



Moses in Qur'an and Bible

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Introduction

“We recite to the (O Muhammad) from the account of Musa and Fir'aun with truth for a people who believe.” (28:3)

Moses is the most frequently mentioned of all the prophets spoken of in the Qur'an and the details of his life are dwelt upon to a much greater extent than those of any other prophet's life. Why was so much importance given to his history is a point to consider.

In the earlier chapters revealed during the Prophet's stay at Mecca there are only brief references to Moses and the incidents connected with him. The Prophet had to deal here mostly with the idolatrous Quraish of Mecca and, therefore, we find the principles of the faith of Islam discussed in details in these revelations.

But when he migrated to Medina he had also to deal with the people of the Book, the Jews and the Christians, living in and around Medina. As far as the principles of religion were concerned, there was very little difference between the teachings of the Qur'an and those of the original Torah and the Evangel.

But the people of the Book in general and the Jews in particular were most callous in the observance of these teachings and had tampered with the books. To make them realise their error it was necessary to call to their mind the most important features of their history and to show how far they have strayed away from the path of truth which their scriptures had laid down for them.

These were the people receiving the guidance of God ever since the time of Jacob (Israel) through several prophets bringing the guidance of God and prophesying the advent of the last messenger of God and yet these were the very people who greatly misused their privileges and were the most forward of all to reject the last Prophet in spite of a clear prophecy of Moses which says:

“The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall harken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth.” (Deut. 18: 15-18).

It is to be noted that they are told twice that the promised prophets who shall be like Moses shall appear from among their brethren and we have already pointed out in the story of Abraham that the Arabs are the descendants of Ishmael the one of Abraham and, therefore, they are the brethren of the Israelites.

No Israelite prophet ever claimed to be the like of Moses and even Jesus, the last among the prophets of Israel did never say that he was the like of Moses. Even after the supposed crucifixion of Jesus his disciples awaited the fulfillment of that prophecy. See Acts 3: 22 wherein it is stated:

“For Moses truly said unto the fathers. A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me.”

The Qur'an, in one of its earliest revelations, points out the fulfillment of this prophecy in these words:

“We have sent to you a Messenger, a bearer of witness to you, as We sent a messenger to Fir'aun.” (73:15)

This claim is made plainer still in a later revelation:

“Say what think ye? If it is from Allah and you disbelieve in it, and a witness from among the children of Israel has borne witness of one like him.” (46:10)

In unfolding the history of Moses and his followers, the Jews, the aim of the Qur'an is not only to reclaim the Jews to Islam but at the same time to teach the followers of Muhammad (may peace and blessings of God be on him) that they should avoid all those pitfalls into which the followers of Moses had fallen and also to assure them that after being guided if they behave in the manner of the Jews, eventually their fate will be no better than that of the Jews.

With this object in view the Qur'an has quoted the irrefutable incidents of the life of Moses as evidence of the truth of the claim of the last Prophet, preparing for them a straight path to reach the goal of godliness set for them.

In this context it should be noted that some of the commentators of the Qur'an have included in their commentaries much of the folklore that was prevalent among the Jews, but as these accounts are not based on any authentic Source, they cannot be relied Upon. We have tried in this chapter to present to our readers a continuous account of the history of Moses which is widely scattered in the pages of the Qur'an.

Chapter 1: The Tyranny of Pharaoh over the Israelites

Surely Fir'aun⁰ exalted himself in the land and divided its people into parties, oppressing one party from among them by killing their sons and sparing their women. Surely he was one of the mischief-makers. And We desired to bestow a favour upon those who were Oppressed in the land and to make them leaders and the heirs and to grant them power in the land to make Fir'aun and Haman¹ and their hosts see from them what they feared. (28: 4-6)

The two parties were the Israelites and the Egyptians, the latter being the task-masters of the former corresponding to the parties at Mecca, the idolatrous Quraish who were the Oppressors and the followers of the Prophet who were the oppressed. Pharaoh and his Counsellors, fearing that the Israelites, who were aliens in the land of Egypt, might one day become powerful and supreme in the land, oppressed and persecuted them in various ways.

Chapter 2: The Childhood of Moses

“And We revealed to Musa's mother saying: Give him suck, then when thou fearest for him, cast him into the river and do not fear nor grieve; surely We will restore him to thee and make him one of the apostles.” (28:7)

In another place the same incident is expressed in these Words:

“Call to mind the Occasion when Vie revealed to thy mother: Put him into a chest, then, cast it down into the river, then the river shall throw him on the shore, then shall take him up one who is an enemy to Me and enemy to him and I cast down upon thee love from Me and that thou mightest be brought up before My eyes.” (20:38-39).

Moses was born at a time when Pharaoh had commanded all male children born to the Israelites to be thrown into the Nile: Moses's mother kept him concealed for three months and at last unable to hide him any longer threw him into the river in an ark of bulrushes whence he was picked up by Pharaoh's Wife.

“And Fir'aun's followers took rum up that he might be an enemy and a grief for them, Surely Fir'aun and Haman and their hosts were wrongdoers. And Fir'aun's wife said: Joy of the eye to me and to thee: do not slay him; maybe he will be useful to us or we may take him for a son. But they knew not what they did. And the heart of Musa mother was free from anxiety; she would have almost disclosed it had We not strengthened her heart so that she might be of the believers. And she said to his sister: Follow him up. So she watched him from a distance while they did not perceive.

And We caused him to refuse the nurses his sister came and said: Shall I point to you the people of a house who will take care of him for you and they will be benevolent to him. So We restored him to Ids mother that her eyes might be refreshed and that she might not grieve and that she might know that the promise of Allah is true, but most of them do not know.” (28:8-13).

So Moses was brought up in the house of Pharaoh like a prince; a reference of this is given in another place in the Qur'an in these words:

“So Pharaoh said: Did we not bring thee up as a child among us for many years of thy life.” (26:18)

Chapter 3: Moses Kills an Egyptian and is Warned

“And when he attained his maturity and became full-grown, We granted him wisdom and knowledge and thus do We reward those Who do good. And he went into the city at a time of unvigilance on the part of its people. He found therein two men fighting, one being of his party and the other of his foes, and he who was of his party cried out to him for help against him who was of the enemies.

Moses struck him with his fist and despatched him. He said: This is of the devil's doing; surely he is an open enemy leading astray. He said: My Lord! Surely I have done harm to myself, So do Thou protect me. So He protected him; Surely He is the Forgiving, the Merciful. He said: My Lord! Because Thou hast bestowed a favour on me I shall never be a backer of the guilty.

