



HISTORY

ACCORDING TO

AL QURAN

ABDULLAH AMIR

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(2:129) A Messenger of their own

“Our Lord! send amongst them a Messenger of their own, who shall rehearse Thy Signs to them and instruct them in scripture and wisdom, and sanctify them: For Thou art the Exalted in Might, the Wise.”

The Prophet said, “I’m the (answer) to the supplication of my father Abraham, the glad tidings (announced by) Jesus, the son of Mary, and my mother saw (in a vision) a light that radiated from her which illuminated the castles of Syria.” (Ahmad) The last part refers to a dream Muhammad’s mother had before he was born in which she reported to her maid Barakah that she saw bright lights radiating from the direction of Syria. Within a few years of the Prophet’s passing, the seat of the Islamic Empire was moved to Damascus, Syria, and Syria has remained ever since a destination of choice for those seeking higher learning in the Islamic sciences.

References:

Emerick, Yahiya. *The Meaning of the Holy Qur’an in Today’s English* (p. 829). Unknown. Kindle Edition.

105:1 the Companions of the Elephant

Seest thou not how thy Lord dealt with the Companions of the Elephant? Seest thou not?-

i.e. with thy mental vision. The incident happened in the very year of the holy Prophet's birth, barely two months before it, C6271. These were the troops of Abrahah the Abyssinian, who invaded Makkah with a large army, in which were some elephants. References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 105 verse 1) [1]Quran Arabic with English Translation & Commentary (Tafsir) by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Free Download (quran4u.com)

105:3 And He sent against them Flights of Birds

And He sent against them Flights of Birds,

The miracle consisted in the birds coming in large flights and flinging stones at the army which destroyed the whole of Abrahah's army References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 105 verse 3) [1]Quran Arabic with English Translation & Commentary (Tafsir) by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Free Download (quran4u.com)

Then did He make them like an empty field of stalks and straw, (of which the corn) has been eaten up.

A field, from which all the corn has been eaten up and only straw with stalks or stubble is left, is a field dead and useless. And such was the army of Abrahah,- dead and useless. Another possible rendering would be: "like eaten straw and stubble found in the dung of animals". The meaning would be the same, but much more emphatic.

C6275. The lesson to be drawn is twofold. For the Pagan Quraysh of Makkah it was: Allah will protect His own; if you persecute the holy Prophet, he is greater than the mere building of the Ka'bah: will not Allah protect him?

For men in all ages it is:

'a man intoxicated with power can prepare armies and material resources against Allah's holy Plan; but such a man's plan will be his own undoing; he cannot prevail against Allah'.

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 105 verse 5) [1]Quran Arabic with English Translation & Commentary (Tafsir) by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Free Download (quran4u.com)

For the covenants (of security and safeguard enjoyed) by the Quraish,

The Quraysh were the noblest tribe of Arabia, the tribe to which belonged the holy Prophet himself. They had the custody of the Ka'bah, the central shrine of Arabia, and their possession of Makkah gave them a triple advantage:

1. they had a commanding influence over other tribes;
2. their central position facilitated trade and intercourse, which gave them both honour and profit; and
3. the Makkah territory being by Arabian custom inviolable from the ravages of war and private feuds, they had a secure position, free from fear of danger. This honour and advantage they owed to their position as servants of the sacred shrine of the Ka'bah. They owed it to Allah. Was it not therefore right and fitting that they should adore the One True God, and listen to His Message of Unity and Purity, brought by His Prophet? In those days of general insecurity, their prestige as custodians of Makkah enabled them to obtain Covenants of security and safeguard from the rulers of neighbouring countries on all sides-Syria, Persia, Yemen, and Abyssinia-protecting their trade journey in all seasons.

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 106 verse 1) [1]Quran Arabic with English Translation & Commentary (Tafsir) by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Free Download (quran4u.com)

106:2 The Quraysh

Their covenants (covering) journeys by winter and summer,-

On account of their trade journeys to the warmth of Yemen in the winter and the cooler regions of Syria and the north in the summer, the Quraysh became practised travellers and merchants, acquired much knowledge of the world and perfected their language as a polished medium of literary expression.

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 106 verse 2) [1]Quran Arabic with English Translation & Commentary (Tafsir) by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Free Download

(quran4u.com)

10:90 Pharaoh said: “I believe that there is no god except Him Whom the Children of Israel believe in: I am of those who submit (to Allah in Islam).”

We took the Children of Israel across the sea: Pharaoh and his hosts followed them in insolence and spite. At length, when overwhelmed with the flood, he said: “I believe that there is no god except Him Whom the Children of Israel believe in: I am of those who submit (to Allah in Islam).”

[1]The Splitting of the sea as tall as a Mountain by Moses (peace be upon him) – Islamic Web Library (Category: the prophets) Quran 26:61-63:

And when the two companies saw one another, the companions of Moses said, “Indeed, we are to be overtaken!” (verse 61) [Moses] said, “No! Indeed, with me is my Lord; He will guide me.” (verse 62)

Then We inspired to Moses, “Strike with your staff the sea,” and it parted, and each portion was like a great towering mountain. (verse 63)

The following excerpt is taken from “Tafhim ul Quran” by Sayyid Maududi under the commentary of the above verse note 47:

“Literally, tawd is a high mountain. It appears that as soon as Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) struck the sea with his staff, it tore the sea asunder and the waters stood like two mighty mountains on the sides and remained in that condition for so long that, on the one hand, the Israelite caravans consisting of hundreds of thousands of the migrants were able to pass through safely, and on the other, Pharaoh and his hosts stepped in and reached the middle of the sea. In the natural course, a phenomenon like this has never occurred that

due to a windstorm, however strong, the sea should have parted and stood like mighty mountains on either side for such a long time. According to Surah Taa-Haa 20:77 , Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was commanded by Allah to make for them (the Israelites) a dry path across the sea. This shows that the smiting of the sea did not only result in dividing the waters into two parts, which stood like mighty mountains on either side, but it also created a dry path in between without any mud or slush. In this connection, one should also consider Ayat 24 of Surah Dukhan 44:24 , which says that after Moses (peace be upon him) had crossed the sea along with his people, he was commanded by Allah to let the sea remain as it is because Pharaoh is to be drowned in it. This implies that if after crossing the sea, Moses had again struck it with his staff, the two sides would have rejoined, but he was forbidden to do so. Obviously, this was a miracle, and the view of those who try to interpret it as a natural phenomenon, is belied.”

References:

Maududi, Abul Ala (2010). Tafhim ul Quran. (note 47).
[2]<https://www.english tafsir.com/Quran->

[/6/index.html #sdfootnote47sym](#)

Allah will forgive every sin upon Repentance

Quran 4:17-18: The repentance accepted by Allah is only for those who do wrong in ignorance [or carelessness] and then repent soon after. It is those to whom Allah will turn in forgiveness, and Allah is ever Knowing and Wise.

But repentance is not [accepted] of those who [continue to] do evil deeds up until, when death comes to one of them, he says, "Indeed, I have repented now," or of those who die while they are disbelievers. For them We have prepared a painful punishment.

The following excerpt is taken from "Maariful Quran" vol 2 pg. 363-368:

Repentance was mentioned in the previous verse. Now, given in the present two verses are conditions under which repentance is or is not accepted.

Commentary Repentance from a deliberate sin

At this point, it should be noted that the Holy Qur'an has used the words "in ignorance" which apparently gives an impression that the repentance may be accepted when a sin is committed unintentionally and unknowingly. But if it is committed deliberately, it will not be acceptable.

However, according to the explanation of this verse given by the noble Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all, the word, "jahalah" (ignorance) here does not mean that a sinning person is not aware of a sin as sin, or has no intention or volition to commit a sin. Instead, it means that it was the insensitivity and heedlessness of a person towards the evil end of sin and its ultimate punishment which became the cause of his audacity to venture into sin, even

though he knew a sin as sin, and had approached it with intention and volition as well.

In other words, the word, “jahalah” or ignorance used here is in the sense of carelessness or stupidity. This is supported by an evidence in Surah Yusuf Sayyidna Yusuf (as) (Joseph) had said to his brothers: Here the brothers have been called, “jahilun”, the ignorant ones, although what they did was not the outcome of any error or forgetfulness but they had done that knowingly and with full deliberation. Yet, it is because of their heedlessness towards the evil end of their act that they have been called “jahil” (ignorant). Abu al-‘Aliyah and Qatadah report that the noble Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all, agreed that, that is, ‘any sin committed by a servant of Allah is, anyway, an act of ignorance, be it deliberate or otherwise.’ The master of exegesis, Mujahid said: “Every one who is doing anything in disobedience to Allah is, for that matter, ignorant while doing it,” even though, on the outside, he may appear to be a person of great learning. (Ibn Kathir) ,

In his Tafsir, al-Bahr al-Muhit, Abu Hayyan has said: “This is just like what has been reported in a hadith – poy 52) | gut , that is, ‘a person who commits zina (adultery) will not be doing so while in a state of being a true Muslim.’ It means that the time when he succumbed to the temptation of this evil act, that was the time when he was flung far off from the demand of his faith. For this reason, Sayyidna ‘Ikrimah said : that is, ‘everything one does in this mortal world – outside the framework of obedience to Allah – is ignorance.’ The logic is very obvious since the person disobeying Allah is preferring short-lived pleasures over those ever-lasting; and, anyone who takes the punishment which will last for ever and ever in exchange for this short-lived series of pleasures cannot be called rational, sensible or smart. Such a person would be universally termed as ignorant, even if he knows the evil of his act and has all the intention and resolve to go ahead with it. The gist of the discussion so far is that the sin that a man commits, deliberately or

mistakenly, gets committed due to nothing but ‘jihalat’ or ignorance. Therefore, there is a consensus of the entire Muslim ummah on the principle that the repentance of a person who commits some sin deliberately can also be accepted. (al-Bahr al-Muhit)

Incidentally, there is another point worth attention in the present verse which prescribes a condition for the acceptance of repentance – that one should repent soon without delaying it. The Qur’anic words are: “Shortly thereafter.” What does “shortly” signify and how much time will come within the limit of “shortly” The- Holy Prophet (S) hashimself explained this in a hadith in the following words: The hadith means that Allah Almighty accepts the repentance of His servant until the time he passes into the throes of death and his soul struggles to get out of his rattling throat.

Muhaddith Ibn Marduwayh has narrated from Sayyidna ‘Abdullahibn ‘Umar (RA), that he heard the Holy Prophet (S) saying: ‘A believing servant of Allah who repents from his sin a monthbefore his death, or repents a day or a moment earlier, Allah Almighty shall accept his repentance, the condition being that the repentance should be genuine and sincere. (Ibn Kathir)

In short, the explanation of “min garib” (shortly thereafter) given by the Holy Prophet (S) himself tells us that virtually man’swhole life-time comes urtder “garib” and, as such, any repentance which is offered well before death shall be acceptable. However, the repentance made by man while in throes of death is not acceptable. Maulana Ashraf ‘Ali Thanavi in his Tafsir Bayan al-Qur’an, has elabo- rated the subject by saying that man faces two conditions when close to death. Firstly, there is the condition of utter hopelessness when all medicines and efforts fail and man comes to realize that death is round the corner. This is known as the state of “»u” ie., conscious suffering. The second condition relates to what comes after, that is, when the pangs of the departure of human. soul begin and the fated time of ghargharah (the onomatopoetic rattling

sound emerging from the throat, a herald of approaching death) comes close. This is known as the state of i.e., total despair. The first condition, that is, the condition of conscious suffering comes within the sense of “min garib” and the repentance made at that time is accepted; but, the repentance in the second condition, that is, the condition of total despair, is not acceptable, for this is a condition when, the angels and things belonging to the Hereafter may start appearing before the dying person, and they are not included in the sense of “min garib”.

This explanation given by the Holy Prophet (S) has been pointed out by the Holy Qur’an itself in the following verse (i.e. verse 18) where it is expressly mentioned that repenting, after the sure signs of death are visible, is not accepted.

So, in the light of this explanation the addition of “min qarib” (shortly thereafter) in this verse serves to indicate that the very life-span of man is limited in time, and death, which he may think is far away, may actually be quite near.

“Relenting taken by Allah upon Himself” is a form of promise the fulfillment of which is certain. Otherwise the truth is that Allah Almighty does not necessarily owe anything to anyone.

The second verse (18) describes those whose repentance is not acceptable with Allah, those who fearlessly go on committing sins throughout their entire lives yet, when death stands on their head and the withdrawal of their soul is set in motion and the angels of death start becoming visible, they start offering repentance. How could their repentance become acceptable when they kept running wild with their lives and wasted all opportunities of repenting while there was still time to repent. This is very much like Pharaoh and his people who called out while drowning that they were ready to believe in the Lord of Musa (Moses) and Harun (Aaron). Naturally,

they were told that their declaration of faith at that time was of no consequence, because the time set for it was all over.

The same thing has been pointed out in the last sentence of the verse which says that Allah also does not accept the repentance of those who die while they are still disbelievers. What is the worth of a declaration of faith right in the middle of one's match with death facing the pangs of the withdrawal of the soul from the body? This confession or this declaration of faith is out of tune with the time and quite worthless now as their punishment stands prepared for them.

What is repentance?

After the literal explanation of these two verses, it seems necessary to define Taubah or repentance and determine its real nature and status. In his 'Ihya' al-'Ulum, Imam al-Ghazali has identified three different situations with regard to committing sins:

The first state is that of total sinlessness, that is, no sin has ever been committed. This is either the hallmark of angels or that of the prophets, may peace be on them. The second stage of getting involved in sin comes when one takes the initiative and ventures into sin and then repeats and persists with it, never feeling ashamed or regretful and never thinking of stopping and abandoning it. This is the degree of the satans and the devils. The third station belongs to human beings, the children of Adam who, immediately after having committed a sin, regret it and resolve firmly not to go near it in future.

This tells us that failing to repent after committing a sin is the style of devils exclusively. Therefore, it is the consensus of the entire Muslim ummah that Taubah is obligatory. The Holy Qur'an says:

(O those who believe, repent before Allah, a sincere repentance; may be your Lord removes from you your sins and admits you to gardens beneath which rivers flow.) (66:8)

How generous is the mercy of our Lord! A man spends a whole life-time in disobeying Him. Nevertheless, when he repents sincerely before his death, not only his sins are forgiven, but he receives much more when he is admitted into the circle of favoured servants of Allah and made an inheritor of Paradise. –

In a hadith, the Holy Prophet (S) has been reported to have said: that is, ‘one who repents from sin is loved by Allah and one who has repented from sin is like one who had never committed a sin.’ (bn Majah)

According to some narrations, if a servant of Allah repents from a sin and his repentance finds acceptance with Him, he is not only absolved from having to account for it, but the very record in writing posted by the angels is erased out from his book of deeds so that he may not be disgraced either.

However, what is necessary is that the repentance is genuine and is offered in sincerity. This repentance stands on three pillars. Firstly, one should regret over and feel ashamed about what he or she has done. According to hadith, that is, ‘Taubah is (another name of) remorse’. Secondly, one should immediately leave off the sin he has committed and he should, for the future too, firmly resolve to stay away from it. Thirdly, one should think of making amends for what has gone by, that is, he should try to take measures to rectify what has happened in sin to the best of his ability. For example, if he has missed a prayer or a fast, he should make up for it by doing what is known as qada (compensatory worship). If one does not remember the correct number of such missed prayers and fasts, he should think, calculate and come to an estimated number and then go on to offer qada for these in all seriousness. If one finds it

impossible to do so all at one time, he could offer, with each salah due at its time, one gada of each salah he missed throughout his life, which is commonly known as 'umri qada. In the same way, one should do his best to make up, as and when convenient, for obligatory fasts he missed by offering gada fasts.

May be one has not paid the obligatory zakah due on him; he should, then pay the zakah due on him for previous years as well, paying it all or paying it gradually. God forbid, if one has usurped someone's right, he should return it back to him and if he has hurt someone, he should seek his forgiveness. But, should it be that one does not regret what he has done, or, despite being regretful, he does not leave off that sin for future, then, this repentance is no repentance even though it may be said a thousand times, as so delightfully put in verse by a Persian poet:

Repentance on the lips, rosary in hand and a heart full of the taste of sin
Sin laughs at my style of seeking forgiveness!

The point being made here is that man, once he repents as stated earlier, and despite having been in all sorts of sins, becomes a servant dear to Allah. And should it ever be that, out of human weakness, one does fall into sin yet another time, he should immediately renew his repentance in the fond hope that this time, like every other time, Allah Almighty shall, being Most-Forgiving, relent towards him. Let me conclude with yet another Persian couplet which says:

This is the Court of My Presence, not the Court of Despair.

Even if you have broken (the promise in) your repentance a hundred times, come again!

References:

Shafi, Muhammad (2008). Maariful Quran. (Vol .2 pg. 363-368). English – Maariful Quran : Mufti Muhammad Shafi (r.a) : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive

110:2 And thou dost see the people enter Allah's Religion in crowds

And thou dost see the people enter Allah's Religion in crowds, The Prophet migrated from Makkah to Madinah, a persecuted man. In Madinah all the forces of truth and righteousness rallied round him, and the efforts by the Makkans and their confederates to destroy him and his community recoiled on their own heads.

Gradually all the outlying parts of Arabia ranged themselves round his standard, and the bloodless conquest of Makkah was the crown and prize of his patience and constant endeavour.

After that, whole tribes and tracts of country gave their adhesion to him collectively, and before his ministry was finished, the soil was prepared for the conquest of the wide world for Islam.

What was the lesson to be learnt from this little epitome of the world's history?

Not man's self-glory, but humility; and power but service; not an appeal to man's selfishness or selfsufficiency, but a realisation of Allah's Grace and Mercy, and the abundant outpouring of Allah's Praises in word and conduct.

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 110 verse 2) [1]Quran Arabic with English Translation & Commentary (Tafsir) by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Free Download (quran4u.com)

11:43 Noah said: This day nothing can save, from the command of Allah, any but those on whom He hath mercy!

The son replied: “I will betake myself to some mountain: it will save me from the water.” Noah said: “This day nothing can save, from the command of Allah, any but those on whom He hath mercy! “And the waves came between them, and the son was among those overwhelmed in the Flood.

The son of Noah who remained aloof in v. 42 is said to have been named Yām (IK, Z) or Kan‘ān (Z). From a spiritual point of view, his statement that he would take refuge on a mountain can be understood to refer to the false sense of security, stability, and permanence (symbolized by a mountain) that the disbelievers, in their state of denial of God, assign to the world.

References:

Nasr, Hossein (2015). Study Quran. <https://islamiconlinelibrary.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/TheStudyQuranANewTranslationAndCommentaryBySeyyedHosseinNasr.pdf>

11:44 Mount Judi

Then the word went forth: “O earth! swallow up thy water, and O sky! Withhold (thy rain!)” and the water abated, and the matter was ended. The Ark rested on Mount Judi, and the word went forth: “Away with those who do wrong!”

Maududi writes,

According to the Quran, the Ark rested upon Mount Judi, which is situated to the north-east of Jazirah Ibn Umar in Kurdistan. But according to the Bible its resting place was Mount Ararat in Armenia, which is one of the ranges of mountains of the same name that extends from Armenia to southern Kurdistan. Mount Judi is one of the mountains of the Ararat range, and is known by the same name even today. The ancient histories confirm that the resting place of the Ark was Mount Judi. For instance, Berasus, a religious leader of Babylonia, who lived about 250 years before Christ, says in his history of the Chaldeans that Noah’s Ark rested upon Mount Judi.

Abydenus, a pupil of Aristotle, not only confirms the same but also says that many people of Iraq of his time possessed pieces of the Ark, which they ground in water and gave to the sick as a medicine. Now let us consider the question: Did the deluge mentioned here cover the whole earth or was it confined to that particular region where Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) lived? This is a question which has not been finally settled up to this day.

As far as the Bible and the Israelite traditions are concerned, this was universal. (Genesis 7: 18- 24). But the Quran is silent about it, though it does say things which show that the whole human race after the deluge was the descendant of Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) and of those with him in the Ark, but this does not mean that the deluge covered all the earth. It may be explained like this: At that time of the history the only region of the earth, which was inhabited by the human race, was the region in which Noah lived, and the

generations which came after the deluge, gradually spread over other parts of the earth. This theory is supported by two things. First, there is a conclusive proof that a great flood did come over the land of the Tigris and the Euphrates. This is confirmed by historical traditions, archaeological remains and geological evidence. But there are no such proofs in the other parts of the earth as might show that the deluge was universal. Secondly, traditions have come down to almost all the peoples of the earth living even in distant places like America and Australia, that once a great flood had come all over the earth. The only conclusion which can be drawn from the above is that at one time the forefathers of all the people of the earth lived at one place. But, when afterwards they spread over different lands in the earth; they carried the traditions of the deluge along with them.

References:

Maududi, Abul Ala (2010). Tafhim ul Quran.
[1]<https://www.english tafsir.com/Qur-an/27/index.html>

11:46 O Noah! He is not of thy family

He said: “O Noah! He is not of thy family: For his conduct is unrighteous. So ask not of Me that of which thou hast no knowledge! I give thee counsel, lest thou act like the ignorant!”

Like all Prophets of Allah, Noah was kind-hearted, but he is told that there can be no compromise with evil. And Noah acknowledges the reproof.

There was a wife of Noah, who was also an unbelieving woman (66:10), and she suffered the fate of Unbelievers.

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 11 verse 46).

[1]Mi- crosoft Word – 011 Hud.doc (quran4u.com)

11:47 Noah's Repentance

Noah said: "O my Lord! I do seek refuge with Thee, lest I ask Thee for that of which I have no knowledge. And unless thou forgive me and have Mercy on me, I should indeed be lost!"

Noah, in his natural affection and respect for ties of relationship, was overcome with human weakness in wishing to reverse the Decree of Allah. It was not sin but ignorance. His ignorance was corrected by divine inspiration, and he immediately saw the full Truth, acknowledged his error, and asked for Allah's forgiveness and mercy. This is the standard set for us all.

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 11 verse 47). [1]Microsoft Word – 011 Hud.doc (quran4u.com)

1. <http://www.quran4u.com/Tafsiraya/011%20Hud.pdf>

11:48 Noah's Flood: A Universal Flood?

The word came: "O Noah! Come down (from the Ark) with peace from Us, and blessing on thee and on some of the peoples (who will spring) from those with thee: but (there will be other) peoples to whom We shall grant their pleasures (for a time), but in the end will a grievous penalty reach them from Us."

Maurice Bucaille writes,

There is a second highly significant subject of comparison between the Bible and the Quran; descriptions of the deluge. In actual fact., the Biblical narration is a fusion of two descriptions in which events are related differently. The Bible speaks of a universal flood and places it roughly 300 years before Abraham.

According to what we know of Abraham, this would imply a universal cataclysm around the twenty-first or twenty-second century BC. This story would be untenable, in view of presently available historical data. How can we accept the idea that, in the twenty-first or twenty second century BC, all civilization was wiped off the face of the earth by a universal cataclysm, when we know that this period corresponds, for example, to the one preceding the Middle Kingdom in Egypt, at roughly the date of the first Intermediary period before the eleventh dynasty? It is historically unacceptable to maintain that , at this time, humanity was totally wiped out. None of the preceding state is acceptable according modern knowledge. From this point of view, we can measure the enormous gap separating the Bible from the Quran.

In contrast to the Bible, the narration contained in the Quran deals with a cataclysm that is limited to Noah's people. They were punished for their sins, as were other ungodly peoples. The Quran does not fix the cataclysm in time. There are absolutely no historical or archaeo- logical objections to the narration in the Quran.

References:

- Bucaille, Maurice. The Quran and Modern Science. (1995)
[1]The Quran and Modern Science (islamicweblibrary.com)

11:77 Prophet Lut

When Our messengers came to Lut, he was grieved on their account and felt himself powerless (to protect) them. He said: “This is a distressful day.”

Sexual Perversion: A Major Sin

We must be aware that in regulating the sexual drive Islam has prohibited not only illicit sexual relations and all ways which lead to them, but also the sexual deviation known as homosexuality. This perverted act is a reversal of the natural order, a corruption of man’s sexuality, and a crime against the rights of females. (The same applies equally in the case of female homosexuality. (Trans.))

The spread of this depraved practice in a society disrupts its natural life pattern and makes those who practice it slaves to their lusts, depriving them of decent taste, decent morals, and a decent manner of living. The story of the people of the prophet Lut (Lot) as narrated in the Qur’an should be sufficient for us. Lut’s people were addicted to this shameless depravity, abandoning natural, pure, lawful relations with women in the pursuit of this unnatural, foul and illicit practice. That is why their prophet, Lut (peace be on him), told them, What! Of all creatures, do you approach males and leave the spouses whom your Lord has created for you? Indeed, you are people transgressing (all limits)! (26: 165-166)

The strangest expression of these peoples’ perversity of nature, lack of guidance, depravity of morals, and aberration of taste was their attitude toward the guests of the prophet Lut (peace be on him) who were angels of punishment in human form sent by Allah to try these people and to expose their perversity. The Qur’an narrates the story thus: And when Our messengers came to Lut, he was grieved on their account and did not know how to protect them. He said, ‘This is a day of distress.’ And his people, who had long since been practicing abominations, came rushing toward him. He said, ‘O my

people, here are my daughters. They are purer for you, so fear Allah and do not disgrace me in front of my guests. Is there not a single upright man among you?’ They said, ‘Thou knowest well that we have no right to thy daughters, and certainly thou knowest what we want.’ He said, ‘If only I had strength to resist you or had some powerful support!’ Said (the angels) ‘O Lut, truly, we are messengers of thy Lord; they shall not reach thee....’(11:77-81)

The jurists of Islam have held differing opinions concerning the punishment for this abominable practice. Should it be the same as the punishment for fornication, or should both the active and passive participants be put to death? While such punishments may seem cruel, they have been suggested to maintain the purity of the Islamic society and to keep it clean of perverted elements.

References:

Al-Qaradawi, Yusuf (1960). The Lawful and Prohibited in Islam. (p. 164, 166). <https://islamiconlineibrary.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/TheLawfulAndTheProhibitedInIslamal-halalWalHaramFilIslamByShaykhYusufAlQardawi.pdf>

12:47-49 The Interpretation of the King's dream

(Joseph) said: “For seven years shall ye diligently sow as is your wont: and the harvests that ye reap, ye shall leave them in the ear,- except a little, of which ye shall eat.“Then will come after that (period) seven dreadful (years), which will devour what ye shall have laid by in advance for them,- (all) except a little which ye shall have (specially) guarded.“Then will come after that (period) a year in which the people will have abundant water, and in which they will press (wine and oil).”

Joseph's interpretation of the dream offers a window into what would happen during the next fifteen years of Egypt's agrarian cycle. During the first phase, the Egyptians would sow diligently for seven years, as this would be a time of great fertility and abundance (R). The second phase would bring seven hard [years], that is, a time of dearth that would be exceedingly difficult for people (R). Joseph proposed to store up much of the harvest during the first phase so that the people would have food during the second phase. The year of succor during which people will press [wine and oil] refers to the last year of the cycle, which would be a blessed year of much bounty for the people of Egypt (R); the pressing of oil and wine is an indication that there would be food in abundance once again; cf. Genesis 41:25–36.

References:

Nasr, Hossein (2015). Study Quran. <https://islamiconlineibrary.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/TheStudyQuranANewTranslationAndCommentaryBySeyyedHosseinNasr.pdf>

12:43 The Dream of the King of Egypt

The king (of Egypt) said: “I do see (in a vision) seven fat kine, whom seven lean ones devour, and seven green ears of corn, and seven (others) withered. O ye chiefs! Expound to me my vision if it be that ye can interpret visions.”

This king was most probably one of the Hyksos rulers who ruled Egypt from about 1700 to 1550 bc. They were a northwestern Arab or mixed Arab-Asiatic people who entered Egypt sometime between 1720 and 1710 bc, and subdued the Middle Kingdom.

They used Avaris-Tanis in the Nile Delta as their capital rather than the Egyptian capital of Thebes. Under their hegemony, which lasted over a century, they established a powerful kingdom that included Syria and Palestine, and maintained peace and prosperity in their territories, to which the Prophet Joseph, upon him be peace, must have made the greatest contribution. They introduced the horse-drawn chariot and the composite bow, and their successful conquests were furthered by a type of rectangular fortification of beaten earth used as a fortress; archaeologists have uncovered examples of these mounds at Jericho, Shechem, and Lachish. The Hyksos were crushed by Amasis I at the battle of Tanis, in 1550 bc

References:

Unal, Ali (2006). The Quran with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English. (surah 12 verse 43). https://islamiconlinelibrary.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/The_quran_with_annotated_interpretation-1.pdf th-annotated-interpretation-.pdf.

14:35

Remember Abraham said: “O my Lord! make this city one of peace and security: and preserve me and my sons from worshipping idols.

In the preceding Ayats 32-35 14:32 , an appeal was made to the Quraish to be grateful to that Allah Who has bestowed so many bounties on mankind in general. But in this passage the same appeal is being made on the plea that Allah had bestowed His special bounties on the Quraish in particular. They have been asked to remember that Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) had settled forefathers of the Quraish near the Kabah and made their city, Makkah, a city of peace and Allah showered His blessings on the Quraish in answer to the prayer of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him). They have been admonished to remember those bounties and mend their ways.

References:

Maududi, Abul Ala (2010). Tafhim ul Quran.
[1]<https://www.englishtafsir.com/Quran/27/i-index.html>

15:78 The Companions of the Wood

And the Companions of the Wood were also wrong-doers;
“Companions of the Wood”:

Ashab ul Aykah.

Perhaps Aykah is after all a proper noun, the name of a town or tract. Who were the Companions of the Aykah?

They are mentioned four times in the Quran, viz., here, and in 26:176-191; 38:13; and 50:14.

The only passage in which any details are given is 26:176-191. There we are told that their Prophet was Shu'aib, and other details given correspond to those of the Madyan, to whom Shu'aib was sent as Prophet-, see 7:85-93. In my notes to that passage I have discussed the question of Shu'aib and the Madyan people. It is reasonable to suppose that the Companions of the Wood were either the same as the Madyan, or a Group among them or in their neighbourhood.

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 15 verse 78). [1]Quran

Arabic with English Translation & Commentary (Tafsir) by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Free Download (quran4u.com)

15:80 The Companions of the Rocky Tract

The Companions of the Rocky Tract also rejected the messengers:

“The Rocky Tract”: is undoubtedly a geographical name.

On the maps of Arabia will be found a tract called the Hijr, north of Madinah, Jabal Hijr is about 150 miles north of Madinah. The tract would fall on the highway to Syria.

This was the country of the Thamud For them and the country see 7:73, n. 1043 Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 15 verse 80) [1]Quran Arabic with English Translation & Commentary (Tafsir) by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Free Download (quran4u.com)

17:101 The Nine Clear Signs

To Moses We did give Nine Clear Signs: As the Children of Israel: when he came to them, Pharaoh said to him: “O Moses! I consider thee, indeed, to have been worked upon by sorcery!

Commentators consider the nine clear signs given to Moses (see also 27:12) to refer to the various miracles performed by Moses during his prophetic mission, although they do not all agree upon which ones are referred to here, and al-Rāzī maintains that the verse should not be understood to mean that Moses was given only nine signs. The Bible mentions ten plagues brought by Moses upon Pharaoh and his people: blood, frogs, lice, flies, disease of cattle, boils, hail, locusts, darkness, and death of the firstborns (see Exodus 7–11). Some commentators suggest that the nine clear signs in this verse refers, similarly, to the successive punishments brought upon the Egyptians in 7:130–33 (drought, shortage of crops, flood, locusts, lice, frogs, and blood) along with other miracles Moses performed. Combining the lists given by different commentators, the nine signs may also be said to include: the miracle of Moses’ staff turning into a serpent (7:109; 20:19–21; 26:32; 28:31); his hand turning white after being placed in his bosom (7:108; 20:22; 26:33; 27:12; 28:32); the “untying of a knot” from his tongue (20:27–28); the plagues of flood, locusts, lice, frogs, and blood (7:133) as well as the drought and scarcity that preceded these plagues (7:130); the parting of the sea (2:50; 26:63); the “blotting out” of the wealth of Pharaoh and his notables in response to Moses’ prayer (10:88); his making streams come forth by striking a rock with his staff (2:60; 7:160); the miraculous provision of manna and quails in the desert (2:57; 7:160; 20:80); and the mountain towering over Moses and the Israelites at Sinai (see 2:63–64c; 2:93; 4:154; 7:171; IK, JJ, R, T, Z). Alternately, the nine clear signs given to Moses are identified in a ḥadīth as referring to the nine prohibitions given by Moses to his people, namely, the prohibitions against associating other gods with God, theft, adultery, murder, sorcery, usury, slandering chaste

women, fleeing from a just and righteous battle, and working on the Sabbath; the last of these, unlike the other eight prohibitions, is unique to the Israelites (IK, R, T).

Pharaoh's accusation that Moses is bewitched (*mashūr*) is similar to accusations that he is a sorcerer (10:76; 20:57, 63; 26:34; 27:13; 28:36; 40:24; 51:39). Some commentators read bewitched in this context as synonymous with being a sorcerer (R, T), but others suggest that here Pharaoh is accusing Moses of being misled or confused by sorcery (JJ, Z)

References:

Nasr, Hossein (2015). Study Quran.
<https://islamiconlinelibrary.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/TheStudyQuranANewTranslationAndCommentaryBySeyyedHosseinNasr.pdf>

17:104 And We said thereafter to the Children of Israel, “Dwell securely in the land (of promise)”

And We said thereafter to the Children of Israel, “Dwell securely in the land (of promise)”: but when the second of the warnings came to pass, We gathered you together in a mingled crowd.

This part of the story of Pharaoh has been related here because it applied exactly to the mushriks of Makkah who were doing their best to uproot the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the believers from the land of Arabia. This story, so to say, tells them:Pharaoh resolved to uproot Moses (peace be upon him) and the Israelites but was himself completely annihilated along with his followers. But Moses (peace be upon him) and his followers settled down in the land. Likewise, if you persist on the same way, you will surely meet with the same end.

References:

Maududi, Abul Ala (2010). Tafhim ul Quran.
[1]<https://www.english tafsir.com/Qur- an/27/index.html>

17:5 The Fall of the Israelites

Then the first of the warnings came to pass, We sent against you Our servants given to terrible warfare: They entered the very inmost parts of your homes; and it was a warning (completely) fulfilled.

According to Tafhim ul Quran,

This refers to the terrible destruction that the Israelites suffered at the hands of the Assyrians and Babylonians. One cannot fully appreciate the historical background of this merely from the extracts that have been reproduced above from the Books of the Prophets. A brief history of the Israelites is also needed so that a student may become acquainted with all the causes and circumstances on account of which Allah removed this nation, that professed to believe in a revealed Book, from the leadership of mankind and turned it into a humiliated, condemned and backward community. @@ After the death of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) when the Israelites entered Palestine, it was inhabited by the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, Jebusites, the Philistines, etc.

These communities had adopted the worst kind of idolatry, their supreme deity being Ayl whom they regarded as the father of gods and who was usually represented by the bull images. His consort was called Asherah from whom had descended a whole line of gods and goddesses, about 70 in number. The most powerful god among them was Baal who was regarded as the god of rain and growth and the lord of the earth and heavens. In the northern regions his consort was called Anathoth and in Palestine Ashtaroth. These two were the goddesses of love and procreation. Besides them, there was a god of death, a god of disease and famine, and a goddess of health, and thus all the worldly powers and agencies stood divided among a large number of deities. The people had ascribed such dirty and base qualities and acts to these deities that even a worst offender against

morality would shun being known by them. Obviously the people who have adopted such mean deities for worship and devotion cannot remain secure from the worst kind of moral degeneration and the modern excavations have shown this conclusively. Child sacrifice was a common thing among them. Their places of worship had turned into brothels, where women were kept as religious prostitutes and illicit relations with them were regarded as a part of worship and devotion. The Israelites had clearly been told in the instructions given in the Torah that they should destroy those communities and wrest the land of Palestine from them, and that they should avoid mixing up with those people and ward off their moral and ideological weaknesses. But when the Israelites entered Palestine they set this guidance aside.

They not only did not establish a united kingdom of their own but fell a prey to tribal parochialism. Each of their tribes was content to take a part of the captured land and become a separate and independent state. This disunity among them did not leave any of the tribes strong enough to purge its territory completely of the idolaters, and therefore they had to allow them to live side by side with them in the same land. Not only this, but there had remained in the conquered territories a number of small cities of these idolatrous communities which the Israelites had not been able to subjugate. It is this very thing which has been complained against in the extract of the Psalms reproduced above in the beginning of (17:6) . The first consequence of intermixing with those communities was that the Israelites also became idolatrous, and gradually began to adopt other moral evils also. This has been complained about in the Book of Judges as below: And the children of Israel did evil, in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim. And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger. And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth. (Judges, 2: 11-13). The second consequence suffered by the

Israelites was that the communities whose cities they had left unconquered and the Philistines whose land they had not at all touched set up a united front against them and drove them out of a major part of Palestine by incessant attacks, so much so that they deprived them of the Holy Ark of their Lord. At last, the Israelites felt the need of establishing a united kingdom of their own under one ruler, and on their request Prophet Samuel appointed Saul as their king in 1020 B.C. For details see Ayats 246-248 of Surah Al-Baqara 2:246 and their interpretations (2:268) . This united kingdom was ruled by three kings:Saul (1020 B.C. to 1004 B.C.), Prophet David (1004 to 965 B.C.) and Prophet Solomon (365 to 926 B.C.). These kings brought to completion the mission that had been left incomplete by the Israelites after the death of Prophet Moses (Peace be upon the all). They annexed all the territories except the Phoenician state on the northern and the Philistine state on the southern coast, which of course became tributaries. After the death of Prophet Solomon the Israelites again adopted the ways of the world and fought among themselves and split into two independent kingdoms, the kingdom of Israel in the northern Palestine and Jordan with Samaria as its capital, and the kingdom of Judah in the southern Palestine and Edom with Jerusalem as its capital. These kingdoms were strife ridden from the very beginning and this state of affairs persisted till the end. The rulers and people of the kingdom of Israel were the first to be affected grievously by the ideological and moral weaknesses of the neighboring communities. Specially, after the marriage of its ruler Ahab with the idolatrous princess Jezebel of Zidon, idolatry and other evils began to spread unchecked among the Israelites under the official patronage. Prophets Elias and Elisha tried their very best to check this deluge but the Israelites, who were rapidly degenerating, did not heed their warning. At last the wrath of Allah overtook the kingdom of Israel in the shape of the Assyrians who started subjecting Palestine to incessant attacks from 900 B.C. downward. During this period, Prophet Amos (787-747 B.C.) and then Prophet Hosea (747- 735 B.C.) rose and warned the Israelites again and again, but the wretched depraved people did

not heed their warnings at all and transgressed all limits. Prophet Amos was banished by the king of Israel from the realm of Samaria and warned not to preach his mission in the country. Not very long after this the wrath of Allah burst upon the kingdom of Israel and its people. The Assyrian king Sargon took Samaria in 721 B.C. and put an end to this northern kingdom.

Thousands of Israelites were put to the sword and twenty seven thousand of their leading men were driven out of their homeland and scattered in the eastern districts of the Assyrian empire and replaced by settlers from other parts of the empire. When the remaining Israelites intermixed with the settlers, they also lost gradually their national and cultural identity. The other kingdom of the Israelites, called the kingdom of Judah, which was set up in southern Palestine also began to adopt godless ways soon after the death of Prophet Solomon, though its moral degeneration took place at a slower pace than that of Israel.

Therefore, it was allowed to exist for a longer period. Then, like the kingdom of Israel, it also began to be subjected to continual attacks, its cities ruined and its capital besieged, but this kingdom could not be wholly destroyed by the Assyrians, it only became a tributary.

Afterwards, when in spite of the best reformatory efforts of Prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah the people of Judah did not give up idol worship and other moral evils, king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon attacked and captured the whole of Judah in 598 B.C. including Jerusalem and took the king of Judah as prisoner. Even then the Israelites did not mend their ways and paid no heed to the warnings and guidance of Prophet Jeremiah. Instead of reforming their ways, they started making plans to change their fate by revolting against Babylon. At last in 587 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar punished them heavily by invading Judah and destroyed all its important cities. He razed Jerusalem and Solomon's Temple to the

ground and did not leave a wall of it standing in place. He drove a large part of the Israelite population out of their land and scattered them into the adjoining countries. The people who were left behind were cursed and subjected to all kinds of humiliations by the neighboring communities. This was the first calamity that came as a warning to the Israelites and the first chastisement that they suffered as a result thereof.

Maududi, Abul Ala (2010). Tafhim ul Quran.
[1]<https://www.english tafsir.com/Qur-an/27/index.html>

17:58 The case of ever term

There is not a population but We shall destroy it before the Day of Judgment or punish it with a dreadful Penalty: that is written in the (eternal) Record.

The Quran frequently mentions the destruction of “towns” for the wrongdoing of their inhabitants (e.g., 7:4, 59–101; 17:16; 21:11; 22:45), and this destruction usually means the utter uprooting and annihilation of their people (Ṭ, Z). In this verse, however, destruction is the fate that awaits all towns before the Day of Resurrection. Some commentators suggest that although all towns will eventually be destroyed, righteous towns will be “destroyed” through ordinary death, whereas severe punishment, entailing terrifying modes of destruction, is the fate of those that are wicked (Q, Ṭs, Z). That this fate is inscribed in the Book—likely a reference to the Preserved Tablet (see 85:22c; Ṭ, Ṭs)—means that the appointed time of destruction for all towns has already been decreed (cf. 7:34; 15:4; 18:59).

References:

Nasr, Hossein (2015). Study Quran. <https://islamiconlineibrary.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/TheStudyQuranANewTranslationAndCommentaryBySeyyedHosseinNasr.pdf>

17:6 The Return

Then did We grant you the Return as against them: We gave you increase in resources and sons, and made you the more numerous in man-power.

This refers to the lease of time that the Israelites (That is the people of Judah) got after their release from the captivity of Babylon. As for the people of Israel and Samaria, they did not rise again after their moral and spiritual degeneration. But among the people of Judah there still were some people who practiced the truth and invited others also to follow it. They carried on their work of invitation to the truth among the remaining Israelites in Judah and also exhorted those who had been driven out into Babylon and other lands to repent and follow the truth. At last the mercy of Allah came to their help. The downfall of Babylon started. The Persian king, Cyrus, took Babylon in 539 B.C. and in the following year issued a decree allowing the Israelites to return to and resettle in their homeland. The Israelites began to return home in caravan after caravan, and this continued for a long time. Cyrus also allowed the Israelites to rebuild the Temple of Solomon but the neighboring communities who had settled in this land resisted it. At last Darius appointed Zerubbabel, a grandson of the last king of Judah as the governor of Judah in 522 B.C., who got the Temple rebuilt under the care of Prophet Haggai, Prophet Zechariah and Joshua. In 458 B.C. Ezra arrived in Judah along with an exiled group and the Persian king Artaxerxes made the following decree: @@ And thou, Ezra, after the wisdom of thy God that is in thine hand, set magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people that are beyond the river, all such as know the laws of thy God; and teach ye them that know them not. And whosoever will not do the law of thy God and the law of the king let judgment be executed speedily upon him whether it be unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment. (Ezra, 7: 25-26). Taking advantage of this decree, Ezra carried out the revival of the religion of Prophet

Moses (peace be upon him). He gathered together all the righteous and good people from the Israelites and set up a strong organization. He compiled and spread the Pentateuch which contained the Torah, made arrangements for the religious education of the Israelites, enforced the law and started purging the people of moral and ideological weaknesses which they had adopted by intermixing with the other communities. He compelled the Jews to divorce the idolatrous wives they had married, and took a covenant from them that they would worship God alone and follow His law only. In 455 B.C. an exiled group came back to Judah under Nehemiah whom the Persian king appointed as the ruler of Jerusalem and ordered him to build the wall round the city. Thus, after 150 years the Holy city was fully restored and became the center of Jewish religion and culture, But the Israelites of northern Palestine, and Samaria did not benefit from the work of revival done by Ezra. They built a rival sanctuary on Mount Gerizim and tried to make it the religious center for the people of the Book. This caused a further, and perhaps the final, split between the Jews and the Samaritans. The Jews suffered a setback for a while with the fall of the Persian Empire and the conquests of Alexander the Great and the rise of the Greeks. After the death of Alexander, his kingdom was subdivided into three empires. Syria fell to the lot of the Seleucide empire, with Antioch as its capital, whose ruler Antiochus III incorporated Palestine into his dominions in 198 B.C. These Greek conquerors who were idolatrous by precept and freelance morally felt greatly ill at ease with the Jewish religion and culture. So, they began to propagate the rival Greek way of life and culture by political and economic pressure, and were able to win over a strong section of the Israelites who became their helpers. This external interference caused a split in the Jewish nation. One group among them readily adopted the Greek dress, the Greek language, the Greek way of life and the Greek sports, while the other persistently stuck to their own culture and way of life. In 175 B.C. when Antiochus IV (who was called Epiphanes, that is, the manifestation of God) came to the throne, he used all his power and authority to stamp out the Jewish religion and culture. He got idols

installed in the Holy Temple at Jerusalem and forced the Jews to prostrate themselves before them. He strictly forbade the rite of offering the sacrifices at the altar, and commanded the Jews to offer sacrifices to idolatrous deities instead. He proposed death penalty for those who would keep the Torah in their houses, or observe the Sabbath or perform circumcision of their children. But the Jews did not yield to this coercion, and started a powerful resistance movement, known in history as the revolt of the Maccabees. Though in this struggle the sympathies of the Greek oriented Jews were with the Greeks, and they fully cooperated with the despots of Antioch to crush the Maccabean revolt, the common Jews who still retained the religious fervor of the days of Ezra sided with the Maccabees, who were ultimately able to drive out the Greeks and establish a free religious state which remained in power till 67 B.C. This state prospered and in time extended to all those territories which had once been under the control the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. It was able to annex a part of the land of the Philistines which had remained unconquered even in the days of Prophets David and Solomon (Peace be upon them). This is the historical background of the verse of the Quran under commentary.

References:

Maududi, Abul Ala (2010). Tafhim ul Quran.
[1]<https://www.englishtafsir.com/Qur-an/27/index.html>

17:7 The Second Degeneration

If ye did well, ye did well for yourselves; if ye did evil, (ye did it) against yourselves. So when the second of the warnings came to pass, (We permitted your enemies) to disfigure your faces, and to enter your Temple as they had entered it before, and to visit with destruction all that fell into their power.

The historical background of the second degeneration and its chastisement is as follows: The moral and religious fervor with which the Maccabees had started their movement gradually cooled down and was replaced by love of the world and empty external form. A split appeared among them and they themselves invited the Roman General, Pompey, to come to Palestine. Pompey turned his attention to this land in 63 B.C. By taking Jerusalem he put an end to the political freedom of the Jews. But the Roman conquerors preferred to rule their dominions through the agency of the local chiefs rather than by direct control. Therefore, a local government was set up in Palestine which eventually passed into the hand of Herod, a clever Jew, in 40 B.C. This ruler is well known as Herod the Great. He ruled over the entire Palestine and Jordan from 40 to 4 B.C. On the one hand, Herod patronized the religious leaders to please the Jews, and on the other, he propagated the Roman culture and won the goodwill of Caesar by showing his loyalty and faithfulness to the Roman Empire. During, his reign, the Jews degenerated and fell to the lowest ebb of moral and religious life. On the death of Herod his kingdom was subdivided into three parts. His son, Archelaus, became the ruler of Samaria, Judea and northern Edom. In A.D. 6, however, Caesar Augustus deprived him of his authority and put the state under his Roman governor, and this arrangement continued up till A.D. 41. This was precisely the time when Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) appeared to reform the Israelites whose religious leaders opposed him tooth and nail and even tried to get him the death sentence by the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate. The second son of Herod, Herod Antipas, became

the ruler of Galilee and Jordan in northern Palestine, and he was the person who got Prophet Yahya (John) (Peace be upon him) beheaded at the request and desire of a dancing girl. Herod's third son, Philip, succeeded to the territories bounded on one side by river Yermuk and on the other by Mount Hermon. Philip had been much more deeply influenced by the Roman and Greek cultures than his father and brothers. Therefore the preaching of the truth could not have even so much effect in his land as it had in the other parts of Palestine. In A.D. 41, the Romans appointed Herod Agrippa, the grandson of Herod the Great, ruler of the territories that had once been under Herod himself. Coming into power this man did whatever he could to persecute the followers of Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) and used all the forces at his disposal to crush the movement that was functioning under the guidance of the disciples to inculcate fear of God in the people and reform their morals. In order to have a correct estimate of the condition of the common Jews and their religious leaders, one should study the criticisms leveled by Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) on them in his sermons contained in the four Gospels. Even a religious man like Prophet John (peace be upon him) was beheaded before their eyes and not a voice was raised in protest against this barbarity. Then all the religious leaders of the community unanimously demanded death sentence for Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him), and none but a few righteous men were there to mourn this depravity. Above all, when Pontius Pilate asked these depraved people, which condemned prisoner he should release, according to the custom, at Passover, Jesus or Barabbas the robber, they all cried with one voice Barabbas. This was indeed the last chance Allah gave to the Jews, and then their fate was sealed. Not long after this, a serious conflict started between the Jews and the Romans, which developed into an open revolt by the former between A.D. 64 and 66. Both Herod Agrippa II and the Roman procurator Floris failed to put down the rebellion. At last, the Romans crushed it by a strong military action and in A.D. 70 Titus took Jerusalem by force. About 133000 people were put to the sword.

Sixty seven thousand made slaves, and thousands sent to work in the Egyptian mines and to other cities so that they could be used in amphitheaters for being torn by wild beasts or become the practice target for the sword fighters. All the tall and beautiful girls were picked out for the army of conquest and the Holy City of Jerusalem and the Temple were pulled down to the ground. After this the Jewish influence so disappeared from Palestine that the Jews could not regain power for two thousand years and the Holy Temple could never be rebuilt. Afterwards the Roman Emperor, Hadrian, restored Jerusalem but renamed it Aelia. The Jews, however, were not allowed to enter it for centuries. This was the calamity that the Jews suffered on account of their degeneration for the second time.

