

MA'ĀRIFUL-QUR'ĀN

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Volume 4

(Sūrah Al-A'rāf, Al-Anfāl, Al-Taubah, Yūnus and Hūd)

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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

الحمد لله رب العالمين، والصلاة والسلام على رسوله الكريم وعلى آله وصحبه اجمعين

PREFACE

The 4th Volume of Ma'ariful-Qur'an is being presented before the readers by the grace of Allah. The response of the first three volumes received from the readers belonging to different walks of life was so encouraging that the publishers had to produce several editions of these volumes within a short period. The translation of the fourth volume was initially undertaken by Mr. Muhammad Walī Raazī who has been involved in the process of the translation of the text from the very beginning of the project. He accomplished the translation of Sūrah Al-A'raf from verse 94 to verse 199 but after that he was engaged with some other works and could not continue the translation, while Prof. Muḥammad Shameem after completing the translation of the 3rd volume was free to take up the task. Therefore, the translation from verse 200 of Sūrah Al-A'raf upto the end of the 4th volume was accomplished by him. This volume consists of the commentary of five Sūrahs of the Holy Qur'an upto the end of Sūrah Hūd.

It is for the information of the readers that the translation of the 5th volume has also been completed by Prof. Muḥammad Shameem. Its revision is also about to conclude. The 6th volume is being translated by Mr. Muhammad Ishrat Hussain, while the translation of the 7th volume is now in the hands of Prof. Muḥammad Shameem with whose remarkable speed and zeal of work it is expected to be complete very soon, Insha Allah. May Allah bless the translators with the best of rewards both here and in the hereafter, give them strength to accomplish the task entrusted to them according to His pleasure and make it beneficial for the Ummah.

TRANSLITERATION SCHEME

Arabic Letter	Name of Letter	English Transliteration
ا	الف -- Alif	a
ب	باء -- bā	b
ت	تاء -- tā	t
ث	ثاء -- thā	th
ج	جيم -- jīm	j
ح	حاء -- ḥā	ḥ
خ	خاء -- khā	kh
د	دال -- dāl	d
ذ	ذال -- dhāl	dh
ر	راء -- rā	r
ز	زاي -- zā	z
س	سين -- sīn	s
ش	شين -- shīn	sh
ص	صاد -- ṣād	ṣ
ض	ضاد -- ḍād	ḍ
ط	طاء -- ṭā	ṭ
ظ	ظاء -- ḏā	ḏ
ع	عين -- 'ayn	'
غ	غين -- ghayn	gh
ف	فاء -- fā	f
ق	قاف -- qāf	q
ك	كاف -- kāf	k
ل	لام -- lām	l
م	ميم -- mīm	m
ن	نون -- nūn	n
ه	هاء -- hā	h
و	واو -- wāw	w
ء	همزة -- Hamzah	'
ي	ياء -- yā	y

Short Vowels

: Faṭḥah	a
: Kasrah	i
: Ḍammah	u

Long Vowels

ا	: Shortened Alif	ā
آ	: Maddah Alif	ā
ي	: Maddah Ya	ī
و	: Maddah Wāw	ū

Diphthongs

اى	: Alif and Yā	ay (also ai in some cases)
او	: Alif and Wāw	aw (also au in some cases)

Sūrah Al-A'raf

[The Heights]

Sūrah Al-A'raf was revealed in Makkah and it has 206 Verses and 20 Sections

Verses 94 - 95

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Very Merciful

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِّنْ نَّبِيٍّ إِلَّا أَخَذْنَا أَهْلَهَا بِأَلْبَابِ سَاءٍ وَ
الضَّرَّاءِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَضَّرَّعُونَ ﴿٩٤﴾ ثُمَّ بَدَّلْنَا مَكَانَ السَّيِّئَةِ
الْحَسَنَةَ حَتَّى عَفَوْا وَقَالُوا قَدَمَسَ آبَاءَنَا الضَّرَّاءُ وَالسَّرَّاءُ
فَأَخَذْنَاهُمْ بَغْتَةً وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٩٥﴾

And We did not send any prophet in a town, but We seized it's people with hardship and suffering so that they may turn humble. [94] Thereafter, We substituted good in place of evil until they increased, and said, "The suffering and prosperity came to our fathers (too)." Then We seized them suddenly while they were not aware. [95]

The above verses continue to speak of the events of early people and their ominous fate. The events of five early prophets and their people have been so far discussed. The sixth event concerning the Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام and his people is going to be discussed after a few next verses.

We have already noted that usual style of the Holy Qur'an with regard to the historical events is quite different from the books of history. The Holy Qur'an does not care to describe a historical event in it's entirety or in chronological order. Rather, it selects certain relevant portion of the event then lays emphasis on the lesson or moral contained therein.

After relating the stories of the early people, the above verses speak of the warnings and lessons for present people in order to save them from the ill-fate met by their forefathers. The verse 94 warns people that the fate of disaster and suffering described in the foregoing verses was not limited to the people of Nūḥ, 'Ād and Thamūd only. It is, rather, a usual practice of Allah that He sends His prophets to people for their guidance and eternal success. Then, those who do not listen to their advice and reject their invitation are subjected to suffering and distress so that they may turn to their Lord in repentance. It is human to turn to The Creator in distress. This suffering is, in fact, a blessing of Allah in disguise as it is meant for their good. The great spiritual leader Maulānā Rūmī has versified this fact in these words:

خلق را باتو چنين بد خوکنند تاترا ناچار روا آنسو کنند

"The people are made to misbehave with you
in order that you turn to your Lord in tears."

The verse 94 has referred to this fact by saying, 'We seized it's people with hardship so that they may turn in humbleness. The Arabic word: *Ba'sa* بَأْسًا signifies hunger or poverty while the word: *Darra* ضَرًّا signifies illness. The Holy Qur'an has used these words to signify the same meanings in other situations. The respected Companion 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd رضى الله عنه has confirmed these meanings of the two words. Some linguists have said that the word: *Ba'sa* بَأْسًا refers to financial distress while the word: *Darra* ضَرًّا signifies loss of health. The verse 95 said: "Thereafter, We substituted good in place of evil until they increased."

The Arabic word: *sayyiah* سَيِّئَةً in this verse refers to distress, while the word: *hasanah* حَسَنَةً signifies prosperity, and the word 'Afw: عَفْوٌ signifies increase or growth. The verse implies firstly that, they were made to undergo a test of hardship and suffering in order that they may repent and turn to Allah. When they did not take lesson from this warning and were a failure in this test, they were put to another test of a different kind. Their adversity was replaced with prosperity and their distress with ease and comfort until they increased in number and strength. This prosperity, after a long period of adversity, should have made them grateful to their Lord and they should have repented to Allah, but being completely lost in material pursuits and

perverted by their mundane desires, they did nothing but to say, 'The suffering and prosperity came to our fathers (too).' that is, their suffering and prosperity had nothing to do with their deeds, it was just a natural course of changing phenomena. It was after their obstinate persistence in their evil and ignorance that they were seized by the punishment of Allah. The verse said, 'Then We seized them suddenly while they were unaware.'

Verse 96 - 99

وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ الْقُرَىٰ أٰمَنُوا وَاتَّقَوْا لَفَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِم بَرَكَاتٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ
وَالْأَرْضِ وَلٰكِنْ كَذَّبُوا فَاخَذْنَاهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾ أَفَأَمِنَ
أَهْلُ الْقُرَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتِيَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا بَيَاتًا وَهُمْ نَائِمُونَ ﴿٩٧﴾ أَوَأَمِنَ أَهْلُ
الْقُرَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتِيَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا ضُحًى وَهُمْ يُلْعَبُونَ ﴿٩٨﴾ أَفَأَمِنُوا مَكْرَ اللَّهِ ۗ
فَلَا يَأْتِيهِمْ مَكْرَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْفٰٓسِقُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾

And if the people of the towns believed and feared Allah, We would have opened for them blessings from the heavens and the earth, but they disbelieved. So, We seized them for what they used to earn for themselves. [96] So, do the people of the towns feel secure from Our punishment coming upon them at night while they are asleep? [97] And do the people of the towns feel secure from Our punishment coming upon them in broad daylight while they are at play? [98] So, do they feel secure from the plan of Allah? So, no one feels secure from the plan of Allah but the people who are losers. [99]

The Arabic word بَرَكَهٖ: '*barakah*' used in this verse and translated as blessing signifies increase or growth. The expression 'blessing of the heaven and the earth' refers to all means of prosperity, like proper and timely rain from heavens (clouds), abundant and healthy produce of the earth and, above all, carefree enjoyment from their possessions with no anxiety to spoil the pleasure of things. That is, everything would have been blessed with '*barakah*'.

The *barakah* manifests itself in two different ways. Sometimes, the thing itself increases in quantity, as is reported happening with the Holy Prophet ﷺ that a large number of people drank from a small pot of water and were satiated, or the whole army was fed to their satis-

faction from a small quantity of food. Sometimes, the quantity of thing does not increase but it's usefulness or efficacy is increased manifold. It is usually observed that a certain thing in our household lasts as long or benefits as many people as would have done three or four things of the same kind. That is to say, certain things yield lasting benefit to people while certain other things do not, or hardly serve people either due to being damaged by accident or not being accessible in times of need.

For example, sometime a single morsel of food becomes a source of great strength and health, while in some other times a large amount of food produces no results. Sometimes, we are able to do a considerable amount of work in one hour's short time, while on other occasions this amount of work can hardly be done in four or five hour's time. In these instances the thing itself did not increase. That is, the morsel of food and period of time remained as they were, their effect and benefit was, however, enhanced many times.

This verse has implicitly expressed that 'Barakah' in all the heavenly and earthly things can be achieved through the faith in Allah and by acquiring: تَقْوَىٰ 'taqwā' (abstinence) while, in the absence of these two, one is deprived of the: بَرَكَاتٍ 'barakah'. When we take in view the circumstances prevailing in today's world we notice the fact that the net produce of the earth is comparably far more than ever before. The recent inventions are at our service to ease our life in a way that could not be imagined of by past generations. But in spite of this abundance of means and resources today's man is proportionally worried, depressed, dissatisfied and as much deprived of peace and comfort as was never before.

What has deprived today's man of peace and comfort? No explanation can be given to this question except that the: بَرَكَاتٍ 'barakah' is missing from these things. Another point which demands our attention here is that prosperity, good health and worldly possessions are not necessarily a sign of favour and blessing from Allah. Sometimes, these things are given to man out of anger as has been made clear in verse 44 of Surah Al-An'am which has said:

فَلَمَّا نَسُوا مَا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ أَبْوَابَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ

Then they forgot the advice they had received, we opened to them the doors of all good things. (6:44)

Thereafter, they were suddenly caught by the punishment of Allah. This makes us understand that prosperity and affluence of wealth are not sure signs of Allah's favour. They can sometimes, be a sign of Allah's wrath and punishment. On the contrary, the present verse leads us to conclude that: بَرَكَاتٍ *barakah* in earthly and heavenly things is a sign of Allah's favour. In order to differentiate between the two situations one must understand that prosperity and good health are sometimes, given to people against their sins and transgression. They are usually short-lived and are a sign of Allah's displeasure while on other occasions people are favoured with them with lasting benefits as a reward of 'Īmān' and 'taqwā'. To determine as to which is a sign of favour and which a sign of displeasure is difficult as both are alike.