And he was in the city fearing, awaiting, when lo! he who had asked his assistance the day before was crying out to him again for aid. Musa said to him: Thou art plainly a most depraved person. And when he would have laid violent hands on him who was their common foe, he said: O Musa! Dost thou intend to kill me as thou killed a person yesterday? Thou desirest nothing but that thou shouldst be a tyrant in the land and thou desirest not to be of those who act aright. And a man came running from the remotest part of the city.

He said: O Musa! Surely the chiefs are consulting together to slay thee. Therefore begone at once. Surely I counsel thee as a friend. So forth he went there from fearing, looking warily about him and said: My Lord! Deliver me from the unjust people.” (28:14-21)

Moses's slaying the Egyptian was accidental and not intentional, for striking with the fist as ordinary people always do is not sufficient to cause the death of a person. Moses's taking the law into his own hands to punish a guilty man was owing to his being confused at the moment as to the step he should take. So he call it as a devil's doing who misleads men. He therefore at once realises his mistake and prays for Divine protection.

Chapter 4: Flight to Midian and Marriage

“And when he turned his face towards Midian he said: May be my Lord guide me in the right path. And when he came to the water of Midian, he found on it a group of men watering and he found beside them two women keeping back their flocks. He said: What is the matter with you? They said: We cannot water until the shepherds take away their sheep from the water, and our father is a very old man. So he watered their sheep for them, then went back to the shade and said: My Lord! Surely I stand in need of whatever good Thou mayest send down to me. Then one of the two women came to him walking bashfully.

She said: My father invites thee that he may give thee the reward of thy having watered for us. So when he came to him and gave to him the account, he said: Fear not. Thou art secure from the unjust people. Said one of them: O my father! Employ him, surely the best of those that thou canst employ is the strong man, the faithful one.

He said: I desire to marry one of these two daughters of mine to thee on condition that you shouldst serve me for eight years, but if thou complete ten, it will be of thine own free will, and I do not wish to be hard to thee. If Allah please, thou wilt find me one of the good.² He said: This shall be an agreement between me and thee: whichever of the two terms I fulfill, there shall be no wrongdoing to me and Allah is a witness of what we say.” (28:22-28)

Chapter 5: The Call of Moses to Prophethood

“So when Musa had filled the term and journeyed with his family, he perceived on the side of the mountain a fire. He said to his family: Wait, I have seen a fire, maybe I will bring to you from it some news or a brand or fire, so that you may warm yourself And when he came to it, a Voice was uttered from the right side of the valley in the blessed spot of the bush, saying, 'O Musa! Surely I am Allah, the Lord of the worlds.'“ (28:29-30)

“Surely I am thy Lord: so put of thy shoes, for thou art (in the sacred valley which is blessed twice. I have chosen thee: so hearken to what shall be revealed: verily I am Allah, there is no god but I, therefore serve Me and keep up prayers for My remembrance And what is that in thy right hand, O Musa! He said: This is my staff; I recline on it and I best the leaves with it to make them fall upon my sheep and I have other uses for it.

He said: Cast it down, O Musa! So he cast it down, and behold! it was a serpent running. He said: Take hold of it and fear not. We will restore it to its former state; and thrust thy hand into thine armpit: It shall come out white without hurt. That will be another sign - that We may show thee of Our greater signs.” (20:22-23)

According to 17:101, Moses was given altogether nine signs. These signs are mentioned in detail in the following verses:

And certainly We overtook Fir'aun's people with droughts and diminution fruits that they may be mindful. But, when good befell them they said: This is due to us. And when evil afflicted them, they attributed it to the ill-luck of Musa and those with him. Surely their evil fortune is only from Allah but most of them do not know.

And they said: whatever sign thou mayest bring to us to charm us with, we will not believe in thee. Therefore We sent upon them widespread death, and the locusts, and the lice, and the frogs, and the blood, clear signs, but they behaved haughtily and they were a guilty people. And when the plague fell upon them they said: O Musa! Pray for us to thy Lord as He has promised with thee.

If thou remove the plague from us, we will certainly believe in thee and we will certainly send away with thee the children of Israel. But when We removed the plague from them till a term which they should attain, lo! they broke their promise.” (7:130-135)

So these nine signs were:

1. the rod,
2. the shining hand,
3. the drought,
4. the loss of fruits,
5. the widespread death,
6. the locusts,
7. the lice,
8. the frogs,
9. the blood.

Chapter 6: Demand for Helper in Aaron

“So, these two shall be two arguments from thy Lord to Fir'aun and his chiefs. Surely they are a transgressing people. He said: My Lord; Surely I killed one of them, so I fear lest they slay me. And my brother Harun, he is more eloquent of tongue than I; therefore send him with me as an aide, verifying me.

Surely I fear they would reject me. He said: We will strengthen thy arm with thy brother and We will give you both an authority so that they shall not be able to injure you. Go with Our signs, you two, and those who follow you shall be uppermost.” (28:32-35)

“He said: O my Lord! Expand my breast for me and make my affair easy to me. And loosen the knot from my tongue that they may understand my world.³ And give to me an aide from my family, Harun, my brother - strengthen my back by him and associate him with me in my affair, so that we should glorify Thee much and remember Thee aught oft; surely Thou art seeing us. He said: Thou art indeed granted thy petition! O Musa!” (20:25-36).

Chapter 7: Moses Ordered to go to Pharaoh and Demand the Deliverance of the Israelites

“And certainly We tried before them the people of Fir'aun. And there came to them a noble apostle saying: Deliver to me the servants of Allah; surely I am a faithful apostle to you. (44:17-18).

“And when you Lord called out to Musa saying: Go to the unjust people, the people of Fir'aun: Will they not guard themselves against evil? He said: O my Lord! Surely I fear they will reject me, and my breast straitens, and my tongue is not eloquent. Therefore send Thou Harun to help me.

And they have a crime against me; therefore I fear they may slay me. He said: By no means, go you both with Our signs, surely We are with you, hearing. Then, come to Fir'aun and say: Surely we are the messengers of the Lord of the worlds. Then send with us the children of Israel.” (26:10-17).

“Go both to Fir'aun; surely he has become inordinate. Then speak to him a gentle word, happily he may mind or fear. Both said: O our Lord! Surely we fear that he may hasten to do evil to us or that he may become inordinate.

