

Creation of Man



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KAUSAR NIAZI

CREATION OF MAN

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By

KAUSAR NIAZI

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Foreword

BEFORE the scientists of the 19th century presented their Theory of Evolution in 1858, majority of men believed in what their religions taught them about the origin of their progenitor.

According to the author of '*The World of the Past*',¹ the intellectual and religious circles of Babylonia were the first to initiate thinking over the creation of the human race. They presented the theory that it was the god Iea who first created man out of the blood of the imprecated god, Kalanga. In other words, man came into being when the wrath of Iea descended upon Kalanga who was led to the slaughter house for his sins and had his throat slit with a knife.

If this opinion of the Babylonianists is given credence to and Babylonia is regarded as the first seat of civilization, then this concept naturally assumes the first place and those mythicised stories of Egypt are automatically relegated to a secondary position according to which god Kanum shaped man, first, on the potters' wheel. The second Egyptian story is considerably different from the first. According to it, man was born out of the ribs of a cow that emerged from the Nile.²

The Egyptian civilization flourished about 5,000 years B. C. Thus, 7,000 years ago the Egyptians believed that their progenitor was an off-spring of the cow.

The well-known archaeologist Hunter, who in his famous work dealt with 800 Sumerian seals gathered from the ruins of Harappa and Moenjodaro, regards the bull engraved on the seals as the Bull god. In Hunter's opinion the greatest deity in which the pre-Aryan

1. *The World of the Past*, pp. 728.

2. *Ibid.*

colonisers of the Harappa-Moenjodaro plains believed was the Bull god, who created man. In other words, the Egyptians and the Sumerians, more or less, held identical views. Like-wise, the old Hindu civilization which belongs to the eras of the Rig Veda and the Yajur Veda calls cow the mother.

Though the Aryan scriptures yield no evidence confirming the Egyptian belief that man sprang from the ribs of a cow, nonetheless, they assign the animal the place of mother, whom man sucked.

The historians who have made a study of the Aryan beliefs of the Rig Veda period think that Indira was the biggest of the Indian deities who shared with Brahma the distinction of creating and sustaining man.

The author of *'The World of the Past'* thinks that Greek philosophers were the first to propound an hypothesis about the creation of man different from the one followed by the idolatrous races of the world. In 700 B.C. two pioneer philosophers namely, Anaximander and Archelaus declared very plainly that the human race had to pass through an evolution—the earlier generations bearing strong resemblance to a variety of animals. The first of the two claimed that man made his first appearance on the world stage in the form of fish. The second thought that when the icy crust enveloping the globe melted away and the earth, relieved of a massive weight, became warmer, life germinated on it and some living beings appeared of their own volition. Archelaus thinks these living objects mixed sexually over a long period. In the last stage, man branched off from the rest and assumed a distinct identity. The author of *'The World of the Past'* believes that these two philosophers could not convert many people to their views. Their theories prospered neither in Greece nor elsewhere. And when the Romans and the Greeks, under the influence of their royal courts adopted Christianity as their faith, the Biblical dogma about the genesis of Adam rubbed out every other concept from their minds.

Then for a long time, nobody gave his thought to the Theory of Evolution. By 1858 or to be more precise 1843—when Charles Darwin and his contemporary Alfred Wallace first propounded the theory, people had forgotten what spade work the two Greek

philosophers had done. It cannot be said with exactitude whether or not Darwin and Wallace, when they started formalising their intellectual findings, were already familiar with the Greek thought. Anyhow, since both were scholars of Greek and the study of Greek philosophy was their favourite occupation, it would not be wrong to presume that they had borrowed much from the Greek thought.

Whatever the case, when Charles Darwin and Alfred Wallace claimed that the human race had to pass through a long evolutionary process to attain the present configuration in body, Europe's theological quarters were taken by storm. Nonetheless most of the Western scientists did not hesitate to follow the trail blazed by these two scientists. Sir Arthur Keith says that a large number of scientists voluntarily dedicated themselves to this task and their work continues to this day despite the passing of a century and a half over the original discovery.³ These scientists have made startling revelations during their research. They have travelled all over the globe and have unearthed skulls, jowls and other parts of the bodies which once belonged to men of deep antiquity. From these relics they gather that the human race had to pass through four stages of evolution stretching over a period of thousands of years. A British author, Carleton, while describing a century of scientific discoveries (from 1858 to 1959 in his book *The History of Man*) has divided man's evolution into four stages encompassing a vast period of 7,00,000 years. In other words, European scientists believe that man made his debut 7,00,000 years ago.⁴ What changes the human body and the mind have gone through during this enormous stretch of time are evident from the analysis of the bones and skulls which have been found in the various parts of the world and which differ in shape and texture. Carleton asserts that in the first stage, five crude and unshapely human races inhabited the world. These races after thousands of years of the existence learned to speak and devise a few implements. A few thousand years more passed before they learned to make use of fire and cook their food. In the middle of this period when *Homo Erectus*—the first man known to have used fire—assumed the present shape the crude man had disappeared from the scene. In the second phase, man learnt the art of clothing himself with the

3. *The Discovery of Man*, pp. 41 & 42.

4. *The History of Man*, pp. 31 & 43.

hides of beasts and of sewing warm garments. During this period his lust for wander and food brought him to the fine pastures of the colder regions of the ancient world. By the end of this era, he had succeeded in devising a bow and could shoot volleys of arrows into the air. This was the most potent weapon in his hands with which he hunted down wild animals. He roasted their flesh on fire and thus disposed of his appetite. This was the period when he domesticated the dog which accompanied him invariably on his hunting excursions.

Then began the third phase during which man befriended many more wild animals. He picked up a few from amongst them and trained them. This was also the period when he sowed foodgrains, raised vegetables, baked clay vessels and entered, step by step, into the new and the last phase of his evolution which according to Carleton, started about 7,000 years B.C.⁵

In fact, the new human race is only 7,000 years old—a period which can be extended to 12,000 years B.C. as has been done by H. G. Wells in his work "The Outline of History" (p. 11, 13, 15). H. G. Wells is not the only one to present this view. Almost all pre-1858 archaeologists and historians held the same opinion. They put the age of the human race at 12,000 years, or at the most at 20,000 years. Nobody talked of 7,00,000 years before 1858. None among the scientists started this hare, though heavy deposits of human bones and skulls had been discovered in the caves or were found buried.

Many scholars had carried out excavation at various places before 1858 and had found evidence of civilization like household articles and dwelling places alongwith human skeletons. But none of them ever ventured to fix the age of the human race beyond 12,000 years or at the most 20,000 years. The rigmarole about hundreds of thousands years was the brain-child of post-1858 scientists. Despite the evidence provided by skulls and bones, this was, according to California's Lee, nothing but a patchwork of fancy.⁶ The scientific principles on which these pre-historians raised the edifice of their hypotheses were the creation of their own imagina-

5. The History of Man, p. 43.

6. The Human Destiny, pp. 16 & 18.

tions. Otherwise, no laboratory, however modern, has yet been equipped with "telescopes" which could penetrate the deep mists of the 7,00,000 years and see man—an apelike creation—swinging by the branches of tall-trees in dense forests and finally descending upon the earth where 5,00,000 years of unmitigated toil and toddling straightened his hindlegs and infused power into his limbs, turning his forelegs into his hands and shaping his facial and other bones into a human figure.⁷

Science is doubtless a great branch of knowledge. It has helped the modern man measure distances to the sun and the moon and other heavenly bodies. But all this became practicable because the sun was there and so were available the powerful instruments which were capable of reckoning distances. On the contrary, Darwin and the galaxy around him who have tried to peer through the deep past have no material to present to their contemporaries barring a few putrefied bones, fossilised jowls and rattling skeletons. We admit that those scholars who have during the years 1858-1959, delved deep into the past on the basis of the Theory of Evolution have done a real hard work in exploring caves, deserts, marshes and gorges. They have been examining their discoveries with the aid of microscopes and other chemical processes. But unluckily they tripped badly in their computations when they applied the modern time-scale to weigh the past. And the amusing part of it is that the things they weighed did hardly exist.

If these scientists had really something antique to weigh in the balance of modern science, that would have been a different case. But to base conclusions on bones and jowls which are wrapped in mystery and about which nobody knows whom they belonged to, carries little conviction.

Evolution, no doubt, is a natural law. But the evolution which runs contrary to the laws of nature is no evolution at all. It is an aberration that cannot alter the realities that have been coming into man's observation over the ages. If there had been a fundamental truth in the theories of Darwin and his followers and their assertion that man had assumed the present configuration after journeying

7. *The History of Man*, pp. 31 & 43.
The World of the Past, p. 3.

through a long evolutionary process had been based on reality then some similar incident should have come to notice in man's known history, *i.e.*, during the past, 7,000 years. If this evolution was innate and something to which nature had made some contribution and which was the result of the earth getting warmer and of some other environmental influences then why did this evolutionary process project its image only on the mental screen of Darwin and his colleagues? Why did it not occur as an incident in the known history of mankind? History tells us that man has always hesitated to believe in an invisible God, though His signs are profusely scattered all around. With his mind so frail in face of doubts, how can man, in the absence of concrete evidence, repose his faith in vague and turbid suppositions of Darwin and his co-scholars?

The few bones, some skeletons, certain fossils whose true identification still lacks confirmation cannot falsify the concrete realities of the past 7,000 years, particularly when the Pyramids of Egypt and the ruins of Babylon, Sousse, Nineveh, Moenjodaro, Harappa, Elam and Chhota Nagpur testify the established declarations of science.

The question is why could not the post-1858 scientists take the trouble of casting a look at the mummified monarchs and the queens of the Pharaohic past and the treasures of the royal cemetery before pronouncing man, on the basis of some bones and jowls, to be the brood of apes and chimpanzees? Before tearing the veil from the face of the past one million years, they ought to have seen what legacy the recent past had bequeathed to them. Is science not capable of reading man's past writ indelibly in the faces of the mummies? Do these bodies not conform to the standards of scientific evidence? And if they do, is there no mummy among them to reveal which evolutionary stages man has passed through? Is there no past preserved in these bodies so as to provide an evidence—howsoever insignificant—regarding the physical evolution of the body?

We dare not join issues with the celebrities of the world of science. Nonetheless we respectfully beg to submit that if indistinct, indeterminate and ill-defined skeletons can carry some weight with them why can't those human bodies which have been preserved

for the past thousands of years in the stony wombs of the Pyramids?

Science is never vague, dubious or confused. It is as clear and glittering as the rays of the sun. It is not the monopoly of Darwin and the men of his way of thinking. It belongs to the entire human race. It was not Darwin or Wallace or their disciples who alone gathered the harvest of nature's secrets. The honour of exploring farflung caves and marshes is not the exclusive trophy of the post-1858 scholars. Others, too, have much to their credit in this field. Many Masudis, Ibn Batutas, Istakharis, Ibn Jarirs, Jabir bin Hayyans, Tabaris, Ibn Khalduns, Al-Idreesis and Al-Berunis had dedicated their lives to the task of unearthing nature's secrets and redelineating the contours of the lost civilizations. Many of them had discovered skeletons in the forgotten caves and had scrutinised bones and jowls with the eye of science. But none of them had burdened the world with a theory of evolution which, later, Darwin and his followers did in the wake of their faint and shadowy investigations.

The urge to know the shape and the behaviour of the planets, the study of the structure and deportment of the heavenly bodies, animals or the human beings and a probe into the earth and the unlimited world of space have constituted some of the topics which the Muslim genius over the past 1,200 years had taken up as a challenge. We feel justified in asserting that the discoveries of the modern science are the fruit of Muslim endeavour. There is hardly any branch of scientific research which does not owe its origin to Muslim initiative.

If the creation of man had passed through some primeval stages and science's fundamental truth had upheld this presumption, then somebody from amongst Ibn Khaldun or Masudi or Al-Beruni must have made a mention of it. These men of fabulous intellect had not remained confined to the narrow alleys of one specialised research: their imagination had scanned all the horizons.

What is really amusing is that while the Muslim scientists dedicated their entire lives to research, Darwin and his colleagues caught hold of a few skulls and sitting in their laboratories for a few fleeting moments bestowed upon them lives extending to millions of years.

Thamud, Qahtan or Jerham. They thought it enough to mention that these races were the progeny of Noah's sons. These races were the first to lay the foundations of human civilization and carve their homes out of mountain rocks.⁹ What Darwin and other scholars of the post-1858 period found by way of human skulls or skeletons was recovered from the caves of a much later date which can claim no precedence over the contents of the caves of the Aad and Thamud who were nearer to Adam. The evidence provided by later sources was bound to be of an inferior order in comparison with the earlier information. The Arab historians are certain that the cultural relics of Egypt are of a much later period than those of the Yemen and San'a because they believed that Yabsir—whose son, Misr, gave the country her name—lived later than Aad, Thamud and Qahtan.

Anyhow if the human skeletons can form the basis of any theory then those found by Sharif al-Idreesi, Ibn Saa'd and Al-Mas'udi in the caves of the Yemen should have a prior right to serve as the basis, because not only do we have some information about the builders of these caves, but their annals form a lasting part of world history. Darwin's caves are as obscure as were their builders. It is true, the skeletons which the Arab pre-historians found during their investigations 1,000 years ago are no more available and are not preserved like the mummified bodies of the Pharaohs. Nonetheless, they, as historical record, are wholly dependable. Interestingly enough, the major part of this evidence was introduced to the world by the German and French historians. So its place in history is indubitably recognised by the historians of the modern world.

Islamabad,
March 31, 1975.

KAUSAR NIAZI

9. Ibn Saa'd Vol. I, p. 19.

The Genesis of the Universe

تكوينِ عالم

WHO are we? Wherefrom have we come? How did the world begin? And what fate is it going to meet?