The men of Allah, however, have suggested some distinct signs to differentiate between the two. When prosperity and good health make man more grateful to Allah and he tends to worship His Lord more than before, it is an indication of Allah's favour. On the contrary, when one tends to be more involved in sinful deeds, it must be a sign of Allah's wrath. We seek shelter against such state of affairs.

The verses 97 to 99 have warned the people of the world saying: "So, do the people of the towns feel secure from Our punishment coming upon them at night while they are asleep?" The verse implies that the residents of these towns (the people living in the time of the holy Prophet ﷺ) seem to be unmindful of the fact that they can be caught by the punishment of Allah any time when sleeping at night. They should not feel themselves secure from the punishment of Allah which may come to them suddenly any day when they are busy in their worldly pursuits. What has made them so fearless of Allah's plan? The fate of the early people referred to in the foregoing verses should be a lesson for these people. Man should be wise enough to take lesson from the events of other people and avoid things to do which had led them to death and disaster.

Verses 100 - 102

أَوَلَمْ يَهْدِ لِلَّذِينَ يَرِثُونَ الْأَرْضَ مِنْ أَعْدَائِهِمْ أَنْ تَوَسَّأُ

أَصَبْنَاهُمْ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَنَطَعُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾
 تِلْكَ الْقُرَى نَقِصُ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِهَا وَلَقَدْ جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ
 بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَمَا كَانُوا لِيُؤْمِنُوا بِمَا كَذَّبُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ كَذَلِكَ يَطْبَعُ
 اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِ الْكٰفِرِينَ ﴿١٠١﴾ وَمَا وَجَدْنَا لِأَكْثَرِهِمْ مِنْ
 عَهْدٍ وَإِنْ وَجَدْنَا أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَفٰسِقِينَ ﴿١٠٢﴾

Is it not a guidance to those who inherit the land after it's (former) inhabitants that, if We so will, We would afflict them for their sins? And We seal their hearts so that they do not listen. [100]

Those are the towns We narrate to you of their important events. And surely their messengers came to them with clear signs, but they were not to believe in what they had belied earlier. This is how Allah seals the hearts of the disbelievers. [101]

And We did not find with most of them any covenant (unbroken), and surely We have found most of them sinners. [102]

After relating events of the early people, the above verses invite the people of Arabia and the people of the world to take lesson from these events by abstaining from deeds that incurred Allah's wrath, and by following the practices that led the prophets and their believers to eternal success. The verse 100 speaks " Is it not a guidance to those who inherit the land after it's (former) inhabitants that, if We so will, We would afflict them for their sins?" The word هَدَى يَهْدِي signifies to guide or to inform. The events narrated above have been made the subject of the verb يَهْدِي (guide) . The verse implies that these events should serve as a lesson and a means of guidance for later generations who have inherited the land from their earlier owners. They too, can incur the punishment of Allah for their disbelief just as their ancestors met the fate of ruin and disaster for their disobedience.

Thereafter, the verse says:

وَنَطَعُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ،

"And We seal their hearts so that they do not listen"

The word: طبع is used for printing or stamping. It implies that these people have taken no lesson from the past events with the result that they incurred the wrath of Allah making their hearts sealed. They are, therefore, unable to listen to the truth. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said in a Tradition: "When one commits sin for the first time a black dot is placed on his heart, if he keeps committing sins for the second and third times the second and third dots are placed. If one increases in his sins without repenting to Allah, these black spots keep increasing until the whole heart is painted black." This ultimately deprives man of his natural faculty of distinguishing right from wrong. This, consequently, leads one to receive evil as good and good as evil, harmful as useful and useful as harmful.

This perversion of human understanding has been termed in the Holy Qur'ān as 'rā'n' signifying the rust of the heart. In this verse, as in many other verses of the Holy Qur'ān, this stage has been named as 'taba'. The result of their hearts being sealed has been mentioned at the end of the verse by saying (فَهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ) "so that they do not listen". One may think that more appropriate expression in this context was (فَهُمْ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ) "they do not understand" as the adverse effect of sealing of the heart is obviously related to the faculty of understanding and not to the listening. The Holy Qur'ān has used the word 'listen' to indicate that understanding is usually the result of listening to the truth. Now, since their hearts have been sealed they are rendered unable to listening the truth. Another explanation to this may be that all human faculties and limbs are controlled by human heart, that is, the function of all human parts is adversely affected by malfunctioning of the heart. When one loves any one or anything he likes everything - good or bad - in that person or object.

The verse 101 has contained the phrase تِلْكَ الْقُرَىٰ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنبَاءِهَا "these are stories of the towns that We narrate to you." The word: نَبَأٌ 'nabā' in Arabic is used to denote some great news. With the word: مِنْ 'min' the verse has indicated that the events described in these verses are only some of a large number of events bearing the same lesson. The verse has further said, "And surely, their messengers came to them with clear signs, but they were not to believe in what they had belied earlier." It brings out their obstinate attitude towards the prophets

who came to them with clear signs or miracles which are a definite means to decide between right and wrong but they obstinately rejected the truth, only because they had once belied them.

We know from this verse that miracles were given to all the prophets. The miracles of some prophets have been mentioned while the miracles of most of the prophets have not been referred to in the Holy Qur'an. This does not allow one to infer that the prophets not mentioned in the Qur'an were not given any miracles. As for the statement of the people of the prophet Hūd, appearing in Sūrah Hūd as مَا جِئْتُمْ بِبَيِّنَةٍ "you did not bring any clear sign", this verse has clearly indicated that their statement was simply out of their obstinacy or, may be they thought his miracles were of less significance.

Another point to be noted is that the present verse is speaking of the peculiarity of the disbelieving people who rigidly and obstinately followed the path of ignorance, only to prove that what they had once said was true, with no regard to all the clear signs and proofs of the truth. Most of the Muslims, even some 'Ulamā' (the religious scholars) are seen to have the same habit of supporting their wrong statements in the face of clear proofs of the truth. This condition is a usual cause of incurring Allah's wrath. ('Masail al Suluk')

Thereafter, the verse said كَذَلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِ الْكَافِرِينَ "This is how Allah stamps upon the hearts of the disbelievers" that is, Allah seals the hearts of those who disbelieve and reject the truth, making them unable to accept good as good. The verse 102 has said, "And We did not find with most of them any covenant (unbroken)." The Companion 'Abdullāh ibn Abbās رضى الله عنه has said that the covenant referred to in this verse is the Covenant called عَهْدَائِكُمْ . That is, the covenant that Allah made with the spirits of all the creatures before creating them, when Allah said to them: أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ "Am I not your Lord?" All the human spirits entered into a covenant by answering "Yes" to the question. Most of the people forgot this covenant after they came to earth, and got involved in worshipping false gods instead of worshipping Allah. The verse, therefore, has said that Allah did not find most of the people true to this covenant. (Tafsīr Kabīr)

The respected companion 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd رضى الله عنه has said that the covenant referred to in this verse is the covenant of 'Imān' the

Faith as has been indicated in the Holy Qur'an in these words **إِلَّا مَنِ اتَّخَذَ** **عِنْدَ الرَّحْمَنِ عَهْدًا** "Except the one who entered into a covenant with Raḥman (Allah), the covenant in this verse signifies the covenant of Faith. The verse, therefore, implies that most of the people deviated from their covenant with Allah. We usually note that nearly every individual when he finds himself trapped in some distress, no matter how sinful he is, turns to Allah and often makes a promise in words or in his heart that he will be faithful to Allah and obey Him and avoid disobedience if he is relieved from this calamity. But when they are out of the mess, they indulge in their mundane desires having no regard for their covenant with Allah.

The Holy Qur'an has made mention of many of such people. It may be noted that the verse has made exception by saying 'most of them' and not 'all of them'. It is because there are people who are so perverted that even in their distress they do not turn to Allah, and they do not think of making any promise with Allah, while there are others who fulfil their promise and stay obedient to Him. At the end, the verse has the phrase "We found most of them sinners." That is, most of the people deviate from their covenant of staying obedient to Allah.

The above verses have described five events of earlier people so that present people may learn lesson from them and avoid following the course of their forefathers that led them to disaster.

Of all the events of early people described in this chapter the next event is of prophet **Mūsā عليه السلام** which has been described in some detail in the following verses because his miracles are larger in number and more prominent in their nature. Similarly, his people, the Israelite, were more obstinate and ignorant than other people of the world. In addition, these verses, 103-110 carry some injunctions and points of discussion.

Verses 103 - 108

ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ مُوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِ
فَظَلَمُوا بِهَا فَأَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿١٠٣﴾ وَقَالَ

مُوسَىٰ يُفْرَعُونَ إِنِّي رَسُولٌ مِّن رَّبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٠٤﴾ ﴿١٠٤﴾ حَقِيقٌ
 عَلَىٰ أَن لَّا أَقُولَ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقَّ قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِبَيِّنَةٍ مِّن
 رَبِّكُمْ فَأَرْسِلْ مَعِيَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ ﴿١٠٥﴾ ﴿١٠٥﴾ قَالَ إِنْ كُنْتَ جِئْتَ
 بِآيَةٍ فَأْتِ بِهَا إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿١٠٦﴾ ﴿١٠٦﴾ فَأَلْقَىٰ عَصَاهُ
 فَإِذَا هِيَ ثُعْبَانٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١٠٧﴾ ﴿١٠٧﴾ وَنَزَعَ يَدَهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ بَيْضَاءُ
 لِلنَّاظِرِينَ ﴿١٠٨﴾ ﴿١٠٨﴾

Then after them We sent Mūsā عليه السلام with Our signs to Pharaoh and his chiefs then , they did injustice to them. So, look, how was the fate of the mischief-makers. [103] And Mūsā عليه السلام said, "O Pharaoh, I am a messenger from the Lord of the worlds, [104] worthy of saying nothing about Allah except the truth. I have come to you with a clear sign from your Lord. So, let the children of Isra'īl go with me." [105] He said, "If you have come with a sign, bring it out, if you are one of the truthful." [106] So he threw down his staff, and it was a serpent, manifest; [107] and drew out his hand, and it was a white light to the onlookers. [108]

The verse 103, has said that after the prophets Nuḥ, Hud, Ṣāliḥ, Lūt and Shu'aib, We sent Mūsā عليه السلام with Our signs towards Pharaoh and his people. The 'signs' may refer to the verses of the Torah or to the miracles of the prophet Mūsā عليه السلام . The word Pharaoh was the title of Egyptian kings. The Pharaoh of Mūsā's time is said to be Merneptah. The phrase كَفَرُوا بِهَا "they did injustice to them (signs)" here means that they showed indifference to the verses of Allah, instead of being grateful to Him and having faith in them they rejected His verses. The word ظم rendered as wrong or injustice, in fact, signifies the use of something for a purpose opposite to what it was created for. Further it said فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُفْسِدِينَ "So look how was the fate of mischief-makers." Again the people are invited to take lesson from these events and think of their own fate.

