

**INDSETET MONOGRAPH SERIES
ON
ISLAM AND QUR'AN**

No. 11

**PROPHETS OF ALLAH
AND
THEIR MISSION**

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CONTENTS

	Page
PREFACE : Chairman - MEDNET	v
INTRODUCTION	1
Chapter – 1: Prophets Before Ibrahim (Abraham) (AS)	3
Prophet Adam (AS)	3
Prophet Idris (Enoch) (AS).....	6
Prophet Nuh (Noah) (AS).....	7
Prophet Hud (AS)	11
Prophet Salih (AS)	14
Chapter – 2: Prophets After Ibrahim (Abraham) (AS)	17
Prophet Ibrahim (AS)	17
Prophet Isma’il (AS).....	22
Prophets Is’haq (Isaac) and Ya’qub (Jacob) (AS)	24
Prophet Lut (Lot) (AS)	25
Prophet Shu’ayb (AS)	27
Prophet Yusuf (Joseph) (AS)	29
Prophet Ayyub (Job) (AS)	38
Prophet Dhul-Kifl (AS)	41
Prophet Yunus (Jonah) (AS)	42
Prophets Musa (Moses) and Haroon (Aaron) (AS)	44
Prophet Hizqeel (Ezekiel) (AS)	59
Prophet Ilyas (Elisha) (AS)	59

Chapter – 3: Prophets From The Death Of Al Yas’a (Joshua) Ibn Nun To The Advent Of Shamoel (Samuel) (AS)	60
Dawood (David) (AS) in the battle against Goliath and his Prophet-hood	62
Prophet Sulaiman (Solomom) (AS).....	64
Chapter – 4: Some Prophets Of The Israelites After Prophet Dawud And Before Prophet Zakariya (AS)	69
Prophet ‘Isaiah (Shi’a) (AS).....	69
Prophet Aramaya (Jeremiah) (AS) and the Destruction of Jerusalem	70
Prophet Daniel (AS).....	72
Story of Prophet Uzair (Ezra) (AS) and Reconstruction of Jerusalem in the era of Prophet Aramaya (AS)	73
Chapter – 5: Prophets Zachariah (Zachariah), Yahya (John) and ‘Isa (Jesus) (AS)	76
Prophet Zakariya (Zachariah) (AS)	76
Prophet Yahya (John) (AS).....	77
Prophet ‘Isa Ibn Maryam (Jesus) (AS)	79
Birth of Prophet ‘Isa (Jesus) (AS)	81
Refutation of the Christians’ Claims	88
Chapter – 6: Prophet Muhammad (SAWS)	90
.....	
Early Life	90
Prophet-hood	91
Persecution of Muslims	92
First Migration of Muslims	93

Excommunication of Muslims	95
Mission to Taif	96
<i>Me'raj</i> and Migration (<i>Hijrah</i>) to Yethrib	97
Birth of Islamic State	98
Battle of Badr	99
Battle of Uhud	100
Battle of Tribes	100
Treaty of Hudaibiyah	101
Universal Preaching	101
Abrogation of Treaty of Hudaibiyah and Surrender of Makkah	102
Mass Acceptance of Islam	103
Farewell Pilgrimage (<i>Hajj al Wida'</i>) by the Prophet(SAWS)	104
BIBLIOGRAHPY	106



FOREWORD

It is a distressing fact that most of the Muslims lack proper understanding about the universal relevance of the Qur'anic Message which was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) for the guidance of all mankind. There is considerable misapprehension too about Islam and the Message of the Qur'an in the minds of Non-Muslims. The **Indian School of Excellence Trust (INDSET)** is making an humble endeavour through a series of monographs on Islam and Qur'an to project the image of Islam in its proper perspective and to explain the significance of the Qur'anic Message in a scientific and systematic way.

A careful and close study of the Missions of the Prophets of Allah (SWT) to reform diverse human societies, across the world, from time to time since the descent of Adam-Eve on earth is of great historical significance and full of profound spiritual lessons to the modern secular societies because of their misconceived and fallacious ethical norms and moral values which is evident from the legitimization of Gay Movement (euphemism for sodomy) by the Judiciary in Europe, USA and Canada. This is outrageous and has been unequivocally condemned both in the Bible and the Qur'an as shameful act and heinous sin.

The Prophets of Allah (SWT) were all human beings who carried out their missionary activities with steely resolve in order to reform the corrupt practices such as idol worship,

dishonesty, treachery, fraudulent activities and immorality which had plagued the people to whom they were commissioned. The Prophets were subjected to severe trial and tribulations, experienced indignity and indignation of the people with whom they lived and even sometimes suffered severe reverses but they were never discouraged and stayed firm and undaunted. They persisted and persevered with the challenges with redoubled energy and eventually achieved remarkable success because of their single minded devotion, total dedication, tireless efforts and of-course with the support and blessings of Allah (SWT). The author has highlighted these facts and made the account fascinating by including information contained in the Taurat (Torah: Jerusalem Bible of the Jews / Old Testament of the Catholics) which do not conflict with the facts stated in the Qur'an.

The Trust would like to express its profound thanks to the author Dr. Hafeez Siddiqi who after meticulous research prepared this scholarly and authentic work on the Prophets of Allah (SWT) and their Mission.

We conclude with a prayer to Allah (SWT) to graciously bless our efforts with success (*Aameen*).

وَاٰخِرُ دَعْوَاهُمْ اِنَّ الْحَمْدَ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ

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INTRODUCTION

Among the creations of Allah (SWT)¹ the Angels, the Jinns and the Man are the most notable. The Angels created from light (*Noor*) are most noble and symbolize immaculate piety. They are of various orders and carry out the commands of Allah (SWT) flawlessly and to the most minute details. The most prominent of these angels is Arch Angel *Jibrael* (Gabriel) who acted as the messenger of Allah (SWT) to His prophets. They live in heaven and are invisible. The Jinns are created by Allah (SWT) out of flaming fire and are both of good and evil nature. They inhabit the earth but are invisible. The *Iblis* (Satan) was the chief of the Jinns and was standing with the angels when they were commanded by Allah (SWT) to prostrate before Prophet Adam (AS).² *Iblis* defied the command because he felt superior to Prophet Adam (AS) who was created from clay where as he was created from fire. Consequently, Allah (SWT) condemned him to eternal ignominy for his defiance. He personifies evil and taken up the malicious role to tempt man away from the path of piety and to lead him to sinful deeds.

Man is the prime creation of Allah (SWT). He is gifted with the unique attribute of willpower to distinguish and choose between good and bad, and virtue and vice. By virtue of this decision-making power, he can rise in piety and righteousness above the angels and can descend to lowest depths of corruption and moral depravity outdoing even the *Iblis*. Despite being the most intelligent and knowledgeable creation of Allah (SWT), Man also tends to succumb to Satanic temptations. This is

1. Stand for *Subhanuhu wa Ta'ala*; meaning The Pure and Exalted.

2. Stands for “*Alaihi-ssallam*” meaning ‘May peace be upon him’ .

what had happened to Prophet Adam (AS). Consequently, he, together with *Hawwa* (Eve) and *Iblis*, was commanded to descend to Earth, which, thereafter, would be their abode till eternity: *"We said get you down all from here: and if, as is sure, there comes to you guidance from Me, whosoever follows my guidance on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve. But those who reject faith and belie our Signs, they shall be companions of the fire, they shall abide therein"* (Al-Baqarah; 2:38-39).

It was in fulfilment of this solemn promise that Allah (SWT) sent his messengers since the dawn of civilization and revealed to them His Guidance in order to lead mankind from darkness to enlightenment so that they may adhere to the path of piety and righteousness. The chain of prophets commenced with the descent of Prophet Adam (AS), climaxed and terminated with the Prophethood of Muhammad (AS)³. The prophets were commissioned among all the major communities and ethnic groups of the habitable world. They spoke the language of the people to whom they were sent so that the peoples would have the correct understanding of the divine message conveyed to them by their prophets (Ibrahim; 14:4). The basic mission of all the prophets, as highlighted in the Holy Qur'an, was to act as "the bearer of glad tidings and warner" so that the people are persuaded to refrain from sinful acts and encouraged to follow the straight path (*Sirāt-e-Mustaqeem*). According to an authentic tradition of Prophet Muhammad (AS), approximately 1,24,000 prophets were divinely commissioned by Allah (SWT) (Bukhari). However, only some of them are mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. This

³ Stands for 'Sallallahu 'Alaihi wo Sallam', meaning 'May Blessings of Allah and peace be upon him'.

Monograph attempts to highlight briefly the missions of some of these prophets.

Although in the series of Monographs on Islam and the Holy Qur'an, being published by the Mustafa Educational Network Trust (MEDNET), there is a monograph on Prophet Muhammad (AS), a synoptic description of his mission is included here to show the unity, commonality and continuity of all the Prophetic Missions. This will also bring out the uniqueness of Prophet Muhammad's (AS) message. It contains the essence of the teachings of all the preceding prophets, with the scope extending it to all the peoples of the world, since the Holy Qur'an was declared the Book of Guidance for all mankind (Al-e-Imran; 3:138) and the Prophet Muhammad (AS) himself was designated as "*Messenger to mankind.*" (An-Nisa; 4: 79).

CHAPTER – 1

PROPHETS BEFORE IBRAHIM (ABRAHAM) **(PEACE BE UPON THEM)**

PROPHET ADAM (AS)

Allah Almighty decided to create human beings and the first Man created by Him was Prophet Adam (AS). He created him from clay, breathed His Spirit into him and taught him the names of different objects/creatures, which He had created. Allah (SWT) displayed these before angels and *Iblis*, a Jinn, and asked them to name them. When they could not He asked Prophet Adam (AS) to name them which he promptly did. Allah (SWT) then commanded the angels and *Iblis* to prostrate before Prophet Adam (AS). All the angels instantly obeyed the command but *Iblis* did not (Al-Baqarah; 2:33-34). When asked as to why he did not prostrate, *Iblis* claimed his superiority over Prophet Adam (AS) because he was created of fire and Prophet Adam (AS) was created of clay. Allah (SWT) condemned *Iblis* to eternal ignominy. (Sa'd; 38:76-78).

One day when Prophet Adam (AS) awoke after sleep, he found *Hawwa*, a beautiful woman gazing at his face with tender eyes. Later on he learnt that Allah (SWT) had created her from his rib, while he was asleep, to provide solace to him and enable him to overcome his loneliness. (Al-Araf; 7:189). Allah (SWT) commanded Prophet Adam (AS) to dwell in Paradise: "*O Adam! Dwell you and your wife in the Paradise and eat both of you freely*

with pleasure and delight of things therein as wherever you will, but come not near this tree or you both will be of the Zalimeen (wrong doers)." (Al-Baqarah; 2:35).

Years went by and Prophet Adam (AS) and *Hawwa* forgot the warning, and on the constant temptation of *Iblis* that they would become immortal if they ate the fruit of that tree, they both eventually succumbed to the temptations and ate of the forbidden tree. Thus, they disobeyed their Lord and went astray.

Prophet Adam (AS) had hardly finished eating (the fruit) when he felt his heart contract, and he was filled with pain, sadness and shame. He discovered that he and his wife were naked, so they both started cutting tree leaves in Heaven with which to cover them. Allah the Almighty severely reprimanded Prophet Adam (AS) and Hawwah for their disobedience. Prophet Adam (AS) was extremely sad and Hawwah crying, both were sincerely repentant. Allah (SWT) accepted their repentance but commanded them together with *Iblis* to descend to earth, which henceforth would be their abode till the Day of Resurrection. They and their progenies will live and die there and shall be accountable to Allah (SWT) for their earthly deeds on the Day of Resurrection. (Al-A'raf; 7:24-25).

The pinnacle of earthly bliss was reached when Prophet Adam (AS) and Hawwah witnessed the birth of their first children, a set of twins, *Qabil* (Cain) and his sister. Later, she gave birth to a second set of twins, *Habil* (Abel) and his sister. The children grew up to be strong and healthy young adults. *Qabil* tilled the land, while *Habil* raised cattle.

Allah (SWT) revealed to Prophet Adam (AS), His first messenger on the earth, that he should marry each son to the twin sister of the other. He instructed his children accordingly but *Qabil* was displeased with the partner chosen for him, for *Habil's* twin-sister was not as beautiful as his own. This caused *Qabil* to envy his brother *Habil* and refuse to accept the choice. One day finding an opportunity, *Qabil* struck his brother with a stone, killing him instantly. "This was the first death and first criminal act committed by man on earth." (Ibn Kathir: Stories of the Prophet - p:29).

Qabil did not know what to do with his brother's dead body. He saw two ravens fighting, causing the death of one. The victorious bird dug a hole in the ground with its beak and claws and rolled down its victim into it and covered it with sand. *Qabil* followed the method and buried his brother's corpse. This was the first burial of man.

Prophet Adam (AS) was utterly grief-stricken by the loss of his two sons; one was dead, the other was won over by the devil. He died at the age of 930 years (Genesis; 5:5) but before his death he appointed his third son Prophet Sheeth (Seth) (AS) as his successor. He reassured his children that Allah (SWT) would send His prophets to guide them who would be united in one thing: the call to worship Allah (SWT) alone.

PROPHET IDRIS (ENOCK) (AS)

Allah (SWT) in the Holy Qur'an described Prophet Idris (Enoch) (AS) as a man of truth and a prophet. He was born and raised in Babylon. He followed the teachings and religion of Prophet Adam (AS) and his son Prophet Sheeth (AS). He was the fifth generation of the Prophet

Adam (AS). After Prophet Adam and Prophet Sheeth (AS), he was the third person to be given prophet-hood. He called the people back to his ancestor's religion but only a few listened to him while the majority turned away.

Prophet Idris (AS) and his followers left Babylon (Iraq) for Egypt. There he carried on with his mission calling people to what was just and fair, teaching them certain prayers and instructing them to keep fast on certain days and to give a portion of their wealth to poor. He was divinely raised upto heaven at the age of 82 (Sewharvi: Qasasul-Qur'an, vol.1, pp: 94-95). According to authentic traditions (Bukhari, Muslim) Prophet Muhammad (AS) met and greeted him in the 4th Heaven during his ascent to Heaven (*Me'raj*).

It is reported that he was the first to invent the basic form of writing (Ibn Kathir op.cit. p: 35). A few of his wise sayings are:

"Happy is he who looks at his own deeds and appoints them as pleaders to his Lord."

"None can show better gratitude for Allah's favours than he who shares them with others."

"Do not envy people for what they have, as they will only enjoy it for a short while."

"He who indulges in excess will not benefit from it."

"The real joy of life is to have wisdom."

PROPHET NUH (NOAH) (AS)

Prophet Nuh (AS) was the ninth generation of Prophet Adam (AS), the Father of Mankind. The lineage runs thus: Nuh, Ibn Lamik, Ibn Mitoshilkh, Ibn Idris (Enoch), Ibn Yard, Ibn Mahlabeel, Ibn Qinan, Ibn Anoush, Ibn Sheeth (Seth), Ibn Adam (AS).

According to Genesis 5 (New Revised Standard Version) Prophet Nuh (AS) was born 1056 years after Prophet Adam's (AS) creation (or after he left the Garden of Eden). Ibn 'Abbas narrated that Prophet Muhammad (AS) said; "The period between Adam and Nuh was ten centuries." (Bukhari)

For many generations, Prophet Nuh's (AS) people had been worshipping statues that they called gods. They believed that these gods would bring them good, protect them from evil and satisfy all their needs. They gave their idols names such as Waddan, Suwa'an and Nasran. Originally these were the names of good people who had lived among them. After their deaths, statues of them were created to keep their memories alive. After sometime, however, people began to worship those statues as gods. Later generations did not even know why they were created; they only knew that their parents had worshipped them. That is how idol worship developed. Since they had no understanding of Allah the Almighty, who would punish them for their evil deeds, they became cruel and immoral.

Allah (SWT) in His mercy sent His messenger Prophet Nuh (AS) to guide his people. He was an excellent speaker and a very patient man. He pointed out to his people the mysteries of life and the wonders of the universe. He explained to them that the ownership of the heavens and the earth belonged to the Divine Creator. He

clarified to them how the devil had deceived them for so long and that the time had come for the deceit to stop. Prophet Nuh (AS) spoke to them of glorification how Allah (SWT) had created man, provided him with sustenance, and blessed him with intelligence and understanding. He told them that idol worship was an insult to human intelligence and advised them not to worship anyone but Allah (SWT) and warned about the terrible punishment by Allah (SWT) if they continued in their evil ways.

Prophet Nuh's (AS) people were divided into two groups after his warning. His words touched the hearts of the weak, the poor and the humble and soothed their wounds with mercy. As for the rich, the strong, the mighty and the rulers, they looked upon the warning with contemptuous distrust. They believed they could be better off if things stayed as they were. Therefore, they started their war of words against him.

They accused Prophet Nuh (AS) of being only human like them. He asserted that, indeed, he was only a human being. Allah (SWT) sent a human being as messenger because humans inhabited the earth. If angels had inhabited it, Allah (SWT) would have sent an angel's messenger.

The confrontation between the polytheists and Prophet Nuh (AS) continued. The rulers thought at first that his call would soon fade on its own. When they found that his call attracted the poor, the helpless and common folks, they started verbally attacking and taunting him: "You are only followed by the poor, the meek and the worthless," Prophet Nuh (AS) refuted the arguments of the disbelievers with the noble knowledge of the prophets. It is the logic of intellect that rids itself of personal pride and

interests. When all the refutations of disbelievers collapsed and they had no more to say, they began behaving rudely and insultingly towards Prophet Nuh (AS). Despite this, he was cool and patient and continued appealing to his people hour after hour, day after day, year after year to believe in Allah (SWT). His mission continued for nine hundred and fifty years till his death. (Al-Ankabut; 29:14). It happened that every passing generation admonished the succeeding one not to believe Prophet Nuh (AS) and to wage war against him. Prophet Nuh (AS) noticed that the number of believers was not increasing which made him sad for his people but he never reached the point of despair. Allah (SWT) inspired him not to grieve for them, at which point he prayed that the disbelievers be destroyed: *"My Lord! Leave not one of the disbelievers on the earth. If You leave them, they will mislead Your slaves and they will beget none but wicked disbelievers."* (Nuh; 71:26-27). Allah (SWT) accepted his prayer and passed His judgment on the disbelievers in the form of the flood. Allah (SWT), ordered Prophet Nuh (AS) to build an ark with His knowledge and instructions and with the help of angels. (Hud; 11:37).

Prophet Nuh (AS) chose a place outside the city, far from the sea. He collected wood and tools and began to work day and night to build the ark. The people's mockery continued: "O Nuh! Does carpentry appeal to you more than prophet-hood? Why are you building an ark so far from the sea? Are you going to drag it to the water or is the wind going to carry it for you?" He replied: "You will come to know who will be put to shame and suffer." The ship was constructed and he awaited the command of Allah (SWT) who revealed to him that when water miraculously gushed forth from the oven at his house that would be the sign of the start of the flood, the sign for him to act. (Ibn Kathir: Stories of the Prophet - p:48).

The terrible day arrived when water gushed forth from the oven at Prophet Nuh's (AS) house. He hurried to open the ark and summoned the believers taking with him a pair, male, and female, of every type of animal, bird and insect. His wife was not a believer so she did not join him, neither did one of his sons, who was secretly a disbeliever but had pretended faith in front of him. Likewise, most of the people were disbelievers and did not go on board.

