

Section 3: Generations Raised After Noah's People

Surah al-Mu'minun – Verse 33

وَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ مِنْ قَوْمِهِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِلِقَاءِ الْآخِرَةِ وَأَتْرَفْنَاهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا
مَا هَذَا إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِثْلُكُمْ يَأْكُلُ مِمَّا تَأْكُلُونَ مِنْهُ وَيَشْرَبُ مِمَّا تَشْرَبُونَ

33. “The chiefs of his people, who disbelieved and denied the meeting of the Hereafter, and whom We had given affluence in the life of the world, (said): ‘This is nothing but a mortal like you, he eats of what you eat from and drinks of what you drink.’ ”

The call of the Divine prophets was based upon liberating people from the dominance of oppressors and aristocrats. Consequently, the aristocrats opposed the prophets more than others did.

(“And the chiefs of his people... (said)...”)

The Qur'an in this holy verse implies that the affluent and conceited folk upon whom Allah had bestowed abundant blessings negated the One God, Allah, and denied the meeting of the Resurrection. They said: This is only a mortal like you, he eats what you eat and drinks what you drink.

The verse says:

“The chief of his people, who disbelieved and denied the meeting of the Hereafter, and whom We had given affluence in the life of the world, (said): ‘This is nothing but a mortal like you, he eats of what you eat from and drinks of what you drink.’ ”

Yes, the Qur'an calls those affluent people /mala'/. This means that they were very attractive in their

appearance but their hearts were darkened to the light of Truth. They started to struggle against the teachings of their prophet applying the same type of arguments that those who rejected Noah had done.

This they did because they saw the call of this great prophet as going against their low desires and a barrier to their unlawful interests, arrogance, and baseless social preeminence. It was because of the same affluence that they had been aloof from Allah and denied Resurrection. They disputed against the Truth with the same logic that the disbelievers of the people of Noah (as) did.

The very human nature of these Divine leaders, the normal ways in which they ate, drank and the simple ways in which they lived their lives were used as reasons to negate their prophetic missions.

The humanness of these great men, in fact, confirmed their missions for it made them more accessible and more sympathetic to the sufferings of the common people, something which the arrogant could not see, for as Imam Ali (as) says:

“Their jealousy made them say such words.”¹

Surah al-Mu'minun – Verses 34-36

وَلَئِنْ أَطَعْتُمْ بَشَرًا مِّثْلَكُمْ إِنَّكُمْ إِذَا لَخَاسِرُونَ

أَيَعِدْكُمْ أَنْكُمْ إِذَا مِتُّمْ وَكُنْتُمْ تُرَابًا وَعِظَامًا أَنْكُمْ مُخْرَجُونَ

هِيَاهُ هِيَاهُ لِمَا تُوعَدُونَ

34. “And if you obey a mortal like yourselves, verily then you will be losers.”

35. “Does he promise you that when you are dead and have become dust and bones, you will indeed be raised (from the dead)?”

36. “Far, very far is what you are promised!”

The unbelievers and polytheists believe that following the prophets bring loss to mankind. They would rather want that people submit to themselves and with the slogan of liberty drive people into slavery.

This is why they said:

“And if you obey a mortal like yourselves, verily then you will be losers.”

These blind-hearted persons were probably not aware that they themselves expected the people to follow their evil ideas and united together to struggle against this prophet. They saw following someone guided by the Center of Revelation, whose heart was illuminated by the light of Divine knowledge as a defect and a flaw that stood against human freedom and liberty!

The next verse points to the fact that their real argument against religion was the denial of the Resurrection. They knew that if the Resurrection were accepted, it would prove ahindrance to the achievement of the goals of their appetites and of their social ambitions.

They said:

“Does he promise you that when you are dead and have become dust and bones, you will indeed be raised (from the dead)?”

The third verse shows that the unbelievers did not accept the promises of their prophet in this regard. They were opposed to the possibility of returning back to life after complete annihilation in the earth. In fact, they believed that its occurrence was impossible.

“Far, very far is what you are promised!”

The Qur’anic word /hayhat/ is used in the Qur’an twice which is in this very verse. It shows that the elite among the unbelievers imagined that the Resurrection was a very remote possibility indeed.

Surah al-Mu’minun – Verses 37-38

إِنَّ هِيَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا نَمُوتُ وَنَحْيَا وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَبْعُوثِينَ

إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا رَجُلٌ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا وَمَا نَحْنُ لَهُ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ

37. “There is nothing but our life in this world: we die and we live, and we shall not be raised again”

38. “He is naught but a man who has forged a lie about Allah, and we will not believe him.”