He said: Fear not, surely I am with you both. I do hear and see. So go you both to him and say: Surely we are two apostles of the Lord: therefore and the children of Israel with us and do not torment them. Indeed we have brought to thee a message from thy Lord and peace is on him who follows the guidance. Surely it has been revealed to us that the chastisement will surely come upon him who rejects and turns back.” (20:43-48)

Chapter 8: Discussion with Pharaoh

“Fir'aun asked: Who is your Lord, O Musa? He said: Our Lord is He Who gave to everything its creation, then guided it to its goal. He said: Then what is the state of the former generations? He said: The knowledge there of is with my Lord in the book of His decrees. My Lord errs not nor does He forget, Who made the earth for you an expanse, and made for you therein paths and sent down water from the clouds; then thereby We have brought forth pairs of various herbs. Eat and pasture you cattle.

Most surely there are signs in this for those endowed with understanding.” (20:49-54).

“Fir'aun asked: Who is then the Lord of the worlds? He said: The Lord of the heavens and the earth and of all that is between them, if you believe it. Said Fir'aun to those around him: Hear you this? Your Lord, said Musa, and the Lord of your sires of old. In sooth, your apostle whom He hath sent to you, said Fir'aun, is certainly possessed.

He said: The Lord of the east and the west is He and what is between them, if you can understand' He said: If you take any god beside me I will surely put thee in prison. Said Musa: What if I show thee that which shall be proof of my mission? He said: Forth with it then if thou speakest the truth. Then threw he down his staff and lo! it was an obvious serpent. And he drew forth his hand and to! it appeared white to the beholders.” (26:23-33)⁴

Chapter 9 :Pharaoh's Enchanters Vanquished

“The chiefs at Fir'aun's people said: Most surely this is an enchanter possessed of knowledge. He intends to turn you out of your land. Said Fir'aun: What counsel do you then give? They said: Put him off and his brother and send collectors into the cities that they bring to thee ever enchanter possessed of knowledge.

And the enchanters came to Fir'aun and said: We must surely have a reward if we are the prevailing ones. He said: Yes, and ye shall be certainly of those who are near to me. They said: O Musa! Will you cast or shall we be the first to cast? He said: Cast. So when they cast, they deceived the people's eyes and frightened them and they produced a mighty enchantment.

And We revealed to Musa saying: Cast thy rod. Then lo! it devoured their lying wonders. So the truth was made strong and that which: they had wrought proved in vain. And they were vanquished on the spot and drew back humiliated. And the enchanters prostrated themselves adoring.

They said: We believe in the Lord of the worlds, the Lord of Musa and Harun.⁵ Fir'aun said: Do you believe in him before I gave you permission? Surely this is a plot secretly devised in this city that you may turn out of it its people, but you shall know what shall happen. I shall certainly cut off your hands and your feet on opposite sides, then will I crucify you all together.” (7:109-124)

“They said: We do not prefer thee to what has come to us of clear arguments and to Him Who has made us. Therefore decide what thou art going to decide: thou canst decide only about this world's life. Surely we have believed in our Lord that He may pardon us our sins and the sorcery to which thou hast forced us, for Allah is better and more abiding than thou.

Whoever comes to his Lord being guilty, for him is surely hell; he shall not die therein nor shall he live. And whoever comes to Him a believer and he has done good deeds, indeed these it is who shall have the high ranks, the gardens of perpetuity beneath which rivers flow, to abide therein, and this is the reward of him who has purified himself.” (20:72-76)

Chapter 10: Pharaoh's Opposition to Moses

“When he (Musa) came to them with our signs, lo! they laughed at them. And We did not show them a sign but it was greater than its like and We overtook them with chastisement that they may turn. And they said: O enchanter! Call on thy Lord for our sake and He has made the covenant with thee.

We shall surely be the followers of the right way. But when We removed from them the chastisement, lo! they broke the pledge. And Fir'aun proclaimed among his people: O my people: Is not the kingdom of Egypt mine? And these rivers that flow beneath me, do you not then see? Nay! I am better than this fellow who is contemptible and who can hardly speak distinctly.

Why have not bracelets of gold been put upon him or why have there not come with him angels as companions? So he incited his people to levity and they obeyed him. Surely they were a transgressing people.” (13:47-54).

“And the chief of Fir'aun's people said: Dost thou leave Musa and his people to make mischief in the land and to forsake thee and thy gods? He said: We will slay their sons and spare their women and surely we are masters over them. Musa said to his people: Ask help from Allah and be patient. Surely the land is Allah's.

He causes such of His servants to inherit it as he pleases and the end is for those who guard against evil. They said: We have been persecuted before thou came to us and since thou hast come to us. He said:” It may be that your Lord will destroy your enemy and make you rulers in the land, then He will see how you act.” (7:127-129)

“And Musa said: O my people! If you believe in Allah, then rely on Him alone if you submit to Allah. So they said: On Allah we rely. O Our Lord! Make us not subject to the persecution of the unjust people. And do Thou deliver us by Thy mercy from the unbelieving people. And We revealed to Musa and his brother saying: Take for your people houses to abide in Egypt and make your houses places of worship and keep prayer and give good news to the believers. And Musa said: Our Lord!

Surely Thou hast given to Fir'aun and his chiefs finery and riches in this world's life, to this end, our Lord, that they lead people astray from Thy way? Our Lord! Destroy their riches and harden their hearts so that they believe not until they see the painful chastisement. He said: The prayer of you both has indeed been accepted. Therefore continue in the right was and do not follow the path of those who do not know.” (20:84-89)

Chapter 11: Moses Commanded to Leave Egypt: Splitting the Sea and Drowning of Pharaoh and His Hosts

“And certainly We revealed to Musa saying: Travel by night with My servants, then make for them a dry path in the sea, not fearing to be overtaken nor being afraid.” (20:77)

“And We revealed to Musa saying: Go away with My servants travelling by night. Surely you will be pursued. So Fir'aun sent heralds into the cities. These Israelites, said they, are a scanty band and yet they have enraged us and most surely we are numerous and wary. Thus we caused them to quite of gardens and springs and treasures and goodly dwellings.

Even so, and We gave them as a heritage to the children of Israel. Then the Egyptians pursued them at sunrise. So when the two hosts saw each other the companions of Musa cried out: Most surely we are being overtaken. He said: By no means. Surely my Lord is with Me. He will show me a way out. And We revealed this order to Musa: Strike the sea with thy rod.

And it clove as under and each part became like a large mountain. Then made We the others draw on and We saved Musa and those who were with him all, but We drowned the others.” (26:52-66)

“And We made the children of Israel to pass through the sea, then Fir'aun and his hosts followed them in hostility and for oppression until, when drowning overtook him, he said: I believe that there is no god but He in whom the children of Israel believe and I am of those who submit. What now! said God, and indeed thou has been rebellious hitherto and was of the mischief-makers.

