. In addition ‘Allāma ‘Ainī in his Sharhi Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī writes:

¹⁰³ *Tārīkhul Ṭabarī* by Muḥammad bin Jarīr Al-Ṭabarī, Vol. III (the account of 11AH), Published by Dārul M‘ārif, Egypt 1962. [Publisher]

¹⁰⁴ *Tārīkhul Khamīs* part pertaining to the account 11AH, by Ḥussain bin Muḥammad Dubnul Ḥasan al-Dayyār Bakrī, Published by Mu’ssasa Sha’bān, Beirut. [Publisher]

إِنَّمَا قَاتَلَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ مَانِعِي الزَّكَاةِ، لِأَنَّهُمْ اِمْتَنَعُوا
بِالسَّيْفِ، وَنَصَبُوا الْحَرْبَ لِلْأُمَّةِ—

"Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} only fought against those who refused to pay Zakat because they stopped Zakat through the sword and made war against the Muslims."¹⁰⁵

STRANGE POINT WORTH NOTING

It is also documented in the historical records of Al-Ṭabarī and Ibnī Khaldūn that:

"After the war, when Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} was victorious over the rebels, some of them were made prisoners and some slaves."¹⁰⁶

If the punishment of apostasy was indeed death and was in fact the reason for which Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} fought, and if despite repentance, Islam does not propose any other punishment for apostasy, then why did Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} forget this matter at that time? What right did he have to oppose an evidently clear command of the Islamic Sharia? If God had ordained

¹⁰⁵ 'Allāma Maḥmūd bin Aḥmad 'Ainī, 'Umdatul Qārī, Sharḥu Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, Vol. 14, Page 81, Kitābu Istātabatil Murtaddīn wal Mu'ānidīn wa Qitālihim wa Mā Nusibū Ilar Riddati. [Publisher]

¹⁰⁶ Op cit.

that apostates certainly were to be killed and not given a respite of more than three days, then, despite capturing them for this very crime, despite vanquishing them, why were they not killed but were made slaves?

THE KILLING OF A FEMALE APOSTATE:

Maulānā Maudūdī has also mentioned a female apostate called Ummi Qirfa:

"In the era of Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} a woman by the name of Ummi Qirfa had apostatized after accepting Islam. Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} demanded repentance from her but she did not comply. Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} had her killed. (*Dārul Quṭnī, Baihaqī*)." ¹⁰⁷

The impression given is that she was killed only because of apostasy. Although records do not mention the point that she was killed merely for apostasy. However, he is insistent that the killing of Ummi Qirfa was a link of this sequence.

Although the reality is:

¹⁰⁷ *Irtidād kī Sazā Islāmī Qānūn Meīn*, Page 18. See *Assununul Kubra*, by Abū Bakr Aḥmad Binil Ḥussain Bin ‘Alī Al-Baihaqī, Part 8, *Kitābul Murtaddī, Babu Qatli Manirtadda ‘Anil Islāmī Idhā Thabutā ‘Alaihi Rajulan Kāna Awimra’tan*, published by Nashrus Sunna, Multan, Pakistan, page 202.[Publisher]

أُمُّ قُرْفَةَ كَانَ لَهَا ثَلَاثُونَ ابْنًا وَكَانَتْ تُحَرِّضُهُمْ عَلَى قِتَالِ
الْمُسْلِمِينَ، وَفِي قَتْلِهَا كَسْرٌ شَوْكَتِهِمْ—

"The killing of this woman was ordered because she had thirty sons and she would constantly instigate and incite all thirty sons against war with the Muslims. In order to break the might of these brothers."

Thus the mother was killed for the crime of instigation, only to give the clear message to her sons that if their mother incites them against Muslims and if they think that they are strong and powerful, they should, if they can, save their mother. Yet, after their mother was killed, their lives were saved to show to the world that if by taking one life a mischief can be subverted, then only that life should be taken.¹⁰⁸

From the angle of '*Ilmī Darāyat*', too, this Hadith is not acceptable: An old woman, mother of thirty sons who, too, were apostates, is killed and the sons were not called to account or killed along with their mother.

¹⁰⁸ *Al-Mabsūt* by Shamsuddīn al-Sarkhasī, 2nd Edition, Vol. 10, p110, Published by Maṭba'atūs Sa'āda, Egypt. [Publisher]

* Judging the authenticity of a Hadith on the basis of its contents. [Publisher]

A TRADITION FROM THE FĀRŪQĪ ERA:

Let us move on to the circumstances of the era of Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar^{ra}. The Hadith that Maulānā Maudūdī presents from this era is:

"‘Amr bin al-‘Āṣ, Governor of Egypt, wrote to Ḥaḍrat Umar^{ra} that a man had accepted Islam but became an infidel, returned to Islam, but once again disbelieved. He had repeated that process many a time. Should his Islam be accepted or not? Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar^{ra} replied that as long as Allah, the Exalted, accepted his Islam, he should keep on doing so. Islam should be presented to him, if he accepted, his life should be spared, otherwise he should be put to death."^{109*}

They deduce from the last bit 'otherwise he should be put to death' that surely the punishment of apostasy was death and that is why Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar^{ra} said so.

If the punishment of apostasy was indeed death, then it was impossible for an austere Khalifa like Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar^{ra} to give the above-mentioned answer. He would have issued a strict reprimand to the governor as to on what authority he had to grant that

¹⁰⁹ *Irtidād kī Sazā Islāmī Qānūn Meīn*, Page 18. [Publisher]

* The reference is to a Hadith mentioned in *Kanzul ‘Ummāl, Kitābul Imāni Wal Islāmī, Min Qismil Af’āl, Al-Faṣḥul Khāmis Fī Ḥukmil Islāmī, Al-Irtidādu Wa Ahkāmuhū* Part I, Hadith No. 1463. [Publisher]

man another chance after his apostasy!

He had apostatized not once or twice but several times! Why it was allowed to happen and why he was not killed? Instead, Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar directed to allow him to accept Islam as many times as Allah allowed him. That is to say, he could accept Islam as many times he was apprehended, and that it was incumbent upon the ruler to let him off.

What we have here is an inference of Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar^{ra}. But even this inference of Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar^{ra} does not give the scholars any right over the lives of other Muslims. Ḥaḍrat Umar^{ra} pronounced that if the man would say that he was a Muslim, then, despite the history of his repeatedly apostatizing, each time on his confession of Islam, he was to let go. He was to decide his own fate. His word, despite the previous pattern, was acknowledged as reliable. No one can say that Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar^{ra} had said that as the man’s falsehood was proven, because his betrayal was established, therefore, his word should not be paid heed to even if he accepted Islam one more time.

So, how does the validity of death as punishment of apostasy is inferred from this Hadith? How can one infer that even if one repents, one should not be forgiven and whenever one apostates one should be killed?

THE METHODOLOGY TO MEASURE SOUNDNESS OF NARRATIONS:

Moreover, the principle stands firm that the *Ahādīth* or *Āthār* that are in conflict with the well-known practice of the Holy Prophet^{sa} or are against the evidently clear verses of the Holy Qur'an, are not acceptable. The narration under discussion is among *Āthār* because it is a personal deduction of Ḥaḍrat Umar^{ra}. If a deduction of Ḥaḍrat Umar^{ra} or even of all the Companions^{ra} (God forbid) is found inconsistent with the practice of the Holy Prophet^{sa} or the Word of the Qur'an, in that instance we should consider the narrator erroneous and not (God forbid) that Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra} made an inaccurate inference.

For it is impossible that these eminent people who were fostered by the Holy Prophet^{sa} would have disregarded the practice of the Holy Prophet^{sa}. It does not mean that we disagree with Ḥaḍrat Umar^{ra}. It only means that because this narration is quite clearly in conflict with the Holy Qur'an and Sunna, the narrator of this *Athar* is wrong. Either someone has misunderstood or someone has told a lie.

THE APOSTATE WAS A FIGHTER:

In addition, there is an indication that this particular person was captured during a battle. Here, one may argue that a person who is captured in a battle

and the ruler of the time (or the victorious general) decides that he is to be killed because he had fought against him and had killed his comrades, but the captive, to save his life, accepts Islam, then what should be done to that person? It is the legal right of the ruler or victorious general to choose to forgive or order death penalty. Then the moment he renounces Islam he, as it were, presents himself to the authorities to be killed. In such a case it would be obvious that the decision to kill him at the first place was right. In any case a sword would always be hanging over his head. No one can be permitted to escape justified verdict against himself through deception. But this is quite a separate subject and has nothing to do with apostasy.

A TRADITION OF THE ‘ALĪ^{RA} ERA:

We now enter the era of Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī^{ra}. Here again, a most perilous looking Hadith, (rather a narrative, which has an associated Hadith) is presented. The credibility of this Hadith is apparently very strong. I shall discuss it in some detail. But first I shall quote the Hadith as it is found in Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhāri. The Hadith is:

عَنْ عِكْرَمَةَ قَالَ: أَتَى عَلِيٌّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ بِزَنَادِقَةٍ فَأَحْرَقَهُمْ
فَبَلَغَ ذَلِكَ ابْنَ عَبَّاسٍ فَقَالَ: لَوْ كُنْتُ أَنَا لَمْ أُحْرِقْهُمْ لِنَهْيِ
رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ: لَا تَعَذِّبُوا بِعَذَابِ اللَّهِ - وَ لَقَتَلْتَهُمْ لِقَوْلِ

رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: 'مَنْ بَدَّلَ دِينَهُ فَاقْتُلُوهُ' –

‘Ikrmah narrates that some *zindīqs* (*The one who conceals unbelief and makes an outward show of belief*) were brought to Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī^{ra}. Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī^{ra} ordered to have them burnt alive. Upon hearing this Ḥaḍrat Ibni ‘Abbās^{ra} said that if it were him he would have never done that because the Holy Prophet^{sa} has clearly prohibited us from inflicting a torment on others that is the sole prerogative of Allah, the Exalted, that is to say, the torment of fire. I would have had him killed, because the Holy Prophet^{sa} had said: 'Kill him who changes his faith.'¹¹⁰

INVESTIGATION OF THE TRADITION:

Prima facie, the above Hadith contains a strong argument in support of killing an apostate. It is found in the authentic books of *Aḥādīth* e.g. Bukhārī, Tirmadhī, Abū Dāūd, Nasa’ī and Ibni Māja. Because all these books mention it, it could be argued that the Hadith must be reliable and sound. However, the authenticity of a Hadith cannot only be inferred from the fact that it is documented in authentic books of

¹¹⁰ *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, Kitābu Istitābatil Murtaddīna wal Mu’ānidīna wa Qitālihim, Babu Ḥukmil Murtaddi wal Murtaddati Wastitābatihim, Hadith No. 6922. [Publisher]*

Aḥādīth. There are other criteria, too, to decide about the authenticity of *Aḥādīth*. One of these criteria is to judge the credibility of its narrator. The other is to find out whether it is reported by a single narrator (whose credentials are doubtful) at any step of its *Isnād** or there are other narrators who support him in the same *Sanad* or there are other more reliable *Isnād* of the Hadith than the one in question. When we look at this Hadith on the basis of the above two criteria we find that the renowned scholars, who had dedicated their lives to researching the credibility of *Aḥādīth*, had passed the judgement on this Hadith that it is *ghrīb* (i.e. reported by only one narrator, who in the present case happens to be extremely unreliable i.e. ‘Ikrama) and that it belongs to what are technically known as *Aḥādīthi* Āḥad (that is the *Aḥādīth* in the *Sanad* of which at one are more steps there are three or less than three narrators—in the present case there is only one narrator at the second step of the *Sanad*—that is the step following the Disciple^{ra} of the Holy Prophet^{sa}).

