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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

In this notebook I have collected together certain queries and problems that arose during my study of the Quran. Many of these have been discussed or referred to in the Notes themselves.

The queries are of two types: those relating to the translation or rendering of certain Quranic terms and some Quranic verses; and those which relate to points which are not clear to me. The first type arise mainly because of my ignorance of Arabic; I am unsure whether my renderings are correct or mistaken.

The problems relate to certain difficulties which arise in the context of the Quran as divine revelation. They relate to aspects of the Quran which raise questions and, even, doubts. Many of these are advanced by critics as arguments against the Muslim claim that the Quran is divine revelation. I find that there are satisfactory answers to all of them, and I have recorded these. However, these answers require modifications in the orthodox view, but modifications which, in my opinion, do not sacrifice any essentials.

Some pages have been left blank initially for recording later comments, views etc.

CHAPTER I - TRANSLATIONS

SECTION 1 - TERMS

Mustaqim

1. I have discussed this term in detail in para 20, p. ??, Vol I.
2. In brief, from its use in **17:35** and **26:182** in the term *qistas il-mustaqim*, and relating it to the word *qimah*, I have conjectured that its correct significance is : that which truly and fully substitutes, or provides a true and full equivalence, or seeks to do so”. To my mind the word being in *Ba’ba Istif’al* would support such a sense. A further supporting argument is its use in the Quran (in the term *sirati mustaqim*) in this sense (full details at pp. ??- ??, Vol I).
3. Even from first principles one can arrive at this. The basic meaning of *qama* (root QWM) is to stand. *Mustaqim* is thus he who desires to stand. In the context of the usage of this term this basic meaning makes no sense until it is qualified, i.e., he who desires to stand (like Him, for Him, in Him).

Anab

4. I have discussed this term in some detail at para 44, p.??, Vol I.
5. The problem here is peculiar. According to P.’s Lughat the word, according to Taj, Muhit and Raghib, means substitute, surrogate, one taking the place of another. Yet in all the translations of the Quran that I have seen it is rendered as something else (turning, returning etc.)
6. I have shown at pp. ?? - ??, Vol I, how all the usages of this word in the Quran can fit the lexicon meaning. Naturally, all these verses with the word rendered “turn” are also grammatically correct. But what does this mean? Allah is not a physical object, so no physical turning is involved. Therefore, it is a direction to adopt that relationship is one of substitution. Then let us use the word in its correct lexical meaning!
- 7A. The term is invariably qualified by *ilai-hi*. It is true *ilai* usually means “to, towards etc.” but it also means “for” and “in”, and is so used in the Quran.

7B. Can this also be the plural of su'ah? Refers to second para, p. ??, Vol I.

SECTION 2 - VERSES

10:61

1. In this verse occurs the phrase, : “*illa kunna ‘alaikum shuhud-a*”. Its literal translation is, “but We are upon you witnesses”. Prima facie there appears to be an error here since Allah becomes many witnesses through “*shuhud-an*”.
2. On P. ??, Vol I, I have rendered this phrase as, “but We are through you manifested”. Is this a possible version? Lexically?
3. In some other places in the Quran this plural form also occurs, eg, **21:78, 79, 81, 82.** (see p. ?? below).

11:88

4. This passage contains the phrase: “*wa ma uridu an ukhalifkum ila ma anhakum ‘anhu*”. P. renders it: “It is not possible for me to adopt that which I am dissuading you from”. He bases this on the statement in *Taj al-Ains* that the phrase “*khalafahu ila-al sha ‘i*” means to forbid a thing and then desire it. MA. renders it : “I desire not to act in opposition to you, in that which I forbid you”. *M. Sher Ali*: “I do not desire to do against you the (very) thing which I ask you not to do”. In the context of the verse, and of adjacent verses constituting the whole passage, these renderings make no sense.

MA’s is factually wrong; he is acting in opposition to them. As for *M. Sher Ali*, the thing he was forbidding them from was, *inter alia*, defrauding people of their things (none of the others can be construed as “against” anybody), and it makes no sense for him to say that he would not defraud them. Similarly P’s version has no connection with the context.

It is also clear that these versions (and the ones they are based on) are framed from derived meanings, opinions etc, and are not founded on clear-cut lexical meanings of the words involved.

5. I have discussed this verse at pp. ?? and ??, Vol I, and have rendered this phrase thus: “I desire not that you substitute (for Him) upto your extreme limit in this”.

This is based on taking the word *ukhalif* to mean the verb “substitute”, and *anha* as “extreme limit”. Both these are taken from root meanings. Are these meanings possible? Is the sentence grammatically possible?

- 6A. In the next sentence is the term: “ma astata’tu”. Rendered by all as: “so far as I am able”. Would it be incorrect to render it: “as far as possible”? That is, making it general, or applied to the hearers, rather than to the speaker.
- 6B. In the last sentence is a phrase very common in the Quran: ‘*alaihi tawakkaltu*. Usually rendered: In Him I trust. Would there be any lexical objection to rendering it: To Him I entrust myself? This latter is a meaning more appropriate to the overall Quranic context.

18:46

7. The last word in this verse is “*amal-an*”. Has it any other significances than those in P.’s *Lughat*? Something to do with return, restoration etc.?

See Note 4 on p. ??, Vol I.

25: 69-70

8. Do these verses apply only to the fornicator in **25:68** or can they also be applied to the other wrong-doers mentioned in this verse?

See first para on p. ??, Vol I.

30:30

9. I have discussed this verse at pp. ??, Vol I. The questions which arise in it are :-

- (a) In the first sentence can the word *hanif-an* qualify *al-din*? In the renderings with me it is used to qualify to action, or the person asked to act. Can it be rendered : “Set your face to the *hanif-an din*” ?
- (b) P. insists that *fitrah* cannot be rendered “nature” because this is a later meaning assigned to the word. Do the lexicologists accept this? Even if correct, there must be something in the original usage of this word akin to this meaning which caused this assignment.
- (c) Can *fitrah* Allah relate to the *din* or *hanif-an* (or both) of the previous sentence, or must it stand by itself? Arberry has related it to *hanif-an*, by which he understands *Abraham*.

31:12

10. I have given a rendering of this verse at P.??, Vol II, expressing doubts about its correctness. But on re-examination I do not see much cause for such doubt. Is there any reason preventing such a rendering?

34:39

11. This verse contains the phrase “*fahuwa yukhlifu-hu*”. Can it be rendered: “so it is in His place”?
In **43:60** *yakhlufin* is used in this sense.
Referred to on p. ??, Vol I.

35:32

12. It contains the phrase “*bi'idhi Allah*”. Is there any objection to rendering it as: “according to Allah’s intent”?
Verse at P. ??, Vol II.

39:23

13. It has the phrase : “*ahsan al-hadith*”. Is there any objection to rendering it: “the latest communication of the best”? Can *al-hadith* qualify *ahsan* instead of vice versa?

In **21:2** and **26:5** there is the phrase “*dhikr-in ... muhdath-in*” which is rendered as “new reminder”.

The verse is at p. ??, Vol I.^{1**}

41:6

14. Contains the word “*astaqimu*”. Any objection to rendering it: “seek to stand”? Even if *mustaqim* doesn’t mean substitution.
Verse at p. ??, Vol I
For usage of *ilayhi* in this sense (for; aiming towards and hence on account of) see **4:142** and **5:6**.

57:19

15. Contains the phrase: *Shuhada 'indor rabbihim*. Can “*inda* be rendered as “of”?
Referred to at p. ??, Vol I.

13:21

16. Contains the phrase “*amar Allah bihi an yuwasala*”. Can this be rendered: Allah has directed with (or for) Him be joined?
Referred to at p. ??, Vol I

¹ * 1. Even if not, the general sense of the verse remains pertinent. The emphasis is on *al-hadith*, the new, the latest, message, a revelation *mutashabih-an mathani*. These latter define its relationship to earlier revelation.

CHAPTER II - QUERIES

This chapter lists queries that arose in studying the Quran, due to lack of clarity in my understanding of the concerned passages.

21:78, 79, 81, 82 etc.

1. In all these various roles of Allah are mentioned, but all in the plural, i.e., witnesses, doers, knowers, guardians. This probably occurs in other verses I have not yet noticed. (It also occurs in **10:61**, but there is a possible solution there; see p. ?? above).

A plural instead of singular is used in **23:99**, **15:23**.

Why?

18: 80-81

2. In these two verses the speaker (Moses's travelling companion) suddenly changes from the singular to the plural in referring to himself, reverting again to the singular in the next verse. Why?

Inheritance

3. In the verses prescribing laws for inheritance several queries arise. I have raised these in discussing this subject at:-
 - (a) Para 6, p. ??, Vol IV
 - (b) Para 7, p. ??, Vol IV
 - (c) Para 9, p. ??, Vol IV

Zihar

4. According to MA. This custom was abolished by **33:4**, while **58:2-4** is an earlier revelation and merely laid down means of reversing such a declaration. This is probably the orthodox view.

The Quran does not support it. **33:4** does not abolish or prohibit *zihar*; the one sentence it uses referring to this custom is found also in **58:2** along with much stronger condemnation of the practice. If there is to be inferred any prohibition it is much more tenable from **58:2** rather than **33:4**. But this is prevented by **58: 3-4** laying down methods of expiration for retracting *zihar*.

5. Two possibilities arise:-

- (a) The practice was never abolished as such but declared to be reprehensible. A penalty for its retraction was laid down. It also came under the provisions of **2:226** whereby after 4 months the wife can get a divorce. The terms used there relates to *ila*; *zihar* is also a form of *ila*.
- (b) Or, **58:2** does abolish it, and **58:3-4** refer to cases of *zihar* already in force in which there is desire to retract rather than divorce. The difficulty with this view is that in **58:3** the word *yuzahiram* is in the present/future tense, not the past. Also the retraction mentioned is in a generalized rule form, and not a once-for-all step to finish with this practice.