But this day We save thee in thy body⁶ that thou mayest be a sign to those after thee and most surely most people are heedless of Our signs.” (20:90-92).

Chapter 12: Moses Receives the Law

“And We appointed with Musa a time of thirty nights and completed them with ten more. So the appointed time of his Lord was complete forty nights. And Musa said to his brother Harun: Take my place among my people and act will and do not follow the way of the mischief-makers. And when Musa came at Our appointed time and his Lord spoke to him, he said: My Lord! Show me Thyself, so that I may look upon Thee. He said: Thou canst not bear to see Me.

But look at the mountain; if it remains firm in its place, than will thou see Me. But when his Lord manifested His glory to the mountain, He made it crumble and Musa fell down in swoon. Then, when he recovered he said: Glory be to Thee: I turn to Thee and I am the first of believers.

He said: O Musa! Surely I have chosen thee above the people with My messages and with My words; therefore, take hold of what I give to thee and be of the grateful ones. And We ordained for him in the tablets admonition of every kind and clear explanation of all things. Take hold of them with firmness and enjoin the people to take hold of what is best thereof.” (7:142-145)⁷

Chapter 13: Israelites Worship the Calf

“And Musa people made of their ornaments a calf after him, a mere body which had a hollow sound. What! Could they not see that it did not speak to them nor guide them in the way? They took it for worship and they were unjust. And when they repented and saw that they had gone astray they said; If our Lord show not mercy to us, we shall certainly be of the losers. And when Musa returned to his people wrathful and in violent grief, he said; Evil is it that you have done after me. Did you turn away from the bidding of your Lord.

And he threw down the tablets⁸ and seized his brother by the head dragging him towards him. He said: Son of my mother, surely the people reckoned me weak and had well nigh slain me, therefore make not the enemies rejoice over me and count me not among the unjust people.⁹ He said: My Lord! Forgive me and my brother and cause us to enter into Thy mercy, for Thou art the Most Merciful of the merciful ones.” (7:148-151)

This incident of the worship of the calf is described in another context by the Qur'an thus:

“He said: We have tried thy people after thee and the Samiri¹⁰ has led them astray. So, Musa returned to his people wrathful and sorrowing. Said he: O my people! Did not your Lord promise you a goodly promise; did then the time seem long to you of my absence or desired ye that wrath from your Lord should light upon you that ye failed in your promise to me? They said: We did not break our promise to thee of Our Own accord but we were made to bear the burden of the ornaments of the people, then we cast them away. Thus did Samiri suggest to us.

So he brought forth for them a calf, a mere body which had a hollow sound and they said: This is your God and the God of Musa whom he hath forgotten. What! Could they not see that it did not return to them a reply and that it did not control any harm or benefit for them. And Harun certainly had said to them before: O my people! You are only tried by it and surely your Lord is the Beneficent God; therefore follow me and obey my orders. They said: We will by no means cease to keep to it worship until Musa returns to us.

Musa said: O Harun! What prevented thee when thou sawest them go astray from following me? Hast thou then disobeyed me commands? He said: O son of my mother! Seize me not by my beard or by my head. Surely I was afraid lest thou shouldst say: Thou hast caused a division among the children of Israel and not waited for my word. He said: What was then thy object, O Samiri? He said: I saw what they did not see. So I followed only partly the way of the apostle, then I cast it away; thus did my soul embellish to me.

He said: Begone, then, surely for thee it will be in this life to say, touch me not, and surely there is a threat for thee which thou shalt not escape. Look at thy god to whose worship thou didst keep so long. We will certainly burn it, then we will certainly scatter it a wide scattering in the sea.¹¹ You God is only Allah; there is no god but He and He comprehends all things in His knowledge.” (20:85-98)

Chapter 14: Order to Slaughter a Cow

The idea of calf or bull-worship seems to have been taken from the Egyptians. In the opinion of Renan, Maspers, and Konig, "Bull-worship may have been an imitation of the worship of Apis at Memphis or Mendes at Heliopolis." (Encyclopaedia Biblica, col. 631)

The writer of the article on the golden calf is, however, of opinion that "Adoption from Egypt is unlikely," and his chief reason is that "the Egyptians worshipped only living animals." But the Israelites too seemed to have been addicted to the worship of living animals in the time of Moses as the incident given below shows and the calf was only an image of the living animal

At any rate, four hundred years of contact with the Egyptians could not have been without its influence, a bull worship dating from a very remote antiquity in Egypt must have had some effect. It was for this reason that the Mosaic law laid great stress on the slaughter of cows and the commandment mentioned below seems to have been given for the same reason.

Notwithstanding all that Moses did to uproot this form of idolatry from among the Israelites, the worshipping of the bull appears to have continued up to the time of Hosea who rails at it in very strong terms. (Vide Hosea, 8: 5 and 10: 5)

"When Musa said to his people: Surely Allah commands you that you should sacrifice a cow.¹² They said: Dost thou ridicule us? He said: I seek the protection of Allah from being one of the ignorant. They said: Call on thy Lord for our sake to make it plain to us what she is. Musa said: He says, surely she is a cow neither, advanced in age nor too young, or middle age between that and this. Do therefore what you are commanded. They said: Call on thy Lord for our sake to make it plain to us what her colour is.

Musa said: He says, she is a yellow cow; her colour is intensely yellow, giving delight to the beholders. They said: Call on thy Lord for our sake to make it plain to us what she is, for, surely to us the cows are all alike and if Allah please, we shall surely be guided aright.

Musa said: He says, surely she is a cow not made submissive to plough the land nor does she irrigate the tilth, sound, without a blemish in her. They said: Now you have brought the truth. So they sacrificed her though they had not the mind to do it". (2:67-71)

Chapter 15: Divine Favours on Israelites and their Stubbornness

“We made the clouds to give shade over you and We sent to you Manna and Salwa. Eat of the good things that We have given you.” (2:57)

“And when Musa prayed for drink for his people, We said: Strike the rock with thy rod and from it there gushed twelve fountains, each tribe knew their drinking place. Eat and drink, said We, of what God hath supplied and do no wrong on the earth by licentious deeds.” (2:60)

“And (remember) when ye said: O Musa! we will not put up with one sort of food; pray therefore to thy Lord for us that He may bring forth for us of that which the earth groweth, its herbs, and its cucumbers and its garlic and its lentils and its onions. He said: what! will you exchange that which is worse for what is better? Then enter a city that you may have what you ask for.” (2:61).