The opinion of Maulānā ‘Abdul Ḥayī Lakhnawī^{ra} is that because Imam Bukhārī had reported it from ‘Ikrama, other *Muḥaddithīn*¹¹¹ accepted the Hadith on the authority of Imam Bukhārī—because of his high

* A *Sanad* or *Isnad*, is the chain of narrators which, starting with a Disciple^{ra} of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, comes down to the collector of Hadith e.g. Bukhārī. There are obviously various steps in this chain. Some times sanad starts with a Tāba‘ī, or Taba‘ Tāba‘ī. [Publisher]

¹¹¹ The collectors of *Aḥādīth*. [Publisher]

stature—without critically examining its credentials¹¹².

It is indeed possible that a tradition that has only one narrator can be a correct and reliable Hadith. However, such a tradition cannot be comparable to one that has several narrators. Therefore such ‘*āḥād*’ traditions cannot be relied on in matters pertaining to rights and commitments, obligations and punishments, in particular issues regarding the ‘*ḥudūd*’, namely, the corporal punishments enjoined by the Holy Qur’an.

THE NARRATOR IS A *KHĀRJĪ**

It is essential that we further investigate the reputation of the narrator ‘Ikrama. When we evaluate this tradition on this basis, we find out that the narrator was a Khārjī, *viz.* an enemy of Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī^{ra}. Most noted and prominent books dealing with the narrators of traditions state about him that he was such a lowly and wicked man that the Muslims did not even say his funeral prayer. Consequently, the scholars of Hadith who had expertise in ascertaining the soundness of a tradition, came to the conclusion that this tradition is worthless because its narrator was a *zindīq* and a Khārjī and was a supporter of the enemies of Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī^{ra}, in particular during the period when disagreements ensued between Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī^{ra} and

¹¹² *Al-Raf‘u wal Takmīl*, old edition, Lucknow. [Publisher]

* Belonging to those who revolted against Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī^{ra} during his Khilāfat. [Publisher]

Ḥaḍrat Ibnī ‘Abbās^{ra}.

In the Abbasid period, ‘Ikrama attained the esteem and renown of a pious and God-fearing scholar. It is quite clear that the reason for his renown was his opposition to Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī^{ra} and his support for the Abbasids, on the basis of politics. The Abbasids opposed each person and everything that had anything to do with the progeny of ‘Alī^{ra}.

It is generally noted that in fact the traditions regarding death as punishment of apostasy were born out of the events that took place in Basra, Kufa and Yemen. For the real authorities on *Aḥādīth* who resided in Mecca and Medina seem totally oblivious of this tradition. Indeed one cannot overlook the fact that the narrators of this tradition of ‘Ikrama are Iraqīs. The reader should not forget the saying of Imam Ṭā’ūs bin Qaisān in this respect: "If an Iraqī relates a hundred *Aḥādīth* to you, utterly dismiss ninety-nine of these and be suspicious of the remainder." (*Sunnan Abū Dā’ūd*)

As far as ‘Ikrama being a Khārjī, unauthentic and a liar is concerned, you are presented with the following testimonies from eminent compilers of books about the narrators:

1. Adh-Dhahabī states:

- a) Al-Ṣalt Abū Shu‘aib told us that he asked Muḥammad bin Sīrīn about ‘Ikrama, Ibnī Sīrīn replied: 'I have no trouble that he be

among the people of the Paradise; however, the fact remains that he is a great liar'.

- b) "Ya'qūb bin Al-Ḥaḍarmī relates about his grandfather that he had said that once 'Ikrama stood by the door of the mosque and said that all those who were inside the mosque were non-believers. 'Ikrama subscribed to the principles of the al-Abāḍia sect."
- c) "Ibnul Musayyab asked his slave, named Burd, whom he had freed, not to tell lies against him (by reporting false *Aḥādīth* on his authority), just as 'Ikrama tells lies against Ibni 'Abbās (by reporting false *Aḥādīth* on the authority of Ibni 'Abbās."¹¹³

2. Another great scholar writes:

- a) 'Abdullāh bin al Ḥārith relates: "I went to the house of 'Alī bin 'Abdullāh bin 'Abbās and saw that in front of the house of Hadrat Al-Ḥassan^{ra} 'Ikrama sat shackled. I said to 'Alī do you not fear God? 'Alī replied: This wicked man goes about relating false traditions ascribing them to my father."
- b) Wuhaib says: "I was with Yaḥyā bin Sa'īd Al-Anṣārī and Ayyūb. They mentioned 'Ikrama. Yaḥyā bin Sa'īd said that 'Ikrama

¹¹³ Muḥammad bin Aḥmad binil 'Uthmān Adh-Dhahabi (died 748 AH) in his book *Mizān al I'tidāl fi Naqdir Rijāl* under 'Ikrama, Maulā Ibni 'Abbās. [Publisher]

was a liar".¹¹⁴

3. Ḥaḍrat Ibnī Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī writes:

- a) Yaḥyā bin Mu‘īn said: Imam Mālik bin Anas did not relate a Tradition narrated by ‘Ikrama for the sole reason that he maintained the school of thought of the Ṣafria sect.
- b) ‘Aṭā’ said that he (‘Ikrama) belonged to Abaḍiyya sect.
- c) Al-Juzjānī said that he asked Imam Aḥmad bin Ḥambal whether ‘Ikrama was ‘Abāḍī? He replied, 'It is said that he was Ṣafri'.
- d) According to Muṣ‘ab Al-Zubairī, ‘Ikrama belonged to the Khārjī school of thought.
- e) Ibrāhīm bin Mundhar has narrated on the authority of Ma‘n bin ‘Īsā and some others that Imam Mālik did not consider ‘Ikrama trustworthy and would command that the traditions related by him should not be accepted.
- f) I have heard certain residents of Medina recounting that ‘Ikrama's and Kasīr ‘Iza bodies were brought on the same day to the mosque door. People said the funeral prayer of Kusayyar but did not say the funeral prayer of ‘Ikrama. Aḥmad has also related a

¹¹⁴ *Kitābuḍ Du‘fā’il Kabīr* by Abu Ja‘far Muḥammad bin ‘Amr Al-‘Uqailī Al-Makkī, Part 3, under ‘Ikrama Maulā Ibnī ‘Abbās, published by Dārul Kutubul ‘Ilmiyya, Beirut. [Publisher]

Tradition with similar meanings.

- g) Hishām bin ‘Abdullāh al-Makhzūmī relates that he heard Ibnī Abī Zai’b that ‘Ikrama was untrustworthy and that he had seen him¹¹⁵.

It is thus most certainly not acceptable to rely on such a Tradition about which it is conclusively proven that its narrator was a great liar and a staunch enemy of Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī^{ra}.

TEXTUAL TESTIMONY:

When we investigate into the words of the Tradition, we find it inaccurate in many ways.

1. There is no doubt that Ḥaḍrat ‘Abbās^{ra} has his own standing. However, he cannot compete with the status of Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī^{ra}. The latter was the Caliph of the Prophet^{sa}. God had chosen him for Caliphate. It was not possible that while Ḥaḍrat ‘Abbās^{ra} had a regard for the directive of the Holy Prophet^{sa} Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī^{ra} did not. Even if we acknowledge the Tradition to be correct, the phraseology of Ḥaḍrat ‘Abbās does not verify the information, he says: 'As for me, I am never prepared to do so, for this was the clear directive of the

¹¹⁵ *Tahdhīb al Tahdhīb* (under ‘Ikrama Maulā Ibnī ‘Abbās) by Imam Ḥāfiẓ Shahābuddin ‘Abū’ul Faḍl Aḥmad bin ‘Alī bin Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, Vol.7, 1st Edition, pp. 263-273, Published by *Majlis Dā’iratul Ma’ārif Nizāmiyyah*, Hyderabad, Dakkan, India. [Publisher]

Holy Prophet^{sa} that do not inflict on any one a torment which is the prerogative of God alone how then can ‘Alī^{ra} do so? Therefore it is an absolute fabrication to be associated with Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī^{ra} in that he had the man burnt alive, because this is recounted via a great enemy of his who wished to calumniate him.

Another Tradition verifies this. Here ‘Ikrama relates: When the news of this reaction of Ḥaḍrat ‘Abbās^{ra} reached Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī^{ra} he said most indignantly وَبِئْسَ مَا كَانَتْ يَوْمَئِذٍ تُنَادِي بِصَوْتِهِ عُجَابٌ 'Woe be on Ibnī ‘Abbās' ¹¹⁶

2. Then again, the phrase: مَنْ بَدَّلَ دِينَهُ فَاقْتُلُوهُ connotes generality. It can be construed in many ways. The word 'man' is applicable to man, woman, child and all. However, there are many theologians who have declared death penalty for a female apostate impermissible.

3. Moreover, by the word 'dīn' [which means faith] any faith, and not just Islam, can be denoted. The Holy Qur'an has also pronounced the faith of the idol worshippers as 'dīn' ¹¹⁷.

With these doubts and uncertainties, how is it possible to deem a Hadith like this applying exclusively only to a Muslim who changes his/her faith? In the light of the perceptive and subtle phraseology of law, by virtue of this Tradition each individual who changes his or her faith should be

¹¹⁶ Sunan Abū Dā'ūd, *Awwalu Kitābil Ḥudūdi, Bābul Ḥukmi Fī Manirtadda, Hadith No. 4351*. [Publisher]

¹¹⁷ Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn. [Publisher]

killed, regardless of his or her particular faith. In this case each Jew who becomes a Christian should be killed and each Christian who becomes a Muslim should be killed, as indeed should be a hypocrite who chooses some other faith!

Then the word: *مَنْ* 'man' should be applied even outside the jurisdiction of Islamic State. In other words, any person who changes his religion should be slain whether he lives in Australia, or Africa, or in the jungles of South America.

Just think of the consequences. Islam instructs its followers to invite others to join the religion of Islam, so much so that it demands each Muslim should become a missionary and a *Dā'ī ilAllāh*—a caller towards Allah. But then what will seem to be its attitude towards the followers of other religions? Will they have the same right to propagate their faith? Those who are in favour of death penalty for apostasy, do not take into account the ill effects of their inhumane and innovative view on mutual relations with other nations and religions. Why don't they understand that if their view is valid then it would mean that the followers of other religions will be allowed to change their faith, but a Muslim will not have the same right to leave his religion! Islam would appear to have the right to change other people's religion, but other religions will absolutely have no right to invite Muslims to change their religion! What a dreadful face of Islam they are painting to show to the

world? Therefore, to infer from this Tradition the death penalty for an apostate is absolutely incorrect. Its meaning is ambiguous, and its narrator is a liar, lewd and a renegade Khārjī who is slandering Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī^{ra} that he burnt alive the *Zindīqs*! Though Ḥaḍrat Imam Bukhārī was not informed, but the later *Muḥaddithīn* proved that the narrator of this Hadith was a *Khārjī*, an enemy of Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī^{ra}. His debauchery and malice were so enormous that the Muslims did not care even to say his funeral prayer.

I now present a few more *Aḥādīth* on the subject:

- A. عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ، قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: لَا يَحِلُّ دَمُ امْرِئٍ مُسْلِمٍ يَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَ أَنَّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَّا بِأَحَدِي ثَلَاثٍ: النَّفْسُ بِالنَّفْسِ، وَالثَّيْبُ الزَّانِي، وَالمُفَارِقُ لِديْنِهِ التَّارِكُ الْجَمَاعَةَ-

"Abdullāh narrates that the Holy Prophet^{sa} said: 'It is not permissible to kill a Muslim who bears witness that there is none worthy of worship but Allah, and I (Muḥammad^{sa}) am the messenger of Allah. There are only three exceptions. First, a killer is to be killed in retribution; second, a married man who commits adultery; and third, he who leaves the

religion and the community¹¹⁸.

