

RAMADAN

IMMERSION



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The Sixth Hadith in the Book of Revelation

- Narrated 'Abdullah bin 'Abbas:

أَخْبَرَهُ أَنَّ أَبَا سُفْيَانَ بْنَ حَرْبٍ أَخْبَرَهُ أَنَّ هِرْقَلَ أَرْسَلَ إِلَيْهِ فِي رَكْبٍ مِنْ قُرَيْشٍ - وَكَانُوا تُجَارًا بِالشَّامِ - فِي الْمُدَّةِ الَّتِي كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَادًّا فِيهَا أَبَا سُفْيَانَ وَكَفَّارَ قُرَيْشٍ، فَاتَّوَهُ وَهُمْ بِإِيلِيَاءٍ فَدَعَاهُمْ فِي مَجْلِسِهِ، وَحَوْلَهُ عُظَمَاءُ الرُّومِ ثُمَّ دَعَاهُمْ وَدَعَا لِتَرْجَمَانِهِ فَقَالَ أَيُّكُمْ أَقْرَبُ نَسَبًا بِهَذَا الرَّجُلِ الَّذِي يَزْعُمُ أَنَّهُ نَبِيُِّّي فَقَالَ أَبُو سُفْيَانَ فَقُلْتُ أَنَا أَقْرَبُهُمْ نَسَبًا. فَقَالَ أَدْنُوهُ مِنِّي، وَقَرَّبُوا أَصْحَابَهُ، فَاجْعَلُوهُمْ عِنْدَ ظَهْرِهِ. ثُمَّ قَالَ لِتَرْجَمَانِهِ قُلْ لَهُمْ إِنِّي سَأِلْتُ هَذَا عَنْ هَذَا الرَّجُلِ، فَإِنْ كَذَّبَنِي فَكَذَّبُوهُ. فَوَاللَّهِ لَوْلَا الْحَيَاءُ مِنْ أَنْ يَأْتِرُوا عَلَيَّ كَذِبًا لَكَذَّبْتُ عَنْهُ، ثُمَّ كَانَ أَوَّلَ مَا سَأَلَنِي عَنْهُ أَنْ قَالَ كَيْفَ نَسَبُهُ فَيَكُمُ قُلْتُ هُوَ فِينَا ذُو نَسَبٍ. قَالَ فَهَلْ قَالَ هَذَا الْقَوْلَ مِنْكُمْ أَحَدٌ قَطُّ قَبْلَهُ قُلْتُ لَا. قَالَ فَهَلْ كَانَ مِنْ آبَائِهِ مِنْ مَلِكٍ قُلْتُ لَا. قَالَ فَأَشْرَافُ النَّاسِ يَتَّبِعُونَهُ أَمْ ضَعَفَاؤُهُمْ فَقُلْتُ بَلْ ضَعَفَاؤُهُمْ. قَالَ أَيْزِيدُونَ أَمْ يَنْقُصُونَ قُلْتُ بَلْ يَزِيدُونَ. قَالَ فَهَلْ يَزِيدُ أَحَدٌ مِنْهُمْ سَخَطَةً لِدِينِهِ بَعْدَ أَنْ يَدْخُلَ فِيهِ قُلْتُ لَا. قَالَ فَهَلْ كُنْتُمْ تَتَّهَمُونَهُ بِالْكَذِبِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَقُولَ مَا قَالَ قُلْتُ لَا. قَالَ فَهَلْ يَغْدِرُ قُلْتُ لَا، وَنَحْنُ مِنْهُ فِي مُدَّةٍ لَا نَدْرِي مَا هُوَ فَاعِلٌ فِيهَا. قَالَ وَلَمْ تُمَكِّنِي كَلِمَةً أَدْخُلُ فِيهَا شَيْئًا غَيْرَ هَذِهِ الْكَلِمَةِ. قَالَ فَهَلْ قَاتَلْتُمُوهُ قُلْتُ نَعَمْ. قَالَ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ قِتَالِكُمْ إِيَّاهُ قُلْتُ الْحَرْبُ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَهُ سَجَالٌ، يَنَالُ مِنَّا وَنَنَالُ مِنْهُ. قَالَ مَاذَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ قُلْتُ يَقُولُ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَوَحْدَهُ، وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا، وَاتْرَكُوا مَا يَقُولُ آبَاؤُكُمْ، وَيَأْمُرُنَا بِالصَّلَاةِ وَالصَّدَقِ وَالْعَفَافِ وَالصَّلَاةِ فَقَالَ لِلتَّرْجَمَانِ قُلْ لَهُ سَأَلْتُكَ عَنْ نَسَبِهِ، فَذَكَرْتَ أَنَّهُ فَيَكُمُ ذُو نَسَبٍ، فَكَذَلِكَ الرَّسُلُ تُبْعَثُ فِي نَسَبِ قَوْمِهَا، وَسَأَلْتُكَ هَلْ قَالَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُمْ هَذَا الْقَوْلَ فَذَكَرْتَ أَنْ لَا،