These are some of the questions, which arise in the minds of all thinking men. Every soul is restless to resolve this puzzle. But the more the wisemen pondered over these questions, the more complicated they grew. So much so that whosoever set out to find an answer to this mystery cried out in despair:

“What we have come to know at last is that we know nothing.”

Why did God create this universe? What was the idea behind this creation? The great minds of the world have not been able to resolve this mystery. Whoever has thought over the personality and the attributes of God and on the splendid diversity in His creation had to declare at least:

“Man is finite, God is infinite. How can the finite comprehend the infinite?”

A scientist accomplishes astonishing feats. His discoveries marvel the world. But when he muses over the beginning and the end of the world he openly admits: “I feel as if I am gathering pebbles on a sea-beach.” Socrates, no doubt, said that real knowledge consisted in knowing what man was and what relationship he bore with the Absolute Truth. All other knowledge, he said, was worthless. Yet he himself had not been able to define what kind of relationship existed between man and the Ultimate Truth or by what method that relationship could be established.

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The poet's imagination can build fascinating mansions and attain wonderous heights. But when he, too, tries to peep into the mysteries of life, he has no option but to declare :

“We know not when the world began
And when it will end.

It is a book whose opening and
The final chapters have been lost.

Yet others had to say :

“Nobody knows where lies our destination
We only hear the jingling of the caravan bells.”

The human intellect is a noble endowment indeed. But all admit that it cannot truly comprehend the whole scheme of things. Ibn Al-Qayyem was true when he said that a man can weigh anything in the balance but he would indeed be a fool if he asserts that he can weigh a mountain in it. The intellect undoubtedly is a guide but if somebody thinks that he can fathom the depths of these secrets with this instrument, he is amusingly simple. It is for this reason that God Almighty has, out of His mercy, bestowed upon man an undying light of divine revelation which has illumined his darkest moments. He has been raising those noble souls among men whom we call the prophets, and to whom were revealed the answer to these questions and to whose gaze were thrown open all the secrets which men longed to know about.

‘The Prophet tells what he perceives.’

The writer of *Al-Milal Wa Al-Nihal* is correct in saying that the philosophers and the men of worldly lores look upon the miracles of the prophets exactly as the beasts watch men's strange activities. “If the philosopher's denial of the prophetic miracles on the basis of his inadequate understanding can be an argument against miracles, why can't a beast's denial of man's achievements be equally an argument against them? In reality, where the human intellect ends, there begins the prophetic consciousness. Whatever the worth of their claim, those who deny the revelational truths can advance no cogent reason against these truths. Commenting on the fool-hardiness of those who deny God's signs, the Quran says:

“Nay but they denied that, the knowledge whereof they could not compass and whereof the interpretation (in events) had not yet come into them. Even so did those before them deny. Then see what was the consequence of the wrong-doers.” (x : 40)

In other words, what decisive arguments do you possess against the prophets' claim that God Almighty, out of His unique benevolence, had revealed unto them the realities which thus far had remained unexperienced. But the completest consummation of this process was attained in the Quran, which was revealed to the last of the prophets—Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Although every verse of the Holy Quran reveals a truth—(to whatever part, I turn my gaze, beauty speaks out 'here I lie')—nonetheless the Quran, with unequalled eloquence and brevity, has discussed all these matters in the story of Adam and Satan. It is for this reason that an endeavour has been made to keep this story as the central theme of this work.

A d a m آدم

(Peace be upon him)

ADAM has been mentioned in nine chapters of the Quran: at some places in detail, at others briefly, yet at others only in passing references. But every time a fresh light is shed on the various aspects of his story. Like others, Adam's story has not been told as a piece of history: neither does it observe sequence in time or in epochs. It aims chiefly at revealing certain consequences which couched in a most eloquent expression sink into the listener's soul. Every word of the story is a treasure of meanings, it is a world in itself so much so that one can infer an unlimited number of principles and fundamentals from them. The nine chapters in which Adam has been specifically mentioned are: Al-Baqara, Al-i-Imran, Al-Maidah, Al-A'raf, Al-Isra, Al-Kahf, Maryam, Ta-Ha and Yasin.

“And when the Lord said unto the angels : Lo : I am about to place a viceroy in the earth, they said : Wilt Thou place therein one who will do harm therein and will shed blood, while we hymn thy praise and sanctify Thee? He said: surely I know that which ye know not.

And He taught Adam all the names, then showed them to the angels, saying: Inform me of the names of these, if you are truthful. He said: O Adam! Inform them of their names and when he had informed them of their names, He said: Did I not tell you that I know the secret of the heavens and the earth? And I know that which ye disclose and which ye hide.

And when we said unto angels: Prostrate yourselves before Adam, they fell prostrate, all save Iblis. He demurred through pride, and so became a disbeliever.

And we said: O Adam! Dwell thou and thy wife in the Garden, and eat ye freely (of the fruits) thereof where ye will; but come not nigh this tree lest ye become a disbeliever.

But Satan caused them to deflect therefrom and expelled them from the (happy) state in which they were, and We said: Fall down, one of you a foe unto the other! there shall be for you on earth a habitation and provision for a time.

Then Adam received from his Lord words (of revelation) and He relented toward him. Lo! He is the Relenting, the Merciful. We said: Go down, all of you, from hence; but verily there cometh unto you from Me a guidance; and whose followeth My guidance there shall no fear come upon them neither shall they grieve.

But they who disbelieve, and deny Our revelations, such are rightful owners of the Fire. They will abide therein." (ii: 30-39)

Adam—the meaning of the word

It is controversial whether Adam is an Arabic word. According to Zamakhshri's *Tafsīr Kashshaf*, Adam is a non-Arabic word and has occurred in the Quran like Azar in the form of Fa'al. Abu Ishaq Tha'labi says; In Hebrew Adam means 'the earth' and since the father of man was moulded out of clay, he was called Adam. But most commentators say that it is an Arabic name. According to them, Adam having been created out of "Adeem-ul-Aradah (the earth's skin)", he was known as such. Ibn Jarir has quoted a Prophet's saying on the authority of Abu Musa Ash'ari: "God collected a handful of dust from the entire earth and created Adam out of it. That's why Adam's progeny has divergent colours; some are brown, others are swarthy or white."

Ibn Jarir has also quoted another tradition narrated by Ibn Abbas. "Since Adam was created out of the earth's skin, he was called Adam." Some maintain that he was called Adam owing to his skin being brown. Imam Raghīb, too, is of the same opinion. Among the most famous commentators, Mujahid

Tabii says: "Ibn Abbas thinks the word is derived from 'udmatun', which means 'wheatish.'

According to some etymologists, the word has been derived from 'admatun' on the form Af'alun—which means 'worthy of emulation'. In short, there have been, among the scholars of Islam, elaborate discussions on this word. But none of the scholars has ever maintained that Adam was no particular man and that he, as certain modern quarters say, stood metaphorically for the whole of mankind. Surprisingly enough, these men skip over the Quranic verse in which Adam's creation has been likened to Jesus Christ's,

"The similitude of Jesus
Before God is that of Adam
He created him from Dust
Then he said unto him:
Be ! and he is. (iii : 59)

If Adam had stood for the entire human race—as modern thinkers tend to interpret—then this verse would have meant 'the similitude of Jesus is that of the human race'. But the context indicates that the purpose of this verse was to refute the Christian doctrine of Trinity and 'sonhood' of Jesus. The Christians were told not to regard Jesus as the son of God merely for the reason that he was born without a human father: Adam, too, before him, had no father. Therefore, despite this distinction, Jesus was just a "favoured slave of ours."

The Quran at another place says: "Lo! Allah preferred Adam and Noah and the Family of Abraham and the Family of Imran above (all His) creatures. (iii : 33)

Was Adam a Prophet?

The ouster of Adam from the Garden as mentioned in the story has raised a doubt in some minds whether Adam was a prophet. They say that the error which Adam committed does not go with the sanctity of prophethood. We shall deal with Adam's "guilt" later at an appropriate place. This much may, however, be kept in mind that Adam, at a number of places in the Quran and the Traditions,

has clearly been mentioned not only as a prophet but as an Apostle also. We have added the word apostle because prophecy means to be a recipient of inspiration only. An apostle, on the other hand, is one who is the bearer of a Shariah. So far as the divine revelation is concerned Adam, as testified by the above verse, was a recipient of inspiration. But when the verse is looked into more observantly, it shows that Adam was an Apostle, who had also a shariah of his own.

What constitutes the basis of a Shariah It is:

- (a) Ordering the people to do the right,
and
- (b) Prohibiting them from doing the wrong.

These verses show that when Adam was ordered to get down to the earth, God Almighty told him:

“Get ye down all from here
And if, as is sure there come to you
Guidance from me, whosoever
Follows My Guidance on them
Shall have no fear, nor
Shall they grieve. (ii: 38-39)

The portion of the verse ‘whosoever follows my guidance’ encompasses all exhortations to good deeds. Likewise, a warning against evil deeds is contained in the second part of this verse. ‘But they who disbelieve, and deny Our revelations, such are rightful owners of the Fire. They will abide therein. (ii-39)

The writer of *Al-Bidaya Wa Al-Nihaya* has, on the authority of Muhammad Ibn Hibban, quoted a tradition narrated by Abu Zar Ghifari:

“I asked; O, Apostle of Allah how many prophets were sent to the world. He replied; One hundred twenty four thousand. Again I asked; How many Rasuls (Apostles)? He replied 313. I asked: Who was the first among them? The Prophet said: Adam. I again said; Was he a messenger with a mission? He replied: “Yes Allah shaped him with His own

hands and blew into him part of His soul and then beautified him.”

Ibn Al-Kathir also has quoted the following tradition by Hazrat Abu Zar.

“I asked the Messenger of Allah whether Adam was a prophet.” He said: “Yes a prophet and a messenger. God also talked to him face to face.”

In another tradition the narrator says that he himself had heard Abu Imama saying that a person asked the holy Messenger whether Adam was a prophet, to which he replied: “Yes he was a prophet and one with whom God talked.”

Ibn Taimiyya's View

Here Ibn Taimiyya's conclusion are worth mentioning. In his famous work '*An-Nabbuwat*' he has discussed exhaustively the difference between a *Nabi* (prophet) and a *Rasul* (apostle). He has also named the earliest Apostles. According to him, a *Nabi* is one who is divinely informed about secrets. So long as he acts upon that knowledge—being under no obligation to diffuse that knowledge among men—he remains a prophet. He may follow an earlier Shariah. But the moment he is charged with the office of disseminating that message among the disbelievers, he becomes an Apostle.

Ibn Taimiyya says that those prophets who were raised during the interregnum between Adam and Noah were just *Nabis*, not *Rasuls*. During this whole period their main task was to act upon the prevalent Shariah and exhort others to do so. By the time Noah arrived, disbelief had struck dangerous roots. He was, therefore, ordered to uproot it. And thus he was the first *Rasul*.

Anyhow this was a subsidiary discussion. The primary aim was to prove that Adam's prophethood had always been a settled point. And if an attempt is underway in some quarters to make it a disputable point, it is based on ignorance and lack of capacity to see things in their true perspective. What is strange about this theory

is that while, on the one hand, attempts are being made to prove that Zul-Kafal was Gautama and he, alongwith Krishna, was a prophet—though no Quranic verse upholds this supposition—there is, on the other hand, a calculated attempt to cast doubts on Adam, although the Quran mentions him as a *nabi* alongwith others.

The Theory of Evolution and Adam's Creation

The Quran while narrating the genesis of the First Man says in plain words that his heart gleamed with the celestial light of Tauhid—unity of God. He was not born as an ignorant brute whose offsprings succeeded in arriving at the present concepts of God and religion after centuries of experimentation. The Quran asserts that humanity started its journey under the full light of heavenly guidance. It says:

“Mankind were one community, and Allah sent (unto them) Prophets as bearers of good tidings and as warners, and revealed therewith the Scripture with the truth that it might judge between mankind concerning that wherein they differed.”
(ii: 213)

In other words, the beginning of mankind was not tainted with idolatry. They were a united people. Disunity and fissures among them were the curse of the later days. It was precisely for the obliteration of this curse that God sent the prophets. Till some time ago, some European scholars thought that religion started as a set of vague beliefs in mythological deities. But now after modern researches they have come round to the belief that monotheism was man's earliest religion. A famous British scholar, Sir Charles Marston in his book “*The Bible is True*,” says: “The original religion of the early races was actually monotheism or some thing very like it.” Further he says: “The theory of the evolution of religion is contradicted by the evidence of both archaeology and anthropology.”

Lingdon writes: “In my opinion the history of the oldest religion of man is a rapid decline from monotheism to extreme polytheism.”

While describing the creation of Adam, God Almighty has cut the root of the evolution concept originated by Darwin. The Qurān has said plainly that human life came into existence as a result of God's blowing His spirit into man's model. The spirit is a divine power whose true nature we are unable to comprehend. The moment it flees the body, there and then occurs death.

The Quran says: "And remember when thy Lord said unto the angels: Lo! I am creating a mortal out of potter's clay of blackmud altered. So when I have made him and have breathed into him My spirit, do ye fall down prostrating yourselves unto him". (Al-Hijr: 28-29)

Unfortunately an inclination is growing in strength among some scholars to twist the Quranic verses so as to fit into modern hypotheses, though nobody can predict what transformation these notions themselves would suffer during the next few years.