The first possibility is most likely the correct one.

60:10 & 12

6. These verses relate to the examining or testing of women who come as *muhajirs* and claim to be Muslims. According to MA. this *sura* was revealed after the Treaty of *Hudaibiyah*. Two questions arise :-

- (a) Why examine and test only women? Why not men too?
- (b) If this is really a revelation after *Hudaibiyah* then does it not violate the terms of the treaty, one of which is said to have been that Muslims feeling from *Mecca* to *Medina* would be returned? Or, was there in fact no such provision? ²

*

Dowry

7. There is some difficulty in understanding the Quranic references to dowry. I have discussed the problem at pp. ??-??, Vol III.

²

60:10 & 12

- 1. I have been able to investigate the matter further. The orthodox answer to the two queries would be:-
 - (a) Because women are inferior to men, more crooked and unreliable.
 - (b) The treaty referred to *rajal* (men) and did not cover women (as stated in some versions).
- 2. However, I think the correct answer is that there was infact no such provision in the treaty. I come to this conclusion from an examination of the relevant *ahadith* in the *Sahih Bukhari*. The position is set out below. (For a detailed discussion see my article in the Muslim World of January 1981).

CHAPTER III - PROBLEMS

These are mainly problems which arise in the context of the Quran as divine revelation, and can be, and often are, advanced as arguments casting doubt on this.

Textual Errors

1. Certain statements in the Quran to the effect that Allah is its guardian (e.g., **15:9**) are taken to imply that there can be no textual errors in the Quranic text as now with us. However, there are certain items which appear to be errors in the recording or compilation of the text. The ones I have noticed are:-
 - (a) **5:3**. A portion of this verse (“*This day have those who disbelieved despaired ...Islam as a religion*”) has nothing to do with the rest of the verse, both the preceding and succeeding portions. It clearly appears to be a separate verse wrongly inserted into the middle of another one.
 - (b) **66:12**. The words *fi hi* are used³, whereas in **21:91** the identical sentence occurs with *fi ha*. From other references to the subject it is clear that the latter is the correct version. In any case one of them is incorrect.
 - (c) **3:95**. This may or may not be an error: *Bakkah* is used instead of *Makkah*. The need felt for explaining it away shows that it was not a commonly used synonym. I do not know how adequate is the explanation that in Arabic and can be indiscriminately used in place of each other (P. in his *Lughat* based on *Taj* and *Raghib*. P. ??).
 - (d) Plurals. There are several occasions where the plural form is used whereas it should have been the singular (listed in paras 1 and 2 p. ?? above).
2. Comment. The possibility of errors in the text now with us need not be ruled out. In the Prophet’s time the Arabic script was not properly developed. (Watt calls it “a scriptio defectiva which was more a mnemonic device than a system of writing” - The Formative Period of Islamic Thought; Edinburg; 1973; p. 262). It was only gradually improved and this process was completed towards the end of the 9th century.

³

66:12

A possible reconciliation between this verse **21:91** is possible if one adopts a rendering I find in *Allama Mashriqi*. He takes the *hi* of **66:12** as referring to her *farj*.

Then there were variant readings, and a set of seven were more or less accepted early in the 10th century, though some scholars held out for 10 or even 14.

All this provides scope for some errors to have crept in. This possibility is vigorously denied by Muslims because they hold that every word of the Quran is Allah's word and is applicable for all time to come. However, as discussed in my Notes, the Quran's every word is not Allah's word in the sense in which Muslims generally take it. What is permanently significant and applicable are the fundamentals of the Quran, not its every word. From this point of view if there are a few textual errors in the Quran they do not detract in the least bit from its significance, completeness and authority.

Proper research can discover and point out such errors, and (doubtless in some distant future) a consensus of Muslims can correct the text they have.

Factual Errors

3. The Quran appears to contain certain factual errors, as outlined below.
4. **5:116.** This verse refers to Jesus asking people to take him and Mary as gods besides Allah. The obvious conclusion is that the Quran's view of the Christian doctrine of the trinity in this. This is the one occasion on which the Quran spells out who were the other gods the Christians accepted, though it makes a few references to their having 3 in all. With this latter figure of 3 specifically stated (eg. **4:171**), there can be no other interpretation of **5:116** except that these are the 3, ie, Allah, Jesus and Mary. The word used is *ilahini* ("two gods"), and not "gods", besides Allah. Nor can this be explained away by saying that some Christian sect in Arabia held this belief; the language is general and relates to Jesus' teaching, not the belief of any Christians. (There appears to be an indirect reference to the same thing in **5:75**, ie, referring to Jesus and Mary: "they both used to eat food").
5. **9:30.** This verse states that the Jews say that *Ezra* ('*Uzayr*) is the some of Allah while the Christians say the *Masih* is. It is a fact that the Jews do not so regard *Ezra* or anyone else who could be '*Uzayr*, and have never done so. Even if it be admitted that (as some Muslim historians are said to claim) there was a sect among the Jews who did hold this belief it must have been some minuscule one in or around *Medina*. But this would account for the Prophet holding such a view, not Allah! The verse does not say or imply that only some of the Jews hold this view; it is a general statement covering all Jews, just as all Christians are covered in the same sentence.

- 6A. Mary. *Maryam*, the mother of Jesus, is referred to in **3:34** and **66:12** as the daughter of ‘*Imran* and in **19:28** as the sister of *Harum*. Is it a mere coincidence that, in the Bible, *Aaron*, brother of Moses, had a sister called *Maryam* and that his father’s name was *Amran*?
- 6B. **71:23**. In this Noah’s opponents name the idols they worship. But these are the names of idols worshipped by the Arabs in the Prophet’s time. It is extremely unlikely that the same idols, or their names, persisted and moved from those people to the Arabs. These idols named were worshipped each by a different Arab tribe and there appears to be no trace of them outside Arabia (i.e., in their original home). Besides, according to the Quran, Noah’s idol-worshipping opponents were drowned in the flood, so how could these idols and their worship have remained? (According to *Maulana Mandoodi* some of them escaped alive and it was from them that later generations going astray learnt the names of the old idols!).
- 6C. Haman. He is referred to as the minister of Pharaoh. But this was the name of the minister of *Ahasuerus*. (This needs further checking as to where he is so designated - in the Old Testament or Jewish books or historical record).
7. **5:20**. In this verse Moses asks his people to remember Allah’s past favours, ie, the raising of prophets among them, making them kings, giving them what He gave not to any other people. From what is known of the history of the Jews, before the time of Moses they never had the power, prominence and plenty that Moses’s words seems to imply. These came afterwards. On the other hand many other powerful and prosperous kingdoms and empires rose in that area in that period.
8. Comment. If the Quran is Allah’s word in the sense generally taken, i.e., every word of it is Allah’s and the Prophet was merely a neutral transmitter, then there can be no factual errors in it. But there are some. Whatever contortions apologists may perform I don’t think that one can honestly deny that at least the statements in paras 4 and 5 above are factually wrong. (In the case of the other three one might concede that we don’t have the necessary information to decide unequivocally).

In my opinion such errors can be adequately accounted for by the view of revelation that I have discussed in Vol. IV (paras 9-15, pp. ??-??), namely that though the inspiration is divine the “revelation” as uttered by the prophet is formulated in his mind, and incorrect knowledge existing in the prophet’s mind can appear in the revelation. The factual errors listed above are presumably such items of wrong belief.

Accounts of Past Prophets

9. The Quran contains accounts of several prophets of earlier times. These create grave problems. It would be no exaggeration to say that, at face value, they contradict many fundamentals of the Quran. Also, many of the prophets described are the very antithesis of the Prophet. I have not tried to tabulate a comprehensive list of the troublesome items, but below give some of the more obvious as examples.
10. Miracles. The Quran frequently states that every prophet sent by Allah was a human being like the Prophet. But many of the prophets referred to in the Quran freely performed miracles, and at least one (Jesus) was a miraculous person. I will only mention some of these.

The Quran confirms the virgin birth of Jesus, and his ascension to heaven. I do not think that the terminology used can give any other honest interpretation. Also, if these Christian dogmas were wrong, the Quran should have refuted them directly, as it does in the case of the Trinity, much less use words which support this version. Then there are his other miracles like raising the dead etc.

Moses and Pharaoh's encounter also includes miracles, eg, the staff that becomes a snake, the sea-parting like mountains etc.

Then there is the person who died for a 100 years and came alive again (**2:259**), and the youths in the cave who also came alive after some centuries (Ch. 18). And Jonah swallowed and regurgitated alive by a fish (**37:144**). And David and Solomon with their birds and *jinn*s and the dead body sitting on the throne. Infact, the story of Solomon and Sheba could compare favourably with similar stories in the Arabian Nights. Abraham and the cut-up birds?

Then Noah is said to have lived for 950 years (**29:14**). (The Bible also gives this as his age).

11. Direct Requital. In practically every case recounted, when the people concerned rejected their prophet, Allah sent some calamity on them and destroyed them. But this does not fit into the Quran's teaching on the subject of requital, nor does it accord with observed and recorded experience. It never applied to the Prophet; he had to carry on his own long struggle. If those accounts are true then there must have been at some stage a radical change in Allah's method of dealing with human beings. But He says there is never any change in His ways.

12. Strange Incidents and Implications. To name a boy so that he may not later only a few. Lot offering his daughters to the lustful crowd. Moses's companion slaying cause trouble to his parents (**18:80**). The several dreams in *Yusuf's* story with their implication of the pre-determination of human fate.

If Moses's encounter with Pharaoh's enchanters did not involve a miracle then it becomes a contest between two sets of magicians, and Pharaoh's magicians fall down prostrate before Allah as the greater magician.

13. Comment. In the main there have been adopted two methods of dealing with the problems presented by these accounts. The orthodox view is to accept them as literally true. The unsettling implications (and contradictory evidence) are either not realized or ignored. The other, modern, method is to try and somehow explain away the problems, usually by taking the language used as metaphorical.