قُلْتُ فَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ آبَائِهِ مِنْ مَلِكٍ قُلْتُ رَجُلٌ يَطْلُبُ مُلْكَ أَبِيهِ، وَسَأَلْتُكَ هَلْ كُنْتُمْ تَتَّهَمُونَهُ بِالْكَذِبِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَقُولَ مَا قَالَ فَذَكَرْتَ أَنْ لَا، فَقَدْ أَعْرِفُ أَنَّهُ لَمْ يَكُنْ لِيَذَرَ الْكَذِبَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكْذِبَ عَلَى اللَّهِ، وَسَأَلْتُكَ أَشْرَافُ النَّاسِ اتَّبَعُوهُ أَمْ ضَعَفَاؤُهُمْ فَذَكَرْتَ أَنَّ ضَعَفَاءَهُمْ اتَّبَعُوهُ، وَهُمْ اتَّبَاعُ الرَّسُولِ، وَسَأَلْتُكَ أَيَزِيدُونَ أَمْ يَنْقُصُونَ فَذَكَرْتَ أَنَّهُمْ يَزِيدُونَ، وَكَذَلِكَ أَمْرُ الْإِيمَانِ حَتَّى يَتِمَّ، وَسَأَلْتُكَ أَيَزِيدُ أَحَدٌ سَخَطَةَ لِإِيمَانِهِ بَعْدَ أَنْ يَدْخُلَ فِيهِ فَذَكَرْتَ أَنْ لَا، وَكَذَلِكَ الْإِيمَانُ حِينَ تُخَالِطُ بِشَاشَتِهِ الْقُلُوبَ، وَسَأَلْتُكَ هَلْ يَغْدِرُ فَذَكَرْتَ أَنْ لَا، وَكَذَلِكَ الرَّسُولُ لَا تَغْدِرُ، وَسَأَلْتُكَ بِمَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ، فَذَكَرْتَ أَنَّهُ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ، وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا، وَيَنْهَأَكُمْ عَنِ عِبَادَةِ الْأَوْثَانِ، وَيَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَالصَّدَقِ وَالْعَفَافِ. فَإِنْ كَانَ مَا تَقُولُ حَقًّا فَسَيَمْلِكُ مَوْضِعَ قَدَمَيْ هَاتَيْنِ، وَقَدْ كُنْتُ أَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُ خَارِجٌ، لَمْ أَكُنْ أَظُنُّ أَنَّهُ مِنْكُمْ، فَلَوْ أَنِّي أَعْلَمُ أَنِّي أَخْلُصُ إِلَيْهِ لَتَجَشَّمْتُ لِقَاءَهُ، وَلَوْ كُنْتُ عِنْدَهُ لَغَسَلْتُ عَنْ قَدَمِهِ. ثُمَّ دَعَا بِكِتَابِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ بِهِ دِخِيَةَ إِلَى عَظِيمِ بُصْرَى، فَدَفَعَهُ إِلَى هِرَقْلَ فَقَرَأَهُ فَإِذَا فِيهِ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ. مِنْ مُحَمَّدٍ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ إِلَى هِرَقْلَ عَظِيمِ الرُّومِ. سَلَامٌ عَلَيَّ مِنْ اتَّبَعَ الْهُدَى، أَمَّا بَعْدُ فَإِنِّي أَدْعُوكَ بِدَعَايَةِ الْإِسْلَامِ، أَسْلِمْتَ تَسْلِمًا، يُؤْتِكَ اللَّهُ أَجْرَكَ مَرَّتَيْنِ، فَإِنْ تَوَلَّيْتَ فَإِنَّ عَلَيْكَ إِثْمَ الْأَرِبِيِّينَ وَ{يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَنْ لَا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُولُوا اشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ} قَالَ أَبُو سُفْيَانَ فَلَمَّا قَالَ مَا قَالَ، وَفَرَّغَ مِنْ قِرَاءَةِ الْكِتَابِ كَثَرَ عِنْدَهُ الصَّخْبُ، وَارْتَفَعَتِ الْأَصْوَاتُ وَأُخْرِجْنَا، فَقُلْتُ لِأَصْحَابِي حِينَ أُخْرِجْنَا لَقَدْ أَمَرَ ابْنُ أَبِي كَبْشَةَ، إِنَّهُ يَخَافُهُ مَلِكُ بَنِي الْأَصْفَرِ. فَمَا زِلْتُ مُوقِنًا أَنَّهُ سَيُظْهِرُ حَتَّى أَدْخَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيَّ الْإِسْلَامَ. وَكَانَ ابْنُ النَّاطُورِ صَاحِبُ إِبِلِيَاءَ وَهَرَقْلَ سَقْفًا عَلَيَّ نَصَارَى الشَّامِ، يُحَدِّثُ أَنَّ هِرَقْلَ حِينَ قَدِمَ إِبِلِيَاءَ أَصْبَحَ يَوْمًا حَيْثُ النَّفْسِ، فَقَالَ بَعْضُ بَطَارِقِيهِ قَدِ اسْتَنْكَرْنَا هَيْئَتَكَ. قَالَ ابْنُ النَّاطُورِ وَكَانَ هِرَقْلُ حَزَاءً يَنْظُرُ فِي النُّجُومِ، فَقَالَ لَهُمْ حِينَ سَأَلُوهُ إِنِّي رَأَيْتُ اللَّيْلَةَ حِينَ نَظَرْتُ فِي النُّجُومِ مَلِكَ الْخِتَانِ قَدْ ظَهَرَ، فَمَنْ يَخْتَتِنُ مِنْ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ قَالُوا لَيْسَ يَخْتَتِنُ إِلَّا الْيَهُودُ فَلَا يُهَمُّكَ شَأْنُهُمْ وَاكْتَبُ إِلَى مَدَائِنِ مُلْكِكَ، فَيَقْتُلُوا مَنْ فِيهِمْ مِنَ الْيَهُودِ. فَبَيْنَمَا هُمْ عَلَى أَمْرِهِمْ أَتَى هِرَقْلُ بِرَجُلٍ أَرْسَلَ بِهِ مَلِكُ غَسَّانَ، يُخْبِرُ عَنْ خَبَرِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَلَمَّا اسْتَخْبَرَهُ هِرَقْلُ قَالَ اذْهَبُوا فَانظُرُوا أَمْخَتَتِنُ هُوَ أَمْ لَا. فَانظُرُوا إِلَيْهِ، فَحَدَّثُوهُ أَنَّهُ مُخْتَتِنٌ، وَسَأَلَهُ عَنِ الْعَرَبِ فَقَالَ هُمْ يَخْتَتِنُونَ.