References:

Maududi, Abul Ala (2010). Tafhim ul Quran.
[1]<https://www.english tafsir.com/Qur- an/27/index.html>

18:94 Who are the Gog and Magog?

They said: “O Zul-qarnain! the Gog and Magog (People) do great mischief on earth: shall we then render thee tribute in order that thou mightest erect a barrier between us and them?”

This is the form in which these names (in Arabic, Yajuj and Majuj) have achieved currency in all European languages on the basis of certain vague references to them in the Bible (Genesis x, 2,

I Chronicles i, 5, Ezekiel xxxviii, 2 and xxxix, 6, Revelation of St. John xx, 8). Most of the post- classical commentators identify these tribes with the Mongols and Tatars (see note 100 below)

References:

Asad, Muhammad (1980). The Message of the Quran. <https://islamiconlineibrary.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Message-of- Quran.pdf>

18:98 The idea of Gog and Magog is Allegorical

He said: “This is a mercy from my Lord: But when the promise of my Lord comes to pass, He will make it into dust; and the promise of my Lord is true.”

Some of the classical commentators (e.g., Tabari) regard this as a prediction of a definite, historic event: namely, the future breakthrough of the savage tribes of “Gog and Magog”, who are conceived of as identical with the Mongols and Tatars (see note 95 above). This “identification” is mainly based on a well-authenticated Tradition – recorded by Ibn Hanbal, Bukhari and Muslim – which tells us that the Apostle of God had a prophetic dream to which he referred, on awakening, with an exclamation of distress: “There is no deity save God! Woe unto the Arabs from a misfortune that is approaching:

a little gap has been opened today in the rampart of Gog and Magog!” Ever since the late Middle Ages, Muslims have been inclined to discern in this dream a prediction of the great Mongol invasion in the thirteenth century, which destroyed the Abbasid Empire and, thus, the political power of the Arabs.

However, the mention, in verses 99-101 of this surah, of “the Day” –i.e., the Day of Judgment – in connection with “Gog and Magog” shows that “the time appointed by my Sustainer” relates to the coming of the Last Hour, when all works of man will be destroyed. But since none of the Qur’anic references to the “approach” or the “nearness” of the Last Hour has anything to do with the human concept of time, it is possible to accept both of the above interpretations as equally valid in the sense that the “coming of the Last Hour” comprises an indefinite – and, in human terms, perhaps even immensely long span of time, and that the breakthrough of the godless forces of “Gog and Magog” was to be one of the signs of its approach. And, finally, it is most logical to assume

(especially on the basis of 21:96-97) that the terms Yajuj and Majuj are purely allegorical, applying not to any specific tribes or beings but to a series of social catastrophes which would cause a complete destruction of man's civilization before the coming of the Last Hour.

References:

Asad, Muhammad (1980). The Message of the Quran. <https://islamiconlineibrary.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Message-of- Quran.pdf>

19:30 Jesus spoke in the cradle

He said: “I am indeed a servant of Allah: He hath given me revelation and made me a prophet; (“I am the servant of Allah” – 19:30)

There is a report that when her family members started berating and censuring Sayyidah Maryam (AS), Sayyidna 'Isa (pbuh) was sucking milk. When he heard their accusations he stopped sucking milk and moved over to his left side facing them, and raising his index finger he said: i.e. I am the servant of Allah. In this way in his very first words Sayyidna 'Isa (pbuh) made it clear that although his birth was a miracle, he himself was not God, but only a servant of God. This was to eliminate forever the possibility of people worshipping him as God due to his miraculous birth.

“He has given me the Book and made me a prophet.” – 19:30.

In these words, Sayyidna 'Isa (pbuh) even in his infancy announced his future prophethood and the revelation to him of a sacred book from Allah Tala. Since no prophet has been granted prophethood and a sacred book before the age of forty years, therefore this pre- announcement of his prophethood by Sayyidna Isa (pbuh) here means to convey in advance that he would be bestowed prophethood and the Book at the proper time. In a similar manner The Holy Prophet (S) said that he was bestowed prophethood even before Adam was yet in the process of his creation.

This shows that the promise for granting prophethood to Sayyidna Muhammad Al-Mustafa (S) was firm and final. Here too, because of the certainty of occurrence, the grant of prophethood is referred to in the past tense. By announcing his future prophethood he (Sayyidna 'Isa) dispelled peoples' doubts and exonerated his mother from the charge of fornication, because his being a Prophet was proof enough that his birth was free from any blemish.

References:

Shafi, Muhammad (2008). Maariful Quran. (Vol .5 surah 19 verse 30). English – Maariful Quran : Mufti Muhammad Shafi (r.a) : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive

20:87 The Samari

They said: “We broke not the promise to thee, as far as lay in our power: but we were made to carry the weight of the ornaments of the (whole) people, and we threw them (into the fire), and that was what the Samiri suggested.

The designation al-Sâmari is an adjectival noun denoting the persons descent or origin. Sâmarî was one of the many Egyptians who had joined the Israelites on their exodus from Egypt (Ibn ‘Abbâs). Most probably, the word is derived from shemer. In the Coptic language, shemer means “foreigner.” Sumrat is a colour between fair and black. The golden calf symbolizes the glamor of this life (cf. 20:131)

References:

NOORUDDÎN ,ALLÂMAH. (2015). Exegesis of The Holy Qur’ân Commentary and Reflections. <https://islamiconlinelibrary.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Exegesis-Commentary.pdf>

20:94 Prophet Harun and Musa

(Aaron) replied: “O son of my mother! Seize (me) not by my beard nor by (the hair of) my head! Truly I feared lest thou shouldst say, 'Thou has caused a division among the children of Israel, and thou didst not respect my word!'”

This reply of Aaron’s is in no way inconsistent with the reply as noted in 7:150.

On the contrary there is a dramatic aptness in the different points emphasised on each occasion. In Surah 7, we were discussing the Ummah of Israel, and Aaron rightly says, “The people did indeed reckon me as naught, and went near to slay me!” In addition, “Let not the enemies rejoice over my misfortune” he is referring by implication to his brother’s wish to maintain unity among the people.

Here the unity is the chief point to emphasize: we are dealing with the Samiri as mischief- monger, and he could best be dealt with by Moses, who proceeds to do so.

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 20 verse 94). [1]Quran Arabic with English Translation & Commentary (Tafsir) by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Free Download (quran4u.com)

1. <http://www.quran4u.com/Tafsiraya/Index.htm>

23:20 Mount Sinai

Also a tree springing out of Mount Sinai, which produces oil, and relish for those who use it for food.

The tree mentioned here is the olive tree. The Qur'ān mentions it as a tree growing in the lands around Mount Sinai; Mount Sinai may have been its natural habitat or the place where the best olives were produced, at least at the time when the verse was revealed.

References:

Unal, Ali (2006). The Quran with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English. (surah 23 verse 20) https://islamiconlineibrary.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/The_quran_with_annotated_interpretation-1.pdf

25:38 Companions of the Rass

As also 'Ad and Thamud, and the Companions of the Rass, and many a generation between them.

Commentators are not clear as to who the “Companions of the Rass” were. The root meaning of “rass” is an old well or shallow water-pit. Another root connects it with the burial of the dead. But it is probably the name of a town or place.

The “Companions of the Rass” may well have been the people of Shu'aib, as they are here mentioned with the 'Ad, the Thamud, and Lut's people, and the people of Shu'aib are mentioned in a similar connection in 26:176- 190 and in 11:84- 95.

Shu'aib was the prophet of the Madyan people in the north-west of Arabia, where many old wells are found. There is however an oasis town al-Rass in the district of Qasim in Middle Najd, about thirty-five miles south-west of the town of 'Unaiza, reputed to be the central point of the Arabian Peninsula, and situated midway between Makkah and Basra. See Doughly's Arabia Deserts, thin-paper one-volume edition, London 1926, 11, 435 and Map, Lat. 26N., and Long. 43E.

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 25 verse 38. [1]Quran Arabic with English Translation & Commentary (Tafsir) by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Free Download (quran4u.com)

27:23 “I found (there) a woman ruling over them and provided with every requisite; and she has a magnificent throne.

“I found (there) a woman ruling over them and provided with every requisite; and she has a magnificent throne. The Queen of Sheba (by name Bilqis in Arabian tradition) came apparently from Yemen, but she had affinities with Abyssinia and possibly ruled over Abyssinia also.

The Habasha tribe (after whom Abyssinia was named) came from Yemen. Between the southern coast of Yemen and the north-eastern coast of Abyssinia there are only the Straits of Bab-al-Mandab, barely twenty miles across.

In the 10th or 11th century B.C. there were frequent invasions of Abyssinia from Arabia, and Solomon’s reign of 40 years is usually synchronised with B.C. 992 to 952. The Sabaean and Himyarite alphabets in which we find the south Arabian pre-Islamic inscriptions, passed into Ethiopic, the language of Abyssinia.

The Abyssinians possess a traditional history called “The Book of the Glory of Kings” (Kebra Nagast), which has been translated from Ethiopic into English by Sir E.A. Wallis Budge (Oxford, 1932). It gives an account of the Queen of Sheba and her only son Menyelek 1, as founders of the Abyssinian dynasty. (R).

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 27 verse 23). [1]Quran Arabic with English Translation & Commentary (Tafsir) by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Free Download (quran4u.com)

27:36 Solomon's response to Queen Bilqis

Now when (the embassy) came to Solomon, he said: "Will ye give me abundance in wealth? But that which Allah has given me is better than that which He has given you! Nay it is ye who rejoice in your gift!

Historical Israili legends describe in great detail the incident of the visit of the envoys of Bilqis and the gifts they had taken with them. All versions of the legends agree on that the gifts included some gold bricks, some precious stones, one hundred slaves and one hundred slave girls. But the slave girls were dressed in men's clothes and the slaves were dressed in ladies outfits. There was also a letter from Bilqis, in which there were some questions for testing Sayyidna Sulaiman (AS). In the selection of gifts also, his test was intended. Allah Ta'ala had passed on detailed information of gifts to Sulaiman (AS) even before their arrival. Sayyidna Sulaiman (AS) commanded the Jinns to lay out a floor of gold and silver bricks over a thirty miles stretch from his court, and that strange looking animals be lined up on either side of this pathway. Their excrement of bowels was also to be placed on the floor of gold and silver. Similarly, his court was decorated with special attention. Four thousand chairs of gold were placed on the left side and four thousand on the right side of the main hall for the scholars, ministers, and other officials of the court. The entire hall was bedecked with precious stones. When Bilqis's envoys saw animals standing on the floor of gold bricks, they were embarrassed with the gifts they had brought with them. It is reported in some narrations that they threw away their gold bricks. Then as they proceeded, they saw rows of beasts and birds on either side of the pathway. After that they came across the rows of jinns. Seeing them, they were browbeaten. Ultimately, when they reached the court and stood before Sayyidna Sulaiman, he received them with dignity, and entertained them with veneration. But he returned

all their gifts and presents, and answered all the questions sent up by Bilqis. (Qurtubi) When Bilqis's envoys reached the court of Sayyidna Sulaiman (AS) with the gifts and presents sent by her, he said to them 'Do you wish to help me with wealth? Whatever wealth and bounties I have been given by Allah is much better than your wealth and material. Therefore, I do not accept your presents of wealth. You better take them away, and enjoy them yourself.

References:

Shafi, Muhammad (2008). Maariful Quran. (Vol .6 surah 27 verse 36). English – Maariful Quran : Mufti Muhammad Shafi (r.a) : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive

She said: “Kings, when they enter a country, despoil it, and make the noblest of its people its meanest thus do they behave.

The character of Queen Bilqis, as disclosed here, is that of a ruler enjoying great wealth and dignity, and the full confidence of her subjects. She does nothing without consulting her Council, and her Council are ready to carry out her commands in all things. Her people are manly, loyal, and contented, and ready to take the field against any enemy of their country.

But their queen is prudent in policy, and is not willing to embroil her country in war. She has the discrimination to see that Solomon is not like ordinary kings who conquer by violence. Perhaps in her heart she has a ray of the divine light already, though her people are yet Pagans.

She wishes to carry her people with her in whatever she does, because she is as loyal to them as they are to her. An exchange of presents would probably establish better relations between the two kingdoms. And perhaps she anticipates some spiritual understanding also, a hope which was afterwards realised. In Bilqis we have a picture of womanhood, gentle, prudent, and able to tame the wider passions of her subjects. (R).

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 27 verse 34). [1]Quran Arabic with English Translation & Commentary (Tafsir) by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Free Download (quran4u.com)

27:37 Bilqis' envoys dumb founded and awe struck

“Go back to them, and be sure we shall come to them with such hosts as they will never be able to meet: We shall expel them from there in disgrace, and they will feel humbled (indeed).”

Qurtubi has reported, giving references of historical record, that Bilqis's envoys returned from the court of Sulaiman (AS) totally dumb-founded and awe-struck, and conveyed his declaration of war to the queen. Then Bilqis said to her people that she was already of the view that he was no ordinary king, but was on some special assignment from God, and that fighting with His messenger is like fighting with God, for which they did not have the strength. After making this statement, she started getting ready to go to Sayyidna Sulaiman. She took along with her twelve thousand chiefs, commanding an army of hundred thousand men each.' Allah Ta'ala had graced Sayyidna Sulaiman with such awe and majesty that no one had the courage to speak before him. One day he saw a cloud of dust at some distance. So he asked from those who were present as to what that was. His people answered 'O messenger of Allah! Queen Bilqis is coming with her people'. Some narrations relate that at that time she was about three miles from the court of Sulaiman. At that moment Sayyidna Sulaiman (AS) turned to his courtiers and asked them: He said, "O chieftains, which one of you will bring her throne to me before they come to me submissively?" 27:38. References:

Shafi, Muhammad (2008). Maariful Quran. (Vol .6 surah 27 verse 37). English – Maariful Quran : Mufti Muhammad Shafi (r.a) : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive

27:38 Sulaiman and Bilqis

He said (to his own men): “Ye chiefs! which of you can bring me her throne before they come to me in submission?”

Sayyidna Sulaiman was already informed that Bilqis was coming to him to submit after having been impressed by his invitation. So he decided that, apart from royal grandeur, she should also witness a prophetic miracle, which should help her convert to faith. Allah Ta’ala had bestowed the miracle of control of jinns to Sayyidna Sulaiman. After receiving the cue from Allah Ta’ala, he fancied to have Bilqis’s throne brought to his court even before her arrival. So he commanded the jinni, who was also present in his court, to bring her throne. Selection of throne was presumably made on the basis that it was the most secured object of her treasure, which was kept in the impregnable inner most hall of the seven castles, one within the other, properly secured under lock. So much so that her own people could not reach there. Shifting of such a huge and secured object without breaking the lock or door to a place so far away from where it was placed, could not have been possible without the help and will of Allah Ta’ala. This was an ideal way to make her see and realize the unlimited power and control of Allah. At the same time it was also intended to make her realize that the high position and status of Sulaiman (AS) was actually bestowed by Allah Ta’ala, which had enabled him to perform such super-human things. (Ibn Jarir)

References:

Shafi, Muhammad (2008). Maariful Quran. (Vol .6 surah 27 verse 38). English – Maariful Quran : Mufti Muhammad Shafi (r.a) : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive

27:41 The Throne

He said: “Transform her throne out of all recognition by her: let us see whether she is guided (to the truth) or is one of those who receive no guidance.”

The throne having been transformed, it will be a test to see whether Bilqis recognises it as her own and accepts it of her own free will as her own, or rejects it as something alien to her, something she will not accommodate herself to.

So in our life.

We get used to certain habits and customs and certain ways of thought. Allah’s message comes to transform us and set us on a different kind of throne, with our own active and willing consent. If we are wise, we feel honoured and grateful. If we are “obstinately rebellious”, we reject it as not our own, and pine for the old slavery, as the Israelites pined for Egypt when they were under Allah’s guidance in the wilderness.

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 27 verse 41). [1]Quran Arabic with English Translation & Commentary (Tafsir) by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Free Download (quran4u.com)

27:42 Bilqis converts to Islam

So when she arrived, she was asked, “Is this thy throne?” She said, “It was just like this; and knowledge was bestowed on us in advance of this, and we have submitted to Allah (in Islam).”

The story of Bilqis has ended in the above verses on the statement that she converted to Islam after coming to Sayyidna Sulaiman (AS) What happened after that? The Qur’an is silent on this. It is for this reason that when someone asked ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Uyaynah whether Sayyidna Sulaiman (AS) had married Bilqis, he answered that her case has finished on this (I submit, along with Sulaiman, to Allah, the Lord of the worlds – 44). The idea behind this answer was that when Qur’an has not divulged anything after that, it is not for us to probe any further. But Ibn ‘Asakir has reported on the authority of Sayyidna ‘Ikrimah (RA) that Sayyidna Sulaiman (AS) had married Bilqis after that, and she was retained as the sovereign of her country. She was then sent back to Yemen, and Sayyidna Sulaiman (AS), used to visit her every month for three days. He got three palaces made for her in Yemen, which had no parallel of their kind. (Only God knows best).

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 27 verse 42). [1]Quran Arabic with English Translation & Commentary (Tafsir) by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Free Download (quran4u.com)

27:50 The End of Salih's people

They plotted and planned, but We too planned, even while they perceived it not.

That is, "Before they could make the night attack on the Prophet Salih (peace be upon him) at the appointed time, Allah sent down His scourge which destroyed their whole nation completely. It appears that they made this plot after hamstringing the she-camel. According to Surah Hud, 11:65 , when they had killed the she-camel, Prophet Salih (peace be upon him) gave them a notice to enjoy life in their houses for three more days, for then they would be seized by the torment. At this they might have thought that the torment with which Salih (peace be upon him) threatened them might come or might not, but they must take the vengeance on Salih himself. Therefore, most probably they chose the same night for the attack which Allah had appointed for sending down the torment, and thus were struck down by Allah even before they could touch the Prophet Salih (peace be upon him)."

References:

Maududi, Abul Ala (2010). Tafhim ul Quran.
[1]<https://www.english tafsir.com/Qur-an/27/index.html>

28:16 Implied Peace treaties: A lesson to remember for all Muslims

He prayed: “O my Lord! I have indeed wronged my soul! Do Thou then forgive me!” So (Allah) forgave him: for He is the Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

(He said, “O my Lord, I have wronged

myself, so forgive me.” So he forgave him – 28:16). The gist of this verse is that Sayyidna Musa (AS) regarded the killing of the infidel Qibti as a sin, despite the fact that it had happened without any intention on his part, because it was in conflict with his status of prophethood, and thus below his dignity. So, he begged Allah’s pardon for the act, which was duly granted.

The first question that arises here is that this Qibti was an infidel combatant (harbi) in the religious term. Hence, his killing was permissible and preferable, because he was neither a dhimmi i.e the citizen of an Islamic state nor under any covenant with Musa (AS). Then why did Sayyidna Musa (AS) regarded it a sin and an act of Satan? His killing should have been regarded as an act worth the reward, because the Qibti was harming a Muslim unjustly, and got killed in the process when Musa (AS) tried to save the life of the Muslim. The answer to this question is that covenants of peace are sometimes written or spoken in express words, and sometimes they come into effect by consistent practice of the parties that amounts to an implied agreement and is as good as a written covenant. Violation of the covenants of this type is also prohibited in Islam. The covenant established by practice can be understood by the example that if in a non-Islamic state Muslims and non-Muslims are living in harmony and there is no conflict between them, and any pillage or fighting with each other is regarded as treachery, then this consistent practice of co-existence would be regarded as an implied agreement

for peaceful living, and its violation is not allowed. The proof of this principle can be found in a lengthy hadith of Sayyidna Mughirah Ibn Shu'bah (RA) that has been reported by Imam Bukhari in his book in the chapter entitled as 'Kitab Ash-Shurut. The hadith runs like this: Sayyidna Mughirah Ibn Shu'bah (RA) had good relations with a group of infidels before the advent of Islam, and later he killed them and took possession of all their wealth. Then he went to the Holy Prophet (S) and submitted to Islam, and presented all that wealth to him.

On this action the Holy Prophet (S) said to him (As far as your embracing Islam is concerned, I accept it, but I have nothing to do with this wealth) Abu Dawud has quoted this hadith like this: (As for wealth, we have no concern with it). The Holy Prophet declared in this hadith that he accepted his submission to Islam, but this wealth has been snatched by breach of trust and was a treachery, hence he did not have any desire for this wealth. Hafiz Ibn Hajar has observed in his commentary that this hadith has laid down the principle that grabbing of wealth of the infidels during peacetime is not permissible. It is for the simple reason that people living together in a city or township or those who work together regard themselves secured from each other. The agreement established through their practice is like a trust, which must be honoured by each and every person, no matter whether he is a Muslim or an infidel. The property of infidels permitted for possession by the Muslims is only that which is acquired during a war with them. It is not permitted to grab the wealth of infidels during peacetime, when one feels secured from one another.

Qastalani has observed in his commentary on Bukhari as follows:

'No doubt the wealth of infidels is permitted (to take possession) during war or jihad, but in peacetime it is not lawful. Therefore, any Muslim living and socializing with infidels in the manner that they are safe and secure for each other, for him it is unlawful to slay them,

or forcefully grab their wealth, unless the peace agreement established through practice is abrogated through an announcement’.

The gist of the discussion is that if the Qibti would have been killed with preconceived resolve in the presence of an implied peace agreement, it would not have been lawful. But Musa (AS) did not have the intention of killing the Qibti. He only hit him with his bare hands to save the Isra’ilite from his grip. In the normal course, it should not have been fatal, but he died all the same by that blow. Then Musa (AS) realized that a lighter blow would also have done the job of getting rid of him. Realizing that a harder blow was not needed, he repented and invoked Allah’s mercy.

References:

Shafi, Muhammad (2008). Maariful Quran. (Vol .6 surah 28 verse 16). English – Maariful Quran : Mufti Muhammad Shafi (r.a) : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive

28:38 The Speech of Pharaoh

And Pharaoh said: O chiefs! I know not that ye have a god other than me, so kindle for me (a fire), O Haman, to bake the mud; and set up for me a lofty tower in order that I may survey the god of Moses; and lo! I deem him of the liars.

I understand his speech to his minister Haman to be sarcastic. But some Commentators have taken it very seriously and imagined that he actually thought of reaching the heavens by budding lofty towers

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 28 verse 38). [1]Quran Arabic with English Translation & Commentary (Tafsir) by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Free Download (quran4u.com)

28:4 The cruelties of Pharaoh

Truly Pharaoh elated himself in the land and broke up its people into sections, depressing a small group among them: their sons he slew, but he kept alive their females: for he was indeed a maker of mischief.

For a king or ruler to make invidious distinctions between his subjects, and specially to depress or oppress any particular class of his subjects, is a dereliction of his kingly duties, for which he is responsible to Allah. Pharaoh and his clique were intoxicated with pride of race and pride of material civilization, and grievously oppressed the Israelites. Pharaoh decreed that all male sons born to his Israelite subjects should be killed, and the females kept alive for the pleasure of the Egyptians. Moses was saved in a wonderful way, as related further.

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 28 verse 4). [1]Quran Arabic with English Translation & Commentary (Tafsir) by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Free Download (quran4u.com)

28:76 Qarun

Qarun was doubtless, of the people of Moses; but he acted insolently towards them: such were the treasures We had bestowed on him that their very keys would have been a burden to a body of strong men, behold, his people said to him: “Exult not, for Allah loveth not those who exult (in riches).

Qarun is identified with the Korah of the English Bible. His story is told in Num. 16:1-35

He and his followers, numbering 250 men, rose in rebellion against Moses and Aaron, on the ground that their position and fame in the congregation entitled them to equality in spiritual matters with the Priests,-that they were as holy as any, and they claimed to burn incense at the sacred Altar reserved for the Priests. They had an exemplary punishment: “the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods: they, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation.”

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 28 verse 76). [1]Quran Arabic with English Translation & Commentary (Tafsir) by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Free Download (quran4u.com)

28:79 Qarun

So he went forth among his people in the (pride of his worldly) glitter. Said those whose aim is the Life of this World: “Oh! that we had the like of what Qarun has got! for he is truly a lord of mighty good fortune!”

When he was in the hey-day of his glory, worldly people envied him and thought how happy they would be if they were in his place. Not so the people of wisdom and discernment. They knew a more precious and lasting wealth, which is described in the next verse.

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 28 verse 79). [1]Quran Arabic with English Translation & Commentary (Tafsir) by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Free Download (quran4u.com)

28:8 Then the people of Pharaoh picked him up (from the river)

Then the people of Pharaoh picked him up (from the river): (It was intended) that (Moses) should be to them an adversary and a cause of sorrow: for Pharaoh and Haman and (all) their hosts were men of sin.

This was the Plan of Providence: that the wicked might cast a net round themselves by fostering the man who was to bring them to naught and be the instrument of their punishment, or (looking at it from the other side) that Moses might learn all the wisdom of the Egyptians in order to expose all that was hollow and wicked in it.

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 28 verse 8). [1]Quran Arabic with English Translation & Commentary (Tafsir) by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Free Download (quran4u.com)

28:81 Then We caused the earth to swallow up him and his house; and he had not (the least little) party to help him against Allah, nor could he defend himself

Then We caused the earth to swallow up him and his house; and he had not (the least little) party to help him against Allah, nor could he defend himself. Besides the obvious moral in the literal interpretation of the story, that material wealth is fleeting and may be a temptation and a cause of fall, there are some metaphorical implications that occur to me.

1. Material wealth has no value in itself, but only a relative and local value.

2. In body he was with Israel in the wilderness, but his heart was in Egypt with its fertility and its slavery. Such is the case of many hypocrites, who like to be seen in righteous company but whose thoughts, longings, and doing are inconsistent with such company.

3. There is no good in this life but comes from Allah. To think otherwise is to set up a false god besides Allah, Our own merits are so small that they should never be the object of our idolatry.

4. If Qarun on account of his wealth was setting himself up in rivalry with Moses and Aaron, he was blind to the fact that spiritual knowledge is far above any little cleverness in worldly affairs. Mob-leaders have no position before spiritual guides.

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 28 verse 81). [1]Quran Arabic with English Translation & Commentary (Tafsir) by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Free Download (quran4u.com)

The wife of Pharaoh said: “(Here is) joy of the eye, for me and for thee: slay him not. It may be that he will be use to us, or we may adopt him as a son.” And they perceived not (what they were doing)!

What one understands from this is briefly so: When the ark or the basket was carried by the river to the place where Pharaoh’s palaces were situated, the servants of Pharaoh picked it up and took it before the king and the queen. It is just possible that the king and the queen were at that time strolling along the river bank and might have noticed the basket and ordered it to be picked up. When they saw a child in it, they could easily guess that it belonged to an Israelite family. For it came from the quarters inhabited by the Israelites, whose sons were being put to death in those days. It was understood that somebody had hidden the child for some time but when it could not be hidden any longer, it was cast to the river in the hope that it might be picked up and rescued from death. With this in view, the most obedient servants submitted that the king order the child to be killed forthwith, for it might prove dangerous for him. But the Pharaoh’s wife was a woman and might even be childless. Then it was a lovely child, as Allah has reminded Moses in Surah Ta-Ha: Ayat 39, thus: “I had cast on you love from Myself.” That is “I had made you such a lovely child that the beholders could not help but love you.” Therefore, the woman could not keep their feelings for him, and said to the king, “Do not kill him, but let us adopt him. When he grows up in our house as our son, he will not know that he was an Israelite: he will rather think he is one of Pharaoh’s own kinsfolk, and he will be useful for us as against the Israelites.” @@ According to the Bible and the Talmud, the woman who had counseled adoption of Moses was Pharaoh’s daughter, but according to the Quran his wife (imraat-u-Firaun). Obviously, the direct word of Allah is more reliable than the verbal traditions which were compiled centuries afterwards. Therefore, it is absolutely needless to translate imraat-u-Firaun as a woman of Pharaoh’s family against

the Arabic idiom and usage only for the sake of seeking conformity with the Israelite traditions.

References:

Maududi, Abul Ala (2010). Tafhim ul Quran.
[1]<https://www.englishtafsir.com/Qur-an/27/index.html>

29:38 The Ad and Thamud

(Remember also) the 'Ad and the Thamud (people): clearly will appear to you from (the traces) of their buildings (their fate): the Evil One made their deeds alluring to them, and kept them back from the Path, though they were gifted with intelligence and skill.

The remains of their buildings show:

that they were gifted with great intelligence and skill; that they were proud of their material civilization; and their destruction argues how the greatest material civilization and resources cannot save a People who disobey Allah's moral law. They were so arrogant and self-satisfied, that they missed the higher purpose of life, and strayed clean away from the Path of Allah. Though their intelligence should have kept them straight, Evil made them crooked and led them and kept them astray.

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 29 verse 38). [1]Quran Arabic with English Translation & Commentary (Tafsir) by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Free Download (quran4u.com)

2:246 “Appoint for us a king, that we May fight in the cause of Allah

Hast thou not Turned thy vision to the Chiefs of the Children of Israel after (the time of) Moses? they said to a prophet (That was) among them: “Appoint for us a king, that we May fight in the cause of Allah.” He said: “Is it not possible, if ye were commanded to fight, that that ye will not fight?” They said: “How could we refuse to fight in the cause of Allah, seeing that we were turned out of our homes and our families?” but when they were commanded to fight, they turned back, except a small band among them. But Allah Has full knowledge of those who do wrong.

Maududi writes,

This took place about a thousand years before Christ. At that time the Israelites were persecuted by the Amalekites who had deprived them of the greater part of Palestine. The Prophet Samuel, who was then ruling over the Israelites, was old. The elders of Israel, therefore, felt the need to appoint as their head someone else under whose leadership they could wage wars. By that time, however, the Israelites had become so deeply infected with Ignorance, and the customs and practices of non-Muslim nations had made such inroads into their lives that the distinction between a religious state committed to serving God and secular monarchy was lost on them. They consequently asked God to appoint a king rather than a religious ruler (khalifah) over them. The information contained in the Bible is as follows: Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life

Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, and said to him, 'Behold, you are old and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint for us a king to govern us like all the nations.' But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, 'Give us a king to govern us'. And Samuel prayed to the Lord. And the Lord said to Samuel, 'Hearken to the voice of the people in what they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have

rejected me from being king over them. According to all the deeds which they have done to me, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt even to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are also doing to you ' So Samuel told all the words of the Lord to the people who were asking a king for him. He said, 'These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you; he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen, and to run before his chariots. And he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plough his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make the implements of war and the equipments of his chariots. He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his servants. He will take the tenth of your grain and your vineyards and give it to his officers and to his servants. He will take you men- servants and maid-servants, and the best of your cattle and asses, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves. And on that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the Lord will not answer you in that day.' But the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel, and they said. 'No! But we will have a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may govern us and go out before us and fight our battles.' And when Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in the ears of the Lord. And the Lord said to Samuel, 'Hearken to their voice, and make them a king.' Samuel then said to the men of Israel, 'Go every man to his city.' (1 Samuel 7: 15; 8: 4-22.) And Samuel said to the people , 'And when you saw that Nahash the king of Ammonites came against you, You said to me, No, but a king shall reign over us, when the Lord your God was your king. And now behold the king whom you have chosen, for whom you have asked; behold, the Lord has set a king over you. If you will fear the Lord and serve him and hearken to his voice and not rebel against the commandment of the Lord, and if both you and the king who reigns over you will follow the Lord your God, it will be well; but if you will not hearken to the

voice of the Lord, but rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then the hand of the Lord will be against you and your king. Now therefore stand still and see this great thing, which the Lord will do before your eyes. Is it not wheat harvest today? I will call upon the Lord, that he may send thunder and rain; and you shall know and see that your wickedness is great, which you have done in the sight of the Lord, in asking for yourselves a king.’ So Samuel called upon the Lord, and the Lord sent thunder and rain that day; and all the people greatly feared the Lord and Samuel. And all the people said to Samuel, ‘Pray for your servants to the Lord your God, that we may not die, for we have added to all our sins this evil, to ask for a king.’ And Samuel said to the people, ‘Fear not; you have done all this evil, yet do not turn aside front following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart, and do not turn aside after vain things which cannot profit or save, for they are vain. For the Lord will not cast away his people, for his great name’s sake, because it has pleased the Lord to make you a people for himself. Moreover as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you; and I will instruct you in the good and right way?’ (1 Samuel 12: 6-23). These statements from Samuel make it clear that the demand to appoint a king was disagreeable to God and to His Prophet. It might be asked, however, why the Qur’an does not contain any denunciation of this demand of the elders of Israel. The reason is that to the purpose for which this incident has been cited the appropriateness and otherwise of the demand is irrelevant. The purpose here is to show the extent to which cowardice and self-indulgence had become part of Israelite life, and to show how the lack of moral restraint had come to characterize their conduct. It is these which ultimately led to their decline. The aim of the Qur’anic narrative is to enable Muslims to derive a lesson from this and to ensure that these weaknesses do not creep into their own lives.

References:

Maududi, Abul Ala (2010). Tafhim ul Quran.
[1]<https://www.englishtafsir.com/Quran/27/index.html>

2:247 The Children of Israel and Talut (Saul)

Their Prophet said to them: “Allah hath appointed Talut as king over you.” They said: “How can he exercise authority over us when we are better fitted than he to exercise authority, and he is not even gifted, with wealth in abundance?” He said: “Allah hath Chosen him above you, and hath gifted him abundantly with knowledge and bodily prowess: Allah Granteth His authority to whom He pleaseth.

Allah careth for all, and He knoweth all things.”

Saul’s low social status, which is here the source of the Israelites’ disdain for his kingship, is mentioned by Saul himself when Samuel first speaks to him in 1 Samuel 9:21: “Saul answered, ‘I am only a Benjamite, from the least of the tribes of Israel, and my family is the humblest of all the families Why then have you spoken to me in this way?’” And in 1 Samuel 10:27 the Israelites express their disdain: “But some worthless fellows said, ‘How can this man save us?’ They despised him and brought him no present.” The basis for their aversion to Saul as king is similar to that for the aversion of the Quraysh and the Jews to Muhammad at his election as a prophet, namely, his lack of wealth and status among the Quraysh and his non-Jewish lineage among the Jews; see also 3:26c. In the case of Saul, the commentators understand this account to mean that Saul was from neither a kingly nor a priestly line, but hailed from the tribe of Benjamin (R). Saul’s intelligence and physical prowess were intrinsic qualities useful for a good leader; the status and wealth expected by the people would be qualities extrinsic to any man, “accidental” to his nature (R). Increased him amply in knowledge and body could also be rendered “increased him in excellence of knowledge and body.” The granting of sovereignty by God is also mentioned in 3:26; 4:54; 12:101.

References:

Nasr, Hossein (2015). Study Quran.
<https://islamiconlineibrary.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/TheStudyQuranANewTranslationAndCommentaryBySeyyedHosseinNasr.pdf>

2:248 The Heart

And (further) their Prophet said to them: “A Sign of his authority is that there shall come to you the Ark of the covenant, with (an assurance) therein of security from your Lord, and the relics left by the family of Moses and the family of Aaron, carried by angels. In this is a symbol for you if ye indeed have faith.”

Asad writes,

Lit., “that there will come to you the heart”. The word *tabut* – here rendered as “heart” – has been conventionally interpreted as denoting the Ark of the Covenant mentioned in the Old Testament, which is said to have been a highly-ornamented chest or box. The explanations offered by most of the commentators who adopt the latter meaning are very contradictory, and seem to be based on Talmudic legends woven around that “ark”. However, several authorities of the highest standing attribute to *tabut* the meaning of “bosom” or “heart” as well: thus, Baydawi in one of the alternatives offered in his commentary on this verse, as well as Zamakhshari in his *Asas* (though not in the *Kashshaf*), Ibn al-Athir in the *Nihdyah*, Raghīb, and Taj al-’Arus (the latter four in the article *tabata*); see also Lane I, 321, and IV, 1394 (art. *sakfnah*). If we take this to be the meaning of *tabut* in the above context, it would be an allusion to the Israelites’ coming change of heart (a change already indicated, in general terms, in verse 243 above). In view of the subsequent mention of the “inner peace” in the *tabut*, its rendering as “heart” is definitely more appropriate than “ark”

Lit., “and the remainder of that which the House (al) of Moses and the House of Aaron left behind. borne by the angels”. The expression “borne by the angels” or “angel-borne” is an allusion to the God-inspired nature of the spiritual heritage left by those two prophets; while the “remainder” (*baqiyyah*) denotes that which is “lasting” or “enduring” in that heritage

References:

Asad, Muhammad (1980). The Message of the Quran.
<https://islamiconlineibrary.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Message-of- Quran.pdf>

2:249 Allah will test you at the stream

When Talut set forth with the armies, he said: “Allah will test you at the stream: if any drinks of its water, He goes not with my army: Only those who taste not of it go with me: A mere sip out of the hand is excused.” but they all drank of it, except a few. When they crossed the river,- He and the faithful ones with him,- they said: “This day We cannot cope with Goliath and his forces.” but those who were convinced that they must meet Allah, said: “How oft, by Allah’s will, Hath a small force vanquished a big one? Allah is with those who steadfastly persevere.” Some have drawn a parallel between this verse and the account of Gideon’s crossing the Jordan River in Judges 7:4–7, though the similarities are typological and not historical. In the Gideon account, the test was known to Gideon alone, the army was not aware they were being divided into two categories (those who drank with their mouths and those who did so with their hands), and the purpose was to reduce the army’s numbers to three hundred men, so as to show that the Will of God could be carried out with a small number of fighters. In the Quranic account, Saul openly tests the faith of his soldiers, who are commanded to take only a handful of water and no more.

From a Quranic point of view, Saul’s test of his army could be a reenactment of sacred history (Gideon lived before Samuel and Saul), much as parting the waters is a recurring theme in the Old Testament, taking place at the hands of Moses while the Israelites were escaping from the Egyptians through the Red Sea and by the ark when the people were crossing the Jordan during the time of Joshua (Joshua 3:14–17). That this incident echoes Gideon’s crossing, whose purpose was to show that God could defeat many with few, is reinforced by the statement in this verse of those who believed that they would meet their Lord, “How many a small company have overcome a large company by God’s leave!” This group deemed they would meet their Lord, meaning they were either certain of the Hereafter or prepared to die (Q).

References:

Nasr, Hossein (2015). Study Quran.
<https://islamiconlineibrary.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/TheStudyQuranANewTranslationAndCommentaryBySeyyedHosseinNasr.pdf>

33:9-27 Battle of Al Azhab

O ye who believe! Remember the Grace of Allah, (bestowed) on you, when there came down on you hosts (to overwhelm you): But We sent against them a hurricane and forces that ye saw not: but Allah sees (clearly) all that ye do.

Behold! they came on you from above you and from below you, and behold, the eyes became dim and the hearts gaped up to the throats, and ye imagined various (vain) thoughts about Allah!

In that situation were the Believers tried: they were shaken as by a tremendous shaking.

And behold! The Hypocrites and those in whose hearts is a disease (even) say: "Allah and His Messenger promised us nothing but delusion!"

Behold! A party among them said: "Ye men of Yathrib! ye cannot stand (the attack)! therefore go back!" And a band of them ask for leave of the Prophet, saying, "Truly our houses are bare and exposed," though they were not exposed they intended nothing but to run away.

And if an entry had been effected to them from the sides of the (city), and they had been incited to sedition, they would certainly have brought it to pass, with none but a brief delay!

And yet they had already covenanted with Allah not to turn their backs, and a covenant with Allah must (surely) be answered for.

Say: "Running away will not profit you if ye are running away from death or slaughter; and even if (ye do escape), no more than a brief (respite) will ye be allowed to enjoy!"

Say: “Who is it that can screen you from Allah if it be His wish to give you punishment or to give you Mercy?” Nor will they find for themselves, besides Allah, any protector or helper.

Verily Allah knows those among you who keep back (men) and those who say to their brethren, “Come along to us”, but come not to the fight except for just a little while.

Covetous over you. Then when fear comes, thou wilt see them looking to thee, their eyes revolving, like (those of) one over whom hovers death: but when the fear is past, they will smite you with sharp tongues, covetous of goods. Such men have no faith, and so Allah has made their deeds of none effect: and that is easy for Allah.

They think that the Confederates have not withdrawn; and if the Confederates should come (again), they would wish they were in the deserts (wandering) among the Bedouins, and seeking news about you (from a safe distance); and if they were in your midst, they would fight but little.

Ye have indeed in the Messenger of Allah a beautiful pattern (of conduct) for any one whose hope is in Allah and the Final Day, and who engages much in the Praise of Allah.

When the Believers saw the Confederate forces, they said: “This is what Allah and his Messenger had promised us, and Allah and His Messenger told us what was true.” And it only added to their faith and their zeal in obedience.

Among the Believers are men who have been true to their covenant with Allah: of them some have completed their vow (to the extreme), and some (still) wait: but they have never changed (their determination) in the least:

That Allah may reward the men of Truth for their Truth, and punish the Hypocrites if that be His Will, or turn to them in Mercy: for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

And Allah turned back the Unbelievers for (all) their fury: no advantage did they gain; and enough is Allah for the believers in their fight. And Allah is full of Strength, able to enforce His Will.

And those of the People of the Book who aided them – Allah did take them down from their strongholds and cast terror into their hearts. (So that) some ye slew, and some ye made prisoners.

And He made you heirs of their lands, their houses, and their goods, and of a land which ye had not frequented (before). And Allah has power over all things.

Commentary

Identified in the previous verses was the great station of the Holy Prophet along with the instruction to Muslims that they should follow and obey him totally and perfectly. Congruent to this, these two full sections of the Qur'an have been revealed about the event of the battle of al-Ahzab. Mentioned therein is the simultaneous attack of the combined forces of many groups of disbelievers and polytheists, their threatening encirclement, the subsequent blessings bestowed on Muslims by Allah Ta'ala and the several miracles that issued forth at the hands of the Holy Prophet ae Then, very much as a corollary to this, there are many instructions and injunctions relating to different departments of life. It is because of these very priceless instructions that great commentators have written about the details of the event of Ahzab with considered details at this place, particularly al-Qurtubi, Mazhari and others. Therefore, some details of the event of Ahzab along with the instructions are being written here. Most of it has been taken from al-Qurtubi and Mazhari. That which has been taken from some other book carries the necessary reference.

THE EVENT OF THE BATTLE OF AL-AHZAB

The word: (al-ahzab) is the plural form of: (hizb) which

means party or group. In this battle, the combined forces of different groups of disbelievers had, under a pact to eliminate Muslims, mounted an attack on Madinah. Therefore, this battle has been named as the battle of al-Ahzab. And since, in this battle, a trench was also dug under the orders of the Holy Prophet across the line of enemy attack, therefore, this battle is also called the battle of the Trench (Khandaq).

The battle of Banu Quraizah too – which took place immediately after the battle of al-Ahzab and finds mention in the cited verses as well – that too, was actually a part of the battle of al-Ahzab, as it would appear through the details of this event.

In the year only next to the year the Holy Prophet was graced

Madinah after migrating from Makkah al-Mukarramah, the event of the battle of Badr came to pass. In the third year, came the battle of Uhud. In the fourth year, it was this battle of al-Ahzab. Some narrations say that this event came to pass in the fifth year. Nevertheless, the attacks of the disbelievers against Muslims had been continuing since the hijrah up to this time without any break. The attack on the occasion of the battle of al-Ahzab was made with full power, determination and mutual pledge. Therefore, this battle was the severest on the Holy Prophet (S) and the noble Sahabah as compared with other battles – because, the count of the attacking confederate forces of the disbelievers has been given as twelve to fifteen thousand. On the other side, there were Muslims, three thousand in all, and those too very ill-equipped. Then, the time was hard winter. The Qur'an describes the horrible severity of this event by saying things like: (the eyes were distracted – 33:10),

(and hearts reached the throats – 33:10) and at (they were shaken with a violent convulsion – 33:11).

But, the way this time was the hardest on Muslims, they were also compensated at its best by Allah Ta‘ala. It was with His help and support that the matter ended in favour of Muslims in the form of such a great success and victory that broke the back of all hostile groups of Mushriks, Jews and Hypocrites leaving them just about incapable of even thinking of some attack against Muslims in the future. From that angle, this battle was the last armed confrontation between kufr and Islam. – fought on the plains of al-Madinah al-

Munawwarah in the fourth or fifth year of hijrah.

The event began when about twenty men from the Jewish tribe of Banu Nadir and the tribe of Abu Wa’il who were morbidly hostile to the Holy Prophet ae and Muslims at large reached Makkah al-Mukarramah. They met with Quraish chiefs and roused them to start a war against Muslims. The Quraish chiefs were under the impression that the way Muslims took their idol- worship to be kufr (disbelief, infidelity) and for

which reason they regarded their religion as ill-founded, the Jews too would be no different and their thinking would be similar to it. If so, how could they hope for a common ground of unity from them? Therefore, these chiefs asked the Jews, “You people know that there is difference of religion and creed between us and Muhammad ae. And you are the people of the Book and the people of learning. First of all, you tell us as to which religion is better in your sight, ours or theirs?”

‘A lie is no novelty in the arena of politics!

The reply given by these Jews was totally contrary to their knowledge and conscience. To

them, they said, “Your religion is better than the religion of Muhammad.” Thereupon, the infidels of Makkah were somewhat satisfied. Still, the matter was taken to a future demonstration of intent. It was decided that these twenty visitors joined by fifty men from among the Quraish chiefs would go to al- Masjid al-Haram, cling to the walls of the Baytullah by their chests and make a solemn pledge before Allah that they would continue fighting against Muhammad % & to their last man.

A marvel of the forbearance and magnanimity of Allah Ta’ala!

Here are the enemies of Allah in the House of Allah clinging to the walls of the Ka’abah of Allah making a compact to fight a war against His Rasul – and then return satisfied with a new passion for war! This is unique manifestation of the forbearance and magnanimity of Allah Ta’ala. Then, the ultimate end of this compact is not too far to find. It will appear towards the end of the narrative in that all of them bolted from this battle.

These Jews, after having made a pact with the Quraish of Makkah, reached the tribe of Ghitfan, a great warring tribe of Arabia. They told them that they and the Quraish of Makkah were in full agreement with the plan to eliminate the spreaders of this new religion (Islam) once for all with their combined power. They asked them too to join hands with them in that pact. Then, they also offered them a bribe. They promised to give them the total produce of dates in one year in Khaibar – according to some narrations, they promised the half of it to the tribe of Ghitfan. ‘Uyaiynah Ibn Hisn, the chief of the tribe of Ghitfan, approved of his participation in the pact under this condition. Thus, they too became a part of the war effort. Then, in accordance with the mutual pact, the Quraish armed force of four thousand men, three hundred horses and war supplies laden on one thousand camels came out of Makkah under the

command of Abu Sufyan and stopped at Marr az-Zahran. Here, all tribes of Aslam, Ashja', Banu Murrarah, Banu Kinanah, Fazarah and Ghitfan joined them. Their total number has been reported in some narrations as ten thousand, as twelve thousand in some others and as fifteen thousand in still other.

The most lethal attack on Madinah

The armed force that fought against Muslims in the battle of Badr was that of one thousand men. Then, the army that attacked in the battle of Uhud had three thousand men. This time, the numerical strength of the attacking forces was greater than it was any time before that – the equipment and the combined power of the Arab and Jewish tribes were also to be counted as additional factors.

Three ingredients of Muslim war effort

When the information about this aggressive united front reached the Holy Prophet (S), the very first verbal reaction came out from him in the words:

Allah is all-sufficient for us, and the best One to trust in – 3:173.

After that, he assembled opinion leaders from among the Emigrants and Helpers together and went into consultation with them. Although, the blessed recipient of Wahy (revelation) really needs no consultation for he acts directly with the permission of Allah Ta'ala. But, there were two advantages in having such consultation: (1) To initiate and establish the Sunnah (practice) of consultation in the Muslim community and (2) to revive mutual liaison and unity in the hearts of the believers and to persuade them to the need of helping and supporting each other. After that, they talked about matters of defence and the physical resources needed in fighting a war. Present among the group of consultants there was

Sayyidna Salman al-Farisi who had recently freed himself from the artificially imposed slavery of a Jew and had devoted himself to the service of Islam. He advised that in his country, the Persian kings have used trenches they arranged to be dug across the enemy line of attack. This had always helped stop the enemy. Accepting his advice, the Holy Prophet ordered that trenches be dug – and he himself participated with others doing that.

The digging of trenches

It was decided to dig this trench on the entire passage way behind the mount of Sal' which could be used by the enemy to come into Madinah from the north. The ground marking of the length and width of this trench was personally drawn by the Holy Prophet ae. Beginning from Shaikhayn, this trench came as far as the western corner of the mount of Sal' and later it was extended to the intersection of the valleys of Buthan and Ratauna. The total length of this trench was approximately three and a half miles. The precise measurement of the width and depth could not be ascertained from any narration. But, it is obvious that the width and depth would have also been special, of the kind the enemy would have not found easy to cross.

It has appeared in the narration of the event relating to Sayyidna Salman RA digging the trench that he used to dig his allotted portion of the trench which, at the end of the day, came to be five yards long and five yards deep (Mazhari). From this, it can be said that the depth of the trench was five yards.