P. exemplifies this latter tendency. He believes that each one of these accounts is a true narrative of actual historical events, but the language used is often metaphorical. He does not seem to realise that in solving one difficulty by this method, he creates several others. Moses's staff provides a typical example. According to P. this was really the laws revealed to Moses, but Allah always calls it a staff. To show how strong and powerful these laws were the Quran always uses the metaphor of the staff becoming a great snake running about. When Allah asks Moses his opinion of the laws granted to him, He asks him about his staff, and Moses reveals his high opinion of them by saying that he can lean on this staff, and beat down leaves for his sheep with it, and also do many other things with it (**20:17-18**). Then, Pharaoh's men produce their arguments but the Quran calls them ropes and cords and Moses's arguments are again the staff-snake which eats them all up. And so on in practically every case.

P. does not raise or answer the question that such a view immediately raises: why? Why should Allah do this? If He is recounting factual accounts of actual events, why not use plain simple clear language? The use of metaphorical language in describing things like Allah's actions or the Hereafter is understandable, but these are things that actually happened in the past. Why fill their accounts with metaphors? The possible answers raise more difficulties than the metaphor-school solves. Perhaps, Allah is not very good at language, rather poor in choice of words, with an oblique, confusing style. For example, He rejects the Christian contention that Jesus ascended to God, but unfortunately uses words like *rafi'uka ilaihi* (raise you to Me) (**3:54**) or *rafa'ahu Allah ilaihi* (Allah raised him to Him) (**4:158**), a mistake even a schoolboy could avoid. Or, perhaps, there's another possibility. Maybe Allah was being very clever. He used this language so that the Jews and

Christians would be deceived into thinking that the Quran confirms their beliefs (and thus wouldn't oppose the Prophet or Islam) while clever Muslims would discover what Allah really meant. Regrettably, the people who actually got deceived were the bulk of Muslims. And so on.

Where stretching language even does not remove the difficulty, P. falls back on blind faith. For example, he uses language to reduce Noah's 950 year's age to 200 years, and then dismisses the whole issue with what amounts to a *bi-la kayf*, ie, we accept whatever the Quran states; it must be true, never mind how. Actually, this whole metaphor approach can only be accepted on the basis of blind faith, implicitly held if not overtly. It cannot stand an honest scrutiny made without preconceptions.

But blind faith, and the attitude based on *bi-la kayf*, are diametrically opposed to the Quran's teaching. From on end to the other the Quran is full of exhortations to observe, think, reflect, ponder, consider, weigh, to use one's eyes and ears and minds. Even as regards its most fundamental postulate, the existence of Allah, it does not ask for blind faith, but advances various reasons and arguments in support of its assertion. It is a negation of the Quran to try and explain away its problems by hypotheses or solutions which depend on blind faith for their acceptance as valid.

Let us see what the Quran itself has to say about these accounts of earlier prophets etc:-

- (a) It generally refers to them as *anba'* (3:43; 11:49; 11:120; 7:101; 14:9; 20:99;) which means news or a report. In 12:3 and 12:111 they are referred to as *qasas*, which means a report, an account, tale, story.
- (b) In 14:9 and 20:99 the *anba's* is said to be of those before the Prophet, or of what has gone before. Elsewhere they are referred to as *anba'il ghaib* (3:43; 11:49). *Gaib* means what is not present before the eyes, not what is unknown. This is clarified in several references which say the Prophet was not present when various incidents described took place (3:43; 12:102; 28:44-46).
- (c) 11:49 says: "*These are of the anba'il-ghaib which We inspire to you. You did not know them, (neither) you nor your people, before this...*". If the word *ta'lamu* is taken as becoming aware of something which was unknown before, then this Quranic verse is factually incorrect, since some knowledge of these earlier prophets etc was with the Arabs. But '*ilm* is a word used (as against several other similar ones) for knowing the reality of a thing, to discover and recognize its real nature. This sense of the word is confirmed by 14:9 where, referring to the earlier peoples, it says: *None knows them but*

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Allah. Obviously the ordinary sense of knowing is inapplicable. A further indication is in **12:3** where, in the same context, the Prophet is told that before learning these accounts through revelation he was one of the *ghafil*. The basic meaning of this is: being unmindful, inattentive, i.e., unaware of the real significance of some thing.

- (d) The Quran gives two reasons for dealing with these accounts. In **11:120** it says this is to strengthen through them the Prophet's heart. (the rest of the verse relates to the whole Quran, not just these accounts). In **12:111** it says that in them is '*ibrat* for persons of understanding and wisdom (Here again the rest of the verse relates to the whole Quran). The root 'BR means to move from one place or state to another. '*Ibrat* is to arrive, by means of something visible or apparent, at some invisible but underlying conclusions about it or arising from it about other things. In **16:66-67** the Quran says there is '*ibrat* in the cattle (also in **23:21**) and the fruits and plants etc, and that surely there is in them an *ayat* for those who use their reason⁴. An *ayat* is a sign through which one discovers some other thing; an outer phenomenon indicative of an inner truth or reality. In **59:2**, referring to the defeat of the Jews of *Madinah*, it asks those who have eyes to take '*ibrat* from it.
- (e) In many places the Quran treats these accounts in a purely formalized or stylized fashion, all conforming to one pattern. For example, in **7:59-102** the accounts of several prophets are given but each of them uses almost identical words to his people, and each people replies in the same words. The same thing happens in **14:9-15** and **Ch. 26**. There is even an account where the same pattern (including practically the same language) is used but neither the prophet nor the people are identified (**36:13-29**).
- (f) In **16:103** the Quran refers to the charge of the Prophet's opponents that he was taught the Quran by some mortal. The reference in **25:5** may be to the same charge; here the opponents claim that these are stories of the ancients which the Prophet has got written by someone, and which are read out to him daily. In **16:103** the Quran's reply is that the person they refer to is a foreigner whose language is not clear Arabic. Implicitly it admits that there was a foreigner in contact with the Prophet. He would most likely be a Jew or Christian.

⁴ These tales are called *ayat* in **2:252; 3:57; 18:9; 23:30**. In several others the word *ayat* is used but could refer to some particular aspect of the tale (**15:75**; frequently in Ch. 26; **27:52; 29:15; 29:24; 34:19**

From what the Quran says in relation to these accounts, and its overall scheme, it is possible to formulate a hypothesis which, while remaining fully true to the Quran and consistent with its implications, will overcome the problems raised by these accounts (if understood in other ways). This is outlined below.

These accounts of earlier prophets and others are NOT factual, historical accounts. They are parables, moral tales. Of the same nature as, for example, the accounts of Adam in the Quran. Whereas the latter may be called the Parable of the Prophet. They contain truths about the system of divine revelation, the essential nature of revelation, the task of the prophet and the usual fate which befalls him, the response of people to revelation, the motives underlying this response, and the inevitable outcome of rejection of revelation. Instead of illustrating these truths through stories of nameless prophets and nameless peoples (as in 36:13-29), the Quran uses the stories of prophets actually known to its audience. This method would have vastly greater impact. And also be much more effective in its other purpose, viz, strengthening the Prophet's heart.

For us, therefore, the correct approach to these accounts is to derive '*ibrat* from them, i.e., by means of the surface descriptions discover the underlying truths and principles. Other than that these descriptions carry no significance. They are obviously not true historical narratives.

The question immediately arises: even though this be Allah's purpose, why did He not recount the actual facts as befell these prophets and their peoples instead of fictitious tabs about them? The answer is provided by the hypothesis instead about the nature of revelation which the Quran seems to support. Namely, that though the mainspring, the source, of revelation is Truth and Reality (*Al Haqq*) it is formulated in the mind of the prophet. Thus, in its outer form it cannot transcend the prophet's mind. If accounts of earlier prophets to be recounted in revelation these narratives are constructed out of the knowledge present in the prophet's mind. The process is not a mere reproduction of what the prophet has heard from others or believes to have happened, but an organic reconstruction, using the bits and pieces of this knowledge to form a new entity which serves to express the reality which revelation is to convey.

These accounts of earlier times in the Quran are based on stories heard by the prophet; their external accuracy is dependent on the accuracy of these informants and has nothing to do with the truth of revelation. This truth is to

be discovered beneath the surface events described, and cause for worry would only arise if these truths were found to be inconsistent with others propounded in the Quran. Such is not the case.

I think we need to take more seriously the Quran's statement in **17:89** and **18:54** that in it Allah has *sarraf* (transformed, turned about, repeated in different ways) every kind of *mathal* (parable, description of something for purposes of comparison with something else or its explanation). The truths and principles of the Quran, its fundamentals, lie not in the surface narratives, but in their underlying meaning and significance. Because the external structure of the revelation is formulated in and by the prophet's mind, while the inspiring Truth and Reality are immanent within the outer forms.

How could it be otherwise? Truth and Reality are infinite, abstract entities. The only way of making finite minds which deal in concrete concepts apprehend them is by converting the abstract infinite into the finite concrete through a temporal mind. But this Truth and Reality is only valid or that time and place. In other times and other places other human minds must delve beneath the forms and structures made by the prophet's mind to discover the Truth and Reality valid for their time and place. If the revelation is a true one it will provide this.

The method of this delving beneath the surface and outer forms is made clear by the Quran. Not a mystical plunge into mysterious deeps, but to reflect, think, examine, ponder. The key to the secrets is with the rational intellect.

A point for further examination : a suspicion has been raised in my mind that the language of these accounts differs from the rest of the Quran, ie, certain terms which are used throughout the Quran in a particular sense sometimes occur in these accounts in a different, rather loose, sense (see footnote or p. ??, Vol I; second para from top on p. ??; sub-para (c) on p. ??, Vol I.