فَقَالَ هِرَقْلُ هَذَا مَلِكُ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ قَدْ ظَهَرَ. ثُمَّ كَتَبَ هِرَقْلُ إِلَى صَاحِبِهِ لَهُ
بِرُومِيَّةٍ، وَكَانَ نَظِيرَهُ فِي الْعِلْمِ، وَسَارَ هِرَقْلُ إِلَى حِمَصَ، فَلَمْ يَرِمْ حِمَصَ حَتَّى
أَتَاهُ كِتَابٌ مِنْ صَاحِبِهِ يُوَافِقُ رَأْيَ هِرَقْلَ عَلَى خُرُوجِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
وَأَنَّهُ نَبِيٌّ، فَأَذِنَ هِرَقْلُ لِعُظَمَاءِ الرُّومِ فِي دَسْكَرَةِ لَهُ بِحِمَصَ ثُمَّ أَمَرَ بِأَبْوَابِهَا
فَعُلِقَتْ، ثُمَّ أَطْلَعَ فَقَالَ يَا مَعْشَرَ الرُّومِ، هَلْ لَكُمْ فِي الْفَلَاحِ وَالرُّشْدِ وَأَنْ يَثْبُتَ
مُلْكُكُمْ فَتُبَايَعُوا هَذَا النَّبِيَّ، فَحَاصُوا حَيْصَةَ حُمْرِ الْوَحْشِ إِلَى الْأَبْوَابِ، فَوَجَدُوهَا
قَدْ غُلِقَتْ، فَلَمَّا رَأَى هِرَقْلُ نَفَرَتَهُمْ، وَأَيْسَ مِنَ الْإِيمَانِ قَالَ رُدُّوهُمْ عَلَيَّ. وَقَالَ
إِنِّي قُلْتُ مَقَالَتِي آيَفَا أَخْتَبِرُ بِهَا شِدَّتَكُمْ عَلَى دِينِكُمْ، فَقَدْ رَأَيْتُ. فَسَجَدُوا لَهُ
وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ، فَكَانَ ذَلِكَ آخِرَ شَأْنِ هِرَقْلَ. رَوَاهُ صَالِحُ بْنُ كَيْسَانَ وَيُونُسُ وَمَعْمَرٌ
عَنِ الرَّهْرِيِّ.

Abu Sufyan bin Harb informed me that Heraclius had sent a messenger to him while he had been accompanying a caravan from Quraish. They were merchants doing business in Sham (Syria, Palestine, Lebanon and Jordan), at the time when had truce with Abu Sufyan and Quraish infidels. So Abu (ﷺ) Allah's Messenger Sufyan and his companions went to Heraclius at Ilya (Jerusalem). Heraclius called them in the court and he had all the senior Roman dignitaries around him. He called for his translator who, translating Heraclius's question said to them, "Who amongst you is closely related to that man who claims to be a Prophet?" Abu Sufyan replied, "I am the nearest relative to him (amongst the group)". Heraclius said, "Bring him (Abu Sufyan) close to me and make his companions stand behind him." Abu Sufyan added, Heraclius told his translator to tell my companions that he wanted to put some questions to me regarding that man (The Prophet) and that if I told a lie they (my companions) should contradict me." Abu Sufyan added, "By Allah! Had I not been afraid of my companions labeling me a liar, I would not have spoken the truth about the Prophet. The first question he asked me about him was: 'What is his family status amongst you?' I replied, 'He belongs to a good (noble) family amongst us.' Heraclius further asked, 'Has anybody amongst you ever claimed the same (i.e. to be a Prophet) before him?' I replied, 'No.' He said, 'Was anybody amongst his ancestors a king?' I replied, 'No.' Heraclius asked, 'Do the nobles or the poor follow him?' I replied, 'It is the poor who follow him.' He said, 'Are his followers increasing decreasing (day by day)?' I replied, 'They are increasing.' He then asked, 'Does anybody amongst those who embrace his religion become displeased and renounce the religion afterwards?' I replied, 'No.' Heraclius said, 'Have you ever accused him of telling lies before his claim (to be a Prophet)?' I replied, 'No.' Heraclius said, 'Does he break his promises?'

