

Diwan of Royal Court
Sultan Qaboos Centre for Islamic Culture

THE TWENTY FIVE PROPHETS

The Parables of the Apostles Mentioned in The Holy Quraan

Written and Compiled by
Nassir Bin Issa Bin Said Al-Kindy

FOR**EWORD**

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. Allah's Blessing and Peace be upon our Prophet Muhammad to the day of resurrection, Amin. I thank Allah the Almighty for enabling me to write this book that I hope my readers will benefit from it. I wish to thank Ms. Saada Al-Jahadhamy for taking her time in reading and correcting the book. Lastly my thanks to my family for tolerating with me and encouraging me in the writing, to whom I dedicate this work.

I originally wrote the book in the Swahili language; thus I felt that it might be better to translate it in English for the benefit of those who can not understand Swahili. Several Arabic books were originally used in the research of the subject. For the translation, I heavily depended on "THE HOLY QUR'AN" *Translation and commentary by* A. YUSUF ALI, *Published by* Islamic Propagation Centre International, my thanks to that.

P.O.Box 1139
P.C.112,
RUWI,
Sultanate of Oman.
Tel. (+968 99326900)

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Following are some of the verses in the Holly Quraan that were related to Prophet Muhammad (SAW)[1] so that his followers, who believe in the true religion of the one Allah, may read and be able to understand it.

In Chapter 12 verse 3, Allah says:

We do relate unto you the most beautiful of stories, in that We reveal to you this (portion of the) Quraan: Before this, you too was among those who knew it not.

The Almighty again reveals the following in Chapter 18 verse 13:

We relate to you their story in truth: they were youths who believed in their Lord, and We advanced them in guidance.

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[1]SAW — *Salla Allahu Alayhi Wasallam* meaning Allah's Blessing and Peace be upon him, (sometimes written PBUH). This will appear everytime Prophet Muhammad is mentioned.

Yet again He relates this in Chapter 7 verse 176 and says:

So relate the story; perchance they may reflect.

There are many Prophets, who have had their stories related in the Quraan, some of them related in detail while some of them related only briefly. Of those mentioned therein are twenty-five, and the following narration in Chapter 6 verses 83-86 reveals some of these Prophets:

That was the reasoning about Us, which We gave Abraham (to use) against his people: We raise whom We will, degree after degree: For your Lord is full of wisdom and knowledge. We gave him Isaac and Jacob: all (three) We guided: and before him, We guided Noah, and among his progeny, David, Solomon, Job, Joseph, Moses, and Aaron: Thus do We reward those who do good: And Zachariah and John, and Jesus and Elias: All in the ranks of the righteous: And Ishmael and Elisha, and Jonas, and Lot: And to all We gave Favour above the nations: (To them) and to their fathers, and progeny and brethren: We chose them, and we guided them to a straight way.

The Almighty reveals to Muhammad (SAW) in Chapter 11 verse 120:

All that we relate to you of the stories of the messengers, with it We make firm your heart: in them there cometh to you the Truth, as well as an exhortation and a message of remembrance to those who believe.

The reason that these stories about the Prophets who came before were narrated was to make the Prophet's (Muhammad) heart firm, and that the truth, that those who came before had rejected, emerges. In rejecting Allah's teachings, which were brought by those Prophets who came before, there were a lot of bad things and sins committed by these people, which were also inherited by those who came after them. For this reason, The Almighty sent the Quraan to the people to correct all this, so that the truth is revealed, and the Quraan be a reminder and a teaching for the believers.

The Almighty goes on relating to Muhammad (SAW) about these Apostles, as explained in Chapter2 verse 253:

Those Messengers We endowed with gifts, some above others: To one of them Allah spoke; others He raised to degrees (of honour); To Jesus the son of Mary We gave clear (Signs), and strengthened him with the holy spirit.

As we can see in this verse Allah differentiates these Prophets in grades, while He goes on to relate further in Chapter 40 verse 78:

We did aforetime send Messengers before you: of them there are some whose story We have related to you, and some whose story We have not related to you.

Allah sent Messengers of His Truth to all people. There are some whose names are known to us through the holy Quraan, but there are a large number of others whose names are not made known to us through that medium.
The stories of the Prophets in the Quraan are not mere narratives or histories. They involve three things:
1. They teach us the highest spiritual Truth,
2. They give us advice, direction, and warning, as to how we should govern our lives,
3. They awaken our conscience and recall to us the working of Allah's Law in human affairs.
Therefore, the verses that are referred to are an admonition and a teaching for those who can understand and learn from that teaching.

These Prophets were sent by The Almighty to the people to lead them in the right direction. Allah has guided the Prophets, and we need therefore follow their footsteps. These Prophets have come from the time of the creation of the human; Adam (AS)[1]

[1]AS — *Alayhi Ssalaam* meaning Peace be upon him. This will appear everytime a Prophet's name is mentioned.

himself for example, was a Prophet to his own family. The total number of those sent are one hundred and twenty four thousand, of whom three hundred and thirteen are Messengers or Apostles (*Rasuls*) and the remaining are Prophets (*Nabiis*).

In the past, the Jews always had a Prophet among them; and when any of them died, another one was sent to them instead. This meant that there was no time that they stayed without having a Prophet to guide them. There were times when there were more than one Prophet at a time, for example during Ibrahim's (AS) time there was Luut (AS) who was sent to the people of Sodom. Musa (AS) and his brother Harun (AS) were together; Zakariya, Yahya and Issa (AS) were there at the same time.

Allah says in Chapter 4 verse 165:

Messengers who gave good news as well as warning, that mankind, after (the coming) of the Messengers, should have no plea against Allah.

People would therefore have no excuses on the Day of Judgement to say: "Of this we were never aware", that is to say they were not told of the existence of Allah.

During their mission of teaching the people the true religion, these Apostles met with a lot of obstacles and problems. They were beaten, called liars, mad and the like; but they resisted all this and persisted with their difficult mission. Among those who really had tough time were Muhammad (SAW), Issa, Musa,

Ibrahim and Nuuh (AS); these are known as *Uli L-Azm,* the most determined.

The stories related in this book are true stories; they are the true events in history. In these stories, there is a lot to be learnt from what happened in the past, so that people would realize their mistakes and hence correct themselves. The teachings of these Prophets constitute a large portion in the writing of the history, without which one cannot understand history. The most important of all is the fact that one cannot really understand the Quraan without knowing these events in history.

Therefore, with this introduction I hope the reader can follow the story of each of these Prophets that are to be mentioned in the following chapters.

CHAPTER II

ADAM (AS)

Allah almighty created the earth in two days and set on it mountains standing firm high above it. He then bestowed His blessings on it, and measured therein all things to give nourishment in due proportion; He did this in four days. He then comprehended in His design the sky, which was (as) smoke. He said to it and to the earth: "Come ye together, willingly or unwillingly." They said: "We do come (together) in willing obedience."

It is He who created the heavens and the earth in six days and His Throne was over waters. It is scientifically correct to say that all life was evolved out of the waters. The Throne of Allah's authority is metaphorically expressed as over waters; i.e. water is what regulates all life. He then created the Angels who obey and idolize Him for all what He has cherished them. They are near to Him and that they are there to worship and obey the Almighty at all times.

Long before creation of the human being, Allah created Jinn from fire who resided the earth. These, however, caused a lot of problems and bloodshed among themselves and Allah punished them for their sins by banishing them. One of them, Satan, however, was blessed by Allah and allowed to live and mingle with the Angels.

After this He decided to create another being (Adam), He said to the Angels: "I will create a vicegerent on earth."
When the Angels came to know of their Lord's intention, they quickly wanted to clear themselves of any blame. They did this because they thought that they might have wronged to upset their Lord. They therefore came forward and said:

"Will You place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood? – Whilst we do celebrate Your praises and glorify Your holy (name)? "
(Chapter 2 verse 30)

They said this because they thought of themselves as being of preference in front of Him, as they existed before this new being that was to come, and that they had more knowledge. They also feared that there would again be bloodshed as that caused by the Jinn before. Allah Almighty said to them: "I know what you know not, I will create what I want and you will see afterwards what you don't know."

He then created Adam (AS) from sticky clay and breathed into him His spirit and became a living being. He then commanded the Angels to bow down to him and they did bow to him. *Iblis* (Satan), however, refused to do so and was arrogant; he was one of those who rejected Faith.
Allah then asked Satan the reason for not bowing down to Adam (AS), and said to him: "O *Iblis*! What prevents you from prostrating yourself to one whom I have created with My hands? Are you haughty? Or are you one of the high (and mighty) ones?"

Satan showing himself to be better and of high ranking that no one could reach his status, replied: “I am better than he, You have created me from fire and him You have created from clay.”

Allah punished Satan for his sin, and said to him: “Then get out from here for you are rejected, accursed. And My Curse shall be on you till the Day of Judgement.”
Satan asked for forgiveness and pleaded to his Lord to give him another chance and let him live until the Day of Judgement. For this, Allah gave him another chance that he would live until the Day of Judgement.
He, however, never thanked his Lord for this, but instead he said with insolence: “Then by Your Power, I will put them all in the wrong, Except Your servants amongst them, sincere and purified (by Your grace).”
Here Allah threw Satan out and cut off all His blessings on him, and said: “Get out from this, disgraced and expelled. If any of them follow you, Hell will I fill with you all.”

The Angels bowed down to Adam (AS) with respect, and accepted that he is far better in all respects in front of their Lord than they are. They, however, had thought that since they were there before Adam (AS), they had better knowledge of everything. Therefore, Allah wanted to test the Angels. Allah gave Adam (AS) the knowledge and taught him the nature of all things; then He placed the things before the Angels, and said: “Tell me the nature of these things if you are right.”

The Angels searched from all the knowledge that they had, but could not identify the names of those put in front of them. They then said: “Glory to You: of knowledge we have none, save

what You have taught us: in truth it is You who are perfect in knowledge and wisdom."
He (The Almighty) did this to show the Angels what they lack in their knowledge and to show them that Adam (AS) was far superior in all respects. He then commanded Adam (AS) to tell them the names, which he did fluently. Allah then turned to the Angels and said: "Did I not tell you that I know the secrets of the heavens and of the earth, and I know what you reveal and what you conceal?"
Here the Angels accepted Adam (AS) to be what he was for his superiority, and Satan tasted the powers of his Lord and felt the pinch of being forsaken and thrown out from the Heavens.

Allah then put Adam (AS) in the Garden of Eden and created for him, within himself, a partner *Hawaa* (Eve) so that they could live together. He then said to them: "Remember my blessings to you, that I have created you a better being when the Angels bowed down to you and Satan refused to obey My orders. Remember that Satan is your biggest enemy. In this Garden of Eden will it be your abode, you shall not go hungry or thirsty, and you shall not go naked as long as you are in it. If you obey Me I will let you live in it, but if you go against my wishes then I will throw you out of it."

Allah allowed them to dwell in the Garden and eat whatever they pleased but warned them not to approach a certain tree, and He said to them: "O Adam! Dwell you and your wife in the Garden; and eat of the bountiful things therein as (where and when) you will; but approach not this tree, or you run into harm and transgression."

Adam and Hawaa (AS) lived in the Gardens very happily moving around freely and enjoying what was in it, but his biggest enemy (Satan) was jealous to see them like that. Satan therefore made every means to find his way into the Gardens, which he eventually managed to do. He then approached them in a deceptive way and swore to them that he was their savior and a sincere adviser. He began to whisper to them, bringing openly before their minds all their shame that was hidden from them. He told them: "Your Lord only forbade you this tree, lest you should become angels or such beings as live for ever." Therefore, by deceit he brought about their fall when they tasted of the tree.

They became naked immediately thereafter, so they began to sew together the leaves of the Garden over their bodies. Their Lord called to them: "Did I not forbid you that tree, and tell you that Satan was your enemy?"
Here Adam (AS) realizing his mistake, said to his Lord: "Our Lord! We have wronged our own souls; if You do not forgive us and bestow Your Mercy on us we shall certainly be lost."

Our first parents as created by Allah (and this applies to all of us) were innocent in matters material as well as spiritual, they knew no evil. But the faculty of choice, which was given to them and to which raised them above the Angels, also implied that they had the capacity of evil, which by training of their own will, they were reject. They were warned of the danger. When they fell, they realized the evil. They were (and we are) still given the chance, in this life on a lower plane, to make good and recover the lost status of innocence and bliss.

Allah accepted their plea for forgiveness, but He told them: "Get down with enmity between you. On earth will be your dwelling-place and your means of livelihood, for a time. Therein you shall live, and therein you shall die; but from it you shall be taken out (at last). "

The Birth of the Children of Adam (AS)

After Adam and Hawaa (AS) were expelled from the Garden and sent down to live on earth, they were told that they had then entered a life where there were two tracks (so to speak). One a straight and lit track, while the other one is a dark alley. Metaphorically speaking, the straight and lit one is the right way of Allah. While the dark alley is the one Satan will lead them into so as to go against their Lord.

While they were in the Garden, there was no such thing as the life we know, of human intercourse of man and wife. Therefore, Allah sent the Angel Gabriel to teach Adam (AS) what to do with his spouse. Here started the normal human life, and Hawaa was anxiously waiting for the first birth.

Hawaa gave birth to twins; a boy called Qabil and his twin sister. And in her second birth she gave birth to twins, a boy called Habil and his twin sister. The pairs grew up together happily until they came of age. Qabil became a farmer, while Habil was a shepherd; their life was easy and very peaceful. After a while nature took its course and each one of the boys felt that they needed someone to live with and build up a family.

Allah wanted the human being to have children to multiply and start a nation. Hence, He instructed Adam (AS) to cross marry the two pairs of twins, that is to say Qabil to marry Habil's twin sister while Habil marries Qabil's twin sister. We are to note here that Allah wished this cross marriage of brothers and sisters to take place, which is not allowed in our society today, because there was no other alternative to this. This was the only way that the human could start the process of multiplication.

Adam (AS) therefore related this Allah's order to his children, but Qabil objected outright to this, because he thought that the wife he would get was not as beautiful as was his own twin sister. He felt jealous of his brother Habil and utterly refused to give up his twin sister and instead wanted to marry her himself. It was because of the beauty of his sister that caused jealousy and quarrel between the brothers.

Adam (AS) then had a problem in his hands to try and reconcile the two brothers. He therefore suggested that each one of them bring a sacrifice (to Allah), and the one whose sacrifice would be accepted, would have the right to choose the wife he wanted. Habil brought from his herd a camel as his sacrifice, while Qabil brought wheat from his farm. They left these sacrifices and waited to see which one Allah would accept. It turned out that Habil was the winner in this case. Actually, Qabil did not do this in earnest and with a clean heart; he did it only to please his father. Allah says in Chapter 5 verse 27:

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.

From here on Qabil became more and more jealous and hated his brother to an extent that he told him: "Be sure I will kill you."
But Habil told his brother in a kind way: "Allah only accepts the sacrifice of those who are righteous. If you stretch your hand against me to kill me, it is not for me to stretch my hand against you to kill you for I do fear Allah."

Habil was a person who was open – minded, honest and knew how to tackle problems. He was very obedient to his parents and was satisfied for what he had. He loved his brother and wished hi no harm. He tried to advise him, and told him to ask for forgiveness from his Lord for what he had said, and told him that Satan who got into his head is the biggest enemy. All this was in vain, and Qabil with his selfish soul proceeded with his plan and murdered his brother. That was the end of Habil. That was the first crime on earth, the murder of Habil, and Qabil being the first murderer. Allah, however, gave Adam (AS) another child (Shiyth) instead, who grew up to be a Prophet after the death of his father.

After Qabil had committed the crime of murdering his brother, he did not know what to do with the body. He therefore put it in a sack, carried it on his back and started walking around with it. Allah then sent two ravens that fought until one was killed, and then the one that survived scratched the ground to show him how to hide the shame of his brother. When he saw this he said in repentance: "Woe is me! Was I not even able to be as this

raven, and hide the shame of my brother?" He then became full of regrets. Because of this, the humans have been instructed to bury their dead as respect to them.

The time came when Adam (AS) was to depart from this world and go back to his Lord, so he gathered all his children and gave them advice to worship only Allah the Almighty and to be careful with Satan who was their biggest enemy. He told them that Allah would send Prophets after him to teach people the right religion of worshiping the one Allah. He then passed away peacefully. Adam lived for nearly a millennium.

It is said that Friday is a day of great significance, the day Adam (AS) (father of all the humans) was created, and it is also the day when he was put in the Garden of Eden and also the day he was evicted from it. The Lord is more Knowledgeable.

After the death of Adam (AS), it is believed that his son Shiyth (AS) became the Prophet and continued with the teachings of his father.

CHAPTER III

IDRIS (AS) (ENOCH)

He is Idris bin (son of) Yaarib bin Mahlaiyl bin Qiynan bin Anoush bin Shiyth bin Adam (AS), he is therefore the sixth generation from Adam (AS). He was born during Adam's time, spent one hundred and twenty years of his life with Adam (AS). After the death of Shiyth (AS), whom we have mentioned earlier, Allah had sent Idris (AS) as a Prophet to his own people.

Idris (AS) was heavily built, tall and very handsome, and had a thick beard. He was known to be kind and generous. He liked reading the holy books that is why he was called Idris.[1] In addition, he was the first person to write with a pen, and he was the first person to use a needle for sewing. He was a man of truth and sincerity Prophet, and he enjoyed a high position among his people.

It is not known exactly where he was born, but some scholars say that he was born in Egypt. He was given the name of Hurmus or in Greek Armis meaning Mercury a name of one of the stars. On the other hand, some say that he was born in Babel in Iraq. Allah is the more Knowledgable.

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[1] Comes from the word *Darasa* in Arabic meaning read or study.

During his youth, he learnt a lot from Shiyth (AS), and when he became a Prophet, he taught his people the teachings of Adam and of Shiyth (AS). He passed to his people the message of Allah, and taught them the true religion of worshipping the only one God, and not to be polytheists. He kept himself in touch with his people, and was honoured among them; he kept to truth and piety in the highest station.

Idris (AS) was only mentioned in the Quraan twice, and in Chapter 19 verse 56 Allah says:

Also, mention in the Book the case of Idris. He was a man of truth (and sincerity), (and) a Prophet.

Allah had told him that for each good deed he did every day, He would pay him equivalent to the good deeds done by all the people in the whole world.

When he died, Allah raised him to the fourth firmament. It is explained that one day one of the Angels who was very dear to him came and told him that the Angel of death had been instructed to take his soul. (Prophets were normally informed beforehand of their time to return to their Lord). Idris (AS) then asked him to intervene and beg the Angel of death to defer this so that he can continue to do more good deeds. The Angel then carried him under the wing and raised him to the fourth firmament; there this Angel met with the Angel of death and said: "Idris had requested me to ask you to defer your mission."
The Angel of death asked: "And where is Idris?"
The Angel said: "Here he is under my wing."

The Angel of death said: "That is very strange! Allah had instructed me to take Idris's soul on the fourth firmament and I was wondering how to do this when he is available on earth."

It was here therefore where his soul was taken, Allah says in Chapter 19 verse 57:

And We raised him to a lofty station.

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) met with Idris (AS) in the fourth firmament when he was raised to the seventh firmament to receive Allah's instruction.

There were seventy-two tongues spoken during Idris's (AS) time, and Allah taught him all these languages so as to be able to teach his people. He kept teachers in each town to help him in the teachings of Allah.

It is said that in his time, people used to pray facing the north of Makah, which had been the direction faced by Adam (AS) and those who followed him, until Suleiman (AS) came and changed it to facing to Al-Quds, in Palestine. Muhammad (SAW) then changed it back to towards Makah, after being instructed to do so by Allah, while he was in the middle of his prayers.

It is known that in Al-Koufa in Iraq there is a mosque known as A-Sahlah, where Idris's house had been and where he used to do his sewing and say his prayers. This is what is made known to us, but Allah Almighty Knows best.

CHAPTER IV

NUUH (AS) (NOAH)

He is Nuuh bin Laamik bin Matushlikh bin Idris bin Luud (or Yaarib as mentioned in Taurat) bin Mahalail bin Qinyan bin Anoush bin Shiyth bin Adam (AS). Therefore, Idris (AS) is Nuuh's great grandfather, as is related in the Taurat and in history books. The Lord is more Knowledgeable. Nuuh (AS) was born during the year when Adam (AS) died, and he lived for nine hundred and fifty years. He was made Prophet at the age of four hundred years, and was sent after Idris (AS). He was sent to preach to his people the Truth of Allah, the one and only Allah (The Almighty). He was a carpenter.

After the death of Idris (AS), there was no Prophet, and the people were left by themselves to follow the good teachings of Idris, Shiyth and Adam (AS). There was lack of reverence among the people for a while. They, however, remained in unification of the one Allah (The Almighty) and they remained like this for one thousand years after the death of Adam (AS). Allah relates this fact in Chapter 2 verse 213 where He says:

Mankind was one single nation…

After the death of Adam (AS) there were many pious people who were known to have worshipped the one Allah. They were from the ancestors of Nuuh (AS), and among them were these five men known as Wudd, Suwa, Yaghuth, Ya'uq and Nasr.

After their death, their people made statues of them for remembrance. Years passed, and the generations that came later did not know the reason for these statues that were erected by their ancestors.

Here Satan found a good opportunity to make people go astray. He therefore started telling them that these statues were Allahs that deserved to be worshiped. From there on people took to worshipping idols and leaving the good teachings of their forefathers. People got into worshipping many Allahs or what is known as polytheism, and went astray. For this reason it was necessary to send a Prophet so as lead them again in the right direction of worshipping the one Allah, and so Nuuh (AS) was sent. Allah relates the following in Chapter 71 verse 1:

We sent Noah to his people (with the Command): "Do you warn your People before there comes to them a grievous Penalty."

Nuuh (AS) was a person who was very fluent in his speech, bright and very persevering. He was not a rich person, and used to thank his Lord for everything he ate or drank and for anything, he did. He called upon his people to leave the worship of idols and listen to him in his teachings and worship the one Allah. They rejected all what he told them, put a deaf ear to it and became obstinate. He used all the resources of an earnest preacher; he dinned the Message of Allah into their ears; he spoke in public places; and he took individuals into his confidence, and appealed privately to them; but all this was in vain. He, however, never gave up but persisted in calling his people day and night. After a great effort he managed to get a

small group of people, numbering no more than eighty, who agreed to follow him. He was the first Prophet to meet with such obstacles.

Nuuh (AS) after trying his best without success said to his Lord:

O my Lord! I have called my people night and day. But my call only increases (their) flight (from the Right). And every time I have called to them, that You might forgive them, they have (only) thrust their fingers into their ears, covered themselves up with their garments, grown obstinate, and given themselves up to arrogance.
(Chapter 71 verses 5 – 7)

The literal meaning of thrusting their fingers into their ears would be to prevent the voice of the admonisher reaching them, so they covered their bodies with their garments that the light of truth should not penetrate to them, and that they should not even be seen by the Preacher.

Those who refused to listen to him and follow his teachings were mostly the rich people of high ranking in the society. The chiefs of the Unbelievers among his people said: "He is no more than a man like yourselves; his wish is to assert his superiority over you. If Allah wished to send messengers, He could have sent down Angels. Never did we hear such a thing (as he says), among our ancestors of old."
And some said: "He is only a man possessed, wait and have patience for a time."

They therefore said to him: “You seem to have gathered but a few of these poor people who know nothing, if you really wanted us to follow you then throw them out of your society, because we can not tolerate to be seen with them.”
Nuuh (AS) replied: “This is a call for everyone, poor and rich, weak and strong, illiterate and educated. Anyone who wished to follow me then he should join in.”

When the argument got heated up, they said to him: “O Nuuh! You have disputed with us, and you have much prolonged the dispute with us. Now bring upon us what you threaten us with, if you are speaking the truth.”

Nuuh (AS) then told them: “And who am I that can bring upon you affliction? I am no more a human than what you are. Allah has sent me revelations of His teachings; I have told you no more than what I have been instructed to do by my Lord.”

Allah has given these Prophets much endurance and perseverance so that they could withstand all the problems they faced. They persisted in their preaching and left no chance to their people to come and say “But we were not told” when the affliction comes to these people.
Here Allah told Noah (AS): “None of your People will believe except those who have believed already! So grieve no longer over their (evil) deeds.”
Nuuh (AS) then begged his Lord and said: “Oh my Lord! Do not leave a single one of the unbelievers on earth. For if You leave any of them, they will but mislead Your devotees, and they will breed none but the wicked ones.”

Here Allah accepted Nuuh's plea, and commanded him to build an Ark. He said:

But construct an Ark under Our eyes and Our Inspiration, and address me not (further) on behalf of those who are in sin, for they are about to be overwhelmed (in the Flood).
(Chapter 11 verse 37)

Therefore, Nuuh (AS) found a place outside the village, away from everybody, where he gathered the material he needed for the construction of the Ark, and started the work with help of those who were with him. Every time those unbelievers passed by, said to tell him: "O Nuuh! Were you not the one who used to say to us that you were a messenger of Allah, why have you become a carpenter? And this ship you are constructing here in the middle of the desert where will you get the water to float it? Or you will get the wind to carry it for you?

Nuuh (AS), however, just continued working as instructed by his Lord and did not utter a word to reply them. He said to them at one time: "If you ridicule us now, we (in our turn) can look down on you with ridicule likewise. But soon will you know who is it whom will descend a Penalty that will cover them with shame, on whom will be unloosed a Penalty lasting."

The ship was said to be more than one thousand meters long, two hundred meters wide and about one hundred meters high. It was made into three decks, and covered on the top so that no rain would affect it. The Ark has recently been discovered somewhere on a mountain in Turkey, the specifications

mentioned here are more or less exact. It is there as a symbol and a lesson for the people. Allah Almighty says in Chapter 54 verse 15:

And We have left this as a Sign (for all time), then is there any that will receive admonition?

As the Ark was completed, Nuuh (AS) awaited for the instructions from his Lord. He was then commanded: "Embark therein, and carry with you mated pairs of every species of animals. And carry your family, except those who have gone against your preaching, and the believers." His wife and one of his sons were among those unbelievers. He therefore did this and waited for the zero hour.

Here came Allah's command and it was said: "And the fountains of the earth gushed forth." There came gushing forth of waters from the earth and downpour from the skies above and in no time the whole place was like a large ocean and the Ark floated with them on waves towering like mountains. Literally the peaks of the highest mountains were submerged. The entire earth or a large part of it was inundated and everybody was drowned and perished. Everything submerged under the waters, the only survivors were those who were on the Ark, and there was nothing to be seen except the Ark floating.

Nuuh (AS) saw his son who had separated himself from the rest. He called out to him: "O my son! Embark with us, and do not be with the unbelievers."
The son replied: "I will betake myself to some mountain, it will save me from the water."

Nuuh (AS) said: "This day nothing can save, from the Command of Allah, any but those on whom He has mercy!"
Here a big tidal wave came between them, and the son was submerged under it and was drowned. Nuuh (AS) called upon his Lord, and said: "O my Lord! Surely my son is of my family! And Your promise is true, and You are the Justest of Judges."
Allah said to him: "O Nuuh! He is not of your family, for his conduct is unrighteous. So do not ask me that which you have no knowledge! I give you counsel, lest you act like ignorant!"
Like all men of Allah, Nuuh (AS) was kind-hearted, but he is told that there can be no compromise with evil, and he acknowledges the reproof.
Nuuh (AS) said: "O my lord! I do seek refuge with You, lest I ask You for that of which I have no knowledge. And unless You forgive me and have mercy on me, I should indeed be lost!"

Nuuh (AS), in his natural affection and respect for the ties of relationship, was overcome with human weakness in wishing to reverse the law of spiritual justice. 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.
The Ark floated on the waters and they remained on it for a period of six months. Then the word went forth: "O earth! Swallow up the water, and O Sky! Withhold (the rain)!" And the water abated, and the matter was ended. The Ark rested on Mount Judi.

Here Nuuh (AS) was commanded by his Lord to disembark on dry land with his followers to start a new life. They therefore disembarked with all their animals, and there was no one there except those who came off the Ark. It is related that there were

no people on earth at that time except in the region of the Arabian continent. Allah, however, chose to make those who were with Nuuh (AS) to be sterile and would bear no children. Eventually they all died and left no children of their own except those of Nuuh (AS). Therefore, Nuuh (AS) is known as the second Adam or the second father of all the people.
Allah says: "And made his descendants to endure on this earth."

Nuuh (AS) had three children. Saam, and from him were born children who were white with a little tan. Haam, from him were born children who were dark skin with a little whiteness. Yaafidh, from him were children who were white with redness. The Arabs and Jews are from Saam, the Africans are from Haam and the Turks and those from eastern Asia and Europeans are from Yaafidh.

Nuuh (AS) lived after the flood for one hundred and fifty years. He lived in a place between north of Shaam (i.e. the area of Jordan, Syria and Lebanon) and south of Turkey. From there people spread out and moved into Palestine and into Arabia.

