

Tafseer Al-Baqarah (2: 130-134)

From the Book, Introduction to the Tafseer of the Quran,

by the Ameer of Hizb ut Tahrir, the eminent jurist and statesman, Sheikh Ata Bin Khalil Abu Al-Rashtah:

﴿وَمَنْ يَرْغَبْ عَنْ مِلَّةِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِلَّا مَنْ سَفِهَ نَفْسَهُ وَلَقَدْ اصْطَفَيْنَاهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَإِنَّهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ لَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ (130) إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ أَسْلِمْ قَالَ أَسْلَمْتُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ (131) وَوَصَّى بِهَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ بَنِيهِ وَيَعْقُوبُ يَا بَنِيَّ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَى لَكُمُ الدِّينَ فَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ (132) أَمْ كُنْتُمْ شُهَدَاءَ إِذْ حَضَرَ يَعْقُوبَ الْمَوْتَ إِذْ قَالَ لِبَنِيهِ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِن بَعْدِي قَالُوا نَعْبُدُ إِلَهَكَ وَإِلَهَ آبَائِكَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ (133) تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَلَكُم مَّا كَسَبْتُمْ وَلَا تُسْأَلُونَ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ (134)﴾

***"And who turns away from the Millah of Ibrahim (i.e. Islamic Monotheism) except him who fools himself Truly, We chose him in this world and verily, in the Hereafter he will be among the righteous). (130) When his Lord said to him, "Submit (i.e. be a Muslim)!" He said, "I have submitted myself (as a Muslim) to the Lord of the `Alamin (mankind, Jinn and all that exists)."* (131) *And this (submission to Allah, Islam) was enjoined by Ibrahim (Abraham) upon his sons and by Ya`qub (Jacob) (saying), "O my sons! Allah has chosen for you the (true) Deen, then die not except as Muslims."* (132) *Or were you witnesses when death approached Ya`qub (Jacob) When he said unto his sons, "What will you worship after me" They said, "We shall worship your Allah (God) the Ilah of your fathers, Ibrahim (Abraham), Isma'il (Ishmael), Ishaq (Isaac), One Ilah, and to Him we submit (in Islam))."* (133) *That was a Ummah who has passed away. They shall receive the reward of what they earned and you of what you earn. And you will not be asked of what they used to do (134).*" [Surah al-Baqarah: 130-134]**

Allah (swt) clarifies in these verses the following:

1. Indeed the one who hates and disbelieves in the Millah of Ibrahim has afflicted himself with ignorance and foolishness, because Allah has chosen Ibrahim - peace be upon him - for Prophethood and Messengership in the world, and he peace be upon him is in the Hereafter from those witnessed for their steadfastness on integrity, goodness and righteousness.

﴿وَمَنْ يَرْغَبْ عَنْ مِلَّةِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ﴾ ***"And who turns away from the Millah of Ibrahim"*** It is a condemning question, as to who from the wise could turn away from the clear truth which is the Millah of Ibrahim.

﴿مِلَّةٍ﴾ ***"Millah"*** in origin it is the Sunnah and the Method as Zujaaj has said. Millah encompasses the Deen, Aqeedah (Creed) and Shariah (Legislation) and though it is the Aqeedah, i.e. Imaan, upon which Ibrahim was, because the Legislation of the previous Prophets was abrogated by the Message of Islam since the time that RasulAllah (saaw) was appointed.

﴿وَأَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمُهَيِّمًا عَلَيْهِ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَهُم بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ عَمَّا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ لِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مَنكُم شِرْعَةً وَمِنْهَاجًا وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِنْ لِّيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا﴾ ***"And We have sent down to you the Book (this Qur'an) in truth, confirming the Scripture that came before it and Muhayminan over it (old Scriptures). So judge between them by what Allah has revealed, and follow not their vain desires, diverging away from the truth that has come to you. To each among you, We have prescribed a law and a clear way. If Allah willed, He would have made you one nation, but that (He) may test you in what He has given you; so compete in good deeds. The return of you (all) is to Allah; then He will inform you about that in which you used to differ."*** [Surah Al-Maidah 5:48].