- B. حَدَّثَنِي أَبُو قَلَابَةَ أَنَّ عُمَرَ بْنَ عَبْدِ الْعَزِيزِ أُرْزِرَ سَرِيرَهُ يَوْمًا لِلنَّاسِ ثُمَّ أَذِنَ لَهُمْ فَدَخَلُوا..... قَالَ لِي مَا تَقُولُ يَا أَبَا قَلَابَةَ..... قُلْتُ: فَوَاللَّهِ مَا قَتَلَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ أَحَدًا قَطُّ إِلَّا فِي إِحْدَى ثَلَاثِ حِصَالٍ، رَجُلٌ قَتَلَ بِجَرِيرَةٍ نَفْسِهِ فُقُتِلَ، أَوْ رَجُلٌ زَنَى بَعْدَ إِحْصَانٍ أَوْ رَجُلٌ حَارَبَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَارْتَدَّ عَنِ الْإِسْلَامِ— فَقَالَ الْقَوْمُ: أَوْ لَيْسَ قَدْ حَدَّثَ أَنَسُ بْنُ مَالِكٍ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَطَعَ فِي السَّرِقِ وَ سَمَرَ الْأَعْيُنِ ثُمَّ بَدَّهْمُ فِي الشَّمْسِ؟ فَقُلْتُ أَنَا أَحَدُكُمْ حَدِيثُ أَنَسٍ، حَدَّثَنِي أَنَسُ أَنَّ نَفَرًا مِنْ عُكْلٍ ثَمَانِيَّةٍ قَدِمُوا عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ فَبَايَعُوهُ عَلَى الْإِسْلَامِ فَاسْتَوْحَمُوا الْأَرْضَ فَسَقَمَتِ أَجْسَامُهُمْ، فَشَكَّوْا ذَلِكَ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: أَفَلَا تَخْرُجُونَ مَعَ رَاعِيْنَا فِي إِبِلِهِ فَتُصَيَّبُونَ مِنْ أَلْبَانِهَا وَأَبْوَالِهَا؟ قَالُوا: بَلَى، فَخَرَجُوا فَشَرِبُوا مِنْ أَلْبَانِهَا وَأَبْوَالِهَا فَصَحُّوا، فَقَتَلُوا رَاعِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ وَأَطْرَدُوا النَّعَمَ، فَبَلَغَ ذَلِكَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ، فَأَرْسَلَ فِي آثَارِهِمْ فَأَدْرِكُوا— فَجِئَ بِهِمْ، فَأَمَرَ بِهِمْ فَقُطِعَتْ

¹¹⁸ *Ṣaḥīḥul Bukhārī, Kitābud Diyāti, Bābu Qaulillāhi T'ālā Annannaḥsa Binaḥsi Wal 'Aina Bil 'Aini, Hadith No. 6878. [Publisher]*

أَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُمْ وَسَمَرَ أَعْيُنُهُمْ ثُمَّ نَبَذَهُمْ فِي الشَّمْسِ حَتَّى
 مَاتُوا- قُلْتُ وَأَيُّ شَيْءٍ أَشَدُّ مِمَّا صَنَعَ هَؤُلَاءِ؟ ارْتَدُّوا عَنِ
 الْإِسْلَامِ وَقَتَلُوا وَسَرَقُوا-

"Abū Qilābata narrates: 'One day 'Umar bin 'Abdul 'Azīz held an open court, and called the people to see him. They started coming to him... He asked my opinion regarding one case. I swore to God and said that the Holy Prophet^{sa} did not allow killing of any one with the exception of the following three criminals: One who kills another human being out of his personal passions. Second, one who is married and yet commits adultery. Third, the one who becomes an apostate and engages in a war against Allah and His Messenger^{sa}. On hearing that the people said: Is it not narrated by Ḥaḍrat Anas^{ra} that the Holy Prophet^{sa} punished the thieves by cutting their hands, putting red-hot needles in their eyes, and then throwing their bodies in the sun to rot? On hearing that, I said to them, "Let me tell you Ḥaḍrat Anas' narration as Anas^{ra} had told me himself: 'Eight men of 'Ukl tribe came to see the Messenger of Allah^{sa} and accepted Islam by making *bai'at* at his hand. But the climate of Medina did not suite them and they got ill and became very

weak. They complained about their health to the Messenger of Allah^{sa}, and he told them that they should go out with his shepherd and live in the open in the meadows for his camels, and they may use the milk and urine of the camels as a treatment for their illness. They agreed and went out to live at the meadows. They used the milk and urine of the camels and their health was recovered. Then, they killed the shepherd of the Messenger of Allah^{sa} and ran away with the camels. When the Messenger of Allah^{sa} came to know about it, he sent men to catch them. They were caught and brought in front of him. He ordered that they should be punished for their crimes. Their hands and feet were cut, red-hot needles were pierced in their eyes and they were left in the sun to die! I say can there be any crime as monstrous as they had committed and were punished for! They had committed a murder and theft after their apostasy! ¹¹⁹

- C. عَنْ عَائِشَةَ أُمِّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ أَنَّهُ قَالَ: لَا يَحِلُّ قَتْلَ مُسْلِمٍ إِلَّا فِي إِحْدَى ثَلَاثِ خِصَالٍ - زَانٍ مُحْصِنٍ فَيُرْجَمُ، وَرَجُلٌ يَقْتُلُ مُسْلِمًا مُتَعَمِّدًا وَرَجُلٌ يَخْرُجُ مِنَ الْإِسْلَامِ

¹¹⁹ *Ṣaḥīḥul Bukhārī, Kitābud Diyāti, Babul Qasāmati, Hadith No. 6899.*
[Publisher]

فِيحَارِبُ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَرَسُولَهُ فَيُقْتَلُ أَوْ يُصَلَّبُ أَوْ يُنْفَى مِنْ
الْأَرْضِ -

Ḥaḍrat ‘Ā’isha^{ra} narrates that the Messenger of Allah^{sa} said: Killing of a Muslim (who has declared that there is none worthy of worship but Allah, and Muḥammad is His Messenger) is forbidden with the exception of three cases: A married man who commits adultery is to be stoned to death; and the one who killed someone unjustly, he should be killed in retribution of the victim; a person who having renounced Islam, picks up arms against Allah and His Messenger, he is to be killed or crucified or expelled from the country.¹²⁰

FIGURATIVE MEANING OF "QATL" (KILLING) IN LEXICONS:

The term "qatl" (killing) has also been used figuratively in the books of lexicon. Thus, the eminent scholars of Arabic language write:¹²¹

وَمِنَ الْمَجَازِ: قَتَلَ الشَّيْءُ خَبْرًا وَ عِلْمًا - أَيْ عِلْمَهُ عِلْمًا تَامًا -

¹²⁰ Sunan Nasī, Kitābul Qasāmati wal Qawadi Waddiyati, Babu Suqūtil Qawadi Minal Muslimi lil Kāfiri, Hadith No. 4747. [Publisher]

¹²¹ Tājul ‘Arūs. Lisānul ‘Arab. Al-M’ujamul Wasī. [Publisher]

وَقَتَلَ الشَّرَابَ: إِذَا مَزَجَهُ بِالْمَاءِ فَازَالَ بِذَلِكَ حَدَّتَهُ—

وَقَتَلَ فُلَانًا: أَذَلَّهُ—

وَتَقَتَّلَ الرَّجُلُ لِلْمَرَاةِ: خَضَعَ لَهَا— وَ نَاقَةٌ مُقْتَلَةٌ: مُذَلَّلَةٌ—

وَقَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى: قُتِلَ الْإِنْسَانُ مَا أَكْفَرَهُ— أَيْ لَعِنَ، قَالَهُ الْفَرَّاءُ— وَ

قَوْلُهُ— قَاتَلَهُمُ اللَّهُ أَنْى يُوَفِّكُونَ— أَيْ لَعَنَهُمْ— وَ فِى الْحَدِيثِ:

قَاتَلَ اللَّهُ الْيَهُودَ: أَيْ قَاتَلَهُمُ اللَّهُ— وَقِيلَ: لَعَنَهُمْ— وَقِيلَ:

عَادَاهُمْ— وَ فِى حَدِيثِ الْمَارِّ بَيْنَ يَدَى الْمُصَلِّى: قَاتَلَهُ فَإِنَّهُ

لَشَيْطَانٌ: أَيْ دَافِعُهُ مِنْ قِبَلَتِكَ— وَ لَيْسَ كُلُّ قِتَالٍ بِمَعْنَى

الْقَتْلِ—

وَقَتَلَ اللَّهُ فُلَانًا فَإِنَّهُ كَذَا: أَيْ دَفَعَ شَرَّهُ— وَ فِى حَدِيثِ

السَّقِيفَةِ، قَالَ عُمَرُ: قَتَلَ اللَّهُ سَعْدًا، فَإِنَّهُ صَاحِبُ فِتْنَةٍ وَ شَرٍّ،

أَيْ دَفَعَ اللَّهُ شَرَّهُ— وَ فِى رِوَايَةٍ: أَقْتَلُوا سَعْدًا قَاتَلَهُ اللَّهُ، أَيْ

اجْعَلُوهُ كَمَنْ قُتِلَ، وَ لَا تَعْتَدُوا بِمَشْهَدِهِ، وَ لَا تُعْرَجُوا عَلَى

قَوْلِهِ—

وَ فِى حَدِيثِ عُمَرَ أَيْضًا: مَنْ دَعَا إِلَى إِمَارَةٍ نَفْسِهِ أَوْ غَيْرِهِ مِنْ

الْمُسْلِمِينَ فَاقْتُلُوهُ: أَيْ: اجْعَلُوهُ كَمَنْ قُتِلَ وَ مَاتَ بِالْأَلَا تَقْبَلُوا لَهُ

قَوْلًا وَلَا تُقِيمُوا لَهُ دَعْوَةً— وَلِذَلِكَ الْحَدِيثُ الْآخِرُ: إِذَا بُوِيعَ
لِخَلِيفَتَيْنِ فَأَقْتُلُوا الْآخِيرَ مِنْهُمَا، أَيْ أَبْطَلُوا دَعْوَتَهُ، وَاجْعَلُوهُ
كَمَنْ مَاتَ—

Figuratively, it is said: قَتَلَ الشَّيْءَ خَيْرًا وَ عِلْمًا He killed a thing in respect of knowledge, that is to say, he gained full knowledge of a thing. Again, it is said: He killed the wine. That is, he mixed water with the wine and thus reduced its strength. And when it is said قَتَلَ فَلَانًا it means that he ridiculed and contemptuously treated the other person. When we say: وَ تَقَتَّلَ الرَّجُلُ لِلْمَرْأَةِ: it means that the man became submissive to the woman. And نَاقَةٌ مُقَتَّلَةٌ is the she-camel that moves obediently in accordance with its master's instructions. Concerning the verse [of the Holy Qur'an]: قَتَلَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا كَفَرَهُ Farrā' says that here the word "QUTILA" means "LU'INA"—that is, here "killing a man" stands for "God's curse on man". Similarly, in قَاتَلَهُمُ اللَّهُ أَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ "QĀTALA" signifies: May God put his curse upon the hypocrites. In one Hadith it is stated قَاتَلَ اللَّهُ الْيَهُودَ and it means "May Allah destroy the Jews!" Some have taken it to mean, "May Allah curse the Jews!" And others have taken it to mean "May Allah be their enemy!"