The size of the Islamic 'army'

At that time, Muslims were a total of three thousand in number along with a total of thirty six horses. Participant age of maturity was set at fifteen years Some non-pubert children had also come out with the Islamic 'army' with the desire to defend their faith. The Holy Prophet 3 asked children below the age of fifteen years to

leave. Those fifteen year old were accepted – included therein were Sayyidna ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Umar, Zayd Tbn Thabit, Abu Sa‘id al-Khudri and Bara’ Tbn When this Islamic force was ready to march for battle, the hypocrites who normally kept a face and remained intermingled among Muslims, started backing out. Some bolted away incognito. Others came up with false excuses and tried to get the permission of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to go back. This was a new trouble that rose from within. Some of the cited verses have been revealed about these very hypocrites. (Qurtubi)

Islamic nationality and Islamic unity do not contradict administrative and social division

For this Jihad, the Holy Prophet (S) appointed Sayyidna Zayd Ibn Harithah (RA) as the standard bearer of the Muhajirin and Sayyidna Sa‘d Ibn ‘Ubadah as the standard bearer of the Ansar. At that time, the mutual brotherhood among the Muhajirin and the Ansgar stood established on very firm foundations. All of them were brothers to each other. But, it was in view of administrative convenience that the leadership of the Muhajirin was separated from the leadership of the Ansar: From this, we learn that Islamic nationality and Islamic unity are not contradictory to administrative and social division. In fact, by placing the burden of responsibility on each group helped strengthen the bond of mutual confidence and cooperation. And in the very first assignment, that is, in the digging of trenches before this battle, this mutual cooperation became all too evident as described below:

The job of digging the trenches was spread over the whole army The Holy Prophet (S) divided the whole army of the Muhajirin and the Ansar in groups of ten men each and made every group of ten men responsible for digging forty yards of the trench. Since Sayyidna Salman al-Farisi was the one who had advised the digging of the trench, knew the job, was strong and was neither one of the Ansar nor one of the Muhajirin, it created a sort of competition

among the Ansar and Muhajirin for each of the two wanted to have him with them. The matter reached to the extent that the Holy Prophet 4 had to intervene in order to avoid any dispute. He gave his verdict by saying: (Salman is part of our family).

The discrimination of local and foreign in functional expertise The universal wont in our time is that people do not like to treat those non-resident and non-local at par with them. But, this was a place where every group felt proud of having the competent one on their side and with them. It was for this reason that the Holy Prophet \$ & included him in his family on his own and thus put an end to the dispute. Then, he practically picked up some Muhajirin and some Ansar to form a group of ten which included Sayyidna ‘Amr Ibn ‘Awf , Sayyidna Hudhaifah and others who were from among the Muhajirin.

A great miracle

By chance, in the section of the trench entrusted with Sayyidna Salman and others with him, a huge, hard and glossy rock showed up.

Sayyidna Salman’s colleague, Sayyidna ‘Amr Ibn ‘Awf (RA) says, “This rock broke our implements and we failed to cut it apart. Then I suggested to Salman that though it is possible to dig the trench by- passing the huge rock and join it up with the main trench with a minor crookedness in it, but we should not deviate from the line drawn by the Holy Prophet 3 as based on our opinion. So, you go, tell the Holy Prophet (S) about the position here and get an order from him about what we should do now.”

Divine reminders

It is strange that in this three and a half mile stretch of land no one from among the diggers of the trench faced any impediment which would render him helpless. The only one who did face it was

Sayyidna Salman who had given the advice of digging a trench and the whole project had started on his advice. To him Allah Ta'ala showed that there was no way out even after digging and making a perfect trench – except turning to Allah Ta'ala for help in the face of the failure of all implements and instruments. Here, these blessed souls were being taught that assembling material means to the measure of capacity and ability was obligatory, but to place trust in these was not correct. The trust of a believer – even after having assembled all possible material means – should be in Allah Ta'ala alone.

Sayyidna Salman (RA) presented himself before the Holy Prophet -and told him about what had happened. At that time, the Holy Prophet 4 was himself working in his part of the trench. He was busy hauling the dug out earth from the trench. Sayyidna Bara' Ibn 'Azib says, "I saw him. Dust had covered his blessed body in a manner that the skin on his front and back was not visible." Rather than give Sayyidna Salman any advice or order, he accompanied him in person to the problem spot. With the ten Sahabah busy digging the trench with Sayyidna Salman, he too went down into the trench and joined the diggers. He took the pickaxe in his blessed hands, struck at the rock and recited the verse: 2-33 ihe Ks (tammam kalimatu rabbika sidqa: And the Word of your Lord is perfect in truth... – al-An'am, 6:115). With this one single stroke from it, one third portion of the rock was cut off and released from this rock was a streak of light. After that, he struck at the rock once again and recited the said verse upto the end, that is: (tammam kalimatu rabbika sidgan wa 'adla : And the Word of your Lord is perfect

in truth and justice – al-An'am, 6:115). Cut off with this second stroke was an additional one third portion of the rock which released a streak of light as before. The third time, he recited the same verse in full and executed the third stroke. With it, the rock was all finished. The Holy Prophet came out of the trench, picked up the sheet wrap he had left at the edge of the trench and sat down on one

side of it. At that time, Sayyidna Salman al-Farisi said, “Ya Rasulallah, every time struck at the rock, ever time I saw a light coming out of the rock.” The Holy Prophet (S) asked Sayyidna Salman, “Have you really seen this light?” He said, “Ya Rasulallah, I have seen it with my own eyes.”

The Holy Prophet (S) said, “In the light that was released after the first strike, I saw the palaces of the cities of Yaman and those of Cyrus and Angel Jibra’il told me: your Ummah will conquer these cities.’ And when I struck at the rock the second time, I was shown the red palaces of the Byzantines and Angel Jibra’il gave the good news, ‘your Ummah will conquer these cities as well.’” After having heard this, all Muslims felt at peace and became assured of their great successes in the future.

Hypocrites throw taunts at Muslims for believing in their Prophet’s promises At that time, the hypocrites who were part of the digging operations of the trench, started asking other Muslims, It is strange that you people are not surprised at what Muhammad C4 is telling you. Is it not that he is making all those baseless promises to you in the depth of this trench being dug in Yathrib where he is claiming to be seeing the palaces of Hirah (in the South) and Mada’in (in the North)? And on top of it all, he is telling you that it is you people who are going to conquer them! Just look at yourself. Here you are, digging and digging, forgetful of all your needs. Frankly, you do not even have the time to take care of your human compulsions. Still, is It you who are going to conquer the countries of Cyrus and others?’ Thereupon, it was about this very event that, in the twelfth verse cited above, it was revealed:

(And (remember) when the hypocrites and those having malady in their hearts were saying, “Allah and His messenger did not promise us but deceitfully; – 12). Here, in this verse, by saying: (and

those having malady in their hearts), reference is being made to the state of the same hypocrites hidden in whose hearts there was that disease of hypocrisy.

Just imagine the kind of time it was, a severe trial indeed. At stake was the very faith of Muslims for they had to believe in the word of the Holy Prophet with the full backing of their mind and heart despite being threatened by disbelievers from all sides. They had no servants to dig their trench for them. They were doing this hard work with their own hands braving the lashing winter. The unfriendly weather, the approaching enemy factor, theirs was a general climate of fear all around. In a situation like that, it was not easy to be sure of even one's defence and survival within whatever means were available.

How could they go on from here and start believing in the good news of the conquests of the great kingdoms of Byzantine and Persia? But, the value of Iman (faith) is the highest of all deeds for the reason that they, even when facing totally contrary causes and conditions, did not have the least doubt or qualm of conscience about what the Holy Prophet SE had told them.

Seniors must share every trial with their juniors – Great guidance for Muslims Who does not know that the Sahabah of the Holy Prophet were such selfless servants of the Holy Prophet cad that they never wanted to have him do the hard labor of digging the trench with them, but it was the personal initiative of the Holy Prophet #2 that he chose to share this hard labor with his noble companions to mollify their hearts and teach them their essential lesson to put mutual brotherhood to practice. Of course, the noble companions staked their lives for the Holy Prophet He on the basis of his most perfect attributes as prophet and messenger of Allah, but of the many outward causes for this attachment, there was this major cause that he would be with them on all occasions facing all sorts of trials and pains like everybody else. When he did that, nobody ever

thought of what we know as a class difference. There was no ruler and there was no one being ruled. There was no king around and there was no subject paying homage. Who was the man in power and who was the man from the masses? This kind of difference was unimaginable at that time.

Unfortunately, from the time the Muslim wielders of power abandoned this Sunnah (the blessed practice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ) that was the time these differences gushed forth bringing all sorts of tests and trials in their wake.

The master prescription of achieving success against something hard to accomplish. In the event mentioned above, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has recited the verse of the Quran: *And the Word of your Lord is perfect in truth and justice. None is there to change His Words – al-An‘am, 6:115*) while striking at this invincible rock. This tells us that the recitation of this verse is a tested prescription for the resolution of something difficult. The selfless mutual cooperation of the noble Sahabah

We already know that there were ten men appointed for the digging of the trench at every ten yards. But, it is obvious that some people are stronger and can finish their job sooner than others. The same was true here. The noble Sahabah who finished their allotted portion of digging would never go on to sit doing nothing and thinking that their duty was over. In fact, they would help out other Sahabah whose portion of digging was still incomplete. (Qurtubi, Mazghari) Three and a half mile long trench was completed in six days. The outcome of the hard work put in by the noble Sahabah, may Allah be pleased with them all, was before everybody in six days in that such a long, wide and deep trench stood all completed within that short period of time. (Mazhari)

An open miracle in the feast hosted by Sayyidna Jabir. It was during the digging of this very trench that the well known event

came to pass. On one of those days, when Sayyidna Jabir (RA) looked at the Holy Prophet a he felt deep down in his heart that he was really affected by hunger. He went to his wife and told her, “If you have something with you, cook it. I simply cannot bear by seeing this effect of hunger on his blessed person.” His wife said, “We have about a sa‘ of barley grains in our home. I am going to grind them and make some flour.” One sa‘ is equal to about three and a half kilograms in terms of our weights. So, his wife got busy with the grinding of barley, making flour, preparing dough and baking bread. There was a goat kid in the house.

Sayyidna Jabir 2 slaughtered it, cooked the meat and was ready to go out and invite the Holy Prophet (S) in when his wife called out to him saying, “Look, there is a crowd of the Sahabah with the Holy Prophet we Do something and somehow invite only the Holy Prophet ee alone.

Please, do not put me to disgrace by causing such a big crowd of the noble Sahabah come in with the Holy Prophet (S).” Sayyidna Jabir (RA), acting realistically, made the actual situation fully clear before the Holy Prophet eg telling him that they had only that much of food in the house. But, as for the Holy Prophet Be he made a public announcement before the entire work force asking everyone to come to the feast at Sayyidna Jabir’s home. Sayyidna Jabir & was struck with wonder. When he reached home, his wife was extremely disturbed. She asked, “Did you tell the Holy Prophet we about the actual situation at home and the amount of food available?” Sayyidna Jabir # & said, “Yes, that I have told him.” This put his wife at peace and she said, “Then we have nothing to worry about.

The Holy Prophet is our master. Let him have it the way he wishes.”

Any more detail of the event is unnecessary at this place. It is enough to know the outcome that the Holy Prophet #2 took it upon

himself to distribute the bread and curry to everybody with his own blessed hands and see that they are entertained and fed satisfactorily. As a result, the whole crowd ate to their fill. And Sayyidna Jabir «8 says that “even after everybody having finished eating, our stock pot showed no dearth of meat, nor our kneaded flour any signs of decrease, All of us in the family ate to our heart’s content and whatever remained we sent to the neighbours.”

Thus, when the digging of the trench was finished within six days, the Confederate army arrived and the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his noble Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all, went into battle formation with the Mount of Sal‘ thoughtfully kept towards their rear.

The Jews of the tribe of Bani Quraizah break their pledge and join the Confederate aggressors. That was a time when a group of three thousand ill-equipped people standing up to fight against an equipped army of some ten to twelve thousand men was something far too wild to believe. On top of all that, there came up a new factor. Out of the Confederate forces, Huyayy Ibn Akhtab, the chief of the tribe of Banu Nadir who had contributed most in rallying everyone against the Holy Prophet and his Muslim followers, took another step. He reached Madinah and conspired to win over the Jewish tribe of Banu Quraizah over their side. The situation was that Banu Quraizah and the Holy Prophet ﷺ already had a peace treaty signed between them. This was a solemn undertaking and the two parties naturally had no apprehensions from each other. Ka‘b Ibn Asad was the chief of the tribe of Banu Quraizah. Huyayy Ibn Akhtab went to see him.

When Ka‘b heard about his reported arrival, he had the gate of his castle closed, so that this man would not reach him. But, Huyayy Ibn Akhtab hanged out there, he called and called and insisted that the gate be opened. Ka‘b told him from inside the gate, “We have already made a peace treaty with Muhammad ﷺ and we know of

nothing from his side other than truth, honesty and strict adherence to the treaty right to this day, therefore, we are bound with this treaty and cannot join hands with you.” For long, this dialogue between the two continued with Huyayy

Ibn Akhtab insisting that the gate be opened and that Ka‘b should talk to him and the latter kept refusing to do that while staying inside the closed gate. But, consequently when Huyayy Ibn Akhtab challenged Ka‘b’s sense of shame in that he was treating a visitor in such a crude manner, the gate was opened. Once called in, Huyayy Ibn Akhtab painted such a rosy picture of his proposals that Ka‘b ultimately fell into the trap laid out by him and gave his word that he would take part in the Confederate expedition. When Ka‘b related what he had done before other chiefs of his tribe, they all said in one voice, “You did something terrible. You broke your pledge with Muslims for no reason whatsoever and that by going along with the other side you have exposed your own self to danger.” Ka‘b too was affected by their comments and even repented for what he had done.

But, things had gone out of his control by that time and this very pledge-breaking finally went on to become the cause of the destruction of Banu Quraizah as it would be mentioned later.

At that particular time, when the Holy Prophet(S) and the noble Sahabah got this information, they were shocked by this breach of trust from Banu Quraizah. What worried them most was the strange situation created for them. They had a trench dug across the line of the marching forces of the Confederates who were coming from outside Madinah. But, these Banu Quraizah people were right there inside Madinah. How were they going to defend against them? About this when the Qur’an says that the disbelieving forces of the Confederate army had overtaken you: (from above you and from below you -10), Tafsir authorities say that the expression: (from

above) means the Banu Quraizah and those who came from below them (jac) mean the rest of the Confederates.

To find out the reality of this breach of trust and to assess the correct situation in the whole matter, the Holy Prophet sent a deputation comprising Sayyidna Sa'd Ibn Mu'adh, the chief of the Ansar tribe of Aws and Sayyidna Sa'd Ibn 'Ubadah, the chief of the tribe of Khazraj, to Ka'b in order to talk to him about the matter. The instruction given to them was that should the event of this breach of trust turn out to be incorrect, they were to tell the whole truth before all the Sahabah openly. And should it turn out to be true, they should, on their return, say something ambivalent which will be a message only we shall understand while the rest of the Sahabah will remain safe from facing any panic because of it.

When both these elders named Sa'd reached there, they saw open proofs of the breach of pledge all over which even went to the extent of hot exchanges of words between them and Ka'b. On their return, following the instructions given to them earlier, they reported back their findings in unclear words and thus informed the Holy Prophet that the event of the breaking of the pledge was true.

At the time when the Jewish tribe of Banu Quraizah, once an ally of Muslims, also joined the war against them, something else started happening. The hypocrisy of people who posed to be a part of the Muslim community lost its cover. Some of them became far too vocal and started saying things against the Holy Prophet #2 as was mentioned earlier in: (and when said the hypocrites – 12). Then, they were others who cooked up all sorts of excuses to run away from the battlefield and sought the permission of the Holy Prophet Me to do that – which has been mentioned in verse 13: 2) 32532 51 (Our homes are vulnerable).

Now according to the present state of the battle front, the Confederate forces could not march in because of the trench with

the Muslim army positioned on the other side. There was almost a continuous exchange of arrows between them all the time. This state of affairs dragged on for nearly a month. They could neither confront each other in some open or decisive battle, nor could they turn heedless towards the opponent for any extended period of time. Day and night, the Holy Prophet we and his noble Sahabah would stand guard by the trench. Although, the Holy Prophet 3 was personally involved in this hard task like everybody else, yet the thought that all his companions were suffering from extreme anxiety due to this impasse was very painful for him.

A strategic plan of the Holy Prophet (S)

It was already in the knowledge of the Holy Prophet that the chief of the tribe of Ghitfan had joined hands with these Jews as tempted by the greed of having the fruits and dates of Khaibar. He sent an emissary to the two chiefs of the tribe of Ghitfan, “Uyaynah Ibn Hisn and Abu al-Harith Ibn ‘Amr, with the message: “If you leave the battlefield with your men, we shall give you one-third of the fruit of Madinah.” This negotiation was still on. The two chief had agreed and a peace treaty was close to be signed. But, as was his wont and habit, the Holy Prophet. we decided to consult the noble Sahabah in this matter. He called the two Sa‘ds, the chiefs of the tribe of Aws and Khazraj, that is, Sayyidna Sa‘d Ibn ‘Ubadah and Sa‘d Ibn Mu‘ach, and sought their advice.

The Faith, the Sense of Shame and the Granite of a Determination shown by a Sahabi of the Rasul of Allah Both of them said, “Ya Rastlallah, if you have orders from Allah Ta‘ala to do this thing, then, we cannot dare say anything. We shall accept. If not, tell us: Is it your personal opinion or you have devised this as a measure to save us from all this hardship and suffering?”

The Holy Prophet S said, “Neither is there a Divine order for it, nor do I have any personal inclination to do so. In fact, | have come

up with this via media in view of your pain and suffering because you are surrounded from all sides. So, I simply wished to shatter the power of the adversary in this manner without losing any time.” Sayyidna Sa‘d Ibn Mu‘adh said, “Ya Rasulallah, when we worshipped idols, we did neither know Allah nor did we worship Him. At that time, these people could not dare look at a single fruit of our city with greedy eyes – except that they be our guests and we offer some of it to them by way of hospitality, or that they would buy it from us and take it away with them. Today, when Allah Ta‘ala has, in His infinite grace, given us the ability of knowing Him, and has bestowed upon us the honor of Islam, shall we, on this day, let these people have our fruits and our wealth and our properties? We need no peace and compromise from them. As for us, we are not going to give them anything but the cutting edge of our swords – to the extent that Allah Ta‘ala Himself gives the ultimate verdict between us and them.”

When the Holy Prophet (S) heard Sayyidna Sa‘d (RA) and saw this high determination and this great enthusiasm in the matter of his ‘Iman, he cast that thought of his aside and said, “You now have the right to do what you wish.” Sayyidna Sa‘d (RA) took the peace treaty document from his blessed hands and erased the writing on it because it was not signed yet. ‘Uyaynah and Harith, the chiefs of the Ghitfan tribes who were present in the meeting ready to sign this treaty found themselves personally unnerved in their hearts at this demonstration of power and determination from the noble Companions of the Holy Prophet (S). The wound received by Sayyidna Sa‘d Ibn Mu‘adh – and his prayer On the other side, the activity of throwing arrows and stones on each other continued unabated. Sayyidna Sa‘d « & had gone into the fortress of Banu Harithah to see his mother where women had been housed under security. Sayyidah ‘Aishah ts alli is, says, “At that time, I too was in the same fortress and the injunctions of hijab for women were yet to be enforced. I saw that Sa‘d Ibn Mu‘adh was wearing a small coat of mail from which his hands were protruding out rather awkwardly

and his mother was telling him to make haste, go and join the men fighting with the Holy Prophet we. I said to his mother, “A larger coat of mail would have been better for him. [apprehend that his hands and feet showing out of his coat of mail may be exposed to danger.” His mother said, “It does not matter.

Whatever Allah has to do is what has to happen.”

When Sayyidna Mu‘adh (RA) reached the battlefield, he was hit by an arrow which cut through his medial arm vein. At that time, Sayyidna Mu‘adh (RA) made the following prayer:

“O Allah, if there is yet another attack by the Quraish destined to come against the Holy Prophet #8, please keep me alive for that, because I have no worthwhile wish left in me but that I fight the people who have caused all sorts of pain to the Holy Prophet, expelled him from his homeland and falsified his person and mission. And if, in Your ultimate knowledge, this process of war has come to an end, please bless me with the death of a martyr’ in the way of Allah – but, let not death come to me until such time that the treachery of Bani Quraizah is avenged as the parting delight of my eyes.” Allah Ta‘ala answered both these prayers from him. This event of al-Ahzab was made to be the last attack of the disbelievers. After that, began the period of Muslim victories. First came Khaibar, then Makkah al-Mukarramah and then other areas. As for the event relating to Banu Quraizah, it follows later as to how they were brought forth as captives and their case was entrusted with none else but Sayyidna Sa‘d Ibn Mu‘ach for the final verdict. It was in accordance with his verdict that their men were killed and their women and children were taken prisoners.

During this event of al-Ahzab, the noble Sahabah and the Holy Prophet (S) had to maintain an all-night vigilance throughout the trench area. The slightest relaxation at any time had to be broken at the faintest sound of commotion from any side. In fact, the Holy

Prophet S would himself put his arms back on and come out in the battle area. Umm ul-Mu'minin Sayyidah Umm Salamah says, "Every single night, this would happen several times that he would come in for a little rest and then heard some sound and went out immediately. The same thing happened again. The moment he would put his back for rest, he would hear some sound and leave as usual."

Umm al-Mu'minin Sayyidah Umm Salamah, also says, "I have been with the Holy Prophet (S) in many battles such as Muraisi', Khaibar, Hudaibiyah, the battles of the conquest of Makkah and Hunain. None of these caused more Hardship on the Holy Prophet we as did the battle of Khandaq. Muslims also received a lot more wounds in this battle. Then, they were hit by the severity of the winter chill as well. Furthermore, their circumstances were extremely straightened in terms of food and water available to them. (Mazhari) The Holy Prophet (S) had to miss four Salaha in this Jihad

One of those days, the confronting disbelievers decided to launch a joint and simultaneous attack and force their way ahead by somehow crossing the trench. Once they had resolved to do that, they threw themselves dauntlessly against the Muslims and their archers rained their arrows so incessantly that the Holy Prophet ve and his noble Sahabah had to remain so engaged throughout the day that they did not find any respite to even make their Salah. As a result, four Salaha missed during the day had to be performed at the time of 'Isha'.

The prayers of the Holy Prophet

When things became unbearably hard on Muslims, the Holy Prophet Se prayed against the Confederate forces of the disbelievers, doing that for three days consecutively on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday inside Masjid al-Fath imploring Allah Ta'ala to bring defeat on the Confederates and victory for Muslims. It was on the

third day, on Wednesday between Zuhr and ‘Asr that the prayer was answered. Pleased, the Holy Prophet ﷺ came to his noble Sahabah and gave them the glad tiding of victory. They say that after that time no Muslim faced any hardship any more. (Mazhari) The unraveling of the causes of victory In the combined forces of the enemy, the tribe of Ghitfan was a power to reckon with. It was the most perfect power of Allah Ta‘ala that put the light of faith in the heart of Nu‘aim Ibn Mas‘ud who, as destiny would have it, was one of them. He presented himself before the Holy Prophet, confessed to his faith in Islam and told him that no one from among his people is aware of the fact that he has become a Muslim. Then, he wished that he be told as to how he could serve Islam. The Holy Prophet told him, ‘You being all alone here would not be able to do anything worthwhile. If you can go back to your people, be with them and still do something in defence of Islam, then, go ahead and do it.’ Nu‘aim Ibn Mas‘ud was an intelligent man. He conceived of a plan of action in his heart and sought the permission of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to be given the choice of saying what is expedient when he reaches those people. He gave the permission. From here, Nu‘aim Ibn Mas‘ud went to see the tribe of Banu Quraizah with whom he had age-old relations since the time of Jahiliyyah. He said to them: ‘O people of Banu Quraizah, you know that I am an old friend of yours.’ They said, “We have no doubt about your friendship.’ After that, Sayyidna Nu‘aim Ibn Mas‘ud addressed the chiefs of Banu Quraizah as a well-wisher and asked them, ‘You know that none of us – be they the Quraish of Makkah or our tribe of Ghitfan or the several other Jewish tribes – have their homes here. If these people face defeat and run, they do not lose much. Your case is different from all “of them. Madinah is your home. Your women and your properties are all here. Now, if you were to participate in the war effort with them and if, later, when these people taste defeat and run, what would happen to you? Would you be able to fight against the Muslims all by yourselves? Therefore, as one who wishes the best for you, I advise you not to take part in the joint war effort with them until such time that they do not put with you a certain number of

their selected chiefs as ransom and guarantee that they would not throw you all at the mercy of Muslims and run.’ The people of Banu Quraizah found this advice good. They appreciated it and said so before him. After that, Nu‘aim Ibn Mas‘iid (RA) reached the Quraish chiefs and said to them, ‘You know that I am your friend and that I have nothing to do with Muhammad (S). I have a little bit of information with me. Being one who wishes well for you, it is necessary that I pass on that information to you – of course, on the condition that you will not disclose my name as its source. Here is that information: The Jews of the tribe of Bani Quraizah have now regretted their decision after they had concluded their pact with you. They have sent a message to Muhammad about it telling him that they will be willing to go along with him subject to the condition that they would hand over some chiefs of the tribes of Quraish and Ghitfan and that he would then put them to the sword. Once that was done, they would join hands with him and fight against all of them. Muhammad (S) has accepted this proposal made by them. Now the Banu Quraizah were going to demand that you put some of your chiefs as ransom with them and it was upto them to figure out what they were going to do in their case.

After that, Nu‘aim Ibn Mas‘ud (RA) went to his own tribe, Ghitfan and to them, he passed on the same information. Concurrent to this, Abu Sufyan appointed Tkrimah Ibn Abi Jahl on behalf of the tribe of Quraish and Warqa’ Ibn Ghitfan on behalf of the tribe of Ghitfan to the mission of going to Banu Quraizah and telling them that their war supplies were diminishing and their men were getting tired of having to fight continuously. So, according to the provision of their pact, they were looking forward to their help and participation. The tribe of Banu Quraizah, acting in the light of ‘their’ (latest) understanding of the pact, told them that they will not take part in the war effort with them until such time that some chiefs from both of their tribes have been placed in their custody as ransom (guarantee, hostage). ‘Ikrimah and Wargqa’, the two emissaries carried the message back to Abu Sufyan. As a result, the chiefs of

Quraish and Ghitfan came to believe that the information given by Sayyidna Nu‘aim Ibn Mas‘ud # was correct. So they sent a return message to Banu Quraizah telling them that they were not going to let them have any of their men. Now it was up to them. If they wished they could join the war effort with them and if they did not, they were free not to. When Banu Quraizah saw this state of affairs, their belief in what Nu‘aim Ibn Mas‘ud had said became all the more firm. It was in this manner that Allah Ta‘ala caused a rift in the ranks of the enemy through a person who came from their camp and soon after they lost their foothold on the battlefield.

Along with it there came another calamity upon them. Allah Ta‘ala caused a cold stormy wind overtake them which uprooted their tents and blew their cooking pots from their stoves. As for these, they were only outward causes generated by Allah Ta‘ala to make them desert the battlefield. More came in the form of His angels who were sent to put awe in their hearts inwardly too. These two things have been mentioned at the beginning of the verses cited above as follows: (and We sent upon them a wind, and the forces (of angels) you did not see – 9). As a consequence, they had no choice but to run. The event of Sayyidna Hudhaifah going into enemy lines and reporting back about conditions prevailing there. On the other side, when the Holy Prophet (S) heard the report of what Nu‘aim Ibn Mas‘ud (RA) had accomplished and how a rift was caused among the Confederate forces, he was strongly inclined towards the idea of someone from among the Muslims going into the enemy lines and returning with the much needed intelligence about the enemy formations and intentions. But, this severe and chilly wind storm that was sent upon the enemy, however, did affect the whole of Madinah and Muslims too were affected by it. The chill was bitter. The time was night. The noble Sahabah were, after the heavy grind of a long day, sitting all shattered because of the confrontation, huddled together feeling the pinch of bitter cold. Addressing the gathering, the Holy Prophet ae said, “Is there someone who would stand up and go into the enemy lines and bring some news about

them and may Allah Ta‘ala admit him into Jannah?” Of course, this was a gathering of Sahabah who would have normally staked their lives at his call. But, the objective conditions prevailing with them were such that no one could stand up. The Holy Prophet got busy with Salah. After remaining busy with Salah for a while, he addressed the gathering again saying, “Is there someone here who would bring me some news from the enemy lines and receive Jannah in return for it?” This time too, silence prevailed over the entire gathering. No one rose. The Holy Prophet got busy with Salah once again. After some time, it was the third time that he made the same appeal, “Whoever does it shall be in Jannah with me.” But, everyone was so broken down from fatigue, hunger and chill and so utterly helpless that no one could still bring himself up to rise. The narrator of the hadith, Sayyidna Hudhaifah Ibn Yaman, says, ‘at that time the Holy Prophet called me by name and said,

“Hudhaifah, you go.” My condition was no different from the others. But, once I was ordered by name, I had no option but to obey. I stood up while my whole body was shivering with bitter cold. He passed his blessed hand over my head and my face and said, “Go into the enemy lines and just bring back some news and do nothing before you return to me.” Then he prayed for my safety. I picked up my bow and arrows, tied up my own clothes on my body and took my way towards them.

When I started moving ahead from here, I noticed something strange. The shivering sensation that had me in its grips while I was in the tent was all gone. Actually, I was walking as if one was inside a hot bath all the way up to enemy camp. Once there, I saw that the wind storm had uprooted their tents and upturned their cooking pots. Abu Sufyan was seated by the makeshift fire place relaxing before the heat. When I saw this (a sitting target), I trained my bow and arrow over my shoulders and was about to shoot Abu Sufyan with my arrow, I remembered the order given by the Holy Prophet (S): ‘Do nothing before you return back to me.’ Abu Sufyan was

absolutely within the striking range of my arrow, but it was in consideration of this order of the Holy Prophet ie that I disengaged my arrow from the bow. Disturbed by the condition around him, Abu Sufyan wanted to announce the plan to withdraw. But, in order to do that, it was necessary that he should talk to responsible people from among the combined armed forces. The night was dark and the place was desolate. The danger of a snooping spy nearby who may overhear what they were talking about was very much present. Therefore, Abu Sufyan did something smart. Before starting to talk, he asked the whole gathering to recognize the person sitting next to everyone so that no one who is not one of them would be able to hear what they said.'

Sayyidna Hudhaifah (RA) says, "Now, I was scared. What if the person sitting next to me were to ask me: Who are you? If so, my cover will blow up.' It was with great presence of mind and courage that he himself took the initiative, and slapping the hand of the person sitting next to him, he himself asked: Who are you? The man said, 'Strange that you do not know me. I am so and so the son of se and so.' He was a member of the tribe of Hawazin. Thus, Sayyidna Hudhaifah was saved by Allah Ta'ala from being arrested on the spot. When Abu Sufyan ensured it that the gathering was that of his own people and that there was no stranger present among them, he related the disturbing conditions around them, how the tribe of Bant' Quraizah had committed a breach of pledge and the extent to which their war supplies had shrunk. After having recounted the situation, he said: In my opinion, all of us should now leave and go back and I too am going back. Immediately thereafter, a state of panic hit the Confederate army and everyone started going back.

Sayyidna Hudhaifah (RA) says, "As I started going back from there, I felt as if I had some sort of a hot bath around me that was shielding me from the bitter chill. When I reached the home base, I found the Holy Prophet Be busy with Salah. When he turned for Salam, I reported the event. Pleased with this happy news, the Holy

Prophet started laughing – to the extent that, in the darkness of the night, his blessed teeth were seen shining. After that, the Holy Prophet “ made room for me close to his feet and covered my body with a part of the sheet he had wrapped around him until I went to sleep in that condition. When morning came, he himself woke me up saying: (‘big sleeper’)

Good News after the ambition of the disbelievers is shattered

According to a narration of Sayyidna Sulayman Ibn Surad appearing in the Sahih of al- Bukhari, when the Confederate forces retreated, the Holy Prophet (S) said:

Now, they shall not attack us, instead, we will attack them and run over their territory – al- Bukhari as in Mazhari. After having said that, the Holy Prophet (S) and his noble Sahabah returned to the city of Madinah and it was only after a month that Muslims formally disarmed themselves.

A special note

This event pertaining Sayyidna Hudhaifah appears in the Sahih of Muslim. It is an example-setter of great class as well as a bearer of many elements of guidance and miracles of the Holy Prophet #e. Those who ponder over it would themselves find these out, therefore, any more details are not needed.

The Battle of Banu Quraizah

The Holy Prophet ee had just about reached Madinah when suddenly came Sayyidna Jibra’il al- Amin see in the guise of the Sahabi, Sayyidna Dihyah Ibn Khalifah al-Kalbi & and said, “Even though you people have disarmed yourselves but the angels have not. Allah Ta‘ala commands you to attack Banu Quraizah and I am going right there ahead of you.”To announce this in Madinah, the Holy Prophet ae serit a proclaimer who proclaimed this order of the

Holy Prophet before the people making sure that it reaches everyone. The order was: Say abe Co (Let no man make his Salah of ‘Asr until he reaches Banu Quraizah).

All Companions got ready for this second Jihad immediately and marched towards Banu Quraizah. On their way came the time of ‘Asr. Some of them, following the outward sense of the prophetic order, did not make their Salah of ‘Asr en route – instead, made it only after having reached the designated destination of Banu Quraizah. And there were others who thought that objective of the Holy Prophet ee was to reach Banu Quraizah within the time for ‘Asr. So, they thought, if they made their Salah en route and reached there within the time for ‘Asr, then, it would not be contrary to the order of the Holy Prophet we Thus, they made their Salah of ‘Asr as it became due while still en route.

In the difference of Mujtahids, no side is sinful or blameworthy. When the Holy Prophet ae was informed about this difference in the practical compliance of his order on the part of the noble Sahabah, he put no blame on any of the two parties; in fact, he approved of both. From here, the religious scholars of the Muslim community have deduced the principle that none of the different sayings of Mujtahid ‘Ulama’ who are Mujtahids in the real sense of the term and have the required expertise and ability of [jtthad (arriving at a Shari‘ah-based religious solution of problems at the highest conceivable level) can be called ‘sin’ or ‘blameworthy.’ For both such differing sides, reward is recorded against their action as based on their respective Ijtihad. At the time of marching out for Jihad against Banu Quraizah, the Holy Prophet (S) handed over the Muslim flag to Sayyidna ‘Ali al-Murtada (RA). Hearing about the coming of the Holy Prophet 82 and his noble Sahabah, the Banu Quraizah decided to shut themselves into their fort. The Islamic army laid a siege around it.

The Speech of Ka‘b, the Chief of Banu Quraizah

Ka‘b, the Chief of the tribe of Banu Quraizah who had broken the pledge given to the Holy Prophet #2 in favor of a compact with the Confederates, assembled his people together, told them about the delicate situation and presented three possible solutions of the problem:

“To begin with, the first option is that you all embrace Islam and follow Muhammad because, and I tell you on oath, you already know that he is in the right and the prophecy of his coming is there in your Torah which you recite. If you were to do this, not only that you will find safety for your life, property and children in this mortal world but also that your Hereafter too will turn out to be good and correct.

The second option is that you start by first killing your women and children with your own hands and then go on to fight and kill them with all power at your command until such time that all of you are also killed in the process. The third option is that you make a surprise attack on Muslims on the day of Sabbath – for Muslims know that fighting and killing on the day of Sabbath is unlawful in our religion. Therefore, they would not be expecting an attack from our side on that particular day. Now, if we were to launch a sudden attack, it is possible that we may succeed.” After having heard this address of their chief, Ka‘b, his people replied that they will never accept the first option of embracing Islam, because Surah al-Ahzab : 33: 9 – 27 126 they did not want to abandon the Torah and start believing in some other Book. As for the second option, what wrong had their women and children done that they go about killing them? As for the third option, it was by itself against the commandment of the Torah and their religion. They could not do that too. After that, all of them reached an agreement that they would lay down their arms before the Holy Prophet and be ready to accept whatever he decided about them. Present there were some Ansari Sahabah belonging to the tribe of Aws. They had an age-old pact with Banu Quraizah. So these Sahabah from the tribe of Aws requested the

Holy Prophet S that these people may be handed over to them. The Holy Prophet S said, “Would you like me to entrust their case with one of your own chiefs?” When they agreed, the Holy Prophet # said, “He is your chief, Sa‘d Ibn Mu‘adh. I entrust this matter with him for a judgement.” Everyone approved of it.

Sayyidna Sa‘d Ibn Mu‘adh was fatally wounded during the battle of Khandag (the Trench) by an arrow. The Holy Prophet Me had housed him in a tent pegged within the compound of the Masjid so that he could be attended to. According to the order of the Holy Prophet ae, the verdict on the prisoners from Banu Quraizah was left up to him. The verdict that he gave was that the warring young from them should be killed and women, children and the aged should be treated as prisoners of war which is well-recognized in Islam. This very verdict was enforced. Soon after this verdict, the wound of Sayyidna Sa‘d Ibn Muadh started bleeding suddenly. Therefrom he died. Allah Ta‘ala answered both prayers made by him – that there would be no attack from the Quraish against the Holy Prophet ue in the future, and that the Banu Quraizah would receive the punishment for their treachery which Allah caused to come upon them precisely through him. Some of those earmarked for killing were set free because of having embraced Islam. ‘Atiyyah al-Qurazi, well-known among the Sahabah, is one of them. Also among them, there was Zubayr Ibn Bata. His freedom was specially requested from the Holy Prophet by the Sahabi, Sayyidna Thabit Ibn Qays Ibn Shammas. The reason was that Zubayr Ibn Bata had done a favour to him during the days of the Jahiliyyah when, in the battle of Bu‘ath, Thabit Ibn Qays had fallen a prisoner in the hands of Zubayr Ibn Bata who had simply cut the locks of his hair on the head and let him go free. He had not killed him.

Return of favour and national pride: Two unique models

After having received the order for the release of Zubayr Ibn Bata, Sayyidna Thabit Ibn Qays went to him and said, “I have done

it to return your favor you had done to me during the battle of Bu'ath." Zubayr Ibn Bata said, "There is no doubt that one gentleman deals with another gentleman just like that. But, please tell me what for would a man whose entire family is no more there like to stay alive?" When Sayyidna Thabit Ibn Qays heard this, he presented himself before the Holy Prophet and submitted that the life and honor of his family and children may also be spared. In his grace, he approved of it. When he informed Zubayr Ibn Bata about it, he took another step forward saying, "O Thabit, now tell me how a man with a family would stay alive if he is left with nothing to support it?" Sayyidna Thabit Ibn Qays returned to the Holy Prophet once again and arranged to have whatever wealth or property he had also given back to him. Up to this point, narrated here was the case of the gentleness and gratitude of a true Muslim as demonstrated by Sayyidna Thabit Ibn Qays.

Now, we can go to have a look at what happened on the other side. When Zubayr Ibn Bata was fully satisfied after having earned his freedom and the freedom of his family and children as well as his wealth and property, he asked Sayyidna Thabit Ibn Qays about the chiefs of the Jewish tribes: "What happened to Ibn Abi al-Huqaiq whose face was like a Chinese mirror?" He said that he was killed. Then, he asked, "What became of the Banu Quraizah chiefs, Ka'b Ibn Quraizah and 'Amr Ibn Quraizah?" He told him that they too were killed. Then he asked about another two groups. In response, he was informed that all of them were killed. Hearing this, Zubayr Ibn Bata said to Sayyidna Thabit Ibn Qays, "You have returned the favor done to you and you have fulfilled your responsibility as due. But, I am not going to rehabilitate myself on my property after they are no more. Include me among them." He meant that he too should be killed. Sayyidna Thabit Ibn Qays refused to kill him. After that, it was on his insistence that some other Muslim killed him. (Qurtubi)

This was the national pride or sense of communal shame demonstrated by a disbeliever, a kafir who, even after having been

given everything back, did not like to continue living without his companions.

Here we have two models of conduct demonstrated by a believer and a disbeliever, a mu'min and a kafir. Both belong to significant historical record. This victory against Banu Quraizah had taken place in the fifth year of Hijrah towards the end of the month of Dhulqga'dah and the beginning of Dhul-Hijjah. (Qurtubi)

A special note of caution

That the battle of al-Ahزاب and Banu Quraizah have been taken up here in a somewhat detailed manner is because of two factors. (1) First of all, the Qur'an has itself opted to describe it in details spread over two sections. (2) Then, there is another reason for it. These events carry many instructions about different departments of life and they also spell out many clear miracles and lessons. These have been highlighted in the text of the present commentary under bold headings. Once we come to know the whole event, the translation of the meanings of the verses given above under the Arabic text, alongwith the footnotes, would become easier to understand. There are a few things that should, however, be taken note of:

Firstly, mention has been made of extreme hardships faced by Muslims in this battle. One state of the anxiety of believers has been pointed to in the words: *G5ibh slit 5 pli* (and you were thinking about Allah all sorts of thoughts. – 10) These thoughts refer to scruples that emerge in one's heart beyond his control at the time of acute anxiety under which one may feel death as near with no hope of deliverance left, or at other occasions like that. Such non-voluntary apprehensions and scruples are neither contradictory of the perfection of 'Iman (faith) nor that of one's nearness to Allah (wilayah). Nevertheless, they do point out to the extent of the severity of distress and anxiety under which scruples had started

creeping into the hearts of even the noble Sahabah who, otherwise, were virtual mountains of fortitude.

The second state mentioned here is that of the hypocrites for they had started saying that the promises of Allah and His Rasul were a web of deception: (And (remember) when the hypocrites and those having malady in their hearts were saying, “Allah and His messenger did not promise us but deceitfully. This was an externalized demonstration of their inner disbelief. Onward from here, mention has been made of two groups of hypocrites who were practically a part of the Jihad effort along with Muslims, though outwardly only. One of the two groups started running without any permission saying: (and when a group of them said, “O people of Yathrib (Madinah), there is no place for you to stay; so go back. - 13” And the other group requested the permission of the Holy Prophet ie to go back on the basis of false excuses. Their conduct has been mentioned as: (And a group of them was seeking permission (to leave) from the prophet, saying, “In fact our homes are vulnerable,” while they were not vulnerable – 13).

Thus, the Qur’an exposed the hollowness of their excuses as a pack of lies. The truth of the matter was no more than that they intended to run from the battlefield: (They wanted nothing but to escape – 13). Taken up in the next several verses is their mischief-making and enmity with Muslims following which their sad end has been pointed out. After that, the text mentions sincere believers and praises their firmness and fortitude. In the same connection, there comes a strong assertion of the need to obey and follow the Holy Prophet ae almost in the form of a legal rule of conduct: Syed abi (There is indeed a good model for you in the Messenger of Allah – 21). From here it stands proved that all sayings and doings of the Holy Prophet 4 have to be followed. But, the Shari’ah authorities have explained the rule about the different degrees of following required from a Muslim. The rule is that any act or omission of the Holy Prophet ve proved to have been done as an obligation would

have to be obeyed and followed as wajib (obligatory, necessary). And any act or omission on his part that is proved to have been done as a preferable conduct (istihbab) and not as an obligatory one, should be followed by us too as a commendable (mustahab) conduct and not as a necessary obligation. This, in other words, means that its contravention will not be declared to be a sin. (For a detailed discussion, see al-Jassas in Ahkam ul- Qur'an)

The last three (25-27) of the cited verses refer to the event relating to Banu Quraizah. In verse 26:

It was said that Allah Ta'ala had, by putting the awe of the Holy Prophet S and his Muslim followers into the hearts of the people of the Book who had helped the Confederate forces, made them come down from their strong fortresses and had thus made Muslims the inheritors of their properties, homes and areas of concentration.

In the last verse (27), good news of future victories has been given. Gone is the time when disbelievers attacked. Now the cycle of Muslim victories will begin and they will come to be on lands their feet have not touched yet. And this prophecy unfolded itself during the tenure of the noble Sahabah and everyone witnessed the spectacle of great empires ruled by Cyrus and Caesar come under them. And Allah does what He wills.

References:

Shafi, Muhammad (2008). Maariful Quran. (Vol .6 surah 33 verses 9-27). English – Maariful Quran : Mufti Muhammad Shafi (r.a) : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive³

34:15 The Two Gardens of Saba

There was, for Saba, aforetime, a Sign in their home-land – two Gardens to the right and to the left. “Eat of the Sustenance (provided) by your Lord, and be grateful to Him: a territory fair and happy, and a Lord Oft-Forgiving!

This is the same city and territory in Yemen as is mentioned in 27:22: see note there as to its location. There the period was the time of Solomon and Queen Bilqis.

Here it is some centuries later. It was still a happy and prosperous country, amply irrigated from the Maarib dam. Its roads or perhaps its canals, were skirted by gardens on both sides, right and left: at any given point, you always saw two gardens. It produced fruit, spices, and frankincense, and got the name of Araby the Blest for that part of the country.

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 34 verse 15). [1]Quran Arabic with English Translation & Commentary (Tafsir) by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Free Download

(quran4u.com)

38:39 The legacy of Solomon and his kingdom

“Such are Our Bounties: whether thou bestow them (on others) or withhold them, no account will be asked.”

Allah bestowed such abundant powers and bounties on Solomon that they could not be counted or measured: and he was free to give away anything he liked or keep anything he liked.

In this was great temptation for an ordinary man. Solomon as a prophet withstood it and asked to be forgiven for power and such a kingdom as others might not be able to use lawfully.

His earthly kingdom went to pieces after his death. But his name and fame endure. And what is more, he obtained a place among the Nearest Ones to Allah.

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 38 verse 39). [1]Quran Arabic with English Translation & Commentary (Tafsir) by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Free Download (quran4u.com)

3:121 The Battle of Badr

Remember that morning Thou didst leave Thy household (early) to post the faithful at their stations for battle: And Allah heareth and knoweth all things:

With this verse begins the commentary on the battle of Uḥud and its effects. As it had recently taken place and its memory was quite fresh in minds, a mere hint or a passing reference to it would have been enough for a contemporary audience. However, as this commentary deals with certain circumstances and effects that touched on conspiracies by some parties or were related to how people perceived and reacted to the attributes of Allah being the all-Hearing and all-Knowing, these are cited in the opening sentence. There was and is no room for any refuting or challenging the veracity of this account. It is by the One Who knows all and hears all. And whatever He has said is based on his flawless knowledge, hearing and seeing.

References:

Islahi, Amin Ahsan. *Pondering Over The Qur'an: Surah Ali Imran* (p. 232). Islamic Book Trust. Kindle Edition.

3:122-123 The Battle of Badr

Remember two of your parties Meditated cowardice; but Allah was their protector, and in Allah should the faithful (Ever) put their trust.

Allah had helped you at Badr, when ye were a contemptible little force; then fear Allah; thus May ye show your gratitude.

A mischief of the hypocrites

The two groups referred to in the above verse, according to some commentators, are the Banū Salamah of Khazraj and the Banū Hārithah of the Aws tribe. On account of the hypocrites' machinations among them, they experienced cowardice and weakness for a time, but soon overcame these feelings. The hypocrites did not want to participate in this fight and the Prophet, peace be upon him, was well aware of this weakness in them. That is why, before going out to meet the Quraysh (in the battle of Uḥud), in order to assess the situation, he posed to the Muslims the question of whether they should fight the enemy from within Madīnah, or go out and confront them outside the city. All the true and sincere Muslims enthusiastically responded that they should go out of the city to meet them. The hypocrites, on the other hand, proposed fighting from within Madīnah and enumerated the alleged advantages of such a strategy. This gave the Prophet, peace be upon him, a clear picture of the morale of his army. The weakness of the hypocrites was quite apparent. So after listening to both the groups, he chose the course on which he had already decided – the one that his faithful and sincere followers had so enthusiastically expressed in their determination to fight the enemy outside the city. With this conspiracy of the hypocrites thus coming to naught, for the time

being they went along with the decision to fight the Quraysh outside the city. Later, using this as an excuse and saying that since their advice was ignored, their leader Ibn Ubayy returned to Madīnah with three hundred of his companions. Naturally this had a demoralising effect on some groups of the Muslims. To begin with, the total strength of Muslims was only one thousand men compared to three thousand men of the disbelievers' army. Of this one thousand, the flight of three hundred men at such a critical juncture was a serious blow and the weaker elements among the Muslim army were adversely affected.

Allah is the guardian of the believers

The Qur'ān draws attention to this weakness, saying that those who go out to fight in the cause of Allah, He Himself is their helper and patron, and they should have faith and trust in His help and support. When Allah and His help is with the believers, why should they worry and be unnecessarily concerned at the desertion of a group of hypocrites and cowards?

A reminder of Allah's help in the battle of Badr

After having made clear the implications of faith and trust in Allah, the Muslims are also reminded of the battle of Badr and how Allah had helped them and given them a resounding victory over their enemies despite their numerical and material weakness. Why should they lose heart now and despair of Allah's help and mercy? He is still their helper, patron and guardian as before.

References:

Islahi, Amin Ahsan. Pondering Over The Qur'an: Surah Ali Imran (pp. 233-234). Islamic Book Trust. Kindle Edition.

3:124-125 Three thousand Angels

Remember thou saidst to the Faithful: “Is it not enough for you that Allah should help you with three thousand angels (Specially) sent down?

“Yea, – if ye remain firm, and act aright, even if the enemy should rush here on you in hot haste, your Lord would help you with five thousand angels Making a terrific onslaught.

It is not unreasonable to assume that God could send angels to assist the forces of righteousness on the battlefield. The Old Testament promises that God will send hornets to help drive the enemies of the Children of Israel away! See Exodus 23:28.

References:

Emerick, Yahiya. *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an in Today's English* (p. 829). Unknown. Kindle Edition.

3:127 The Promise of Victory

That He might cut off a fringe of the Unbelievers or expose them to infamy, and they should then be turned back, frustrated of their purpose.

The words “Allah has made it but a message of hope” refer to the promise of victory mentioned in the above verse. In other words, the special promise of help through angels on this occasion was given only as good news to you and to remove your dismay caused by the hostility of your enemies and the treacherous behaviour of the hypocrites. For, even if such a glad tidings was not revealed, the believers should always firmly believe that victory and success lies only in the hands of Allah. He is mighty and supreme as well wise, and as such none of His acts is without wisdom behind it.

The sentence “li-yaqṭa-‘ a ṭarafan minalladhīna kafarū...(that He might cut off a portion of the unbelievers ...”) explains the purpose of specially encouraging the believers and the decision of Allah that the Quraysh would either be crushed in this battle or be beaten back with humiliation or at least, lose a portion of their strength.

References:

Islahi, Amin Ahsan. *Pondering Over The Qur'an: Surah Ali Imran* (p. 237). Islamic Book Trust. Kindle Edition.