The verse is a clear declaration of the prophet Mūsā عليه السلام before Pharaoh that he was a messenger of Allah, the Lord of all the worlds, and that his status of prophethood does not allow him to ascribe

anything but truth to Allah because the message given to the prophets by Allah is a sacred trust and it is a great sin to tamper with it. All the prophets of Allah are free of all sins and cannot do so. The prophet Mūsā عليه السلام tried to convince them that they should believe him because his truthfulness was beyond question and that he had never uttered a word of lie. In addition to this, his miracles are a clear proof to support his claim to prophethood.

In the light of these clear signs he must believe him and let the children of Isra'īl go with him free of his illegitimate surveillance. The Pharaoh, out of his obstinacy, did not listen to anything, but demanded saying, " If you have come with a sign, bring it out, if you are among the truthful, " *إِنْ كُنْتَ جِئْتَ بِآيَةٍ فَأْتِ بِهَا إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ* . The prophet Mūsā عليه السلام, in response to his demand, threw down his staff on the earth, instantly it turned into a serpent: *فَإِذَا هِيَ تُعْبَأُ مُبِينٌ* . The word 'thu'ban' in Arabic signifies a huge serpent. The use of the word 'mubīn' as an adjective which means 'clear or prominent' is quite descriptive of the fact that this miraculous event took place manifestly before the eyes of the people of the Pharaoh, and it was not performed secretly in a hidden or secluded place as is usually done by magicians. In some historical traditions it has been cited on the authority of the Companion Ibn 'Abbās رضى الله عنه that as the serpent moved towards Pharaoh, he jumped from his throne and sought shelter near the prophet Mūsā عليه السلام and many of his courtiers died of extreme fear. (Tafsīr Kabīr)

Transformation of the staff into a real serpent is not, in fact, totally impossible as it apparently seems. It is, however, surprising due to being unusual. The miracle has to be an unusual act, beyond the power of a common individual. Allah shows the miracles through His prophets to make people understand that they possess some divine powers and are true prophets of Allah. Thereafter, the verse (7:108) said, *وَنَزَعَ يَدَهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ بَيْضَاءُ لِلنّٰظِرِيْنَ* 'And he drew out his hand, and it was white light to the onlookers.'

The Arabic word: *نزع naza'a* signifies extracting something from another thing with force. Here this word indicates that the prophet Mūsā عليه السلام applied some force while drawing out his hand. The verse does not speak of a place from where he drew out his hand. In

other verses, however, we find mention of two things. In a verse (27:12) we find the words *أَدْخُلْ يَدَكَ مِنْ جَيْبِكَ* 'enter your hand under your robe.' The other verse (20:22) contains the words *(وَاضْعُ يَدَكَ إِلَى جَنَاحِكَ)* 'put your hand under your arm.' The two phrases indicate that he used to draw out his hand either from under his arm or from under his shirt. Arabic word: *بَيْضًا* 'bayḍā' means white. The whiteness of hand may also be due to some disease, it is perhaps, why the Holy Qur'an has added the words 'without an evil' in other (28:32, 27:12) verse to eliminate any possible doubt of a disease. We know from a Tradition reported by the Companion 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās رضى الله عنه that this whiteness was not of ordinary kind. It had light that illuminated the whole surrounding. (Qurtubī) The Arabic word '*nāzirīn*' signifying the 'onlookers or viewers' indicates that this light was so surprising for the people that they gathered to see it.

The prophet Mūsā عليه السلام performed two miracles at this occasion on the demand of the Pharaoh. First, the transformation of his staff into a serpent, second, drawing his hand out from under his arm, emanating light from it. The first was to serve as warning for the unbelievers while the second aimed at inviting them to the truth. It also indicated that the message of the prophet Mūsā was a light and to follow it would lead people to eternal success.

Verses 109 - 110

قَالَ الْمَلَأُ مِنْ قَوْمِ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّ هَذَا لَسِحْرٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٠٩﴾ يُرِيدُ أَنْ
يُخْرِجَكُمْ مِنْ أَرْضِكُمْ فَمَاذَا تَأْمُرُونَ ﴿١١٠﴾

The chiefs of the people of the Pharaoh said, "This man is certainly a sorcerer of great knowledge. [109] He wants to expel you from your land. So, what do you suggest ?" [110]

The Arabic word 'Mala' is used for influential chiefs. After seeing these miracles they said to the people he was a great sorcerer. Being ignorant of divine powers of Allah they could say nothing else as they believed Pharaoh to be their god and had seen nothing but the magical charms of the sorcerers in their life. They, however, added the word '*alīm*' signifying the one who knows, showing their impression that the

miraculous acts of Mūsā عليه السلام were of the kind that could not be performed by an ordinary magician. So, they said that he was a sorcerer of great knowledge.

The difference between miracle and sorcery

The miracles and sorcery are so distinct in their nature and effect that they do not require any explanation to any one applying common sense. The sorcerers usually live in impurity and, the more they are unclean and impure the more they are successful in their sorcery. The prophets, on the other hand, are by nature the most clean and pure people. Another obvious distinction is that a sorcerer is never successful when he makes claim to prophethood. Besides, the acts performed under the effect of sorcery do have physical causes as other things have, with the only difference that their causes remain hidden to common people. The people, therefore, take them to be happening without the help of any cause. On the contrary, the miracles are directly a manifestation of Allah's power and have nothing to do with physical causes. This is why the miracles have been ascribed directly to Allah and not to the prophets in the Holy Qur'an. The Qur'an said "but Allah threw the pebbles" (while these pebbles were thrown by the Holy Prophet ﷺ in the battle of Badr). In short, the miracles and sorcery are totally different from each other. The people of knowledge have no confusion about it. In order to eliminate any possible confusion of a common individual, Allah has provided with obvious distinctions between the two.

Even the people of the Pharaoh found the miracles of the prophet Mūsā عليه السلام somehow different from the normal acts of sorcerers. Therefore, even while accusing him of sorcery they admitted that he was 'of great knowledge' meaning that his act was not comparable with the acts of the normal sorcerers.

Verses 111- 122

قَالُوا أَرْجِهْ وَأَخَاهُ وَأَرْسِلْ فِي الْمَدَائِنِ حَاشِرِينَ ﴿١١١﴾
يَأْتُونَكَ بِكُلِّ سَجِرٍ عَلَيْهِمْ ﴿١١٢﴾ وَجَاءَ السَّحَرَةُ فِرْعَوْنَ قَالُوا
إِنَّ لَنَا لَأَجْرًا إِن كُنَّا نَحْنُ الْغَالِبِينَ ﴿١١٣﴾ قَالَ نَعَمْ وَإِنَّكُمْ لِن

الْمُقْرَبِينَ ﴿١١٤﴾ قَالُوا يُمُوسَىٰ إِنَّآ أَنُتْلِقِى وَإِمَّآ أَنُتَكُونَن
 نَحْنُ الْمُلْقِينَ ﴿١١٥﴾ قَالُ الْقُوَا فَلَمَّآ أَلْقُوَا سَحَرُوَا أَعِينُ
 النَّاسِ وَاسْتَرْهَبُوهُمُ وَجَاءُ وَا بِسِحْرِ عَظِيمِ ﴿١١٦﴾ وَ أَوْحَيْنَا
 إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ أَنُ أَلِقْ عَصَاكَ فَإِذَا هِىَ تَلْقَفُ مَا يَأْفِكُونَ
 ﴿١١٧﴾ فَوَقَعَ الْحَقُّ وَبَطَلَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١١٨﴾ فَغَلِبُوا
 هُنَالِكَ وَانْقَلَبُوا طَبْعِينَ ﴿١١٩﴾ وَأَلْقَى السَّحَرَةُ سُجُودِينَ
 ﴿١٢٠﴾ قَالُوا آمَنَّا بِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٢١﴾ رَبِّ مُوسَىٰ وَهَارُونَ
 ﴿١٢٢﴾

They said, "leave him and his brother alone for a while, and send men to the cities to collect [111] and bring to you every expert sorcerer." [112]

And the sorcerers came to Pharaoh. They said, "There must be a reward for us, if we are the victors." [113] He said, "yes, and of course, you will be among the closer ones." [114] They said, "O Mūsā عليه السلام, either you throw (first) or shall we be the ones to throw?" He said, "You throw." [115]

So when they threw, they bewitched the eyes of the people, and made them frightened, and produced great sorcery. [116] And We revealed to Mūsā, "Throw your staff." Then of a sudden, it began to swallow all that they had concocted. [117]

So, the truth prevailed, and what they were doing became a nullity. [118] So, they were overcome there and turned humiliated. [119] And the sorcerers were constrained to fall in prostration. [120] They said, "We believe in the Lord of the worlds, [121] the Lord of Mūsā and Hārūn." [122]

These verses narrate the remaining part of the story of the prophet Mūsā عليه السلام. Seeing these wonders of staves turning into serpents and making his hand emitting strong white light, the Pharaoh should have been convinced and have believed in Mūsā عليه السلام as the logic

and sense demanded. But it is the common practice of the wrong-doers that they always seek false interpretations of the truth in order to conceal it, the Pharaoh and his people belied him instead, and said to the people that he was a great sorcerer and that he wanted to expel them from their homes and take over the rule of the country. The people of the Pharaoh suggested:

أَرْجُهُ وَأَخَاهُ وَأَرْسِلْ فِي الْمَدَائِنِ حَاشِرِينَ - يَا نُؤُوكَ بِكُلِّ سِحْرٍ عَلَيْنَا (١١٢-١١١)

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

The people of the Pharaoh said that there were many expert sorcerers in their cities who were capable of defeating Mūsā عليه السلام.