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- (a) '*Ibrat*. Equated to *ayat* in **3:13**; for the *uli'l-absar*, (in the battle of *Badr*). For same category in alternation of night and day: **24:44**. And in Pharaoh's story or his fate: **79:26**.
- (b) *Imthal*. These accounts are called in **14:45**. Also in **36:13**.
- (c) *Hadith*. **20:9**. "Has *hadithu Musa* come to you?"

Hadith means tale, story. This or a similar query is often repeated in the Quran (). It may well mean have you heard this story from your informant(s)?

- (d) From Bible etc. In Ch. 19 some of these stories are given and are prefaced with the phrase, eg, “*Adhkar fi 'l-kitabi Maryam...*”(V.16). This could well mean: Remember (the story of) Maryam as given in revelation (the Bible). These stories were obviously related to the Prophet by his informant(s) with the Bible as their source. Throughout the Quran these stories are always begun with the phrase: *Wa idh* (And when). This could well refer to the same thing, ie, And when (as related to you from the Bible)...’ when in the story...
- (e) Contain the Truth. I have mentioned **11:120** on p. ?? . It says **11:20** “*And all that We recount to you of the anba’ of the messengers, We strengthen thereby your heart. And herein has come al-Haqq and man’izah and dhikra for the mumimun*”. Al-Haqq is used in the Quran for the essential truth, the underlying reality. Man’izah is an account of good or/and bad things designed to influence people’s attitudes and/or conduct. This point is also made in **2:252**.
- (f) Face Value. The Quran warns against taking these tales at face value: **31:6**. “*And of humans is he who, without knowledge, takes in exchange frivolous tales (lahwa’l hadith) to lead astray from Allah’s path, and to take it as a joke...*”
Take their surface descriptions in exchange for their underlying truth (*al Haqq*). According to *Ibn Faris* one of the two root meaning of LHW is: to have one’s attention diverted from something by another thing. Arberry renders the above phrase, ‘diverting talk’. This is the pertinent point in this verse: the tales become *lahw* if their details divert one from their underlying significance. As I have said in sub-para (c), p. ?? above, ‘ilm means to know the reality of a thing, its underlying significance.

Malaikah and Jinn

14. The references to these beings also create problems. One school accepts them as literally true. The other seeks to explain them away by construing them metaphorically. While the metaphorical meaning of *malaikah* as forces carrying out Allah’s purpose is tenable, the attempt in the case of jinn creates difficulties as regards the exact significance to attach to them. (the is why MA., while admitting the existence of evil spirits called jinn, construes practically every reference in the Quran to jinn as referring metaphorically to some types of humans. For the same reason, P. does almost the same. Some references he construes as of some fiery beings (or species) existing on earth much before the present forms of life. The rest

he construes as references to bedouins. These are both extremely weak, and only a generous dose of blind faith can enable one to swallow them. If Allah wanted to refer to bedouins why didn't He use the normal term *al-a'rab* always (as He does once or twice) instead of jinn whose normal meaning for the audience was something totally different?).

15. The problem is two-fold. Though it applies to *malaikah* also it is best exemplified in the case of the jinn and may be put thus :-

- (a) The Arabs believed in *jinns*, and had very definite ideas about them. when the Quran uses this term it is quite out of the question that they understood by it anything else (bedouins, or leaders, or *kahin* etc.). Especially when many of the Quranic references are directly to aspects of their beliefs eg, *jinns* eavesdropping on heavenly discussions. If Allah meant something else then why didn't He use some other language? Why use that which He knows will mislead? (This is of course on the basis that the Arabs' belief was wrong. If one takes the view that Allah was confirming their beliefs then the problem of the Quran's factual accuracy arises).
- (b) If the Quran is Allah's word, direct, immutable, eternally applicable (as both P. and MA. And others of the metaphor-school hold) then how far is it justified to stretch meanings which were once clear and unambiguous into senses totally different? Is this not a negation of the first belief? Is there really all that much difference from someone who says: Look, this word jinn in the Quran may have once meant something to people but now it creates problems, so let's replace it by another word more congenial (eg, *al-a'rab*)?

16. Comment. This problem is no problem in the context of the correct hypothesis regarding the nature of revelation. Since revelation is formulated in and by the prophet's mind it inevitably deals in categorical concepts natural to that mind. And these are concepts which are prevalent in the society in which the prophet lives. If the prophet along with his contemporaries thinks in terms of *malaikah* and jinn then these will appear in the revelation he utters.

But not as a true reproduction of these concepts as commonly held. They will be transformed by the Truth and Reality inspiring the revelation. I think this can be seen in the case of the concept of jinn (Unfortunately at present I have not the means to carry out a detailed study of this point).

The pre-Islamic Arabs had widely prevalent among them a strong animistic view. It is therefore likely that the majority of their jinn were associated with natural and

inanimate objects. It is also likely that in their beliefs the jinn were capable of performing miraculous feats, against what we would call the order of nature, and persons who managed to acquire the services of a jinni could have such things done for them (as exemplified in popular tales and myths such as in the Arabian Nights).

The Quran, however, does not “recognize” any jinn associated with natural objects. All its jinn are firmly associated with human beings, in the sense of being able to mislead them or assist them*.

In no case is there a reference to jinn assisting people in a supernatural way (the only possible reference I can recall is in the tale of Solomon and Sheba but even here it is only an offer made by a jinni which is pre-empted by a human being who has “knowledge of the book”. As we have seen, these tales are not to be taken literally).

The same thing occurs in the case of *malaikah*. Their intervention in human affairs is strictly circumscribed to non-physical measures. The references to their participation in the Battle of *Badr* are immediately clarified as a strengthening of the believers hearts.

The radical transformation made by the Quran in the then currently prevalent beliefs about *malaikah* and jinn becomes clear if the Quranic treatment of these beings is compared with their treatment in *Hadith*, even though this is a considerably refined and modernised version of the views in the Prophet’s times, since these *hadith* have passed through the hands of many scholars, and reflect views which could be anything from 50 to 200 years later, besides having been selected out of a great mass, most of which must have been much cruder and more far-fetched.

To conclude, it seems to me that the only correct view of the matter is that when the Quran refers to *malaikah* and jinn it is referring to the concepts held by its immediate audience. But it does not by any means confirm these concepts. For us to now understand what these Quranic references imply we must look at the essence of these concepts as given in the Quran without mixing up in them the concepts held about these entities by the contemporary Arabs (but keeping the entities the same, eg, the jinn of the Quran is a jinn, not a bedouin). Seen thus these entities should mean to us now the following (in outline only; I have not studied the Quranic references in detail*):-

- (a) Malaikah. Forces working for Allah, furthering His purpose in His creation, but beneath the surface, invisibly.

- (b) Jinn. “Additional” or “extra” powers inherent in human beings. Usually manifested in only a few, but probably available to all. Generally lead humans to “rebel” against Allah. Not evil by nature; amenable to harnessing through acceptance of revelation; and by no means beyond the power of Allah. Invisible, and working only with and through humans.

It will be seen that these concepts are almost identical to the ones conveyed to the Prophet’s audience, even though they may have objectified these entities as pictured in popular mythology. If we like we can objectify them according to our popular mythology (which includes our science) and label the former “the forces and laws of nature” and the latter “the potentialities hidden within the human subconscious mind”, or some such.

POSTSCRIPT

1. I have now been able to examine the Quranic references to malaikah and jinn. The results are summarized below.

Malaikah

2. The Quran refers to the *malaikah* as follows:-

- (a) As Extraordinary Beings. In the view of people, especially its listeners ie, non-believers. Never used in this sense in reference to believers. 14 references (not verses, since some verses contain two references (not verses, since some verses contain two references; indicated by²) including 4 in tales of past peoples/prophets (6:50, 111, 158; 11:12; 31; 12:31; 15:7; 17:92², 95; 23:24; 25:7, 21; 41:14; 43:53).
- (b) As Objects of Wrongful Worship/Service. 6 references (3:79; 17:40; 34:40; 37:40; 37:150; 43:19²; 53:27).
- (c) Relationship to Allah. In 9 reference they are just grouped with Allah, doing what He does, not stating but implying that they act thus on His directions/will (2:98; 210; 3:86; 4:166; 17:92²; 33:43², 56²; 50: 16-17; 66:4²). In 8 references they are directly stated to be servants of Allah (4:172; 43:19²) or working unceasingly for Him or to ensure His praiseworthiness or on His *amr* (13:13; 16:49-50; 19:64; 37:166; 39:75; 42:5). There are 3 other references which refer to the qualities or status of *malaikah* but also imply service of Allah (37: 164-165; 43:60; 70:4).

- (d) Relationship to Humans. In all these the *malaikah* are acting as Allah's agents or servants in their dealings with human beings, which are:-
 - (1) As Allah's Messengers. 6 references (2:97; 6:9; 16:2; 22:75; 35:1²; 97:4). In most of these the reference is to bringing revelation, though 35:1 is a general one. 2:97 mentions *Jibril*.
 - (2) Assisting Believers. 8 references (details at para 3 below).
 - (3) Causing to Die. 7 references (4:97; 6:93; 8:50; 16:28, 32; 32:11 (*Malak al-maut*); 47:27).
 - (4) Recorders of Actions. An indirect reference in 50: 17-18, ie, *malaikah* as such are not specified.
 - (e) In the Hereafter. Appearance or actions on the Day of Resurrection/Judgement: 10 references (6:8; 15:8; 16:33; 25:22, 25; 50:21-24; 53:26; 69:17; 78:38; 89:22). In the Garden: 4 references (13:23; 21:103; 41:30, 31²). As wardens of the Fire: 3 references (43:77; 66:6; 74:31).
 - (f) In Stories/Parables etc. Certain references which all generally fall in one or other of the above categories. In 35:1 is the only mention of wings (this is not a story/parable reference).
3. Assisting Believers. The 8 references are as follows. 3:123-4 and 8:9, 12 refer to the battles of *Uhud* and *Badr* respectively. In these it is made clear that this was through strengthening and giving confidence to the believer's hearts (3:125 and 8:10). In 33:43² they *yusalli* upon the believers along with Allah, and in 33:56 the same upon the Prophet. According to *Raghib* and *Taj Salla 'alai* means to honour, bless, encourage, make successful, nourish, and protect from anything bad. In 41:31² they are referred to as *wali* of believers. In 42:5 they ask for *maghfirah* for believers. In 42:5 they ask for *maghfirah* for believers. In 66:4 they are the Prophet's supporters.
 4. Conclusion. A study of the Quran's treatment of *malaikah* shows that it deals with them in two forms:-
 - (a) The concepts held by its audience, i.e., as extraordinary, superhuman beings, daughters of god, whose help and intercession was to be sought.
 - (b) Its own concept, i.e., as beings or forces working for Allah in the universe. Their interaction with human beings is purely internal, i.e., psychological, Invisible. No act of theirs is against the natural order.