3:128-129 A message of comfort to the Prophet, peace be upon him

Not for thee, (but for Allah), is the decision: Whether He turn in mercy to them, or punish them; for they are indeed wrong-doers.

To Allah belongeth all that is in the heavens and on earth. He forgiveth whom He pleaseth and punisheth whom He pleaseth; but Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

A message of comfort to the Prophet, peace be upon him

This verse is addressed to the Prophet, peace be upon him. The attitude and behaviour of the hypocrites in this battle that left such an adverse effect on Muslims, was no less shocking to him. Allah has, in these words, consoled him that in this matter he neither had any power to intervene nor any responsibility for their behaviour and attitude. He had fully done his duty and if some of the groups still wronged their own selves, he need not worry about them. Leave their affair to Allah. If He wills, He will grant them an opportunity to repent and mend their ways, in which case He will forgive them. And if they are not eligible for His forgiveness, He will punish them.

All power and authority in the heavens and earth rests with Him, to forgive or to punish whosoever He wishes. The reference at the end to the two attributes of Allah being most Forgiving and ever Merciful indicates that He will punish only those who really and truly deserve to be punished.

References:

Islahi, Amin Ahsan. *Pondering Over The Qur'an: Surah Ali Imran* (p. 238). Islamic Book Trust. Kindle Edition.

3:143 The Battle of Uhud

Ye did indeed wish for death before ye met him: Now ye have seen him with your own eyes, (And ye flinch!) In the Battle of Uhad the opinion of some of the Companions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was that they should meet the enemy outside Madînah in the open field: they said, “We had longed for this day, let us go out to fight our enemies, lest they think we are cowards”. The “desire for fighting the enemy and being slain in the cause of truth” is

called a “desire for death.” (Commentary and Reflections on the Quran, pg. 445)

Asad writes:

In Zamakhshari’s opinion, this is a twofold reproach addressed to the majority of the Companions who took part in the battle of Uhud: firstly, on account of their insistence, against the Prophet’s advice, on giving battle to the enemy in the open field and thereby

unnecessarily courting a deadly danger; and, secondly, on account of their failure to live up to their faith during the earlier part of the battle (see note 90 above). This passage may have yet another, more positive implication: namely, a reference to the lesson which the believers should draw from their near-defeat, and a reminder of the fact that their future depends on the strength of their faith in God (cf. verse 139 above) and not on a fleeting desire for self-sacrifice.

References:

Asad, Muhammad (1980). The Message of the Quran. <https://islamiconlineibrary.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Message-of- Quran.pdf>

NOORUDDÎN ,ALLÂMAH. (2015). Exegesis of The Holy Qur’ân Commentary and Reflections.

<https://islamiconlineibrary.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Exegesis-Commentary.pdf>

3:144 The Rumor that the Prophet was Killed at Uhud

Muhammad is no more than a messenger: many Were the messenger that passed away before him. If he died or were slain, will ye then Turn back on your heels? If any did turn back on his heels, not the least harm will he do to Allah; but Allah (on the other hand) will swiftly reward those who (serve Him) with gratitude.

The Rumor that the Prophet was Killed at Uhud

When Muslims suffered defeat in battle at Uhud and some of them were killed, Shaytan shouted, “Muhammad has been killed.” Ibn Qami’ah went back to the idolators and claimed, “I have killed Muhammad.”

Some Muslims believed this rumor and thought that the Messenger of Allah had been killed, claiming that this could happen, for Allah narrated that this occurred to many Prophets before. Therefore, the Muslims’ resolve was weakened and they did not actively participate in battle. This is why Allah sent down to His Messenger His statement, Muhammad is no more than a Messenger, and indeed Messengers have passed away before him. He is to deliver Allah’s Message and may be killed in the process, just as what happened to many Prophets before.

Ibn Abi Najih said that his father said that; a man from the Muhajirin passed by an Ansari man who was bleeding (during Uhud) and said to him, “O fellow! Did you know that Muhammad was killed?”

The Ansari man said, “Even if Muhammad was killed, he has indeed conveyed the Message. Therefore, defend your religion.”

The Ayah, (Muhammad is no more than a Messenger, and indeed (many) Messengers have passed away before him), was revealed.

This story was collected by Al-Hafiz Abu Bakr Al Bayhaqi in Dala'il An-Nubuwwah. Allah said next, while chastising those who became weak, If he dies or is killed, will you then turn back on your heels, become disbelievers. And he who turns back on his heels, not the least harm will he do to Allah; and Allah will give reward to those who are grateful. Those who obeyed Allah, defended His religion and followed His Messenger whether he was alive or dead.

The Sahih, Musnad and Sunan collections gathered various chains of narration stating that Abu Bakr recited this Ayah when the Messenger of Allah died.

Al-Bukhari recorded that Aishah said that; Abu Bakr came riding his horse from his dwelling in As-Sunh. He dismounted, entered the Masjid and did not speak to anyone until he came to her (in her room) and went directly to the Prophet, who was covered with a marked blanket. Abu Bakr uncovered his face, knelt down and kissed him, then started weeping and proclaimed, "My father and my mother be sacrificed for you! Allah will not combine two deaths on you. You have died the death, which was written for you." Ibn Abbas narrated that;

Abu Bakr then came out, while Umar was addressing the people, and Abu Bakr told him to sit down but Umar refused, and the people attended to Abu Bakr and left Umar. Abu Bakr said, "To proceed; whoever among you worshipped Muhammad, then Muhammad is dead, but whoever worshipped Allah, Allah is alive and will never die. Allah said,

Muhammad is no more than a Messenger and indeed (many) Messengers have passed away before him. If he dies or is killed, will you then turn back on your heels And he who turns back on his heels,

not the least harm will he do to Allah; and Allah will reward the grateful.”

The narrator added,

“By Allah, it was as if the people never knew that Allah had revealed this verse before until Abu Bakr recited it, and then whoever heard it, started reciting it.”

Sa‘id bin Al-Musayyib said that Umar said, “By Allah! When I heard Abu Bakr recite this Ayah, my feet could not hold me, and I fell to the ground.”

Allah said,

And no person can ever die except by Allah’s leave and at an appointed term meaning, no one dies except by Allah’s decision, after he has finished the term that Allah has destined for him. This is why Allah said, (at an appointed term) which is similar to His statements,

And no aged man is granted a length of life nor is a part cut off from his life, but it is in a Book. (35:11)

He it is Who has created you from clay, and then has decreed a (stated) term (for you to die).

And there is with Him another determined term (for you to be resurrected). (6:2)

This Ayah (3:145) encourages cowards to participate in battle; for doing so, or avoiding battle neither decreases, nor increases the life term.

Ibn Abi Hatim narrated that, Habib bin Suhban said that a Muslim man, Hujr bin Adi, said in a battle, “What prevents you from

crossing this river (the Euphrates) to the enemy. And no person can ever die except by Allah's leave and at an appointed term.”

He then crossed the river riding his horse, and when he did, the Muslims followed him. When the enemy saw them, they started shouting, “Diwan (Persian; crazy),” and they ran away.

References:

Kathir, Ibn. Tafsir Ibn Kathir. (surah 3 verse 144).
[1]<https://archive.org/details/TafseerIbnKathirenglish114SurahsComplete>

3:153 The Battle of Uhud

Behold! ye were climbing up the high ground, without even casting a side glance at any one, and the Messenger in your rear was calling you back. There did Allah give you one distress after another by way of requital, to teach you not to grieve for (the booty) that had escaped you and for (the ill) that had befallen you. For Allah is well aware of all that ye do.

In order to understand the proper sequence of this verse, we need to recast another glance over the previous verse, verse 152, that states “*thumma şarafakum ‘anhum li-yabtaliyakum* (then Allah did divert you from your foes in order to test you)”. In other words, because of their disobedience and lapses, Allah made them taste defeat in order to test them. Furthermore, the verse makes it clear that instead of punishing them for their disobedience, Allah chose to put them through a test so as to forgive them and to bestow His bounty and grace upon them.

Following this, the words “*idh tuş‘idāna* (remember, when you were fleeing) to “*fa athābakum ghammam bi ghammin ...* (there did Allah give you one distress after another”) gives the nature and detail of this trial. And the words “*li kay la tahzanū ‘ālā mā fātakum wa la mā aşābakum* (to teach you not to lose heart or to grieve for the loss suffered or the ill that had befallen you)” underline the lesson that the believers could learn and benefit from in the light of this experience, provided they faithfully and sincerely follow the teachings of Islam and persevere in its cause.

References:

Islahi, Amin Ahsan. *Pondering Over The Qur’an: Surah Ali Imran* (pp. 270-271). Islamic Book Trust. Kindle Edition.

3:159 The Council

It is part of the Mercy of Allah that thou dost deal gently with them. Wert thou severe or harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about thee: so pass over (Their faults), and ask for (Allah's) forgiveness for them; and consult them in affairs (of moment). Then, when thou hast Taken a decision put thy trust in Allah. For Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him).

Asad writes,

Lit., "with them" – i.e., with those of his followers who had failed in their duty before and during the disaster at Uhud. According to all available accounts, the Prophet did not even reproach any of them for what they had done.

This injunction, implying government by consent and council, must be regarded as one of the fundamental clauses of all Qur'anic legislation relating to statecraft. The pronoun "them" relates to the believers, that is, to the whole community; while the word *al-amr* occurring in this context – as well as in the much earlier-revealed phrase *amruhum shura baynahum* in 42:38 – denotes all affairs of public concern, including state administration. All authorities agree in that the above ordinance, although addressed in the first instance to the Prophet, is binding on all Muslims and for all times. (For its wider implications see *State and Government in Islam*, pp. 44 ff.) Some Muslim scholars conclude from the wording of this ordinance that the leader of the community, although obliged to take counsel, is nevertheless free to accept or to reject it; but the arbitrariness of this conclusion becomes obvious as soon as we recall that even the Prophet considered himself bound by the decisions of his council (see note 90 above). Moreover, when he was asked – according to a Tradition on the authority of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib – to explain the implications of the

word 'azm (“deciding upon a course of action”) which occurs in the above verse, the Prophet replied, “[It means] taking counsel with knowledgeable people (ahl ar-ra’y) and thereupon following them [therein]” (see Ibn Kathir’s commentary on this verse).

References:

Asad, Muhammad (1980). The Message of the Quran. <https://islamiconlineibrary.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Message-of- Quran.pdf>

40:29 Pharaoh's Remark

“O my People! Yours is the dominion this day: Ye have the upper hand in the land: but who will help us from the Punishment of Allah, should it befall us?” Pharaoh said: “I but point out to you that which I see (myself); Nor do I guide you but to the Path of Right!”

’Do not be puffed up with arrogance because the power is in your hands at present! Do you deserve it? Will it last? If you are sinning and drawing upon yourselves Allah’s Punishment, is there anything that can shield you from it?’

Pharaoh’s egotism and arrogance come out. ’I can see and understand everything. As I see things, so do I direct you. The Path which I see must be right, and you must follow it.’

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 40 verse 29). [1]Quran Arabic with English Translation & Commentary (Tafsir) by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Free Download (quran4u.com)

44:37 The People of Tubba

What! Are they better than the people of Tubba and those who were before them? We destroyed them because they were guilty of sin.

Tubba' was the title given to a succession of Ḥimyārī kings who ruled for centuries over southern Arabia and were defeated by the Abyssinians in the fourth century AD. Some understand Tubba' to be the title that the people of Sheba, who were in Yemen (see 34:15–19), gave their kings (IK). In 50:14 the people of Tubba' are mentioned as among those who denied God's messengers and the Resurrection. According to some, Tubba' refers to a righteous king who had called his people to God, but they denied him (JJ on 50:14). Some debate whether this Tubba' to whom reference is made in the Quran was a prophet, since the Prophet is reported to have said, "I know not whether Tubba' was a prophet" (Aj, Bḍ, IK, Q). Although the people of Tubba' were stronger than the Quraysh, they were destroyed for their disbelief (JJ). In this sense, the reference to them is similar to verses that speak of previous generations or "towns" that were destroyed for their wrongdoing, despite being stronger in their earthly provision and material situation than were the Quraysh of Makkah; see 6:6; 7:4; 17:17; 19:74, 98; 21:11; 22:45; 28:58; 38:3; 47:13; 50:36

References:

Nasr, Hossein (2015). Study Quran. <https://islamiconlineibrary.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/TheStudyQuranANewTranslationAndCommentaryBySeyyedHosseinNasr.pdf>

48:1 The Manifest Victory

Verily We have granted thee a manifest Victory:

Surah Al-Fath (The Victory) Preliminary Remarks

According to the consensus of scholarly opinion of Sahabah (Companions of the Holy Prophet #2), Tabi'in (Pupils of sahabah) and the leading authorities on Qur'anic commentary, the Surah was revealed when, after signing the Treaty of Hudaibiyah, the Holy Prophet was on his way back to Madinah, in the 6th year of Hijrah in the month of Dhul Qa'dah. In other words, the Holy Prophet with a party of his Companions set out for Makkah with the intention of performing the 'Umrah. When he approached the sanctuary of Makkah he halted at a place called Hudaibiyah.

The Quraish, however, debarred his entry into Makkah. Later they were willing to compromise that he must go back home that year and make up for the missed 'Umrah the following year. Many companions, especially Sayyidna 'Umar $\frac{4}{100}$, were greatly upset but the Holy Prophet accepted it under Divine direction because he felt that this would pave the way to Muslim success. The details are set out later in the Surah, When the Holy Prophet put off his Ihram, this Surah was revealed on his return journey from Hudaibiyah in which it is pointed out that his vision is true which will most certainly be fulfilled at the appropriate time.

But this is not the right time for it. It will happen after the conquest of Makkah. The Treaty of Hudaibiyah in this Surah is described as "an open victory" because this Treaty was in fact the forerunner of the conquest of Makkah. Sayyidna 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud $\frac{4}{100}$ and some other Companions say "you think the conquest of Makkah is 'Victory'" but we regard "The very Treaty of Hudaibiyah as the real 'Victory'". Likewise Sayyidna Jabir $\frac{1}{100}$ says "We think the Treaty of Hudaibiyah is 'Victory'". Bara' Ibn 'Azib says "You think 'Victory' refers to the conquest of Makkah.

No doubt, it does, but we think the Pledge of Ridwan on the occasion of Hudaibiyah is the real 'Victory' where the Companions [some 1400] were asked by the Holy Prophet under an acacia tree to declare on solemn oath that they would stand by him at all costs and would fight under his banner to the bitter end. The Pledge of Jihad is referred to later on in this Surah. (Ibn Kathir) As mentioned earlier, this Surah was revealed on the occasion of Hudaibiyah, and since some parts of this incident are referred to in this Surah, it seems pertinent to first give details of this incident. Tafsir Ibn Kathir elaborates on the event and gives many small details. Tafsir Mazhari develops it even more elaborately. He has, on this occasion, written about fourteen pages, narrating the story from the beginning to the end with reference to authentic collections of Hadith. The narrative comprises many miracles, pieces of advice, and educational, religious and political points of wisdom. We intend to give the details of those parts of the narrative which are referred to in the Surah itself, or are profoundly relevant to the Surah, so that it may facilitate the understanding of those verses which are related to the incident. The details given below are mainly adopted from Tafsir Mazhari, and reference is made to other commentaries from where other details are taken.

The Event of Hudaibiyah:

Hudaibiyah is a plain situated outside Makkah on the way to Jeddah which is very close to the boundaries of Haram. It is now called Shumaisiyy. This is the site where the incident took place.

Part [1]: The Prophet's Vision

It is reported by Ibn Jarir, 'Abd Ibn Humaid, Baihaqi, and others that the Holy Prophet (S) saw in a dream in Madinah that he had gone to Makkah with his Companions, entered it peacefully and performed the 'Umrah (shorter pilgrimage). He and his Companions put off their pilgrim-garb and, according to the rule, some had their

heads shaven and others had their hair cut short. The Holy Prophet Me then entered the House of Allah, and the key of the House fell into his hand. This part of the event is referred to later on in this Surah [48:27]. The dream of the Prophets (AS) is not a mere dream or fiction. It is a Divine revelation, acting upon which is necessary. Therefore, this vision of the Holy Prophet 4 was not merely a dream, but a Divine inspiration which he had to strictly obey and follow. However, no time or date was specified for this. In fact, this vision was to be fulfilled at the time of the conquest of Makkah. But when the Holy Prophet Ae narrated this vision to his companions, they in their enthusiasm to visit Makkah and perform the tawaf (circumambulation) of the House, started preparations forthwith.

When a party of the Companions was in full readiness to depart, the Holy Prophet we too made up his mind to accomplish his vision, since no time or date was specified, it is possible, he thought, that this purpose could be achieved instantly (Bayan-ul-Qur'an, citing from RUh- ul-Ma'ani).

Part [2]: The Prophet ue Invites his Companions and Bedouins to Join him: Some refused

It is reported on the authority of Ibn Sa'd and others that when the Holy Prophet te and his Companions made up their mind to perform 'umrah, the Holy Prophet te had the apprehension that the pagans of Makkah might hinder them from performing 'umrah, and it was possible also that an armed clash might ensue. Therefore, he invited people from the neighbouring villages to join him for the pilgrimage. Many of the village bedouins refused to join him claiming that Muhammad we and his Companions wanted to push them into the jaws of death. They said that Muhammad and his Companions wanted to get them into an armed clash with Makkans who were superior to them in terms of weapons and power, They felt that as a result of this superiority, the Muslims would not come back alive (Mazhari).

Part [3]: Setting out for Makkah

According to the versions of Imam Ahmad, Bukhari, Abi' Dawud,

Nasa'i and others the Holy Prophet before setting out for the journey, took a bath, put on his new clothes and mounted his camel Qaswa'. He was accompanied by his blessed wife "Umm Salamah. A large number of the Muhajirin, Ansar and the village folks was with him. This constituted, according to most versions, 1400 people altogether. No one doubted that Makkah will be conquered on that day on account of the Holy Prophet's 42 vision, whereas they did not have any weapons except swords. The Holy Prophet and his Companions set out for this journey on Monday at the beginning of Dhul-Qa'dah. He reached Dhul-Hulaifah and donned the pilgrim-robe with the intention of 'Umrah (Shortened from Mazhari). Part [4]: Preparing for Confrontation with Makkans

When the people of Makkah received news about the Prophet's journey to Makkah with a large number of his Companions, they gathered together, and expressed their concern that if Muhammad was allowed entry into Makkah, the entire Arabia would be under the impression that the Makkans were subdued by him, while several battles had been fought between them and Muhammad. As such, they were not willing to allow him entry into the city. Thus they dispatched an advance cavalry towards Kura'-ul-Ghamim under the command of Khalid Ibn Walid [who until then was not a Muslim] to intercept him. The neighboring villagers were also attached to the cavalry, and the tribe of Banu Thagif from Ta'if joined them as well. They pitched their tents in a place called Baldah. They pledged to debar the Holy Prophet from entering into Makkah and to declare war against him.

A Strange and Simple Network of Communication

The enemies set up a network of communication from Baldah to the place where the Holy Prophet we had reached. They placed a few men on the top of each mountain to observe the movement, activity and position of the Holy Prophet #2 and inform the people on the adjacent mountain in a loud voice, they in turn relayed the message to the people on the next mountain, they would then convey the information to the third mountain, and so on. In this way they communicated the details of the Holy Prophet's 5B activities to the people of Baldah within a few minutes.

The Informants of Holy Prophet (S)

The Holy Prophet ee dispatched Bishr Ibn Sufyan « & to Makkah in advance as a secret informer, so that he may secretly observe the activities and movements of the Quraish and keep him fully informed of their intentions and activities. When he returned from Makkah, he informed the Holy Prophet. de that the Makkans were preparing for an all-out war. The Holy Prophet de expressed his regret that several wars had already weakened the strength of Quraish, and yet they would not give up fighting. The Prophet #E said: "This was an ideal opportunity for them to leave me.and the other Arabs alone. If these Arabs had vanquished me, they would have accomplished their objective without any pain; and if I had vanquished them, one of two things could have happened – either they would have embraced Islam or if they intended to fight me they would have braced themselves to face me. But nobody knows what is wrong with them! By Him who has sent me with His commands, I shall never cease to fight them until my neck is separated from the rest of my body."

Part [5]: The Camel of the Holy Prophet Refuses to Move

After that the Holy Prophet ae gathered the people and delivered a sermon in which he consulted them whether they should start the fight against the enemies then and there, or press forward and make

forced entry into Makkah, and “if they debar us we shall fight them.” Sayyidna Abu Bakr and other companions said, ” You have come out on a peaceful mission with the intention of visiting the House of Allah, not with the belligerent intention of fighting. Therefore, adhere to your peaceful intention. However, if anyone bars us from entering Makkah, then we shall fight.” Sayyidna Miqdad Ibn Aswad stood up and said: “O Allah’s Messenger! We are not like the children of Israel who would say {5:24 } ‘So go, you and your Lord, and fight. As for us, we are sitting here’. We shall fight with you at all costs.” Having seen the Companions’ determination, Allah’s Messenger responded that they should press forward in the direction of Makkah in the name of Allah.

When the Holy Prophet approached the Holy City, and Khalid Ibn Walid and his cavalry noticed them moving forward in the direction of ghiblah, he arrayed his army into regiments and stood up there like adamantine walls. Allah’s Messenger appointed ‘Abbad Ibn Bishr as the commander of a unit that was arrayed in opposition to Khalid Ibn Walid. In the meanwhile it was time for Zuhr Salah,

Sayyidna Bilal called the adhan, and the Holy Prophet led the congregation in prayer. Khalid and his cavalry looked on. Later on Khalid Ibn Walid said: “We lost a golden opportunity to wipe them out whilst they were praying. It does not matter, wait for another time, because soon they will be praying again.” But in the meantime Jibra’l brought down the injunction of Salat-ul-Khawf. Having made Allah’s Messenger aware of their intentions, he was shown how the army should be divided into two groups in times of danger. Allah’s Messenger followed the direction of the Qur’an. Each group performed the prayer in alternation. (When one group prayed, it was guarded and protected by the armed regiment who remained on the alert for a possible attack by the enemy. It took its turn when the praying group had finished.) Part [6]: A Miracle at Hudaibiyah When Allah’s Messenger was nearing Hudaibiyah,

the forelegs of his she-camel (named Qaswa) slipped and it sat down. The Companions tried to urge it up, but in vain. The Companions thought that Qaswa was enraged, but Allah's Messenger said that it was no fault of Qaswa nor is it its usual habit to do this. In fact, it has been stopped by the same One who had blocked the men of elephant. [Probably Allah's Messenger by then had discerned that the time was not up for the fulfillment of his vision.] With this discernment, Allah's Messenger declared: "By Him in whose hand is Muhammad's life, today I shall accept all the demands of the Quraish in which the Symbols sanctified by Allah are held in full esteem." Then he called out the she-camel and it stood up. Allah's Messenger He moved away from the spot where Khalid Ibn Walid was staying, and stationed himself on the other side of Hudaibiyah where there was very little water. Khalid Ibn Walid and the people of Baldah had occupied the places where water was available in abundance. Here a miracle of Allah's Messenger # % shown by Allah Ta'ala. At this place there was a well in which very little water trickled. He rinsed his mouth in it, and got one of his arrows pitched therein. As soon as this happened, its water bubbled almost up to the brim of the well. People on the upper side of the well drew water and quenched their thirst.

Part [7]: Negotiation with the Deputations of the People of M ah

In this way all the Companions were satisfied and settled there, and Started negotiations with the people of Makkah through their deputations. First, Budail Ibn Warqa' [who later on embraced Islam] along with his companions paid a visit to Allah's Messenger te and informed him, as a well-wisher, that the entire Makkah had come out in full force to confront him. They have occupied all the water spots. "They will never allow you to enter into Makkah." He said. Allah's Messenger de replied, "We have not come to fight anyone. However, if they block us from performing 'umrah, we will fight". Then he repeated what he had said to his spy Bishr 4: "Several wars have weakened the Quraish. If they wish, a peace treaty could be

arranged for a specified period of time, so that they may peacefully prepare themselves. In the meantime they should leave us and the rest of the Arabs alone. If these Arabs vanquish me, they would have accomplished their objective without any pain; and if I vanquish them, and they started entering into the fold of Islam, then the Quraish will have two options: either they too will embrace Islam, or if they will intend to fight me, they will have braced themselves to face me. But if they refuse this, then I swear by Him who has sent me with His commands, I shall never cease to fight them until my neck is left separated from the rest of my body.” Budail, saying that he will convey the message to the Quraish leaders, went back. When he returned to the Quraish and communicated the Holy Prophet’s response, some of them did not want to even hear him, and were in a fit of war, while others, like ‘Urwah Ibn Mas‘id, the leader of his tribe, advised them to at least hear him. Then when Budail conveyed the message of the Holy Prophet ‘Urwah said to the leaders of Quraish that Muhammad’s suggestions were fair and satisfactory, and therefore, they should be accepted. He opted to negotiate and asked for their permission to confer with the Holy Prophet with the aim of reaching an agreement of peace. Thus the second person to pay a visit to the Holy Prophet in an attempt to negotiate was ‘Urwah who said to the Holy Prophet : “If you wipe out your own people, the Quraish, will it be good for you? Have you ever heard anyone destroying his own people?” Then there was a heated and protracted parleys between ‘Urwah and the Companions, and while this was going on, ‘Urwah observed that when the Holy Prophet performed his ablutions, his companions would not allow the water to fall on the ground but would rub it on their bodies and clothes. When the Holy Prophet spoke, they would lower their voices. ‘Urwah went back to the Quraish leaders, and described the whole scenario to them, adding that “I have been to the courts of the Caesar and Khosroes, and the Negus also, but by God, never have I seen any people so devoted to a king as are the Companions of Muhammad to him. He is suggesting a correct proposal, and I suggest that you accept it.” But the people replied that they could not accept it;

“Muhammad must go back this year, and may come again the following year.” When ‘Urwah’s suggestion was not accepted, he returned with his people. After him a person by the name of Jalis Ibn ‘Algamah, the leader of the bedouins, visited the Holy Prophet ae . He saw the Companions in pilgrim-robcs with sacrificial animals. He too returned and explained to his people that these people had come to perform their ‘Umrah in the House of Allah. “It is not proper in any way to debar them.” The people did not pay heed to his suggestion either. He too went away back with his deputation. A fourth person arrived to confer with the Holy Prophet S and persuade him to give up his intention to enter Makkah. But the Holy Prophet we repeated the same reply to this deputation that he had made to Budail and ‘Urwah. He went back to Quraish and communicated the Holy Prophet’s Me reply to them.

Part [8] : Sayyidna Uthman Despatched as a Special Envoy

Imam Baihagqi reports on the authority of ‘Urwah Ibn Zubair that when Allah’s Messenger ae settled in Hudaibiyah, it unnerved the Quraish. He decided to send an envoy with the message that he had not come to fight, but to perform ‘Umrah. Therefore, they should not block his way. He called upon Sayyidna ‘Umar 4 % for this task. He said, “Quraish are my implacable enemy, because they are fully aware of my ardent support for Islam, and there is not a single member of my tribe in Makkah that will support me. As a result, I will not be able to change their mind. I propose the name of ‘Uthman for this task. He is the most appropriate person who, because of his tribe, holds a special power and honour in the whole of Makkah.” Allah’s Messenger accepted the proposal and sent off Sayyidna ‘Uthman (RA) for the task. He also advised him to visit the socially and economically disabled Muslim men and women who were not able to migrate from Makkah and were suffering hardships. He was to console them that they should not be distressed. Soon, Allah willing, Makkah will be conquered and their difficulties will end. First, Sayyidna Uthman went to those people

who had gathered in Baldah to block the way of the Holy Prophet and confront him. He communicated to them the same message that was conveyed to them by Budail and ‘Urwah. They replied that they had heard the message and that it was not acceptable. Having received their reply, he attempted to get into Makkah. Aban Ibn Sa‘id [who later on embraced Islam] met him and welcomed him warmly. He took him into his refuge and allowed him to convey his message anywhere in Makkah without any fear of hindrance. Then he gave his mount to Sayyidna ‘Uthman which he rode and entered Makkah, because his tribe Banu Sa‘id was eminently powerful.

Sayyidna ‘Uthman (RA) met each one of the Quraish leaders, and conveyed the Holy Prophet’s (S) message: “We have not come to fight, but to perform ‘umrah. After completing the rites of pilgrimage we shall return home. Indeed, if the road is blocked, we shall fight. Quraish themselves have been debilitated by several wars. Therefore it would be to their advantage to leave us and other Arabs alone. Then we shall see who overpowers the other. If the Arabs overpower us, then their objective would be accomplished. If we overpower them, then too they will have a choice to fight at that stage. During this time they will have the opportunity to improve and preserve their strength.” But they rejected his proposal. Then ‘Uthman (RA) visited the helpless Muslims and conveyed to them the Holy Prophet’s message. This communication pleased them immensely, and they asked him to convey their salam to the Holy Prophet. Having communicated the Holy Prophet’s message, the Makkans allowed Sayyidna ‘Uthman “ to perform the tawaf of the House if he wished. But he refused saying he would not do that unless the Holy Prophet would have first performed it. ‘Uthman RA stayed in Makkah for three nights, and continued to invite the Quraish leaders to accept the Holy Prophet’s (S) message.

Part [9] : Tension between Quraish and Muslims: Seventy Makkans Captured

In the meanwhile Quraish selected fifty men and asked them to be on the look-out for the Holy Prophet. As soon as they find an opportunity, their task was to assassinate him. Whilst the men were on the look-out for the Holy Prophet, Muhammad Ibn Maslamah, the Holy Prophet's body-guard, captured them and brought them to the Holy Prophet. On the other hand, Sayyidna 'Uthman was already in Makkah and ten more Muslims joined him in the Holy City. When the Quraish heard that fifty of their men have been captured, they detained 'Uthman and other Muslims. A cavalry of Quraish marched towards the Muslim caravan and shot arrows and threw stones at them. One Companion – Ibn Zanim by name – was martyred. The Muslims captured ten of the Quraish horse-riders. In the meantime a rumour reached the Holy Prophet that 'Uthman has been assassinated.

Part [10] : The Pledge of Ridwan

Having received this rumour, the Holy Prophet gathered his Companions under an acacia tree and took a solemn pledge from them that they would fight the Quraish to the last breath of their lives. This pledge came to be known as bai'at-ur-Ridwan, which signified those lucky people who had taken the oath had obtained Allah's pleasure. This is referred to later on in the Surah. Authentic Prophetic Traditions speak eminently of the people who participated in this pledge. Since 'Uthman was on a mission to Makkah under the direction of the Holy Prophet he was absent at the time of the solemn pledge. So the Holy Prophet placed one of his own hands on the other hand of his and said, "This is 'Uthman's pledge." This illustrates the distinction of Sayyidna 'Uthman.

Part [11]: Peace Treaty at Hudaibiyah

A distinct event or episode of the scenario of Hudaibiyah is that through, the grace of Allah, the Quraish were overawed and subdued by the Muslims. As a result, they themselves were then willing to

make peace. Thus they sent three of their men as representatives, namely,

Suhail Ibn ‘Amr, Huwaitib Ibn ‘Abdul ‘Uzza and Mikraz Ibn Hafis. (Later the first two of the representatives embraced Islam.) They apologised to the Holy Prophet on behalf of their people. Suhail Ibn ‘Amr said to the Holy Prophet “The report that ‘Uthman and his companions have been killed is absolutely false. They are being sent to you. Set free our men you have captured.” The Holy Prophet set them free. It is recorded in Musnad of Ahmad and Sahih of Muslim on the authority of Sayyidna Anas that verse 24 of this Surah refers to this episode. Then Suhail and his deputation went to Quraish and described to them the amazing scene of bat‘at-ur-Ridwan where the sahabah showed their readiness to lay down their lives and willingness to make the supreme sacrifice. The opinion-makers of Quraish suggested that nothing would be better for them than they would compromise on Muslims’ retiring that year without entering Makkah, but the Holy Prophet and his Companions may visit Makkah the following year only for three days to perform ‘Umrah. On that occasion they may slaughter the sacrificial animals and put off their pilgrim-ropes, otherwise the impression created would be that attempts were made to block the Holy Prophet’s way, but he forced his entry into Makkah, which would be tantamount to a humiliating defeat for them. When Suhail arrived again with message, the Holy Prophet said, “It seems that Quraish has decided to make peace. That is why they have sent Suhail again.” The Holy Prophet sat up cross- legged. Two of his Companions, ‘Abbad Ibn Bishr and Salamah, armed themselves with weapons and stood on his sides to guard him. Suhail came, whilst sitting courteously in front of him, delivered the message of Quraish. The Companions generally were not happy to put off the pilgrim-garb without performing ‘Umrah. They spoke harshly to Suhail – the voices sometimes became loud and at other times low. ‘Abbad Ibn Bishr reprimanded Suhail for raising his voice in the presence of the Holy Prophet S. After heated and protracted parleys, the Holy Prophet

agreed to enter into Peace Treaty. Suhail wanted to have the Peace Treaty reduced to writing. The Holy Prophet S called Sayyidna ‘Ali and dictated to him to write the words, bismil- lahir-rahmanir-rahim. Suhail objected to this – saying that the words rahman and rahim do not exist in our idiom. He said they should write the words that used to be written before, that is, cai Kul bismika- allahumma. The Holy Prophet agreed to this and asked Sayyidna ‘Ali 4 to erase the mez! el abi bismil-lahir- rahmanir-rahim and insert pal Sei bismika- allahumma. Then the Holy Prophet ae asked Sayyidna ‘Ali to write “This is the Peace Treaty into which Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah entered.”

Suhail objected to this as well, and argued that they did not recognise him as the ‘Messenger of Allah’. If they had, they would never have prevented him from visiting Allah’s House. There should be no such expression in the Treaty that would be in defiance of any party’s belief system. Therefore, it should read Muhammad, the son of ‘Abdullah. The Messenger of Allah ee granted this and dictated to Sayyidna ‘Ali to erase the words, ‘the Messenger of Allah’ and replace it with ‘the Son of ‘Abdullah.’ Sayyidna ‘Ali , despite being an embodiment of obedience, said he could not erase the attributive title rasu/ [Messenger] of Allah from his name.

Sayyidna ‘Usaid Ibn Hudair and Sa’d Ibn ‘Ubadah (RA) withheld Sayyidna ‘Ali’s hand so that he might not rub the attributive title out. He should not write any appellation with his name other than the rasul [Messenger] of Allah. “If they do not accept it, then the sword will decide the matter” they said. Voices arose all around. Despite the fact that the Messenger of Allah was an Ummi who had never written before, took the document in his hand and wrote with his own pen the following preamble:

“This is the Treaty into which Muhammad the Son of ‘Abdullah and Suhail Ibn ‘Amr entered. They agree that war shall be suspended for ten years, during which time people would be able to live

peacefully and no party would indulge in any hostility against the other.” The Messenger of Allah dee wanted that the treaty should have a clause to the effect that the Muslims would not be hindered from performing tawaf that year, but Suhail swore by God to say that it was not possible. The Messenger of Allah 8 conceded that to him. Suhail then inserted his own clause: if a Makkan [even if he is a believer] were to go over to Muhammad ee without his guardian’s permission, he shall be sent back to his guardian; but should any of Muhammad’s followers return to the Quraish, he shall not be sent back. At this, the common Muslims raised their voices and exclaimed that it was not tolerable to send one of their own Muslim brethren back to the pagans. However, the Messenger of Allah we accepted this clause as well, and explained that if any of the believers is gone over to the Quraish of his own accord, Allah has distanced him from the Muslims, and they should not bother about him. If any of their men comes over to the Muslims and they send him back to the pagans, Allah will pave the way for him. Sayyidna Bara’ (RA) summarises that the Treaty contained three clauses: [1] If anyone during that period from among the Quraish went over to the Holy Prophet we without his guardian’s permission, he would return him to them; [2] if a Companion of the Holy Prophet SE came over to the Quraish, they would not return him; and [3] the Holy Prophet ee together with his men, should retire that year, and visit Makkah the following year only for three days to perform ‘Umrah, but they shall carry no arms save sheathed swords. Towards the end of the Treaty, the concluding statement was appended: “This Agreement between the people of Makkah and the Messenger of Allah ue is a guarded document which none shall violate. Whosoever would like to join the Holy Prophet ME and make himself a party to the Treaty from his side, shall have the liberty to do so; and likewise whosoever would like to join the Quraish and make himself a party to the Treaty from their side, shall have the liberty to do so.

As soon as this proclamation was made, Banu Khuza'ah jumped at the opportunity, and entered into alliance with the Holy Prophet a, but Banu Bakr, on the other hand, sided with the Quraish and allied themselves with them.

Terms and Provisions of the Treaty Upset the Companions

The Muslims were noticeably perturbed over the terms of the Treaty that were apparently tilted against their interests. Sayyidna 'Umar exclaimed in extreme grief and indignation: "O Messenger of Allah! are you not the True Prophet of Allah?" He replied: "Why not!" Then Sayyidna 'Umar asked: "Are we not on the right path and they on the wrong?" He replied: "Why not!" Sayyidna 'Umar asked: "Is it not a fact that our martyrs are in the Paradise and their slain ones in the Fire?" He replied: "Why not!" Sayyidna 'Umar then said: "Why should we submit to this humiliation and return without observing 'Umrah or Allah decides the matter through war?" The Messenger of Allah replied: "I am the servant of Allah and His Messenger. I can never violate His command. He will never destroy me. He is my Helper. Sayyidna 'Umar posed more questions to the Prophet . 'O Messenger of Allah! did you not promise us that we would visit Allah's House and perform tawaf?" He replied: "Yes, indeed, I did promise, but did I promise that it will happen this year?" Sayyidna 'Umar replied: "No, you did not promise that." The Messenger of Allah responded: "The event will definitely happen as I promised. You will visit the House and perform the tawaf."

Sayyidna 'Umar Ibn Khattab kept quiet, but his grief and indignation did not subside. After the Messenger of Allah he went to Sayyidna Abu Bakr and repeated his questions to him as he had posed them to the Holy Prophet He replied that the Prophet is the servant of Allah and His Messenger. He is not at liberty to violdte any Divine decree.

Allah is his Helper. Therefore, hold on to his stirrup until the last breath of your life. By Allah! he is on the path of Truth. In short, Sayyidna ‘Umar (RA) was in intense grief and pain because of the seemingly unfavourable terms and provisions of the Treaty. In fact, he is reported to have said: “I never gave way to doubt since I embraced Islam, but on this occasion I could not avoid it.” (Transmitted by Bukhari) Sayyidna Abt ‘Ubaidah allayed his misgivings and suggested to seek refuge with Allah from the evils of Shaitan. Sayyidna ‘Umar (RA) said: “I seek refuge in Allah from the evils of the Shaitan.” He says that since he realised his misgivings, he continued to observe voluntary prayers, keep voluntary fasts, emancipate slaves and give alms, so that Allah may pardon his error.

The Case of Abu Jandal: The Prophet’s Commitment to the Treaty

The terms and provisions of the Treaty had just been concluded, and Companions were still grieving over them. Suhail Ibn ‘Amr was the chief negotiator on behalf of Quraish. Abu Jandal was Suhail’s son. He embraced Islam and was imprisoned by his father. He used to persecute him harshly; fetters were put about his ankles; and there were signs of violence on his body. He could not bear the persecution, so somehow he managed to escape to the Holy Prophet ie and sought asylum. Some of the Muslims went forward and granted him the asylum. Suhail yelled out: “This is the first instance of the violation of a proviso of the Treaty. If he is not returned, I shall never accept any of the other provisions in the document”. The Holy Prophet we had already entered into the Treaty and was bound by its terms and provisions, therefore he called Abu Jandal and asked him to be patient for a little while longer. Soon Allah will pave the way for him and other helpless Muslims, who are detained in Makkah, to live in easier circumstances and in a peaceful atmosphere. This case of Abu Jandai really rubbed salt into the wound or added fuel to the fire. The Companions were sure that

Makkah will be conquered instantaneously, but when they experienced the apparently unfavourable situation, their grief and disappointment knew no bounds. They were on the brink of disaster and ruination. However, the Treaty was concluded, and on behalf of the Muslims Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Abdur-Rahman Ibn ‘Awf, ‘Abdullah Ibn Suhail Ibn ‘Umar, Sa’d Ibn Abi Waqaas, Muhammad Ibn Maslamah, ‘Ali Ibn Abi Talib and others cater had appended their signatures. Likewise on behalf of the idolaters, Suhail and a few others appended their signatures.

Putting Off the Pilgrim-Garb and Slaughtering the Sacrificial Animals

When the document was finalised , the Holy Prophet (S) addressed the Companions, and asked them to slaughter their sacrificial animals in that very place, shave their heads and put off the pilgrim-robles, but they were so overwhelmed by grief that no one moved from his position to comply. This depressed the Holy Prophet , and he went up to his blessed wife Umm Salamah , and expressed his grief to her. She gave him the most apt advice, saying: “Do not reprimand them at this time, because they are acutely grieved by the terms of the Treaty and by returning without observing ‘Umrah. Call the barber in the presence of all, and get your own head shaved, put off your pilgrim-garb and slaughter your own camel.” He followed her advice. When the Companions saw this, they followed suit. They started shaving each other’s head, slaughtered their animals and put off their pilgrim-robles. The Holy Prophet earnestly supplicated for all.

The Holy Prophet stayed on the plain of Hudaibiyah for nineteen days and, according to other versions, twenty days. He then started his return journey. With his Companions he first went to Marr Zahran, and then arrived in ‘Usfan. When they reached here, their provisions were depleted: very little food and water had been left for them. The Holy Prophet ee spread a dining-sheet and asked

everyone to put the little they had on the sheet. In this way the leftovers were collected on the sheet. There were 1400 people: they all sat around the sheet, the

Holy Prophet supplicated and asked them to eat. The noble Companions report that 1400 people ate to the full and in addition they filled their bowls – yet nothing had diminished. This was the Holy Prophet’s second miracle that appeared on this plain. The Holy Prophet Me, seeing this, was highly delighted.

The Noble Companions’ Strength of Faith and Obedience of the Holy Prophet (S) Tested Once Again

It was noticed in the foregoing sections that the Companions were extremely unhappy at the terms and provisions of the Treaty. They found it even more difficult and painful to return without performing ‘Umrah or fighting a war. It was their strength of faith that despite all odds and the awkward situation; they persisted in their faith in and obedience of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. On his way back from Hudaibiyah, at Kura’-ul-Ghamim Surah Al-Fath was revealed which the Prophet ﷺ recited to the blessed Companions. Despite the terms and provisions of the Treaty and returning home without ‘Umrah wounding their hearts, this Surah calls the trip “a manifest Victory”. Sayyidna ‘Umar 4 % could hardly contain himself and inquired: “Messenger of Allah! is this ‘victory’?” He replied: “By Him in whose Hand is my life, this is indeed ‘a manifest Victory’!” The noble Companions submitted to him and thus were assured that it was “a manifest Victory”.

The Effects and Advantages of the Treaty

One immediate effect of this Treaty was that the misplaced obstinacy of Quraish and their followers became manifest, and a schism arose among themselves, and they were divided into different groups as a result of differences in thinking and attitudes. Budail Ibn Warqa’ separated himself with his comrades from the

Quraish. Following his example, ‘Urwah Ibn Mas‘ud separated with his group. Secondly, the Quraish of Makkah were highly impressed by the unparalleled self-sacrifice of the noble Companions. They were also profoundly touched by the unwavering obedience of, and love and reverence for, the Holy Prophet. This inclined them to make peace. This was an ideal opportunity for them to wipe out the Muslims, because they were at home with all its conveniences, and the Muslims were on a journey with all its inconveniences. The Quraish had captured all the water spots, whereas the Muslims had to occupy waterless spots – lacking in foodstuffs. They were in full force, whereas the Muslims were ill-equipped in weaponry. Allah infused terror into their hearts. Many members of their group had the opportunity to meet and mingle with the Holy Prophet, as a result the cheerfulness of Islamic faith was infused into their hearts. Later on they embraced it. Thirdly, the Peace Treaty made the road safe and secure. The way was opened for the Holy Prophet and the blessed Companions to call the people towards Islam. Arab delegations visited the Holy Prophet. The blessed Companions, together with the Holy Prophet, spread Islam rapidly in every nook and corner. Letters were sent to the rulers of the world – inviting them to the call of Islam. Some of the prominent rulers were impressed. On the occasion of Hudaibiyah, there were not more than 1500 Muslims with him, despite the Holy Prophet’s general invitation for all Muslims to join him to observe ‘Umrah. But after the Treaty, people entered Allah’s religion in throngs. In the year 7 Hijri Khaibar was conquered, and considerable amount of booty fell into the hands of the Muslims. This strengthened their material power. Hardly two years had passed during which time an unprecedented large number of people joined the Islamic camp.

When the Quraish violated the terms of the Treaty, the Holy Prophet secretly started preparing for the conquest of Makkah. The Quraish came to know about this, and were unnerved.

They sent Abu Sufyan to apologise and to negotiate the renewal of the Treaty, but the Holy Prophet refused. As a result of violation by the Quraish of the terms of the Treaty, the Holy Prophet within twenty-one months marched towards Makkah with ten thousand strong faithful soldiers of Allah. The Quraish were so overwhelmingly subdued that no fighting took place. There are differing views among the leading jurists whether Makkah was conquered by force of arms or by peaceful means. Nevertheless while in Makkah, the Holy Prophet had the following announcement made: “Whoever shuts his door shall be safe; whoever enters the mosque shall be safe; whoever enters Abu Sufyan’s house shall be safe.” This announcement made them concerned about saving themselves. This, on the part of the Holy Prophet Me was a master-stroke of political sagacity, strategy and ingenuity. As a result, no fighting took place. In sum, Makkah was conquered easily and very comfortably. Thus the Holy Prophet’s vision turned into a reality. The Companions fearlessly performed the tawaf of the House, then had their heads shaved or cut short, the Holy Prophet together with his Companions, then entered the Ka’bah where he received its keys. At that moment, the Holy Prophet we addressed Sayyidna ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattab (RA) in particular and other Companions in general, saying: “This is the incident that I have been narrating to you.” On the occasion of the Farewell Pilgrimage, the Holy Propheta repeated his address to Sayyidna ‘Umar Ibn Khattab (RA) who replied: “Undoubtedly there is no better and greater ‘Victory’ than the Treaty of Hudaibiyah.” Sayyidna

Abu Bakr (RA) believed from the very outset that the Treaty of Hudaibiyah was indeed the ‘Victory’, but people did not have the insight and foresight to discern the reality that was determined between Allah and His Messenger. Allah does not do anything because of people’s impatience, Instead, He does what His wisdom demands that everything should take place at the right moment. Therefore, ‘a manifest Victory’ in this Surah refers to the Treaty of

Hudaibiyah. These were the most important elements of the event of Hudaibiyah. This will facilitate the understanding of forthcoming verses of this Surah.

Analysis of Verses

(so that Allah may forgive you of your previous and subsequent faults...” – 48:2). If the particle “Jam” (translated above as ‘so that’) is taken to be for “ta’/il”, it indicates the purpose for which, and the reason why, such a manifest Victory is given to the Holy Prophet. It is mentioned in this verse that the victory was given to him to bless him with three different bounties. The first bounty is forgiveness of all his past and future shortcomings. Attention was drawn in Surah Muhammad that all Prophets are infallible. Wherever words like dhanb and oer ‘isyan (‘sin’ or ‘fault’) are attributed to them in the Qur’an, they are in relation to their lofty status. Works that are merely unadvisable contrary to the preferred practice are also referred to as dhanb in relation to the high status of the Prophets by way of reprimand. ‘Previous’ refers to shortcomings committed before conferment of prophethood, and ‘subsequent’ refers to shortcomings committed after the conferment of prophethood (Mazhari). The reason why this victory caused forgiveness for such shortcomings is that large masses of people entered the fold of Islam after it, and naturally the credit of spreading the call of Islam goes to the Holy Prophet for which he deserved the divine reward, and an increase in reward always entails forgiveness of the shortcomings.

(“...and may guide you to a straight path,” 48:2.)

This is the second bounty which resulted from the manifest victory. Here arises a question of the highest significance: The Holy Prophet was established in the right path from the very outset. Not only was he himself on the right path, but also a source of guidance for the entire world. His night-and-day preoccupation was to call the

people towards the Straight Path. So what then is the meaning of guidance to the straight path through manifest victory in the 6 % year of Hijrah? A detailed answer to this question can be found in Ma'ariful-Qur'an Vol 1/pp 71-81 – particularly look at the definitions and the three degrees of Hidayah [guidance].

Definition of Hidayah

Hidayah has been defined as to show the path or to lead someone gently and kindly towards his destination. The real destination of man is to attain Allah's pleasure and his proximity. The degrees of pleasure and proximity are unlimited. Having attained the first degree, man needs to go for the next one, then he should aim for the third one and so on to no end. Not any man, Muslim, saint or prophet is above the need of such spiritual and moral attainment.

Therefore, the instruction to pray for right guidance in the first Surah is not only to the Muslim Community, but also to the Holy Prophet we. He is to soar higher and higher in the path of spiritual and moral attainment. Allah has, in this manifest victory, raised the Holy Prophet we to the highest pinnacles of spiritual eminence which is described by the clause yahdiyaka.

(and so that Allah may support you with a mighty

support – 48:3.) This is the third bounty which follows naturally from the preceding circumstance of the manifest victory. The Holy Prophet has always had help from Allah, but on this occasion he received a very large share.

48:11 Those who lagged behind

The desert Arabs who lagged behind will say to thee: “We were engaged in (looking after) our flocks and herds, and our families: do thou then ask forgiveness for us.” They say with their tongues what is not in their hearts. Say: “Who then has any power at all (to intervene) on your behalf with Allah, if His Will is to give you some loss or to give you some profit? But Allah is well acquainted with all that ye do.

