

Tāriq ibn Shihāb narrated:

1

A Jew came to ‘Umar and said: ‘*Amīr al-Mu’minīn*, you recite a verse in your Book. Had it been revealed to us, Jews, we would have made its day of revelation a time of celebration’.

2

He said: ‘Which verse?’ He said: ‘This day I have perfected your religion for you and have bestowed on you the full measure of My blessings and have chosen Islam as a religion for you’. (5: 3)

3

‘Umar said: ‘I know the day when and the place where it was revealed. It was revealed to God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) at Arafat, on a Friday’. ⁽¹⁾

From the Qur’an

﴿Do they, perchance, envy other people for what God has given them out of His bounty? We have indeed given revelation and wisdom to the House of Abraham, and We did bestow on them a mighty dominion. (54) Some of them believe in him and some turn away from him. Sufficient scourge is the fire of Hell.﴾ (4: 54-55)

﴿This day I have perfected your religion for you and have bestowed on you the full measure of My blessings and have chosen Islam as a religion for you.﴾ (5: 3)

The Narrator

Abu Ḥafṣ ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ibn Nufayl belonged to the ‘Adiy branch of the Quraysh tribe. His line of descent joins with that of the Prophet at Ka’b ibn Lu’ay. He was nicknamed al-Fārūq. He was the second of the rightly-guided caliphs, and the first to have the title *Amīr al-Mu’minīn*, i.e. Prince of the Faithful. He was constantly very close to the Prophet (peace be upon him). At the time of his death, the Prophet was very pleased with him. He died in Year 23 AH 645 CE.

Summary

The Jews envied the Muslims that this verse was revealed to them and wished that a similar verse had been revealed to their own prophets. This is the verse in which God states that He has perfected the religion of Islam. ‘Umar told them that he knew the time and place of its revelation and that all Muslims honour that place and that day.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 45; Muslim, 3017.



Message and Meaning

1

A rabbi came to see ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb. His name was Ka‘b ibn Māti’, better known by his nickname, Ka‘b al-Aḥbār. He said to ‘Umar that he envied the Muslims a certain Qur’anic verse. The Jews would have loved for a similar verse to have been revealed to them. They would have made the day of its revelation one of celebration and commemoration.

2

In answer to ‘Umar’s question, Ka‘b told him that it is ‘This day I have perfected your religion for you and have bestowed on you the full measure of My blessings and have chosen Islam as a religion for you’. (5: 3)

The Jews noted this verse because they pay attention to religious matters. Needless to say, the revelation of this verse is an occasion of celebration because it states the great news that the religion of Islam has been completed and perfected. This is so because all its legislation, including mandatory punishments and inheritance legislation, have clearly been stated. Also, the idolaters were removed and banned entry into the Sacred Mosque in Makkah; Islam prevailed while polytheism and its adherents were defeated and humiliated; Muslims no longer feared any enemies; and Makkah came under Islam and its rule. Moreover, the religion of Islam was given its final status: there can no longer be any abrogation of its legislation, and no further creed will be given from on high. Islam is the final message from God. Its perfection is further manifest in the fact that there is no contradiction between its texts, nor between it and sound reason or logic. It is a religion that is suitable for humans and jinn, in all places and generations. Its legislation meets the needs of mankind and ensures a life of peace and good order for all.

Moreover, God bestowed the full measure of His blessings, making His religion prevail and spread throughout the earth, giving people peace and security. God also states that He has chosen Islam as the religion to be followed by mankind. It will never be abrogated or superseded by any other religion.

3

‘Umar tells Ka‘b al-Aḥbār that Muslims attach greater importance to divine revelation than the Jews. We know the time when this verse was revealed and the place of its revelation. Both are marked by us. It was revealed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) when he was in attendance at Arafat during his hajj, and the day was Friday. As such, the occasion marked two Eids at the same time: the weekly one, which is Friday, and the Day of Arafat. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ‘The Day of Arafat, the Day of Sacrifice and the Tashrīq days are the time of Eid and celebration for us, Muslims. They are days of eating and drinking’.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by Abu Dāwūd, 2419; al-Tirmidhī, 773; al-Nasāī, 4186.

Implementation

- 1 The enemies of Islam study it carefully, searching for points of ambiguity in order to raise doubts about it. Every scholar should be ready to defend Islam and refute the doubts they raise.
- 2 Muslims should not be deceived by unbelievers' apparent cordiality towards them. They harbour strong grudges against Muslims for what God has given them.
- 3 Non-Muslims envy us the revelations God has given us, yet many Muslims neglect its recitation and make no attempt to understand its meanings.
- 4 Every Muslim should know that Islam is a complete and perfect religion that is free from defects. There is no internal contradiction in its texts, nor between its texts and sound logic and reason. Anyone who feels confused about something should refer to scholars who will be able to sort it out for him, clarifying any imagined or perceived contradiction.
- 5 The Eids are not determined by personal view or occasion. They are determined by religious text. A Muslim should not mark any of the occasions celebrated by other communities.
- 6 Every Muslim should be proud of his faith, and learn about it. He should not allow anyone to let him appear as one whose religion is unknown, or as one who does not understand his own faith.