Nuuh (AS) died and it is said that he was buried in Makka, but there are also some who say that he was buried in a place called Karki Lbiqaa in Lebanon, and The Lord is more Knowledgeable.

CHAPTER V

HUD (AS)

Hud (AS) was a Prophet sent to the people of Aad bin Aws bin Iram bin Saam bin Nuuh. He was the son of Abdulla bin Rabaah bin Jaarut bin Aad bin Aws that is to say he was from the same people. Aad and his people used to live in southern Arabia, a place called Ahqaaf, which is in Yemen and is between Oman and Hadhramout. It is a place facing the sea, which is now known as As-Shihr. The Aad people and Hud (AS) himself were Arabs and used to speak Arabic.

These Aad people lived near the mountains, used to stay in huge tents with lofty pillars on the level grounds, and used to compete in the construction of these tents. They constructed palatial houses by cutting them out of the mountains; for this construction, they seem to have possessed an ancient civilization.

Allah bestowed on these people many nice things, He gave them good fertile land with plenty of water where they cultivated large plantations and made beautiful gardens. He gave them strength and good health and they lived in great comfort. However, with all this they never thought for a moment where it all came from. They forgot that there is a Giver and a Cherisher who is non-but Allah Almighty. Instead of worshiping the one and only Allah (The Almighty) and thanking Him for what He has bestowed on them, they instead worshiped idols. They used

to bow down to these idols and thank them for any good thing they got, and asked for their help for any evil that come to them.

These people of Aad were the first to worship idols after the destruction of the people of Nuuh (AS) in the flood. They had three idols by the name of *Sadaa, Samuda* and *Haraa* that they used to bow down to and worship. This is when Allah had sent to them Hud (AS) as Prophet who was to guide them to a straight path and remove them from the darkness they were in, Allah relates this in Chapter 11 verse 50:

To the Aad people (We sent) Huud, one of their own brethren. He said: "O my people! Worship Allah! You have no other Allah but Him. (Your other Allahs) you do nothing but invent!

He preached to them and told them to ask for forgiveness from their Lord and turn to Him (in repentance). They rejected Allah and His Message and went on their evil ways and became arrogant and adhered to their false Allahs. They were materialists believing in brute force, and felt secured in their fortresses and resources. Their infidelity reached an extent that they said to Hud (AS): "Who is superior to us in strength?"
Did they not see that Allah, Who created them, was superior to them in strength?

Hud (AS) told them: "O my people! Worship Allah! You have no other Allah but Him. Will you not fear (Allah)? O my people! I am not asking any reward from you for this (Message) my reward is from none but Him who created me. Will you not then understand?"

The leaders of the unbelievers among his people said: “Ah! We see you are an imbecile! And we think you are a liar!” They went on to say to him: “Do you expect us to leave what our forefathers worshiped?”
Hud (AS) told them: “Your forefathers were all in the wrong, there is no Allah to be worshiped except The Almighty.”
He went on to tell them: “O my people! Have you forgotten the destruction of the people of Nuuh in the flood? That was not long ago. Are you not afraid of a similar punishment from Allah if you go on like this?”
They said to him: “We are not convinced by what you are saying, bring us what you threaten us with, if you are telling us the truth.”
Here Hud (AS) turned to his Lord and said: “O my Lord! Help me for that they accuse me of falsehood.”
Allah said: “In but a little while, they are sure to be sorry.”

Allah slowly started to bring to them the punishment that they had disputed when their Apostle warned them of its coming. The first sign was the scarcity of rains that brought drought, then temperatures started to go up and the crops dried. When there were no signs of any rain coming, they went running to Hud (AS) and said to him: “O Hud! We see the weather has changed, what could be wrong?”
Hud replied them: “O my people! Don’t you see Allah is angry with you for what you are doing? Ask for forgiveness of your Lord and turn to Him (in repentance) He will send you the skies pouring abundant rain.”

They, however, refused to listen to him and continued with their wrongdoing. The day when the Lord wanted to send them the punishment that they really deserved, there appeared in the sky a

pitch-black cloud coming to them from the valley. When they saw this cloud, they thought it was a good sign of rain coming, and said: "This is what our Allahs has sent us, this is what we were waiting for, rain at last!" No it is the calamity they were asking to hasten! A wind wherein a Grievous Penalty!

The punishment came suddenly, and when they least expected it. They wanted rain, and they saw a cloud and rejoiced. But no! It was a hurricane, bringing destruction. There was a violent blast, with dust and sand destroying everything that came in front of it. After it had passed through there was nothing to be seen except fields covered with sand hills, with lives lost. The morning dawns on a scene of desolation! Where were the men who boasted and defied their Lord! There were only the ruins of their houses to witness the past!

Allah relates in Capter 69 verses 6-7:

And the Aad they were destroyed by a furious wind exceedingly violent; He made it rage against them seven nights and eight days in succession so that you could see the (whole) people lying prostrate in its (path), as if they had been roots of hollow palm trees tumbled down!

That was the end of the Aad people. However, Allah saved Hud (AS) and his followers, and cut off the roots of those who rejected the Signs of their Lord and did not believe. Hud (AS) lived with his people, and eventually died. He was buried in Hadhramaut, Yemen.

CHAPTER VI

SALEH (AS)

As we have seen that Aad people were destroyed after they defied their Lord. Then came the Thamud people who moved from Yemen and went towards the south of Arabia and lived at a place called Hijr that is between Hijaaz and Shaam about three hundred and eighty kilometers north-west of Madina.

They, like the Aad people, constructed palatial houses by cutting them out of the mountains; an art they inherited from the Aad people. Allah had also bestowed on these people many nice things, and they constructed their cities bigger and better than those of Aad's. He gave them good fertile land with plenty of water where they cultivated large plantations and made beautiful gardens. But these people like the Aad's never for a moment thought of their Lord who had given them all this. They also became infidels and went against their Lord.

This is when Allah sent Saleh (AS) to be a Prophet to them. He was an Arab and one of the grand children of Thamud. He is Saleh bin Ubayd bin Isaaf bin Maashih bin Ubayd bin Haadhir bin Thamud bin Aad (AS).

Like any Prophet who was sent, he started preaching to them and telling them to leave the worship of idols and worship the only one Allah (The Almighty). As happened with those who came before, they were in darkness and going astray, then a man

from their kith and kin came and told them to abandon what they were worshipping. They of course rejected his teachings, and majority of those who rejected were usually the rich who enjoyed high class in the society. Saleh (AS) was highly respected and had high standing in his society, and was well learned and a very honest man. Before becoming a Prophet he was very respected by his people and they used to come to him for counseling; and when he became a Prophet and started preaching to them, his people rejected him.

They told him: "O Saleh! You have been among us a centre of our hopes. Do you now ask us not to worship what our fathers had worshipped? We are in grave doubt concerning that to which you tell us to worship."
He said to them: "O my people! Worship Allah, you have no other Allah but Him. O my people! Do you see? If I have a clear sign from my Lord and He has sent mercy onto me from Himself, who then can help me against Allah if I were to disobey Him?"

He gave them the same kind of preaching, that the other Prophets who came before him did. He reminded his people of the existence of Allah who is the only One to be worshipped. He told them to come out of the darkness and leave the worship of idols. The same cycles repeatedly, their rejection of Allah and refusing to listen to their Prophet. They soon forget what had happen to those who rejected Allah before, and refused to learn a lesson from it.

They went on to say: "This Message is sent to him of all people among us? No he is a liar, an insolent one!"

When the argument got heated up, they said to him: “You are no more than a human like us, and then bring us a Sign if you are telling the truth.”

They wanted him to bring to them a Sign from Allah to prove what he says was true and that he really was a Prophet. With arrogance, they specified what sort of Sign they wanted. So they said to him: “We want to see this rock here (there was a big rock) split up and come out of it a she-camel. The camel should be pregnant in her last months; it should be fawn in colour and be a huge camel ever seen before.”
Saleh (AS) told them: “If this Sign comes, will you then believe?”
They jokingly said: “Yes let us see; may be we will believe you.”

One day therefore they gathered round, and Saleh (AS) prayed to his Lord and begged Him to send this Sign. Therefore, with Allah’s command the rock split and from it came out the she-camel in front of their own eyes and with the exact specifications, as they wanted it to be. It was a miracle that no human had seen before, a huge she-camel pregnant in her last months; that was the Sign from Allah.

Saleh (AS) warned his people not to harm this camel else, they were bound to get severe punishment from their Lord. He said to them: “O my people! This she-camel of Allah is a symbol to you. Leave her to feed on Allah’s (free) earth, and inflict no harm on her, or a swift Penalty will seize you.”
He also told them: “Here is a she-camel, she has a right of watering, and you have a right of watering, (severally) on a day appointed.”

The camel used to drink all the water that was available in the wells on the day allotted, while the people used the water on the alternate days. On the day the camel drank the water, it used to produce milk enough to feed everyone in the village. Because of this miracle, they used to call it 'Camel of Allah.'

This camel of course was sent as a trial to them. The Lord relates this to us in Chapter 54 verses 27:

For We will send the she-camel by way of trial to them. So watch them, (O Saleh), and possess yourself in patience.

At first, his people were surprised to see this strange animal which drinks all the water in one day and produce abundance milk enough to feed thousands. It only used to sleep in clean a place. Therefore, when they saw this as a Sign from Allah, some people believed and followed Saleh (AS). While some of them despite all this, they never wanted to believe in him and treated the camel wrongfully.

The Lord says in Chapter 17 verse 59:

We sent the she-camel to the Thamud to open their eyes, but they treated her wrongfully: We only send the Signs by way of terror (and warning from evil).

The camel remained with them for a long time, until one day those unbelievers decided to do away with it, so a group of them sat down to discuss the plans.

They said: “This she-camel as we see it, is a problem, during the summer it finds a cool place in the valley to rest, while in winter it finds a warm place. In turn our animals (sheep etc.) run away from it and this way they are harmed and some die.”
Their chief said: “There is no other way out except to kill it.”
One of them said: “But you know what Saleh told us about this camel, if we do any such thing we are bound to receive punishment from Allah.”
Their chief said: “Do you really believe all what Saleh says?”

There were in the city nine men of a family who made mischief in the land, and those unbelievers selected these men to do their dirty work for them. They therefore planned their tactics of how to kill it, and decided to do the job at night when everybody was asleep. They came to it while she and her baby were asleep, and all together started stabbing it until they killed her and the baby. They then cut it to pieces and distributed the meat for people to eat. Everyone in the village except those believers shared the sinful act of eating the meat.

When Saleh (AS) came to know about this sinful act, he became very furious and said to them: “Did I not warn you people not harm the camel?”
They replied to him in all confidence: “We have done it O Saleh! Let us see what you will do!”
Saleh (AS) then said to them: “Enjoy yourselves in your homes for three days, then you will be destroyed and that is a promise not to be belied!”

They never believed what Saleh (AS) was telling them; instead, they were planning to get rid of Saleh (AS) himself. The Lord relates this in Chapter 27 verses 50-51:

They plotted and planned, but We too planned, even while they perceived it not. Then see what was the end of their plot! – This, that we destroyed them and their people, all (of them).

The first punishment came to the nine men who committed the act of killing the she-camel. An earth tremour came under their feet, and there was a landslide with heavy rocks from the mountains, which killed them all.

After this Saleh (AS) and his followers left the village saying: "O my people! I did indeed convey to you the message of my Lord, I gave you counsel, but you do not love good counselors!"

Here the real punishment came upon the Thamud people, those unbelievers. The first sign of the punishment, people's faces became yellow in colour, and they started weeping. On the second day their faces turned red, and on the third day their faces turned black. When they saw this they started wailing, and each one of them started digging his own grave because they knew that this was their dooms day and there was no place to run to.

At day break after the third day as promised by Saleh came the real blow. A terrible earthquake came, buried the people, and destroyed their boasted civilization. It came to them as a single Mighty Blast and took them unaware, and they lay prostrate in their homes like dry sticks.
Therefore, Thamud and his people were destroyed because of their wrongdoing, and Saleh (AS) and his people who believed

and practiced righteousness were saved from this calamity. Saleh (AS) then moved with his people towards Palestine, lived in a town of ArRamla, and eventually died there.

Their ruins known as Madan Saleh are available until now about two hundred and ninety kilometers north of Madina. To the west and North West of Madan Saleh are three tracts of volcanic land covered with lava, stretching as far as Tabuk.

CHAPTER VII

IBRAHIM (AS) (ABRAHAM)

After the death of Saleh (AS), people lived for a long time worshiping the one Allah and going the straight way. Slowly they started again to go astray and getting into worshipping idols. Paganism therefore spread out everywhere and reached into Iraq, Palestine and into the Arabian subcontinent. Here Allah again had to send someone to guide these people back into the right track. He therefore sent one of his persevering (*Uli Lazm*) Prophets who was one of the high ranking among the Prophets. He was made a Prophet while he was very young, no more than sixteen years old.

He was Ibrahim bin Taarikh bin Nahoor bin Saarough bin Arou bin Faligh bin Shalikh bin Arfakhshad bin Saam bin Nuuh (AS). He is a descendant of Saam son of Nuuh (AS) . In the Quraan his father's name has been mentioned as Aazar, this might have been his real name or his nickname. Some scholars, however, say he was his paternal uncle, although in the Quraan he is mentioned as his father. Allah is the most Knowledgeable.

Ibrahim (AS) has been mentioned in the holly Quraan seventy three times in twenty-five Suras. The Lord relates about Ibrahim inChapter 16 verses 120-121:

Abraham was indeed a model, devoutly obedient to Allah, (And) true in Faith, and he joined no Allahs

with Allah. He showed his gratitude for the favors of Allah, Who chose him, and guided him to a Straight Way.

In a town of Babel, north of Iraq, a town at that time well advanced in all respects, people lived a life of high standard and had all the worldly comforts. However, these people were in total darkness, forgetting their creator, Allah (The Almighty), and all the good things that He had given them. Instead, they took to the worshipping of idols, they used to carve these idols out of wood and stone and then bow down to them, instead of bowing down to their Lord the Almighty.

Ibrahim (AS) one day said to his father and his people when he saw them worshipping idols: "What do you worship?"
They said: "We worship idols, and we remain constantly in attendance on them."
He said to them: "Do they listen to you when you call (on them), or do you good or harm?"
They said: "No, but we found our fathers doing thus (what we do)."
He said: "You have taken (for worship) idols besides Allah?"

This means they had inherited Paganism from their forefathers without asking themselves whether it was right or wrong. Therefore, Ibrahim (AS) was constantly trying to guide them and getting them to leave the worship of many Allahs, and to worship the only one Allah and their Cherisher.

Among these people there was Namroud bin Kuwsh who was their king. He was a very strong and powerful king, and since

these people were in darkness, this king took the advantage of misguiding his people. He told them that he was their king and god and that they had therefore not only to obey him but they also had to worship him. And why not? Unlike their idols, he could talk, see and hear. He gave them protection and cherished them. He could make poor, rich and the rich into nothing.

The Birth of Ibrahim (AS)

One day, king Namroud was told by his counselors that there would come a man from within his kingdom who would remove Paganism, and start to call on people to worship only one Allah. He therefore gave his orders to separate men from women, and any newborn that was a boy to be slain.

In a town of Bakhuthaar in Al-Koufa, Iraq (also known as Aaram), Ibrahim's mother became pregnant but no one could tell, as her pregnancy did not show. When she was about to give birth, she went into hiding, and gave birth to this beautiful boy who she then brought home with her.
The husband asked her: "And who this baby might be?"
She said: "He is your son." That was to be Ibrahim (AS).
He said to her: "Woman! Don't you know my position with the king, and how respectable our house is? What are we going to do when the king comes to know of this boy?"
She replied to him: "Don't you worry a thing, the king will not know; if he comes to know then I know what to do."

Ibrahim (AS) was kept inside the house and was not allowed to go out until he grew up. One day he told his mother that he wanted to go out because he was tired of being cooped up

inside. His mother warned him about the king who would kill him if he came to know about him.

Azaar, Ibrahim's father was a carpenter who used to carve the idols and sell to the people for worshipping. Ibrahim (AS), however, Allah had guided him since he was very young. He knew that the idols that did not see or hear could not help anyone and so were not worth worshipping. He advised his father not to worship these idols.

Ibrahim (AS) said to his father: "You take these idols for Allahs? For I see you and your people are making a terrible mistake."

He never stopped advising his father, he told him: "O my father! Why worship that which does not hear or see and can not help you? O my father! It has come to me knowledge which has not reached you, so follow me and I will guide you to a way that is even and straight. O my father! I don't serve Satan, for Satan is a rebel against Allah Most Gracious. O my father! I fear a penalty will come to you from Allah Most Gracious, so that you become to Satan a friend."

His father said: "Do you hate my Allahs, O Ibrahim? If you don't stop this I will stone you. Now get away from me!"
Ibrahim (AS) said: "Peace be on you, I will pray to my Lord for your forgiveness."
This is how much Ibrahim (AS) loved his father and wanted to put him in the right path, with gentle persuasive tone he tried to advise him. Despite all this argument, he still said to him that he would pray for his forgiveness from his Lord.

One day Ibrahim (AS) said to his Lord: "My Lord! Show me how You give life to the dead."
The Lord said: "Don't then believe?"
He said: "Yes! But to satisfy my own understanding."
His Lord said: "Take four birds; tame them to you and cut them to pieces. Keep a portion of them on every hill, and call them, they will come to you with speed. Then know that Allah is exalted in Power and Wise."
Ibrahim (AS) had complete faith in Allah's power, but wanted, with Allah's permission to explain that faith to his own heart and mind.

Ibrahim (AS) Breaks the Idols

Ibrahim (AS) had decided that he had to do something to these idols to remove the roots of paganism. He openly told his people of his intentions. He said to them: "And by Allah, I have a plan for your idols after you go away and turn your backs."
He was therefore waiting for the opportunity to do this act, a time when these idols were not under guard.

It was customary among these people to celebrate for their idols every year on a particular day. They used to go outside their town for a picnic, but before they went out, they would bring a lot of food and keep in their temple near their Allahs so as to bring them good luck. After a day of enjoyment, they would come back to their Allahs and eat the food that was left in the temple.

When they were going out on that day they asked Ibrahim (AS) to join them, he refused to do so and he gave them the excuse that he was not well, (here he told a little white lie). He found

this to be the best opportunity for him to break the idols, as they would be unguarded on that day. After everybody had gone, Ibrahim (AS) went into the temple and found the food kept on the floor near the idols.
He shouted to the idols: "Why are you not eating the food?"
He did not hear a reply so he said: "Why don't you utter?"
Here he started kicking them with his feet and took an axe and started breaking them to pieces one by one, save the biggest one and kept the axe on its shoulder so that the people might turn to it when they came back. He left the temple his heart filled with joy leaving behind him food, pieces of stones and wood strewn on the floor of the temple.

When the people returned that evening, they went straight to their temple so that they would eat the food that was to bring them good luck. On entering the temple, they were shocked by what they saw, pieces of their idols and food strewn all over the floor. They asked each other in surprise as to who might have done this sinful act. There were some people who had earlier heard Ibrahim (AS) of his intention to break these idols, so they said: "We heard a youth talk of them, he is called Ibrahim."

Here they knew that it was Ibrahim (AS), who did this, so they said: "Then bring him before the eyes of the people, that they may bear witness."
He was therefore brought in front of the chiefs and the people gathered to witness and hear the judgement. This is actually, what Ibrahim (AS) had wanted; to be judged in front of the people so that he could prove to them that the gods they were worshiping were nothing but pieces of stones and wood.

They said to him: “Are you the one that did this to our Allahs, O Ibrahim?”
He said: “No! This was done by this – their biggest one! Ask them, if they can speak intelligently!”
They were confounded with shame and said: “You know full well that these (idols) do not speak.”
Ibrahim (AS) said: “Do you then worship, besides Allah, things that can neither be of any good to you nor do you harm? Fire upon you, and upon the things that you worship besides Allah! Have you no sense?”

As soon as they admitted in so many words that the idols could not speak, Ibrahim (AS) delivered his final attack: “Then why do you worship such useless impotent creatures?” After that, there remained nothing but the argument of violence, which they, being the party in power, proceeded to exercise.
They then said: “Burn him and protect your Allahs, if you do (anything at all)!”

The judgement on him was that he was to be burnt alive. They therefore collected firewood and made a large bonfire, and Ibrahim (AS) was to be thrown in it using a large catapult. He therefore stood in front of the fire without despair, putting his faith and trust to his Lord, here Angel Jibril came and asked him: “O Ibrahim! Do you request anything?”
Ibrahim (AS) said: “From you no, but relate my position to your Lord He knows best.”

Ibrahim (AS) was therefore thrown into the burning fire, but with the supremacy of the Lord, the fire was harmless.

We said: "O Fire! Be cool, and (a means of) safety for Abraham!"
(Chapter 21 verse 69)

The fire therefore became cool and harmless and Ibrahim (AS) stayed in it comfortably praying. Here we note that Allah had said to the fire to be cool and safe. If He had said, 'be cool' only, it might have been too cold for Ibrahim (AS) to bear.

The people sat anxiously waiting to see the result of it, but when the fire subsided, they saw in front of their own eyes Ibrahim (AS) come out of it unharmed. When they saw him come out without a mark, they were astounded and the news about his miraculous escape from the fire quickly spread out, and people used talked about it everywhere. They said: "Ibrahim's Allah had saved him from the burning fire." However, even after what they saw in front of their own eyes they did not believe in Allah.

When the news reached king Namroud, he summoned Ibrahim (AS) to him and told him: "I hear you are going round publicizing a new religion of worshiping a new Allah."
Ibrahim (AS) said to him: "I am only preaching to the people to worship the one Allah and leave the worshiping of idols."
King Namroud said: "And what does this Allah of yours do that I can not do?"
Ibrahim (AS) said: "My Lord gives life and death."
The king said: "I give life and death too."

Here the king brought two people in front of him and judged them both to be killed; he then ordered one to be spared and one to be killed as if he has given life and death.

Ibrahim (AS) said: “But it is Allah that causes the sun to rise from the east, can you then make it rise from the west?”
Thus, the king was confounded by this argument and was ashamed for what he was saying.
Ibrahim (AS) continued with his hard work of preaching to the people, but in vain. He only managed to get as his followers one lady by the name of Sarah bint Haaraan who is the grand daughter of his paternal uncle, and a man by the name of Lut (Lot). Later on Ibrahim (AS) married Sarah, and Lut (AS) became a Prophet. Ibrahim together with Lut (AS) and Sarah then went to a town known as Aawr and later went to Harran and on to Palestine, preaching to the people about the worship of the one Allah (The Almighty).

The people of Harran (The Chaldeans)[1], they used to worship the stars. Ibrahim (AS) wanted to show these people that what they did was not correct. One night he joined them in their worship session as if he were one of them.
He saw a star and said: “This is my Lord.” However, when it set, he said: “I don’t like Allahs those that disappear.”
When he saw the moon rising in splendor, he said: “This is my Lord.” However, when the moon set, he said: “Unless my Lord guides me, I shall surely be among those who go astray.”
When he saw the sun rising in splendor, he said: “This is my Lord; this is the greatest (of all).” However, when eventually the sun had set, he said: “O my people! I am indeed free from your (guilt) of giving partners to Allah. For me, I have set my face, firmly and truly towards Him Who created the Heavens and the Earth, and never shall I give partners to Allah.”

[1] Chaldea anciently a country on the Euphrates in Asia.

His people disputed with him and threatened him with the dire consequences of his rebellion, because they felt that what he said about their gods might go against him. On the contrary, he knew that it was the Godless who had no just grounds for fear.
He said: "You dispute with me about Allah, when He (Himself) has guided me? I fear not (the beings) you associate with Allah. Unless my Lord wills, (nothing can happen). My Lord comprehends in his knowledge all things. Will you not (yourselves) be admonished? How should I fear (the beings) you associate with Allah, when you fear not to give partners to Allah without any warrant having been given to you? Which of (us) two parties have more right to security? (Tell me) if you know."

Here Ibrahim (AS) decided to move to Egypt. When he arrived in Egypt, the king immediately came to know that a man with the most beautiful woman had just arrived. Sarah was one of the most beautiful women created on earth. The king wanted this woman for himself; he therefore summoned her to his palace. He also ordered that if the man who was with her was her husband then he should be killed. Ibrahim (AS) therefore told his wife that if she was asked about him she should say that he was her brother (brother in Allah's religion). When the king's envoy came and asked Ibrahim (AS) about his relation with the lady, he said that she was his sister. Here again he told a little white lie.

Muhammad (SAW) said that Ibrahim (AS) had told white lies three times but he did this for the sake of his Lord. The first time was when he said he was not well and refused to join the people in their celebrations and wanted to remain behind to

break the idols. The second time was when the people asked him as to who might have broken their idols and he told them that it was done by their biggest idol. And the third time he told the king's envoy about his wife as being his sister.

So they took Sarah to the king; and while she was on her way there, she kept on praying to her Lord. She was saying: "O my Lord! I have believed in You and in Your Prophet and have kept the private part of my body clean for my husband only. O my Lord! Please don't let this pagan overpower my feelings."

She was brought to the king, and when he approached her and wanted to touch her, his arm got paralyzed. He started shouting and when his people came to his aid they could not do a thing. Sarah got very scared and prayed to her Lord to release the king from this, and he was released but he tried again the second and third time and the same thing happened to him. In the end the king called his people and said: "Take away this woman from here; she is not a human being but a Satan."
The king gave Sarah a woman slave by the name of Hagar, and she left to return to her husband.

Ibrahim (AS) lived in Egypt for a long time preaching to the people to worship the one Allah, but they were stubborn and never wanted to believe in him. In the end he decided to move on and went to Palestine. He left there with his wife Sarah and their woman slave Hagar and lived a comfortable life with a few people who believed in him.

Ibrahim (AS) died at the age of one hundred and seventy five and was burried in Hebron also known as Al-Khalil.

CHAPTER VIII

ISMAIL (AS) (ISHMAEL)

As we have seen in the previous chapter that Ibrahim (AS) lived in Plaestine with his wife Sarah and their woman slave Hagar. He was working as a trader and at the same time preaching the worship of the one Allah. Sarah was barren and did not bear any children, and Ibrahim (AS) had grown old in age and wanted very much to have a child. This used to upset Sarah very much to see her husband in that state; she therefore suggested to him that he married Hagar hoping that she might bear a child for him. She said this wholeheartedly with her own consent. Ibrahim (AS) therefore married Hagar when he was eighty-six years old and she gave birth to a boy who was called Ismail.

Ibrahim (AS) became a very happy man and he wanted very much to share this happiness with his wife Sarah. Instead, Sarah became very jealous to see that it was Hagar who gave her husband a child, she never wanted to see both of them in front of her and wanted that Hagar be removed. She therefore told her husband to banish Hagar and her baby.

Here came the Lord's command to Ibrahim (AS) to remove both of them and take them far away. He therefore took them and went out towards the desert. He travelled in the valleys and desert and went far away, until he reached a place where there was nothing at all, no life, no water not even a tree to be seen.

This place as mentioned in the Quraan is a valley of Bakka or known as Makah, which is the site of the famous Holy Kaaba.

Ibrahim (AS) put down his wife Hagar and their baby Ismail here. As he was departing with the intention of leaving them there, Hagar held onto him pleading, saying: "How can you leave us alone in this valley where there is no life at all, or is this an order from your Lord?" Ibrahim did not pay attention to Hagar's pleas but went on leaving the two behind with only a little food and water. Hagar understood that this was the wish of their Lord, she then said: "Allah will not leave us alone."

Ibrahim (AS) left them there, feeling very sorry but went without looking back. He said: "O our Lord! I have made some of my offspring to dwell in a valley without cultivation, by your sacred house; in order, O our Lord, that they may establish regular prayer. So fill the hearts of some among men with love towards them, and feed them with fruits so that they may give thanks."

Years later, Sarah gave birth to a son, about whom we shall talk later. Therefore, Ibrahim (AS) had two sons and both of his sons became Prophets.

The Start of Zamzam Spring

Hagar and her baby remained at that place helpless, eating and drinking what she had, until the food and water finished. The baby then became hungry and thirsty and started to cry. Hagar put her child on the ground and started pacing up and down between two small rocks known as *Safaa* and *Marwaa* in the

hope that she would see a caravan approaching. She did these seven times up and down without success. This is what now people do during Hajj and Umrah known as *Saaiy* as a remembrance of this event.

She then sat down with her baby helpless not knowing what to do, leaving it to her Lord. As the baby was crying and kicking his little feet on the ground, with Allah's miracle, water started gushing out under his feet. Hagar was astonished and very happy to see the water coming from underneath her baby's feet. She thanked her Lord and drank from it and fed her baby.
At first the water was not much so Hagar was trying to collect it and as she was doing this she was saying "*Zam Zam*" meaning gather, gather. This spring which has been blessed by Allah exists until today near the Holy Kaaba. It is the one known as Zamzam, and the water coming from it is called Zamzam water. The availability of water here made the caravans passing through stop.

