

Fast 12: Religious principles taught to Israelites — (6): Explaining it to people

- Going back to the full verse quoted in Study 10:

<p>“And when Allah took a covenant from those who were given the Book: You shall explain it to people and shall not hide it. But they threw it behind their backs and took a small price for it. And evil is what they buy.” — ch. 3, v. 187</p>	<p>وَإِذْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ لَتُبَيِّنُنَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَكْتُمُونَهُ فَنَبَذُوهُ وَرَاءَ ظُهُورِهِمْ وَاشْتَرَوْا بِهِ تَمَنَّا قَلِيلًا فَبِئْسَ مَا يَشْتَرُونَ ﴿١٨٧﴾</p>
--	---

We may add that the “small price” taken for throwing the book of Allah behind their backs includes the following:

- leadership over the public, who then rely unquestioningly on the interpretation of the religious leaders,
 - popularity with the public because, instead of correcting them, they are being encouraged in their pre-conceived wrong beliefs
 - earning livelihood through certain rituals and functions conducted in the name of religion for which the cleric, priest or *maulvi* is paid.
- The above verse says at the beginning: “You shall explain it to people”. The word for “explain” is based on the word *bayān*. It doesn’t say you shall “read it” or “recite it” to people, but *explain* it to them. So its meaning must be conveyed to them.
 - The Holy Prophet Muhammad did all that he could to explain the teachings of Islam to people and answer their questions. He acted according to the above command: “You shall explain it to people and shall not hide it.” He encouraged people to learn. In Bukhari we read of the following:
 - The Holy Prophet was talking to people when a man came and intruded into his talk by asking a question. The Prophet ignored him and carried on. People thought that either the Holy Prophet had disliked the interruption or he didn’t hear the question. When the Holy Prophet finished his talk, he asked people: “Where is the man who asked that question?” When he responded, “I am here”, the Holy Prophet then answered the question he had asked. (hadith 59)
 - A stranger came to the Holy Prophet’s mosque and asked people: “Which one of you is Muhammad?” When people pointed out the Prophet, the man said: “I am going to ask you some questions and I am going to be hard on you in asking them, so do not be offended with me.” The Prophet was not offended by the man’s attitude or his words and said to him: “Ask whatever occurs to you.” (hadith 63)

- Many times, after he had been explaining something to people, he would say: “Those who are present must convey it to those who are absent.” (hadith 67, etc.) The Holy Prophet wanted the widest circulation of what he taught people.
- Whatever you explain, it should neither be boring to people nor make them run away from religion. It is reported by the Holy Prophet’s companions that he “used to have consideration for us while preaching, by selecting suitable times and days, as he did not like that we should get bored”, and also that he said: “Make it easy and do not make it difficult. Give them happy news and do not make them disenchanting.” (hadith 68, 69)
- It is reported that “when he said anything, he would say it three times so that it was understood”. It is, of course, not meant that the Holy Prophet used to repeat every statement that he made, but only in case of those about which he wanted to ensure that people understood them clearly.
- Regarding the preservation of religious teachings, the Caliph Umar ibn Abdul Aziz, who ruled at the end of the first century of Islam, wrote in his instructions: “People should disseminate knowledge and establish gatherings until those who have no knowledge have been taught, for surely knowledge does not disappear unless it is kept secret.” (Bukhari, ch. 34 of the Book of Knowledge)
- It is recorded about Aishah, wife of the Prophet, that “whenever she heard a thing (from him) which she did not understand, she would ask about it again and again, till she understood it.” (hadith 103)
- Once women approached him and said: “Men have an advantage over us in approaching you, so appoint for us a day that you can (to teach women).” So the Holy Prophet promised them a day on which to meet them. (hadith 101)
- Once, a companion reports, the Holy Prophet “thought that women did not hear (his sermon), so he preached to them and exhorted them to give in charity” (hadith 98). Thinking that the women had not heard his sermon, the Holy Prophet went over to them specially to preach it.

Now compare this — the Quran says “You shall explain it to people” and the Holy Prophet took special steps to preach to women, but many Muslims don’t allow a woman to be present to listen to her own *nikah* (wedding) sermon!

- On many occasions, after preaching something, the Holy Prophet would ask people: “Have I conveyed the message? (*hal ballagh-tu*)” Many a time, he would raise his hands and ask Allah the same: *hal ballagh-tu*. This famously happened at the Farewell Pilgrimage, the last (and only) *Hajj* performed by

him. According to one report, after he asked the great gathering this question, “Have I conveyed the message?”, people replied: “Yes”. He said: “O Allah, bear witness” (Ibn Majah).