“And We made a covenant with you under the lofty mountain heights and (said): Take hold of what We have given you with firmness and bear in mind what is in it, so that you become righteous, you turned back after that. Were it not for the grace of Allah and His mercy on you, you would certainly have been losers;” (2:63-64)

Chapter 16: Mose's Own People Make False Imputations Against Him.

“O you who believe! Be not like those who spoke evil things of Musa but Allah cleared him of what they said and he was worthy of regard with Allah.” (33:69)¹³

“And when Musa said to his people: O my people! Why do you cause me grief when you know that I am Allah's apostle to you. But when they turned aside, Allah made the hearts turn aside and Allah doth not guide the transgressing people.” (61:5)

Chapter 17: Lessons from the Story of Moses

The importance attached to the life-story of Moses in the Qur'an is due to the fact of his likeness with the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him). Moses was both a law-giver and a nation-builder and so was the Holy Prophet. The Israelites had been in a state of slavery to the Pharaoh of Egypt for about four centuries.

It was, therefore, a hard task for Moses to build a nation out of them but this task was very limited in comparison to the work with which the Holy Prophet was entrusted. He had to build a nation on quite a new principle, a nation, not united by any ties of blood, race, colour or county but united by a moral and spiritual outlook, united by a belief in the; Unity of God and His all-pervading Lordship.

Such was to be the Muslim nation in which the Arab and the non-Arab, the white and the black, the Semitic and the Aryan, were all to be on one level. The whole world was the country and the whole humanity the race out of which this nation was to be formed.

With this apparently: impossible task, the Prophet was entrusted; and single-handed in the face of all difficulties he built up the foundation of a new nation within a short period of twenty-three years. An accomplishment like this cannot be placed to the credit of any other man in the history of the world.

As both Moses and Muhammad were nation-builders and lawgivers, many were the occasions in the life of the former that resembled those which faced the latter and therefore these are recalled to show that what happened to the opponents of Moses was sure to happen to those who now opposed the Prophet and the same God who delivered Moses and his people from the bondage of the Pharaohs is at the back of the Prophet and He is powerful enough to change the situation in his favour by means unperceived by human mind.

Whatever respite is being given by God to a people to reform themselves, if not utilized in time, for their own betterment, will not be prolonged, and repentance will do them no good when the chastisement is in sight, as was the case with the Pharaoh at the moment of his drowning.

The followers of the Prophet should not despair of the mercy of God: if success is delayed in their affairs, for, it is the righteous only that ultimately win. They should also bear in mind that when they are delivered of their enemies, they should not tread the path of the Israelites which they adopted after their liberation from the slavery of the Egyptians.

Take for instance their behaviour, when they were ordered to slaughter a cow. Here is a lesson for the, Muslims that in carrying out the Divine injunctions they should not seek the refuge of lame excuses but obey the behests under all circumstances with the spirit of ready compliance and with a willing heart. The principle laid down for them is expressed in two meaningful words: Sama'na wa Ata'na, i.e., we have heard and we obey.

In the course of the history of Moses the Qur'an has pointed out the main traits of the character of the Israelites with the object of warning the Muslims lest they take to a similar path and meet the same fate which the

Israelites had come to. Let us briefly note what the Qur'an has said about them.

(1) Sectarianism

The People of the Book were divided into many sects and each sect was condemning the other out of their mutual jealousies, even though they possessed the same scriptures. The Qur'an warns the Muslims in these words:

“Surely they who divided their religion into parts and became sects, you have no concern with them.” (6:160)

Again:

“Be not of those who divide their religion and became parties, every sect rejoining in what they have with them.” (30:32)

Or:

“Hold fast by the cable of Allah all together and be not disunited.” (3:102)

And also:

“Allah revealed the Book with truth and those who differed in the Book have drifted away from it.” (2:176)

(2) Interpolations in Divine Scriptures

They used to make changes to suit their whims and fancies. The Qur'an points out their mischievous dealings in these words:

Those who were unjust changed the word into other than what was given them.” (2:59)

Or:

“Woe to those who transcribe the Book corruptly with their hands and say it is from God in order that they may sell it for some price. Woe then to them for the gains they have made thereby.” (2:79)

Again it is said:

“here is a party of them who used to listen to the word of God and yet knowingly perverted it and they knew what they were doing.” (2:81)

(3) Suppression of Truth

They used to hide the truth that was revealed in their scriptures. The Qur'an points it out in these words:

“lothe not what is true with what is untrue or knowingly suppress the truth.” (2:142)

They were expecting the advent of a prophet according to prophecies contained in their scriptures, but when the same prophet did appear, they did not leave any stone unturned to destroy him for the simple reason that he belonged to the Ishmaelites instead of the Israelites. The Qur'an points this out in these words:

“And believe in what I have sent down confirming that which is already with you and do not take the lead in rejecting it.” (2:41)

And when anyone of them would recite any portion of their scripture before the Muslims which supported the claim of the Prophet they used to say:

“Blab ye to them what Allah has disclosed to you that they may throw it back at you as the very thing received from your Allah. Can you not understand this much?” (2:76)

In spite of their knowing full well that the Prophet was the promised Messiah of their scriptures they would not recognize him. This is pointed out in the Qur'an in these words:

“Those whom We have given the Book recognise him as they recognise their own sons.” (2:146)

(4) Fondness of Worldly Gains and Abhorrence of Death

The Jews were notorious for their fondness of material gains and abhorrence of death which brought upon them disgrace from all quarters. The Qur'an makes mention of this in these words:

“And thou wouldst surely find them of all men the most covetous of life, even more covetous than those who associate others with God. Every one of them may wish to live a thousand years.” (2:96)

(5) Selfish Rabbies and Doctors of Law

The Israelite doctors of law had for their own selfish gains usurped the place of God and were obeyed and followed implicitly by their people against the injunctions of their scriptures. The Qur'an points out this weakness of theirs in these words:

“They have taken their doctors of law and -their priests for lords besides God.” (9:31)

They had forgotten their own responsibilities and lived for their own selfish ends, and their ignorant followers relied implicitly on their exposition of their religious responsibilities.