Surprisingly enough, scholars like Mufti Muhammad Abduhu have not remained immune from this tendency. Commenting on the verse the Mufti mentions evolution and says: "Thus the quintessence of clay is that basic material which in the modern language of science is called '*Bazurto blasma*.'" (Remember this is the Arabicised 'Protoplasm.') This view of life is out and out materialistic. According to this, men's life and death are not different from the life and death of plants and thus God—who is the ultimate cause of all events—has nothing to do with man's life and death. The Quran, too, believes in history's process of evolution. But according to it, evolution does not take place in the basic demands of man's nature: it occurs only in his resources. For instance, food and shelter are man's fundamental necessities. He cannot outgrow them. So, he would continue to devise new ways and means to multiply and exploit the food resources. Even in the story of Adam and Iblis we notice that the first man had to sew together, for his covering, leaves from the Garden. But so far as his creation or beliefs are concerned, no vestige of evolution is discernible anywhere. The father of man *i.e.* Adam was created on the best of models and with the best of beliefs *i.e.* monotheism.

drawn a distinction between Malak and Malaika. He says, : "Malaika means the generality of the angels and malak is a particular angel who discharges a specific duty. The Quran terms the latter category as "muddaberat." The angels are formed of light. They neither err nor commit sin. They are constituted so. Their sole occupation is to sing the hymns of Allah. They are free from baser appetites. Wrong beliefs about gods and goddesses have stemmed from the distorted notion of God's unshared authority. People believed that God had placed His domains under the authority of various angels who run the administration of their respective provinces under His command. The Quran has repeatedly contradicted this theory. It tells that the angels are not God's daughters nor are they benefactors in their own right. They are the beings, who flinch not (from executing) the commands they receive from God. But do (precisely) what they are commanded to do."

As to their numbers, the Quran declares that "none can know the forces of thy Lord except He".

Their attributes have been reported in the traditions. And those who want to know details should refer to the chapter on the angels in Ibn Al-Kathir's "*Al-Bidaya Wa Al-Nihaya*."

The Philosopher's point of view

Almost the entire Ummat from the beginning agrees on these beliefs. There was hardly anybody in Islam (except a group of philosophers) who indulged in such poetic fancies with respect to the angels as do some of our modern thinkers. The pseudo-philosophers when their minds were captivated by philosophy and rationalism advanced not only grotesque interpretations about the Quran and the nature of revelation but started theorising about the angels as well. They said the angels are an 'outpouring' of the operative reason. Farabi who is regarded as the leader of Muslims philosophers holds the view that the "angles are intellectual figures whose essence is the divine knowledge. They are not like tablets on which are engrossed some images? Neither are they like hearts in which are treasured certain sciences. They are, on the contrary, those sciences which exist in their own right. They oversee the higher affairs—the affairs which get imprinted upon their being.

Nonetheless they are absolute and single. But the Holy Spirit communicates to them while they are awake and the human spirit enjoys their company, while it is in sleep."

If this piece of writing has led you nowhere you may take the help of Ibn Taimiyah's explanatory note. He says: "These people believe that the angels, in reality, are those enlightened thoughts which a soul yearning for prophethood gives birth to in his heart. And God's word is that voice which a prophet hears in the depth of his heart as does a sleeping person see things in a dream."

In the days of Aurangzeb, a saint was known to be holding a belief somewhat similar to this. Since he was dead by the time the emperor called for the list of his disciples, the person occupying his gaddi was summoned to the royal court and commanded to consign every bit of his writings to fire. In the recent past, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan held similar views. In his *Tafseer-i-Ahmadi*, he writes:

"There is no messenger between God and a prophet except the prophetic faculty which is *Namus-i-Akbar* or Gabriel. The prophet's heart itself is that messenger who carries the messages from God Almighty to him and *vice versa*. He himself is that personified identity from which emerges the sound of God's voice. He himself is the ear which hears the voice of God—a voice which is neither couched in words nor is borne away by sound. Revelation gushes forth from his heart like a fountain and descends again upon it. It casts its reflection on his heart and he calls it a revelation. Nobody makes him speak, it is he who speaks."

Descent of the angels upon non-Prophets

There arose another discussion among the learned. Do the angels, talk to the people of proven piety also? And if they do how does their descent upon them differ from the descent upon the prophets?

The Quran says: "Lo those who say, our Lord is Allah and afterwards are upright, angels descend upon them." (xli: 30)

In fact, this verse alone is enough to illustrate the point, because the prophets have not been mentioned as the exclusive personages upon whom the angels descend. Some commentators say that the descent of angels in this context means the conferment of God's mercy and blessing. His invisible forces come to the aid of the pious. Whether this verse lends itself to this interpretation is for the learned to decide. But even if we accept this explanation for a while, we would like to submit that this verse alone was not intended to be the deciding factor.

At another place, the descent of angels on non-prophets has been explicitly stated.

Behold! the angels said:
"O Marry! God hath chosen thee
And purified thee—chosen thee
Above the women of all nations". (iii : 42)

This verse from Aal-i-Imran clearly proves that the angels talked to Mary although she was neither a prophet nor an apostle, for it is settled that no woman could ever be a prophet.

Vicegerency of Adam

THE present discussion began with the verse wherein God had unfolded his plan to the angels to create a viceroy in the earth. What does the word viceroy mean?

According to Ibn Jarir "when a man acts on someone else's behalf, he is said to be his viceroy." In support of this Ibn Jarir has quoted the following Quranic verse:

"Then we made you heirs
In the land after them.
To see how ye would behave!" (x : 14)

Imam Raghīb's *Mufredat* defines 'vicegerency as deputising for someone else, whether this is necessitated by the absence, death or incapacitation of the latter or whether it is meant to enhance the dignity of the deputy."

It is obvious that when God decided to appoint Adam as his viceroy it was not owing to God's non-presence or death or incapacitation. Its purpose could be none else but to glorify Adam. What an elevation! A handful of dust was raised to the high office of deputising the Creator himself: it was vicegerency not only in the affairs of Shariah, but in the matter of creation also! The people today marvel at man's conquest of nature. This tiny, little creature is shooting rockets into the space and is thinking of establishing colonies on the planets. But this is hardly a thing to wonder about. When God had appointed Adam as His viceroy in the sphere of creation also, such discoveries were bound to result. We have yet to see may more—far more astonishing, though not unexpected.

Why was man made vicegerent?

It should be known that before the emergence of man, God's creation comprised the Jinns and the angels. According to some traditions it was the jinns who first held viceroyalty. They were created out of fire, while the angels were formed of light. Thus both the species were rarefied beings. Having being created out of "smokeless fire," the jinns needed no dwelling places. Neither did they require multifarious devices to defend themselves. In short, though they did enjoy the bounties of nature, yet they did it in an incomplete and faulty way. Similarly, the angels needed no spouses. They had to procreate none. They are free from the sexual urge and hunger. 'They do not eat' (Fathul Bari—vol. 6, 217).

The creator wanted to confer vicegerency on a species which needed all the necessities of life and since necessity is the mother of invention, that species was bound to exploit the potentialities of the earth.

There is a Prophet's saying:

"I was a sealed treasure. When I wished to be discovered I brought into being the whole creation."

Man has been created out of four elements: earth, water, air and fire. What is amazing about these elements is that they are mutually hostile. It is nature's law that all opposing forces strive to neutralise each other. This perpetual hostility among the elements foments unrest and corruption. The angels' fear on the eve of man's creation that he would spill blood on the earth and corrupt it sprang from the gloomy prospect of an interplay of these conflicting forces.

But, in reality, these human powers which are now being made use of as engines of destruction when harnessed to constructive purposes, can raise man to a position higher than that of the jinns or the angels. Seen analytically, two potentialities are stridently conspicuous in man's nature: Passion and anger. Sex is that urge which instigates an evil man to indulge in acts of loose morality and in the pleasures of the flesh. Similarly, anger leads man and races to wars and even to global conflagrations in which victors persecute

and humiliate the vanquished. Superficially, these two potentialities seem to be the bane of human race. But on closer examination one finds that when properly oriented they constitute the basis of man's glory as the quintessence of God's creation. A true believer when he harnesses the passion in him and elevates it into love for God believing Him to be the master of all that exists in the heavens and on the earth, attains such spiritual heights which no angel can ever dream of. The angels are deprived of that power from which rises the eternal spring of love. They have been denied the relish of that consuming love which makes a lover wail on lonely nights. The pangs of love have fallen exclusively to man's share. Iqbal says:

“Tell Gabriel ! it is true
Of no celestial form are we.
But yet look at the fire
Of love we
The creatures of clay
Are burning in.
Those born of light
Have been denied
The delicious pangs of separation.”

The same is the case with anger. When a believer utilises the energy raised by this state of mind in the service of Islam, he fights with the enemies of Allah and if there arises a need for laying down his life in the encounter, he does so unflinchingly.

Now look at this problem from another angle. There is no limit to God's attributes. The ninety-nine attributes mentioned in the traditions are not an arithmetical sum, exactly “one less than hundred”. It is, in fact, a way of saying “innumerable”. Otherwise, how could a finite mind comprehend an infinite personality. These attributes are known to the angels also, for they recite them night and day without intermission. But the truth remains that unless one goes through an experience one cannot have a taste of it. Two of the divine attributes are *Muhyyi* and *Mumeet*. One who gives life and one who takes away life. The way the human beings experience life and death is totally unknown to the angels, for they only watch the sea of mortality from its shores. Similarly, they know that God gives health to the diseased. But unless someone

falls ill, how can he have a genuine taste of God's mercy in the shape of recovery? The famous Urdu poet Mir Taqi Mir was true when he said:

“This handful of dust has polished the mirror of creation
The mirror was there, no doubt,
But it was not so refined as to be worth looking into.”

The Angels' Enquiry

When God wished to invest Adam with the robes of vicegerency, He said to the angels: “I am about to place a viceroy in the earth”. They knew that Adam was being invested with the power of taking decisions. So they apprehended that he would “do harm therein and shed blood.”

The way the angels behaved was not that of criticism, for criticism is contrary to their nature. In fact, this was a subtle way of advancing their own claim to the high office which was being conferred upon man. They were pleading with the Lord that since they “hymn His praise and sanctify Him” they might prove a better viceroy than the proposed incumbent. After this supplicatory questioning, it became imperative that God Almighty established the superiority of His viceroy over others. He, therefore, replied to this query in two ways: one was authoritative, the other philosophical. Exercising His authority, He said something amounting to this: “Surely I know that which ye know not” *i.e.* “You cannot fathom the wisdom of my actions. Your job lies only in complete submission. You need not worry about the sagacity of my orders”.

The Science of Names

Alongwith this show of authority, God out of His infinite mercy, showed a glimpse of the heights on which Adam stood. The Quran says: “He taught Adam all the names.”

What were those names? There is a difference of opinion among the scholars. Some say the names denoted all the things with which Adam had to deal during his worldly sojourn. Others say that these were the names of the angels.

Abdullah bin Jafar reports from his father and the latter from Rabia that the Quranic verse on the subject meant 'the names of the angels'. Some scholars belonging to the later generation said that these were the names of the prophets and the Apostles who were to appear among generations yet unborn. This was a device to impress upon the angels that the person whom they belittled so much was going to be the progenitor of a long line of those holy men to whom they would feel honoured to carry God's messages.

The viewpoint that the "names" encompassed all the worldly belongings was, according to some, open to an objection; namely the Quran has used the word "*Arzeahum*"—a pronoun which is used for animate objects. It, therefore, cannot be construed to mean inanimate 'objects'.

But, Ibn Al-Kathir has set aside this objection. He says that where animate and inanimate objects are to be collectively covered, the pronoun for animate objects can be used. Moreover, when Adam was to be sent down to the earth as God's representative he was expected to know the names and the nature of things he was to deal with. In the correct knowledge of the things lay his authority as well as glory. If a monarch remains ignorant of his domain, how can he exercise authority effectively?

According to the Quran, when these articles were presented to the angels, they were found wanting in the knowledge of their nature. At this stage, Adam was asked to name them, and when he carried out the command as assuredly as he was expected to do the angels exclaimed:

"Praise be unto thee, we have no knowledge but what thou teachest us, for thou art knowing and wise."

This part of the story of Adam and Satan yields multifarious conclusions:

First, the creatures who are busy discharging their own duties (such as angels) are not to be worshipped. They are themselves obedient servants of God. In knowledge, they know only what is divulged to them: in action, they cannot go beyond the limits of their assignments.

Secondly, it is utter foolishness to reject the commandments of Shariah on the basis of inadequate knowledge. One should believe that there is a profound wisdom behind every order. If we fail to perceive that wisdom, the fault lies with our vision.

Thirdly, The precedence which man enjoys over the angels is attributable to his better knowledge.

Iqbal says:

These celestial beings
Know naught
Except to run on errands
But how majestic is
This Handful of Dust !
With what ease
He carries all the heavens
Beneath his arms.

Roumi's praise of man is still more edifying. Says he:

'The Master of the Science of Names'
Adam: the Father of Man
In his very veins run
Sciences myriad
From whose eyes,
Scanning the universe through Divine light,
No secret remained obscure.
Before whom the Angels
In reverence made a bow
Sensing in his gaze
The Divine glow.

Prostration

When God had demonstrated His viceroy's intellectual superiority over the angels, He ordered them to prostrate themselves before him.

"And behold we said to the angels:
Bow down to Adam, and they bowed down".

Whom among the angels was this order addressed to? Did it apply to all the angels or only to those who run the affairs of the

earth? The doctors differ over this point? Some say the order was addressed only to those angels who are in charge of the earthly affairs. But the majority believe that it was a universal order. Carefully seen, the latter view seems to be more correct. If the audience had been limited to the angels of the earth alone the Quran would have certainly made the distinction.

Prostrations: what it really means

What does the word 'prostration' mean? What is its true sense? The commentators, for the most part, have presented three views. Some take it literally. Literally, 'sajda' means "to bow down, to be lowly, to do adoration to any object." The writer of the "*Tafseer-i-Mazhari*" says: "In fact, it is a posture of humbleness."

In Imam Raghib's opinion, 'sajda' is to place one's forehead on the ground in utter humility.'

According to this class of scholars the Quran has used this word for the trees as well as the stones. It does not, therefore, necessarily mean the physical placing of the forehead on the ground.

The Quran says: "Don't you see that all that is in the heavens and on the earth prostrate before Him."