5. The manner in which the jinn are dealt with in the Quran is slightly different to that of the *malaikah*. Instead of giving its own concept the Quran corrects the concept currently held. I thin this is due to the fact that whereas it uses the concept of *malaikah* to denote forces working for Allah, the jinn are not accorded any such relationship; instead, their relationship is totally with human beings. In the case of the jinn it is useful to consider the current concept references under two separate heads (this division could also be made in the case of *malaikah*, but would not be significant).
6. The Quran refers to jinn in 3 ways:-
 - (a) The Current Concept. The important aspects of this are :-
 - (1) Jinn as supernatural beings, related to God, and hence objects of worship/service of humans (6:100; 34:41; 37:158).
 - (2) Humans seeking protection and assistance of jinn (72:6).
 - (3) Jinn overhearing divine secrets (and presumably informing their human friends) (72:8-10).
 - (4) Certain human beings being possessed by jinn. (7:184; 15:6 etc. etc.).
 - (5) More important perhaps than the mention of some aspects of the concept currently prevailing at the time is the lack of mention of others. There is not a single reference to jinn associated with natural objects. Except for some references in the story of Solomon (27:17, 39, 34:12, 14) there is no mention of jinn helping anyone in any physical way, or harming anyone. In fact there is no mention of jinn acting in any way in the physical, material world.
 - (b) Within Context of Current Concept. There are several references to jinn which are within the context of the prevailing concept, but display a significant angle. Not only are jinn referred to as doing things which normally humans do, but in every single reference they are specifically coupled with humans, bracketted together. These are: some of them are righteous and believe, others are not and deviate, different sects (72:11, 14); enemies of prophets, reject them, disbelieve, deceive and lead astray one another and humans (6:112, 128, 130; 41:29). Do not use minds and go astray (7:179); utter lies about Allah (72:4-5); *Shaitan* whispers into their hearts (114:6); in the Hereafter (55:56, 75). In Ch. 55 humans and jinn are repeated bracketted and dealt with as one.
 - (c) Corrections to the Current Concept. These are:-
 - (1) Their Creation. Rejecting the prevailing belief that jinn were supernatural or divine beings related to Allah the Quran says they were created by Allah (6:100; 7:179; 15:27; 51:56; 55:15). They were created to serve

Allah, as humans were (51:56). They were made of the “fire which penetrates” or “a mixture of fire” (15:27; 55:15. For a discussion of these verses, see pp. ?? & ??, Vol I).

- (2) Subject to Allah Authority. They cannot frustrate Him or escape (72:12). Cannot go beyond their limits and the limits of the physical universe without (His) power and authority (55:33). This last denies them supernatural powers beyond His system, the natural order.
- (3) Subject to Judgement. Like humans they too will be judged in the Hereafter and duly requited (6:128, 130:7;179; 11:119; 37:158; 41:25 ; 46:18; 55:39; 72:15).
- (4) Amenable to belief. Like humans they, too, are converted to belief through accepting revelation (46: 29-32; Ch. 72).

In the vast majority of these references the jinn are again bracketted with humans; in the rest this is implied (grouped in 12 out of 15 references, **Ch. 72** being taken as one reference).

7. Another aspect of the Quranic treatment of Jinn which needs to be noted is their relationship to *Shaitan*. In 18:50 *Iblis* (another name for *Shaitan*) is said to be of the jinn. In many other references the *Shaitan* or *shayatan* are said to do things which are also attributed elsewhere to the jinn, eg, leading people astray, enemies of prophets. In 72: 8-10 the jinn try to overhear divine secrets in heaven but are repulsed; in 37: 7-10 this is said of *Shayatan*. As discussed elsewhere (Vol IV, p. ??) in the Quran *Shaitan* is that aspect or part of human nature which tends to lower human beings from their rightful place and led them away from Allah.
8. Conclusion. From the above it can be seen that the Quran’s concept of jinn is the following:-
 - (a) They are associated only with human beings, and not with any physical objects, animals etc.
 - (b) they are immaterial and invisible. They cannot act in the physical world. Their actions are only upon and through humans.
 - (c) In matters of nature, thought, belief etc. they are like humans. However, the prevailing belief is implicitly accepted to the extent that, within the properties allowed them, the jinn may be much more advanced than the average human.
 - (d) They have no supernatural powers. They operate entirely within the system imposed by Allah upon the universe. They are totally subject to Allah.
 - (e) They are not inherently evil, though they tend to rebel against Allah and urge humans in the same direction. By accepting revelation they can also, like humans, do the right.

In other words, whereas *malaikah* in the Quran are forces working for Allah, the jinn are extra mental powers, intellectual and emotional, within or available to some, though perhaps potentially to all human beings. This additional power and capacity tends to lead to a denial and rejection of Allah, but acceptance of the truths in revelation can harness it for good ends.

Trivia

17. In some places the Quran deals with extremely trivial matters. For example: **24:27-29** (obtaining permission before entering houses); **24:58-59** (same before entering rooms); **24:61** (permits eating in relations' houses); **33:53** (not lingering in the Prophet's house; speaking to his wives from behind a curtain); **49:2-3** (not raising voices above the Prophet's); **49:4** (not calling to him from outside his house); **58:11** (not bunching up in assembles and dispersing when told to do so).
18. These are minor aspects of good manners. Why should they be included in the Final Revelation of the Lord of All the worlds? It doesn't really befit Him. And why through revelation? Is there anything in them that ordinary sensible persons could not think up themselves? As the leader of his community the Prophet must have been teaching them such rules of good manners and civilized behaviour. Why should Allah repeat some of these in junctions in revelation?
19. Comment. If the revelation uttered by the prophet is formulated in and by his mind then it would be natural to expect that some ordinary concerns of his mind would also appear in the revelation. Items similar to what he consciously urges upon his followers. Items which may seem ridiculously trivial when ascribed to Allah, but certainly not so in the case of a human being labouring to raise his people in all ways.

Lack of Proportion

20. In many places in the Quran one finds a vehemence of feeling and language which is difficult to reconcile with the idea of Allah speaking. In other places a similar problem arises from a seeming lack of proportion, an immoderation in the response or reaction to a certain situation. One can understand humans reacting or feeling thus, but surely not Allah. While one can accept that in speaking to human beings he has to use human language and concepts, surely there is no reason why He should start feeling like a human, why He should start expressing human emotions.

Examples of this are the following. The blood-curdling descriptions of the torments of the Fire. While one realizes that some explicit detail is necessary for conveying the seriousness of the prospect, for Allah the whole seems rather excessive, a form

of verbal overkill. It is also difficult to reconcile with the concept of Allah the urgency and concern reiterated in the Quran that people should believe. The depth of this anxiety almost bespeaks of a personal involvement in the issue. But why should it matter so much to Allah whether people believe or not? He should surely be above such concerns.

Then there are certain instances of a disproportionate reaction against some opponents of the Prophet, eg, *Surah* 111 (*Abu Lahab* and his wife); **68:10-16**; **74:17-26**. Even in relation to two of the Prophet's wives there is an excessive reaction (**66:4**). Allah speaking thus?

In some cases the Fire is promised for relatively minor infringements, e.g., violating the inheritance laws (**4:14**); killing game in the *Haram* (**5:94-95**). If it is Allah's word then these must be taken literally. [NOTE. In the latter case the term used is *adhab-un alim*, which is invariably used for punishment in the Hereafter. This is clarified in **5:95** where Allah's punishment is spoken of apart from temporal penalties].

21. Comment. The formulation of revelation in and by the prophet's mind explains all these problems.

33:50

22. This verse raises problems which are, I think, usually glossed over. If it lists the women who are lawful for the Prophet to marry, then why should it include mention of his wives? On the face of it the inclusion of his wives in the list would seem to indicate that the list is of women with whom it is lawful or permissible for him to have sexual relationship ! This is further supported by the concluding reference to what has been prescribed for other believers, ie, that it is lawful for them to have sexual relations with their wives and "those their right hands possess".

Against such an interpretation is the use of the word *yastankiha*. Such an argument is greatly strengthened if one can demonstrate that the term *nikah* is used as a technical term in the Quran to refer only to the marriage relationship as opposed to others between men and women. In my view this is so.

23. Parenthetically, I find it extraordinary that, completely ignoring the implications of what they are doing, both P. and MA. render this term (*nikah*) as "sexual relations" in **24:3**. Even though thereby they have to accept a strange meaning for this verse. According to MA's version the Quran seems to permit an adulteror or adulteress, after punishment, to have free sexual relations with others similarly convicted and mushrikin, but not with believers! P. makes Allah disclose to us the startling

information that only that man and woman will commit adultery who desire to do so (literally: only the adulteror and adulteress can commit adultery)!

Why I am amazed at their giving these strange versions is that, firstly, according to P. in his *Lughat*, the term *nikah* is only metaphorically used for coitus while its direct and standard usage is for marriage, and, secondly, that by using the sense of marriage the verse becomes both clear and meaningful. With this meaning what it says is: one convicted of adultery can only marry another person similarly convicted or a *mushrik*, not a believer.