I replied, 'No. We are at truce with him but we do not know what he will do in it.' I could not find opportunity to say anything against him except that. Heraclius asked, 'Have you ever had a war with him?' I replied, 'Yes.' Then he said, 'What was the outcome of the battles?' I replied, 'Sometimes he was victorious and sometimes we.' Heraclius said, 'What does he order you to do?' I said, 'He tells us to worship Allah and Allah alone and not to worship anything along with Him, and to renounce all that our ancestors had said. He orders us to pray, to speak the truth, to be chaste and to keep good relations with our Kith and kin.'

Heraclius asked the translator to convey to me the following, I asked you about his family and your reply was that he belonged to a very noble family. In fact all the Apostles come from noble families amongst their respective peoples. I questioned you whether anybody else amongst you claimed such a thing, your reply was in the negative. If the answer had been in the affirmative, I would have thought that this man was following the previous man's statement. Then I asked you whether anyone of his ancestors was a king. Your reply was in the negative, and if it had been in the affirmative, I would have thought that this man wanted to take back his ancestral kingdom.

I further asked whether he was ever accused of telling lies before he said what he said, and your reply was in the negative. So I wondered how a person who does not tell a lie about others could ever tell a lie about Allah. I, then asked you whether the rich people followed him or the poor. You replied that it was the poor who followed him. And in fact all the Apostle have been followed by this very class of people. Then I asked you whether his followers were increasing or decreasing. You replied that they were increasing, and in fact this is the way of true faith, till it is complete in all respects. I further asked you whether there was anybody, who, after embracing his religion, became displeased and discarded his religion. Your reply was in the negative, and in fact this is (the sign of) true faith, when its delight enters the hearts and mixes with them completely. I asked you whether he had ever betrayed. You replied in the negative and likewise the Apostles never betray. Then I asked you what he ordered you to do. You replied that he ordered you to worship Allah and Allah alone and not to worship any thing along with Him and forbade you to worship idols and ordered you to pray, to speak the truth and to be chaste. If what you have said is true, he will very soon occupy this place underneath my feet and I knew it (from the scriptures) that he was going to appear but I did not know that he would be from you, and if I could reach him definitely, I would go immediately to meet him and if I were with him, I would certainly wash his feet.' Heraclius then asked for the letter addressed by Allah's Apostle which was delivered by Dihya to the Governor of Busra, who forwarded it to Heraclius to read.

The contents of the letter were as follows: "In the name of Allah the Beneficent, the Merciful (This letter is) from Muhammad the slave of Allah and His Apostle to Heraclius the ruler of Byzantine. Peace be upon him, who follows the right path. Furthermore I invite you to Islam, and if you become a Muslim you will be safe, and Allah will double your reward, and if you reject this invitation of Islam you will be committing a sin of Arisiyin (tillers, farmers i.e. your people). And (Allah's Statement:) 'O people of the scripture! Come to a word common to you and us that we worship none but Allah and that we associate nothing in worship with Him, and that none of us shall take others as Lords beside Allah. Then, if they turn away, say: Bear witness that we are Muslims (those who have surrendered to Allah).' (3:64). Abu Sufyan then added, "When Heraclius had finished his speech and had read the letter, there was a great hue and cry in the Royal Court. So we were turned out of the court. I told my companions that the question of Ibn-Abi-Kabsha) (the Prophet (ﷺ) Muhammad) has become so prominent that even the King of Bani Al-Asfar (Byzantine) is afraid of him. Then I started to become sure that he (the Prophet) would be the conqueror in the near future till I embraced Islam (i.e. Allah guided me to it)."

The sub narrator adds, "Ibn An-Natur was the Governor of Ilya' (Jerusalem) and Heraclius was the head of the Christians of Sham. Ibn An-Natur narrates that once while Heraclius was visiting Ilya' (Jerusalem), he got up in the morning with a sad mood. Some of his priests asked him why he was in that mood? Heraclius was a foreteller and an astrologer. He replied, 'At night when I looked at the stars, I saw that the leader of those who practice circumcision had appeared (become the conqueror). Who are they who practice circumcision?' The people replied, 'Except the Jews nobody practices circumcision, so you should not be afraid of them (Jews).

'Just Issue orders to kill every Jew present in the country.'

While they were discussing it, a messenger sent by the king of Ghassan to convey the news of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) to Heraclius was brought in. Having heard the news, he (Heraclius) ordered the people to go and see whether the messenger of Ghassan was circumcised. The people, after seeing him, told Heraclius that he was circumcised. Heraclius then asked him about the Arabs. The messenger replied, 'Arabs also practice circumcision.'

(After hearing that) Heraclius remarked that sovereignty of the 'Arabs had appeared. Heraclius then wrote a letter to his friend in Rome who was as good as Heraclius in knowledge. Heraclius then left for Homs. (a town in Syrian and stayed there till he received the reply of his letter from his friend who agreed with him in his opinion about the emergence of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the fact that he was a.

On that Heraclius invited all the heads of the Byzantines to assemble in his palace at Homs. When they assembled, he ordered that all the doors of his palace be closed. Then he came out and said, 'O Byzantines! If success is your desire and if you seek right guidance and want your empire to remain then give a pledge of allegiance to this Prophet (i.e. embrace Islam).'