Some of unbelievers believed in Allah, but they did not accept the Resurrection and prophecy.

They rejected the saints and friends of Allah as well as the Divine promises with the claim of ‘preserving the sanctity of the Lord.’

In this noble verse, the other reason they employed to deny the Resurrection was by saying:

“There is nothing but our life in this world...”

They implied that there was nothing left of them after death one appeared out of nothing and returned to nothingness. One generation always dies and another generation takes its place.

The verse continues saying:

“...we die and we live, and we shall not be raised again.”

Finally, in the next verse, their argument became personal and they attacked their prophet's character, when they said:

“He is naught but a man who has forged a lie about Allah, and we will not believe him.”

The unbelievers thought that no wise man would believe in that prophet for they denied his Divine mission nor did they believe in his promises about the Resurrection.

Sometimes a society can decline to such an extent that the real supporters of religion are introduced as liars and the conceited unbelievers are called as supporters of Allah's sanctuaries.

Surah al-Mu'minun – Verses 39-41

قَالَ رَبِّ انصُرْنِي بِمَا كَذَبُونَ

قَالَ عَمَّا قَلِيلٍ لَّيُصْبِحُنَّ نَادِمِينَ

فَاَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّيْحَةُ بِالْحَقِّ فَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ غُرَاءً فَبُعْدًا لِلْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ

39. “ (Their prophet) said: ‘My Lord! Help me against what they belie!’.”

40. “ (Allah) said: ‘In a little while they will be remorseful’.”

41. “Then the Blast overtook them with justice, and We made them into a scum. So away with the unjust people!”

Prophets Only Rely On Allah

(“O my Lord...”)

The word ‘Rabb’ is one of the best words to use in prayer and supplication. After the word Allah, the most frequent word applied in the Qur’an is ‘Rabb’.

When the conceit and rebelliousness of the people of Thamud had exceeded its limit, they got more brazen in their unbelief and indecency attacking the character of the prophet himself and calling his prophetic arguments, miracles and revelations lies.

The Divine prophet invoked to Allah, as the verse says:

“(Their prophet) said: ‘My Lord! Help me against what they belie!’”

He (as) invoked, indicating that they did and said whatever they could and they accused me in whatever they desired, but You, O’ Lord, help me.

The next verse is an answer to him, it says:

“(Allah) said: ‘In a little while they will be remorseful’.”

They will become regretful when it would be of no benefit and there will be no way of return for them.

And this is what happened, as the next verse says:

“Then the Blast overtook them with justice...”

The deadly thunder descended with a terrible and horrible sound and destroyed everywhere. It piled up their corpses and it was so sudden and devastating that they did not have even a chance to escape from their houses and so they were buried in them, as the Holy Qur’an says:

“...and We made them into a scum...”

So away with the wrongdoing lot! These are the people of the Thamud who had defied their prophet Salih, and killed the female camel that, as a miracle of their prophet, had come out of the middle of a mountain.

The verse concludes:

“...So away with the unjust people!”

Points to Note

1– What Does ‘Sayhah’ mean?

The Arabic word /sayhah/ (here, the Cry) philologically means a very loud noise that comes out of the mouth of a human or animal. This noise is however not particular to them and is applied to every loud noise.

We read in the Holy Qur'an that some sinful nations were destroyed by it. A few of them are the nations of Thamud, Lot² and Shu'ayb.³

It is understood from other verses of the Qur'an that the punishment of the people of Thamud was occurred by a thunderbolt.

For example, it says:

"But if they turn away, men say: 'I have warned you of a thunderbolt like the thunderbolt of 'Ad and Thamud.'"⁴

This verse shows that the meaning of 'sayhah' is the terrible sound of thunderbolt. Can the terrifying noise of thunderbolt kill a crowd of people?

The answer to this question is surely positive, for we know that if sound waves exceed a certain limit, they can break building glass, and even destroy some buildings and disable some organs of the human body.

When an airplane breaks the sound barrier some people fall unconscious or some women abort their fetuses, and it breaks all of the glass in buildings of the locality.

It is natural that if the intensity of acoustic waves increases to certain levels, it can easily cause deadly disorders in the nervous system, brain vessels and in the heart, and it can kill people.

Of course, according to the Holy Qur'an, the end of this world would be with such a Cry, where it says:

"They await but a single Cry, which will overtake them while they are disputing".⁵

It is similar to Resurrection which begins with an awakening Blast.