Muhammad (SAW) said: "Allah bless Ismail's mother, had she not gathered the water in one place, then the Zamzam spring would have been bigger than what it is now and would have overflowed into a river." However, with the excitement of wanting to save her child from thirst, she made a hole into which the water flowed, and remained in one place.

Ismail (AS) is Offered in Sacrifice

Ibrahim (AS) never forgot his son Ismail. He visited him quite often. When Ismail was a young lad, his father dreamt (saw a vision) that he was slaughtering him. Normally Prophet's

dreams are true and are commands from their Lord who gives them a sort of a test to check their faith. Imagine a man in his nineties, all his life he had wanted a child, Allah blesses him with a child, and he is then ordered to abandon him at a place where there is no life, alone with only his mother. The child grows up to become a nice youth; he then gets an order from his Lord to slaughter this child. Is this not a big test to him? Allah Almighty Knows best.

Therefore, Ibrahim (AS) came to his son Ismail and said to him: "O my son! I see in vision that I offer you in sacrifice, now see what your view is!"
The son said: "O my father! Do as you are commanded, you will find me, if Allah so wills, one practising patience and constancy!"
Here Ismail said to his father: "Let me lie facing down so that you do not see my face when you come to slaughter me."
So when they had both submitted to their wills (to Allah), and he had laid him prostrate on his forehead (for sacrifice), Allah called out to him: "O Ibrahim! You have already fulfilled the vision!"

And this is how those who do right are rewarded. It was obviously a trial. Then Allah sent to him a sheep to sacrifice instead of his son. The vision, it is believed had occurred in the valley of Mina six miles north of Makah, where a commemoration sacrifice is annually celebrated as a rite of the Hajj, in memory of this Sacrifice of Ibrahim and Ismail (AS).

The sacrifice was demanded of both Ibrahim and Ismail (AS). It was a trial of the will of the father and the son. By way of trial the father had the command conveyed to him in a vision. To

make sure that it was not an idle dream, and, if it was a real order, to make sure that his son consented, he consulted the son. The son readily consented, and offered to stand true to his promise if his self-sacrifice was required.

Ismail (AS) and the People of Jurham

Birds flew over the area where there was water but people were not aware of it yet. One day Jurham and his people stopped on their way with their caravan near to this place, and while they were there, they noticed birds flying over the area not far away. They said: "These birds are a sign that there is water in that place, but as far as we know this place is arid." They therefore sent someone to investigate. The person went to where the water was and came back to them with the good news.

They then went to the place and to their surprise found an oasis. There was an old woman and a youth that were living there; they asked permission from them if they could put up camp. Hagar gave them permission for them to stay as respectable guests not to take the place as theirs (by force). They put up camp and stayed there for a while. They then decided to live there so they brought their families. Ismail (AS) was a clever young man who liked to mix with people, so he mixed with the Jurhams and learnt their language (Arabic), he later married one of them.

As we saw earlier, Ibrahim (AS) was always visiting his son. This time when he came to his house he did not find him, but found a woman. He asked about him from this woman and she told him that he had gone to work. The woman without knowing

whom the old man was started to complain to him about their life. Ibrahim (AS), however, knew that she must be his son's wife and felt that the woman was not satisfied with the life and what they had. When he came to depart, he asked her to tell her husband to change the threshold of his house.

When Ismail (AS) returned home, he asked his wife if anyone had called in, and she said: "Oh yes! An old man came here asking for you and said to tell you to change the threshold of your house or something, and then left."
Ismail (AS) said to her: "That was my father and the message he left for me is to divorce you."

Ismail (AS) therefore divorced her and married another woman. After a while, Ibrahim (AS) came again to visit him, this time again, he did not find him but found another woman. When he asked her about his son she told him that he had gone to work. The woman without knowing who the old man was talked very highly of her husband and she never stopped for a moment to thank Allah for what they had. Ibrahim (AS) left and asked her to tell her husband to hold on to the threshold of his house. When Ismail (AS) returned home, the wife without being asked, straight away told her husband about this nice old man who had paid her a visit and left a message for him to hold on to the threshold of his house. Ismail (AS) said to his wife: "That was my father, and the message he left means that I must never part with you." So they lived very happily and had many children.

Hagar, Ismail's mother died before her husband Ibrahim (AS) and was buried in Makah. After that, Sarah died, at the age of one hundred and twenty seven years.

The Construction of Holy Kaaba

Ibrahim (AS) stayed away from his son for a long time, and again came to pay him a visit. Only on this occasion, it was not just a visit to see his son, this time he came with an important task from his Lord. He had been ordered to build the first shrine for people to worship in, which was to be the Holy Kaaba. He told his son: "I have been commanded by my Lord to build a shrine here." He pointed to a place, which was a little elevated; the place was actually directed to him by the Angels.

It is said that he dug at the place and found a foundation of a building that was constructed by Shiyth (AS) earlier, but it is also said that the Angels had laid the foundation that he found there. It is known that during Muhammad (SAW) that the Quraishy wanted to rebuild the Kaaba after it had fallen down. When they were digging to increase the foundation, they found a layer of green stones laid together in a honeycomb. They tried to remove the stones, but a very strong blinding light came from underneath, so they decided to leave them.

Ibrahim (AS) and his son started the construction, laying stone by stone until they completed it. At some stage during the construction works, Ibrahim (AS) could not reach the height to lay the stones, so asked his son to get him a stone that he could stand on. Ismail (AS) found a black stone and brought it to his father. This is the black stone that has been laid in one corner of the Holy Kaaba known as *Hajar L-Aswad*. There is also another narrative that relates that the Angel Jibril brought this stone from Heavens to Ibrahim (AS). It is also said that it was white when it was first put up but became black because of people's sins, as they constantly kissed it.

After they completed the construction, Ibrahim (AS) was commanded by The Lord to call the people to perform the Hajj. He was told: “And proclaim the Pilgrimage among men they will come to you on foot and (mounted) on every kind of camel, lean on account of journeys through deep and distant mountain highways; that they may witness the benefits (provided) for them.”

Ibrahim (AS) said: “O my Lord! How can the people far away hear my voice?”

The Lord said: “You call and I will pass the message.”

Therefore, Ibrahim (AS) stood on top of the Kaaba and called.

CHAPTER IX

ISHAAQ (AS) (ISAAC)

Ishaaq (AS) is the second son of Ibrahim (AS), and his mother was Sarah. He was born five years after his brother Ismail (AS). The Angels who were sent to Sodom to the people of Luut (AS) passed by Ibrahim (AS) and gave him and his wife the good news that they would get a child.

These Angels came in the shape of humans, and as they entered they greeted him saying "Salaam" (peace); he answered "Salaam." He then hastened to entertain them, and he brought to them a roasted calf. However, when he saw their hands would not reach for the meal he got scared of them and suspected them of not being honest men.

They said: "Fear not, we have been sent against the people of Lut, and to give you and your wife Sarah the good news that you will get a child (Ishaaq) and after that a grandson Yaakub (Jacob), and that you will become grandparents while you are still alive."

His wife was standing there serving them, and when she heard this she laughed and said: "Alas! Shall I bear a child seeing I am an old woman, and my husband here is an old man? That indeed would be a wonderful thing!"

The angels said: “Do you wonder at Allah’s decree? The grace of Allah and His blessings on you, O you people of the house! For He is indeed worthy of praise and full of all glory!”

Ishaaq (AS) has only been mentioned in the Holy Quraan with the news of his coming. He married Rifqat bint Nahour his cousin, the daughter of his paternal uncle, and at the age of sixty he had two sons who were twins and named them of Ays and Yaakub. He prayed for Yaakub (AS) to be a guardian to his brothers and his people, and also prayed for him to become a Prophet. For Ays he prayed to be graced with nobility together with his offspring.

Ishaaq (AS) lived to the age of one hundred and seventy five. He was buried near his father’s grave in Al-Khalil, Palestine that is eighteen miles from Baitil-Maqdis (Al-Quds). Their graves are still there to be seen in Masjid Ibrahim.

CHAPTER X

LUUT (AS) (LOT)

He is Luut bin Haaraan (AS) the son of Ibrahim's brother; and his mother was Ibrahim's maternal aunt. Taarikh and his son Haaraan married the two daughters of Laahij and was born Ibrahim bin Taarikh and Luut bin Haaraan (AS). Sarah, Ibrahim's wife is Luut's half sister from mother's side. Luut (AS) has been mentioned in the Holy Quraan twenty seven times in fourteen Suras. His father died while he was very young and was brought up together with his paternal uncle Ibrahim (AS) by Taarikh.

As we have seen in the earlier chapter, Ibrahim (AS) left Egypt together with Luut (AS) and Sarah, as these were the only people who believed in Ibrahim's preaching, and they all went to Palestine. Luut (AS) stayed with his uncle Ibrahim (AS), but later was asked by him to go to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, east of the Dead Sea, also known as Al-Muutafika as mentioned in the Quraan. (There is a lake in the Dead Sea known as Lake Luut). He instructed him to go there and preach to the people of Sodom, as they were corrupt and profane. He wanted him to get these people to leave these bad habits and to worship Allah. Luut (AS) was not one of their own brethren, as in the case of Saleh and Shuayb (AS). Nevertheless, he looked upon his people as his brethren, as a man of Allah always does.

These people were the biggest rogues who used to rob people of their belongings. They used to commit lewdness and the biggest transgression no people in creation ever did before. They practised their lust on men in preference to women.

Luut (AS) advised these people to stop all the bad habits and the things they were doing and turn to their Allah for forgiveness. He tried very hard but without success, he told them that Allah was very angry with them and that if they did not stop then they should expect punishment from their Lord.
He told his people: "Will you not fear Allah? I am to you an Apostle worth of all trust, so fear Allah and obey me, I ask no reward from you for it, my reward is only from the Lord of the Worlds. Of all the creatures in the world, you approach males and leave those whom Allah has created for you to be your mates? No you are people transgressing all limits."

These people rejected his call and their reply was the same as that of the people who came before. They said to him: "Bring us the wrath of Allah if you are telling us the truth."
More or less the same words which the people of Nouh, Huud and those of Saleh (AS) said to their Prophets. They also said: "Drive him and his followers out of your city, these are indeed men who want to be clean and pure."
See how insulting these people were, instead of being ashamed on account of the consciousness of their own guilt they attacked the pure ones with their sarcasm and did not even want to see pious people among themselves advising them.
When Luut (AS) saw his people like this, he prayed to his Lord: "O my Lord! Help me against these people who do mischief!"
Allah heard Luut's pleas and sent his Messengers to deal with these people who were polluting the earth with their crimes.

As we have seen in the story of Ibrahim (AS), the Angels went to give him and his wife the good tidings of their getting a child. After entertaining them, he asked them what was their mission after this, and they said: "We have been sent to a people (deep) in sin; to bring on them, (a shower of) stones of clay (brimstones), marked as from the Lord for those who trespass beyond bounds."

Here Ibrahim (AS) requested these Messengers to defer their mission, as may be the people of Luut (AS) would listen to his preaching and repent. But at the same time he was also afraid that his nephew might be among those destroyed when the punishment is sent down to destroy his people.
Without hesitation, he said: "But there is Luut there."
They said: "We know well who is there, we will certainly save him and his followers, except his wife she is one of those who will remain behind."

The Messengers thus left Ibrahim (AS) and went to Sodom and appeared as two very handsome youths. When they arrived there, before entering the town they saw a young woman in a garden watering the trees. They approached and requested her if they could be her guests. She immediately felt sorry for them; because she knew that if the people of Sodom came to know of them, they would want to do to them the dirty act (sodomy). She therefore asked them to wait and rushed to her father.
She said to her father: "There are two youths that I have never seen before around here and they seem to be strangers, they want to be our guests. I am afraid if the people came to know they would throng around them."

The father was Luut (AS) and the woman was his daughter. He was astonished to hear this. At first, he hesitated and did not want to go and meet these people, but their Angelic call made him go and meet them. He therefore met them and took them to his house, but was afraid that the news of their coming would reach his people. As his wife was one of them, the news immediately was spread out, and in no time, there was a throng of people outside his house. He got very scared and did not know what to do. He tried to advise them to go away and leave his guests alone. They just laughed and mocked at him, they said jokingly to him to let them take these beautiful youths to their homes. He ignored them and went inside the house and closed the door behind him.

He later came out again and said to them: "O my people! Here are my daughters they are purer for you (if you marry)! Now fear Allah, and do not cover me with shame about my guests! Is there not among you a single right-minded man?"
Here his words 'my daughters' was meant the young girls of the town among themselves, and does not imply that he is giving away his daughters to these men.

Luut (AS) tried very hard to talk to his people but they refused to listen and said: "Well you know well we have no need of your daughters, indeed you know quite well what we want."
These men came in an uproar, assaulted his house, and tried to snatch away the two handsome men. Luut (AS) tried to prevent them, but was powerless, and he said: "Had I had power to suppress you or that I could betake myself to some powerful support."

The guests said: "O Luut! We are Messengers from your Lord by no means shall they reach you! Now get out with your family while it is dark and do not let any of you look back. But your wife will remain behind, and will happen to her what will happen to the people; morning is their appointed time."
So Luut (AS) was commanded to leave Sodom that night and take his family with him except his wife for she was one of the wicked ones who refused to believe.

Luut (AS) had been preaching to them for some time against their immorality. The crisis of their fate came when the two Angels came to him in the guise of young handsome men. Darkness (blindness) fell on their eyes, as the first stage in their punishment. Despite this, they said that this was only sorcery, so they felt their way to their homes, and before next morning the cities of the wicked were buried under a shower of brimstone. A violent wind and noise accompanying the shower of brimstones possibly with some volcanic action overtook them before morning. The cities were destroyed, and even their precise position cannot be identified, but the brimstone plain of the tract still exists, right on the way between Arabia and Syria. The remains can be seen as a (Sign and Warning) for those who disbelieve in Allah, in the sulphury plain around the Dead Sea, a scene of dismal desolation which truly suggests the awful punishment for unspeakable crimes.

Luut (AS) and his believing household were saved. As we have seen that Luut's wife was among those wicked ones and was destroyed with the rest of the people.

Allah says in Chapter 66 verse 10:

Allah set forth, for an example to the Unbelievers, the wife of Noah and the wife of Lot. They were (respectively) under two of our righteous Servants, but they were false to their (husbands), and they profited nothing before Allah on their account, but were told: "Enter you the Fire along with (others) that enter!

CHAPTER XI

YAAKUB (AS) (JACOB)

He is Yaakub bin Ishaaq bin Ibrahim (AS), the grandson of Ibrahim (AS); he had a twin brother by the name of Ays (Esau). One day Yaakub (AS) came to his father, who was very old at the time, and complained to him about his brother and said to him: "O my father! I came to complain to you about my brother Ays for what he is doing to me. He has become very jealous of me ever since you seem to have taken more care in my upbringing. He is showing off to me his two wives whom he has married from the Kanaan people, and does not seem to like me at all. I have therefore come to you so you can judge us with your wise knowledge."

When Ishaaq (AS) felt that the argument between his two sons was not getting any better, he thought and then said to Yaakub (AS): "O my son! As you can see, I have grown old and in this argument with your brother, I cannot help you. I feel it is better that you leave home and go away from here for a while. Go to Araam in Iraq to your maternal uncle Labaan bin Batwaiyl. Go there and stay with him and you can marry one of his daughters. You will be happy there with him. I will pray Allah to that you have better life than your brother, go my son and Allah be with you."

Yaakub (AS) therefore left home and went towards Iraq as told by his father. He traveled across the desert for many days until

he reached Araam, and as he was a stranger in a new town, he asked the people if anyone knew Labaan bin Batwaiyl. The town's people replied: "Who does not know Labaan, the brother-in-law of Prophet Ishaaq (AS). He is the chief of his people here."

He asked to be shown his house, and that time a beautiful girl by the name of Rahil appeared and was asked to escort him. The girl was one of Labaan's daughters. When Yaakub (AS) saw this most beautiful, well-bred girl, he was amazed. With the powers of his clean heart, it made him not to think with temptation towards her. He approached her and said: "We are relatives. My name is Yaakub, I am the son of Ishaaq the Prophet, and my mother is Rifqat the daughter of Batwaiyl, your grandfather, I am therefore your cousin. I have travelled across the desert from the town of the Kanaan to meet my uncle."

As he was walking along with her, he felt in his heart that he had fallen in love with her, but tried to control his heart not to think badly towards her. When he reached his uncle's house and met him, he greeted him and gave him his father's regards. He also told him that after seeing Rahil, he liked her and wanted to marry her.

His uncle said to him: "That is very good news my son, and I agree, but on a condition that you stay and work for me for seven years as a herdsman to look after my flock so that you can earn your money for the dowry." Yaakub (AS) accepted this condition and stayed with his uncle looking after the sheep.

Labaan had two daughters Layya and Rahil. Rahil was younger than Labaan. According to the culture of the people there, a

younger daughter could not be married before the elder one, or for one to marry two sisters at the same time. Neither was it the intention of Labaan to let the younger daughter be married first. However, Labaan could not disappoint his nephew since it was his choice that he wanted Rahil. When Yaakub (AS) completed his seven years, he approached his uncle for Rahil's hand. Labaan found a way out of the problem so he said to him: "O my son! My heart does not feel that I should let you marry Rahil before her sister, Layya, who is older and the rules do not allow this. If you like Rahil for her beauty then Layya is more intelligent and matured than her so take her as your wife. However, if you still feel that you want Rahil then you have to serve me for another seven years."

Yaakub (AS) could not refuse his uncle, since his heart was set on Rahil, he agreed to the condition and stayed with his uncle for another period of seven years and then married Rahil. But it is also believed that he first married Layya and when she died he married Rahil, and Allah is the most Knowledgeable. Labaan had given to each of his daughters a woman slave to work for them, and Yaakub (AS) married these women.

Yaakub (AS) had twelve sons from his four wives. From Layya he had six and they were Rawabyn, Shamoun, Laawy, Yahudha, Riyaaloun and Yashjab. From Rahil he had two, Yusuf and Benyamin (Benjamin). From Rahil's slave he had two, Dana and Naftayl, and from Layya's slave he had two, Jaad and Ashyr. All these were born in Araan except for Benyamin the youngest that was born in Kanaan.

These twelve sons are known as *Asbaat* (plural for *Sibt* in Arabic meaning clan) and are mentioned in the Quraan.

However, these Asbaat who are mentioned in Quraan are their offspring since they became as twelve well-known clans, and among them, there were Prophets.

How Yaakub (AS) Came to be Known as Israiyl (Israel)

He was called Yaakub because he was born after his twin brother. In Arabic, the word *Aqib* means that which follows, and he had followed his twin brother in coming out of his mother's womb during birth.

Yaakub (AS) used to work in Baitil-Maqdis (the temple) and used to be the first to arrive and the last to go out after the prayers. He usually used to light the lanterns and put them off before going out. One night he remained behind and fell asleep, while he was asleep a Jinni came and put the lanterns off and then kidnapped him and made him a prisoner. In the morning when the people came, they found him a prisoner of this Jinni known as Iyl. In Arabic the word *Asyr* means prisoner, therefore came the word Asyr-Iyl (or Israiyl) meaning prisoner of Iyl. However, it is also known that Iyl means Allah, therefore Israiyl means the slave of Allah. In addition, it might have the meaning that Isra means power and Israiyl means power of Allah; and The Almighty knows better. Those who are known as Bani Israiyl the Children of Israiyl are the ancestors of Yaakub the Prophet.

CHAPTER XII

YUSUF (AS) (JOSEPH)

Allah Almighty says in Chapter 12 verse 3:

We do relate unto you the most beautiful of the stories, in that We reveal to you this (portion of the) Quran: before this, you too were among those who knew it not.

The Almighty calls it the most beautiful of the stories, since it combines Eminence, Righteousness and Kindness all in one story as narrated in this Sura.

He is Yusuf bin Yaakub bin Ishaaq bin Ibrahim (AS), coming from a chain of Prophets. He is the second youngest son of Yaakub (AS), and as we have seen in the story of Yaakub (AS), he had eleven brothers, the youngest of whom is his full brother, Benyamin. The two were the most loved ones by their father. Yusuf (AS) was a very handsome young boy and well mannered. The ten other brothers seeing that their father liked Yusuf (AS) more, they became very jealous of him and did not like him at all.

One morning Yusuf (AS) woke up very scared and rushed to his father to tell him what he saw in his dream. He said to him:

"O my father! I did see eleven stars and the sun and the moon; I saw them prostrate themselves to me!"
His father said to him: "My (dear) little son! Do not relate your vision to your brothers, lest they cook up a plot against you, for Satan is to man an avowed enemy!"
Yaakub (AS) did not know exactly the meaning of this vision, but felt that there was something in it.
He said to him: "Thus will your Lord choose you and teach you the interpretation of stories (and events) and perfect His favour to you and to the posterity of Yaakub – even as He perfected to your fathers Ibrahim and Ishaaq before! For Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom."

Yaakub (AS) used to love his two youngest children most without hiding his feelings and the ten brothers grew more jealous of them. They therefore planned to get rid of Yusuf (AS) and take him away from the eyes of their father. At first, they wanted to kill him, but Yahudha the eldest one told his brothers that, that would mean murder, which was a great sin. They instead decided to throw him in a deep well as in this way he could be picked up by some caravan of travellers passing by.

The plan was therefore to take Yusuf (AS) with them in the morning when they went out to tend the sheep and do away with him. They approached their father that evening and said to him:
"O our father! Why you do not trust us with Yusuf seeing we are indeed his sincere well – wishers? Send him with us tomorrow to enjoy himself and play, and we shall take every care of him."
The father said to them: "Really it will sadden me that you take him away, and I fear lest the wolf should eat him up while you are not aware."

They replied: “If the wolf were to attack him while we are (so large) a party, then we should be ourselves the first to perish.”

Yaakub (AS) did not know the precise plot, but he had strong doubts. How could he put them off? Therefore, he had to deal with them wisely and cautiously. He pleaded to them that he was an old man, and would miss Yusuf and would be sad without him. After all, Yusuf (AS) was not of an age to play with them, it is said he was hardly twelve years old.

They left the next morning taking Yusuf (AS) with them with the intention of carrying out their plot. When they arrived at the place where Yusuf (AS) was to be thrown they took him, removed his shirt and threw him in a well as they had planned. As they were throwing him, Allah put into his heart (This Message): “Surely you shall (one day) tell them the truth of this affair without them knowing.”

His brothers betrayed the poor lad. He was left, perhaps to die or to be sold into slavery. But his heart was undaunted; his courage never failed him. On the contrary, he had inkling, a presentment, of things that were to be – that his own morality and beauty of soul would land him on his feet, and perhaps some day, his brothers would stand in need of him. That he would be in a position to fulfill that need, and would do it gladly, putting them into shame for their present plotting and betrayal of him.

They stained his shirt with false blood and returned to their father that evening weeping, said: “O our father! We went racing with one another, and left Yusuf with our things; and the wolf ate him up. You will not believe us even though we tell the truth.”

Yaakub's fear about the wolf made them imagine that he would swallow the wolf story readily. Yaakub (AS) saw that there had been some foul play, and that he did not hesitate to say so. He said to himself: "How merciful the wolf was, it managed to eat up my son without even tearing his shirt a bit." Then said to them: "The tale you are telling may be good enough for you who made it! But what about me, your aged father? What is there left for me with him gone except patience? I ask for Allah's assistance for I know that all that He does is for the best!"

Yusuf (AS) remained in the darkness of the chasm, deep in the well. Luckily, when they dropped him, he did not reach the bottom of the well, but fell on a ledge on which he sat on. Luckily, a caravan of merchants travelling to Egypt with merchandise passed by, and as they needed water, let down their bucket. To their surprise, the bucket came out with a handsome youth instead of water. The men were surprised and taken aback to see this innocent youth, like an angel with a face as bright as the sun, come out of the well. They shouted to others: "Good news. Here is a fine young man!"

So they concealed him as a treasure to be sold in the markets of Egypt. These were merchants, so they thought of everything in terms of the money to be made out of it! Here was an unknown, unclaimed youth, of surpassing beauty, with apparently a mind as refined as was his external beauty. Afraid that he might have been someone's slave, who had run away they quickly got rid of him and sold him for a miserable price, a few *Dirhams*, the coinage used at the time.

The man in Egypt who bought him took him home and said to his wife: "Make his stay (among us) honorable. May be he will bring us much good, or we shall adopt him as a son." The man was a high-ranking minister and perhaps could not bear any children. He therefore thought that such a handsome, attractive intelligent son would get him more honour, dignity, power and wealth. But Zulaikha, his wife had other feelings; Yusuf (AS) was the man of her dreams! She wanted a man to give her love since her husband was not in a position to satisfy her lust for love.

Yusuf (AS) stayed in his master's house with great dignity and lived like one of the family not as a slave. He was clean hearted; well mannered and matured in his thinking so his master let him run the affairs of the house. When he attained his full manhood, Allah gave him power and knowledge. He was devout to his Allah and none of the worldly affairs bothered him, so he was going around the house not noticing anybody that would attract his mind. Zulaikha, however, was always behind him looking at him with affection and lust, but Yusuf (AS) was avoiding her. He was purified and thus protected himself from any sin. At the same time he did not want to betray his master for the trust he has put on him.

One day when the lady of the house found herself and Yusuf (AS) alone in a room, she locked all the doors and said to him: "Come dear one!"
Yusuf (AS) said: "Allah forbid! Truly, your husband is my lord! He made my residence here agreeable!"
Zulaikha was blinded with passion, and his plea had no effect on her. Yusuf (AS) was human after all, and her passionate love and her beauty placed a great temptation in his path. But he had

a sure refuge, -- his faith in Allah. His spiritual eyes saw something that her eyes, blinded by passion, did not see. She thought no one saw them when the doors were closed. But he knew that there was Allah, and He is every where. That made him strong, and had full protection against temptation.
The situation became intolerable, Yusuf (AS) ran towards the door to get away from her, and she went after him. She tugged at his garment to detain him and got hold of the back of his shirt, and in the struggle, she tore it. As he opened the door, they both came face to face with the master of the house. Here Zulaikha became defensive and was the first to complain to her husband and at the same time set the judgement for Yusuf (AS), she said: "What is the suitable punishment for the one who wants to do evil to your wife, but prison or grievous reprimand." She had turned the story against Yusuf as being the culprit.
Yusuf (AS) said: "It was she who wanted to seduce me."

There was no eyewitness to what had happened between the two since they were in a closed room. However, as there was a scene, the whole household collected. Wisdom came through one who was not immediately concerned; they say it was a child (a toddler) from Zulaikha's own people. The child said: "Look at his shirt, if it is torn from the front then her tale is true and he is telling lies. But if the shirt is torn from the back, then she is a liar, and he is telling the truth."

Therefore, when he saw his shirt was torn at the back, the husband had to decide what to do. His position was difficult, and it was made ridiculous, he had to blame his wife and also do justice. He said: "Behold! It is a snare of you women! Truly, mighty is your snare!"

He then turned to Yusuf (AS) and said to him: "O Yusuf, pass this over! And do not go round telling everyone about this." Then said to his wife: "As for you ask for forgiveness from your Lord for your sin, for truly you had been at fault!"

After this incidence, women in the city started gossiping and said: "The wife of the great *Aziz* (Nobleman) is seeking to seduce her slave without him wanting her. She is evidently going astray."
When Zulaikha heard of their malicious talk, she sent for them and prepared a banquet for them. She then gave each one of them a knife, perhaps for cutting some fruits served after the meal. When they were reclined at ease and the dessert was served and the talk flowed freely about the gossip and scandal that made their host interesting. They were just about to cut the fruit with their knives, when Zulaikha said to Yusuf (AS): "Come out before them and pass in front of them."

When they saw him, they glorified him, and (in their amazement) cut their hands. They said: "Allah preserves us! This is no human! This is none other than a noble Angel!"
So Zulaikha said: "There before you is the man about whom you did blame me! I did seek to seduce him from his (true) self but he firmly saved himself guiltless! And now if he does not do as I tell him, he shall certainly be cast into prison, and (what more) be of the company of the evils!"

From here, it was now not only Zulaikha who was after Yusuf (AS) but also all the women who saw his beauty joined in and used to send messages of their affection to him. Therefore, where there was the snare of one woman before, it is now the collective snare of many women. Thus, Yusuf (AS) preferred

going to. He said: "O my Lord! The prison is more to my liking than that to which they invite me, unless You turn away their snare from me, I should feel inclined towards them and join the ranks of the ignorant."

Therefore, his Lord heard his prayers. His master seeing the signs of Yusuf's purity and innocence decided that it would be better to prison him for a while and avoid the gossip and slander. Therefore, Yusuf (AS) was sent to prison and was saved from the wiles of women, which would have degraded him.