الْحَرَّتْ رَأَىٰ اللَّهُ يَسْجُدُ لَهُ مَن فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَن فِي الْأَرْضِ

The order which the Sons of Isreel received on entry into Palestine after victory, was to "enter the Gate with (prostrating) humility".

وَأَدْخُلُوا أَبْوََابَ سُبْحَانَ

Great commentators like Abdullah Ibn Abbas and Imam Razi regard *Sajda* as synonymous with humility, submission, humbleness and meekness.

Like *Sajda*, the Quran has used *Tasbeeh* (chanting of God's glory) both for the animate and inanimate objects.

“Whatever is in the heavens or on the earth glorifies Him”.

Here, too, ‘*Tasbeeh*’ does not necessarily mean the uttering of some formula as the human beings do. What is meant, in fact, is sanctifying God and celebrating His praise through their speechless submission to His supreme authority. These and similar other arguments led the doctors to believe that what God commended the angels to do was not to throw themselves in prostration as we do in prayer. They were ordered only to bow before Adam. The physical touching of the ground with forehead and hands was not meant.

Sajda-i-Tazeemi

Some scholars think that it was a physical prostration, no doubt, but was of a different character. It was deferential prostration, which was permissible under earlier Shari’ahs. When Jacob, as described in the Quran, entered Egypt along with his sons to meet Joseph “they fell down in prostration (all) before him.” Commentators are of the view that prostration here meant a “deferential bowing”—an act that was permissible among earlier shari’ahs, but which now, under the present Shari’ah, stands abrogated.

In Tirmizi and Abu Dawood, a tradition has been reported under the title ‘*nikah*’ which carries almost the same sense.

Another View

Some commentators hold that though the angels did bow before Adam, their obeisance in actuality was directed to an higher object. It was done to God Almighty Himself, from whom the command came: Adam only served as Qibla, precisely as the Kaaba does. Prayer is not addressed to that stony structure: it is addressed to the Master of the House. This interpretation gives rise to the question: whether adverbial “*lam*” in *Le-Adama* can be used in the meaning of ‘*ila*’ (to) and whether instances are available in the Quran or the Arabic literature establishing the permissibility of this use? The commentators who think it is permissible have quoted many examples in support of their contention. The author of *Tafseer-i-Mazhari* has quoted Hassan bin Thabit’s verse in which he praises Hazrat Abu Bakr by saying “Is he not the first

Muslim who turned his face to Kaaba in prayer and is he not better versed in the knowledge of Quran and Sunnah than the rest?

اليس اّول من صلى لقبلكم واعرف الناس بالقران والسنن -

In the first stitch, 'le' has quite plainly been used in the meaning of 'ila'. In the Quran itself, 'lam' has been used to mean 'ind',

عند as in

اقم الصلوة اذ زوال الشمس

“Establish regular prayers
At the Sun's decline
Till the darkness of the night.”

On the basis of similar instances the scholars have proved that God's order to the angels was not intended to confer the title of godhood on Adam and to make him an object of worship. It only gave him the status of the *qibla* enhancing thereby his dignity.

Whichever argument be the weightiest of the three, there should be no hesitation in accepting that God Almighty directed the angels to co-operate with (rather follow) man in the discharge of his duties as the viceroy of God.

This high office pre-supposed man's control over Nature. He was supposed to be the master of all the winds, water, Jinns, birds that float in the air and the beasts that roam over the pastures. And since the prophets are the noblest models to represent God, their actions were expected to reflect fully God's authority. Man has all the capabilities of acting as the lord paramount in the earth provided the angels in charge of various departments render him full service. The holy Prophet tells us that God has placed the management of the universe under the charge of various angels. The order to do homage to Adam was aimed at establishing his supremacy. The angels were told not to be disloyal to him in any case, whether he fulfilled the demands of vicegerency or did not, whether he wielded his authority equitably or transgressed his limits, they were not to falter in their allegiance to him. So long as God Almighty was pleased to keep him in that office, they were to co-operate with him.

Iblis's Refusal

The Quran has also related the story of Iblis's refusal to carry out the Lord's command.

And behold, we said to the angels:
"Bow down to Adam" and they bowed down:
Not so Iblis: he refused and was haughty.
He was of those who reject Faith.

This verse has given rise to a number of questions in many minds:

- (a) What is meant by Iblis?
- (b) Is it a proper name?
- (c) To what species did he belong?
- (d) Was he included among those who were ordered to bow down to Adam?

The verse indicates that it was merely the angels who were ordered to prostrate.

Grammatically Iblis being a verbal noun in the form of 'Ifil' Its root is Iblas which means utter want of hope. Abu Jafar Tabari thinks that "Iblis is despaired of good for the shame and grief which he brought upon himself."

The Quran, too, has used this word in the same meaning.

The day the Balance (of Justice) will be set up, the evil doers will be utterly devoid of hope.

The Quran, at some places, has used the word Shaitan for Iblis. Shaitan, literally means "to be away". Since Iblis is far removed from God's mercy, he is called Ash-Shaitan. Some scholars think that the word is coined in the *Filan* form and its root is *shat*—which means 'to burn', and 'to die'. Since Iblis is perpetually burning in the fire of jealousy in this world and will be consigned to eternal flames in the next, he is called Shaitan. The difference between the two usages of this word is that while Iblis denotes the archshaitan, shaitan, ordinarily, is applicable to anyone from amongst the men or the jinns who, puffed up with pride, defies God's orders. The Holy Quran says:

"And thus have we, appointed unto every prophet an adversary—devils of humankind and Jinn" (vil : 13).

In their anxiety to "rationalise" the Quranic account of Iblis's wicked activities, some intellectuals have tried to interpret them as the promptings of the soul prone to evil. They do not recognise any external agent like Iblis or Shaitan.

In the chapter 'Ibrahim', the Quran describes the Shaitan's address to the dwellers of the Hell: "And when the matter ended, Shaitan said: 'God had given you a true promise, but you defied it.'

"I had no authority over you,
Except to call you, but ye
Listened to me: then reproach not me but
Reproach your own souls."

This verse indicates that apart from man's own reproaching soul, there is an external agency as well upon which man tends to fasten the blame for his waywardness and which, in her own defence, is constantly reminding him that he was free in his actions. That agency proclaims: "You were a responsible creation. You succumbed to my promptings of your own free will. Why are you now blaming me for your sins?"

If 'Shaitan' had been only one's own reproaching soul, how could such a dialogue occur? Obviously, there is something other than the power of Evil which incites man to mischief and whose alluring call weans him away from the path of righteousness.

Who was Iblis?

To which species Iblis belonged. Was he an angel or man or some other creation? Though many amongst the earlier scholars thought that he was one of the angels, nonetheless, the ummat, in general, believed that he was neither a man nor an angel: he belonged to a separate species whom the Quran names as Jinns.

Jinn is a derivative of 'Jinnun'—which means "concealed". Since this creation remains invisible, it is called 'Jinn'. The scholars who regard Iblis as an angel base their argument on his "invisibility". According to them the angels too, being invisible could possibly be called Jinns. This line of argument is not acceptable because in that case the angels will prove to be a creation

liable to commit evil. This conclusion runs counter to the Quranic verse.

“They never disobey God. They do whatever they are directed to do.”

The Reality of Jinns

Among the earlier scholars this was the only point at difference. Nobody doubted their existence. But the later scholars swept by a wave of rationalisation totally rejected the creation of jinns. Initially, it was Nizam, a Mutazelite who refused to believe in the existence of the Jinns. In India, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and his colleagues discussed the Jinns in their works. One of Sir Syed's co-worker, Maulvi Chiragh Ali—a scholar of repute and a modernist—has simply let himself go in his famous book, *Tahqiqe-i-Jehad*, while putting an interpretation on the meeting of a deputation of the Jinns with the holy Prophet. He says the deputationists were just a band of the bedouins who embraced Islam at Nakhla. But on what authority does this scholar surmise so? He did not even feel obliged to quote any verse or any historical evidence. Next to Sir Syed, are Mirza Ghulam Ahmed of Qadian and the writers of his party who hold similar views. For instance, Maulvi Muhammad Ali in his book '*Bayanul Quran*', says: “Jinns are the human beings. Since they were the dwellers of the desert, they remained hidden from the gaze of the civilised Arabs.” Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmood has gone a step further and has propounded the theory that the Jinns in reality were the cavemen. So long as men lived in the caves, they were known as Jinns. When they emerged from the caves, they came to be called ‘men’. Expressing similar views, Mr. G. A. Parvez says: “Jinns were the savage tribesmen who lived in the desert and were physically more powerful than the dwellers of the cities. They were a well-built race.”

By now you must have seen how far the people have gone in their zest for something unique. Each of them has theorised on the Jinns according to his own fancy; and instead of bringing about a unity of thought he has thrown the people into confusion. Nobody from amongst them seems to have felt the necessity of casting a glance over the holy Quran, the Traditions and the research done by earlier

scholars. Actually these interpretations are no less open to that sort of criticism which Mirza Ghulam Ahmad had levelled against Sir Syed *i.e.*, the interpretation which was neither in the mind of God nor His Apostles nor saints or sages, nor was there any implicit or explicit reference to it in the Quran some how or the other took its birth in Syed Sahib's mind."

The Quran and the Jinns

But the Quran says that the human beings and the jinns are two separate species. For instance there occurs in the Quran:

"I have only created Jinns and men, that
They may serve Me." (51-56)

and

"He created man from sounding clay
Like unto pottery
And he created Jinns from fire free of smoke". (55-14)

The Quran has even said that:

"We created man from sounding clay
From mud moulded into shape:
And the Jinn race, we had
Created before from the fire
of a scorching wind." (15-26, 27)

The Quran says that the Arabs "had made the jinns co-partners with God" and worshipped them. Were the Arabs so dense (as Mr. Parvez and Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmood maintain) as to elevate the wild folks of the desert and the dwellers of the caves to the status of deities? Is there any instance in history where civilized human beings have sung hymns to savages? Turning the argument the other way round, we may well ask: "Is the invisibility of an object a proof of its non-existence? If you believe it is, then mind you, a very noble concept *i.e.* faith in the Unseen, would be hit directly. Who has proved empirically the existence of God, angels, paradise or the hell? But can anybody in his senses assert that he would believe in none of these unless he saw them in a tangible shape. Leave aside the faith in the Unseen. Would you reject the force of

gravity or the pull of a magnate, simply for the reason that you cannot see the pull? We do not believe that any of these celebrities would like to take that ludicrous position. But strangely enough they do assume this position with regard to the jinns and fail to realise that they thereby adopt only a one-sided posture.

Our submission is: "How can we assume that the jinns cannot be seen when sufficient testimony is available to the fact that they have been seen by many. Not only that, many have taken service out of them. One may disagree with Imam Ibn Taimyya's theories. But as a man his character was irreproachable. Even his adversaries admit that he was a straightforward scholar who kept his writings clean and pure. In his famous work '*An-Nabuwwat*', the Imam writes that whosoever attains mastery over the Jinns, is flown on their backs to distant places. It was a common phenomenon, which he had himself witnessed. He says that many jinns who had succeeded in insinuating themselves into his disciples' company were given a severe beating by him. They took to their heels never to return.

At another place, the Imam writes, "Nobody from amongst the unbelievers or the Muslims has ever doubted the existence of the Jinns, not even the people of the Book".

In some books, one does come across the Jehmite or the Mutazalite views which are in conflict with the Imam's. But these sects, as everybody knows, are totally negligible. Their beliefs could now only be found entombed in moth-eaten books. Nobody bothers to know what dogmas they once preached. The main body of the Ummat has reposed its faith in the Traditions and the writings of the doctors of fiqh. A glance over the discussions on this issue astonishes one as to the immensity of their sway. Not only have these doctors proved the existence of the Jinns but have also discussed various relationships that exist or are possible between the two species. The author of *Akam-ul-Marjan*, Allama Qazi Badruddin, in his famous book "*Fi Bayane Munakahat-ul-jinn*" writes: "In this chapter have been discussed the conjugal ties between men and the jinns. The problem will be viewed from two angles:

- (a) Whether it is possible to have such a relationship; and
- (b) What view the Shariah takes in the matter?

So far as the first is concerned, it is quite possible that "a man took a she-jinn into matrimony or *vice versa*."

The learned author then proceeds with the refutation of the impossibility of such a relationship. He quotes many instances in support of his arguments. From the point of view of fiqh, he says, the Prophet (peace be upon him) had forbidden to establish such ties. Among the Tab'ins many regarded this as 'undesirable.'

The matter did not rest at that. Our doctors have also discussed whether the deeds of the jinns would be duly rewarded or punished. Those who have participated in this discussion include Imam Abu Hanifa, Ibn Abi Laila, Imam Muhammad, Imam Shafii, Imam Ahmad bin Hambal and Ibn Hazm.

The learned among the Tabins have also discussed whether prayer led by a jinn is permissible. In the books of Fiqh, there are long discussions on the jinns. A few of the topics mentioned above indicate that our ancestors did not only believe in the jinns but knew much about their activities. If one adopts the view of the modern writers that jinns were savage denizens of the desert or brute cavemen, then it would amount to believing that nobody during the intervening 14 centuries had truly grasped the meanings of the Holy Book and it was for the first time that the true Quranic light was illuminating the illustrious hearts of some of the modern commentators. If we accept this supposition, will not the Quran then, be reduced to an "enigma wrapped in a mystery"? And can anybody accept with a reasonable amount of equanimity the beliefs that have been handed down to us from generation to generation since the days of the Prophet?

Of all the references to the jinns in the Quran, one is of particular significance:

"Those who devour usury
Will not stand except
As stands one whom
The Evil one by his touch
Has driven to madness. (ii : 275)

Some commentators say that since the Arabs believed that insanity was the result of being possessed by a jinn, so the Quran, while describing the mentality of the devourer of usury has repeated the common belief. The intention was to paint a horrid picture. But we do not, on various grounds, think that the above interpretation is correct.