Water continued pouring from the sky and rising from the cracks in the earth. It is stated in the Genesis (part of Torah) that the ark was made of gofer (cypress) wood, its length was 300 cubits, width 50 cubits, height 30 cubits and it had 3 stories. Prophet Nuh (AS) was about 600 years old at the time of the flood. Further according to Genesis: "it rained for forty days and nights and the underground springs also burst open." (Genesis; 7:11). The land inhabiting the people of Prophet Nuh (AS) was submerged. The ark sailed among the waves and when the water diminished and the Decree of Allah (SWT) was fulfilled i.e. the destruction of the people of Prophet Nuh (AS), the ship rested on Mt. Judi. The flooded area stretched over the Ararat Mountains lying between the Euphrates and Tigris rivers from Dayar Bakr in the north to Baghdad in the south. (Sewharvi, op. cit. pp: 76, vol.1) With the issue of the divine command calm returned to earth, the water retreated and the dry land shone once again in the rays of the sun. The flood had cleared the earth of the disbelievers and polytheists.

PROPHET HUD (AS)

Many years ago, people known as 'Ad lived on the wind-swept hills between Yemen and Oman. They were physically well built and renowned for their

craftsmanship in the construction of tall buildings with lofty towers. They were powerful and wealthy but unfortunately had become arrogant and boastful. Their political rulers were unjust against whom none dared to raise his voice.

They worshipped Allah (SWT) but also other gods and had their idols. Allah (SWT) does not forgive this one sin. (An-Nisa; 4:48). To guide and discipline them, Allah (SWT) sent Prophet Hud (AS), who was one amongst them only, and handled his task with great resoluteness and patience.

According to Ibn Jarir, he was the great grandson of Prophet Nuh (AS) and was from a tribe called 'Ad who were Arabs living in Al-Ahqaf in Yemen. Some traditions claimed that Hud (AS) was the first person who spoke Arabic. (Ibn-Kathir, op.cit. p:54).

Prophet Hud (AS) condemned idol worship and admonished his people for doing that. He preached to his people that there is only one deity worthy of worship and that is Allah (SWT). Worship of Him and Him alone is obligatory on you. He created you, He provides for you and He is the One who will cause you to die. He gave you wonderful physiques and blessed you in many ways. So believe in Him and do not be blind to His favours, or the same fate that destroyed Prophet Nuh's (AS) people will overtake you.

With such reasoning, Prophet Hud (AS) hoped to instil faith in them, but they refused to accept his message. His people felt that they were the strongest on earth, so they became prouder and more obstinate. They ridiculed him when he told them that man would be brought back

to life after death. He explained that justice demands that there be a Day of Judgment because good are not always victorious in life. Sometimes evil overpowers good. He asserted that such crimes would not be spared.

When his people rejected his teachings Prophet Hud (AS) was pretty certain that divine punishment would be inflicted on the disbelievers among his people. Allah (SWT) punishes the disbelievers, no matter how rich, and powerful they may be. On one occasion, a drought spread throughout the land of 'Ad, for the sky no longer sent the rain. The sun scorched the desert sand looking like a disc of fire, which settled on people's heads.

Prophet Hud's (AS) people came to him asking, "What is this drought?" He answered: "Allah (SWT) is angry with you. If you believe in Him, He will accept you and the rain will fall making you richer and stronger." They mocked at him and became more arrogant, sarcastic and perverse in their belief.

A day came when they found the sky full of clouds. The weather changed suddenly from burning hot and dry to stinging cold blizzard that shook everything: trees, plants, tents, men and women. The wind increased day after day and night after night. It raged for eight days and seven nights: *"And as for 'Ad they were destroyed by a furious violent wind which Allah imposed on them for seven nights and eight days in succession, so that you could see men lying overthrown as if they were hollow trunks of palm tree!"* (Al-Haqqah; 69:6-7).

That violent gale did not stop until the entire region was in total ruins and its arrogant, obstinate idol worshippers were destroyed and buried in the sand of the desert. Only Prophet Hud (AS) and his followers remained

unharméd. They moved to adjoining Hadhramaut and lived there in peace, worshipping Allah (SWT), their true Lord.

PROPHET SALIH (AS)

He was the seventh generation of Prophet Nuh (AS). The lineage runs thus: Salih Ibn Ubeid, Ibn Maseh, Ibn Hader, Ibn Thamud, Ibn Ather, Ibn Eram, Ibn Nuh (AS).

He was commissioned to the prosperous tribe of Thamud who had adopted evil ways. He asked them to worship Allah (SWT) alone and not to associate partners with Him. While some of them believed him, the majority remained disbelievers and harmed him by words and deeds.

Prophet Salih (AS) was known for his wisdom, purity and virtuous deeds and was greatly respected by his people before he started receiving the divine revelations. Fearing that his followers would increase, the disbelievers insisted that he perform a miracle like producing a she-camel from the mountains, if he was a real messenger of Allah (SWT). They also committed that if this miracle were performed they would worship Allah (SWT) alone. This miracle was granted by Allah (SWT) to him and a huge and unique she-camel appeared from the direction of the mountain.

The people of Thamud gathered at their meeting place to witness this miracle. They were greatly surprised when the she-camel came out from the mountain rocks. Ibn Kathir narrates a number of ancient accounts of this she camel. "It was said that the she camel was miraculous because a rock in the mountain split open and it came

forth from it followed by its off spring. Other accounts said that the she-camel used to drink all the water in the walls in one day, and no other animal could approach the water. Still others claimed that the she-camel produced milk sufficient for all the people to drink on the day that it drank all the water." (Ibn Kathir; op. cit. pp:63-64). If it slept on a place, that place was abandoned by other animals. Thus, it was obvious that it was not an ordinary camel but one of Allah's (SWT) signs. The people of Thamud were clearly told by Prophet Salih (AS) not to harm the she-camel. Further that the camel and the people should drink water from the common well on alternate days. The people of Thamud were categorically warned that if she were harmed in any way the consequences would be disastrous for them. Despite the miraculous appearances of the camel and its existing among the people a majority continued in obstinacy and disbelief. A conspiracy started to be hatched against the camel by the disbelievers. They began complaining that the huge animal with its unusual qualities drank most of the water and frightened their cattle.

They laid a plot to kill the camel and sought the help of their women-folk to tempt the young and strong men to execute their evil design. Nine young men were finally tempted and agreed to kill the she-camel. Two of them were Masrai Ibn Mahraj tempted by Suduq bint Mahya, daughter of a rich noble family and Qudar Ibn Saheb whom Aniza an old woman promised to marry one of her beautiful daughter. These two and others could not resist the temptations and as the she-camel came to drink water at the well, Masrai shot it in the leg with an arrow. It tried to escape but hampered when it was struck by Qudar with a sword in the leg. As it fell to the ground, he pierced it with his sword. (Ibn Kathir; op.cit. p: 65).

The killers were given a hero's welcome and cheered with songs and poetry composed in their praise. In their arrogance they mocked Prophet Salih (AS), but he warned them: "Enjoy life for three more days then the punishment will descend upon you." He was hoping that they would see the folly of their ways and change their attitude before the three days were out. He thought they would seek pardon of Allah (SWT) and could receive His mercy; instead, they plotted to kill him and his household. Allah (SWT) saved him and his followers from their wicked plans. Three days after the warning, thunderbolts filled the air, followed by severe earthquakes, which destroyed the entire tribe of Thamud and their homeland. There was one terrific sound, which had hardly ended when the disbelievers among the people of Thamud were struck dead, one and all, at the same time. Neither their wealth nor military power nor their strong buildings built of solid rocks could protect them. As for the people who believed in his message, they were saved because they had already left the place. (Al-A'raf; 7:77-78).

It was narrated by Ibn 'Umar that while Prophet Muhammad (AS) was passing by Thamuds' houses on his way to the battle of Tabuk, he stopped with his people in the land of Thamud. The people fetched water from the wells from which the people of Thamud used to drink, prepared their dough (for baking) with this water and filled their water-skins. Prophet Muhammad (AS) asked his people to avoid entering the land of Thamud, saying: "I fear that you may be affected by what afflicted them, so do not enter upon them." (Bukhari and Ibn Kathir, p:68).

CHAPTER - 2

PROPHETS AFTER IBRAHIM (ABRAHAM) (AS)

PROPHET IBRAHIM (AS)

Prophet Ibrahim (AS) was born in a typical family of ancient times. The head of the family was not an ordinary idolater, but was one who totally rejected Allah (SWT) and who used to make idols with his own hands.

Prophet Ibrahim (AS) was endowed with spiritual understanding from an early age. Allah (SWT) enlightened his heart and mind and gave him wisdom from childhood. During early childhood, he observed that his father, Azer, made strange statues. One day he asked him about what he made. His father replied that he made statues of gods. Prophet Ibrahim (AS) was astonished and he spontaneously rejected the idea. Being a child, he played with such statues, sitting on their backs as people sit on the backs of mules and donkeys.

One day his father saw Prophet Ibrahim (AS) riding the statue of Murdukh. He became furious and warned his son not to play with it again. Prophet Ibrahim (AS) asked; "What is this statue, father? It has big ears, bigger than ours." His father answered. "It is Murdukh, the god of gods, son! These big ears show his deep knowledge." This made him laugh. He was only seven years old at that time.

Years passed and Prophet Ibrahim (AS) gained strength and intelligence. Since his childhood, his heart had been full of hatred for those idols. He could not understand how a sane person could make a statue and then worship what he had made. He noticed that those

idols did not eat, drink or talk and that they could not even turn themselves right side-up if someone turned them upside down. How could then people believe that such statues could harm or benefit them? What added to the problem was that his father wanted him to be a priest when he became adult. He wanted his son to revere those statues but Prophet Ibrahim (AS) never stopped displaying his hatred and disdain of them.

One night Prophet Ibrahim (AS) walked alone in the dark and sat resting his back against the wall of a cave in the mountain. He looked at the sky and saw planets and stars, which were worshipped by some people on the earth. His young heart was filled with pain. He considered what was beyond the moon and the stars [i.e. Allah (SWT)]. He was astonished that those celestial bodies, which appeared and disappeared, were being worshiped by men, who ought to be worshipping and obeying their own Creator, i.e. Allah (SWT): *"Thus did We show Ibrahim the kingdom of the heavens and the earth that he be one of those who have faith with certainty. When the night covered him over with darkness, he saw a star. He said: 'This is my Lord' but when it set, he said: 'I like not those that set.' When he saw the moon rising up, he said: 'This is my Lord.' But when it set he said: 'Unless my Lord guides me, I shall surely be among the erring people.' When he saw the sun rising (in splendour), he said: 'this is my Lord. This is the greatest of all,' but when the sun set, he said: 'O my people! I am indeed free from your (guilt) of giving partners to Allah. Verily I have turned my face towards Him Who has created the heavens and the earth and never shall I give partners to Allah.'"* (Al-An'am; 6:75-79).

Prophet Ibrahim's (AS) reasoning reveal the truth and then the conflict between him and his people began, for the worshippers of the stars and planets did not stand mute. They began arguing with and threatening him. The

most amazed and furious was his father for he not only worshipped idols but sculptured and sold them as well. Prophet Ibrahim (AS) felt that it was his duty as a good son to advise his father against that evil so that he could be saved from Allah's (SWT) punishment. But his father said: *"Do you reject my gods, O Ibrahim? If you stop not (this) I will indeed stone you. So get away from me before I punish you."* (Maryam; 19:46).

His father's harsh treatment did not stop Prophet Ibrahim (AS) from delivering the message of truth. Angry and sad to see people prostrate before idols, he was determined to stamp out those practices knowing fully well that he might suffer harm. To convince them that the idols could not harm him, he challenged: "I have already condemned them, if they had any power they would have harmed me by now."

Prophet Ibrahim (AS) left his father's house, deciding to do something about their state of disbelief, but did not reveal his course of action. On a festival day when the whole city had gone across the river for celebration, he went into the city's main temple carrying a sharp axe with him. He destroyed all statues in the temple except one on whose neck he hung the axe and left the temple. He had fulfilled his vow to show his people a practical proof of their foolishness in worshipping something other than Allah (SWT).

When the people returned, they were shocked to see their gods smashed to pieces, lying scattered all over the temple. They began to guess who could have done that to their idols and Prophet Ibrahim's (AS) name came to their minds. They demanded that he be arrested and tried. He did not resist, because he could show them in public for their foolish beliefs.

At the trial, they asked him if he was responsible for breaking the idols. Smiling, Prophet Ibrahim (AS) told them to ask the biggest idol, which was still intact, for he must be the culprit! They replied that he knew well that the idol could not speak or move which gave him the chance to prove the foolishness of worshipping those lifeless objects. However, their arrogance would not allow them to admit their foolishness. They were raging with anger. They decided to throw him into the biggest fire they could make. They dug a deep pit filled it with firewood and ignited it. They brought a catapult with which to cast him into the fire. The fire was ready with its flames reaching the sky. Then the chief priest gave his order to cast him into it. He was cast into the fire, but it did not burn him, for Allah (SWT) had issued His command: *"O Fire! Be you coolness and safety for Ibrahim"* (Al-Anbiya; 21:69).

The Chiefs, the priests and the crowd in the stadium sat watching the fire from a distance. It was burning their faces and nearly suffocating them. When the fire extinguished, they were greatly amazed to find Prophet Ibrahim (AS) coming out untouched by the fire. Their faces were black from the smoke, but his was bright with the light and Grace of Allah (SWT). The raging fire had become cool for him and had only charred the ropes, which held him. He walked out of the fire as if he was walking out of a garden.

The miracle ashamed the tyrants but it did not cool the fire of anger in their hearts. However, after the event many of the people followed Prophet Ibrahim (AS) although some kept their belief a secret for fear of harm or death at the hands of the rulers.

When king Nimrud, heard of Prophet Ibrahim's (AS) exit from the fire he became very angry. He feared that his proclaimed status of god-head was now challenged by an ordinary human being. He summoned Prophet Ibrahim (AS) to the palace and held a dialogue with him, which Allah (SWT) the Almighty has recounted in the Holy Qur'an: *"Have you not thought about him who disputed with Ibrahim about his Lord (Allah) because Allah had given him the kingdom? When Ibrahim said (to him); 'My Lord (Allah) is He who gives life and causes death.'* He said: *'I give life and cause death.'* Ibrahim said: *'Verily! Allah causes the sun to rise from the east; then you cause it to rise from the west.'* So the disbeliever was utterly defeated. And Allah guides not the people who are Zalimeen (wrong doers, unjust, etc.)" (Al-Baqarah; 2:258).

Prophet Ibrahim's (AS) fame spread throughout the kingdom. People talked about how he had been saved from the blazing fire and how he had debated with the king and left him speechless. However, in spite of his love and care for his people, they deserted him. Only one woman and one man of his people shared his belief in Allah (SWT); his wife and Prophet Lut (Lot) (AS), his nephew, who later became a prophet.

When Prophet Ibrahim (AS) realized that no one else was going to believe in his call, he decided to emigrate. He left his people and travelled with his wife and Prophet Lut (AS) to a city called Ur, then to another called Haran, and then to Palestine. From there he went to Egypt calling people to believe in Allah (SWT) wherever he travelled, judging fairly between people and guiding them to truth and righteousness.

Prophet Ibrahim's (AS) wife Sarah was sterile. She had been given by her father an Egyptian maidservant

called Hajirah. Prophet Ibrahim (AS) had aged and his hair gone grey after many years spent in calling people to Allah (SWT). Sarah thought that Prophet Ibrahim (AS) and she were lonely because she could not have a child. Therefore, she offered him her maidservant Hajirah in marriage. Hajirah gave birth to her son, Isma'il (Ishmael), when Prophet Ibrahim (AS) was about eighty years old.

While Prophet Ibrahim (AS) was approaching death, his heart was filled with inner peace contemplating about a blissful life after death. This thought of life after death suddenly raised in his mind the desire to know as to how Allah (SWT) will bring back the dead to life. Therefore, one day, Prophet begged Allah (SWT) to show him how He brought the dead back to life. Allah (SWT) commanded him to take four birds, cut them to pieces, mingle their body parts, divide them into four portions and place them on top of four different hills, then call back the birds in Allah's name. Prophet Ibrahim (AS) did as he was told. Immediately the mingled parts of the birds separated to join their original bodies in different places; and the birds flew back to him (Al-Baqarah; 2:260).

PROPHET ISMA'IL (AS)

Prophet Ibrahim (AS) asked his wife Hajirah, one day, to get her son and prepare for a long journey. They travelled until they reached a barren valley having no trees, water and no sign of life. He left them with a small quantity of food and water and walked away without replying to her repeated calls. Finally, she asked him; "Did Allah (SWT) command you to do so?" He replied; "Yes". Then the great lady said: "We are not going to be wasted since Allah (SWT), Who has commanded you is with us."

When the water in the water-skin had all been used up, Hajirah and her child Isma'il both became very thirsty. She left him for she could not endure the agony of her son and climbed up the nearest mountain, As-Safa, so that she might see somebody but could not see anyone. Then from As-Safa, she crossed the valley and reached the mountain of Al-Marwah. There also she could not see anybody. She kept running between Safa and Marwah several times. Prophet Muhammad (AS) said: "This is the source of the tradition of the 'Sa'ee' (one of the rituals of the Hajj pilgrimage) the going of people between Safa and Marwah." Then she saw water gushing out from that place. She made something like a basin around it with her hands and said 'Zam-Zam' meaning slow down.

A family from the tribe of Jurhum settled down there with the permission of Hajirah and the boy. Prophet Isma'il (AS), grew up and learned Arabic from them. When he reached the age of puberty, they made him marry a woman from amongst them.

When Prophet Ibrahim (AS) returned, he learnt that his wife, Hajirah, had already died. Seeing his father Prophet Ismail (AS) got up to welcome him and both greeted each other. Prophet Ibrahim (AS) said: "O Isma'il! Allah (SWT) has given me an order. Will you help me?" Prophet Isma'il (AS) said: "I will help you". Prophet Ibrahim (AS) said: "Allah (SWT) has ordered me to build a house here." Then they raised the foundation of the House (i.e. Ka'bah). Prophet Isma'il (AS) brought the stones while his father kept building. When the walls became higher, he brought a big stone and put it for his father, who stood over it and carried on building while he was handing him the stones. Then both of them kept on building the Ka'bah saying: "*O our Lord! Accept (this service) from us. Verily, You are the All-Hearer, the All Knower.*" (Al-Baqarah; 2:127).

Though Prophet Ibrahim (AS) resided in Palestine, he used to visit Ka'bah for circumambulation occasionally and also to meet Prophet Isma'il (AS). During one such visit he told Prophet Isma'il (AS): "...O my son! I have seen in a dream that I am slaughtering you (offering you in sacrifice to Allah), so look what do you think!" He said: O father! Do that which you are commanded, Insha-Allah you will find me patient." (As-Saffat; 37:102). When they had both submitted themselves [to the Will of Allah (SWT)] and Prophet Ibrahim (AS) had laid his son prostrate on his forehead for slaughtering, Allah (SWT) called out to him: "...O Ibrahim! You have fulfilled the dream (vision). Verily! Thus do we reward those who perform good deeds totally for Allah's sake. Verily that indeed was a manifest trial and we ransomed him with a great sacrifice (i.e. a ram)..." (As-Saffat; 37: 104-107).

