

does not extend to the transgressors». What is meant is: leadership in religion cannot be attained by one who wrongs and harms himself and brings himself down, because transgression is contrary to this status, which can only be attained by means of patience and strong faith. In other words, those who will be qualified to attain this status will be those who have a high level of faith, do a great deal of righteous deeds and are possessed of good characteristics, a good attitude, and complete love of Allah, fearing Him and turning to Him. How could a transgressor attain such a status? The implicit meaning of this verse is that anyone other than the transgressor may attain a position of leadership, but only after meeting its conditions.

Then Allah (ﷻ) refers to a lasting sign that is indicative of Ibrâheem's leadership, which is this sacred House, pilgrimage to which is one of the five pillars of Islam, a means of erasing sin.

In that House we see the legacy of Ibrâheem and his descendants, which offers proof of his leadership and reminds us of how he was. Allah (ﷻ) says: «And [remember] when We made the House a focal point for the people» that is, a place to which they return to attain religious and worldly benefits; it is a place that they frequent and never tire of it.

«and a sanctuary» that is, it is a place where everyone feels safe, even wild animals and inanimate things such as trees.

Hence during the *jâhiliyah*, despite their polytheism, the people venerated it immensely, to such a degree that if a man found his father's killer in the sanctuary, he would not disturb him. When Islam came, it further emphasised the sanctity, veneration and honour of the House.

«Take the Station of Ibrâheem as a place of prayer». It may be that what is meant here is the well-known *Maqâm* (Station), the position of which now is in front of the door of the Kaaba, where two *raka'ât* are prayed following *tawâf* (circumambulation of the Kaaba), which it is recommended to offer behind the Station of Ibrâheem. This is