First, the Quran may have kept the pagan belief in view while comparing the condition of the consumer of usury with that of the insane or epileptic. But nowhere has the Quran in this context negated this belief. So its restatement by the Quran is the most potent proof of its correctness.

Secondly, if this had been only a pagan belief then the Quran would have categorically rejected it, for it was the primary object of the Book of God to overthrow all unfounded assumptions. It was never expected to adopt a notion or use an expression that strengthened superstitious conceptions.

Thirdly, while making this statement, nowhere has the Quran hinted that it was repeating a pagan belief.

Fourthly, the study of the Quran reveals that it was not the Arabs alone who believed that the touch of Shaitan brought illness and calamity. Some of the earlier prophets, too, considered it to be so. Prophet Job (Ayub) says: "The Evil one has afflicted me with distress and suffering."

Fifthly, prominent commentators while interpreting this verse have reaffirmed this belief. Qazi Sanaullah of Panipat in his *Tafseer-i-Mazhari* says: "The mental ailment is the result of the Shaitan's touch. So is epilepsy. It needs no proof for it is affirmed by the Book and the Tradition".

Imam Ahmad bin Hambal's son says that once he said to his father that some people believed that no Jinn could possess a human being. The Imam said: "O son, they utter a lie".

Abul Hasan al-Ash'ari while dealing with the beliefs of the Sunnis has said that according to them, a Jinn enters the body of the

epileptic as Allah says in the Quran: "Those who devour usury".
—Abu Daud has narrated a Tradition that a woman brought her child to the Prophet saying that the child had become insane. The Prophet touched the chest of the child and said: "O you enemy of God, get out. I am Allah's Apostle".

That the Jinns enter the body of human beings, take possession of them and reduce them to a nonplus is so patently true that apart from arguments it is upheld by experience also. The writings of innumerable doctors of theology are full of narrations how they, with the aid of the divine word, made the Jinns flee from the bodies of the possessed.

Even in these days a very pious scholar told the present writer that his wife had been ailing for many years. She underwent spasms. No amount of treatment could cure her. At last a person well-versed in occult sciences was consulted. He told him that her ailment was a Jinn's mischief. Afterwards whenever she fell into a spasm, he recited the Quran. Slowly she began to recover and was finally delivered from the affliction. During the moments of convulsion, the Jinn very often talked to the pious man. He knew Qasida Burda by heart and could recite it nonstop, though the woman knew little about the Qasida. Once he asked the Jinn to give a proof of his existence. Suddenly a fresh and fragrant cardamom bough fell into his lap.

This is not the solitary example. One can find many more. How can one withhold one's faith in the reality of Jinns in view of these examples?

As to the question how we can remain safe from the mischief of Jinns, the Quran and the Traditions have suggested many remedies:

- (i) One should always seek God's protection, who is the Listener and the Knower. The holy Prophet frequently recited:

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

"I seek refuge in the Lord against Shaitan—the rejected".

- (ii) The frequent recitation of the last two chapters of the Quran known as 'mauzatain'.
- (iii) The recitation of the Throne verse—Aayat-ul-Kursi. (ii : 255)
- (iv) While enumerating the blessings of the second chapter of the Quran—Al-Baqara (The Cow), the Prophet (peace be upon him) once said: 'Don't turn your homes into graveyards'. The house where Al-Baqara is recited remains immune from the touch of Shaitan.
- (v) Sura Ha Meem—beginning with Al-Momin up to *Ilehil masir* إِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ alongwith the Throne Verse (ii:255). The Prophet said that whosoever recited these verses at night enjoyed God's protection till the break of the Day and whosoever recited them in the morning remained in His sanctuary till evening.
- (vi) To repeat the following formula 100 times:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ
لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

(There is no god but Allah, He is one and there is no partner unto him. All praise unto Him. His Authority encompasses all."

- (vii) Frequent recital of God's attributes.
- (viii) Ablution and prayer: The Shaitan and the Jinns are creatures of fire. Only water can quench their flames.

The Prophet once said: "The fury and passion are satanic moods and since Satan is a fiery creation, water alone can put it out. So whosoever gets a fit of rage should at once perform the ablution.

These remedies have been summarised by Shaikhul Islam Imam Ibn Taimyya in the following words:

“So far as the people of faith are concerned, they can never come under the shadow of these creatures, for the Shaitans and the Jinns run away from the place where Al-Baqara is recited. They also take to heels the moment they listen Aayatul Kursi and other verses from the Quran.”

Winding up the discussion, I would like to reiterate that I am not conversant with the art of exorcising the evil spirits. Nonetheless from the little study of the holy book and the Prophet's Traditions I have made, I gather that the only way to avoid this creation is to lead a life in perfect harmony with the dictates of the Shariah. Thus one should always seek refuge in the haven better than which none can be conceived.

The story of Solomon in the Quran is an illustration of how God Almighty had made the Jinns subservient to him. The exalted position which Solomon enjoyed cannot, of course, be everybody's luck. Nevertheless this much could be vouchsafed that even today if someone tried to shape his life on the true Islamic pattern, not only will he be safe from these petty annoyances by the Jinns, but will make the jinns change their course on seeing him coming. Imam Ibn Taimyya is of the same opinion. And here I end the discussion.

The Shaitans who carry other people's tales to their masters admit that they find no access to the counsels of those who believe in the oneness of God and are faithful and sincere. They have to be at safe distance from them.

Prostration Order to Iblis

So far as the prostration order to Iblis is concerned many people believe that it was the angels who were asked to bow before Adam. They assert that if it was so, why was Iblis condemned for not obeying the order? This objection is usually raised by those who do not keep in mind all the relevant verses. When they do not find the prostration order in Al-Baqara all manner of doubts start assailing their minds. But if all the verses pertaining to this story are kept in view, there should remain no confusion. A verse in the

chapter 'Sad' ٤٦ makes it perfectly clear that Iblis, too, was ordered to do homage to Adam.

God said, 'O Iblis! What prevents
Thee from prostrating thyself to one
Whom I have created with my hands?
Art thou haughty?
Or art thou one
Of the high 'and mighty ones'? (xxxviii : 75).

I am better than he

After this clarification, there should be no room for doubt. And even if this explanation had not been offered, the issue was not at all complicated. The angels are superior to Iblis and when a superior creation had been ordered to prostrate before Adam how could the inferior species like the Jinns claim exemption from the order? When a royal decree is addressed to a minister his subordinate staff is automatically covered by that decree. When questioned by God as to what made him defy His order, Iblis said:

"——— I am better than he.
Thou createst Me from fire, and
Him thou createst from clay". (vii : 12)

How far this argument is cogent, we shall see later. But for the present must it suffice that some of the Kharjites attach much weight to the stand taken by Iblis. The book *Al-Kamil* by Mubarrad says that according to Bashshar bin Burd the Shaitan did the right thing in not doing homage to Adam. A verse attributed to Bashshar bin Burd says:

"The clay is dark and the fire luminous. Fire has been worshipped ever since it has existed".

Hafiz Ibn Al-Qayyem has critically examined the reasons advanced by Iblis for not obeying the divine order. He has given a number of arguments rejecting the Iblis's thesis summarily.

First, fire is a destroyer and a killer. To burn is its property. Clay is free from this blemish.

Secondly, fire is a state of anger and heat; the earth, on the contrary, reflects calm and dignity.

Thirdly, it is the earth from where we seek our sustenance and also our clothes and other paraphernalia for embellishment. Fire possesses none of these utilities.

Fourthly, nobody can outgrow his dependence on earth; fire, on the contrary, is hardly needed by beasts. Sometimes even man does not need it.

Fifthly, a seed tossed into the fire is reduced to ashes; a grain thrown into the earth blooms into a charming flower or a majestic tree.

Sixthly, the Quran repeatedly recounts the utilities of the earth. A man leads his life on it and when he dies his dust mingles with it. Except in a verse or two, the fire has been mentioned throughout the Quran as an instrument of punishment.

Seventhly, innumerable worship houses (including the Ka'ba) stand on the earth. Fire enjoys no such distinction.

Eighthly, fire is the servant; the earth is its master. When it is needed it is lighted and when it has served its purpose it is put out.

You must have found this comparison interesting. But let us see how God Almighty Himself reacted to Iblis's vain pride. He said:

فَاخْرِجْ مِنْهَا فَإِنَّكَ رَاجِعٌ

“Then get thee
Out from here; for
Thou art Rejected, Accursed”.

What's this, after all? God Almighty did neither contradict Iblis's argument, nor did He offer any of His comments on his assertion and pronounced a decree straightaway. Is it, God forbid, that the Lord could not think of an argument in reply to Iblis and asserted His authority? No, that is not the case. Then what is the underlying wisdom? If you ponder over this a little you will find that it has a lesson for us. In a way we have been taught not to take note of absurdities. Where there is no will to understand things and there is an endless argumentation instead one should pay no heed to it. It has also been shown that those who, despite God's clear injunctions, rely on their own wisdom and indulge in polemic in contravention to the laws of Shariah, their intellect is that of an accursed one which deserves no respect. Maulana Rumi has said well:

“Those who understand the
Secrets of things know
That to Adam belongs
Love and to Iblis intellect”.

The Philosophy of Respite

After the proclamation of the curse, it would have been proper for Iblis to express his regrets over his mistake and proceed to make amends. Instead, his attitude of defiance stiffened and he asked for reprieve till the Day of Judgment so that he could entice people away from the path of righteousness.

“Iblis said: O may Lord!
Give me then respite
Till the Day the (dead) are raised”.

But look! once the respite had been granted what a vainglorious oath he took! He said:

“By Thy power I will
Put them all in the wrong.”

If faith in the unity of God without faith in the prophethood of His Apostles had been enough to qualify for salvation, then Iblis perhaps would have been the first person to enter paradise, because, first he refused to prostrate before anybody else than God and then even after having been turned away from the God's presence, he took an oath by His might. But what did actually happen? Once he rejected the prophethood of Adam, his lifelong devotion to God was declared worthless and he was eternally driven away from mercy.

The actual point under discussion was the grant of respite. What deserves to be noted in particular is that why was his request for reprieve conceded even after his blatant challenge to God.

One aspect of this episode highlights God Almighty's unlimited tolerance and magnanimity. Even we mortals would not just like to throw out a life-long servant who, after dismissal for gross impudence, asks for some more time to stay on. Such a ruthless attitude would offend against our own sense of decency. Now, keeping this in view, look at the Iblis affair. When we, human beings who are an imperfect creation, have a distaste for acting petty-mindedly, how could He whose kindness knows no bounds choose to be pusillanimous. He would indeed be ready to meet the last prayer of one who had worshipped Him for ages.

But if somebody wants to delve deeper, we would submit that this respite in reality is man's trial. It is only darkness which adds lustre to light, it is autumn which lends charm to spring, pleasure is enhanced by misfortunes, contradictions make life delightfully variegated. If there is no sin, virtue would pass unnoticed. With no evil to encounter, it would lose its identity. The obstacles should not sap our will, they should act as spurs.

“There is no better guide than the distance itself that separates me from my beloved.

Our indebtedness to this guide grows at every step”.

The sufi poet Asghar of Gonda says:

Jubilantly I glide
Along the furious waves;

For life without hardships
Would be hell for the braves

Where there is no challenge to face, man's capabilities mostly remain dormant. They find no expression. This exactly is the philosophy of Iqbal. In his famous poem—"the Secrets of Self" he has recalled an episode in Hazrat Ali Al-Hujwairi's life. A young man called upon the saint and complained against the excesses of his enemies and sought his advice as to how best he could settle scores with them. The saint replied:

From your heart benish
The fear of your foes
Wake up! You, dormant power!

What's the use of being angry with your friends and of being full of complaints against your foes. To tell you the truth, even the enemy is your friend, for it is he who makes life throb in your veins. One who is aware of the grandeur of self, accepts a powerful foe as a blessing from God".

In this anecdote, the great saint has styled the enemy as a divine blessing. It would be not far wrong if we regard the respite granted to Iblis as God's mercy on men. What is needed of us is that we should follow the Prophet (peace be upon him) in his foot-prints and subjugate the devil in us. Hazrat A'isha once asked the Prophet: "O Apostle of Allah! is every human being shadowed by a Shaitan?" The Prophet replied: "Yes". She then asked; "Does one shadow you also?" He said; "Yes, but God in His grace has helped me gain ascendancy over him and convert him to Islam".

Iqbal was most probably interpreting this Tradition when he said:

'Tis hard to kill the devil :
He is submerged in the depths of the heart.
Better you convert him to Islam
And kill him with the sword of the Quran".

The Theory of Determinism

After having procured reprieve till the Day of Judgment, Iblis threw a challenge to God that he would spare no effort to beguile His

men to the path of evil and He would find that a majority of them are ungrateful. But what he chose as the ground for this challenge was extremely ludicrous. He said to God: "I am resorting to this because 'you have misled me'.

In other words, he shifted the blame for his defiance and disbelief to God and absolved himself of the guilt by saying that since He wanted him to go astray, he was left with no choice.

The misguided preachers of determinism as a class came into being only a few centuries ago, but actually the doctrine is an antique one. Iblis himself is the author of this theory. Those who blame their misfortunes on God should take a lesson from the lame excuse advanced by the Devil.

Iqbal has rendered the dialogue between God and the Devil into very charming verses. The poet says:

Iblis: O God Almighty, I harbour no rancour against Adam—that poor little creature who is a prisoner of time and space! Nor could I be so arrogant as to utter a rebellious word in your presence, except that you willed that I bow not to Adam.

God: Look at the devil! His low mentality has fashioned this argument for him. Says he, it was I who willed against his prostration! He is calling his freedom a compulsion. What a stupid creature! Himself calls his writhing flame a puff of smoke."

The lesson which this story has for us has been summarised in the earlier pages. A few more observations are attempted here.