The Qur'an does not reveal any details about the Prophetic missions of Prophet Isma'il (AS). However, at the time of the construction of Ka'bah, Prophet Ibrahim (AS) and Prophet Isma'il (AS) prayed for the birth of a prophet among the children of Prophet Isma'il (AS) who will teach them the concept of monotheism, recite to them verses from a book of guidance and bring them to the fold of Islam to worship only Allah (SWT). Prophet Muhammad (AS), according to authentic traditions, used to say that his prophetic mission was in response to this prayer of Prophet Ibrahim (AS) and Prophet Isma'il (AS) (Agreed upon)

PROPHET IS'HAQ (ISAAC) & PROPHET YA'QUB (JACOB) (AS)

One day, three angels descended to the earth, appeared in human shape before Prophet Ibrahim (AS) and greeted him. He took them as guests and offered roasted lamb to them. But they did not eat it and disclosed that

they were angels sent by Allah (SWT). One of them turned towards his wife (Sarah) and conveyed the good news of the birth of a son, Prophet Is'haq (Isaac) (AS) and of his progeny Prophet Ya'qub (Jacob) (AS). Sarah was astonished and said: *"Woe unto me! Shall I bear a child while I am an old woman, and here is my husband, an old man? Verily! This is a strange thing"*. They said: *"Do you wonder at the Decree of Allah? The Mercy of Allah and His Blessings be on you, O the family of (Ibrahim), surely He (Allah) is All-Praiseworthy, All Glorious."* (Hud; 11:72-73).

The Qur'an does not give details of Prophet Is'haq's (AS) life but reliable Qur'anic commentators mention that Prophet Ibrahim (AS) got Prophet Is'haq (AS) married to Rebecca, his niece living in Iraq. She gave birth to a set of twins, Al-Eis (Esau) and Prophet Ya'qub (Jacob) (AS) also known as Israel.

According to Jewish and Christians sources Prophet Ya'qub (AS) came to his maternal uncle, Laban, in the land of Haran, who had two daughters, Leah (Liu) and Rachel (Rahil). Prophet Ya'qub (AS) married both of them, one after another, as it was allowed according to Torah. Leah had seven sons and a daughter, Dinah, from Prophet Ya'qub (AS). The sons were Reuben (Rebel), Simeon (Shamun), Levi (Lewi) Judah (Yahudh), Issachar ('Isakher) Zebulun (Zablun) and Asher. Rachel gave birth to two sons. One of them was extremely handsome whom she named him Yusuf (Joseph) and the other was named Bin Yamin (Benjamin). Prophet Yaqub (AS) had two sons, named Dan and Nephtali, from Bilha, and one son, Gad, from Zilpah, who were slave girls given to him by his uncle and father-in-law, Laban.

PROPHET LUT (LOT) (AS)

Prophet Ibrahim (AS) left Egypt accompanied by his nephew Prophet Lut (AS) who then went to the city of Sodom (Sadum), which was on the western shore of the Dead Sea. The city was filled with evil. Its residents waylaid, robbed and killed travellers. Another common evil among them was homosexuality. This unnatural act later became known as Sodomy (after the city of Sodom). It was practiced openly and shamelessly. It was at the height of these crimes and sins that Allah (SWT) ordered Prophet Lut (AS) that he should advise the people to give up their indecent behaviour, but they were so deeply sunk in the immoral habits that they were deaf to Prophet Lut's (AS) preaching. Swamped in their unnatural desires, they refused to listen, even when Prophet Lut (AS) warned them of severe punishment by Allah (SWT). On the other hand, they mockingly challenged him to: "*...bring Allah's torment upon us if you are one of the truthful.*" (Al-Ankabut; 29:29).

Ultimately, Prophet Lut (AS) prayed to Allah (SWT) to grant him victory and destroy the corrupt. Allah (SWT) sent three angels in the garb of handsome men to Sodom. They became guests of Prophet Lut (AS) but his wife spread the news to all inhabitants of the town that three handsome men were the guests in her house. A large mob approached Prophet Lut's (AS) house demanding the handing over of those guests to them. Prophet Lut (AS) pleaded with them to leave the visitors alone and fear Allah's (SWT) punishment. He urged them to seek sexual fulfilment with their wives and was even prepared to marry his daughters to any of them for that is what Allah (SWT) has made lawful. Seeing him in this state of helplessness and grief, the guests said: "Do not be anxious or frightened, Prophet Lut (AS), for we are angels and these people will not be able to harm you". On hearing this, the mob s terrified and fled from his house, hurling threats at him as they left. The angels advised Prophet Lut (AS) to

leave his house before sunrise, taking with him all his family except his wife, who was a disbeliever.

Allah (SWT) had decreed that the city of Sodom should perish. An earthquake rocked the town. It was as if a mighty power had lifted the entire city and flung it down in one jolt. A storm of stones rained on the city. Everyone and everything was destroyed and their towns were erased from the face of the earth.

PROPHET SHU'AIB (AS)

The people of Madyan were Arabs who lived in the country of Cana'an. They were a trading community but greedy who did not believe that Allah (SWT) existed and led sinful lives. They gave short measure, praised their goods beyond their worth and hid their defects. They lied to their customers, thereby cheating them.

Allah (SWT) sent His Prophet Shu'ayb (AS) armed with many miracles. He preached to them, urging them to be mindful of the favours of Allah (SWT) bestowed upon them, and warning them of disastrous consequences if they persisted in their evil ways. He conveyed the message of Allah (SWT) to them that they should give full measures in their business deals and cause no loss to others; and weigh with the true and straight balance. They should not defraud people by reducing their things; nor do evil, spreading corruption and mischief in the land they lived. He preached to them to fear Allah (SWT) Who created them and earlier generations. But the people only mocked him and said: "You are only one of those bewitched. You are but a human being like us and verily, we think that you are one of the liars; so cause a piece of the heaven to fall on us, if you are truthful!" He remained

calm and reminded them of his kinship to them and that what he was doing was not for his personal gain but for their benefit and welfare.

The people seized the belongings of Prophet Shu'ayb (AS) and his followers and drove them out of the city. He turned to his Lord for help, and his prayer was granted. Allah (SWT) made them suffer terribly from scorching heat. While they were experiencing this scorching heat, they observed black clouds gathering in the sky. They thought it would bring rain and cool and rushed outside in the hope of enjoying the rainfall. Instead the clouds burst, hurling thunderbolts and fire. (Ash-Shu'ara; 26:187~189). They heard a thunderous sound from above, which caused the earth under their feet to tremble. (Al-A'raf; 7:91). They were thus punished by the dual calamity of a rain of cinders and ashes from above and a terrible earthquake from below. Thus, the evildoers perished in the state of horror.

PROPHET YUSUF (JOSEPH) (AS)

This is the most detailed and fascinating story in the Holy Qur'an, involving both human weaknesses such as jealousy, hatred, pride, passion, deception, intrigue, cruelty, terror, as well as patience, loyalty, bravery, nobility and compassion. The entire story is contained in one *Surah-Yusuf*.

The story begins with a dream and ends with its interpretation. Prophet Yusuf (AS) had a pleasant dream in his sleep, filled with excitement ran to his father, Prophet Ya'qub (AS), to relate it to him thus: "O my father! I saw (in my dream) eleven stars and the sun and the moon. I saw them prostrating themselves to me." His father's face lit up. He foresaw that Prophet Yusuf (AS) would fulfil Prophet Ibrahim's (AS) prophecy that his offspring would spread Allah's message to mankind. However, he warned him against telling about the dream to his brothers in view of their jealous nature. (Yusuf; 12:4-5).

Prophet Yusuf (AS) was eighteen years old, very handsome, robust and with a gentle temperament. His younger brother, Binyamin, was also pleasant. Both were from Prophet Ya'qub's (AS) second wife, Rachel. Because of their refined qualities, the father loved these two sons more than he loved his other children from Leah and to protect them he kept them busy with work in the house garden. His brothers felt jealous of their father being very fond of him. They plotted either to kill him or send him away to a distant land so that they could stand a better chance of receiving their father's affection.

One day they persuaded their father to send Prophet Yusuf (AS) with them so that he could enjoy and

play with them and assured their father that they would take good care of him. Prophet Ya'qub (AS) reluctantly allowed him to go with his brothers. On leaving home, the brothers went to a deep and dark well, as they had planned, on the pretext of drinking water and pushed Prophet Yusuf (AS) into the well. Then they killed a sheep and soaked his shirt in its blood. They returned home crying loudly and told their father that they went racing with one another and left Prophet Yusuf (AS) by their belongings and a wolf devoured him. They showed his shirt soaked in blood.

Deep down in his heart Prophet Ya'qub (AS) knew that his beloved son was still alive and that his other sons were lying. He held the bloodstained shirt in his hands, spread it out and remarked: "What a merciful wolf! He ate up my beloved son without tearing his shirt!" (Ibn Kathir op.cit. p:135). The broken-hearted father burst into tears and did not believe the cooked up tale narrated by his sons. However, he said, "For me patience is most fitting, and it is Allah (SWT) alone whose help can be sought against that which you assert." (Yusuf, 12:18).

In the dark well, Prophet Yusuf (AS) prayed earnestly to Allah (SWT) for rescue from the agony. His Creator was testing him with a great misfortune in order to infuse in him a spirit of patience and courage. Prophet Yusuf (AS) surrendered himself to the Will of his Lord.

A caravan of merchants halted at that very well for water. A man lowered in his bucket. He grabbed it firmly before it could land in the water. As the man began to haul he felt the load unusually heavy. He held the rope tightly and shouted to his friends: "Better give me a hand, fellows! Looks like I found real treasure in the well!" His

companions rushed to the well and helped him to pull out the stranger holding onto the rope. Standing before them was a healthy handsome youth, beaming with an angelic smile. They saw in him a handsome prize, for money was all that mattered to them. Immediately, they clapped iron shackles to his feet and took him to Egypt, far away from his beloved homeland of Cana 'an. (Ibn Kathir: op. cit. p:136).

All over the Egyptian city the news spread that an unusually handsome robust young slave was on sale. The auctioneer had a field day as the bidding went wild, each buyer trying to outbid the other. Eventually, the 'Aziz, the Chief Minister of Egypt, outbid all the others and took him to his palace. He told his wife: "*....Make his stay comfortable, may be he will profit us or we shall adopt him as a son.....*" (Yusuf; 12:21).

Love for Prophet Yusuf (AS) was enshrined into the heart of the man who bought him. He told him not to betray the trust; he will not be ill treated if he behaved himself. Prophet Yusuf (AS) thanked him and promised to be loyal. He was obedient and with his pleasant manners and charming behaviour won everybody's heart. The purity of his inner soul and heart reflected on his face, and added to his charming personality. But he was always humble and polite.

Prophet Yusuf (AS) was soon confronted with a problem. The Chief Minister's wife, Zulaikha, could not resist the handsome Prophet Yusuf (AS). She fell in love with him and it was painful for her to be so close to a man, yet be unable to hold him. Once finding him alone she tempted him but he refused. His refusal only heightened her passion. As he moved to the door to escape, she ran after him and caught hold of his shirt. In her tugging, she

tore his shirt and held the torn piece in her hand. They reached the door together. It opened suddenly; there stood her husband and a cousin of her. The sly woman immediately changed her tone to anger and accused Prophet Yusuf (AS) of molesting her. Though bewildered, he denied it and blamed Zulaikha for tempting to seduce him. The Aziz questioned his wife and Prophet Yusuf (AS) and consulted Zulaikha's cousin. He was an honest and wise man that listened to both accounts and opined that the proof was in the shirt. If it was torn at the front, it meant that he had tried to molest her, as the torn shirt would then be a proof of self-defence. And if the shirt were torn at the back, it would mean that she was the one who tempted him. It was found that the shirt was torn at the back. The evidence clearly showed that she was guilty. The wise and just 'Aziz apologized to Prophet Yusuf (AS) for his wife's indecency. He also asked her to beg him forgiveness for accusing him falsely.

The news of the incident spread among the ladies of Egypt. Their gossips distressed Zulaikha. She honestly believed that it was not easy for any woman to resist a man as handsome as Prophet Yusuf (AS). In order to prove her helplessness, she planned to subject other women to the same temptation she faced; she invited all noble ladies to a lavish banquet. After finishing their dinner, the guests began cutting their fruits (desert). At that very moment, she summoned Prophet Yusuf (AS) to make his appearance. He entered the hall gracefully, his gaze lowered. Zulaikha called him by his name and he raised his head. The guests were astonished and dumbfounded. They cut their palms instead of cutting fruits without even realising it. His presence at the scene produced such a stunning effect on the ladies that blood flowed without their realising it and feeling any pain. Then Zulaikha

stood up and announced; "This is the one for whom I have been blamed. I do not deny that I tempted him. You have also been enchanted by him, and see what has happened to your hands. I have tempted him, and if he refuses he shall be imprisoned." Hearing this Prophet Yusuf (AS) quietly prayed to Allah (SWT): *"O my Lord! Prison is more to my liking than that to which they invite me.... So his Lord answered his invocation and turned away from him their plot. Verily, He is the All Hearer, the All-Knower."* (Yusuf; 12:33-34). That evening, Zulaikha convinced her husband that the only way to save her honour was to put Prophet Yusuf (AS) in prison.

The prison was another test for Prophet Yusuf (AS). During this period, Allah (SWT) blessed him with an extraordinary gift: the ability to interpret dreams. At about the same time two other men landed in the prison. One was the cupbearer of the king the other was the king's cook. Both men had vivid dreams and they were anxious to have them correctly interpreted. The king's cook dreamt that he stood in a place with bread on his head and birds were eating the bread. The cupbearer dreamt that he was serving wine to the king. The two narrated their dreams to Prophet Yusuf (AS) and asked him to explain their meaning and significance.

Prophet Yusuf (AS) agreed to interpret their dreams, but before that, he praised Allah (SWT), who blessed him with knowledge. He asserted that he has nothing to do with the religion of those who have no faith in Allah (SWT) and deny the Day of Judgement. He said that he followed the monotheistic religion of his forefathers; Prophets Ibrahim, Is'haq and Ya'qub (AS). It is not just to assign partners to Allah (SWT) Who has blessed mankind with grace but majority are thankless. *"O my prison-mates! Are many sundry gods better than one Allah, the*

Almighty. Those whom you worship besides Allah (SWT) are but mere names, which your ancestors have invented. Allah (SWT) has not decreed it. He has ordained that you all should worship Him alone which is the right religion but majority does not know." (Yusuf, 12:39-40) Then he said that the cook would be crucified until he died and the cupbearer would return to the service of the king. He told the cupbearer to remember him to the king and to say that an innocent person called Prophet Yusuf (AS) is wrongly imprisoned. What Prophet Yusuf (AS) predicted did happen: the cook was crucified and the cupbearer returned to the palace, but Satan made him forget to mention Prophet Yusuf's (AS) name to the king. Therefore, he remained in prison for a few years but was patient, and always praying to Allah (SWT).

Once when the king was asleep, he saw seven lean cows devoured seven fat cows, that seven ears of crop are green, and seven dry. The king awoke frightened, not knowing what all that meant. He sent for the sorcerers, priests and ministers and told them his dream. They told him that it was just a nightmare and cannot be interpreted. (Yusuf; 12:43-44) The cupbearer heard about it and was reminded of Prophet Yusuf (AS). He ran to the king to tell him about Prophet Yusuf (AS) who alone could interpret the dream correctly. The king sent the cupbearer to ask Prophet Yusuf (AS) to interpret the dream. Prophet Yusuf (AS) said: "There will be seven years of abundance. If the land is properly cultivated, there will be an excess of good harvest, more than the people will need. This should be stored. Thereafter, seven years of famine will follow, during which time the excess grain could be used. He also suggested that during the famine they should save some grain to be used for seed for the next harvest." He then added: "After seven years of drought there will be one year during which the water will be plentiful. If the water

is properly used, grapevines and olive trees will grow in abundance, providing plenty of grapes and olive oil." (Yusuf; 12:47-49).

The cupbearer hurried to the palace with the good news. The king was fascinated by Prophet Yusuf's (AS) interpretation, commanded that he be set free from prison, and brought to him at once. But Prophet Yusuf (AS) refused to leave until his innocence was established regarding the ladies who had cut their hands. The king summoned Zulaikha and the wives of the ministers and enquired about the facts of the story of Prophet Yusuf (AS). Zulaikha boldly confessed that she had lied and told the truth to the king that she had tempted him but he had refused. Other ladies also confirmed his innocence before all. The king informed Prophet Yusuf (AS) that his innocence was established and ordered him to come to the palace for an interview. The king recognized his noble qualities and offered him a high position. Prophet Yusuf (AS) asked to be made the controller of granaries, so that he could save the nation's harvest and thereby safeguard it during the anticipated drought to rescue hungry nations.

During the seven good years, Prophet Yusuf (AS) had full control over the cultivation, harvesting and storage of crops. During the following seven years, drought followed and famine spread throughout the region, including Cana'an, his homeland. He advised the king that as his kingdom was blessed with surplus grain, he should sell grain to the needy nations at a fair price. The king agreed and the good news spread all over the region.

Prophet Ya'qub (AS) sent his sons, except Binyamin, to Egypt to purchase provisions. When they called on Prophet Yusuf (AS) to purchase their needs he

recognized his brothers but they could not place him. He received them warmly. After supplying them with provisions, he asked where they had come from. They explained: "We are eleven brothers, the children of a noble prophet. The youngest is at home tending to the needs of our aging father." On hearing, this Prophet Yusuf's (AS) longing for his beloved parents and his loving brother Binyamin swelled up in his heart but he managed to conceal his feelings. He merely said to them; "If what you say is true then bring your brother as proof and I will reward you with double rations. But do not come back if you do not bring him with you." As an inducement that they may return with his brother, he ordered his servant to place secretly the purse, with the money they had paid, into one of their grain sacks. (Yusuf; 12:58-60).

After sometime when they had no more grain, Prophet Ya'qub (AS) asked his sons to travel to Egypt for more grains. The sons reminded him of the warning the Egyptian official had given them. They could not go to Egypt without Binyamin to which he was most unwilling. Prophet Ya'qub (AS), ultimately agreed but not before he extracted a pledge from them saying: "I will not send him with you unless you give me a pledge in Allah's (SWT) name that you shall bring him back to me as safely as you take him." The brothers went on the long journey to Egypt, taking good care of Binyamin.

In Egypt, Prophet Yusuf (AS) welcomed them heartily, prepared a feast for them, and seated them in pairs. He arranged to sit next to his beloved brother Binyamin. There, at an opportune time, he secretly revealed his identity to Binyamin but asked him to let it be a secret between them only for the time being. (Ibn Kathir)

Next day, while their bags were being filled with grain to load on to the camels, Prophet Yusuf (AS) ordered one of his attendants to place the king's golden grain measuring cup, into Binyamin's saddlebag. When the brothers were ready to move, the courtier announced that the king's golden cup was missing and the guilty would have to stay back as punishment. When the guards searched the bags of the caravan, they found the golden cup in Binyamin's baggage and therefore he was held up there. The other brothers had to leave for home (Cana'an) and on arrival there they told their father the reason why they could not bring back Binyamin. Prophet Ya'qub (AS) was overwhelmed with sorrow and tears rolled down his eyes. He said: "Patience be with me, perhaps Allah (SWT) will return all of them to me. He is Most Knowing, Most Wise." Weeping all those years for his beloved son Prophet Yusuf (AS) - and now one more of his best sons had been snatched from him - he almost lost his sight.

Prophet Ya'qub (AS) consistently asked his sons to search for Prophet Yusuf (AS) and Binyamin. Meanwhile Cana'an was again afflicted by a severe drought. Prophet Yusuf's (AS) brothers were forced to come back to him. Their father exhorted them not to despair of Allah's (SWT) mercy. The sons went back to Egypt, approached Prophet Yusuf (AS) and begged for alms appealing to his heart, reminding him that Allah (SWT) rewards almsgivers. At that moment, Prophet Yusuf (AS) spoke to them in their native tongue and revealed his identity: *"Do you know what you did with Yusuf and his brother, when you were ignorant." They said: 'Are you indeed Yusuf?' He said: 'I am Yusuf, and this is my brother (Binyamin). Allah has indeed been Gracious to us. Verily, he who fears Allah with obedience to Him (by abstaining from sins and evil deeds, and by performing righteous good deeds) and is patient, then surely, Allah makes not the reward of the good doers to be lost.'* They said: *'By Allah!*

Indeed Allah has preferred you above us and we certainly have been sinners.” (Yusuf; 12:89-91)

Prophet Yusuf (AS) embraced them and together they wept with joy. It was not possible for him to leave his responsible office without proper replacement, so he advised his brothers to go with his shirt and cast it on the face of his father so that he may regain his sight and bring to him all their family.