(On hearing the views of Heraclius) the people ran towards the gates of the palace like onagers but found the doors closed. Heraclius realized their hatred towards Islam and when he lost the hope of their embracing Islam, he ordered that they should be brought back in audience.

(When they returned) he said, 'What already said was just to test the strength of your conviction and I have seen it.' The people prostrated before him and became pleased with him, and this was the end of Heraclius's story (in connection with his faith).

Historical Context

- Heraclius, the Byzantine ruler, summons the Quraysh to his court, and from amongst them is Abu Sufyan.
- Prior to this incident, the Persians and Byzantine empires were at war with one another. The area that they were fighting over was Ash-Sham (Greater Syria), inclusive of Jerusalem and Palestine, which the Persians seized control of until 629 CE.
- The Roman empire with the help of the Byzantine empire had managed to seize control over Ash-Sham again. Thus why Heraclius had come to Palestine.
- During this time, the Prophet SAW had sent a letter to the King of Ghassan to be forwarded to the Roman empire, inviting them to Islam.
- While in Palestine, Heraclius orders for his men to go out to the marketplace and find someone from amongst the Arabs.
- Abu Sufyan and some Qurayshi men were coincidentally there on a business trip. This was how he and his entourage were summoned forth to the court of Heraclius.

Why Imam Bukhari Chose This As The Final Hadith in the Book of Revelation?

- There are two primary reasons.
 - The first reason:
 - To mention all the similarities between all the prophets and messengers; in which their message was to worship Allah SWT alone and not associate any partners to Him.
 - This final hadith holds the exact same message and it was a recurring theme of all the prophets and messengers.
 - This is the crux of wahy and why revelation came down. It was for mankind to worship the oneness of Allah SWT.
 - As stated in the very first command of Allah SWT in Surah Al-Baqarah:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

O mankind! worship your Lord, the One Who created you and those from before you, so that you may become righteous. (2:21)

- This shows us the consistency throughout the message of revelation, in all forms of scriptures from the Tawrah, Injil, to the Quran, or any other form of revelation that Allah SWT sent down.
- The second reason:
 - It talks about how there had been signs that were sent to the previous nations to recognize the Quran.
 - The prophethood of the Prophet Muhammad SAW was also known to previous nations through the descriptions of his characteristics.
 - A point indirectly tied to this is the impact wahy had on individuals.
 - For example, here, we have Abu Sufyan who is not Muslim when this incident occurred but eventually ends up accepting Islam.

- Meanwhile, we have Heraclius who has all this knowledge about Islam, prophethood and scripture, but yet he does not end up accepting Islam.

Part One

- The wisdom behind Heraclius asking the first question: “Who amongst you is closely related to that man who claims to be a Prophet?”
 - This is because usually families know each other best. At this time, families are very close-knit. They were very tribalistic in nature, kept close ties of kinship and had allegiance based upon family.
 - Abu Sufyan came forward as he was related to the Prophet SAW through Abdul Manaf.
 - The second relationship that was later established between them was when he became the father-in-law of the Prophet SAW through his marriage to Umm Habiba.
- Abu Sufyan tells Ibn Abbas, “By Allah! Had I not been afraid of my companions labeling me a liar, I would not have spoken the truth about the Prophet.”
 - This was because he was not Muslim at this time, and only converted to Islam after Fatah Makkah.
 - This also shows that even though they were from the Quraysh and they did things that were wrong, they still had a sense of retaining one’s reputation, honor and dignity.
 - Abu Sufyan wanted to keep the honor of the Prophet SAW intact, despite detesting him. It was very important amongst the Arabs.
 - This was significant to Abu Sufyan. As seen during Fatah Makkah, the Prophet SAW honors Abu Sufyan, by saying, “Whoever enters the house of Abu Sufyan will be safe.” The Prophet SAW knew that if he gave him such honor that Abu Sufyan would be inclined to accept Islam.

- When Abu Sufyan steps forward to converse one-on-one with Heraclius, he commands those who were behind him to point out his lies.
 - For Abu Sufyan it was impossible for him to lie and utter anything against the Prophet SAW.
 - He mentioned that the Prophet SAW “belongs to a good (noble) family”. This means that he came from a pure lineage.
 - The vast majority of prophets all came from pure lineages. In a hadith narrated by Abu Huraira:

قِيلَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، مَنْ أَكْرَمُ النَّاسِ قَالَ " أَتَقَاهُمْ " . فَقَالُوا لَيْسَ عَنْ هَذَا نَسْأَلُكَ. قَالَ " فَيُوسُفُ نَبِيِّ اللَّهِ ابْنُ نَبِيِّ اللَّهِ ابْنِ نَبِيِّ اللَّهِ ابْنِ خَلِيلِ اللَّهِ " .
قَالُوا لَيْسَ عَنْ هَذَا نَسْأَلُكَ. قَالَ " فَعَنْ مَعَادِينِ الْعَرَبِ تَسْأَلُونَ خِيَارَهُمْ فِي الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ خِيَارَهُمْ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ إِذَا فَقَهُوا " . قَالَ أَبُو أُسَامَةَ وَمُعْتَمِرٌ عَنْ عُبَيْدِ اللَّهِ عَنْ سَعِيدٍ عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