Jealousy lay at the root of Iblis's haughtiness. Adam's superiority ignited a fire of hatred in his heart and he, despite an order from God, was not prepared to do homage to Adam.

In order to prove Adam's nobility as something sham, he took upon himself the task of beguiling his progeny. According to Maulana Rumi:

“The wretch after having burnt down his own harvest seeks to snuff out other people’s candles”.

Just take jealousy. How ordinary the evil seems. But how ruinous it is in its results. Iblis lost all his spiritual gains in a fit of jealousy. When we keep the moral of this story close to our hearts, the following Tradition of the holy Prophet becomes clearer.

“Save yourself from jealousy, for it consumes good as fire consumes the wood”.

By naming the big Satan as Iblis (The Disappointed), God Almighty has shown man the way to another reality, *i.e.* one need not ever be given to despair. Even today many people think that a spiritual pursuits presuppose monkery—a complete detachment from worldly affairs. In fact, this attitude of despair and aloofness is the greatest victory of Iblis. His strongest argument for not bowing before Adam was that man was not fit for the office of viceroy. And if today instead of carrying the load bravely, we exhibit escapism it would naturally set the seal of approval on the false contention of Iblis. This escapism does not attack the religious circles directly. It insinuates under the charming colour of contentment. To sit idle is a sign of contentment among the divines; although the Quranic concept of trust in God is something totally different from it. So far as the procurement of means is concerned, there is hardly any difference between the believer and the non-believer. The difference lies in that the non-believer places his trust wholly in his worldly gadgets while the believer keeps his gaze fixed on God’s help—something far above the earthly wherewithal.

Ulema’s classification of disbelief

The Ulema have enumerated five kinds of disbelief.

First is to harbour doubts about the prophets. God Almighty while describing the disbelievers says: **إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا فِي شَكٍّ مُّرِيبٍ**
“Verily they were in doubt”.

Secondly, to deny the Apostles and the Prophets: “And the disbelievers said he (the Prophet) is a liar and a sorcerer”.

Thirdly, To turn away from the call of the Prophets "Those who disbelieve, when warned, turn aside".

Fourthly, hypocrisy,
"Of the people there are some who say:
We believe in God and last Day
But they do not (really) believe".

Fifthly, the kind of disbelief of which Iblis was initially guilty :

"He refused and was haughty
He was one of those who reject faith".

Failure to act on any injunction of Shariah out of ignorance or lapse of memory is a sin which does not trantamount to disbelief. What really destroys faith is wilful defiance and haughtiness. And most probably the holy Prophet was referring to this malady in particular when he said that 'no heart with a lingering shadow of arrogance will ever enter Paradise'.

E v e

ADAM'S wife Eve, has been mentioned in three chapters of the Quran—Al-Baqara, Al-A'raf and Ta Ha.

In Al-Baqara, there occurs a verse :

“We said O' Adam! dwell thou
And thy wife in the Garden
And eat of the bountiful things therein
As (where and when) ye will, but approach not this tree.
Or ye run into harm and transgression.”

In 'Araf, the same words have been used :

O Adam! dwell thou
And your wife in the Garden.

In Ta Ha, a slightly different wording occurs :

“Then we said
O Adam! verily this is an
Enemy to thee and thy wife.”

How was this first lady of the human race born? The Quran nowhere gives the description. At the most, the verses which allude to this phenomenon can be found in three chapters—Zumar, Nun, and A'raf in which men and women have been described as the progeny of 'a single soul'. Taking the context into account one gathers that the reference does not pertain to Adam and Eve. It applies to the mankind in general.

“O mankind! reverence
your Guardian Lord
Who created you

From a single person
Created of like nature his mate".

All commentators agree that this verse is addressed to the whole of mankind and the single soul referred to therein is Adam. The pronoun 'ha' points to Eve. What is being impressed upon humanity is that nobody can claim nobility on the basis of his birth. All human beings are equal.

If you turn to the Old Testament, there, of course, you find a description.

"And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof. And the rib which Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman and brought her unto the man" (Gen: ii, 21-22).

It was under the influence of this Biblical similitude that Muslim commentators recorded that Eve was taken out of Adam's rib. For instance, Siddi Abi Saleh says that when Eve had been brought into existence the angels asked Adam:

'What's her name, O Adam?
He replied: Hawwa (Eve).

Then they asked: But why Hawwa?

Adam said: "Since she has been created out of a living (Hayy) thing".

The following tradition recorded in Al-Muslim and Al-Bukhari is proffered in support of this thesis. Abu Huraira is the narrator.

"Woman has been created from man's rib. She will not follow a straight path with you. If you want to derive any benefit out of her, try to put up with her crookedness. And if you ever try to straighten her, remember you will break her *i.e.* the only way out in that case, would be separation".

First of all, there is no mention of Eve in this tradition. It is the female sex that has been mentioned in general. Another

tradition, however, throws a clearer light on the subject. It says that 'Woman was created out of a rib', زَيْلَة (Zila) and if we take the liberty of translating the phrase etymologically we may say that "Woman is the creation of crookedness".

In this translation we have followed the great linguists who hold that Zila زَيْلَة means 'crookedness'.

According to Ibn Al-Athir the sentence 'Woman has been created out of crookedness', is like the Quranic verse which says that 'precipitancy is in man's nature'. It seems that holy Prophet used the simile of the rib to emphasize that if an attempt was made to force the curve out of her nature, there was every likelihood of her breaking up. Left to herself she would continue with her crookedness. So the advice was to tackle her tactfully and to do kindness to her in all dealings.

In Bukhari, there is another tradition wherein woman has been likened to a rib. In *Majma-ul-Bihar*, the word *Zila* carries the following note: 'Creation out of the Zila (rib) is a metaphor to indicate the crookedness of woman's nature.'

Zauj (Pair)—the philosophy of the word

When God granted permission to Adam to reside in the Garden, He told him!

'O Adam dwell thou
And thy wife in the Garden'.

He did not say:

O Adam dwell thou and thy *woman* in the garden.

The word used in the Quranic text is *Zauj* not *Imraat*.

Naturally it strikes one that when *Zauj* and *Imraat* are used in the same meaning why was *Zauj* preferred? The commentators (particularly Imam Humam and Imam Ibn Al-Qayyem) have drawn a fine distinction between the two. They say that wherever the Quran means a believer's wife it uses *Zauj* for her. Never has this

word been used for the wife of a disbeliever. For instance where Abu Lahab and his wife are mentioned, the Quran says:

“The power of Abu Lahab will perish and he will perish. His wealth and gains will not exempt him. He will be plunged in flaming fire and his wife (*imraat*) the wood-carrier will have upon her neck a halter of palm-fibre”. (cxi: 1-5).

And where there was a reference to the believers, the Quran said:

‘And unto you belongeth a half of that which your wives (*Azwajukum*) leave, (iv: 12).

This distinction has been observed to the finest limits and disbelieving wives of some of the great prophets have been called *Imraat*. In chapter At-Tahrim, the Quran says:

“Allah citeth an example for those who disbelieve: the wife (*imraat*) of Noah and the wife (*imraat*) of Lot—(lxvi: 10).

On the contrary, the Quran uses the word ‘*Azwaj*’ for the wives of the holy Prophet. In the chapter, Al-Ahzab (28-32) *Azwaj* has also been used for the wives of the Believers. There are only two exceptions where Zakaria’s and Abraham’s wives have been called *imraat*.

Suhaili says that since the physical characteristics of womanhood like conception and child-bearing were under discussion, appropriateness of the occasion demanded that the word ‘*imraat*’ be used. Suhaili and others maintain that since conjugal ties between an idol-worshipper and a believing woman are null and void and the two will not join in the Hereafter, the Quran avoids the use of the word *zauj*. For instance when the Pharoah and his wife Asiya form the subject of a verse the Quran says:

And Allah citeth an example for those who believe: the wife (*imraat*) of Pharoah. (lxvi: 11).

The earlier doctors have undoubtedly shown an extraordinary taste for precision. Yet to what further etymological subtleties

these words lend themselves is not within our power to grasp. Imam Ibn Al-Qayyem was right when he said: "The secrets of the simple as well as compound words of the Quran are beyond men's comprehension".

Superiority of Man

The Quran is a miraculous book in that it resolves the most momentous problems in a few simple words. For instance take the following verse:

O Adam: Dwell thou and thy wife in the Garden (ii: 35).

The style adopted in this verse establishes men's superiority over woman. This also establishes another fact *i.e.* woman has been placed under man being inferior to him in physical as well as intellectual potentialities. Here, in this verse, both Adam and Eve were asked to enter the Garden. But it was Adam to whom the order was addressed. In fact no other way would have been more appropriate than the one adopted here. Adam besides being a prophet was also the husband of Eve and as such deserved her devotion and loyalty. So where was the need for addressing Eve separately?

The Garden

In the verse, O Adam dwell thou and thy wife (*zauj*) in the Garden (*Jannat*) the other notable word after *Zauj* is *Jannat*—The Garden. We will discuss it later whether it meant a paradise on the earth or the Garden of (Eternal) Abode. At present we concern ourselves with the lexicographic meanings of the word and try to disabuse the people's mind of a common misunderstanding about it.

Literally, *Jannat* means 'a garden' overshadowed by tall, rich trees whose boughs are densely intertwined.

Imam Raghīb says that *Jannat* is a Garden overgrown with large number of trees which completely cover the land. Consequently the Quran has, at many places, described the earthly gardens, too, as *Jannat*.

And there are gardens of grapes and olives and pomegranates
Each similar (in kind)
Yet different (in variety) (vi : 99).

What kind of garden God Almighty has prepared for the Faithful, we cannot conceive in our mundane environs. The Quran has, nevertheless, revealed a few glimpses of it. There will be palaces with murmuring brooks flowing underneath, beautiful and graceful companions of a special creation, beloved and equal in age; fruits and flesh of fowls—"anything that they may desire."

These things can, of course, be found in this world also. But according to a saying of the holy Prophet, the worldly bounties of nature have absolutely no comparison with their heavenly counterparts. Similarity lies in names only. Hazrat Abdullah Ibn

Abbas says: "There is hardly anything in this world which resembles, paradisaical rarities, except in name."

But it is surprising that we find all manner of conjectural descriptions of the Garden alongside this tradition. A Believer will no doubt, repose his faith in the word of 'God or of the Prophet, however irrational it may appear on the face of it. But it gives no licence to anybody else to turn Islam into a store-house of fantastic rarities out of his imagination.

In Heaven, all the physical as well as spiritual delights will be procurable. And to crown all, the faithful will be rewarded with the realisation of the presence of God.

"There ye will have (all) that your souls desire and ye will have (all) for which ye pray" (xli: 31).

After this terse but comprehensive assurance there remains no need to indulge in flights of fancy and say that the fruits in Heaven will be as big as earthen pitchers. God bless Ibn Jarir who has gathered all such versions which are the product of our ancestors' fantasy in his valuable exegesis. Intelligence when confronted with such fantasies naturally feels offended and grows critical of this intellectual extravagance.

To quote an example, here is a version: 'The trees in Heaven will be uniform in girth from the roots to the branches and their fruits will be as big as pitchers. The moment a fruit is plucked from a branch there will appear another in its stead. Water will flow free of channels'.

Such a description can be acceptable only when some authority is quoted. Did the Prophet ever say so? Which of the Books of the Traditions contain this description? And if there is no such authority to rely upon, we would beg our learned doctors not to allow their imagination run unbridled, for Jannat's beauty needs no crutches of bewitching phrases to stand on. Jannat is the celestial beauty at its sublimest. It does not need the services of a beautician to make it look charming. How can we, the clay mortals of this world, comprehend the majesty of the place, the dwellers of which can bring things into being by merely uttering 'Be' ?

According to a Tradition quoted by Shaikh Ibn Al-Arabi in his '*Futuhat*' "an angel will approach the dwellers of the Jannat and seek their permission to be admitted to their heavenly abode. He will then handover a letter to them conveying the blessings of God Almighty. The letter will read: 'It is a message from God—the Living, the Self-subsisting, Eternal to those who will never die hereafter and have become eternal. You should know that when I command a thing to be, it becomes. Now I invest you with this power. To whatever thing you may say 'Be' it shall be.' The Shaikh says that the Prophet added: 'Whosoever, after receiving this letter will order a thing to be, it will have no option but to be'."

The Tree: its identity

We have digressed a bit. The situation under discussion was the one in which Adam and his wife were told: 'O Adam! dwell thou and thy wife in the Garden.' Reverting to the situation we find that simultaneously with this order a condition was laid. They were told: "Approach not this tree or ye run into harm and transgression". Since Adam was being appointed God's viceroy on earth, his stay in Heaven was just transitory. The aim perhaps was to make the first human being to have a close look at the Garden before proceeding to the earth and then try to convert his new abode into a heaven of his own. Moreover this temporary stay in Heaven had an element of trial in it. In order to help man assess the potentialities of his most formidable foe—Iblis—he was asked even not to approach a particular tree what to speak of tasting its fruit because in that case both he and his wife would be the losers. Which tree was that? And what fruit did it bear? The Quran does not elaborate the point. The Old Testament, anyhow, defines it as the tree of knowledge—knowledge of what is good and what is bad.

"And the Lord God commanded the man saying of every tree of the Garden thou mayst freely eat. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shall not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shall surely die"—(Genesis, ii-16 and 17.)