﴿مُهَيِّمًا﴾ ***"Muhayminan"*** i.e. Abrogating the Sharia (Legislation) of the previous Prophets. As for the Aqeedah (Creed) of the previous Prophets it is not abrogated because the abrogation occurred in the Ahkaam Sharieeyah (Legal Rulings) of the previous prophets, except all that has been approved

by Islam from their Legislations becomes a Hukm Shari (Legal Ruling) in Islam because Islam has approved it.

Accordingly, the one who disbelieves in the Millah of Ibrahim with respect to its Aqeedah (Creed), i.e. in the Tawheed (Oneness) of Allah (swt) and the rejection of Shirk (Partnership with Allah) and all that was asked in this of Ibrahim - peace be upon him, is Imaan. So indeed the one who hated it and disbelieved it has afflicted himself with foolishness, ignorance and disbelief in Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saaw).

﴿مَنْ سَفِهَ نَفْسَهُ﴾ i.e. he has afflicted himself with foolishness, ignorance and disbelief.

﴿سَفِهَ﴾ This is how it should be read i.e. by pronouncing the ف “F” in *Kassrah* كسرة form, becomes ف “Fi.”

2. All the Prophets - peace be upon them - were Muslims to Allah in the linguistic sense i.e. submitting subjects of Allah (swt), believing in all that Allah (swt) asked from them. In this sense Ibrahim - peace be upon him – was Hanif (upright) and Muslim i.e. without deviation from the truth but is sincerely, submitting subject to Allah (swt).

Therefore Allah (swt) responded to the Jews in their saying that Ibrahim was a Jew, and Allah (swt) also responded to the Christians in their saying that Ibrahim was a Christian. ﴿مَا كَانَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ يَهُودِيًّا وَلَا نَصْرَانِيًّا وَلَكِنْ كَانَ حَنِيفًا مُسْلِمًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ﴾ **“Ibrahim was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was a true Muslim Hanifa and he was not of the Mushrikin”** [Surah Aali-Imran 3:67]

Allah (swt) also replies similarly in the previous verse ﴿وَمَنْ يَرْغَبْ عَنْ مِلَّةِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِلَّا مَنْ سَفِهَ نَفْسَهُ﴾ **“And who turns away from the Millah of Ibrahim (i.e. Islamic Monotheism) except him who fools himself.”** So Jews and Christians hated that the Millah of Ibrahim be, Hanif (upright), a Muslim, and they say that he was a Jew or a Christian.

And Allah (swt) responded to them similarly over their claim by saying that the Torah and the Bible were not revealed until after him. ﴿يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لِمَ تُحَاجُّونَ فِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمَا أَتَتْهُ الْتَوْرَةُ وَالْإِنْجِيلُ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ﴾ **“O people of the Scripture! Why do you dispute about Ibrahim, while the Tawrah and the Injil were not revealed till after him Have you then no sense.”** [Surah Aali-Imran 3:65]

As for the benefit of the Millah of Ibrahim:

The Prophets and those who follow them are Muslims in this sense, in linguistic terms i.e. submissive and subject to Allah (swt), but Islam in the Shari (Legal) sense is that which was revealed by Allah (swt) to His Messenger, Muhammad (saaw) with his complete Aqeedah (Creed) - which encompasses the Aqeedah of the previous Prophets - and with his complete Shariah (Legislation) abrogating the legislations of the previous Prophets.

After the appointing of the Messenger of Allah (saaw) the Dawah (Call) become confined to the Dawah of Islam and Islam alone. ﴿إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ﴾ **“Indeed the only Deen before Allah is Islam”** [Surah Aali-Imran 3:19] ﴿وَمَنْ يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ﴾ **“And whoso seeks a religion other than Islam, it shall not be accepted from him, and in the life to come he shall be among the losers.”** [Surah Aali-Imran 3:86]

It is not correct to specifically Call to the Millah of any from the previous prophets, but it is mandatory to Call to the Islamic Aqeedah - and the Aqeedah of the previous Prophets is part of it - likewise, it is also mandatory to call to the Islamic Shariah (Legislation) that abrogated the Legislation of the previous prophets, except that which were approved by it and became part of the Ahkaam Shariyyah (Legal Rulings).