Reference in this passage is to those Bedouin tribes who were invited by Allah’s Messenger to join the party of 1400 Muslims who were marching to Hudaibiyah but on one pretext or another, they requested to be excused. This was narrated in part [I] of the story of Hudaibiyah. According to some versions, some of those people later repented and became sincere Muslims. References:

Shafi, Muhammad (2008). *Maariful Quran*. (Vol .8 surah 48 verse 11). English – *Maariful Quran* : Mufti Muhammad Shafi (r.a) : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive

If the Unbelievers should fight you, they would certainly turn their backs; then would they find neither protector nor helper. (Such has been) the practice (approved) of Allah already in the past: no change wilt thou find in the practice (approved) of Allah.

And it is He Who has restrained their hands from you and your hands from them in the midst of Makka, after that He gave you the victory over them. And Allah sees well all that ye do.

They are the ones who denied Revelation and hindered you from the Sacred Mosque and the sacrificial animals, detained from reaching their place of sacrifice. Had there not been believing men and believing women whom ye did not know that ye were trampling down and on whose account a crime would have accrued to you without (your) knowledge, (Allah would have allowed you to force your way, but He held back your hands) that He may admit to His Mercy whom He will. If they had been apart, We should certainly have punished the Unbelievers among them with a grievous Punishment.

While the Unbelievers got up in their hearts heat and cant – the heat and cant of ignorance,- Allah sent down His Tranquillity to his Messenger and to the Believers, and made them stick close to the command of self-restraint; and well were they entitled to it and worthy of it. And Allah has full knowledge of all things.

Commentary

(...in the valley of Makkah...) The Arabic word used here is

batn which means 'belly' and in relation to a city, it refers to its center. However, in the present context it is used for Hudaibiyah, because of its close proximity to Makkah. This supports the Hanafi

view that some parts of Hudaibiyah are included in the haram. The relevant details may be found in our commentary on the verse 2:196.

(and thus an embarrassing situation might have befallen you because of them unknowingly...48:25): According to some authorities on lexicology *ma'arrāh* connotes "sin"; according to others it means "harm"; and other authorities say it denotes "shame" or "embarrassment". In this context, apparently the last meaning appears to be right. There was a nucleus of Muslims in Makkah and if the fight had broken out, Muslim army would have unwittingly killed their own Muslim brethren in faith, thereby causing great injury to their own cause, and incurring obloquy and opprobrium for themselves.

Natural Safeguard of the Noble Companions against Mistakes Imam Qurtubi says that if a Muslim unknowingly kills another Muslim, it is not a sin or crime. It is, however, certainly a source of shame, embarrassment and regret. Since it is a *Qatl Khata'*, the laws of *diyāh* [blood-wit] will apply. Allah has protected the noble Companions against this as well. This shows the noble Companions are not infallible like the prophets of Allah, but Allah has in general terms safeguarded them in a natural way against mistakes which would be a cause of embarrassment, obloquy and opprobrium to them. (so that Allah may admit to His mercy whom He wills...48:25): It means that Allah infused patience in Muslims on this occasion to avoid war, because He knew that many people in future would embrace Islam on whom His mercy will be showered. Similarly the nucleus of Muslims who were detained in Makkah will also receive a large share of His mercy.

(And if they [the believing men and women] had been separate,

[from disbelievers], We would surely have punished those of them who disbelieved....48:25) Lexically, the word *tazayyul* denotes 'separation'. The sense is that if Muslims detained in

Makkah had been separate and distinct from the unbelievers, the Muslims coming from Madinah would have been able to save them in case of war, and Allah would have had the disbelievers punished then and there, because that was the demand of their attitude. However, the Makkan society at that time was a mixed society – helpless Muslim men and women and non-Muslims were living together.

The Muslims were indistinguishable from non-Muslims. If fighting had broken out, there would have been no way to save the Muslims. Therefore, Allah averted the war.

(and made them stick to the word of

piety, and they were very much entitled to it, and competent for it – 48:26)”. The construction *kalimat-at-taqwa* connotes the word of the pious persons, that is, the *Kalimah* of Tauhid and Risalah whereby a person declares his faith in Allah’s Oneness and in the Messengership of Sayyidna Muhammad ae It is named here as ‘word of piety’ because this word is the foundation of piety, righteousness and right conduct. The noble Companions here are said to have better right to it and more worthy of it, and thus Allah exposed and unmasked those people who accused them of infidelity and hypocrisy. Allah asserts that the noble Companions are more worthy of the word of Islam and better entitled to it, and thus made them adhere to it firmly, whereas the wretched evil-minded people refuse to acknowledge their value and entitlement.

The Prophet’s Dream: The Conquest of Makkah

Certainly Allah had shown to His Messenger the vision with truth: you shall most certainly enter the Sacred Mosque, if Allah pleases, in security, (some) having their heads shaved and (others) having their hair cut, you shall not fear, but He knows what you do not know, so He brought about a near victory before that. It is He Who has sent His Messenger with Guidance and the Religion of

Truth, to proclaim it over all religion: and enough is Allah for a Witness. Muhammad is the messenger of Allah; and those who are with him are strong against Un- believers, (but) compassionate amongst each other. Thou wilt see them bow and prostrate themselves (in prayer), seeking Grace from Allah and (His) Good Pleasure. On their faces are their marks, (being) the traces of their prostration. This is their similitude in the Taurat; and their similitude in the Gospel is: like a seed which sends forth its blade, then makes it strong; it then becomes thick, and it stands on its own stem, (filling) the sowers with wonder and delight. As a result, it fills the Unbelievers with rage at them. Allah has promised those among them who believe and do righteous deeds forgiveness, and a great Reward.

Recapitulation of the Event of Hudaibiyah

When the Peace Treaty of Hudaibiyah was completed, it was decided that the Muslims would not enter Makkah that year, and would return to Madinah without performing 'Umrah. They were highly upset at this, because the blessed Companions' determination to perform 'Umrah was on account of the Holy Prophet's a vision, which is also a kind of revelation. The fact that everything was apparently happening contrary to the vision, they could not understand how the Holy Prophet's ae journey had served its purpose. Some of the noble Companions, as a result, began to doubt, God forbid!, whether the vision was not fulfilled, The non-believers and hypocrites, on the other hand, taunted the believers that their Prophet's dream was not translated into reality. At this, the current set of verses was revealed (Transmitted by Baihaqi and others from Mujahid). (Indeed, Allah has made true to His Messenger the dream (shown) with truth...48:27). Sidq [truth] is, lexically, the antonym of kidhb [lie or falsehood]. Both these words are used for statements. If a statement is conformable to existing fact or reality, it is sidq. If it lacks accord with fact or reality, it is kidhb.

Sometimes this word is used in relation to actions. In that case the word connotes the realization of an action, as for instance in [33:23], (Among the believers are men who were true to their covenant with Allah;...). In this case the word *sidg* takes two grammatical objects, as in this verse the first object of the verb *sadaga* is *rasulahu* and its second object is *ru'ya*. The verse says that Allah has made true the dream. Here the event that was to take place in future has been expressed in the past perfect tense because of its certainty of occurrence. A reinforcing context that this event is definitely going to take place in future is expressed in energetic aorist thus: *pas inn* is "You will most definitely enter the Sacred Mosque." (The construction under analysis *la-tadkhulu-nna* is made up of the following constituents: The corroborative *Ja* is prefixed to the aorist denoting "Certainly" the doubled energetic or corroborative *nun* reinforcing the sense of "most definitely" appended as a suffix to the future tense *tadkAulu* "you shall most definitely enter"). That is to say, the vision you had seen that you we entered the sacred Mosque will most definitely happen. It will not pappen this year. It will happen at a future date. The date had not been cified in the dream. The blessed Companions in their enthusiasm made mp their mind to set out for the journey that very year, and the Holy 'Prophet concurred with their determination. There was much Divine "gisdom in it which became manifest at the time of the Treaty of Hudaibiyah and served many useful purposes to which reference is gready made.

For example, when Sayyidna 'Umar questioned the whole situation and expressed his doubt, Sayyidna Abu Bakr Be allayed "his suspicions and misgivings. He said no particular date and year was

specified in the Holy Prophet's vision. If it did not happen now, it does not matter; it will happen at some other time (Qurtubi). Importance of *insha-allah* for the Performance of Future Works

In this verse Allah promises the Muslims that they will most definitely enter the sacred precincts of Makkah at a future time, and in making His promise He employed the phrase *alīi glad! insha-allan* (If Allah wills or God willing). Allah being fully aware of His Will, there was no need for Him to have used the phrase, yet He used it (Qurtubi). This has been done for the purpose of teaching the Messenger and the people the importance of *insha-allah*. (Qurtubi)

(your heads shaved, your hair cut short...

48:27). It is recorded in Bukhari that when ‘Umrah that was missed in the sixth year of Hijrah was performed in Dhul Qa‘dah of the following year (7 .H.] and came to be known in history as ‘Umrat-ul-Qada’, Sayyidna Mu‘awiyah (RA) says he trimmed the blessed hair of the Holy Prophet with a pair of scissors. This incident took place in ‘Umrat-ul-Qada’, not in *hajja-tul-wada’* [farewell pilgrimage] because on the latter occasion he had his head shaved (Qurtubi). (So He knew what you did not know...48:27). It was within Allah’s power to have allowed the Muslims to enter the sacred Mosque and perform their ‘Umrah that very year. However, there was great wisdom in deferring it until the following year which Allah only knew and the Muslims generally did not know. Among these benefits was the conquest of Khaibar which Allah had willed must be achieved first, so that the Muslims may become a powerful force in terms of material resources. This would make it possible for them to perform their ‘Umrah peacefully and with tranquility.

Thus the Qur’an says: (and He assigned before that a well-nigh victory.) [27]” *dhalika* (before that) in this context stands for, that is to say, before the fulfilment of this vision, the Muslims must achieve the conquest of Khaibar which is near at hand. Some scholars have expressed the view that [nigh victory] refers to the Peace Treaty of Hudaibiyah itself, because that opened the gate for the victory of Makkah and all subsequent victories. Eventually, all the noble Companions acknowledged the Treaty to be the greatest of all

victories, The meaning of the verse would be: you did not know what wisdom and good lay hidden in your determination to march, then your apparent failure to accomplish it, and eventually in reaching a peace settlement the terms of which seemed to be hurtful to your self-respect but Allah was fully acquainted with it. He had ordained that before the Holy Prophet's vision should manifest itself, you might be blessed with another victory in the form of the Peace Treaty of Hudaibiyah – a victory near at hand. As a result of this victory, it was seen by all that while on the occasion of Hudaibiyah the noble Companions did not number more than 1500, later they increased in number to about 10000 (Qurtubi).

(He is the One who has sent His Messenger with Guidance and the religion of truth, so that He makes it prevail over all religions...48:28). In the preceding verses, promises were made about conquests and spoils of war; reference was made to the special merits of the participants of Hudaibiyah and general merits of all the noble Companions; and glad tidings were given to them. Now at the conclusion of the Surah all these themes are summarized and emphasized. Because these blessings were showered and the glad tidings were given as a result of accepting and obeying the Holy Prophet Me the verse lays further stress on strengthening the acceptance and obedience of the Holy Prophet. It also denounces those who reject the messengership of the Holy Prophet He and allays suspicions of those Muslims who were dissatisfied with the terms and provisions of the Treaty of Hudaibiyah. The verse in addition confirms the messengership of the Holy Prophet and, giving glad tidings, makes a very bold prophecy to the effect that not only would Islam prevail in Arabia but would also eventually triumph over all other religions. (Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah...48:29).

The general style of the Qur'an is that, instead of referring to the Holy Prophet by his name, he is normally called by one or another of his characteristic or attributive names especially in vocative

cases, as for example, ya ayyuhan-nabiyyu, ya ayyuhar-rasiulu, yaayyuhah- muzzammilu and so on, unlike other prophets who are addressed by their personal names, as for instance, ya ibrahimu, ya musa, ya ‘isa. The Holy Prophet is addressed four times only in the entire Qur’an by his personal name Muhammad. This is done only where there is a special reason for it. Here the reason is that when at Hudaibiyah, the Peace Treaty was being written, the unbelievers had objected to the use of the characteristic or attributive name [rasulul-lah] with the personal name of the Messenger of Allah. The pagan Quraish wiped off Muhammad rasul-ul-lah, and insisted that it be replaced with Muhammad Ibn ‘Abdullah. By the command of Allah, the Messenger accepted it. However, Allah on this occasion, in the Qur’an, especially attached the characteristic phrase rasulul-lah [Messenger of Allah] to his personal name [Muhammad] and thus entrenched it permanently in His Last Book, the Holy Qur’an, so that it will be written and recited like that until the Judgement Day.

and those who are with him are hard against the disbelievers, compassionate among themselves; you will see them bowing down in ruku’, prostrating in sajdah, seeking bounty from Allah and (His) good pleasure;.... 48:29).

From this point onwards the merits of the noble Companions of the Holy Prophet are described. Although the immediate addressees of the verse are the noble participants of Hudaibiyah and bai‘at-ur-Ridwan. But on account of the generality of words, all blessed Companions are included in the description, because a sahabi or Companion is one who embraced Islam, saw the Holy Prophet and accompanied him, even for a short time.

The Qualities, Merits and Special Marks of the Noble Companions

Allah Ta'ala, on this occasion, describes the messengership of the Holy Prophet te and makes a prophecy to the effect that not only would Islam prevail in Arabia, but would also eventually triumph over all other religions. In addition, He has described the qualities, the merits and the special marks of the noble Companions :. The severe test which they had to undergo at the time of the Treaty of Hudaibiyah has also been described. The passage describes that they never wavered from the path of rectitude despite the fact that the Treaty was against their firm belief and heart-felt emotions, and despite the fact that they could not enter the sacred Mosque, and had to return without performing 'Umrah. In these unfavourable circumstances, they displayed an unusual obedience of the Holy Prophet Me and their strength of faith. The blessed Companions have been described here fully, because the Holy Prophet we is the Final Messenger and there shall be no prophet or messenger after him. He left behind him the Book of Allah and the paradigm of noble Companions to follow. Specific injunctions have been laid down to emulate their pattern of life. Therefore, the Qur'an too describes the merits of the blessed Companions, and encourages and emphasizes to follow their model of life.

The first quality of the Companions mentioned here is that they are hard against the unbelievers, and merciful to one another. It was proven time and again that they were harsh against the unbelievers. They sacrificed all their ethnic and tribal relations for the sake of Islam. This was especially demonstrated on the occasion of Hudaibiyah. The tenderness of the blessed Companions was especially demonstrated when Islamic brotherhood [mu'Gkhat] was created between muhajirs [emigrants from Makkah] and ansar (helpers from Madinah]. Ansar invited the muhajirin to share with them in their holdings. The Qur'an describes this quality of the blessed Companions first, because nothing they practiced – whether friendship or enmity, love or hatred – was for any selfish reasons. Everything was for the sake of Allah and His Messenger – and this

is the highest degree of perfect faith. In a Hadith recorded by Bukhari, the Holy Prophet we has said,

“He who loves for the sake of Allah and hates for the sake of Allah has attained the highest degree of faith.”

This means that anyone who has subjugated his friendship, love, hatred and enmity under the Will of Allah has perfected his faith. This clarifies another point: The Companions’ being hard against the unbelievers does not imply that they were never tender towards any non-believer. In fact it means that where Allah and His Messenger enjoins them to be hard against the non- believers, they would simply comply without taking into account the relations of kinship or friendship. As far as kind and equitable dealing with them is concerned, the Qur’an itself promulgates:

“Allah does not forbid you from those who did not fight you on account of faith, and did not expel you from your homes, that you do good to them, and deal justly with them.” (60:8).

There is a large number of incidents where Allah’s Messenger and the blessed Companions displayed their kindness and compassion to the helpless and needy unbelievers. Treating them with justice and equity is the general injunction of Islam. No activity flouting justice and equity is permissible even in the field of pitched battle.

The second quality of the blessed Companions is that they are generally preoccupied with bowing and prostrating. The first quality is the mark of their perfection in faith and the second quality is the mark of their perfection in deeds, because salah is the most meritorious of all the good deeds.

(their distinguishing feature is on their faces from the effect of sajdah (prostration)...48:29). That is to say, salah has become such a permanent routine of their life that the special effects of salah and

sajdah are evident on their faces. These distinguishing features do not necessarily refer to any physical sign on the forehead on account of constant prostration. This in fact refers to the light and brightness that is reflected naturally on the faces of the devout as a result of humility, meekness and gentleness of disposition. Particularly this is one of the effects that follow from offering tahajjud salah regularly. It is recorded in Ibn Majah on the authority of Syyidna Jabir that the Holy Prophet (S) has said, “He who offers his salah abundantly at night, his face looks good during the day.”

Hadrat Hasan Basri has said that the “features” in the verse refer to the light that the faces of those who pray will emit on the Day of Judgement.

(This is their description in the Torah; and their description in the Injil is: like a sown crop that brings forth its shoot, then makes it strong, then it grows thick and stands straight on its stem, looking good to the farmers, so that He may enrage the disbelievers through them. Allah has promised forgiveness and a huge reward to those of them who believe and do good deeds.... 48:29)

This part of the verse states the description of the noble Companions given above about the light of their prostration and prayers on their forehead is the same description as was given in the Torah for the Companions of the Holy Prophet ae And another parable of them is put in the Gospel [injil]: When a farmer sows a seed in his field, it grows over a period of time – especially so that it changes from its original form into a form which is at first weak like a thin needle, then it develops into branches getting stronger, larger and more complicated. Eventually when it is fully grown, it is the strongest of shrubs and becomes a tree. Likewise the Companions of the Holy Prophet in the beginning were very few. At one time, besides the Holy Prophet there were only three Muslims: Among men, n, Sayyidna Abu Bakr As-Siddiq ; among women, Sayyidah Khadijah . and among children, Sayyidna ‘Ali BD,

Gradually, but progressively, the strength of the Muslims continued to grow, so much so that the number of the noble Companions who performed the farewell pilgrimage with the Holy Prophet ﷺ is said to be about One hundred and fifty thousand (150,000). There are three possibilities in this verse: First, the grammatical pause be observed at fit-tawrah in which case it will mean that the previous likeness, that is, the light of the faces is described in the Torah. In this case, a grammatical pause would not be observed at fil-injil, but one should proceed without stopping, and it will mean that the parable of the noble Companions in the Gospel is like a field or tree which at the beginning is very weak but gradually it grows strong.

The second possibility is that the pause be observed at deny! i fil-injil rather than at 41, se ia fit-tawrah, in which case the meaning would be that the description of the light of their faces is found both in Torah and the Gospel, as here in the Qur'an. Then Ka-zar-'in "like a sown crop" may be treated as a separate parable. The third possibility is that the statement does not end at fit-tawrah nor at fil-injil. In this case dhalika, the demonstrative pronoun, would point to the next parable, and it would mean that the description of the

Companions is given in both the Torah and the Gospel "like a sown crop". If the Torah and the Gospel had been intact in their original form, we could have compared the parables as given in those books with those given here in the Qur'an and determined its exact meaning. However, the present-day Torah and the Gospel have been subjected to many alterations and distortions.

Therefore, its true import cannot be determined with any degree of certainty. Nevertheless, most commentators prefer the first possibility according to which the first description is found in the Torah and the second parable is found in the Gospel. Imam Baghawi says that this description of the noble Companions is found in the Gospel in the following way : At the beginning they will be few in number, then the number will grow and become strong. Qatadah

quotes from the Injil as follows: “Such a people will emerge who will grow like a crop; they will enjoin good works and forbid evil works” (Mazhari).

Despite changes in the present-day Torah and Gospel, the following prophecy is found:

“He said: The Lord came from Mount Sinai; and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them. Yea, he loved the people; all his saints are in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words.” [Deut. 33:2]

As pointed out earlier, at the time of the conquest of Makkah there were 10000 Companions who entered the City of Khalil Ibrahim (Makkah) with the embodiment of light [Prophet Muhammad (S)] whose advent was from the mount Paran (in which the Cave of Hira’ is situated). The expression “in his hand will be a fiery sacrosanct law [Shari‘ah]” probably refers to us “hard against the unbelievers”.

The expression “he will love his people” is understood to refer to *pate nee* “compassionate to one another”. The details are set out together with other references in a work *Izhar-ul-haq*, Vol. 3/ chap. 6: p.256. This book was written by Maulana Rahmatullah Kairanwi against the Priest Fonder . In this book, the parable of Injil is quoted as follows:

Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof. [Matthew 13:31-32]

The following passage is quoted from Mark 4:26 in Izhar-ul-haq, Vol 3 chap 6:p. 310:

And he said, so is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; And should sleep, rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come. (Mark 4: 27-29)

The expression “kingdom of heaven” on various occasions in the Gospel seems to refer to the Final Messenger. Allah knows best! (... that He may enrage the disbelievers through them...48:29). That is, Allah has characterized the blessed Companions by some noble qualities. He made them strong after being weak and multiplied them into large numbers after being small in numbers. Seeing the growth and expansion of Islam and Muslims, the unbelievers became furious and angry towards them, and envious of them, burning in the fire of jealousy. Abu ‘Urwah Zubairi says he was sitting in one of the sessions of Imam Malik when a person uttered a belittling statement against the blessed Companions. The Imam recited this entire verse. When he came to the clause “so that He may enrage the disbelievers through them. [29]”, he said this warning will apply to anyone who belittles the blessed Companions (Qurtubi). The Imam did not say that such a person would become kafir, however he said that the warning applies to such a person. It means that the conduct of such a person will be like that of unbelievers. (Allah has promised forgiveness and a huge reward to those of them who believe and do good deeds. ..48:29). The preposition *min* in the prepositional phrase *min-hum* is by consensus of Qur’anic scholarly opinion an explicative or *min lil-bayan* or *tabyin*. Therefore, it means that it is Allah’s promise to those Muslims who are selfless in faith and strong in character that He will forgive them and give them a great reward. The preposition *min*

serves to make clear and explains that all the blessed Companions – without any exception – believe and do deeds of righteousness. The second point this verse clarifies is that Allah has promised them all without any exception forgiveness and a mighty reward. *Min lil-bayan* or *tabyin* is frequently used in the Qur'an. For example, the command in [22:30] “So, refrain from the filth of the idols and refrain from a word of falsehood” (22:30). In this clause, the preposition *min* explicates the obscure noun *ris* as referring to the “idols”. Likewise the prepositional phrase *min-hum* here is explicative of “those who believe”. Rawafid, however, treat the preposition *min* as partitive denoting a part as distinct from the whole – meaning the promise of forgiveness and mighty reward applies only to a part of those who believed and worked deeds of righteousness. This is completely incompatible with the context and in conflict with the above verses. This verse undoubtedly comprehends all the blessed Companions. However, the immediate application of this verse is to the participants of Hudaibiyah and the Pledge of Ridwan. In the preceding verses Allah has announced that they have incurred His pleasure:

“Allah was pleased with the believers when they were pledging allegiance with you by placing their hands in your hands under the tree,...”(18)

This verse is a guarantee that they will all be firmly established in their faith and righteousness, because Allah is All-knowing and Well-Aware of what is going to happen. If Allah knows that anyone at anytime will turn away from the faith, He will never announce about His pleasure. Ibn ‘Abdul Barr, quoting this verse in the introduction to his book *isti‘ab*, writes:

“He with whom Allah is pleased, He will never be displeased with him.”.

On the basis of this verse, the Holy Prophet we said that no one from among the participants of the Pledge of Ridwan will ever enter the Fire. It is absolutely invalid to exclude some of those who were originally promised forgiveness and a mighty reward. Hence there is unanimity among ummah on the point that all the noble Companions are impartial, unbiased and worthy of confidence.

All Companions Are Inmates of Paradise: Their Sins Are Forgiven and to Belittle them is a Major Sin

Many verses of the Qur'an bear testimony to this fact. Some of the verses are part of this Surah. For instance, "Allah was pleased with the believers...48:29" and " _..and made them stick to the word of piety, and they were very much entitled to it, and competent for it." (48:26)

Besides, in several verses scattered in various other Surahs the same position has been affirmed for all the Companions:

"on the Day when Allah will not disgrace the Prophet and those who believed with him." [66:8]

"As for the first and foremost of the Emigrants and the Supporters, and those who followed them in goodness, Allah is pleased with them, and they are pleased with him; and He has prepared for them gardens berneath which rivers flow..."[9:100]

And in Surah Al-Hadid, Allah has promised the Companions as follows:

"Allah has promised Husna (the good) for each." (57:10)

_ And about Husna it is said in Surah Anbiya':

Surely, those for whom the good (news) from Us has come earlier shall be kept far away from it (the Hell) [21: 100] The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said:

“The best of generations is my generation, then that which follows it immediately and then that which follows it immediately (Bukhari).”

In a Hadith the Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said: “Do not revile my Companions, for if one of you contributed as much gold as the mount ‘Uhud, it would not amount to as much as the mudd of one of them, or half of it (Bukhari). A mudd in Arabia was a measure which, according to the Hanafi school of Fiqh, is equal to 1.032 litre or 815.39 grams and, according to the other three major schools, it is equal to 0.687 litre or 543 grams. Bazzar records with a sound chain of transmitters that Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said: “Of all the people in the entire world Allah has chosen my Companions, and of all the Companions He has particularly chosen four for me – Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthman and ‘Ali . (See Jam‘-ul-Fawa‘id) There is a Hadith recorded in Tirmidhi on the authority of ‘Abdullah Ibn Mughaffal (RA). In it the Holy Prophet (S) said: “Fear Allah, fear Allah regarding my Companions!

Do not make them a target of your criticism after me. He who loves them does so on account of my love; he who hates them does so on account of hating me; and he who injures them has injured me, and he who injures me has injured Allah. He who intends to injure Allah will soon be punished by Him.”

I have written a book entitled maqam-e-sahabah in which I have collected relevant Qur’anic verses and Prophetic Traditions pertaining to the status of the Companions. This book has already been published in Urdu. The “Ummah is unanimous on the point that all the blessed Companions are righteous and worthy of

confidence. The book deals elaborately with their disagreements and the civil wars that took place among them. It also explains how a Muslim critic should deal with the differences of the sahabah and whether it should be made a subject of debate and investigation or one should avoid commenting on them. Some of these issues to the degree necessary have been included in the commentary of Surah Muhammad. Please refer to the relevant section there. Allah's help is sought and on Him is our reliance!

48:4 Bounties of Allah upon the Participants of Hudaibiyah

It is He Who sent down tranquillity into the hearts of the Believers, that they may add faith to their faith;- for to Allah belong the Forces of the heavens and the earth; and Allah is Full of Knowledge and Wisdom;-

Bounties of Allah upon the Participants of Hudaibiyah

In the first three verses of this Siirah, reference was made to Allah's particular bounties bestowed upon the Holy Prophet (S) in the wake of the manifest victory. Some of the participants of Hudaibiyah congratulating the Holy Prophet B, asked him that the favours are conferred exclusively upon him, but what is there in it for them? In response to this query, verses 4-7 were revealed. They distinctly refer to the good graces of Allah upon the participants of Hudaibiyah and the Pledge of Ridwan. These favours were generously bestowed upon them because of faith in, and obedience to, the Holy Prophet (S). All believers whose faith and obedience are complete and perfect will receive similar good graces of Allah.

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4:47 The Exile of the Arabian Jews

O ye People of the Book! believe in what We have (now) revealed, confirming what was (al- ready) with you, before We change the face and fame of some (of you) beyond all recognition, and turn them hindwards, or curse them as We cursed the Sabbath-breakers, for the decision of Allah Must be carried out.

This passage calls on the People of the Book, but more specifically the Jews of Madinah, to believe in the revelations given to the Prophet, as they are said to confirm the previous scriptures given to the Jews (see, e.g., 2:89; 3:81; 6:92; 46:12). If not, a warning is issued that God will blot out faces and turn them backwards. Since the face is a symbol for or a manifestation of the state of the individual soul, Divine punishment is often said to be meted out upon faces (see, e.g., 3:106; 8:50; 20:111; 88:2). Some say blot out faces means that their facial features, notably their eyes, will be removed, so they will be blinded (Q); turn them backwards means that their eyes will be placed behind their heads, rendering them incapable of seeing what is before them, so that they have to walk backwards (Ṭ). Others say it is metaphorical,

meaning they will be blinded to the path to truth and so turned back toward error (Q, Ṭ). It further warns that He may curse them as He cursed those [who broke] the Sabbath; see 2:65, where God curses Sabbath violators by saying, Be you apes, outcast. The present verse may thus suggest that the Madinan Jews will be cursed in this same manner for deriding the Prophet (Q, Ṭ). Several Madinan Jews reportedly converted to Islam after the revelation of this verse (Ṭ), and their conversion served to avert the punishment, threatened in this verse, from the Madinan Jews as a whole (Q). Others assert that the verse alludes to the Jews' eventual exile from much of Arabia (Q, Ṭ, Z).

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4:88-91 Different forms of Emigration and their Rules

Why should ye be divided into two parties about the Hypocrites? Allah hath upset them for their (evil) deeds. Would ye guide those whom Allah hath thrown out of the Way? For those whom Allah hath thrown out of the Way, never shalt thou find the Way.

They but wish that ye should reject Faith, as they do, and thus be on the same footing (as they): But take not friends from their ranks until they flee in the way of Allah (From what is forbidden). But if they turn renegades, seize them and slay them wherever ye find them; and (in any case) take no friends or helpers from their ranks;- Except those who join a group between whom and you there is a treaty (of peace), or those who approach you with hearts restraining them from fighting you as well as fighting their own people. If Allah had pleased, He could have given them power over you, and they would have fought you: Therefore if they withdraw from you but fight you not, and (instead) send you (Guarantees of) peace, then Allah Hath opened no way for you (to war against them). Others you will find that wish to gain your confidence as well as that of their people: Every time they are sent back to temptation, they succumb thereto: if they withdraw not from you nor give you (guarantees) of peace besides restraining their hands, seize them and slay them wherever ye get them: In their case We have provided you with a clear argument against them. The verses quoted above describe three groups of people about whom two injunctions have been given. The following narrations clarify events surrounding these groups:

1. 'Abdullah ibn Hamid has narrated from. Mujahid that some disbelievers of Makkah came to Madinah. They pretended to have become Muslims and claimed to have come there as emigrants. Later, they turned into apostates. They went to the Holy Prophet (S), told him about their plan to go Makkah to buy merchandise from there. Having made their false excuse, they departed for Makkah and

never returned. There arose a difference of opinion about their behaviour among the Muslims of Madinah. Some said that they were believers. It was in verse 88: (So what is the matter with you that you have become two groups about the hypocrites) where Allah Almighty declared that they were disbelievers and should be killed.

Maulana Ashraf 'Ali Thanavi has explained the Qur'anic word, 'munafiq' (hypocrite) by saying that they were hypocrites when they claimed to have become Muslims – they had never believed in their hearts. The fact was that hypocrites were not killed because they concealed their inner disbelief. But, the case of these people was different as their apostasy had come out in the open. As for those who took them to be Muslims, they may have, perhaps, taken a benign view of their action under some interpretation. However, this interpretation was based on sheer opinion not supported by any proof from the Shari'ah. That is why no reliance was placed on it.

1. Ibn Abi Shaybah has narrated from Hasan that Suraqah ibn Malik al-Mudlaji visited the Holy Prophet (S) after the events of Badr and Uhud and requested him to make peace with his tribe, Bani Mudlaj. Thereupon, he sent Sayyidna Khalid (RA) to them to conclude a peace treaty. The terms of the treaty were as follows:

“We will not support anyone against the Holy Prophet & . If the Quraysh become Muslims, We too shall become Muslims. All tribes who enter into alliance with us, they too shall become a party with us in this treaty.”

Thereupon, this verse: (They wish that you disbelieve like they have disbelieved) was revealed.

It has been narrated from Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbas (RA) that the people mentioned in the verse: (You will find others who want to be secure from you) are those belonging to the tribes of Asad and Ghitfan who, when they came to Madinah, professed Islam outwardly, but to their own people they would confide that

they had really believed in monkeys and scorpions while before Muslims they would piously declare that they were followers of their faith. However, Dahhak ascribes this conduct to the tribe of 'Abd al-Dar according to a report from Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbas. The first and the second narration appears in Ruh al-Ma'ani, while the third narration can be seen in Ma'alim.

Maulana Ashraf 'Ali Thanavi likens the state of those mentioned in the third narration as that of the first one since it proves that they were no Muslims to begin with, therefore, they fall under the injunction governing disbelievers in general, that is, 'do not fight them in the presence of a peace treaty – otherwise, do.' Thus, regarding those mentioned in the first narration, the second verse (then if they turn away, seize them and kill them) carries the injunction that they be arrested and killed, while the statement in the third verse (90): (except those who join a group with whom you have a treaty) gives them a clear exemption in the event of peace, a situation which finds mention in the second narration. This exemption has been emphasized once again in (if they stay away from you) later in the same verse (90).

Regarding those mentioned in the third narration, it has been said in the fourth verse (91): (you will find others ...I which means that should these people refuse to leave you alone and insist on fighting, then do fight against them. From this, it can be deduced that in the event they make peace, there should be no fighting against them. (Bayan al-Qur'an) In short, the three groups mentioned here are:

1. Those who do not emigrate despite their ability to do so in a period of time when emigration was a pre-requisite of faith in Islam. Or, after having emigrated, they go out of the new abode of Islam (Dar al-Islam) and return to the abode of disbelief (Dar al-Kufr).

2. Those who themselves enter a no-war pact with Muslims or those who join hands with those entering into such a pact.

3. Those who make peace to buy time and once there comes an occasion to fight a war against Muslims, they would readily join the enemy camp throwing all treaty obligations to winds.

The injunction governing the first group is similar to that which governs the disbelievers in general. The second group is exempted from being arrested and killed. The third group deserves the same punishment as fixed for the first. These verses yield a total of two injunctions, that is, fighting in the absence of peace; and not fighting in the event of peace.

Different forms of Emigration and their Rules

It is sufficient to know that Emigration from the homeland of Disbelief (Darul-kufr) was enjoined on all Muslims during the early period of Islam. It is for this reason that Allah Almighty has prohibited treating those who fail to carry out this obligation as Muslims. Consequently, when Makkah was conquered, the Holy Prophet (S) declared: (There is no Hijrah after the Victory). It means: 'Now that the Conquest of Makkah has made it the Abode of Islam, emigration from there was no more obligatory.' This rule related to the period of time when Emigration was considered to be a pre-condition of anyone's faith. During those days, anyone who did not emigrate despite having the ability to do so was not taken to be a Muslim. But, later on, this injunction was abrogated and now this mode of Emigration has ceased to exist.

There remains, however, another form of Hijrah which has been identified in a hadith of Sahih al-Bukhari where it was said: It means that Hijrah (not in the sense of abandoning one's homeland, but in

the sense of abandoning one's sins) will continue to exist until there remains the time to repent.

'Allamah 'Ayni, the commentator of al-Bukhari has said about this

Hijrah: (This later Hijrah means the abandonment of sins). This subject also finds elucidation in a hadith of the Holy Prophet (S) where he is reported to have said: 'It means that a Muhajir (Emigrant) is one who emigrates ('hajara': abandon, leave) from everything prohibited by Allah Almighty (al-Mirqat, v.1)

The discussion appearing above tells us that, technically, the word, Hijrah is applied in a dual sense:

1. To leave one's homeland in order to save one's faith as was done by the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all – they left their homeland of Makkah and emigrated to Madinah and Ethiopia.

2. To leave one's sins.

The words of the verse 89: (and do not take from them a friend or a helper) tell us that seeking help from disbelievers is forbidden (Haram). Pursuant to this, it appears in a narration that the Ansars of Madinah sought the permission of the Holy Prophet (S) to seek help from the Jews to offset disbelievers whereupon he said: (The bad ones! We do not need them). (Mazhari, v. 2)

References:

Shafi, Muhammad (2008). Maariful Quran. (Vol .2 surah 4 verse 88-91). English – Maariful Quran : Mufti Muhammad Shafi (r.a) : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive

59:9 The Ansars

But those who before them, had homes (in Medina) and had adopted the Faith,- show their affection to such as came to them for refuge, and entertain no desire in their hearts for things given to the (latter), but give them preference over themselves, even though poverty was their (own lot). And those saved from the covetousness of their own souls,- they are the ones that achieve prosperity.

This refers to the Ansar (the Helpers), the people of Madinah who accepted Islam when it was persecuted in Makkah, and who invited the holy Prophet to join them and become their Leader in Madinah.

The Hijrah was possible because of their goodwill and their generous hospitality. They entertained the Prophet and all the refugees (Muhajirs) who came with him. The most remarkable ties of full brotherhood were established between individual members of the one group and the other. Until the Ummah got its own resources, the Helpers regularly gave and the Refugees regularly received.

The Helpers counted it a privilege to entertain the Refugees, and even the poor vied with the rich in their spirit of self-sacrifice. When the confiscated land and property of the Banu Nadir was divided, and the major portion was assigned to the refugees, there was not the least jealousy on the part of the Helpers. They rejoiced in the good fortune of their brethren. And incidentally they were themselves relieved of anxiety and responsibility on their behalf.

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 59 verse 9 [1]Quran Arabic with English Translation & Commentary (Tafsir) by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Free Download (quran4u.com)

5:27 The two sons of Adam

Recite to them the truth of the story of the two sons of Adam. Behold! they each presented a sacrifice (to Allah): It was accepted from one, but not from the other. Said the latter: "Be sure I will slay thee." "Surely," said the former, "Allah doth accept of the sacrifice of those who are righteous.

The following excerpt is my personal opinion as I could not find a scholarly position to confirm it and no one is obliged to follow:

'The scholars are divided as to who the two sons of Adam (peace be upon him) were. The traditionalists see them as the two sons of Adam, the first man. However all these excerpts originate from Jewish histories and are thus not authentic narrations Islamically. The other group of scholars take a metaphorical approach saying Ibn e Adam (Sons of Adam) is a metaphorical expression meaning two persons from the lineage of Adam or the early Hebrews.

*I categorically reject both opinions. Adam (peace be upon him) was the first prophet sent to Ibn e Adam, the children of Adam, or in other words, the human beings after the completion of their evolution on Earth. The story of Cain and Abel, in my opinion, is the story

of the two sons of this historical Adam (peace be upon him) who was raised as the first prophet for humanity. The story of Cain and Abel is clouded with allegory so we cannot identify the exact portents of this narration; however, the general meaning can certainly be applied to this reference as a historical event.

To conclude, Adam (peace be upon him) was not the first man and neither a metaphorical human. He was with certainty the first prophet; and had two sons named Cain and Abel. The story of Cain and Abel is to be interpreted in this context.

For details on the prophethood of Adam, see the post:

[1]The Prophethood of Adam (peace be upon him) according to the Quran and Sunnah – Islamic Web Library

Those who behave arrogantly on the earth in defiance of right – them will I turn away from My signs: Even if they see all the signs, they will not believe in them; and if they see the way of right conduct, they will not adopt it as the way; but if they see the way of error, that is the way they will adopt. For they have rejected our signs, and failed to take warning from them. (verse 146)

Those who reject Our signs and the meeting in the Hereafter, -vain are their deeds: Can they expect to be rewarded except as they have wrought? (verse 147)

The people of Moses made, in his absence, out of their ornaments, the image of calf, (for worship): it seemed to low: did they not see that it could neither speak to them, nor show them the way? They took it for worship and they did wrong. (verse 148)

When they repented, and saw that they had erred, they said: “If our Lord have not mercy upon us and forgive us, we shall indeed be of those who perish.” (verse 149)

When Moses came back to his people, angry and grieved, he said: “Evil it is that ye have done in my place in my absence: did ye make haste to bring on the judgment of your Lord?” He put down the tablets, seized his brother by (the hair of) his head, and dragged him to him. Aaron said: “Son of my mother! the people did indeed reckon me as naught, and went near to slaying me! Make not the enemies rejoice over my misfortune, nor count thou me amongst the people of sin.” (verse 150)

Moses prayed: “O my Lord! forgive me and my brother! admit us to Thy mercy! for Thou art the Most Merciful of those who show mercy!” (verse 151)

Commentary

The verse 146 spoke of the arrogant people as showing arrogance unjustly. The word without truth or unjustly indicates that assuming arrogance in response to the arrogant people is a justified act, since it is the act of arrogance in appearance, and not in reality. It is a known 9,; 8

dictum: “Showing arrogance to the arrogant is an act of humbleness”. (Masail as-Suluk).

The effects of Arrogance

By saying, “I shall keep away from My verses those who show arrogance,” the verse implies that the people who have an offensive sense of superiority over others are deprived of knowledge and understanding. They are rendered incapable of benefitting themselves from the signs of Allah. The term ‘Signs of Allah’, may have a reference to the revealed verses of the Torah, Evangel and the Qur’an, as well as to the signs inherent in all the things of the heavens and the earth. The false sense of superiority is, therefore, the worst habit which keeps man away from deliberations in the signs of Allah and getting awareness of the truth.

We find it stated in Ruh-al-Bayan that arrogance is such a wicked habitude as raises a wall between man and the knowledge from Allah. Since divine knowledge comes only through the mercy of Allah, and the mercy of Allah visits those who are humble. The spiritual leader Sheikh Rumi has said:

“Water flows down towards the slope, and solution goes where difficulty appears.”

The next verses continue to narrate the remaining part of the story. When the prophet Musa (pbuh) did not turn up after thirty days from the mount of Sinai where he was to be ordained by Allah after passing ten more nights on the mount, the Israelites who were a hasty and impatient people began to make fuss about it.

Among them there was a person named Samiri who was a prominent man, but at the same time, had beliefs in superstitions. He said to the people that the jewels and ornaments of the Egyptians possessed by them were not permissible for them. It may be noted that the plunder or booty taken from the enemy after their defeat was also not permissible for the Israelites. The Israelites gathered all their jewels and handed these over to him. He melted the ornaments and forged a golden calf from it. A peculiar thing reported about him is that he had collected some dust from under the hoofs of the horse of the Archangel Jibra'il (Gabriel) at some occasion. Allah had made this dust to have the effect of some kind of life. Samiri mixed this dust with the molten metal while preparing the calf. This made the calf to emit a sound like the mooing of a cow.

Having designed this satanic invention he invited the people to worship the calf and said that it was god. He said that the Prophet Musa (pbuh) had gone to speak with God to the mount of Sinai; while god had come to them in the form of this calf. Samiri already enjoyed a place of respect among them, this unusual demonstration increased their trust in him and they started worshipping the calf, and took it as their god. The verse 148 has given a short description of this event while another verse of the Holy Qur'an has described it in detail. The verse 149 speaks of their remorse on this guilt and their repentance, while the verse 150 describes the events followed by the arrival of the Prophet Musa (pbuh) from the mount of Sinai. It described that the Prophet Musa (pbuh) was extremely angry

when he saw his people in this state of ignorance. It is reported that Allah had informed him of their perversion on the mount of Sinai. Now seeing them in this state with his own eyes filled him with indignation. First, he turned to his people and said: “How bad is the thing you have done in my absence.” “How did you act in haste against the command of your Lord?” That is, you must have waited until the book of Allah came to you. Some of the commentators have said that it meant that they hastily decided that the Prophet Musa (pbuh) was dead. Then he turned to the Prophet Harun (pbuh) whom he has left among them as his deputy. He wanted to free his hand in order to grab him. He quickly put down the tablets of the Torah and grabbed the head of his brother. This has been termed as having dropped. The Arabic word used here is: 'Ilqa' which signifies dropping or throwing. This gives rise to a doubt that the Prophet Musa (pbuh) showed disrespect to the tablets of the Torah by throwing or dropping them down. It is obvious that throwing the tablets of the Torah was great sin, and equally obvious is the fact that all the Prophets are innocent and free of all sins. The implication of the verse, therefore, is that he put away the Tablets as quickly in order to free his hands, as seemed like having been dropped. The Holy Qur'an has described it by using this word as a gesture of warning. (Bayan al-Qur'an).

Thereafter he turned to the Prophet Harun (pbuh) and grasped the hair of his head. The Prophet Harun then gave him the true account of the events and said that it was not his fault, for he stopped them from this wicked act but they did not listen to him. They were so obstinate about it that they were about to kill him. He said that he should not count him among the ignorant people and should not let his enemies laugh at him by treating him in that way. This made the Prophet Muss (pbuh) cool down. At this occasion, he prayed to Allah, saying, "My Lord, forgive me and my brother, and admit us to Your mercy, and You are the most merciful of all those who show mercy." He asked forgiveness for his brother for any of his shortcoming with regard to his duties. He asked forgiveness for

himself either for his putting away the tablets of the Torah in a hurry which the Holy Qur'an had described as having been 'dropped' to make a gesture of warning, or perhaps, for educating people that they should include themselves while asking forgiveness for others to preclude the sense of complacency on their part.

References:

Shafi, Muhammad (2008). Maariful Quran. (Vol .4 surah 7 verses 152-156). English – Maariful Quran : Mufti Muhammad Shafi (r.a) : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive

7:111-122 Prophet Moses vs the Sorcerers

They said: “Keep him and his brother in suspense (for a while); and send to the cities men to collect (7:111) And bring up to thee all (our) sorcerers well-versed.” (7:112)

So there came the sorcerers to Pharaoh: They said, “of course we shall have a (suitable) reward if we win!” (7:113) He said: “Yea, (and more),- for ye shall in that case be (raised to posts) nearest (to my person).” (7:114)

They said: “O Moses! wilt thou throw (first), or shall we have the (first) throw?” (7:115)

Said Moses: “Throw ye (first).” So when they threw, they bewitched the eyes of the people, and struck terror into them: for they showed a great (feat of) magic. (7:116)

We put it into Moses’s mind by inspiration: “Throw (now) thy rod”:and behold! it swallows up straight away all the falsehoods which they fake! (7:117)

Thus truth was confirmed, and all that they did was made of no effect. (7:118)

So the (great ones) were vanquished there and then, and were made to look small. (7:119) But the sorcerers fell down prostrate in adoration. (7:120)

Saying: “We believe in the Lord of the Worlds,- (7:121) “The Lord of Moses and Aaron.” (7:122)

These verses narrate the remaining part of the story of the prophet – Musa (pbuh) Seeing these wonders of staves turning into

serpents and making his hand emitting strong white light, the Pharaoh should – –have been convinced and have believed in Musa (pbuh) as the logic and sense demanded. But it is the common practice of the wrong- doers that they always seek false interpretations of the truth in order to conceal it, the Pharaoh and his people belied him instead, and said to the people that he was a great sorcerer and that he wanted to expel them from their homes and take over the rule of the country. The people of the Pharaoh suggested:

“leave him and his brother alone for a while, and send men to the cities to collect and bring to you every expert sorcerer 111,112.”

The people of the Pharaoh said that there were many expert sorcerers in their cities who were capable of defeating Musa (pbuh). Some soldiers should be sent to collect and bring the sorcerers for this purpose. Sorcery and magic, being the custom of the day, the sorcerers enjoyed a high status among people. Allah sent Musa (pbuh) with the miracles of the staff and white-lit hand so that people may clearly observe the misery of the sorcerers after entering into a contest with Musa (pbuh). It is the usual practice of Allah that He sends His prophets with miracles that are appropriate to the demand of the time.

For instance, in the time of the prophet 'Isa (the Jesus), Greek philosophy and medical sciences were at their zenith. He was, therefore, sent with the miraculous powers of restoring the sight of those who were born blind and cure the lepers instantly with a touch of his hand. In the time of the Holy Prophet (S) the Arabs were boastful of their oratory and linguistic capabilities. The Holy Qur'an was sent as the greatest of all miracles of the Holy prophet (S). It's diction and style so bewildered the Arabs that they instantly acknowledged a super human element in it.

The sorcerers came to Pharaoh and said:

“There must be a reward for us, if we are the victors.” (113) He said,

“Yes, and of course, you will be among the closer ones.” (114)

The sorcerers were invited from all over the country. When they all came to Pharaoh they asked him of some reward if they gain victory over Musa (pbuh). He promised that in addition to their reward they shall be included among those close to him. The historical reports about the number of these sorcerers give us different information. These give us a number from nine hundred to three hundred thousand. The quantity of the staves and strings used in this contest is reported to be as great as was loaded on three hundred camels. (Qurtubi)

It may be noted that the first thing the sorcerers did, was to have an assurance about the reward they will get in return of their performance. It is because worldly people are always after worldly gains.

They do nothing unless they are sure of their gains, while on the contrary, the prophets and their disciples always declare:

I do not ask you for a reward, as my reward is with the Lord of all the worlds.’ (26:109)

That is, the prophets of Allah preach and convey the message of Allah only for the good and guidance of people and they seek no financial gain against it. They seek their reward from Allah alone.

After this discourse with Pharaoh the sorcerers got the place and date fixed for the great encounter. An open land was chosen for the purpose and the time was fixed after the sunrise on their festival Day. It is also mentioned in a verse of the Holy Quran: Musa (pbuh) “your appointed day is the day of ‘zinah’ so that people may be gathered after sunrise.” (20:59)

Some reports say that the prophet Musa (pbuh) had a short conversation with the chief of the sorcerers and asked him if they would accept the faith in case he defeated them? He said that there was no question of their being defeated as they possessed such great magical powers that could not be overcome by any one. And in case 'you bring defeat to us we shall declare our faith openly in the presence of the Pharaoh'. (Mazhari and Qurtubi) They said, "O Musa either you throw (first) or shall we be the ones to throw."

The Arabic word: 'ilqa' means to drop something down. On the day of encounter the sorcerers asked the prophet Musa (pbuh) if he would drop down his staff first or should they throw theirs first? This question of the sorcerers was perhaps to show their complacency about their art, though the mode of their sentence indicated that they wanted to start first, but for giving an impression of power to their opponent they put that question. Since the prophet Musa (pbuh) had nothing to fear about, he invited them saying 'you drop.'