When the bearers of the glad tiding arrived, they cast the shirt over Prophet Ya'qub's (AS) face and he became clear sighted. Then the whole family went to Egypt and were reunited with Prophet Yusuf (AS) who raised his parents to the throne and said: *“...Oh my father! This is the interpretation of good dream of old. My Lord has made it come true! He was indeed good to me, when he took me out of the prison and brought you all from the desert after Satan had sown discord between me and my brothers...”* (Yusuf; 12:100).

It may be noted that there was no feeling of revenge and vengeance in heart and mind of Prophet Yusuf (AS).

PROPHET AYYUB (JOB) (AS)

Prophet Ayyub's (AS) lineage was connected with Prophet Is'haq (AS), son of Prophet Ibrahim (AS). Allah (SWT) praised His worshipper: *“...Truly! We found him patient. How excellent (a) slave! Verily, he was ever oft-returning in repentance (to Us)!”* (Dhād; 38:44). He was repentant, remembering Allah (SWT) with thankfulness, patience and steadfastness. This was the cause of his salvation and the secret of Allah's (SWT) mercy and praise being showered on him.

Iblis planned to tempt Prophet Ayyub (AS) to corruption and disbelief, and tried to distract him from his prayers by whispering to him about good things in life, but Prophet Ayyub (AS) was a true believer and would not let evil thoughts tempt him. This disturbed *Iblis* and he complained to Allah (SWT) that although Prophet Ayyub (AS) was continuously glorifying Him, he was not doing so out of sincerity but to safeguard his wealth. If his wealth is taken away his tongue will no longer mention His name and his praying will stop. Allah (SWT) told *Iblis* that Prophet Ayyub (AS) was one of His most sincere devotees. But to prove to *Iblis*, the depth of Prophet Ayyub's (AS) sincerity and patience Allah (SWT) allowed him to do whatever he and his helpers wished with Prophet Ayyub's (AS) wealth. *Iblis* was very happy and destroyed Prophet Ayyub's (AS) cattle, servants and farms until he was left with no possessions. Then he came to him in the guise of a wise old man and said: "If Allah (SWT) had the capacity to prevent harm, then He would have protected your wealth." True to his belief, he replied: "What Allah (SWT) has taken away from me belongs to Him. I was only its trustee for a while. He gives to whom He wills and withholds from whom He wills." With these words, Prophet Ayyub (AS) again prostrated to his Lord.

On seeing this *Iblis* felt frustrated so he again addressed Allah (SWT): "I stripped him of his possessions but he placed great store by his children. The real test of a parent is through his children. You will then see how Prophet Ayyub (AS) rejects you." Allah (SWT) granted *Iblis* authority, but warned him that it would not reduce Prophet Ayyub's (AS) faith in his Lord nor his patience.

Iblis shook the foundation of Prophet Ayyub's (AS) house and sent the building crashing killing all his children. Then he went to him as a sympathetic man and

said; "Your Lord is not rewarding you for all your prayers." But again, Prophet Ayyub (AS) disappointed him by replying: "Allah (SWT) sometimes gives and sometimes takes. Whether a thing is beneficial or harmful to me, I will remain firm in my belief and remain thankful to my Creator." At this *Iblis* was extremely vexed.

Iblis again called on Allah (SWT): "O my Lord! Ayyub's (AS) wealth is gone, his children are dead, but he is healthy in body. Grant me authority over his body so that I may weaken it." Allah (SWT) wanted to teach *Iblis* a lesson that Prophet Ayyub (AS) was a devoted servant of his Lord, so He granted this third request but placed a condition that the authority would be on his body but not over his soul. Armed with this new authority, *Iblis* afflicted Prophet Ayyub's (AS) body with disease until it was reduced to mere skin and bone causing severe pain. But despite this suffering, he remained firm in his faith. As Allah's (SWT) true servant, he did not despair but remained hopeful of His mercy. *Iblis* reminded Prophet Ayyub's (AS) wife of the days when Prophet Ayyub (AS) had good health, wealth and children. Suddenly the painful memory of years of hardship overcame her and she burst into tears. She said to Prophet Ayyub (AS): "How long are you going to bear this torture from our Lord? Are we to remain without wealth, children or friends forever? Why don't you call upon Allah (SWT) to remove this suffering?" Prophet Ayyub (AS) sighed and understood that such complaint was based on the whispering of *Iblis* into her ears. He asked her how long he had enjoyed good health. She replied; "For eighty years." Then Prophet Ayyub (AS) asked her how long was he suffering like that? She replied; "For seven years." Prophet Ayyub (AS) then told her that he had not suffered longer than the years of good health he had enjoyed. He told her: "In that case I

am ashamed to call on my Lord to remove the hardship.” However, Prophet Ayyub (AS) vowed to beat her after recovery for succumbing to satanic temptations.

Prophet Ayyub (AS) turned to Allah (SWT), not to complain but to seek His mercy. Allah (SWT) answered his call and removed the distress inflicted on him. Allah (SWT) said to him: *“Strike the ground with your foot. This is a spring of water to wash in, cool and a (refreshing) drink. And We gave him (back) his family and along with them the like thereof, as a Mercy from Us and a reminder for those who understand.”* (Dhād; 38:42-43). On full recovery, he also fulfilled his vow to beat his wife with a tinge of grass as instructed by Allah (SWT): *“And take in thy hand a bundle of thin grass and strike therewith, and break not thy oath...”* (Dhād; 38:44).

PROPHET DHUL-KIFL (AS)

In the Glorious Qur’an, along with other prophets, it is mentioned that Prophet Dhul-Kifl (AS) was a prophet and was among those who observed patience. (Taha; 21:85). However, some of the Qur’anic commentators assumed that he was not a prophet but that he was righteous and strictly just person.⁴

Ibn Jarir narrated that he supported his people to fulfil their needs and administered justice among them. That is why he was called ‘Dhul-Kifl’, which literally means “possessor of or giving a double requital or portion.” He is again mentioned in the Holy Qur’an along with Prophet Isma’il (AS) as a blessing to their people:

4. Maulana Hifzur Rahman Sewharvi, in his book Qasas ul-Qur’an has not included Dhul Kifl among Prophets but Ibn Kathir considers him a Prophet of Allah. We have followed Ibn Kathir. ‘Abdullah Yusuf Ali suggests that he was presumably the same as Ezekiel in the Old Testament in Note 2743 (Al-Anbiya; 21:85).

"...And commemorate Isma'il, Elisha, and Dhu-al Kifl; each of them was of the company of good." (Dhād; 38:48).

PROPHET YUNUS (JONAH) (AS)

The inhabitants of the town of Nineveh were idolaters who lived a shameless life. Prophet Yunus (AS), also known as 'Dhan-Nun' was sent to teach them the worship of Allah (SWT). The people disliked this interference in their ancestral way of worship, so they argued: "We and our forefathers have worshipped these gods for many years and no harm has come to us." He tried his best to convince them of the foolishness of idolatry and the goodness of Allah's (SWT) laws, but they ignored him. Prophet Yunus (AS) was disheartened and left Nineveh fearing that Allah's (SWT) anger would soon follow.

Hardly had he left the city when the skies began to change colour and looked as if they were on fire. The people were filled with fear by the sight. They recalled the destruction of the people of 'Ad, Thamud and Prophet Nuh (AS). Was theirs to be a similar fate? Slowly faith penetrated their hearts. They all gathered in the mountains and started to beseech Allah (SWT) for His mercy and forgiveness. The mountains echoed with their cries. It was a momentous hour, filled with sincere repentance. Allah (SWT) removed His wrath and showered His blessings once again. When the threatening storm was lifted, they prayed for the return of Prophet Yunus (AS) so that he could guide them.

Meanwhile, Prophet Yunus (AS) had boarded a small ship with other passengers. In the night, suddenly the sea changed. A horrible storm blew as if it were going to split the ship into pieces. The tempest continued and

the captain of the ship asked the crew to lighten the ship's heavy load. They threw their luggage over board, but it was not enough. Their safety lay in reducing the weight further, so they decided among themselves to lighten their load by removing at least one person. It was decided to draw lots with all the passengers' names. It was done three times and each time Prophet Yunus's (AS) name appeared. Prophet Yunus (AS) realised that it was Allah's (SWT) Will for he had abandoned his mission without His consent. He stood at the edge of the ship in that dark night and kept mentioning Allah's (SWT) name as he jumped into the raging sea. A big fish found him floating on the waves, swallowed him into its spacious stomach, and shut its ivory teeth on him as if they were white bolts locking the door of his prison. Because of this, he has also been addressed as '*Dhan-Nun*', The man of the Fish, in the Holy Qur'an (Al-Anbiya; 21:87). Three layers of darkness enveloped him, one above the other; the darkness of the night, the darkness of the stomach of the fish and the darkness of the bottom of the sea. Prophet Yunus (AS) imagined himself to be dead, but his senses became alert when he found he could move. He knew that he was alive and imprisoned in the midst of three layers of darkness. He continued praying to Allah (SWT), while still in the belly of the fish repeating the invocation: "*...There is no god but Thou: Glory to Thee; I was indeed wrong!*" (Al-Anbiya; 21:87).

Almighty Allah (SWT) heard the sincere repentance of Prophet Yunus (AS) and was touched by his invocation in the stomach of the fish. Allah (SWT) commanded the fish to surface and eject him onto an Island. The fish ejected him onto a remote island. His body was inflamed because of the acids inside the fish's stomach. He was ill and sun's rays burned his body so that he was on the verge of screaming in pain. However, he endured the pain

and continued to repeat his invocation to Allah (SWT). Almighty Allah (SWT) caused a vine to grow to considerable length over him for protection. Then Allah the Exalted caused Yunus (AS) to recover and forgave him. Allah (SWT) told him that had it not been for his sincere repentance and continuous praying, he would have stayed in the stomach of the fish till the Day of Judgement.

Gradually, Prophet Yunus (AS) regained strength and returned to his hometown Nineveh. The entire population turned out to welcome him. They informed him that they had turned to believe in Allah (SWT). Together they followed him in a prayer of thanks to their Merciful Lord.

PROPHETS MUSA (MOSES) AND HAROON (AARON) (AS)

The Pharaoh who ruled Egypt was a tyrant, oppressing the descendants of Prophet Ya'qub (AS) known as the Children of Israel (*Bani Israel*). He used every means to demean and disgrace them. They were kept in bondage and forced to work for him for small wages or nothing.

The Pharaoh saw in his dream a fire, which came from Jerusalem and burned the houses of Egyptians but did not do harm to Children of Israel. He asked his priests and magicians the interpretation of his dream. They said it meant that a boy would be born to Children of Israel at whose hands the Egyptians would perish. The Pharaoh commanded that all male children of *Bani Israel* be killed. In order to avoid losing manpower to work for Egyptian economy he modified his order that males should be killed in one year but spared to live the next year. Prophet Musa's (AS) mother was pregnant with Prophet Haroon

(AS) in a year that boys were to be spared. Thus, she gave birth to the child publicly and safely.

During a year in which boys were to be slain, she gave birth to Prophet Musa (AS), thus his birth caused her great anxiety and fear. She was afraid he would be slain, so she nursed him secretly. Allah (SWT) revealed to Prophet Musa's mother: *"We inspired the mother of Musa, saying: Suckle him (Musa) but when you fear for him, then cast him into the river and fear not, nor grieve. Verily! We shall bring him back to you and shall make him one of (Our) Messengers."* (Al-Qasas; 28:7). She nursed him, placed him into a basket and put the basket into the river as divinely instructed. She instructed her daughter to follow the course of the basket and to report to her. As she followed the floating basket along the riverbank, she found herself in the palace because the basket came to rest at the riverbank, which skirted the king's palace. The servants of the palace took the basket with the baby to the Pharaoh and his queen. When the queen beheld the lovely infant, Allah (SWT) instilled in her a strong love for the baby. She was good hearted but sad because she was infertile and desired to have a son. She requested her husband: "Let me keep the baby and let him be a son to us." The Pharaoh was amazed to see her intense liking for the baby and gave his consent.

The queen summoned a few wet-nurses to suckle the baby but he would not take any of their breasts. Seeing the queen's anxiety, Prophet Musa's (AS) sister blurted that she knew just the mother who would suckle the child affectionately. The queen ordered her to rush and fetch the woman she was talking about. She lost no time and brought the woman, who was in fact Prophet Musa's (AS) mother. As the child was put to her breast, he immediately started suckling. The Pharaoh was astonished and asked

the woman. "Who are you? This child has refused to take any other breast but yours." Had she told the truth the Pharaoh would have known that the child was an Israelite and would have killed him instantly. However, Allah (SWT) gave her inner strength and she replied; "I am a woman of sweet milk and sweet smell, and no child refuses me." This answer satisfied the Pharaoh. From that day onward she was appointed as Prophet Musa's (AS) wet-nurse.

Allah (SWT) had granted Prophet Musa (AS) good health, strength, knowledge and wisdom. The weak and oppressed turned to him for protection and justice. One day he saw two men fighting. One was an Israelite who was being beaten by the other, an Egyptian. On seeing Prophet Musa (AS), the Israelite begged him for help. Prophet Musa (AS) struck a heavy blow on the Egyptian who died on the spot. He did not intend to kill him and pleaded with Allah (SWT) to forgive him. The next day he saw the same Israelite involved in another fight. Prophet Musa (AS) went to him and said, "You seem to be a quarrelsome fellow." Fearing that he might strike him, the Israelite warned Prophet Musa (AS): "Would you kill me as you killed that Egyptian yesterday?" The Egyptian with whom the Israelite was fighting overheard the remark and reported against Prophet Musa (AS) to the authorities. Prophet Musa (AS) knew that the penalty for killing an Egyptian was death. He was also informed by a well-wisher that the authorities had decided to try and kill him. So he left Egypt in a hurry.

He travelled in the direction of Midian, the nearest town between Egypt and Syria. The hot sand burnt his feet but fearing the pursuit of the Pharaoh's men he forced himself to march on. He travelled for eight nights, hiding

during the day and reached a waterhole outside Midian, where shepherds were watering their flocks. He was suffering from hunger and fatigue. He went to the spring to quench his thirst where he saw two young women holding back their sheep from mixing with the others. Prophet Musa (AS) sensed that the women were in need of help. Forgetting his thirst, he drew nearer to them and asked if he could help them in any way. He watered their sheep and returned to sit in the shade of a tree.

The young ladies returned home earlier than usual and told about the incident to their father, who sent one of them to invite the stranger to his house. She approached him shyly and conveyed her father's message. He welcomed the invitation and accompanied her to her father. He introduced himself and told the old man about the misfortune that had befallen him and compelled him to flee from Egypt. The old man comforted him and said; "Fear not, you have escaped from the wrong-doers." One of the daughters suggested to her father that he employ him, as they needed someone like him. He said to Prophet Musa (AS): "I wish to marry you to one of my daughters on condition that you agree to work for me for a period of eight or ten years." The offer suited Prophet Musa (AS) well and he married the older daughter Safoora and looked after the old man's animals for ten long years.

At the end of this period, Prophet Musa (AS) left Midian with his wife Safoora and a son and travelled through the desert. At night, they noticed a fire in the distance towards Mt. Toor. "I will enquire about the way or fetch a firebrand to warm you," he said to his wife. As he neared the fire, he heard a sonorous voice from a tree calling him: "O Musa, I am Allah (SWT), the Lord of the Universe." He again heard: "And what is in your hand, O

Musa?" Prophet Musa (AS) answered: "This is my staff on which I lean, and with which I beat down branches for my sheep, and for which I find other uses." The same voice commanded him: "Throw down your staff!" He did so, and the staff became a wriggling snake. Prophet Musa (AS) got scared and started retreating. Then Allah (SWT) commanded him to hold the snake and it would return to its former state." The snake changed back into his staff as Prophet Musa (AS) touched it. His fear subsided and was replaced by peace, for he realized that he was witnessing the force of divine power. Next, Allah (SWT) commanded him to thrust his hand into his robe at the armpit. When he pulled it out, the hand illuminated brilliantly without any blemish. Allah (SWT) then commanded Prophet Musa (AS): "You have two signs from your Lord; go to Pharaoh and his chiefs, for they are an evil gang and have transgressed all bounds." (Taha; 20:11~24).

However, Prophet Musa (AS) feared that he would be arrested by Pharaoh, as he turned to Allah (SWT) saying: "My Lord! I have killed a man among them and I fear that they will kill me." Allah (SWT) assured him of his safety and set his heart at rest. He gifted Prophet Musa's (AS) brother Prophet Haroon (AS) with prophet-hood and assigned him to assist Prophet Musa (AS) in his mission. (Taha; 20:25~36).

Prophet Musa and Prophet Haroon (AS) went together to the Pharaoh and delivered their message. Prophet Musa (AS) spoke to him about Allah (SWT), His mercy and His power of creation, about the virtues of monotheism and the worship of Allah (SWT) alone. The Pharaoh heard his speech with disdain. He thought that Prophet Musa (AS) was crazy because he dared to question Pharaoh's supreme authority. After asserting his divinity, Pharaoh asked Prophet Musa (AS) how he dared worship

another god. Prophet Musa (AS) said: "Even if I bring you something manifest (and convincing)." Pharaoh said: "Bring it forth then, if you are of the truthful!" So Musa threw his staff and behold, it was a serpent, manifest. And he drew out his hand, and behold, it was white to all beholders." (Ash-Shu'ara; 26:30-33). Pharaoh's amazement turned to fear, and he looked towards his advisers who counselled him to detain Prophet Musa (AS) and his brother while they summoned the cleverest magicians in the country. They thought their skills of magic would also change sticks into serpents and the influence of his miracles would be thoroughly exposed before all the people.

On the customary festival day, which attracted citizens from all over the Egyptian empire, Pharaoh arranged for a public contest between Prophet Musa (AS) and the great magicians collected from all over Egypt. The people came in droves, as never before, to witness this unique festival. There was a contest between many magicians and a single man, who claimed to be a Prophet of Allah (SWT). Prophet Musa (AS) asked the magicians to perform first. They threw their magical objects down on the ground. Their staffs and ropes took the forms of waving serpents while the crowd watched in amusement. Pharaoh and his men applauded loudly. Then Prophet Musa (AS) threw his staff. It began to swirl vigorously and became an enormous serpent and one by one swallowed all the snakes. Prophet Musa (AS) bent down to pick it up and it became a staff in his hand. On witnessing the power of Prophet Musa (AS), the magicians prostrated themselves to Allah (SWT), declaring "We believe in the Lord of Prophet Musa (AS) and Prophet Haroon (AS)." Pharaoh became angry and blamed the magicians for secretly conniving with Prophet Musa (AS). He ordered to cut off

their hands and feet and to crucify them on the trunks of palm trees as an example to his subjects. (Taha; 20:64~73).

The Pharaoh with the help of his Prime Minister Haman and his army unleashed a reign of terror against the followers of Prophet Musa (AS) to take revenge and infuse the Israelite with a spirit of defeat. Prophet Musa (AS) began to face a difficult situation. He had to confront the Pharaoh's anger and his plots while at the same time he had to deal with the mutiny of his people. Qaroun (Korah), who was an Israelite, rebelled against him when Prophet Musa (AS) asked him to pay alms (*Zakaat*) on his wealth, a portion of which was rightfully due to the poor.