“Why do their learned men and the doctors of law not prohibit them from their speaking of what is sinful and their eating of unlawfully acquired things? Certainly evil be that which they do.” (5:83)

Their story does not end with this but they had totally neglected to forbid evil and were obsessed in promoting their own selfish interests and, if, on any occasion they had any impulse to admonish others, they would do so forgetting to set themselves aright. The Qur'an asks them:

“Will you enjoin righteousness on others and neglect to practice the same yourselves and yet you profess to follow the Book.” (2:44)

(6) Indifference towards the Law

In every affair of theirs whether it be temporal or spiritual, the rule of the devil was the order of the day. Even the few injunctions which had escaped their interference were only given lip profession and were never put into practice. They were no doubt bearers of the Torah but no corner of their life's activities was illuminated with its light. The Qur'an refers to this in these words:

“The likeness of those who were charged with the Torah then did not observe it is the likeness of an ass bearing a load of books.” (62:5)

They threw aside the Book of God and thereby invoked the curse of God. To them Qur'an says:

“Say (to them O Prophet): O people of the Book! you follow no good till you keep up the Torah and the Gospel and that which is revealed to thee from thy Lord.” (5:68)

(7) Mutual Enmities

The Qur'an says that on account of interpolations in the word of God and breaking the covenants and neglecting the law, they are made to suffer the curse of mutual enmities. It says:

“On account of breaking the covenant We cursed them and made their hearts hard; they altered the words from their places and they neglected a portion of what they were reminded of and thou shalt always discover treachery in them excepting a few of them and with those who say we are Christians, We made a covenant but they neglected a portion of what they were reminded of; therefore We excited among them enmity and hatred to the day of resurrection.” (5:13-14)

(8) Devouring the Unlawful

Love of wealth is the proverbial weakness of a Jew. Even Shakespeare had to expose this weakness in the notorious character of Shylock. The Qur'an throws light upon this trait of their character in these words:

“They are listeners of lies and devourers of what is forbidden.” (5:42)

Or:

“Ye who believe! Most surely many of the doctors of law and the monks eat away the property of men falsely and turn them from Allah's way.” (9:34)

(9) Cooperation with the Unbelievers and idol-worshippers

When the Jews, forsaking the path of God, formed themselves into different schisms and when after materialistic attainments, their standard of antagonism eventually underwent a change. On the one hand they claimed to be the chosen people of God and on the other they made friends with the enemies of God and the enemies of the believers. The Qur'an has pointed out their double-sidedness in these words:

“Thou wilt see many of them befriending those who disbelieve.” (5:80)

When the mind is darkened by animal passions, one loses the talent of distinguishing good from evil. The Qur'an declares in this connection that:

“Thou shalt not find a people who believe in Allah and the latter day be mending those who act in opposition to Allah and His apostle even though they were their own fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kinsfolk.” (58:22)

But the Jews who professed to believe in God and the Hereafter were foremost in making alliances with the polytheists against the Muslims.

(10) Seeking Pretexts

When man gets overpowered with the influx of passions and loses the fear of God, he sacrifices the injunctions of God on the altar of his worldliness. He begins to seek pretexts to avoid correct performance of his duties forgetting that there is an omnipresent and omniscient God who knows the secrets of his heart. The Sabbath day was declared by the law of Moses as a sacred day and the Jews were forbidden to work for their livelihood on that day. But their covetous and greedy temperament could not keep them at home. They transgressed the law under various pretexts to hoodwink God Himself.¹⁴ The Qur'an refers to it in these words:

“And certainly you have known those among you who exceeded the limits of the Sabbath. We said to them: Be as apes despised and hated.”
(2:65)

(11) Ignorance of the Law and Persistence in Ignorance

It has been the rule with the old nations of the world that after the passing away of their prophets they gradually let the law enforced by them fall into desuetude and followed self invented rituals and customs according to their wishes in place of the simple and clear teachings of their faith, The Israelites were no exception. Thought they had the Torah with them thought not in its original purity, yet their religious life was based upon certain superstitious rites and customs. The Qur'an points this out in these words:

“And there are among them illiterates who know not the Book but only idle stories and they only make use of conjectures.” (2:78)

The Qur'an condemns them in these words:

“O people of the Book! Be not unduly immoderate in your religion and not follow the low desires of people who went astray before and led many astray and drifted away from the right path.” (5:77)

This is only a birds-eye-view of the state of society among the people of the Book during the Prophetic mission of Muhammad (may peace and the blessings of God be upon him). This picture is drawn in the sacred book of Islam with the object of warning the Muslims that God's law of Requital is universal and indiscriminating and is applied to all without the least distinction of race and creed. For is it not said in the Qur'an.

“Thou shalt not find any change in the course of Allah.” (33:62)

“Thou shalt not find any alteration in the course of Allah.” (35:43)

NOTES

[0] The word Fir'aun looks to a superficial observer to be only a difference of pronunciation but this is not so. Pharaoh is undoubtedly the Hebraized title of the King of Egypt.

If the Prophet had heard this title from the Jews there was no reason why he should not have used Pharaoh (Fero) in Arabic and its pronunciation was not difficult for the Arabs. But he did not do it and there must be some reason for it. That reason has come to light now from the book of Herodotus; the Greek historian of ancient Greece. He uses Peroun for Pharaoh, the very title the Qur'an has used.

Herodotus's information must be direct and first-hand. Was this true also of Muhammad? Yes, in one sense, for the real author of the Qur'an is far better informed than the Jews, and if, later, a Greek historian whose work could never have been consulted by the Prophet in Mecca accidentally comes to confirm the Qur'anic name, it should give some food for reflection to those who glibly talk of Muhammad obtaining his information from the Jews or from the folk-lore popular in Arabia in his days.

1. The Christian critics point out that Haman who is mentioned here as the minister of Pharaoh is not mentioned in the Bible as such and therefore, they allege that the Prophet has blundered and confounded the Haman mentioned in the book of Esther of the Old Testament, a favourite of the Persian king Abasuerus with the minister of Pharaoh. But this allegation is based on ignorance combined with prejudice as we shall presently prove.

The Pharaoh who was the contemporary of Moses was Rameses II belonging to the nineteenth dynasty of Egypt. During his reign some of the biggest temples and buildings of Egypt were constructed and the head priests of the temples enjoyed great power in the land. Among these the high priest of the temple of Ammon, the Ram-god was the most powerful (Jewish Encyclopaedia, Vol. X, p. 12)

Dr. Steindroff of the Leipzig University, in the book *Religious of Ancient Egyptians*, states on page 96 that the high priest of the temple of Ammon was the chief officer in charge of constructions and decorations of all public buildings and he also used to be the general of the military attached to the temples like the archbishops of medieval Europe. He was also in charge of the public treasury and the head of all the priests of the temples of Thebes and of north and the south Egypt, Again on page 106 he writes that the servants of the temples were mostly prisoners of war or the cultivators and artisans of the land.