In Hadith, the person performing the Salat is instructed regarding the person who comes in front of him *فَاتِلُهُ فَإِنَّهُ لَشَيْطَانٌ*, [kill him for he is Satan] and here "QĀTIL" means that he should remove him from in front of him. *وَلَيْسَ كُلُّ قِتَالٍ بِمَعْنَى الْقَتْلِ* that is the word "QITĀL" does not in every instance of its use convey the meaning of physical killing. Similarly, it is said: *قَتَلَ اللَّهُ فُلَانًا* and it means that Allah may protect others from his evil. Thus, on the occasion of Saqīfa banī Sa‘d Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar^{ra} said: *قَتَلَ اللَّهُ سَعْدًا* "May Allah protect Muslims from the evil of Sa‘d!" In an another tradition it is narrated that he said: *أَفْتُلُوا سَعْدًا قَتَلَهُ اللَّهُ* that is to say: Consider him dead; as if he was not alive! Do not listen to him; do not accept his evidence!

In the same way it is attributed to Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar^{ra} that he who nominates himself or some other Muslim’s name for leadership (to be the Amīr): *أَفْتُلُوهُ* *UQTULŪHU* that is he is finished! Do not agree with him.

Hence, it is evident that the Arabic word *قَتَلَ* *QATL* is used in vast meanings."

Thus it is wrong to deduce that: *فَأَفْتُلُوهُ* *FAQTULŪHU* always means "to kill physically!" That would go against the meanings of the verses of the Qur’an and the practice of the Messenger^{sa}.

It is proven that Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar had used the word: *أَقْتُلُوهُ* to mean to boycott and to deny one’s existence! Thus, for an eminent Companion who did not make *bai‘it* early on at the hand of Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr, Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar had used the word; *أَقْتُلُوهُ* *Uqtulūhu* for him, and it was understood to mean to ex-communicate him.¹²²

As far the above mentioned tradition of Ḥaḍrat ‘Ā’isha^{ra} goes, there are some other elements that seem incorrect. For example, the saying attributed to the Messenger of Allah^{sa} to stone to death a married man if he commits adultery is found nowhere in the Holy Qur’an. Then, how is it possible that the Holy Prophet^{sa} could have issued a commandment against the Holy Qur’an? Moreover, the Quranic injunction that no one should marry an adulterer unless the marrying person is also an adulteress clearly shows that the adulterer was not to be stoned to death. Otherwise it would not be possible for him to marry anyone as he could not survive the death punishment!

The second portion concerning with an intentional murder is correct in its literal sense, and also corresponds with rules of justice that a murderer should be killed, unless he is forgiven by the close relatives of the victim, in retribution of a killing. In the third portion, Ḥaḍrat ‘Ā’isha^{ra} says that one possibility is that a person may not only be an apostate, but that he

¹²² Muḥammad bin Jarīr Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh Al-Ṭabarī, Egypt, Dārul Mu‘ārif, 1962, Part III.* [Publisher]

may also actively engage in war against the Holy Prophet^{sa} and his Companions^{ra}. If that be the case, such a person should either be killed or crucified, or he should be expelled from the country. Now, all these three positions are contradictory to each other. If the punishment of apostasy was nothing but death, then the Holy Prophet^{sa} was obliged to order his killing. As for crucifixion, there is no evidence at all that the Holy Prophet^{sa} ever ordered anyone to be crucified. If the Holy Qur'an had a clear injunction of death penalty for apostasy, then how could the Holy Prophet^{sa} order to expel such an apostate?

Therefore, keeping in mind all these factors, this Hadith needs further consideration. Its wording may be correct, but its meaning needs in-depth analysis so that no action or saying attributed to the Holy Prophet^{sa} may be deemed to contradict the Holy Qur'an. The Holy Prophet^{sa} was always praying for forgiveness of those who were well-known apostates, and to attribute to him that he advocated death penalty is a clear-cut insult to him^{sa}.

After this incidental but important discussion, let us revert to Ḥaḍrat Umar's^{ra} statement. It clearly indicates that "killing" does not mean "physical killing", but it is "killing of a thought." Otherwise, anyone who aspired to become "Amir"—a leader—should have been killed! The fact is that not a single person was killed by Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra} who wished for leadership. A demand for leadership was to be completely repudiated, and

فَأَقْتُلُوهُ "faqtulūhu" means that his demand must be treated as if it did not exist.

THE AḤĀDĪTH THAT REFUTE THE DEATH PENALTY FOR APOSTASY:

Now I present some *Aḥādīth* that fully refute the notion of killing the apostates.

First Hadith: Once a Bedouin came to the Holy Prophet^{sa} and made Bai‘at at his hand. While in Medina, he got ill. The poor Bedouin was a superstitious person and thought that he was being punished for accepting Islam. He was a very simple man, and came to the Holy Prophet^{sa} and asked him to take back his Islam that had caused him to get ill. He wanted to recant and repent. The Holy Prophet^{sa} knew that he was a simple man. He did not tell him that he would be killed for his apostasy, he just refused to annul his Bai‘at¹²³. Once again the man approached the Holy Prophet^{as} and asked him to abrogate his Bai‘at and he be excused. (He thought unless the Holy Prophet^{sa} announced that his Islam was recanted, he would not get well!) Again, he was informed that his Bai‘at was not to be annulled. The third time he made the same request, but it was declined. On that, the Bedouin got upset, and left Medina. Then, the Holy

¹²³ The oath of allegiance. [Publisher]

Prophet^{sa} said: "Medina is like a furnace, that cleanses the matter. That he was a wrong kind of man, and he left Islam despite Holy Prophet's^{sa} efforts to keep him in Islam. Medina's environment threw him out as the goldsmith's furnace removes the impurities." ¹²⁴

Thus, it is evident that the man was an apostate in Holy Prophet's view. He had asked three times that his Islam be taken away from him. When he left Medina, even then the Holy Prophet did not order his killing. How is this possible that Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra}, Ḥaḍrat Umar^{ra}, Ḥaḍrat 'Alī^{ra} knew what was the punishment of apostasy, but only the Holy Prophet^{sa} was unaware of that?

Second Hadith: At the time of the Treaty of Hudaibiya, one of the terms that the Holy Prophet^{sa} accepted was that if any Muslim recanted Islam and went to Mecca, the non-believers would not send him back¹²⁵. If the punishment in Islam was clear that anyone who commits apostasy should be killed, then the Holy Prophet^{sa} would never have shown leniency in this matter of religious belief.

Third Hadith: Then there is another tradition mentioned earlier that an apostate came to Ḥaḍrat

¹²⁴ *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, Kitābu Faḍā'ilil Madīnati, Bābun Al-Madīnātu Tanfil Khabatha*, Hadith No. 1883. [Publisher]

¹²⁵ *'Abdul Malik Bin Hishām, Al-Sīratun Nabawiyya*, part III, page 203, *Maktabatul Kulyātul 'Azhariyya*, Egypt. [Publisher]

‘Uthman^{ra} in hiding to seek protection, and the Holy Prophet^{sa} forgave him ¹²⁶.

This again is an absolutely clear proof that the Holy Prophet^{sa} did not have any thoughts to kill an apostate.

Forth Hadith: Ḥaḍrat Anas^{ra} narrates that once Abū Mūsā sent him to Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar^{ra} to deliver good news of a victory. The incident was that six members of Bakr bin Wā’il clan had left Islam and gone to join the band of *mushrikīn**. On Ḥaḍrat Umar’s inquiring about them, he told him that they had renounced Islam and had joined the *mushrikīn*. On hearing this, Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar said, "Had I caught them without fighting and killing, I would have been the happiest man; I would have preferred it over having all the gold and the silver of the world! Ḥaḍrat Anas asked: "O, Commander of the believers! If you had caught them, then what would you have done to them?" He replied: "I would have asked them to come back through the same door from which they had made their exit! If they had done so, I would have excused them. Had they refused, I would have put them in prison!"¹²⁷

¹²⁶ *Sunan Abū Dā’ūd, Awwalu Kitābil Ḥudūd, Bābul Ḥukmi fī man Irtadda*, Hadith No. 4358. [Publisher]

* Idolators. [Publisher]

¹²⁷ *Kanzul ‘Ummāl, Kitābul Īmāni Wal Islām, Al-Faṣṣul Khāmis, Fī Ḥukmil Islāmi, Al-Irtidādu Wa Aḥkāmuhū*, Hadith No.1464. [Publisher]

This narration also confirms that the Righteous Khalīfa, Ḥadhrat ‘Umar^{ra} was opposed to the concept of killing the apostates.

EARLY ULEMA AND THE CONCEPT OF APOSTASY:

When they cannot find any solid and strong evidence in the eras of the Holy Prophet^{sa} and the Righteous Khulafā’, those who are in favour of death penalty for the apostates start talking about *Ijmā’* [consensus of opinion]. They infer this from the opinions of the Ulema of the middle ages of Islam (when darkness prevailed) and declare that there was an *Ijmā’* on this issue. Hence, no argument is acceptable against the *Ijmā’*.

THE CLAIM OF *IJMĀ’* IS INCORRECT:

FIRST ARGUMENT:

I have already given an argument against this *Ijmā’* that in the era of Ḥadhrat Abū Bakr^{ra}, apostates were caught but not killed.¹²⁸

Therefore, the *Ijmā’* of that time was against the death penalty of apostates. If there was an *Ijmā’* on the

¹²⁸ *Tārikhul Ṭabrī*, Part III, *Ḥawādith* 11AH, pp 259-263; *Tārikh Ibnī Khaldūn, Al-Qismur Rabi’i*, Vol. II, p 864-865. [Publisher]

subject, then it was not possible for Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} not to kill the apostates. Not a single Companion^{ra} of the Prophet^{sa} objected and told Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} that the commandment of the Holy Qur'an was to kill the apostate, it was an established law, and it was obligatory for him to put it into practice; that he did not have permission to inflict any punishment to the apostates other than their death; that he did not have a right to make them slaves.

This was the *Taqrīrī Ijmā'** of the Companions. Not a single voice was raised against the decision (of Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr) and it proves that if there was any consensus of opinion it was on the point that Islam does not permit death as punishment for an apostate.

SECOND ARGUMENT:

In the *Sunnan Dār Quṭnī*, a statement is attributed to Ḥaḍrat Ibni 'Abbās as follows:

عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ: الْمُرْتَدَّةُ عَنِ الْإِسْلَامِ تُحْبَسُ وَلَا تُقْتَلُ

"It is reported that Ibni 'Abbās Said: 'The female apostate should be imprisoned and

* A technical term used when someone gives his tacit approval to someone else's statement or action by not raising an objection against it. [Publisher]

should not be killed'. " 129

That is, according to him a female apostate was not to be killed, but was to be imprisoned. The Holy Prophet^{sa} had forbidden killing a woman even in a battlefield. Thus, both the narrations are rejecting the opinion of Maudūdī that a female apostate should be killed, and also the opinion that there is an *Ijmā'* on the issue of apostasy.