The commentators have given a long list of trees including that of dates, camphor, grapes, fig, olive and wheat. Some say it was the

tree of love, others say it was the tree of desire. Yet in others' opinion it was the tree of knowledge. Some modern commentators have gone many steps further and have pointed out that since *shajara* is derived from *Mushajarat* i.e. disputation, Adam was ordered to eschew the path of polemics, cleavage and partisanship. A glance over all the ancient and modern conjectures will only demonstrate how widespread was the confusion around the tree's identity. Some amusing fellows after naming it as wheat have tried to raise a whole crop of similis and metaphors. In short, all that crossed these people's minds was readily committed to pen, although in this frantic race for hair-splitting one should have constantly kept in view that when God and His Apostle had left the tree unnamed, on what ground are we justified in launching upon all manner of speculations? It is, therefore, wise on our part to remain silent. Notable scholars from the beginning have adopted this attitude. Ibn Jarir says:

“We do not know which particular tree it was, because God has not specifically named it in the Quran. Nor is any definite clue available in the Prophet's Traditions.”

Imam Razi is not much at variance with this opinion. “We are not sure which tree it was, so we need not particularize it”, he says:

Now we have to see what exactly the verse “approach not this tree or ye run into harm and transgression” meant. Adam and Eve were forbidden to approach the tree. Was this an injunction under the Shariah or was it just a prohibitive order? What do the wrong-doers or transgressors mean? And in what sense the Quran has used these words.

The general belief is that it was a sin to approach the tree and Adam and Eve committed a sin when they approached it. It is argued that God had warned them beforehand. Since transgressing is sin, approach to the forbidden tree was palpably a sinful act.

In our opinion this line of argument is open to many objections. First of all, wrongdoing does not essentially tantamount to committing a sin, though it does carry this sense also. None the less the word

covers a wide spectrum of meaning . The Quran uses this word for those people also who (unwittingly) transgress.

“We did indeed offer
The Trust to the Heavens
And the Earth
And the Mountains,
But they refused
To undertake it,
Being afraid thereof:
But Man undertook it;
He was indeed unjust
and foolish—(xxxiii : 72).

Now consider the word “Zaluman”—unjust, tyrant. If you take this word to mean “sinners”, then you will have to provide an answer to the question: ‘What guilt did man commit on the eve of his creation in consequence of which he was dubbed a ‘sinner’? And if it means somebody who tyrannises others, then who was the object of his tyranny?

Obviously, none of these translations is apt. We shall have to interpret the verse as follows:

“Verily man was unjust towards himself and was foolish”.

Try to understand this interpretation in the light of another verse. In the Chapter Al-Baqara where there is a mention of the conferment of *Imamat* (leadership) on Ibrahim, a question was raised by him whether his offspring too would enjoy the honour of leading mankind. To this God Almighty replied:

لَا يَتَّخِذُ الْغَافِلِينَ

“My covenant includeth not wrongdoers” (ii : 124).

Undoubtedly ‘Zulum’ in this context means ‘disbelief’, (forsaking the path of righteousness) heresy, transgression, rebellion, disobedience. Some leading commentators have offered the same interpretation.

In Ibn Hayyan's commentary is laid down :

قد قسر الظام ههنا بالكفر وهو قول ابن جبيرو بظام العاصى غير الكفر وهو قول عطاء السدى

'Zulum' has been interpreted here as 'disbelief'. This is Ibn Jubair's opinion. According to Ata Siddi "it was disobedience not amounting to disbelief (kufr)".

In other words it is the Divine decree that *imamat* (leadership) the sublimest form of which is the prophethood—shall not be bestowed upon the sinful. Now in the light of this word, cast a deeper look at the words 'Ye shall become an evil-doer'. If you still insist upon translating the word 'zulum' as 'sin' then beware you are in for a predicament. What situation you would logically be led to? You accept the Quranic verdict that a sinful man shall never become a prophet and here you insist upon the view that since Adam violated the instructions and ate the forbidden fruit, he turned a sinner. Logically, one is driven to the conclusion that Adam was not a prophet. And since this conclusion directly contravenes numerous Quranic explanations, the word '*Zulum*' at this juncture cannot obviously be construed as to mean that Adam had been guilty of wilful disobedience. The true rendering of it in English would be "Do not, both of you, approach this tree otherwise you will be among those who overstep due limits."

There is yet another confusion in this exposition of ours. You may ask: "If to approach this tree was a sin and if this was merely a piece of advice to save Adam and Eve from a loss exclusively their own, why was the imperative form of the verb used?"

The positive and negative commands used here do cause this confusion. But there are many instances in the Quran where the positive command has been employed only to grant permission for certain activity. For example men are permitted to go to their wives during the Ramadan nights. The actual words used are :

فَالسُّنُّ بِأَسْرُوهُنَّ

"so now associate with them".

Here the verb 'bashir' is in the positive mood. And if you take it as a command then it would mean that if somebody does not hold sexual intercourse with his wife during a Ramadan night he is a sinner. This conclusion, obviously, is not acceptable.

The above example, we hope, has cleared the confusion to a great extent. It is proved that the imperative mood employed in the Quran does not necessarily mean that whosoever acts against it is a sinner. It is sometimes an advice which man is expected to follow to his own advantage. The directive given to Adam falls under this category.

Iblis's whispering campaign

While Adam and Eve were allowed to reside in Heaven, Iblis with envy and hatred blazing in his heart was out to tarnish their image. When he came to know that the couple has been forbidden to approach a particular tree he devised a strategem against them to avenge his shame. He assumed the role of a well-wisher and approached them and said suavely: "Let bygones be bygones. I seek your pardon for my past behaviour. For the future, I extend my hand of friendship and if you desire to test my change of heart, here is a concrete proof of it. There stands a tree whose fruit if you eat will make you eternal. You will never die. Thereafter you can remain engaged eternally in singing praise to God Almighty".

According to the Quran, the Devil said: "Shouldn't I point out a tree of eternity to you and a dominion that would never crumble".

Adam and his wife were of a simple disposition whose hearts knew no jealousies. Iblis, on the other hand, was highly cunning and expert at weaving words. He was the originator of the slogan "go on repeating falsehood to the point till it looks like the truth". His artful speech impressed them both. They must have thought that if one could attain eternal life just for asking, why should not one go in for it? It will give them an endless opportunity for the adoration of God and for earning His favour. They asked: "Where is that wonderful tree, after all? Iblis led them to the tree. On seeing it, both shouted simultaneously "Ah! This is precisely the tree whose fruit we have been forbidden to take".

Satan immediately changed his tactics and said: "You have been doubtless forbidden to approach the tree. But this prohibition is a temporary injunction. This tree, otherwise, bears a fruit which when taken gives an eternal life to man. Once you have eaten it you would reside permanently in the Garden with a timeless opportunity to do adoration to the Creator."

This sophistry, though fascinating, left the pair untouched. Their resistance to temptation compelled Satan to adopt a new strategem. He swore by God and said that he was a well-wisher of the couple. "He, then, took an oath that 'I am a well-wisher of both of you.'"

This swearing by God immediately changed the character of the matter. Adam and Eve had never suspected that one could utter a lie in the name of God. They thought how can a creature indulge in so sinful an act as to cheat others on a covenant made before God?

Anyhow, they succumbed to the Satanic allurements and ate the fruit. God Almighty had already warned them that 'they would be the losers in case they partook of the fruit'. Things finally came to the dreaded pass and Adam and Eve had to say good-bye to their heavenly abode. Now was the time for Adam to discharge the duties of a viceroy on earth.

Two questions arise out of Shaitan's deceitful manoeuvrings and the externment of Adam and Eve from the Garden.

- (a) If Heaven was a celestial abode, how did the Devil find his way into it?
- (b) If Adam was a prophet, how did he commit a mistake? Are the prophets prone to slips?

This episode has been narrated by the Old Testament in the following words:

"Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the Garden?"

And the woman said unto the serpent, we may eat of the fruit of the trees of the Garden.

But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the Garden God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest Ye die.

And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and it was pleasant to the eyes and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof and did eat and gave also unto her husband with her and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened and they know that they were naked and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons"—Genesis (iii : 1-7).

Some narrow-minded Orientalists say that the Quran is an imitation of the Bible and in the matter of relating ancient events it has no fresh contribution to make. This is a churlish statement against which innumerable instances can be quoted. But since this subject is beyond our discussion we can ill-afford to devote any time to it.

We only request our readers to compare the two texts and judge for themselves how far the Evangelist's accusations are sound. This great book—the Quran—instead of imitating the Biblical narrations, has corrected the corrupted versions. This book is a tremendous blessing for humanity in that it has sifted the truth from falsehood and righteousness from perversion. Yet some people with boorish mentality continue harping on the charge that the Quran has borrowed copiously from the Bible.

"You call wisdom madness and madness wisdom.
The charm of your beauty
Can work miracles !

Take, for instance, the Biblical passage quoted above. Here the woman has exclusively been held responsible for the tragedy. It was she who let herself tricked by the snake. Adam's slip was the

result of her foolishness. None the less the people of the Bible claim that they are the champions of the woman's high status in modern society.

Look ! how bold is the thief!
He carries
A candle in his hand!"

The Bible does not end the matter here. It devises some sort of punishment for the woman—though this punishment was precisely the mark of distinction and honour for her. She was told:

"...I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception ; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children and thy desire shall be thy husband, and he shall rule over thee (Old Testament, iii : 16-17).

But the Quran rejects all these deviations. It clears the woman of the guilt and says: 'Satan led both of them astray'. The woman alone was not held responsible for this slip. Satan dragged both of them into his snare. The woman was not the first victim who later influenced man.

After this long digression let us revert to the original questions.

The Garden : Its Nature

The first question that if the Garden was in the heavens, how could the Devil effect an entry into it, is in fact not a complete question. It is part of a larger question which ought to be : 'Was it a paradise on the earth or was it the Garden of Abode?' Those who insist upon its being the earthly paradise advance, among others, the argument quoted above. It is, therefore, proper if we examine the question in its totality. According to Hafiz Ibn Al-Kathir and Imam Razi four main lines of argument are followed in this behalf!

First: It refers to Jannat-ul-Khuld *i.e.* The Garden of Eternity.

Second: It was a separate Garden created especially for the pair.

Third: It was based on earth.

Fourth: I tetter remain silent over the point.

Two of these four points are anyhow well-known; namely whether it was the Garden of Eternity or a paradise on the earth. The majority, however, believes that the whole episode took place in Jannat-ul-Khuld.

Those who supported the second view include scholars who hardly need any introduction. They are Obayy Ibn Ka'b, Abdullah bin Abbas, Wahb bin Munabbih, Sufyan bin Oyaina, Imam Ibn Taimiya. Some say Imam Abu Hanifa is also among them.

The scholars who believe that it was a paradise on the earth offer the following objections:—

- (a) How did Iblis get into paradise?
- (b) Since life in paradise is eternal, how can Adam be thrown out of it?
- (c) No body can utter falsehood in paradise. Its atmosphere is free from all chicanery. None the less Iblis is seen practicing this art on Adam and Eve.
- (d) Paradise is a place of reward. By declaring a tree as forbidden, it was turned into a place of trial.

The majority of commentators meet these objections by asserting that at the time of this occurrence, paradise had not yet been declared as the "House of Rewards". So the doors of paradise must not have been closed upon Iblis. The Quran does not say that the moment Satan was declared 'Rejected' he was bodily lifted by the angels and thrown out of the Garden. On the contrary, he was not asked to quit until Adam's externment had been ordered. Then why should it not be believed that he was hovering all the time around Adam and Eve to mislead them?

If you are hesitant to believe that Iblis could find an entry into paradise, even then there are more possibilities than one of his meetings with the couple. When Adam and Eve were asked to stay in paradise obviously they might be living somewhere else. Satan could meet them during their journey to paradise. Was it not possible for him to find such an opportunity?

And if somebody really thinks it to be impossible, the meeting could take place at the entrance of the paradise. The couple while strolling along one of the garden paths might have come near the entrance where Iblis was lying in wait for them. Hasan Tab'i says: "He saw them at the entrance of the Garden, as they were coming out of it".

1. The Quran at another place uses the word: "Satan sneakishly whispered in the hearts of both". If the Devil's modus operandi was whispering evil suggestions into the hearts, then for that purpose no entry into paradise was needed. Whispering could be carried out even from outside. As a long distance voice could be carried to the farthest end of the world through Radio and TV or even more subtle messages could be flashed across the globe without the assistance of an intermediary agency (as in wireless) why could not Satan's whispering enter into man's heart?

2. It is true man will live eternally in the Heaven and once he gets entry into it he shall never be turned out of it, none the less one should not overlook one fact. This particular phase of life in paradise will become operative after the Day of Judgment. It has been repeatedly narrated in the Traditions that the Holy Prophet paid a visit to Heaven on the Night of Ascension, and returned to this world.

3. Nobody will tell a lie in paradise, and also it is an abode of reward: these two qualities are relevant only to the post-Judgment Day period. Such a ban might not be in operation in the days when this incident took place. For instance, it has been repeatedly asserted in the Quran (and intelligence has no reason to doubt its veracity) that nobody will ever be able to utter a lie in Allah's presence. Yet Iblis, when asked to do homage to Adam, made a

totally false and an untenable claim. He said that he was better than Adam **أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِنْهُ** It proves that the Divine decree 'that none shall utter a falsehood before Allah' is exclusively related to the Day of Judgment. Iblis, likewise, must have made a false statement in paradise also.

These answers meet some particular objections only. Otherwise more cogent arguments for Heaven being the Garden of Abode are available only if we keep in view all the verses from the beginning of Al-Baqara to the place where the incident of Adam and Eve has been narrated. Only in the four preceding verses the Quran had given the tidings of paradise to the faithful.

“But glad tidings
To those who believe
And work righteousness
That their portion is Garden
Beneath which rivers flow

—Al-Baqara

After this verse begins the narration of the incident. The garden mentioned in this story has been prefixed with a definite article **ال** emphasizing thereby that it is not a common garden: it is The Promised Garden.

Connected with it, is the story of the Fall of Adam:

“We said:

Get ye down all (ye people)
With enmity between yourselves
On earth will be Your dwelling place
And your means of livelihood
For a time”.—(ii : 36).