Yusuf (AS) in Prison

Here a new chapter in the life of Yusuf (AS) opens. Allah's plan was for him to be sent to prison to teach the truth to men of all sorts who were imprisoned, and that was when he was entrusted with Prophecy. He was to teach faith to these people in the prison. Yusuf (AS) also had the ability of foretelling events and interpreting dreams.

Two men came to prison about the same time as Yusuf (AS). These were both apparently officers of the king (the Pharaoh), who had incurred his wrath. One was a butler whose duty was to prepare the king's wines and drinks. The other was the king's baker, whose duty was to prepare the king's bread. One morning they both came to Yusuf (AS) asking him to interpret their dreams, as they saw the Signs of Allah about him. They felt not only that he had wisdom, but also that he was kind and generous, and would give of his wisdom even to the strangers like themselves.

One of them said: "I see myself (in a dream) pressing wine."

The other said: “I see myself (in a dream) carrying bread on my head, and birds are eating thereof.”
They said: “Tell us the truth and meaning thereof, for we see that you are one that do good to all.”

Yusuf (AS) at first preached to them about the faith of believing in the one Allah. And after having fulfilled his great duty, he then moved to the point the two were interested in.
He said: “As to one of you, he will pour out the wine for his lord to drink. As for the other, he will hang from the cross, and the birds will eat from his head.”
He then turned to the one whom he considered about to be saved and said: “Mention me to your lord.”

After a while, the two prisoners came out and one of them was hanged on the cross as predicted, while the other one was reinstated in his job of serving wine to his lord. However, Satan made him forget to mention him to his lord, and Yusuf (AS) remained in prison for a few more years.

One day the king (of Egypt) said: “I do see (in a vision) seven fat cows being eaten by seven lean ones, and seven green ears of corn, and seven others dry. O you chiefs! Explain to me my vision if you can interpret visions.”
They said: “That is a confused jumbled dream, and we are not skilled in the interpretation of dreams.”
However, the man who was released from prison, one of the two who survived, remembered and came forward and said: “I will tell you the truth of its interpretation. Send me to the prison for I know someone there who can interpret dreams.”

He went to the jail and said to Yusuf (AS): "O Yusuf! O man of truth! Explain to us (the dream) of seven fat cows that seven lean ones eat up, and of seven green ears of corn and seven others dry. That I may return to the people, and that they may understand."
Yusuf (AS) said: "For seven years you shall diligently sow, and the harvest that you reap, you shall leave them in the ears, except a little, of which you shall eat. Then will come after that (period) seven dreadful years, which you will eat what you have laid by in advance for them all, except a little which you shall have (specifically), 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)."

The messenger went and reported Yusuf's interpretation of the dream back to the king. The king naturally wanted to see Yusuf (AS) himself, he sent the messenger back to fetch him, but when the messenger came to him, he said: "Go back to your lord, and ask him, 'What is the state of mind of the ladies who cut their hands?' For my Lord is certainly well aware of their snare."

The king sent for the women concerned, including Zulaikha, and said to them: "What was the affair? Tell me the whole truth." Zulaikha stood by while the women answered, they said: "Allah preserves us! No evil we know against him!"
Zulaikha then said: "Now the truth is obvious to all. It was I who sought to seduce him from his (true) self; he is indeed of those who are (ever) true and noble. I say this in order that he may know that I have never been false to him in his absence and that Allah will never guide the snare of the false ones. Nor do I absolve my own self (of blame) the (human) soul is certainly

prone to evil, unless my Lord do bestow His mercy, but surely my Lord is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."

Yusuf (AS) is Made Chief Minister

So the king said: "Bring him to me, I will take him specially to serve me personally." Thus Yusuf (AS) was taken out of prison and sent to the king to be dealt with by him; the king said: "Be assured this day, you are, before our own presence with rank firmly established, and loyalty fully proved!"
Yusuf (AS) said: "Set me over the store-houses of the land; I will indeed guard them as one that knows (their importance.)"

Thus, Yusuf (AS) became the most trusted dignitary as chief minister in one of the greatest empire of that day. He was given the powers to take possession of the storehouses of the land, when, or where he pleased. His age at that time was barely thirty years. The powers were in his hand to do what he wished, but for his loyalty, these powers were for service rather than for self.

Therefore, Yusuf (AS) started gathering the crops during the times of plenty and storing in the warehouses to build up the reserves for the lean years to come. As predicted, after seven years of plenty came famine which extended to the neighboring countries. However, Yusuf's (AS) preparations were complete; there was enough reserve to meet the hardship.

As the hardship hit the neighboring countries, they sent people to Egypt to buy corn. These people were received with hospitality, and corn sold to them in a rational measure. Each

person would get a camel load of grain as his share. Yaakub (AS) sent his ten children to Egypt to buy food, leaving the youngest one Benyamin behind. Yusuf's ten brothers came to Egypt to his presence, he immediately recognized them but they did not know him, for in their thoughts Yusuf (AS) was probably some menial slave in a remote household, perhaps already starved to death in these hard times. He entertained them, as a guest would be entertained, giving them a place to put up during their stay. During the conversation with them, he managed to get the full story of their family without hinting to them his identity.
He treated his brothers liberally and ordered his workers to furnish them with provisions. He then said to them: "Next time you come you bring with you your younger brother as you can see I pay full measure and that I do provide the best hospitality. If you do not bring him to me next time you shall not have any ration from me and do not even come near."
They said: "We shall certainly seek to get our wish about him from his father, indeed we shall do it."

Yusuf (AS) then told his servants to put back into their saddlebags the goods that they had brought to trade-in for corn, to make them come back. Yusuf (AS) wanted them to come back but not without his full brother Benyamin.

When they returned to their father, they related to him about their trip and the generous minister they met in Egypt, and the conditions laid down to them to bring Benyamin the next time they went back. To beg their father to release Benyamin to them was not an easy matter, as he did not trust them after what they had done to Yusuf (AS) before.

Yaakub (AS) said: “How can I trust you with him as I have trusted you with his brother before; and you lost him?”

As they came to open their baggage, they found that the goods they had paid for the food had been returned to them, which meant that they got the grain free.
They said: “O our father! What more can we desire? Here are our goods returned to us, and we can get more food for our family. We shall take care of our brother, and in this way we can get a full camel load of grain.”

Yaakub (AS) said: “I will never send him with you until you swear a solemn oath to me in Allah’s name that you will be sure to bring him back to me unless you yourselves are hemmed in and made powerless.”
When they had sworn their solemn oath, Yaakub (AS) said: “Over all that we say, let Allah be the Witness and Guardian! O my sons! Do not enter all by one gate but enter by different gates.” They therefore entered in the manner their father had commanded them.

The ten brothers, with Benyamin arrived in Egypt and were received by Yusuf (AS) hospitably, only this time even more so than before, as they complied with his request to bring Benyamin. The guests were seated in twos and Benyamin was an odd one out, so Yusuf (AS) took him to his own table. After the feast they were lodged, and accommodated in twos; so Benyamin was the odd one out. It was natural for the minister to take him himself. Yusuf (AS) thus got a chance of privacy with him. He disclosed his identity to his younger brother, asking him to keep it a secret, and to take no notice of any strange things that might happen.

Yusuf (AS) had a plan to retain his brother, and eventually to get all his family over to Egypt. After he had furnished them with provisions, he put the king's (golden) drinking cup into his brother's saddlebag. The caravan left and before long, there came a caller shouting: "O you in the caravan! Behold! You are thieves, without doubt!"
They said turning towards them: "What is it that you are missing?"
They said: "We miss the great beaker of the king; and the one who will bring it will be rewarded a camel load. 'And I will be bound by it.' (Yusuf said)."
The brothers said: "By Allah! You know well that we did not come to make mischief in the land, and we are not thieves!"
The Egyptians said: "What then shall be the penalty of this, if you are proved to have lied?"
They said: "The penalty should be that he in whose saddlebag it is found should be held as prisoner to compensate for the crime. That is how we punish the wrong-doers!"

Therefore, he (Yusuf) began the search with their baggage, before he came to the baggage of his brother. At last, he brought it out of his brother's baggage. That was the plan, he could not have taken his brother by the law of the king except by him doing something; and here was the proof, he was a thief and had to be held behind as bondsman for what he had done. Immediately the ten brothers came to a defensive and said:

"If he steals, there was a brother of his who did steal before (him)."
(Chapter 12 verse 77)

They were referring to Yusuf (AS), not knowing that he was the one in front of their eyes. Yusuf (AS), however, kept this in his heart not uttering a word to reveal the secret to them. He simply said (to himself): "You are in a worse case, and Allah knows best (the truth of) that you say."
They said: "O exalted one! Behold! He has a father, aged and noble, (who will grieve for him); so take one of us in his place; for we see that you are polite in doing good."
He said: "Allah forbids that we take other than him with whom we found our property. Indeed if we do so, we shall be acting wrongfully."

When they saw no hope of his yielding, they got together in private to discuss the affair. Their leader, presumably the eldest, said: "Have you forgotten that your father had taken an oath from you in Allah's name, and how before you failed in your duty with Yusuf? Therefore, I will not leave this land until my father permits me, or Allah commands me; and He is the best to command. Go back to your father and say: 'O our father! Behold! Your son committed theft! We bear witness only to what we know, and we could not well guard against the unseen! Ask at the town where we have been and the caravan in which we returned, and (you will find) indeed we are telling the truth."

The nine brothers therefore returned home to convey the sad news to their father as instructed. Yaakub (AS) was stunned by the story, for he knew Benyamin too well to believe that he had committed theft. He said: "No but you have yourselves made a story (good enough) for you. There is nothing for me left except patience; may be Allah will bring them back all to me for He is indeed full of knowledge and wisdom."

He turned away from them, and said: “How great is my grief for Yusuf!” And his eyes became white (blind) with sorrow, for weeping too much, and he fell into silence and depression.
They said: “By Allah! You will never stop remembering Yusuf until you reach the last extremity of illness or until you die.”
He said: “I only complain of my distraction and grief to Allah, and I know from Allah that which you do not know. O my sons! Go and inquire about Yusuf and his brother, and never give up hope of Allah’s soothing Mercy. Truly no one despairs of Allah’s soothing Mercy, except those who have no faith.”

The nine brothers went back to Egypt according to their father’s wishes. This time they came begging since they had hardly anything to offer in exchange for food, furthermore they had left behind an old man in deep grief of missing his son. They had to see the chief minister and tell him of their father’s distress, and beg him to release Benyamin.

When they got to see him, they said: “O exalted one! Grief has seized our family and us; we have now brought these scanty goods so pay us full measure. We beg you to treat it as charity to us, for Allah do reward the charitable.”
Yusuf (AS) said: “Do you know how you dealt with Yusuf and his brother? How ignorant you are!”
They said: “Are you indeed Yusuf?”
He said: “Yes, I am Yusuf and here is my brother; and if you have still any doubt of my identity here is Benyamin, ask him. We have suffered much, but patience and right conduct are at last rewarded by Allah.”
They said: “By Allah! Indeed has Allah preferred you above us, and we certainly have been guilty of sin!

He said: “This day let no blame be put on you. Allah will forgive you, and He is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy! Go with this shirt of mine, and throw it over the face of my father, he will come to see (clearly). Then come to me together with all your family.”

When the caravan left Egypt, their father said: “I do indeed scent the presence of Yusuf, although you think I am crazy.”
Yaakub (AS) had always had faith that Yusuf (AS) was living and that his dream would be realized. Moreover Allah had given him the gift of smelling the scent of his son even before his children had arrived with the shirt; he knew it already before the news was actually brought to him.

Then when the bearer of the good news came, he threw the shirt over his face, and forthwith he regained his sight.
He said: “Did I not say to you that I know from Allah that which you do not know?”
His sons said: “O our father! Ask for forgiveness for our sins, for we were truly at fault.”
He said: “Soon will I ask my Lord for forgiveness for you, for He is indeed Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”
Yaakub (AS) fully intended to do this, but the one hurt most was Yusuf (AS), and it was only fair that he should be consulted.

The whole family thus left for Egypt, and when they arrived, Yusuf (AS) provided a home for his parents with himself, and said: “Enter Egypt (all) in safety if it pleases Allah.”
He then raised his parents on the throne (of dignity). To show his high respect for his parents, Yusuf (AS) made them sit on a throne of dignity. This is a place of honour where usually a seat or a dais is set for dignitaries to sit on.

His parents and his eleven brothers all performed the ceremony of prostration before Yusuf (AS) in recognition of his supreme rank in Egypt under the Pharaoh. Thus was fulfilled the dream or vision of his youth. It was customary during that time for people to prostrate before a dignitary of high rank as a sign of respect. This, however, is not allowed except to prostrate to Allah.

Yusuf (AS) then said:

"O my father! This is the fulfillment of my vision of old! Allah has made it come true! He was indeed good to me He took me out of prison and brought you (all here) out of the desert, (even) after Satan had sown enmity between me and my brothers. Verily my Lord understands best the mysteries of all that He plans to do, for verily He is full of knowledge and wisdom."
(Chapter 12 verse 100)

He went on to pray and said:

"O my Lord! You have indeed bestowed on me some power, and taught me something of the interpretation of dreams and events, -- O You Creator of the heavens and the earth! You art my protector in this world and in the Hereafter. Take You my soul (at death) as one submitting to Your

Will (as a Muslim), and unite me with the righteous."
(Chapter 12 verse 101)

Such is one of the stories of what happened unseen. Is it a story? It is rather a recital of forces and motives, thoughts and feelings, complications and results ordinarily seen by men. With every character in the story, there are problems, and the whole is a beautifully balanced picture of the working of Allah's providence in man's checkered destiny.

CHAPTER XIII

SHUAYB (AS)

Shuayb (AS) is a Prophet of an Arab origin who used to speak Arabic. He is from the ancestry of Ibrahim (AS). He is from a town known as Madyan where people were known as Madyanites. These people of Madyan were Arabs who lived near the town of Maan in Jordan near Lake Luut at the Dead Sea. They worshiped idols and were the biggest rouges that used to cheat people in almost everything. They were commercial people, but they were given to fraud, injustice and wrongful mischief. When they weighed the goods for sale, they always cheated; and if it was to their favour, that if they were buying, and then they used to weigh more for themselves.

Allah then sent to them a Prophet to preach and correct them. He sent to them Shuayb bin Nuwait bin Raawil bin Murrah bin Anqa bin Madyan bin Ibrahim (AS). He was the one who started the use of weights and measures. He advised his people to stop being despotic and cheaters and that Allah would give them His blessings and favour. Moreover, when they refused to listen to him he threatened them by telling them that Allah would punish them like those who were punished before them for not listening to the teachings of their Prophets.

They said to him:

"O Shuayb! Does your (religion of) prayer command you that we leave off the worship which our fathers practiced, or that we leave off doing what we like with our property? Truly, you are the one that forbears with faults and is right-minded!"
(Chapter 11 verse 87)

It was only natural for such selfish people to react like this; to scoff the spiritual things like prayers and worship, and to cling to their property rights as if there were no other rights even greater than those of property were.

In his preaching, he said:

'O my people! See you whether I have a clear (Sign) from my Lord, and He has given me sustenance (pure and) good as from Himself? I wish not, in opposition to you, to do that which I forbid you to do. I only desire (your) betterment to the best of my power; and my success (in my task) can only come from Allah. In Him I trust, and unto Him I look. And O my people! Let not my dissent (from you) cause you to sin, lest you suffer a fate similar to that of the people of Nuuh, or of Huud or of Saleh, nor are the people of Luut far off from you! But ask for forgiveness of your Lord, and turn unto Him (in

repentance): for my Lord is indeed full of mercy and loving-kindness.'
(Chapter 11 verses 88 – 90)

After all, he had told them, they called him a liar and said:

You are only one of those bewitched! You are no more than a mortal like us, and indeed, we think you are a liar! Now cause a piece of the sky to fall on us, if you are truthful!
(Chapter 26 verses 153 – 154)

The same words were uttered by those who existed before. Shuayb's people did not learn from the past events. They denied that he was a Prophet and could not see that what they were doing was wrong, or that any former generations behaved differently. Moreover, they threatened to cast him off their town, but he did not despair. He continued with his preaching. A handful of the people accepted him and followed his teachings. The unbelievers told those who followed Shuayb (AS) that if they do not stop following him they will be cast off their town together with him. Thus, Shuayb (AS) prayed to his Lord to protect him and his followers from these people and said:

Our Lord! Decide You between us and our people in truth, for You are the best to decide."
(Chapter 7 verse 89)

Here Allah sent to them the awaited punishment. The weather became very hot and no water of the world would quench their thirst, there was not even a breeze to cool them. They could not stay in their homes so they went out hoping that there would be a refuge somewhere. Then they saw a pitch-black cloud coming towards them thinking it would protect them from the scorching sun. They therefore amassed themselves under the shade of the cloud. There then came the blow pieces of molten rocks came down on them and there was an earth tremor under their feet and all of them were destroyed. Shuayb (AS) and his followers left the town and were saved from the calamity.

CHAPTER XIV

AYYUB (AS) (JOB)

He is Ayyub bin Muws bin Razaah bin Al-A'ys bin Ishaaq bin Ibrahim (AS), his mother is Luut's daughter. He and the rest of the Prophets are ancestors of Ishaaq (AS) except for Muhammad (SAW); who is an ancestor of Ismail (AS). He was sent to the people of Hawraan in Shaam.

Allah gave him all the worldly comforts and riches; he had a lot of animals and plantations and was very rich and prosperous. He had seven sons and seven daughters, and was very healthy and strong and very handsome. His people used to like him very much and had many friends, as he was kind and generous. Ayyub (AS) was known for his honesty, perseverance and piety. He was given the name of *As-Siddiq* in Arabic meaning the righteous. He had faith in Allah to extremes. He got the name of Ayyub, coming from an Arabic word *Ayyaba* meaning to return, that is to say Allah took everything from him and then returned to him what He took.

Allah gave him many physical tests to see how strong his faith was. He had many ups-and-downs in his life suffering a number of calamities, all his children were crushed under his roof, and lost his wealth and everything he had. He tolerated all this and held fast to his faith in Allah; just thanked his Lord for what he had, left. He got a very bad disease and was bedridden for a long time with only his wife to nurse him. Eventually Allah

gave him back what he had lost; he was restored prosperity, with twice as much as he had before. His friends and his brethren came back to him; and had a new family of seven sons and three fair daughters. He lived to the age of sixty-three years, and saw four generations of his descendants.

Ayyub (AS) was very devoted to Allah and feared Him very much. He was also very grateful to Him. Whatever he got or whenever he ate anything, he always thanked his Lord. If anything bad happened to him he remained calm and pray to Allah to save him from the calamities. Allah gave him more and more tests to see if he could persevere to a stage that he might set an example to others. Allah wanted Ayyub (AS) to be an example to us all. We should know that whatever happens to us is what Allah has decreed. Ayyub (AS) was the first man who went through a lot of hardships and suffering. He persevered and passed all the tests.

The first stage of these tests was that he lost all his wealth and became very poor, but he never despaired and instead he prayed to his Lord. Secondly, all his children died and remained alone with his wife, the grief which he also he tolerated. He continued praying to Allah. After this, he had a very deadly disease that he became so ill and was nothing but a skeleton. All his friends had left him and had only his wife to nurse him. He persevered all this and kept on praying to Allah.

His wife remained with him nursing and feeding him; until they had no more to live on. She then took up a job to get a little income. Ayyub (AS) remained in this state for eighteen years without complaining even to his wife, only praying and hoping that Allah would make him better.

When Satan saw that Ayyub (AS) had gone through all the tough tests without losing his faith in Allah, he was not happy. So he thought of getting to him through his wife, and poked into her mind. He reminded her of the good old days and all the things they had – the riches, the children and the friends who were then all gone. He went on asking her for how much longer she could persevere that state of suffering.

The wife therefore went to Ayyub (AS) and said to him:
"O my husband! For how long will your Allah torture you? Where are your riches, your children, and your strength and the good health you had? Even your friends have left you. At least pray to your Lord to give you recovery."
He said to her: "No doubt Satan has got into your head. You are now crying for the lost riches, the dead children and the good life. Those are the days gone; this is what our Lord wishes us to be. How long did you live that life?"
She said: "Eighty years."
He said: "And how long have you lived in sufferings?"
She said: "Eighteen years."
Ayyub said: "I feel ashamed to my Lord to ask him to save me from this catastrophe, if I look back to the years I lived in comfort. I feel that your faith has become weak; if I had the strength, I would thrash you one hundred times. Get out of my sight and from today onwards I do not want to be nursed by you, neither will I accept to be fed from your hand. So leave me alone until my Lord decides on my fate."

Thus Ayyub (AS) was left alone, and eventually he prayed to Allah.

And (remember) Job, when he cried to his Lord, 'Truly distress has seized me, but You are the Most Merciful of those that are merciful.' So We listened to him, We removed the distress that was on him, and We restored his people to him, and doubled their number, -- as a Grace from Ourselves, and a thing for commemoration, for all who serve Us.
(Chapter 21 verses 83 – 84)

To this stage, Ayyub (AS) had reached the state where he was considered to be the most persevering person with full faith to Allah Almighty, and was an example to the human race.

(The command was given): "Strike with your foot: here is (water) wherein to wash, cool and refreshing, and (water) to drink."
(Chapter 38 verse 42)

He was ordered to hit the ground with his foot, and a fountain of water gushed forth to give him a bath and clean his body, to refresh his spirits; and to give him a drink. When he had done that, immediately, he became healthier, stronger and younger than before. His wife meanwhile had softened down and returned to him, and when she arrived at first she could not recognize him, she asked him: "Where is that old ailing man who was here?"
He said to her: "Do you not recognize me? I am your husband!"

With Allah's miracle, she also became as young as she was before, and she bore for him ten new children.

After this Allah commanded him to put hundred straws together and beat his wife with them once, as to carry out the oath he had made when she went astray:

"And take in your hand a little grass, and strike therewith: and break not (your oath)." Truly, We found him full of patience and constancy. How excellent in Our service! Ever did he turn (to Us)!
(Chapter 38 verse 44)

This is a lesson that Allah teaches us through Ayyub (AS), as an example, of what he has gone through his life. Therefore, one is supposed to think hard and realize that it is Allah who is the Cherisher, He is Most Gracious, Most Merciful. We should all learn from what Ayyub (AS) had gone through, and realise that all we get, good or bad, comes from Allah. He is the one who bestows means of living, gives health and prosperity at any time to anyone He wishes. He also takes away this means at any time from anyone He wishes. We are to thank Him for His generosity and if at any time, find ourselves in a kind of calamity, He is the one we should turn to and ask for his mercy. He, who can persevere through any calamity, is said to have Ayyub's perseverance.

One must not look up to a person who is above him and wish to be like him or better than him. For example one should not look up to someone who has a big house and wish he could have one like or better, that that one should look down to the one who

lives in a hut and thank Allah that he has a roof over his head. If you are well, healthy and on your two feet doing your business, then you think about the one who is lame and can not walk.

CHAPTER XV

MUSA (AS) (MOSES)

He is Musa bin Umraan bin Wahib bin Laawy bin Yaakub bin Ishaaq bin Ibrahim (AS). His mother is said to have been known as Afahiyah, she is also Harun's (Aaron) mother.

Bani Israiyl (The Children of Israelis) lived in Egypt from the time of Yusuf. The Bani Israiyl are the People of Yaakub (AS) who was also known as Israiyl. As we have seen earlier, Yusuf (AS) eventually brought his parents and brothers over from Palestine to Egypt to live with him. The historians say that those who went to live in Egypt at first were only eighty-six people, and then multiplied to reach six hundred thousand during Musa's time.

The Pharaoh who ruled Egypt during the time of Yusuf (AS) was called Rayyan bin Alwalid. Seeing how Yusuf (AS) had saved the country from famine, the King gave him many powers in running the affairs of the country. Therefore, Yusuf (AS) enjoyed a high standing and nobility in Egypt, and his people lived very comfortably. After the death of Rayyan, a King by the name of Qaboos bin Mus'ab bin Muawia bin Abi Namir took the powers. This king was a tyrant and oppressed the Israelis after the death of Yusuf (AS).

After King Qaboos came his brother, Alwalid bin Mus'ab and was the fourth in the chain of the Pharaohs of Egypt. His wife

was Asiya bint Muzaahem and she was a very piety lady who believed in the one God. The King wanted to take her from her father by force, but the father told the King that if he really wanted her then he should pay the dowry and marry her legally. When the father came to tell his daughter about her marriage to the king, at first she refused saying that she did not want to be married to an infidel and a tyrant. But the father told her that if she refused to marry the King then he and all his people would face severe punishment from him. She therefore agreed only because of the threat from the King, and lived with him but was unhappy.

This Pharaoh went to an extent of saying that he was god, when he said to his chiefs: "O Chiefs! No god do I know for you but myself." He also said: "I am your Lord, Most High." Commenting that Musa's Allah is inferior and low.

The Birth of Musa (AS)

Musa (AS) was born in Egypt during the reign of King Alwalid bin Musaab. This Pharaoh kept his people at different levels; the lowest were the Bani Israiyl. He used to treat them very badly as he considered them as nothing but shepherds who used to live in the desert. He treated them like slaves and used to take their women as and when he wished.

The Bani Israiyl, however, lived in expectation that one day a young fellow would come from within the King's Palace and save them from the hardships they were in. It is said that the King had a dream that he saw a huge fire coming from Baitil-Maqdis and entering Egypt, and that the fire destroyed

everything and everyone except the Bani Israiyl. So his priests interpreted the dream that a boy would be born among the Bani Israiyl who would then overthrow him from his throne.

The King therefore gave orders that any son born among the Bani Israiyl must be slain. When this order came out Harun (AS) was already born and his mother was pregnant (carrying Musa) in her first few months. She tried to keep away from the public eye and no one knew of her pregnancy, and when she delivered (a boy), nobody knew about it except those in her household. Naturally, no mother could take her son to be slain, so she kept him but was she very scared. Allah sent her the inspiration to suckle her child, but if she feared for him, she should cast him in the river and he would return to her. It was also a promise from her Lord that he will be a Prophet.

Thus when the mother felt that she could no longer keep it a secret, she put her baby in a chest and threw the chest into the river Nile. She then told her daughter to follow the chest along the riverbank and bring her the news of its whereabouts. The girl followed the chest until she saw it land in front of the Pharaoh's Palace, and saw it being picked up and taken inside, she then went back to her mother to inform her.

The Pharaoh immediately ordered the boy to be slain, but his wife Asiya who did not have any children said to her husband: "Here is a joy of the eye for me and you do not slay him. It may be that he will be of use to us, or we may adopt him as a son." Alas! That was the boy that Pharaoh was warned about, but with Allah's miracle, they did not realize it, thus the boy was saved. When Musa's mother came to know that his son was not slain, she was at least assured of his safety. Then Musa (AS) as a

baby needed to suckle, therefore they brought ladies to try and breast feed him, but he refused to suck from any of them. Then came Musa's sister and said to them: "I can bring you a nice lady who would nourish him and bring him up for you, and be sincerely attached to him." In this way, he was restored to his mother and got the benefit of his mother's milk as well as the prestige and the opportunities of being brought up in the royal family, with the best of teachers to teach him Egyptian wisdom. In addition, there was the comfort of his mother. This was Allah's promise to his mother that he would return to her.

Musa (AS) lived in the Pharaoh's Palace as an adopted child and grew up to be a matured youth. He was good at heart, true and loyal to his people, and obedient and just to those among whom he lived. He was granted wisdom and knowledge from Allah, to be used for the times of conflict, which were to come.

One day he entered the City at a time when its people were not watching, which might have been at noon when people were taking a siesta. His entrance to the City, however, was not usually taken to be right, being that he was from the Palace was usually not free to run around on his own. There he found two men fighting, one of his own religion (an Israelite) and the other of his foes (an Egyptian). The Israelite appealed to Musa (AS) to help him against the Egyptian, thus he struck the foe with his fist and unfortunately killed him. His intention, however, was only to hit him slightly and release the Israelite, but not to kill the Egyptian. This was unfortunate in more ways than one. His visit to the City was clandestine; he had taken the side of the weaker and despised party; and he had taken the life of an Egyptian. He was full of regrets and repentance, and he prayed to Allah, and obtained Allah's forgiveness.

The next morning Musa (AS) was going about in a state of fear for what he had done the day before.

When behold, the man who had, the day before, sought his help called aloud for his help (again). Musa said to him: "You are truly, it is clear, a quarrelsome fellow!"

(Chapter 28 verse 18)

Taking into account that the Egyptian was unjust, and an enemy to the Israelites, Musa wanted to intervene again. The man said to him: "O Musa! Do you want to kill me as you have killed a man yesterday? Your intention is none other than to become a powerful violent man in the land, and not to be one who sets things right!"

Hence it revealed that Musa (AS) was the one who had killed the man the day before. The news spread around very fast, and reached the Palace. Immediately a council was held and the death of Musa (AS) was decreed. There came a man running from the furthest end of the City and warned Musa (AS), and said:

"O Musa! The Chiefs have passed a decree to slay you. So get away from here, for I give you sincere advice."