The Qur'an says:

"There would be naught but a single cry, when behold! They shall all be brought before Us."⁶

2. The Islamic narrations say that it was only one person who killed the camel, however, the Holy Qur'an attributes the crime to the entire unbelieving nation who were Salih's opponents and it uses plural pronoun, where it says:

"So they hamstrung her..."⁷

This is because the Qur'an counts inward contentment with an ideological affair and maintaining a

relationship with it as participating in it. In fact, the plot to kill the animal did not have an individual aspect, for even the person who had committed the offence did not only rely on his power, but he was encouraged by the power and support of the group.

Certainly, such a task is not individual but collective and communal.

Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) once said:

*"The Camel of Thamud was slaughtered by one person, but Allah punished all of the Thamud people, for they all were content with this offence."*⁸

There are many narrations with the same meaning or like it from the Prophet (S) and the Imams (as) about this subject. They show the extraordinary importance that Islam gives to ideological commonality and support as well as acting in harmony with a program.

Here are a few of them:

The Prophet (S) said:

*"Someone who watches and observes an activity but dislikes it, is like a person who is absent when that activity is being performed; and someone who was absent at the time an activity was being performed but was inwardly content with it, is like a person who was present at the time of that activity and had taken part in it."*⁹

Imam Ali ibn Musa-ar-Rida (as) once said:

*"Whenever someone is murdered in the east and another person in the west is satisfied with the murder of that individual, this person is an abettor of the murderer before Allah."*¹⁰

Imam Ali (as) said:

*"One who is satisfied with an activity of a group is like a person who has taken part in that activity, but someone who has taken a practical part in the activity has committed two sins, one is the sin of committing the activity and the other is the sin of being satisfied with it."*¹¹

Islam sees ideological and intellectual affinities as very profound and extensive to the extent that they are not limited by time and place. A close reading of this meaningful speech of Imam Ali (as) in Nahj-ul-Balaqah will be enough:

When Imam Ali (as) overcame the enemy in the War of Jamal, and his comrades were happy with the victory of Islam over ignorance and division, one of them said:

"I wish my brother had participated in this war, so he, too, would have seen what success and victory Allah had given you."

Imam Ali (as) replied:

“Tell me! Was your brother with us (in his heart)?”

The man said:

“Yes.”

The Imam said:

“In that case, he was with us.”

Then he (as) continued:

“Rather, in this army of ours, even those persons were also present who are still in the loins of men and wombs of women! Shortly, time will bring them out and faith will get strength through them.”¹²

3. There is a relationship between the Qur’anic word /’itraf/ (life of the aristocracy) and the infidelity that denies the meeting with Allah.

Verily, it is true. Usually those who live this type of life enjoy a larger degree of freedom to pursue whatever kinds of sensual gratification and animal pleasure they wish. Accepting the Divine guardianship and the Resurrection would be a barrier to this kind of life, disturbing both the consciences of these aristocrats and making people brave enough to stand up against them.

They, therefore, remove the yoke of Allah’s servitude from their necks and deny the Origin and the Resurrection. As we read in the verses above, they insist that worldly, physical life is the only life and there is nothing after that, calling a liar whoever claims the contrary.

They believe that this is the only moment they have, and as such they must pick a flower from every garden and enjoy themselves on every occasion in these few days of life! In this manner, they justify their offenses and wrong actions.

Moreover, to live such luxurious lives without usurping others’ rights is usually impossible. Thus, they had to deny the Resurrection and the mission of the prophets to maintain their position and their lifestyle.

We see in our daily lives that the majority of those who live luxurious lives turn their backs, and look down their noses at every one.

These miserable blind-hearted people, who are at the mercy of their whims and caprices, go out of Allah’s shadow of obedience and grace whenever they wear the yoke of bondage to lusts and low desires, and open themselves up to becoming the slaves of other slaves.

Such persons, who are usually rich and corrupt, have dark hearts, unclean souls, and degenerate

thoughts. Their grand view of life may seem interesting to some people, but when one looks closely, it appears terrible and ugly, for they are agitated and disturbed by the absence of the peace caused by sin, the fear of death, and the decline of blessings.

In Majma'ul-Bayan, volume 5, page 168, Tabarsi narrates an interesting view of one of the interpreters of the Qur'an following verse 49 where saying:

“The worldly possessors of favour are led astray and perish, for verily ignorance and negligence overcome them and they care about nothing but this world and its pleasures.”