Forced labour was imposed on them all in the construction of public buildings. The priests were very wealthy and exercised great power over the people. The high priest of the Temple of Ammon was owner of one-tenth of the whole of land.

Now keeping these things in view which the European orientalisists have discovered from the study of Egyptian archaeology let us see that the Qur'an says about Haman:

“Surely Fir'aun and Haman and their hosts were wrong-doers.” (28:8)

No doubt Pharaoh was the king, but the high priest of Ammon with his retinue was also of no less importance and therefore the Qur'an uses the words “and their hosts.” Again in the same chapter the Qur'an says:

“And Fir'aun said: O chiefs I do not know of any god for you besides myself and therefore burn me then, O Haman! Bricks of clay and build me a lofty tower that I may mount up to the Lord of Musa, for, in sooth I deem him a liar,” (28:38)

This shows that the high priest of Ammon was also the chief architect of the kingdom. Now why did the Qur'an call him Haman? The simple reply is that in the Old Testament the brother of Moses is called Aaron who was the high priest of the Israelites and the Qur'an has called him Harun. Like was the high priest of Ammon is called Haman in place of Ammon.

In the city of Munich in Germany there is an ancient statue on which is written that it is the statue or the high priest of Ammon of the time of Rameses II (vide Dr Steindroff, op. cit, pp. 97-98). The Muslim commentators of the Qur'an called Haman as the vizier of Pharaoh without any proof and the Christian critics of the Qur'an took this opportunity to level the charge of historical blunder against the Qur'an, but recent researches have furnished the proofs, See *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. IX 11th edition, p. 54, where it is stated that along with many other powers the high priest of Ammon used to be appointed as the vizier in charge of southern Egypt. Indeed what the Qur'an has stated fourteen hundred

years ago is being proved by modern researches day by day and why should it not be so when the All-Knowing God Himself says;

"This is of the announcements relating to the unseen which We reveal to thee (O Muhammad)" (112:192),

But those blinded with prejudice can hardly see the truth.

2. Christian critical opinion discovers here another example of how the Qur'an commits mistakes in borrowing from the Bible. It says that the Prophet had in mind a confused idea of Jacob making an agreement with Laban to serve him for seven years as a condition of marrying one of his daughters (Genesis, 29: 18) and he invented the story of Moses's marriage.

The slightest similarity in incidents like similarity of names (as we have seen in the case of Haman) gives rise in the minds of the Christian critics to a conclusion of confusion and anachronism where the Qur'an is concerned. But they intentionally forget that the stories given in the Bible of Laban marrying his daughters with Jacob by fraudulent methods and then Jacob's going to the female slaves of both his wives and producing children from them in Genesis, 29 and 30, are daring examples of incident and even loathsome fiction.

The Qur'an is far above borrowing such disgusting and abominable tales. We have quoted these passages for our reader's illumination showing the worth of the Bible narratives.

According to Rabbinical accounts as given in the Jewish Encyclopaedia Moses lived with Jethro for ten years which corroborates the Qur'anic story in substance and there is nothing in the circumstances that he may have served him during that period in consideration for marrying of his daughters. The Qur'an does not state how many daughters the man had. It only speaks of two of them being in charge of their father's flocks. Hence the alleged confusion of this story with that of Laban's two daughters is itself due to confusion of the minds of our Christian critics.

3. When Moses was a child he burnt his tongue with a live coal. This caused an impediment in his tongue to speak freely. This fact is not mentioned in the Bible but it is given in Midrash Julkut on Ex. c. 166 and also in Shalsheth Hakabalab, p. 5 b.

4. Here again we have an instance of the correctness of the Qur'anic statement where it differs with the Bible showing the incompleteness of the Bible narrative. In the 4th chapter of Exodus it is clearly stated that two signs were given to Moses, that of his rod turning into a serpent and that of his hand turning white when put into his bosom. And when we read chapter 7 where the performance of these miracles before Pharaoh is recorded, we find mention only of the miracle of the rod. It is, however, obvious that Moses must have shown the second sign on the rejection of the first, for he could not have disobeyed the Divine commandment, nor was the second miracle given to him in vain.

5. The Bible does not speak of the magicians as believers in the Divine mission of Moses and in the Lord of the worlds Whom he represented. But we have mention of this in the Rabbinical literature according to which some Egyptians accompanied Moses when he departed from Egypt which is corroborated by the Bible narrative: "And a mixed multitude also went up with them" (Exodus 12: 39) "For the Egyptians, when the time fixed for Moses's descent from the mountains had expired came in a body, forty thousand of them accompanied by two Egyptian magicians, Yanos and Yambross the same who imitated Moses in producing the signs and the plagues in Egypt" (Jewish Encyclopaedia). This is a proof of the truth of the statement made in the Qur'an and of the incompleteness of the Bible narrative.

6. The Bible does not mention that the body of Pharaoh was cast ashore. But from recent discoveries in Egyptology it has been found that the body of Rameses who is regarded as the Pharaoh of Moses's time has been preserved among the mummies of Egypt (vide Encyclopaedia Britannica, Article: 'Mummy'). This is another instance of the insufficiency of the Bible narrative and the truth of the Qur'anic statement where it supplements the Bible.

Surely the discovery now made could not have been known to the Holy Prophet and here we have a clear example of the superhuman knowledge contained in the Qur'an. The contention of the Christian critics that the stories of the Qur'an are borrowed from the Bible falls flat to the ground.

7. According to the Bible, Moses received the Torah in the form of tablets written by the hand of God “The tablets were the work of God and the writing was writing of God graven upon the tablets. (Exodus, 32: 16). But according to the Qur'an the Torah was revealed to Moses in the same manner as books were revealed to other prophets and as the Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet of Islam.

“Who revealed the Book which Musa brought?” (6:92); 'We have sent revelations to thee as We sent revelations to Nuh and prophets after him” (6:163)

8. According to the Bible, Moses in his anger broke the tablets on which the word of God was written (Ex 32: 19) and Ex. 34: 1 describes how they were renewed, but the Qur'an says that he only put the down and took them up again when his anger calmed. It appears strange indeed that a prophet like Moses should have been so overpowered with wrath as to have broken the tablets upon which were written down Divine communications. Therefore the Bible narratives must be rejected. Its absurdity is to be found in the fact that the tablets of stone written with the finger of God by merely being cast out of his hand, as the Bible says, had been so broken as to make the writing illegible. Therefore the Qur'anic statement which contradicts the Bible is the correct one.