THIRD ARGUMENT:

‘Allāma Al-Marghinānī (d. 593 AH) writes:

..... وَلَنَا أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ عَلَيْهِ الصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ - نَهَى عَنْ قَتْلِ النِّسَاءِ،
وَلِأَنَّ الْأَصْلَ تَأْخِيرُ الْأَجْزِيَةِ إِلَى دَارِ الْأَخْرَةِ، إِذْ تَعْجِلُهَا يُحِلُّ
بِمَعْنَى الْإِبْتِلَاءِ، وَإِنَّمَا عُذِلَ عَنْهُ دَفْعًا لِشَرِّ نَاجِزٍ وَهُوَ الْحِرَابُ
وَلَا يَتَوَجَّهُ ذَلِكَ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ لِعَدَمِ صِلَاةِ الْبِنِيَّةِ بِخِلَافِ
الرِّجَالِ -

"The reasons for not killing a female apostate are two-fold: One, the Holy Prophet^{sa}

¹²⁹ *Sunan ad-Dār Quṭnī, Kitābul Hudūdi Wad Diyāti Wa Ghairhā*, Vol. III, page 118, Hadith No.120, Published by *Darunnashril Kutubil Islāmiyyah*, Lahore, Pakistan. [Publisher]

prohibited the killing of women; and second, in essence this particular punishment requires that it may be left for the Day of Judgement. A person needs time to be tested. Killing a person hurriedly takes away that chance. Adopting this principle of justice helps prevent a trial—the trial related to war! (The chances are that she will not go back and join the ranks of enemy war machine.) As women by nature are not inclined to wage war like men, therefore, their killing is prohibited."¹³⁰

FOURTH ARGUMENT:

Similarly, a great jurist, Imam Ibnul Humām (d. 681 AH) writes in his book *Fathul Qadīr*:

يَجِبُ فِي الْقَتْلِ بِالرَّدَّةِ أَنْ يَكُونَ لِدَفْعِ شَرِّ حِرَابِهِ، لَا جَزَاءَ عَلَى
فِعْلِ الْكُفْرِ، لِأَنَّ جَزَاءَهُ أَعْظَمُ مِنْ ذَلِكَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى -
فَيَخْتَصُّ بِمَنْ يَتَأْتَى مِنْهُ الْحِرَابُ، وَهُوَ الرَّجُلُ، وَلِهَذَا نَهَى
النَّبِيُّ ﷺ - عَنْ قَتْلِ النِّسَاءِ وَلِهَذَا قُلْنَا: لَوْ كَانَتْ
الْمُرْتَدَّةُ ذَاتَ رَأْيٍ وَتَبِعَ تُقْتَلُ، لَا لِرَدَّتِهَا، بَلْ لِأَنَّهَا حِينِيذٌ

¹³⁰ *Al-Hidāyah Sharhu Bidayatul Mubtadī*, by Abu'ul Ḥasan 'Alī bin Abī Bakr Al-Rashidānī Al-Marghinānī, Part 2, pp. 406-407, Published by *Dārul Ahyā' Atturāthul 'Arabī*, Beirut, Labnan. [Publisher]

تَسْعَى فِي الْأَرْضِ بِالْفَسَادِ—

"The reason to kill an apostate is only with the intent to eliminate the danger of war, and not for the reason of his disbelief. The punishment of disbelief is far greater with God. Therefore, only such an apostate shall be killed who is actively engaged in war; and usually it is a man, and not a woman. For the same reason, the Holy Prophet^{sa} has forbidden to kill women. And for this very reason, an apostate female could be killed if she in fact instigates and causes war by her influence and armed force at her disposal. She is not killed because of her apostasy, but for her creating disorder (through war) on earth."¹³¹

FIFTH ARGUMENT:

Moreover, ‘Allāma Al-Sarkhasī, an eminent scholar of the fifth century Hijra, writes:

'To disbelieve is no doubt a very grave sin, but it is a matter between God and His servant. Hence, its punishment shall be in the life Hereafter. The corporal punishments that are

¹³¹*Sharhu Fathil Qadir* by Muḥammad bin ‘Abdul Wāḥid, Part V, Page 311, Published by *Dārul Aḥyā’ Atturāthul ‘Arabī*, Beirut, Labnan. [Publisher]

given in this world are ordained to protect the rights of other human beings, such as the punishment of "*qiṣāṣ*" [the law of retaliation for murder or physical injuries] is to protect life; punishment for "*Zinā*" [adultery & fornication] is to protect family lineage; punishment for "*Sirqa*" [theft] is to protect the property of others; punishment of "*Qadhaf*" [defamation] is to protect honour and reputation of others; and punishment for "*Khumr*" [use of intoxicants] is to protect mental health in society. When a person who insists on "disbelief" is engaged in armed struggle against Muslims, to protect the Muslims from the evil consequences of war, he is killed.

At places, God has clearly stated the immediate cause of protection from the evil effects of the war. For example, He says: **فَإِنْ قَاتَلُواكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوهُمْ**¹³² And at other places, He gives the reason (of *Shirk*) that leads them to war. Thus, on the one hand it is established that the reason to kill is armed conflict, and on the other hand it is known that woman is not by nature capable of waging armed attacks; therefore, she

¹³² But if they attack you, then kill them. (The Holy Qur'an 2:192).
[Publisher]

is killed neither for her disbelief, nor for her apostasy.¹³³

How is it possible to call this as *Ijmā'* when such eminent scholars are clearly against the notion of killing an apostate?

SIXTH ARGUMENT:

Imam An-Nakh'ī says: "He (the apostate) will be granted respite till his death."¹³⁴

OPINIONS OF THE PRESENT DAY ULEMA:

The Ulema of present day have never agreed on this opinion. There was never an *Ijmā'* in the past and there is no *Ijmā'* at present.

For example:

Imam Maḥmūd Shaltūt, ex-rector of Al-Azhar University states:

"For this violation, all that is stated in the Holy Qur'an is in the following verse:

وَمَنْ يَرْتَدِدْ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ فِيمَتْ وَهُوَ كَافِرٌ فَأُولَئِكَ حَبِطَتْ
أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ ۚ وَأُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ ۗ

¹³³ *Kitābul Mabsūṭ* by Shamsuddīn Al-Sarkhasī, Part 9, Page 110, Published by Maṭba'atus Sa'āda, Egypt. [Publisher]

¹³⁴ *Nailul Autār* by Imam Muḥammad bin 'Alī Muḥammad Al-Shaukānī, Part VII page 221, *Abwābu Aḥkāmīr Riddati wal Islām, Bābu Qatīl Murtaddi*, Published by Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Halabī, Cairo. [Publisher]

هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ 135

You can see that in the above verse only this much is stated that the works of such apostates shall be lost, and in the Hereafter they shall be punished and remain in the Fire. As far as the corporal punishment, the jurists present the following Hadith in its favour which is narrated by Ibni ‘Abbās^{ra}: The Holy Prophet^{sa} said, مَنْ بَدَّلَ دِينَهُ فَاقْتُلُوهُ "Whosoever changed his religion should be killed." Scholars have discussed this Hadith and they hold different viewpoints... Opinion on this issue is changed when it becomes clear that the "Haddūd" – (the prescribed punishments for various crimes in Sharia) cannot be based on *Hadīthi Ahād*; and that it is not right to kill anyone just for disbelief. Killing is allowed only when some one fights with Muslims and attacks them to make them change their religion by force. Many verses of the Holy Qur’an very clearly prohibit the use of force in matters of religion. Allah the Exalted says: لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ ۗ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ ۚ 136 مِنْ النَّعْيِ ۗ

135 And whoso from among you turns back from his faith and dies while he is a disbeliever, it is they whose works shall be vain in this world and the next. These are the inmates of the Fire and therein shall they abide. (The Holy Qur’an 2:218). [Publisher]

136 There should be no compulsion in religion. Surely, right has become distinct from wrong. (The Holy Qur’an 2:257). [Publisher]

2. Apart from Imam Shaltūt, Ustādh Muḥammad Maḥmūd Zaghlaf, Dr. ‘Alāuddīn Zaidān, ‘Abdul Mun‘im Yaḥyā Al-Kāmil and Yaḥyā Kāmil Aḥmad hold the opinion that:

"There is no evidence in support of this alleged punishment in the Holy Qur’an or in the authentic Sunna. On the contrary, several verses of the Qur’an declare similar assumptions to be utterly false, and permit man to use his freedom to adopt either disbelief or belief. It is up to him to accept Islam or to leave it. Moreover, the Quranic verses make it clear that Allah Himself will judge each person in the matter concerning acceptance or rejection of the true faith, as only He is fully aware of the secrets of the hearts of His servants." "Those who argue that Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr Al-Ṣiddīq^{ra} fought battles against the apostates should know that, after a careful study of various historical aspects of those battles, we shall come to the conclusion that they were not only apostates, they were also a source of mischief within the Islamic society and they had revolted and disturbed the law and order situation within the country. So much so that

¹³⁷ Wilt thou, then, force men to become believers? (The Holy Qur’an 10:100). *Al-Islam—‘Aqīda Wash Sharia*, by Imam Maḥmūd Shaltūt, pp. 292-293, *Darul ‘Ilm, Cairo*. [Publisher]

they had brought Medina under siege! These circumstances compelled Abū Bakr to take up arms against them and break the siege. It proves that it was not merely a matter of few persons becoming apostates and being fought against for their apostasy. They were battled against to stop their armed attack against the Islamic government and to finish a mischievous revolt. It was to eliminate a threat to Islamic state's security.

Abū Bakr^{ra} took action in the light of the following command of God:

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا
 إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ ۝¹³⁸

Similarly, the historical account of Tha'labah* is a clear proof that apostasy is not a punishable act. It also refutes the argument that Abū Bakr^{ra} fought against the apostates only because they refused to pay the Zakat. Tha'labah had refused paying Zakat in the time of the Messenger of Allah^{sa} and he had openly treated the Holy Prophet's functionary with

¹³⁸ And fight in the cause of Allah against those who fight against you, but do not transgress. Surely, Allah loves not the transgressors. (The Holy Qur'an 2:191). [Publisher]

* See *Addurrul Manthūr* by Siyuṭī, Part 3, under Surah Al-Taubah, pp. 467-468, published by Darul Kutubil 'Ilmiya, Beirut, Labnan. [Publisher]

contempt. But still, the Prophet^{sa} did not order his death nor tried to take Zakat forcefully from him. Later, Tha‘labah himself repented and wanted to pay the Zakat but the Prophet^{sa} refused to accept it. Similarly, Abū Bakr^{ra}, Umar^{ra} and ‘Uthmān^{ra}, in their respective eras of Khilāfat, did not accept his Zakat. This incident proves that neither at the time of the Holy Prophet^{sa} nor in the era of Abū Bakr Zakat was considered a compulsory tax to be forcefully collected, and none was attacked because he had refused to pay the Zakat. The Muslims used to pay the Zakat most willingly to purify their souls in obedience to their God.

Obviously, Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr followed the footsteps of the Holy Prophet^{sa} and adhered to his noble manner of conduct. Thus, it appears impossible that he would have compelled anyone to return to the faith of Islam by the dint of sword! We fear Allah and do not attribute any action to him that might be against the Sunna of the Holy Prophet^{sa}. The fact remains that he fought with those apostates only to secure the budding Islamic society from the threats of their mischief and armed attacks.