Summarizing what has been said:

i) As for the Millah of the previous prophets in terms of Aqeedah, we believe in it and it is part of the Islamic Aqeedah.

ii) As for the Millah of the previous prophets in terms of Shariah, it is abrogated by Islam and what is approved by Islam from it becomes part of Islam and is effective by it, because Islam brought it and not because it is *Shara min Qablina* شرع من قبلنا “Legislation from Before Us (Previous Prophets).”

iii) Is not correct to specifically Call, after Islam, to any Millah from the Millahs of previous Prophets, rather the Call is only to Islam and what Islam approved of from the Millahs of previous prophets becomes a part of Islam.

3. Indeed Ibrahim (saaw) has complied with the order of Allah and submitted sincerely, submissively, to Allah and enjoined this upon his sons, and likewise Ya'qub (as) - peace be upon him - enjoined this upon his sons, that they be careful to adhere to their Deen that was chosen by Allah for them, that they continue upon that until Allah takes their life and they are Muslims submitting to Allah, obedient to him, that they must never falter in the endeavor of their obedience to Allah, their surrender and submission to him, because they do not know when they will die.

﴿فَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ﴾ **“Do not die except as Muslims”** i.e. remain steadfast upon Islam until death overcomes you, i.e. let not death come upon you except that you are Muslims, the prohibition is in reality about being other than in the state of Islam when they die, and not a prohibition of them dying per se, just like saying do not make *Salah* (Prayer) until you are *Khashia* خاشع (Devout) does not prohibit *Salah*, rather it is about leaving devotion and here it is likewise, so the prohibition is not about death, but it is prohibited to leave Islam.

4. Indeed the Jews and the Christians invent a lie against Allah, so their every sect claims that the Prophets were on their Millah and they said that about Ibrahim - peace be upon him. So, Allah (swt) made clear the invalidity of their saying as we mentioned earlier, and they spoke about Ya'qub (as) so Allah (swt) invalidated their case because they were not present with Ya'qub (as) - peace be upon him - when death presented before him, even if they were present to know that Ya'qub (as) - peace be upon him - was a Muslim (submitted) to Allah (swt), an obedient subject and that and his sons after him vowed to him in his illness of death that they would remain upon his Deen and the Deen of his fathers, Ibrahim, Ismaeel and Ishaaq, worshiping the one and only Allah and submitting to Him (swt) obediently, submissively, and not as the Jews and Christians that claim were on their altered and distorted Millah, changed and distorted and that what was revealed after them was distorted and altered.

﴿أَمْ كُنْتُمْ﴾ **“Or were you”** ﴿أَمْ﴾ **“or”** is a conjunction with the meaning بل “but” and a conjunction of denial i.e. بل أَكُنْتُمْ “but were you.” The meaning of “but” is of denial of the previous speech - in the previous ayah - which is a statement of recommendation, thus moving on to resume a new topic, which is a rebuke of the Jews and the Christians for their claim by their Millah over Ya'qub (as) and his sons.

The Arabs ask a question using (أَمْ) in every question that is initiated after a statement has preceded it, in a manner such as that of the speech of the Almighty, رَبِّ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ مِنْ رَبِّ ﴿الم - تنزيل الكتاب لا ريب فيه من رب﴾ **Alif. Lam Mim (1) The revelation of this book is, without any doubt, from the Lord of the Worlds (2) Do the people say that this man himself has forged it? Nay, but it is the Truth from your Lord so that you may warn a people to whom no warner has come before you. Maybe they are guided aright.”** [Surah as-Sajdah 32: 1-3]

﴿شُهَدَاءَ﴾ **“witnesses”** the plural of witness with the sense of being present i.e. you were not present when Ya'qub (as) - peace be upon him - was dying and his questioning of his sons asked about Deen, so why do you claim what you claim?!