I rather suspect that they have adopted this strange position in order to counter the *rajam* school. I do not know, I only guess, that one argument used by the *rajam* school is that **24:2** refers only to unmarried persons, and they support this position by reference to **24:3's** injunction regarding marriage of such persons. It is to block this argument contortions. Quite unnecessarily, it seems to me. It would be natural, and the Quran seems to assume this, that a married person convicted and publicly punished for adultery would in all likelihood be divorced by his or her spouse. Or, it may even be laying this down as mandatory. If there is in fact any such argument advanced by the *rajam* school I think it cannot stand in the face of the reference to married persons in **24:6-9**, which deal with a special case not covered by the earlier provisions, and hence conclusively prove that the general case dealt with in **24:1-2** includes married persons.

In any case, the implications for **33:50** of trying to force such an unnatural interpretation on **24:3**, by making *nikah* stand for sexual relations, should give serious pause to whoever tries it.

24. Hostile critics of Islam accuse the Prophet of being a voluptuary. I do not know if they use **33:50** to support their charge, but it is quite possible. As we noted, it is possible to give this verse such a sense, especially if *nikah* is used for sexual relations. But even if *nikah* is taken in the standard Quranic sense of marriage, it leaves the verse obscure and confusing.
25. Comment. This verse becomes quite clear if it is read in the context of **33: 50-52**. In **33:51** the Prophet is permitted to reshuffle his wives; he can “take to himself whom he wishes”. **33:50** lays down who are those out of whom he can make such a choice. Apart from handmaidens* any woman he takes to himself is to be through *nikah*, as **33:50** makes clear. Once he has done this reshuffling it is forbidden for him, vide **33:52**, to make any more changes in his wives; to either divorce any of them or marry any new ones. It is this injunction as well as the permission to carry out the reshuffle which are only for him and do not apply to the rest of the believers, who

can, under the normal injunctions, marry other women, divorce, remarry etc. This is the concluding reference in **33:50**.

I have said above, “Apart from handmaidens...” (marked*). This is most probably wrong since the reference in 33:50 is to “those whom your right hand possesses out of those given you by Allah as prisoners of war”. Even for these the permission is for marriage (since the possibility of acquiring handmaidens out of prisoners remains even after the ban; see **33:52**). In other words **33:50** lists categories only for purposes of marriage. (The Prophet is, in fact, stated to have married 3 women of tribes defeated by the Muslims and taken prisoner. This reference is presumably to such women).

The passage **33:50-52** relates only to wives, existing and possible. It only makes clear in the end that the ban imposed does not cover handmaidens (but see the following pages).

The question naturally arises: why give a list of categories out of whom the Prophet could choose? Why not let him choose out of the generally permissible categories, especially when the list practically amounts to that? I think the answer is that this list gives ex-post-facts approval to the categories out of whom the Prophet had already married wives. It is possible that there may have been criticism from the *munaḥiqin* and opponents, and even doubts among some Muslims, about some of these marriages, especially those to *Zainab* and the prisoners of war. This verse would stamp approval on the Prophet’s action.

There is another possibility, which in theory seems plausible, but may clash with certain accepted versions of event. At the moment I do not have the references to check how well-based are these versions. This hypothesis is that these verses were revealed after *Zainab*’s divorce from *Zaid*, and it was after them that the prophet married her. In that case the reference in **33:37** to Allah having given her to the Prophet as a wife, and in **33:38** to what Allah ordains or prescribes for the Prophet, are to these verses - **33:50-52**^{5*}. However, if this hypothesis is correct then this marriage to *Zainab* should be the Prophet’s last. According to the generally accepted version (as given by MA) the Prophet married *Zainab* in 5 AH, *Jawairiyah*, *Maiminnah* and *Safiyah* in 6 and 7 AH (these are the 3 prisoner-wives) and *Umm Habibah* in 7 AH. The 3 prisoner-wives can be accounted for if we construe the concluding portion of **33:52*** as exempting from the ban on future marriages those whom his right hand possesses, ie, prisoners. Not only would such a construction fit the language, but it appears to me to be a superior construction to the other one, i.e.,

that he cannot change or acquire handmaidens. The latter permission doesn't make much sense in that society and those conditions. Putting a ban on further wives would by no means apply to handmaidens, and this would be understood without there being need for clarification.

The date of *Umm Habibah's* marriage, if correct, would demolish this hypothesis. But is it correct? Firstly, I find that there are all sorts of versions regarding the Prophet's wives and children, and none of the dates quoted can be taken as unquestionably authentic (even the numbers and names of the wives are not universally agreed). Secondly, *Umm Habibah* had emigrated to *Abyssinia* and it is said that the Prophet's marriage proposal was sent to her there. If the *nikah* wasn't solemnized there is *absentia* then it must have occurred immediately on her return. I haven't got the books available here but I seem to remember that Watt in his biography of the Prophet has shown that the emigrants to *Abyssinia* returned fairly soon after the Prophet's establishment at *Medina*. This needs checking^{6**}.

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1. The dates, for what they are worth, also fit. This chapter refers to, and is named after, the attack by the *al-ahzab* on *Medina*. This took place in the 10th month of 4AH. So it was probably revealed soon thereafter. The marriage to *Zainab* was in 5AH,
2. It seems to me the sentence "*wa man ibtaghaita mimman 'azalta fata junaha 'alaika*" in **33:51** is significant. It says: *And any (or anyone or whom) you strongly desire, from whom you stepped aside, then there is no harm upon you (in respect of her)*. ('*azalta* is usually rendered "whom you have put aside"; this is wrong; the correct rendering is as above. *Mimman* is usually rendered "of those"; I think mine is a better version though the other is possible and would not change the meaning; I think of this was intended the word *minhunns* would have been used, as in the previous sentence). This appears to be a reference to *Zainab* (According to the accepted account, she originally wanted to marry the Prophet but he, instead, persuaded her brother to marry her to *Zaid*). The usual rendering doesn't make sense. It can't refer to any divorced wives of the Prophet because the word *talaq* would have been used instead of '*azal*. It can't refer to any wives or wife from whom he had separated himself because they are already covered by the term *azwa'jaka* used in **33:50** and the word *minhunna* in the preceding sentence in **33:51**. This sentence ("You can put off whom you wish out of them, and take to yourself whom you wish"). Is a general statement covering all cases, so this additional reference must be to a special case (one in which the word *ibtigha'* is more appropriate than *sha'*), a case in which the Prophet had doubts about the rightness of what he desired and hence hesitated to act. This second sentence

⁶ * While I hold no brief for the accuracy of *Ibn Sa'd's Tabaqat* as it relates to the Prophet's life, I read that he quotes a tradition (*hadith*) on the authority of *Ibn Ka'b al-Qarzi* to the effect that the *Farad* of **33:38** referred to the permission "that he should marry what he wished from women". It is not clear if this is to **33:50** or **51**, but it refers to this passage. (This reference is probably to be found in viii. **35-100, 156** in the leiden edition, ed. Sachan).

reassures him on that point. In fact this can be quite legitimately translated as: *And her whom you desire, from whom you stepped aside (earlier), there is no harm (blame) upon you (in marrying her).*

3. There are several common terms used in these two passages - **33: 37-38** and **33: 50-52**. *Farad* in **33:38** and **33:50** (in the former applied to the Prophet; in the latter applied to believers but implies that the rest is farad for the Prophet. See also footnote on p. ??). *Haraj* also occurs in both these verses. In **33:37** there is a reference to concealing something within one's *nafs*; **33:51** says Allah knows what is in your hearts.

This hypothesis is bound to be violently opposed by most Muslims, or at least the modernists. Because it would indirectly lend support to a certain account of the Prophet's marriage to *Zainab* which they are at pains to deny.

This account is referred to by MA. As a "mean attack" by prejudiced Western writers, though it is obvious that they did not invent it but took it from Muslim sources. I do not know what is the reliability of these sources. However, the fact is that **33:37** does lend support to some such version. P. and MA seek to get out of such an implication by what seems to be an unfair rendering of the verse (MA., realizing this, puts this version in a footnote, saying however it is even better than the one he has given in the text!).

I do not think the possible sequence of events that these verses could substantiate is in any way derogatory to the Prophet. All they would show is that he was a human being, and like all human beings vulnerable to happenings that our human nature makes us prey to. But these verses establish, and specially **33:50** if related to this matter, that whatever may have been his feelings his conduct was scrupulously correct throughout, and he did not move in the matter until revelation permitted him.

Another reason why Muslims are afraid of which interpretations is because of the charge of hostile critics that many revelations in the Quran relate to personal matters of the Prophet and sort out difficulties or problems for him. This shows, they say, that the Quran was his own formulation and not divine revelation.

Such verses do create difficulties in the way of the view that the Quran is Allah's word and has nothing to do with the Prophet's mind. But not for the concept that though the inspiration is divine the actual formulation of revelation is in and by the Prophet's mind. In this case it would be natural that matters which concerned him deeply should figure in such revelation. But their content and import is strictly subject to the inspired vision.

As for the possible retort - what is to show that there was in fact any such vision or inspiration at all? - the answer lies in the pragmatic field, ie, the effect of this revelation upon whoever came in touch with it, and the results it produced. That there was more behind it than the Prophet's subconscious is shown not by the material successes of early Islam but by the effect of the Quran on Muslims, especially its hold after the Prophet's death. During his lifetime the hold of revelation on people's minds and hearts might be ascribed to his personality, but after his death the revelation he uttered was on its own. It has stood the test well. (For a detailed discussion see pp. ??-??, Vol IV).

KENNETH CRAGG - THE EVENT OF THE QURAN

1. **1:1-2**

Praise be to God, the Lord of all being,
The merciful Lord of mercy.