Ibn Kathir has said that the prophet Musa (pbuh) behaved with them politely by inviting them to have their turn first. The effect of this behaviour was that they accepted the faith after their defeat. Here we are faced with a question. The sorcery is an impermissible act, specially when it is used to oppose a prophet sent by Allah it becomes an act of infidelity. How then the prophet Musa (pbuh) gave permission of magic to the sorcerers by saying 'you drop'? With a little thought we can find the answer. It was certain that the sorcerers will show their magic by all means. The point of conversation was to decide who should start the contest. The prophet Musa (pbuh) allowed them to begin. Another advantage of this strategy was that the people could see their performance and the sorcerers had all the time to show their art and turn the staves into snakes. Then the staff of the prophet Musa (pbuh) should turn into a serpent and eat up all the snakes, thus the open defeat of magic should be exhibited before the people. (Bayan- al- Qur'an)

So, when they threw, they bewitched the eyes of the people, and made them frightened, and came out with great sorcery. (116) This verse indicates that this demonstration of their magic was just a bewitching of the eyes of the people which made them see the staffs and strings as snakes leaping on the ground, while the strings and the staffs did not change physically. It was a kind of mesmerism hypnotising the minds of the onlookers. This does not mean that sorcery is confined only in this kind and that it cannot change something into another, as we do not have any proof against it. On the contrary, many forms and kinds of magic have been taken as being reality. The terms magic and sorcery are usually applied for all the acts that seem to be happening in unusual way. Sleight of hand, telepathic influences and mesmerism are sometimes called magic. Transformation of one thing into another through magic may be a possibility but we have no valid reason or proof for or against it. The next verse 117 said, “And We revealed to Musa ‘Throw your staff.’ Then, of a sudden it began to swallow all that they had concocted.” We find it reported in history, when thousands of staffs and ropes were turned into snakes leaping all over the ground, Allah commanded Musa to drop down his staff on the ground. It turned into a great snake and instantly began to eat up the snakes of the sorcerers. The crowd stood bewildered and stunned at this sight. Within no time all the snakes were eaten up by the great snake of the prophet Musa (pbuh). Next, the verse said:

“So, the truth prevailed and what they were doing became a nullity. So there they were overcome and turned humiliated. And the sorcerers were constrained to fall in prostration. They said, “We believe in the Lord of the worlds, the Lord of Musa and Harun.”

The sorcerers were so overawed by the miracle of the prophet Musa (pbuh) that they fell in prostration. This may also imply that Allah blessed them with favour and put them in prostration. They added the phrase, the Lord of Musa (pbuh) and Harun after saying, the Lord of

the worlds, to make it clear that the Lord worshipped by Musa and Harun is, in fact, the Lord of the Universe, and not the Pharaoh as he pretended to be.

References:

Shafi, Muhammad (2008). Maariful Quran. (Vol .4 surah 7 verses 111-122). English – Maariful Quran : Mufti Muhammad Shafi (r.a) : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive

7:123-127 The Miracle: The Sorcerers submit to Allah

Said Pharaoh: “Believe ye in Him before I give you permission? Surely this is a trick which ye have planned in the city to drive out its people: but soon shall ye know (the consequences). (verse 123)

Be sure I will cut off your hands and your feet on opposite sides, and I will cause you all to die on the cross.” (verse 124) They said: “For us, We are but sent back unto our Lord: (verse 125)

“But thou dost wreak thy vengeance on us simply because we believed in the Signs of our Lord when they reached us! Our Lord! pour out on us patience and constancy, and take our souls unto thee as Muslims (who bow to thy will)! (verse 126)

Said the chiefs of Pharaoh’s people: “Wilt thou leave Moses and his people, to spread mischief in the land, and to abandon thee and thy gods?” He said: “Their male children will we slay; (only) their females will we save alive; and we have over them (power) irresistible.” (verse 127)

The foregoing verses had a detailed account of the contest between the prophet Musa (pbuh) and the sorcerers and that after their defeat the sorcerers declared their faith in Allah. Some historical reports say that subsequent to their declaration of faith in Allah, six hundred thousand more people followed suit and declared their belief in Allah. Before this open contest there were only two individuals believing in Allah. Now a great army of people became Muslims. It was, obviously an embarrassing situation for the Pharaoh. Like a clever politician he managed to conceal his state of mind before the people, and changed the situation by putting the blame of conspiracy and rebellion on the – – sorcerers. He claimed that they had joined hands with Musa (pbuh) and Harun in order to create disorder in the country. Then he said to the sorcerers, “You have believed in him before I permitted you.” This was a threat to the sorcerers on the one hand, and on the other, he

tried to convince his people that the sorcerers made a hasty decision in accepting their faith and fell prey to the trap of Musa and Harun. Otherwise, he would have also believed in him in case Musa (pbuh) and Harun proved truthful in their claim.

It was a clever design of Pharaoh. He tried to keep his people stay in their former ignorance and make people believe that the contest was pre-plotted between the prophet Musa (pbuh) and the sorcerers. He cleverly twisted the fact that the miracle of Musa (pbuh) and the open conversion of the sorcerers to the true Faith was purely to expose the ignorance and falsehood of the Pharaoh. He turned it into a political issue by saying, “So that you may expel it’s people from there.” He wanted to make his people believe that they planned the whole matter to gain power over the country and expel the people from there.

After making all these strategic statements he threatened the sorcerers, first, with an indefinite remark saying, “Now you shall know (your end)”. Further specifying the threat, He said, shall surely, cut your hands and legs from the opposite sides. Then I shall crucify you all together.” By cutting from the opposite sides he meant the right hand and the left foot so that they are made completely disabled and invalid.

The Pharaoh made all the efforts that he could to control his people. The belief in Allah, or “Iman’ as it is called by the Qur’an, is a great power. When it finds it’s way into one’s heart, one finds himself as powerful as to face the whole world and all the forces gathered together against him. This was a great change. Only a few hours ago, the sorcerers were the worshippers of Pharaoh, but having faith in Allah they demonstrated such a great power and courage that in response to all the threats to their lives by the Pharaoh, they only said with perfect satisfaction that, in that case, “To our Lord we are sure to return.”

The sorcerers were fully aware of Pharaoh's power and authority over them. They did not say that Pharaoh will not be able to kill them because of their new faith. Their answer was to suggest that the whole life of this temporary world had no value in their eyes. Their satisfaction was due to the fact that they were sure of meeting the Lord of the worlds after passing away from this world. There they shall get an everlasting life of peace and comfort.

Another interpretation of their answer is that though the Pharaoh had all the power to finish their life, but soon he will be presented before the Lord of the worlds where he shall be taken to account for his despotism. In another verse, the following statement is also included in the answer of the sorcerers, "You may pass any judgement you can against us, but your judgement will be restricted to this worldly life." (72:20) This also shows their total indifference towards the temporary life of this world. This great change in their thought and action was the result of their true faith in Allah. In addition to this, their faith opened the door of knowledge and wisdom upon them which is manifest from their invocation to Allah at this occasion. They prayed, "O Allah! Shower upon us patience and let death take us while we are Muslims." This prayer is not only a manifestation of knowledge and wisdom, but also the best means of getting out of the difficulty they were in. It is because perseverance and patience are the only keys to success over one's enemy.

The report of the commission formed for investigating the causes and effects of the World War has remarked that the Muslims who observe faith in Allah and in the Hereafter are the most valiant and brave people in the battle field, and the most patient in the times of difficulty because they have faith in Allah and in the Hereafter. This is why the German military officials, expert in military sciences, emphatically suggested that they should create honesty and sense of accountability in the Hereafter among their soldiers, as they are the great source of strength and courage. (Tafsir al-Manar)

It Was A Miracle

The instant perfect change of mind of the sorcerers was, in no way, a lesser miracle than the other miracles of the prophet Musa (pbuh). Those who led a life of infidelity and ignorance for their whole life were instantly changed into the most cognizant, knowledgeable and true Muslims, as faithful as to readily sacrifice their life for their faith. It is a pity that the Muslims and the Muslim states are trying all other ways and means to make themselves powerful and strong, but have become neglectful of the real source of power and strength. That is faith, perseverance and patience.

Pharaoh was frightened

It is to be noted that the Pharaoh was in some degree successful in keeping his ignorant people in their former ignorance through his clever and false statements, but at the same time, they strangely noted that all the fury and rage of Pharaoh was limited to the sorcerers only. He did not dare say a word against the prophets Musa and Harun (peace be upon them) who were his real opponents. This is obvious from the following statement of his people: “Do you leave Musa (peace be upon them) and his people alone to spread disorder in the land, even when he abandons you and your gods?”

“We shall slaughter their sons and let their women live, and we have full power over them.”

According to the commentators of the Holy Qur’an, Pharaoh tried to satisfy his people saying that by killing their males and leaving their women alive, he shall totally eliminate them within a period of time. Their women shall be spared to serve his people as maid servants. In fact, Pharaoh was so frightened by the miracle of the prophet Musa (pbuh), that even at this occasion when he was threatening to kill all the men of Israelites, he could not utter a single

word of threat against Musa and Harun (peace be upon them), Maulana Rhmi said :

“Whoever adopts ‘Taqwa’ and fears Allah is feared by all human beings and spirits”.

The above statement of Pharaoh’s people, ‘Even when he abandons you and your gods’ makes us understand that Pharaoh himself used to worship other gods, even though he claimed to be the god of his people. The law about killing of the males of the Israelites and leaving their women alive was now promulgated the second time. The first time it was put into force prior to the birth of the prophet Musa (peace be upon him). He was witnessing the failure of this law up to this day which was evident from the huge crowd of the Israelites present at this occasion. When Allah intends to bring disgrace to a people, all they contrive leads to nothing but disaster. We shall soon see that this tyranny and oppression, at last, led him and his people to an ignominious end.

References:

Shafi, Muhammad (2008). Maariful Quran. (Vol .4 surah 7 verses 123-127). English – Maariful Quran : Mufti Muhammad Shafi (r.a) : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive

7:128-132 We punished the people of Pharaoh with years (of droughts) and shortness of crops; that they might receive admonition

Said Moses to his people: “Pray for help from Allah, and (wait) in patience and constancy: for the earth is Allah’s, to give as a heritage to such of His servants as He pleaseth; and the end is (best) for the righteous. (verse 128)

They said: “We have had (nothing but) trouble, both before and after thou camest to us.” He said: “It may be that your Lord will destroy your enemy and make you inheritors in the earth; that so He may try you by your deeds.” (verse 129)

We punished the people of Pharaoh with years (of droughts) and shortness of crops; that they might receive admonition. (verse 130)

But when good (times) came, they said, “This is due to us;” When gripped by calamity, they ascribed it to evil omens connected with Moses and those with him! Behold! in truth the omens of evil are theirs in Allah’s sight, but most of them do not understand! (verse 131)

They said (to Moses): “Whatever be the Signs thou bringest, to work therewith thy sorcery on us, we shall never believe in thee. (verse 132)

After being defeated by the prophet Musa (peace be upon him), Pharaoh enforced the law of killing the male children of the Israelites.

They were greatly alarmed of the punishment they had experienced before – – the coming of the prophet Musa (pbuh). The prophet Musa (pbuh) was also mindful of this fact. Out of his kindness, he offered two wise

solutions to the Israelites. He said to them that only way of getting out of this trial was, firstly, to seek help from Allah and, secondly, to remain patient until the things change into their favour.

He also promised them that they shall inherit the whole land if they faithfully observed the two instructions. This is what the verse said: 'Seek help from Allah and be patient; surely, the land belongs to Allah, He lets whomsoever He wills inherit it, from among his servants.' This implies that all the lands belong to Allah, and He lets whomsoever He wills inherit the land. And decidedly the end result is for the God-fearing. So, if they observe 'Taqwa (keep away from disobedience) by acting upon the two instruction offered above they shall ultimately rule the whole country.

The Only Way To Success

A little reflection over the above two teachings of the prophet Musa (peace be upon him) will show that it is the sovereign remedy which never fails against any difficulty. The first ingredient of this recipe is seeking help from Allah which is the essence of the remedy. It is for the obvious reason that if the Creator of the universe comes to one's help who is there to stop Him? Maulana Rum said in a couplet: "The earth, the air, the water and the fire, all are servants of Allah. To me and to You they are dead, but to Allah they are full of life."

It is reported in a Hadith: When Allah wills to do something everything turns in favour of that purpose. Therefore, nothing is more powerful against an enemy than seeking Allah's help with all the sincerity of one's heart, Simply uttering out some formula words for seeking help are not enough.

The second important ingredient of the recipe is being patient. The Arabic word 'Sabr' rendered as patience literally signifies to keep oneself under one's control against unfavorable happenings. It is common knowledge that nothing significant can be achieved

without undergoing difficulties and hardships. One who readily prepares himself to face hardships is generally successful in most of his objectives. The Holy Prophet said in a Tradition, “No greater blessing has been given to any one other than patience.” (Abu Dawud)

The Israelites who seemed to have no conception of such matters could not understand how patience alone could free them from Pharaoh’s punishment and bring them success against him. They blamed the prophet Musa (pbuh) saying ‘We have been persecuted before you came to us as well as after you came to us.’”

What they meant, perhaps, was that they were looking for a prophet to deliver them from the oppression of the Pharaoh, but their fate remained unchanged even after he came to them. The prophet Musa (peace be upon him) answered to them:

‘It is likely that your Lord will destroy your enemy and make you successors in the earth that He may see how then, you act.’

Sovereignty is a test

The last phrase of the verse has provided with a wise observation that sovereignty or dominion is not in itself an aim or objective but a means to achieve the objective of making peace and justice prevail in the land. Sovereignty or dominion is a sacred trust bestowed upon by Allah for making good prevail over evil. The verse has warned them that, in case they are bestowed this trust, they should not forget the ill fate of those who were before them. Though the direct addressee of the verse are the Israelites, but indirectly the verse has thrown a warning to all those trusted with rule or dominion. Sovereignty or power, in fact, belongs to Allah alone. Allah has made man his deputy on the earth. He is the One who designates man with power and takes it away when He so wills. This is what the following verse means: “You give power to whom You please, and You strip off power from whom You please.” (3:26)

The power and rule, therefore, is a test for the rulers to see how far they have fulfilled their duty of establishing peace and justice and making good prevail over evil. Abu Hayyan in his Tafsir Al-Bahr al Muhit has included the following event under the comments on this verse: 'Amr ibn 'Ubaid once visited Mansur, the second caliph of the Abbasid dynasty, prior to his designation to caliphate and recited this verse: 'It is likely that Allah will destroy your enemy and make you successor in the earth.' This was a sort of prediction by 'Amr ibn 'Ubaid of his succession to the throne. Soon after Mansur succeeded to the throne and became the Caliph. 'Amr ibn 'Ubaid came to the Caliph again. Mansur reminded him of the prediction made by him. Amr ibn 'Ubaid instantly answered, "Well, the first part of the prediction has come true and you have become the Caliph, but the second part of it still remains unfulfilled. The verse also contains this phrase, then, He will see how you act." Amr ibn 'Ubaid suggested that gaining power is not a matter of pride because thereafter, Allah judges the acts of those in authority and sees how they make use of this trust.

The next verses speak of the events that led Pharaoh and his people to a number of calamities sent to them as punishment and finally led them to their death. The first heavenly punishment came to them in the form of famine. According to historical reports this famine lasted for seven years. "And We seized the people of the Pharaoh with years of famine and loss of fruits, so that they may take lesson. So when something good came to them they said, 'This is our right.' And if they suffered from something evil, they ascribed it as an ill omen to Musa (pbuh) and those with him. Listen, their omen lies with Allah only, but most of them do not know."

The first verse has described the famine with two phrases: 'years of famine and 'loss of fruits.' The respected Companion 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas and the commentator Qatadah have said that the punishment of drought was for the people of the rural areas, while people living in cities and towns were punished by the loss of fruits.

When a people are stamped with the wrath of Allah they lose their faculty of distinguishing right from wrong. Pharaoh and his people too, had lost their understanding. They did not take lesson from this warning. On the contrary, they ascribed the calamity to be a bad presage from the prophet Musa (pbuh) and his people. The verse said, 'So when something good came to them they said, 'This is our right.' And if they suffered from something evil, they ascribed it as an ill omen to Musa (peace be upon him) and those with him. Listen, their omen lies with Allah only, but most of them do not know.

The Arabic word: Ta'ir' used for omen signifies a bird. The Arabs had a superstition that a bird coming down to their right or left meant a good or bad fate. The verse implies that good or bad fate comes from Allah. Everything in this world happens under the will of Allah. No one is there to bring good or bad fate to any one. It is sheer ignorance to believe in such things and base their activities on such baseless assumptions. The last verse describes their rejection of the truth in these words:

And they said, 'Whatever sign you bring to us in order to enchant us therewith, we are not going to believe in you.'

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Shafi, Muhammad (2008). Maariful Quran. (Vol .4 surah 7 verses 128-132). English – Maariful Quran : Mufti Muhammad Shafi (r.a) : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive

7:133-136 So We sent (plagues) on them: Wholesale death, Locusts, Lice, Frogs, And Blood: Signs openly self-explained: but they were steeped in arrogance,- a people given to sin

So We sent (plagues) on them: Wholesale death, Locusts, Lice, Frogs, And Blood: Signs openly self-explained: but they were steeped in arrogance,- a people given to sin. (verse 133)

Every time the penalty fell on them, they said: “O Moses! on your behalf call on thy Lord in virtue of his promise to thee: If thou wilt remove the penalty from us, we shall truly believe in thee, and we shall send away the Children of Israel with thee.” (verse 134)

But every time We removed the penalty from them according to a fixed term which they had to fulfil,- Behold! they broke their word! (verse 135)

So We exacted retribution from them: We drowned them in the sea, because they rejected Our Signs and failed to take warning from them. (verse 136)

The above verses relate the next part of the story of the prophet Musa (pbuh) and the people of Pharaoh. According to historical reports, the prophet Musa (pbuh) stayed in Egypt for 20 years. He kept preaching consistently and conveyed the message of Allah to them. He was given nine miracles during his stay in Egypt which served as warnings to the people of Pharaoh. The Holy Quran has referred to the nine miracles in these words “Surely, We gave him nine miracles.”

Out of the nine miracles, two were performed before Pharaoh and his people. The third miracle was of famine reported in verse

130. The above verses speak of the remaining six miracles. The verse 133 has mentioned five punishments coming to the people of Pharaoh. All these punishments have been termed as 'signs distinct from each other.' According to the comments of the respected Companion 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas each of these punishments lasted for a fixed period of time followed by a period of relief followed by the next punishment. Ibn-al-Mundhir has cited from the Companion 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas that each punishment lasted for seven days starting from Saturday, then they were given three weeks of relief. Imam al-Baghawi, citing the Companion 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas said that the first time when they were relieved of famine by asking the prophet Musa (pbuh) to pray Allah for their relief, they did not keep the promise of believing in Allah. The prophet Musa (pbuh) prayed Allah that they may be inflicted with some painful punishment so that it serves as a lesson to his people and to their descendants. Allah first sent a storm upon them. According to great commentators, this was a flood. All the lands and houses of the people of Pharaoh were filled and surrounded by the water leaving for them no place for farming and living in their homes. The strange thing about it was that the lands and houses of the Israelites were not affected by the water of the flood. In a state of great distress they came to the prophet Musa (pbuh) and requested him to pray Allah for their relief from this calamity. They promised that if they are relieved from the flood they would embrace faith in Allah and let the Israelites go with him from Egypt. The prayer of the prophet was acceded to and the storm subsided. It is reported that their fields were more fertile and productive than before. Again they did not keep their promise and said that the storm was not a punishment from Allah. Rather it came to their benefit and the increase in the produce was the result of the flood and that Musa (pbuh) had nothing to do with it. A period of respite was given to them to reflect and realize their error. After a period of one month another punishment was sent to them in the form of locusts which ate up all the crops and fruits. Some reports say that the locusts devoured even their doors and roofs made of wood and other things of their houses. Again they were surprised to

notice that the locusts did not do any harm to the houses and fields of the Israelites which were quite close to them. Once again they cried for help and implored to the prophet Muss (pbuh) to pray his Lord for taking away this punishment from them and that they make firm promise to believe in him and free the Israelites after their relief. The prophet Musa (pbuh) prayed Allah for their relief again and they got rid of this chastisement.

Seeing that they were left with enough grain to suffice them for one year, they turned against their promise and showed arrogance as before. Once again, a period of peace and relief followed. The third punishment came to them of 'Qummal' rendered here as pest. Qummal in Arabic is used for 'louse' as well as for an insect which eats up grain. It is possible that both kinds of insects were sent to them, that is, small pests started to eat up their grain while equally large number of lice ate up even their hair and eyelashes. Exasperated as they were, they came again to prophet Musa (pbuh) and asked him to pray Allah for their riddance, promising again their acceptance of the true faith and release of the Israelites. He prayed Allah for their relief and Allah relieved them of this punishment too.

The fourth punishment was of the frogs. The frogs were created in such a large number in their houses that they covered them up to their necks. The frogs covered them in their beds when they came to sleep. All of their cooking pans and utensils and their household were full of frogs. Being highly disgusted with this situation they came again to prophet Musa (pbuh), with all their old promises, and asked him to pray for their deliverance. This time also they were relieved of this punishment. They were given enough time to correct themselves but those who incur Allah's wrath are deprived of positive thinking. This time when they were in peace they said that they were sure that Musa (pbuh) was a sorcerer and not a messenger of Allah. Those mishaps to them were the effect of his sorcery.

After a month of relief the next punishment visiting them was that of blood. Everything of their use turned into blood. Their drinks, their food and their water became all blood before they could use them. As they took out water from the wells or tanks it turned into blood. History has reported it was strange that whenever the Egyptians and the Israelites sat together for meal the morsel of food taken by the Egyptian became all blood, while the one taken by an Israelite did not change. This punishment too lasted for seven days. They were relieved of this punishment through the prayer of the Prophet Musa (pbuh), after their usual false promises.

The people of Pharaoh were subjected to the above five punishments one after another but they persisted in their arrogance and showed no sign of taking lesson from these warnings. The sixth punishment has been mentioned in the Qur'an by the Arabic word: 'Rijz' which signifies plague or pestilence. The number of Egyptians killed in this plague is reported to have been more than seventy thousand. They were relieved of this punishment by the prayer of the prophet Musa (pbuh). Again they broke their promise as before. Now, when they showed no sign of understanding they were finally caught by the last punishment – the death. Leaving behind all their lands, houses and possessions they chased the prophet Musa (pbuh) and his people and were drowned in the sea.

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Shafi, Muhammad (2008). Maariful Quran. (Vol .4 surah 7 verses 133-136). English – Maariful Quran : Mufti Muhammad Shafi (r.a) : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive

7:154 The Tablets of Moses

When the anger of Moses was appeased, he took up the tablets: in the writing thereon was guidance and Mercy for such as fear their Lord.

The verse 154 describes that the Prophet Musa (pbuh) lifted up the tablets of the Torah which contained guidance and blessing for those who feared Allah. The Arabic word: 'Nuskha' rendered as contents signifies a writing copied from a book or other writings. There are certain reports that inform us that the tablets had broken at the time the Prophet Musa (pbuh) had put them away quickly. This time Allah gave him the Torah written on some other material.

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Shafi, Muhammad (2008). Maariful Quran. (Vol .4 surah 7 verses 155). English – Maariful Quran : Mufti Muhammad Shafi (r.a) : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive

7:155-156 Seventy people and their Death

And Moses chose seventy of his people for Our place of meeting: when they were seized with violent quaking, he prayed: “O my Lord! if it had been Thy will Thou couldst have destroyed, long before, both them and me: wouldst Thou destroy us for the deeds of the foolish ones among us? this is no more than Thy trial: by it Thou causest whom Thou wilt to stray, and Thou leadest whom Thou wilt into the right path. Thou art our Protector: so forgive us and give us Thy mercy; for Thou art the best of those who forgive. (verse 155)

“And ordain for us that which is good, in this life and in the Hereafter: for we have turned unto Thee.” He said: “With My punishment I visit whom I will; but My mercy extendeth to all things. That (mercy) I shall ordain for those who do right, and practise regular charity, and those who believe in Our signs;- (verse 156)

Seventy people and their Death

The verse 155 describes an unusual event. After the Prophet Musa (pbuh) brought the Torah for his people and bade them to follow it, they, being a crooked and pretentious people, said that they were not sure of it's being the word of Allah, and that the Prophet Musa (pbuh), might have written it himself. He prayed to Allah for making them certain about it. Allah said to Musa that he should choose seventy men out of his people and bring them to the mount of Sinai, He shall make them hear the word of Allah which was done as was promised. But they said that they were not certain of the voice heard by them as being the voice of God – 'We shall believe only when we see Allah vividly.' Since this demand was based on ignorance and obstinacy, they evoked the wrath of Allah. They were caught by the earthquake from beneath and by a thunder clap from above.

Instantly they fell down on the ground as senseless as dead.

The word used in Surah Al-Baqarah while describing this event is which signifies thunder, while in this verse the word has been used which denotes earthquake. The two words can be reconciled by assuming that they were punished by both the thunder and the earthquake. In short, they looked like dead, or perhaps they were really dead. The Prophet Musa (pbuh) was extremely aggrieved by this incident. Firstly, because they were all prominent personalities of the Israelites, secondly, he did not know how he would face his people on his return. They would blame him with the murder of all these people, and would even kill him. The Prophet Musa (pbuh) said to Allah, 'O, my Lord, I know that it is not your will to kill them, as they could be killed at earlier occasions more suited to their destruction.

They could be drowned with Pharaoh, or killed at the time of calf worship, but you did not do so. I am sure that You do not want them dead, but You aim at giving them warning in this way. Besides, You cannot kill all of us for the bad deeds done by some foolish people.' He also said, "O my Lord, I know this is just a trial from You. You let some people go astray with Your test and give guidance to some others who perceive the wisdom and lesson inherent in them. I am also among those who know that You are The Wise and All-Knowing. You are the Most Merciful of all and the Most-forgiving. O my Lord, forgive the insolence shown by these people." As a result of his prayer, all the seventy men were raised to life. "And write for us good in 'this world and in the Hereafter. We turn to you in repentance." Allah Almighty answered in response to this request: "As for My punishment, I afflict with it whom I will. And My Mercy extends to everything. So I shall write it for those who fear, and pay Zakah and those who do believe in Our verses".

That is, though all the disobedient deserve the punishment of Allah but out of His mercy, which encircles everything, even the

wrath of Allah, He afflicts with His punishment only a few whom He wills. His mercy is as great as includes everything, even those who rebel Allah and deny Him are shown some of His mercy, though it is limited to this world alone. When His mercy is so covering that it includes even the disobedient, He will surely write it for those who deserve it by fearing Allah, paying Zakah and by believing in His verses. Then the Prophet Musa (pbuh) was given the good news of it's acceptance.

The Commentators have varied opinion about the above interpretation of this prayer. This verse has no indication of the acceptance of his prayer in clear words as in other cases the approval of his prayers has been' clearly mentioned. For example, the approval of his prayer has been mentioned in these words at another occasion (20:36): O Musa you are given what you asked for." It is mentioned in another verse (10:89) (O Musa and Harun) your prayer has been accepted." At this occasion (7:156), no mention of such approval has been made. Some commentators have, therefore, suggested that this prayer of the Prophet Musa (pbuh) was not accepted in favour of the Israelites, rather, it was accepted in favour of the Muslim Ummah. The author of Ruh al-Ma'ani has, however, said it to be a remote possibility.

The correct interpretation, therefore, is that the Prayer of the Prophet Musa was comprised of two requests. The first, was of mercy and forgiveness for those who were punished, and second for writing the good for him and his people both in this world and in the Hereafter. The acceptance of the first request is mentioned in this verse while the answer to the second request has been mentioned in the next verse (157). In response to his first request he was told that Allah does not punish every one who acts sinfully. He punishes only a few whom He will for their transgression. Therefore these people also shall not be punished. His Mercy is as great as covers every creation of Allah. Even those who are punished are not completely

deprived of His mercy, since they could get harder punishment than they got. Allah has all the powers to do everything He wills.

The Satan claimed that according to this verse he was also the subject of His mercy because His mercy is said to be extending to everything and he was one of 'everything.'

My teacher, the Sheikh Anwar Kashmiri has said that this verse

has indicated that His mercy can encircle every thing. It did not say that His mercy shall encircle everything. In another verse of the Holy Qur'an it has been said in more clear words:

If they disbelieve in you say: 'Your Lord has all encompassing mercy; but His punishment cannot be warded off from the evil-doers-6:147.'

This has made it clear that vastness of His mercy does not preclude the sinners from being punished by Him. In short, the first part of the invocation of the Prophet Musa (pbuh) in favour of these people for mercy and forgiveness was instantly granted, but the second part asking for writing the perfect favour of Allah both in this world and in the Hereafter was stipulated with certain conditions. That is, as far as this world is concerned Allah can make His mercy common to all without regard to their belief or disbelief, but the Hereafter is a distinct world where His Mercy shall be limited only to those who fulfil certain conditions. Firstly, those who fear Allah and take to piety that is, they fulfil all their religious obligations and avoid things forbidden by Allah, and pay Zakah regularly out of their earnings, and thirdly, those who, firmly believe in His verses without offering any pretences or false interpretations to them. If these people too, fulfil the above conditions, the perfect favour shall be written for them both in this world and in the Hereafter.

The next verse, however, has indicated that people who shall perfectly fit the above description will be those coming after them in the last age, and follow the last Prophet, consequently deserving the perfect Mercy or favour of Allah. According to the report of Qatadah cited above, the Satan claimed that he also deserved the Mercy of Allah, for His Mercy extends to everything but the condition of 'Iman (belief) etc. specified in the verse excluded him. Similarly, the Jews and the Christians claimed that they too believed in Allah and paid Zakah, therefore, they shall also get the perfect Mercy of Allah in both the worlds. The next verse, however, included the condition of belief in the last Prophet (S) and in the verses of the Qur'an. This has excluded the Jews and the Christians who did not believe in the Holy Prophet (S).

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Shafi, Muhammad (2008). Maariful Quran. (Vol .4 surah 7 verses 155- 156). English – Maariful Quran : Mufti Muhammad Shafi (r.a) : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive

7:167-169 After them succeeded an (evil) generation

Behold! thy Lord did declare that He would send against them, to the Day of Judgment, those who would afflict them with grievous penalty. Thy Lord is quick in retribution, but He is also Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful. (verse 167)

We broke them up into sections on this earth. There are among them some that are the righteous, and some that are the opposite. We have tried them with both prosperity and adversity: In order that they might turn (to us). (verse 168)

After them succeeded an (evil) generation: They inherited the Book, but they chose (for themselves) the vanities of this world, saying (for excuse): “(Everything) will be forgiven us.” (Even so), if similar vanities came their way, they would (again) seize them. Was not the covenant of the Book taken from them, that they would not ascribe to Allah anything but the truth? and they study what is in the Book. But best for the righteous is the home in the Hereafter. Will ye not understand? (verse 169)

The first two verses (167 and 168) have referred to the two punishments given to the Israelites. Firstly, Allah will keep sending up to the Day of Doom, some individuals or groups of people who will punish and bring disgrace to them. In fact, this is what has been happening to them up to this day. They had been dominated and disdainfully treated by others as has been recorded by history. We may not be in doubt about their present government in a part of Palestine, as it is a common knowledge that the state of Israel is, in fact, a part of the world powers, created by them for their political objectives against the Muslim Ummah. They are still ruled over and dominated by the colonial powers. It is, in fact, a military base of America.

The day these powers stop providing them with their aid they shall not be able to maintain their existence for long.

The second punishment has been mentioned in verse 168. That is, Jewish populace has been cut into fragments scattered in all the parts of the world they could not integrate themselves into a solid nation.

The phrase “And we divided them on the earth as separate communities”, has referred to this fact. The Arabic word signifies breaking into pieces. While the word is plural of Ummah, which means ‘a group’, ‘a party’. The verse means that Allah has divided them into fragments making them scattered on the earth. This indicates that being integrated in a whole, or having an entity as a nation is a blessing of Allah while getting disorganized into parts separated from each other is a punishment from Him. The Muslims have always enjoyed the blessing of having their own entity, and being recognized as an organized people in the world. Starting right from Madinah in the time of the Holy Prophet (S) up to this day they have their own independent rule in various parts of the earth. The presence of Islamic countries from the far East to the West is an obvious proof of this fact.

Their present state in Palestine should not cause any doubt as they have to come together in a place in the last age according to the prophecies made by the Holy Prophet (S) . He informed us in authentic Traditions that Prophet 'Isa (pbuh) shall come down to the earth from heavens before the end of the world, and all the Christians shall embrace Islam. He shall fight a war against the Jews and put them to death. The culprits of Allah are not summoned through police, or other agencies; they are driven to their place of death by the causes created by the will of Allah.

The Prophet 'Isa (Jesus) (pbuh) is to descend from heavens in the land of Syria. He shall fight war with the Jews. The Prophet (S) has been saved the trouble of seeking the Jews in different parts of the world by causing them to gather in Palestine. As to their present political power and sovereignty in the State of Israel, it is a delusion

which beguiles only those who are not conversant with the world politics. The so called 'State of Israel' is, in fact, a common camp ground of the big powers like America, Russia, and England. It depends upon the aid of its masters for its existence. It has to serve the aims and objectives of its Masters. They are still living in real servitude, and are deprived of their free rule in true sense of the word. The Holy Qur'an has informed us of their disgrace and distress up to the end of time in these words:

“And when your Lord declared that he would surely keep sending till the Day of Doom, those who inflict upon them an evil punishment.”

History has recorded that they have been continually persecuted by one people or another right from the time of the Prophet Sulayman (pbuh) to the present age. Their imprisonment by Nebuchadnassar and persecution at the hands of subsequent kings, then their defeat and ignominious fate at the hands of the Holy Prophet (S) and his Caliph 'Umar al-Faruq (RA) are obvious example of this fact. The second phrase of this verse is this:

“Some of them are righteous, and some of them are otherwise.”

The righteous people among them are those who followed the commandments of the Torah faithfully and did not try to distort them as others did. The people termed as 'otherwise' include infidels and those who obstinately disobeyed their prophets and even killed them. The terms 'righteous' and 'otherwise' may also refer to the people who believed in the Holy Prophet (S) and followed the Qur'anic guidance after it's revelation. Opposed to them are those believing in the Torah as the word of Allah, disobeyed it or distorted its commandment and thus sold out their eternal salvation for petty gains of this world. The last phrase of this verse has said: “And we tested them with good happenings and bad happenings so that they might return.”

The “good happenings” refer to their state of prosperity, comfort and ease while ‘bad happenings’ has reference either to their various persecutions and calamities faced by them throughout their history, or it may have referred to some period of famine coming upon them as punishment. Both the methods of testing their obedience were used in their case. Prosperity and wealth were given to them to see if they show their gratefulness to their Lord. When they were a failure in this test, they were made to undergo many punishments already discussed in the foregoing verses.

Their perversion of thought and practice had gone to such extent that in the time of prosperity they said: “Allah is poor and we are rich.” (3:181) while in times of their destitution they said: “Allah’s hand is shackled.” (5:64) Another implication of the verse is that prosperity or poverty, happiness or suffering are sent as a test to mankind in order to judge the faith and love of the created for the Creator. Both, prosperity and suffering should be of no real concern to the men of understanding, as they are temporary and have to end.

It is, therefore, not wise to show arrogance for one’s prosperity or being dejected for one’s impoverishment. A persian poet said: “Neither happiness awarded us with real benefit nor did sorrow make us weep. Both came as guests to our resolute spirit.” The verse 169 has said:

“Then, after them came a generation, who inherited the Book, taking to the mundane stuff of this world and saying: ‘We shall be forgiven.’ And if there comes to them similar stuff, they would take to it (again).”

The Arabic word () is a past tense of () signifying a deputy or a person trusted with one’s work in one’s absence. The second word used here is () with the merged sound of the second letter Lam, generally denoting a deputy who is marked with wickedness, as opposed to the good practices of his elders. The word () is a

derivative of 26, that is, inheritance. The next word is () meaning something bought with money. Sometimes, it is used just for something possessed. The use of this word for money indicates that any thing owned in this world is temporary, because this word, as an antonym of 'Jauhar' (substance), is used for an object which requires something else to show its existence like colour which requires another thing to show itself. The word () has been derived from () which denotes nearness or lack of distance. The word () a feminine gender of this word. The word () may also be taken to be a derivative of (), which signifies disgrace. In this case the word shall refer to something disgraced.

The verse implies that there were two groups of people among the early Jews, the righteous and the wrong-doers. The people coming in later generations who inherited the Torah, however, acted opposite to their elders and made the Book an object of trading or a means of their earning. They used to manipulate and distort the text of the Torah for some money offered to them for this purpose.

Moreover, "they said: "We shall be forgiven". In spite of committing as great a sin as distorting the text of the Book of Allah, they claimed their forgiveness by Allah. They are warned of this error in the very next sentence saying: "If there comes to them similar stuff they would take to it (again)." That is to say, they are in such a state of perversion that in case they are offered money for changing another text, they shall readily accept it. The verse has implied that forgiveness of Allah is always there to those who are mindful of their error and turn to their Lord in repentance showing their remorse over what they have done, and making firm promise of not repeating the same mistake again. Being persistent in their sinful acts and claiming their forgiveness is sheer self deception. The next part of the

verse puts a question to them, whether they were not made to enter a covenant with Allah that they shall never say anything but truth about Allah.

Yes, they read this pledge in their Book. This is nothing but their impudence and obstinacy that stops them from realizing the truth of the Hereafter which is exclusively the fate of those who fear Allah.

References:

Shafi, Muhammad (2008). Maariful Quran. (Vol .4 surah 7 verses 167-169). English – Maariful Quran : Mufti Muhammad Shafi (r.a) : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive

7:73 The Thamud People and the Prophet Salih

To the Thamud people (We sent) Salih, one of their own brethren: He said: "O my people! worship Allah: ye have no other god but Him. Now hath come unto you a clear (Sign) from your Lord! This she-camel of Allah is a Sign unto you: So leave her to graze in Allah's earth, and let her come to no harm, or ye shall be seized with a grievous punishment.

Yusuf Ali writes,

The Thamud people were the successors to the culture and civilization of the 'Ad people, for whom see n. 1040 and 7:65 above. They were cousins to the 'Ad, apparently a younger branch of the same race. Their story also belongs to Arabian tradition, according to which their eponymous ancestor Thamud was a son of 'Abir (a brother of Aram), the son of Sam, the son of Noah.

Their scat was in the north-west corner of Arabia (Arabia Petraea), between Madinah and Syria. It included both rocky country (hijr, 15:80), and the spacious fertile valley (Wadi) and plains country of Qura, which begins just north of the City of Madinah and is traversed by the Hijaz Railway.

When the holy Prophet in the 9th year of the Hijrah led his expedition to Tabuk (about 400 miles north of Madinah) against the Roman forces, on a reported Roman invasion from Syria, he and his men came across the archaeological remains of the Thamud. The recently excavated rock city of Petra, near Maan, may go back to the Thamud, though its architecture has many features connecting it with Egyptian and Graeco-Roman culture overlaying what is called by European writers Nabataean Culture.

Who were the Nabataeans?

They were an old Arab tribe which played a considerable part in history after they came into conflict with Antigonus I in 312 B.C. Their capital was Petra, but they extended their territory right up to

the Euphrates. In 85 B.C. they were lords of Damascus under their king Haritha (Aretas of Roman history). For some time they were allies of the Roman Empire and held the Red Sea littoral. The Emperor Trajan reduced them and annexed their territory in A.D. 105. The Nabataeans succeeded the Thamud of Arabian tradition. The Ibmijid are mentioned by name in an inscription of the Assyrian King Sargon, dated 715 B.C., as a people of Eastern and Central Arabia (Encyclopedia of Islam). See also Appendix VII to Surah 26. With the advance of material civilisation, the Thamud people became godless and arrogant, and were destroyed by an earthquake. Their prophet and warner was Salih, and the crisis in their history is connected with the story of a wonderful she-camel: see next note.

7:85 The Madyan People

To the Madyan people We sent Shu'aib, one of their own brethren: he said: "O my people! worship Allah; Ye have no other god but Him. Now hath come unto you a clear (Sign) from your Lord! Give just measure and weight, nor withhold from the people the things that are their due; and do no mischief on the earth after it has been set in order: that will be best for you, if ye have Faith.

"Madyan" may be identified with "Midian".

Midian and the Midianites are frequently mentioned in the Old Testament, though the particular incident here mentioned belongs to Arab rather than to Jewish tradition.

The Midianites were of Arab race, though, as neighbors of the Canaanites, they probably intermixed with them. They were a wandering tribe: it was Midianite merchants to whom Joseph was sold into slavery, and who took him to Egypt.

Their principal territory in the time of Moses was in the northeast of the Sinai Peninsula, and east of the Amalekites. Under Moses the Israelites waged a war of extermination against them: they slew the kings of Midian, slaughtered all the males, burnt their cities and castles, and captured their cattle (Num. 31:7-11).

This sounds like total extermination. Yet a few generations afterwards, they were so powerful that the Israelites for their sins were delivered into the captivity of the Midianites for seven years: both the Midianites and their camels were without number: and the Israelites hid from them in "dens..... caves, and strongholds" (Judges 7:1-6).

Gideon destroyed them again, (Judges 7:1-25), say about two centuries after Moses. As the decisive battle was near the hill of Moreh, not far south of Mount Tabor, we may localize the Midianites on this occasion in the northern parts of the Jordan valley, at least 200 miles north of the Sinai Peninsula.

This and the previous destruction under Moses were local, and mention no town of Midian. In later times there was a town of Madyan on the east side of the Gulf of 'Aqabah. It is mentioned in Josephus, Eusebius, and Ptolemy: (Encyclopedia of Islam). Then it disappears from geography.

In Muslim times it was a revived town with quite a different kind of population, but it never flourished. The Midianites disappeared from history. Shu'ayb belongs to Arab rather than to Jewish tradition, to which he is unknown. His identification with Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, has no warrant, and I reject it. There is no similarity either in names or incidents, and there are chronological difficulties (see n. 1064 below).

If, as the Commentators tell us, Shu'ayb was in the fourth generation from Abraham, being a great-grandson of Madyan (a son of Abraham), he would be only about a century from the time of Abraham, whereas the Hebrew Bible would give us a period of four to six centuries between Abraham and Moses. The mere fact that Jathro was a Midianite and that another name, Hobab, is mentioned for a father-in-law of Moses in Num 10:29, is slender ground for identification. As the Midianites were mainly a nomad tribe, we need not be surprised that their destruction in one or two settlements did not affect their life in wandering sections of the tribe in other geographical regions. Shu'ayb's mission was apparently in one of the settled towns of the Midianites, which was completely destroyed by an earthquake (7:91). If this happened in the century after Abraham, there is no difficulty in supposing that they were again a numerous tribe, three or five centuries later, in the time of Moses (see last note). As they were a mixed wandering tribe, both their resilience and their eventual absorption can be easily understood. But the destruction of the settlement or settlements (if the Wood or Aykah was a separate settlement, see n. 2000 to 15:78) to which Shu'ayb was sent to preach was complete, and no traces of it now remain. The name of the highest mountain of Yemen, Nabi Shu'ayb (11,000 ft.) has probably no connection with the geographical territory of the nomad Midianites, unless we suppose that their wanderings extended so far south from the territories mentioned in the last note.

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran.
(surah 7 verse 85). [1]Microsoft Word – 007 Araaf.doc
(quran4u.com)

8:11 The Battle of Uhud

Remember He covered you with a sort of drowsiness, to give you calm as from Himself, and he caused rain to descend on you from heaven, to clean you therewith, to remove from you the stain of Satan, to strengthen your hearts, and to plant your feet firmly therewith.

Maududi writes:

In the Battle of Uhud the Muslims passed through a similar experience 3:154 . On both occasions, when prevalent conditions should have produced intense fear and panic among them, God filled their hearts with such peace and tranquillity that they were overpowered with drowsiness.

References:

Maududi, Abul Ala (2010). Tafhim ul Quran.

[1]<https://www.englishtafsir.com/Quran/27/i-index.html>

8:17 When thou threwest (a handful of dust), it was not thy act, but Allah's

It is not ye who slew them; it was Allah: when thou threwest (a handful of dust), it was not thy act, but Allah's: in order that He might test the Believers by a gracious trial from Himself: for Allah is He Who heareth and knoweth (all things).

When the battle began, the Holy Prophet prayed, and threw a handful of dust or sand at the enemy, which, as described in traditions, struck the eyes of the enemy. This had a great psychological effect. Every act in the battle is ascribed to Allah, a it was in His cause and it was not undertaken except by His command. (R)

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran.[1] Microsoft Word – 008 Anfal.doc (quran4u.com)

8:34 The Sacred Mosque: The rightful place of Believers

But what plea have they that Allah should not punish them, when they keep out (men) from the sacred Mosque – and they are not its guardians? No men can be its guardians except the righteous; but most of them do not understand.

Asad writes,

At the time of the revelation of this surah (the year 2 H.) Mecca was still in the possession of the hostile Quraysh, and no Muslim was allowed to enter it. Owing to their descent from Abraham, the Quraysh considered themselves entitled to the guardianship of the Ka'bah (“the Inviolable House of Worship”), which had been built by Abraham as the first temple ever dedicated

to the One God (see surah 2, note 102). The Qur'an refutes this contention, just as it refutes the claim of the children of Israel to being “the chosen people” by virtue of their descent from Abraham. (Cf. in this connection 2:124, and especially the last sentence, “My covenant does not embrace the wrongdoers.”) Although they still retained a modicum of belief in God, the Quraysh had entirely forsaken the unitarian faith of Abraham, thus forfeiting any moral claim to the guardianship of the Temple (al-bayt) built by him

References:

Asad, Muhammad (1980). The Message of the Quran.
<https://islamiconlinelibrary.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Message-of- Quran.pdf>

8:43 Remember in thy dream Allah showed them to thee as few

Remember in thy dream Allah showed them to thee as few: if He had shown them to thee as many, ye would surely have been discouraged, and ye would surely have disputed in (your) decision; but Allah saved (you): for He knoweth well the (secrets) of (all) hearts.

According to Anwar al Bayan,

Before the battle, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) saw in a dream that the disbelievers were few in number, and the Companions (RA) were encouraged by this. If Allah had shown the Holy Prophet (pbuh) that the disbelievers were many in number, the Companions would have lost courage to fight and they would have disputed among themselves whether they should advance to fight or retreat instead.

Referring to this, Allah says, “Remember in thy dream Allah showed them to thee as few: if He had shown them to thee as many, ye would surely have been discouraged, and ye would surely have disputed in (your) decision; but Allah saved (you): for He knoweth well

the (secrets) of (all) hearts.” Allah knows exactly whose heart is imbued with His love and is devoted to the Hereafter. He is also well aware of those who entertain love only for this world, have no inclination for the Hereafter and are cowardly.

References:

Madani, Muhammad. Anwar ul Bayan. (vol. 2 p. 393). [1]Tafsir-Anwarul-Bayan-02.pdf (islamicweblibrary.com). Tafseer Anwar-ul- Bayan (English) [Illuminating Discourses on Noble Quran : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive

8:44 And remember when ye met, He showed them to you as few in your eyes

And remember when ye met, He showed them to you as few in your eyes, and He made you appear as contemptible in their eyes: that Allah might accomplish a matter already enacted. For to Allah do all questions go back (for decision).

Yahiya Emerick writes,

‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud explained that on that day at Badr, the enemy appeared to be smaller in number than it actually was. He said to a man near him that day, “They look about to be ninety in number.” The man replied, “No, they must be about a hundred.” (Ma’ariful Qur’an) In fact they were a thousand!

References:

Emerick, Yahiya. *The Meaning of the Holy Qur’an in Today’s English* (p. 829). Unknown. Kindle Edition.

8:67 Jihad is for the sake of Allah alone

It is not fitting for a prophet that he should have prisoners of war until he hath thoroughly subdued the land. Ye look for the temporal goods of this world; but Allah looketh to the Hereafter: And Allah is Exalted in might, Wise.

Yusuf Ali writes,

An ordinary war may be for territory or trade, revenge or military glory, -all “temporal goods of this world.” Such a war is condemned. But a Jihad is fought under strict conditions laid down by Islam, and solely for the cause of Allah. All baser motives, therefore are strictly excluded. The greed of gain in the shape of ransom from captives has no place in such warfare. (R). At the same time, if there has been heavy loss of life already, captives may be taken, and it would be for the Imam to exercise his discretion as to the time when it was safe to release them, and whether the release should be free or on parole or on a fine by way of punishment.

Destruction and slaughter, however repugnant to a gentle soul like that of Muhammad, were inevitable where evil tried to suppress the good. Even Jesus, whose mission was more limited, had to say: “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace but a sword.” (Matt. 10:34).

Seventy captives were taken at Badr, and it was decided to take ransom for them. While the general principle of fighting for the purpose of taking captives in order to get their ransom is condemned, the particular action in this case was approved in verses 68-71.

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 8 verse 67). [1]Microsoft Word – 008 Anfal.doc (quran4u.com)

8:68 Captivity in war

Had it not been for a previous ordainment from Allah, a severe penalty would have reached you for the (ransom) that ye took.

Yusuf Ali writes,

Though any motive of worldly gain, which may have been in the minds of some among the victorious Muslim army, is condemned as worthy of a severe penalty, what actually happened is ascribed to the Plan of Allah, which was preordained.

Among the prisoners taken were the Prophet's uncle 'Abbas and Hadhrat 'Ali's brother, Aqil, who afterwards became Muslims. 'Abbas was an ancestor of the founder of the celebrated 'Abbasi Dynasty which played such a notable part in Islamic history. In his case the promise made in verse 70 was amply fulfilled. In the case of all prisoners, if there was any good in their hearts, their very fight against Islam and their capture led to their being blessed with Islam. Thus does Allah's Plan work in a marvelous way, and evolve good out of seeming evil.

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 8 verse 68). [1]Microsoft Word – 008 Anfal.doc (quran4u.com)

8:74 Hijrah

Those who believe, and adopt exile, and fight for the Faith, in the cause of Allah as well as those who give (them) asylum and aid,- these are (all) in very truth the Believers: for them is the forgiveness of sins and a provision most generous.

According to the Study Quran,

This verse is understood to exalt the Emigrants and the Helpers above all other categories of Muslims, and this rank is seen by most Muslims as forever restricted to them, based upon a ḥadīth that states, “There is no migration (hijrah) after the victory,” thought by most to refer to the conquest of Makkah, but by others to refer to the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyah, which enabled open travel between Makkah and Madinah for the two years previous to the final conquest of Makkah by the Prophet and his followers. Some commentators mention opinions that describe leaving one’s homeland to campaign in the way of God as a kind of hijrah (Q, R).