Musa (AS) Leaves Egypt and Goes Towards Madyan

The King ordered his guards to hunt Musa (AS) down and bring him in to be judged for the murder. Musa (AS) saw no way out except to flee from Egypt; he therefore got away from there in a state of fear. He prayed: "O my Lord! Save me from people given to wrong-doing."

He got out of town unprepared for the journey. He had no animal to ride on, no food and no water. He just went towards the desert, not knowing exactly where he was going, he said: “I do hope that my Lord will show me the smooth and straight path.” He walked in the desert alone for eight days barefooted, eating leaves from the desert trees until he arrived a small town of Madyan, the town of Prophet Shuayb (AS), which was between Shaam and Hijaaz.

He arrived at a watering place in Madyan where he found a group of men watering their flocks, and besides them, he saw two women who were keeping back their flocks.
He approached the two and said: “What is the matter with you?”
They said: “We can not water our flocks until the shepherds take back their flocks, and our father is a very old man.”
So he watered their flocks for them; he then turned back to the shade to rest and said: “O my Lord! Truly I am in desperate need of any good that You do send me!”

The two women returned home early that day and told their father of this nice young man who had helped them in watering their flocks. The father therefore told one of his daughters to go and fetch this man and bring him home so that he could repay him for the good he had done to his daughters. One of them came (back) to him, walking bashfully, and said: “My father invites you home so that he may reward you for having watered our flocks for us.” Therefore, Musa went with her, and as a way of respect, he walked in front, but was also careful not set his eyes on her lest the wind would blow her dress up and show her body. These are all signs of holiness in Musa (AS).

So Musa (AS) came to this old man, sat down and chatted with him, and they became friends at once. The old man is said to be Prophet Shuayb (AS), but some say he was not, and the Lord is more Knowledgeable. Musa (AS) told the old man his story right from the beginning, and the whole household sat down listening with eagerness. The old man then said: "Do not fear you are in good hands; you have escaped from the unjust people."

The old man, the head of the household, assured him of hospitality and safety under his roof. Thus, Musa (AS) became a guest here, and according to their custom, a guest was entertained for three days. The whole family felt that, as the father was old; such a strong young man would be useful to have around permanently to help look after the flocks. One of the daughters therefore, who had given her heart to this man, spoke their unspoken thoughts by saying: "O my dear father! Engage him on wages; he seems to be strong and trusty."
Musa (AS) had proved himself both and these were the very qualities that a woman most admires in a man.

Here the father said: "I intend to wed you one of my daughters, on condition that you serve me for eight years; but if you complete ten years, it will be grace from you. But I do not intend to place you under difficulty."
The intention was that his service for that period was sufficient to cover for his dowry. Musa (AS) was glad of the proposal, and said: "Let that be the agreement between me and you, whichever of the two terms I fulfil, let there be no ill-will to me. Let Allah be a witness to what we both of us say."

Musa (AS) stayed with the old man. As agreed, he married one of his daughters and worked for him looking after the flocks. When he fulfilled the term agreed, he decided to depart and go home to his people. He took his family and his flocks and went across the desert into the direction of Egypt. The Holy Quraan only mentions his 'family' and here we can assume that it was his household in general. As he was travelling with his family, in a cold dark night he saw a fire in the direction of Mount Tur. He said to his family: "Remain here, I see fire; I hope to bring you from there some news or a burning ember so that we may light a fire to warm ourselves."

Musa (AS) is Given His First Inspiration

Musa (AS) went in the direction of the fire, towards the valley of Tuwaa. When he got to it, he was amazed to see the fire burning in a green bush without the bush burning.
When he came to it, he heard a voice: "O Musa! Verily I am your Lord! Therefore, (in My presence) take off your shoes. You are in the sacred valley of Tuwaa. I have chosen you so listen then to the inspiration (sent to you). Verily, I am Allah there is no Allah but Me; so serve Me (only), and establish regular prayer for acknowledging My praise. Verily the Hour is coming – My design is to keep it hidden — for every soul to receive its reward by the measure of its endeavor."
The voice went on to say: "And what is that in your right hand O Musa?"
He said: "It is my rod (walking stick) on it I lean; with it I beat down fodder for my flocks; and in it I find other uses."
(Allah) said: "Throw it, O Musa!"

He threw it, and behold! It turned into a large snake, active in motion; and Musa got terrified and leaped in fear of the snake.
(Allah) said: "Seize it, and fear not. We shall return it at once to its former condition."
Thus, Musa (AS) picked it up and it returned at once to its former condition.
(Allah) said: "Now put your hand under your armpit, it shall come out white (and shining), without harm (or stain) — as another Sign, -- in order that We may show you (two) of our Greater Signs. Go to Pharaoh, for he has transgressed all bounds."
Musa (AS) put his hand under his armpit as commanded, and when he took it out it was shining like the full moon.

Musa (AS) said: "O my Lord! Expand me my breast; ease my task for me; and remove my impediment from speech, so they may understand what I say. And give me a Minister from my family, Harun, my brother; add to my strength through him, and make him share my task. That we may celebrate Your praise without limit, and remember You without limit. For You are He that ever regards us."

In other verses, Musa (AS) says to his Lord:

O my Lord! I have slain a man among them, and I fear lest they slay me. And my brother Harun – he is eloquent in speech than I, so send him with me as a helper, to confirm (and strengthen) me. For I fear that they may accuse me of falsehood.

(Chapter 28 verses 33 – 34)
Here Musa (AS) asks his Lord to expand his breast, which is reputed to be the seat of knowledge and affection. He further

asks Allah to help him in his task, and remove the impediment in his speech, which he suffered from. He also asks to have with him for counselling and constant attendance, his dear brother, Harun (AS), for he did not like be alone among the Egyptians.

Allah granted his wish and he was called upon to go to Egypt on double mission -- to go and preach to Pharaoh and the Egyptians that he was a messenger of Allah, and to free his own people from the hardships and take them out of Egypt. Thus, Musa (AS) and his brother Harun (AS) went to meet the Pharaoh and said to him: "We have been sent by the Lord and Cherisher of the Worlds; send with us the children of Israiyl."

Here the Pharaoh starts arguing with Musa (AS), firstly on the point of 'Lord and Cherisher of the Worlds.' So he says to Musa: "Who cherished you? Did we not bring you up as a child? Did you not grow up among us?" Then he goes on to remind him of having slain an Egyptian, and accuses him of not only being a murderer but also an ungrateful wretch who killed one of the races that had brought him up.
However, Musa (AS) tells him: "I did it then, when I was in error. So I fled from you; but my Lord has (since) invested me with judgement (and wisdom) and appointed me as one of the Apostles."

The Pharaoh said: "And who is the 'Lord and Cherisher of the Worlds'?"
Musa (AS) said: "The Lord and Cherisher of the heavens and the earth, and all between, if you want to be quite sure."
The Pharaoh turned to those around him and said: "Do listen to what he says?" Because all along he has been pretending to be god.

Musa (AS) went on saying: "Your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers from the beginning! Lord of the East and the West, and all between! If you only had sense!"
The Pharaoh said: "Truly your Prophet who has been sent to you is a real madman! If you put forward any god other than me, I will certainly put you in prison." He then told his minister Haman: "O Haman! Light me a (kiln to bake bricks) out of clay, and build me a tall tower, that I may mount up to see this god of Musa what he looks like. But as far as I am concerned, I think Musa is a liar!"
Musa (AS) then said: "Even if I showed you something clear and convincing?"
The Pharaoh answered: "Show it then if you are telling the truth!"

Musa (AS) then threw his trump card. He threw his cane on the ground, and beholds it turned into a huge serpent in front of their own eyes, then picked it up and it returned to its previous state. He then drew his hand and behold it was white to all spectator.
The Pharaoh said to his Chiefs around him: "This is indeed a sorcerer well-versed, his plan is to get you out of your land by his sorcery; then what is it you counsel?"
They said: "Keep him and his brother waiting for a while, and call in all our sorcerers well versed."

Therefore, the sorcerers were brought together on a day appointed, the day of celebration; and the people were told to assemble and watch. When the sorcerers arrived, they said to Pharaoh: "Of course we will have a suitable reward if we win?"
The Pharaoh said: "Yes, and more, for you shall in that case be raised to posts nearest to me."

They thus assembled in front of the Pharaoh and there was a large crowd of people who came to watch. At first, they disputed one another over their affair, but they kept their talk a secret. They said: "These two are certainly expert magicians; their object is to drive you out from your land with their magic, and to do away with your most cherished institutions." When they were ready, they asked Musa (AS): "Who will be the first to start?" Musa (AS) said to them: "You throw what you wish to throw!"

Therefore, they threw their ropes and sticks, and they all turned into large serpents; and said: "By the might of Pharaoh, it is we who will certainly win!" They bewitched the eyes of the people, and struck terror into them for they showed a great (feat of) magic.
Musa (AS) at first got scared at the sight of this but he stayed calm, then Allah called to him and said: "Fear not, throw your cane for you will certainly be the winner."
Musa (AS) then threw his cane, and it straightaway swallowed up all the falsehoods that they faked!
When the sorcerers saw this, they fell down, prostrate in adoration, saying: "We believe in the Lord of the Worlds, the Lord of Musa and Harun."

When the Pharaoh heard this, he shouted in anger: "You believe in him before I give you permission? Surely, he is your leader, who has taught you sorcery! Soon you shall know! Be sure I will cut off your hands and feet on opposite sides, and I will cause you all to die on the cross!"
They said: "Only, our desire is that our Lord will forgive us our faults, that we may become foremost among the Believers!"

Pharaoh's order against the sorcerers was drastic enough. However, his Council was not satisfied, and wanted to know what would happen to Musa (AS) and the Israelites. So the Chiefs said to Pharaoh: "Will you leave Musa and his people, to spread mischief in the land, and to abandon you and the gods?"
The Pharaoh said: "We will slay their male children, and their females we will save alive; and we will have power over them."
Thus Pharaoh after this became even harsher on the Bani Israiyl.

None believed in Musa (AS) except a few of Pharaoh's people, because of the fear of Pharaoh and his chiefs, lest they would punish them. The majority of Pharaoh's people refused to believe at the time, but the sorcerers believed and so did Pharaoh's wife, Asiya.
Musa (AS) said: "O my People! If you do (really) believe in Allah, then in Him put your trust if you submit (your will to His)."
They said: "In Allah do we put our trust. Our Lord! Make us not a trial for those who practise oppression; and deliver us by Your Mercy from those who reject (You)."
The people of Pharaoh were punished with years of drought and shortness of crops as a warning. However, when good times came, they said, 'This is due to us;' and when gripped with calamity, they ascribed it to evil omens connected with Musa (AS) and those with him! Behold! In truth, the omens of evils are theirs in Allah's sight, but most of them did not understand!
They said to Musa (AS): "Whatever are the Signs you bring, to work therewith your sorcery on us we shall never believe in you."

There came heavy rains after this and the river (Nile) flooded. Pharaoh's people went running to Musa (AS) to ask him to pray

to his god to save them from this calamity, and that they will believe and let him take the Bani Israiyl with him out of Egypt. So Musa (AS) was happy to hear the good news, he thus prayed for them; but they did not keep their word.

The flooding of the river caused fertile soil to spread into places where there was none before, so the Egyptians planted a lot of grain and such food. They were very happy to see this greenery and said that the flood had brought them good luck and not because of Musa's prayers. But when the grain was about ready to be reaped, there came locusts and attacked the fields. The Egyptians went running to Musa (AS) and told him the same story as before. Without hesitation, he prayed for them; and again they did not keep their word.

The next stage of their calamity was that they were sent lice that attacked the grain. Again, they went running to Musa (AS) with the same story and he prayed for them. Again, they did not believe or let Musa (AS) take the Bani Israiyl. Then came tiny frogs, every time they tried to put food into their mouths, frogs appeared in the food. The same story repeated, but still they refused to believe. Then came the blood. Anytime they tried to drink water it turned into blood; the water in all the wells, rivers and lakes turned to blood. On top of this most of them refused to believe, and said, whatever calamity came to them they would never believe in Musa."

The nine Clear Signs given to Musa (AS) were: 1. The Rod (Cane), 2.The Radiant Hand, 3. Years of drought, 4. Shortness of crops, 5. Epidemic among men and beasts, 6. Locusts, 7.Lice, 8. Frogs, 9. The water turning to blood.

Musa (AS) Leaves Egypt with Bani Israiyl

By inspiration, Allah told Musa (AS) to travel by night and take with him the Bani Israiyl. Thus, he and his people left Egypt at night to go to Shaam, and went towards the Red Sea. In the morning, when the news of their departure got around and reached the Pharaoh, he took his army and pursued after them.

When Pharaoh and his army got to them, he found them along the shores of the Red Sea. Thus, they were surrounded; in front, there was the sea and behind them were the Pharaoh and his army and on their left and right, there were high mountains.
The Bani Israiyl said to Musa (AS): "We are sure to be overtaken."
Musa (AS) said: "By no means! My Lord is with me! Soon He will guide me!"
Here Musa (AS) was told by inspiration from Allah: "Strike the sea with your rod."
He did this and immediately the sea was divided, and each separate part became like the huge, firm mass of a mountain. Therefore, Musa (AS) and his People passed through to the other side walking on foot. When Pharaoh saw this, at first, he hesitated but with Allah's Will the horse he rode charged ahead, and his army followed behind. When they were in the middle, and all the Israelites had crossed through, the sea returned to its normal state and they were all drowned.

In insolence and spite; at length when overwhelmed with the flood, the Pharaoh said: "I believe that there is no god except

Him Whom the Children of Israiyl believe in. I am of those who submit (To Allah in Islam)."
Allah said to him: "Ah now! – But a little while before, you were in rebellion! – And you did mischief (and violence)! This day We shall save your body, that you become a Sign to those who come after you! But verily, many among mankind are heedless of Our Signs."
Hence, the Pharaoh's body was washed to the shore to be seen by his people what had happened to the person they considered to be their god.

The Bani Israiyl went across the sea safely, and came to the Sinai Peninsular where they came across some people who were devoted entirely to some idols. As some of the Bani Israiyl due to the influence of the Egyptians, used to worship idols before, they therefore said to Musa (AS): "O Musa! Make for us a god like the gods they have."
Musa (AS) was very cross to hear this from his people, and said to them: "You have already forgotten how you have been rescued from Pharaoh's people, who afflicted you with the worst of penalties, who slew your male children and saved your females. Surely, you are people without knowledge. As to these folk, -- the cult they are in is (but) a fragment of a ruin, and vain in the (worship) they practise. Shall I seek for you a god other than the (true) Allah, when it is Allah who has endowed you with gifts above the nations?"

The Lord Almighty had ordered Musa (AS) to go to Mount Tur and worship Him for thirty nights then he would be given the Tawraat, the Holy Book. When he completed the period, he was given ten more nights making it forty nights. Before he left, Musa (AS) had given charge to his brother Harun (AS) to act for

him amongst his People while he was away. He advised him to do right and not to follow the way of those who did mischief; he also told his People that he would be back in thirty days.

When Musa (AS) came to the place appointed by his Lord and addressed him, he said: "O my Lord! Show Yourself to me that I may look upon You." Musa (AS) was the only Prophet who had direct conversation with Allah and used to be known as *Kalim - Ullah* (the one to whom Allah spoke). Here Musa (AS) was a bit hasty and greedy in his dealings with his Lord by asking to see Him.

Allah said: "By no means can you see me (direct); but look upon the mount; if it abide in its place, then you shall see Me."
When his Lord manifested His glory on the mount, He made it crumble like dust, Musa fell down and fainted. When he recovered his senses he said: "Glory be to You I turn in repentance, and I am the first to believe."

Allah said: "O Musa! I have chosen you above other men, by this mission I have given you and the words I have spoken to you, take then the revelation that I give you, and be of those who give thanks."
And the laws were established for him in the Tablets (boards) in all matters, both commanding and explaining all things. It was said to him: "Take and hold these with firmness, and command your people to hold fast by the best in the precepts. Soon shall I show you the homes of the wicked, -- (how they lie desolate)."

When Musa (AS) was up on the mount, Allah said: "What made you hasten in advance of your people, O Musa?"

He replied: “Behold, they are close on my footsteps; I hastened to You O my Lord to please You.”
Allah said: “We have tested your people in your absence, Samiri has led them astray.”

After Musa (AS) left, in his absence, a man called Samiri led his people astray by telling them that Musa (AS) would not come back. He told them that Musa (AS) had gone to meet his Lord and promised to be back after thirty days and that it seemed he was not coming back for them. He told them that he could make for them a god that they could worship. He therefore got them to collect all their jewels, melted them and molded for them an image of a calf for them to worship. It was made in such a way and kept in a place that when wind blew, it gave out a sound like a moo of a cow. They then started worshiping this idol except a few of them who refused to join them.

When Musa (AS) came back to his people and saw this, he was angry and grieved, he said: “This is none but evil that you have done in my absence, why did you make haste to bring on the judgement of your Lord?”
He put down the Tablets, seized his brother by the hair of his head, and dragged him. Harun (AS) said: “O Son of my mother! The people did indeed judge me as invalid, and went near to slaying me! Do not make the enemies rejoice over my misfortune, nor count me amongst the people of sin.”

Musa (AS) then prayed: “O my Lord! Forgive me and my brother! Admit us to Your mercy! For You are the Most Merciful of those who show mercy!”

Musa (AS) then turned to Samiri and said: “What then is your case, O Samiri?”
He replied: “I saw what they did not see, so I took a handful (of dust) from the footprint of the Apostle, and threw it (into the calf). Thus did my soul suggest to me.”
He pretended to have caught sight of an Apostle, construed to be the Angel Jibril; he saw something sacred or supernatural in his footprints. The dust from the footprint of the Apostle became sacred, and his throwing it into the calf’s image made the calf utter a lowing sound.

Musa (AS) said: “You get gone! However, your punishment in this life will be that you will say, ‘Touch me not’ and (for a future penalty) you have a promise that will not fail. Now look at your god, of whom you have become a devoted worshipper, we will certainly melt it in a blazing fire and scatter it in the deep sea!”
He and his kind were to become social lepers, the untouchables. That was their punishment.

Those who took the calf (for worship) will indeed be overwhelmed with anger from their Lord, and with shame in this life. Thus do We recompense those who invent (falsehood). But those who do wrong but repent thereafter and (truly) believe, -- verily Your Lord is thereafter oft forgiving, Most Merciful.

Those who did wrong realized it and thus went to Musa (AS) and asked him to ask the Lord for forgiveness. He said to his people: “O my people! You have indeed wronged yourselves by your worship of the calf, so turn (in repentance) to your Maker,

and slay yourselves (the wrong-doers); that will be better for you in the sight of your Maker."
Thus, some of them took heed to this and killed themselves, and Allah did forgive them.

When the anger of Musa (AS) was appeased, he took up the Tablets in the writing. Thereon was Guidance and Mercy for those who fear their Lord. Musa (AS) was then commanded to pick from his people seventy elders to be taken to Mount Tur so as to ask for forgiveness for those who did wrong. They were taken there and kept at a distance from the place where Allah spoke to Musa (AS). They were to be silent witnesses, but their faith was not yet complete, and they dared to say to Musa (AS): "We shall never believe in you until we see Allah in public."
They were immediately seized with violent quaking for this. The tremor stopped and instead there came pitch black cloud above the mountain; they could not see anything but could only hear what was going on.

Musa (AS) then prayed: "O my Lord! If it had been Your Will you could have destroyed, long before, both them and me. Would You destroy us for the deeds of the foolish ones among us? This is no more than Your trial, by it You cause whom You wish to stray, and You lead whom You wish into the right path. You are our Protector, so forgive us and give us Your mercy; for You are the Best of those who forgive. And ordain for us that which is good in this life and in the Hereafter for we have turned unto You."

Musa (AS) was guiltless, but he identified himself with his people, and mediates with Allah on their behalf. He realised that it was a trial, in which some of his people failed. Such

failure was worth of punishment. But he pleaded for mercy for such as erred from weakness and not from defiance, and were truly repentant, although all who erred were in their several degree worthy of punishment.

On top of this, they insisted to Musa (AS) that they wanted to see Allah so that when they went back they could tell the others of the truth in Allah. He tried to tell them to repent for what they had said, but in vain. Here Allah was very angry, and with a hit of one lightning, they were all dead.

These were among the best of Musa's people. How could he go back to his people without them? He was afraid of unrest among his people. He therefore prayed to his Lord not to let him go back without the seventy men; thus, Allah brought them back to life. They looked at themselves in amazement and asking each other as to what had happened. Therefore, Musa (AS) went back to his people with the seventy men.

Musa (AS) then led his people towards Palestine to a town of Ilyaa now known as Al-Quds. The country was under the rule of tyrants, and Musa (AS) wanted to attack and enter the city by force. He wanted his people to be prepared to enter the city and said to them: "O my people! Enter the Holy Land which Allah has assigned unto you."
They said to him: "O Musa! In this land are a people of exceeding strength, never shall we enter it until they leave, and then we shall enter."
Among their God-fearing men were two on whom Allah had bestowed His grace; they said: "Assault them at the (proper) Gate when once you are in, victory will be yours; but on Allah put you trust if you have faith."

The others said: “O Musa! While they remain there, never shall we be able to enter. You go with your Lord, and you two fight, while we sit here and (watch).”
Musa (AS) said: “O my Lord! I have power only over myself and my brother, so separate us from this rebellious people!”

The punishment for the rebellion of these stiff-necked people was that they were left to wander distractedly hither and thither through the wilderness for forty years. Allah, however, did not want to destroy them completely but only to punish them. Thus when the people asked Musa (AS) for water, he prayed for them; and Allah commanded him to strike the rock with his cane. Here gushed forth therefrom, twelve springs for each group; these were the twelve tribes derived from the sons of Yaakub (AS). There was also a cloud above them always to give them shade from the scorching sun of the desert. In addition, sent down to them from heaven manna and quails; and were told to eat the good things provided for them, but they rebelled. They said to Musa (AS): “We can not endure one kind of food (always); so plead your Lord for us to produce for us what the earth grows, -- its pot-herbs, and cucumbers, its garlic, lentils and onions.”

Musa (AS) told them: “You want to exchange the better for the worse? Go down to any town and you shall find what you want!” They were covered with humiliation and misery; they drew on themselves the wrath of Allah. This is because they went on rejecting the Signs of Allah.

They were left to wander aimlessly through the wilderness of the desert for forty years. That generation was not to see the Holy Land. All those that were twenty years old and above

were to die in wilderness. Only those who were children were to reach the Promised Land, and so it happened. Musa, his brother Harun (AS) and the elders died during this period. His people, however, got to the Promised Land in the end, but they continued to rebel against Allah. Their humiliation and misery then became a national disaster.

The Story of the Heifer

There was once a murder case that needed to be solved. These people had a habit that in a case of this kind, everyone tried to clear himself of guilt and lay the blame at the door of the others. If they found a body of a slain man in a field and the slayer was not known, they would slaughter a heifer. And the elders of the city next to the slain man's domicile would wash their hands over the heifer and say that they neither did the deed nor saw it done, thus clearing themselves from the blood-guilt. In this particular case the people went to Musa (AS) for his advice. This story is related in Chapter 2 verses 67-73.

Musa (AS) told them: "Allah commands you to sacrifice a heifer."
They said: "Are you trying to make a laughing-stock of us?"
He said: "Allah save me from being an ignorant fool."
They said: "Beseech on our behalf your Lord to make plain to us what heifer it is!"
He said: "He says the heifer should be neither too old nor too young, but of average age, now do what you are commanded!"
They said: "Beseech on our behalf your Lord to make plain to us her colour."

He said: “He says a fawn-coloured heifer, pure and rich in tone, the admiration of spectators!”
They said: “Beseech on our behalf your Lord to make plain to us what she is, to us all heifers are alike we wish indeed for guidance if Allah wills.”
He said: “He says a heifer not trained to till the soil or water the fields; sound and without blemish.”
They said: “Now you have brought the truth.”

Their questions were sarcastic criticisms rather than seeking guidance, although they made the sacrifice but not with a clear heart. They found the heifer of these qualities and offered her in sacrifice. They were then commanded to strike the dead body with a part of the heifer, possibly the tail, thus Allah brought the dead to life and showed (them) with the signal of the hand who murdered him.

Musa (AS) and the Prophet Lkhadhir

Here is a story of two Prophets, Musa and Lkhadhir (AS) who existed at the same time but at different places. Musa (AS) was more learned than Lkhadhir (AS) in all respects, however, sometimes the more learned could learn from the less learned by the experience the other one had. Allah established this so that no one should think of himself that he knows everything and becomes a snob, he should realize that he always lacks something in himself; it is only Allah who is perfect in everything.

The story is meant to illustrate that although Musa (AS) was learned, but his knowledge did not include everything. Even after he had received his divine mission of Apostleship, his

knowledge was not so perfect that it could not receive further addition. Keeping up with new trends of knowledge in life is necessary so as to keep abreast, and this is illustrated in this case. There are some hidden things that only Allah knows them. These are again illustrated here. For example, an apparent loss may be real gain, apparent cruelty may be real mercy, and returning good for evil may really be justice and not generosity.

One day Musa (AS) stood up preaching to his people. When he finished, someone asked him: "O Musa! Is there anyone in this whole world who is better than you in knowledge?" Musa (AS) told him that there was no one; was he not the Prophet of Bani Israiyl who had challenged the Pharaoh? Was he not the Prophet with the miraculous cane and the shiny hand? Was he not the only Prophet who talked directly to Lord Almighty?

Here Allah sent him an inspiration to tell him that the learning and wisdom are like an ocean, and a man can swim in it without end. He was informed that there was someone else who had more knowledge than he did; he knew the inside of things that were not bare to him. Thus, Musa (AS) asked his Lord the whereabouts of this man so that he could go and meet him and learn from him. Allah told him that he would be able to meet him at the junction of the two seas. This is said to be where the two arms of the Red Sea join, viz. the Gulf of Aqaba and the Gulf of Suez. Also it may mean where the sweet waters of the river meet with the salty waters of the sea. The parable is related in Chapter 18 verses 60 - 82.

He was instructed to take with him a fish. The place where he was to meet his mysterious teacher would be indicated by the fact that the fish would disappear into the water when he got to

that place. Therefore Musa (AS) took with him his attendant by the name of Yuushaa (Joshua)[1] to go on their journey. As instructed they took with them the fish in a basket and it is said that the fish was cooked and was to be their meal for the journey. He told his attendant that he would not give up until he reached the junction of the two seas even if he had to spend years and years travelling.

The two traveled for sometime until they were tired and rested for a short while. Musa (AS) put his head down and fell asleep while Yuushaa was waiting. They forgot about the fish. Some rain showers came down and the fish got wet. Miraculously it became alive, jumped out of the basket and swam away into the sea. When Musa (AS) got up they continued with their journey, and after they had covered some distance, Musa (AS) said to his attendant: "Bring us our meal; truly we suffered much fatigue at this stage of our journey."

Yuushaa said: "I forgot to tell you what happened when we rested by the rock, and none but Satan made me forget. The fish came out of the basket alive and swam away into the sea in a very strange way."
Musa (AS) said: "That was what we were seeking after."

So, following their footprints, they went back to that place where they had rested earlier. When they reached the place, they found a lean tall man who had all the signs of a pious man. This man had been bestowed with the Mercy and had been

[1]Yuushaa was Musa's attendant, he was with him everywhere he went and was very obedient. He became the Prophet of the Bani Israiyl after the deaths of both Musa and Harun.

taught the knowledge from Allah. He could interpret the inner meaning and mystery of events. He was the Prophet Lkhadhir that Musa (AS) was seeking to meet. So he approached him.
Musa (AS) said to him: "Salaam! (Peace be upon you)."
The man said: "Salaam! And who might you be?"
Musa said: "I am Musa bin Umraan."
The man said: "Musa, the Prophet of Bani Israiyl?"
Musa (AS) said: "And who might have told you about me?"
The man said: "The one (Allah) who sent you here."

Therefore, Musa (AS) knew that he had found the man he had been looking for. He then made a simple request. He wanted to learn something of the special Knowledge that Allah had bestowed to Lkhadhir. Therefore, he asked the man if he could go with him and learn from him, but Lkhadhir told Musa (AS) that he would not be able to have patience with him. Musa (AS), however, argued with him on a point that how one could judge a man before having seen from experience. He went on telling Lkhadhir that he would find him to be patient, and would obey him with the help of Allah. Lkhadhir was doubtful, but permitted him to follow him on condition that he asked no questions about anything until he himself mentioned it first. Musa (AS) then instructed his attendant to return home while he went with Lkhadhir (AS).

Therefore, Lkhadhir and Musa (AS) proceeded with their journey until they came to a place where they had to cross to the other side of the sea. They got into a boat, and when they were in the boat, Lkhadhir (AS) made a hole in it.
Musa (AS) immediately said to him: "Why are you doing this? You want to drown us and those who are in it. Truly this is a strange thing that you have done."