This fact is discerned in rich and prosperous countries where most of them are ridden with corruption. They not only do not care for the oppressed of the world but also they make new plans every day to exploit them and their resources.

Consequently their blessings are temporarily removed by wars and painful events that Allah causes to awaken them.

4. What is Qutha' (scum)?

In the verses above, we read that the people of Thamud were made into /qua' (scum) by the thunderbolt. The Arabic term /qua' originally means dried plants in the form of an untidy pile of muck that float on floodwaters. In addition, the scum produced in a boiling pot is also called /qua/.

Likening their corpses to /qua/ indicates their extreme weakness, frailty, defeat, and worthlessness, because straws on the floodwater are lighter and more trivial than anything there is. They have no choice and destination, for after the passing and subsiding of a flood no trace of them remains.

5. It is noteworthy that the last sentence of the verses above no longer particularize the issue to the people of Thamud, it now becomes generalized and Allah says:

“...So away with the unjust people!”

This is, in fact, the conclusion of all these verses, which means that what has been stated up to this point, the denial and negation of Divine signs and the denial of the Resurrection and their painful consequences, are not particular to a certain people, rather, all oppressors in the course of history share the same characteristics and the same fate.

Surah al-Mu'minun – Verses 42-43

ثُمَّ أَنشَأْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ قُرُونًا آخَرِينَ

مَا تَسْبِقُ مِنْ أُمَّةٍ أَجَلَهَا وَمَا يَسْتَأْخِرُونَ

42. “Then after them We brought forth other generations.”

43. “No nation may outstrip its term, nor do they postpone (it).”

Raising another generation when the previous one passes away is Allah’s way.

(“Then ... We brought forth...”)

Historical change is under the sovereignty of Allah. Every society and nation has a wisely specified term and a defined end.

Do not become self-confident when the Divine punishment is delayed, for Divine programs are not cancelled with the clamor of people, and historical changes are governed by the Divine discipline. History has some stable and well-established traditions.

Thus, in this noble verse, after the end of the story of the people of Thamud, the Holy Qur’an indicates that other nations were brought forth after them and before Moses (as).

The Qur’an says:

“Then after them We brought forth other generations.”

It is Allah’s grand rule and way of treatment that He does not terminate His constant outpouring of grace and emanation, and if a group of people becomes a barrier to human perfection, He will cause them to perish and will continue to lead this caravan on its way.

In the next verse Allah implies that each of these various nations and tribes had a fixed time, nations could neither hasten nor forestall their terms and whenever the decisive command for their extinction is issued, they will perish forthwith, neither sooner nor later.

The Arabic word /’ajal/ means the period and lifetime of an object, or it can sometimes mean an end or a termination. For example, we say that the due date (’ajal) of a particular debt is on such and such a day.

As we also said before, there are two kinds of /’ajal/ (termination):

A) Unavoidable: This is the fixed date of a person, a thing, or a people’s extinction, and it cannot be changed.

B) Conditional or pending: This can be increased or decreased as circumstances change.

This verse obviously refers to ‘the unavoidable kind of /’ajal/’.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 44

ثُمَّ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا تَتْرًا كُلَّ مَا جَاءَ أُمَّةً رَّسُولُهَا كَذَّبُوهُ فَاتَّبَعْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ بَعْضًا
وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أَحَادِيثَ فَبُعْدًا لِقَوْمٍ لَّا يُؤْمِنُونَ

44. “Then We sent Our messengers one after another. Whenever there came unto a people their messenger, they belied him, so We caused some of them to follow others (in disaster) and We made them stories. So away with a people that do not believe!”

Sending prophets to various nations is one of the Ways of Allah. (Every society needs a leader. Thought and science alone do not suffice man, for there are many affairs that can only be realized through revelation). Allah decides historical transitions and the destruction of obstinate nations is a manifestation of His imprecation and curse.

(“...and We made them stories...”)

Therefore, this noble verse indicates the fact that the call of the prophets has never been terminated during the course of history.

The verse says:

“Then We sent Our messengers one after another...”

The Arabic word /tatra/ is derived from the word /watr/, meaning successively or one after another. And /tawatur-i-’axbar/ means bits of news that arrive one after the other by means of which one is convinced with certainty.

This word originally is derived from the word /watr/ which means ‘bowstring’, for it is attached to the ends of the bow at its sack and brings them closer together.

(From the point of view of the structure of the word, /tatra/ was originally/ watra/ but, in Arabic, its ‘w’ was changed to a ‘t’).