Who is the most honorable amongst! (ﷺ) The people said, "O Allah's Messenger the people (in Allah's Sight)?" He said, "The most righteous amongst them." They said, "We do not ask you, about this. " He said, "Then Joseph, Allah's Prophet, the son of Allah's Prophet, The son of Allah's Prophet the son of Allah's Khalil (i.e. Abraham)." They said, "We do not want to ask about this," He said' "Then you want to ask about the descent of the Arabs. Those who were the best in the pre-Islamic period of ignorance will be the best in Islam provided they comprehend (the religious knowledge." (Sahih al-Bukhari

- It is interesting to see that the prophets and messengers all came from noble lineage and there was a pre-telling of this, which was a consistent trait throughout history.
- Heraclius asked, “Does anybody amongst those who embrace his religion become displeased and renounce the religion afterwards?”
 - People leave Islam all the time and Abu Sufyan knew this because his son-in-law, Ubaidullah ibn Jahsh, the husband of Umm Habiba left Islam after their migration to Abyssinia. He accepted Christianity for worldly reasons.

- Abu Sufyan understood the context that people did not leave the religion for religious reasons (ie. because they found a religion more superior to it). They leave Islam for worldly reasons, or other reasons.
- Heraclius said, “Have you ever accused him of telling lies before his claim (to be a Prophet)?”
 - Prior to Islam, the Prophet SAW was nicknamed Al-Amin, the trustworthy one.
 - This was illustrated when he was chosen to place the hajar al-aswad at the corner of the ka’aba after its rebuilding.
 - Abu Sufyan could not deny this fact as it was too well-known that the Prophet SAW was an honest and trustworthy man.
- Heraclius said, “Does he break his promises?” I replied, ‘No. We are at truce with him but we do not know what he will do in it.’ I could not find opportunity to say anything against him except that.
 - The truce here refers to the treaty of Hdaybiyyah. Hence, this also tells us the timeline when this conversation took place, roughly around the sixth or seventh year of the hijrah.
 - Another version of this hadith from Urwa ibn Zubayr, brings a particular nuance. He said Abu Sufyan’s attempt in taking down the characteristics of the Prophet bore no fruit.
 - According to his report, Heraclius further inquired, “What is it that you fear during this truce?”
 - Abu Sufyan explains, “My people supported our allies against his allies.”
 - Upon hearing this Heraclius expressed, “If you have started the trouble, then you are the greatest of betrayers.”
 - This is referring to the onset of what led to the Fatah Makkah. The allies of Muslims were attacked by the Quraysh. The Quraysh aided those that attacked the allies of the Muslims, which led to Fatah Makkah.
- Heraclius asked, “Have you ever had a war with him?” and “What was the outcome of the battles?” I replied, “Sometimes he was victorious and sometimes we.”

- This refers to the battle of Badr and Uhud. While Badr was clearly a victory for the Muslims, the Quraysh won Uhud, due to unfortunate circumstances.
- It was not that they were superior, it was because the Muslims did not stick to their plan. When the archers were commanded to remain in a particular area, they did not obey the order of the Prophet SAW as they were too attracted by worldly gain.
- Elaborating on the Prophet's instruction, "He tells us to worship Allah and Allah alone and not to worship anything along with Him, and to renounce all that our ancestors had said. He orders us to pray, to speak the truth, to be chaste and to keep good relations with our Kith and kin."
 - This shows us that as wahy is continuously being sent down for several years, the Prophet SAW is conveying these messages to the Quraysh.
 - Through the Prophet's preaching, Abu Sufyan understands the message of wahy so well that he is able to narrate and summarize these qualities to Heraclius.
 - Once again, this is a recurring theme we find in previous scriptures from Allah SWT that command these commonalities.
 - When he says, "to renounce all that our ancestors had said", this explains the emotional blackmail that was displayed by the Quraysh that made Abu Talib refuse to declare the oneness of Allah SWT when he was about to die.
 - A hadith tells us the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) came to him and found with him Abu Jahl ('Amr b. Hisham) and 'Abdullah b. Abi Umayya ibn al-Mughirah. He said:

" يَا عَمُّ قُلْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ . كَلِمَةً أَشْهَدُ لَكَ بِهَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ " . فَقَالَ أَبُو جَهْلٍ وَعَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ أَبِي أُمَيَّةَ يَا أَبَا طَالِبٍ أَتَرْتَعِبُ عَنْ مِلَّةِ عَبْدِ الْمُطَّلِبِ . فَلَمْ يَزَلْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَعْزُّضُهَا عَلَيْهِ وَيُعِيدُ لَهُ تِلْكَ الْمَقَالَةَ حَتَّى قَالَ أَبُو طَالِبٍ آخِرَ مَا كَلَّمَهُمْ هُوَ عَلَى مِلَّةِ عَبْدِ الْمُطَّلِبِ . وَأَبَى أَنْ يَقُولَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ . فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " أَمَّا وَاللَّهِ لَأَسْتَغْفِرَنَّ لَكَ مَا لَمْ أَنْهَ عَنْكَ " . فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ { مَا كَانَ لِلنَّبِيِّ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْ يَسْتَغْفِرُوا لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ وَلَوْ كَانُوا أَوْلِيَا قُرْبَى مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُمْ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ } . وَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى فِي أَبِي طَالِبٍ فَقَالَ لِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ { إِنَّكَ لَا تَهْدِي مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ } .

My uncle, you just make a profession that there is no god but Allah, and I will bear testimony before Allah (of your being a believer), Abu Jahl and 'Abdullah b. Abi Umayya addressing him said: Abu Talib, would you abandon the religion of constantly requested him (to accept (ﷺ) 'Abdul-Muttalib? The Messenger of Allah his offer), and (on the other hand) was repeated the same statement (of Abu Jahl and 'Abdullah b. Abi Umayya) till Abu Talib gave his final decision and be stuck to the religion of 'Abdul-Muttalib and refused to profess that there is no god but Allah. Upon this the Messenger of Allah remarked: By Allah, I will persistently beg pardon for you till I am forbidden to do so (by God), It was then that Allah, the Magnificent and the Glorious, revealed this verse: " It is not meet for the Prophet and for those who believe that they should beg pardon for the polytheists, even though they were their kith and kin, after it had been made known to them that they were the denizens of Hell" (ix. 113) And it was said to the Messenger of Allah Verily thou canst not guide to the right path whom thou lovest. And it is " (ﷺ) Allah Who guideth whom He will, and He knoweth best who are the guided" ((xxviii, 56). (Sahih Muslim

- This was why the Prophet SAW used to emphasize this point to the Quraysh to not follow their ancestors without questioning the truth as they would be led astray.
- Thus, in the Quran we will find verses like these which say, "Our Lord, these had misled us, so give them a double punishment of the Fire." (7:38)
- Heraclius reads out the letter sent by Dihya al-Kalbi. It begins with "In the name of Allah the Beneficent, the Merciful (This letter is) from Muhammad the slave of Allah and His Apostle to Heraclius the ruler of Byzantine."

- He goes on to say, Assalamu ala man ittaba'a al-huda (Peace be upon him, who follows the right path).
- Are Muslims allowed to say Assalamu alaykum (Peace be upon you) to non-Muslims? Majority of scholars are of the opinion that Muslims are not allowed to initiate salam to non-Muslims.
- Nevertheless, some say there is a room for exception, if one is trying to familiarize a non-Muslim with Islam and when there is a greater benefit in store.
- The alternative when we cannot say salam to non-Muslims is saying Assalamu ala man ittaba'a al-huda.
- The wisdom behind saying this is with the aim and the hope that the heart of the person receiving the salutation will be moved to attain peace and be amongst those who follow the right path.
- However, if a non-Muslim initiates salam, we should say Wa 'alaykum (upon you be what you wished for me) and leave it at that.
- Muslims are also allowed to respond with Wa 'alaykumu salam (may peace be upon you). This is based on the following verse from Surah An-Nisa:

وَإِذَا حُيِّتُمْ بِتَحِيَّةٍ فَحَيُّوا بِأَحْسَنَ مِنْهَا أَوْ رُدُّوهَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَسِيبًا

And when you are greeted with a greeting, greet [in return] with one better than it or [at least] return it [in a like manner]. Indeed Allah is ever, over all things, an Accountant. (4:86)

- The Prophet SAW writes, "Furthermore I invite you to Islam, and if you become a Muslim you will be safe, and Allah will double your reward"
 - It was as if the Prophet SAW knew what was in the heart of Heraclius. He was conflicted; he prioritized retaining his position, while at the same time wanting to embrace the truth.
 - Hence, the Prophet SAW assured him that he would get his reward twofold if he were to embrace Islam.

- Allah SWT would allow him to keep his position, and in the Hereafter he would be from the saint.
- The Prophet added: "and if you reject this invitation of Islam you will be committing a sin of Arisiyin." He then includes the verse from Surah Ali Imran:

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَإِن تَوَلَّوْا فَقُولُوا اشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ

Say, "O People of the Scripture, come to a word that is equitable between us and you - that we will not worship except Allah and not associate anything with Him and not take one another as lords instead of Allah ." But if they turn away, then say, "Bear witness that we are Muslims [submitting to Him]." (3:64)

- The Arisiyin were Syrian farmers, whom Heraclius used to oversee.
- Here, we see the Quranic verse was written to a non-Muslim. This was allowed as it is a letter from the Prophet SAW and it is not the Quran.
- Non-Muslims should not touch the Quran in Arabic which is void of any translation or explanation. That is why the Prophet SAW forbade taking the Quran to the land of disbelievers.
- It is important to note that the Prophet SAW invited these various rulers to embrace Islam and did not wage a war against them. This is contrary to common belief from the West that Islam was spread by the sword.
- As seen in this letter, the Prophet SAW also used language that was respectful and did not offend Heraclius.
- He did not use any grandiose title other than Allah's slave and messenger, he greeted him with peace, he delivered a very brief and concise message, he spoke about the consequences of declining Islam as well as the virtues of accepting Islam, while including a direct scripture from Allah SWT.