Some soldiers should be sent to collect and bring the sorcerers for this purpose. Sorcery and magic, being the custom of the day, the sorcerers enjoyed a high status among people. Allah sent Mūsā عليه السلام with the miracles of the staff and white-lit hand so that people may clearly observe the misery of the sorcerers after entering into a contest with Mūsā عليه السلام. It is the usual practice of Allah that He sends His prophets with miracles that are appropriate to the demand of the time. For instance, in the time of the prophet 'Īsā (the Jesus), Greek philosophy and medical sciences were at their zenith. He was, therefore, sent with the miraculous powers of restoring the sight of those who were born blind and cure the lepers instantly with a touch of his hand. In the time of the Holy Prophet ﷺ the Arabs were boastful of their oratory and linguistic capabilities. The Holy Qur'an was sent as the greatest of all miracles of the Holy prophet. It's diction and style so bewildered the Arabs that they instantly acknowledged a super human element in it. The sorcerers came to Pharaoh and said:

إِنَّ لَنَا لَأَجْرًا إِنْ كُنَّا نَحْنُ الْغَالِبِينَ

"There must be a reward for us, if we are the victors." (113)

He said,

نَعَمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ

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

The sorcerers were invited from all over the country. When they all

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

It may be noted that the first thing the sorcerers did, was to have an assurance about the reward they will get in return of their performance. It is because worldly people are always after worldly gains. They do nothing unless they are sure of their gains, while on the contrary, the prophets and their disciples always declare:

وَمَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَى رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

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

That is, the prophets of Allah preach and convey the message of Allah only for the good and guidance of people and they seek no financial gain against it. They seek their reward from Allah alone. After this discourse with Pharaoh the sorcerers got the place and date fixed for the great encounter. An open land was chosen for the purpose and the time was fixed after the sunrise on their festival Day. It is also mentioned in a verse of the Holy Qur'an: Mūsā عليه السلام said: قَالَ مُزْعِدُكُمْ يَوْمَ الزَّيْتَةِ وَأَنْ تُحْشَرَ النَّاسُ ضَحَى "your appointed day is the day of 'zīnah' so that people may be gathered after sunrise." (20:59)

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

They said,

قَالُوا يَا مُوسَى إِمَّا أَنْ تُلْقَى وَإِمَّا أَنْ نَكُونَ نَحْنُ الْمُلْقِينَ

"O Mūsā either you throw (first) or shall we be the ones to throw."

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

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

فَلَمَّا الْقَوْا سَاحِرُونَ أَعْيَنَ النَّاسَ وَاسْتَرْتَبَهُمْ وَجَأُوا بِسِحْرِ عَظِيمٍ

So, when they threw, they bewitched the eyes of the people, and made them frightened, and came out with great sorcery.

(116)

This verse indicates that this demonstration of their magic was just a bewitching of the eyes of the people which made them see the staves and strings as snakes leaping on the ground, while the strings and the staves did not change physically. It was a kind of mesmerism hypnotising the minds of the onlookers. This does not mean that sorcery is confined only in this kind and that it cannot change something into another, as we do not have any proof against it. On the contrary, many forms and kinds of magic have been taken as being

reality. The terms magic and sorcery are usually applied for all the acts that seem to be happening in unusual way. Sleight of hand, telepathic influences and mesmerism are sometimes called magic. Transformation of one thing into another through magic may be a possibility but we have no valid reason or proof for or against it.

The next verse 117 said, "وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ أَلْقِ عَصَاكَ فَإِذَا هِيَ تَلْقَفُ مَا يَأْبَىٰ فَكُونْ" And We revealed to Mūsā 'Throw your staff.' Then, of a sudden it began to swallow all that they had concocted." We find it reported in history, when thousands of staffs and ropes were turned into snakes leaping all over the ground, Allah commanded Mūsā عليه السلام to drop down his staff on the ground. It turned into a great snake and instantly began to eat up the snakes of the sorcerers. The crowd stood bewildered and stunned at this sight. Within no time all the snakes were eaten up by the great snake of the prophet Mūsā عليه السلام. Next, the verse said:

فَوَقَعَ الْحَقُّ وَوَيْطَلَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ . فَعَلِبُوا هُنَالِكَ وَانْقَلَبُوا صَاغِرِينَ وَأَلْقَى
السَّحَرَةُ سُجُودًا قَالُوا آمَنَّا بِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ رَبِّ مُوسَىٰ وَ هَارُونَ .

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

The sorcerers were so overawed by the miracle of the prophet Mūsā عليه السلام that they fell in prostration. This may also imply that Allah blessed them with favour and put them in prostration. They added the phrase, the Lord of Mūsā عليه السلام and Harun after saying, the Lord of the worlds, to make it clear that the Lord worshipped by Mūsā عليه السلام and Hārūn is, in fact, the Lord of the Universe, and not the Pharaoh as he pretended to be.

Verses- 123 - 127

قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ آمَنْتُمْ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ أَدْنَىٰ لَكُمْ إِنَّ هَذَا لَمَكْرٌ مَّكْرُمُونَ فِي
الْمَدِينَةِ لِتُخْرِجُوا مِنْهَا أَهْلَهَا فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٢٣﴾ لَا قَطِيعَةٌ
أَيْدِيكُمْ وَأَرْجُلِكُمْ مِّنْ خِلَافٍ ثُمَّ لَأَصْلَبَنَّكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٢٤﴾ قَالُوا

إِنَّا إِلَىٰ رَبِّنَا مُنْقَلِبُونَ ﴿١٢٥﴾ وَمَا تَنْقِمُ مِنَّا إِلَّا أَنْ آمَنَّا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّنَا
 لَمَّا جَاءَنَا رَبَّنَا أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا وَتَوَفَّنَا مُسْلِمِينَ ﴿١٢٦﴾ وَقَالَ
 الْمَلَأُ مِنْ قَوْمِ فِرْعَوْنَ أَتَدْرُ مُوسَىٰ وَقَوْمَهُ لِيُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ
 وَكَذَرِكِ وَالْهَتَكَ قَالَ سَنُقَتِّلُ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ وَنَسْتَحْيِي نِسَاءَهُمْ وَإِنَّا
 فَوْقَهُمْ قَاهِرُونَ ﴿١٢٧﴾

The Pharaoh said, "You have believed in him before I permitted you. No doubt, this is a device you have devised in the city, so that you may expel it's people from there. Now you shall know (it's end). [123] I shall certainly, cut apart your hands and your legs from opposite sides. Then I shall crucify you all together." [124] They said, "We are surely to return to our Lord. [125] You punish us for no other reason but that we have believed in the signs of our Lord when they came to us. "O our Lord, pour out patience upon us and let the death take us while we are Muslims (the faithful)." [126]

And the chiefs of the people of the Pharaoh said, "Do you leave Mūsā عليه السلام and his people that they spread disorder in the land while he leaves you and your gods?" He said, " We shall slaughter their sons and let their women live. And we have full power over them." [127]

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

accepting their faith and fell prey to the trap of Mūsā عليه السلام and Hārūn. Otherwise, he would have also believed in him in case Mūsā عليه السلام and Hārūn proved truthful in their claim.

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

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

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

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

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

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

It Was A Miracle

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

Pharaoh was frightened

It is to be noted that the Pharaoh was in some degree successful in keeping his ignorant people in their former ignorance through his clever and false statements, but at the same time, they strangely noted that all the fury and rage of Pharaoh was limited to the sorcerers only. He did not dare say a word against the prophets Mūsā عليه السلام and Hārūn who were his real opponents. This is obvious from the following statement of his people: *أَتَذَرُ مُوسَى وَقَوْمَهُ لِيُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَيَذَرَكَ وَالرَّهْتَكَ* "Do you leave Mūsā عليه السلام and his people alone to spread disorder in the land, even when he abandons you and your gods?"

Pharaoh had no convincing answer to this question. He only said, *سَنَقْتِلُ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ وَنَسْتَحْيِي نِسَاءَهُمْ وَإِنَّا فَوْقَهُمْ قَاهِرُونَ* "We shall slaughter their sons and let their women live, and we have full power over them."

According to the commentators of the Holy Qur'an, Pharaoh tried to satisfy his people saying that by killing their males and leaving their women alive, he shall totally eliminate them within a period of time. Their women shall be spared to serve his people as maid servants. In fact, Pharaoh was so frightened by the miracle of the prophet Mūsā عليه السلام that even at this occasion when he was threatening to kill all the men of Israelites, he could not utter a single word of threat against Mūsā and Hārūn عليهم السلام Maulānā Rūmī said :

هرکه ترسید از حق و تقوی گزید
ترسید ازوی جن و انس و هرکه دید

"Whoever adopts 'Taqwā' and fears Allah is feared by all human beings and spirits".

The above statement of Pharaoh's people, 'Even when he abandons you and your gods' makes us understand that Pharaoh himself used to worship other gods, even though he claimed to be the god of his people. The law about killing of the males of the Israelites and leaving their women alive was now promulgated the second time. The first time it was put into force prior to the birth of the prophet Mūsā عليه السلام. He was witnessing the failure of this law up to this day which was evident from the huge crowd of the Israelites present at this occasion. When

Allah intends to bring disgrace to a people, all they contrive leads to nothing but disaster. We shall soon see that this tyranny and oppression, at last, led him and his people to an ignominious end.

Verses 128-132

قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ اسْتَعِينُوا بِاللَّهِ وَاصْبِرُوا إِنَّ الْأَرْضَ لِلَّهِ
يُورِثُهَا مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ ۗ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٢٨﴾
قَالُوا أُوذِينَا مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَأْتِيَنَا وَمِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جِئْتَنَا ۗ قَالَ
عَسَىٰ رَبُّكُمْ أَنْ يُهْلِكَ عَدُوَّكُمْ وَيَسْتَخْلِفَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
فَيَنْظُرَ كَيْفَ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢٩﴾ ۗ وَلَقَدْ أَخَذْنَا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ بِالسِّنِينَ
وَنَقْصِ مِّنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذَّكَّرُونَ ﴿١٣٠﴾ ۗ فَاِذَا جَاءَتْهُمْ
الْحُسْنَىٰ قَالُوا لَنَا هَذِهِ ۗ وَإِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ يَطَّيَّرُوا بِمُوسَىٰ وَمَنْ
مَّعَهُ ۗ إِلَّا إِنَّمَا طَّيَّرَهُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ
﴿١٣١﴾ ۗ وَقَالُوا مَهْمَا تَأْتِنَا بِهِ مِنْ آيَةٍ لِّتَسْحَرَنَا بِهَا فَمَا نَحْنُ
لَكَ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٣٢﴾

And Mūsā said to his people, "Seek help from Allah and be patient. Surely, the land belongs to Allah. He lets whomsoever He wills, from among His slaves, inherit it. And the end-result is in favour of the God-fearing." [128] They said, "We were persecuted before you came to us, as well as, after you have come to us." He said, "It is likely that your Lord will destroy your enemy and make you successors in the earth, then He will see how you act." [129]

And We seized the people of the Pharaoh with years of famine and loss of fruits, so that they may take lesson. [130] So when something good came to them they said, 'This is our right.' And if they suffered from something evil, they ascribed it as an ill omen to Mūsā and those with him. Listen, their omen lies with Allah only, but most of them do not know. [131]

And they said, "whatever sign you bring to us to

enchant us therewith, we are not going to believe in you." [132]

After being defeated by the prophet Mūsā, عليه السلام Pharaoh enforced the law of killing the male children of the Israelites. They were greatly alarmed of the punishment they had experienced before the coming of the prophet Mūsā عليه السلام. The prophet Mūsā عليه السلام was also mindful of this fact. Out of his kindness, he offered two wise solutions to the Israelites. He said to them that only way of getting out of this trial was, firstly, to seek help from Allah and, secondly, to remain patient until the things change into their favour. He also promised them that they shall inherit the whole land if they faithfully observed the two instructions. This is what the verse said: *اسْتَعِينُوا بِاللَّهِ* "Seek help from Allah and be patient; surely, the land belongs to Allah, He lets whomsoever He wills inherit it, from among his servants." This implies that all the lands belong to Allah, and He lets whomsoever He wills inherit the land. And decidedly the end result is for the God-fearing. So, if they observe 'Taqwā' (keep away from disobedience) by acting upon the two instructions offered above they shall ultimately rule the whole country.