2. **2:251.** ...Had not God held back humanity by some of its members, indeed the earth itself would have been corrupted. But God is the source of good to all beings.

3. **3: 78-79**

It is not right for any man to whom God has given the Book and authority and prophethood and to turn and say to men: “be servants to me rather than to God”. Rather he should say: “Be God’s men¹, in that you know the scriptures and are students of them”.

He would never direct you to take angels and prophets for your masters. How could he direct you into unbelief, Muslims as you are?

[NOTE. 1. Arberry renders *rabbaniyun* as ‘masters’ in the sense of experts in the Scriptures (“Be masters in that you know the Book...”)].

4. **6:163-164**

Say: Truly my prayer and my ritual sacrifice, my living and my dying, are God’s,
the Lord of all being
Whom none can equal....

5. **11:114.**in the last and first watches of the night...

6. Ta’qilun. Apprehend, realize significance of. (12:2)

7. **16:91.** Fulfil God’s covenant when you make covenant and do not break oaths you have affirmed, with God as your surety...

8. **22:52.** No apostle or prophet We have sent before you, but experienced (how) interjected into what he imported (or intended) when he spoke. Then God cancelled what Satan interjected and thus God makes His signs authoritative. For God is all-knowing and all-wise.

9. **23: 97-98.** And say: “My Lord, I take refuge with Thee from the evil prompting of the Satans.
And I take refuge with thee, O my Lord, from their attentions.
10. **24:43.** Do you not see how God drives the clouds, folds them into themselves, banks them into great soaring heights? And then you see the drops teeming out of them and the hail following in their train...with flashing lighting of a blending brilliance.
11. **30:39.** What you derive from usury, gaining from men’s capital, does not gain with God....
12. **51: 1-6**
By the winnowing winds,
The rain-laden clouds,
By the swift running courses,
By all that disposes,
Faithful is all that you are pledged.
The judgement will indeed befall.
13. **53: 3-12**
Nor speaks he out of caprice
This is none other than a revelation revealed.
One of awesome might has taught him,
One endued with strength. Standing there
He was, away on the horizon;
Then he drew near, hovering down,
Two bows lengths away, nearer still,
And what He revealed to His servant He revealed.
The heart does not lie: he saw
Are you disputing with him, with him who saw?
14. *Takhsha*‘. Hushed to reverence. (**57:16**).
15. **57:29.** Qadr ‘ala = prescriptive right.
16. **73: 1-8**
O you that are enwrapped, watch almost the night long.
Or half the night, or thereabouts
A fragment less or more.
Recite the Quran with due recital.

We shall entrust to you profound words.
Truly in the watches of the night
Impressions are weightiest
And words most telling.
By day you have pressing business.
Remember the name of your Lord,
Devote yourself altogether to Him.

17. **78: 6-7.** ..like pegs for the cradle of the earth.

18. **80: 25-32**

We poured down the copious rain,
cleaving the ground like fissures
And making grain
And grapes and vegetation
Olives and dates
and laden orchards,
Fruits and pastures
All to grow, delightful for you and your flocks.

19. **81: 17-24**

By the darkening night,
By the breathing dawn,
It was truly the word of a noble messenger,
Of one whose power is with the Lord of the throne,
Obeyed and sure.
Your comrade is not deluded:
He saw him truly on the clear horizon.
He does not scant the unseen.

20. **91: 1-4**

By the sun and his morning radiance
And the moon that follows after:
By the day telling his splendour
And the night that hides him away.

21. *Al-Samad*. Self-sufficient (Cragg). The Eternal (Rodwell). The Everlasting Refuge (Arberry). The eternally besought of all (Pickthall). The Eternal absolute (Yusuf Ali). (**Ch. 112**).

22. **Ch. 113**

Say I take refuge with the Lord of the daybreak,
From the evil of what He has created,
And from the evil of the enveloping darkness,
And from the evil of those who bind their spells.
And from the evil of the envier and his envy.

23 **Ch. 114**

Say: I take refuge with the Lord of men
The King of men,
The God of men,
From the evil of the whispering insinuator
Who whispers in the hearts of men,
From Jinn and men.

THE KORAN INTERPRETED - A. J. ARBERRY (1955)

1. **22:52**

We sent not every any Messenger
or Prophet before thee, but that Satan
Cast into his fancy, when he was fancying;
But God annuls what Satan casts, then
God confirms His signs - surely God is
Al-knowing, All-wise -

2. **22:78**

and struggle for God as in His due, for
He has chosen you, and has laid on you
no impediment in your religion,....

3. **24: 1-2**

A *sura* that We have sent down
and appointed; and We have sent down
in it signs, that haply
you will remember.
The fornicates and the fornicator -
scourge each one of them a hundred stripes,
and in the matter of God's religion
let no tenderness for them seize you....

4. **27: 42-43**

So, when she came, it was said, 'Is thy

throne like this? She said, 'It seems the same.' 'And we were given the knowledge before her, and we were in surrender, but that she served , apart from God, barred her, for she was of people of unbelievers'.

5. **30:30**

So set thy face to the religion,
a man of pure faith - God's original
upon which He originated mankind.
There is no changing god's creation.
That is the right religion; but
most men know it not -

6. *Amur bi'l ma'ruf wa anha 'an il-munkar* (31:17)
Bid unto honour, and forbid dishonour.

7. *Mukhlisina lahu al-din* (31-32)
Making their religion sincerely His

8. *La raiba fih* (32:2). Wherein no doubt is.

9. **35:32**

...but of them some
wrong themselves; some of them are lukewarm,
and some are outstrippers in good works
by the leave of God ;.....

10. *Dhikr*. Remembrance

11. **38: 10-11**

...Why, then let them ascent the cords!
A very host of parties is routed there!

12. **39:23**

God has sent down the fairest discourse as
a Book, consimilar in its oft-repeated,...

13. **39:42**

God takes the souls at the time of their death,
and that which has not died, in its sleep;
He withholds that against which He has decreed death,

but looses the other till a stated term.....

14. *Ma qadaru Allah haqqa qadrilu* (39:67)

They measures not God with His true measure.

15. **40:82**

.....

They were stronger than themselves in might
and left firmer traces in the earth;....

16. **41:3**

A Book whose signs have been distinguished as an Arabic Koran for a people
having knowledge,

17. **41:26**

The unbelievers say, 'Do not give ear
to this Koran, and talk idly about it;
haply you will overcome'.

18. **41:36**

If a provocation
from Satan should provoke thee,
seek refuge in God;....

19. **42:14**

They scattered not, save after knowledge
had come to them, being insolent
one to another;....

20. **43:86**

...such as have testified to the truth
and that knowingly

21. **49:13**

O mankind, We have created you
male and female....

22. **50:32**...it is for every mindful penitent

23. **53: 1-2**

By the Star when it plunges,

Yours comrade is not astray, neither errs,
nor speaks he out of caprice.
This is naught but a revelation revealed,
taught him by one terrible in power,
very strong; he stood poised,
being on the higher horizon,
then drew near and suspended hung,
two bows' - length away, or nearer,
then revealed to his servant that he revealed.
His heart lies not of what he saw;
what, will you dispute with him what he sees?

ISLAM BY G.E. VON GRUNEBAUM

(P. 221 NFR)

1. **71:13**. What is the matter with you that ye expect not in Allah seriousness [of purpose], seeing that He created you by stages? [Quoted from *Qasimi, Hadi hiya 'l-aghtal, Cairo 1946*].
2. '*Ibada*. 'Know that '*ibada* consists in carrying out the commanded action with a view to glorifying Him Who gave the commandment'. - *Fakhr ad-din ar-Razi, Magatih, al-ghaib* (Cairo 1324/1906), I, 5⁶⁻⁷ (p. 121).

WHAT IS ISLAM - BY W. N. WATT

(P. 267, CFR)

1. **21:31** (etc.). "...[O]ne traditional interpretation of the phrase is that the mountains anchor the earth, as it were, and so keep it from moving, that is from heaving and tossing on the sea". [Cf. *Az-Zamakhshan, Kashshaf, Butaq* 1318-19 (1900-01) on **16:15**]. (P. 33)
2. ***Dhikr etc.*** The root is frequent not only in the second verbal stem (*dhakkir*), but also in the first - *dhakara*, to remember - and fifth - *tadhakkara*, to accept and take to heart a reminder. "The Arabic second verbal stem, however, seems to be wider than the English word 'remind', even if the latter is a convenient translation. It means more than recalling to men's minds what they have already known and have forgotten. It seems to mean rather bringing them to a full knowledge of that of which so far they have had

only a dim awareness, and to which they have paid no special attention. In particular it means bringing men to realize that the supreme God, whose existence they vaguely acknowledge, is^{7*} in fact the ultimately denominating power in their lives, so that they come to make this realization the basis of their conduct” (p.63).

3. Hanif. “It is apparently derived from a Syriac word meaning ‘pagan’, and is frequently used in this sense by Christian writers of Arabic. In the Quran, however, *hanif* is applied to one who is monotheist but neither a Jew nor a Christian. It is possible that the connecting link between these two usages is that there was a form of the word in the language of the Nabataeans which ‘meant a follower of some branch of their partially Hellenized Syro-Arabian religion’; 5...whatever the derivation, there is no doubt about the Qur’anic meaning - a follower of the purest form of monotheism”.

(⁵ Cf conclusion *Faris* and *Glidden*, “The Development of the Meaning of the *Koranic Hanif*”, *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society*, 19 (1939), 1-13. And *EI* (2), art. ‘Hanif’).