In the light of these facts all such pernicious opinions prove false that the orientalist and opponents of Islam propagate

under the heading "Abū Bakr's battles against apostates."¹³⁹

In the same manner, the following scholars have also rejected this worthless opinion:

a. Maulānā Ghulām Aḥmad Parwaiz	140
b. Maulānā 'Abul Kalām Āzād	141
c. Maulānā Nawāb Ā'zam Yār Jang Charāgh 'Alī ..	142
d. Maulānā Muḥammad 'Alī Juhar, Ra'īsul Aḥrār ..	143
e. Maulānā Thanā'ullāh Amritsarī	144
f. Raḥmatullāh Ṭāriq	145
g. Chief Justice S. A. Raḥmān	146
h. Justice M.R. Kiyānī and Justice Muḥammad Munīr	147

¹³⁹ *Ḥaḳīqatul Ḥukm Bimā Anzala Allāhu* – pp 126-131, First Edition, published by *Dāru Nahrinnabīl*, Cairo. [Publisher]

¹⁴⁰ Nuqta'ī Sarkarī Ḥayāt Ya'ni Jihād kā Saḥīḥ Mafhūm Qur'āni Karīm kī Raushnī meīn, pp 30, 31, Idāra Ṭulū'ī Islam Ashraf Press Lahore. [Publisher]

¹⁴¹ Tafsīr Tarjamānūl Qur'an, Vol. 1, Zamzam Company Ltd., Lahore. [Publisher]

¹⁴² A'azmul Kalām fī Irṭiqā'il Islam, Vol. 1, First Edition, Haiderabad Daccan, 1910. [Publisher]

¹⁴³ Sīrat Muḥammad 'Alī by Ra'īs Aḥmad Ja'farī, First Edition, Kitāb Manzil, Lahore. [Publisher]

¹⁴⁴ Islam aur Masīḥīyyat, Thanā'ī Barqī Press, Hall Bazar, Amritsir, 1941. [Publisher]

¹⁴⁵ Qatli Murtad ki Shar'ī Haithīyyat, Third Edition 1987, Idāra Adbiyāt Islāmiya, Multan. [Publisher]

¹⁴⁶ Punishment of Apostasy in Islam, Idāra Thaḳafati Islāmiya, Pakistan. [Publisher]

¹⁴⁷ Report of the Court of Inquiry, Punjab Disturbances of 1953. [Publisher]

IS MAULĀNĀ MAUDŪDĪ SERIOUS?

Maulānā Maudūdī had said that if one reflected realistically on the contemporary Muslims, one would realise that they are not Muslims at all. Now, we have to resolve the issue whether he was serious in this fatwa of his. Take note about what he had to say about those who forsake Jamā‘ati Islāmī. He says, warning those who renounce Jamā‘ati Islāmī, and not those who forsake Islam:

‘This is not a path on which going forward and retreating is the same. No, here retreating means apostasy.’¹⁴⁸

If forsaking Jama‘ati Islāmi and joining another community is apostasy then the other community can be nothing but an embodiment of kufr.

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE MULLAHS

So what are their objectives? If they could have their way—and indeed the manner in which they are seizing control over the Government of Pakistan and in this they are fully supported by a global conspiracy against Islam—what would they do? The Court of Inquiry to enquire into the Punjab Disturbances of

¹⁴⁸ Maudūdī, *Ru‘idādi Jamā‘ati Islāmī*, (Compiled by— *Shu‘ba‘i Tanzīmi Jamā‘at*) Part I, page 8, *Maktaba Jamā‘ati Islāmī*. [Publisher]

1953 reflected on the issue of the possible outcomes of this belief. The sitting judges Justice Munīr and Justice Kiyānī wrote that in the genuine *Fatwa* (Ex. D. E. 13) by the Diyubandī Dārul ‘Ulūm the Shias are Kafirs and *Murtad* (apostates), and:

"According to the Shias all Sunnis are *kafirs*, and Ahl-i-Qur‘an, namely, persons who consider *hadith* to be unreliable and therefore not binding, are unanimously *kafirs*, and so are all independent thinkers. The net result of all this is that neither Shias nor Sunnis nor Deobandis nor *Ahl-i-Hadith* nor Barelvis are Muslims and any change from one view to the other must be accompanied in an Islamic State with the penalty of death if the Government of the State is in the hands of the party which considers the other party to be *kafirs*."¹⁴⁹

Today Islam is in danger from within the world of Islam. This is a most horrific conspiracy that is being led today by the American ‘colonization’. The countries under the influence and domination of USA are pushing forward the death penalty for apostasy. These oppressors aim for the Muslims to destroy each other rather than to divert their attention to them. They are fully aware that the weak [Muslim] governments

¹⁴⁹ *Report of the Court of Inquiry, Punjab Disturbances of 1953 – Page 219.*
[Publisher]

which are totally dependent on their aid, are fed by them, get their weapons from them, would not ever dare to kill any Hindu, Christian or Jew. Indeed if their wrath was to descend on anyone it would descend on the fellow Muslims. If they were to destroy anyone it would be Muslims alone. They would have one Muslim sect declare another Muslim sect apostate, and have the sect with the greater sway destroy the one deemed by it as weak and apostate. A calamity would thus fall on the world of Islam and the rest of the world would curse the followers of the religion (as well as the religion itself) who regard the shedding of blood of their own brethren permissible and remain busy cutting each other's throats. This is the essence of the western conspiracy against Islam.

OLD WAYS

This scene has been enacted before within the Islamic world and is not a mere supposition. In actual fact, the countries where the Muslim governments have been in the clutches of the mullah, or where oppressive Muslim rulers have used the religious scholars to support them in achieving their objectives, a most horrendous performance has been staged in the name of death penalty for apostasy, the thought of which, even today, make hairs stand on ends.

I shall present before you some incidents of the era of the Abbasid King Māmūn and of the subsequent

period.

Some extremely truthful, God-fearing, pious and scholarly Muslims were crucified for the crime of having a belief that the Holy Qur'an is a 'creation'. However, when the era changed and a person who himself was of the belief that the Holy Qur'an is a 'creation' held the office of *Khilafat*, he ordered the killing of all the scholars who did not consider the Holy Qur'an a 'creation'. The blood of venerable Muslims thus went on spilling in the streets for the crime of apostasy, whereby death was the punishment of apostasy and the argument for deeming them apostate was merely the fact that, in the light of *Tanzīhī**. Attributes of God, they had declared the Qur'an a 'creation'.

This was indeed a most horrific and cruel era, but then this was not the only era, rather there is a myriad of such brutal episodes that stigmatise the Muslim regimes. To this day, the free world feels hatred and contempt for Islam and its adherents because of this ignominy, and considers Islam an ignorant faith belonging to the dark ages.

Today these religious scholars do not seem to have learnt lessons from this. They are devoid of any sense of shame. They keep on forcibly attributing beliefs, against the Holy Qur'an and Sunna, to Islam which are

* Those Attributes of Allah which exclusively belong to Him and cannot be shared by His creation as His being All Knowing. Others like kindness, love, can be shared by his creation and are called *Ghair* (Non) *Tanzīhī*. [Publisher]

infact un-Islamic and thus carry on making the history of Islam murky and gory.

However, now that the mullah has become used to this kill, he is not easily going to let go. If the world of Islam does not wake up and does not dismiss the dominance of the mullah as rubbish, and if the mullah is not forced to keep religious affairs separate from politics and to refrain from hurting the faith of Islam and to limit himself to preaching righteousness, prayer and worship, then the dreadful history will repeat itself! The present situation is backed by great political powers which wish Muslims kill Muslims, and Islam be destroyed by the world of Islam itself.

AN IMPORTANT EXCERPT.

I shall now present another excerpt from the Court of Inquiry and then move on to the conclusion of this subject. The Court of Inquiry acknowledges: "Apostasy in an Islamic State is punishable with death. On this the ulema are practically unanimous." That is to say that only the religious scholars who appeared before the court unanimously concurred with this issue. Here the court is not referring to the renowned religious scholars who did not attend the court proceedings who hail from Pakistan as well as various other Arab countries. The court could not refer to them. Such scholars, currently as well as in the past, have striven against the punishment of death for apostasy, they have performed

Jihad against the opinion and have written books. Therefore the court most certainly does not mean that all religious scholars were unanimous on this viewpoint, rather only those who had attended the court. The Court states:

"And the same fate should befall Deobandis and Wahabis, including Maulana Muhammad Shafi Deobandi, Member, Board of Talimat-i-Islami attached to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, and Maulana Daud Ghaznavi, if Maulana Abul Hasanat Sayyad Muhammad Ahmad Qadri or Mirza Raza Ahmad Khan Bareilvi, or any one of the numerous *ulama* who are shown perched on every leaf of a beautiful tree in the *fatwa*, Ex. D. E. 14, were the head of such Islamic State. And if Maulana Muhammad Shafi Deobandi were the head of the State, he would exclude those who have pronounced Deobandis as *kafirs* from the pale of Islam and inflict on them the death penalty if they come within the definition of *murtadd*, namely, if they have changed and not inherited their religious views."¹⁵⁰

¹⁵⁰ Report of the Court of Inquiry, Punjab Disturbances of 1953 – Page 219.
[Publisher]

MAUDŪDĪ'S RIGIDITY

There is another interesting reference in the writings of Maulānā Maudūdī in which he expresses his disagreement regarding the fact that all born Muslims should be considered Muslim. He says that he will not accept such people as Muslims in an Islamic regime; rather he will give them a year's notice. They will be told that in view of their being apostates for all practical purposes, they will be at liberty to verbally reject the truth of Islam and declare that Islam is a false religion. If this is done they will be forgiven and pardoned. [How much the Maulana longs to hear Muslims to declare Islam false]. However, if they do not follow this and a year goes by and they remain in the state of apostasy, then they are warned that they will be killed and wiped out. Alternatively they will be forced to observe that particular Islam which the regime considers to be Islam.

He writes:

‘The Muslim population of the region where an Islamic revolution takes place should be issued a notice that those who have in belief and in deed rejected Islam and wish to remain disaffected, should within one year of the date of announcement, make a formal declaration of being a non-Muslim and leave our communal system. After this duration all those born in the

lineage of Muslims shall be considered Muslims. All Islamic laws shall be enforced on them. They will be compelled to follow all religious obligations and duties. After this, whosoever steps outside the sphere of Islam will be killed'.¹⁵¹

No one should be misled by Maudūdī Ṣāhib's words here that 'all those born in the lineage of Muslims shall be considered Muslims' because in an excerpt referred to earlier Maudūdī Ṣāhib had given out an edict about those Muslims that the condition of the Muslims is such that out of 1000, even 999 are not true Muslims. This means that these Muslims are born non-Muslims. The fact is that the Prophet of Allah says that each child is born in the true nature, that is, Islam. These are the intentions of these ulema and this is their concept of Islam and this is their opinion concerning freedom of conscience.

APOSTASY AND THE HISTORY OF THE PROPHETS^{AS}

Now I shall present to you one last observation which is interesting, but in one respect very painful, too. It will be the final word on this subject.

The Holy Qur'an presents a comprehensive and

¹⁵¹ *Irtidād kī Saẓā Islāmī Qānūn Meīn*. Page 80-81. [Publisher]

authentic history of the Prophets^{as} covering long eras. It has preserved vast historical details from the time of Adam^{as} till that of the Prophet Muḥammad^{sa}. It informs us about the beliefs and practices of all the Prophets^{as}; morals and lifestyle of their followers; and in contrast the beliefs and behaviour of their opponents. The Holy Qur'an has preserved all this in great detail, giving us a systematic and continuous historical record. Narrations covering Ḥadrat Nūḥ^{as} up to the Holy Prophet Muḥammad^{sa}, concerning their opponents and what discussions took place between them—all are preserved in the Holy Qur'an.

THE BELIEFS OF THE ENEMIES OF THE PROPHETS^{AS}

It is evident from the Holy Qur'an that all who opposed the Prophets^{as} held without exception the position that anyone who left his religion and became an apostate must be subjected to dreadful punishment. Hence if there is a consensus of opinion, it is a consensus among all the enemies of the Prophets^{as} and not among the Prophets^{as} nor among their true followers. The Holy Qur'an says that God was on the side of His Prophets^{as}, and He cursed those who upheld this tenet and tried to execute it. The Holy Qur'an condemns them who believed in punishing converts by death, burning them alive, and throwing them out of homes or imprisoning them.