The Only Way To Success

A little reflection over the above two teachings of the prophet Mūsā عليه السلام will show that it is the sovereign remedy which never fails against any difficulty. The first ingredient of this recipe is seeking help from Allah which is the essence of the remedy. It is for the obvious reason that if the Creator of the universe comes to one's help who is there to stop Him? Maulānā Rūmī said in a couplet:

خاک و بادو آب و آتش بنده اند
بامن وتو مرده باحق زنده اند

"The earth, the air, the water and the fire, all are servants of Allah. To me and to You they are dead, but to Allah they are full of life."

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

The second important ingredient of the recipe is being patient. The Arabic word 'Ṣabr' rendered as patience literally signifies to keep oneself under one's control against unfavourable happenings. It is common knowledge that nothing significant can be achieved without undergoing difficulties and hardships. One who readily prepares himself to face hardships is generally successful in most of his objectives. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said in a Tradition, "No greater blessing has been given to any one other than patience." (Abū Dāwūd)

The Israelites who seemed to have no conception of such matters could not understand how patience alone could free them from Pharaoh's punishment and bring them success against him. They blamed the prophet Mūsā عليه السلام saying:

قَالُوا أَوَدِينَا مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَأْتِينَا وَمِنْ أَعْدٍ مَا جِئْتَنَا

'We have been persecuted before you came to us as well as after you came to us.'

What they meant, perhaps, was that they were looking for a prophet to deliver them from the oppression of the Pharaoh, but their fate remained unchanged even after he came to them. The prophet Mūsā عليه السلام answered to them:

عَسَىٰ رَبُّكُمْ أَنْ يُهْلِكَ عَدُوَّكُمْ وَيَسْتَخْلِفَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرَ كَيْفَ تَعْمَلُونَ

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

Sovereignty is a test

The last phrase of the verse has provided with a wise observation that sovereignty or dominion is not in itself an aim or objective but a means to achieve the objective of making peace and justice prevail in the land. Sovereignty or dominion is a sacred trust bestowed upon by Allah for making good prevail over evil. The verse has warned them that, in case they are bestowed this trust, they should not forget the ill fate of those who were before them.

Though the direct addressee of the verse are the Israelites, but indirectly the verse has thrown a warning to all those trusted with rule or dominion. Sovereignty or power, in fact, belongs to Allah alone. Allah has made man his deputy on the earth. He is the One who desig-

nates man with power and takes it away when He so wills. This is what the following verse means:

تُوْتِي الْمَلِكَ مَن تَشَاءُ وَتَنْزِعُ الْمَلِكَ مِمَّن تَشَاءُ

"You give power to whom You please, and You strip off power from whom You please." (3:26)

The power and rule, therefore, is a test for the rulers to see how far they have fulfilled their duty of establishing peace and justice and making good prevail over evil.

Abū Ḥayyān in his Tafsīr Al-Baḥr-al Muḥīṭ has included the following event under the comments on this verse: 'Amr ibn 'Ubaid once visited Maṣṣūr, the second caliph of the Abbaside dynasty, prior to his designation to caliphate and recited this verse: 'It is likely that Allah will destroy your enemy and make you successor in the earth.' This was a sort of prediction by 'Amr ibn 'Ubaid of his succession to the throne. Soon after Maṣṣūr succeeded to the throne and became the Caliph. 'Amr ibn 'Ubaid came to the Caliph again. Maṣṣūr reminded him of the prediction made by him. Amr ibn 'Ubaid instantly answered, "Well, the first part of the prediction has come true and you have become the Caliph, but the second part of it still remains unfulfilled. The verse also contains this phrase, فَيَنْظُرُ كَيْفَ تَعْمَلُونَ "Then, He will see how you act." Amr ibn 'Ubaid suggested that gaining power is not a matter of pride because thereafter, Allah judges the acts of those in authority and sees how they make use of this trust.

The next verses speak of the events that led Pharaoh and his people to a number of calamities sent to them as punishment and finally led them to their death. The first heavenly punishment came to them in the form of famine. According to historical reports this famine lasted for seven years.

"And We seized the people of the Pharaoh with years of famine and loss of fruits, so that they may take lesson. So when something good came to them they said, 'This is our right.' And if they suffered from something evil, they ascribed it as an ill omen to Mūsā عليه السلام and those with him. Listen, their omen lies with Allah only, but most of them do not know."

The first verse has described the famine with two phrases: 'years of

famine' and 'loss of fruits.' The respected Companion 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās and the commentator Qatādah have said that the punishment of drought was for the people of the rural areas, while people living in cities and towns were punished by the loss of fruits. When a people are stamped with the wrath of Allah they lose their faculty of distinguishing right from wrong. Pharaoh and his people too, had lost their understanding. They did not take lesson from this warning. On the contrary, they ascribed the calamity to be a bad presage from the prophet Mūsā عليه السلام and his people. The verse said, 'So when something good came to them they said, 'This is our right.' And if they suffered from something evil, they ascribed it as an ill omen to Mūsā عليه السلام and those with him. Listen, their omen lies with Allah only, but most of them do not know."

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

And they said, مَهْمَا تَأْتِنَا بِهِ مِنْ آيَاتٍ لِنُسْحَرَنَّا بِهَا فَمَا نَحْنُ لَكَ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ 'Whatever sign you bring to us in order to enchant us therewith, we are not going to believe in you."

Verses 133 - 136

فَارْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الطُّوفَانَ وَالْجَرَادَ وَالْقُمَّلَ وَالضَّفَادِعَ وَالِدَّمَ
 آيَاتٍ مُفَصَّلَاتٍ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا وَكَانُوا قَوْمًا مُجْرِمِينَ ﴿١٣٣﴾ وَلَمَّا
 وَقَعَ عَلَيْهِمُ الرِّجْزُ قَالُوا يُمُوسَى اذْعُ لَنَا رَبِّكَ بِمَا عَهِدَ
 عِنْدَكَ لَئِن كَشَفْتَ عَنَّا الرِّجْزَ لَنُؤْمِنَنَّ لَكَ وَلَنُرْسِلَنَّ مَعَكَ
 بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ ﴿١٣٤﴾ فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ الرِّجْزَ إِلَى آجَلٍ هُمْ
 بِالْغَوَةِ إِذَاهُمْ يَنْكُثُونَ ﴿١٣٥﴾ فَانْتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ فَأَغْرَقْنَاهُمْ فِي

الْيَمِّ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَكَانُوا عَنْهَا غَافِلِينَ ﴿١٣٦﴾

So We sent upon them the storm and locusts, and pests, frogs and blood, signs distinct from each other. Yet they showed arrogance and they were a guilty people.

[133] **And when the punishment fell upon them, they said, "O Mūsā, pray for us to your Lord by the covenant He has made with you. If you remove the punishment from us, we shall surely believe in you and shall send the children of Isra'īl with you."** [134]

So when We removed the punishment from them, for a period of time that they had to reach, they suddenly started to break the promise. [135] Then we took vengeance from them, and drowned them in the sea, for they belied Our signs and were neglectful of them. [136]

The above verses relate the next part of the story of the prophet Mūsā عليه السلام and the people of Pharaoh. According to historical reports, the prophet Mūsā عليه السلام stayed in Egypt for 20 years. He kept preaching consistently and conveyed the message of Allah to them. He was given nine miracles during his stay in Egypt which served as warnings to the people of Pharaoh. The Holy Qur'an has referred to the nine miracles in these words. "وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى تِسْعَ آيَاتٍ" Surely, We gave him nine miracles."

Out of the nine miracles, two were performed before Pharaoh and his people. The third miracle was of famine reported in verse 130. The above verses speak of the remaining six miracles. The verse 133 has mentioned five punishments coming to the people of Pharaoh. All these punishments have been termed as 'signs distinct from each other.' According to the comments of the respected Companion 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās each of these punishments lasted for a fixed period of time followed by a period of relief followed by the next punishment.

Ibn-al-Mundhir has cited from the Companion 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās that each punishment lasted for seven days starting from Saturday, then they were given three weeks of relief. Imām al-Baghawī, citing the Companion 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas said that the first time when they were relieved of famine by asking the prophet Mūsā عليه السلام to pray

Allah for their relief, they did not keep the promise of believing in Allah. The prophet Mūsā عليه السلام prayed Allah that they may be inflicted with some painful punishment so that it serves as a lesson to his people and to their descendants. Allah first sent a storm upon them. According to great commentators, this was a flood. All the lands and houses of the people of Pharaoh were filled and surrounded by the water leaving for them no place for farming and living in their homes. The strange thing about it was that the lands and houses of the Israelites were not affected by the water of the flood.

In a state of great distress they came to the prophet Mūsā عليه السلام and requested him to pray Allah for their relief from this calamity. They promised that if they are relieved from the flood they would embrace faith in Allah and let the Israelites go with him from Egypt. The prayer of the prophet was acceded to and the storm subsided. It is reported that their fields were more fertile and productive than before. Again they did not keep their promise and said that the storm was not a punishment from Allah. Rather it came to their benefit and the increase in the produce was the result of the flood and that Mūsā عليه السلام had nothing to do with it.

A period of respite was given to them to reflect and realize their error. After a period of one month another punishment was sent to them in the form of locusts which ate up all the crops and fruits. Some reports say that the locusts devoured even their doors and roofs made of wood and other things of their houses. Again they were surprised to notice that the locusts did not do any harm to the houses and fields of the Israelites which were quite close to them. Once again they cried for help and implored to the prophet Mūsā عليه السلام to pray his Lord for taking away this punishment from them and that they make firm promise to believe in him and free the Israelites after their relief. The prophet Mūsā عليه السلام prayed Allah for their relief again and they got rid of this chastisement.

Seeing that they were left with enough grain to suffice them for one year, they turned against their promise and showed arrogance as before. Once again, a period of peace and relief followed. The third punishment came to them of 'Qummal' rendered here as pest. Qummal in Arabic is used for 'louse' as well as for an insect which eats up

grain. It is possible that both kinds of insects were sent to them, that is, small pests started to eat up their grain while equally large number of lice ate up even their hair and eyelashes. Exasperated as they were, they came again to prophet Mūsā عليه السلام and asked him to pray Allah for their riddance, promising again their acceptance of the true faith and release of the Israelites. He prayed Allah for their relief and Allah relieved them of this punishment too.