﴿مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ بَعْدِي﴾ **“What will you worship after me”** i.e. the what entity will you worship after my death. The use of مَا “what” in the question is to indicate that the answer of Ya'qub (as)'s sons of worshiping Allah alone was not based on imitation of or guidance from their father, but based on the intellectual conviction and sincere Imaan (Belief) in that, so it is as if they were asked about what they worship in origin without having previous knowledge from anyone, so they answered about believing without imitation. The Arabs ask مَا “what” about every unknown matter, if it is known then the experts ask with مَنْ (who) when asking about something specific, and when asking about its description, it is said, what does Zaid know more than a doctor? So, the question ﴿مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ بَعْدِي﴾ **“What will you worship after me”** is to question them about their worshiping in origin, i.e. as if they did not know anything about what was asked to the extent that their answer is neither imitation or nor is it based on

information that has no evidence for it, but it will be an answer on definitive knowledge and so it was.

﴿آبَاكَ إِبرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ﴾ **“your fathers, Ibrahim (Abraham), Isma'il (Ishmael), Ishaq (Isaac)”** As for Ibrahim (as) and Ishaq (as) they are the respectively the grandfather and father of Ya'qub (as), which is evident in calling them "fathers". As for Ismail - peace be upon him - he is the uncle of Ya'qub and Arabs include "uncles" within the meaning of "fathers." Thus Messenger of Allah, (saaw) said, «عم الرجل صنو أبيه» **“The uncle of the man synonymous with his father.”** And he (saaw) said about Al-Abaas **“He is what remains of my fathers.”**

5. In the last Ayah is an address to the Jews and the Christians to leave the slander against Ibrahim, Ismail, Ishaq and Ya'qub and his sons as being Jews or Christians, so do not attach them to you or attach yourselves to them, thinking amongst yourselves that you will elevate your importance through them, it is otherwise, for they are a Ummah have passed away upon good deeds which they earned, whereas for you, you will be frustrated in the evil deed that you committed and you will never benefit of the good deeds of this righteous Ummah. So you are not going to be reckoned upon for their deeds, but for your own deeds, which will be placed on your balance on the Day of Reckoning. It is upon your deeds, so make sure that your deeds are in obedience to Allah (swt) so they benefit you on the Day of Reckoning, and as for you disobeying Allah (swt) whilst depending on attachment to the Prophets with you, thinking amongst yourselves that their good deeds will benefit you and relieve you, this will never be.

Allah (swt) said, ﴿تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَلَكُمْ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَلَا تُسْأَلُونَ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ﴾ **“That was an Ummah who has passed away. They shall receive the reward of what they earned and you of what you earn. And you will not be asked of what they used to do.”** ﴿أُمَّةٌ﴾ Ummah (Nation) is a homonym, a word of more than one meaning, which can become restricted to one, such as when it is restricted to Khair (Goodness) and for this matter ﴿إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَانَ أُمَّةً قَانِتًا لِلَّهِ حَنِيفًا وَلَمْ يَكُ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ﴾ **“Indeed, Abraham was a [comprehensive] leader, devoutly obedient to Allah, inclining toward truth, and he was not of those who associate others with Allah”** [Surah an-Nahl 16:120] or it can be restricted to Deen and Millah ﴿إِنَّا وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا عَلَى أُمَّةٍ﴾ **“Indeed, we found our fathers upon a religion.”** [Surah Zukhruf 43:23] Likewise, it is restricted to meaning a time period ﴿وَاذْكُرْ بَعْدَ أُمَّةٍ﴾ **“remembered after a time”** [Surah Yousuf 12:45] and the Qareenah قرينة (Context) is that which clarifies the meaning. And it is also there with the meaning of a group from the people because it says of Ibrahim, Ismail, Ishaq and Ya'qub and his sons and about those who believe in them and follow them in the same sense of His (swt) saying, ﴿وَلَتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ﴾ **“Let there be from amongst you a group”** [Surah Aali Imran 3:104] and His (swt) saying ﴿وَمِنْ قَوْمِ مُوسَى أُمَّةٌ يَهْدُونَ﴾ **“And among the people of Moses is a group which guides”** [Surah Al-Araaf 7:159]

﴿خَلَتْ﴾ **“Passed away”** i.e. passed away in death, and indeed it is said of the one who has died and passed away: that he departed in his departure from the world and of his separation from his family and of the subject of his moving on, in origin from the Arabs saying that a man departed when he leaves for a place that is delightful for him and he becomes alone from the people.