ḤAḌRAT NŪḤ^{AS} WAS ACCUSED OF BECOMING AN APOSTATE:

Thus the Qur'an tells us about Ḥaḍrat Nūḥ^{as} that his people accused him of apostasy and that he was attempting others to change their religion, and – "They said, 'If you desist not, O Noah, thou shalt surely be one of those who are stoned.'"¹⁵²

○ قَالُوا لَيْنَ لَمْ تَنْتَهُ يُونُحُ لَتَكُونَ مِنَ الْمَرْجُومِينَ

They warned him with unanimity that if he did not desist, if he did not repent from his apostasy and did not cease to make others apostates, they were certain he would be stoned to death.

Therefore, if the ulema of Quetta have given the verdict that Aḥmadīs are apostates, and they have declared them out of Islam against their [*Aḥmadī's*] wishes and announced that their punishment is stoning to death—that they should be put in the ground and then stoned to death—then this is not a new claim. Earlier, the opponents of Ḥaḍrat Nūḥ^{as} had made exactly the same claim.

¹⁵² The Holy Qur'an 26:117. [Publisher]

VERDICT OF APOSTASY AGAINST ḤAḌRAT IBRĀHĪM^{AS}.

Concerning Ḥaḍrat Ibrāhīm^{as}, the Holy Qur'an narrates that he was warned by his father:

قَالَ أَرَأَيْبُ أَنْتَ عَنِ إِلَهِي يَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ
لَيْسَ لَكَ إِلَهٌ إِلَّا أَنَا فَتَوَلَّ وَأَهْرَاجُ نِي مَلِيًّا

"Do you turn away from my gods, O Abraham? If you cease not, I shall surely cause you to be stoned to death. Now leave me alone for a while."^{153*}

The attitude of Abraham's^{as} father was adopted by his people also, and they invented a new way to punish apostasy. They said,

قَالُوا حَرِّقُوهُ وَانصُرُوا إِلَهَتَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ فَعَلِينَ
قُلْنَا يَا نَارُ كُونِي بَرْدًا وَسَلَامًا عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ

"They said, 'Burn him and help your gods, if *at all* you *mean* to do *anything*.' We said, 'O fire, be thou cold and a *means of* safety for

¹⁵³ The Holy Qur'an 19:47. [Publisher]

* Some of the view that it was his uncle who repute him so, but the Qur'an was says it was his father. [Publisher]

Abraham!'''¹⁵⁴

Thus, they got encouraged on listening to what his father had told him. If the father could prescribe stoning as a punishment for apostasy, they took a step further and, according to the Qur'an, declared that he should be burned alive. Thus it was that they wanted to help their gods. To safeguard their religion it was imperative for them to do so. They feared that otherwise their religion would get perverted. But the command of those who pronounced punishment for apostasy did not work. God says it is His command to the fire that works, fire being His creation. He commanded to the fire **‘قُلْنَا يَا نَارُ كُونِي بَرْدًا وَسَلَامًا عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ** 'O Fire, be thou cold and means of safety for Abraham!'

We should learn a lesson from this. Man is created from dust which has the potential for growth. But Satan is created from fire as opposed to dust. Fire has the tendency to burn the products of the earth. So those who try to sow the seeds of mutual hatred they possess the nature of Satan.

ḤAḌRAT ṢĀLIḤ^{AS} WAS CALLED AN APOSTATE:

Ḥaḍrat Ṣāliḥ's^{as} people also treated him in this way, as the argument was carried on among them whether one who turns away from one's society and apostatises

¹⁵⁴ The Holy Qur'an 21:69-70. [Publisher]

should be punished or not?

قَالُوا تَقَاسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ لَنُبَيِّتَنَّهُ وَأَهْلَهُ ثُمَّ لَنَقُولَنَّ لِوَلِيِّهِ مَا
شَهِدْنَا مَهْلِكَ أَهْلِهِ وَإِنَّا لَصٰدِقُونَ ۝¹⁵⁵

That is they said that all should swear by Allah's name that they would assault him and his family at night and would kill them and whoever comes to claim blood money for them, they will say to them that they had not witnessed the killing of his family and that they are truthful and that they are not aware of anything.

Thus in certain instances the said punishment for apostasy was declared to be carried out openly and in other instances it was suggested that the assault be carried out secretly so that no one was caught in the action. So if today the same is going on in Pakistan and the mullahs are suggesting to make covert assaults—and kill children, women and the elderly—in order to avoid the law then this is nothing new. Prior to this, such instances took place in the time of Ḥaḍrat Ṣāliḥ^{as}.

¹⁵⁵ They said, "Swear to each other by Allah that we will surely attack him and his family by night, and then we will say to his heir, 'We witnessed not the destruction of his family, and most surely we are truthful. ' " (The Holy Qur'an 27:50). [Publisher]

THE CALUMNIATION OF APOSTASY ON ḤADḤRAT SHU‘AIB^{AS}

The Holy Qur’an declares about Ḥadḥrat Shu‘aib^{as}:

قَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ لِنُخْرِجَنَّكَ
لِشُعَيْبٍ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَكَ مِنْ قَرْيَتِنَا أَوْ لَتَعُوذُنَّ فِي
مِلَّتِنَا قَالَ أَوَلَوْ كُنَّا كِرِهِينَ ۗ قَدْ افْتَرَيْنَا عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا
إِنْ عُدْنَا فِي مِلَّتِكُمْ بَعْدَ إِذْ نَجَّيْنَا اللَّهُ مِنْهَا ۗ وَمَا يَكُونُ لَنَا
أَنْ نَعُوذَ فِيهَا إِلَّا أَنْ يُشَاءَ اللَّهُ رَبُّنَا وَسِعَ رَبُّنَا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا ۗ
عَلَى اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا ۗ رَبَّنَا افْتَحْ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ قَوْمِنَا بِالْحَقِّ
وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْفَاتِحِينَ ۝¹⁵⁶

The arrogant leaders of the people of Shu‘aib^{as} said: 'O Shu‘aib! we will surely expel you and those who believe in you from our town, unless you return to our society'. How can it be that you have apostatized and we let you go without punishment! Ḥadḥrat Shuaib^{as}

¹⁵⁶ The chief men of his people who were arrogant said, 'Assuredly, we will drive thee out, O Shu‘aib, and the believers *that are* with thee, from our town, or you shall have to return to our religion.' He said: 'Even though we be unwilling? 'We have indeed been forging a lie against Allah, if we *now* return to your religion after Allah has saved us therefrom. And it behoves us not to return thereto except that Allah, our Lord, should *so* will. Our Lord comprehends all things in *His* knowledge. In Allah have we put our trust. *So* O our Lord, decide Thou between us and between our people with truth, and Thou art the Best of those who decide.' (The Holy Qur’an 7:89-90). [Publisher]

gave a reply that shall always remain valid and forceful and said: 'Will you oppress us despite the fact that our hearts are disgusted with your faith?' That is, since our hearts are not convinced of your faith anymore, your oppression cannot make the faith enter in our hearts.

The scholars of today have come to know the method as to how faith can be put into hearts by force that Ḥaḍrat Shu'aib^{as} and his people did not know, and these scholars consider it completely permissible, wise and in the exact light of the teachings of Islam and those of the Holy Qur'an to make use of force (the sword) and demand a return to their society.

Listen to the response of Ḥaḍrat Shu'aib^{as} to this superstitious belief. He says:

قَدْ افْتَرَيْنَا عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا إِنْ عُدْنَا فِي مِلَّتِكُمْ

'If we now return to your society under coercion and from fear of death and that of being driven out of our homes, then we will be among those who impute lies to Allah.'

Does Islam ordains that those who do not believe in the 'Islam' of mullahs should be subjected to commit a greater crime and should be coerced into telling lies against God. Then Ḥaḍrat Shu'aib^{as} says: "This is certainly not possible for us or for you. There is only One Being that has influence and control over hearts and that is Allah, the Exalted. Until our Lord does not Will that we return to the beliefs that we have left

behind, it is not within our control to accept what you are persuading us to."

So how have the things come within the control and influence of the people of today that were not in the control of the Prophets^{as} of earlier eras? Or were not in the control of the enemies of the Prophets^{as} of those eras and were only in the control of Allah, the Exalted. Most certainly it is the same God today Who controls hearts and without His command hearts cannot be transformed.

ALLEGATION AGAINST ḤAḌRAT MŪSĀ^{AS} BY THE NATION OF THE PHARAOH:

The people of Ḥaḍrat Mūsā^{as} and the Pharaoh of the time also treated Ḥaḍrat Mūsā^{as} in the same way. The Holy Qur'an states that not only did they treat him as the opponents of other Prophets^{as} treated them. Rather they surpassed in cruelty and invented new methods of causing infliction. Pharaoh thought of ways and means that did not even cross the imagination of the adversaries of the earlier Prophets^{as} and he thus carried on with all kinds of cruelty on the grounds that according to him Ḥaḍrat Mūsā^{as} was causing his people to apostatize. The Holy Qur'an thus declares:

فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ بِالْحَقِّ مِنْ عِنْدِنَا قَالُوا اقْتُلُوا
أَبْنَاءَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ وَاسْتَحْيُوا نِسَاءَهُمْ^ط

وَمَا كَيْدُ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ اِلَّا فِيْ ضَلٰلٍ ۝
 157 وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ ذَرُوْنِيْ اَقْتُلْ مُوسٰى.....

That when he [Moses^{as}] came to them [the Pharaoh and his people] with the truth [that was granted to him] from Us, they [the Pharaoh and his people] said to kill not just Moses and those who believed him but also their sons, but keep their women alive. But the design of the disbelievers is nothing but wasteful.

Today exactly the same voice is being raised by the Pakistani ulema against the Aḥmadīs. By 'keeping the daughters alive' they (ulema) mean the same as was meant by this expression by Pharaoh i.e. do not kill those among them who are cowards and will comply with you. The adversaries of truth always drum up such plans. However, Allah the Exalted declares وَمَا كَيْدُ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ اِلَّا فِيْ ضَلٰلٍ that all the plans of the disbelievers will come to naught.

The Holy Qur'an states that the Pharaoh said ذَرُوْنِيْ اَقْتُلْ مُوسٰى leave me to kill Moses.

He expressed his fear lest he [Moses^{as}] should change his people's faith and make them apostate or that he should create disorder in his country.

¹⁵⁷ And when he came to them with truth from Us, they said: 'Slay the sons of those who have believed with him, and let their women live.' But the design of the disbelievers is but a thing wasted. And Pharaoh said: 'Leave me alone that I may kill Moses; ... (The Holy Qur'an 40: 26, 27). [Publisher]

REASONING OF THE GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN

The White Paper published by the Government of Pakistan against the Aḥmadiyya Community presents this reasoning as well. The matter being presented to the foreign countries by the Government of Pakistan's White Paper, on the basis of which it opposes the Aḥmadīs, is that the Aḥmadīs are allowed to keep the faith of their choice, however, they make others apostatize by propagating their faith (*tablīgh*) and create disorder in the country. What government will tolerate such a disorder!

THE REVELATION OF THE PROMISED MESSIAH^{AS}

The Promised Messiah^{as} also received the revelation ذُرُونِيَّ أَقْتُلْ مُوسَىٰ وَيُدْعَ رَبَّهُ And this *fir'auniyyat* (the arrogance of Pharaoh) has been demonstrated, in the above words, about my humble self. The despot of Pakistan Ḍiyā'ul Ḥaq had also, like the Pharaoh, decided to have my humble self killed, assuming, in his arrogance, that if he will do so he would cut off the juggler vein of Aḥmadiyyat.