References:

Nasr, Hossein (2015). Study Quran.
<https://islamiconlineibrary.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/TheStudyQuranANewTranslationAndCommentaryBySeyyedHosseinNasr.pdf>

8:9 The Battle of Badr

Remember ye implored the assistance of your Lord, and He answered you: “I will assist you with a thousand of the angels, ranks on ranks.”

It is said that on the day of the Battle of Badr, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) implored Allâh in the following words: “O Lord! Fulfil what you have promised. O Allâh! If this little band of your servants is destroyed you will not be worshipped on earth.” (Bukhârî, Abû Muslim). The verse above was revealed in response to this prayer. The “help with a thousand angels” should be understood in a metaphorical sense. There is no statement in the Holy Qur’ân that angels actually fought. Here and in 3:125 it is to be meant that the help from angels was in the form of strengthening the hearts of the Muslims against the three times bigger and much more well- equipped Makkan forces, and at the same time filling the hearts of their enemies with fear: It is said that during the fight calm and tranquillity fell upon the Companions who were fighting (8:10), and their hearts felt strengthened and their footsteps steadied (8:11). The number one thousand angels is significant. In the battle of Badr the number of enemies fighting against the Muslims was 1,000 and the number of angels who came to aid the Muslims was 1,000. In the battle of Uhad the enemy attacked the Muslim with 3,000 men, and the angels who came to aid the Muslims were also 3,000 (3:124). Finally, in the Battle of the Confederates, the enemy came with 5,000 soldiers and correspondingly the number of angels on the Muslim side was 5,000 (3:125). These varying numbers also tell the number of the enemy forces fighting against the Muslims on each of these three occasions.

References:

NOORUDDÎN ,ALLÂMAH. (2015). Exegesis of The Holy Qur’ân Commentary and Reflections. <https://islamiconlinelibrary.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Exegesis-Commentary.pdf>

9:1 A (declaration) of immunity from Allah and His Messenger

A (declaration) of immunity from Allah and His Messenger, to those of the Pagans with whom ye have contracted mutual alliances:-

According to Bayan al Quran,

This ayah announces the disavowal by Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW) unto the idolaters of Arabia. All of the treaties were abrogated except for those described in the following ayaat. It should also be mentioned that this surah does not start with 'Bismillah' as do all other surahs in the Qur'an, because 'Bismillah' is an assurance of protection and mercy and as per report of Ali (RAA) this surah was revealed with a sword in its hand, and thus could not have the assurance of peace and mercy for the disbelievers.

References:

Ahmad, Israr. (2012). Bayan ul Quran. [1]9-At-Tauba.pdf (islamicweblibrary.com)

9:2 Allah will cover with shame those who reject Him

Go ye, then, for four months, backwards and forwards, (as ye will), throughout the land, but know ye that ye cannot frustrate Allah (by your falsehood) but that Allah will cover with shame those who reject Him.

All of the disbelievers and

idolaters of Makkah were allowed a respite of four months to leave the Arabian peninsula or embrace Islam. This refers to all those who were covered by some treaty without a fixed time limit and those whose treaties ended in less than four months. Then they were told to know that they could not escape Allah's decision, for He would surely humiliate the disbelievers.

References:

Ahmad, Israr. (2012). Bayan ul Quran. [1]9-At-Tauba.pdf (islamicweblibrary.com)

9:25 Battle of Taif

Assuredly Allah did help you in many battle-fields and on the day of Hunain: Behold! your great numbers elated you, but they availed you naught: the land, for all that it is wide, did constrain you, and ye turned back in retreat.

In the year 630, just after Mecca surrendered to the Prophet, the nearby city of Ta'if organized an army to fight against the Muslims under the command of one Malik ibn 'Awf an- Nadri. The two powerful tribes of Hawazin and Thaqif, who were the nucleus of the new enemy, were so confident of victory that they ordered all their women, children, camels and sheep to accompany them to the battlefield, thinking it would make them that much more earnest to win the fight. When the Prophet received news of the march of this new foe, he organized an army that numbered over twelve thousand men and set out from Mecca to meet this new enemy. (He asked the people of Mecca, his former foes, for the loan of weapons to equip his army. They were pleased that he asked, rather than took, and provided many weapons.) When the Muslims entered into a narrow valley named Hunayn, they were suddenly ambushed by the enemy – almost 20,000 strong – with a rain of arrows followed by an infantry charge, and the startled Muslims retreated in utter confusion. The Prophet and a few faithful companions not only stood their ground, however, but they continued to advance, and even Abu Sufyan, the recent convert, stood by the Prophet and helped defend him from the rushing assault of the enemy. (He later remarked that he would rather be ruled by a Qurayshi man than by a man of Ta'if!)

The Prophet called for the Muslims to return and asked his uncle 'Abbas to shout loudly to them. 'Abbas cried out, "Companions of the Tree (from the Pledge of Ridwan), Companions of the Chapter of the Calf!" (This was a reference to chapter two of the Qur'an and it's special place in the hearts of many.) Feeling ashamed at their cowardice, the Muslims returned and drove the forces of Ta'if back. Even some embittered Meccans who had come, secretly desiring to kill the Prophet in the confusion, found faith in God and instead helped the Prophet! Soon the pagans were on the run. They abandoned their women, children and goods in their camp and ran

all the way back to the secure walls of their city. The Muslims took some 6,000 men, women and children captive and then laid siege to the city. The companions asked the Prophet to pray for the ruin of Ta'if, but the Prophet instead prayed for their conversion. Siege engines and catapults were soon brought by the recently converted Muslim tribe of Banu Daws from the south, but after a little less than a month, the Prophet lifted the siege, realizing that a sacred truce month had just arrived. However, he vowed to the beleaguered men of Ta'if that he would return with a new force the following year unless they capitulated. Some days passed, and a delegation of men from Ta'if arrived at the Prophet's camp even before he returned to Mecca. They made offers of peace and then declared their conversion to Islam. They begged for the return of their families and goods. An-Nadri even sent word that both he and his nobles had converted. The Prophet asked the delegation to choose what they wanted returned: their captured men, women and children or their captured goods. They chose their people, and, after calling upon his men to consider freeing the captured people as a gesture of goodwill towards their new brothers-in-faith, the Prophet succeeded in getting the 6,000 captives freed. He also gave a hundred camels to an-Nadri and confirmed him as chief of the city of Ta'if. An-Nadri, who was surprised by the Prophet's generosity, then composed a poem to praise the Prophet and his graciousness. (At-Tabari)

References:

Emerick, Yahiya. *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an in Today's English* (p. 829). Unknown. Kindle Edition.

9:26 But Allah did pour His calm on the Messenger and on the Believers

But Allah did pour His calm on the Messenger and on the Believers, and sent down forces which ye saw not: He punished the Unbelievers; thus doth He reward those without Faith. It is recorded that at the point in the battle when some of the army was retreating from the initial onslaught of the Hawāzin, the Prophet called to them, but his voice was drowned out by the din of the battle. Among the people at his side were his uncle ‘Abbās, who had a powerful voice, and they called out to the Emigrants and Helpers. They rallied to the Prophet, who it is said then picked up a handful of dust or pebbles—in an account similar to the one usually given in connection with the Battle of Badr (see 8:17c)—and threw it at the enemy, after which the tide of the battle turned and the Hawāzin and Thaḳīf were put to rout.

On His Tranquility, see 48:4c. Hosts whom you saw not is understood to refer to angels. The commentators record accounts of members of the enemy army, long after the battle, saying that before and during the battle they encountered men with white faces that struck terror into their hearts (R). As discussed in 3:124–26c, it is traditionally believed that the angels, if they participated in fighting at all, did so only at the Battle of Badr; one interpretation of the help they would give is to strengthen the hearts and resolve of the believers, or in the words of al- Rāzī, “To cast beautiful inspirations into their hearts.”

References:

Nasr, Hossein (2015). Study Quran.
<https://islamiconlinelibrary.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/TheStudyQuranANewTranslationAndCommentaryBySeyyedHosseinNasr.pdf>

9:38-42 Battle of Tabuk

O ye who believe! what is the matter with you, that, when ye are asked to go forth in the cause of Allah, ye cling heavily to the earth? Do ye prefer the life of this world to the Hereafter? But little is the comfort of this life, as compared with the Hereafter. (verse 38)

Unless ye go forth, He will punish you with a grievous penalty, and put others in your place; but Him ye would not harm in the least. For Allah hath power over all things. (verse 39)

If ye help not (your leader), (it is no matter): for Allah did indeed help him, when the Unbelievers drove him out: he had no more than one companion; they two were in the cave, and he said to his companion, "Have no fear, for Allah is with us": then Allah sent down His peace upon him, and strengthened him with forces which ye saw not, and humbled to the depths the word of the Unbelievers. But the word of Allah is exalted to the heights: for Allah is Exalted in might, Wise. (verse 40)

Go ye forth, (whether equipped) lightly or heavily, and strive and struggle, with your goods and your persons, in the cause of Allah. That is best for you, if ye (but) knew. (verse 41)

If there had been immediate gain (in sight), and the journey easy, they would (all) without doubt have followed thee, but the distance was long, (and weighed) on them. They would indeed swear by Allah, "If we only could, we should certainly have come out with you": They would destroy their own souls; for Allah doth know that they are certainly lying. (verse 42)

The verses quoted above describe an important battle from among those fought by the Holy Prophet (S). As a corollary, also

given there are many injunctions and instructions. This battle is known as the battle of Tabuk and is almost the last battle of the Holy Prophet (S).

Tabuk is the name of a place located close to the Syrian border towards the north of Madinah. Syria was, at that time, a province of the government controlled by Byzantine Christians.

When the Holy Prophet (S) reached Madinah in the 8th year of Hijrah after the conquest of Makkah and the battle of Hunain, that was a time major parts of the Arabian Peninsula had come under the control of the Islamic state. This was a period of some peace Muslims could enjoy after their eight year long battles against the Mushriks of Makkah.

But, destiny has its own workings. Is it not that Allah had already revealed about the blessed person of the Holy Prophet (S) (so that He makes it prevail over every faith – 9:33,48:28, 61:9) which was the glad tidings of a world of victories and the ascendancy of the Faith of Truth? The Prophet (S) and his companions in the mission would hardly have the respite to relax. Soon after they reached Madinah, Syrian traders of olive oil informed them that the Byzantine ruler, Hiraql had assembled his forces at Tabik on the border of Syria. They were also told that soldiers of the Byzantine army had been placated by the payment of advance salaries for one year and that they had sinister understanding with some Arab tribes and that they all had plans to mount a surprise attack on Madinah.

When this information reached the Holy Prophet (S), he decided that their attack plans should be pre-empted and they should be challenged where they are gathered together with their forces. (Tafsir Mazhari, with reference to Muhammad ibn Yusuf Salihi).

By chance, this was a terribly hot summer. People in Madinah were generally devoted to agriculture. Their farms were close to being harvested. On this depended their economy, rather the sustenance of the whole year. Like people in vocations who have empty pockets by the end of the month, people who depend on agricultural produce are empty-handed close to the harvesting time. On the one hand, they have poverty while on the other, they have hopes of income in the near future. Then, there was this scorching heat of the summer for a people who had their first breather after eight years of incessant wars. No doubt, this was an exacting trial.

But, equally crucial was the time. This Jihad was different. It was not like the wars they had fought before. At that time, they were fighting common people like them. Here, they were to confront the trained armed forces of Hiraql, the ruler of Byzantine. Therefore, the Holy Prophet (S) ordered all Muslims of Madinah to come out for this Jihad. He also invited some other tribes living around Madinah to join in.

This general call was a tough test for those who were willing to make sacrifices for Islam as well as a challenge to the hypocrites who would have to prove their claim to be Muslims by joining the Jihad or be exposed as false pretenders. Apart from this consideration, the inevitable consequence was that those who professed belief in Islam reacted to the call in terms of the conditions they were in. The Holy Qur'an has enumerated them as separate groups of people and has pointed out to their condition as well. The first group included those who were strong and perfect in their faith. They were ready for Jihad without any hesitation. The second group was composed of those who hesitated at the initial stage but, later on, joined up with those ready for Jihad. About these two groups of people, the Holy Quran said: , (. . . who followed him in the hour of hardship after the hearts of a group of them were about to turn crooked – 9:117). The third group was of those who were unable to join this Jihad on the basis of some genuine excuse. About that, by saying: (There is no blame on the weak, nor on the sick – 9:91), the Holy Qur'an has announced the acceptance of their excuse. Belonging to the fourth group were people who, despite that they had no excuse to offer, simply did not participate in the Jihad out of sheer laziness. Several verses were revealed about them, for example: (And there are others who admitted their sins – 9:102), and (and there are others whose matter is deferred till the command of Allah [comes] – (9:106), and (And [He relented] towards the three whose matter was deferred – 9:118). These three verses were revealed about similar people. They carry admonition for their inertia as well as the good news that their Taubah or repentance has been accepted. The fifth group was that of the hypocrites, the munafiqs. Their hypocrisy was deep seated and saying yes to Jihad was hard. Finally, they failed to cover it up and stayed away from Jihad. Hypocrites have been mentioned in the verses of the Qur'an on many places.

The sixth group included munifiqs who had joined up with Muslims with the objective of spying and mischief making. The Holy Qur'an mentions their conduct in the following verses:

1. (and among you there are their listeners – 9:47)
2. (and if you ask them, they will say – 9:65)
3. (and had planned for what they could not achieve – 9:74).

Given above were details about those who stayed away from the Jihad. But, the fact is that their total number was negligible. The majority did belong to those Muslims who, despite many prohibitive factors, chose to sacrifice all gains and comforts and were ready to face expected hardships in the way of Allah. This is the reason why the total number of the Islamic army which set out for this Jihad was thirty thousand – a number never seen in a Jihad before.

The outcome of this Jihad expedition was that Hiraql, the Byzantine ruler – when he heard about such a large Muslim force coming up against him – was overtaken by awe. He simply did not turn up on the battlefield. The Holy Prophet (S) camped on the war front with the army of his angelic companions for a few days in the hope that the enemy may decide to come. When totally disappointed, he returned back to Madinah.

The verses quoted above obviously relate to the fourth group of people who did not take part in the Jihad because of their inertia and without any valid excuse. In the beginning of this set of verses, they were admonished for their lethargy, then, they were told why they behaved the way they did and, finally, they were told how to correct themselves. This wise approach unfolds major lessons.

Regard for Dunya and Disregard for akhirah: The Root of all Crimes

No doubt, what has been said above is related to a particular event. But, if we were to think about it, we shall realize that the real cause of negligence towards faith – and of every crime and sin – is

nothing but this love for the material and heedlessness towards the life to come.

Therefore, the Holy Prophet (S) said: (The love for Dunya [material life of the present world] is at the top of every error and sin). That is why it was said in the verse:

O those who believe, what is wrong with you that, when it is said to you, “Come out in the way of Allah,” you turn heavy (and cling) to the ground. Have you become happy with the worldly life instead of the Hereafter? –38.

This was the diagnosis of the disease. Its treatment appears next when it was said: So, the enjoyment of the worldly life is but little as compared with the Hereafter – 38.

The thrust of the argument is that one’s major concern in life should be that of the eternal life in Akhirah. It is this concern for the Akhirah that offers the only and the most perfect treatment of all diseases. Incidentally, this also happens to be the master prescription for eradication of crimes that bother human societies all over the world.

The 'Aqa'id of Islam (articles of faith) are based on three principles:

1. Tauhid (Oneness of Allah);
2. Risalah (the true mission of the messenger and prophet sent by Allah) and
3. Akhirah (Hereafter).

Out of these, the belief in Akhirah is, in all reality, the moving spirit for correction of deeds and serves as an iron wall before crimes and sins. A little thought would make it amply clear that there can be no peace in the world without subscribing to this belief. The world as we see it today has reached its zenith in terms of its material progress. Then, there is no dearth of functional solutions and plans designed to eradicate crimes. Laws proliferate.

So does the administrative machinery to interpret and implement the objective. No doubt, there is progress in those terms. But, along with it, everyone is witnessing crimes increasing day by day, every- where, in all societies. The reason, in our humble view, is no other but that the disease has not been properly diagnosed and the line of treatment is not sound. The root of the disease is materialism, excessive indulgence in the temporal and negligence or avoidance of the thought of any life to come. The only way this frame of mind can be corrected is to remember Allah and think about the Akhirah, the life to come. Whenever and wherever in this world this master prescription was used, whole nations and their societies became models of humanity at its best earning the admiration of angels. That this happened during the blessed period of the Holy Prophet (S) and during the age of his noble Companions, is sufficient as its proof.

It is interesting that the modern world would very much like to eradicate crimes but it would do so by not having to bother about God and the Hereafter. To achieve this purpose, it invents, introduces and surrounds itself with things to live with – a lifestyle which would never allow human beings to turn their attention towards God and Hereafter. The result of this negative approach is no mystery. We are watching it with our own eyes. Even in the face of ever better laws, all legal systems seem to be failing. Crimes are there as they were, in fact, they are increasing with dangerous speed. To conclude, we wish that intelligent people among countries and nations of the world would think of using this Qur’anic prescription, at least for once, and discover for themselves how easily crimes can be controlled. Now, as we move to the second verse (39), the text has, after serving a notice of warning to the lazy and the listless about their disease and its treatment, delivered its verdict by saying:

’If you do not come out for Jihad, Allah will have you go through a painful punishment and bring in your place a nation other than you, and (by your refusal to follow Islam) you can bring no loss to Allah (or His Messenger) because Allah is powerful over everything. In the third verse (40), by citing the event of the Hijrah of the Holy Prophet (S), it has been stressed that the Rasul of Allah has no need to depend on any human help and support. Allah can

help him directly through unseen factors – as it happened at the time of Hijrah when his own people had forced him to leave his homeland. On this journey, the only companion he had was Sayyidna Abu Bakr (RA), the true one. Enemy foot soldiers and riders were looking for them in hot pursuit. The place to hide he had found was no fortified fortress. It was just a cave and the enemy search party had reached close to its edges. Inside it, the companion of the cave, Sayyidna Abu Bakr (RA) was worried, not for his own safety, but about his master. He was in fear lest the enemy outside were to harm the Holy Prophet (S). But, the master himself was sitting calm like a mountain at peace. Not simply that he was himself cool and collected, he was telling his companion, Sayyidna Abu Bakr: (‘la taban innalliha ma’ana: Do not grieve. Allah is with us).

What has been said here is composed of a couple of words, easy and effortless as they sound. But, let those listening place the blueprint of conditions prevailing before their eyes, cross their hearts and ask: Can someone dependent on mere material means be that tranquil? Every honest person would say that it was just not possible. The reason for this was no other but that which the Qur’an has given in the next sentence:

So, Allah sent down His tranquility on him and strengthened him with troops you did not see . . .

These troops could be troops of angels, and of the elemental forces of the entire universe too – for they are, so to say, a virtual army of Allah. When this happened, the ultimate came to be. The word of disbelievers was rendered low and the word of Allah remained the highest. In the fourth verse (41), the command given earlier has been repeated for emphasis. It is being said here that, once the Prophet of Allah orders people to come out for Jihad, they must come out as a matter of absolute obligation – for on the compliance of this command hinges all that is good for them.

The fifth verse (42) mentions an excuse offered by those who did not participate in the Jihad because of negligence and lethargy. It was rejected as unacceptable because they did not use the ability

given by Allah to pick and choose the right thing to do in His way. Therefore, the excuse of not having that ability is not valid.

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Shafi, Muhammad (2008). Maariful Quran. (Vol .4 surah 9 verses 38-42). English – Maariful Quran : Mufti Muhammad Shafi (r.a) : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive

9:5 The Conquest of Makkah

Then, when the sacred months have passed, slay the idolaters wherever ye find them, and take them (captive), and besiege them, and prepare for them each ambush. But if they repent and establish worship and pay the poor-due, then leave their way free. Lo! Allah is Forgiving, Merciful

The emphasis is on the first clause; it is only when the four months of grace are past, and the other party show no signs of desisting from their treacherous designs by right conduct, that the state of war supervenes-between Faith and Unfaith.

When war becomes inevitable, it must be prosecuted with vigour. According to the English phrase, you cannot fight with kid gloves. The fighting may take the form of killing, capture, or siege, or ambush and other stratagems. But even then there is room for repentance and amendment on the part of the guilty party, and if that takes place, our duty is forgiveness and the establishment of peace. The repentance must be sincere, and that is shown by conduct-a religious spirit of true prayer and charity. In that case we are not to bar the gate against the repentant. On the contrary we must do all we can to make their way easy, remembering that Allah is Oftforgiving, Most Merciful

References:

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9:7 As long as these stand true to you, stand ye true to them

How can there be a league, before Allah and His Messenger, with the Pagans, except those with whom ye made a treaty near the sacred Mosque? As long as these stand true to you, stand ye true to them: for Allah doth love the righteous.

These ayat from 7 to 24 were

revealed before the conquest of Makkah as mentioned in the introduction. At that time when the Muslims were preparing for their final assault against the Quraysh of Makkah, a difference of opinion arose between on the question whether they fight against the Quraysh or not. Much of the debate was initiated by the hypocrites of Madinah who discouraged the Muslims from fighting against the Quraysh, for they said that the Quraysh were the custodians of Makkah and if they fight, they would be shedding blood in the Holy Sanctuary. Thus Allah (SWT) admonished them in this ayah and said that how can there be a treaty with the idolaters on part of Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW), for they will never abide by it as they have so much hatred in their hearts for the Muslims that if given the least opportunity, they will not even bother to honor their pledge. Thus Allah (SWT) stated that there can never be a treaty with the idolaters except for those with whom the Muslims concluded a treaty at the Sacred Mosque i.e. the peace treaty of Hudaibiyah. Then He commanded the Muslims to honor this treaty as long as they uphold it, for He loves those who keep their promises.

References:

Ahmad, Israr. (2012). Bayan ul Quran. [1]9-At-Tauba.pdf (islamicweblibrary.com)

Adam

The following is from “Exposition of the Quran” by Ghulam Ahmed Pervez pg. 1141: Adam

Ud-matun

means the human characteristic of living together. Al-idam means anything, which is favourable (Taj-ul-Urus). Ibn-e-Faris says that the basic meaning of this word is mutual understanding, love, and affection. The word adam is also used for any outstanding individual, by whose virtue a tribe is recognized (Taj).

It is believed that Adam, supposedly the first man created by Allah, (whose story is narrated in the Quran regarding his exit from Jannah) was the first Rasool. This is not supported by any verse of the Holy Quran, neither is the name of Eve (Hawwa) mentioned in the Quran.

The story is narrated in a symbolic form and does not pertain to a particular person or a couple; in fact this is the story of mankind and Adam is its representative. The word Adam occurs 25 times in the Quran and only in one place (3:32) it appears that Adam was also the name of a chosen person. The greatest quality of adam or man is that he has been bestowed with the potential to acquire knowledge of how everything in the universe functions (2:33), then all the malaika (divine forces) were ordained to bow down before him – come within his reach (2:34).

Now it is upto him to utilize his potential and conquer all that lies in the universe.

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Pervez, Ahmad (2010). Exposition of the Quran. (p. 1141).
<https://islamiconlinelibrary.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/ExpositionOfHollyQuran.pdf>

Did Jesus foretell of Muhammad?

Quran 61:6:

And [mention] when Jesus, the son of Mary, said, "O children of Israel, indeed I am the messenger of Allah to you confirming what came before me of the Torah and bringing good tidings of a messenger to come after me, whose name is Ahmad." But when he came to them with clear evidences, they said, "This is obvious magic."

The following excerpt is from "The Holy Quran in Today's English" Note #2370:

Ahmad means praise, and the name Muhammad, which is derived from it, means the one who is praised. (Muhammad once also called himself Ahmad in a tradition recorded in Bukhari, which is like a person named Jonathon calling himself John, Jon, Johan or Johnny.) Did Jesus foretell such a man with that name (Ahmad) in the New Testament? Jesus spoke in the Aramaic language. His later followers wrote his words down in Greek. The possibilities for misinterpreting or miswriting his words are thus endless. In the New Testament, John 14:16 has Jesus predicting that someone like him (Greek: *allos*) will come after him to complete God's religion for his followers.

Thus, the essential difference and main point of contention between Islam and Christianity: if Jesus was a god, then the one who will come after him will be another god, like him (i.e., the Holy Spirit). If Jesus was a man blessed of God, then the one who will come after him will be a man blessed of God, as well. Now turning to the Greek word used for that future being, *paracletos*, we find that this term is often translated as advocate or comforter. This 'person' is then held by Christian theologians to be the third part of the Trinitarian God, or the Holy Ghost. However, the Holy Ghost (whom Muslims believe is Gabriel) was already present and working in the world before this, as evidenced by verses such as Luke 2:25 and others like it, including some in the Old Testament. Now there is another Greek word, *pariclytos*, that is nearly

identical, which means, ‘highly praised.’ There is only one vowel sound of difference!

Muslims hold that Jesus foretold the coming of Muhammad, based on this verse in the Qur’an [61:6], and they also look upon the New Testament book of John as a kind of confirmation.

John 16:7-14 even stipulates (specifically in verse 13) that this one who will come after Jesus will “...not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and he will show you things to come...” The first word of revelation to Muhammad was, “Read,” and the frequently used command, qul, or say, (or tell them), repeatedly orders Muhammad to preach what is told to him. In verse 2:252 we even read, “These are the revelations of God. We recite them truthfully to you, for you, (Muhammad), are one of His messengers.” (Also see 53:3 where it is said of him, “...and he doesn’t say anything on his own.”) If the comforter (or highly praised one) were one of the three equal parts of the godhead, would he be a mute slave who had to wait for instructions on what to tell people from a superior? Furthermore, Muhammad said he was the completion of God’s revealed religion until the end of time; he witnessed to the truth of Jesus as a righteous servant of God and he prophesied of the End Times (quite often). Clearly, the one Jesus foretold was not yet another ‘part’ of Almighty God coming into the world, but a man who would wait upon the instructions of his Master.

Muhammad, himself, once said that he was the result of “...the invocation to God of Abraham and of the glad tidings that Jesus conveyed.” He also said that his mother dreamt of him before he was born and that the mothers of all the prophets had dreams about their sons, as well. (Ahmad)

References:

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Harut and Marut

Quran 2:102:

They followed what the evil ones gave out (falsely) against the power of Solomon: the blasphemers Were, not Solomon, but the evil ones, teaching men Magic, and such things as came down at babylon to the angels Harut and Marut. But neither of these taught anyone (Such things) without saying: “We are only for trial; so do not blaspheme.” They learned from them the means to sow discord between man and wife. But they could not thus harm anyone except by Allah’s permission. And they learned what harmed them, not what profited them.

And they knew that the buyers of (magic) would have no share in the happiness of the Hereafter. And vile was the price for which they did sell their souls, if they but knew! (Yusuf Ali Translation)

The following excerpt is taken from “The Holy Quran: Text, Translation and Commentary” by Abdullah Yusuf Ali pg. 45 note 104:

“This verse has been interpreted variously. Who were Harut and Marut? What did they teach? Why did they teach it? The view that commends itself to me is that of the Tafsir Haqqani, following Baidhawi and the Tafsir Kabir. The word “angels” as applied to Harut and Marut is figurative. It means “good men, of knowledge, wisdom and power.” In modern languages, the word “angel” is applied to a good and beautiful woman. The earlier tradition made angels masculine, and applied to them the attributes that I have mentioned, along with the attribute of beauty, which was implied in goodness, knowledge, wisdom, and power.

Harut and Marut lived in Babylon, a very ancient seat of science, especially the science of astronomy. The period may be supposed to anywhere about the time when the ancient Eastern Monarchies were strong and enlightened: probably even earlier, as Ma-ru-tu or Mandruk was a deified hero afterwards worshipped as a god of magic in Babylon. Being good men, Harut and Marut of course dabbled in nothing evil, and their evil hands were certainly clean of

fraud. But knowledge and the arts, if learned by evil men, can be applied to evil uses. The evil ones, besides their fraudulent magic, also learnt a little of this true science and applied it to evil uses.

Harut and Marut did not withhold knowledge, yet never taught anyone without plainly warning them of the trial and temptation of knowledge in the hands of evil men. Being men of insight, they also saw the blasphemy that might rise to the lips of the evil ones puffed up with science and warned them against it.

Knowledge is indeed a trial or temptation: if we are warned, we know its dangers: if Allah has endowed us with free will, we must be free to choose between the benefit and the danger.

Among the Jewish traditions in the Midrash (Jewish Tafsir) was a story of two angels who asked Allah's permission to come down to earth but succumbed to temptation, and were hung up by their feet at Babylon for punishment.

Such stories about sinning angels who were cast down to punishment were believed in by the early Christians also. (See the Second Epistle of Peter, 2:4, and the Epistle of Jude, verse 6). (R). There may be an allusion to such legends here, but much spiritualized and we are expressly warned against dabbling in magic or believing that anything can hurt us except by God's will, and God is just and righteous.

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (pg. 45, note 104). [1]Microsoft Word – 002 Baqarah.doc (quran4u.com)

King Joseph

According to “The Unchallengeable Miracles of the Quran” by Yusuf al-Hajj: The Qur’an mentions the ancient rulers of Egypt with the title Fir’awn (Pharaoh). This title comes up at seventy-four places in the Qur’an. However, in Soorah Yusuf, the Qur’an did not mention the title “Pharaoh”. Instead, it mentioned “the King” as in the following saying of Allah:

“And the king (of Egypt) said: ‘Verily, I saw (in a dream) seven fat cows, whom seven lean ones were devouring’.” (Soorah Yusuf 12:43)

At the end of the 19th century, the Frenchman, Champ Leon, was able to read and interpret the Hieroglyphic writings and came to discover that Prophet Yusuf (Joseph), peace be upon him, lived in Egypt during the era of shepherd king (Hexus) from 1730 B.C. to 1580 B.C.¹

References:

Al Hajj- Yusuf. The Unchallengeable Miracles of the Quran.

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References:

Al Hajj- Yusuf. The Unchallengeable Miracles of the Quran.

Musa and Al-Khadir

Quranic Narrative:

In [2]Sura 18, [3]ayat (verses) 65–82 Al Kahf, Moses meets the Servant of God, referred in the Quran as “one of our slaves whom We had granted mercy from Us and whom We had taught knowledge from Ourselves”. [4][26] Muslim scholars identify him as [5]Nabi Khadra, although he is not explicitly named in the Quran and there is no reference to him being immortal or being especially associated with esoteric knowledge or fertility. [6][27] These associations come in later scholarship on al-Khidr. [7][28]

The Quran states that they meet at the junction of the two seas (i.e., the two sources of salt and fresh water described elsewhere in the Quran) and Moses asks for permission to accompany the Servant of God so Moses can learn “right knowledge of what [he has] been taught”. [8][29] The Servant informs him in a stern manner that their knowledge is of different nature and that “Surely you [Moses] cannot have patience with me. And how canst thou have patience about things about which thy understanding is not complete?” [9]

[30] Moses promises to be patient and obey him unquestioningly, and they set out together. After they board a ship, the Servant of God damages the vessel. Forgetting his oath, Moses says, “Have you made a hole in it to drown its inmates? Certainly you have done a grievous thing.” The Servant

reminds Moses of his warning, “Did I not say that you will not be able to have patience with me?” and Moses pleads not to be rebuked.

Next, the Servant of God kills a young man. Moses again cries out in astonishment and dismay, and again the Servant reminds Moses of his warning, and Moses promises that he will not violate his oath again, and that if he does he will excuse himself from the Servant’s presence. They then proceed to a town where they are denied hospitality. This time, instead of harming anyone or anything, the Servant of God restores a decrepit wall in the village. Yet again Moses is amazed and violates his oath for the third and

last time, asking why the Servant did not at least exact “some recompense for it.”

The Servant of God replies, “This shall be separation between me and you; now I will inform you of the significance of that with which you could not have patience. Many acts which seem to be [10]evil, malicious or somber, actually are merciful. The boat was damaged to prevent its owners from falling into the hands of a king who seized every boat by force. And as for the boy, his parents were believers and we feared lest he should make disobedience and ingratitude to come upon them. God will replace the child with one better in purity, affection and obedience. As for the restored wall, the Servant explained that underneath the wall was a treasure belonging to two helpless orphans whose father was a righteous man. As God’s envoy, the Servant restored the wall, showing God’s kindness by rewarding the piety of the orphans’ father, and so that when the wall becomes weak again and collapses, the orphans will be older and stronger and will take the treasure that belongs to them.”

Osman's Dream: The Legacy of the Ottoman Empire

The following excerpt is taken from "History of the Ottoman Turks: From the Beginning of their Empire to Present Time" by Edward

S. Creasy pg. 4-5:

"Othman, or, according to the Oriental orthography, Osman, is regarded as the founder of the Ottoman Empire; and it is from him that the Turks, who inhabit it, call themselves Osmanlis, tho only national appellation which they recognize. Ertoghrul never professed to act save as the vassal and lieutenant of the Sultan of Iconuim. But Othman, after the death of the last Alaeddin in 1307, waged wars and accumulated dominions as an independent potentate. He had become chief of his race twelve years before on Ertoghrul's death, in 1288. Othmman, at his succession, was twenty-four years of age, and was already of proved skill as a leader, and of tried prowess as a combatant. "

The following excerpt is taken from "Osman's Dream: The Story of the Ottoman Empire 1300- 1923" by pg. 31-32:

"The Early Ottomans, struggling to plant their authority, were less concerned with the date of the founding of their state than the vision that underpinned their right to rule. To them, empire began quite literally with a dream. One night, the first sultan, Osman, was sleeping in the house of a holy man called Edeballi when:

'He saw that a moon arose from the holy man's breast and came to sink in his own breast. A tree then sprouted fro his navel and its shade compassed the world. Beneath this shade there were mountains, and streams flowed forth from the foot of each mountain. Some people drank from these running waters, others watered gardens, while yet others caused fountains to flow. When Osman awoke he told the story to the holy man, who said 'Osman, my son, congratulations, for God has given the imperial office to you and your descendants and my daughter Malhun shall be your wife'."

Furthermore, according to Edward Creasy,

“The Ottoman writers attach great importance to this dream of the founder of their empire. They dwell also on the prophetic significance of his name, signifying the resistless energy with which he and his descendants were to smite the nations of the earth. “Othman” means “Bone-breaker.” It is also a name given to a large species of vultures, commonly called the royal vulture, and which is, in the East, the emblem of sovereignty and warlike power, as the eagle is with the nations of the West.” (History of the Ottoman Turks: From the Beginning of their Empire to Present Time, pg. 7-8)

References:

Edward S. Creasy, Edward. History of the Ottoman Turks: From the Beginning of their

Empire to Present Time. (p. 4 -5, 7-8) Finkel, Caroline. Osman’s Dream: The Story of the Ottoman Empire 1300-1923. (p. 31-32)

The Battle of Badr

Quran 3:13:

Already there has been for you a sign in the two armies which met – one fighting in the cause of Allah and another of disbelievers. They saw them [to be] twice their [own] number by [their] eyesight. But Allah supports with His victory whom He wills. Indeed in that is a lesson for those of vision.

The following excerpt is taken from “Maariful Quran” vol 2 pg. 33-34:

This verse refers to the Battle of Badr in which the disbelievers had about 1000 men, 790 camels and 100 horses, while the Muslim mujahidh were just over 300, having a total of 70 camels, 2 horses, 6 armours and 8 swords. The encounter was certainly strange as each combating group saw the opponent being twice its own numbers..

The sighting of so many Muslims inspired awe in the hearts of the disbelievers, while Muslims who saw the disbelievers as twice of them turned to Allah more fervently. They had hopes of Allah’s help, and ultimate victory, because they had placed their total trust in Allah, were steadfast and sincerely believed in the promise of Allah revealed to them in the following words:

If there be among you a hundred patient ones, they shall overcome two hundred. (8:66)

If the actual number of disbelievers which was three times more than their own were to be realized by Muslims, they may have been overawed. This state of sighting the numbers of the other group as twice its own was at a particular time. At another time each of the two combating groups felt the other one as low in numbers, as it would appear later in Surah al-Anfal. To sum up, it can be safely said that making a small group of people with very little to fight against a much stronger group and score a victory, as

prophecied in Makkah, is an unusual event full of lessons for the observant and the discerning

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The Curse given by David and Jesus, the son of Mary

Quran 5:78-79:

Those among the Children of Israel who disbelieved were cursed by the tongue of Dawud (David) and 'Iesa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary). That was because they disobeyed (Allah and the Messengers) and were ever transgressing beyond bounds. (Verse 78)

They used not to forbid one another from the Munkar (wrong, evildoing, sins, polytheism, disbelief, etc.) which they committed. Vile indeed was what they used to do. (Verse 79)

The following excerpt is taken from "In the Shade of the Quran" Volume 4 pg. 173:

When we remember that it was Jesus and David who cursed the Children of Israel, we realise that theirs is a long history of unbelief, disobedience and rejection of the truth. Prophets who were sent to guide and save them were the ones who eventually condemned them so that they might not be guided to the truth. God answered their prayers and destined the Israelites to a perpetual curse.

The unbelievers among the Children of Israel were the ones who distorted their revealed Scriptures and refused to abide by the rulings of the Divine Code, as we are told in several Qur'ānic sūrahs. They violated their covenant with God in which they pledged themselves to support and follow every messenger He sent: "That was because they rebelled and persisted in their transgression." (Verse 78)

Jewish history is full of examples of such rebellion and aggression. These were not mere individual actions in the Jewish community. Indeed, they were so frequent they became characteristic of the whole community, and even those who did not perpetrate such crimes either turned a blind eye to them or did not speak out against them: "They would never restrain one another from wrongdoing. Vile indeed were the things they did." (Verse 79)

According to “Tafhim ul Quran” note 102, under the commentary of the above verse:

“The corruption of any nation begins with that of a few individuals. If the collective conscience of that nation is alive, the pressure of public opinion keeps those persons in check and prevents the nation as a whole from becoming corrupted. But if instead of censuring such individuals, the nation leaves them free to behave corruptly, the corruption originally confined to a few continues to spread till it engulfs the whole nation. It was this which ultimately caused the degeneration of Israel. (For the curse against Israel in the words of David and Jesus see Psalms 10, 50 and Matthew 23.)”

In the Shade of the Quran further writes:

“As the Qur’ān depicts this phenomenon of Israelite society, condemning it and showing it in a bad light, it wants for the Muslim community a solid structure which repels every aspect of rebellion and transgression. It wants the Muslim community to solidly defend the truth and to be sensitive to any aggression against it. It wants those who advocate the implementation of faith to discharge their responsibility by standing firm against evil, corruption, tyranny and transgression. The Muslims should pay no heed to anyone who blames them for their attitude. They maintain their opposition to evil whether it is practised by powerful rulers, influential men of wealth, evil people with physical power or the masses swayed by vain desires. God’s system remains the true system and those who deviate from it are all alike, be they people of high or low position. Islam strongly emphasises the need to fulfil God’s trust, and threatens a common punishment to the whole community if it allows evil to spread within it. The responsibility is shared by every individual and by the community as a whole.” (pg. 173-174)

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The Day of Ashura

The following excerpt is taken from islamqa:

With regard to the reason why the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) fasted on the day of ‘Ashoora’ and urged the people to do likewise is mentioned in the hadeeth narrated by al-Bukhaari (1865) from Ibn ‘Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with him), who said: The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) came to Madeenah and saw the Jews fasting on the day of ‘Ashoora’. He said, “What is this?” They said, “This is a good day, this is the day when Allaah saved the Children of Israel from their enemy and Moosa fasted on this day.” He said, “We are closer to Moosa than you.” So he fasted on this day and told the people to fast.

The words “this is a good day” – according to a version narrated by Muslim, “This is a great day when Allaah saved Moosa and his people and drowned Pharaoh and his people.” The words “so Moosa fasted on this day” – Muslim added in his report: “In gratitude to Allaah, so that is we fast on this day.” According to another version narrated by al-Bukhaari, “So we fast it out of respect for it.” The words “and told the people to fast” – according to another version narrated by al-Bukhaari, “He said to his companions, ‘You are closer to Moosa than them, so fast this day.’”

The Garden of Eden: An Earthly or Heavenly Garden?

The following excerpt is taken from “Islamic Theory of Evolution” by T.O. Shanavas pg. 161- 168:

Dr. Imad writes,

“The city of Makka was called Baca at a time when it was covered with gardens and rivers as part of the tropical land. When its water dried out and it was deserted, its name became ‘Makka’ meaning ‘sucked out.’ Both names are interchangeable to this day.”

On the day Makka was conquered, the Prophet said,

“This land was made inviolable by God on the day the heavens and the earth were created. It is inviolable by God’s Inviolability until the Day of Resurrection. Killing was not permitted to anyone therein before me, and to none after me.” (Study Quran under 2:126)

Al-Baihaqi, in his book, *Dala’il al-Nubuwwah*, has reported on the authority of Sayyidna ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Amr ibn al As (RA), that the Holy Prophet (S) said: ‘After the arrival of Sayyidna Adam and Sayyidah Hawwa’ into the mortal world, Allah Almighty commanded them through angel Jibra’il that they should build the House of Allah (the Ka’bah). After they had fulfilled the command, they were asked to go round it (in tawaf). They were told that they were the first among people and this house was the first House (of worship) appointed for people (Ibn Kathir).

In his work, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, the famous 12th–13th century Andalusian Sufi thinker Ibn ‘Arabi implies that the original place where Adam was placed was not some far-off physical “paradise” disconnected from Earth, but rather a sanctified spot on Earth—which he identifies or associates with Makkah.

He considered Makkah, and particularly the Ka‘bah, as a manifestation of the divine center or cosmic heart of the Earth.

Therefore, placing Adam in the “garden” (jannah) could mean placing him in the spiritual heart of the world, which in Sufi metaphysics aligns with Makkah.

Ibn ‘Arabi also believed in the idea that the Ka‘bah on Earth is a reflection of the Bayt al-Ma‘mūr, the celestial Ka‘bah in heaven. This adds to the idea that the Garden (Jannah) Adam was in was metaphysically linked to Makkah.

Adam is said to have rebuilt or built the first Ka‘bah after descending to Earth. Ibn ‘Arabi may have interpreted this as a return to the place of his original descent, further cementing the idea that Makkah was linked to the primordial dwelling place of humanity.

The Location of the Garden of the Forbidden Tree

Most contemporary Muslims across the world believe that Adam and Eve were created in Paradise (Jennat-ul-Khuld) but were expelled for eating fruit from the forbidden tree in the garden. Early Muslims carried on great debates about the location of the garden. According to the foremost exegetes of the Quran, Ibn Kathir (died 1372) and ar-Razi (died 1209), four interpretations of the location of the garden prevailed: that the garden was Paradise itself, that it was a separate garden created especially for Adam and Eve, that it was located on Earth, and the view that it was best for the Muslims not to be concerned with the location of the garden.

Unorthodox as it seems for our time, more reasons lead us to believe that the garden was on Earth rather than in Paradise. Many Quranic verses suggest that Paradise is a place the eyes of believers have never seen:

32:17 No living soul knows what comfort of eyes has been kept hidden from them as a recompense for their deeds.

Abul A'ala Maududi, a twentieth-century commentator of the Quran from the Wahabi faction among Muslims, tells us that Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi, and Imam Ahmad, all most respected scholars in the field of the Prophet's traditions, cited Abu Hurayrah's text (a contemporary of the Prophet) that the Holy Prophet said: "Allah says: I have prepared for my righteous servants that which has neither been seen by eyes, nor heard by ears, nor ever conceived by any man." If no human eyes have seen it, then Adam could not have seen it, and therefore the Garden of the Forbidden Tree could not have been seen in Paradise.

The contextual analysis of the following verses also rules out the possibility of the garden being Paradise:

2:31-34 And he taught Adam the nature of all things; then He placed him before the Angels, and said: Tell me the nature of these if you are right... And behold! We said to the angels: bow down to Adam and they bowed down . No, said Iblis (Satan). He refused and was haughty. He was of those who rejected the Faith.

When Iblis refused to prostrate before Adam, God ordered him out of the garden. God said:

7:13 "Get thee down from this: it is not for thee to be arrogant here: get out, for thou art of the meanest (of creatures)."

Then in the presence of Adam and Eve before their expulsion from the Garden, Iblis requested and God replied:

7:14-15 “Give me respite till the Day they shall be raised up from the dead.” Allah replied, “You are granted respite.”

According to the above verses, Adam learned the nature and reality of all things and everything (2:31). Therefore, when God granted Iblis respite, Adam and Eve must’ve known that their lives in the garden with the forbidden tree were subject to immanent death and that they would be “raised up from death” on the Day of Judgment (7:14-15). For these reasons, the garden could not have been in Paradise and it must’ve been on earth. The promise of the Garden of Final Return would make no sense for Adam, as well as for his human contemporaries for their good deeds, if they were already there.

Iblis deceived Prophet Adam and his followers, telling them: “Your Sustainer has forbidden you this tree, lest you two become [as angels], or lest you live forever.” (7:20) He whispered to Adam: “O Adam! Shall I lead you to the tree of eternity and to a kingdom that never decays?” (20:120) Thus, by describing the Forbidden Tree as a secret recipe for eternal life, Iblis tempted Adam and Eve to partake of the fruit of the tree. When they consumed the Forbidden Fruit

, they sought eternal life. The Quran states that the Garden of Final Return is eternal for the righteous and the Hell “for whoever of them follows you, indeed the hell shall be your requital, an ample reward.” (17:63).

If Adam and Eve were actually in it, then they too would be eternal. The desire to acquire a thing develops in the human mind only when the desired object or state is not available.

Adam was in an environment where death and decay, not immortality, were the facts of life.

Adam and his contemporaries would not have become victims of temptation if they had already been immortal beings in Paradise. So the Forbidden Tree as well as Adam, Eve, and their human

contemporaries were not in the Garden of Final Return. The following verse adds more support to the falsity of the notion that the forbidden tree was in Paradise:

37:7-10 I have secured it (Heaven) against every rebel Satans. These Satans cannot hear the exalted ones; they are darted at and driven off from every side, for them there is a perpetual torment. However, if someone snatches away something, a flashing flame follows him.

Abul A'ala Maududi, a scholar among the Wahabi faction of Muslims, explains the above verse as follows: "The satans have no access to Heaven and no power to hear the angels' conversations... if by chance a little of its news enters the ear of a devil, and he tries to bring it down, he will be followed by a flashing flame." Based on verses 20:120; 7:20; 37:7-10, and 7:22, we can conclude the following: First, Adam was allowed to stay in the Garden of the Forbidden Tree after Iblis' expulsion from it. Second, although Iblis did not have access to the Garden of the Final Return, he succeeded in entering and deceiving Adam. Third, Adam and Eve fell for Satan's persuasion and ate from the tree in the hope of becoming immortal. Thus, the Garden of the Forbidden Tree, was a place where all that existed had a transient, decaying nature into which Satan was able to enter. How could it be the Garden of Eternity?

Quranic verses repeatedly disprove the idea that the garden was in Paradise. One verse reads: "There [Paradise]they call for every kind of fruit in peace and security: Nor will they there taste death..." (44:55-56) Thus, the presence of a forbidden tree bearing the fruit of

immortality and the commandment that Adam and Eve not eat of that fruit contradict the location of the Garden of Forbidden Tree in Paradise.

Throughout the Quran, Paradise is described as a place where peace prevails: “There they shall hear no idle talk, but only ‘Peace’” (19:62), where sin, lies, and vanity do not exist (56:25-26; 78:35, and 88:11). If we accept the Quranic description of the Garden of Final Return, then we also have to conclude that the Garden of the Forbidden Tree could not be the place where Satan makes the false, vain claim that he is better than Adam. He (Iblis) said:

7:12 “I am better than he [Adam]; You have created me of fire and created him [Adam] of clay.”

If Iblis’ claim was true, God would not have asked the angels and the Jinn to prostrate before Adam- thus Iblis lied. In Paradise, Iblis would not have been able to tempt Adam to commit sin.

Such egoism, lying and deception could not have taken place in the Garden of Final Return- a place where fruits are not forbidden, where peace and justice prevail, and where sin, lies, and

vanity are unknown.

Finally, Adam could not have been thrown out of Paradise because it is the place of (final) return.” (38:49) Thus, Adam, Eve, Iblis, and the Forbidden Tree could not have been in Paradise (Jennat-ul-Khuld), and the notion that the garden with the forbidden tree and Paradise were one and the same is false. The Garden of the Forbidden Tree is a place for human trial and error, while Paradise is a place for reward.

Since the Quran does not support the notion that the garden was Paradise, where was the garden instead? The following verses offer clue. After God presented Adam to the Angels, He said to Adam:

20:118-119 There is therein (enough provision) for thee not to go hungry nor to go naked, nor to suffer from thirst, nor from the sun's heat.

God provided Adam and Eve with food, water, and shelter to protect them from the heat of the sun. From among the billions of stars in our universe, why would the Quran mention the sun's heat if the garden on the Forbidden Tree was Paradise? Moreover, in every context(7:98, 20:59, 79:29 and 46, and 91:1), the word (daha) or its derivatives are used in the Quran only in situations related to sun. Thus, the Garden of the Forbidden Tree, must have been within the solar system in order for it to be affected by the heat of the sun, which could be felt only on planets close to it. The Garden of the Forbidden Tree could not have been on Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, or Pluto because their surface temperatures are so low that mention of the protection from the sun's heat would be illogical. The surface temperatures of Mercury and Venus are extremely high, too high for plants and animals to

exist as living creatures and as sources of food for Adam. The only place in the solar system where DNA-based life exists and where humans need protection from the sun is Earth. Based on our present-day knowledge of the solar system and on the above verses we can conclude that Adam and Eve were in a garden that was located on Earth.