These verses show that Adam and Eve before getting down to the earth were stationed somewhere else. If they had been living already on the earth, then where was the need to tell them “Get ye down all . . .”?

Innocence of the Prophets

NOW take the second question. Are prophets prone to sins? On the face of it, Adam appears to be guilty of a sin.

Whatever has been said explicitly on this subject by the Quran and the Traditions goes to prove that the prophets are sinless. Commission of a sin on their part is completely ruled out. Not that they are a constrained creation devoid of all sinful capabilities. They are innocent because God Almighty, despite their being free in their actions, has taken special care to keep their lives uncontaminated.

Shah Ismail Shaheed writes:

“The innocence of the prophets means that God Almighty through His unlimited authority keeps an eye on the activities of the prophets—their words and deeds, their behaviour and worship, their manners and experiences—and keeps them immune from the lapses of memory and morality and appoints angels as guardians to ensure that they remain fortified against the promptings of the unregenerate human soul. These angels also see that no worldly dust soils the prophetic mantle”.

That is why the Quran while listing the functions of an Apostle includes the purification of the soul among them.

“He it is who hath sent among the unlettered one messenger of their own to recite unto them His revelations and to sanctify them——” (lxii : 2).

Just look at this verse a little more closely. What is being notified is that here is a prophet who is not only himself pure and innocent

but purifies his followers too. If the prophets are not themselves above sin how can they sanctify others? Will you not in that case beg leave of such a prophet, saying 'The one who himself has lost the way how can he guide others? Or

When disbelief starts surging out of the Kaaba, itself, where else would Islam find a springhead?

Shaikh-ul-Hind Maulana Mahmudul Hasan has put it very nicely. He says: Before a duty is assigned to someone two things are particularly taken note of:

- (a) Is the proposed functionary capable of understanding and implementing the government policy; and
- (b) How far can he be expected to keep the people loyal to the Government?

No king or parliament will ever appoint a viceroy who can be suspected of fomenting disaffection. A Government consisting of erring human beings is, of course, liable to misjudge the qualities (or even the loyalty) of its representatives. But there is absolutely no doubt that God will judge His Creatures correctly. If He thinks that so and so would never violate His dictates, and he does, the Divine knowledge will, in that case, prove deficient. This explains the doctrine of the innocence of prophets. (*Fawaid Mudhihul Furqan*, p. 77).

The majority of the Ummat, therefore, believes that the prophets are fortified against all erosions of faith and morality. In their day-to-day conduct, any how, they may, as God wills, commit a lapse in a state of forgetfulness. But even that lapse is designed to serve as a lesson for the people. Actually, their forgetfulness, is an act of mercy for the Ummat. Imam Malik in his famous work, *Muatta*, quotes the following traditions:

"The Prophet offered the Asr prayer and finished it with two rakaats only. So Dhul Yada'in got up and said: O Apostle of Allah! has the prayer been shortened or have you forgotten? The Prophet said none of the things has happened. Dhul Yada'in said: O Apostle of God! something indeed has happened. Thereupon, the Prophet

turned to his companions and asked: 'Is Dhul Yadain correct? They said: 'Yes'. The Apostle stood up and offered the remaining two rakaats and then performed two prostrations while he kept sitting".

Similarly, according to Bukhari and Muslim, the Prophet once offered five rakaats of Zuhr. When asked whether the rakaats had increased, he replied: "I am a human being like you. I, too, some times forget things as you do. And if I forget you please remind me".

On the face of it, this slight forgetfulness does not seem to be in harmony with the eminence of a prophet. But suppose, after him somebody from amongst his followers had made a similar mistake how could he be taught to expiate the lapse. The occasion was to be used to teach the method of *Sahw*. It was precisely for this reason that acts of forgetfulness on the part of the Prophet were divinely designed—for the larger good of the Ummat.

Imam Malik has quoted another tradition on the authority of Hazrat Abu Saeed Al-Khudri as the Holy Prophet saying: "I witnessed Lajla-tul-Qadr, but was later made to forget it".

Now consider the words "was made to forget it." The Prophet did not simply say: 'I forgot it'. He was 'made to forget it' *i.e.* God Almighty in His Supreme sagacity erased the exact date of the Blessed Night from his memory. Commentators say that the divine wisdom which caused this forgetfulness aimed at keeping alive people's zest for worship throughout the last week of Ramadan. This was a device to keep them on the watch: any night could be the Blessed Night. Similarly if the Prophet had not missed a prayer on Laila-tul-Ta'ris, the Ummat had remained uninformed about the way the missed prayers are atoned for. Whether Adam's action amounted to sin or *Sahw* this, too, is worth considering. First of all, it should be borne in mind that sin involves wilful defiance of a righteous command. And if the act is just a lapse of memory, the Quran does regard it censurable.

If we keep this concept of guilt in view and cast a glance over the episode in which Adam and Iblis were involved in the Garden

we find that Adam never intended to defy God's instructions. He did not wilfully commit disobedience. The Quran absolves him of harbouring such intentions.

“And verily We made a covenant of old with Adam, but he forgot and We found no constancy in him”—(xx : 115).

Some people quote these verses of the chapter TA HA as an argument in support of Adam's innocence.

وَعَصَىٰ آدَمُ رَبَّهُ فَغَوَىٰ ۖ ثُمَّ اجْبَسَ الْأَرْضَ لَهَا فَسَقَتْ ۖ وَجَاهِلِيٌّ عَلَىٰ هَدًى

According to them the words '*Asa and Ghawa* bear testimony to the fact that Adam did commit a sin. But we do not share their view. *Ma'siyat*, in the general, does carry the meaning which the common run of translators have adopted. But, according to *Lisanul Arab*, (a famous work of Arabic lexicography) *Ma'siyat*, adoptively means just a slip.

Ma'siyat is infinitive and it applies to a mere slip.

So far as *Ghawa* is concerned it, too, generally means 'waywardness', but is often used to mean "unsuccess". Imam Raghīb in his *Mufredat* has supported this interpretation. He has, in support of this view, quoted the following line from a poet.

دَمَنَ يَغُولًا يَعمَدُ عَلَى النِّعَى لَا مَئِمَّةَ

'One who does not meet success, does meet a fault-finder'.

There is a famous saying in Arabic that 'the virtues of the good are faults among the most pious'. The pious themselves having attained eminence in the spiritual order regard the earlier stages far beneath their station and for that they continue seeking their Lord's pardon. God Almighty Himself warns them sternly on such matters. According to Shah Abdul Aziz of Delhi this mode of warning is an exclusive privilege of the Almighty. It is not permissible for the ordinary folk to adopt and propagate this from door to door.

Shah Abdul Aziz writes: 'God Almighty has used angry words on occasions which demand such a treatment. But the Ummat is not permitted to use those words for the prophets. For instance, to call Adam a sinner or a wayward is unbelief. Likewise, to term

Jonah a fugitive or a transgressor or one 'worthy of blame' is not permissible".

To err is human. Even the angels had feared that man would spill blood and do mischief on the earth. He was to do good as well as foul deeds. And when God Almighty had Himself assumed the responsibility of guiding man to the right path, it was considered necessary to teach him the way to expiate for sins in order that no sinner, once despaired of God's mercy, was irretrievably lost to humanity. Since a long line of prophets was to be commissioned to guide the human race, Allah in His supreme wisdom thought it necessary that Adam's children be taught the method of repentance through the example set by their ancestor.

The Prophet said: "Whosoever calls men to the right path, shall be entitled to the reward equal to that of him who responds to the call, although nothing will be detracted from the reward of the latter".

Adam was the first to initiate the tradition of repentance. According to the Prophet's saying whoever from amongst the human race offers repentance, Adam gets a credit for it. Who can reckon the immense reward that has been credited to Adam's account ever since his fall—and will continue to be credited to him till the Day of Reckoning!

How can an act so fruitful in results be termed as a 'sin'? Some mystics, therefore, do not look upon Adam's fall as a punishment.

Haji Imdadullah Muhajir Makki says:

"Adam had undoubtedly knowledge of God's personality while he was in the Garden. But this awareness was not complete. It became so when he was sent down to the earth. Because being the direct recipient of God's favours he only knew—of course with the surety of vision—His attributes as the Giver, the Beneficent. But the attributes of mercy, forgiveness and the capacity to award penal punishment had not yet been fully revealed. The eating of the forbidden fruit and expulsion from the Garden brought these Attributes to his view in their full glory. As is said: "If a sin had not been taken note of, how could You be known as the forgiver?"

It means that Adam's fall was none of his loss, though it undoubtedly was our gain.

Imam Ibn Al-Qayyem puts it beautifully when he imagines what God Almighty must have told Adam: "O' Adam, do not feel dejected over my order, for the Garden has been brought into being only for your benefit. For the present you would indeed get down to the earth which is a place of struggle and strife for you. Go and sow the seed of piety in its soil; water it with your raining eyes and when the seed sprouts and grows into a sapling erect on its stalk—put your sickle to it and gather the harvest. O Adam! I have not asked you to quit the Garden except that this expulsion should, ultimately prove a means to higher stages. You have been asked to go away only to return".

Adam's Repentance

DESPITE the fact that Adam had committed no sin, he, being totally dedicated to the will of God, felt utterly grieved over the slip and repented his action, till God's own mercy came to his rescue; he was taught a prayer that could wipe out the blot.

“...Our Lord! we have wronged ourselves. If Thou forgive us not and have not mercy on us, surely we are of the lost (iiv—23).

“In response to this prayer
‘.....his Lord chose him
For His grace, He returned
To him and gave him guidance”.

Some people have misunderstood Adam's penitence. But as we have said earlier, it was the outcome of his act of total surrender. In fact this was a device to remind Adam's children that when their ancestor after having committed a mistake had no option but to offer his sincerest apologies, they should be more regretfully penitent. Just imagine the prophet's spiritual elevation and study his sayings and his conduct. One is drawn to the conclusion that the more one rises spiritually the more one becomes humble before God Almighty. The Prophet says: “I seek God's forgiveness and express repentance more than 70 times a day.”

Why did he repent so frequently? Did he commit any sin? No, certainly not. But to be unmindful of God even for a moment necessitated the seeking of His pardon. He said: “Sometimes I feel a sort of cloud casting its shadow over my heart, so I beg Allah's pardon hundred times a day”.

Nobody can pronounce the shadow of a fleeting cloud over a heart as a cognizable offence in Shariah. Man's psyche is always experiencing changing moods; his heart is like an ocean, perpetually in a state of ebb and flow. The Shariah has, therefore, imposed no penalty—neither in this world nor in the next—on evil thoughts that sneakishly find their way into one's heart. But a prophet's conscience is far more crystalline than that of ordinary human beings. It is highly sensitive to all kinds of obliques. He haes no breath which is devoid of God's remembrance. I have tried to express this truth in one of my verses:

O My beloved! the moments
I remained neglectful of you.
Were, in fact,
Spent in kufr (disbelief)

According to a Tradition in Muslim, the Prophet said: "O ye people beg pardon of your Creator, for I do so hundred times a day".

This brief exposition should convince one that Adam's repentance was not occasioned by any commission of sin. It was the wail of a grieved heart. It was intended to relieve Adam's conscience of a weight and also to serve as a source of instruction for his children.

The Decree of Fall

Adam's ejection from the Garden has been interpreted by small-minded people as a sort of punishment. The poets, in particular, have laboured hard to spread this impression. They maintain that if Adam had not partaken of the wheat seed, his children would have been spared the misery of groping in the dark now. But the Quran firmly rejects this false belief.

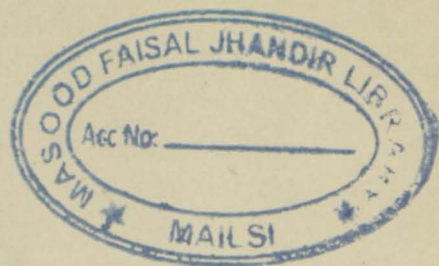
After the announcement that God Almighty had forgiven Adam, he said to him: "Get down, all of you, from hence; but verily there cometh into you from Me a guidance; and whoso followed My guidance there shall no fear come upon them neither shall they grieve".—(ii-38).

But the order ("get ye down") was repeated after pardon had been granted, in order to dispel the notion that the Fall resulted from

a sinful act. If the eating of the fruit had been a sin, there was no question of punishing the pardoned souls. If this order was an evidence of God's wrath, it should have been set aside the moment it lost its ground. But we find the order is re-issued. The reason for this course of action was that God Almighty wanted to show that Adam's expulsion from the Garden was not a punishment. It was to meet the needs of the Providence's supreme plan. I wonder why people insist on calling Adam's coming down to the earth as punishment while they forget that Adam was created as God's viceroy. The eating of the forbidden fruit or eschewing it would have made no difference. He had to have come down to this world to manage it. The famous Sufi Ibn Al-Arabi says that the order to get down did not amount to demotion, it was just a transfer from one place to another.

This order has another notable aspect. If the order had been addressed to Adam and Eve alone, the verb according to the Arabic grammar, should have indicated the dual number. There would never have been the need to use the plural number. To think that the order was confined to the two souls, raises innumerable difficulties. Adam was a prophet indeed. There was hardly any necessity of assuring him that if he obeyed God's dictates, he would never come to grief. This assurance in the case of a prophet, who is a chosen being and whose status was to suffer no change, carries little meaning. Iblis, the third character in the drama, had been irretrievably rejected. It was not expected that he, at any subsequent date, would ever rehabilitate himself and be the recipient of the comfort assured in this verse. Then to whom was the Divine word addressed? The scholars think that though the immediate audience was limited to two, it was to apply to the entire human race, for they (Adam and Eve) carried the unborn generations on their backs like a loaded ark". It was they who were being told that if they followed God's guidance, they would be welcome back to the lost paradise. And if they turned aside in arrogance they would be condemned to be the fuel of the Fire.

“Here is a piece of advice for the people who can perceive”.



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