Qaroun was very rich and indulged in every known luxury. When he calculated the alms due on his wealth, he was shocked at the large amount he had to part with. To avoid payment of alms, he spread the rumour that Prophet Musa (AS) had invented the law of *Zakaat* for his own gain. He even bribed people to oppose Prophet Musa (AS) and to spread wicked rumours about him. Prophet Musa (AS) appealed to Allah (SWT) to punish him for his stinginess and for defying His laws. Qaroun was subjected to divine anger and humiliated. The earth opened up and swallowed him and all his wealth.

When the Egyptians saw the miracle against Qaroun, they developed increasing faith in the teachings of Prophet Musa (AS). The Pharaoh was upset because he believed that Prophet Musa (AS) was threatening his kingdom. He called Haman and ministers to decide the course of action and ultimately decided to kill Prophet Musa (AS), although one of the notable men raised a voice of dissent and suggested that such an extreme action

would create chaos among masses and warned about the possibility of the torment of Allah (SWT).

Allah (SWT) commanded Prophet Musa (AS) to warn the Pharaoh of a punishment in this world for his faithlessness and his persecution of the Israelites. As a portent of the punishment, the Nile did not flood its banks to soak the dry land as it normally did. As a result, crops failed, causing a famine. The second portent was; Allah (SWT) sent swarms of locusts that ate whatever crops they had grown. The third sign came in the shape of lice that spread among the Egyptians carrying diseases. The fourth sign appeared when the land was suddenly filled with frogs. They jumped on the food of Egyptians, shared their houses and distressed them greatly. Then the last sign was revealed, the sign of blood. The Nile water was changed into blood. For Prophet Musa (AS) and his people it was normal water, however, for Egyptians it was blood, which they could not drink. As often as Egyptians were troubled grievously they appealed to Prophet Musa (AS) thus: *"...O Musa! Invoke your Lord for us because of His promise to you. If you will remove the punishment from us we indeed shall believe in you and we shall let the Children of Israel go with you."* (Al-A'raf; 7:134). But as soon as everything returned to normal, they turned their backs on Allah (SWT).

Allah (SWT) decided to put an end to the Pharaoh's crimes after He had given him several chances to mend his ways and believe in Him. Allah (SWT) commanded Prophet Musa (AS) to leave Egypt. This later became known as the Exodus. In the darkness of night, Prophet Musa (AS) led his people towards the Red Sea and in the morning, they reached the beach. When the Pharaoh learnt about their departure, he pursued them with a huge army. At that moment, Allah (SWT) revealed to Prophet

Musa (AS): "Smite the sea with your staff!" Prophet Musa (AS) obeyed the command. A fierce wind blew, the sun shone brightly and in a flash the sea parted, the crests of the waves stood like mountains on either side. Prophet Musa (AS) led his people across briskly to the other side of the bank. Allah (SWT) commanded the sea to return to its former state. Terror stricken Pharaoh realising that his end had come, declared out of fear; *"I believe that there is no god worthy of worship except Allah in Whom the Children of Israel believe, and I am of those who surrender to Him."* (Yunus; 10:90). But Allah (SWT) did not accept this declaration from the dying tyrant and the waters closed over him, drowning him and his entire army. Later, the waves threw up his corps on the seashore. Presumably, this Pharaoh was Minfatah, Ramases II. His body is still preserved in the Museum of Egyptology - it is encrusted with salt with the nose bitten by a fish. However, this cannot be stated with certainty.

The despotic rule of the Pharaoh had left a bad influence on the psyche of Children of Israel. They had become accustomed to humbling themselves and submitting to someone other than Allah (SWT). They even began to harass Prophet Musa (AS) out of ignorance and obstinacy. They asked him to specify a god for them to worship as other people did. They were severely admonished by Prophet Musa (AS). In order to relieve their hunger during their wandering in desert, *mannā* (the dried exudates of certain plants) and *Salwa* (quail) were provided to them in abundance as food. Some mean and dispirited Israelites, after a while, expressed their disgust with this food. They desired to be provided with onions, garlic, beans and lentils instead, which were traditional Egyptian foods. Prophet Musa (AS) again admonished them that they were ungrateful for the best and abundant food and wanted the worst instead of the best.

Allah (SWT) had also directed Prophet Musa (AS) to lead them to the Promised Land (Palestine), which had been promised to Ibrahim (AS) as a land for pious people. When Prophet Musa (AS) ordered them to conquer the town of the Cana'anites and Hittites (their enemies who had hounded them), the Children of Israel showed cowardice and made excuses. Allah (SWT) said to Prophet Musa (AS). *"Therefore it (the holy land) is forbidden to them for forty years, in distraction, they will wander through the land. So be not sorrowful over the people who are the Fasiqeen (rebellious and disobedient to Allah)"* (Al-Maidah; 5:26).

The days of restless wandering began. They walked to no destination, day and night, morning and evening. They entered Sinai where Prophet Musa (AS) had spoken to Allah (SWT) for the first time. He appealed to Allah (SWT) for guidance in judging over his people. Allah (SWT) revealed the 'Law' (Ten Commandments) in the form of Tablets. Islamic scholars point that the Ten Commandments of the Torah are included in the following two verses of the Holy Qur'an:-

"Say: 'I will recite what your Lord has prohibited you from; join not anything in worship with Him, be good and dutiful to your parents; kill not your children because of poverty – We provide sustenance for you and for them; come not near to shameful sins (illegal sexual intercourse, etc.), whether committed openly or secretly; and kill not anyone whom Allah has forbidden, this He has commanded you that you may understand. And come not near to the orphan's property, except to improve it until he (or she) attains the age of full strength; and give full measure and full weight with justice, We burden not any person but that which he can bear; and whenever you give your word (or give evidence, etc.), say the truth, even if a near relative is

concerned; and fulfil the Covenant of Allah, this He commands you, that you may remember.'" (Al-An'am; 6: 151,152).

When Prophet Musa (AS) had gone to Mt. Sinai to receive the 'Law', his people became restless. An evil-minded man called Samiri suggested that they find another guide in place of Prophet Musa (AS). He said; "In order to find true guidance, you need a god and I shall provide one for you." So he collected all their gold and jewellery, dug a hole in the ground in which he placed the lot and lit a huge fire to melt it down. During the casting, he threw a handful of dust, making actions like a magician to impress the ignorant. From the molten metal he fashioned a golden calf. It was hollow and the wind passing through it produced a sound. Since superstition was imbedded in the hearts and minds of the Children of Israel from their past, they linked the strange sound to something super-natural, as if it were a living god. Some of them accepted the golden calf as their god.

Prophet Musa's (AS) brother Prophet Haroon (AS), who acted as their leader in his absence, was grieved and spoke to them: "O my people! You have been deceived. Your Lord is the Most Benevolent. Follow and obey me." They said; "We shall stop worshipping this god only if Prophet Musa (AS) returns." On his return, Prophet Musa (AS) saw his people singing and dancing around the calf statue. Furious at their paganistic ritual, he flung down the Tablet of the Law he had brought for them from Mt. Sinai. In his anger he tugged his brother's beard and asked why he did not fight such corruption. Prophet Haroon (AS) replied that they were about to kill him for his preaching. Prophet Musa's (AS) anger subsided when he understood Prophet Haroon's (AS) helplessness and he directed his anger towards Samiri who was the chief

culprit and asked him as to why he committed such a blasphemous act.

Prophet Musa (AS) burnt the golden calf and scattered its ashes and told Samiri to observe the fact of the god, besides Allah (SWT), created by him. He also cursed Samiri that he would lead a miserable life like a leper in this world and will suffer extreme punishment in the Hereafter. He commanded the elite of the Israelites to pray to Allah (SWT) for His forgiveness and demonstrate their repentance. He chose seventy men from among them and returned to Mt. Sinai so that they may seek the forgiveness of Allah (SWT). There they heard Allah (SWT) directly communicating with Prophet Musa (AS). But they insisted on seeing Allah (SWT). They were instantly punished for their insolence by a bolt of lightning and violent earthquake, which killed them instantly. They were however revived back to life with the prayer of Prophet Musa (AS) (Al-Araf; 7:155-157; also see Deutonomy; 18:18 and Gospel of Mathew; 21:42-43).

It is said that among the Israelites there lived a pious man who was poor but very honest. Everything that he did was done for the sake of Allah (SWT). On his death, his last words were; "O Allah (SWT)! I place my wife, my little son and my only possession, a calf, in Your care." Strangely, he asked his wife to take the calf to the forest and leave it there. He did this because he did not trust the Israelites, for they were a selfish and greedy folk. After some years, when his son had grown up his mother told him: "Your father has left you a calf in the trust of Allah (SWT). It must have grown into a cow by now." The son asked her where the cow could be found. She replied; "Be like your father and say: 'I trust in Allah (SWT),' then go and look for it." The son went to the forest and prostrated himself before Allah (SWT): "O Allah (SWT),

Lord of Prophets Ibrahim and Ya'qub and Ayyub (AS), return to me my father's trust." As he raised his head, he saw a bright yellow coloured cow coming towards him and it stopped submissively beside him. He tied a rope around its neck and took it home. The cow would not allow anyone else to come near it except the young man.

About this time a wealthy man died, leaving behind a son, who inherited his father's wealth. His cousins envied his good fortune and secretly killed him so that they could inherit it. Other relatives of the dead boy approached Prophet Musa (AS) for help in tracing the murderer of the boy. He instructed them to slaughter a bright yellow cow and put its tongue on the corpse, which would indicate the murderer. They went out in search of such a cow and found one, which was owned by the orphaned youth. They asked the price of the cow from the mother of the boy who insisted that she would agree to sell it only if the skin of the cow was filled with gold. Since such a cow was not available elsewhere, they agreed to buy the cow and paid with its skin filled with gold. Thus, the poor and honest boy was rewarded with enough wealth. The cow was slaughtered. As soon as dead man was touched with the flesh of the cow, he became alive and identified the boy's cousins as his killers. (Shabbir Osmani - Tafsir)

On hearing Prophet Musa's (AS) impressive sermon, the people wondered if there was another person on earth more learned than him and they asked Prophet Musa (AS). He said 'No' because he was gifted with the power of miracles and that *Taurat* (Torah) was revealed to him. However, Allah (SWT) wanted Prophet Musa (AS) to know that no man can be the custodian of all knowledge. There would always be another knowing what others did not. Prophet Musa (AS) asked Allah (SWT): "O Allah (SWT),

where is this man? I would like to meet him and learn from him." Allah (SWT) directed him to reach the junction of two seas where he would find such a man. Prophet Musa (AS) met him (Khidhr) and said: "May I follow you so that you teach me something of that knowledge (guidance and true path) which you have been taught by Allah (SWT)." He said: "Verily! But you will not be able to have patience with me. And how can you have patience about a thing which you know not?" Prophet Musa (AS) said: "If Allah (SWT) wills, you will find me patient and I will not disobey you." He (Khidhr) said: "Then, if you follow me, ask me not about anything till I myself mention it to you."

So, both of them set out walking along the seashore. A boat passed by them and they asked the crew of the boat to take them on board. A sparrow came and perched on the edge of the boat and dipped its beak once or twice into the sea. Khidhr said to Prophet Musa (AS): "My knowledge and your knowledge have not decreased Allah's knowledge as much as this sparrow has decreased the water of the sea with its beak." (Ibn Kathir: op.cit. p:262). Then suddenly Khidhr pulled out a plank of the boat and made it defective. Prophet Musa (AS) protested: "What have you done? They took us on board without charging any fare and you have intentionally made a hole in the boat depriving the boatman of his means of earnings." Khidhr replied: "Did I not tell you that you would not be able to remain patient with me?" Prophet Musa (AS) felt sorry for his forgetfulness.

When they had left the sea, they passed by a boy playing with other boys. Khidhr killed the boy. Prophet Musa (AS) said to him: "Have you killed an innocent person who has not killed any person? You have really

done a horrible act." Khidhr said: "Did I not tell you that you could not remain patient with me?" Prophet Musa (AS) said: "If I ask you about anything after this, don't let me accompany you."

Then both of them went on till they came to a village and they asked its inhabitants for food but they refused to entertain them as guests. Then they saw therein a wall that was at the verge of collapse. Khidhr repaired it free of cost. Prophet Musa (AS) said: "These are the people whom we had called on, but they neither gave us food nor entertained us as guests, yet you have repaired their wall. If you had wished you could have taken wages for it." Khidhr said; "This is the parting between you and me and I shall tell you the explanation of those things on which you could not remain patient."

"First, about the incident of the boat: it belonged to poor people who earned their living through it. They were going towards an area where the ruler was cruel and would seize every good boat. I made the boat defective to save it from seizure, thus the poor boatman would not be deprived of his possession. Second incident was pertaining to the killing of the boy. His parents were pious persons but the boy would become a rebel and an outlaw and would cause harm to them. The third incident was regarding the dilapidated wall that belonged to two orphans. Underneath the wall is buried a treasure and if the wall was not repaired the treasure would be exposed and carried away by undeserving people. Repairing the wall made safe that the orphans would benefit from the hidden wealth left by their righteous parents. And remember (O Musa) what has been done was on the guidance of Allah (SWT)." (Al-Kahaf; 18:66~82).

PROPHET HIZQEEL (EZEKIEL) (AS)

Prophet Hizqeel Ibn Buzi (AS) succeeded Kalih Ibn Yofra (Jophtha) who had succeeded Joshua as the prophet to the Israelites. The people had fled from Palestine to escape fighting in the way of Allah (SWT) and death, and settled on a plateau, Allah (SWT) said to them: "Die you all" and they all perished. (Al-Baqarah; 2:243). In about a week after their mass death by the command of Allah (SWT), Prophet Hizqeel (AS) passed that way and finding them all dead prayed to Allah (SWT) to bring them back to life. (Sewharvi-op cit. pp. 21-22, vol.2) There came a voice: "Do you want Allah (SWT) to resurrect them while you watch." He said; "Yes". Then he was commanded to call those bones to join one to the other and to be covered with flesh. So he called them by the power of Allah (SWT) and the dead persons came back to life and glorified Allah (SWT) loudly and in one voice. This place was called "Damardan" and the resurrected people numbered four thousand.

PROPHET ILYAS (ELISHA) (AS)

Prophet Ilyas (AS) is mentioned among the prophets in Surah Sād (38:48). He was sent to the Israelites and lived among them calling them to Allah (SWT) and abiding by the message and laws until he passed away. The dissension arose among them and events took momentum. Indulgence to sins increased everywhere and the tyrants increased and killed the Prophets.

CHAPTER 3

PROPHETS FROM THE DEATH OF AL YAS'A (JOSHUA) IBN NUN TO THE ADVENT OF SHAMOEL (SAMUEL)(AS)

Morally Israelites had degenerated considerably. They committed many sins and killed a number of the prophets. Consequently, Allah (SWT) put tyrant kings to rule over them. They ill-treated them and spilled their blood. The kings used to go to war, taking with them the Ark of the Covenant to be victorious by its blessings, it became a symbol of calm, and a relic left behind by the people of Prophet Musa (AS). In the battle of Gaza and Ashkelon, the Ark of the Covenant was captured from them. The loss of the Ark shocked the king to death. (Ibn Kathir; op.cit. p: 273)

The Israelites remained like sheep without a shepherd until Allah (SWT) sent them a prophet named Prophet Shamoel (Samuel) (AS). He had memorised the complete text of the Torah. Gradually the Israelites started to ignore Allah's (SWT) laws and evil habits became part of their lives. Allah (SWT) sent upon them an enemy, the Philistines, who defeated them, captured their Ark, drove them out of their homes, destroyed Torah and took away their children to use them or sell them as slaves. Then they approached Prophet Shamoel (AS) asking him to help in appointing a strong leader who could defeat Philistines.

Prophet Shamoel (Samuel) (AS) prayed to Allah (SWT) and He sent Talut (Saul) to be their king. Talut was tall and sturdy, pious and very intelligent. He respected Prophet Shamoel (AS) and was surprised when he told him that it was the will of Allah (SWT) that he should be the

king; that he should thank Allah (SWT) for His favour and be strong in faith. Taking Talut by the hand, Prophet Shamoel (AS) led him to the Children of Israel, but they insisted on a direct sign of Allah (SWT), Prophet Shamoel (AS) told them to go outside the city to see the sign, which they did. Almighty Allah revealed; *“And their Prophet (Shamoel) said to them: ‘Verily! The sign of the kingdom is that there shall come to you At-Tabut (a wooden box) wherein Sakinah (peace and reassurance) is from your Lord and a remnant of that which Musa and Haroon left behind, carried by the angels. Verily, in this is a sign for you if you are indeed believers.’”* (Al-Baqarah; 2:248)

Talut organized a well-trained army; and decided to put them to test. He told them that along the route they would pass by a river, they should not drink its water. In case they drink, it should not be more than a handful. To his disappointment, he discovered that the majority of them drank more water than they should have. He discharged them for disobedience and kept only the few who had obeyed him. This resulted in a split in the army but he was not bothered. He believed in quality and not numbers: better a small band of true believers he could rely on, than a huge army of unreliable men.

Talut’s men sighted the enemy on the other side of the river. Their opponents appeared physically strong and better armed. They were led by the mighty warrior Jalut (Goliath) known for his huge build and brute strength. A great number of Talut’s men ran away on seeing such strong force. The small force that was left was ready to fight, whatever the outcome, for they knew that in the past Allah (SWT) had caused a small force of believers to defeat a large force of non-believers. (Al-Baqarah; 2:249)

PROPHET DAWUD (DAVID) (AS) in the battle against Goliath and his Prophet-hood

When King Talut's (Saul's) and Jalut's (Goliath's) armies stood face to face, Jalut challenged any soldier from the opponent's camp to single combat, as was the custom of battle in those days. Jalut also wanted to show off his physical strength. The men were terrorized and no one dared challenge him. Then, to everyone's surprise a young man, Prophet Dawood (David) (AS) from the city of Bethlehem, stepped forward. Although Talut was impressed by the youth's courage but he advised him not to confront that mighty warrior. Prophet Dawood (AS), however, was determined and told him that only the day before he had killed a lion and on another occasion he had killed a bear. Talut said to him, "My brave soldier, if you are willing, then may Allah (SWT) guard you and grant you strength." Prophet Dawood (AS) replied: "Allah (SWT), Who protected me from the claws of the bear and the fangs of the lion will certainly protect me from this brute."

Prophet Dawood (AS) refused to wear heavy armour offered by the king instead he slung a leather pouch and filled it with small pebbles from the stream. Jalut set eyes on the lean young man, laughed loudly, and roared: "I will simply cut off your head with one swipe of my sword." Prophet Dawood (AS) shouted back: "Today you will see that it is not the sword that kills but the will and power of Allah (SWT)." So saying, he took his sling and placed in it a pebble from his pouch. He swung and aimed it at Jalut. The stone shot from the whirling sling with the speed of an arrow and hit Jalut's head with great force. Blood gushed out and Jalut fell to the ground lifeless, before he could draw his sword. When his army saw their mighty hero slain, they took to their heels. The

Israelites followed in hot pursuit to take revenge for their years of sufferings at the hands of their enemy. In this battle, the Israelites regained the glory and honour.

Prophet Dawood (AS) became a hero overnight. Talut married his daughter Mikal (Michael) to the young warrior and took him as one of his chief advisers. After killing Jalut, Prophet Dawood (AS) went out into the desert glorifying Almighty Allah and contemplating His favours. Creatures such as the plants, birds, beasts and even the mountains responded to his voice glorifying Allah (SWT). Allah (SWT) had chosen Prophet Dawood (AS) to be a prophet and revealed the *Zabur* (Psalms) to him: "...and to Dawood We gave the Psalms." (Al-Isra; 17:55)

He used to recite his scripture (Psalms) daily in a very melodious tune glorifying Allah (SWT). This attracted the attention of even mountains, birds etc., who also joined him glorifying Allah (SWT). He was also gifted with the ability to understand the languages of birds and animals.