These heavenly teachers successively came and left but obstinate nations were still unbelieving in such a way that, as the Qur’an says:

“...Whenever there came unto a people their messenger, they belied him...”

When this denial, scandalizing and infidelity exceeded their limits and the final argument had been already presented,

“...so We caused some of them to follow others (in disaster)...”

They were so completely exterminated that only their stories remained among people.

As He continues saying:

“...and We made them stories...”

Sometimes a generation becomes extinct, but some of its people survive, existing as sparse populations here and there. Sometimes, however, a generation is wiped out in such a way that only its name remains in the pages of history and in the conversations of people. Such has always been the case among those rebellious nations, the latter group.

At the end of the verse, like in the previous verses, the Qur'an adds:

“...So away with a people that do not believe!”

These painful and terrible fates were the results of their unbelief, and therefore they were not particular to just those nations mentioned in this verse. Every oppressing, obstinate, and atheistic group will taste such a fate and it will be so utterly destroyed that only its name will remain in history and among humanity.

They will be away from the grace of Allah not only in this world but also in the Hereafter, because the objective meaning of the verse is absolute and encompasses all.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 45-46

ثُمَّ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَىٰ وَأَخَاهُ هَارُونَ بِآيَاتِنَا وَسُلْطَانٍ مُّبِينٍ

إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا وَكَانُوا قَوْمًا عَالِينَ

45. “Then We sent Moses and his brother Aaron with Our signs and a manifest authority, ”

46. “Unto Pharaoh and his chiefs, but they behaved insolently and they were an arrogant people.”

The Arabic word /sultan/ is a synonym for an ‘evidence’, for someone can often dominate people’s hearts with logic, reasoning, and rational and practical argument.

Up till now the subject was the nations that arose and disappeared before the time of Moses (as), Allah’s arch-prophet, but here the Qur’an briefly refers to the uprising of Moses and Aaron themselves against

the Pharaonic system and the destiny of this conceited nation.

The Qur'an says:

“Then We sent Moses and his brother Aaron with Our signs and a manifest authority, ”

The objective of the Qur'anic word /'ayat/ (Signs) is the Torah and the miracles (the nine Signs) that Allah had bestowed upon Moses, the son of 'Imran.

And the objective of the Arabic phrase /sultanin mubin/ (manifest authority) is the strong logical argument Moses presented and the powerful reasons he gave against the claims of pharaonism.

In the next verse, the Qur'an implies that Allah sent Moses and his brother Aaron to Pharaoh and his aristocrat and proud elites supported by these signs (miracles) and manifest authority.

The verse says:

“Unto Pharaoh and his chiefs, but they behaved insolently...”

This verse indicates the fact that the root of all corruption was found with them and no nation could be reformed unless its elites and authorities change and reform.

Despite the compelling arguments and impressive miracles of Moses, Pharaoh and his companions became conceited and did not accept Allah's signs and the manifest authority and they continued to oppress the people.

The verse concludes saying:

“...and they were an arrogant people.”

Surah al-Mu'minun – Verses 47-48

فَقَالُوا أَنْوْمِنُ لِبَشَرَيْنِ مِثْلِنَا وَقَوْمُهُمَا لَنَا عَابِدُونَ

فَكَذَّبُوهُمَا فَكَانُوا مِنَ الْمُهْلَكِينَ

47. “And they said: ‘Shall we believe in two humans like ourselves while their people are our slaves?’”

48. “So they belied both of them and became of those who were destroyed.”

Moses and Aaron (as) were from the generation of the Children of Israel, while the people of Pharaoh saw themselves as superior to the Children of Israel based upon the latter's enslavement.

That is why the Qur'an implies that one of the clear signs of their seeking superiority was that they said they should not believe in too human beings who were like themselves, 13 and whose tribe, the children of Israel, were their slaves. So, they believed that not only they should not accept them, but also that tribe had to be their servants for ever.

The verse says:

“And they said: ‘Shall we believe in two humans like ourselves while their people are our slaves?’”

They accused the prophets of self-aggrandizement when they themselves were the worst of supremacists, a fact that is clearly seen in their words. In their arrogance they dismissed the Truth and accused Moses (as) and Aaron (as) of being two liars and, because of this, they were destroyed and lost their empire and their rule.

The holy verse says:

“So they belied both of them and became of those who were destroyed.”

Thus, finally, the most powerful obstacle to the call of Moses and the greatest enemy of the Children of Israel was destroyed and the period of Divine education and training for the Children of Israel began.