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

After a month of relief the next punishment visiting them was that of blood. Everything of their use turned into blood. Their drinks, their food and their water became all blood before they could use them. As they took out water from the wells or tanks it turned into blood. History has reported it was strange that whenever the Egyptians and the Israelites sat together for meal the morsel of food taken by the Egyptian became all blood, while the one taken by an Israelite did not change. This punishment too lasted for seven days. They were relieved of this punishment through the prayer of the Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام after their usual false promises.

The people of Pharaoh were subjected to the above five punishments one after another but they persisted in their arrogance and showed no sign of taking lesson from these warnings. The sixth punishment has been mentioned in the Qur'an by the Arabic word: رجز 'Rijz' which signifies plague or pestilence. The number of Egyptians killed in this plague is reported to have been more than seventy thousand. They were relieved of this punishment by the prayer of the

prophet Mūsā عليه السلام. Again they broke their promise as before. Now, when they showed no sign of understanding they were finally caught by the last punishment - the death. Leaving behind all their lands, houses and possessions they chased the prophet Mūsā عليه السلام and his people and were drowned in the sea.

Verse 137 - 141

وَأَوْرَثْنَا الْقَوْمَ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا يُسْتَضَعُونَ مَشَارِقَ الْأَرْضِ
وَمَغَارِبَهَا الَّتِي بَرَكْنَا فِيهَا ۖ وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ الْحُسْنَىٰ عَلَىٰ
بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ بِمَا صَبَرُوا ۖ وَدَمَرْنَا مَا كَانَ يَصْنَعُ فِرْعَوْنُ
وَقَوْمَهُ ۖ وَمَا كَانُوا يَعْرِشُونَ ﴿١٣٧﴾ وَجَاوَزْنَا بِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ
الْبَحْرَ فَأَتَوْا عَلَىٰ قَوْمٍ يَعْكُفُونَ عَلَىٰ أَصْنَامٍ لَهُمْ قَالُوا
يُمُوسَىٰ اجْعَلْ لَنَا إِلَهًا كَمَا لَهُم آلِهَةٌ ۚ قَالَ إِنَّكُمْ قَوْمٌ تَجْهَلُونَ
﴿١٣٨﴾ إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ مُتَّبِعُونَ مَا هُم بِفِيهِ وَبِطُلَّ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ
﴿١٣٩﴾ قَالَ أَغْيِرَ اللَّهُ أْبْغِيكُمْ إِلَهًا وَهُوَ فَضَّلَكُمْ عَلَىٰ
الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٤٠﴾ وَإِذْ أَنْجَيْنَاكُمْ مِنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَسُومُونَكُمْ
سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ يَقْتُلُونَ أَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ نِسَاءَكُمْ ۚ وَفِي
ذَلِكَ بَلَاءٌ مِّنْ رَبِّكُمْ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٤١﴾

And We made those people who were taken as weak, the inheritors of the easts of the land and of its wests which We had blessed. And the sublime word of your Lord was fulfilled for the children of Isrā'īl, because they stood patient. And We destroyed what Pharaoh and his people used to build and what they used to raise high. [137]

And We made the children of Isrā'īl cross the sea, then, they came across a people sitting in devotion before their idols. They (the Israelites) said, "O Mūsā, make a god for us like they have gods." He said, "You are really an ignorant people. [138] What these people are in, is sure to be destroyed; and false is what they

are doing." [139] He said, "Shall I seek any one other than Allah as God for you, while He has given you excellence over the (people of all the) worlds." [140] And (remember) when We delivered you from the people of Pharaoh, who inflicted you with grievous torment, slaughtered your sons and left your women alive and in all that there was great trial from your Lord. [141]

The previous verses contained an account of the warnings from Allah to the people of Pharaoh. The present verses speak of their ignominious end, and of the success of the Israelites. The verse 137 said, "And We made the people, who were taken to be weak, the inheritors of the land, of easts and wests which We had blessed." The verse did not say, the people who were weak, rather it said, those who were taken as weak. It implies that those having Allah as their support can never be weak in the real sense of the word, though they may seem so from their apparent condition. People finally come to realise that they are not weak. It is because dignity and honour all belong to Allah. The verse has used the term inheritance for their domination in the land to indicate that like a son who deserves to be a real inheritor of his father's land and possessions, the Israelites were the real inheritors of the land and wealth of Pharaoh's people.

The words 'east' and 'west' have been used in plural perhaps to denote the different points of sunset and sunrise in winter and summer time. The word 'land', according to all experts in exegesis, refers to the land of Egypt and Syria which was brought under the domination of the Israelites after the people of Pharaoh and the Amaleks were destroyed. The phrase 'Which We had blessed' refers to the lands of Syria and Egypt. The Holy Qur'ān has referred to Syria as the land of Barakah (blessing). Similarly the land of Egypt has been referred to as the land of blessing in a number of Traditions. The Caliph 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb has referred to river Nile as the prince of all rivers. The Companion 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar said that Egypt has nine parts of blessing out of ten. The tenth part has been divided throughout the earth. (Al-Baḥr-a-Muḥīṭ)

In short, the verse has to say that the people who were considered weak and abject were made the rulers of the land possessed by those who showed arrogance. It shows how the promise made by Allah and

His Messenger came out true as it always does. The verse said, 'The sublime word of your Lord was fulfilled.' The promise in this verse either refers to the promise made by the prophet Mūsā عليه السلام with his people mentioned in verse 129 which said, 'It is very likely that our Lord will destroy your enemy and make you successor in the earth.' Or it refers to the promise made by Allah to the Israelites in a verse of Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ (the Stories) It said, "

وَنُرِيدُ أَنْ نَمُنَّ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اسْتُضِعُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَنَجْعَلَهُمْ أَئِمَّةً وَنَجْعَلَهُمُ
الْوَارِثِينَ وَنُفَكِّحَنَّ لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَنُرِيَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ وَجُنُودَهُمَا مِنْهُمَا
مَا كَانُوا يَحْذَرُونَ

"And it was Our will that We favour those considered weak in the earth and make them leaders, and make them the inheritors, and give them power in the land, and show Pharaoh, Hāmān and their armies, the very thing they dreaded." (28:5)

In fact, both the above promises are one and the same. The promise made by the prophet Mūsā عليه السلام obviously was derived by the promise of Allah. This favour of Allah upon the people of Israel was the reward of their patience, as the verse has specified saying 'Because they stood patient.' That is, they were favoured by Allah for their being patient in their distress. This has an understated indication that any people or individual following the same example, at any time and in any place, shall get the same reward. The prophet Mūsā عليه السلام when making the promise of gaining the rule over the land had emphatically said that perseverance, patience and seeking help from Allah was the only key to success.

Sheikh Ḥasan al-Baṣrī said that the verse suggested that in case one is not as powerful as to defend himself against an enemy, the best way to success is to remain patient. He said when a person who has been wronged, tries to take revenge on his own by doing wrong to his opponent Allah leaves him alone and lets him manage his own affairs, ending in success or facing a failure. On the contrary, when one seeks help from Allah against the affliction from others and remains patient, Allah opens the door of success upon him. As the above promise for the rule over the land was fulfilled by Allah, the same kind of promise

Allah made with the people of the prophet Muḥammad in a verse of Sūrah Al-Nūr:

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا
اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ

"Allah has promised those of you who believe and do good deeds that he will make them inherit the land, as He had inherited those who were before them." (24:55)

As the Israelites witnessed the fulfillment of Allah's promise by having their rule over the land, similarly the Muslim Ummah witnessed the fulfillment of Allah's promise in the form of their sovereignty over the major part of the earth (Rūḥ al-Bayān). It is not justified to say that the Israelites did not observe patience, because when Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام asked them to be patient they said that they were persecuted before and after he came to them. Firstly, because their patience against the constant persecution at the hands of Pharaoh and his people is a proven fact. Secondly, the above statement might not be a complaint but a simple expression of their grief. Thereafter, the verse said, "وَدَمَّرْنَا مَا كَانَ يَصْنَعُ فِرْعَوْنُ وَقَوْمُهُ وَمَا كَانُوا يَعْرُشُونَ" "And We destroyed whatever Pharaoh and his people used to build and what they used to raise high." This refers to the buildings they raised high and their trees etc. 'What they used to build' may also refer to their ill designs against the prophet Mūsā عليه السلام. 'What they used to raise high' is a reference to their mansions and to their trees.

The events discussed up to this point were related to the destruction of Pharaoh and his people. The next verses describe the victory and success of the Israelites followed by their insolence in spite of all the blessings they received from Allah. These verses provide a kind of solace to the Holy Prophet ﷺ against his grief at the obstinacy of the unbelievers, by showing the annoyance of the early prophets at the hands of their people.

After the miraculous victory of the Israelites over Pharaoh and his people, and having a life of ease and comfort, they started to show the signs of ignorance as people of wealth show when given a life of luxury and opulence. The first impertinent request they made was to the prophet Mūsā عليه السلام to make for them a god like the gods of the

people they saw being worshipped on their way. They (the Israelites) said, *يَا مُوسَى اجْعَلْ لَنَا إِلَهًا كَمَا لَهُم آلِهَةٌ* "O Mūsā make a god for us like their gods." He said, *قَالَ انكُمْ قَوْمٌ تَجْهَلُونَ* "You are really an ignorant people." The prophet Mūsā was greatly annoyed by their ignorance and said that the labour of worship of those people was to go waste. How could he think of making for them a god other than Allah while he had given to them excellence over the people of all the worlds. That is, the people who believed in the prophet Mūsā عليه السلام were superior to all the people of that age.

The next verses remind them of their pitiable condition and their persecutions at the hands of Pharaoh when their sons were killed and their daughters were saved to serve them as their maid-servants. Allah relieved them of this disgraceful chastisement through His prophet. Shall they be as ungrateful to their Lord as to take the abject stones as gods and make them partners with Allah? They must repent to Allah for their transgression.

Verse 142

وَأُوعِدْنَا مُوسَى ثَلَاثِينَ لَيْلَةً وَأَتَمَمْنَا بِعَشْرِ فِتْمٍ مِيقَاتُ رَبِّهِ
 أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً وَقَالَ مُوسَى لِأَخِيهِ هَارُونَ أَخْلُفْنِي فِي قَوْمِي
 وَأَصْلِحْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿١٤٢﴾

And We made a promise with Mūsā for thirty nights, then We supplemented them with ten. So, the total period fixed by his Lord was forty nights. And Mūsā said to his brother Hārūn, "Take my place among my people and keep things right, and do not follow the way of mischief makers." [142]

This verse speaks of the period followed by the destruction of the Pharaoh and his people. Having a peaceful time after their deliverance from the Pharaoh and his people the Israelites requested the Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام to have some religious system of law so that they may act upon it. The Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام prayed Allah for a code of guidance for them. The Arabic word: *واعدنا* and *wā'adana* is a derivative of *wa'dah* which signifies a worded expression of offering something good to someone - a promise.