Prophet Dawood (AS) was a very ingenious person. He is credited for having invented light iron armour for the army in the battlefield. This increased mobility of the infantry in the battle and enhanced their defence capabilities.

Prophet Dawood's (AS) father-in-law King Saul became very jealous of the ever-increasing popularity of his son-in-law and he even plotted to kill him. Prophet Dawood (AS) managed to escape as he was forewarned by his wife, the daughter of Saul. Subsequently Prophet Dawood (AS) succeeded in convincing him that he was not going to usurp the throne. Their relations normalised and

finally Prophet Dawood (AS) succeeded King Saul as king in Palestine.

Before concluding the story of Prophet Dawood (AS) an incident in his life, which is of great moral significance needs to be narrated. Prophet Dawood (AS) was a most dedicated servant of Allah (SWT) and was reputed for his honesty and profound sense of justice. Being a ruler as well as a prophet, he had allocated a day each in the week to hear public grievances, to conduct the affairs of the state, for *D'awah* work, for the dedicated worship of Allah (SWT) and for his family affairs. The day that was reserved for the worship of Allah (SWT), he would retire in total seclusion, cut off from his people, family and officials of the State. It was on this day that two brothers jumped over the wall of his palace, interfered with his worship and asked for prompt justice. Of the two persons who had intruded, one possessed 99 sheep and the other had only one. The latter complained that the fellow with 99 sheep was pressing him to sell his one sheep to him as well. Without hearing the case from the other party, Prophet Dawood (AS) opined that this was unfair. Immediately after the two disappeared, Prophet Dawood (AS) realised that he was subjected to a severe test by Allah (SWT). Firstly, he should not have given his opinion without hearing the representation from the other man. Secondly, being a ruler he could not completely cut off his contact with his people whom he had to serve and settle their affairs on day-to-day basis. He immediately realised his folly, prostrated before Allah (SWT) and sought His pardon. (Dhād; 38:21-25)

PROPHET SULAIMAN (SOLOMOM) (AS)

Prophet Sulaiman (AS) inherited Prophet Dawood's (AS) prophet-hood as well as his dominion. This was not a material inheritance, as prophets do not bequeath their property. It was the knowledge that he inherited. He became king after his father's death. Besides wisdom, Allah (SWT) had blessed him with many other abilities. He could command the winds, understand, and talk to birds and animals. Allah (SWT) directed him to teach both men and Jinns to mine the earth and extract its minerals to make tools and weapons. He also favoured him with a mine of copper, which was a rare metal in those days.

In Jerusalem, on a huge rock, Prophet Sulaiman (AS) built a beautiful building to draw the people to worship Allah (SWT). Presently this building is known as "The Dome of the Rock."⁵ From here, he went on pilgrimage to the Holy Mosque in Makkah. After performing their Hajj, he travelled to Yemen and visited San'a. He was impressed by their clever method of channelling water all over the city. He desired to build similar water system in his own country, but did not have enough springs. He set out to find the hoopoe bird (*hudhud*), which could detect water under the ground. The bird at that time was untraceable, but eventually came to him and explained the reason for delay thus: "I have come from Saba with an important news. Saba is ruled by a queen named Bilqis who has plenty of everything including a splendid throne. But in spite of all this wealth, *Iblis* has entered her heart and the hearts of her people. She rules their minds completely. I was shocked to learn

5. According to an authentic tradition Masjid Al Aqsa was originally built on this Dome of the Rock by Prophet Ishaq (SAWS), approximately 40 years after the construction of Ka'bah or Masjid Al Haraam (Bukhari).

that they worshipped the sun instead of Allah (SWT). (An-Naml; 27:22-25)

To check the hoopoe's information, Prophet Sulaiman (AS) sent a letter to the queen with the bird. He instructed the bird to remain hidden and to watch everything. The hoopoe dropped the letter in front of the queen and flew away to hide. She excitedly opened and read it: *"Verily! It is from Sulaiman and verily! It (reads): 'In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful; be you not exalted against me, but come to me as Muslim (true believers who submit to Allah with full submission).'*" (An-Naml; 27:30-31)

The queen was very disturbed and summoned her advisers. They wanted to meet Prophet Sulaiman's (AS) invasion threat with battle. However, she told them. "Peace and friendship are better and wiser; war only brings humiliation, enslaves people and destroys the good things. I have decided to send gifts to him, selected from our most precious treasure. The courtiers who will deliver the gifts will also have an opportunity to learn about him and his military might." The envoys of the queen, on reaching Prophet Sulaiman's (AS) palace, noticed him surveying his army. The messengers stood in amazement realising that they were in front of a mighty army. The envoys presented their queen's precious gifts and told him that the queen wished that he would accept them as an act of friendship. They were shocked by his reaction. He told them: "Allah (SWT) has given me plenty of wealth, a large kingdom and prophet-hood. I am, therefore, beyond bribery. My only objective is to spread the belief in *Tawheed*, the Oneness of Allah (SWT)."

The queen's envoys returned with the unaccepted gifts and delivered the message. They also described the

wonderful things they had observed there. Instead of taking offence, she decided to visit Prophet Sulaiman (AS) and sent a messenger to inform him that she was on her way to meet him.

When the queen arrived at Prophet Sulaiman's (AS) palace, she was welcomed with pomp and ceremony. He invited her into the great hall, the floor of which was laid in glass and shimmering. Thinking it was water, as she stepped on the floor, she lifted her skirt slightly for fear of wetting it. Prophet Sulaiman (AS) pointed out to her that it was made of solid glass and she need not lift her skirt. She was amazed, as she had never seen such things before. She realised that she was in the company of a very knowledgeable person who was not only a ruler of a great kingdom but a messenger of Allah (SWT) as well. She repented, gave up sun worship, accepted the faith of Allah (SWT) and asked her people to do the same. She realised that the sun which her people worshipped was nothing but one of Allah's (SWT) creations. The sun eclipsed within her for the first time and her heart was lit by a never-ending light of Islam.

Prophet Sulaiman (AS) lived amidst glory and all creatures were subjected to him. His life was full of wonders and miracles. His death too, like his life, was unique. The people had to learn that the future is known neither to the Jinns nor to the prophets, but to Allah (SWT) alone. He was sitting holding his staff, supervising the Jinns at work in a mine. He died sitting in this position. For a long time no one had even an inkling of his death, for he was seen sitting erect. The Jinns continued with their hard work, thinking that he was keeping a watch over them. Many days later, a hungry ant began nibbling his staff. It continued to do so, eating the lower part of the

staff until it fell out of his hand, and his great body fell to the ground. People hurried to him and realised that he had died a long time ago and that even the Jinns did not perceive the unseen, for had the Jinns known the unseen, they would not have kept working. Allah (SWT) revealed: *“Then, when We decreed (Sulaiman’s) death, nothing showed them his death except a little worm of the earth which kept (slowly) gnawing away at his staff; so when he fell down, the Jinns saw plainly that if they had known the unseen they would not have stayed in the humiliating chastisement (of their task).”* (Saba; 34:14)

CHAPTER – 4
SOME PROPHETS OF THE ISRAELITES
AFTER PROPHET DAWUD AND BEFORE
PROPHET ZAKARIYA (AS)

PROPHET ‘ISAIAH (SHI’A) (AS)

Among the prophets between Prophet Dawood (AS) and Prophet Zachariah (AS) is Prophet ‘Isaiah (Shi’a) (AS). He appeared before Zachariah (AS) and Prophet Yahya (John the Baptist) (AS). He is among those who prophesied about Prophet ‘Isa (Jesus) (AS) and Prophet Muhammad (SAWS). The king during Prophet ‘Isaiah’s (AS) time was Hazkia (Hazeekiah) and was obedient to Prophet ‘Isaiah (AS). He was attacked by the king of Babylon, Sinharib (Sennacherib) with a huge force (60,000 men). The people were greatly terrified and the king sought the help of Prophet ‘Isaiah (AS) who advised him to pray Allah (SWT). He prayed with a sincere heart, trust and patience and said “O Lord of lords and God of gods! O Benevolent and Merciful One Whom neither sleep nor nodding can overpower, remember me for my deeds and my just judgment over the Children of Israel; and all that was from You and You know better than I do, my open acts and my secrets are with You.” (Ibn Kathir; op.cit. pp:304) Allah (SWT) answered his prayers and had compassion on him. He revealed to Prophet ‘Isaiah (AS) the glad tidings that He was touched by his tearful prayers and that He would extend the king’s life for a further 15 years and save him from his enemy, Sinharib (Sennacherib).

Allah (SWT) then sent death upon the army of Sinharib. In the morning, they were all corpses, except Sinharib and five of his companions including

Bukhtanasar (Nebuchadnezzar). The king of Israel, Hazkia immediately sent for them, put them in shackles, displayed them in the land for seventy days to spite, and insults them before confining them to prison. Allah (SWT) revealed to Prophet 'Isaiah (AS) that Sinharib and other Babylonian prisoners should be sent back to their land in order to warn them against any aggressive action against the Israelites, which they solemnly did. Thereafter Sinharib did not even contemplate any attack on Palestine. Sinharib died seven years later. (Ibn Kathir: Stories of the Prophets, pp: 304-305)

PROPHET ARAMAYA (JEREMIAH) (AS) and the Destruction of Jerusalem

Prophet Aramaya (AS) is not mentioned by name in the Holy Qur'an but he was one of the prophets commissioned to Children of Israel. Allah (SWT) sent Aramaya (AS) to the Children of Israel when they exceeded beyond limits in their disobedience of the commands of Allah (SWT), killed their prophets and were filled with jealousy against others. Allah (SWT) was angry with the Children of Israel and revealed to Aramaya (AS): "I am going to destroy Jerusalem (the Children of Israel) in revenge. Go to the Dome of the Rock. I will give you My commands and revelation." Prophet Aramaya (AS) fell prostrate and said; "O my Lord! Whom will you set against them?" He said: "The worshippers of fire who do not fear my punishment, nor expect My reward. Stand up Aramaya hear the news about Israel. If your people had protected the orphans, the widows, the helpless and the stranded, I would have been their Sustainer. They honour only those who despise my command. Those before them feared Me, but these people displayed their obedience of Me in the temple, market place, hill and mountain tops and under the shade of trees until the heavens wondered

at them before Me. And the earth and mountains, including the beasts, wondered and waited. All that had no effect on them; nor was the Book useful to them." (Ibn Kathir; op.cit. pp:309)

Prophet Aramaya (AS) delivered the message of his Lord and the people heard the threats and warnings in it, they said; "You are lying, if you are saying that Allah (SWT) will destroy the land, His temple, His Book, His worship and monotheism." They captured Prophet Aramaya (AS), tied him up and imprisoned him. At this Allah (SWT) sent Bukhtanasar (Nebuchadnezzar) upon them. He ruled over them savagely and punished them cruelly. He intimidated the troops, destroyed the castles and temples, and burned the Torah. He ordered the release of Prophet Aramaya (AS) and asked him. "Did you warn these people against what has happened to them? Prophet Aramaya (AS) affirmed it and said; "Allah (SWT) sent me to them and they accused me of lying." The king said; "What a wicked race, to deny their prophet and their Lord's message!" Bukhtanasar honoured Prophet Aramaya (AS) and gave him a choice either to accompany him or to stay in his country. Prophet Aramaya (AS) preferred to live in his place in Elia (Elat).

Bukhtanasar marched on Jerusalem. Its king, who was a descendant of Prophet Dawood (AS), had built Jerusalem for the Israelites. He made peace with him. Bukhtanasar took a few hostages and departed but on the way, he learnt that the Israelites had revolted against their king because he had made peace with him. So Bukhtanasar returned to Jerusalem and destroyed the city burnt all the copies of the Torah (Sewharvi: op. cit. pp: 99, vol.3) He took the Jewish population as prisoner of war with him to Babylonia. Among the prisoners was Prophet

Daniel (AS) the youngest son Prophet Hizqeel (Ezekil) (AS) and Uzair (Hosea).

PROPHET DANIEL (AS)

Based on a series of citations it is said that Bukhtanasar threw Prophet Daniel (AS) in front of lions. They did not pounce upon him rather remained quiet and friendly as Allah (SWT) wished. For Prophet Daniel's (AS) food, he asked Prophet Aramaya (AS), who was in Syria, to provide it to him at Iraq (where he was sharing the pit with two lions). Prophet Daniel (AS) said, on receiving the food and water: "Praise be to Allah (SWT) Who has never forgotten me! And praise to Allah (SWT), Who never forgets those who appeal to Him! And praise be to Him Who compensates good with good, rewards patience with safety, dispels harm after distress, assures us when we are overwhelmed, and is our hope when skill fails us." (Ibn-Kathir; op.cit. p:315)

Abu Bakr Ibn Abu Dunya wrote in the book, *Ahkam-al-Quboor* (The Rules of Graves), based on a long chain of citations that Prophet Muhammad (AS) said: "Daniel prayed to his Lord, Great and Majestic for the nation of Muhammad to bury him. And whoever discovers Daniel's corpse give him tidings of Paradise." It is stated by Ibn Kathir through a chain of reliable citations: Abu Khalid Ibn Dinar reported that Abul A'lia said: "When Tassar was invaded (by Muslim), we found, in the treasure house of al Harmazan, a bed on which lay a dead man with a holy script at his bedside. We took the scripture to 'Umar Ibn al Khattab (RA). He called Ka'ab (RA) and he translated it into Arabic, and I was the first Arab to read it. I read it as I read the Qur'an." I (i.e. Khalid Ibn Dinar) said to Abul A'lia "what was in it". He said life history, annals, songs, speech and what is to come." (Ibn-

Kathir; op.cit. pp: 315-316) The man who discovered his corpse was called Harqus, 'Umar (RA) sent to Abu Musa (RA) saying: "Bury him and inform Harqus, for the Prophet (AS) has given him promise of Paradise." (Shibli: 'Umar al Farooq, and Ibn Kathir op.cit. p:317)

Ibn Abu Dunya has reported by a chain of citations, that a ring was seen on the hand of Ibn Abu Barda Ibn Abu Musa. The gem of the ring was carved with two lions with a man between them, whom they were licking. Abu Barda said; "This is the ring of that man whom the people of his town say is Prophet Daniel (AS). Abu Musa (RA) took it the day he was buried. It is said that Prophet Daniel (AS) carved his image and the image of the two lions into the gem of his ring for him not to forget Allah's blessing upon him in this."

Story of Prophet Uzair (Ezra) (AS) and Reconstruction of Jerusalem in the era of PROPHET ARAMAYA (AS)

Prophet Uzair (Ezra) (AS) was among the captives who were taken to Babylon by Bukhtanasar (Nebuchadnezzar). After the death of Bukhtanasar, his successor released all the Jewish prisoners and gave them the freedom to either stay in Babylon or go back to Palestine. Many stayed back but Prophet Uzair (AS) was among those who decided to return. He was the only person who had committed the entire text of the Taurat (Torah) to memory and was the only person who knew where a copy of Taurat, which was saved from burning, was concealed by Sarukha. He went out one day, came to a deserted and ruined place, and felt the heat. He dismounted his donkey and under the shade of the Rhaiba tree, he ate his food and slept. Then he got up to see what

remained of the ruins. The people had long been lost and he saw bones. *"...Oh! How will Allah ever bring it to life after its death?..."* (Al-Baqarah; 2:259) He said this not out of doubt but out of curiosity. Allah (SWT) sent the Angel of Death to take his life. He remained dead for one hundred years. During the period of his sleep the city was fully resettled and bustling with life and activity. Prophet Uzair (AS) was most surprised when Allah (SWT) revived him through an angel who asked him how long did he sleep. He said; "A day or part of a day." The angel said: "You remained asleep for one hundred years." Then the angel revived his donkey. This miracle doubly convinced Prophet Uzair (AS) that there would be a Day of Resurrection and people will be brought back to life to account for their deeds. (Maulana Mahmood-al-Hasan & Maulana Shabbir Ahmed Usmani & Translation and Commentary on Qur'an in Urdu p:55; and Maulana Hifzur Rahman Sewharvi: Qasasul Qur'an, p:99, vol.3)

Prophet Uzair (AS) rode on his donkey and entered his native place, but the people did not recognize him, nor did his household except his maid, now an old woman. He asked her if she remembered Prophet Uzair (AS). She said; "Yes, but, Uzair used to be answered when he prayed to Allah (SWT). Pray to cure me of blindness if you are Uzair." He prayed for her, massaged her eyes, took her by the hand, and said; "Get up by the power of Allah (SWT) The crippled woman stood up and walked, she opened her eyes and saw; her blindness was gone. She said; "I bear witness that you are Uzair." She rushed to the assembly of Israelites saying; "This is Uzair come to you. He has just prayed to Allah (SWT) for me and here I am whole again, walking and seeing. "The people stood up and looked at him. His son said: "My father had a mark between his shoulders, a black mole." And they found it. They said; "None among us memorized the Torah since

Bukhtanasar burnt it, except Uzair; and there was only one copy of the Torah, which was hidden by Sarukha. He buried it in the days of Bukhtanasar in a place none but Uzair knows." Prophet Uzair (AS) led the people to the hidden place and took out that copy of the Torah. Its leaves had rotted and the book crumpled. He also recited the Taurat orally. People were then convinced that he was Uzair, the Prophet.

Prophet Uzair (AS) copied out the Torah for the Children of Israel from that script. Henceforth the Jews said that he was the son of Allah (SWT), for the two evidences that came down from Heaven and for his copying the Torah and for his fighting the cause of the Children of Israel. The false and blasphemous claim of the Jews that Prophet Uzair (AS) was the son of Allah (SWT) has been out rightly condemned in the Holy Qur'an (At-Tawbah; 9:30)

CHAPTER – 5
PROPHETS ZAKARIYA (ZECHARIAH),
YAHYA (JOHN) & ‘ISA (JESUS)
(AS)

PROPHET ZAKARIYA (ZECHARIAH) (AS)

Prophet Zachariah (AS) was old and bent with age in his nineties. Despite his weak body, he went to the temple daily to deliver his sermons. Although he was not a rich man, he was always ready to help needy people. His one disappointment in life was that he had no children, for his wife was barren. He remained worried, as there was no one after him to carry out his mission.

One day when he visited the chamber of Maryam (Mary) in the temple, he was surprised to find fresh, out of season fruit in her room. When he inquired, she told him that the fruit was from Allah (SWT) that she used to find every morning. But why was he so surprised she asked him. Did he not know that Allah (SWT) provides without measure for whomsoever He wills?

This noble girl had opened his eyes to a startling idea. Could he not ask his Lord to bless him with a child in his old age? Even if his wife was past childbearing age, nothing was impossible for his Gracious Lord. He called out his Lord [Allah (SWT)] in secret saying: “My Lord! Indeed my bones have grown feeble, grey hair has spread on my head, and I have never been denied blessings in my invocation to You, O my Lord! Verily! I fear my relatives after me, since my wife is barren. So give me from Yourself an heir - who shall inherit me and inherit (also) the posterity of Prophet Ya’qub (AS) inheritance of the religious knowledge and prophet-hood, not the wealth,

etc., and make him, my Lord, one with whom You are Well-pleased.”