He said: “Did I not say that you can not have patience with me?”
Musa (AS) said: “Do not rebuke me for forgetting.”

They continued with their journey and then they met a young man whom Lkhadhir (AS) slew. Musa (AS) got shocked to see this act and could not tolerate, so he said: “How come you slay an innocent person! Indeed this is a foul unheard-of act you have done!”
He answered: “Did I not tell you that you can not have patience with me?”
Musa (AS) said: “If ever I ask you about anything after this, do not keep me in your company, as you would have every right of doing so.”

Then they proceeded until when they came to a town, where they asked them for food, but the inhabitants there refused to give them hospitality. These people broke the universal eastern rule of hospitality to strangers, where a stranger would have expected to receive the hospitality without asking for it. Then they found a wall on the point of falling down, so they repaired it.
Musa (AS) said: “If you had wished, surely you could have demanded payment for the job done! At least we could have earned some money to buy food.”

He answered him: “This is where we part, now I will tell you the interpretation of those things over which you were unable to hold patience. As for the boat, it belonged to certain poor men who plied on the water for their living and I wished to render it unserviceable. There was an unjust king who seized every boat he could get so by doing this it would be saved, as it would be useless. As for the youth, his parents were people of faith, and

we feared that he would grieve them by stubborn rebellion and ingratitude to Allah and man. Therefore, we desired that their Lord would give them in exchange a son better in purity (of conduct) and closer in affection. As for the wall, it belonged to two youths, orphans, in the town; there was, beneath it, a buried treasure, to which they were entitled. Their father had been a righteous man so your Lord desired that they should attain their age of full strength, get out their treasure – a mercy, and favour from your Lord. I did not do this out of my own accord. Such is the interpretation of those things over which you were unable to hold patience."

During the forty years of wandering in the desert as we have seen earlier in the chapter, Harun (AS) died and was buried in the desert therein. Two years later Musa (AS) died and was buried near Masjidl-Aqsaa in Palestine.

CHAPTER XVI

DAUD (AS) (DAVID)

Yuushaa (Joshua) bin Nuun (AS), the companion of Musa (AS), took over after Musa's death. He was one of the descendants of Yusuf (AS). During the forty years of roaming in the desert, he led the Bani Israiyl and eventually became their Prophet. At the end of the forty years, he took the Bani Israiyl towards Baitil-Maqdis. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the Bani Israiyl were to enter the Promised Land during Musa's time but refused to fight and go in. This time with Yuushaa (AS) there was a new generation as those who were there with Musa (AS) before had all died.

Yushaa with his people therefore surrounded the City of Al-Quds for six months slowly fighting those who were in it until they managed to conquer them and entered the City. After this victory, Yuushaa (AS) became King and Prophet and ruled for twenty-five years. Yuushaa (AS) lived for twenty-seven years after Musa's death and lived to an age of one hundred and twenty seven.

Allah said to these people: "Enter this town, and eat of the plenty therein as you wish; but enter the gate with humility, in posture and in words, and We shall forgive you your faults and increase (the portion of) those who do good."

But the transgressors changed the words from that which had been given to them. The word that the transgressors changed may have been a password. In the Arabic, it is *Hittatun*, which implies humility and prayer of forgiveness. As they infringed Allah's command repeatedly, a terrible punishment ensued them, including the plague, of which 24,000 died.
Thus, the Bani Israiyl lived in Palestine after this. After the death of Yuushaa (AS), Kings ruled them dealing with political matters and Prophets ran the religious affairs. Kings were normally from the descendants of Yahudha bin Yaakub and the Prophets came from the descendants of Laawy bin Yaakub.

Years passed and people lived like this, but slowly they started going astray again. The worship of idols came back again in area of Shaam and in particular in Lebanon. In the town of Baalbak (in Lebanon) there were people who worshiped an idol by the name of Baal (god of the sun) and from this was derived the name of Baalbak. Allah then sent them a Prophet whose name was Ilyaas (Elijah) bin Yaasin bin Al-Azaar bin L-Uizaar bin Harun (AS). He is mentioned in the Quraan by the name of Ilyaas and in some verses as Ilyaasin. Verses123-132 of Chapter 37 explain this.

So also was Ilyaas among those sent (by Us). Behold, he said to his people, 'Will you not fear (Allah)? Will you call upon Baal and forsake the Best of Creators, -- Allah**, your Lord and Cherisher of your fathers of old?" But they rejected him, and they will certainly be called up (for punishment), -- Except the sincere and devoted servants of Allah**

(among them). And We left (this blessing) for him among generations (to come) in later times. Peace and salutation to such as Ilyaas! Thus indeed do We reward those who do right. For he was one of Our believing Servants.

After Ilyaas (AS), there was a Prophet by the name of Alyasaa (AS) who is mentioned in the Quraan only by name.

Taaluut (Saul)

After the rule of Yuushaa (AS), there was a period of 320 years when the Israelites had a checkered history. They were not united among themselves, and suffered many reverses at the hands of the Midianites, Amelikites and other tribes of Palestine. They frequently lapsed into idolatry and deserted the worship of the true Allah. From time to time, a leader appeared among them who assumed dictatorial powers. Acting under a sort of theocratic commission from Allah, he pointed out their backsliding, re-united them under His banner, and restored, from time to time and place to place, the power of Israel.

There were always wars between the Israelites and these tribes (the Palestinians) and sometimes they won, and other times they lost. At one time the Palestinians won the war, and took from the Israelis the Ark of Covenant (the *Taabut*), a chest of acacia wood covered and lined with pure gold, about 5ft.x 3ft.x 3ft. It was to contain the "testimony of Allah" or the Ten Commandments engraved on stone, with relics of Musa and Haruun (AS). Its Gold lid was to be the "Mercy Seat" with two

cherubim of beaten gold, with wings outstretched. This was a sacred possession to Israel.

When the Israelites were defeated, there was no one to guide them and so confusion arose among them until a Prophet by the name of Shamwayl (Samuel) was sent to them. Shamwayl, also known as Shamoun, or in Arabic as Ismail, started to lead them through the right way of Allah. They obeyed and followed his preaching. After the loss of their *Taabut*, the Bani Israiyl went to their Prophet, Ismail, and said to him: "Appoint for us a King that we may fight in the cause of Allah."
He said to them: "It is not possible, if you were commanded to fight, that you 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.

Shamwayl (AS) said to them: "Allah has appointed Taaluut as king over you."
Taaluut was tall and handsome, but belonged to the tribe of Binyamin bin Yaakub, the smallest tribe in Israel. He was poor but was well learned.
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?"
They had expected that one of the descendants of Yahudha bin Yaakub would be the king, because the kings who came before were from this family.
He said: "Allah has chosen him above you, and has gifted him abundantly with knowledge and bodily prowess. Allah grants

His authority to whom He pleases. Allah cares for all, and He knows all things. A sign of his authority is that there shall come to you the Ark of Covenant (the *Taabut*)."

Shamwayl (AS) was given an inspiration from Allah to instruct Taaluut to take his army, go out, and fight Jaaluut (Goliath), who was very strong and was feared by everyone. A large army was thus assembled, commanded by king Taaluut and headed out towards the desert. The sun was very hot and the army asked their commander to pray for them for water to drink. Taaluut said to his armies: "Allah will test you at the stream, if any of you drinks of its water, he does not go with my army. Only those who do not taste of it go with me, a mere sip out of the hand is, however, excused."

Taaluut had to test his force to get rid of the doubtful ones. Therefore, he gave an order of not drinking the water when crossing the stream and the majority disobeyed and were sent back. He remained with a few only.

When they had crossed the stream, he and the faithful ones with him said: "This day we can not cope with Jaaluut and his forces."
The number of the enemy appalled them when they met face to face, and saw the size and strength of the enemy Commander, the giant Jaaluut.
However, those who had complete faith in Allah, said: "How often, by Allah's will, has a small force conquered a big one? Allah is with those who constantly persevere."
When they advanced to meet Jaaluut and his forces, they prayed: "Our Lord! Pour out constancy on us and make our steps firm, help us against those that reject faith."

Jaaluut kept his force ready and then sent someone to Taaluut to tell him to bring out anyone of his strong men to fight him. If this man came out victorious then the sovereignty would be theirs (the Israelites), but if he (Jaaluut) killed this man then the sovereignty would remain his. Taaluut asked his people if there was anyone prepared to go and fight Jaaluut; no one was ready to die. He then said: "Any one of you who would be ready to go and fight and came out victorious, I will let him marry my daughter and will make him commander of my army."

Here came out among his people a young man, where name was Daud. He was lean and short and did not seem to have any experience in fighting; he was just a poor shepherd. He was a very pious young man and had faith in Allah; his motto was that "Believing in Allah makes a man brave and strong." He thus said to his commander: "Let me go and face Jaaluut."
Taaluut looked at him and said: "But you are small and weak and you do not seem to have any experience in fighting, this man will cut you into pieces."

Actually, the only weapon Daud (AS) had been a sling; a kind of a catapult that he used when he was tending flocks. Daud (AS) pleaded to his commander to let him go. Here Taaluut said to him: "I command you to go and if you come out victorious, I will make you commander of my army and let you marry my daughter. Go, may Allah be with you."

Taaluut offered Daud (AS) his arms and armor but he declined them. He therefore went out without arms or armor but only carrying with him a sack of stones and his sling, and he approached Jaaluut who was in full armor of steel. Jaaluut,

however, felt in himself a bit of fear when he saw Daud (AS). He said to him: "Are you the one sent to fight me?"
Daud (AS) said: "Yes! And I shall kill you by the will of Allah."
He said: "Before you realize it, I shall cut you into pieces and feed you to the wolves."
Here Daud (AS) took from his bag three stones, put them in his sling and said: "By the name of Allah, the Lord of Ibrahim, of Ishaaq and of Musa." He took aim and threw them towards Jaaluut. By the miracle of Allah the three stones became as one with an equivalent force; flew directly onto Jaaluut's forehead and knocked him down. He then took Jaaluut's own sword and killed him.

Allah says in Chapter 2 verse 251,

By Allah's will they routed them; and David slew Goliath.

There came confusion in Jaaluut's army, they broke ranks and fled but were pursued by Taaluut and his army and cut to pieces and thus Taaluut won the war.

Daud (AS) after this became very famous, and King Jaaluut made him commander of his army and married his daughter as promised. The worldly affairs did not bother Daud (AS) because his time was mostly spent worshiping. Becoming a commander of the King's army did not make him a snob.

Daud (AS) was gifted with a beautiful voice. It is said that his voice could be compared to the sound of seventy bugles. He liked birds and animals, and could understand their languages; and used to feed and nurse them. These birds and animals knew him and would come from afar to follow him. When he passed

next to the mountains, and while he recited verses of sacred poems, even the birds and the mountains would sing back with him. He was also gifted in the use of iron to make armor. He used the iron without using fire to soften it and would make rings of chain, armor and arms.

Between Taaluut and Daud (AS)

Daud (AS) always won in wars because he went into war putting his entire faith to his Lord. He knew that winning or loosing depended upon the will of Allah. He therefore became very brave and even Taaluut became worried about his own authority over him and was worried of his own sovereignty. When Daud (AS) felt this, he used to say: "I am nothing but an ordinary soldier in the King's army fighting, with faith in Allah, for the country. What has got into King Taaluut's mind is none but obsession from Satan."

One day the King called Daud (AS) and was commanded him to get his army, and fight the Kanaan people who had returned and were threatening the kingdom. Daud (AS) felt that it was a trick from the King to send him to war to get rid of him. Nevertheless, he obeyed the orders; went to war and came out victorious. When Taaluut came to know this, he became even more jealous of him. When Daud's wife came to know that her father wanted to get rid of her husband, she advised him to get out and run. He therefore left by night on his camel and went away, knowing that only Allah would save him from this.

Daud (AS) managed to get lot followers while he was in Taaluut's army. Therefore, most of these deserted and followed Daud (AS) to his hiding place and joined him. Taaluut then

started to torture those who remained behind, whether or not they were involved in the desertion. He then decided to fight Daud (AS). However, Daud (AS) did not want to fight him, and one night he tiptoed into Taaluut's palace and found him asleep, he took his sword and cut off a piece of his shirt. When Taaluut woke up and found his sword missing, he was worried.
Daud (AS) said to him: "I could have killed you if I wanted but I am afraid of Allah and do not wish to harm you."
Despite all this Taaluut wanted to kill him. Thus Daud (AS) had no choice; but to prepare for the war against him. The two went into war and Daud (AS) killed Taaluut.

After the death of king Taaluut, the people chose Daud (AS) to be their king and therefore he became King and a Prophet. Here again the King and Prophet was one man. That was after a lapse of four hundred and sixty years from the death of Yuushaa (AS). He is Daud bin Ayshaa' (AS) from the descendant of Yahudha bin Yaakub, thus the Kingship came back to the descendants of Yahudha. Allah gave him strength and became very popular among his people.

Daud (AS) was given the *Zabuur* or the Book of Psalm of David, in Hebrew language.

And to David We gave the Psalms. [1]

In it there are one hundred chapters and was divided into three sections, with the teachings for the people to follow. In the last section, there was guidance to the people to worship the one

[1] Chapter 4 verse 163

Allah. Daud (AS) built the temple of worship, which is now known as Baitil-Maqdis. He had a son by the name of Sulaiman.

Daud (AS) is Put To Test

Daud (AS) divided his daily life into four parts, one for himself, one for worshipping, one for spending time with his people and listening to their problems and the fourth one for guiding his people in matters of religion. Since he was a king, he kept sentries to guard him and to keep people away when he was in his meditations, as he usually did not want any disturbance. His people knew the system and followed it strictly.

One day two men came into town. They were not from the Bani Israiyl and seemed to be strangers. They, however, had all the qualities of being gentlemen and seemed to be the type of being pious people. They were actually Angels who had been sent to Daud (AS) to give him a test and see how he judged his people in their problems.

Acting as ordinary people, they went to the sentry and asked him to allow them to go in and meet the king. The sentry told them that the king was not to be disturbed at that time as he was in his prayers and meditation. There was no way for the sentry to know that these were not humans but Angels, so he sent them away. Without being seen they jumped the wall and entered the palace, went straight to Daud's prayer room. They found him deep in his meditation, but when he saw them sitting next to him he got terrified of them and wondered who these people were who had invaded his privacy.

The two said: “Do not fear, we are two who are in dispute, one of whom has wronged the other; decide between us with truth and do not treat us with injustice but guide us to the even path. This man is my brother. He has ninety-nine ewes, and I have one, yet he says: ‘Commit her to my care,’ and, is moreover harsh to me in speech.”
Daud (AS) said: “He has undoubtedly wronged you in demanding your one ewe to be added to his flock of ewes. Truly there are many partners in business who wrong each other, except a few of those who believe in Allah and do deeds of righteousness.”

Here Daud (AS) immediately realized that he had jumped into conclusion without thinking or listening to the other side of the story; and knew immediately that the two were Angels who were sent to put him to test. He therefore asked for forgiveness of his Lord, fell down, bowing (in prostration) and turned (to Allah in repentance); he was therefore forgiven. From this test we can see that Allah will never leave any problem unturned, be it small or big.

Daud (AS) lived to the age of one hundred years, and was king for forty years. He was buried in Baitil Maqdis.

CHAPTER XVII

SULEIMAN (AS) (SOLOMON)

After the death of Daud (AS), his son Suleiman (AS) inherited from him and became King and Prophet of the Bani Israiyl. Suleiman (AS), was not however, the eldest of Daud's sons but it was Allah's wish that he became the heir, as is mentioned in Chapter 27 verse 16:

And Solomon was David's heir…

His inheritance was not of riches but of Kingdom and Prophet. Suleiman (AS) was a pious man and liked to mix with his people, rich and poor. He was a very learned man, and used to understand the languages of the animals and of the birds and was able to use these animals and birds in his work.

One day when he was marching with his army, he heard an ant say: "O you ants get into your habitations, lest Suleiman and his army crush you (under foot) without knowing it."
So he smiled, amused at her speech; and said: "O my Lord! So order me that I may be grateful for your favors, which you have bestowed on me and on my parents, and that I may work the righteousness that will please You. And admit me, by Your Grace, to the ranks of Your Righteous Servants."

He also had the powers of commanding the wind the way he wished, and whenever that he wanted to move with his army he used the wind to travel.

Allah says in Chapter 34 verse 12:
And to Solomon (We made) the Wind (obedient). Its early morning (stride) was a month's (journey), and its evening (stride) was a month's (journey).

He had the Jinn who used to work for him as divers, builders and blacksmiths. He punished them and kept them chained if they disobeyed him, thus they were very scared of him. His army was made up of men, Jinn and even birds, made up into groups.

The Wisdom of Suleiman (AS)

Allah gave him the ability of judging people with equity. He was erudite from his childhood and even his father used to take advice from him at times. One day two people came to Daud (AS) with complaints. One of them said: "O Prophet of Allah! This man's sheep went into my farm and destroyed everything in it; please judge us with equity."
Daud (AS) turned to the owner of the sheep and said: "Is this correct what this man says?"
The man said: "Yes that is true, O Prophet of Allah!"
Daud (AS) then said to the owner of the sheep: "The judgment on you is that you have to give up your sheep to this man in compensation for his loss."
Suleiman (AS) (still a small boy then) said: "No my father, I feel the owner of the sheep should take the farm, work on it until he brings it back to the state it was. The owner of the farm in the mean time would take possession of the sheep so that he gets

from them the milk and wool for his compensation; he would keep them until his farm is ready. After that each one would take back his property.

For this, Allah says in Chapter 21 verse 79:

To Solomon We inspired the (right) understanding of the matter to each (of them) We gave Judgment and Knowledge.

During his time as King and Prophet, Suleiman (AS) had special sessions listening to the complaints of his people and arbitrate for them. One day two women with a baby came to Suleiman. Each of them claimed the baby to be hers.
Suleiman (AS) asked: "What seem to be the problem between the two of you?"
One of them said: "This is my baby, but this woman insists that it is hers."
Suleiman (AS) turned to the other woman and said: "What do you say about this?"
She said: "I am the rightful mother of this baby."
Suleiman (AS) then said: "I have a solution for the two of you."
Both of them said in one voice: "Tell us! What is it?"
Suleiman (AS) said: "Bring me a knife, I will cut the baby in half and each of you will take one half."
Here the real mother of the baby shouted: "No! I do not want my baby cut in half, let her have the baby in one piece."
In this way, Suleiman (AS) managed to know as to whom the baby belonged.

There was a time when there was drought and there was no water at all; thus, Suleiman (AS) went out with his people to pray for rain. At that time, he saw an ant standing on its hind

legs, with its front legs raised up, praying: "O our Lord! We are your creatures, the same as the humans who are here praying. Please give us from your benevolence."
Therefore, Allah sent down rain for them, and Suleiman (AS) said to his people: "Go back to your homes, Allah has heard our appeal because of this ant."

Suleiman (AS) was given an ability of working on copper, melting and mixing it with tin to make bronze, then making tools for war such as swords, daggers and such things. He used the Jinn to dive into deep seas and bring out pearls and coral, and to take out all kinds of minerals from the earth to be used for the good of his people.

Suleiman (AS) and Queen Balqees of Sheba

Suleiman (AS) wanted to build a shrine in Baitil-Maqdis, for people to worship in; he therefore built a large glorious building. Among his builders were the Jinn. The shrine (mosque) known as Masjid L-Aqsaa, which is in Palestine, was originally built by Yaakub (AS) and was destroyed by the tyrant rulers who came before Daud and Suleiman (AS). Therefore, Suleiman (AS) rebuilt it and built another shrine known as the shrine of Suleiman; and these both are still available in Baitil-Maqdis. When he completed it, he prayed in it and circled round it as a sign of respect to Allah.

After this he left Palestine and went towards Yemen and entered Sanaa'. When he entered there, he had problem finding a place with water so that he could settle there. Therefore, he wanted to send scouts out to look for water. When he inspected the army

of his birds he found one bird, the Hoopoe (the *Hudhud*) was missing in the parade. He said: "Why is it I do not see the Hoopoe? Or is he among the absentees? I will certainly punish him with a severe penalty, or execute him, unless he brings me a clear reason for his absence."

But the Hoopoe tarried not far, came up and said: "I have compassed the territory, which you have not compassed, and I have come to you from Sabaa' with true tidings. I found (there) a woman ruling over them and provided with every requisite; and she has a magnificent throne. I found her and her people worshiping the sun besides Allah."

Suleiman (AS) was very amazed to hear this news of a woman who was a ruler with a magnificent throne!, enjoying great wealth and dignity, and the full confidence of her subjects! Who could she be? He therefore said to the Hoopoe: "We shall soon see whether you have told the truth or lied! Go with this letter of mine, and deliver it to them. Then stay back and wait to see what answer they return."

The Hoopoe took the letter and delivered it to Queen Balqees in her palace in Maarib, and stayed back to see her reaction. The queen immediately summoned her council and said to them: "O you chiefs! Here is a letter delivered to me worth of respect. It is from Suleiman, and is as follows: 'In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, and Most Merciful. Do not be arrogant against me, but come to me in submission (to the true Religion).' O you chiefs! Advise me in (this) my affair, for I have not decided on any affair except in your presence."

They said: “We are a strong nation, and can fight against him, but the command is with you so consider what you will command.”
She said: “Kings when they enter a country, despoil it, and make the noblest of its people its meanest thus they do behave. But I am going to send him a present, and wait to see with what my ambassadors will return.”

But when the ambassadors came to Suleiman (AS), he sent them back with their presents. Queen Balqees thought that by sending her ambassadors with presents she would reconcile with Suleiman (AS) and at the same time pacify her warlike subjects. But the effect was the very opposite; Suleiman (AS) took it as an insult that she should send her presents instead of her submission to the true religion. He flung back the presents at her, as much as to say, “Let these baubles delight your own hearts! Allah has blessed me with plenty worldly goods, and something infinitely better, viz. His Light and Guidance!

Suleiman (AS) then said to his own men: “O you Chiefs! Which of you can bring me her throne before they come to me in submission?”
Ifrit, a large powerful Jinni reputed to be wicked and crafty said: “I will bring it to you before you rise from your council; indeed I have full strength for the purpose and may be trusted.”
One who had knowledge of the Book said: “I will bring it to you within the twinkling of the eye!”
Then when Suleiman (AS) saw the throne firmly before him, he said: “This is by the grace of my Lord! – To test me whether I am grateful or ungrateful!”
He then said: “Transform her throne out of all recognition by her, let us see whether she will recognize it as her own.”

So when she arrived, she was asked: "Is this your 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)."

Before this episode, Suleiman (AS) had constructed a large palace with a courtyard in the middle. The floor was made of slabs of smooth polished glass, which glistened like water. Therefore when Balqees came, having been received with honour on her arrival, and having accepted the transformation of her throne, she was asked to enter the lofty palace. When she saw it, she thought it was a lake of water, and she tucked up her skirts, uncovering her legs.
Suleiman (AS) said to her: "This is but a palace paved smooth with slabs of glass."
She said: "O my Lord! I have indeed wronged my soul, I do now submit (in Islam), with Suleiman, to the Lord of the Worlds."

Suleiman's (AS) Death

Suleiman (AS) one day entered the shrine to pray and found in his hand a small plant. He asked it: "And what might be your name?"
It replied: "I am known as *Kharrouba* (a destroyer)."
He said: "And why have you grown?"
It said: "To destroy this shrine."
He said: "By the might of Allah the shrine will never be destroyed while I am alive."

So Suleiman (AS) took the plant and kept it on the wall outside. He then went on to pray and said: "O my Lord! Do not reveal my death to the Jinn."

After this, he stood leaning on his staff (stick) looking at the Jinn working; he died in that position with his eyes wide open as if he were alive. The Jinn were very scared of Suleiman (AS) therefore they went on working, not knowing the truth. But at one time seeing that their master never changed his posture, they started whispering among themselves asking each other of the situation because none of them was sure if he was alive or dead. Suleiman remained in that position for one year and the Jinn were working for him, as none of them knew that he was dead. The only time they came to know that he was dead, was when a little worm of the earth (possibly white ant) which kept slowly gnawing away at his staff had eaten it all and made him fall down. If they had known the unseen, they would have not remained in the humiliating Penalty of their Task. The Jinn knew nothing of the hidden secrets; they only saw the obvious, and had not given the significance of the little worm that slowly gnawed away Suleiman's staff.

Suleiman (AS) died at the age of fifty-two years.

CHAPTER XVIII

UZAYR (AS) (EZRA)

Years passed after the death of Suleiman (AS) and Bani Israiyl again started straying off from their religion. Allah then sent to these people, Prophet Uzayr (AS) to guide them and put them back again on the right track.

Allah instructed Uzayr (AS) to go to a certain town. When he went there, he found that the town was deserted, like a ghost town. He was amazed to see that he had been sent to a town without people or any life for that matter, so he stood there looking and asking himself how Allah will ever bring this town to life again after its death.

Allah wanted to show him that nothing was impossible for Him, so made him die a hundred years and then raised him up again, and said to him: "How long did you tarry thus?"
He said: "Perhaps a day or part of a day."
Allah said: "No, you have tarried thus a hundred years. Look at your food and your drink; they show no sign of age; and look at your donkey, and that we may make of you a Sign unto the people. Look further at the bones, how we bring them together and clothe them with flesh."
When this was shown clearly to him, he said: "I know that Allah has power over all things."

Actually, Uzayr (AS) was asleep when his soul was taken away. When he was asked how long he had stayed that way, he said that it was for a day or a part of a day. In fact, he was dead for one hundred years, and when he came to life again he found his food and water which he left behind was intact, and as fresh as when he had left it. However, donkey was not only dead, but nothing but bones was left of it. Before his own eyes, the bones were reunited, clothed with flesh and blood, and restored to life. This is how Allah shows that He can bring back to life what was dead when He wishes.

When he woke up he found the town (which was dead) alive and bustling with life. He therefore asked the people of the town if they knew Uzayr; they replied him that Uzayr they knew had died over one hundred years ago. So he said: "But I am Uzayr!" They doubted him, but they took him to a very old woman who was over hundred years old, who is said to have been his mother. They asked her if she knew Uzayr and to give them any identification marks that he might have had, to prove his identity. Therefore, she gave them the marks and when they saw them, they then believed him to be Uzayr.

Uzayr (AS) thus started teaching them again the Tawraat, which was forsaken and forgotten. The people accepted him as their Prophet and exalted him to an extent that they said Uzayr (AS) was the Son of Allah; but Allah punished them for saying this.

CHAPTER XIX

YUNUS (AS) (JONAH)

He is Yunus bin Mataa, ancestor of Ibrahim (AS), but details of his lineage have not been mentioned as for other Prophets. Because he was swallowed by a large Fish or Whale, he was also known as *Dha-Nuun*; the man of the Fish or the Whale. Allah sent him as a Prophet to the people of Assyrian capital, Naynawaa (Nineveh), on the left bank of river Dijla (Tigris) in Iraq opposite the city of Mosul.

He was from the Bani Israiyl and when he was sent to these people, he was thirty years old. The population of Naynawaa was more than one hundred and twenty thousand. He lived with them for thirty-three years preaching and advising them to worship the one God and leave the worship of idols; but they gave him a deaf ear. However, he continued with his mission, and his people, stubborn as they were, called him a liar and wanted to beat him and none believed him. Allah then told him to warn his people that they would get His wrath after three days if they continued like this.

When Yunus (AS) saw that his people did not want to listen to him, he left them and promised them that Allah's punishment would be on them after three days. Discouraged at the apparent failure of his mission, he departed in anger. He should have remained in the most disappointing circumstances, and should have relied on the power of Allah; for Allah had power over

Naynawaa and over the Messenger He had sent to Naynawaa. He left the town with great anger, without waiting for Allah's instructions and went away to the sea and took a boat.
He ran away from the punishment that was to come to his people, thinking that Allah would not punish him for what he did. Allah says in Chapter 21 verse 87 of the Holy Quraan:

And remember Dha-Nuun, when he departed in wrath. He imagined that We had no power over him!

After Yunus (AS) left the town, the signs of Allah's wrath over the people of Naynawaa started. A very black cloud appeared above the town, and from it came sparks of fire. The chiefs of the town gathered in an emergency session to discuss the matter. They knew that this was none but the punishment from Allah that Yunus (AS) had promised would come; the same sort of punishment that was sent to the people of Luut (AS).
The chiefs said: "What Yunus had said was right; this is definitely the punishment he had promised us would come. There is no way out of this except to repent and ask Allah for his mercy."
Therefore, they repented and Allah forgave them for the time being. There were no people in the past who were warned of Allah's punishment and believed except the People of Yunus (AS); the whole nation of over one hundred thousand who were in sin believed, so they profited from their faith.