- An uproar takes place in the court of Heraclius. Abu Sufyan mentions something interesting here. "I told my companions that the question of Ibn-Abi-Kabsha) (the Prophet (ﷺ) Muhammad) has become so prominent that even the King of Bani Al-Asfar (Byzantine) is afraid of him."
 - Ibn-Abi-Kabsha was someone from the Quraysh that abandoned the way of their forefathers (idol worshipping). Instead, he worshipped the stars. Hence, he became an outcast in their society. For that reason, Abu Sufyan refers to the Prophet SAW as "Ibn-Abi-Kabsha".
 - When he says, "Then I started to become sure that he (the Prophet) would be the conqueror in the near future till I embraced Islam (i.e. Allah guided me to it)" he meant that once he saw that even Heraclius was shaken up by the letter, he knew the Prophet SAW would become triumphant and that Allah would instil Islam in his heart.
 - This was witnessed as Abu Sufyan ended up accepting Islam and played a big role during Fatah Makkah.

Part Two

- Heraclius was a foreteller and an astrologer. He replied, "At night when I looked at the stars, I saw that the leader of those who practice circumcision had appeared (become the conqueror). Who are they who practice circumcision?" The people replied, "Except the Jews nobody practices circumcision, so you should not be afraid of them (Jews). Just issue orders to kill every Jew present in the country."
 - The only group of people that were known to them to practice circumcision was the Jews.
 - However, while they were discussing, a messenger sent by the king of Ghassan entered to convey some news to Heraclius.
 - They uncovered him to see whether he was circumcised. This showed that they lacked respect, dignity and honor for others.

- “The people, after seeing him, told Heraclius that he was circumcised.” Heraclius knew then that the Arabs as well the Muslims practice circumcision and remarked that sovereignty of the Arabs had appeared.

Part Three

- After confirming all this information, he wrote a letter to his friend in Rome who is just as knowledgeable as him.
- His friend agreed with him in his opinion about the emergence of the Prophet SAW and acknowledged his prophethood.
- Heraclius later invited all the dignitaries of the Byzantines to assemble in his palace at Homs.
- He was convinced in his heart that Islam is the truth and that Prophet SAW is the Messenger of Allah. However, he did not want to lose his power.
- As they were gathered, he ordered that all the doors of his palace be closed. He addressed them, “O Byzantines! If success is your desire and if you seek right guidance and want your empire to remain then give a pledge of allegiance to this Prophet (i.e. embrace Islam).”
- This stirred an uproar amongst those who were gathered, and they ran towards the gates like wild donkeys.
- When Heraclius saw their refusal towards embracing Islam, he told them, “What already said was just to test the strength of your conviction and I have seen it.” And they followed by prostrating to him.

Did Heraclius Embrace Islam?

- Several years later in 641 CE Heraclius died as a disbeliever, majority of scholars opined. He did not end up accepting Islam and he ended up losing his position.
- Al-Hafiz ibn 'Abd al-Barr was of the opinion that Heraclius embraced Islam but did not remain a Muslim nor did he act upon what Islam requires of its adherents. He remained greedy for his kingdom and preferred the temporary worldly life over the eternal hereafter.

- Despite that, the conclusive opinion based on evidence points to the fact that he never accepted Islam.
- Ibn Hajar reports in Fath al-Bari, Heraclius wrote a letter to the Prophet SAW, "I am a Muslim" and the Prophet SAW said, "He has lied, he is still firm upon his Christianity."
- We also see this evidently in the conclusion of this hadith: "The people prostrated before him and became pleased with him".
- This gives strength to the notion that Heraclius preferred his kingdom over embracing Islam and continued in his state of misguidance.

The Book of Revelation Summary

- Before he starts off with the first hadith, Imam Bukhari mentions this verse from the Quran:

إِنَّا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ كَمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى نُوحٍ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ

Indeed, We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], as We revealed to Noah and the prophets after him. (4:163)

- This is to show that the Prophet SAW is a continuation of the previous prophets, and all the prophets before him received the same message.
- Imam Bukhari began the first chapter with the book of revelation because wahy is the source of all goodness. Hence, he established this as a foundation.
- The first hadith in which the Prophet SAW says **إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ** (the reward of deeds depends upon the intentions) tells us that even the sunnah is a part of revelation as well. He also chose it due to all its narrators being from the land of revelation.
- The second hadith by Aisha speaks about the different ways revelation used to come down upon the Prophet SAW and the impact it had on him.
- In the third hadith, the Prophet SAW starts having divine inspiration in the form of good dreams. As discussed, dreams are one of forty-six parts of prophetism. The hadith also talks about the pre-prophethood signs he received as well as Surah Al-'Alaq being sent down as the first revelation.

- This is followed by a hadith that talks about how Surah Al-Muddaththir descended as the second revelation.
- The fourth hadith tells us how the Prophet SAW used to preserve revelation by constantly repeating it after Jibril. It also shows us the due diligence involved in conveying hadith, as seen through Ibn 'Abbas' explanation to Said ibn Jubair while he mimicked the Prophet moving his lips, then Said ibn Jubair conveying it to his students in the same manner.
- The fifth hadith talks about the impact revelation had upon the Prophet SAW. It would make him the most generous in the month of Ramadan. In addition to that, it tells us how the Prophet SAW used to revise the Quran with Jibril every Ramadan.
- The sixth and final hadith concludes why revelation was sent down for mankind and how it holds the exact same message; to worship Allah SWT alone and not associate any partners with Him. This was the recurring theme throughout the history of prophets and messengers.

For Further Reference

- Commentary on Sahih al-Bukhari, Volume 1: Beginning of Revelation & Belief by Shaykh Omar Subedar
- <https://bukhariexplanation.wordpress.com/>
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