Allah (SWT) said: *“O Zachariah! Verily, We give you the glad tidings of a son. His name will be Yahya (John). We have given that name to none before (him).”* (Maryam; 19:7) Prophet Zachariah (AS) said: *“My Lord! Appoint for me a sign.’ He (Allah) said: ‘Your sign is that you shall not speak unto mankind for three nights though having no bodily defect. ... and remember your Lord much by praising Him again and again, and glorify (Him) in the afternoon and in the morning.’”* (Maryam; 19:10-11)

PROPHET YAHYA (JOHN) (AS)

Prophet Yahya (AS) was born a stranger to the world of children, who used to amuse themselves, as he was serious all the time. Most children took delight in torturing animals, whereas he was merciful to them. Prophet Yahya (AS) loved reading since childhood. When he grew up, Allah the Exalted called upon him: *“O Yahya! Hold fast to the Scripture (The Torah). And We gave him wisdom while yet a child.”* (Maryam; 19:12) Allah (SWT) guided him to read the Book of jurisprudence closely, thus he became the wisest and most knowledgeable man of that time. Therefore, Allah (SWT) endowed him with the faculties of passing judgments on people’s affairs, interpreting the secrets of religion, guiding people to the right path and warning them against the wrong ones.

Prophet Yahya (AS) reached maturity. His compassion for his parents, as well as for all people and all creatures, increased greatly. He called people to repent their sins. Ibn Asakar related that one time his parents were looking for him and found him at the Jordan River. When they met him, they wept sorely seeing his great

devotion to Allah, the Great and Majestic. Ibn Wahab said that according to Malik, grass was the food of Prophet Yahya Ibn Zachariah (AS) and he wept sorely in fear of Allah (SWT).

Prophet Yahya (AS) ate leaves, herbs and sometimes locusts. He slept anywhere in the mountains or in caves. He sometimes would find a lion or a bear as he entered the cave but remaining absorbed in praising Allah (SWT), he never heeded them. The beasts easily recognised him as the prophet who cared for all the creatures, as they would leave the cave, bowing their heads. He sometimes fed these beasts, out of mercy, from his food and was satisfied with prayers as food for his soul. When Prophet Yahya (AS) called people to worship Allah (SWT), he made them cry out of love and submission, arresting their hearts with the truthfulness of his words.

A conflict arose between Prophet Yahya (AS) and the tyrant king, Herod Antipas. He was the ruler of Palestine and was in love with Salome, his niece (brother's daughter). He wanted to marry her. On hearing the ruler's plan, Prophet Yahya (AS) pronounced that such a marriage would be incestuous and he would not approve it as it was against the Law of the Torah. His pronouncement spread like wild fire. Salome was angry, for it was her ambition to rule the kingdom with her uncle. She plotted to achieve her aim. Dressing attractively, she sang and danced before her uncle arousing his lust. Embracing her, he offered to fulfil whatever she desired. At once she told the king: "I would love to have the head of Yahya (AS), because he has defiled your and my honour throughout the land. If you grant me this wish, I shall be very happy and will offer myself to you." Bewitched by her charm, he submitted to her monstrous request. Prophet Yahya (AS)

was executed and his head was brought to Salome. The cruel woman gloated with delight. But the death of Allah's (SWT) beloved prophet was avenged. Not only she, but all the Children of Israel were severely punished by invading armies which destroyed their kingdom. (Ibn Kathir; op.cit. pp: 330-331)

PROPHET 'ISA IBN MARYAM (JESUS) (AS)

Maryam, Daughter of 'Imran. Allah (SWT) affirmed in many verses of the Holy Qur'an that Prophet 'Isa Ibn Maryam (AS) is a slave of Allah (SWT), whom He moulded in the womb of his mother like any of His creatures and that He created him without a father, as He created Prophet Adam (AS) without a father or mother. Allah (SWT) declared that He had selected Prophet Adam (AS) and the elite of his offspring who obey Allah (SWT). Then He specified the family of Prophet Ibrahim (AS), which includes the sons of Prophet Isma'il, Ishaq (AS) and the family of 'Imran, father of Mary. 'Imarn was in the fifteenth generation of Prophet Dawood (AS).

Prophet Zachariah's (AS) sister-in-law had a daughter named Hannah. She was married to 'Imran, a leader of the Israelites. For many years the couple remained childless, Hannah never lost hope and always believed that Allah (SWT) would bless her with a child, on whom she would shower all her motherly love, she decided that she would offer the child in the service of Allah's house, in the temple of Jerusalem. Allah (SWT), granted her request. However, while she was pregnant her husband passed away. Hannah wept bitterly. Alas, 'Imarn did not live to see their child for whom they had so longed. She gave birth to a girl, and again turned to Allah (SWT) in prayer: *"O my Lord, I have delivered a female child..."*

and I have named her Mary, and I seek refuge with You (Allah) for her and for her offspring from Satan, the outcast.” (Al-e-’Imran; 3:36)

Hannah had a big problem in fulfilling her promise to Allah (SWT), for females were not accepted into the temple, and she was very worried. Her sister’s husband Prophet Zachariah (AS), comforted her saying that Allah (SWT) knew best what she had delivered and appreciated fully what she had offered in His service. She wrapped the baby in a shawl and handed it over to the temple elders. Prophet Zachariah (AS) said to the elders: “I am the husband of her maternal aunt and her nearest relation in the temple, therefore, I should be accepted her guardian.” In order to ensure that no one had access to Maryam, Prophet Zachariah (AS) built a separate room for her in the temple.

As Maryam grew up, she spent her time in devotion to Allah (SWT). Prophet Zachariah (AS) visited her daily to look after her daily needs and it continued for many years. One day he was surprised to find fresh fruit, which was out of season, in her room. As he was the only person who could enter her room, he asked her how the fruit got there. She replied that these provisions were from Allah (SWT), as He gives to whom He wills. He understood by this that Allah (SWT) had raised Mary’s status above that of other women. Therefore, he spent more time with her, teaching and guiding her. Maryam grew to be a devotee of Allah (SWT), glorifying Him day and night. ‘Ali Ibn Abu Talib narrated that the Prophet (AS) said: “*The best of the world’s women is Maryam (in her life time) and the best of the world’s women is Khadijah (in her lifetime).*” (Bukhari)

Birth of Prophet ‘Isa (Jesus) (AS).

While Maryam was praying in the temple, an angel in the form of a man appeared before her and said; *"I am a Messenger from your Lord, (to announce) to you the gift of a righteous son." She said: '...How can I have a son, when no man has touched me, nor am I unchaste.' The angel said: 'So (it will be) your Lord said: 'That is easy for me (Allah). And (We wish) to appoint him as a sign to mankind and a mercy from Us' and it is a matter (already) decreed.'"* (Maryam; 19: 20-21)

The angel's visit caused Maryam great anxiety, which increased as the months went by. How could she face giving birth to a child without having a husband? Later she left the temple and went to Nazareth, her place of birth, and settled in a simple farmhouse to avoid the public. After some months, she could not bear the mental strain any longer and left Nazareth not knowing where to go, to be away from the depressing atmosphere. She had not gone far, when she was overtaken by the birth pangs. She sat down against a dry palm tree and there she gave birth to a son. Looking at her beautiful baby, she was hurt that she had brought him into the world without a father. Suddenly she heard a voice nearby; *"...grieve not! Your Lord has provided a rivulet beneath you. And shake the trunk of the palm tree towards you: it will drop fresh, ripe dates upon you. Eat, then, and drink, and let your eyes be soothened. And if you should see any human being, convey this unto him: 'Behold, abstinence from speech have I vowed for the Beneficent and may not speak to any human today.'"* (Maryam; 19: 24~26)

With this miracle, she felt at ease. As she had anticipated, her arrival in the city with a newborn baby in her arms aroused the curiosity of the people. They scolded her: "This is a terrible sin that you have committed." She put her fingers to her lips and pointed to the child. They asked; "How can we speak to a newborn baby?" To their

total amazement, the child began to speak clearly: *"I am Allah's servant. Allah has given me the Book, and has made me a prophet, and has blessed me wherever I may be, and has enjoined on me prayers and alms giving as long as I live. Allah has made me dutiful towards her who has borne me. He has not made me arrogant nor unblessed. Peace unto me the day I was born, the day I die and the day I shall be raised alive."* (Maryam; 19:30-33)

Most of the people realised that the baby was unique, for if Allah (SWT) wills something, He merely says, "Be" and it happens. Of course, there were some, who regarded the baby's speech as a strange trick, but at least Maryam could now stay in Nazareth without being harassed. *"Such is 'Isa, son of Mary. (It is) a statement of truth, about which they doubt (or dispute). It befits not (the Majesty of) Allah that He should beget a son (this refers to the slander of Christians against Allah, by saying that 'Isa is the son of Allah). Glorified (and Exalted) be He above all that they associate with Him. When He decrees a thing, He only says to it 'Be' – and it is. 'Isa said: 'And Verily Allah is my Lord and your Lord. So worship Him (Alone). That is the Straight Path (Allah's Religion of Islamic Monotheism which He did ordain for all His Prophets)."* (Maryam; 19:34-36)

The Jewish priests felt this child 'Isa was dangerous, for they felt that the people would turn their worship to Allah the Almighty alone, displacing the existing Jewish tenets. Consequently, they would lose their authority over the people. Therefore, they kept the miracle of Prophet 'Isa's (AS) speech in infancy as a secret and accused Mary of a great misdeed. As he grew, the sign of prophet-hood became increasingly evident. He could tell his friends what kind of supper waited for them at home. And what they had hidden and where. He grew up to manhood.

On Sabbath, a day of complete rest, no fire could be lit or extinguished, nor could females plait their hair. Prophet Musa (AS) had commanded that Saturday be dedicated to the worship of Allah (SWT). However, the wisdom behind the Sabbath and its spirit had gone, and only the letter remained in the hearts of Jews. They made a hundred things unlawful on Saturday even calling a doctor to save a patient, who was in bad condition, was not allowed. Although the Pharisees were the guardians of the law, they were ready to sell it when their interests were involved to obtain personal gains. There was, for example, a rule, which prohibited a journey of more than one thousand yards on the Sabbath day. The day before, they transferred their food and drink from their homes two hundred yards away and erected a temporary house so that from there they could travel a further thousand yards on the Sabbath day.

Once Prophet 'Isa (AS) was on his way to the temple on a Sabbath day. He raised his hand to pluck two fruits to feed a hungry child. This was considered a violation of the Sabbath law. He made a fire for the old women to keep them warm from the freezing air. It was taken as another violation. He went to the temple and found twenty thousand Jewish priests registered there who earned their living from the temple. He observed that the visitors were a few only and the rest of the crowd were priests. Every step in the temple cost the visitor money. They worshipped nothing but money. He also observed that the visitors who were unable to dish out money were swept away like flies by the Pharisees and Sadducees (two groups of priests). (Ibn-Kathir; op.cit. p:344)

One night the two noble prophets, Yahya and Zachariah (AS), were killed by the ruling authority. On the same night, the revelation descended upon Prophet 'Isa (AS). Allah (SWT) commanded him to begin his call to the Children of Israel. To him the life of ease was closed and the page of preaching and struggle was opened. Like an opposing force, the message of Prophet 'Isa (AS) came to denounce the practices of the Pharisees and Sadducees and to reinforce the Law of Prophet Musa (AS). In the face of a materialistic age of luxury and worship of gold, he called the people to a nobler life by word and deed. This exemplary life was the only way out of the wretchedness and diseases of his age. His call from the beginning was marked by its complete uprightness and piety. It appealed to the soul, the inner self and not to a closed system of rules laid down by the society.

Prophet 'Isa (AS) continued inviting the people to Almighty Allah (SWT). His call was based on the principle that there is no mediation between the Creator and His creatures. However, Prophet 'Isa (AS) was in conflict with the superficial interpretation of the Torah by Jewish Rabbi. He said that he did not come to abrogate the Torah, but to complete it by going to the spirit of its substance to arrive at its essence. He made the Jews understand that the Ten Commandments have more value than they imagined. For instance, the fifth commandment does not only prohibit physical killing, but all forms of killing: physical, psychological or spiritual. And the sixth commandment does not prohibit adultery only in the sense of unlawful physical contact between a man and a woman, but also prohibits all forms of unlawful relations or acts that might lead to adultery. The eye commits adultery when it looks at anything with passion.

Prophet 'Isa (AS) was therefore in confrontation with the materialistic people of his time and particularly Jewish priests. He told them to desist from hypocrisy, showmanship and false praise. There was no need to hoard wealth in this life. They should not preoccupy themselves with the goods of this passing world; rather they should preoccupy themselves with the affairs of the coming world, because it would be everlasting. He told them that caring for this world is a sin, not fit for pious worshippers, because they know that their sustenance is with Allah (SWT), so they trust in Him and scorn this world.

Prophet 'Isa (AS) continued to invite people to worship the Only Lord, Who is without partner, just as he invited them to purify their heart and soul. He said: *"...Now have I come to you with Wisdom, and in order to make clear to you some (points) on which you dispute; therefore fear Allah and obey me. Fear Allah, He is my Lord and your Lord; so you worship Him; this is a Straight Way."* (Az-Zukhruf; 43:63,64)

Prophet 'Isa's (AS) teachings annoyed the priests, for every word uttered by him was a threat to their position and authority, exposing their misdeeds. The priests started to plot against him. They wanted to embarrass him and to prove that he had come to destroy the Mosaic Law, which provided that an adulteress be stoned to death. They brought also a Jewish adulteress and asked Prophet 'Isa (AS). "Does not the law stipulate stoning of the adulteress?" He answered, "Yes", He knew that they were more sinful than she. They understood that if he were going to apply Mosaic Law, he would be destroying his own rules of forgiveness and mercy. He understood their plan and said; "Whoever among you is sinless can stone her." There was none eligible. "No

mortal can judge sin, only Allah (SWT) the Most Merciful.” As he left the temple, the woman followed him and fell on his feet in tears. He asked her to stand up and prayed to the Almighty saying: “O Lord, forgive her sins,” He let the priests understand that those who call people to Almighty Allah (SWT) are not executioners. His call was based on mercy for the people, the aim of all divine calls.

Among the miracles that Prophet ‘Isa (AS) was gifted with by Allah (SWT), he could also revive the dead to life by calling “get up by the command of Allah.” His opponents told him that he could bring back to life only those who died recently. They challenged him to bring back to life Sam Ibn Noah (Nuh). He asked them to show his grave which they did. Jesus again uttered the aforesaid invocation and Sam came out of the grave alive with grey hair. He asked Sam as to how he got grey hair when there was no aging during his time. Sam answered that he thought he was awakened by the Day of Reckoning and the fear of *Qiamah* greyed his hair. (Ibn Kathir; op.cit. pp:347-348)

Some of the miracles which Prophet ‘Isa (AS) performed had been requested by his disciples, such as their wish for a “holy table” to be sent down from heaven. He commanded his disciples to fast for thirty days and prayed to Allah (SWT). The great table came down between two clouds, one above and one below, while the people watched. Prophet ‘Isa (AS) prostrated and his disciples followed him. They sensed a fragrance that they had never smelled before. He said; “The one who is the most devout and most righteous may uncover the table, that we might eat of it to thank Allah (SWT) for it. They said; “O Spirit of Allah (SWT), you are the most deserving.” He performed ablution and prayed before uncovering the table, and behold, there was a roasted fish.

It is said that thousands of people partook of it and yet they never exhausted it. (Ibn Kathir, Sewharvi and other exegetists)

Prophet 'Isa (AS) went on with his mission until vice knew that its throne was threatening to fall. So the forces of evil accused him of magic, infringement of the Mosaic Law, allegiance with the devil; and when they saw that the poor people followed him, they began to scheme against him.

The Sanhedrin, the highest judicial and ecclesiastical council of the Jews, began to plot against Prophet 'Isa (AS). When the Jews failed to stop his call, they decided to kill him. The chief priests held secret meetings to agree on the best way of getting rid of him. The high priest of the Jews tore his garment at the meeting, claiming that Prophet 'Isa (AS) had denied Judaism. The tearing of clothes at that time was a sign of disgust. The priests had no authority to pass the death sentence at that time, so they convinced the Roman governor that Prophet 'Isa (AS) was plotting against the security of the Roman Empire and urged him to take immediate action against him. The governor ordered that Prophet 'Isa (AS) be arrested and later the death sentence was passed upon him. It was the Roman custom for the condemned to be flogged before they were executed. So Pilate, the Roman governor, ordered that Prophet 'Isa (AS) be flogged. The Mosaic Law stipulates forty lashes, but the Romans had no limit and they were brutal people. Then they crucified him and, as a further mockery, two thieves were executed with him. So it is written in the Gospels. (The New Testament - Gospels of John and Mathew)

This false and exaggerated account about the punishment meted out to Prophet 'Isa (AS) and his

crucifixion has been declared totally misleading and untrue in the Holy Qur'an. It asserts that they did not kill him nor did they crucify him: "...for surely, they killed him not (i.e. 'Isa, son of Maryam); But Allah raised him ('Isa) up (with his body and soul) unto Himself (and he is in the heavens). And Allah is Ever All Powerful, All-Wise." (An-Nisa; 4:157-158)

Refutation of the Christian's Claims

The Christians raised the status of Jesus to that of son of God and therefore started worshipping him and his mother Mary who gave birth to him together with Allah (SWT). Jesus condemned it unambiguously as revealed in the Holy Qur'an. Allah (SWT) warned: "*Surely they have disbelieved who say: 'Allah is the Messiah ('Isa) son of Maryam.'* But the Messiah ('Isa) said: '*O Children of Israel! Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord.'* Verily whosoever sets up partners in worship with Allah, then Allah has forbidden Paradise for him, and the Fire will be his abode. And for the Zalimeen (polytheists and wrong doers) there are no helpers. Surely, disbelievers are those who said Allah is the third of the three (in Trinity). But there is no god except Allah – the one. And if they cease not what they say, verily, a painful torment will befall the disbelievers among them." (Al-Ma'eda; 5:72-73)

Prophet 'Isa (AS), the son of Maryam, will categorically deny on the Day of Resurrection when he will be questioned by Allah (SWT) that "...you asked people to treat you and your mother Maryam as two other gods besides me? He will reply that he dare not utter such a blasphemy, moreover if ever he did so it must be in Your knowledge. O Allah for You know what is in my heart, but I have not the slightest knowledge of Your thoughts and actions for You know the secrets of the universe. I always asked them to worship

Allah who is my and your Creator and Sustainer..." (Al-Maidah; 5:116-117)

CHAPTER – 6

PROPHET MUHAMMAD (SAWS)

Early Life

Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) was born in Makkah, Arabia, on Monday 12, *Rabi Al-Awwal* (2 August A.D. 570). His mother, Aminah, was the daughter of Wahab Ibn 'Abdu Manaf of the Zahrah family. His father 'Abdullah was the son of 'Abdul Muttalib. His genealogy has been traced to the noble house of Prophet Isma'il (AS), the son of Prophet Ibrahim (AS) in about the fortieth descent.

The Prophet's (SAWS) father died before his birth and his mother died when he was six years old. He was put under the charge of his grandfather 'Abdul Muttalib who was quite fond of him. But the old chief died two years later. On his deathbed, he confided to his son Abu Talib the charge of the little orphan.

When the Prophet (SAWS) was 25 years old, he got married to Khadijah (RA), a noble and rich widow. This marriage proved fortunate and singularly happy. Khadijah (RA) was much senior in age to her husband but despite the disparity of age, the most tender devotion on both sides existed.

The Prophet (SAWS) had earned the admiration of all for his correctness of manners and purity of morals that were rare among the people of Makkah. His flawless character and the honourable bearing won the approbation of all citizens of Makkah, and he was called the "*Al-Ameen*", the trustworthy.

Khadijah (RA) bore three sons and four daughters. All the sons died in childhood. She had gifted him a young slave named Zayd Ibn Haritha (RA). When Haritha heard that the Prophet (SAWS) possessed Zayd (RA), he came to Makkah and offered a large sum for his son's ransom, but Zayd (RA), being brought up so lovingly by the Prophet (SAWS), declared that he would stay with his master. After hearing this, the Prophet (SAWS) took Zayd (RA) to Ka'bah and publicly adopted him as his son, to which the father of the boy, Haritha, acquiesced and returned home satisfied. Henceforward Zayd (RA) was called the son of Muhammad (SAWS).