MY REPLY

I reply to them in the same Quranic words in which

the Prophet^{as} of an earlier age (i.e. Moses^{as}) replied to his enemies. Not that I consider myself equal to even the dust of the feet of Prophets^{as}. However I consider it imperative to follow the Sunna of the Prophets^{as}. Justifying my reply on the basis of what Ḥaḍrat Mūsā^{as} said to his enemies, I say to them in the words of the Qur'an:

إِنِّي عُذْتُ بِرَبِّي وَرَبِّكُمْ مِّنْ كُلِّ مُتَكَبِّرٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِيَوْمِ الْحِسَابِ

'By Allah! I come into the refuge of my Lord from you and mischief-makers of your sort and every arrogant person who does not believe in the Day of Judgment. [Otherwise he would not stoop to these vile and contemptible deeds.]¹⁵⁸

The Holy Qur'an goes on to expound this subject through many verses. There is an abundance of such verses, however, I shall now come to the last portion of this subject.

THE ALLEGATION OF APOSTASY AGAINST THE CHIEF OF PROPHETS^{AS}

The most elevated, the best, the supreme, the most eminent, the chosen one is our master Ḥaḍrat

¹⁵⁸ The Holy Qur'an 40:28. [Publisher]

Muḥammad^{sa} who is the chief of all the Prophets^{as}. It is established by the Holy Qur'an and the Sunna that allegations of apostasy were made even against the Holy Prophet^{sa} by his people. They said that he had renounced his faith and should thus certainly be punished. Not only he had apostatized but also made others turn away from their faith. They said how was it possible that they could tolerate that he continuously propagated his faith and convert others to his beliefs.

Allah the Exalted informed the Holy Prophet^{sa}:

وَإِذْ يَمْكُرُ بِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِيُثْبِتُوكَ أَوْ يَقْتُلُوكَ أَوْ
يُخْرِجُوكَ وَيَمْكُرُونَ وَيَمْكُرُ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَكْرِينَ ۝

"And *remember the time* when the disbelievers plotted against thee that they might imprison thee or kill thee or expel thee. And they planned and Allah *also* planned, and Allah is the Best of planners."¹⁵⁹

That is there was the time when the disbelievers would devise all sorts of plans against him^{sa}. Among these plans was the scheme that he^{sa} should be captured, murdered or expelled from the town. That all the methods thought by the enemies of the previous Prophets^{as} were not just hatched by the enemies of the Holy Prophet^{sa} but a resolve was made to carry them

¹⁵⁹ The Holy Qur'an 8:31. [Publisher]

out and for this all kinds of efforts were made by them. Just as Allah the Exalted declares: they tried all plans and Allah the Exalted also planned in response and indeed Allah is the best of the planners.

YOU ARE DEVOID OF SHAME!

Let us pause and reflect. The history that has been preserved by the Holy Qur'an and which has been, time and again, presented to us with great clarity—citing by name all the Prophets^{as} from the time of Ḥaḍrat Nūḥ^{as} to the Holy Prophet^{sa}—reminding us, repeatedly and categorically, that the opponents of all Prophets^{as} were united in the belief that Prophets^{as} were apostates who needed to be punished. The enemy of the Prophet^{as} of each era is in agreement and unanimity with the enemy of the Prophet^{as} of another era that there should definitely be a punishment for apostasy, whether one is killed, imprisoned or driven out of home, but punished they must be. In particular it is imperative to punish that apostate who also preaches his faith to others. With reference to this history Allah, the Exalted, constantly tells us that those people were false and cruel who proposed punishment for apostasy. They supported force in matters of faith and openly expressed their views in this regard. The Holy Prophet^{sa} and all the other Prophets^{as}, without exception, dismissed these claims, declared them false, wretched and unfortunate. They made the

proclamations about freedom of religion and the freedom of conscience.

THE QUESTION IS:

After this general agreement and unanimity of the Prophets^{as} that there is no punishment for apostasy, how could it be that the Holy Prophet^{sa}— about whom his enemies maintained that he was an apostate and should thus be punished— would leave the party of the Prophets^{as} and join the party of their enemies and announce that each apostate should be punished by death or other dreadful methods?

It is astonishing that the scholars of today, whilst claiming love for the Holy Prophet^{sa}, would make this assertion! Why, surely they must feel embarrassed. Do they not simply wish to die with mortification! How dare they utter such claims, when all Prophets^{as}, unanimously and without exception, continuously one after the other, dismissed the tenet of death penalty for apostasy. Each time God bore witness that these Prophets^{as} were true in what they said and that there is no compulsion in religion and those who promoted compulsion in matters of faith and suggested the punishment for apostasy were all liars and ignoble. God destroyed and obliterated them all.

Leave all other arguments against apostacy aside and just consider what class you are (God forbid) dragging the Holy Prophet^{sa} into. Most certainly this

can never be. God will certainly never allow you to do this. This doctrine is only fit to die, and it shall. Even if the Aḥmadīs have to lay down their lives for this, they shall do so. They shall erase this stigma from the Holy Prophet^{sa} even if they have to erase these smears with their own blood!

THE TIMES HAVE CHANGED

It is a pity that the officials and the mullahs of Pakistan do not realise that times have changed, that all the opponents of the Prophets^{as}—about whom the Holy Qur’an states that they had suggested punishments for apostasy—are now repentant and have abandoned this belief. At present followers of no religion of the world maintain death penalty to be the punishment for apostasy. Even if the collective judgment of all the faiths of the world in the times of the Holy Prophet^{sa} was death penalty for apostasy or imprisonment or expulsion from township, times have indeed changed now. Now even the Jews say that death penalty is not the punishment for apostasy, that it is a crime in the name of humanity and a smear on religion. Today even the Christians say with reference to their historical past that if they had killed the fellow Christians mercilessly for the crime of apostasy then they have greatly wronged themselves and are now embarrassed to note that history. They say that their heads hang in shame reading the history of the Spanish Inquisition or the

details of the punishments meted out in England for apostasy and say that they now renounce all that. Similarly various other faiths that once held this belief, have now relinquished it.

What a warped scenario is this that today among those who claim death penalty to be the punishment of apostasy, are none other than those who are associated with the Holy Prophet^{sa}. Can a scenario more agonizing than this be imagined?

There is a limit to everything. This situation has crossed all boundaries of ignorance. In the emotional reaction to all this, whilst I feel anger I also undergo extreme anguish and at times I am amused as to what has happened to these people, what on earth has become of their rational faculties!

THE MIRACLE OF HOLY PROPHET'S PRAYER:

I prays to God for the ears which can listen and for the hearts that may be guided. They may or may not believe us, but our stand shall always be that of the Holy Prophet^{sa}—to the practice of whom^{sa} we shall always remain loyal—encapsulated in the verses.

فَذَكِّرْ ۗ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ مُذَكِّرٌ ۗ لَسْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِمُصَيِّرٍ ۗ¹⁶⁰

¹⁶⁰ Admonish, therefore, for thou art but an admonisher; Thou hast no authority to *compel* them. (The Holy Qur'an 88:22-23). [Publisher]

We are here to heal the wounds of today's world and we will definitely try and remove the perversity of today's world. We shall do it through admonishing and reasoning, through counsel with love and care. However, we shall not take on the role of a warden. If one does not believe one has the right to reject:

فَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُكْفُرْ¹⁶¹

Our task is to carry the message. But along with it we shall pray, for the arsenal of prayer is the greatest weapon of all. The land of Arabia witnessed such miracles of the prayers of the Holy Prophet^{sa} that the world is still astonished by them. The fact of the matter is that the tremendous revolution that took place in the Arabian Peninsula within a few years was a fruit of the prayers of the Holy Prophet^{sa} and not just a result of his preaching.

One Hadith relates that, with the obvious exception of Mecca and Medina, Ṭā'if too was, not among the areas which apostatized and that these areas were blessed by the personal education and training of the Holy Prophet^{sa}. The fact of the matter is that Islam reached the rest of Arabia, and indeed the world, by virtue of the prayers of the Holy Prophet^{sa}. The town of Taif did not join the apostates because it has accepted

¹⁶¹ Wherefore let him who will, believe, and let him who will, disbelieve. (The Holy Qur'an 18:30). [Publisher]

Islam exclusively as a consequence of the prayers of the Holy Prophet^{sa}.

The fact that Ṭā'if did not join in the rebellion against the Muslim government at the time when almost all the tribes of Arabia had given in to this treachery, proves that this miracle was indeed a manifestation of the prayers of the Holy Prophet^{sa} for Ṭā'if.

During the time when the Holy Prophet^{sa} was subjected to cruelty in Ṭā'if, when he was being stoned, God's angels descended and offered him that if he so wished the town could be destroyed. But the Holy Prophet^{sa} prayed that the town be granted guidance and beseeched that: **اللَّهُمَّ اهْدِ قَوْمِي فَإِنَّهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ**

'O my Allah, guide these people of mine,
for they know not.'¹⁶²

Therefore, O Aḥmadīs, pray. Pray also for Pakistan. Our love for Pakistan is not primarily based on the fact that it is the country of those of us who migrated from there but because, as I have repeatedly drawn your attention to the fact, it is a country that was exclusively obtained in the name of Islam. Today it is exclusively being used to eradicate Islam. In the entire world it is the only country that was brought into being

¹⁶² *Al-Durrul Manthūr*, 'Allāma Jalāluddīn Al-Suyūṭī, under verse 68 of Chapter 5 of The Holy Qur'an. [Publisher]

for the *Kalima*^{*}, Unity of God. Today, unfortunately this is the very country that is bent upon erasing the *Kalima*. Every such action that would disgrace Islam in the entire world is being carried out there. However, as this country was originally created for the love of the Holy Prophet^{sa} and in the name of God, our love for it will remain firm in any case.

O Pakistan, dear country, by God we love you. As you have increased in cruelty, our love for you has also increased, so as to save you from destruction. All those Aḥmadīs who belong to other countries but to whom the message of truth was conveyed by people born of your land are also grateful to you and will continue to pray for you.

So, most of all remember Pakistan in your prayers and also the entire Islamic world, against which great global conspiracies are being hatched. Remember the entire mankind in your prayers, and indeed the Pakistani Aḥmadīs who are enduring all sorts of hardship and tortures. Those who have not suffered the adversity of imprisonment are also living a life of extreme anguish. They are being treated ruthlessly and are deprived of their basic human rights—it all has made their lives unbearable. Pray for all of them. Pray for those who suffer starvation. Pray for the poor nations. Also pray for the general welfare of mankind. Wars are enormous calamities. With the human

^{*} *La ilaha illAllah, Muhammadur RasululAllah.* "there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger." [Publisher]

progress wars are getting deadlier. Civilized behaviours is the basic condition of civilized people. However transgression and brutality is shown in wars by the so-called civilized countries, because their civilization is superficial and is not built on the foundation of religion. We have repeatedly witnessed that nations who lay claim to be highly civilised have proven to be brutally vicious during war. Christians have displayed extreme cruelty during war against fellow Christians. Communists have been very ferocious to other Communists during war. Their civilizations are superficial; something that only appeared gilded but has no profound human values. These people are not aware of the complete reality of religion.

Today the situation is worse. So, the war of tomorrow will be deadlier than the war of yesterday. Therefore pray that Allah, the Exalted, may avert this calamity and remove the perversities that ultimately result in a war. Pray for the needy and those in dire straits. Pray for the widows, the orphans. Pray for those who bear all sorts of grief, the starving, the poor nations, the people and the nations who are crushed under the monetary burden of interest. Also remember the general welfare of mankind in your prayer.

All these prayers that you will offer will also be answered in your favour and will, with the grace of Allah, descend on you as His blessings.