Surah al-Mu'minun – Verse 49

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَهْتَدُونَ

49. “And certainly We gave Moses the Book, that they may be rightly guided.”

The prophets support their own claims with their powerful reasoning and their miracles, whereas the unbelievers and illegitimate rulers assert theirs through subjugation and enslavement of people.

Allah (s.w.t.) sent the Turah to Moses (as) and called the Children of Israel to implement its Divine programs, as the noble verse says:

“And certainly We gave Moses the Book, that they may be rightly guided.”

One should note that the previous holy verses usually mentioned both Moses and his brother in the dual tense during the phase of struggle with pharaonism, but in this verse we see that only Moses is named

with regard to the revelation of the heavenly Book.

This is because he is an arch-prophet and is the recipient of a new revelation and a new religion. Moreover, at the time when the Turah was sent down to Moses (as) he was alone on Mount Sinai and his brother, Aaron, remained to represent him among the Children of Israel.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 50

وَجَعَلْنَا ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَأُمَّهُ آيَةً وَءَاوَيْنَاهُمَا إِلَى رَبْوَةٍ ذَاتِ قَرَارٍ وَمَعِينٍ

50. “And We made the son of Mary and his mother a Sign, and We sheltered them upon a height quiet, secure and watered by a stream.”

The station of prophethood is the highest position among mankind and it is for this reason the name of Jesus precedes that of his mother,

(“...the son of Mary and his mother a sign...”)

In the explanation of the biography of Divine prophets, here at last the Qur'an shortly refers to Jesus (as) and his mother, Mary.

It says:

“And We made the son of Mary and his mother a Sign...”

The phrase, ‘the son of Mary’, instead of saying ‘Jesus’, draws our attention to the fact that he was conceived without the participation of a father which made his birth one of the great signs of Allah’s power.

Since this exceptional birth is related to both Jesus and his mother, both of them are counted as one Sign, for his mother herself had an exceptional birth and was also exceptionally pure. They were, in fact, one truth with two different aspects.

The verse then mentions some of the blessings and favours bestowed upon Jesus and his mother.

It says:

“...and We sheltered them upon a height quiet, secure and watered by a stream.”

The Arabic word /rabwah/ is derived from the word /riba/, meaning excess and increase. Here it means a high land. The Qur’anic word /ma’in/ derived from the word /ma’n/ means the flow of water, thus /ma’ in

ma'in/ means running water. Some have considered it to be derived from the word /'ayn/, meaning water that is not hidden and can be discerned by eye.

This sentence conveys to us the safe, comfortable and peaceful place that Allah gave this mother and child so that they would be safe from the plots and machinations of their enemies and could fulfil their duties peacefully.

The opinions of interpreters are divided on the location of this site. Some believe that Nazareth (or Nasareh)¹⁴ was the hometown of Jesus (as).

From the time of his birth, some of the enemies, that knew about his birth and his future role, plotted to murder him, so Allah (s.w.t.) saved him (as) and his mother by taking them away from Nazareth and sending them to this secure place, full of blessings.

Some say that it refers to Egypt, for Jesus and his mother had spent part of their lifetimes there.

Another viewpoint is that the site was in a desert in Palestine and Allah had made it peaceful and safe for the mother and the child by causing water to flow and provided them food from a dried-up date palm.

However, this verse shows that Allah constantly supports His messengers and those who support them. When we deserve the protection of Allah, it would not matter whether or not all of our enemies combine against us, they would not have any power to harm us if He does not will it.

The other point to be noted is that being isolated and lacking in physical support, or having only a few defenders, are no indicators of defeat.

1. Bihar, Vol. 32, p. 97

2. Sura Al-Hajj, No. 15, verse 73

3. Sura Hud, No. 11, verse 94

4. Sura Fusslat, No. 41, verse 13

5. Sura Ya-sin, No. 36, verse 49

6. Ibid

7. Sura Hud, verse 65

8. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, speech 1-2

9. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 11, p.409

10. Ibid. p. 410

11. Ibid p. 411

12. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, speech 13

13. Man is called /basher/ because the face and the skin of his body is bare, contrast to the animals whose bodies are usually covered by a natural clothing. In fact, since they lack the ability of providing clothes Allah has naturally provided them with it, while for man, He relied it on his intelligence and talent.

14. It is a historic city of Lower Galilee, in northern Palestine. It is the largest Arab city in the country. In the New Testament Nazareth is associated with Jesus as his boyhood

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