Allah made a promise to Mūsā عليه السلام to send His word to him. It was stipulated that Mūsā عليه السلام should go to the mount of Sināi and pass thirty nights there sitting in devotion for Allah. These thirty nights were later supplemented with ten more nights to make them forty.

There are some points in this verse which demand our attention: Firstly, the number of nights to be passed by the Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام was fixed to be forty nights in the will of Allah. Why was he first asked to pass thirty nights, and then add ten more nights? No one, in fact, can have access to all the wisdom and insight contained in divine acts. The scholars, however, have provided with some explanations: The famous commentary 'Rūḥ al-Bayān' states that one of the wisdom behind the above commandment is of enjoining the laws gradually or by degrees to make it easier for people to practice. The commentary 'Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī' has said that this was for educating those in authority to give respite to their subordinates if they fail to complete their assignments in the prescribed time. This is what happened with Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام. When the spiritual excellence that was required could not be achieved by him in thirty nights, ten more nights were added to give him more time to acquire required perfection.

The commentators have reported that the Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام kept fasting constantly for thirty days and nights without breaking his fast in between. After completing thirty days he took the break fast and presented himself at the fixed point on the mount Sināi, Allah said to him that the peculiar odor generated by fasting in one's mouth is liked by Allah. Mūsā عليه السلام had lost the odor by brushing his teeth, he was therefore, required to observe fasting for ten more days in order to create the odor again.

The above reports of the loss of odor, however, cannot be taken to mean that brushing the teeth after fasting is prohibited or is something disliked, firstly, because the above report has been cited without the chain of narrators and secondly because it could be a commandment meant specifically for the Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام and not for other people, or peculiar to the followers of the Torah. The permissibility of brushing one's teeth during fasting is a practice proved by the Holy Tradition. Al-Baihaqī has reported the following Tradition on the

authority of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: **خَيْرُ خَصَائِلِ الصَّائِمِ السَّوَّاءِ** The best act of the one who is fasting is brushing one's teeth (with *miswāk*). Al-Jami' al-Ṣaghīr has said that the status of this *Hadīth* is that of Ḥasan (a kind of authentic Tradition).

One may wonder here how the Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام could be fasting continuously for thirty days without making a breakfast even at nights, while during his travel for visiting Sayyidnā Khizr (Al-Khaḍīr عليه السلام) he could not wait for even half of the day and said **إِنَّا عَدِمْنَا لَقَدْ لَقِينَا مِنْ سَفَرِنَا هَذَا نَصَبًا** "Give us our food, because this journey has made us tired." Tafsīr Rūḥ al-Bayān has explained that this difference was due to the different nature of journeys. This journey was of a created being for another created being while the journey on the mount of Sināi was for the Creator of a devoted created being who had separated himself from the Creation in quest of his Lord. This spiritual journey weakened the vigour of physical demands of hunger and thirst, making him capable of observing fast for continuous thirty days and nights.

Lunar or Solar Calendars

Another point inferred from this verse is that the laws of the Prophets counted the change of their dates at night. The above verse also has made a mention of thirty nights instead of thirty days. It is because the lunar calendar was the standard calendar in the laws of the Prophets. The beginning of the lunar month is based on sighting of the moon which is possible only at night. It is why the dates in lunar calendar are changed at sunset. Al-Qurṭubī has reported this statement on the authority of Ibn al-'Arabī **حِسَابُ الشَّمْسِ لِلْمَنَافِعِ وَحِسَابُ الْقَمَرِ لِلْمَنَاسِكِ** "The solar Calendar is for the benefits in worldly matters while the lunar Calendar is for religious observances."

According to the commentary of the Companion 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه the thirty nights were the nights of Zul Qa'dah, the eleventh month of the lunar Calendar. The ten nights added to them were the first ten nights of Zul-Hijjah. This makes us understand that the Torāh was given to the Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام on the day of Eid-al-Aḍḥā. (Qurṭubī)

The significance of number forty

This verse also implies that the number forty has some special

effect in spiritual rectification of one's heart. It is reported in a Tradition of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that any one who worships Allah for forty days with sincerity of his heart, his heart is made a source of wisdom. (Rūh al-Bayān)

Practising Gradualism

This verse also educates people to fix a period of time for the fulfillment of their objective and to approach their aims gradually, as it is the practice of Allah to do things gradually. Haste and hurry in doing things is not approved by Allah. By creating the universe in six days while Allah had all the powers to create it instantly without requiring a single moment, He has provided people with a wise principle that they should approach their ends by stages in a period of time so that they may give due attention to their objectives. The Torah was also not given to the Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام in a moment but a period was fixed for it to emphasize the same practice. (Qurtubī)

It was by ignoring this principle that the Israelites had lost their faith in Allah. The Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام while leaving for the mount of Sinai had said that he would be away for thirty days. When he did not return in this period due to being retained for the next ten days, the Israelites, being unduly hasty people said that the Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام was lost somewhere, so they should choose another leader for their guidance. Consequently, they fell prey to the sorcerer Sāmīrī and started worshipping the golden calf. Had they been a people of patience and practised gradualism, they would have not committed the fatal error of infidelity. The next sentence of the verse said, وَقَالَ مُوسَى لِأَخِيهِ هَارُونَ اخْلُفْنِي فِي قَوْمِي وَأَصْلِحْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ "Mūsā عليه السلام said to his brother Hārūn, "Take my place among my people and keep things right, and do not follow the way of mischief makers." This sentence also contains some observations of religious importance.

Making one's deputy when needed.

The Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام made it a point to appoint Sayyidnā Hārūn as his deputy when he intended to leave for the mount of Sināi and said that he should take the responsibility of his people in his absence. This makes it imperative for those who hold some responsible office that they appoint someone to look after the work in their absence.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ used to appoint someone as his deputy whenever he used to leave Madīnah. The Companions 'Alī and 'Abdullāh ibn Umm Maktūm were appointed as his deputies on different occasions. (Qurtubī)

The Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام gave certain instructions to the Prophet Hārūn عليه السلام before his departure to the mount of Sināī, indicating that leaving instructions or guidelines for the deputy is also a religious requirement. The first instruction given by the Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام was just a word "أَصْلِحْ" that is, 'set right'. The object of this imperative has not been mentioned. Possibly, he made it a general command to be observed by the Israelites and the Prophet Hārūn as well.

The second instruction was in these words: "وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ" "And do not follow the way of mischief-makers." It is obvious that Prophet Hārūn عليه السلام, being a Prophet of Allah could not be supposed to indulge in mischief. This instruction, therefore, meant that he should not do any such thing as could help or encourage the mischief makers. This is exactly what the Prophet Hārūn did when he saw his people following the magician Sāmīrī, so much so that they started worshipping the golden calf. The Prophet Hārūn عليه السلام prevented them from this act as well as admonished Sāmīrī against his mischief. Later, the Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام, called him to account for this act of theirs, thinking that it was the result of inefficiency on the part of the Prophet Hārūn عليه السلام. This also serves as a lesson for those who do not care for orderly disposition of matters and take it as a sign of piousness.

Verses 143 - 145

وَلَمَّا جَاءَ مُوسَىٰ لِمِيقَاتِنَا وَكَلَّمَهُ رَبُّهُ قَالَ رَبِّ أَرِنِي أَنظُرَ إِلَيْكَ
 ، قَالَ لَن نَّبْرَأَنَّكَ وَلَكِن نُّنظِرُكَ إِلَى الْجَبَلِ فَإِنِ اسْتَقَرَّ مَكَانَهُ
 فَسَوْفَ تَرَانِي فَلَمَّا تَجَلَّىٰ رَبُّهُ لِلْجَبَلِ جَعَلَهُ دَكًّا وَخَرَّ مُوسَىٰ
 صَعِقًا فَلَمَّا أَفَاقَ قَالَ سُبْحٰنَكَ تُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
 ﴿١٤٣﴾ قَالَ يٰمُوسَىٰ إِنِّي اصْطَفَيْتُكَ عَلَى النَّاسِ بِرِسَالَاتِي
 وَبِكَلَامِي فَخُذْ مَا آتَيْتُكَ وَكُن مِّنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿١٤٤﴾ وَكَتَبْنَا

لَهُ فِي الْأَلْوَاحِ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مَوْعِظَةً وَتَفْصِيلًا لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ
فَاحْذَهَا بِقُوَّةٍ وَأْمُرْ قَوْمَكَ يَأْخُذُوا بِأَحْسَنِهَا، سَأُورِيكُمْ
دَارَ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿١٤٥﴾

And when Mūsā came at Our appointed time and his Lord spoke to him, he said, "My Lord, show (Yourself) to me that I may look at You." He said: "You shall never see Me. But look at the mount. If it stays at its place you will see Me." So when his Lord appeared to the Mount, He made it smashed, and Mūsā fell down unconscious. Then, when he recovered, he said: "Pure are You. I repent to You, and I am the first to believe." [143] He said, "O, Mūsā, I have chosen you above all men for my messages and for My speaking. So, take what I have given to you, and be among the grateful." [144]

And We wrote for him on the Tablets every thing of advice, and explanation of all things. So hold it firm and ask your people to hold on to the best things in it. I shall show you the house of the sinners. [145]

The verse 143 carries the phrase *لن تراني* "you shall never see me" The phrase has an indication that sighting of Allah is not impossible, but that he (Mūsā عليه السلام) cannot endure it with his present physical disposition. Had it been impossible, the phrase would have been *لن ارى* : "I cannot be seen" (Mazhari) This allows that sighting of Allah is a logical possibility even in this world but at the same time this verse has precluded the possibility of its occurrence in this world. This is also the unanimous view of the majority of scholars. The following *hadīth* has been included in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim:

لن يرى احد منكم ربه حتى يموت

"None among you can see his Lord unless he dies."

The second phrase, *ولكن انظر الى الجبل* "But look at the mount" is a physical demonstration of the fact that in his present state the addressee is not capable of enduring the impact of such experience.

Thereafter, Allah actually demonstrated this fact by a flash of His appearance on the Mount of Sināi which could not stand it and was smashed into pieces.

The next phrase is "فَلَمَّا تَخَلَّى رَبُّهُ لِلْجَبَلِ" So when his Lord appeared to the Mount." The Arabic word تَخَلَّى "Tajallī" signifies exposure or disclosure. According to the Spiritual masters (Ṣufīs) the word signifies seeing something indirectly through some other means, like seeing certain thing reflected in the mirror. The word, therefore, cannot signify 'seeing'. It is also inferred by this very verse because this verse has negated the possibility of seeing while it has mentioned the occurrence of 'Tajallī' or appearance on the mount of Sināī.

Imām Aḥmad, Tirmidhī and Ḥākim have reported on the authority of the Companion Anas رضى الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited this verse and placing his thumb on the tip of his little finger said that only this much of Allah's light was exposed to the mount of Sināī which made it burst into pieces. This does not necessarily mean that the whole of the mount was not shattered, but the part of the mountain directly exposed to light might have been affected.