THE HOLY QURAN - A. YUSUF ALI (LAHORE ; SH. MUHAMMAD ASHRAF ; 1938)

1. **2:88**. *Gulfan* = pl. of *Ghilafun*, the wrappings or cover of a book in which it is preserved.
2. Wajh.
 - (1) Face
 - (2) Countenance or favour as in **41:20**
 - (3) Honour, glory. Presence as applied to God in **2:115** and **55:27** (?)
 - (4) Cause, for sake of, as in **76:8**
 - (5) The first part of , beginning as in **3:71**
 - (6) Nature, essence, inner being, self, as in **5:111**, **28:88**, **4:27** (?). [p.48. Note 114]
3. **4:1**. “...Reverence Allah, through whom ye demand your mutual (rights), and (reverence) the wombs (that bore you)”....
[NOTE. Could be (through) the wombs?]
4. Qawwam. One who stands firm in anothers’ business, protects his interests, and looks after his affairs; or, it may be, standing firm in his own business, managing affairs with a steady purpose. (Note: 545 to **4:34**. Cf. **4:135**).

5. **5:96**. “...no blame for what they ate (in the past)...”
6. Fitnah. Root idea : to try, to test, to tempt.
 (1) A trial or temptation; **2:102**
 (2) Trouble, tumult, oppression, persecution; **2:191, 193, 217**.
 (3) Discord; **3:7**
 (4) Subterfuge, an answer that amounts to a sedition; **6:23** (Note 851).
7. Mustaqarr. Definite abode; where a thing stops or stays for some time, where it is established. Mustanda'. Where a thing is laid up or deposited for a little while.
 (Note 1499).
8. Grammer. Kann = past tense. Man = personal pronoun.
 Ma = impersonal pronoun.
9. **13: 38-39**
 “.....For each period is a Book (revealed)
 Allah doth blot out or confirm what He
 pleaseth : With Him is the Mother of the Book”.
10. Yabghhuna-ha 'iwaj-an. Seek therein something crooked. **(14:3)**
11. Punctuation Marks
 (a) Mu'aniqa. This word or expression can be construed as going either with the words or expression preceding it or with those following it. The word or expression in question is indicated by ∴ placed before and after it, above other punctuation marks if any. In the margin the abbreviation (urdu word) indicates that this was worked out by the earlier commentators (*Mutaqaddimin*), or by (urdu word) in full where it was worked out by the later commentators (*mutaakhkhirin*);
 (b) If the end of an *ayat* is not the end of a sentence the mark of a smaller stop is put above the O.
 (c) A mark on top of another governs the latter.
 (d) ____ A warning not to stop.
 (e) ____ For *Lazim*, means that a stop is a must.
 (f) ____ For *jarz*, means the stop is optional.
 (g) ____ For *mutlaq*, denotes a full stop (i.e., end of a sentence) but not the end of an argument.
12. Marginal Marks. The end of each *ruku* (section of *sura*) is marked by an _____. Usually 3 figures are written with it. The top figure shows the number of *ruku*'s

completed in that *sura*. The middle figure shows the number of *ayats* in the *ruku* just completed. The bottom figure shows the number of *ruku*'s completed on the *sipara*.

SIRAT RASUL ALLAH - IBN ISHAQ

1. **Sura 106.** “..There are three rival readings : *Ilaf* (adopted by our author, *ilaf*, and *ilf*. According to all three the meaning is said to be “for their keeping to the journey etc.’. Other authorities say that the first reading means ‘for the preparing and fitting out’. Others say that according to the third reading the meaning is ‘the protecting’Thus for *ilaf* the meanings of covenant, protection, and responsibility for safety are illustrated”.
(FN. Pp. 27-28)

According to *Ibn Hisham*: “The words **Ilafu Qurayh** mean ‘their assembling the party to go to Syria for trade... *Ilaf* is also used of a man who has a thousand camels, cattle, or sheep, or other possessions...*Ilaf* is also used when a people become a thousand in number...*Ilaf* also means the joining of one thing to another so that it adheres and sticks to it”.
(p. 697) (Wustenfeld text: p. 37).

“For the uniting of Quraysh, their uniting the caravans to ply summer and winter....” -
Ibn Ishaq (p. 27) (W. p. 37).

2. ***Bakka***. : It is said that it was called *Bakka* because it used to break² the necks of tyrants when they introduced innovations therein”. - *Ibn Ishaq*. [“²From the verb *bakka*, he broke”]
(p.47) (W. p. 73).

“*abu ‘Ubayada* told me that *Bakka* is the name of the valley of *Mecca* because it is thickly populated’ ...”- *Ibn Hisham* [“¹Tabakku, ‘they came together in crowds’].
(p.708) (W. p. 73).

3. **22:40.** “...Cloisters and churches and oratories and mosques...”.
4. **4:46.** “This text shows that Muhammad knew (a) that when they said “We hear” and ‘*asayna* they were playing on the similar-sounding Hebrew and *asinu* (with *sin*) meaning ‘we carry out’, and (b) that *ra’ina* to them meant ‘our evil one’. It seems, therefore, probable that *ghayra musma’ in* is not to be understood in the sense given above, but as a vocative, ‘O thou that hast not been made to hear,’ i.e. thou hast not

received a divine revelation. The ‘tongue twisting is revealed as the sarcastic use of Arabic in a Hebrew sense by a bilingual scholar’.

(FN. P. 264)

5. Tasrif. “...Lane says that the *tasrif* of the verses means ‘the varying or diversifying of the verses of the Quran by repeating them in different forms, or the making of them distinct in their meanings by repeating and varying them..’...” (FN. P. 273)
6. Furqan. “...the facts are that in Aramaic *furqan* means ‘deliverance’, and in Christian Aramaic it is the common word for ‘salvation’...”. He thinks in **8:29** and **8:42** it probably means ‘deliverance’.
7. **77:33**. “*Wahshu*, the slave of *Jubayr b. Mut’in*, said, ‘By God, I was looking at *Hamza* while he was killing men with his sword, sparing no one, like a huge camel!..” [“1 Lit. ‘dust coloured’. Camels of this colour were unusually large so that the speaker means that Hamza towered over his opponents”]. (p.375) (W.p. 564).
8. Sakinah. “This is (a) a genuine Arab word meaning ‘tranquility’, ‘calm’; and (b) a borrowing from the Hebrew *shakinah*, possibly through the medium of Syriac...” (FN. p. 506-507).
9. Sawa’un. “means the middle (of the path)” - Ibn Hishan. (p.734) (Dealing with **2:108**) (W. p.379)
10. 3:78. “*Tabbaniyun* are the learned, the lawyers, and the chiefs. The singular is *rabbani*...” - Ibn Hisham. (p.734) (W. p.598)
11. 3:145. “*Ribbiyun*, singular *ribbi*, and *al-ribah* is applied to the sons of ‘*Abdu Manat*...because they gathered together and made alliances, by this they mean multitudes”. (p.758) - Ibn Hisham (W. p. 598)
12. Jibt and Taghut. “*al-Jibt* among the Arabs means whatever is worshipped other than God. *Taghut* means everything that leads away from the truth...” - Ibn Hisham. (p. 735) (W. p.391)
13. **3:13 & 16:10**. “*Musawwamin* means ‘plainly marked..’ *Sima* means distinguishing mark)...*Musagqama* also means ‘at pasture’; and in the book of God ‘and horses at pasture’ (**3:13**) and ‘trees on which you send beasts to pasture’ (**16:10**). The Arabs say *sawwama* and *asama* when a man pastures his horses and camels...” Ibn Hisham (p. 757). (W. p. 593).



MUHAMMAD AT MECCA - WM WATT

(P. 65; NFR)

1. **81:19.** “*Karl Ahrens* has suggested that the *rasul karim* of **81:19** was originally identified with *ar-Rub*, the Spirit”. In “Muhammad” (Lerpzig, 1935) (p. 43).
2. Tagha. Mostly it can be aptly translated by “to be presumptuous” or “to act presumptuously”. It is the absence of a sense of creatureliness, a pride in the power of the creature; linked with disregard or denial of the Creator. (p. 67)
3. Dhakkara. Lane gives for the special Quranic usage: ‘He exhorted; admonished; exhorted to obedience; gave good advice, and reminded of the results of affairs; reminded of what might soften the heart, by the mention of rewards and punishments’.

TO ORIGIN OF ISLAM IN ITS CHRISTIAN ENVIRONMENT

By RICHARD BELL

1. Hanif. “By *hanif* he [ie, M in Quran] means one who follows the original natural religion which God had implanted in the heart of man from the first”. (p.59)
2. Rujz (74:5). “...[I] n *Syriac* we find the word *rugza* meaning ‘wrath’. It is the word used in the *Syriac* of Matthew iii. 7, in translating the phrase “the wrath to come”... (*Rugz* was evidently one of those Aramaic Christian words which Muhammad either adopted or found ready to his hand”. (p.88) (N.B. g =j].
3. Qur'an. “There has been some discussion as to the meaning of the verb *qara*’ and the related word *qur'an*. But there can be no doubt, and it is now agreed that they belong to that religious vocabulary which Christianity had introduced into Arabia. *Qara*’ means to read or solemnly recite sacred texts, while *qur'an* is the *Syriac qeryana* used to denote the “reading” or scripture lesson!” (p. 90).
‘ Cf. Horovitz in *Der Islam*, xiii. (1923), p. ?? ff.
4. Furqan. “Scholars are now agreed that the word is borrowed from the Syrian *purqana*, meaning in Christian language “salvation”...But Muhammad always gives his own stamp or twist to everything...(p. 120)...Remembering the meaning of the Arabic root it is easy to see how he associated it with the separation of the believers from the unbelievers when the Catastrophe fell. *Furqan* is deliverance from the judgement” (p. 122).
(NB. Here he is discussing **8:42**).
5. **30:30**. “Set thy face as a hanif towards the religion, the creation of God according to which he created man; there is no change in God’s creation; that is the eternal religion (*din qayyim*); but the bulk of men do not know”. (p. 132)



6. **5:17, 69, 93.** “The enmity spoken of in all these verses is not that between different sects of Christians, Jews, or Muhammadans, but moral perversity and enmity towards God (cf. V. 72)”. (p. 155).