In the meantime, as Yunus (AS) was in the boat, which was fully laden, met foul weather and it almost capsized. The sailors, according to their superstition, wanted to find out who

was responsible for the ill luck; said: “In this boat one of us has a bad omen; we shall therefore have to take a vote to see who that person is. Whoever it is, has to be cast off to the sea, otherwise this storm would not clear.” They took the ballot three times, and in all the three times, the ballot fell on Yunus (AS). Therefore, they decided to throw him out to sea, as he was a man of bad omen in the storm.

At this moment, Yunus (AS) realized that what he had done back there in his town was wrong and that this was Allah’s punishment to him. He said to himself: “I should not have left my people; I should have instead waited for Allah’s instruction before leaving. This is the punishment I am getting for that.” He repented and asked for Allah’s forgiveness. However, Allah wanted to punish him for what he did.

Yunus (AS) therefore stood at the edge and jumped into the sea, and immediately after he jumped the storm stopped. It was a dark night and he swam against the waves; then a huge fish, possibly a whale, swallowed him alive. He thus remained alive in the fish’s belly like a prisoner in a dark cell; he prostrated and prayed to Allah saying: “O my Lord! I have taken in here a praying place that no one had prayed in it before this. There is no god but You, glory to You! I was indeed wrong!” He remained there in the darkness of the fish’s belly, darkness of the night and darkness of the deep sea, praying for Allah’s mercy and forgiveness.

This was to be the burial place and the grave for Yunus (AS). If he had not repented, he could not have got out of the body of the creature that had swallowed him, until the Day of Resurrection, when all the dead would be raised up. It is said that he remained

therein for about forty days, until one day the Angels said to Allah: “O our Lord! We have heard a very strange voice coming from the earth.”
Allah said: “Indeed that is my servant Yunus, he has gone against my wishes and I am punishing him. He is now a prisoner inside the belly of a fish in the deep sea.”
Here the Angels asked their Lord to forgive him, for he was a God fearing man who was always praying. Therefore, Allah instructed the fish to come ashore and Yunus (AS) came out of its belly still alive.

Yunus (AS) came out of the fish’s belly on a naked shore, a place where there was nothing, no trees or vegetation, no animals and no life at all. He was in a state of sickness; his body was all covered with wounds, his flesh dropping off from the effect of being in the fish’s belly for so long. Here Allah had caused to grow over him, a spreading plant of the Gourd kind. The Gourd was a shady creeper and its large leaves were to shade him from the sun, wind and sand; and the leaves have a certain smell that kept away any flies. From it, he ate the fruit, possibly melon that nourished him.

With Allah’s will he got better and then went back to his people and started afresh in his teaching and preaching.

CHAPTER XX

ZAKARIYA (AS) AND YAHYA (AS) (JOHN)

After the death of Suleiman (AS), there came some pious people who were from the ancestry of Ibrahim and of Yaakub (AS). They were from the family of Imraan (the Aal Imraan); however, the Imraan mentioned in the Quraan was a descendant of Daud (AS) and is not Musa's (AS) father. Ashyaa' (Elisabeth) the wife of Zakariya (AS) and Maryam (Marry), Issa's (Jesus) mother were sisters, daughters of Imraan. Zakariya bin Daan (AS) was a descendant of Suleiman bin Daud (AS), and therefore Yahya (AS) (Zakariya's son) was Issa's cousin, the son of his maternal aunt.

Our parable explains that Maryam's mother; the wife of Imraan, was barren and could not conceive and her husband had passed the age of being able to get any children. One day the wife of Imraan prayed to her Lord: "O my Lord! If you give me a son I will dedicate him to work in Baitil-Maqdis." Thus by the Will of Allah she conceived. This is narrated in Chapter 3 verse 35 as follows:

Behold! A woman of Imraan said: "O my Lord! I do dedicate unto You what is in my womb for Your special service: so accept this of me: for You hear and know all things."

It was customary among the people to send their sons to Baitil-Maqdis to work in the temple under the supervision of priests, and be taught the religion and read the Tawraat at the same time. As we have seen Maryam's mother had dedicated what was in her womb for the special services of Baitil-Maqdis; but when she gave birth, it was a girl, who was named Maryam, meaning the servant of Allah in Hebrew.

For this Allah says in Chapter 3 verse 36:

When she was delivered, she said: "O my Lord! Behold! I am delivered of a female child!" – And Allah knew best what she brought forth – "and no wise is the male like the female. I have named her Maryam, and I commend her and her offspring to Your protection from the Evil One, The Rejected."

Maryam's mother expected a male child, was she disappointed that it was a female child? No, for she had faith and she knew that Allah's Plan was better than any wishes of hers. Maryam (AS) was no ordinary girl, only Allah knew what it was that her mother brought forth.

Imraan was one of those learned priests of Baitil-Maqdis, thus his wife asked him for his advice about the child, as the female child could not be devoted to the Temple services under their law as she had intended. He therefore said that there is no other way except to take her to the Temple and let the priests decide; therefore, Maryam (AS) was taken to Baitil-Maqdis. Imraan himself died soon after the birth of his daughter.

The priests argued on the matter, since the child was a girl, she could not work in the Temple. It was customary that any boy who was sent to work in the Temple, he was put under the care of one of the priests who would look after and train him in the matters of religion. Therefore, who would look after Maryam (AS), was their argument; every one of them wanted to take the child and bring her up under his care. Zakariya (AS) who was a priest of the Most High order, stood up and said: "I have more right on this child than any of you; my wife is her maternal aunt, so let me take her under my care."
The others said: "If anyone had the right then she should be sent back to her mother."

Then all of them decided to take a vote, by casting their lots in the water. They did this three times, and all the tree times fell on Zakariya (AS), he therefore took her to his wife to be brought up in his house. When she grew up, Zakariya (AS) wanted to keep her away from the people. He therefore built for her a room on top of the temple, where no one could get to her except by climbing up using a ladder. He left her there so that she could concentrate with her worshiping, and used to visit her every now and then and bring to her what she needed. He used to lock the door from outside when he went away.

Maryam (AS) was a very beautiful lady, well mannered, pure and God fearing who had great belief in her religion. She was freed from all worldly affairs and specially dedicated to Allah's services. It was Allah's wishes that this lady was to become the best lady (in all respects) among all the ladies of the world. She was to be the mother of Issa (AS), the Prophet, whose birth was to be a miracle.

Allah says in Chapter 3 verse 42:
Behold! The angels sad: "O Mary! Allah hath chosen you and purified you – chosen you above the women of all nations.

Zakariya (AS) was astonished at what he saw whenever he entered Maryam's (AS) chamber; he found her supplied with sustenance, the sort of food, which is not normal in this world. One day he said to her: "O Maryam! From where does all this come to you? All I know is what I bring you, and as far as I know the door is locked and no one can get in to you."
She said: "From Allah, for Allah provides sustenance to whom He pleases, without measure."
Maryam (AS) grew under Allah's special protection. Her sustenance, which may include both her physical needs and her spiritual food, came from Allah.

When Zakariya (AS) heard the words 'for Allah provides sustenance to whom He pleases, without measure' he felt that he too should pray to his Lord to give him a son. He therefore prayed to his Lord and said: "O my Lord! Indeed my bones are feeble, and the hair of my head glistens with gray, and my prayers to you has never been unanswered. Now I fear what my relatives (and colleagues) will do after me, and my wife is barren. So give me an heir as from you, one that will truly represent me, and represent the future generations of Yaakub; and make him O my Lord one with whom You are well-pleased!"
While he was standing in a prayer chamber, the Angels called unto him and said: "O Zakariya! We give you good news of a

son. His name shall be Yahya, no one by that name have We conferred distinction before."
He said: "O my Lord! How shall I have a son, when my wife is barren and I have grown quite feeble from old age?"
The Angels said: "So it will be, Your Lord says, 'That is easy for me, I did indeed created you before, when you have been nothing!' "
This is how his Lord wished it to be.
He said: "O my Lord! Give me a Sign."
He was told that as a Sign for him to know that his wife had conceived there would be a lapse of three nights that he would not be able to speak, not because he was dumb. So when this happened, Zakariya (AS) came out to his people from his prayer chamber and told them by sign of hands, to celebrate Allah's praises in the morning and in the evening.

Thus Yahya (AS) was born, and it was Allah that had chosen for him the name. He was a quiet type since he was a child. Allah gave him the instructions: "Keep fast hold of Allah's revelation with all your might." For the unbelieving world had either corrupted or neglected it, and Yahya (John the Baptist) was to prepare the way for Issa (Jesus), who was coming to renew and re-interpret it. Allah says: "And given him Wisdom even as a youth, and pity (for all creatures) as from us, and purity. He was devout and kind to his parents, and he was not overbearing or rebellious."

He learned religion and law and how to judge people with justice. He used to teach people since he was a youth, and told them to repent to their Lord for all their mistakes. The people liked him and so the animals used to like him too because he was very kind to them.

The worldly affairs never used to bother Yahya (AS); he used to seclude himself by going out to the desert or to the mountains and stay there for days, worshiping Allah. He ate anything he could get and at times, he even ate leaves from the trees and drank from the streams. The presence of wild animals never bothered him even when he was deep in his meditation; in fact the animals kept away from him. At times when he was having his meals, animals would come near him and he shared the food with them.

During his time, there was a king by the name of Harrods who was from the Bani Israiyl. Yahya (AS) had a high status at the king's council and attended most of his sittings, and the king sought his advice in many of his affairs. One day the king called on Yahya (AS) and told him that he wanted to marry a certain girl whom he had fancied. The girl is said to have been his niece, which was not allowed morally or legally.
Thus Yahya (AS) said to him: "My lord you can not marry this girl, it is against the religion."
The king said to him: "Find a way to make it legal for me."
Yahya (AS) said: "This is how it is, there is no way out. You are just not allowed to marry her."

Yahya (AS) therefore made the marriage illegal, and for that fact for anyone who would want to marry in such cases. The king became very upset. The girl herself became greedy of the king's riches and wanted to have the status. She therefore made every means of convincing the king in marrying her, and in the end, she told the king: "If you really want me then I want you to bring for me Yahya's head in a platter for my dowry.

The king therefore ordered his guards to find Yahya (AS) wherever he was, kill him and bring his head to him. The guards went to Yahya (AS) and found him praying; they slew him and took his head to the king, which was then presented to the girl. Therefore, the king married the girl he wanted illegally, and the Lord is the more knowledgeable.

After this, they went after Zakariya (AS); who had tried to protect his son in the affair, and killed him too. It is said that when he was trying to run away, he arrived at a big tree and with Allah's miracle the tree opened up and he got inside to hide. After he had gone in, the tree closed again but unfortunately a part of his robe was caught and could be seen from outside. When they were looking for him, Satan came in the shape of a human and pointed to them that part of the robe so they knew that he was inside the tree. The tree was therefore cut and they killed him, and the Lord is the more knowledgeable.

During that time there were three Prophets all at the same time; Zakariya, Yahya and Issa (AS). The two died and Issa (AS), remained alive. He was a little over thirty years old when Zakariya and Yahya (AS) died.

CHAPTER XXI

ISSA (AS) (JESUS)

He is Masiyh Issa bin Maryam (AS); he was known as *Masiyh* (Messiah), which in Arabic means someone who wanders from place to place. He had no particular place, or town or even a particular dwelling that he used to live in; he let the whole (Allah's) land be his abode.

The Birth of Issa (AS)

Three months after the birth of Yahya (AS), Maryam (AS) received the divine inspiration from her Lord that she would get the gift of a holy son.

Maryam (AS) used to spend all her time in prayers and devotion and she withdrew from her family and from people in general and placed a screen (to screen her) from them. One day as she was in her meditations, Angels came and said to her: "O Maryam! Allah has chosen you and purified you – chosen you above the women of all nations. O Maryam! Worship your Lord devoutly, prostrate yourself, and bow down (in prayer) with those who bow down."

Maryam (AS) felt after this divine call from her Lord that there was something tremendous coming, but she was not sure what it was, thus she kept herself prepared. She never went out of her

chamber except if there was a dire need to do so. One day she went out for some work and went towards the east of Baitil Maqdis. On her way, she met a man who had all the qualities of a gentleman. He was Angel Jibril who had appeared before her in the shape of a man in all respects so that Maryam would pause to listen to him.

When Maryam (AS) saw him approaching, she was frightened, she appealed to him not to invade her privacy, she said: "I seek refuge from you to (Allah) Most Gracious, do not come near me if you do fear Allah."
He said: "No, I am only a messenger from your Lord, (to announce) to you the gift of a holy son."
Here Maryam (AS) looked at him suspiciously for what she heard, then she remembered that she was neither married nor had any man touched her before. She then spoke to her Lord saying: "O my Lord! How shall I have a son, when no man has touched me?"

The Angel said; "So (it will be), your Lord says, 'That is easy for me and (We wish) to appoint him a Sign unto men and a Mercy from Us.' It is a matter (so) decreed. His name will be Masiyh Issa bin Maryam (Jesus Christ the son of Mary), held in honour in this world and the hereafter and of (the company of) those nearest to Allah; he shall speak to the people in childhood and in maturity. And he shall be (of the company) of the righteous."

He therefore breathed into (her body) Allah's spirit, thus Maryam (AS) conceived while she was a virgin, though the Jews accused her of unchastity. She never had any problems in her pregnancy, and no one noticed that she was pregnant. She

knew that her people would not believe in her and would accuse her of adultery. Thus, when the pains of childbirth came, she went away from her people to a place called Bait Laham to the trunk of a palm-tree and she cried (in her anguish): "Ah! Would that I had died before this! Would that I had been a thing forgotten and out of sight!"

But (a voice) cried to her from beneath (the palm-tree): "Do not grieve for your Lord has provided a rivulet beneath you; and shake towards yourself the trunk of the palm-tree, it will fall fresh ripe dates upon you. So eat, drink, and cool your eye. And if you do see any man, say, 'I have vowed a fast to (Allah) Most Gracious, and this day will I enter into no talk with any human being.' "

At length she brought the (babe) to her people, carrying him (in her arms). They said: "O Maryam! Truly, an amazing thing you have brought! O sister of Harun your father was not a man of evil, nor your mother a woman unchaste!"
What could she do? How could she explain? Would they, in their faultfinding mood, accept her explanation? All she could do was to point to the child, who, she knew, was no ordinary child.
They said: "How can we talk to one who is a child in the cradle?"

By miracle, the baby spoke, defended his mother, and preached to an unbelieving audience. He said: "I am indeed a servant of Allah, He has given me revelation and made me a Prophet; and He has made me blessed wheresoever I am, and has decreed on me Prayer and Charity as long as I live. He has made me kind to my mother, and not overbearing and miserable; so peace is on

me the day I was born, the day that I die, and the day that I shall be raised up to life (again)."

Such (was) Jesus the son of Mary: (it is) a statement of truth, about which they (vainly) dispute.

(Chapter 19 verse 24)

Issa (AS) is Made Prophet

After Issa (AS) uttered the first words while he was a baby, he never spoke again until he reached the age when normally children would start to talk. He was a very bright child ever since he was a toddler, and when he was sent to his teacher and started schooling, he used to concentrate and pay full attention to what he was taught. Whatever he was taught, he made sure that he understood it and would ask as many questions as possible to understand every thing. The usual worldly affairs never used to bother him. At the age of twelve, he was already deep in his studies.

He mixed with the religiously learned men, listened to them and learned from them. However, he found out that ordinary people would believe anything what these learned men would say to them, but he did not accept anything outright and used to argue with them. Therefore, when these learned men saw that Issa (AS) was learning fast, they opposed him but he did not let them have their way.

One day Issa (AS) did not return home. His mother became worried and went out to look for him. She went everywhere where he would normally be. After a long search, she found

him right in the middle among the learned men deep in a debate trying to learn. His mother was astonished by what she saw of her son, so she called him aside and blamed him for running away from home without telling her. Then she left him to continue with his learning.

When he reached the age of thirty years, the Angel Jibril came to Issa (AS) for the first time and gave the glad tidings of him becoming a Prophet. He was then given the *Injil* (the Gospel) as the book of teachings. He was the Prophet to the Children of Israel, with the message; 'I have come to you, with a Sign from your Lord.'

He started telling the people that he was the Prophet of Allah and preached to them the Gospel. He said to them: "O Children of Israel! I am the Prophet of Allah (sent) to you, confirming The Law (which came) before me."
The Israelites were already lost and had gone astray from their religion that Musa (AS) had taught them. Issa (AS) was thus sent to the Bani Israiyl with a message to confirm what was in the *Tawraat* (Torah) the book of Musa (AS), which had been sent to them earlier.

The Chiefs and the Learned of the Bani Israiyl felt that there was some danger in this matter, and they felt like a current pulling them. Issa (AS) had come with this new religion and was preaching to the people to leave what they were worshipping. These Chiefs were afraid that the high life and wealth they had would go from them. They were used to hoarding riches and live lavishly. Their secrets would come out and those poor people would realize this and would go against them. They thus decided to tell the people that what Issa (AS)

said was nothing but a lie. This did not bother Issa (AS). He continued with his hard work of preaching and used wentto all the villages and towns doing so.

Some people argued with him and wanted him to give them a proof that he was truly a Prophet. He showed them some of the miracles that Allah had given him, and then said: "The Sign from my Lord in that I make for you out of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird, and breathe into it, and becomes a bird by Allah's blessing. In addition, I heal those born blind, and the lepers, and I liven the dead by Allah's blessing; and I declare to you what you eat, and what you store in your houses. Surely therein is a Sign for you to believe." On top of all this those unbelievers said that it was nothing but sorcery, and wanted to harm him but Allah protected him from them.

He went on saying: "I have come to you, to attest the Law that was before me. And to make lawful to you part of what was (before) forbidden to you, I have come to you with a Sign from my Lord. So fear Allah, and obey me. It is Allah who is my Lord and your Lord; then worship Him. This is a way that is straight."

When he found unbelief in their part, he said: "Who will be my helpers to (the work of) Allah?"
The Disciples said: "We are Allah's helpers, we believe in Allah, and you bear witness that we are Muslims."

Therefore, Issa (AS) went on with his hard work and with him were a few people who believed, it is believed they were not more than twelve people. Even those few, who believed in him, had doubt to what he told them and what they saw. He went

into villages with those few to spread the word of Allah. People were divided into three groups, some said that Issa (AS) was Allah; some said he was the son of Allah and some believed that he was the servant of Allah and His Prophet to the people of Bani Israiyl. This last group is those Christians, who believe in the Book, and so are the People of Muhammad (SAW). Thus, a portion of Bani Israiyl believed, and a portion disbelieved, and Allah gave power to those who believed, against their enemies, and they became the ones that prevailed.

One day after a hard day's work, Issa (AS) and his followers were tired and hungry. So they sat down to rest and while they were sitting, they said to their Prophet: "O Issa son of Maryam! Can your Lord send down to us a Table set (with viands) from Heavens?"
He said to them: "Fear Allah, if you have faith."
They said: "We only wish to eat thereof and satisfy our hearts, and to know that you have indeed told us the truth; and that we ourselves may be witnesses to the miracle."
Here Issa (AS) prayed to Allah for the Table set (with viands) to be sent down unto them. Allah said:

"I will send it down unto you: but if any of you after that resist faith, I will punish him with a penalty such as I have not inflicted on any one among all the peoples."
(Chapter 5 verse 115)

It is believed that Allah did send down to them the Table, but some of those who were weak in their faith rejected the truth.

Bani Israiyl, in particular those who were of high class and the rich, did all sorts of things to resist Issa (AS) and his preaching. They called him a liar and said that there was no truth in what he was doing, it was nothing but sorcery. Actually, Issa (AS) and his followers were those people who were of low class, poor and weak; and so had no one to protect him except his Lord. They wanted to kill him, and when he came to know of this, he went into hiding.

After only three years of him becoming a Prophet, the Israelis could not tolerate him so they decided to go to their Roman king by the name of Caesar. They told him that Issa (AS) was planning to kill him and then take over as a king of the Israelis. The king gave orders that he should be hunt down and brought to him to be crucified. One of his followers by the name of Yahudha, whose faith was not so strong, went and disclosed to them the whereabouts of Issa (AS), so they went to arrest him. However, by Allah's miracles, Yahudha himself was made to look like Issa (AS) and was arrested instead, sent to the king and crucified on the cross. Issa (AS) was saved and Allah raised him up to Him. Allah says in Chapter 4 verses 157-158 of the Holy Quraan:

That they said (in boast), "We killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary, the Prophet of Allah"; -- But they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them, and those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no (certain) knowledge, but only conjecture to follow, for of a

surety they killed him not: Nay, Allah raised him up unto Himself; and Allah is Exalt in Power, Wise.

CHAPTER XXII

MUHAMMAD (SAW)

He is Muhammad bin Abdil Laah bin Abdil Muttalib bin Haashim bin Abdi Manaaf (SAW) and some scholars take his lineage up to the twentieth ancestry. He is the last in the line of Prophets, and was sent to all the nations of the world. His mother is Aamnah bint Wahab, a descendent of Zahrat bin Kilaab from the Quraishy clan.

Abdil Laah was one of the most beloved children of his father, Abdil Muttalib; he married Aamnah when she was eighteen years old. She was one of the most respectable ladies among the Quraishies. Soon after their marriage, she conceived and her husband died two months later in Madina, in the house of his maternal uncles the Bani Aday when he was on his way back from his business trip in Shaam; and was buried there.

Muhammad (SAW) was born on twelfth Rabii L-Awal (the third Arabic month) in the year of the elephant.[1] He was born in the house of Abi Taalib in the village of Bani Haashim, and was delivered by Ashafaa' bint Umar the mother of Abdul Rahman bin Awf. Immediately after he was born, his mother sent

[1]The year of the elephant is known as the year when Abraha the king of Yemen wanted to destroy the Holy Kaaba with his army and his elephant. According to calculations, the date falls on 20 April Year 571 After Christ.

someone to his grandfather, Abdul Muttalib, with the news of his birth, and Abdul Muttalib received the good news with great joy and gave him the name of Muhammad. This name was not common among the Arabs, but that is how Allah wanted it to be, to prove what came in the *Tawraat* and *Injil* where it was mentioned that a Prophet by the name of Ahmed (short for Muhammad) would come. Therefore, Abdul Muttalib unknowingly out of his own heart felt this name was suitable for his grandson.

Muhammad's Breast Feeding

Muhammad (SAW) was first suckled by his mother for few days, and then suckled by Thuwaiba L-Aslamiya. It was a habit among the Arabs to give their children to the Bedouin women to be suckled and brought up in the desert. Thus, these Bedouin women would come to the urban areas to collect the children from the rich people so as to get better pay for their work. Muhammad (SAW) had no father and was not among the rich family, a woman called Halima bint Dhuayb As-Saadiya took him to her home. She carried him home not realizing that he was a blessed child. Her husband (Abu Khabsha) L-Harithy bin Abdul Aziz and his household, who submitted to Allah in Islam, were blessed for this.

Something very miraculous happened to Muhammad (SAW) when he was three years old, while he was playing with his mate (brother) who suckled together with him from Halima. The (brother) came running to Halima and said to her: "Two men wearing white robes took my Quraishy brother lay him down and cut open his stomach."

When Halima heard this, she quickly went out with her husband to look for the boy and found him pale with fear. They asked him what was the matter. He said: "There were two men wearing white robes, one of them said, 'Is he the one?' then the second one said, 'Yes he is the one.' So they took me and lay me down then cut open my tummy and took something out, I do not know what it was, after that they went away." So, Halima got scared and decided to take him back to his mother.

The two were Angels who came to take the influence of Satan from his heart and to cleanse him. They took his heart out washed it with water from Zamzam then put it back again. The same incident took place when he was forty years old.

When Halima took him back to his mother and told her the story, Muhammad's (SAW) mother said: "Really this child has a lot of strange things. When I was pregnant, I saw a very bright light, which flooded all the palaces of Busra in Shaam. I also did not feel any heaviness during the pregnancy, and when he was born he kept his hands down as if in prostration and also raised his head looking up to the sky."

After he was returned to his mother, she took him to visit his father's maternal uncles in Madina. On their way, back his mother died in a town called Abha, which is between Makah and Madina and was buried there. He was six years then. After the death of his mother, a woman by the name of Um Ayman, brought him up and his grandfather was the one who was looking after him. When he was eight years old, his grandfather also died, and was taken by his paternal Uncle Abu Taalib to be brought up in his house. Abu Taalib was not among the rich people, but Allah gave him enough to live on.

Muhammad (SAW) was different from the children of his age in that none of the daily things or games that would normally keep children of his age busy bothered him. Whenever he sat down to eat with his cousins, he would sit far back and his hand would not reach for the food in greediness; and whatever he got, satisfied him.

When he reached the age of twelve years, his uncle took him on a business trip to Shaam. This was his first trip, and they did not prolong the trip. When they reached Busra near Syria, a town where there were Jews from the people of Taimaa, they stopped. One learned man of the Christian faith by the name of Bahyra who was there in the town, asked the people who were with the caravan of Abu Taalib if there came a Prophet among the Arabs as mentioned in the *Tawraat* and *Injil*. They said that to their knowledge no one had come yet.

Bahyra made a big feast and invited the Quraishy, thus all the people attended except Muhammad (SAW), as he was considered too young to mix with the elders. When Bahyra missed him in his party, he requested that he be brought to him. He looked at him and noticed that the boy had all the signs that he knew from his researches regarding the Prophet who is to come. He took a look at his back and there he found two scar-like marks on his shoulder blades. Bahyra told Abu Taalib and advised him to take the boy home as quickly as possible and to be careful with the Jews, and said: "Your nephew is very elite and very holy, take very good care of him."
Thus, Abu Taalib took him back to Makah.
When Muhammad (SAW) reached the age of twenty-five, he again went on a business trip to Shaam. The word got around about his honesty in his dealings (people used to call him

LAmin, the honest). There was a lady by the name of Khadija bint Khuwaylid Ssadiyah (RAA)[1], who was among the most respectable ladies of the Quraishy. She was a very clever business lady who used to hire people and give them goods to take to Shaam and sell for her. When she came to know about a man who was very honest, she sent for him and asked him if he would work for her. Muhammad (SAW) agreed, and he traveled with one of Khadija's servants by the name of Maysara, to Shaam, sold the goods and returned.

After their return, Maysara told her lady about the good qualities of this man and how he dealt with the business. When Khadija (RAA) saw the amount of profit that she had received from him, she sent for him. When he came to her, she asked him to marry her. It is not a usual custom among the Arabs for a lady to ask a man to marry her; in this case Khadija (RAA) felt that it would be nice to have an honest man to look after her business. The man would better be a husband who would protect her and look after her interests.

Khadija (RAA) was forty years old, fifteen years older than him, and was divorced. Muhammad (SAW) told his uncle about this. Abi Taalib then went to Khadija's uncle, Amru bin Asad and officially asked him for his niece's hand in marriage to Muhammad (SAW). He married her and had from her two boys, Al-Qasim and Abdulla and four girls, Zaynab, Ruqayyah, Um Kulthum and Fatma (RAA). The two boys did not survive.

[1]RAA—*Radhiya Allahu Anhu* Allah is pleased with him/her

Muhammad (AS) was an orphan and poor. When he was in the desert at Halima's house, as a boy, he was a shepherd. He also worked as shepherd after his return to Makah from Halima's house. This is really Allah's wisdom; if you look closely, you will see that most of the Prophets [e.g. Ibrahim, Yusuf, Musa and Issa (AS)] were all shepherds before becoming Prophets. Had they been from the rich families, they would have been bothered by the worldly affairs and would not have been able to concentrate with their mission.

Muhammad (SAW) was well mannered; honest with no bad habits that made people sin. His people used to call him *Asaadiq L-Amin*, meaning the truthful the honest. Allah had protected him from his childhood from any bad habits that corrupt. One day he was explaining what had happened to him and said: "I asked my colleague to look after my heard, I then went to Makah and entered one of the entertainment houses where there was dancing and singing, so that I could enjoy myself. I stayed for a while, but Allah wanted to protect me from corruption, so before I realized it I slept throughout the night and when I woke the sun was up and the place closed."

Rebuilding of Kaaba

When Muhammad (SAW) reached the age of thirty, heavy rains came down in Makah and the walls of Kaaba fell and it was destroyed. The Quraishy wanted to rebuild and renovate it, thus all the chiefs of the different clans of Quraishy got together to discuss the affair, and decided to rebuild it and put a new roof. They thus started the work, and among the people who were working on the site was Muhammad (SAW) himself.

It was rebuilt, but it could not be completed, as there were no enough funds. Thus, they left part of it not completed, and built a short wall to show the position of the Kaaba, and that area is known as *Maqaam Ismail*. They raised the walls to a height of about forty feet, more than what it was before and raised the door in such a way that one could only enter it by climbing up the steps.