The Speech of Allah:

The fact that Allah spoke directly to the Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام is confirmed by the Qur'an in clear terms. The first time Allah spoke with the Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام was when he was entrusted with Prophethood. This is the second time at the occasion of giving him the Torah that He spoke to him. The wording of the present verse indicates that this later discourse of Allah had some additional characteristics as compared to the first speech of Allah.

As to the question what was the nature and character of this discourse, cannot be ascertained by anyone but Allah. Only those logical suppositions, in this regard, can be allowed which do not go against any rule of the Shari'ah. None of such views can be accepted as being definite unless supported by some valid argument. The best practice, in this regard, is the one followed by the Companions, their disciples, and the elders who followed them. They left such matters to Allah and never tried to make ungrounded supposition to resolve them. (Bayān al-Qur'an).

The last sentence is "سَأُرِيكُمْ دَارَ الْفَاسِقِينَ" "I will show you the abode of the sinners". This is a kind of promise by Allah that the Israelites shall soon take over Egypt or perhaps Syria, referred to as the abode of the

sinner in this verse. There are two views about the reference to the abode of the sinners. The first holds that the reference has been made to Egypt while the second takes it to refer to Syria. The difference of opinion is, in fact, based on a question whether the Israelites had returned to Egypt after the destruction of Pharaoh and his people or not. If they went back to Egypt at that time and ruled the land, as has been indicated by the verse 137 saying that Allah made the Israelites inherit the land, then, this verse definitely has referred to Syria, as the abode of the sinners. It is because, in this case, the Israelites had taken over the land of Egypt before this event of Allah's light appearing to the Mount of Sināi. In case, they did not go to Egypt after the destruction of Pharaoh, the reference may be to Egypt and Syria, both.

The phrase *وَكَتَبْنَا لَهُ فِي الْأَنْبُوتِ* "And we wrote for him everything on the Tablets" makes us understand that the Torah was given to the Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام inscribed or written on the Tablets. ¹

Verses 146 - 151

سَأَصْرِفُ عَنْ آيَتِيَ الَّذِينَ يَتَكَبَّرُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ
وَأَنْ يَرَوْا كُلَّ آيَةٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَا وَإِنْ يَرَوْا سَبِيلَ الرُّشْدِ
لَا يَتَّخِذُوهُ سَبِيلًا وَإِنْ يَرَوْا سَبِيلَ الْغَيِّ يَتَّخِذُوهُ سَبِيلًا ذَلِكَ
بِأَنَّهُمْ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَكَانُوا عَنْهَا غَافِلِينَ ﴿١٤٦﴾ وَالَّذِينَ
كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَلِقَاءِ الْآخِرَةِ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ هَلْ يُجْزَوْنَ إِلَّا
مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤٧﴾ وَاتَّخَذَ قَوْمُ مُوسَى مِنْ أَعْدَائِهِ مِنْ
حُلِيِّهِمْ عِجْلًا جَسَدًا لَهُ خُورٌ أَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّهُ لَا يَكْلِمُهُمْ وَلَا
يَهْدِيهِمْ سَبِيلًا اتَّخَذُوهُ وَكَانُوا ظَالِمِينَ ﴿١٤٨﴾ وَلَمَّا سَقَطَ فِي
أَيْدِيهِمْ وَرَأَوْا أَنَّهُمْ قَدْ ضَلُّوا قَالُوا لَئِنْ لَمْ يَرْحَمْنَا رَبُّنَا

1. Another view with regard to these tablets is that these tablets were given to him prior to the revelation of the Torah and were not the part of the Torah. This has been cited by Allama Shabbir Ahmad Usmani under his comments on this verse. He has cited it from Ibn Kathir. (Translator)

وَيَغْفِرْ لَنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿١٤٩﴾ وَلَمَّا رَجَعَ مُوسَىٰ إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ غَضْبَانَ أَسِفًا قَالَ بِئْسَمَا خَلَفْتُمُونِي مِن بَعْدِي ۖ أَعَجِلْتُمْ أَمْرَ رَبِّكُمْ ۖ وَأَلْقَى الْأَلْوَاحَ وَأَخَذَ بِرَأْسِ أَخِيهِ يَجُرُّهُ إِلَيْهِ ۗ قَالَ ابْنَ أُمَّ إِنَّ الْقَوْمَ اسْتَضَعُّفُونِي وَكَادُوا يَقْتُلُونَنِي ۗ فَلَا تُشْمِتْ بِي الْأَعْدَاءَ وَلَا تَجْعَلْنِي مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٥٠﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِإِخِي وَأَدْخِلْنَا فِي رَحْمَتِكَ ۗ وَأَنْتَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ ﴿١٥١﴾

I shall keep away from My verses those who show arrogance on the earth unduly without truth. And even if they see every sign they do not believe in it. And if they see the Path of guidance, they do not take it as their way, and if they see the path of misguidance they do take it as their way. That is because they have belied Our signs, and have been neglectful of them. [146] And those who have belied Our signs and the meeting of the Hereafter, their deeds have gone waste. They will not be rewarded but for what they have been doing. [147] And after him the people of Mūsā made a calf from their ornaments; just a body with a moaning sound. Did they not see that it neither talked to them nor did it guide them to the path? They took to it, and were so unjust. [148] And when they became remorseful and saw that they had gone astray, they said, 'If Allah shows no mercy upon us, and forgives us not, we shall certainly be among the losers.' [149] And when Mūsā returned to his people, angry and sad, he said, "How bad is the thing you have done in my absence? How did you act in haste against the command of your Lord?" And he dropped down the Tablets and grabbed the head of his brother pulling him towards himself. He (Hārūn) said, 'O, born of my mother, the people have taken me as weak and were about to kill me, so do not let the enemies laugh at me, and do not count me with the wrong-doers.' [150] He said, 'My Lord forgive me and my brother, and admit us into Your mercy. And You are the most Merciful of all those who show mercy.' [151]

Commentary

The verse 146 spoke of the arrogant people as showing arrogance unjustly. The word without truth or unjustly indicates that assuming arrogance in response to the arrogant people is a justified act, since it is the act of arrogance in appearance, and not in reality. It is a known dictum: "أَلْتَكْبُرُ مَعَ الْكَبِيرِ مِنْ تَوَاضُعٍ" "Showing arrogance to the arrogant is an act of humbleness". (Masāil as-Sulūk).

The effects of Arrogance

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

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

هر کجا مشکل جواب آنجا رود هر کجا پستی آب آنجا رود

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

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

Among them there was a person named Sāmīrī who was a prominent man, but at the same time, had beliefs in superstitions. He said to the people that the jewels and ornaments of the Egyptians possessed by them were not permissible for them. It may be noted that

the plunder or booty taken from the enemy after their defeat was also not permissible for the Israelites. The Israelites gathered all their jewels and handed these over to him. He melted the ornaments and forged a golden calf from it. A peculiar thing reported about him is that he had collected some dust from under the hoofs of the horse of the Archangel Jibrā'il (Gabriel) at some occasion. Allah had made this dust to have the effect of some kind of life. Sāmīrī mixed this dust with the molten metal while preparing the calf. This made the calf to emit a sound like the mooing of a cow.

Having designed this satanic invention he invited the people to worship the calf and said that it was god. He said that the Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام had gone to speak with God to the mount of Sināī while god had come to them in the form of this calf. Sāmīrī already enjoyed a place of respect among them, this unusual demonstration increased their trust in him and they started worshipping the calf, and took it as their god. The verse 148 has given a short description of this event while another verse of the Holy Qur'an has described it in detail.

The verse 149 speaks of their remorse on this guilt and their repentance, while the verse 150 describes the events followed by the arrival of the Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام from the mount of Sināī. It described that the Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام was extremely angry when he saw his people in this state of ignorance. It is reported that Allah had informed him of their perversion on the mount of Sināī. Now seeing them in this state with his own eyes filled him with indignation. First, he turned to his people and said: *يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مِنْۢ بَعْدِىْ* "How bad is the thing you have done in my absence". *اَعَجَلْتُمْ اَمْرَ رَبِّكُمْ* "How did you act in haste against the command of your Lord?" That is, you must have waited until the book of Allah came to you. Some of the commentators have said that it meant that they hastily decided that the Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام was dead. Then he turned to the Prophet Harūn عليه السلام whom he has left among them as his deputy. He wanted to free his hand in order to grab him. He quickly put down the tablets of the Torah and grabbed the head of his brother. This has been termed as having dropped. The Arabic word used here is: *الاقطع* *Ilqā'* which signifies dropping or throwing. This gives rise to a doubt that the Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام showed disrespect to the tablets of the Torah by throwing or

dropping them down. It is obvious that throwing the tablets of the Torah was great sin, and equally obvious is the fact that all the Prophets are innocent and free of all sins. The implication of the verse, therefore, is that he put away the Tablets as quickly in order to free his hands, as seemed like having been dropped. The Holy Qur'an has described it by using this word as a gesture of warning. (Bayān al-Qur'an)

Thereafter he turned to the Prophet Hārūn عليه السلام and grasped the hair of his head. The Prophet Hārūn then gave him the true account of the events and said that it was not his fault, for he stopped them from this wicked act but they did not listen to him. They were so obstinate about it that they were about to kill him. He said that he should not count him among the ignorant people and should not let his enemies laugh at him by treating him in that way. This made the Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام cool down. At this occasion, he prayed to Allah, saying, "My Lord, forgive me and my brother, and admit us to Your mercy, and You are the most merciful of all those who show mercy." He asked forgiveness for his brother for any of his shortcoming with regard to his duties. He asked forgiveness for himself either for his putting away the tablets of the Torah in a hurry which the Holy Qur'an had described as having been 'dropped' to make a gesture of warning, or perhaps, for educating people that they should include themselves while asking forgiveness for others to preclude the sense of complacency on their part.

Verses 152 - 156

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا الْعِجْلَ سَيِّئًا لَّهُمْ غَضِبَ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَذَلَّةٌ فِي
 الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُفْتِرِينَ ﴿١٥٢﴾ وَالَّذِينَ عَمِلُوا
 السَّيِّئَاتِ ثُمَّ تَابُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهَا وَأَمْسُوا أَنَّ رَبَّكَ مِنْ بَعْدِهَا
 لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٥٣﴾ وَلَمَّا سَكَتَ عَنْ مُوسَى الْغَضَبَ أَخَذَ
 الْأَلْوَابِحَ وَفِي نُسُخَتِهَا هُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِلَّذِينَ هُمْ لِرَبِّهِمْ يَرْهَبُونَ
 ﴿١٥٤﴾ وَاخْتَارَ مُوسَى قَوْمَهُ سَبْعِينَ رَجُلًا رِئَاسَةً فَلَمَّا
 أَخَذَتْهُمُ الرَّجْفَةُ قَالَ رَبِّ لَوْ شِئْتَ أَهْلَكْتَهُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ وَإِيَّايَ ط