The Quran tells us also that God created Adam and Eve on the earth with earthly material and granted a fixed term of life there: "Behold, thy Lord said to the Angels: I will create a vicegerent (khalifah) on earth"(2:30) and "It is He who created you from clay,

and then decreed a stated term [of life] for you...” (6:2) Moreover, we have seen in Chapter 8 that human species were settled down on the earth before the presentation of the Prophet Adam to Angels and Jinns and subsequent deception of Adam by Iblis, confirming that the Forbidden Tree was on the earth:

7:10-11 And We have given you (mankind) power in the earth, and appointed for you therein livelihoods. Little give ye thanks! And we created you, then fashioned you, then told the angels: Fall ye prostrate before Adam! And they fell prostrate, all save Iblis, who was not of those who make prostration.

Finally, the name bestowed by the Quran on the first perfect human being is highly significant. The name “Adam” is derived from two Aeabic root words, *adim* and *udama*. *Adim* means surface of the earth, and *udama* means dark-complexioned. The literal meaning of Adam, therefore, is a dark-skinned person who lives on the surface of the earth. This, too, supports the idea that Adam was created on earth and not in Paradise, and was of African origin.

As previously emphasized, the Quran asks human beings to observe and discover the mysteries of life on Earth as well as in the universe:

51:20-21 On the earth are signs for those who have faith (in the meaningfulness of all things), as also (there are signs) in your own selves: Will you not, then, observe?

What are those mysteries, and what should we observe? The Quran urges us to trace and explore the human evolutionary journey of our primordial parents, Adam and Eve. Thus, we must remain aware of important scientific facts. First, protoplasm is much the same in all organisms, suggesting a unity among all of them. Similar physiological pathways catalyzed by similar enzymes occur throughout all life.

At the molecular level of all life forms, we find homologous series of chemical molecules and compounds. The degree of differentiation in the sequence of molecules in the homologous compounds is roughly proportional to the degree of taxonomic separation (i.e., classification of animals or plants according to their natural relationship) of the species in which the compounds occur. We also need to realize that fossil record documents the progression of life through time, and that we can change the shape and function of life forms by changing the genes. We observe that the hemoglobin in the red blood cells has two chains of amino acids- alpha and beta chains. Closely related organisms differ less in the amino acid sequences of their hemoglobin alpha chains than do distantly related organisms. The same is true when beta chains are compared with each other. There are many other human observations in nature that I could list here as well.

The above observations and many more suggest that all living forms are related to each other. The grass and the grasshopper and the monkey and human kind can be sisters, brothers, cousins, grandparents and grandchildren. They developed from a single seed called DNA, through genetic modification.

Many Muslims who believe that Adam and Eve were created in Paradise promote their view by quoting verse 2:38. According to the verse, when Adam disobeyed God's command and ate the Forbidden Fruit, God ordered him out of the Garden, saying: "Get ye down all from

here." (2:38) They claim that the verse suggests that Adam went from a higher place to a lower place. They believe that Paradise is located above the earth. Such belief is problematic and unacceptable; we know that the Earth rotates on its axis and that it is an integral part of the Milky Way Galaxy which also rotates on its axis. Therefore, if Paradise were visible from Earth, we would see it beneath us at one point in time, above us at another, and at various times on either side. How, then, can we explain the above verse?

Many early Muslim commentators believed that, before their expulsion, Adam and Eve experienced a mental state filled with

ease, happiness and innocence and that the phrase “get ye down” shows they were driven out of a blissful mental state. Muhammad Rashid Rida records that explanation in Tafsir-ul-Manar. Regardless of one’s concepts regarding the location of Paradise, based on the above study of the literal reading of the Quranic verses, one can reasonably conclude that Adam, Evem and the forbidden tree were located on the earth and not in the Garden of Eternity.

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Shanavas, T.O. (2005). Islamic Theory of Evolution: The Missing Link between Darwin and the Origin of Species. (p. 161-168).

The Garden of Eden: The First House of Worship, 3:96

3:96

The first House (of worship) appointed for men was that at Bakka:
Full of blessing and of guidance for all kinds of beings:

The following excerpt is taken from “Shajara code Decoded” by Dr. Imad Hassan: The Qur’an provides the oldest description of this house and the reasons for which was it built in the following verses:

(Qur’an; 3:96-97).

The above two verses add more weight to our analysis: The most prominent support for our assertions is exemplified by the above statement that although the ‘House of God’ in Makka is a sacred place for Muslims, the above verses literally relate the same house to humankind, or all people, without any religious identity. In fact, it is described here as ‘a guidance for humankind’ which could simply mean that if humanity reflects on its history, it will guide them to believe in Allah. This is also the only place in the entire Qur’an where Makka is referred to by its first and most ancient name, Baca. The ancient reference infers that what is being described above is relevant to Makka when humans first inhabited it because only then was it called Baca. It also means that the first people for whom the house was ‘placed’ were not pilgrims performing rituals, (as is the case today in Makka), but that they were ‘all humankind.’

The city of Makka was called Baca at a time when it was covered with gardens and rivers as part of the tropical land. When its water dried out and it was deserted, its name became ‘Makka’ meaning ‘sucked out’. Both names are interchangeable to this day.

The verses above go on to describe how this house serves as guidance for all people, by presenting two of its manifest signs:

The first sign is described as ‘maqam Ibraheem.’

The word maqam could mean a ‘station;’ as it is usually understood, but it also means ‘intellectuality’ or ‘social status.’ It is used frequently in The Qur’an to refer to positions of honour. We believe that the first sign of guidance for mankind is related to ‘thinking processes,’ ‘Millat Ibraheem,’ or Abraham’s inquisitive nature, which helped him to arrive at the site with his mind before his body while he was exploring the origin of humanity. The second sign, according to our interpretation, is relating ‘the house’ in the verse above with its first occupants:

‘Those who entered it were in peace.’

The salient point here is that the interpretation of the verse that promises ‘peace’ and ‘security’ for whoever enters the house is utterly incorrect. No one enters it; entering it was never part of the rituals. The Arabic phrase actually, describes an event that had taken place in the past, not a current or future event. It is simply referring to the sense of ‘security’ and ‘peace’ that was felt by those who entered it for the first time. This harmonises well with the nature of the terrified Adams, who had been evicted from their secure garden and then, for the first time, re-housed into a safe place. So Allah is telling us that this house has two genuine signs that are sufficient for mankind’s guidance: ‘the thinking of Abraham’ and ‘the fact that it is the first house of our ancestors.’

Psalm 84:4-6 Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you. 5 Blessed are those whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage. 6 As they pass through the Valley of Baka, they make it a place of springs.

Anatomically Modern Homo Sapiens (fully developed human beings) first migrated to the Arabian Peninsula, before spreading to the rest of Earth.

Homo sapiens, the intelligent human, existed at least

200,000 years ago and developed over time to become the anatomically modern intelligent human. 100,000 years ago.

The anatomically modern homo sapiens had migrated out of Africa and began to bury his dead after

that. And this is supported by archaeological evidence. Also, religious scripture, specifically the Quran, mentions the issue of Adam's children being taught to bury the dead. So we concluded that Adam couldn't be more than 100,000 years old and was not born in Africa. So who was the first group of Homosapiens who migrated out of Africa and buried their dead 100,000 years ago?

Well, it was probably the group that migrated through the Nile Valley to Palestine. There are early burials of anatomically modern homo sapiens in a site by the name of Kosa that dates back to about that time, about 90 to 100,000 years ago, and these groups of Homo sapiens became extinct. However, another migration occurred out of Africa about 70,000 years ago, according to the genetic and paleontological record, and it demonstrates that artifacts and skills unique to Homo sapiens appeared at this time period. The homo sapiens population was significantly reduced, most likely due to harsh conditions. And a small, select group ventured out of Africa.

They traveled across the Bab al Mandab Strait of the Red Sea and into the Arabian Peninsula. They were able to cross Bab al Mandab because the water had receded, and also there were springs where the coast was exposed. This made it possible for them to advance through the southern peninsula, traveling along the coastline and passing through modern Yemen and Oman until they reached the Gulf region, which today is covered by water. And from there, humans spread throughout the earth. Yet no one has explained how the migrants crossed Bab al Mandab.

Even if the water was receding, a few kilometers of seawater would still have to be crossed. Here is one analysis of this extraordinary event. How are they able to swim several kilometers, even though they had no skills or device for floating or moving in a particular direction? Why did these people cross? And what compelled them to take the risk of crossing into the unknown? Why didn't multiple crossings occur? If there was accessibility, ease or great benefits that appealed to everyone's animal instinct, we cannot imagine that this crossing was pointless and did not involve selecting. If we do not say that it was a metaphysical selection that prepared the crossing conditions suitable for the select group, then at the very least it was natural selection based on the theory of evolution. Thus, those who crossed the Strait of Babel Mandeb were a more distinct group than the others. What distinguishes this group, at the very least, is their ability to cross several kilometers of seawater without anyone else doing the same.

So within the timeline of Homo sapiens narrowing down the time that Adam existed and maintaining what is consistent with religious scripture, we can restrict it to the period in which the select group migrated out of Africa to the Arabian Peninsula and then elsewhere about 70,000 years ago. We also have evidence of human migration to Asia and Europe, which would have happened after the first group crossed the Arabian Peninsula. These human migrations were to Asia and to Europe approximately 60,000 years ago and 40,000 years ago respectively. And these groups were the offspring of that group that migrated 70,000 years ago out of Africa by way of the Arabian Peninsula. So if we wanted to say that everyone on the earth today is physically from the offspring of the Adam of religion, except for some African tribes, and that Adam is born from the offspring of the first group to migrate out of Africa, then Adam must have been born into that group that migrated 70,000 years ago.

Everyone from the small group became extinct, except for Adam and his offspring, who survived, reproduced and spread throughout the Earth. And this is consistent with the fossil evidence and genetic evidence, because we do know that the genetic evidence traces back to a Homo sapien's ancestor that ventured out of Africa

70,000 years ago, whereas other groups of Homo sapiens that may have wandered out of Africa did not survive.

This means that when we combine religious scripture and scientific fact, there's no way that Adam existed earlier than 70,000 years ago. In fact, according to certain religious scriptures, he must have been a descendant of the group that migrated out of Africa to the Arabian Peninsula. A religious account from over a thousand years ago that could be considered to be consistent with this migrant group that migrated out of Africa 70,000 years ago states that Homo sapiens made pilgrimage 2000 years before Adam's existence, indicating that he is a descendant of that group. They were religiously accountable people who worshiped God in accordance with their circumstances, their capabilities and their comprehension. Here is the religious account from over a thousand years ago. Zurara said I said to Imam Abdullah, I have been asking you about pilgrimage for 40 years, and you continue to answer, meaning that you continue to speak of it. He said, O Zurara, pilgrimage was made to this house 2000 years before Adam existed. So why would you think questions about pilgrimage would end in just 40 years?

Therefore, factual scientific evidence combined with scripture leads us to the conclusion that Adam was born into a religiously accountable family from those who migrated out of Africa. He was born to people who had religious accountability 2000 years before him. As the religious account states, these were people who had souls, but not at the level of Adam's soul, as he was the first vicegerent on Earth.

The following excerpt is taken from "Maarifur Quran" Vol 2 pg. 117-118 under 3:96: "One

possible interpretation of this phrase may be that the first house of all the houses of the world was made for Divine worship exclusively, in which case, there would have been no place of worship or place of residence prior to it. Adam (as) was a prophet of Allah. Given his stature and the eminent position as Allah's vicegerent, it is likely that he, soon after his appearance on the earth, elected to first build the House of Allah even before building

his own residence. It is for this reason that Sayyidna ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar, Mujahid, Qatadah and others from among the Companions and their successors are of the opinion that the Ka’bah is the first house of the world. Then, it is also possible that houses where people lived may have already been made earlier but this may have been the first ever House made exclusively for worship. This very view has been reported from Sayyidna ‘Ali (RA).

Al-Baihaqi, in his book, *Dala’il al-Nubuwwah*, has reported on the authority of Sayyidna ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Amr ibn al As (RA), that the Holy Prophet (S) said: ‘After the arrival of Sayyidna Adam and Sayyidah Hawwa’ into the mortal world, Allah Almighty commanded them through angel Jibra’il that they should build the House of Allah (the Ka’bah). After they had fulfilled the command, they were asked to go round it (in tawaf). They were told that they were the first among people and this house was the first House (of worship) appointed for people (Ibn Kathir).

The ancient land: “Havilah” refers to both a land and people in several books of the Bible. In one case, Havilah is associated with the Garden of Eden, that is mentioned in the Book of Genesis (2:10–11):

And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold;”

W. W. Müller, in the 1992 *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, believes that biblical Havilah refers to two different locations on western Arabia.

Genesis 2 is region in southwest Arabia.

Genesis 25:18 is a northern Arabian location, possibly Medina Province.

The Arabian hypothesis is further strengthened by James A. Sauer’s, former curator of the Harvard Semitic Museum, identification of Pishon, which is described as encircling Havilah

in the Bible, as the Wadi -al Rummah, a dry channel which begins in the Hijaz Mountains, near Medina, to run northeast to Kuwait. Sauer makes this identification based on geology and history. In addition, Bible commentators believe that Havilah should be Arabian because the Ishmaelites, who settled between Havilah and Shur, were ancestors of Arabs.

Müller, W. W. (1992). "Havilah (Place)." In the Anchor Bible Dictionary. Volume 3, p. 82.

According to Anwar ul Bayan,

‘Another opinion is that the angels constructed the Kaba two thousand years before the creation of Sayiddina Adam (as). When he used to make Hajj of the Kaba, the angels would tell him, “Oh Adam, May Allah accept your Hajj. We made Hajj of this house two thousand years before you.”‘ All these narrations point to the fact that Sayiddina Ibrahim (as) was not the first constructor of the Kaba. For this reason he says in Surah Ibrahim, “Our Lord, indeed I have settled some of my offspring in a place of no vegetation, close to Your sacred house” (Surah 14, verse 37). He mentioned this despite the fact that there was no building there at the time.

Allah says in Surah Hajj, “When We showed Ibrahim the place of the house” (22:26). Commentators mention that this verse means that Sayiddina Ibrahim (as) was shown the appointed location of the Kaba since there was no visible structure there at the time.

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The House of Wisdom

The following is taken from “1001 Inventions: Muslim Heritage in Our World” by Salim T S Al-Hassani pg. 46-50: House of Wisdom

THE HEYDAY OF BAGHDAD was twelve hundred years ago when it was the thriving capital of the Islamic world. For about five hundred years the city boasted the cream of intellectuals and culture, a reputation gained during the reigns of Caliphs al-Rashid, al-Ma'mun, al-Mu'tadhid and al-Muktafi, It was the world's richest city and a centre for intellectual development, being second in size only to Constantinople, with over one million inhabitants.

People on the cutting edge of development and discovery group together and so it was in Baghdad under the four generations of these caliphs. The reason that Baghdad had reached, and maintained, such a pinnacle was that these caliphs had taken a personal interest in collecting global, groundbreaking scientific works. As well as books, they brought together Muslim scholars to create one of the greatest intellectual academies in history called the House of Wisdom. This intellectual powerhouse, coupled with the prowess of Baghdad, meant the city was the headquarters for the Arts, Sciences and Letters, and the role chemistry, Zoology and geography on Persian, Indian and Greek texts Ptolemy, Hippocrates, Pythagoras and it played in the spread and development of knowledge in the Arts and Sciences was huge, 'The House (Academy) of Wisdom was known by two names according to its development stages, When it was like a single hall in the time of Harun al-Rashid it was named Bayt al-Hikmah but later, as it grew into a large institute/academy, in the time of al-Mamun, it was named Dar al-Hikmah, and both mean 'the House of Wisdom: It housed a large library, 'the Library of Wisdom' or Khizanat al-Hikmah, and this held a huge collection of different scientific subjects in many languages, making it a scientific academy. Baghdad in 1932, Eleven centuries earlier, this capital was the site of the House of Wisdom. Caliph Mohammad al-Mahdi first began collecting manuscripts when he came across them during his war expeditions. His son, Caliph al-Hadi, carried on this work until his son, Caliph Harun al-Rashid, who reigned from 786 to 809 CE, formally built the scientific collection and Academy of Science.

Caliph al-Mamun, who reigned for twenty years from 813, extended the House of Wisdom and designated a section or wing for each branch of science, so the place was full to bursting with scientists or 'Ulama, art scholars, famous translators, authors, men of letters, poets, and professionals in the various arts and crafts. These medieval brains met every day for translation, reading, writing, discourse, dialogue and discussion. The place was a cosmopolitan melting pot and the languages that were spoken and written included Arabic, the lingua franca, Farsi, Hebrew, Syriac, Aramaic, Greek, Latin and Sanskrit, which was used to translate the ancient Indian mathematics manuscripts.

Among the famous translators was Yuhanna ibn al-Bitrig al-Turjuman, known as 'the Translator Jonah, son of the Patriarch. He was more at home with philosophy than medicine and translated, from Latin, The Book of Animals by Aristotle which was in nineteen chapters, Hunayn ibn Ishaq was also a renowned translator of the books by the Greek physician Hippocrates and Galen, Al-Kindi, the physician, philosopher, mathematician, geometer, chemist, logician and astronomer, was chosen by Caliph al-Ma'mun to be one of the scholars leading the translation of the work of Aristotle. He had his own personal library which used to be referred to as al-Kindiya. Al-Ma'mun was a forward-thinking caliph and contacted other world leaders in his pursuit for knowledge. It is said that he wrote to the king of Sicily asking him for the entire contents of the Library of Sicily, which was rich in philosophical and scientific books. The king responded positively to the Caliph by sending him copies from the Sicilian Library.

'The transportation of books varied. Without the availability of modern planes, it is also said that al-Ma'mun used a hundred camels to carry handwritten books and manuscripts from Khurasan in Iran to Baghdad.

The Byzantine emperor was also approached because al-Ma'mun wanted to send some of his scientists to translate the useful books that were stored in his empire. The emperor said yes and the scientists went, and were also charged with bringing back any books of the Greek intellectuals.

Caliph al-Mamun not only steered the organization of the House of Wisdom, but also participated with the scientists and scholars in their discourses and discussions and built an astronomy centre called Marsad Falaki, [t was run by his personal astronomers, a Jew named Sanad ibn Ali al-Yahoudi and a Muslim named Yahya ibn Abi Mansour. It is said that Sanad became a Muslim at the hands of al-Ma'mun himself.

As well as taking up the reins of the House of Wisdom, al-Mamun took after his father in establishing many higher institutes, observatories and factories for textiles. [t is said that the number of higher institutes during his reign reached 332. They were packed with students pursuing, various subjects in the arts and sciences.

He also apparently asked a group of wise men to prepare a map of the world for him which they did. This was known as 'al-Mamun's map, or al-surah al-rma'muniyah, which expanded upon those which were available during the lifetime of Ptolemy and other Greek geographers.

Among the House of Wisdom's luminaries of the time were the Banu Musa brothers, Muhammad, Ahmed and al-Hasan, known as mathematicians and inventors of trick devices; al-Khwarizmi, the 'father' of algebra; al-Kindi, inventor of decryption and musical theory; Saeed ibn Haroun al-Katib, a scribe or writer; Hunayn ibn Ishaq al-'badi, physician and translator, and his son Ishaq. These names appear time and time again throughout this book because these individuals were researching, discovering and building a vast edifice of knowledge, based on real experiments, that has provided a firm bedrock for much of what we know today, Al-Ma'mun was a visionary of education and some historians have given him the title of "The Master of Arab Civilization' because of what was left behind as cultural heritage in Baghdad. The House of Wisdom and the splendour of Baghdad made it a pulsating metropolis, crowded with the great minds of the day.

However, we must distinguish between the Abbasid House of Wisdom above and the Fatimid House of Wisdom (Dar Al-Hikma), which was established in Cairo in 1005 by the Caliph Al-Hakim.

This academy lasted 165 years. Other cities in the Eastern provinces of the Islamic world established several 'Houses of Science' (Dar al- 'Ilm), or more accurately 'Houses of Knowledge, in the 9" and 10" centuries to emulate that of Dar Hikma in Baghdad.

The Master of Two Horns

Quran 18:83:

Now they're asking you about the Master of the Two Horns. Say to them, "I'll narrate for you something of his story." [1350] The following excerpt is taken from "The Holy Quran in Today's English" by Yahiya Emerick note 1350:

No record or opinion as to the identity of this figure has survived from the time of the Prophet and his companions. Early commentators were divided among themselves as to which historical figure Dhul Quarnayn could be. However, by the end of the classical period, many commentators, after having been exposed to the stories and legends of Alexander the Great (d. 323 BCE), applied the title to him and were elated that such 'a great man' was mentioned in their holy book. Those who still subscribe to this opinion, that Alexander is being spoken of here in verses 83-101, point out that Alexander traveled widely and often wore a pair of ram's horns on his helmet, a decoration commemorating the Egyptian god Ammon-Ra, which even found its way onto coins minted during the ill-fated ruler's reign.

However, putting these two inconclusive and incidental details aside, could Dhul Quarnayn really be Alexander of Macedon? That question can only be answered by first defining the character of the man mentioned in this chapter and then comparing it with all the available historical accounts that we have of Alexander. Dhul Quarnayn is presented as a pious man who ruled with justice. He also traveled generally west, then generally east and then generally north.

Alexander the Great traveled east first, then north, and finally south before going back west, so the chronology of travel doesn't fit here. This is not the only thing that disqualifies him, however, for Alexander was a polytheist who thought of himself as the son of Zeus! He was also fond of wine, murdered some of his friends and conquered for no other purpose than to be famous forever. (He got what he wanted!) So Alexander doesn't fit very well with the description of Dhul Quarnayn. So who was Dhul Quarnayn, or the

Master of the Two Horns? It was the Jews of Medina who had suggested to the Meccans that they ask Muhammad this question. This story was revealed in response. A Persian king named Cyrus the Great (d. 529 BCE) is the definitive candidate, and the proof is very convincing. If we remember the origin of the question that the Meccans put to the Prophet, that it came from the Jews of Medina, and if we also remember that every other similar question the Jews proposed originated from their religion, historical experience and their scripture, then we need do no more than look to the Jewish scriptures for the source of the reference. The Jewish prophet Daniel, who was living in captivity in Babylon, saw a vision of a ram with two horns of different heights. (Thousands of Jews, including Daniel, had been forcibly relocated from Israel to Babylon by the Babylonian tyrant Nebuchadnezzar many years before.) Then Daniel saw a goat (in his vision) with one small horn breaking the two horns of the ram, and then the goat's horn broke into four pieces in turn. According to Daniel, Angel Gabriel came and explained the meaning of the vision. It was that the nations of the Medes and the Persians (symbolized as two horns) would unite to make a great empire spanning a huge territory (under Cyrus's rule) and further that a Greek king, (Alexander the Great,) would then vanquish that empire, and in turn his kingdom would break up into four smaller kingdoms. (See Daniel 8:1-22) In Daniel's lifetime, the Babylonians were in fact defeated by Cyrus the Great, the first king and uniter of the Medes and the Persians (see Daniel 5:30-31), and on a map Cyrus's empire looks roughly like two horns arcing up to the east and west with Persia as the epicenter, while the eastern half of his empire arcs up further north than the western half. (As Biblical scholars admit, the book of Daniel erroneously rearranges the chronology of the two Persian kings, Cyrus and Darius I and mistakenly identifies Darius I, the third reigning Persian king, as the first Persian king and conqueror of the Babylonians. Ezra 4:3-5, however, gets the chronology right.) Cyrus the Great has been beloved of Jews ever since that time on account of the fact that he let the Jewish captives return home to Israel. He is also revered by Jews as having been a righteous man, devoted to God, (see Daniel 6:26-28) and the renovator of many holy places in Jerusalem. Thus, Dhul Quarnayn can be none other than Cyrus the Great of Persia, as the Jews knew him to be the

meaning of the vision of the master of the two ram's horns.
(Ma'ariful Qur'an, Tafhimul Qur'an)

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The Mighty Conquest (of Constantinople)

The following excerpt is taken from “The Unchallengeable Miracles of the Quran” by Yusuf al Hajj pg. 56-59 Miracle of the Unseen in the Qur’an Conquest of

Constantinople

Imam Ahmad reported in his Musnad and Al-Hakim in his Mustadrak on the authority of ‘Abdullah Ibn Bishr Al-Khathami from his father that he heard Allah’s Messenger, blessings and peace of Allah be upon him, say: “Constantinople shall be conquered; and how excellent its leader shall be and how excellent the army which will conquer it shall be”. (‘Abdullah Ibn Bishr, the narrator of this Hadith) said: “Maslamah Ibn ‘Abdul-Malik then called me and asked me about this Hadith. When I narrated it to him, he went and tried to conquer Constantinople.”

Indeed, Allah, Most High, had actually made into reality what His noble Messenger, blessings and peace of Allah be upon him, predicted. Constantinople was conquered and the conqueror was Muhammad Al-Miracle of the Unseen in the Qur’an Fati’h, the 7th Ottoman Khaleefah. His full name was Sultan Muhammad Ibn Sultan Murad Khan. He was born in the Year 835 A.H. He assumed the sultanate in the Year 856 and he ruled for 31 years.

The author of Al-A’lam wrote: “Sultan Muhammad Al-Fati’h was one of the greatest ‘Uthmani rulers. He was a great and noble Khaleefah. Of all the ‘Uthmani Khulafa’, he made the greatest Jihad and was the bravest of all, most courageous, the most resilient and he exercised firm reliance on Allah. He was the founder of the ‘Uthmani Rule, and he created for them laws that the ‘Uthmanis followed for ages. He had excellent qualities and beautiful traits, and his impact can be seen on the pages of history. This impact can never be wiped out, however much the times change. He fought wars in which he destroyed crosses and idols. One of his greatest wars was the conquest of greater Constantinople which he invaded with ships full of his brave soldiers. He laid siege to it for fifty days – a siege regarded as one of the fiercest in the world. He tightened the noose on its sinful

disbelievers and unsheathed Allah's sword over them. He fought that war shielding himself and his soldiers in the impregnable fortress of Allah. He knocked Miracle of the Unseen in the Qur'an Historical Sultan Ahmad Mosque, Istanbul, Turkey (also known as Blue Mosque). It was built between 1609 and 1616 during the rule of Ottoman Empire.on the door of victory which is usually opened for whoever knocks on it continuously. He exercised utmost perseverance and resilience until Allah gave him victory. He conquered Constantinople (today known as Istanbul) on the day of the siege which was Wednesday, 201 Jumada Al-Akhir, in the Year 850 A.H. He offered the Jumu'ah prayer in the city's largest Christian Cathedral. Sultan Muhammad Al-Fati'h established a strong and solid foundation of knowledge that can never be uprooted . He established schools there making the emollment in them easy and laid down rules that were in harmony with the Qur'an and the Sunnah and with reason. May Allah reward him with good on behalf of the students who studied in those schools! For, while they were studying, he allocated to them stipends with which they could meet their financial needs. After their graduation, he gave them salaries that could help them rise and attain the happiness in this world and that could serve as a means of attaining prosperity in the Hereafter. He brought great scholars from all over the world and gave them generous awards and showed them extreme magnanimity. Prominent among these scholars were Maulana 'Ali Al-Qawshaji, Al-Fadid At-Tusi, Al-'Alim Al-Kurani and a host of other leading Muslim scholars. With these scholars, Istanbul became an important global centrer of learning and a source of pride and enlightenment. The city brought together distinguished scholars in every field of knowledge. Till today, its scholars are among the greatest scholars of Islam and its experts are among the most erudite wise men. Its leaders are among the most able leaders of the mankind. The Muslims, especially the scholars, are deeply indebted to this great Sultan.

References:

Al Hajj- Yusuf. The Unchallengeable Miracles of the Quran. (p.56-59)

The People of the Cave and the Inscriptions

Quran 18:9:

Or have you thought that the companions of the cave and the inscription were, among Our signs, a wonder?

The following excerpt is taken from “The Holy Quran in Today’s English” by Yahiya Emerick under the commentary of the above verse note # 1317:

Who were the Companions of the Cave? Most of the classical commentators usually say this story refers to the Christian legend of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, and they take all the details from early Christian sources and repeat them. (Basically a group of Christian young men fled persecution from Roman pagans in approximately the year 250 CE and slept in a cave in some kind of a coma until sometime in the fifth century, when they awoke to find their religion was now the law of the land.) Other commentators offer a whole host of supernatural “sleeper” events from Spain to Iraq, and they include convoluted and very suspect narratives culled from unreliable sources. A handful of more discerning commentators suggest that this story is really about an earlier group of Jews who fled persecution under Roman rule, and this is what Ibn Kathir postulates in his commentary on verse 13. Is there a possible identification for this earlier episode?

During the years 66-70 CE, a faction of puritanical Jews in Palestine rose up in revolt against the Roman occupation. It was a foolish gamble, and the Jews were all but routed. As the Romans were near achieving total victory, a group of these purists (sometimes known as Essenes and other times known as the renegade sons of the priest Zadok, who were banished by the Greek rulers of Jerusalem) fled to the desert and stowed their holy writings away in some caves at Qumran, even as they lived in them for a time. This group, which labeled itself as the ‘Sons of Light’ or ‘Men of Holiness,’ was faithful to the Torah and refused to compromise with the assimilated rabbis of the cities who allowed elements of pagan superstition to seep into their religion. This group of Jews remained apart from society for a number of years –

completely isolated – and later left their caves and rejoined their countrymen when open persecution had ended. The writings they left behind were discovered only in 1947 and are known as the Dead Sea Scrolls. Those who favor the opinion that a group of these purists were the Companions of the Cave offer as evidence the fact that the challenge to the Prophet on this topic came from the Jews, who would seemingly have had no interest in maintaining or circulating Christian legends whose locus was hundreds of miles away in the Greek speaking Anatolian Peninsula. In addition, the Arabic term ar-raqeem that is used here means ‘inscribed writings,’ which could be a reference to the Dead Sea Scrolls, which were written between 200 BCE and 68 CE. (They have been called the most spectacular discovery of ancient manuscripts in history – perhaps a wondrous sign of God.) For these reasons it just may be that the story in this chapter is referring to a righteous group of Jewish young men of a puritanical sect. This view is further strengthened by this description of the Essenes (or the sons of Rabbi Zadok, who was a spiritual leader from David’s time) left by an early Church father named Hippolytus (d. 235). He wrote, “These (purists) practice a more devotional life (than the Pharisees and Sadducees), being filled with mutual love...they turn away from every act of inordinate desire...they renounce matrimony, but they take the boys of others, (to raise as their own). They lead these adoptive children into an observance of their own peculiar customs...they despise wealth, and do not turn away from sharing their goods with those that are destitute. When an individual joins the sect he must sell his possessions and present the proceeds to the community...the head of the order distributes it to all (members) according to their needs.” (As quoted in Vol. V of *The Anti- Nicene Fathers*, ed. by Rev. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, 1951.) In this Qur’anic telling of the story, it is teenage boys, seemingly unconnected to any parents, who flee as a group. They are deeply religious, an obvious sign of sustained indoctrination. indoctrination. They take only coins with them, a sign of the habit of their sect to distribute coins to all members. Finally, their leader freely distributes the coins to the one charged with finding food for them all.

References:

Emerick, Yahiya. The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an in Today's English (p. 827). Unknown. Kindle Edition.

There will appear 12 Caliphs under whom the Ummah will be united

Question

I would like an explanation of this hadeeth, because the Shi'ah always quote it as evidence to support their arguments. In Saheeh Muslim it is narrated that Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "Islam will continue until the beginning of the Hour, and there will appear among you twelve imams coming one after another, all of them from Quraysh."

Answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly: the text of the hadeeth:

It was narrated that Jaabir ibn Samurah said: I entered upon the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) with my father, and I heard him say: "This matter will not end until there have been among them twelve caliphs." Then he said something that I could not hear, and I said to my father: What did he say? He said: "All of them will be from Quraysh."

Narrated by al-Bukhaari (no. 7222); Muslim (no. 1821). According to other versions also narrated by Muslim:

"Islam will continue to prevail through twelve caliphs."

"This religion will continue to prevail and be strong until there have been twelve caliphs."

According to the version narrated by al-Bukhaari, it says: "There will be twelve rulers." Then he said something I did not hear, and my father said that he said: "All of them will be from Quraysh."

Secondly:

The scholars have several approaches and interpretations as to the meaning of this hadeeth:

1. The first approach:

They said that what is meant is the fair and just caliphs; some of them have already appeared and passed on, and the number will be completed before the Hour begins. An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said, quoting from al-Qaadi 'Iyaad:

It may be that what is meant is those who are rightfully deserving of the caliphate; some of them have already come and passed on, and are known, and this number will inevitably be completed before the Hour begins. End quote. Sharh Muslim, 12/202 This view was also favoured by Imam al-Qurtubi (may Allah have mercy on him), who said: They are the just caliphs, such as the four (Rightly Guided) caliphs, and 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azeez. Others who are like them will inevitably appear and support truth and justice, until this number is completed. This is the most correct of the scholarly views in my opinion. End quote.

Al-Mufhim, 4/8

Al-Haafiz Ibn Katheer (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

What this hadeeth means is giving glad tidings of the coming of twelve righteous caliphs who will support the truth and treat the people with justice. It does not necessarily mean that they will come one after another; rather four of them have already come one after another, namely the four caliphs: Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmaan and 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with them). Another of them is 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azeez, according to the leading scholars, and others are some of the Abbasids.

The Hour will not begin until they have all come and the number is completed. What appears to be the case is that one of them will be the Mahdi who is foretold in the hadeeths that speak of him. End quote.

Tafseer al-Qur'an al-'Azeem, 3/65

2. The second approach:

Another view is that what is meant is that the twelve will all appear at the same time and be contemporaries of one another. An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said, quoting from al-Qaadi ‘Iyaad:

It was said that what is meant is that they will all appear at the same time, and each of them will be followed by a group (among the Muslims). Al-Qaadi said: It is not far-fetched to say that this has already happened, if you examine history. In Andalusia alone at the same time, after 433 AH, there were some of them, each of them claiming to be a caliph and taking that title. At that time there was another one in Egypt, and the Abbasid caliph was in Baghdad. This is in addition to others who also claimed to be caliphs at that time in other regions.

He said: This interpretation is supported by what is said in the book of Muslim after that: "... there will be many caliphs." They said: What do you command us to do? He said: "Fulfil the oath of allegiance to the first one, then the next." End quote.

Sharh Muslim, 12/202 Al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar said:

He – i.e., al-Muhallab – said: What appears most likely to be the case is that he (the Prophet – blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) foretold strange things and turmoil that would happen after he was gone, to the extent that the people would be divided among twelve rulers at the same time. If he had meant something other than that, he would have said, there will be twelve leaders who will do such and such.

Because he did not tell us about them, we know that he meant that they would come at the same time. End quote from al-Muhallab.

Al-Haafiz said: This is the view of those who did not come across any of the other versions of the hadeeth except the report that appears in al-Bukhaari, which is a summarized version. It is known from the reports that I have quoted above, from Muslim and elsewhere, that he mentioned some of the characteristics of their

rule, which is that Islam will be prevalent and strong during their rule. According to another report, there is another characteristic, which is that each of them will have the ummah united under his rulership, as it says in the version narrated by Abu Dawood. He narrated this hadeeth via Ismaa'eel ibn Abi Khaalid, from his father, from Jaabir ibn Samurah, as follows: "This religion will continue to prevail until there have been twelve caliphs, behind each of whom the ummah will be united. It was also narrated by at-Tabaraani via another isnaad from al-Aswad ibn Sa'eed, from Jaabir ibn Samurah, as follows: "They will not be harmed by the enmity of those who oppose them." End quote.

Fath al-Baari, 13/211

3. The third approach

The third view is that what is meant is caliphs during whose reign Islam will prevail and the ummah will unite around them, whether they are just and rule equitably or not. An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said, quoting from al-Qaadi 'Iyaad: It may be that what is meant is the one at whose time Islam will prevail and the Muslims will unite around him, as it says in Sunan Abi Dawood: "behind each of whom the ummah will be united."

This happened before the decline of Banu Umayyah (the Umayyads), when their rule became unstable and divisions appeared at the time of Yazeed ibn al-Waleed, when Banu al-'Abbaas (the Abbassds) rebelled against him. End quote.

Sharh Muslim, 12/202-203

Abu'l-'Abbaas al-Qurtubi (may Allah have mercy on him) said, when listing scholarly opinions concerning the hadeeth: This is speaking of the caliphs who would come after him and after his companions. It is as if he was referring thereby to the rule of the Umayyads, and that what was meant by "religion" (deen) was power and rulership; this was said in reference to what would be the status quo at that time (i.e., they would be stable and have a strong hold on power), and it was not said by way of praise.

The word *deen* (usually translated as “religion”) may be used to refer to power or kingship, as it was sometimes used in poetry. The word is also used in this way in the verse in which Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): “He could not take his brother by the law [*deen*] of the king (as a slave)” [Yoosuf 12:76].

Then he listed their kings or rulers:

The first of them was Yazeed ibn Mu‘aawiyah, then his son Mu‘aawiyah ibn Yazeed – and he did not mention Ibn az-Zubayr because he was a Sahaabi, or Marwaan because he usurped the position of Ibn az-Zubayr – then ‘Abd al-Malik, then al-Waleed, then Sulaymaan, then ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azeez, then Yazeed ibn ‘Abd al-Malik, then Hishaam ibn ‘Abd al-Malik, then al-Waleed ibn Yazeed, then Yazeed ibn al-Waleed, then Ibraaheem ibn al-Waleed, then Marwaan ibn Muhammad. These were twelve in number. Then their caliphate ended and the caliphate passed into the hands of Banu’l-‘Abbaas (the Abbasids).

Al-Mufhim, 4/8-9

This opinion was mentioned by Ibn al-Jawzi in *Kashf al-Mushkil min Hadeeth as-Saheehayn*; he also quoted it from al-Khattaabi in a lengthy discussion of which this is a summary. Perhaps al-Qurtubi was narrating it from Ibn al-Jawzi.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

This is how they were; the caliphs were Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmaan and ‘Ali.

Then there came to power whoever the people rallied behind and were able to hold the reins of power: Mu‘aawiyah and his son Yazeed, then ‘Abd al-Malik and his four sons; and ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azeez.

After that, the Islamic state was beset by the decline that has continued until the present. The Umayyads ruled all the Muslim

lands, and during their era the Islamic state was powerful and the caliphs were called by their own names, ‘Abd al-Malik and Sulaymaan; no such titles as ‘Adad ad-Dawlah, ‘Izz ad-Deen, Baha’ ad-Deen (elaborate honorific titles given to the caliphs) were known.

One of them would be the one who led the people in offering the five daily prayers, handed out banners in the mosque (to the armies setting out on expeditions), and appoint commanders, but he would live in his own house; they did not live in palaces or remain aloof from the common people. End quote.

Minhaaj as-Sunnah, 8/170

Al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The view that is most likely to be correct is the third, because it is supported by the Prophet’s words in other versions of the saheeh hadeeth, “the ummah will be united behind all of them.” What happened was that the people united around Abu Bakr, then ‘Umar, then ‘Uthmaan, then ‘Ali, until the incident of the two arbitrators at Siffeen. At that time, Mu’aawiyah was called a caliph. Then the people united around Mu’aawiyah after he made a peace deal with al-Hasan. Then they united around his son Yazeed, and al-Husayn was not able to hold power; rather he was killed before that. Then when Yazeed died, there was some division, until they united around ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Marwaan after the killing of Ibn az-Zubayr. Then they united around his four sons, al-Waleed, then Sulaymaan, then Yazeed, then Hishaam; and ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azeez came between Sulaymaan and Yazeed. These were seven caliphs after the Rightly-Guided Caliphs, and the twelfth was al-Waleed ibn Yazeed ibn ‘Abd al-Malik. The people united around him when his paternal uncle Hishaam died, and he reigned for approximately four years. Then they rebelled against him and killed him, and turmoil spread far and wide, and things changed from that day on. The people did not unite behind any caliph after that, because Yazeed ibn al-Waleed, who rebelled against his cousin al-Waleed ibn Yazeed, did not rule for long; rather the son of his father’s cousin, Marwaan ibn Muhammad ibn Marwaan rebelled against him. When Yazeed died, he was succeeded by his

brother Ibraaheem, but Marwaan defeated him. Then Banu'l-‘Abbaas (the Abbasids) rebelled against Marwaan, until he was killed. Then the first of the Abbasid caliphs was Abu'l-‘Abbaas al-Saffaah, whose reign did not last long because of the large numbers who rebelled against him. He was succeeded by his brother al-Mansoor whose reign lasted for a long time, but they lost the far Maghreb (Andalusia), when the Marwaanis took over Andalusia; they remained in control of it and later on began to call themselves caliphs. Then things started to decline in all regions of the Muslim world, to the point that there was nothing left of the caliphate except the name only, in some countries. Prior to that, during the era of Banu ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Marwaan, the khateebahs had delivered their khutbahs in the name of the caliph in all regions, East and West, North and South, in all lands under Muslim control, and no one could hold any position of authority in any land except by appointment of the caliph. Whoever studies history will realise that this is true. Based on that, what is meant by the words “Then there will be harj (killing)” is the killing that results from widespread turmoil, and continues to spread and increase as time goes by, which is what happened. And Allah is the One Whose help we seek. End quote.

Fath al-Baari, 13/214

4. The fourth approach

The fourth view is that these twelve caliphs will come after the appearance of the Mahdi at the end of time. Ibn al-Jawzi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

With regard to the other way of interpreting the hadeeth that was mentioned by Abu'l-Husayn ibn al-Munaadi concerning this hadeeth, regarding the words “after me there will be twelve caliphs” he said: This will only take place after the death of the Mahdi who will emerge at the end of time. He said: We found in the Book of Daniel: When the Mahdi dies, there will be five rulers, who are descended from the older grandson – meaning the son of al-Hasan ibn ‘Ali – then after them there will be another five from among the descendants of the younger grandson, then the last of them will give instructions that the (next) caliph should be a man

from among the descendants of the older grandson, and he will take power, then after him his son will become ruler, and that will complete twelve rulers, each of whom will be a guided leader.

Ibn al-Munaadi said: We found in the report of Abu Saalih from Ibn ‘Abbaas that he mentioned the Mahdi and said: Then after him will come twelve men, for one hundred and fifty years, six from among the descendants of al-Hasan, one from among the descendants of ‘Aqeel ibn Abi Taalib, and five from among the descendants of al- Husayn. Then he will die and mischief will become widespread and evil will return.

Ka‘b al-Ahbaar said: There will be twelve guided rulers, then the soul created by Allah (i.e., ‘Eesa) will descend and will kill the Dajjaal. End quote.

Kashf al-Mushkil min Hadeeth as-Saheehayn, 1/292-293.

Al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar quoted these words of al-Munaadi and said:

With regard to what he narrated from Abu Saalih, it is very weak, and the same applies to what he narrated from Ka‘b. End quote from Fath al-Baari, 13/214

5. The fifth approach

The fifth view is that it is to be understood as describing the ruling elite, the caliph, the viziers (advisers), governors, and so on. Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Ibn Hubayrah interpreted the hadeeth as referring to the laws of the kingdom, based on twelve, such as viziers, judges and so on.

But this is not valid; rather the hadeeth is to be taken as it appears to be and there is no need for such a far-fetched interpretation. End quote. Minhaaj as-Sunnah, 8/173

6. The sixth approach

The sixth view is to refrain from interpreting the hadeeth and leave knowledge thereof to Allah, may He be glorified and exalted.

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said, quoting from al-Qaadi ‘Iyaad:

Allah knows best what he (the Prophet – blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) meant. End quote. Sharh Muslim, 12/203

Ibn Battaal narrated that al-Muhallab said:

I never met anyone who was certain about the interpretation of this hadeeth. End quote. Fath al-Baari, 13/211

Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Among them were those who said that they did not understand what it meant, such as Abu Bakr ibn al-‘Arabi. End quote. Minhaaj as-Sunnah, 8/173

Thirdly: With regard to the Shi‘ah quoting this hadeeth as evidence for the belief in the imamate – which means belief that their imams are infallible rulers, and even that they have the power of issuing laws and are in control of the universe – of twelve men from the family of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), for whom they have a list of specific names, the last of whom is the Mahdi, this is a far-fetched and distorted understanding of the hadeeth, based on fanatical bias, ignorance, and whims and desires.

We will explain why this view is weak from several angles:

1.

What is mentioned in the hadeeth is “twelve caliphs”, not “twelve imams.” There is a difference between the two. In their view imamate is more than mere caliphate and rule; according to their beliefs, imamate requires obedience, and implies that the imams are infallible in word and deed, that they act on behalf of Allah,

may He be exalted, in controlling the universe, that they have absolute knowledge of the unseen, and other exaggerated notions that reached the point of kufr (disbelief that puts them beyond the pale of Islam), Allah forbid. All the hadeeth is actually saying is that there will be twelve caliphs or, according to another report, twelve ameers (rulers). This indicates that twelve men of Quraysh will be in positions of rulership.

2.

These twelve men were all described in the hadeeth as belonging to Quraysh. The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "... all of them (will be) from Quraysh." If they were from the family of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), he would have said "... all of them from Banu Haashim," because identifying someone as a Haashimi is more specific than identifying him as a Qurashi; the custom is to attribute a person to the closest or most specific lineage. If all

of them were to be from Banu Haashim, he would not have said that they would be from Quraysh. [Banu Haashim are a clan of Quraysh]

3.

The text of the hadeeth indicates that the era of these twelve would be an era of strength, power and righteousness, in which Islam would be prevailing. This did not happen during the era of the twelve imams in whom the Shi 'ah believe. All of them lived a life of weakness and persecution, hidden from view, so how could they have been able to contribute to the glory and strength of Islam in that situation? Shaykh al- Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

"Whoever thinks that these twelve are the ones who the Raafidis believe are their imams is utterly ignorant, for none of them carried a sword except 'Ali ibn Abi Taalib. All the rest of the imams, apart from 'Ali, never carried a sword, especially the Awaited One (al-Muntazar – the last imam). Rather he, according to those who

believe in his imamate, is either scared and helpless or on the run, hiding for more than four hundred years.

This hidden one never guided anyone who had gone astray, he never enjoined any good, forbade any evil or supported any oppressed person; he never gave a fatwa concerning any issue, he never gave a ruling and it is not known that he even existed at all!

What benefit did he offer, even if he did exist, let alone Islam prevailing because of him? Moreover, the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) stated that Islam would remain strong and this ummah would remain in good shape until there had been twelve caliphs. If what is meant thereby is these twelve imams, the last of whom is al- Muntazar, who supposedly exists now, until he appears to them, as they believe, then Islam should still have been strong during the Umayyad and ‘Abbasid periods, and it should have prevailed when the disbelievers emerged in the East and the West (i.e., the Mongols and the Crusaders) and did what they did to the Muslims, which would take too long to describe here. Islam should have been still prevailing until today, and this is something other than what the hadeeth indicates.

Moreover, Islam – according to the Imami Shi‘ah – is what they are following, and they are the most humiliated sect of the ummah. There are no followers of whims and desires who are more lowly than the Raafidis; no group is more concealing of their beliefs than them or more assiduous in practicing taqiyyah (dissimulation). They claim to be followers of the twelve imams, yet they are the most humiliated. What support of Islam was achieved by these twelve, as they claim? Many of the Jews, when they became Muslim, became Shi‘ah, because they read in the Torah mention of twelve, so they think that these are the ones. But that is not the case; rather these twelve (in the hadeeth) are the men of Quraysh who took positions of leadership and caliphate in the ummah; at their time Islam was strong, and this is well known. End quote.

Minhaaj as-Sunnah, 8/173-174

Al-Haafiz Ibn Katheer (may Allah have mercy on him) said: This hadeeth indicates the inevitability of there being twelve just caliphs, but they are not the twelve imams of the Shi'ah. Many of the latter had no power at all, whereas these (caliphs mentioned in the hadeeth) will be of Quraysh, and they will have power and will be just. End quote.

Tafseer al-Qur'an al-'Azeem, 6/78

Shaykh 'Uthmaan al-Khamees (may Allah preserve him) said:

One may wonder: is it mere coincidence that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said that twelve would rule or be in charge of the Muslims, and the number of the imams of the Shi'ah is twelve?

Answer:

This is not a coincidence. The early Shi'ah never had this idea of twelve imams. Hence the Shi'ah divided into many sects. Some Shi'ah believe that only 'Ali was an imam; they are the Saba'is, who stopped at that point. Another group said that he was an imam, as were al-Hasan, al-Husayn and Muhammad ibn 'Ali; they are the Keesaanis, and they stopped at Muhammad.

Another group said that the imamate went up to Ja'far then stopped. And another group said that al-Muntazar (the awaited one) is also an imam; they are the Ithna 'Asharis (Twelvers). And there are other groups and many other divisions. Anyone who wishes to know more may refer to an-Noobakhti's book on the Shi'ah sects.

So you can see that the idea of twelve imams came very late, because this idea did not exist among the early Shi'ah; the hadeeths they quote were fabricated after the death of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and even after the death of most of the imams of the Shi'ah.

Thus it will become clear to you that the Shi‘ah are the ones who made this number match the number in the hadeeth of the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon

him).

Finally, I say that the sound report is the one that says “all of them from Quraysh”. The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) would not have mentioned this general claim if he had meant something more specific; doing so is contrary to eloquence, and the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was the most eloquent of people. For example, I would not say, “I am going to give a hundred dinars to every Arab,” then if an Egyptian comes to me, I tell him that I meant every Syrian. Is he not going to accuse me of being foolish and unable to express myself, and tell me that in that case I should have said “every Syrian”?

If the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) had meant ‘Ali and his sons, he would have said, “They are ‘Ali and his sons.” Even if he had said “All of them from Banu Haashim,” that would have been eloquent. Banu Haashim were many, and Quraysh were more numerous, but the report speaks of them (Quraysh). If at-Tijaani [who wrote a book in support of Shi‘i ideas] and others quote this hadeeth as evidence because it matches the number they have, then what would they say about the hadeeth narrated by Imam Muslim in his Saheeh (2779), according to which the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Among my ummah there will be twelve hypocrites; they will not enter Paradise or even smell its fragrance, until the camel goes through the eye of the needle”? End quote.

Kashf al-Jaani Muhammad at-Tijaani (a refutation of at-Tijaani’s book), p. 75 ff And Allah knows best.