Then came the time to put back the holy Black Stone (*Hajar L-Aswad*), here the different clans argued as to who would do that work. They argued and nearly fought a war, and remained in this situation for four days without coming to an agreement. One of the Quraishy elders by the name of Abu Umayyah bin L-Mughyra L-Makhzumy, the uncle of Khalid bin Waleed, said: "O my people! Do not fight; instead find a solution to your problem which would satisfy all of you."
They said: "We shall allow the first person who walks through that door to judgment us and solve our problem."
As they were saying this, Muhammad (SAW) walked in. When they saw him, they said: "Here is *L-Amin*, we have agreed he will judge us."
They explained to him the problem. Muhammad (SAW) took off his robe and lay it on the ground, then put the stone on it and said: "Let one person from each clan hold my robe and then lift it up, together."
Therefore, they lifted it all together to the position where the stone was to be laid, and Muhammad (SAW) placed it in its place with his hands and they were all happy and satisfied. The argument ended in peace, by Allah's wisdom, Abu Umayyah had the brains to think quickly and guided his people, and Muhammad (SAW) had the ability to judge and put them in the right direction that led to a peaceful solution.

Muhammad (SAW) is Made Prophet

Before Muhammad (SAW) became a Prophet, he used to get very upset seeing his people lost in sins and he did not know the way to guide them on the right track. He thus took to the mountains near Makah, where he spent days praying and worshiping, asking Allah to show him the right track and beg Him for mercy.

He was made Prophet when he was forty years old, on 17th day of Ramadhan, thirteen years before *L-Hijra* the year he emigrated to Madina, which marks the beginning of the Islamic year. This was on the beginning of July of the year 610 After Christ. When Muhammad (SAW) was in his meditation in the cave called *Hiraa* near Makah, the Angel Jibril came and said to him: "O Muhammad the Prophet of all beings, Read!"
Muhammad had not received formal education, so he said: "I am not able to read."
Jibril said to him again: "Read!"
Muhammad again said: "I am not able to read."
Jibril said to him:

Proclaim! (or Read!) In the name of your Lord and Cherisher, Who created – Created man, out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood: Proclaim! And your true Lord is Most Bountiful, – He Who taught (the use of) the Pen, Taught man that which he knew not.

After this episode, Muhammad (SAW) returned home to his wife Khadija (RAA) trembling in a fit of fear by seeing Jibril for the first time and from what he heard from him. He said to his wife: "Cover me! Cover me!"

Later on after he cooled off from the fear, he explained to his wife what had happened to him, and she said: "By Allah! He would not do anything to you but for the better, and I give you the good tidings that you are truly the Prophet of Allah."
From then on Muhammad (SAW) became the Prophet, and the first words of the Holy Book (The Quraan) to be recorded were those of Surat Alaq (Iqraa).

Muhammad (SAW) then started preaching to his people, advising them not to worship idols but turn to the one God (Allah) who deserves to be worshiped. He told them to stop doing bad things and not to sin. However, it was not easy for him as he had a lot of resistance and torture from his people. At the beginning only a few people believed, his wife being the first. Among them were his cousin Ali bin Abi Taalib (RAA), who was very young at that time, Zaid bin Haarith (RAA) and the family of Abu Bakr Ssiddiq (RAA).

At the beginning Muhammad (SAW) started preaching in secrecy and did not publicly tell the people of him being a Prophet. He continued like this for three years. The few who submitted to Islam could not show themselves publicly and could not pray in public for the fear of the Quraishis who were the ones very much against Muhammad (SAW) right from the beginning. Therefore, whenever his people wanted to pray, they went to the villages of Makah where there were no Quraishis and worshipped in secret. It was also necessary for them to be

in one group with Prophet Muhammad (SAW) so that he could teach and guide them. Hence, they used to amass together in the house of L-Arqam bin L-Arqam, one of those who submitted to Islam.

After this, Allah sent him an inspiration that he should no longer keep it a secret; he should publicly tell the people the truth of him being the Prophet of Allah. Therefore, one day he stood on top of the Safaa hillock in Makah and shouted at the top of his voice: "O people of Adul Muttalib! O people of Fahar! O people of Kaab! If I told you that there were horses on top of this hillock that were about to jump and attack you, would you believe me?"
They all said: "Yes we would believe you."
He then said: "I am therefore warning you of a severe punishment from Allah if you do not follow me."
Abu Lahab shouted and said: "Hell with you! You are calling us here only to tell us this rubbish."

Here Surat Lahab Chapter111 (the Father) of Flame was sent down:

Perish the hands of the Father of Flame! Perish he!

Abu Lahab "Father of Flame" was the nickname of an uncle of the holy Prophet. He was called so for his fiery hot temper and his reddish complexion. He was one of the most constant enemies of early Islam.

Muhammad (SAW) continued preaching and calling his people to the true religion, but he still met with a lot of resistance from his own people. These people said to him: "O Muhammad! If

you want to be the king we will make you king, and if you want wealth we will give all the wealth you want."
He said to them: "I do not need your wealth nor do I want to be king. I am but a Prophet of Allah to you, calling you to leave the worship of idols that do not hear or help you in anything. O my people! Listen to me, worship the one God who created you and who cherishes you."

A delegation from the Quraishy went to his uncle and said to him: "O Abu Taalib! Your nephew has insulted us and defamed our gods, we ask you to tell him to call off what he is doing. This is a big shame to us all."
Abu Taalib replied them with nice words so as not to upset them, then he called Muhammad (SAW) and said to him: "O the son of my brother! The elders have come to complain to me about what you are doing, therefore please do not put a burden on my head that I can not carry."
He said: "O my uncle! By the name of Allah! Even if they had kept the sun on my right and the moon on my left so that I leave what I am doing, I will not do that until my Lord commands me to do so, or I die."
Abu Taalib said: "O my nephew! Go your way and say anything you want, I will never hand you over to the Quraishy."

The Quraishy started torturing those who believed and followed Muhammad (SAW); they used all sorts of tortures so as to break down their faith. They surrounded the village where Muhammad (SAW) and his people lived, and told the people not to sell anything to them or buy from them until they die from hunger. One day as Muhammad (SAW) was in his prayers; these people came and slaughtered a camel near him. They then

took out its bowels and poured over his head as he was bowing down.

A group of those who submitted to Islam ran away from these people and went to Ethiopia leaving Muhammad (SAW) with a handful of his people in Makah. However, after three months they returned, as they could not live away from home, also because they had no force as they were just few. When they returned some of them could not re-enter Makah as the Quraishy had made a rule that no one was allowed to enter Makka unless he or she had a sponsor. For example a man would only be allowed to bring in his wife, or his son and so on.

Again another group consisting of eighty-three men and eighteen women immigrated to Ethiopia. This time when the Quraishy saw this happening, they sent Amru bin L-Aas and Umara bin L-Waleed (before they became Muslims) to Nnajashiy, the king of Ethiopia. They took with them presents for the king, and requested him to evict the followers of Muhammad (SAW) and send them back to their country. But the delegation went back without success, and the Muslims lived in Ethiopia in peace until the time when Muhammad (SAW) emigrated to Madina.

Three years before Muhammad (SAW) emigrated to Madina, his beloved wife, Khadija (RAA) died; he mourned her death and he became very sad. After her death, he married Sawdah bint Zaama L-Amriyah L-Qurashiya (RAA), who was also a widow. One month later, he married Aisha (RAA) the daughter of Abu Bakr As-Siddiq (RAA) who was seven years old and a virgin, but only slept with her after they moved to Madina.

One month after the death of his wife Khadija (RAA), his uncle, Abu Taalib who was the only one who protected him from the Quraishy, died. Although Abu Taalib never objected whatever his nephew said and believed him in everything, he never submitted to Islam. Muhammad (SAW) loved his uncle dearly, and naturally wanted him to die in the new faith, but the pagan Quraishy leaders persuaded him to remain true to the faith of his fathers. This was an incident of disappointment and grief to him, thus Allah sent the following verse 56 of Chapter 28 to tell Muhammad:

It is true you will not be able to guide everyone, whom you love; but Allah guides those whom He will and He knows best those who receive guidance.

Muhammad (SAW) called the year when his wife and uncle died, the 'Year of Grief.' After the death of his uncle, the Quraishy became stronger and went on troubling Muhammad (SAW) even more. They used to tell him: "You want to make all the gods as one god? You must be crazy!"

Some of Muhammad's (SAW) Miracles

One of his miracles was the splitting of the moon into two. This happened when the pagans of Makkah wanted Muhammad to show them the signs of his prophetic powers. Here Allah made the moon split in two; each piece lay on top of a separate mountain. This is related in Chapter 54 verse 1:

The Hour (of Judgment) is nigh, and the moon is cleft asunder.

Among some of his miracles was that he dripped water between his fingers. One of the incidences narrated about this was that one day people had no water to perform ablution for prayers. Here Muhammad (SAW) put his hand in a bucket and water dripped out, and there was enough water for everyone.

One of his other miracles was that if he prayed on the food, it became ample and could feed many people. For example, one day he fed almost seventy to eighty people on a small piece of bread, which was cut into small pieces and then prayed on it, thus all the people ate to their satisfaction.

His mosque in Madina was constructed using trunks of palm trees that formed the columns, and the roof was out of palm tree fronds. He used to stand at one of these columns whenever he preached, and when a rostrum was built for him he stopped standing at that column. People in the mosque started hearing wailing sound coming from the column, and so Muhammad (SAW) instructed the column to be buried under the rostrum.

He also used to cure the sick and those hurt in the war by rubbing and praying on their wounds. His invocations were never returned unheeded by Allah; whatever he prayed and asked for from his Lord it was always granted. His dreams always came true.

Al-Israa and Al-Miraaj

Allah gifted Muhammad (SAW) with the *Israa* and *Miraaj*. *Al-Israa* is when he went from Makah to Baitil-Maqdis and back in one night, and *Al-Miraaj* is when he climbed to the seventh

firmament and back. *Al-Israa* is mentioned in Chapter 17 verse 1, where Allah says:

Glory to (Allah) who did take His servant for a Journey by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Farthest Mosque, whose precincts We did bless, -- in order that We might show him some of Our Signs: for He is One Who hears and sees (all things).

The sacred mosque refers to the Kaaba at Makah; it had not yet been cleared of its idols and rededicated exclusively to the One True God. It was symbolical of the new Message, which was been given to mankind. The Farthest Mosque (Al-Aqsaa Mosque) refers to the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem on the hill of Moriah, at or near where the Dome of the Rock stands.

The *Miraaj* is mentioned in Surat Nnajm (liii), verses 1-18. For this miraculous trip, he was sent a *Buraaq*, an animal that resembles a horse, on which he rode and (flew) to Baitil-Maqdis. There he went inside the temple and prayed. After that, the Angel Jibril came and took him on a trip to the seventh firmament. When he reached the first firmament he met Adam (AS), at the second, he met Issa and Yahya (AS). When he reached the third he met Yusuf (AS), at the fourth, he met Idris (AS), the fifth he met Harun (AS), the sixth he met Musa (AS) and the seventh he met Ibrahim (AS).

When he reached the seventh firmament, he was taken to the tree of *Sidratil-Muntahaa* (Lote tree) where Allah gave him some of the Divine Inspirations and ordained for his people

prayers fifty times per day and night. When he reached the sixth firmament on his way back down to earth, Musa (AS) asked him: "What has the Lord ordained to you for your people?"
He said: "Prayers fifty times a day and night."
Musa (AS) said: "Your people will not be able to cope with this. I myself could not get my people perform simple prayers, so go back to your Lord and ask Him to ease on you."

Muhammad (SAW) went back and asked his Lord to ease on him the burden; they were then made five times in a day and night. When he went back to Musa (AS), he asked him if the prayers had been reduced, and Muhammad (SAW) said: "They have been reduced to five times in a day and night."
Musa (AS) told him: "That is still too much, go back and appeal to your Lord to reduce further."
Therefore, he was shuttling back and forth, until in the end Allah said to him: "O Muhammad! Those five prayers in a day and night adorned to you for your people, each one of them is equivalent to ten that is a total of fifty prayers."

The next morning after his return to Makah that night, he went to the chiefs of the Quraishy and told them what had happened. Some of them jeered at him and some were stunned to hear this strange story. The only person who believed in him was Abu Bakr (RAA) who was later nicknamed *As-Siddiq* (he who believed), from then on he was known as Abu Bakr As-Siddiq.
The pagans wanted to test Muhammad (SAW) to see if he was really telling the truth, thus they told him to explain to them what he saw in Baitil-Maqdis. There were some of them who knew what the temple looked like. He therefore gave them a detailed overview of the temple. They said to him: "Tell us about our caravan that is on the way coming." He told them in

details, how many camels were there, how the people in it were and when they were due to arrive in Makah. After all this, they were still stubborn and refused to believe in him.

That morning after his return, the Angel Jibril came to teach him how to pray and gave him the timings of these five prayers. He was told to bow (kneel) two times at dawn just at the first twilight; kneel four times at noon immediately after the sun had gone over to the West, four times after the shadow became double the size of the object, three times immediately after sunset, and four times after the evening twilight had disappeared. Before this, Muhammad (SAW) used to kneel two times in the morning and two times in the evening.

In the month of Shaaban (the eighth month), of the second year of the Islamic calendar Allah ordained to the Muslims the fasting of the month of Ramadhan (the ninth month). Before that Muhammad (SAW) used to fast three days in each month. This is the fourth pillar out of the five pillars of Islam. It was also ordained in the same year the giving of *Zakaat*, the giving of alms to the poor or the cleansing of one's wealth; and is the third pillar. Islam is based on five pillars viz.:
1 Testify that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad (SAW) is His Apostle.
2 Performing of prayers.
3 Giving of *Zakaat*.
4 Fasting the month of Ramadhan.
5 Going for pilgrimage to Makka for those who can.

When the annoyance of the unbelievers became intolerable and got beyond control, Muhammad (SAW) ordered his follower to emigrate to Madina. Groups of them thus left and went to

Madina, leaving behind Muhammad (SAW) with only a few people, among them were Abu Bakr Ssiddiq, Ali bin Abi Taalib, Suhaib and Zeyd bin Haaritha (RAA).

The Quraishy got together to discuss what to do with Muhammad (SAW). One of them said: "Banish him from Makka and you will be in peace." This suggestion was refused because if Muhammad (SAW) went out of Makah his followers would join him and would become stronger. Another suggestion was to throw him into the gallows; this was also refused, as his followers would try to free him and that they might start a war.

Abu Jahal (the Ignorant) his people called him *Abu Lhakam* (the Wise), said: "Let us kill him. We should get a strong youth from each of our clans, and let them wait for him outside his home at night and when he comes out they all attack him together. In this way his blood would be in the hands of all the Quraishy, and the Abd Manaaf would not be able to fight all of us." They therefore agreed on this plan, but by Allah's miracles Muhammad (SAW) came to know of the plan and his Lord commanded him to leave and go where he would get respect and be able to spread the religion freely and well.

In Surat Nnajm (The Star) (liii) Allah defends Muhammad (SAW) against three kinds of charges that the unbelievers brought against him:

1. That he was going astray, either through defect of intelligence or through carelessness.
2. That he was being misled or deceived by evil spirits.
3. That he spoke of a whim or impulse, or from a selfish desire to impress his own personality.

None of these charges was true; on the contrary, he had direct inspiration from Allah.

Emigration of Muhammad (SAW)

When Muhammad (SAW) came to know of the assassination plot made by the Quraishy, he went to his best friend Abu Bakr (RAA) and told him what he had heard and what his Lord had commanded him to do. He requested Abu Bakr (RAA) to go with him and he agreed; so they made arrangements for their departure. They agreed to meet outside the perimeters of Makah that night; and the Quraishy for that fact had set for his assassination on the same night. When the time came for his departure, he asked his cousin Ali bin Abi Taalib (RAA) to sleep in his bed so that the would be assassins would not suspect anything. He went out that night and was reciting:

And We have put a bar in front of them and a bar behind them, and further, We have covered them up; so that they can not see.
(Chapter 36 verse 9)

Here by Allah's miracles the assassins fell asleep and did not hear anything, and Muhammad (SAW) came out of his house, passed by them and left them like dead logs. He went to where he had agreed to meet Abu Bakr (RAA) and left the same night. They went until they reached the cave known as *Ghaar Thawr* (Bull's Cave) and went inside to hide. Immediately after they had got into the cave, miraculously there came a dove, made a nest, laid eggs and sat in it. Moreover, the whole entrance of the cave was covered with cobwebs.

When the Quraishy woke up in the morning and realized that their plot had failed, they were very upset. They sent scouts in every direction to look for Muhammad (SAW) and promised a good reward for anyone who would bring the news of his whereabouts. They looked everywhere, searched high and low without success. They followed the footprints until they reached the cave but they said that it was not possible for anyone to be inside it. Had they only looked closely they would have seen them; that was Allah's miracle they were blinded. While inside the cave Muhammad (SAW) said to his companion: "Have no fear, for Allah is with us."

They stayed in there for three days. In the daytime, a youth by the name of Amir bin Fahyrat used to pass by with his sheep, which he milked them and gave the milk to Muhammad (SAW) and Abu Bakr (RAA). In the evening, Abdulla bin Abu Bakr brought them news of any movements in town. When the matter was forgotten, they came out and headed towards Madina.

When the people of Madina came to know that Muhammad (SAW) was coming, every day they used to go outside the town waiting for his arrival, until one day they heard someone shouting: "Muhammad is approaching!" Here all the people went out to meet them with joy and dancing. When he arrived he stayed for few days at the home of Amru bin Awf, and they built the first mosque at a place called Qubaa. After this he left with his camel going towards the town of Madina and the people along the way welcomed him in great joy. Everyone wanted him to be his guest but he answered: "The camel has been ordered (by Allah), anywhere it stops that would be my abode."

The camel was let loose and went until it reached at the place of Abi Ayyub L-Ansary and stopped there, and Muhammad (SAW) said: "This is where my home shall be by Allah's will."
There he built his Masjid, which exists until today, but has been expanded.

It is said that Muhammad (SAW) arrived in Qubaa on 2 Rabii L-Awal (the third month), which falls on 20 September 622 After Christ. That was thirteen years from the beginning of Islam and from then on the new Islamic year *Al-Hijra* started commemorating the immigration of Muhammad (SAW) to Madina. When Umar bin L-Khattab (RAA) came to power, the people agreed that the beginning of the year should start from Muharram, and that is the first month in the Islamic calendar used until now.

Muhammad (SAW) called those who came from Makah as *Muhajirin* (who migrated), and those people of Madina who submitted to Islam as *Ansaar* (the protectors of religion).

The Building of the Prophet's Mosque

The Prophet then ordered for a mosque to be built near the vicinity of the village of Bani Malik bin Nnajaar and the land proposed belonged to two orphans. Muhammad (SAW) called them and asked them if the land could be given for the purpose, they said to him: "O Apostle of Allah! We have donated to you this our land without payment, for our payment will come from our Lord."
However, Muhammad (SAW) refused and said: "O the people of Nnajaar! Put a value for this here land."

They said: “We are asking no value for it, Allah shall pay us.”

Thus the land was leveled and prepared for the construction of the mosque. Two columns for the door were constructed from stones, and then the remaining columns were made from trunks of the date palm and the roof was made from palm fronds. Muhammad (SAW) himself was among those who worked and supervised the construction. The *Mihraab* where the *Imam* (leader) of the prayers, should stand was kept on the north side towards the grand mosque at Baitil Maqdis. The floor had only pebbles spread on the bare ground and nothing else was laid on it. This was to become the Grand Mosque of Madina that we know now standing majestically.

Later on Muhammad (SAW) built two rooms adjoining the mosque, one room for his wife Sawdah (RAA) and the other for his wife Aisha (RAA). More rooms were later added to become nine, where each wife had a room of her own, as Muhammad (SAW) kept all his wives within one compound of his house.

Changing the Direction of *Qibla*

Qibla is the direction where one faces (in prayers). When Muhammad (SAW) was in Makah, during his prayers he used to stand in front of the Kaaba facing towards the south. In this way, he faced towards Baitil Maqdis in Palestine, as this was the direction supposed to be facing to, and at the same time, he faced the Kaaba, which was in front of him. He did this until he moved to Madina. In Madina, he was not able to face Baitil Maqdis and at the same time face towards Kaaba in Makah, since Madina lies in the middle between the two. Thus, he faced

Baitil Maqdis during his prayers, and continued this for sixteen months although he wanted very much to be facing towards the Kaaba, and was always praying to his Lord for the change of direction. One day when he was in the middle of his prayers came the Divine inspiration commanding him to change his direction towards the Holly Kaaba, and he together with those who were praying with him at that instant changed the direction. This, until now, is where all Muslims throughout the globe face, during their prayers. There is a mosque outside Madina called *Masjid Qiblatayn* (Mosque of the two Qiblas) where the incidence took place. Until a few years back one could see these two Qiblas in the old mosque.

The Divine inspiration is mentioned in Chapter 2 verse 144:

We see the turning of your face (for guidance) to the heavens: now shall We turn you to a Qibla that shall please you. Turn then your face in the direction of the sacred Mosque: wherever you are, turn your faces in that direction. …

Muhammad (SAW) continued preaching to the people to submit to Islam, and sent envoys to different people far away and to different countries to tell them of the religion. Despite this there was a lot of resistance from many of them, and for this many wars were fought. Among these wars to mention but a few, was 'The War of Badr' on 17 Ramadhan year 2 Hijra, 'The War of Uhud' during Shawwaal year 3 Hijra. Many a times the unbelievers sent assassins to assassinate Muhammad (SAW) but Allah always protected him.

The Hudaybiya Pact

Six years after Muhammad (SAW) had moved to Madina, he dreamt that he was entering the sacred mosque of Makah. He told his companions what he had dreamt and that he had decided to go to Makah to perform *Umra* (minor pilgrimage). He, together with one thousand four hundred of his companions, therefore left for Makah for the intention of performing *Umra.* When the Quraishy came to know that a large group of Muslims with Muhammad (SAW) were approaching Makah, they thought that they were coming to fight a war, therefore they sent people to meet them before they entered Makah. When the envoy arrived, Muhammad (SAW) told them that he and his people had come in peace and only wanted to enter Makah to perform *Umra*. They went on until they reached a place called L-Hudaybiya outside Makah and put up camp there.

The Quraishy stopped them from entering Makah, and envoys were shuttling back and forth to find a solution that would satisfy both the parties. After a prolonged discussion and argument, they agreed on the following points:

1. Stop the wars between the Muslims and the Quraishy for a period of ten years.
2. Anyone from the Quraishy who would go to Muhammad (SAW) with the intention of submitting to Islam, without the consent of his/her guardian must be returned to his/her people.
3. Anyone from the Quraishy who had submitted to Islam and later wanted to return to paganism should be accepted back by the Quraishy.

4. Anyone who wished to join Muhammad (SAW) was to be allowed, and anyone who wanted to join the Quraishy was also to be allowed.
5. The Prophet and his companion who came this year to perform *Umra* should go back to Madina without being allowed to enter Makah. However, they would be allowed to return the following year if they were coming with the intention of performing *Umra.*

Both the parties agreed on the points and they signed an official pact. Muhammad (SAW) and his companions slaughtered their sacrifices at that place and cut their hair as if they had performed the *Umra* and returned to Madina without entering Makah.

The Opening (conquest) of Maka

Because of the pact signed, Muhammad (SAW) could not fight and enter Maka to spread the Islamic religion; the Quraishis, however, did not keep to their word. Therefore, Muhammad (SAW) decided to attack Makah, and he went out with his army, attacked and entered Makah. He then went inside the holly Kaaba and shattered all the idols that were there and kept it clean. He then made the *Tawaaf* (circling round the Kaaba).

When Muhammad (SAW) entered Maka he had with him twelve thousand Muslims, and four hundred of the Quraishy submitted to Islam after that. He stayed there for nineteen days and then returned to Madina. The opening of Makah was during Ramadhan fourth year of *Hijra* which fell in January of the year 630 After Christ.

The Farewell Pilgrimage

In the tenth year of *Hijra,* Muhammad (SAW) went to Makah to perform pilgrimage. This was his first and his last pilgrimage. He performed pilgrimage only that one time. He left Madina and with him nearly ninety thousand Muslims, travelling to Makka on camel backs. When he arrived he first performed the *Umra,* which is the usual practice done now by the Muslim when they go for pilgrimage. On the eighth of *Dhul Qaada* (the eleventh month) he went to Mina and spent the night there, and the next morning he went to Arafaat and at noon, he gave a sermon to the public and said:

"O my people! Listen to what I am going to say to you, I do not think I shall see you again after this year and at (this) same place of this here gathering."

He went on explaining to them the basis and foundation of the Islamic religion and advised them to keep together as one nation, which was the only way to success.

Therefore, the following verse was revealed at the time when he was preaching to his people, marking the approaching end of Muhammad's ministry in his early life:

This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed my favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion. But if any is forced by hunger, with no inclination to transgression, Allah is indeed oft forgiving, Most Merciful.
(Chapter 5 verse 3)

'Perfected your religion for you.' The religion of worshiping the one Allah, the religion preached by all the Prophets all along from Adam (AS) to Muhammad (SAW).

This of course was his last and farewell speech to his people, since he did not last long after his return to Madina. He died soon after that. The *Haj* or pilgrimage was thus made the fifth pillar of Islam.

The Death of Muhammad (SAW)

Muhammad (SAW) returned home to Madina after his completion of the pilgrimage. In the month of *Safar* (the second month) in the eleventh year of *Hijra* he got ill, and was nursed in the house of his wife Aisha (RAA). When he felt that he was no longer able to go to the mosque, he instructed Abu Bakr (RAA) to lead the congregation in the prayers. Three days later he managed to drag himself and went to the mosque, where he told his people: "O my people! I have been told that you are afraid that your Prophet would die, was there anyone of the Prophets who lived for ever? I shall go back to my Lord, and all of you as well shall follow. I am advising those *Muhajirin* among you to stick together with the *Ansaar* in doing righteous deeds, for Allah says":

By (the Token of) time (through the Ages), Verily Man is in loss, Except such as have Faith, and do righteous deeds, and (join together) in the mutual teaching of Truth, and of Patience and Constancy.

He advised the Muslims in general to be together, love each other without any segregation. This was his last sermon, for he was on and off, a little better but was not able to get out of his bed after that. Muhammad (SAW) died on Monday the 13th of *Rabii Awal* (the third month) year 11 *Hijra*, which was the 8th of June year 633 After Christ, at the age of exactly sixty-three. According to the Gregorian calendar, he was sixty-one years and eighty-one days old.

Abu Bakr (RAA) was not present at the time of Muhammad's (SAW) death, but immediately when he got the news he came and entered the house of Aisha (RAA) where his body was lying. When he saw his body, he wept and then said: "O people! Those who worshiped Muhammad, he is now dead. But those who worship the one Allah He is there alive and ever remaining!"

Allah says in Chapter 3 verse 144:

Muhammad is no more than a Prophet: many were the Prophets that passed away before him. If he died or were slain, will you 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 Prophet's body lay there for two days, until the Muslims agreed on a successor (Caliph). They had agreed to make Abu Bakr (RAA), as a successor to Muhammad (SAW) to continue with his work, but not as a Prophet as Muhammad (SAW) was

the last of the Prophets. After this they started the arrangements for the funeral. Therefore, the body was washed, shrouded and laid on his bed. Here people started coming into the room and pay their last respect, by praying individually without the *Imam*. Then they had to decide where to bury him, and some suggested that he be buried together with his companions at the graveyard known as *L-Baqiy* near his mosque. However, Abu Bakr (RAA) said: "I heard the Prophet say, 'No prophet who died before had been buried anywhere except where his soul was taken.' Therefore his resting place would be where he had died." He was therefore buried in the room of his wife Aisha (RAA).

Muhammad (SAW) died and left behind for his followers the Allah's Book, the Holy Quraan that has collected the teachings of everything what anyone would require in his/her daily life, if followed as required. He left behind for his people the true religion of worshipping the one Allah and no one would go astray if he/she followed. We therefore pray to Allah the Almighty to put us on that straight path of the true believers so as to accomplish what Muhammad (SAW) had brought to us. We also pray to our Lord to let us be with those lucky ones of being together with him in the hereafter, Amin.

This Book

This book gives a simple narration of the parables of the twenty five Apostles who are mentioned in the Holy Quraan. These are the Prophets who were sent by the Almighty to the People to lead them in the right direction. God has guided these prophets. and we need therefore to follow their footsteps. These Prophets have come from the time of the creation of the human. Adam (AS) himself for example. was a prophet to his own family. The total number of those sent is one hundred and twenty four thousand. of whom three hundred and thirteen are messengers or Apostles (Rasuls) and the remaining are Prophets (Nabiis).

The stories related in this book are true stories; they are the true events in history. In these stories there is a lot to be learnt from what happened in the past. so that people would realize their mistakes and hence correct themselves. The teachings of these Prophets constitute a large portion in the writing of the history. without which one can not understand history. The most important of all is the fact that one cannot really understand the Quraan without knowing these events in history.

Nassir bin Issa bin Said Al-Kindy,
P.P. Box 1139,
P.C. 112,
RUWI,
Sultanate of Oman.
Tel. 575220
1812000

ISLAMIC INFORMATION CENTER
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