Prophet-hood

Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) had been accustomed to secluding himself in a cave in Mt. Hira, about three miles from Makkah, where he often spent the whole nights in deep thought. It was during one of those retirements in the still hours of the night that Archangel *Jibrael* (Gabriel) came to tell him that he was chosen to be the Messenger of Allah (SWT) to reclaim a fallen people to the knowledge and service of their Lord. Upset and scared over the unusual incident, he returned to Khadijah (RA) and told her what had occurred and that he was becoming either a soothsayer or one smitten with madness. She replied; "Allah forbid! He will surely not let such a thing happen, for you speak the truth, you are faithful in trust, you bear the afflictions of the people, you spend in good works what you gain in trade, you are hospitable and you assist your fellow men." She took him to her cousin Warqah bin Naufal, who knew the Scriptures of the Jews. When she told him of what she had heard, he was excited and declared; "Holy! Holy! Verily this is Namees (The Holy Spirit) came to Prophet Musa (AS). He

will be prophet to his people. Tell him this and bid him to be brave of heart.”

Khadijah (RA) was the first to accept his mission followed by ‘Ali, Zayd and Abu Bakr (RA), a leading member of the Quraysh, an honest and wealthy merchant, who enjoyed great consideration among his compatriots. His adoption of the new faith was moral boosting. Soon after, five notables presented themselves before him and adopted Islam. Several people from lower classes of the Arabs came forward to adopt the new religion.

After about three years he was commanded by Allah (SWT) to carry out his mission openly and boldly (Al-Hijr; 15:94) and he proclaimed his mission first among his relatives as directed by Allah (SWT) (Ash-Shu‘ara; 26:214). Encouraged by the divine command he decided to appeal directly to his relatives first and thereafter to the rest. He warned them of the fate that had overtaken past races who had not heeded the preaching of former prophets. But the gathering departed without listening to the warning given by him.

Having thus failed to induce his fellow citizens, the Prophet (SAWS) turned his attention to the strangers visiting the city for commerce or pilgrimage. The pilgrims and traders returned to their homes carrying with them the news of the advent of the bold preacher who at the risk of his life was inviting the Arabs loudly to abandon the worship of their old and dear idols.

Persecution of Muslims

The hostile Quraysh prevented Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) from offering his prayers at the Sacred

House, Ka'bah. They pursued him wherever he went, covered him and his disciples with dirt and filth when engaged in their prayers, scattered thorns in the paths taken by him. But despite these trials and tribulations, he did not waver. He taught that in the sight of his Lord, all humans were equal; the only distinction among them was their level of piety. The Quraysh would have none of this levelling of distinction, as it would adversely affect their long inherited privileges.

Utbah Ibn Rabiah, a prominent Quraysh leader, was delegated to induce the Prophet (SAWS) to discontinue his teachings of the new religion. He said; "O son of my brother, if you intend to acquire riches, honours and dignity, we are willing to collect for you a fortune larger than possessed by any of us; we shall make you our chief and will do nothing without you. If you desire dominion, we shall make you our king; and if the demon which possesses you cannot be subdued, we will bring you doctors and give them riches until they cure you." When Utbah finished his discourse, the Prophet (SAWS) said; "Now listen to me", and recited to him the first thirteen verses of *Surah Fussilat*. He Prophet added: "This is my reply to your proposition; now take what course you find the best." (The theme of this particular *Surah* is that the basis of Faith and Revelation is Allah's Power and Goodness and the fruit of both is man's righteousness and healing).

First Migration of Muslims

Persecution by the Quraysh grew fiercer every day and the sufferings of the Prophet's disciples became unbearable. He had heard of the righteousness, tolerance and hospitality of the neighbouring Christian king of Abyssinia. He recommended unprotected companions to

seek refuge in the kingdom of the pious king, Al Najashi (Negus). Some 15 adherents of Islam promptly availed themselves of the advice and sailed to Abyssinia. There they got kind reception from the Najashi. This is called the first *Hijrah* (migration) in the history of Islam and occurred in the fifth year of the Prophet's (SAWS) mission.

When hostile Quraysh learnt about the escape of their victims, they protested to the king of Abyssinia and requested him to return those escapees. The king summoned the fugitives and inquired of them about the religion they had adopted in preference to their old faith. Ja'far (RA), son of Abu Talib and brother of 'Ali (RA) acted as spokesperson for the exiles and said; "O King, we were plunged in the depth of ignorance and barbarism, we adored idols, lived unchastely, ate dead, and spoke abominations. We disregarded every feeling of humanity and sense of duty towards our neighbours, and knew no law but that of the strong, when Allah (SWT) raised among us a man, of whose birth, truthfulness, honesty and purity we were aware. He called us to profess the Unity of Allah (SWT) and taught us to associate nothing with Him. He forbade us the worship of idols and enjoined us to speak the truth, to be faithful to our trusts, to be merciful, and to regard the rights of neighbours. He exhorted us to worship only Allah (SWT) and not to return to the worship of idols of wood and stone. He advised us to abstain from evil, to offer prayers, to give alms, to observe the fast. We have believed in him, we have accepted his teachings and his injunctions to worship Allah (SWT) alone and to associate nothing with Him. Hence, our people have persecuted us, trying to make us forego the worship of Allah (SWT) and return to the worship of idols of wood and stone and other abominations. They have tortured us and injured us until, finding no safety among them we

have come to your kingdom, trusting you will give us protection against their persecution." After hearing Ja'far's (RA) speech, the hospitable king ordered the deputies to return to their people in safety and not to interfere with their fugitives. Thus, the emigrants passed the period of exile in peace and comfort.

While the followers of the Prophet (SAWS) lived safely in foreign lands against the persecution of their people, he continued his preaching more vigorously than ever. Despite all opposition and increased persecution, the new faith gained ground.

Excommunication of Muslims

The ferocity of Makkans, however, grew at the Prophet's (SAWS) patience and bold preaching. They went in a body to Abu Talib to urge the venerable chief to prevent his nephew from abusing their gods and also warned him that if he did not control him, he would be excommunicated and driven aside with the Prophet (SAWS) and that the matter would then be settled by fight until one of the two parties was exterminated. Abu Talib spoke to the Prophet (SAWS) very softly and pleaded him to abandon his affair. He firmly replied; "O my uncle, if they placed the sun on my right hand and the moon on my left to cause me to renounce my task, verily I would not desist from it until Allah (SWT) made manifest His cause or I perished in the attempt." (Bukhari) The Quraysh made a solemn covenant of excommunication against the descendants of Hashim and Muttalib. The expelled party, Muslims as well as idolaters, betook themselves isolated from the rest of the community on the eastern skirts of Makkah. They lived for three years on very meagre resources facing extreme hardship. However,

reconciliation was concluded between the two factions resulting in their return to Makkah.

In the following year two tragedies occurred for the Prophet (AS); both Abu Talib his loving and supportive uncle, and Khadijah (RA), his devoted wife, died.

Mission to Taif

To continue and widen his mission, he decided to go to Taif, a town about 60 miles east of Makkah. The tribe of Thaqif treated him harshly. They stoned and starved him and forced him to depart and return to Makkah. Despite this setback, he continued to preach to the public assemblies at the time of pilgrimage and trade fairs, gaining several new converts. Among them were six from the city of Yethrib (later called Madinah), of the tribe of Khazraj. On their return, they spread the news among their people that a prophet had arisen among the Arabs calling them to Allah (SWT) and put an end to their idolatry and iniquities.

***Me'raj* and Migration (*Hijrah*) to Yethrib**

In the 12th year of the mission, the Prophet (SAWS) made his famous night journey from Makkah to Jerusalem (*Isra*), and thence to heaven (*Me'raj*). His journey, known in history as *Me'raj* (Ascension), was real and not a dream. It was at this time that Allah (SWT) ordered the Muslims to pray the five daily prayers.

In the same year, 12 men of Yethrib, 10 of whom were of the tribe of Khazraj and other two of Aws, met the Prophet (SAWS) at Al Aqaba, a hill on the north of Makkah and embraced Islam. The next year, there were 73 new

converts to Islam in Yethrib and invited him to their city in view of the growing opposition in Makkah and even possible assassination that was being planned. They professed their sincerity and swore to defend the Prophet (SAWS) and not to betray him. They left for home leaving him to arrange for his journey to their city.

About 100 families silently migrated to Yethrib where they were received with much warmth and hospitality. Later, most of the disciples went to Yethrib. When Makkans learnt about the alliance of the followers of Islam with Yethribites, they planned to prevent the Prophet (SAWS) from escaping to Yethrib. Ultimately, they decided to kill him. To avoid resulting factional fight they decided to involve one man from every tribe. But the Prophet (SAWS) escaped miraculously and reached the house of Abu Bakr (RA). The two left for the caves of Mt. Thaur and took shelter there. Abu Bakr (RA) had hired a trustworthy man from the tribe of Bani-Ad-Dail who brought two she-camels to the cave of Thaur and guided them along the seashore to Yethrib.

They reached the summit of Harrah where a large gathering was waiting to welcome them. They alighted at the quarters of Bani Amr Ibn Auf, stayed there for 10 nights, and established the mosque (Masjid Al-Quba). From there the Prophet (SAWS) prayed and mounted his she-camel and proceeded on, accompanied by the people till his she-camel knelt down at the place where he eventually built his Mosque in Madinah. When the Prophet (SAWS) and his companions settled down at Yethrib, its name was changed to *Al-Madinat-al-Munawwara*, "The Illuminated City", or simply, Madinah.

Tribes of Aws and Khazraj ruled Yethrib at that time. These tribes were always quarrelling among themselves but after the arrival of the Prophet (SAWS) they forgot their old feuds and were united together in the bond of Islam. Their old divisions were soon effaced and their common designation became "*Ansars*," the "Helpers of the Prophet (SAWS)", having helped him in his cause. Those who emigrated with him from Makkah received the title of "*Mahajirin*" (Migrants). The Prophet (SAWS) tied them in a strong bond of brotherhood.

Birth of Islamic State

Three distinct parties, the *Mohajirs*, the *Ansars* and the Jews, at this time, inhabited Madinah and its suburbs. In order to weld them together into an orderly federation, the Prophet (SAWS) proclaimed a charter defining rights and obligations of each of these groups. This charter, called *Mithaq-e-Madinah*, represented the framework of the first commonwealth organized in Islamic history. Following are some extracts from the charter:

"The state of peace and war shall be common to all Muslims; no one among them shall have the right of concluding peace with, or declaring war against, the enemies of his co-religionists. The Jews, who attach themselves to our commonwealth, shall be protected from all insults and vexations; they shall have an equal right with our own people to our assistance and good offices. The Jews of the various branches and all others domiciled in Madinah shall form with the Muslims one composite nation. They shall practice their religion as freely as the Muslims. The allies of the Jews shall enjoy the same security and freedom. The guilty shall be pursued and punished. The Jews shall join the

Muslims in defending Madinah against all enemies. The interior of Madinah shall be a sanctuary for all who accept this charter. Muslims shall hold in abhorrence every man guilty of crime, injustice or disorder. No one shall uphold the culpable, though he be his nearest kin. All future disputes arising among those, who accept this charter, shall be referred to the Prophet (SAWS).” (Seerah: Ibn Hisham)

Battle of Badr

Towards the second year of the *Hijrah*, the pagans of Makkah began a series of hostile acts against the Muslims of Madinah. A force consisting of 1000 men marched under Abu Jahal, a great enemy of Islam, towards Madinah to attack the city. A body of 300 Muslims, of whom two thirds were the *Ansars*, was gathered to forestall the idolaters by occupying the valley of Badr, situated near the sea between Makkah and Madinah. The Pagans were defeated and driven back with great loss. The Prophet (SAWS) gave strict orders that sympathy should be shown to them in their misfortune and that they should be treated with kindness. The victory of Badr made a deep impression on the minds of Muslims.

Battle of Uhud

The next battle between the Quraysh and the Muslims was the battle of Uhud, a hill about four miles to the north of Madinah. The Quraysh, in order to avenge their reverse at Badr, made tremendous preparations for a new attack upon the Muslims. Under the leadership of Abu Sufiyan an army of 3000 strong men, including 200 horses, encamped at a village six miles from Madinah. The Prophet (SAWS) with the advice of some companions

marched out leading 1000 men with just one horse, besides his own, and halted at Mt. Uhud. At this juncture, 'Abdullah Ibn Ubaiy, the leader of Hypocrites, left the field with 300 of his followers. Thus the small force of the Muslims was reduced to 700 only.

The Prophet (SAWS) drew the battle plan with the hill at his back and posted fifty archers to guard the pass to prevent an attack from behind. He gave strict orders to them not to leave their posts under any circumstance.

Muslims dominated the battle and forced the enemy to retreat. Seeing this development, the archers abandoned their post to join others in collecting the spoils. Noticing the pass left unguarded a party of enemy mounted a surprise attack on the Muslims from behind. Caught unawares the Muslim got disorganised and fled the battlefield. The enemy targeted the Prophet (SAWS) who not only lost the day but also very nearly lost his life. He was struck down by a shower of arrows and wounded in the face and one of his front teeth was broken. Muslims lost 70 men including Prophet's (SAWS) uncle Hamza (RA). The idolaters lost 22 men. The Quraysh, on their part were too exhausted to follow up their advantage either by attacking Madinah or by driving the Muslims from the heights of Uhud. They retreated from the battlefield after severely mutilating the corpses of the fallen Muslims.

Undeterred, the Prophet (SAWS) rallied his men brilliantly and pursued the retreating enemy some distance to make sure that no fresh attack is launched.

Battle of Tribes

The disastrous battle of Uhud encouraged some of the neighbouring nomad tribes to make forays upon the territories of Madinah without much success. In the same year, Jews of Madinah secretly joined hand with the Quraysh to make a final bid on Muslims. An army of 10,000 well-equipped men marched towards Madinah under the command of Abu Sufiyan. The Muslims could gather only an army of 3,000 men and therefore preferred to remain on the defensive. They dug up a deep trench (*Khandaq*), as suggested by a companion of the Prophet (SAWS), Salman Farsi (RA), round the unprotected quarters of Madinah and took positions between the trench and the city facing the enemy. The enemy made repeated attempts to cross the trench, but failed in the face of stiff resistance from the small Muslim force. The siege of Madinah continued for 20 days resulting in running out of resources of the attacking army creating disunity and frustration among them. At this stage rose a strong storm uprooting the tents and causing disorder in enemy encamped in the open. Demoralised and disheartened, the enemy retreated to the relief of Muslims.

Treaty of Hudaibiyah

Six years after *Hijrah*, the Prophet (SAWS) announced his intention to visit the Sacred House of Ka'bah. Accompanied by seven or eight hundred unarmed Muslims, both *Mohajirs* and *Ansars*, he set out for Makkah. The Quraysh gathered a large army to prevent them from entering Makkah and maltreated his envoy, 'Usman (RA) who was sent to negotiate with Quraysh. After much difficulty, a treaty was concluded (Treaty of Hudaibiyah), mostly on the terms of the Quraysh. They insisted that the Muslims return to Madinah this time.

However, they would be permitted to visit Makkah in the following year.

Universal Preaching

About this time, it was revealed to the Prophet (SAWS) that his mission should be universal. He dispatched several envoys to invite the neighbouring sovereigns to Islam. The King of Persia, Chosroes Pervis (Khusro Pervez) received the message with disdain. He tore the letter of the Prophet (SAWS) into pieces and dismissed the envoy from his presence with great contempt. The Prophet, (SAWS) on receiving the information calmly observed; "Thus will the Empire of Chosroes be torn to pieces."

Another envoy was sent to Heraclius, the Emperor of Rome, who treated him with great respect and sent the Prophet (SAWS) a gracious reply to his message. But, as narrated by 'Abdullah Ibn Abbas (RA), Heraclius could not gather courage to change his faith due to the pressure of his friends and courtiers.

Abrogation of Treaty of Hudaibiyah and Surrender of Makkah

The Quraysh and their allies, the Bani Bakr, violated the terms of peace concluded at Hudaibiya by attacking the Bani Khaza'ah who were in alliance with the Muslims. They appealed to the Prophet (SAWS) for help and protection. The Treaty of Hudaibiyah was abrogated after a notice of four months to the Quraysh because of their repeated violations of the agreed terms and conditions. (At-Tawbah; 9:1-2) Determined to stop the reign of injustice and oppression, he gathered 10,000 men, marched upon Makkah, and laid siege.

Abu Sufiyan was deputed by the Quraysh to request the Prophet (SAWS) to abandon his mission. The Prophet (SAWS) asked him if the time had not come for him to acknowledge that there is no deity save Allah (SWT) and that Muhammad (SAWS) is His Messenger. Abu Sufiyan, having observed and assessed the strength of Muslim army, pronounced the *Shahadah* (declaration of belief) and embraced Islam.

The Muslims entered the city unpretentiously and peacefully. No house was robbed and no man or woman was insulted. The Prophet (SAWS) granted a general amnesty to the entire population of Makkah. He, however, ordered the destruction of all idols and pagan images of worship, over 350 of them that were in the Sacred House of Ka'bah.

After the Prophet (SAWS) had destroyed these pagan idols and abolished every pagan rite, he delivered a sermon to the assembled people: *"O Mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honourable of you in the sight of Allah is that (believer) who has At-Taqwa [(i.e. pious and righteous persons who fear Allah much (abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds which He has forbidden). Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware." (Al-Hujrat; 49:13)*

Mass Acceptance of Islam

Now great multitudes came to adopt Islam and take the oath of allegiance to the Prophet (SAWS). For this purpose an assembly was held at As-Safa Mountain. 'Umar (RA), acting as the deputy of the Prophet (SAWS), administered the oath, whereby the people bound

themselves not to adore any deity but Allah (SWT), to obey the Prophet (SAWS), to abstain from theft, adultery, infanticide, lying and backbiting and all evil deeds. Thus was fulfilled the prophecy embodied in the *Surah Al-Fath* in the Holy Qur'an.

Farewell Pilgrimage (*Hajj al Wida'*) by the Prophet (SAWS)

In February 632 A.D., the Prophet (SAWS), having a premonition of his approaching end, decided to perform Hajj and farewell pilgrimage to Makkah. It is stated that about 140,000 Muslims accompanied him. Before completing all rites of the Hajj pilgrimage, he addressed the assembled multitude from the top of *Jabal ar-Rahman* (Mt. of Peace) in Arafat in the following words:

“O People! Listen to my words, for I know not whether another year will be vouchsafed to me after this year to find myself among you. Your lives and property are sacred and inviolable among one another until you appear before the Lord, as this day and this month are sacred for all; and remember, you will have to appear before Lord Who will demand from you an account for all your actions. O people, you have rights over your wives, and your wives have rights over you. Verily you have taken them on the security of Allah (SWT) and have made their persons lawful unto you by the words of Allah (SWT). And your slaves, see that you feed them with such food as you eat yourselves, and clothe them with the stuff you wear, and if they commit a fault which you are not inclined to forgive, then part with them; for they are the servants of the Lord, and are not to be harshly treated. O people listen to my words and understand them. Know that all Muslims are brothers. You are one brotherhood, but

no man shall take anything from his brother, unless by his free consent. Keep yourselves free from injustice.”

The Prophet (SAWS) concluded his sermon by exclaiming:

“O Lord, I have fulfilled my message and accomplished my work.”

The assembled multitude, all in one voice cried:

“Yes, verily you have.”

The Prophet (SAWS) again exclaimed:

“O Lord, I beseech You, bear witness to it.”

Having performed all the rituals (*Manasik*) of the pilgrimage that all Muslims might follow the example for all succeeding ages he returned with his followers to Madinah.

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