9. In chapter 32 of Exodus the people cause Aaron to make a calf out of their golden ornaments. He fashions the calf with graving tool after melting the gold into the shape of a calf and builds an altar for it and offers burnt offerings. God informs Moses of their transgression and wishes to destroy them all. Moses beseeches the Lord not to be angry and reminds Him of the promise He gave to Abraham, Isaac and Israel and God repents for the evil which He thought to do to the Israelites.

Imagine the enormity of accusing God of committing an evil and repenting for it. Moses returns to his people, casts the tablets out of his hand and breaks them beneath the mount and takes Aaron to task for the sin he committed. Aaron confesses his fault and the chapter ends with the words:

“And the Lord plagued the people because they made the calf which Aaron made.”

The Qur'an not only clears him of idol-making but shows him as plainly warning the Israelites because of the worship of the calf in these words:

“O my people, you are only tried by it and surely your Lord is the Beneficent God; therefore follow me and obey my orders.” (20:90)

Here Aaron's excuse and Moses's acceptance of it show clearly that Aaron was quite innocent, having had a share neither in making the calf nor in worshipping it. The Bible account which makes a righteous prophet of God guilty of the most heinous crime must be rejected as untrue. Here is another example of the Qur'an championing the cause of the prophets of God and clearing them of the blasphemies that the compilers of the Bible have heaped upon their sacred memories.

10. Who was this Samiri? As the Bible does not mention the name of any such person, the adverse Christian critics of the Qur'an at once jump to the conclusion that the Qur'an has committed a blunder of anachronism. According to these critics, the Jewish capital Samaria was founded about 925 B.C. long after the Exodus and a tribe by the name of Samaritans sprang up from this place which was a cross-breed of the Israelites and the Gentiles, and calf worship was in vogue among these people.

Perhaps Muhammad learnt this from the Jews at Mecca and fabricated this story in connection with Moses. We have seen under footnote 2 how in the case of Haman, the high priest of Ammon, they made similar accusations and how the truth of the Qur'an was vindicated by the researches in Egyptology. A similarity in names becomes enough authority with these oriental scholars where Muhammad or the Qur'an is concerned and that is enough excuse to accuse the Qur'an or the Prophet.

There is every possibility of this Samiri to be some ancestor of the Samaritans. What the Qur'an says in this verse is that some person other than Aaron was responsible for making the calf. From Rabbinical literature (see Jewish Encyc., Art: “Calf”) it appears that the Egyptians who had come with the Israelites were foremost in demanding the making of the calf. Imam Razi in his commentary asserts that he was an Egyptian who had believed in Moses and come along with the Israelites.

11. This shows that the ashes of the calf were thrown into the sea and the story of the Israelites being made to drink water mixed with the ashes of the calf is not credited by the Qur'an as given in Exodus, 32: 20, and Deut. 2: 21. The ring-leaders among the Israelites

show seduced the people to calf-worship were slain by the Levites. The Bible states that three thousand people were killed on that day. Therefore there was no need of making them drink the water containing the ashes of the calf.

The Qur'an, on the other hand, tells us:

“And when Musa said to his people: O my people! you have surely been unjust to yourselves by taking the calf for a god. Therefore turn to you Creator penitently and mortify yourselves. That is best for you with your Creator. So He turned to you mercifully, for surely He is the oft-returning to mercy, the Merciful.” (2:54).

Thus the wrong was forgiven, though it is possible that the forgiveness may have been granted after the sentence was executed. It is however strange that Aaron, who according to the Bible, made the image and led the people to calf-worship was not at all punished. This itself is enough to show that the allegation made against him in the Bible was baseless.

12. The slaughter of a cow referred to in this verse has nothing in common with the slaying of the heifer as an expiration of the uncertain murder in Deut. 21: 1-9 or to the slaughter of a red heifer, the ashes of which purify one who was touched the dead body of any man (Num. 19: 1-9) except the fact that as the Israelites held the cow in great honour and even worshipped it, as is clear from their worship of the golden calf, they were ordered to slaughter such cows as were usually let abroad and worshipped as sacred objects-cows not wrought with nor drawn in yoke but let loose to wander abroad and the cow mentioned in these verses is a typical cow answering this description.

This type of cow is still an object of special reverence in India. The slaughter of this particular type was specially enjoined upon the Jews according to the Bible as well as the Holy Qur'an the object being to root out cow-worship among them.

But whereas the Biblical injunction to slaughter a heifer is a general injunction to be observed whenever an uncertain murder takes place or an unclear person is to be purified the injunction as contained in the Qur'an points to the slaughter of one particular cow which was probably likely to become an object of worship. Indeed there is a striking resemblance between the colour of the golden calf and the cow ordered to be slaughtered.

The concluding words of the passage show that because of their reverence for that particular cow, the Jews were very averse to slaughter it. This incident is entirely ignored by the Bible.

13. The Bible has ascribed a very despicable act of Moses. In the book of Numbers, chapters 12, verse 1, it is written that the sister of Moses, Miryam, charged him with illicit connection with a Cushite woman and the God of Moses became angry with her and made her leper but on the prayer of Moses she was restored again to health. The Qur'an rejects this story in the verses quoted above.

Further on, the Bible paints Moses as a heartless tyrant inflicting vengeance on the Midianites for the doubtful fault of one Midianite woman who was supposed to beguile an Israelite. In retribution he wages war against the Midianites in which all the males are slain and all the women and children are taken captive and all their flocks and herds and goods are taken and all their cities and castles are burnt.

When the spoils of this war are taken to Moses he gets angry with his men for having spared the women and children and he orders to kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him, in cold blood and distributes the virgins and the little ones among his followers to be their slaves and those numbered thirty-two thousand souls in all, (vide chapter 31, Numbers).

14. This was not mentioned in the story of Moses as this incident did not take place during the life-time of Moses. We read in Ezek, 22:, 8-15 the following; “Thou hast despised mine holy things, and has profaned my Sabbaths. In thee are men that carry tales to shed blood: and in thee they eat upon the mountains: in the midst of thee they commit lewdness. In thee have they discovered their fathers' nakedness; in thee they humbled her that was set apart for pollution.

And one hath committed abomination with his neighbour's wife; and another hath lewdly defiled his daughter in law; and another in thee hath humbled his sister, his father's daughter... and I will scatter thee among the heathen, and disperse thee in countries.” All this description conforms to the character of apes which the Qur'an uses.

Moses's prophecy of the fact of the Jewish nation amply bears out the description as given in the Qur'an. “And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of

the earth even unto the other And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest; but the Lord shall thee a trembling heart, and falling of eyes, and sorrow of Mind” (Deut. 28: 64-65)

